

Havering Library Strategy 2024 - 2029



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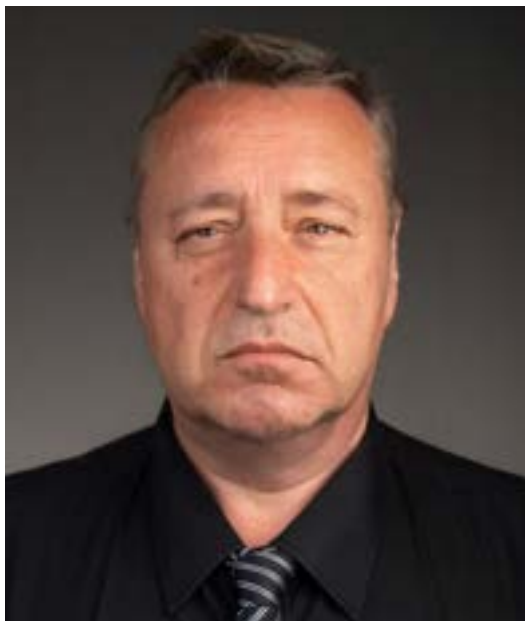


Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

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Introduction – Cllr Paul Middleton



This library strategy, and the accompanying public consultation that will give us the evidence that helps us make decisions for the future, comes at an extremely difficult time for the borough. The funding we need to deliver all of our legal responsibilities – as well as those we don't have to provide but which residents want and need – is denied to us due to an unfair and outdated system.

Libraries are one of those legal responsibilities and this strategy proposes the very difficult decision of closing up to four of our current branch library sites, leaving us with six libraries in the borough. Doing so will save more than £300,000, a saving which has been part of the balanced Council budget that by law we have to set.

Although this is a very difficult choice to make, and one we know will have impacts, it is in our view an essential one for three reasons. The first is that the way people use our libraries has changed. More than 940,000 visits were made to our libraries in 2023/24, over three quarters of them at our five main libraries. More than 1 million items were issued and thousands of activity sessions – ranging from baby bounce to knit and natter, from IT sessions to the summer reading challenge– took place right across our library estate. We know that thousands of Havering residents value and cherish our libraries and we do too.

The second is that the condition of our library estate has declined and will do so further without intervention. And the third is that we need to consider how best to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service that meets residents' changing needs at a time of significantly reduced council funding.

This strategy seeks to build on the work that professional library staff are doing every day in Havering. It sets out a strategic vision for the service and priorities to ensure that libraries remain an intrinsic part of the fabric of our communities. While our proposals would if carried out reduce the number of libraries in the borough, the strategy will also kick-start the development of a business case to invest heavily in making sure the sites that remain see improvements to those buildings. And it will start the process to look at whether a children's library, with specialist library support for children with special educational needs, is viable.

Our libraries aren't just buildings that have books in them. They are places where people find inspiration, education and enjoyment. They are places that improve physical and mental health, help people become less lonely, provide free internet access and the help to use it and encourage participation in all facets of life in the borough. Trained library staff aren't people whose job it is to put books on shelves – they are people with empathy and knowledge who are there to help people achieve their aspirations.

It is in this spirit that this draft strategy is published. This strategy provides for a strong and sustainable service equipped to remain at the heart of our communities serving those in most need. Please do read this strategy and help us shape the future of libraries in Havering.

Councillor Paul Middleton

Executive Summary

The Council's current statutory library provision consists of 10 library sites, together with the Home library service and the online library. This strategy proposes for consultation a reduction of sites from ten to six libraries. This is a reduction of 96 hours per week in service across the borough.

It is proposed that the service will continue to be delivered, on current opening hours, at:

- Harold Hill Library (50 hours per week)
- Hornchurch Library (50 hours per week)
- Rainham Library (50 hours per week)
- Romford (Central) Library (50 hours per week)
- Upminster Library (50 hours per week)
- One current branch library, site to be determined (24 hours per week)

It is therefore proposed that up to four of the remaining five branch libraries would close. These libraries placed at risk of closure in this draft strategy and consultation are:

- Collier Row Library
- Elm Park Library
- Gidea Park Library
- Harold Wood Library
- South Hornchurch Library

Depending on a Cabinet decision to close specific sites, full-year recurrent savings would be in the region of between £334,613 and £350,855.

The local studies library, online library and housebound delivery services would be unaffected by the proposals contained in this draft strategy.

The proposals and strategy have been informed by a needs assessment that concluded:

- More than three quarters of all visits and issues and the vast majority of IT and wifi use occur at the current five main libraries;
- The condition of the estate requires significant investment in order to maintain current condition. The council considers that obtaining such investment is not viable in the current funding climate;
- A library service of six sites will mean that the vast majority of the borough remains within a 20-30 minute journey by public transport of a nearby library;
- Some areas of deprivation and/or low educational attainment are likely to be negatively impacted by the closure of a branch library in their area;
- Some groups, particularly those with mobility issues, those living in difficult economic circumstances and children with disabilities and/or living in poverty are likely to be negatively impacted by the closure of a branch library in their area. For a small number of people it may result in them feeling excluded from the ability to visit and enjoy membership of a library.



It is proposed that Havering's Library Service Vision is:

“A service where education, information and inspiration is available for free to all. We exist to cultivate a community of lifelong learners. Our service fosters literacy, nurtures creativity, supports local endeavours, serves as a welcoming sanctuary for people of all ages and empowers our communities with the tools they need to thrive in an ever-evolving world. Together, we build bridges between the past and the future, residents new and old, fostering a shared journey of discovery, enlightenment, and community growth.”

The Strategy also provides for:

- Development of proof of concept and a business case for a new Havering Children's Library.
- Development of a business case for investment in improving the condition of the remaining library estate, including signage, furniture
- Library usage, demographic change and potential for new library services to inform the Council's ongoing work to ensure its buildings are future-proofed
- Libraries working to improve digital inclusion in the borough



National and local context

Our statutory duty

Havering Council has a statutory responsibility (a duty set out by law) to provide a local library service in accordance with the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. The Act requires each local authority to provide a library service that is “comprehensive and efficient for those that live, work or study in the area”. It is for local decision how the library service best meets this requirement practically, including how many libraries there are, where they are, when they are open, and what each one offers.

The Council also has an equality duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set in the Act to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The national context and supervision of public libraries in England

In England, public library services play a crucial role in fostering literacy, community engagement, and access to information. However, the landscape of these services is evolving amidst various national factors.

Firstly, funding challenges persist. Over the years, budget cuts have forced many local authorities to reduce library hours, staff, and resources. This has put pressure on the ability of libraries to provide diverse and comprehensive services to their communities.

Moreover, the digital age presents both opportunities and challenges. While online resources and digital platforms offer new ways to access information and engage with library services, they also highlight the need for libraries to adapt and modernize their offerings to remain relevant.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted library services, with temporary closures, restrictions, and a significant shift towards digital services. Library services have had to respond rapidly to changing local circumstances to ensure that post 2021 libraries remain relevant and used.

Despite these challenges, public libraries remain essential pillars of community life in England. They provide spaces for learning, creativity, and social interaction, forging a sense of belonging and supporting lifelong learning.

While books remain a cornerstone of library services, digital loans are gaining popularity alongside physical ones. Access to PCs has increased but use of libraries for traditional services like printing and copying are changing as the range of applications available to patrons on their own technology such as smartphones changes.

There are a number of national stakeholders who have power and influence over the way libraries are run; in particular, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), who have the power to intervene if a service is not meeting its legal requirements. Challenge can also come from the public through a judicial review.

DCMS suggest that when developing models, local authorities should ensure that library services:

- are shaped by local needs;
- meet legal requirements;
- focus on public benefit and deliver a high-quality user experience;
- make decisions informed by evidence, building on success;
- support delivery of consistent England-wide core offers;
- promote partnership working, innovation and enterprise; and
- use public funds effectively and efficiently

The DCMS Libraries Taskforce has produced a national strategy document for public libraries that sets out seven outcomes for libraries to deliver against:

- Cultural and creative enrichment
- Increased reading and literacy
- Improved digital access and literacy
- Helping everyone achieve their full potential
- Healthier and happier lives
- Greater prosperity
- Stronger, more resilient communities

Successful modern library services understand their role as part of the wider council vision and, working where necessary with partners, deliver a range of opportunities that respond effectively and efficiently to the needs of their local community.

To do this they:

- Recognise the ongoing importance of traditional library materials but also the key importance of digital enablement;
- Use the latest technology to support service delivery and increase access to services;
- Add value through links between libraries and other policy areas such as health and wellbeing, business and economic growth;
- Build the skills needed to help the library workforce deliver these priorities and to take on new roles as part of wider service provision; and
- Communicate the value of libraries, highlighting innovation and good ideas

Libraries in Havering – the local context

Library performance

The service performs well in comparison to similar library services. CIPFA's data on libraries shows that the Havering service measures low on cost and in the mid-range on visit numbers and lending. The service performs consistently well in the national Summer Reading Challenge.

Library footfall followed a national trend of decline by more than 25% from 2010 to the national closure at the start of the Covid pandemic. However, Havering's library service has been successful in building visitor numbers post-pandemic, adding more than 400,000 visits in the last two years.



Visits to and issues at libraries in Havering

The service experienced a year-on-year increase of 33% in visitors between 2022/23 and 2023/24. Last year 940,602 visits were made to Havering's libraries. A total of 1.2m visits were made to Havering libraries in the full year before the pandemic, meaning the service has retained more than 78% of pre-pandemic visit numbers. While figures comparing retention rates of library services nationally are not published, it is believed that this figure represents a well-used and well-performing service.

Issue numbers have also increased in the last 2 years. In 2023/24 the service issued 979,431 items.

The changing library estate

The library estate in Havering is among the service's highest risk areas. The newest buildings in the estate – Elm Park (2009), Rainham (2014) and Harold Hill (2016) provide a strong amenity mix with good-quality facilities in energy-efficient buildings. However, the rest of the estate is in generally poor condition and a number of buildings (Gidea Park, Harold Wood, Collier Row, South Hornchurch, Hornchurch) are either approaching the end of their natural life or are in need of significant improvement.

These deficiencies have been thrown in to stark relief during periods of bad weather. The service was forced to close a number of libraries in winter 2022 due to storm damage and also in the summer 2023 heatwave.

An initial condition survey was carried out on all library buildings in 2023. The survey set out that while a smaller number of buildings would need little more than general maintenance to remain operable, the estate in general is in poor condition, evidenced by instances of roof leaks, structural cracks, energy-inefficient buildings and flooring replacement.

The cost of remedying the issues set out in the below table – which would only serve to maintain rather than improve our libraries – is likely to be well over £1m in the next five years.

Library	General Condition	Key maintenance required in next 5-10 years
Collier Row – mid 1960s	Poor	Replacement of all window frames due to rotten timbers; Replace energy inefficient single glazed windows; Repair leaking guttering; Replace toilets in staff area due to asbestos; Redecorate throughout.
Elm Park – 2009	Good	Replacement of soiled carpet tiles; Replace leaking downpipe
Gidea Park – mid 1960s	Poor	Cracks in external structure; Roof requiring repair; Decoration required throughout directly including repair to water-damaged ceiling tiles.
Harold Hill – 2016	Good	Roof lights require full survey to check for water ingress; Full decoration recommended within 5-10 years; Survey and remedial work to check blocked drains and ensure system is functioning normally.
Harold Wood – 1960s	Poor	Replacement of energy-inefficient single-glazed windows; Leaking roof to be fully surveyed and repaired; cracks to external walls to be surveyed and repaired; Asbestos vinyl floor to be replaced; full redecoration throughout required directly.
Hornchurch – 1960s with 2007 extension	Average and declining	Single-glazed timber framed windows throughout are original to the building and need replacing directly; No insulation identified in condition survey; Full internal and external redecoration required directly; Fire safety compliance issues (insufficient compartmentalisation and fire stopping around flue ducting) to be remedied directly.
Upminster – 1960s	Average and declining	Leaking roof to be investigated and repaired; Damp to front external wall to be investigated and repaired; Full decoration internally required directly.
Rainham – 2014	Good	Full internal redecoration recommended within next 10 years.
Romford – 1965 refurbished in 2010	Average and declining	Extensive general maintenance to external facades; investigation and repair to multiple areas of water ingress in internal rooms; Renew all flooring within 5 years; General redecoration work.
South Hornchurch – 1960s	Average and declining	Ongoing checks to investigate compliance issues around glazing and glazed doors; cracks in external structure to be investigated; Full internal redecoration required within 5 years

The 2019 Consultation and Community Hubs

The last significant review of Havering's library service came in 2019 with the publication of Front Doors To Sustainable Services. The consultation accompanying the publication aimed to identify opportunities to sustainably fund a library service for the borough following a zero-based budget review that had identified a budget shortfall in the order of £150,000.

Options to change opening hours and propose that the five "branch" libraries (Collier Row, Elm Park, Gidea Park, Harold Wood and South Hornchurch) would remain as part of the statutory library service but would be run and managed by community groups or associations if local appetite existed.

Following consultation, the Council's cabinet determined that no such appetite could be identified locally. The service subsequently secured budget growth to meet the annual budget shortfall.

The consultation also raised the concept of the creation of "community hubs" – defined as "local places at the heart of communities, offering and hosting a wide range of services, public events and activities, and spaces to meet friends and contribute to community life". Following the consultation two pilot hubs were created and are currently hosted at Harold Hill and Rainham libraries. The consultation assumes that these offers would continue.

The hubs' service offer is based on provision of information, advice and guidance on matters including housing, welfare, health and employment as well as a community food pantry offer. The food pantry offer in particular is fully utilised at both sites and is often over-subscribed.

Looking to the future

In order that the library service can continue to develop in future, we think two factors are critical:

1. Condition and location of buildings

Satisfaction and popular usage of library buildings tend to depend on three factors – they are safe, comfortable and inviting.

While we are proud of the warm and professional service our library staff offer, the condition of the buildings we work from do not meet those standards. A smaller library estate will mean we are better able to maintain and develop the library estate to meet the needs of the borough as it changes, even taking into account the Council's current financial challenges.

This strategy and consultation proposes the development of a business case for capital investment in the remaining library estate, including the replacement of buildings which are no longer economically viable to maintain.

As the borough's population changes, we will need to ensure that the location of our libraries continues to reflect need.

Libraries thrive where people are. Successful libraries tend to be in areas with good local transport links, convenient pedestrian access and high street or other high-footfall locations. Although most of our library buildings fulfil these requirements, we will need to ensure they continue to do so in future.

We think this is particularly the case in the south of the borough, where one possible reason that library footfall is low at both Rainham and South Hornchurch libraries is that the development of housing to the West has stretched the catchment area of those libraries beyond reasonable bounds. In our work to look at the library and other public estate in the borough, we will look carefully at whether there needs to be further library development to serve population growth in the south of the borough in coming years.



2. The changing demographics of the borough and changing expectations of what people need in a library service

Havering has an increasingly diverse population. Historically and still one of the oldest populations in London, it now has the second largest growing youngest population in the UK and the highest in London, with an increase of 19.7% in those aged 0–14 years. We have also seen a 26.5% growth in 25–39 years.

Library usage is much more popular in groups of 0–19 years and over 60 years of age than other age groups. We think the changing demographics of the borough will lead to a continued increase in library use in coming years.

In particular, we think there is capacity for a continued and steep rise in demand from children and young people, and parents and carers, for library services. In order to meet this demand, we think there may be a case to develop proposals for a new library – a dedicated children’s library for Havering.

This strategy proposes the development of an options appraisal and business case for a new children’s library in the borough.

Library vision



“A service where education, information and inspiration is available for free to all. We exist to cultivate a community of lifelong learners. Our libraries build literacy, nurtures creativity, supports local endeavours, serves as a welcoming sanctuary for people of all ages and empowers our communities with the tools they need to thrive in an ever-evolving world. Together, we build bridges between the past and the future, residents new and old, fostering a shared journey of discovery, enlightenment, and community growth.”

Proposed Library Delivery Model

In order to deliver against the resourcing model provided to the library service in Havering, it is necessary to reduce the number of library buildings in use across the borough.

We propose the future delivery model for the statutory library service in Havering is:

- To reduce the number of library buildings in the borough by four, from ten libraries to six libraries. If implemented, this proposal will reduce the total cumulative weekly opening hours across the service from 370 hours per week to 274 hours per week. This would mean the closure of four of the borough's current five 'branch' libraries.
- The physical library service will operate from six sites (five open for 50 hours a week and one open for 24 hours a week), each holding a collection of physical book stock catering to a wide spectrum of interest. Free PC access, WiFi access and space for personal or school study will continue to be provided at all libraries and Havering Council basic customer service support is available at library front counters. A variety of meeting rooms and activity space will remain available for lease or partner use across the estate with commercial space available or already rented at Rainham, Upminster and Harold Hill
- Our Virtual Library offer will remain open access 24/7 to a wide range of online resources from dictionaries, art and music resources, driving and citizenship tests, encyclopaedias, study aids to family and local history resources, legal and business resources, online courses, foreign language courses, newspapers and magazine access, and access to e-books and audio books.
- The library service will continue to support Reader Development by developing and promoting library services to children, young people and adults, managing safeguarding across the service, and working with the branches to deliver our event programme. Also working closely with schools supporting literacy attainment via initiatives such as the Summer Reading scheme, Every Child a Member and class visits.
- A Housebound Service will continue to support people who are housebound either for a temporary period of time (i.e. coming out of hospital) or as an on-going service for people who meet the criteria.
- We will continue to offer opportunities for local people to volunteer for the service which can include delivering books to our housebound residents in addition to working onsite in a library.
- A Local Studies and Family History offer will continue to be based at Romford library will continue to provide access to local and family history collections, holding exhibitions and talks to the local community, and providing support for research. The Local Studies service collects, organises, maintains and makes accessible the permanent collection of books, maps, documents, illustrations, the archive of local authority minutes and other items relating to the London Borough of Havering in the Local Studies Library. It assists customers wishing to access information about the London Borough of Havering's history in the Local Studies Library with research appointments and an enquiry service.
- The library service will work across institutional boundaries to support and inspire the delivery of positive outcomes relating to health and wellbeing in Havering. In doing so it will seek to build partnerships with public, private and voluntary organisations.

Other library delivery models considered and rejected

We have considered whether other options, delivery models or mitigations could be pursued as alternatives to our proposals.

Community-managed libraries

Community-managed libraries run in two ways:

- Libraries are operated entirely by community groups or organisations in space not funded by Havering Council (although council-owned space to lease may be available). These libraries would not form part of the statutory library service.
- Libraries run on a day-to-day basis by community groups or organisations. In order to remain part of the statutory service, the library would need to benefit from funding, support for infrastructure (buildings, IT connections) and professional librarian support

Havering Council consulted in 2019 on proposals that would see some of the branch libraries transferred to become community-managed if local appetite to do so could be evidenced. At that point, and at no point since then – has that local appetite been evidenced.

Should community groups or associations express a desire and capacity during this consultation to take over the running of a branch library proposed for closure, Havering Council would give serious consideration and support to help make proposals viable and deliverable.

Contracted-out library services

Some library services nationally are delivered on behalf of rather than directly by the Council. These services take a number of different forms, including contracted delivery by private sector organisations, mutualised services (a service which was in the public sector, continues to deliver public services, and has a significant degree of employee control) or services run on behalf of Councils by charity partners on a contracted-out basis.

We have not explored in detail any of these operating models for libraries because an initial desk-based assessment has not identified that they could guarantee statutory service delivery or delivery of library and broader council outcomes within the Council's current funding envelope.

If proposals emerge during the consultation that could be viable, we will give them due consideration.

Other proposals for libraries in Havering

During options appraisal, we considered other options to deliver required savings within the context of a statutory library service.

These included:

- Replacement of branch libraries with a mobile library. This was rejected due to the set-up and ongoing operational costs of a mobile library meaning the service was unlikely to deliver required savings. In addition, a mobile library is considered unlikely to adequately serve the geography and demographics of the borough, particularly given that funding such a service may well impact on either opening hours elsewhere in the estate or other services such as the housebound service
- Closure of no libraries but achieving required savings through reducing by half opening hours in each library. This option was not considered to be viable because it would result in extremely inefficient use of ten buildings and would also result in a reduction of cumulative opening hours from 370 hours to 180 hours a week. Also, such a reduction in opening hours would be unlikely to meet the council's statutory obligations

Havering Library Service Strategic Priorities 2024-2029





Strategic Priority 1: Libraries to shape young lives

This strategic priority links to Havering Council's corporate plan 2024/25 priority: Supporting our residents to stay safe and well

The library service aims to enhance children's engagement through various initiatives such as facilitating easy access to local libraries, promoting membership, and collaborating with Early Years partners and schools. It focuses on literacy by emphasising Reading For Pleasure, conducting author events, and organizing creative writing competitions. The library offers diverse activities including Baby Bounce, Wiggle and Giggle sessions, Storytime, and the Summer Reading Challenge, while also prioritizing stock diversity, engaging children's interests, and promoting health and wellbeing collections tailored to children and young people.

How we will accomplish this:

A new Havering Children's Library

Some libraries across the country have developed standalone children's libraries – either mobile or at a fixed site – to improve library provision for an audience that is a heavy user of library services.

We think that, given the current and forecast growth in numbers of children and young people in the borough, there is a case to explore whether a standalone Children's Library could provide additional positive outcomes.

We are agnostic as to what this library might look like – whether in a fixed location or mobile so it can visit schools and other provision – or whether there could be more benefits in improving the children's offer in individual libraries instead of creating a central provision.

We intend to carry out an options appraisal looking at what successful provision looks like nationally and internationally before developing a business case for members.



Membership

- Ensure that by 2029 every child registered as born in the borough becomes a member of Havering libraries
- Make sure joining a library is a quick and easy process, particularly for those who face extra barriers such as disabled people young people whose parents face difficulties finding stable housing and young people in care
- Engage with Early Years partners to promote the service and ensure residents who use other council services are aware of library provision
- Support broad Council outcomes for children and young people by engaging with colleagues across the organisation to identify where libraries can add value and develop new services
- Engage with all schools to encourage class visits, staffed and unstaffed

Literacy

- Focus on Reading For Pleasure, provide staff training to ensure awareness of its importance, particularly for new staff.
- Provide buildings and spaces suitable to hold Summer Reading Challenge activities and class visits
- Engage with additional needs schools to promote and encourage visits for Bag Book sessions
- Support school curricula activity through aligned library work i.e. Local Studies Library supporting school history projects and class visits
- Deliver regular author events online and in person to encourage Reading For Pleasure
- Hold competitions to encourage creative writing eg. National Poetry Day competition
- Display on rota basis local schools creative writing
- Deliver children's Reading Buddies at all libraries.
- Support the distribution of Bookstart packs at all libraries at suitable events.
- Create business plan for Havering Literary Festival, to be delivered at no cost to the public purse

Activities

- Provide fun and accessible children's library areas suitable for age group and activities focusing on children using imagination and sensory play
- Baby bounce –hold free weekly sessions in every library
- Wiggle and Giggle – hold weekly sessions where possible
- Storytime – hold regular sessions including weekends
- Summer Reading Challenge – provide regular free activities throughout the summer to support the national programme
- Engage in national reading initiatives and high days/holidays
- Expand the activities provided for older children, potentially including gaming and e-sports

Stock

- Provide suitable displays that are eye catching and fun
- Engage with children to see what they are reading
- Follow and purchase popular stock
- Ensure stock is representative and reflective of audience
- Present library in a fun way with a focus on 'Reading for Pleasure' eg. Comics and graphic novels
- Improve Young Adult stock
- Promote Health and Wellbeing collections eg. Reading Well books



Strategic Priority 2: Libraries to bring communities together

This strategic priority links to Havering Council's corporate plan 2024/25 priority: A great place to live, work and enjoy

The library service meets community needs and wants through a diverse range of events and initiatives. These include regular programs for children and adults, fostering social inclusion and community harmony. Engaging in national reading initiatives and showcasing local organisations further strengthens community bonds. Additionally, the library service supports climate change awareness, with initiatives like staff training, participation in Green Libraries Week, and promoting events with climate action themes. Through its commitment to providing shared community spaces, diverse stock, and green initiatives, the library serves as a vital hub for education, creativity, and community engagement.

How we will accomplish this:

Events

Children's examples

- Baby bounce – hold weekly sessions in every library
- Wiggle and Giggle – hold weekly sessions where possible
- Storytime – hold regular sessions at times when children will attend eg Saturdays
- Summer Reading Challenge – provide regular free activities throughout the summer to support the theme
- Chess clubs
- Author events – eg. with multiple schools online for the same event
- Craft events
- Engage in national reading initiatives and high days/holidays eg. Empathy day
- Hold showcase events for local organisations

Adult examples

- Knit and Natter groups
- Gratitude Club
- Craft events
- Games Club
- Reading groups
- Poetry Group
- Engage in national reading initiatives and high days/holidays eg. World Book Day
- Hold showcase events for local organisations



Stock

- Engage in-library with children and adults to see what they are reading
- Follow and purchase popular stock
- Ensure stock at all age levels is representative of a diverse borough with material suitable for all audiences to access

Shared community space

- Build stronger partnerships between libraries and other community facilities - local GPs, organisations looking to hire space, support/guidance sessions
- Hold competitions to encourage creative writing eg. National Poetry Day competition
- Display on rota basis local school's creative writing if space allows.
- Display local artists' work of all ages
- Review need or Create start up business hub/independent work space

Green Libraries - My community and the world around us

We will help bring climate action and awareness to our staff and our community by:

Staff

- Deliver staff training in the Green Libraries Campaign and local initiatives and have Green Champions at each library.
- Connect with and support council working groups on Climate Emergency and the CILIP Green Libraries Campaign.
- Signing the Green Libraries Campaign pledge
- Attend the Green Libraries Conference
- See if we can apply for funding for projects from the Green Libraries Grant Fund or The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme which provides grants for public sector bodies to fund heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures.

Information

- Ensure a physical space is provided in each library for a Green Information Hub
- Stock the Libraries Connected Climate Change booklist with core books available at each library supported by the remaining books from the booklist on rotation across all libraries
- Hold and promote lists of local contacts for groups and activities
- Create a Green Reading Group

Supporting Community Action

- Participate in Green Libraries Week in October, support with events.
- Continue to deliver author events with climate action and awareness as a theme
- Continue to deliver events for all ages with climate action and awareness as a theme eg. Warm Coats, school uniforms
- Become focal meeting points for local action groups and the wider community eg. Hold Green Information days



Strategic Priority 3: Libraries to enjoy

This strategic priority links to Havering Council's corporate plan 2024/25 priority: A great place to live, work and enjoy

The library service actively promotes happiness and enjoyment within its community through a multifaceted approach centred around reading, culture, creativity, and health. By emphasizing Reading for Pleasure, offering suitable building spaces for events, activities and displays, fostering a love for reading across all ages. Children benefit from engaging sessions like Baby Bounce and Summer Reading Challenge activities, while adults enjoy Book Clubs, poetry events, and diverse author engagements. These initiatives not only promote literacy but also social inclusion and community harmony. Additionally, the library supports health and wellbeing through key collections and events, while also providing information and digital resources. Furthermore, the library's commitment to environmental sustainability, demonstrated through initiatives like the Green Information Hub and Green Reading Group, aligns with broader community values, contributing to overall happiness and enjoyment.

How we will accomplish this:

Reading and enjoyment

- Literacy and being able to read is the key skill to unlocking Reading for pleasure and its emotional and material benefits.
- To encourage all of our community to read for pleasure we will:
- Focus on Reading For Pleasure, providing staff training to ensure awareness of its importance, particularly for new staff.
- Ensure buildings are suitable to display stock effectively and hold events to promote stock.
- Deliver regular author events online and in person to encourage Reading For Pleasure
- Develop social media engagement to promote Reading For Pleasure and our book stock, digital and hard copy.
- Ensure stock is continually purchased, once funds allow, to keep stock fresh and on top of trends. Attend conferences, search through social media avenues eg. Book Tok to source new diverse and sought after stock.

Children

- Engage with all schools to encourage fun and interactive class visits, staffed and unstaffed
- Provide buildings and spaces suitable to hold Summer Reading Challenge activities and class visits
- Engage with additional needs schools to promote and encourage visits for Bag Book sessions
- Display on rota basis local school's creative writing if space allows.
- Deliver children's Reading Buddies at all libraries.
- Support the distribution of Bookstart packs at all libraries at suitable events.
- Develop an options appraisal and business case for a new Havering Children's Library which would be a dedicated library for children and young people in the borough.



Adults

- Continue to hold physical Book Clubs, at least one per branch, plus Zoom online Book Club and Havering Libraries Poetry Group, poetry events and competitions.
- Hold competitions to encourage creative writing eg. National Poetry Day competition
- Display creative writing if space allows eg Poetry Winners
- Deliver borough wide Adult Reader Development projects eg. Relaunch 'Havering Reads'
- Continue to deliver diverse author events supported with relevant stock displays for national celebrations eg Black History Month, LGBTQ+ History month.
- Deliver adult Reading Buddies at Romford with possible expansion to other libraries.

Culture and Creativity

Events

- Hold a regular programme of events for children and adults to support happiness, social inclusion and community harmony:

Children's examples

- Baby bounce – hold weekly sessions in every library
- Wiggle and Giggle – hold weekly sessions where possible
- Storytime – hold regular sessions at times when children will attend eg Saturdays
- Summer Reading Challenge – provide regular free activities throughout the summer to support the theme
- Chess clubs
- Author events – eg. with multiple schools online for the same event
- Craft events
- Engage in national reading initiatives and high days/holidays eg. Empathy day
- Hold showcase events for local organisations

Adult examples

- Knit and Natter groups
- Gratitude Club
- Craft events
- Games Club
- Reading groups
- Poetry Group
- Engage in national reading initiatives and high days/holidays eg. World Book Day
- Hold showcase events for local organisations

Health and Wellbeing

- We have key collections of books on topics essential to our community's health and well being.
- We will promote the Reading Well collections with space in each library for a Health and Wellbeing section and focus events eg. Children's Mental Health Week in February, Dementia Awareness Week, Healthy Weight Strategy.
- Clubs and Societies – publicising more, posters if possible
- Healthy Weight Strategy
- Vaccination Centres
- All events – social inclusion
- Reading Agency
- Health Champions – staff, health champions directory in branches and staff awareness
- Community Hub, Pantry
- Citizens Advice Bureaux offices
- Positive East – HIV information and testing
- Back to Work
- Reading Well
- Blood Pressure

Information and Digital

- Staff – information professionals
- Green Libraries
- Information
- Ensure a physical space is provided in each library for a Green Information Hub
- Stock the Libraries Connected Climate Change booklist with core books available at each library supported by the remaining books from the booklist on rotation across all libraries
- Hold and promote lists of local contacts for groups and activities
- Create a Green Reading Group
- Public network
- IT volunteers
- Online ebooks, magazines
- Local history images – collections on website and facebook
- Online resources

Measuring performance against strategic priorities

Quantitative Measures

Library Usage Metrics:

- Total number of visits to the library per month/year.
- Number of registered library users.
- Percentage of registered users who are active borrowers.
- Number of new library card registrations per month/year.

Circulation Statistics:

- Total number of items issued per month/year.
- Breakdown of circulated items by type/format.
- Average number of items borrowed per borrower.
- Percentage of items that are checked out versus those that remain on shelves.

Digital Services:

- Number of visits to the library's website or online catalogue per month/year.
- Number of e-books and audiobooks downloaded or streamed.
- Usage statistics for online databases and digital resources.
- PC and wifi occupation rates.

Activity Attendance:

- Attendance figures for library programs and events (e.g., storytime sessions, workshops, author talks).
- Demographic breakdown of program attendees (age groups, demographics).

Community Engagement:

- Number of community partnerships established (e.g., collaborations with schools, local businesses, cultural organisations).
- Participation in community outreach activities (e.g., bookmobile services, literacy programmes).

Qualitative Measures

User Satisfaction Surveys:

- Regular surveys to gauge user satisfaction with library services, facilities, and staff assistance.
- Feedback on the variety and quality of materials available.

Impact on Education and Literacy:

- Testimonials or case studies highlighting the library's role in supporting education and literacy initiatives.
- Anecdotal evidence of improved literacy skills or academic performance among library users.

Community Impact and Inclusivity:

- Stories or testimonials showcasing how the library serves diverse community needs and populations.
- Feedback on the accessibility of library services for individuals with disabilities or language barriers.

Collections and Resources Evaluation:

- Reviews or feedback on the relevance and diversity of the library's collection.
- Input from users regarding the availability of resources for research, professional development, and recreational reading.

Innovative Services and Programmes:

- Assessment of new services or programs introduced by the library and their perceived value to the community.
- Feedback on the effectiveness of technology integration and digital literacy initiatives.

Library Environment and Atmosphere:

- Observational assessments of the library's physical space, including cleanliness, organisation, and comfort.
- Feedback on the ambiance of the library and its suitability for various activities (e.g., studying, socialising).



Appendix 1 – Library Needs Assessment

Borough and Ward data

As part of the development of the Library Strategy we have looked at a series of data to determine where need is greatest.

These data have been drawn from the borough's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2023 and 2021 Census data.

The measures we have determined as relevant to the development of this strategy are:

- Educational attainment (percentage of residents 16+ with no qualifications)
- Households where no member has English as main language
- Unemployment percentage of residents claiming JSA/UC)
- Access to car percentage of residents who do not own a car or van)
- Deprivation percentage of households with 2 indices of deprivation)
- Disability (disabled under Equality Act)
- Community safety (crime rate)
- Children - (percentage of population made up of children aged 0-15)
- Children – number of households with children living in relative poverty
- Older people (percentage of population aged 65+)
- AHAH Index (a multi-dimensional index measuring how 'healthy' neighbourhoods are)
- Community Needs rank (data analysing the social and cultural factors that can impact upon peoples outcomes)

Borough and Ward data

Note: The use of red, amber and green colouring on the below table is intended to highlight data that is in comparison to other wards in the highest, mid or lowest third and not to indicate an absence of need.

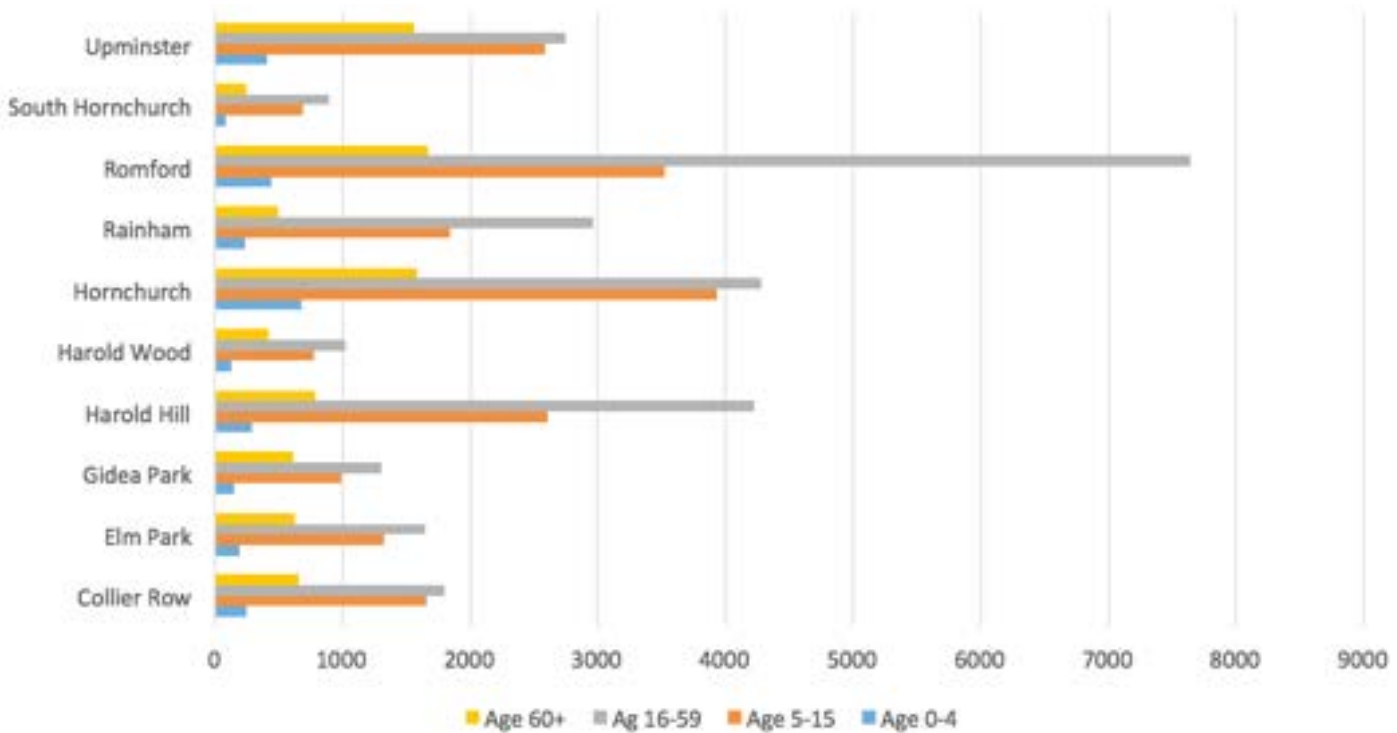
Ward	Havering- atte-Bower	Gooshays	Mawneys	Marshalls and Rise Park	Heaton	Rush Green & Crowlands	St Edwards
Nearest libraries	Collier Row; Harold Hill	Harold Hill; Harold Wood	Collier Row; Romford	Gidea Park; Romford	Harold Hill; Harold Wood	Romford	Romford; Gidea Park
Educational attainment (% of residents 16+ with no qualifications)	23.3%	24.0%	21.5%	18.9%	24.9%	18.7%	18.3%
Households where no member has English as main language	3.6%	5.1%	4.2%	3.8%	6.3%	11.0%	8.3%
Unemployment (% of residents claiming JSA/UC)	4.7%	6.1%	4.4%	2.7%	6.3%	5.6%	4.8%
Access to car (% of residents who do not own a car or van)	18.7%	26.9%	19.4%	14.9%	29.6%	29.7%	35.9%
Deprivation (% of households with 2 indices of deprivation)	15.9%	20.1%	15.8%	12.8%	20.3%	14.5%	14.0%
Disability (disabled under Equality Act)	16.3%	17.0%	14.9%	13.3%	17.8%	13.3%	14.8%
Community safety (crime rate)	58.0	66.7	39.7	51.3	101.3	56.6	232.9
Children - % of population made up of children aged 0-15	21.5%	24.0%	20.5%	17.3%	24.6%	22.8%	19.4%
Children – number of households with children living in relative poverty	17.8%	20.5%	16.4%	10.6%	21.4%	19.0%	10.4%
Older people (% of population aged 65+)	16.9%	12.4%	18.0%	23.0%	12.7%	10.9%	15.2%
AHAH Index (higher score = poorer health-related environment)	30.8	24.9	30.3	24.9	29.8	34.1	31.2
Community Needs rank	8,094	2,021	17,504	28,347	3,366	22,835	23,665

Ward	Squirrels Heath	Harold Wood	St Albans	Hylands and Harrow Lodge	Emerson Park	St Andrews	Cranham
Nearest libraries	Gidea Park; Romford	Harold Wood; Harold Hill	Romford; Gidea Park	Romford; Hornchurch	Hornchurch; Gidea Park	Hornchurch; Upminster	Upminster; Harold Wood
Educational attainment (% of residents 16+ with no qualifications)	16.0%	17.2%	18.2%	18.4%	18.5%	20.2%	16.5%
Households where no member has English as main language	3.9%	4.3%	11.1%	3.0%	2.9%	2.7%	1.0%
Unemployment (% of residents claiming JSA/UC)	2.9%	3.1%	4.3%	3.0%	2.2%	2.9%	1.9%
Access to car (% of residents who do not own a car or van)	18.9%	18.1%	31.9%	17.2%	11.5%	22.8%	15.7%
Deprivation (% of households with 2 indices of deprivation)	11.6%	11.9%	15.2%	13.4%	12.6%	14.3%	11.6%
Disability (disabled under Equality Act)	13.1%	14.3%	13.5%	14.5%	12.7%	15.5%	14.0%
Community safety (crime rate)	48.4	59.9	74.0	45.1	32.4	43.7	29.4
Children - % of population made up of children aged 0-15	19.1%	18.7%	21.3%	17.6%	15.9%	16.2%	18.8%
Children – number of households with children living in relative poverty	9.9%	11.9%	16.7%	11.4%	7.2%	11.0%	8.0%
Older people (% of population aged 65+)	18.1%	17.3%	10.2%	19.2%	24.9%	22.5%	22.9%
AHAH Index (higher score = poorer health-related environment)	25.3	24.0	33.8	21.9	21.9	23.1	19.1
Community Needs rank	20,313	17,172	23,640	25,076	26,971	24,577	14,602

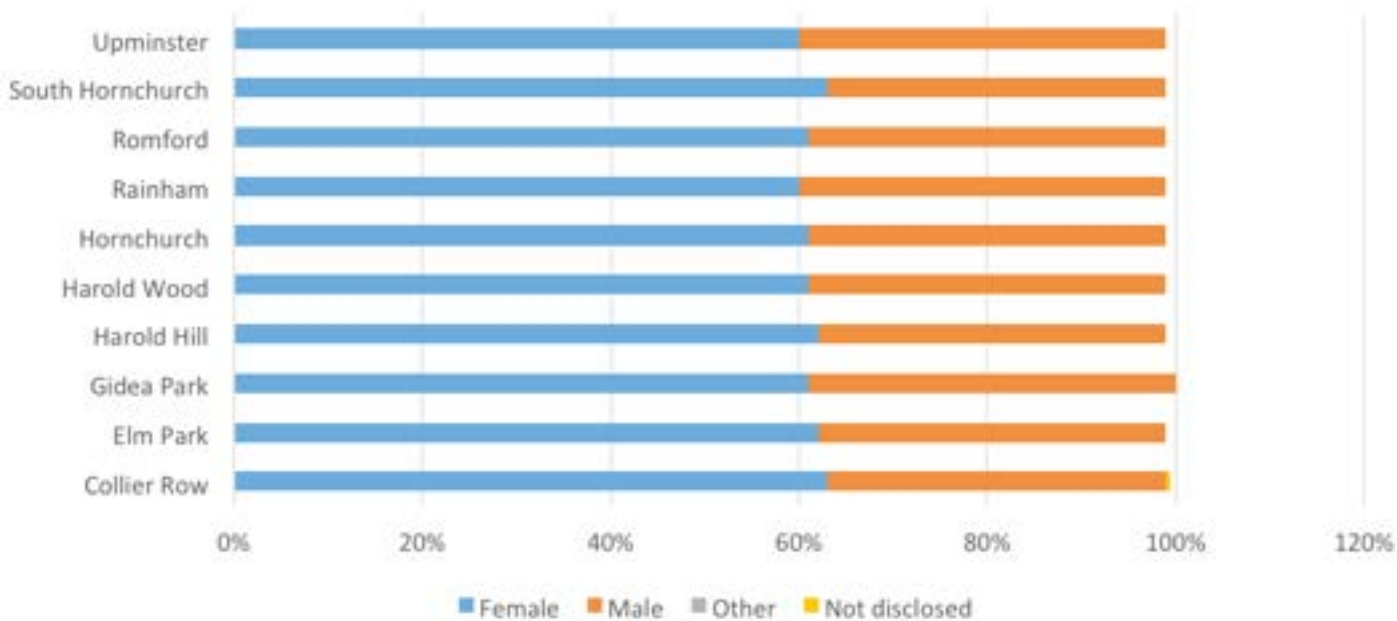
Ward	Elm Park	Hacton	Upminster	South Hornchurch	Beam Park	Rainham & Wennington	England average
Nearest libraries	Elm Park; Hornchurch	Hornchurch; Elm Park	Upminster; Hornchurch	South Hornchurch; Rainham	Rainham; South Hornchurch	Rainham; South Hornchurch	
Educational attainment (% of residents 16+ with no qualifications)	21.6%	19.2%	15.2%	18.1%	21.8%	23.4%	18.1%
Households where no member has English as main language	4.0%	2.4%	1.3%	4.7%	5.8%	5.5%	5.0%
Unemployment (% of residents claiming JSA/UC)	3.5%	2.1%	1.4%	5.2%	7.5%	4.7%	3.8%
Access to car (% of residents who do not own a car or van)	21.8%	17.1%	13.0%	19.3%	27.3%	20.8%	23.5%
Deprivation (% of households with 2 indices of deprivation)	15.7%	12.6%	9.6%	15.4%	18.1%	16.4%	14.2%
Disability (disabled under Equality Act)	14.4%	13.2%	13.8%	14.0%	15.6%	14.7%	17.3%
Community safety (crime rate)	51.7	31.4	27.7	55.8	65.1	61.0	88.2
Children - % of population made up of children aged 0-15	19.5%	17.0%	17.2%	20.7%	24.1%	20.2%	18.6%
Children – number of households with children living in relative poverty	13.6%	7.7%	5.0%	15.8%	22.5%	16.2%	19.5%
Older people (% of population aged 65+)	18.0%	21.9%	24.6%	16.1%	10.1%	17.5%	18.4%
AHAH Index (higher score = poorer health-related environment)	29.4	25.7	21.7	31.2	32.2	28.5	23.2
Community Needs rank	16,056	21,380	24,668	14,452	10,409	13,934	16,998

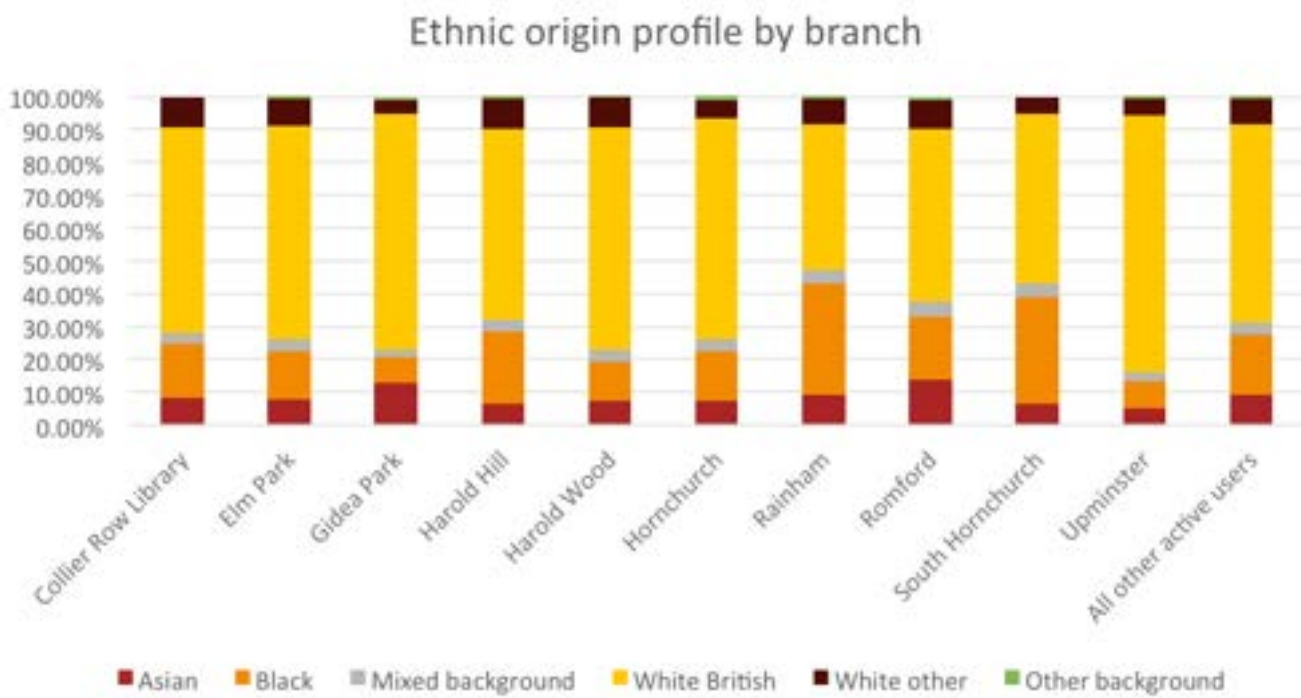
Library membership data

Library membership is available for free by law to all who live, work or study in the area, and in Havering as in many other library authorities, it is not restricted to these categories. Of the total membership of almost 60,000, there will be some who have not used the service for a long period but still remain members.



Membership by gender





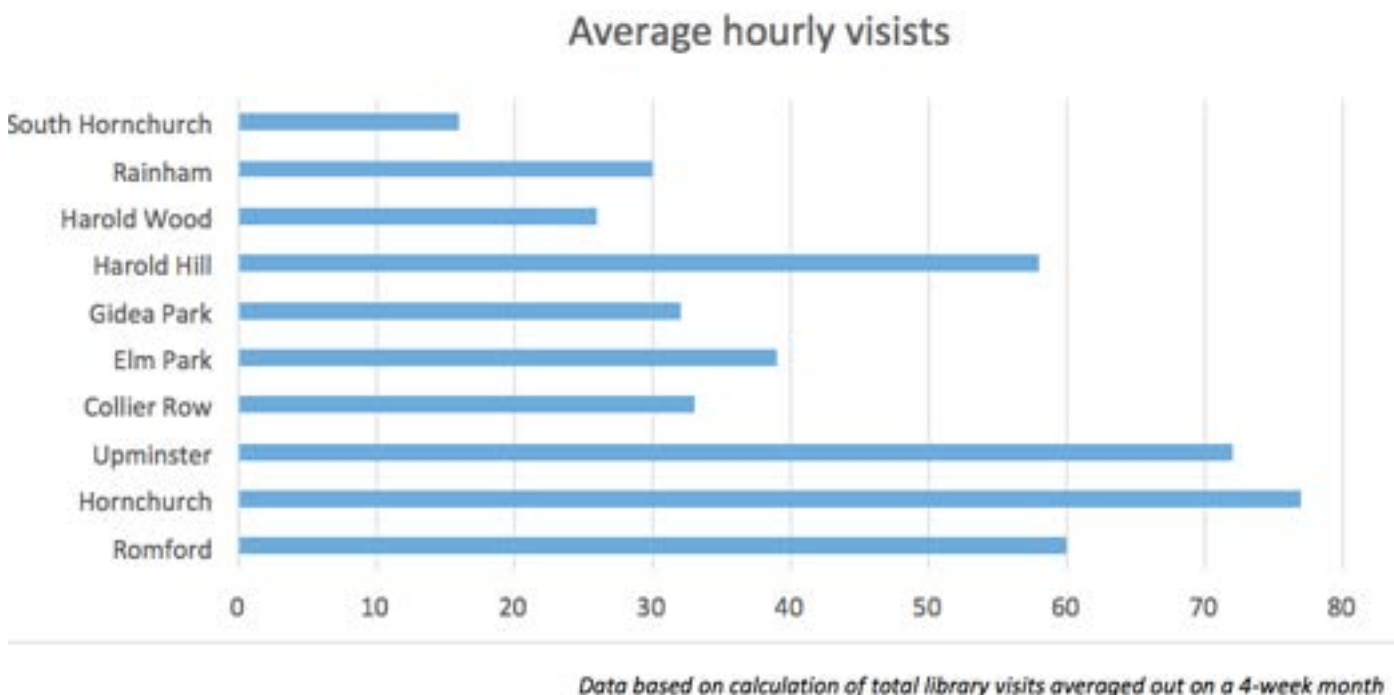
Note – the service’s recorded data on disability is limited . Less than 1% of members have provided data on disability, meaning the service holds no meaningful data to inform this needs assessment.

Visits and Issue data

Library visits 2023-24

	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	Aug 2023	Sept 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	March 2024	Total
Romford	10,614	12,503	14,080	14,100	13,699	11,787	12,178	11,417	8,864	11,059	11,988	12,824	145,113
Hornchurch	11,039	11,492	11,449	16,093	16,865	11,565	17,780	18,708	14,924	20,789	20,742	13,598	185,044
Upminster	12,821	10,554	12,690	15,940	19,226	13,299	15,342	13,034	13,816	18,839	14,388	12,502	172,451
Collier Row	2,276	3,110	3,427	4,142	6,037	3,733	2,474	2,703	2,113	2,671	2,798	2,546	38,030
Elm Park	3,074	3,045	3,896	4,132	3,983	4,187	3,582	3,242	4,216	4,132	3,447	3,932	44,868
Gidea Park	2,804	3,641	4,063	3,853	4,195	3,881	2,410	2,914	1,871	2,550	2,467	2,517	37,166
Harold Hill	6,183	7,219	7,153	8,361	9,039	11,354	11,599	14,201	12,011	15,029	17,753	19,400	139,302
Harold Wood	410	2,150	2,776	2,806	3,944	3,167	2,755	3,811	2,340	2,268	1,679	1,926	30,032
Rainham	4,221	4,491	4,877	4,841	5,163	5,383	6,796	9,475	6,434	7,324	7,423	7,168	73,596
South Hornchurch	1,655	1,741	1,619	1,704	1,936	1,950	1,471	1,335	1,821	1,673	741	1,065	18,711
Local History					57	59	70	170	42	158	53	66	675
Other activities	4,527	5,910	4,438	3,514	2,475	3,984	5,697	6,667	2,889	5,418	5,237	4,858	55,614
Total	59,624	65,856	70,468	79,486	86,619	74,349	82,154	87,677	71,341	91,910	88,716	82,402	940,602

Library average visits per hour



Library issues 3 year trend

Year	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	Total
Target	66,917	66,917	66,917	66,917	66,917	66,917	66,917	66,917	66,917	66,917	66,917	66,917	803,004
21/22	34,549	81,936	71,161	81,117	80,613	68,843	78,134	67,833	69,290	66,912	63,229	78,250	841,867
22/23	76,426	78,340	76,748	89,757	97,793	88,441	85,443	83,584	81,584	80,706	79,989	92,487	1,011,418
23/24	85,884	92,145	91,957	86,222	95,285	84,205	82,691	76,880	72,103	75,284	67,317	69,458	979,431

*Figures include online issues of ebooks & eaudio

Commentary

Measuring library performance on a library-by-library basis is not straightforward. Catchment area, opening hours, location (high street location sites tend to perform better than those buildings not on a high street), facility/activity mix and condition of building can all be factors explaining footfall.

However, a simple calculation based on averaging out the number of visitors divided by a four-week month can be used as a more meaningful comparison tool.

From this data, it is apparent that three libraries – Romford, Hornchurch and Upminster are far busier in terms of visits and issues. Rainham and Harold Hill are busier than branch libraries. Branch library visitor numbers are relatively similar although Elm Park has a higher average number of visitors.

Visitor numbers at Rainham and South Hornchurch remain very low by comparison to main and branch libraries respectively. It is possible that the geography of the south of the borough and Rainham library’s location as not on a recognisable high street is a cause for lower footfall figures at this location (and it should be noted that footfall is increasing at that site).

Three quarters of all library visits are made to the five main libraries and these libraries also account for 88% of all computer use and Wi-Fi access.



Schools in Havering

Havering's library service has built strong relationships with schools across the borough, linking with schools library services and running dozens of class visits to libraries. Each library has a catchment area of schools and this is listed below.

(Private schools are in Italics, Secondary schools at top of each list in bold and counted separately to Primary schools)

Romford

- **Marshalls Park Academy**
- **St Edwards Academy**
- Concordia Academy
- Crowlands Primary
- Hylands Primary
- Gidea Park Primary
- The Mawney
- St Edwards CE Primary
- St Peters Catholic Primary
- **The Bridge** (Brentwood Rd) – secondary school for pupils with emotional needs

Harold Wood

- **Redden Court School**
- Harold Court Primary
- Harold Wood Primary
- *Lime Academy, Forest Approach*

Elm Park

- **Abbs Cross Academy and Arts College**
- Benhurst School
- Elm Park Primary School
- RJ Mitchell Primary
- Scotts Primary
- St Albans Catholic Primary
- Harrow Lodge Primary



Rainham

- **Harris Academy (formerly Chafford)**
- Brady Primary
- La Salette RC Primary
- Parsonage Farm Primary
- Rainham Village Primary

South Hornchurch

- **Brittons Academy**
- Newtons Primary
- Scargill Infant
- Scargill Junior
- Whybridge Infant
- Whybridge Junior

Hornchurch

- **Hornchurch High (formerly Albany)**
- **The Champion School**
- **Emerson Park Academy**
- **Sanders School**
- **Havering Sixth Form College**
- Hacton Primary
- Langtons Infant
- Langtons Junior
- Nelmes Primary
- St Mary's RC Primary
- Suttons Primary
- Towers Infant
- Towers Junior

Gidea Park

- **Frances Bardsley Academy**
- **The Royal Liberty School**
- Ardleigh Green Infant
- Ardleigh Green Junior
- Squirrels Heath Infant
- Squirrels Heath Junior
- Gidea Park College
- St Marys Hare Park



Upminster

- **Coopers' Company and Coborn School**
- **Gaynes School**
- **Hall Mead School**
- **Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School**
- Branfil Primary
- Engayne Primary
- The James Oglethorpe Primary
- St Joseph's RC Primary
- Upminster Infant
- Upminster Junior
- *Oakfields Montessori*
- ***Corbets Tey additional needs school***

Harold Hill

- **Drapers' Academy**
- Broadford Primary
- Drapers Brookside Infant
- Drapers Brookside Junior
- Drapers Maylands
- Hilldene Primary
- Mead Primary
- Drapers Pyrgo Priory
- St Ursula's RC Infant
- St Ursula's RC Junior
- Lime Academy, Forest Approach (Settle Rd opp Drapers Academy) additional needs
- Lime Academy, Ravensbourne (Neave Cres) additional needs

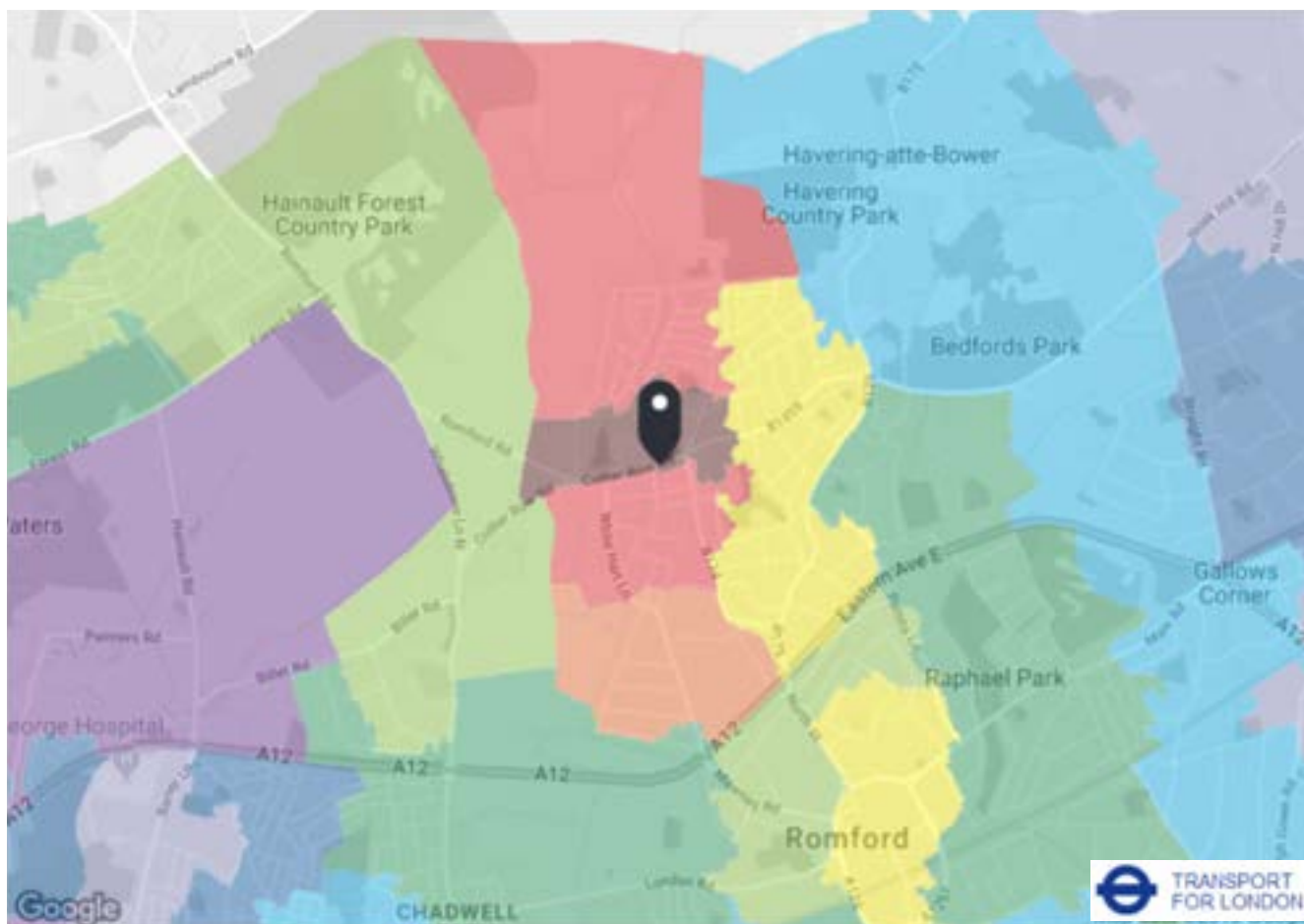
Collier Row

- **Bower Park Academy**
- Rise Park Infant
- Rise Park Junior
- St Patricks Catholic Primary
- Clockhouse Infant
- Clockhouse Junior
- Crownfield Infant
- Crownfield Junior
- Dame Tipping CE Primary
- Parklands Infant
- Parklands Junior
- Oasis Pinewood Academy

Transport links

Collier Row

Collier Row library is located in a district shopping centre near the intersection of two main roads. The next nearest library to Collier Row is Romford, 2.4 miles away. This library is the most remote from any other in the borough. There is a bus stop outside the library and several bus routes serve the area. The map below shows approximate travelling times by public transport to the library outside peak hours.



Code: NT096105A

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TIM output for the Base Year

Scenario Base Year Mode.

All public transport modes, Time of day:
Between peak times, Direction: To location

Collier Row Library, 45 Collier Row Rd,
Romford RM5 3NR, UK
Easting: 549763, Northing: 191055

Map key - Travel Time

 < 5 mins	 5 - 10 mins
 10 - 15 mins	 15 - 20 mins
 20 - 25 mins	 25 - 30 mins
 30 - 35 mins	 35 - 40 mins
 40 - 45 mins	 45 - 50 mins

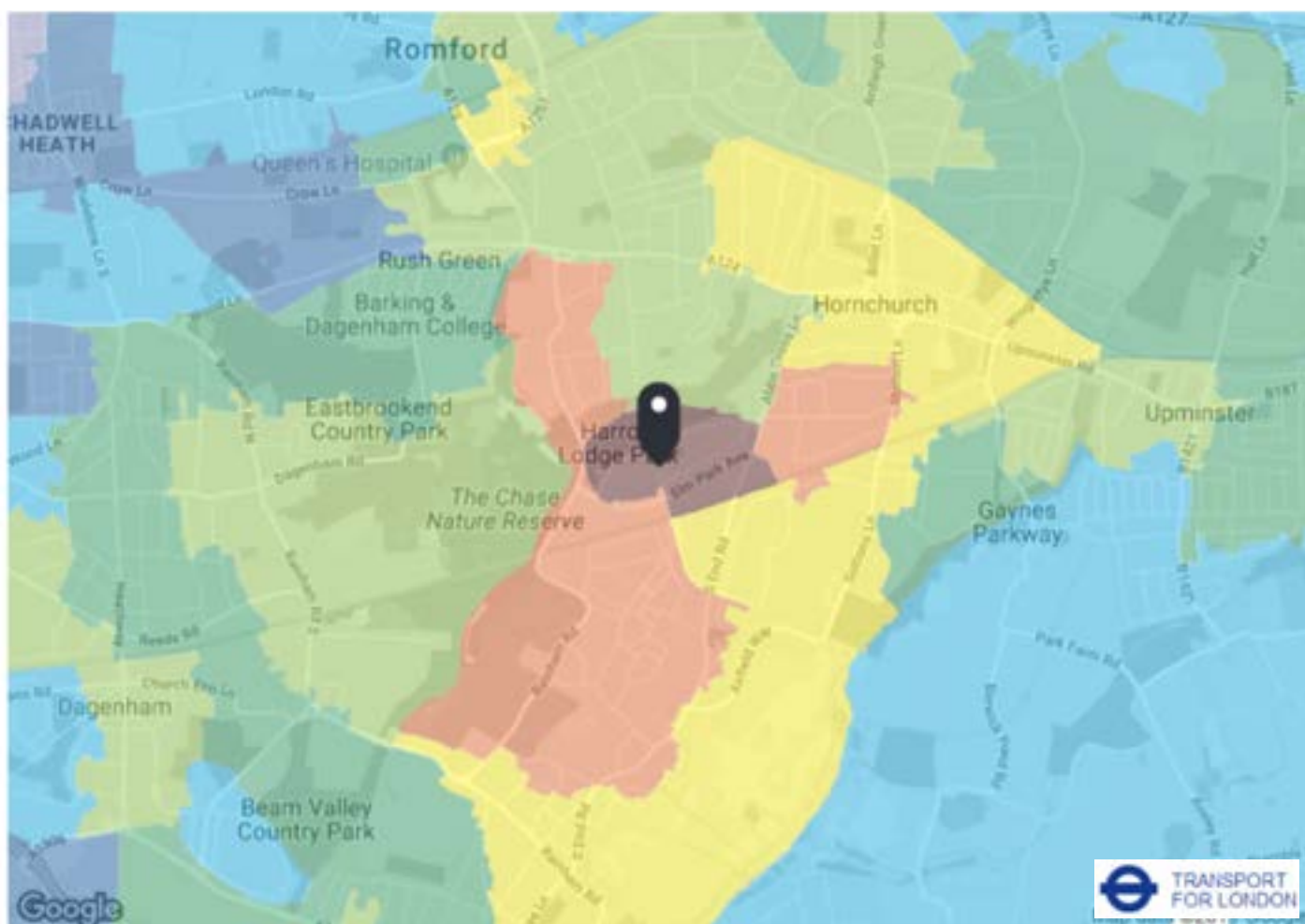
Much of the inhabited parts of Havering-atte-Bower and Mawney’s wards are within ten minutes travelling time from the library. Travelling times to Romford library are between 17 and 28 minutes off peak, but from the north of the area they are considerably longer.

Around 20% of households in Havering-atte-Bower and Mawney’s wards, those closest to the library, had no access to a vehicle in latest available data. This was below average for the borough. There are seven dedicated parking spaces at the library and free parking nearby.

Transport links

Elm Park library

Elm Park library is located to the north of a district shopping centre and around 300 meters from an underground station. The next nearest library is Hornchurch, 1.8 miles away. This is the second most remote in the borough. There are bus stops within 150 metres of the library and several bus routes serve the area. The map below shows travelling times by public transport to the library outside peak hours.



Code: NT096105A

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TIM output for the Base Year

Scenario Base Year Mode.

All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

Elm Park Library, 12 St. Nicholas Ave, Hornchurch RM12 4PT, UK

Easting: 552508, Northing: 186022

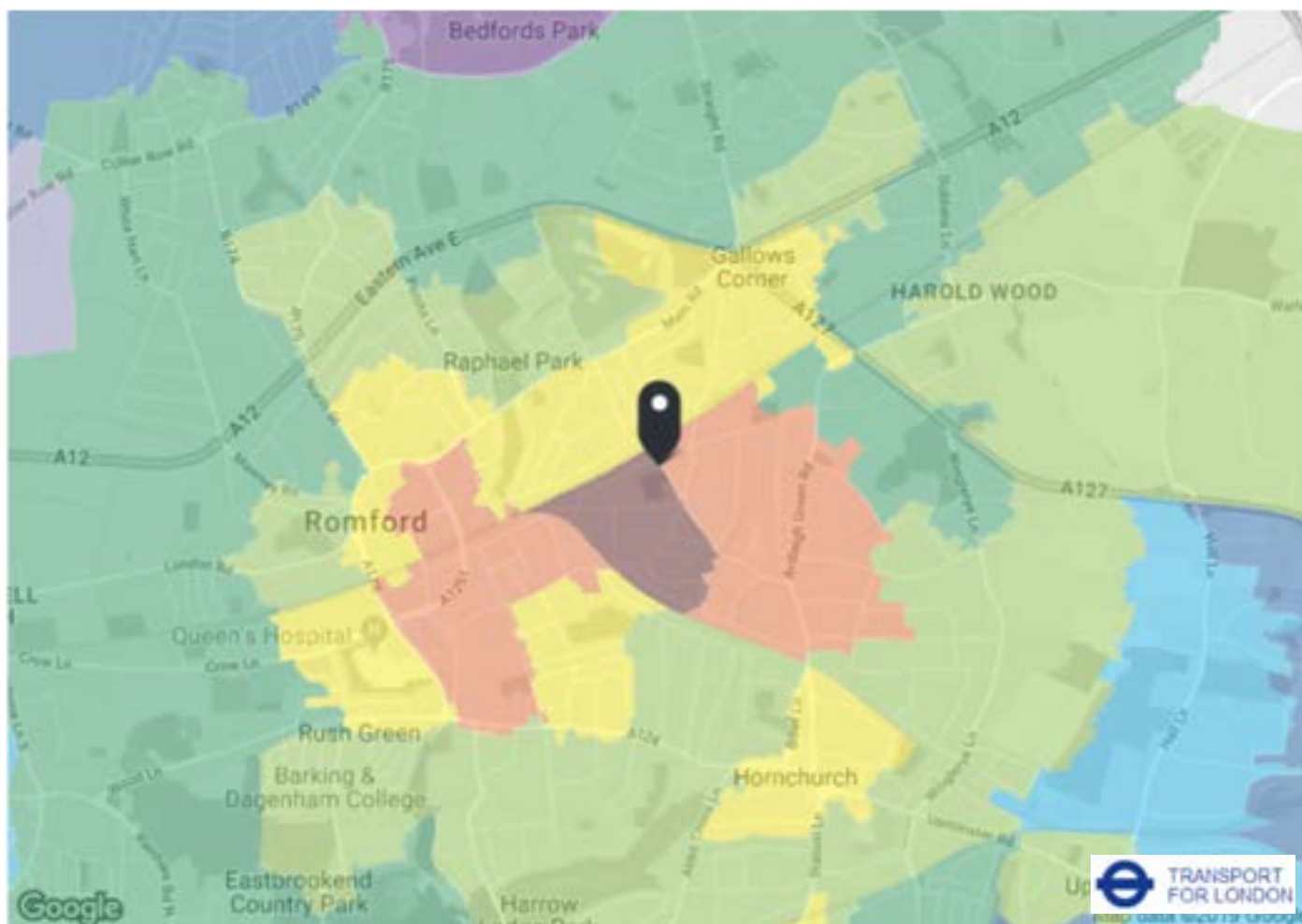
Much of Elm Park wards and parts of South Hornchurch and Hylands and Harrow Lodge wards are within ten minutes travelling time from the library. Travelling times to Hornchurch library are between 18 and 23 minutes.

Around 25% of households in Elm Park ward had no access to a vehicle in latest available data. This was above average for the borough. There is no dedicated parking space at the library, but there is free parking nearby.

Transport links

Gidea Park library

Gidea Park library is located about 300 metres from a small area of shops in a mainly residential area and around 200 meters from a main line station. The next nearest library is Hornchurch, 1.4 miles away and Romford is 1.5 miles away. There are bus stops nearby but not immediately outside the library. The map below shows travelling times by public transport outside peak hours.



Code: NT096105A

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TIM output for the Base Year

Scenario Base Year Mode.

All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

Gidea Park Library, 168 Balgores Ln, Romford RM2 6BS, UK

Easting: 552940, Northing: 189103

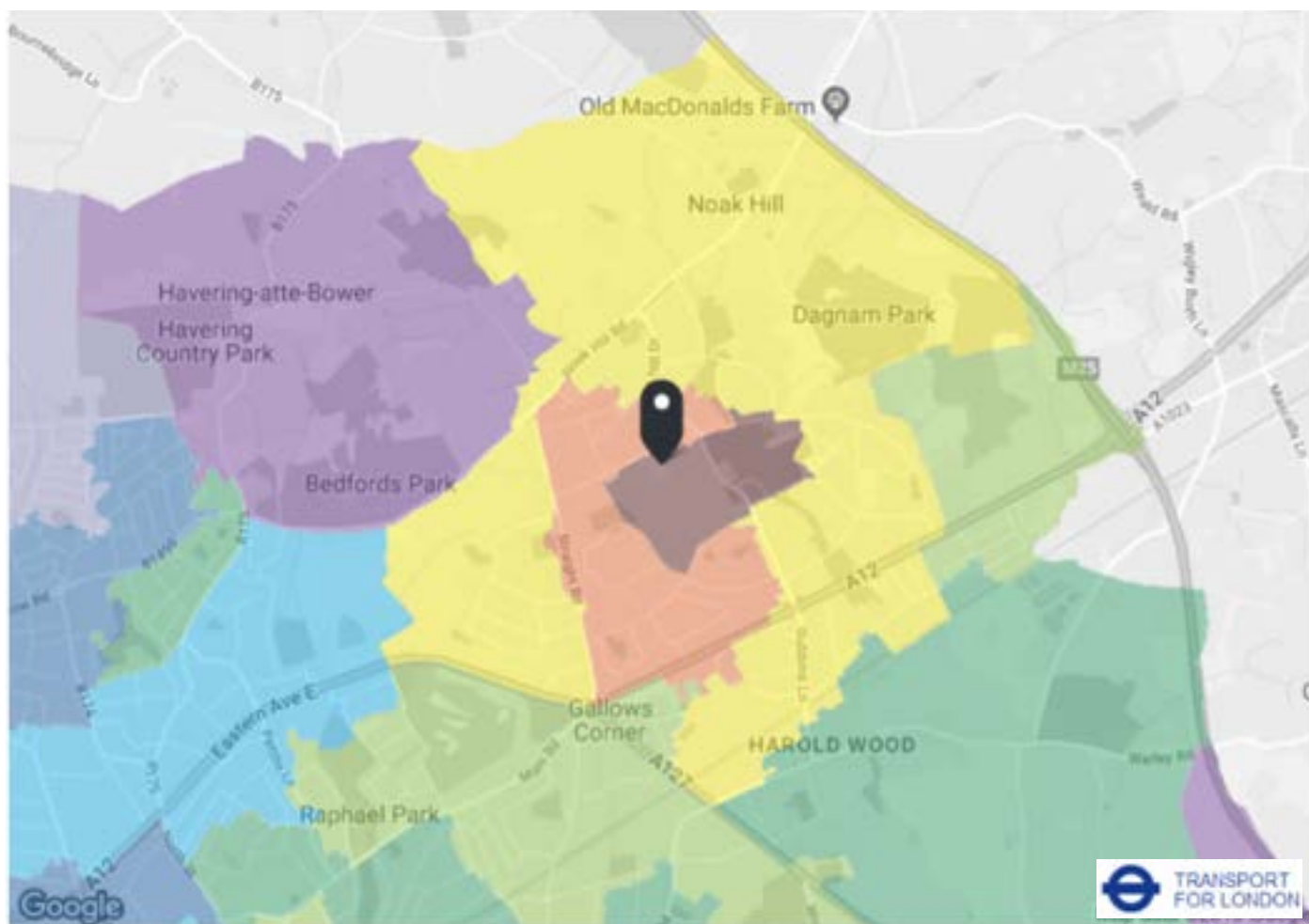
Much of Squirrel's Heath ward is within 15 minutes travel of the library. Travelling times to Hornchurch library are between 14 and 26 minutes off peak, and a similar time to Romford library.

19% of households in Squirrel's Heath ward had no access to a vehicle in latest available data. This was below average for the borough. There are 16 dedicated parking spaces at the library and free parking nearby.

Transport links

Harold Hill library

Harold Hill library is located within a district shopping centre. The next nearest library is Harold Hill, 1.3 miles away. There are bus stops nearby but not immediately outside the library. The map below shows travelling times by public transport to the library outside peak hours.



Code: NT096105A

Copyright 2019, TL

TIM output for the Base Year

Scenario Base Year Mode.

All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

Harold Hill Library, 19a Farnham Rd, Romford RM3 8EH, UK

Easting: 553791, Northing: 192062

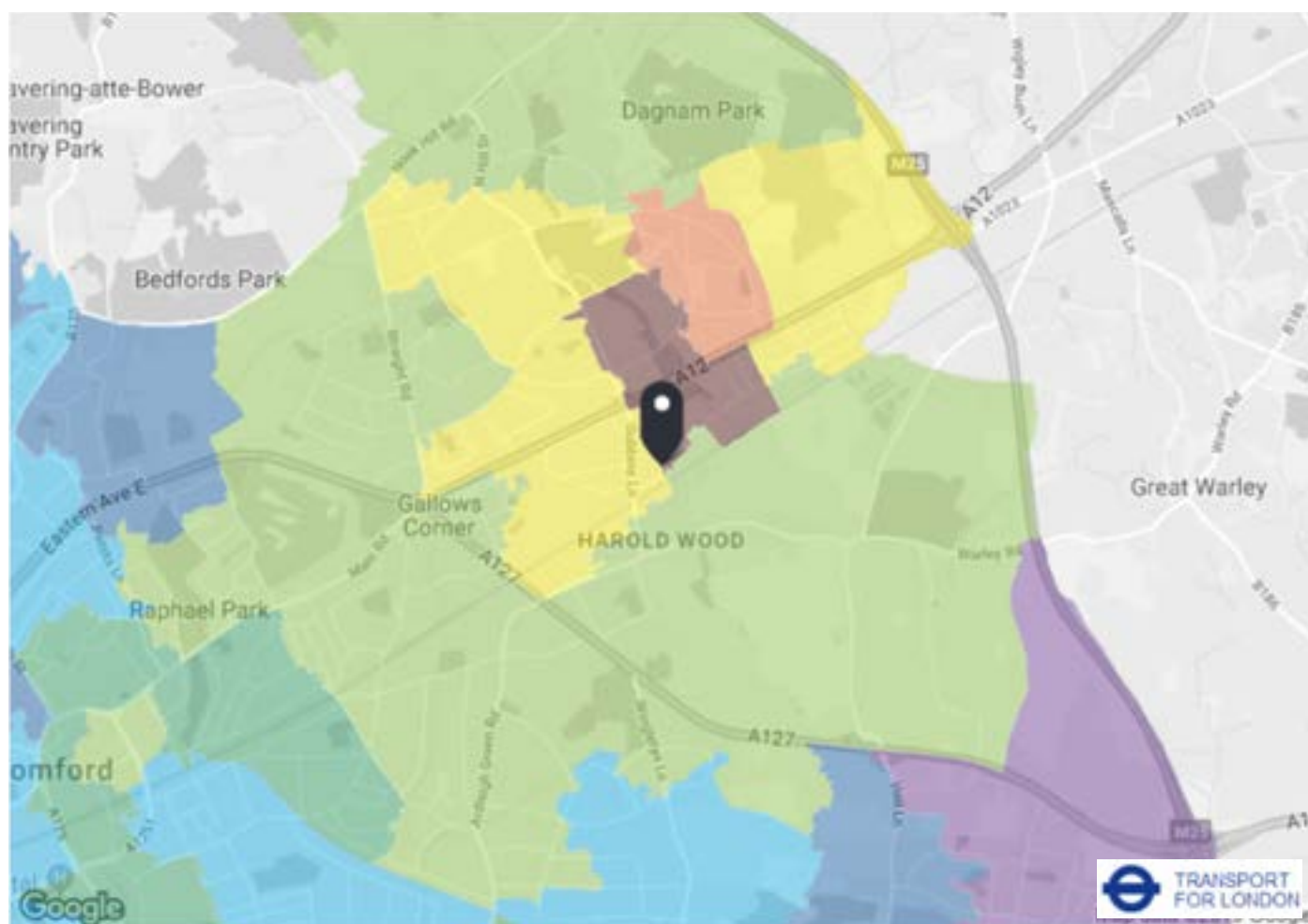
Much of Heaton ward is within 15 minutes travelling time from the library by public transport, but much of Gooshays ward has transport times of up to 20 minutes. Most of Harold Wood ward is within 20 minutes travelling time.

34% of households in Gooshays and Heaton wards, those closest to the library, had no access to a vehicle in latest available data. This was the highest in the borough. There are four dedicated parking spaces at the library and free parking nearby.

Transport links

Harold Wood library

Harold Wood library is located at a short distance from a district shopping centre and about 250 metres from a main line railway station. The next nearest library to Harold Wood is Harold Hill, 1.3 miles away. There is a bus stop outside the library and several bus routes serve the area, although most stop near the station. The map below shows travelling times by public transport to the library outside peak hours.



Code: NT096105A

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TIM output for the Base Year

Scenario Base Year Mode.

All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

Harold Wood Library, Arundel Rd, London RM3 0RX, UK

Easting: 554942, Northing: 190766

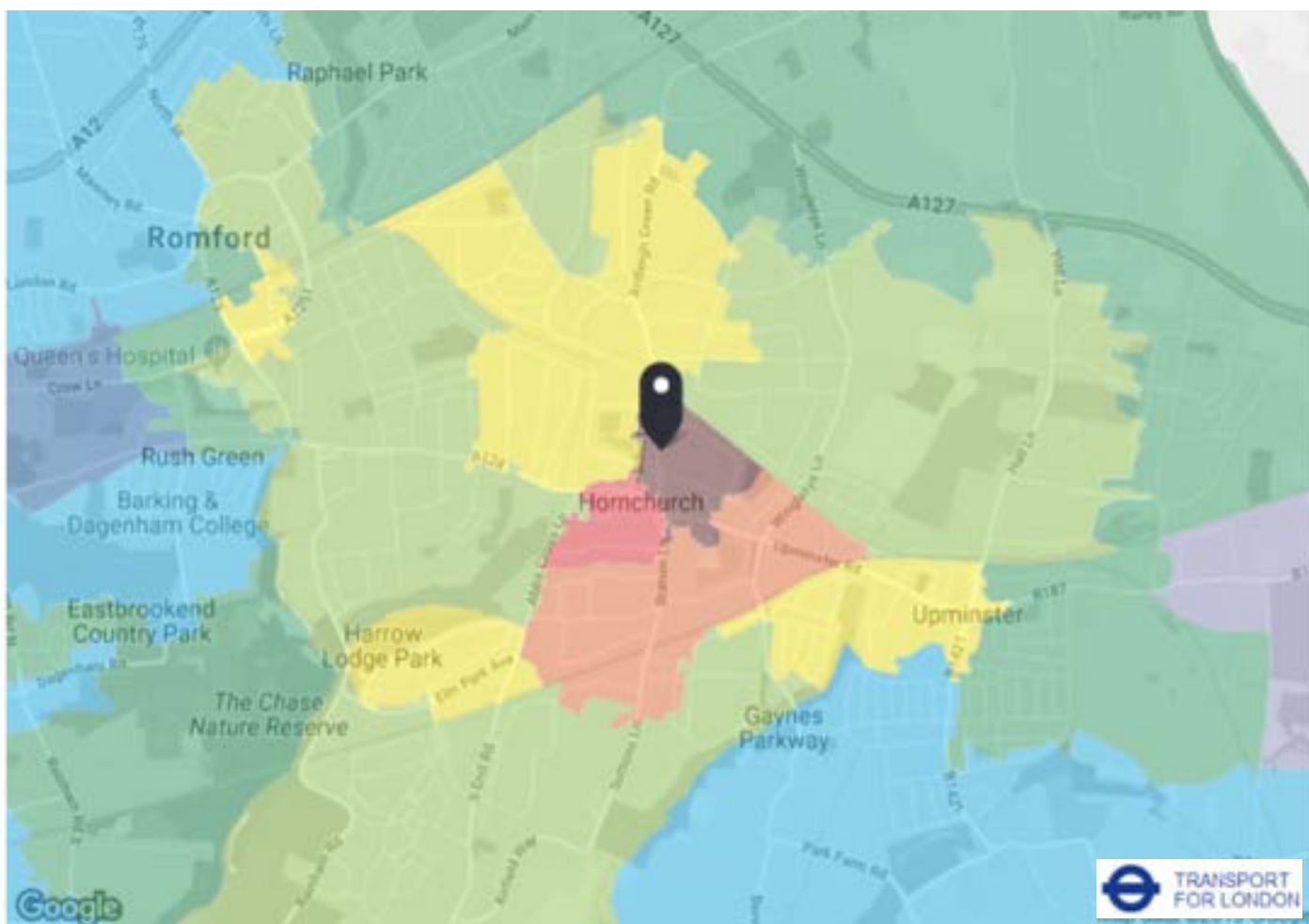
Much of the inhabited part of Harold Wood ward is within 15 minutes travelling time from the library and within 20 minutes of Harold Hill library. Travelling times to Harold Hill library are between 22 and 24 minutes off peak.

22% of households in Harold Wood ward had no access to a vehicle in latest available data This was below average for the borough. There are four dedicated parking spaces at the library and free parking nearby.

Transport links

Hornchurch library

Hornchurch library is located on the edge of the town centre of Hornchurch and about 1.2km from both Hornchurch and Upminster Bridge underground stations. The next nearest library is Gidea Park, 1.4 miles away. There are bus stops nearby and Hornchurch is very well served by buses. The map below shows travelling times by public transport to the library outside peak hours.



Code: NT096105A

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TIM output for the Base Year

Scenario Base Year Mode.

All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

Hornchurch Library, 44 North St, Hornchurch RM11 1TB, UK

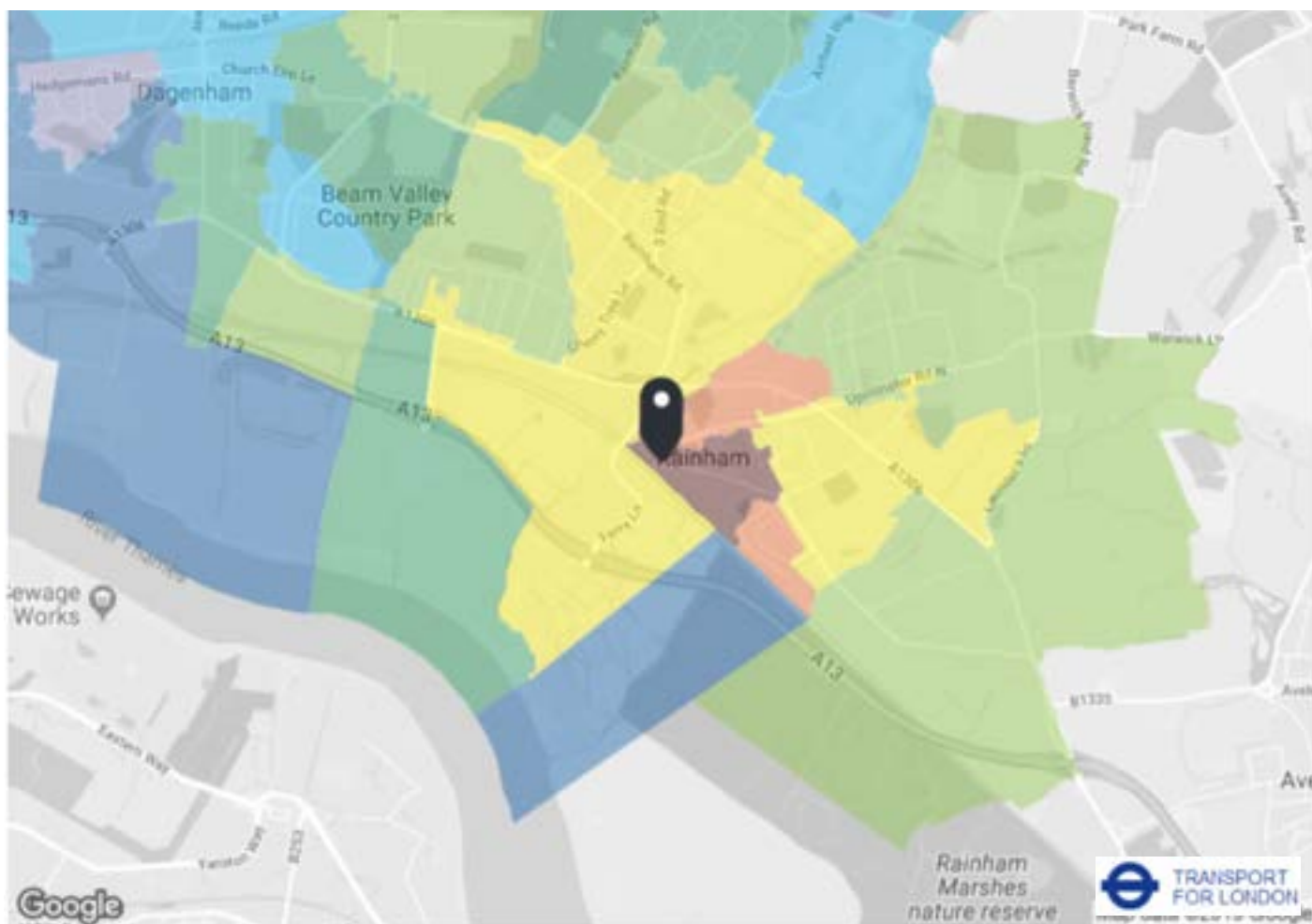
Easting: 554005, Northing: 187448

Much of St Andrews ward is within 15 minutes travelling time of the library, and most of Emerson Park ward within 20 minutes. Parts of Hacton and Hylands and Harrow Lodge wards are less accessible. 18% of households in these wards had no access to a vehicle in latest available data. This was well below average for the borough. There are 16 dedicated parking spaces at the library and free parking nearby.

Transport links

Rainham library

Rainham library is located close to the district shopping centre and adjacent to Rainham mainline station. The next nearest library is South Hornchurch, 1.1 miles away. There are bus stops outside the library and Rainham is served by several bus routes. The map below shows travelling times by public transport to the library outside peak hours.



Code: NT096105A

Copyright 2019, TIL

TIM output for the Base Year

Scenario Base Year Mode.

All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

Rainham Library, Celtic Farm Rd, Rainham RM13 9GP, UK
Easting: 552120, Northing: 182076

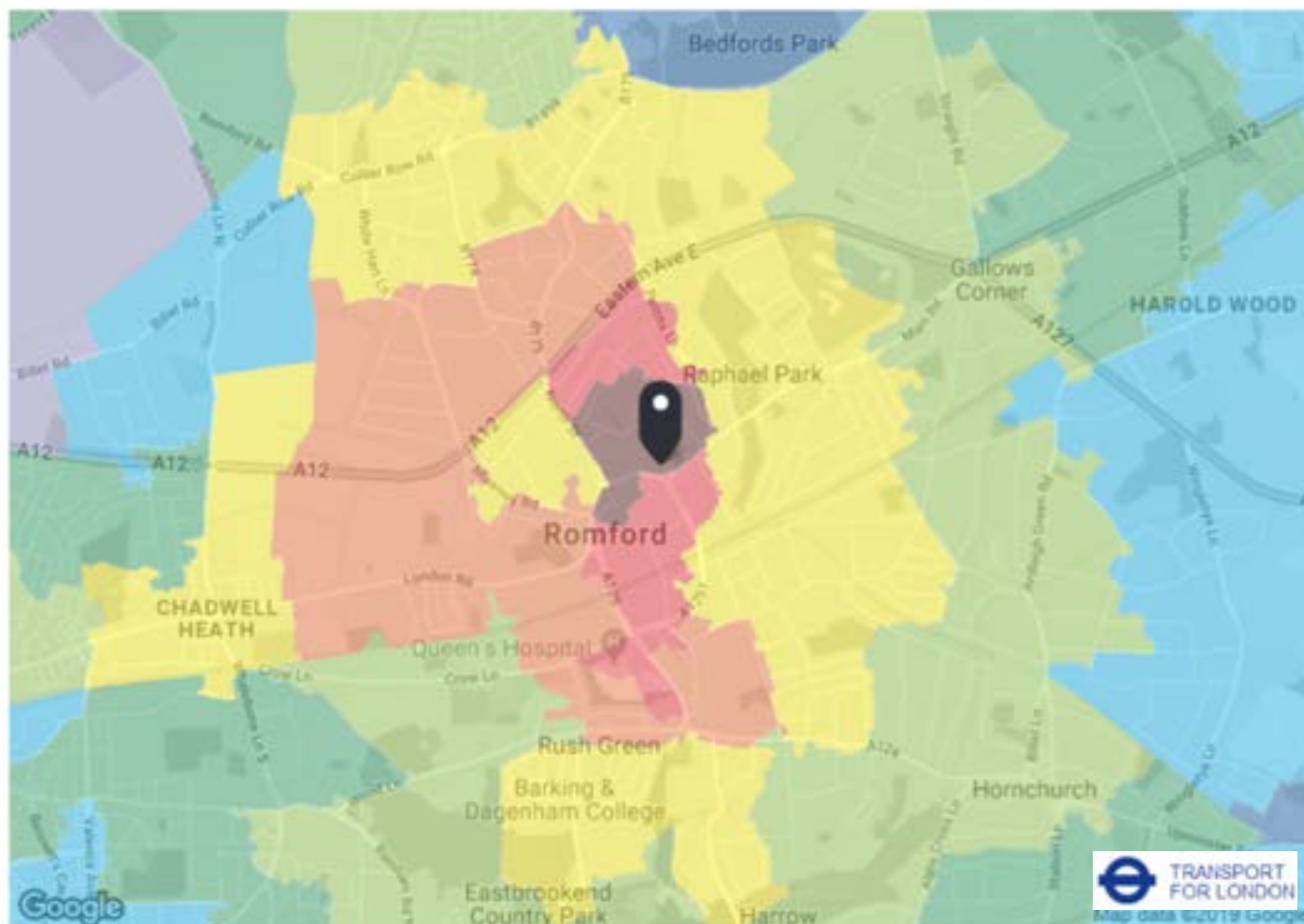
The map shows that most of the inhabited parts of Rainham and Wennington ward are within 25 minutes or less travelling time of the library. This also applies to the Beam Park and South Hornchurch wards.

21% of households in Rainham and Wennington ward had no access to a vehicle in latest available data. This was below average for the borough. There are no parking spaces at the library but there is free parking nearby.

Transport links

Romford library

Romford library is located on the edge of Romford town centre and about 700 metres from Romford mainline station. The next nearest library is Gidea Park, 1.5 miles away. There are bus stops outside the library and Romford is at the heart of the local bus network with routes to all parts of the borough. The map below shows travelling times by public transport to the library outside peak hours.



Code: NT096105A

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TIM output for the Base Year

Scenario Base Year Mode.

All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

Romford Library, St. Edwards Way, Romford RM1 3AR, UK

Easting: 551391, Northing: 189141

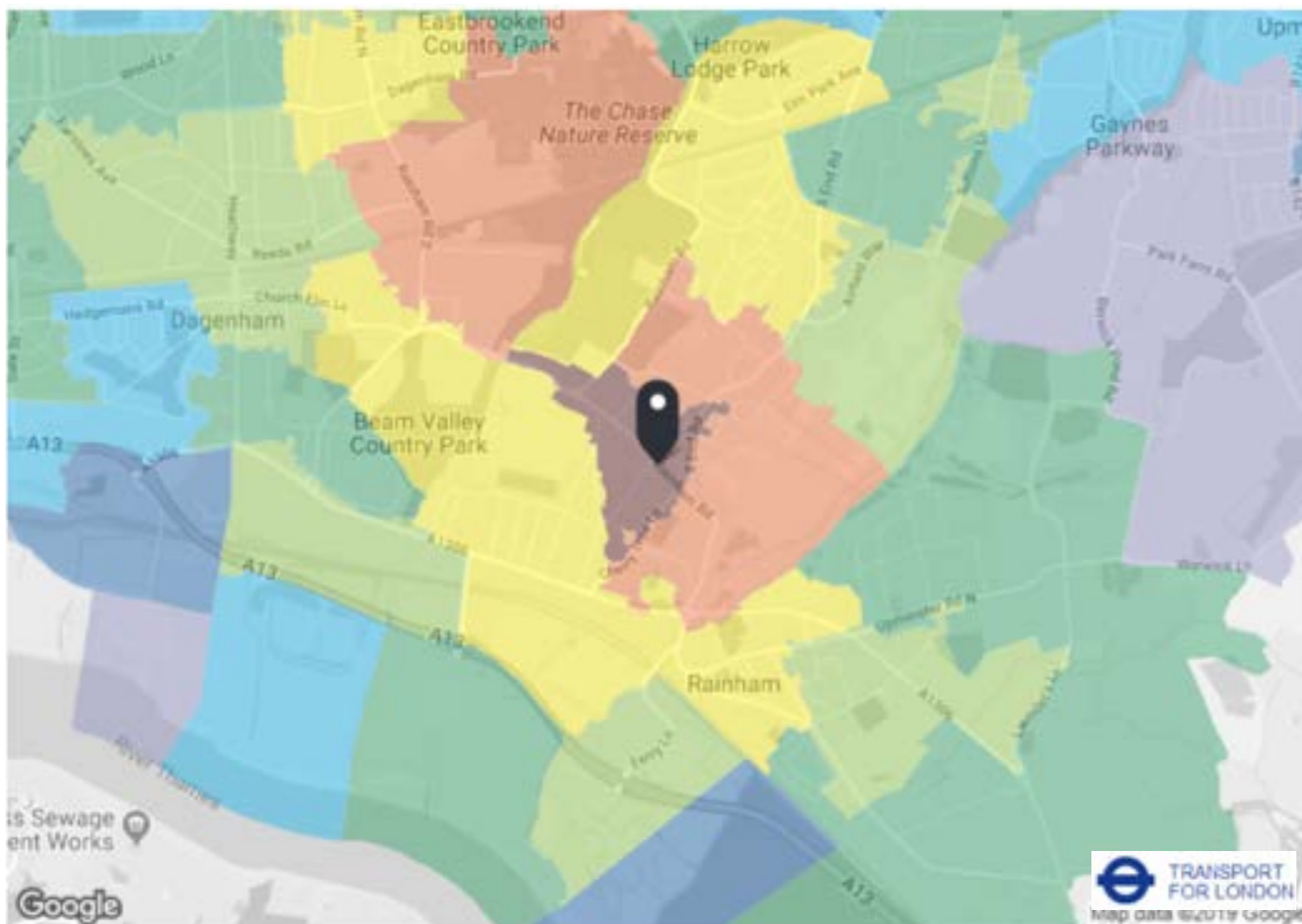
This shows that a wide area of the centre of the borough is within 20 minutes travelling time by public transport, including the areas around Collier Row and Gidea Park libraries.

the Beam Park and South Hornchurch wards. There are no parking spaces at the library but there is abundant chargeable parking nearby.

Transport links

South Hornchurch library

South Hornchurch library is located about 200m from a small retail district. The next nearest library is Rainham, 1.1 miles away. There is a bus stop outside the library and three bus routes serve the area, although only one passes the library. The map below shows travelling times by public transport to the library outside peak hours.



Code: NT096105A

Copyright 2019, TfL

TIM output for the Base Year

Scenario Base Year Mode.

All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

South Hornchurch Library, 138 Rainham Rd, Rainham RM13 7RH, UK

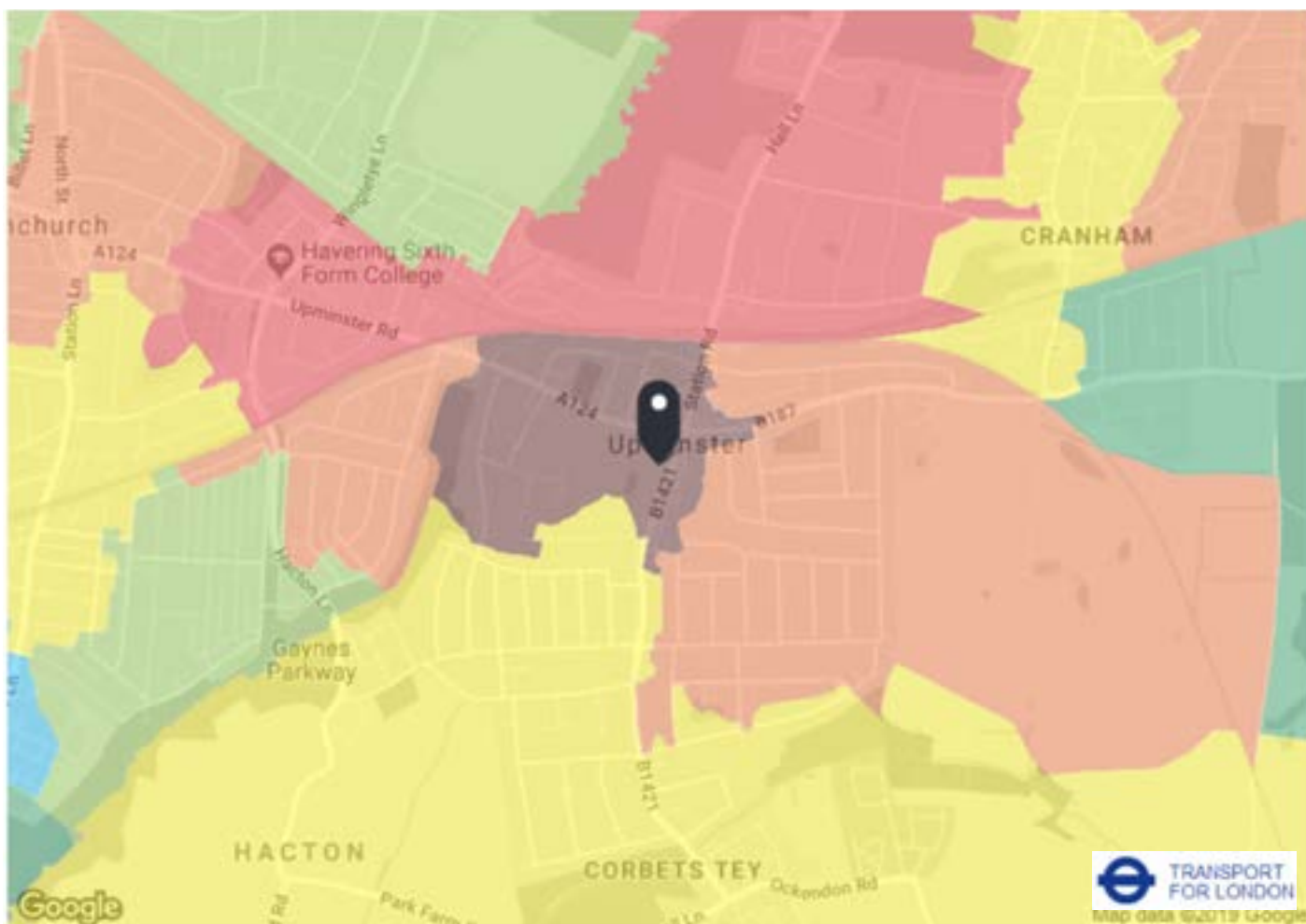
Easting: 551846, Northing: 183529

The map shows that most of the inhabited area of South Hornchurch ward is within 15 minutes travelling time of the library. Significant development and population growth in the Beam Park area is within 20 minutes of the library and a similar time to Rainham library. Off peak bus journeys to Rainham library take between 6 and 14 minutes from South Hornchurch library. 25% of households in South Hornchurch had no access to a vehicle in latest available data. This was above average for the borough. There are nine parking spaces at the library and free parking

Transport links

Upminster library

Upminster library is located within Upminster town centre. The next nearest library is Hornchurch, 1.6 miles away. There is a bus stop outside the library and four bus routes serve the area. Upminster mainline and underground station is around 450 metres away. The map below shows travelling times by public transport to the library outside peak hours.



Code: NT096105A

Copyright 2019, TfL

TIM output for the Base Year

Scenario Base Year Mode.

All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

Upminster Library, Upminster RM14 2BB, UK
Easting: 5559533, Northing: 186423

The map shows that the majority of the inhabited parts of Upminster and Cranham wards are within 15 minutes travelling time by public transport, although parts of Cranham and the Corbets Tey areas are less accessible.

15% of households in Cranham and Upminster wards had no access to a vehicle in latest available data. This was the lowest in the borough. There are no parking spaces at the library but there is some free parking nearby.

Needs Assessment Conclusions

The needs assessment, assessing multiple factors, demonstrates a broad need for libraries across the borough. Every area has some level of need for a library and that with limited resources, difficult decisions need to be made about where the Council spends its resources. We have identified the following conclusions:

- The five main libraries serve three quarters of all visits and issues, the vast majority of wifi access and IT use and are easily accessible for the vast majority of the borough by public transport;
- These main libraries serve catchment areas which include large and growing numbers of children aged 0-15 as well as growing populations of adults aged over 60. They are also in general the libraries in the best condition (although it should be noted that Hornchurch library in particular will require significant investment approaching £500,000 within the next five years in order to maintain its operation.)
- There is therefore a strong evidence, based on the needs assessment and other factors, for the retention of these five main libraries as part of the future delivery model.

Of the remaining branch libraries (in alphabetical order):

- Collier Row branch library is furthest away from a nearby library, with Romford library being the closest venue. Collier Row also serves as a catchment area with relatively high numbers of children living in poverty. Collier Row also serves a larger number of schools in its catchment area. However, the library is in poor and deteriorating condition, cannot provide a comparable facility mix to other libraries and if retained will need to be replaced within the next decade.
- Elm Park branch library is relatively close to a nearby library with good public transport links to Hornchurch. Footfall at the library is higher than at the other branch libraries but significantly lower than the main libraries. Elm Park library is a relatively new building with low ongoing maintenance costs due to its eco-friendly design and features. The library has some scope to generate income through renting out meeting space or through alternate use of the library on non-opening days. There is relatively less deprivation in this library's catchment area than in other areas, but the library serves growing numbers of children and young people and adults aged over 60.
- Gidea Park branch library is relatively close to a nearby library with good public transport links to Romford. Footfall at the library is relatively low compared to other libraries and the condition of the library building is poor and deteriorating with a poor facility mix: the library is approaching the end of its natural life. Gidea Park serves a population with a growing number of children and a relatively high number of adults aged over 60.
- Harold Wood branch library is relatively close to a nearby library with good public transport links to Harold Hill although it provides a poor experience for pedestrians with the A12 having to be crossed. Footfall at the library is low compared to other branch libraries and the condition of the building is poor. The library serves a catchment area experiencing relatively less deprivation than in other areas. The library does have the potential to generate income from meeting space but as the condition of the building declines further it is unlikely income targets can be achieved



- South Hornchurch branch library is relatively close to a nearby library with good public transport links to Rainham. The library has the potential to serve growing populations in the South West of the borough but that has not translated into library use: footfall and issues at South Hornchurch are the lowest across the service. The library's catchment area includes parts of the borough experiencing some of the highest deprivation levels, including numbers of children living in poverty. South Hornchurch library delivers a significant income stream through a modular unit in use as an early years provision.

The impact of closing up to four branch libraries would be:

- The total provision of statutory library services in the borough would reduce from 370 hours to 274 hours per week, a reduction of 26% total hours of provision.
- More residents live further away from their nearest library and journeys that were able to be made on foot would now only be achievable by using public transport or by car or bicycle. More libraries would be further than 2.5 miles away from their neighbour and depending on which libraries were identified for closure some would be up to four miles away from their neighbour.
- Some areas experiencing high levels of deprivation and/or serving large and growing populations of children or older adults would lose a nearby library. This could mean that children are unable to access libraries and the library offer at key points in the year. One potential impact could be uptake of the summer reading challenge and it is feasible that such a reduction in service could have a longer-term impact on educational attainment and adult literacy.
- Concentrating the service on a provision of six fixed sites is likely to make more effective use of available capital funding to adequately maintain the library estate and make future improvements to condition and look and feel at each site.

Some of these impacts are discussed in further detail below.



Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

We understand that our customers come from all walks of life, with various ages, backgrounds, and abilities, each having their own needs and preferences when it comes to accessing library services. We are committed to providing our library services in a fair and inclusive manner, in line with the Equalities Act 2010, which aims to prevent discrimination, promote equal opportunities, and encourage positive relationships among all individuals.

Our Library Strategy has been shaped by this Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA), which help us understand how proposed changes might affect people with different characteristics. Specifically, we have looked at how potential closures of certain libraries and reduced opening hours might impact various groups:

- Some libraries are at risk of closure, affecting their local communities.
- Overall reduction in library hours could affect service accessibility.
- Based on library membership and demographic data, these impact assessments have shown that library closures could particularly affect certain groups, such as:
- Children, older adults, and women are more likely to use libraries facing closure.
- Groups meeting in these libraries are often attended by children, older adults, and women.
- More women than men use the libraries at risk of closure.
- Older or disabled individuals relying on these libraries may struggle to access alternative options, potentially needing the Housebound Service.

To gauge the impact, we have looked at various data sources, including attendance records, membership data, census data, and performance metrics. The closure of libraries could lead to difficulties in accessing books and resources, digital services, and social interactions, impacting mental health and well-being, especially for those who consider libraries a safe community space.

To address these concerns, we are considering measures like guiding people to other nearby libraries, providing travel information, promoting digital services, and offering housebound library services where necessary. However, despite these efforts, we recognize that some individuals with specific needs may still face challenges, potentially limiting their ability to participate in community life through library access.

Potential Negative Impact	Action Required To Mitigate the Potential Negative Impact
<p>The closure of libraries will impact on groups with protected characteristics who are current users, and any person who wishes to access its library provision, whether they live in the community or elsewhere within the Borough.</p> <p>The groups most likely to be affected are disabled people, older people, and families with young children and disabled children.</p>	<p>The library website will be updated with bus and train information, as well as information for nearby car parks and disabled car parking spaces. Available car parking at libraries will be assessed to ensure that parking is available for those who need it most.</p> <p>We will work with partners to support provision of information on active and alternate travel.</p> <p>Digital support: This will be targeted at those who most need it, including older people, users with a disability (e.g., visual impairment).</p> <p>Better marketing and promotion of the e-library service offer is needed, as some people may be able to download books, audio, newspapers, magazines and comics to their own devices.</p> <p>The Library Service will offer familiarisation visits to other libraries for older people and families with young children who may feel anxious about visiting new libraries. This could help them to feel welcome to visit other libraries, encourage them to continue to attend groups and activities that promote social, emotional, and wellbeing support, and to help with the adjustment to the loss of their familiar library space.</p>
<p>Closure of library sites may increase demand for housebound delivery services which then put unsustainable burdens on staff.</p>	<p>Home Delivery Library Service: The consultation results will be analysed to assist with the referrals process onto the Housebound service, providing people meet the referral criteria as a reasonable adjustment to mitigate any barrier to library service access that they might experience as a direct result of the proposed closures.</p> <p>Further work will be done to expand the number of library volunteers able to meet increased housebound delivery demand.</p>
<p>Some disabled people, older people and families with young children and those from BAME communities may find it difficult to travel to other libraries. There is a potential impact for people who share these protected characteristics where their local library will close. Some may find it difficult to travel to other libraries if they are required to walk certain distances, travel lengthy routes, or take a journey which requires them to change bus or train to get to a library. There may also be a financial barrier to accessing alternative travel methods.</p>	<p>Signposting to alternative library provision: The library website will be updated with bus and train information, as well as car parking arrangements and disabled parking bays for each library.</p> <p>Housebound services will be offered to people as a reasonable adjustment to mitigate any barrier to library service access that they might experience as a direct result of the proposed closures, providing they meet the referral criteria.</p> <p>Digital support will be targeted at those who most need it. Better marketing and promotion of the e-library service offer is needed, as some people may be able to download books, audio, newspapers, magazines and comics to their own devices.</p>

Potential Negative Impact	Action Required To Mitigate the Potential Negative Impact
<p>Some disabled people, older people, children and people from the BAME community rely on regular visits to their library to socialise and establish friendships and experience social and emotional support. User feedback suggests that many people who share different protected characteristics feel the library is a safe, familiar place in which they are comfortable, included and respected. There is a potential impact for people who share these protected characteristics where their local library will close.</p>	<p>Familiarisation visits to other libraries: These will be offered to disabled people, older people and people with young families who may feel upset and angry that their library is closing and/or anxious about visiting other libraries. This will help them to feel welcome to visit other libraries, encourage them to continue to attend groups that promote social, emotional and wellbeing support and to help with the adjustment to the loss of their familiar library space. Staff will signpost vulnerable residents to additional support agencies.</p>
<p>Some children, in particular children in care or children living in poverty may find it difficult to travel to other libraries, in particular to access school holiday educational activities like participation in the summer reading challenge.</p> <p>Local schools and nurseries who visit libraries that are proposed to close to look at books and find out about the services on offer may be negatively impacted.</p>	<p>Provide an outreach offer targeting schools and community settings which serve communities affected by Library closures, to ensure the continued engagement of young people in initiatives such as the Summer Reading Challenge. Seek to identify alternate community locations where the service can deliver Library activities.</p>
<p>The closure of libraries may result in an increase in usage of the Digital Library Service if the Strategy is adopted.</p>	<p>Promote the Online Library Service: Better promotion/ awareness of the Online Library. Providing training for customers so they can access the digital library offer at any time of the day. Supporting customers to download books and offering tablet/device loan to access on-line provision. Seek to identify community locations in communities served by libraries that will close where the service can deliver Digital and Information Literacy.</p>
<p>A closure of up to four library sites will not reduce library usage, but rather concentrates nearly one million visits annually in four fewer sites, leading to some buildings becoming increasingly busy and unsatisfactory to use.</p>	<p>We will monitor on an active basis library footfall and look to schedule activities in ways complementary to how libraries are being used.</p> <p>We will consider ways of providing more flexible space in libraries, such as using unbooked meeting room space as study space in busy periods such as examination season.</p>