

Consultation on Ealing's Draft Library Strategy 2019 – 2023

Consultation document

February 2019

EALING COUNCIL

Why are we consulting?

We are asking for your views on our draft strategy for Ealing's libraries over the next four years (2019 – 2023).

The draft strategy sets out our proposed approach to providing a modern, sustainable library service, recognising the financial constraints that Ealing council faces and also the changes in the way people now use libraries.

Our strategy presents proposals for a needs-based library service. This means a library service where we prioritise our resources to achieve outcomes that will best meet the needs of those who live, work and study in Ealing.

You can read our draft strategy and all of the evidence on which our proposals are based in full on our website at **www.ealing.gov.uk/consultations**

What changes are being proposed?

We are committed to providing a comprehensive library service, but we can no longer afford to provide a library service from 13 buildings. The focus of our new strategy is on how we consolidate our library offer in fewer buildings and at the same time provide opportunities for communities to get involved in shaping and delivering local community managed libraries (CMLs).

CMLs are not new. There are as many as 400 across the country including over 30 CMLs in London. The principle of community involvement is the same, but they are all managed differently, shaped by the communities and individuals who are involved.

We want to support communities who have viable proposals for CMLs and have set aside some funds to help get them off the ground. Ealing library service will still own and provide book stock, access to the Ealing library network through the Ealing library card, the People's Network computers and access to the extensive stock provided through the London Libraries Consortium.

We expect that CMLs will be open to the public for an agreed minimum number of hours and provide a wider neighbourhood offer that would benefit local people. We are not prescribing what that wider offer should be.

As part of the consultation on the draft Ealing library strategy 2019 – 2023 we will provide a prospectus for each of the seven CMLs and invite expressions of interest. This will be available on the council website.

Preserving buildings is not the driver for this shift in our strategy for libraries. It is driven by our commitment to consolidate and improve our library service, being more efficient in fewer buildings and working with communities who come forward to run CMLs.

We believe we can meet our statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service in fewer buildings and at the same time create the opportunity for a network of CMLs led by residents, the community and not for profit groups to provide what they want on their doorstep.

Our key proposals in the Ealing library strategy 2019 – 2023 are to:

- Consolidate the statutory library offer through six libraries directly run by the council. This will include;
 - Four main town centre libraries and two smaller branch libraries in areas of greater social need
 - Change opening hours in the four town centre libraries and two branch libraries provided by the council so that services are open when they are most needed
- Provide the opportunity for CMLs in seven areas working with the community and other partners

What changes are being proposed? continued

Service	Current offer	Proposed Service Offer
<p>Libraries</p>	<p>Thirteen libraries all run by Ealing council’s library service</p>	<p>Four town centre libraries run by Ealing council’s library service in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acton (co-location with leisure services) • Ealing • Northolt • Southall (co-location with the Dominion Community Centre) <p>Two branch libraries run by the library service in areas of the borough with high deprivation needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jubilee Gardens in Southall (co-location with health) • Northolt Leisure Centre <p>An opportunity for seven branch libraries to be CMLs run by community organisations / partners. If no viable partner is identified then these libraries may close.</p> <p>CML locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenford • Hanwell • Perivale • Northfields • Pitshanger • West Ealing • Wood End

In addition, the Ealing library strategy proposes to:

- Continue the home library service commissioned through the voluntary sector
- Retain the local studies and archives service and move it to the Dominion Centre, Southall
- Improve IT and Wi-Fi across the library service

What changes are being proposed? continued

The financial context

Increasing demand and reduced government funding means that the council has a gap of £57million to close by 2021. This gap is more than double Ealing’s total annual budget for children centres, libraries, street cleaning, rubbish and recycling collections combined.

Ealing, along with most other local authorities, is facing its toughest financial challenges in living memory. Its government grant has been cut by 64% over the decade and by 2021 it will completely disappear. When that happens, the council will be reliant on council tax, business rates and fees and charges alone. At the same time, departments across the organisation, particularly in social services and housing, are experiencing ever-increasing demand.

In the light of this, there is a continuing need to review how we provide many of our services, looking at ways that they can be delivered even more efficiently, whilst maintaining our commitment to deliver services that deprived areas and citizens in need require.

Through consultation on the proposals for the library service, we will start a conversation with residents, communities, staff and stakeholders on the shape of libraries in Ealing. We have a difficult task ahead and decisions to make. However, we believe that the proposals provide a feasible solution to safeguard the statutory library service and provide the opportunity for residents and communities to partner with us to shape and provide libraries in their local areas.

Our aim is to:

Co-create a comprehensive neighbourhood library service working with our communities and partners to provide

A modern library service in safe, accessible and friendly spaces, real and virtual, to help more people to:

- Develop reading, learning, functional and entrepreneurial skills
- Be independent users of IT and digital services, as consumers and producers
- Get involved in civic and community life
- Access the arts, imagination and creativity

Improve, extend and sustain what we do through

Partnering with communities and businesses

Being relevant and innovative

Creating and exploiting commercial opportunities to unlock value and efficiencies in our assets (buildings, land and resources)

Continuous professional development of our staff to deliver modern and efficient services

What changes are being proposed? continued

Key principles underpinning the strategy:

We have based our library strategy on the following key principles

- Ensure that we maintain and grow our main library service of providing books, as well as spaces and opportunities for reading, learning and creativity
- Provide good quality and fast digital access in our libraries
- Provide opportunities for libraries to be located in the same building as other public and community services
- Our main town centre libraries will act as the central hub for branch libraries and support new community managed libraries
- Partner with the local community, the not for profit social sector and other agencies, to grow sustainable community managed libraries and maximise the benefits for residents
- Adopt a more commercial approach to make the best use of our libraries and generate income to support our library service

Please read our draft Library strategy 2019 – 2023 and Ealing Library Service Needs Assessment, available on our website at www.ealing.gov.uk/consultations to view the full detail of our analysis of the performance and usage of our libraries, as well as proposals for future provision.

How to take part in this consultation

The consultation runs for 12 weeks, from 22 February to 17 May 2019. We would like to hear from you whether you currently use a library in the borough or not. We particularly want to hear from you if you are interested in supporting local library services either as a volunteer or as a community organisation.

To take part in the consultation please visit www.ealing.gov.uk/consultations and complete a short online survey. You can also download and print a copy of the questionnaire and return it to us through your local library.

We will also be organising a number of public events in different parts of the borough to gather direct feedback on our proposals.

Details of these events and how you can take part will be available on the consultation webpage www.ealing.gov.uk/consultations.

If you have a question about this consultation, need help to take part, please contact us libraries@ealing.gov.uk

What happens next

Responses to the consultation will inform a final report to the council's cabinet in July 2019. If the proposals contained in this consultation are accepted, based on the consultation and other relevant considerations, the new library service provision will start to be implemented from autumn 2019.

FAQs

Why are you closing libraries if more people are using them?

We want to keep our libraries open. There are 13 library buildings in Ealing. Ealing council will continue to run six libraries in Acton, Ealing, Northolt and Southall. We are proposing that seven of our 13 libraries become community managed.

Community managed libraries are not unique to Ealing. Thirteen London boroughs have community managed libraries alongside the libraries provided by the library service. One in three library services in England now has at least one community supported or managed library operating within their area. There are up to 400 community managed libraries across the country.

What will happen to these libraries if you can't find someone to run them?

These proposals rely on organisations and local people coming forward to run the seven libraries earmarked for community management. We want to work closely with local groups and will do everything we can to help make this happen. Unfortunately, if no workable proposals are received, some of the libraries will close.

Why are you reducing opening hours?

The council's government funding has been cut by 64% and demand is increasing and we need to make all our services as efficient as possible. We are proposing to change operating hours of the six libraries being proposed as council run libraries. This will mean that libraries are open at times when they are used the most.

Libraries currently open at 9am with most visitors arriving after 10am. It is proposed that the main town centre libraries open at 10am in line with the way most customers use the service.

The branch libraries have lower visitor numbers in the mornings. It is proposed that the opening hours of these libraries are changed to midday to 5pm. It may be possible to extend the hours, with the support of volunteers, where there is local demand and support from residents.

Community Managed Libraries – we will encourage community partners to provide a minimum five hours opening between midday and 5pm, but with the flexibility to provide extended hours in line with their community needs or service offer they are providing.

Will the extended opening of libraries in the lead up to exams be reduced?

There are no changes to the extended opening hours at Acton, Ealing Central, Northolt and Southall libraries during the April to June study period. Currently we provide 24 additional hours in these three months and will continue to provide this service.

Will you outsource the remaining council-run libraries?

No. Our intention is to continue to keep their operation in-house.

What will happen to the local studies and archives service?

This service is based at West Ealing library; one of the libraries earmarked for community management. If the proposals are approved, this service will continue and move to Southall Library in the Dominion Centre.

Will the home library service close?

No. We want to grow this service. The council is considering the option to commission the service through a third party charitable organisation with a good track record. The service currently serves 650 residents, who are home bound. We would be looking to ensure that any organisation we partner will further develop and expand the service.

Does Ealing care about libraries?

We are fighting to keep as many libraries open as we can. That is why we are asking local people to help with the long-term management of some of our branch libraries. Government cuts and rising demand mean that we cannot afford to keep them all open as council-managed, so we want to work with groups and come up with solutions that work for everyone.

FAQs continued

We have plans to keep improving our council-managed service. Our plans include upgrading the Wi-Fi and public computers and software. We also want to increase the number of digital volunteers to help residents and provide a better digital offer, including a cashless service for fines and bookings. We also want to reach out to more schools to better share our local and social history.

What is a community managed library?

Community managed libraries are run by community groups, organisations and local people with support from the council's library service.

Community management of a library can take different forms. In some other boroughs libraries are now run by local community groups or social enterprises.

We want to partner with community organisations or groups to run community managed libraries in Ealing.

Community libraries are all different. It depends on the proposals that come from community organisations or groups to run the library as part of a wider programme of community benefit in a local area.

Benefits of community managed libraries may include:

- helping to keep a local library open
- community management can bring renewed energy and innovation to the service, prompting new activities and more flexible use of the space
- often leads to increased usage by the local community through an enhanced sense of ownership

What happens to the book stock?

Ealing library service will still be responsible for the book stock in the community managed libraries. New books will be supplied as part of the Ealing library service plans for buying new stock and refreshing the stock in libraries.

Will there still be activities in the community managed libraries such as author talks, Baby Rhyme Time and Summer Reading Challenge?

We will work with community managed libraries to ensure that the activities are available in these libraries. We encourage volunteers to help with these events in the council run libraries and want organisations running community managed libraries to get volunteer involvement in these events at the community managed libraries too.

Will new members be able to join community libraries and use my existing library card at any of the branch libraries even if they are community managed libraries?

Yes, your existing library card will continue to allow you to borrow, return and reserve items at any of the library branches within Ealing and London Libraries Consortium libraries. You will be able to join the Ealing library service at a community managed library.

Will computers and internet access still be available at community managed library branches?

Yes, you will still be able to use computers and access the internet at any community managed libraries. This is likely to form part of the agreement between the council and the community group.

Who would recruit and train volunteers?

A community group would need to recruit and manage their own volunteers. The council will offer initial start-up training and support to do this.

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