

CONSULTATION ON HILLINGDON'S LIBRARY STRATEGY

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Eddie Lavery
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Cabinet Member for Residents' Services
Officer Contact(s)	Perry Scott - Place Darren Deeks – Libraries, Museums and Theatres
Papers with report	Appendix 1 – Draft Library Service Strategy 2023-2027 Appendix 2 - Tiered opening hours table

HEADLINES

Summary	<p>Hillingdon Council is committed to putting its residents first. Through strong leadership, sound financial management and transforming how it works, the Council will ensure it provides high-quality services residents expect in the most efficient way.</p> <p>The Council recognises the library service as a key service to residents which enables the aims of the wider Council strategy to reach residents across its network of static branches, and via the Home and Mobile library services</p> <p>The five-year library service strategy presented in this report provides a clear vision and a comprehensive framework of commitments to residents which continue to deliver on the Universal Libraries Offer, the duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. The strategy identifies ways of modernising and improving services, while using resources in responsible and cost-effective ways.</p> <p>Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the draft five-year library strategy for consultation and to agree to receive the findings of the consultation and any recommended changes.</p>
Putting our Residents First Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026	<p>This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: Enjoy access to green spaces, leisure activities, culture and arts</p> <p>This report supports our commitments to residents of: Thriving, Healthy Households</p>
Financial Cost	<p>There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report.</p>

Relevant Select
Committee

Residents' Services

Wards

All

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet:

- 1. Approves Hillingdon Library Service's draft Strategy 2023-27 in Appendix 1 for consultation;**
- 2. Agrees as part of this, to consult on new tiered library opening hours as set out in the report and;**
- 3. Agrees to receive the final Library Strategy 2023-2027 at a later meeting, informed by the findings from the proposed consultation process.**

Reasons for recommendation

The draft library service strategy sets out a clear vision for the service for the next five years, providing a direction of travel and improvement for all stakeholders. Approval is sought from Cabinet to approve the strategy for consultation, to ensure that residents and partners have the opportunity to consider and comment on the commitments.

Library opening hours have not returned to the permanent pre-COVID patterns and since coming out of lockdown libraries have operated on a set of temporary hours, reviewed throughout. The library service now wishes to adopt a new set of opening hours, based on the usage, busyness and location of each library. Libraries would be tiered into four bands (Flagship/Tier 1, and Tiers 2-4) with flagships offering the longest opening hours and Tier 4 branches offering the shortest opening hours, across the Borough, however, the libraries would offer comprehensive opening hours that also recognise the need to provide services efficiently.

The draft strategy is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

Alternative options considered / risk management

Alternative is to have no strategy in place for the library service; however, it is important to set out the priorities and ambitions of the library service due to its role in the community and its ability to help deliver on Council Strategy objectives.

Democratic compliance

Cabinet is the relevant body in the Council's Constitution to propose consultation and make any decision in relation to such proposed changes to Council library services.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage, however, the Residents' Services Select Committee, as part of its important overview and scrutiny role, will consider the consultation on this strategy at a future meeting and may wish to comment on the matter, reporting back to Cabinet before any final decision.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Hillingdon Council continues to put residents first in everything it does. As a key, statutory universal service, libraries help the Council to achieve many of its goals including helping residents to live healthy, active and independent lives with access to culture and the arts; to achieve well in education with opportunities for learning at all ages; to feel safe and to thrive.
2. The Council's approach of strong leadership, sound financial management and transforming how it works will continue to ensure high-quality services and facilities residents expect are provided in the most efficient way.
3. The draft Library Service Strategy 2023-2027 builds on the successes of the library service to date and sets out 5 areas of ambition that meet all the objectives of a core service while extending this with a rich and varied programme of activities, outreach, promotions and community engagement that meets the needs of residents of all ages and extends to hard-to-reach residents.
4. The ambition statement and key areas of ambitions for libraries are:

Hillingdon libraries commit to building on and increasing the services they provide, so that as many people as possible can take advantage of the transformative power of libraries.

We will achieve this by pursuing ambitions in the following areas:

- *Reading, literacy and culture*
 - *Health and Wellbeing*
 - *Improving digital services and inclusion*
 - *Information and Learning*
 - *Sustainable Service Delivery*
5. The draft strategy (appendix 1) provides a comprehensive set of goals within each ambition with simultaneously acknowledging the success of the service to date and identifying steps needed to expand the offer to all residents.
 6. As part of Sustainable Service Delivery, a new permanent schedule of library opening hours is proposed on a Tiered Model which uses the data regarding location and busyness of each branch and provides a range of opening hours for 4 different levels of library, from flagship branches providing the greatest number of opening hours to level 4 branches offering the least. These hours recognise usage trends and provide excellent access to library service, while providing scope for rolling review as trends change and usage develops.

Consultation on proposed tiered opening hours are as follows: (also set out in Appendix 2)

Tier 1 / Flagship libraries (Botwell Green, Ruislip Manor, Uxbridge):

Mon, Tues, Thurs: 9am-7pm;
Weds, Fri, Sat – 9am-5pm;
Sun 10am-1pm (Ruislip Manor closed on Sun)

Tier 2 libraries (Manor Farm, Northwood, Oak Farm, Yeading, Yiewsley):

Mon, Thurs: 10am-7pm
Tues, Weds, Fri; 10am-5pm
Sat: 10am-4pm

Tier 3 libraries (Eastcote, Harlington*, Ickenham, Northwood Hills**, South Ruislip):

Mon or Weds: closed
Three weekdays: 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm
One weekday: 10am-1pm and 2pm-7pm
Sat: 10am-4pm

Tier 4 libraries (Charville, Harefield, Hayes End, West Drayton):

Mon or Weds: closed
Four weekdays: 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm
Sat: 10am-2pm

- **Harlington library subject to separate Cabinet report on the same agenda regarding decommissioning/public consultation*
- ***Northwood Hills library may open through lunchtime following rebuild, also set out on separate Cabinet report on the same agenda*

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report. Should a decision following the consultation be to adopt a tiered operating model, this would be evaluated on a Library by Library basis with identified efficiencies contributing to the Council's Medium Term Financial Forecast.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

The five-year library service strategy presented in this report provides the aims and ambitions for Hillingdon library service, which act as a set of commitments to residents. The commitment to deliver on the Universal Offers, and to develop work supporting those most vulnerable in our communities, is drawn from our track record, the needs of residents and the best practice described by Libraries Connected. Residents can continue to expect excellent access to book stock that appeals to a broad range of interests, reliable information, enriching activities and opportunities for independent lifelong learning

The draft Library Strategy has been developed in line with the Council Strategy 2022-2026 and enables the library service to support the wider Council to achieve the goals set out in its strategy of putting residents first and meeting its commitment to residents:

- Safe and Strong Communities
- Thriving, Healthy Households
- A Green and Sustainable Borough
- A Thriving Economy
- A Digital-enabled, Modern, Well-Run Council

The proposed consultation stage for the strategy will seek views from residents, partner organisations and businesses to ensure comments are considered prior to finalising the strategy.

Consultation carried out or required

The report recommends Cabinet approves a consultation stage with residents, partner organisations and businesses to seek views on the proposed five-year strategy to inform the final strategy to be presented to Cabinet. The consultation will involve a structured survey available to all residents, promotion through a variety of channels, and pro-active contact with partners. The consultation stage will invite comments from the relevant Select Committee.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial implications set out above, noting that there are no direct financial implications associated with this report, however, following consultation, a decision to approve the strategy will support the Council's delivery of efficiency savings identified in the Council's budget strategy.

Legal

The Council is required by section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a "comprehensive and efficient" library service that is available to everyone who resides, works or studies in the borough. Statutory Guidance issued by the Secretary of State requires the Council to consult with its residents and service users before deciding the extent of library provision in the Borough, whilst taking into account the available resources. By undertaking this consultation, the Council will comply with this Statutory Guidance. Further, more detailed legal advice will be given as necessary (including any equalities issues) when Cabinet considers the consultation outcome at a future meeting.

Infrastructure / Asset Management

Asset Management has been consulted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL