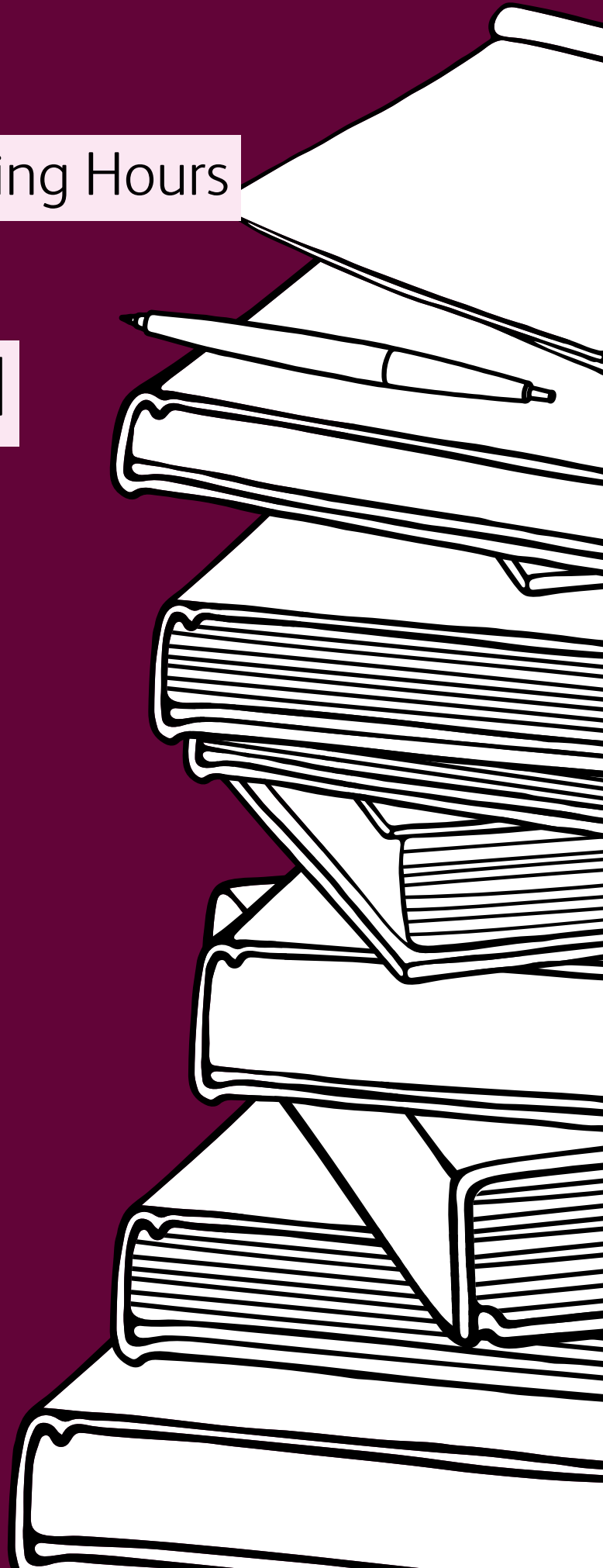


Hackney Libraries:  
Consultation on Opening Hours

Full Proposal and  
Data Document

Consultation closes:  
27 January 2026



# Consultation on Opening Hours: Hackney Libraries (January 2025)

**In Hackney, our library buildings provide vital connections for residents as community hubs. In 2024 we had over 750,000 visitors to our libraries. We have very high levels of usage by diverse communities compared to other boroughs and the number of young people registered as customers at all our libraries is higher than our borough demographic. Our opening hours are in line with other borough averages, but we have above average Personal/Public Computer (PC) hours by users.**

The Council has managed to protect libraries from cuts during long years of austerity caused by severe constraints on council funding nationally, which has resulted in a period of significant change for our libraries, including staff reductions in 2022/2023 and further savings that are now required. This has made the delivery of the [Library Strategy 2022-2026](#) challenging and we are unable to operate our libraries in the same way. The Council is therefore consulting residents and stakeholders on reducing opening hours across some sites.

In the past 5 years we have surveyed over 9,500 residents about their use of libraries and in January 2024 we installed footfall counters to monitor footfall levels and patterns meaning we have a wealth of data and insight about our library service.

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## Why We Need To Review Opening Hours

**Hackney Council's Library Service has been asked to reduce its operating budget by approximately 15%, or £773,000. This is part of the Council's annual budget-setting process, driven by the challenging national financial climate impacting all councils.**

You can find more information on the Council's budget for 2025/26 on the Council website at <https://hackney.gov.uk/budget>.

Hackney Libraries' transformation over the past two years to promote literacy, health and wellbeing and the critical role libraries play in reducing social isolation and digital exclusion is highly regarded by the Council. All the work the service has been doing to open up our libraries to a wider range of communities and to meet a wider range of needs has been considered in the savings we are being asked to make.

We will be able to achieve most of the savings by deleting current vacancies in the service, but in order to achieve the full amount and to make the service sustainable in the future with a reduced workforce, we need to reduce opening hours across 5 out of 8 sites. This will achieve savings through reductions in relief staffing, security staff and spending on buildings and book stock.

To arrive at the options outlined in this proposal we have considered:

- extensive customer insight collected since the Libraries Review in 2019
- footfall data we have been collecting at sites since January 2024, and
- insight gathered with library services in other boroughs to understand planned changes to their services and the pros and cons of the measures they have already taken to make savings, such as community-run and volunteer models, Open-Plus and unstaffed libraries, and full site closures.

None of the approaches used in other boroughs were considered suitable for Hackney at this stage, due to the need to provide a library service in every neighbourhood and the essential face-to-face support for residents that staffed libraries provide.

This proposal was developed alongside a consideration of other options, including the closure of library branches. However, none of the alternative options progressed to this consultation stage because of the impact these options could have on residents and communities.

The proposal is supported by a full [Equalities Impact Assessment](#) and [Strategic Need Assessment](#), which show the considerations used in developing the proposal and options presented and how the proposals would impact each library and neighbourhood.

The proposal set out in this consultation document is a working model. This means that the opening hours options are being provided for feedback, which will be considered and revised, if necessary, following the consultation and before any final decision is made by Hackney Council's Cabinet.

### **The Council's Legal Obligations:**

Hackney Council has a legal duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a "comprehensive and efficient" library service for all those who "live, work or study and want to access the service."

- This includes lending books and other materials to both adults and children, free of charge to those who live, work or study in the area; and
- We must also continue to encourage both adults and children to make full use of the library service and provide advice and support on how to make use and access services, information, and resources.

The current financial challenges mean it is now even harder to keep running the library service in its current form. At the same time, the way people use libraries is changing. Fewer people are visiting library locations, but there is still a strong need for free access to information, culture, and advice. We want to make sure that Hackney Library Service continues to meet the needs of local communities. We are keen to ensure that Hackney library service adapts to meet the changing

needs of the local community and the Council is also committed to meeting its legal duty to provide a library service that is both comprehensive and efficient.

## Engagement Completed to Date

**Between 2019 and 2025 we have surveyed over 9,500 library users and non-users about their use of Hackney's libraries and their satisfaction with the services it provides residents. 8,500 residents took part in the Hackney Library Review (2019), 527 in the Customer Satisfaction Survey (Jan 2025), and 600 have completed surveys evaluating library and partner events and programmes (2024). In the data and insight collected, there are numerous comments highlighting the pride residents feel in our libraries and anecdotes about how Hackney's libraries have supported users and their families, neighbours and wider communities to participate, thrive and succeed. This is particularly evident in the feedback from parents and carers, job-seekers, older people, diverse local communities, Council tenants and those experiencing homelessness.**

In developing this proposal we have spoken to other local authorities about the options we considered to understand their experience, particularly self-service and volunteer-led community libraries, which a number of other councils have already adopted. Whilst these models have worked in other boroughs, they have not been successful everywhere. We share resident, staff and trade union concerns about safety in unstaffed libraries and the loss of professional library staff expertise and one-to-one support, particularly in a borough like Hackney, which still has pockets of high deprivation in all wards. The Council has listened to the concerns communicated by Library Management about each of these models and decided not to proceed with self-service and volunteer-led libraries.

However, given the current financial pressures facing the Council, the operating budget for libraries does still need to be reduced as part of the overall package of savings, so doing nothing isn't an option.

Using the extensive data and insight we have about our services, we are putting forward three proposed options that will allow us to continue the work we are doing in every neighbourhood by keeping all sites open and only making changes to library opening hours. After such a successful year in libraries, consulting on reductions to libraries is difficult for everyone, but we believe the reduction of hours across all sites is the best and fairest way to make the savings we have been asked to make. We would like to hear your views on the proposed options before making the final decision.

## What the Public Have Already Told Us

**Library usage data is broken down by age, gender, ethnicity, and postcode, though not by protected characteristics like disability. Gaps are filled using demographic data from each library's catchment area and surveys asking about disability, caring responsibilities, and housing status. A 2021 survey gathered 8,500 responses from users, non-users, businesses, and community organisations, with additional insights from 52 focus group participants representing diverse groups. A 2019 socio-economic needs assessment, updated with 2021 Census data, informs library profiles and visiting patterns. In 2025, a customer satisfaction survey of 527 participants (96% Hackney residents) helped compare satisfaction and usage trends with data from 2019. A huge amount of customer insight was also gathered through this engagement and the key findings are summarised below.**

Many respondents across all surveys highlighted the crucial role of libraries, especially during the current cost of living crisis. They noted that libraries offer residents not only free access to books and educational resources but also facilities that promote health, provide information, offer support, and foster social and digital inclusion.

### **Neighbourhood libraries**

In 2025, neighbourhood libraries have seen a marked increase in use, with a more even distribution of visitors compared to 2021. A growing number of people now consider smaller libraries as their most frequently used, and more individuals report having visited these libraries. Notable increases in usage have been observed at Homerton and Clapton libraries, as well as at Hackney Central. Satisfaction with “library accessibility”, “the variety of resources”, “opening hours”, and “staff knowledge and conduct” has risen significantly across all sites, reaching over 95% since 2021. According to a January 2025 survey, 59% of customers stated that they “regularly use their local library and value having a smaller library nearby”, compared to just 12% who prefer traveling to larger libraries for their offerings. The qualitative data reveals strong support from elders, families, and young people for their local libraries, highlighting concerns about the challenges of traveling to other locations. Many emphasised how these barriers impact their wellbeing, social connections, ability to study, and job search efforts. Visitor figure increases since 2024 are also more significant at smaller sites Homerton (31% increase), Clapton (8.6% increase) than they are at larger and medium sized sites, which have seen decreases since 2024 of between 1% and 3%.

### **Warm hubs and public toilets**

In our 2025 survey and previous engagements, many respondents emphasised the vital role of libraries as warm spaces. 46% of survey participants agreed that libraries are crucial for reaching those who truly need them. Among daily PC users, 30% were residents in temporary accommodation, experiencing homelessness, or living in Council housing. Additionally, 31% of daily users and 25% of those who visit a few times a week shared this housing status. The qualitative data highlights numerous comments from and on behalf of vulnerable individuals who rely on libraries. These respondents voiced concerns about potential cuts to essential frontline services for these groups. They also emphasised the need for continued access to toilets, warm spaces, and face-to-face support and advice.

### **Variable hours for workers, students and parents**

Relying solely on data or consultation feedback to determine opening hours is not sufficient. Some respondents have highlighted the importance of quieter times, such as older people, students, job-seekers, childminders, and parents or carers of young children, who may visit libraries early in the morning when foot traffic is low, to attend groups and classes. It was also noted that these quieter hours are often better suited to children with special needs or disabilities. Evenings and after-school hours are particularly crucial for children, young people, students preparing for exams, and working individuals. This was confirmed in both our 2021 and 2025 surveys, where under-16s and 16-24-year-olds indicated they are most likely to use the library during these times. In the 2025 survey, respondents expressed general satisfaction with opening hours; however, those who were dissatisfied mainly expressed a desire for longer and more convenient hours.

### **Education, Culture, Socio-Economic Health and Wellbeing**

In our January 2025 survey, the most common response to the question of how people feel about libraries was, “They are absolutely essential, I don’t know what I would do without them,” with 73% of respondents agreeing. Additionally, 43% of respondents stated that libraries have been “crucial to their health and wellbeing”, while 37% said they have been “vital for their education”, and 27% use them for “studying or doing homework”. The qualitative data reveals numerous comments highlighting the role of libraries in supporting health and wellbeing, social connections, access to

services, education and literacy, early childhood development, studying, homework, job seeking, and clubs or activities for learning and social engagement. Our staff have all received training from RNIB, Papyrus Suicide prevention, Homerton Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, so they are much better informed about making referrals to specialist support groups. Customer insights show that closing a library branch would significantly limit literacy, education, and employment opportunities for disadvantaged communities, potentially leading to worse physical and mental health outcomes in the future.

### **Digital Inclusion**

In our 2025 customer survey, 34% of respondents agreed that "The wifi and computers are essential to me." Among daily PC users, 30% were residents in temporary accommodation, experiencing homelessness, or living in Council housing. The qualitative data reveals numerous comments from individuals who lack a computer or printer at home, highlighting the need for free Wi-Fi and access to computers for job-seeking, studying, and work. Since 2021, there has been a shift in how people use the PCs, with "reading and learning online", as well as career-related activities like "applying for jobs and creating CVs", now surpassing "general information browsing" as the most popular uses. The number of customers using PCs has increased since 2021, particularly among older and younger people. Between 2021 and 2025, the use of PCs for job applications and CV creation rose by 350%, while those using PCs for managing or applying for Universal Credit increased by 150%.

### **Connecting to the Council**

In 2024, we expanded our Adult Learning and ESOL classes, Digital Buddies sessions, and Ward Councillor surgeries in partnership with Employment and Skills, Adult Education, and the Mayor's Office. We also introduced Housing surgeries and a Refugee Hub in collaboration with Housing and the Welcome Hackney Team. As a result, many respondents to our 2025 survey noted they were visiting libraries not for traditional library services, but to access Council support and advice. All of our staff have received training from Make Every Contact Count, the Domestic Abuse Information Service, the Policy Team, Safeguarding Team, and Hackney Education Attendance Team, which has enhanced their ability to resolve customer issues at first contact and increased their confidence in referring individuals to other Council teams for further support. In our 2025 customer survey, 26% of respondents agreed with the statement, "They help me connect to Council services; I use them to get advice, knowledge, and information," and 15% expressed a desire to access more Council services at their local library. Between 2021 and 2025, the number of people using libraries to access other Council services increased by 143%.

### **Community cohesion and customers with protected characteristics**

In 2024, we expanded our community partnerships to include organisations such as Kings Park Moving Together, John Howard Forensic Mental Health Centre, Unity Works SEND Employment, Scope Disability Community Advice, Healing Generations Therapy Group for Global Majority residents, Side by Side Orthodox Jewish SEND School, Stormont House SEND School, Carers First, Positive East Sexual Health, and Gloji SmokeFree City & Hackney, among others. This expansion has allowed us to better support a wider range of residents with protected characteristics. Across all libraries, we see higher-than-average levels of women, young people, Black, Mixed, and Asian customers (excluding Stoke Newington), as well as above-average levels of disabled customers, children, and LGBTQIA+ registered users. As a result, many respondents to our 2025 survey reported visiting libraries not just for traditional services, but for community-specific support related to health and wellbeing, SEND, and cost of living. Their feedback is well represented, with 37% agreeing that libraries "help them connect to their community", and 24% saying they "help them connect with people from other communities". Respondents reported feeling less isolated, better equipped to study and search for jobs, and more supported by the inclusive range of community languages, LGBTQIA+, Global Majority, and Torah materials available at our libraries.

## **Non-users**

In our survey of 2021, non-users told us they were most likely to visit during the day, followed by evenings then weekends. In the Library Review Engagement Report the most common reason for not using libraries from non-users across all ages was “I have access to a computer, tablet or phone at home/work” The most common reason for not using libraries from Council renters and across all ages was “I pay for subscription services (e.g. Netflix, Amazon, Virgin)”. The most common response to what would encourage non-users to use a library in the future was from Council renters, who said “Attend events for children, adults and the community,” “Coffee shop or bookshop on site” “Provision of health and wellbeing activities and information” and “More learning and education activities in the library”

## Other Cost-Saving Options Considered

**The required savings could be achieved by closing libraries. However, the Council does not wish to see libraries in the borough close.**

The measures below have been considered but were not deemed as viable options at this time. As a result, no further modelling or feasibility work has been undertaken on any of the models below. Nonetheless, we recognise that those responding to this consultation may wish to express a view about alternative ways of achieving savings. The alternative approaches that were considered are as follows:

**Self Service:** Introducing self-service technology in Hackney Libraries would necessitate substantial investment in digital and other technologies, and result in periods where library staff are not present in some libraries. Due to the high costs associated with installing Open Plus technology<sup>1</sup> and other factors, self-service has been ruled out at this stage. This decision also reflects the known benefits of providing in-person and face-to-face support for Hackney's vulnerable and digitally excluded residents, as well as the experiences of other boroughs. For example, Hackney Council's most recent Resident Survey (2024) indicates that fear of crime is evenly spread across the borough; therefore, footfall is expected to drop dramatically if unstaffed libraries were introduced, as has been the case in other boroughs. Given the high levels of deprivation, digital exclusion and homelessness across the borough, the cost of living crisis felt by Hackney's residents, the refugee and asylum seeker support Hackney Council provides and the closures of neighbourhood community centres and housing offices, Hackney's libraries are one of the few places remaining where vulnerable people with high levels of need and mental health issues can find support. Additionally, there are concerns about public perceptions of safety and people feeling unsafe using unstaffed libraries. Ultimately, self-service technology is not in line with the Council's current direction, which is focused on providing more support, co-located services and increased/improved digital access for residents.

**Community-led libraries and volunteers:** The volunteer model at Woodberry Down Library requires constant recruitment, training, and supervision. Despite having a part-time manager, a permanent staff member was needed one day a week in 2024 to support the volunteer-led work. The reliance on volunteers has led to reduced opening hours and lower footfall compared to other libraries - averaging 3,911 visitors annually, whereas the smallest staffed library has 63,000. While a self-service model, potentially combined with a community-led approach, could achieve cost-saving targets, the specific savings are difficult to predict due to varying operating costs across libraries. The level of savings would depend on the implementation of the model and the willingness of individual communities to participate in a volunteer-led library service.

**Site Closures:** Closing one or more library sites could achieve the necessary savings. While closing a main library would achieve the required savings immediately, closing 2-3 smaller neighborhood libraries would be necessary to achieve the same savings due to their lower operating costs. Our proposal avoids full site closures due to the high number of customers with protected characteristics who use all of our libraries. Our recent customer survey shows that all library sites have daily users, and daily PC use is very high among people who are in temporary accommodation or are experiencing homelessness. All sites run literacy programs for both adults and children, social inclusion, health and wellbeing programs, work experience and homework clubs, digital support, and Council advice and co-located services. The closure of a site would disproportionately affect multiple demographics and wards of residents. Additionally, keeping a

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<sup>1</sup> Open Plus technology allows access to library facilities outside regular staffed hours. Users can borrow and return items, access study facilities, and use technology such as Wi-Fi and printing services without staff present.



library building safe and secure after closure also incurs costs for 24-hour security and ongoing maintenance and upkeep to avoid vandalism, squatting and disrepair.

**Removing security guards entirely from all sites:** The proposal includes a reduction to security guard hours to make up a proportion of the savings required. However, to remove them completely from all sites would not meet the savings target and so savings would still need to be found elsewhere to make up the shortfall. Safety of staff and library visitors is paramount and so safety procedures and equipment are being reviewed. Currently, all of our libraries have CCTV systems installed, except Stoke Newington (currently closed for refurbishment) and Homerton, which is scheduled to have a CCTV system installed in 2025/26. All frontline staff are trained in incident management and the proposals are to retain guards where and when the majority of incidents have taken place based on recent incident data.

**Early morning, evening, and weekend closures:** This was not felt to be suitable for Hackney residents who rely on libraries for free wifi, study spaces, and computers outside of standard working hours. This change would also disproportionately affect working families and people with protected characteristics who may feel more comfortable accessing library services at quieter times. Though this would not be a popular change to make to our libraries, evening opening hour reductions are included in some of the options in the proposal to gauge public opinion on where the reductions should be made.

**Tiered model:** Introducing a tiered model with different libraries offering different levels of service would not be suitable for Hackney, as visitors across all neighborhoods rely on the current full range of services. Though this was initially ruled out, using footfall data to protect the libraries with the highest footfall are included in some of the options in the proposal to gauge public opinion on where the reductions should be made.

**Increasing fees and charges/income generation:** While increasing fees, exploring redevelopment opportunities, and generating income from leasing underused library areas could supplement other options, income generation alone would not achieve the required savings.

## **Summary**

As a Council we are required to keep all our budgets under review, including our expenditure on libraries. At present, the only proposed change to the library service concerns opening hours. Any future proposed changes would be subject to further engagement with the public, as appropriate.

# How We've Designed the Proposals for Reduced Hours

**Hackney Council faces the challenge of making necessary budget cuts whilst maintaining access to essential library services for everyone.**

The proposal we have prepared is the result of an intensive and iterative process in which user, non-user and partner data and insight was scrutinised and multiple models were analysed over a period of months. Additionally, we have spoken to neighbouring library services in other boroughs to understand their offer and any likely future changes that could impact Hackney residents travelling to neighbouring boroughs to access a library.

The options presented in the proposal reflect a process of thorough analysis and consideration of a range of factors including operational feasibility, library footfall patterns, the Strategic Needs Assessment and the Equality Impact Assessment. Each proposed option has been developed with distinct priorities in mind and comes with different implications. Full consideration of the feedback will be a key part of the decision-making process.

Three options are being proposed for reducing opening hours, all of which aim to achieve necessary savings while maintaining a library in every neighborhood and minimising disruption to core activities and programming. Each option employs a different rationale for hour reduction, resulting in varying impacts on medium and smaller libraries.

While closing sites with the lowest footfall is not considered acceptable at this point, the options presented that rely solely on footfall data for reductions have a greater impact on smaller sites. We are keen to understand how residents will be affected by these options to determine the most equitable service model for the Council to adopt across the borough. We also seek to understand if residents would like the Council to prioritise protecting main libraries with high footfall, protecting evenings when the libraries tend to be quieter, or protecting smaller sites in more deprived neighborhoods despite footfall being lower at these sites.

We involved staff and trade unions in reviewing the proposal and options. Their feedback will be considered alongside feedback from the public consultation. Initial feedback from staff and trade unions was that they were opposed to the budget cut, raised concerns that reduced hours would have negative impacts (especially on those that depend most on libraries), and worried that removal and reductions of security staff could impact the safety of users and staff. They have asked the Council to consider alternative options such as improving building energy efficiency, increasing commercial events and using financial reserves.

More information about the data considered by the Council is set out in the Strategic Needs Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment.

## **Equalities**

The accompanying Strategic Needs Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) indicate areas of need equally spread across the borough on a range of different measures. For example, the EQIA discusses Hackney's significant attainment gap amongst children and young people with lower attainment most significant among young Black and Turkish children, the high number of young people using libraries and the surge in footfall during exam revision time. All libraries have higher levels of Global Majority customers, with the exception of Stoke Newington where there are a higher number of White registered customers and below average levels of Global Majority registered customers.

As outlined in the Strategic Needs Assessment, data from the recent resident survey suggests that residents in Stamford Hill, disabled residents, Global Majority residents, older people, social renters and those not in work are more likely to be digitally excluded and therefore more reliant on libraries for digital access. The resident survey also suggests fear of crime is evenly spread across the borough, but particularly felt in Dalston, Stoke Newington, Hackney Central, Wick and wards in the South East and North West of the borough.

### **Branch Closures and Impacts on Data**

It should be noted that during the period of analysis, Stoke Newington Library was closed to undertake extensive improvements and, as a result, hasn't been fitted with footfall counters, which will be added when it re-opens. This has affected the levels of internal usage data for this library, particularly in relation to more granular detail on daily and hourly footfall. There is more explanation of this in the Strategic Needs Assessment.

### **Design Principles**

We've adopted a range of overarching design principles which inform the proposal. These principles reflect a combination of operational considerations, analysis and interpretation of available data, and our Strategic Needs Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment. These principles are as follows:

- Each library requires a minimum number of staff to operate safely and comply with health and safety laws; this is determined by the size and layout of the different buildings. This limits the number of libraries which can be open at any one time while still achieving savings.
- Longer opening hours should be maintained at the main libraries due to their larger size and broader service offerings.
- The options presented in the proposal should seek to minimise the negative impacts of reductions in hours.
- In the context of inequalities within the borough we should also consider how libraries help to mitigate existing inequities of access by providing access to information and education.
- Libraries, and opening hours, should ensure access within reasonable travelling distance.
- The options presented in the proposal should seek to achieve a level of consistency in opening patterns, as far as possible.
- The options presented in the proposal should avoid the closure of any library on consecutive days. This means: that if a customer's usual library is closed on a particular day, their nearest library will generally be open (in addition to their nearest large library) from Monday to Saturday; and that their usual library will be open on the following day, excluding bank holidays.
- There should be at least one library open on Sunday in the borough. Whilst footfall is significantly lower on Sundays, hundreds of people use the service on this day and access should be protected.
- The options presented in the proposal should reflect daily and hourly usage data, as discussed in the Strategic Needs Assessment, wherever possible and appropriate. However, where possible, consideration should be made for protecting the quietest hours for all libraries are early mornings, evenings and weekends, when working families, parents and young people need and use libraries most.
  - Weekends: Although usage is generally lower at weekends across all sites, where possible, weekends need to be protected at most libraries for working families and students who rely on our libraries. We experience a surge in use during exam revision times. The exception is Homerton where we have a high level of well established and well attended partnership programmes running Monday - Friday.
  - Evenings: Although usage is generally lower in the evenings, where possible, these hours should be protected for students, people working from our libraries and for

people using our libraries as warm and cool hubs and the toilets. We have significant levels of customers living in temporary accommodation, experiencing homelessness, experiencing isolation, and migrants, refugee and asylum seekers

- Mornings: Morning opening times will stay the same to avoid significant impacts on staff timetables and also so we can honour the services delivered out of libraries and income generating room bookings by partners who need early access to spaces to set up
- Weekdays: Where closures have been proposed on weekdays, these are days when footfall is generally lower and in each case we have ensured provision at alternative sites is available for customers on these days.
- Reductions to the stock budget (books and other materials) should be based on data and insight and where possible, should not disproportionately affect users with protected characteristics who are using libraries in increasing numbers.

# The Proposal

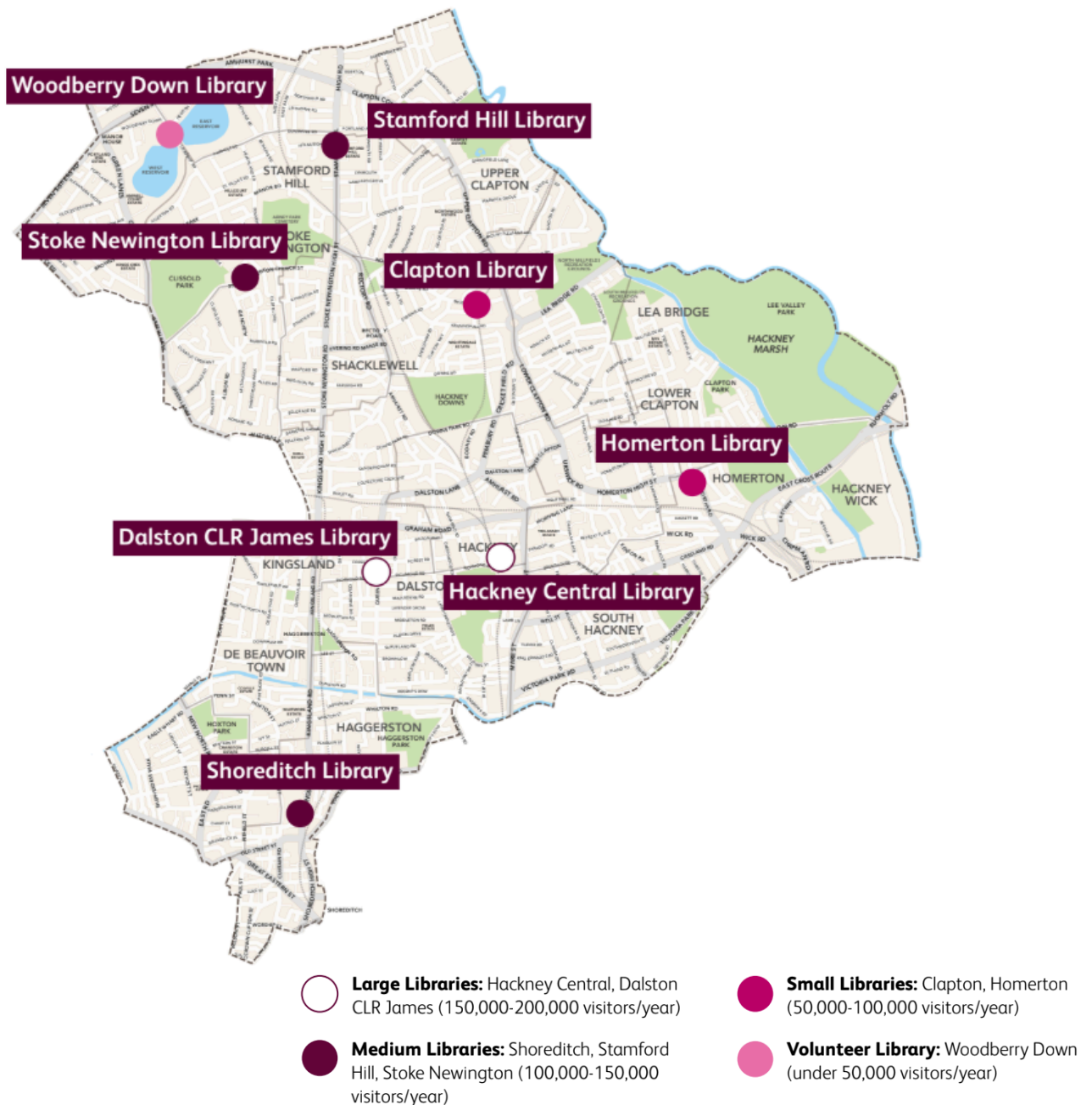
## Background Information on the Proposal

To meet a 15% reduction (£773,000) in the libraries budget over the next two years, operational savings are required from April 2026. Despite the proposed changes, all libraries would remain open and all library buildings would be retained in Council ownership.

The final decision will be made by Cabinet, taking into account both the consultation responses and the Equality Impact Assessment.

## Library Locations

The Council's library provision consists of 8 static libraries, in addition to a mobile library service.



## The Proposed Options

Three options are being proposed for reducing opening hours, all of which aim to achieve necessary savings while maintaining a library in every neighborhood and minimising disruption to core activities and programming. Each option employs a different rationale for hour reduction, resulting in the same impact across all options for large libraries and varying impacts on medium and smaller libraries.

The proposal prioritises even distribution of available hours as much as possible, sharing reductions across sites, protecting the neighbourhood branches where the need is great and main libraries where footfall is significantly higher.

Alongside adjusting opening hours, savings would also be made by deleting vacant posts, reducing costs for service development and book purchasing, and reducing security costs. However, these elements do not form part of this consultation.

Hackney Central Library (the library with the highest footfall), Stoke Newington (closed for refurbishment) and Woodberry Down (Volunteer Library) are unaffected in all options.

A summary of the options is as follows:

### Option One: Full and Half-Day Closures

This option uses equalities data to determine reductions which protect smaller sites and distribute full day closures across most sites. This option focuses on full and half-day closures throughout the week and weekend, protecting evenings, but impacting some week and weekend days, including Sundays at Dalston. It results in a 49-hour per week reduction across five sites, reducing total opening hours to 373 hours per week.

- **Medium-sized libraries** (Shoreditch and Stamford Hill): Closed an additional one day per week.
- **Small libraries** (Homerton and Clapton): Closed an additional 1.5 days per week.
- **Large libraries** (Dalston CLR James): Additionally closed on Sundays.

### Option Two: Weekend-Focused Closures with Some Evenings

This option uses footfall data to determine reductions, which includes the loss of Saturdays and Monday evenings at all small and medium sites, and Sunday closure at Dalston. In this option weekdays are protected at medium sites, but full day closures on Wednesdays are proposed at small sites (already closed on Wednesday mornings). This option leaves only the main libraries open on Saturdays, and Stamford Hill only on Sundays. This option results in a 51-hour per week reduction across five sites, reducing total opening hours to 371 hours per week.

- **Medium-sized libraries** (Shoreditch and Stamford Hill): Additionally closed Monday evenings (from 6pm) and full days on Saturdays..
- **Small libraries** (Homerton and Clapton): Additionally closed Monday evenings (from 6pm) and full days on Saturdays and Wednesdays.
- **Large libraries** (Dalston CLR James): Additionally closed on Sundays.



## Existing Opening Hours 2024

The table below shows the existing hours the libraries are open and the total number of hours each library is open for weekly. The three largest libraries are open on Sundays for 4 hours. This gives a total of 422 hours a week (this includes the 59 hours Stoke Newington was open before temporary closure).

Library	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
Dalston CLR James	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-6pm	9am-5pm	1pm-5pm	65
Hackney Central	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-6pm	9am-5pm	Closed	61
Shoreditch	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	Closed	55
Stamford Hill	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-6pm	9am-5pm	1pm-5pm	65
Stoke Newington	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	59
Clapton	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	1pm-6pm	10am-8pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	Closed	50
Homerton	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	1pm-6pm	10am-8pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	Closed	50
Woodberry Down	10am-1pm 2pm-6pm	Closed	2pm-6pm	10am-12pm 1pm-5pm	Closed	Closed	Closed	17

## Proposed Opening Hours

**Proposed Opening Hours under Option One: 373 hours per week, 49 hours reduction in opening times.** Reductions are proposed across 5 sites affecting 3 weekend days, 2 half days and 2 week days. This option results in a 49-hour per week reduction across five sites.

Library	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total	Reduction
Dalston CLR James	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-6pm	9am-5pm	Proposed closure	61	4
Hackney Central	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-6pm	9am-5pm	Closed	61	Not affected
Shoreditch	Proposed closure	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	Closed	45	10
Stamford Hill	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-6pm	Proposed closure	1pm-5pm	57	8
Stoke Newington	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	59	Not affected
Clapton	Proposed closure	10am-8pm	Proposed closure	10am-8pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	Closed	35	15
Homerton	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	Proposed closure	10am-8pm	10am-6pm	Proposed closure	Closed	38	12
Woodberry Down	10am-1pm 2pm-6pm	Closed	2pm-6pm	10am-12pm 1pm-5pm	Closed	Closed	Closed	17	Not affected

Existing closed hours  
New proposal



**Proposed Opening Hours under Option Two: 371 hours per week, 51 hours reduction in opening times.** Reductions are proposed across 5 sites affecting 5 weekend days, 2 half days and Monday evenings at 4 sites. This option results in a 51-hour per week reduction across five sites.

Library	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total	Reduction
Dalston CLR James	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-6pm	9am-5pm	Proposed closure	61	4
Hackney Central	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-6pm	9am-5pm	Closed	61	Not affected
Shoreditch	Reduced hours 10am-6pm	Reduced hours 10am-6pm	Reduced hours 10am-6pm	Reduced hours 10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	Closed	47	8
Stamford Hill	Reduced hours 9am-6pm	Reduced hours 9am-6pm	Reduced hours 9am-6pm	Reduced hours 9am-6pm	9am-6pm	9am-5pm	1pm-5pm	57	8
Stoke Newington	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	59	Not affected
Clapton	Reduced hours 10am-6pm	Reduced hours 10am-6pm	Proposed closure	Reduced hours 10am-6pm	10am-6pm	Proposed closure	Closed	32	18
Homerton	Reduced hours 10am-6pm	Reduced hours 10am-6pm	Proposed closure	Reduced hours 10am-6pm	10am-6pm	Proposed closure	Closed	32	18
Woodberry Down	10am-1pm 2pm-6pm	Closed	2pm-6pm	10am-12pm 1pm-5pm	Closed	Closed	Closed	17	Not affected

**Proposed Opening Hours under Option Three: 366 hours per week, 56 hours reduction in opening times.** Reductions are proposed across 5 sites affecting 3 weekend days, 2 half days and all evenings at 4 sites. This option results in a 56-hour per week reduction across five sites.

Library	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total	Reduction
Dalston CLR James	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-6pm	9am-5pm	Proposed closure	61	4
Hackney Central	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-6pm	9am-5pm	Closed	61	Not affected
Shoreditch	Reduced hours 10am-6pm	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-6pm	Proposed closure	Closed	46	9
Stamford Hill	Reduced hours 9am-6pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-8pm	9am-6pm	Proposed closure	1pm-5pm	55	10
Stoke Newington	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	59	Not affected
Clapton	Reduced hours 10am-6pm	10am-8pm	Proposed closure	10am-8pm	10am-6pm	Proposed closure	Closed	36	14
Homerton	Reduced hours 10am-6pm	10am-8pm	Proposed closure	10am-8pm	10am-6pm	Proposed closure	Closed	36	14
Woodberry Down	10am-1pm 2pm-6pm	Closed	2pm-6pm	10am-12pm 1pm-5pm	Closed	Closed	Closed	17	Not affected

Existing closed hours  
New proposal

## Detailed Analysis of Proposed Library Hour Reductions: Justifications and Impact

This section provides a comprehensive overview of the rationale behind proposed opening hour adjustments across several Hackney libraries, based on visitor figures, operational efficiencies, and community impact.

### Dalston CLR James Library: Strategic Considerations for Maximum Savings

Dalston CLR James Library would be impacted by the reductions proposed in all options.

**Rationale, Justification and Impact:** While annual footfall at Dalston Library remains high, its inclusion in all proposed options is driven by the potential for significant financial savings. Larger sites like Dalston offer greater opportunities for reductions in security, utilities, and cleaning costs.

The primary objective for Dalston is to align its Sunday closing with Hackney Central Library, which is already closed on Sundays. This is projected to provide a higher level of savings than closing a smaller library for an additional day, without disproportionately impacting overall service capacity. The rationale is to leverage the larger infrastructure and resources of Dalston to absorb potential customer shifts from other sites, while optimising cost efficiencies.

### Dalston CLR James Library Visitor Figure Comparison: Jan 24 vs Jan 25

Day	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	Diff	% increase/decrease
Monday	514	510	-4	-0.8%
Tuesday	525	500	-25	-4.8%
Wednesday	568	537	-31	-5.5%
Thursday	561	606	44	7.8%
Friday	454	446	-8	-1.8%
Saturday	455	417	-38	-8.3%
Sunday	265	268	3	1.1%

### Hackney Central Library: Strategic Consideration Based on Recent Investment and High Footfall

Hackney Central Library would not be impacted by the reductions proposed in all options.

**Rationale, Justification and Impact:** Hackney Central Library has the highest and consistently increasing annual footfall across all libraries. In 2024, it experienced the second-highest increase in visitor figures by 18%.

Despite its high usage, Hackney Central is protected from significant hour reductions in all proposed options. This decision is primarily due to substantial recent investment in its refurbishment and improvement of facilities starting in September 2025, highlighting a commitment to its long-term viability and enhanced service provision.

### Hackney Central Library Visitor Figure Comparison: Jan 24 vs Jan 25

Day	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	Diff	% increase/decrease
Monday	621	643	22	3.5%
Tuesday	599	674	75	12.5%
Wednesday	680	731	51	7.5%
Thursday	663	661	-1	0%
Friday	629	602	-27	-4.3%
Saturday	467	562	95	20.3%

### Stamford Hill Library: Equitable Access and Cultural Sensitivity

Stamford Hill would be impacted by the reductions proposed in all options.

**Rationale, Justification and Impact:** Stamford Hill Library is a key focus in all proposed options. While Saturday visitor figures have seen a slight increase since 2024, the per-hour footfall on Saturdays is significantly lower than on Sundays. This has been a crucial factor in the proposal for Saturday closures in Option One and Option Two.

Crucially, Fridays and Sundays are protected in all options. This decision is directly informed by the significant presence of Orthodox Jewish residents in the area and the high levels of need demonstrated by customers from this community on these specific days. This protection underscores a commitment to equitable access and cultural sensitivity within the library service.

Across all libraries, a consistent trend of lower footfall is observed during evening hours. Consequently, the proposed reductions to evening opening hours outlined in Option Two and Option Three are directly informed by footfall data. These reductions are designed to standardise opening hours across all small and medium libraries, aiming for consistency and efficiency in service delivery.

Similarly, Saturdays across all libraries generally see quieter periods and lower footfall compared to other days. The proposed Saturday closures in Option One and Option Two are also based on footfall data, aligning with the broader strategy of standardising opening hours for small and medium libraries, ensuring a streamlined operational schedule across sites.

### Stamford Hill Library Visitor Figure Comparison: Jan 24 vs Jan 25

Day	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	Diff	% increase/decrease
Monday	400	368	-32	-8.0%
Tuesday	397	344	-53	-13.4%
Wednesday	362	375	13	3.6%
Thursday	325	353	28	8.6%

Friday	309	313	4	1.3%
Saturday	146	160	14	9.6%
Sunday	190	166	-24	-12.6%

### Shoreditch Library: Reductions that Ensure Equitable Access Across the Borough

Shoreditch Library would be impacted by the reductions proposed in all options.

**Rationale, Justification and Impact:** While Mondays at Shoreditch typically show average levels of visitor figures, the proposal to close on Mondays in Option One is part of a broader strategy to stagger opening hours across the library network. This ensures that even with Shoreditch's Monday closure, four other libraries would remain open, maintaining overall accessibility for the wider community.

Similar to other libraries, evenings at Shoreditch generally experience lower footfall. Therefore, proposed reductions to evening opening hours in Option Two and Option Three are consistent with the approach for all small and medium libraries, aiming for standardised and efficient service provision based on visitor data.

### Shoreditch Library Visitor Figure Comparison: Jan 24 vs Jan 25

Day	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	Diff	% increase/decrease
Monday	399	389	-10	-2.5%
Tuesday	402	410	8	1.9%
Wednesday	431	394	-37	-8.6%
Thursday	350	340	-10	-2.9%
Friday	309	336	27	8.7%
Saturday	287	278	-9	-3.1%

### Homerton Library: Protecting a Growing Community Hub

Homerton Library would be impacted by the reductions proposed in all options.

**Rationale, Justification and Impact:** Homerton Library, despite being the smallest in the network, has seen a 29% increase in visitor figures over the last year, the largest rise among all Hackney libraries. This substantial growth presents a challenge in identifying a single day for closure without disproportionately impacting its increasingly vital role within the community.

In acknowledgement of this, opening hours at Homerton are protected across all options compared to other sites with higher overall footfall. Option One, which also incorporates equalities data, proposes the lowest reductions for Homerton.

Across both small libraries(Homerton and Clapton), Wednesdays and Saturdays generally experience lower footfall. The proposed closures on these days for Homerton in all options align with efforts to standardise opening hours across branches, with reductions directly based on footfall data. The rationale behind closing Homerton on Wednesdays and Saturdays in all options

is to avoid two consecutive closure days, minimising potential inconvenience for users. Furthermore, Wednesday currently operates as a half-day, meaning fewer customers would be affected by a full-day closure on this day.

Similar to other libraries, evenings at Homerton typically see lower visitor numbers. Options Two and Three include reductions to evening opening hours at Homerton, consistent with the approach for all small and medium libraries and aimed at achieving uniform opening hours across the network.

### Homerton Library Visitor Figure Comparison: Jan 24 vs Jan 25

Day	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	Diff	% increase/decrease
Monday	210	280	70	33.3%
Tuesday	226	319	93	41.1%
Wednesday	142	178	36	25.3%
Thursday	216	251	35	16.2%
Friday	187	265	78	41.7%
Saturday	168	207	39	23.2%

### Clapton Library: Protecting a Growing Community Hub

Clapton Library would be impacted by the reductions proposed in all options.

**Rationale, Justification and Impact:** Clapton Library, the second smallest in the network, has experienced a notable 7% increase in visitor figures over the past year, ranking as the third highest rise among all libraries. Given its expanding community role and significant increase in visitors, identifying a single closure day for Clapton without considerable impact remains a challenge.

Its opening hours are therefore disproportionately protected compared to higher footfall sites, acknowledging its growing importance as a community hub. Option One, which integrates equalities data, suggests the least severe reductions for Clapton, reinforcing the commitment to safeguarding access for its growing user base.

Generally, Wednesdays and Saturdays have lower footfall at our smaller libraries. While Saturday footfall is lower, it has been increasing since 2024. Options Two and Three propose closures on these days for Clapton, aligning with efforts to standardise opening hours across branches based on footfall data.

Fridays are protected across all options due to the high needs of the local Orthodox Jewish community, even though footfall is lower on this day compared to others.

Tuesdays and Thursdays also have lower footfall than Mondays, but consecutive closures with Wednesday presented in Option One are not feasible in this option, which attempts to stagger opening hours, ensuring 4 other libraries remain open on Mondays.

Evening visitor numbers are typically lower across all libraries. Options Two and Three include

reductions to evening opening hours at Clapton, consistent with the approach for all small and medium libraries, aiming for uniform opening hours.

### Clapton Library Visitor Figure Comparison: Jan 24 vs Jan 25

Day	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	Diff	% increase/decrease
Monday	262	275	13	4.9%
Tuesday	249	265	16	6.4%
Wednesday	157	181	24	15.3%
Thursday	252	245	-7	-2.7%
Friday	190	216	26	13.7%
Saturday	143	173	30	20.9%

## Appendix

### Timetabled Activities

The tables below set out the current timetabled activities by library.

Run by external providers

Co-located Council services

Run by library staff and Engagement & Development Team

### Appendix One: Timetabled Activities

Library	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
<b>Dalston</b>	Writing Group Unity Works SEND Digital Skills Club Ward Cllr Surgeries Housing Surgeries Scope Energy Advice	Adult Ed: English Afrikan Writers Group Chatterbooks	Adult Ed: English Reading Group Adult Ed: ESOL Hackney Pensioners Convention	Refugee Hub Under 5s Read Easy Adult Ed: ESOL Housing Surgeries Queertopia Community forum	Adult Ed: ESOL Mind Book Club	Under 5s Lego Club Ward Cllr Surgeries Inclusion Group for Young People New Beginnings Therapy Group for Refugees Digital Buddies	Chess Club
<b>Hackney Central</b>	Read Easy Comic Club Read, Rhyme & Sign	Toy Library Digital Buddies Homework Club	Knit and Natter Writing Group	Carers First Positive East Chatterbooks Book Club	Under 5s Board Games Club Nappy Demos	Lego Club Ward Cllr Surgeries	
<b>Shoreditch</b>	Knit and Natter	Under 5s	Adult Ed: ESOL	Adult Ed: ESOL	Adult Ed: English	Empower Us Young Voices Group	

	<p>Stop Smoking Clinic</p> <p>Colour Me Kind (LGBTQIA+)</p>	<p>Film Club</p> <p>Black Women Writers</p> <p>Chatterbooks</p> <p>Shoreditch Book Club</p>	<p>Homework Club</p> <p>Digital Buddies</p>	<p>Adult Ed: Enrollment</p> <p>Board Games Club</p> <p>Digital Buddies</p>	<p>Community Builders Sessions for Global Majority Residents</p> <p>GamCare</p> <p>Games Club</p>	<p>Healing Generations Therapy Group</p> <p>Lego Club</p> <p>Crafternoons</p> <p>Ward Cllr Surgeries</p>
<b>Stamford Hill</b>	<p>Bikur Cholim</p> <p>Lego Club</p>	<p>Bikur Cholim</p> <p>Digital Buddies</p>	<p>Bikur Cholim</p> <p>Under 5s</p> <p>Chatterbooks</p> <p>Scope Energy Advice</p>	<p>Bikur Cholim</p> <p>Writing Group</p>	<p>Orthodox Jewish Work Placement Scheme</p>	<p>Ward Cllr Surgeries</p>
<b>Clapton</b>	<p>Stop Smoking Clinic</p> <p>Under 5s</p>	<p>Adult Ed: English</p> <p>Housing Surgeries</p> <p>Crafternoons</p> <p>Reading Group</p>	<p>Adult ed: English</p> <p>Chess Club</p>	<p>Chatterbooks</p> <p>Lego Club</p> <p>Social Prescribing</p>	<p>Ward Cllr Surgeries</p> <p>Under 5s</p>	<p>Lego Club</p> <p>Writing Group</p> <p>Ward Cllr Surgeries</p>
<b>Homerton</b>	<p>U3A Pilates &amp; Tai-Chi</p> <p>Coffee Mornings</p> <p>NHS Digital Drop-ins Writing Group</p> <p>Craft Club</p> <p>Writing Group</p>	<p>Housing Surgeries</p> <p>Stop Smoking Clinic</p> <p>Scope Energy Advice</p> <p>Under 5s</p> <p>Story Telling Circle</p> <p>Accessible Yoga for elders</p> <p>U3A talks</p>	<p>Inter-generational Storytime</p> <p>Hip Hop Dance for Elders</p>	<p>John Howard Community Theatre</p> <p>Homework Club</p> <p>Chatterbooks</p> <p>U3A Art History</p>	<p>Lego Club</p> <p>Timeless Tales Intergenerational Club</p> <p>Social Prescribing</p> <p>U3A Life Drawing</p>	<p>Life Drawing</p> <p>Board Games Club</p>