



Essex County Council

# Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee

<b>12:30</b>	<b>Thursday, 22 November 2018</b>	<b>Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH</b>
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**For information about the meeting please ask for:**

Lisa Siggins, Democratic Services Officer

**Telephone:** 033301 34594

**Email:** democratic.services@essex.gov.uk

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<b>1</b>	<b>Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest</b>	<b>4 - 4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes</b> To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2018.	<b>5 - 7</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Questions from the Public</b> A period of up to 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make representations on any item on the agenda for this meeting. On arrival, and before the start of the meeting, please register with the Democratic Services Officer.	
<b>4</b>	<b>Essex Future Library Services</b> To receive report ( <b>PSEG/14/18</b> ) from Councillor Susan Barker, Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Customer updating members on the Future Libraries Strategy.	<b>8 - 148</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b> To note that the next Committee activity day will be on Wednesday, 12 December 2018.	

- 6 Future meeting dates** **149 - 149**  
To agree at the meeting the Committee meeting dates for 2019/2020 as contained in report (**PSEG/15/18**).
- 7 Urgent Business**  
To consider any matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered in public by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

### **Exempt Items**

(During consideration of these items the meeting is not likely to be open to the press and public)

To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of an agenda item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 or it being confidential for the purposes of Section 100A(2) of that Act.

In each case, Members are asked to decide whether, in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption (and discussing the matter in private) outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

- 8 Urgent Exempt Business**  
To consider in private any other matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

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## **Agenda item 1**

**Committee:** Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee

**Enquiries to:** Peter Randall, Senior Democratic Services Officer

### **Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest**

#### **Recommendations:**

To note

1. Membership as shown below
2. Apologies and substitutions
3. Declarations of interest to be made by Members in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct

#### **Membership**

(Quorum: 5)

Councillor I Grundy	Chairman
Councillor B Aspinell	
Councillor T Ball	
Councillor T Cutmore	
Councillor A Erskine	
Councillor S Hillier	
Councillor P Honeywood	
Councillor D Kendall	
Councillor B Massey	
Councillor C Pond	
Councillor R Pratt	
Councillor W Schmitt	
Councillor C Weston	
Councillor J Young	



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**Minutes of the meeting of the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee, held in Committee Room 1 County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH on Thursday, 18 October 2018**

**Present:**

Councillor I Grundy (Chairman)	Councillor B Massey
Councillor T Ball	Councillor C Pond
Councillor T Cutmore	Councillor R Pratt
Councillor S Hillier	Councillor S Robinson
Councillor P Honeywood	Councillor W Schmitt
Councillor D Kendall	Councillor Y Young

- 1 Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest**  
The report of the Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received and it was noted that

1. The membership of the committee was unchanged since the last meeting;
2. Councillor B Aspinell had sent his apologies and was substituted by Councillor S Robinson
3. There were no declaration of interests.

- 2 Minutes**  
The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 17 May 2018 were agreed as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

- 3 Questions from the Public**  
There were no questions from the public.

- 4 Air Quality Review**  
The Committee received a PowerPoint presentation in respect of the Air Quality Review from Jason Torrance, Clean Air Cities Director, UK. Members were advised that UK100 is a network of local government leaders, which seeks to devise and implement plans for the transition to clean energy that are ambitious, cost effective and take the public and business with them.

It supports decision-makers in UK towns, cities and rural areas in their transition to 100% clean energy by 2050. It is the only network for UK local authorities focused solely on climate and clean energy policy.

90 local leaders have already committed to 100% clean energy and more are signing up.

Prior to the presentation the Chairman explained that the Committee has formed the following 3 sub task and finish groups to conduct the review:

- Transport
- Planning
- Public Health and Technology

The presentation included:

- An overview of air pollution
- Air Quality Directions 2017 and 2018
- Details of mandated local authorities
- The clean air timetables for 2018 and 2019
- The local leaders asks of Central Government.

A discussion followed during which the following issues were raised:

- The lack of powers available to local authorities
- The lack of partnership between local authorities and Government
- The possibility of an increase in congestion and cleaning air charging throughout the country
- The need for encouragement for the use of low emission buses
- The conflict in conservation areas regarding the need for more homes whilst trying to reduce pollution

In response to some requests by members for more information, Mr Torrance agreed that following the meeting he would provide clarification regarding some of the technical details touched upon during his presentation and advice regarding some “quick wins” which could be of use.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Mr Torrance for a very informative presentation.

## 5

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The Committee noted that the next activity day will be on Thursday, 22 November 2018 commencing at 12.30 pm due to Cabinet meeting earlier that morning.

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There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 11.40 am.

**Chairman**

		AGENDA ITEM 4
		PSEG/14/18
Committee:	Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	22 November 2018	
Update on Essex Future Library Services		
Enquiries to:	Suzanna Shaw Director for Customer Services suzanna.shaw@essex.gov.uk	

### **Purpose of report**

The Place Services & Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the report and appendices on proposals for the Future Libraries Strategy and determine whether further scrutiny work is required.

### **Background**

Under section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 the Council is placed under a duty 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof'.

Earlier this year the council undertook a public engagement exercise on what the public wants to see from their service. The report describing the outcome of the exercise is at appendix 3.

An assessment of need for library services was undertaken and is presented in appendices 1 and 2, (the draft strategy and supporting needs assessment). These consider what the council should do in order to continue to provide a comprehensive and efficient service meeting the needs of Essex.

### **Overview**

The draft strategy is based on an assessment of need for library services across the county and within specific communities and has been guided by priority outcomes informed by the Needs Assessment. The strategy outlines what is required from the service in future and how this can be delivered, by focussing on creating a service that is relevant to people's lives, is fit for the future and is financially sustainable. The draft strategy is considered to be the most appropriate strategy to prioritise resources in order to meet the needs which have been identified at the current time. The draft strategy is attached as appendix 1 to this report and a rationale and needs assessment for the proposed needs-based library service is attached as appendix 2.

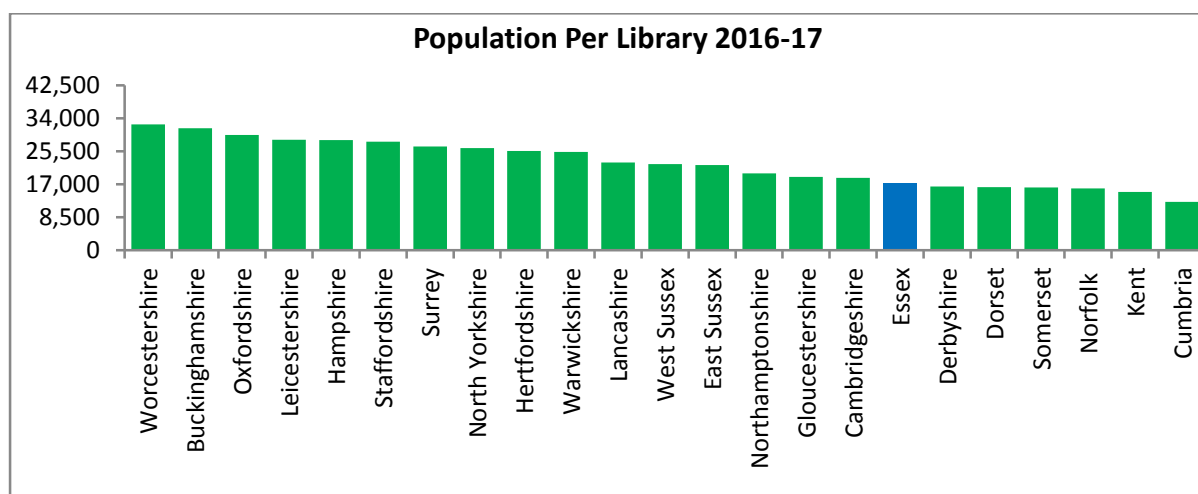
The draft strategy has identified the context in which the library service in Essex is operating in terms of reducing demand for traditional library services, the needs of the population of the county and ECC's priority outcomes, as well as the financial

challenges facing the authority. This included a consideration of factors which may influence need for library services in the future, such as changes in population and population growth, economic factors, and developments in new technology (which are likely to change the way people access library services in future).

Nationally and in Essex, use of public libraries is falling. Between 2012/13 and 2017/18, loans from Essex library services fell 43% from over 7.1m a year to fewer than 4.1m; use of public network computers fell 22%. Across Great Britain, as shown in benchmarking data collated by the CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) loans fell 27% and the number of active library users fell 21%; net expenditure reduced by 20.2% over the same period. Just 16% of Essex residents, 241,400 people, are 'active users' (people who have used their library card in the last year). Over the same period, online loans of eBooks, eAudio and eMagazines rose by 205% and the increased prevalence of smart phones and mobile devices suggests this demand is likely to continue to rise. ECC wants to be in a position to respond to such changes in customer expectations.

Yet Essex provides more libraries and spend more per head on libraries than comparator authorities. ECC provides 74 public libraries (and two mobile libraries): one for every 17,325 residents compared to the national average of one library for every 22,425 people, as shown in graph 1. There are significant variations across the county. Maldon district has a ratio of 1:16,000 residents; Colchester borough has 1: 28,000 residents.

Essex is the second largest library authority in terms of population and has the fourth highest spend per head of population among comparator county authorities. In 2016/17 Essex spent £11.4m on libraries, £13.25 per head, 28% more than the average of £10.37<sup>1</sup>. If ECC had spent at £10.37 per head, that would equate to around £2.8m lower annual cost. The amount Essex spends per active library user is £80 a year, compared to a counties average of £86<sup>2</sup>.



**Graph 1:** Population per Library in comparator English counties 2016-17

<sup>1</sup> Per capita spend among 27 county library authorities, 2017/18, CFO Insights powered by CIPFA.

<sup>2</sup> 2017 CIPFA benchmarking survey

The needs assessment identified areas of need across a broad range of indicators, where the library service would be well placed to help achieve better outcomes for the people of Essex. In addition to providing a core library service offer accessible to residents, by re-prioritising and developing new, more targeted services, we have a key opportunity through the draft strategy to provide a comprehensive service across the county, so that people who want to use it can reasonably access it, whilst creating a library service that residents value and is sustainable into the future.

The draft strategy proposes an overall vision for the service over the five year period as 'a 21st century library service that is inclusive and vibrant, and enables all users to learn, engage and remain connected to their communities'. It is a strategy about books, reading and events, not buildings. It envisages library services sometimes being delivered in different ways and from different places than they are currently, with fewer library buildings and greater use of technology and community spaces, to deliver a service relevant to changing customer needs. Five strategic priorities propose the future focus for delivery of the service. They are:

- putting reading at the heart of what we do
- creating safe social spaces
- investing in and supporting our staff and volunteers
- creating consistently good customer experiences and
- creating a library service that fits people's lives and is convenient.

Each of the strategic priorities will be delivered through a range of enhanced and new services which are described in the draft strategy. These five strategic priorities are also closely aligned to, and will enable the library service to support the council's overarching priority outcomes of driving sustainable economic growth, providing spaces and resources to help people in Essex to increase their skills and prosper, or through providing safe, welcoming and stimulating spaces for all users to learn, engage and remain connected to their communities.

The draft strategy therefore proposes that the way in which people access library services would change. The key elements of the draft strategy are as follows:

- a. **An enhanced eLibrary service** - we would continue to expand the range of online services and materials that are offered through the eLibrary, our online library service, and would actively promote the benefits of the eLibrary;
- b. **A focus on outreach** - we would work closely with other ECC services and partners to reach communities and individuals and promote and deliver our offer more closely with other services in different settings, such as community hubs and other community settings;
- c. **Greater community involvement** – inviting volunteers and groups to work with us to deliver future services to promote library use in communities and, where possible, extend opening hours;

- d. **Smart libraries** – we would explore and where viable, incorporate smart use of technology to improve opening hours, access, customer experience and responsiveness to changing needs;
- e. **Fewer but better library spaces** – we would focus our resources on the libraries with the greatest need, allowing us to be more effective on meeting the needs of communities.

The draft strategy identifies potential for creative thinking about the kinds of spaces library services could use and how buildings could be shared with other services or with organisations. For instance, in future people might browse library shelves in a community or arts centre, collect and return books at a local shop or attend a children's Rhymetime session in a village hall. The strategy invites any interested parties to make contact during the consultation period.

The draft strategy places each current library into one of four tiers. There will be at least one tier 1, 'hub' library, in each district, usually located in the main town where there are good transport links and access to other facilities. Tier 1 libraries will be managed by ECC with volunteer support, provide a core offer and be open for at least 40 hours a week instead of the current 48 - 59 hours a week. Libraries in tier 1 will be in areas of higher population density and usage (which may mean that there would be more than one tier 1 library in a particular district). These libraries have been selected on the basis of local knowledge.

The draft strategy uses evaluation criteria based on the needs assessment have been used to place the remaining libraries into tier 2, 3 or 4. This evaluation is shown in needs assessment at appendix 2. Five criteria have been used, as shown in table.

- \* Tier 2 libraries are library services in locations that rank highest on the needs assessment. These libraries will be managed by ECC with volunteer support where possible and will provide a core offer and a range of opening hours, typically between 16 and 32 per week, instead of the current 16 – 50 hours a week.
- \* Tier 3 libraries are in locations where the council considers that it is not necessary to provide library services in order to meet its statutory duty but where it nonetheless believes there would be benefit in providing library services if suitable arrangements could be made with the community. In these locations ECC would seek community interest in running library services with ECC support and look to identify and have an agreement reached within a period of six months from Cabinet approval of the strategy. If after six months suitable partners cannot be found in some locations, we intend to consult on the future of all those tier 3 libraries where there are no firm plans for them to be run by community or partner organisations. This 6 month period may be extended to up to 12 months if proposals have been received but not agreed - or if we believe that deliverable proposals are likely to be forthcoming during that period. Whilst we hope that community organisations will want to run libraries in this location and we would encourage them to start thinking about plans now, we think we can provide a comprehensive and efficient library service without libraries in these locations. If we cannot find a community organisation and, if the council's financial position remains difficult then closure would be one option we would consider, but that decision may be two years away.

\*Tier 4 locations are where the needs assessment identifies that a library service is not required as part of a comprehensive service. These libraries will be closed, although it may be possible for a community library to be run in these places, if we receive a suitable proposal from a community or partner organisation. If a library closes we may continue to provide some library services in the area, such as reading and literacy-related activities in other venues or additional mobile library stops. Enhanced e-library and online services and home library services will continue to be available to all.

Increased use of volunteers may mean we can extend opening hours to reflect the needs of the community. The introduction of smart library technology can further increase the opening hours by enabling card holders to enter and use library services outside of ECC or volunteer staffed hours.

**Table 1: Needs assessment evaluation criteria**

Criterion	EVALUATION CRITERIA	Weighting of category
Location	Proximity to other libraries. Libraries clustered within two miles, by foot (Google Maps) of each other will be ranked at lower need <sup>3</sup>	30%
Usage	Active users	25%
Population	Libraries per district/borough population size. Based on current figures, not projected growth. Districts with more people per library ranked higher for need	25%
Deprivation	Levels of deprivation around each library (Index of Multiple Deprivation)	15%
Social Isolation (district)	Prevalence of new parents and % of residents over 65 as indicators of higher risk of social isolation <sup>4</sup>	5%
	Weighted score (100%)	100%

<sup>3</sup> A local library was important to 66% of survey respondents (BMG Research survey for Essex Libraries, 2018) and 63% of Essex library users walk to the library (CIPFA survey of adult users, 2016). Travel distance by car or public transport has not been taken into account

<sup>4</sup> The higher weighting for location takes account of rural isolation. *Social Isolation in Essex*, ECC Strategic Planning & Commissioning, 2013; *Social Isolation & Loneliness: Literature & best practice review, research and recommendations*, ECC Organisational Intelligence [date]; *Social Isolation of Pregnant Mothers and Families with Young Children*, ECC Organisational Intelligence, July 2016



**Table 2 below shows the management options and offer at each tier**

	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>	<b>Tier 4</b>
	<b>A comprehensive and efficient service provided by ECC to meet its statutory duty</b>		<b>Not required to meet ECC's statutory duty</b>	
<b>Brief description</b>	Hub libraries, - at least one per district/ borough, may also rent/lease space to other service providers. Location normally in the main town but informed by local knowledge such as proximity to other facilities, transport and population size.	Library services in areas where there is a need for a library, managed by ECC and delivered in partnership with the community or other partners	Library services where no library is needed in order to have a comprehensive and efficient network, but where ECC wishes to support the provision of library services run by a community organisation or other partners with ECC support.	Locations with low evidence of need. A library service in these locations is not required as part of a comprehensive service
<b>Management and Support</b>	Managed by ECC as part of our statutory provision of a comprehensive network	Managed by ECC as part of our statutory provision of a comprehensive network and delivered in partnership with the community or other partners	Run by the community or other partners with ECC support. If no suitable offer is received and accepted within a period of six to twelve months from Cabinet approval of the strategy (see para 3.11 above), we intend to re-consult on the	Not required as part of a comprehensive library service, although it may be possible for a community library to be run in these places, if a suitable proposal from a community or partner organisation is received

			future of that library.	
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Table 3 below places each of the 74 libraries into one of the four tiers, using the criteria described in table 1 above.

**Table 3:** Libraries by tier by district

District	Library	Proposed tier	District	Library	Proposed tier
Basildon	Basildon	1	Colchester	Tiptree	3
	Billericay	1		West Mersea	3
	Fryerns	4		Wivenhoe	3
	Laindon	2	Epping Forest	Buckhurst Hill	4
	Pitsea	2		Chigwell	4
	Vange	4		Chipping Ongar	2
	Wickford	1		Debden	4
Braintree	Braintree	1		Epping	2
	Coggeshall	3		Loughton	1
	Earls Colne	3		North Weald	4
	Halstead	2		Waltham Abbey	2
	Hatfield Peverel	4	Harlow	Great Parndon	3
	Kelvedon	4		Harlow	1
	Sible Hedingham	4		Mark Hall	4
	Silver End	4		Old Harlow	2
	Witham	1		Tye Green	4
Brentwood	Brentwood	1	Maldon	Burnham-on-Crouch	2
	Ingatestone	3		Maldon	1
	Shenfield	3		Southminster	4
Castle Point	Canvey Island	1		Wickham Bishops	4
	Great Tarpots	3	Rochford	Great Wakering	4
	Hadleigh	3		Hockley	3
	South Benfleet	3		Hullbridge	4
Chelmsford	Broomfield	4		Rayleigh	1
	Chelmsford	1		Rochford	2
	Danbury	4	Tendring	Brightlingsea	3
	Galleywood	4		Clacton	1
	Great Baddow	2		Frinton	3
	North Melbourne	2		Harwich	2
	S Woodham Ferrers	2		Holland	4
	Springfield	3		Manningtree	3
	Stock	4		Walton	3
	Writtle	4		West Clacton	3
				Dunmow	2
Colchester	Colchester	1	Uttlesford	Saffron Walden	1
	Greenstead	2		Stansted	4
	Prettygate	4		Thaxted	4
	Stanway	3			

ECC intends to withdraw service from tier 4 locations, on the basis that because of relatively low demand, the availability of other services and considering the community served, a library service is not required in these locations as part of the comprehensive library service offer.

The strategy invites interest from groups offering shared space to library services or aspects of the library service, in supporting ECC provision in tier 2 and in running library services with ECC support in tier 3 locations. In planning service provision ECC will take account of existing partnerships or interest in joint working and of the best use of available buildings and spaces.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been conducted to inform decision-making of the draft strategy (EqIA, Appendix 4). The EqIA is an assessment of the impact of the proposals and further detailed assessments will be undertaken throughout the development of the strategy and following public consultation. This current draft identifies **four** main groups who it is considered might be more affected by the proposals or that the proposals may impact more significantly than others, by reason of the fact that they are more likely to use library services or may find it harder to travel. These are:

- those aged 60 and over (22% of library service users),
- children under nine years of age (23% of library service users),
- females, who make up 58% of users and new parents
- those who identify as Black, Asian or other ethnic minorities – this equates to 7% of the Essex populations and 11% of Essex Libraries active members <sup>5</sup>.

Rurality is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 but is an additional factor to take into account when considering the impact of the proposals. For those living in rural communities the impact is likely to be that they would have further to travel to an alternative library service. Where residents are unable or have difficulties accessing their nearest library service, Essex offers a range of alternative solutions such as the mobile library service, home library service, friends and family memberships and online library service.

## **Delivery Model**

Essex library services are currently delivered in-house, managed by ECC. There are alternative delivery models that some other authorities use, such as setting up a local authority trading company, transferring the whole service to a commercial company or charitable trust, or partnering in a joint venture.

We visited a number of library services run by other local authorities and considered the approach taken by others during the development of the Strategy, including Suffolk County Council who have created a Public Service Mutual<sup>6</sup> organisation to

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<sup>5</sup> Your community, libraries and you: summary report of public engagement and research, 2018

<sup>6</sup> Public Service Mutual: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-alternative-delivery-models-toolkit/alternative-delivery-models-explained#adm-detail>

deliver their library services, Peterborough which has introduced smart library access and East Sussex who are delivering in-house (with re-engineering). Such schemes have savings programmes that include many of the options we have either delivered already or that we propose to deliver through the strategy.

The draft strategy proposes that at this time the service be kept in house, albeit that we anticipate that community libraries and tier 3 libraries will be run by community organisations. Options will continue to be reviewed over the life of the strategy.

### Considered options

The following options have been considered. Option 2 is the recommended option to enable the council to retain a comprehensive and efficient service, whilst increasing community involvement and achieving required savings.

	Option 1	Option 2 (Recommended)	Option 3
<b>Tier 1</b>	Retain	Retain	Retain
<b>Tier 2</b>	Retain	Retain	Run by the community or other partners with ECC support or retain if no suitable offer is forthcoming over the life of the Strategy
<b>Tier 3</b>	Retain	Run by the community or other partners with ECC support. If no suitable offer is received and accepted within a period of six months from Cabinet approval of the strategy, we intend to re-consult on the future of that library. This six month period may be extended to up to 12 months if proposals have been received but not agreed - or if we believe that deliverable proposals are likely to be forthcoming during that period.	Run by the community or other partners with ECC support or withdraw provision if no suitable offer is forthcoming within 12 months
<b>Tier 4</b>	Withdraw Provision	Withdraw Provision	Withdraw Provision
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>Up to £974k</b>	<b>Up to £2m*</b>	<b>Up to £3.7m*</b>

\* All savings are indicative estimates only, subject to further verification, and do not include additional one off or ongoing costs of supporting community libraries or any capital costs or benefits.

### **Impact and opportunity**

Closure of tier 4 library services would affect 11% of active users and reduce revenue expenditure on library services by circa 11%. Changes to provision in tier 3 would affect 17% of active users, although in most cases we anticipate that they will be able to access library services in other locations and we anticipate that many libraries in tier 3 locations will be taken over by community organisations. Tier 3 library services account for circa 12% of revenue expenditure. Closure of tier 4 services and changes to tier 3 could save up to £2m a year in total, depending on the level of community or partner interest and ECC support provided. It should be noted that many of the closures are lightly used libraries and/or are in locations where alternative libraries are nearby, meaning that in seeking changes to tier 3 and 4 libraries we believe that the service will remain comprehensive and efficient and will make it as easy as possible for as many people as possible to continue to access library services. Based on the information we have, we have no reason to think that the libraries selected for changes will have a bigger impact on people with a protected characteristic than if other locations had been selected instead. We do not however have access to data about the usage of individual libraries by ethnicity or racial origin. Clearly there is a risk that some service users will find it harder to access libraries than they currently do, although by encouraging proposals from the community and by careful selection of libraries we believe we have kept this to a minimum.

The statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for people who desire to use it can be met through provision of library services in tier 1 and tier 2 locations plus eLibrary, mobile and home library services. However, recognising the benefit of providing library services in tier 3 locations, support will be offered to community groups interested in running community libraries in these locations. Account will be taken of the potential to share space with other ECC services and of existing partnerships or interest; other groups will be invited to express interest during the consultation. Usage of ECC-run and community-run services and evidence of need will be reviewed annually and support may be withdrawn in future if there is insufficient evidence of need. Additional mobile library stops could be added to meet needs where no other provision exists, for example if a tier 4 library closes and there is no alternative provision nearby.

### **Next steps**

Given the proposed changes in service provision, a 12-week public consultation is proposed, to run from 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018 to 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

The primary response channel will be an online survey, hosted on the Essex Insight website. There will also be the option to respond by phone or on paper for those who cannot or do not wish to respond online. The survey will be available in large print, in an Easy Read version that will enable us to capture the views of children and young people under 16.

District, borough and city leaders, town and parish councils, partner organisations and stakeholders will be notified and invited to respond to the consultation and share information about the consultation and respond. Active users will be notified by text, phone, email or letter and the consultation will be publicised in libraries, via ECC channels and via media and social media. Information drop-ins will be held at libraries around the county, for people to find out more before responding.

Organisations will be invited to express interest in joint provision. When implementing the strategy we will take account of these and of discussions that have already taken place with interested organisations. Such discussions will continue during the consultation period.

Once the consultation period is over, responses received will be evaluated, and the Cabinet will be asked to adopt a final version of the strategy in the light of the public consultation which will be brought to Cabinet in summer 2019 for approval.

## **Issues for consideration**

### **Financial implications**

It is anticipated that resources required to evaluate responses to the consultation will be met from existing Customer Services resources.

During the period of consultation, detailed analysis will be undertaken to identify the technology and property implications of each option.

Should the costs of the requirements to gather information not be able to be met from within existing Customer Services budgets, the relevant cabinet member will be asked to agree additional funding via Cabinet Member Action.

### **Legal implications**

ECC has a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' in the area that want to make use of it.

In considering how to meet the duty the Council should carry out an assessment of the needs which the service has to meet. In order to ensure that the needs assessment is accurate, it is advisable to consult on the needs assessment as alongside any proposals to change the service.

Changes to library services can be examined by the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport.

### **Equality and Diversity implications**



The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic. However, this assessment will be reviewed with individual impact assessments completed following feedback from consultation.

## **List of appendices**

Appendix 1: Essex Future Library Service 2019 to 2024 draft strategy

Appendix 2: Essex Library Services Need Assessment

Appendix 3: Your community, libraries and you: summary report of public engagement and research, 2018

Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment

# Essex Future Library Services Strategy

2019 - 2024



**This is a strategy for the provision of library services in Essex over the next five years, from 2019/20 to 2023/24. This document is a draft version, published for public consultation which will run from 29 November 2018 to 20 February 2019. Essex County Council will consider responses to the consultation and may amend the strategy before agreeing the final version.**

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# Foreword

I am incredibly proud of the public library service in Essex and the staff and volunteers who deliver it. Library services play a unique role in our society as providers of reading, learning, digital access and culture, and as safe community spaces.

Library services have successfully adapted before to changing demands and customer needs. But now, with advances in technology and evolving customer expectations, they need to adapt even further. We must seize the opportunities presented by technology and embrace the changing demands of service users.

The facts and figures are stark.

Use of libraries has slumped over the last five years – book borrowing has almost halved, fewer than one in five Essex residents are active library users and fewer people now use the public computers in libraries. We need to reimagine the service to make it relevant to people's lives, now and in future, and financially sustainable.

Earlier this year, we asked the people of Essex what their priorities for future libraries were. Books and reading were top of their list, so this strategy listens to this and is about books and library services, not buildings.

Our vision is that we will have a 21st century library service that is inclusive and vibrant, one that offers a consistently good customer experience, embraces digital technology and enables all users to learn, engage and remain connected to their communities. We are ambitious in our thinking; we will explore the opportunities technology offers and be open to new and creative ideas.

We want to support our staff and volunteers to work in different ways and encourage communities and partners to get involved.

But there are challenges ahead. We need to spend taxpayers' money wisely. We need to be innovative and resourceful, and work with the people of Essex to make the best of the resources we have.

Essex has one of the largest networks of libraries in the country. But it is irresponsible to spend taxpayers money on keeping poorly used buildings open when we could spend it on improving the library services that people do use and need whilst still maintaining a network of well-located libraries throughout Essex. So, our goal is to have a smaller number of libraries more effectively focused on meeting the needs of communities.

We propose placing library services into four tiers based on needs across the county and closing libraries where they are not required - while still providing a comprehensive library service through the network, supported by our eLibrary, and mobile and home library services, and mobile and home library services.

This is a draft strategy; public opinion and engagement on these proposals is vital. I want to know what you think of these proposals before any decisions are made. You can find out more at [essex.gov.uk/libraries-consultation](http://essex.gov.uk/libraries-consultation) or at a drop-in at one of our libraries. The public consultation on this strategy will be open for 12 weeks from 29 November to 20 February 2019, so please have your say by completing the consultation survey.

I look forward to finding out what you think about our proposals and creating a new library strategy that works for the people of Essex.



**Cllr Susan Barker**

Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate

# Summary

Our vision for library services over the next five years is a 21st century library service that is inclusive and vibrant, and enables users to learn, engage and remain connected to their communities.

Over the lifetime of this strategy, our ambition is that we will:

- Have books and reading at the heart of our library service offer
- Have a class-leading eLibrary and embrace digital technology
- Have a smaller number of libraries more effectively focused on meeting the needs of communities
- Work in partnership with our communities to run and improve library services
- Offer a consistently good customer experience

This is a strategy about library services not buildings. It focuses on how best to provide library services, both physical and online. What we provide will be based on need, and will be provided in different ways and in different locations and spaces than currently.

For instance, library shelves and study spaces could be in community centres or other public buildings, children's story-times or library events could take place in village halls, smart access and self-service technology could make it much easier for you to browse, study, borrow and return books outside regular opening hours.

In the future, we think community groups and volunteers are much more likely to be involved in delivering library services, taking the opportunity for people who live and work in the community and who best understand the unique needs of their community to run services in ways that fit local needs.

Library services are integral to society, helping people to thrive and prosper. They help create great places to grow up, live and work and help people get a good start in life and age well.

But customer expectations are changing, our population is growing, and we need to make sure that we offer the best possible value for money. The county council also needs to ensure it meets its statutory duty and provides a library service that is fit for the future, financially sustainable and fits with people's lives and expectations.

Essex Libraries serve a population of 1.5m through 74 library buildings, eLibrary services, two mobile libraries and home library service volunteers. It also supports eight volunteer-run community libraries that are not part of the core offer. The location and spread of libraries are the result of historical decisions rather than design and do not reflect current demographics or need.

In 2016-17, Essex was the second largest library authority in England, with a higher than average number of outlets and the fourth highest spending per head of population (see p20).

But in the last five years, here in Essex and across the country, use of libraries has sharply declined. Essex Libraries' loans decreased 43% from over 7.1m loans a year in 2012/13 to less than 4.1m loans in 2017/18. Demand for public network computers in libraries fell 22% over the same period.

The equivalent of 16% of Essex residents – fewer than one in five – are active library users.

Meanwhile, technology has transformed how people consume information and entertainment. Loans of eBooks, eAudio and eMagazines rose 205%, from 61,000 to 186,000 in five years. And with 85% of UK adults now owning a smartphone and 10% using an eReader daily, we expect that trend to continue. In March 2018, we did extensive research and engagement with Essex residents and library users (p15). Your feedback informs this strategy and the results are published in appendix 3, Your Community, Libraries and You. Our priorities (p21), with books and reading at the top, reflect your priorities.

These are challenging times for all local government. We can no longer afford to spend as much on services as before and we must take opportunities to do things in new and more efficient ways. In the future we will look to reduce the number of library buildings that we manage, so that we can focus our attention on meeting needs.

This strategy sets out the priorities for library services, based on what you have told us. It also defines a 'core offer' you can expect from library services and a future approach that will meet our statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service.

## Key points

- Keep books and reading at the heart of our comprehensive library offer, as this is the top priority for the people of Essex
- Invest in eLibrary and online services to respond to changing demand, particularly among younger users, and make services more accessible, for instance offering easier browsing, ordering and downloads on mobile devices.
- Explore the potential of smart libraries – offering members swipe card access outside staffed opening hours - to increase opening hours and the ways people can use libraries, and introduce them where viable.
- Seek investment to modernise library spaces to a consistent standard, so they are welcoming, easy to use and meet diverse user needs.
- Focus on outreach, working closely with other ECC services and partners to reach communities and individuals with the greatest needs and promote and deliver our offer more closely with other services in different settings, such as community hubs and other community settings.
- Provide future library services based on evidence of need, taking into account distance between locations, usage, population size, deprivation and social isolation.

- This strategy places current libraries in four tiers, based on evidence of need. We propose that the future of the existing library network will be:
  - o Tier 1: main or 'hub' libraries, at least one per district/borough, managed by Essex County Council (ECC) as part of our statutory provision of a comprehensive network.
  - o Tier 2: library services in areas where there is a need for them, managed by ECC as part of our statutory provision of a comprehensive network and delivered in partnership with the community or other partner
  - o Tier 3: locations where no library service is needed in order to have a comprehensive and efficient network, but where ECC wishes to support the provision of library services run by a community or partner organisation with ECC support.
  - o Tier 4: locations where a library service is not required as part of a comprehensive service but where ECC will consider proposals for community libraries.

Tier 1 libraries will act as hubs for their area. The council will meet its statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service through a combination of library services in tiers 1 and 2, the online eLibrary, mobile libraries and the home library service.

Tier 3 community-run libraries will supplement the core offer. Partners could include community groups or other agencies. ECC will review mobile library stops to meet changing needs.

More information about the tiered approach is on p23 and in the needs assessment which you can view at [essex.gov.uk/libraries-consultation](https://essex.gov.uk/libraries-consultation) or ask to see in your library.

This strategy is about the service, not the buildings. However, it is worth noting that as the strategy develops, we will work in partnership to make the most efficient use of public buildings, whether owned by the council, public bodies or community organisations.

This includes considering the most appropriate building for the service. Most library services will be in shared spaces, not their current buildings by 2024.

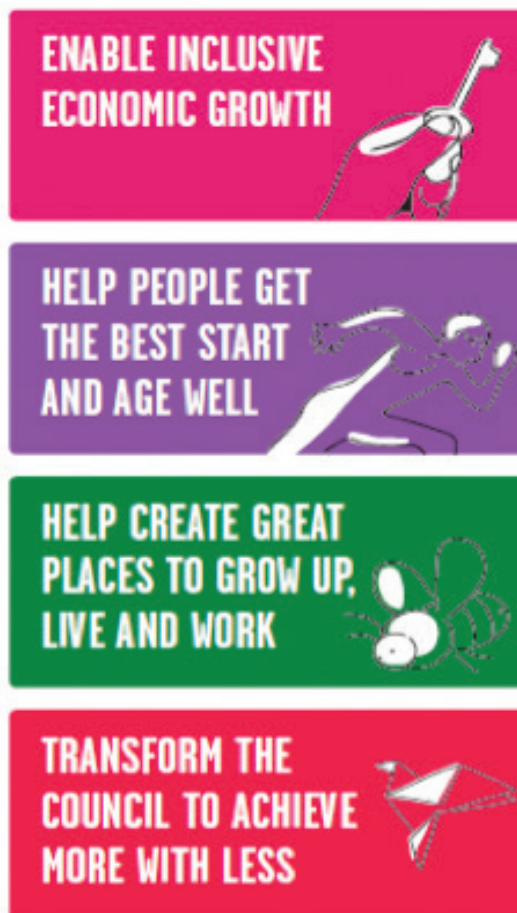


# Our vision and ambition

## Essex County Council's Organisation Strategy 2017-21

Libraries have a key role to play in enabling Essex County Council to deliver on its strategic aims, be that through providing spaces and resources to help people in Essex to increase their skills and prosper, or through providing safe, welcoming and stimulating spaces for all users to learn, engage and remain connected to their communities.

As library services evolve to meet our changing communities, we recognise that we need to achieve more with less, be that through limiting costs or driving growth in revenue. We will re-imagine how residents' needs can be met in a digital world and support our staff to deliver great customer service.



## Our Vision

**Our vision for library services over the next five years is a 21st century library service that is inclusive and vibrant, and enables all users to learn, engage and remain connected to their communities.**

**We are ambitious for our library service – we recognise the challenges and will embrace the opportunities. Over the course of this strategy we will build on the great foundations of our library service to achieve our vision.**

## Our Ambition

Over the life of this strategy we will continue to deliver our core offer and seek new ways of working so that in 2024 Essex library service will:

- Have books and reading at the heart of our library service offer
- Have a smaller number of libraries more effectively focused on meeting the needs of communities
- Work in partnership with our communities to run and improve library services
- Offer a consistently good customer experience
- Have a comprehensive eLibrary offer and embrace digital technology.

## What will be different in five years?

If this strategy is delivered, we expect that by 2024 it will have the following impact:

- There will be a consistent library service across the county, that people can access more easily in ways and at times that are convenient to them, whether online or on the ground
- People will be able to access library services online more easily 24 hours a day via the eLibrary
- The quality and range of books, eBooks and materials on offer will be much better informed by customers' preferences, through improvements in management systems and insight
- We will have re-imagined how people access library services and how reading materials are borrowed and distributed. It will be more of a service 'without walls': fewer library buildings, more shared spaces with other council services or community groups, many more people borrowing and reading online, aspects of the service delivered in community spaces according to what best meets local needs.

For instance, children's activities may take place in a village hall or community centre; customers may be able to pick up items from an outlet in a local shop or leisure centre

- Essex residents and community groups will be much more involved, with many libraries run by or run jointly with community groups and volunteers
- Extended opening hours through volunteer support and the introduction of smart library technology that, where viable, will enable people to use libraries at times that are convenient to them
- Smart library technology will also make it easier for community groups and businesses to hire library spaces for other activities and generate income to support libraries.

*"I had an appointment at the Job Centre and Council Offices. When it's cold outside it's great that everything is under one roof. Don't need to leave the building."*

Female Basildon library user, age 49

# Context

## Library Services in Essex

Essex Libraries serve a population of 1.4m through 74 library buildings, an eLibrary service, two mobile libraries, home library service volunteers and support for eight volunteer-run community libraries. The location and spread of libraries is a result of historical decisions rather than design and does not reflect current demographics or need.

In 2016-17, Essex was the second largest library authority in England, with a higher than average number of outlets and the fourth highest spending per head of population.

The national average ratio is one library per 22,425 people; in Essex the ratio is one per 17,325.<sup>i</sup>







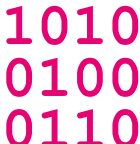

The mobile library service was reviewed and changed after public consultation in 2017-18. This strategy does not propose another review of mobile libraries but routes and timetables may be adjusted over the course of the strategy to meet changing needs.

Library services have evolved and changed over recent years.

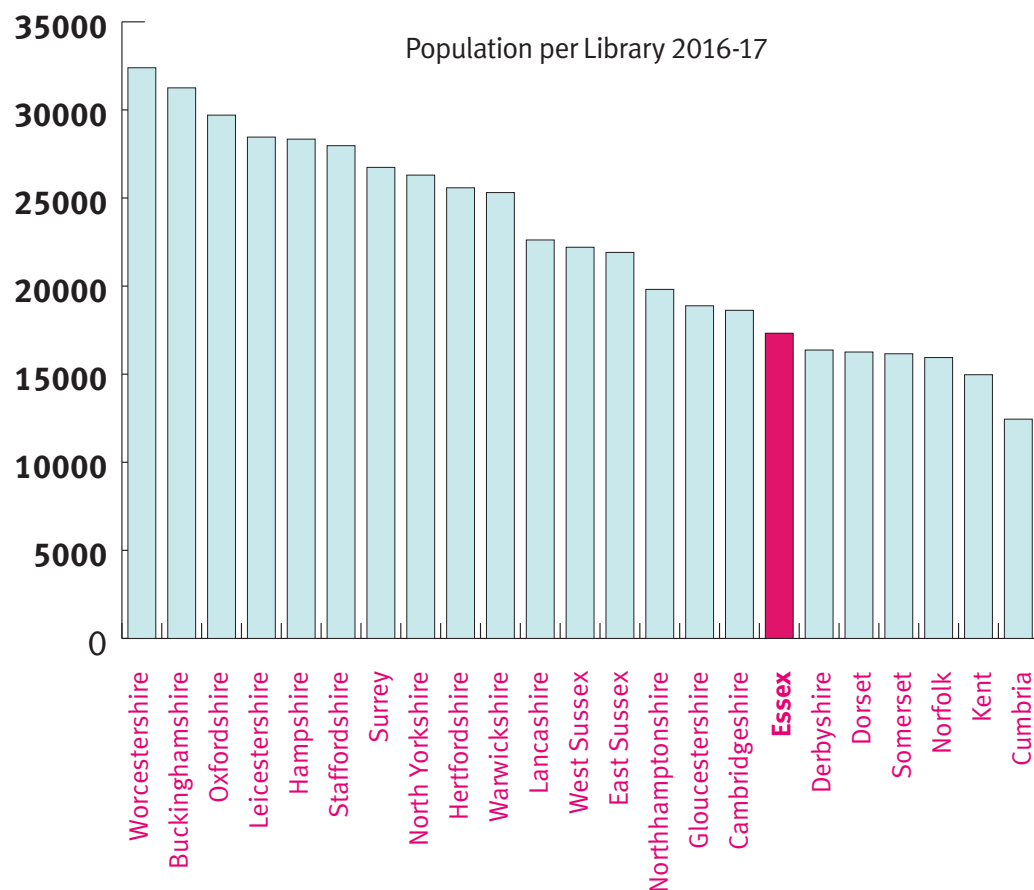
They play a role in preventing health and social problems by providing safe spaces where people

can access or find out about other services, meet others and socialise or simply spend time.

## Some of the many things that happen in libraries

 <b>Books and magazines</b>	 <b>Job clubs and job search help</b>	 <b>Free public network computers</b>	 <b>Baby and Toddler Rhymetimes</b>
 <b>Book readings, music and events</b>	 <b>Language books and classes</b>	 <b>Code Clubs</b>	 <b>Wifi access</b>

## How Essex compares with other counties

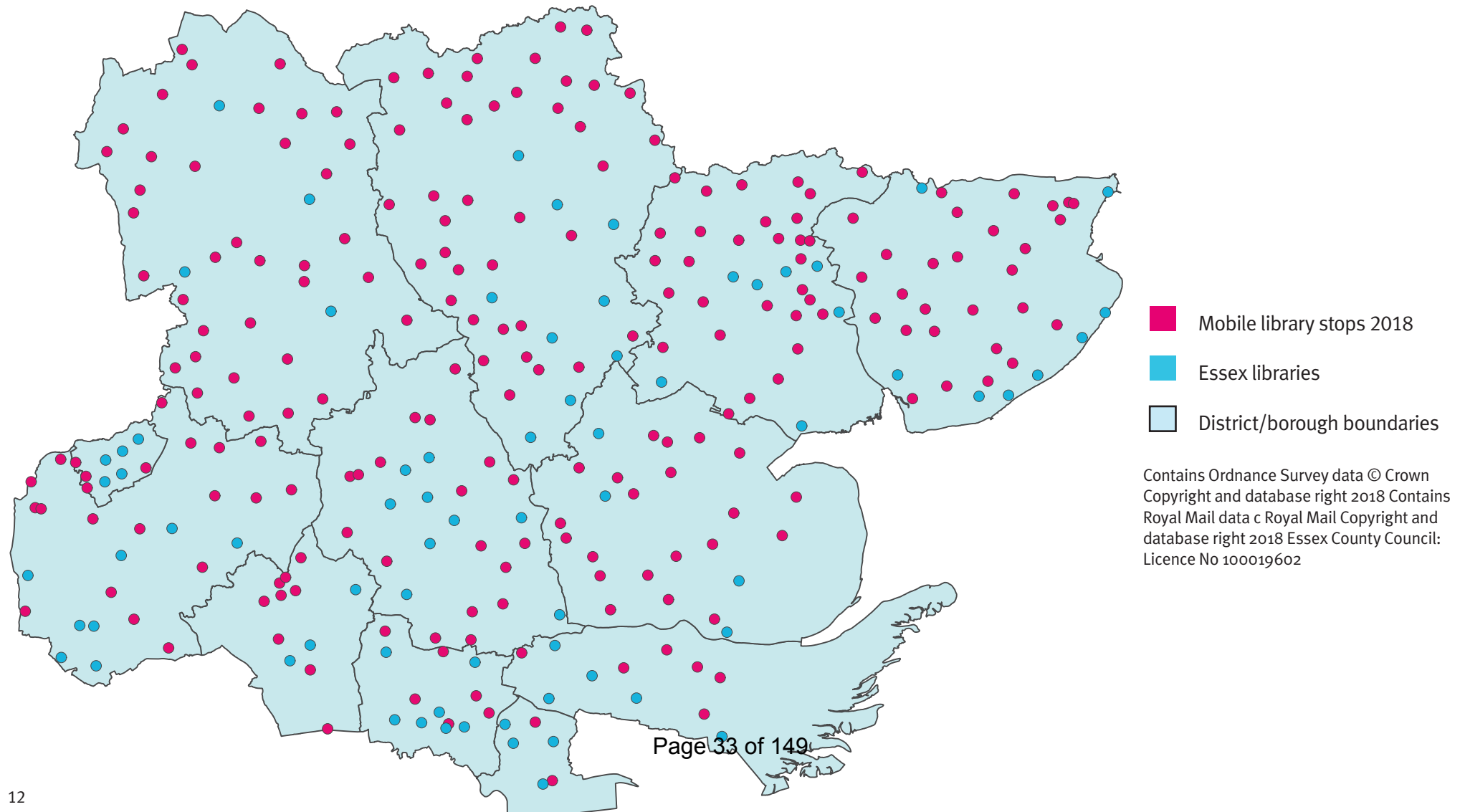


Source: Cipfa Benchmarking 16-17. Population / Authority run libraries (includes mobiles).  
Outlier Lincolnshire excluded due to only having 2.

County	Actual	No of libraries	Council run libraries	Population per library based on current number of libraries	Population per library based on number of council run libraries
Lincolnshire	743,400	51	2	14576.47	371700.00
Worcestershire	583,100	23	18	25352.17	32394.44
Buckinghamshire	534,700	30	17	17823.33	31452.94
Oxfordshire	683,200	43	23	15888.37	29704.35
Leicestershire	683,000	51	24	13392.16	28458.33
Hampshire	1,360,400	53	48	25667.92	28341.67
Staffordshire	867,100	43	31	20165.12	27970.97
Surrey	1,176,500	54	44	21787.04	26738.64
North Yorkshire	604,900	43	23	14067.44	26300.00
Hertfordshire	1,176,700	48	46	24514.58	25580.43
Warwickshire	556,800	31	22	17961.29	25309.09
Lancashire	1,198,800	47	53	25506.38	22618.87
West Sussex	843,800	36	38	23438.89	22205.26
East Sussex	547,800	26	25	21069.23	21912.00
Northamptonshire	733,100	36	37	20363.89	19813.51
Gloucestershire	623,100	40	33	15577.50	18881.82
Cambridgeshire	651,900	42	35	15521.43	18625.71
<b>Essex</b>	<b>1,455,300</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>19404.00</b>	<b>17325.00</b>
Derbyshire	785,800	46	48	17082.61	16370.83
Dorset	422,700	33	26	12809.09	16257.69
Somerset	549,400	34	34	16158.82	16158.82
Norfolk	892,900	47	56	18997.87	15944.64
Kent	1,541,900	99	103	15574.75	14969.90
Cumbria	497,900	40	40	12447.50	12447.50
Suffolk	745,300	45	0	16562.22	
Devon	779,800	50	0	15596.00	
Nottinghamshire	810,700	60	0	13511.67	

## Essex libraries and mobile library stops, April 2018

The map below shows where Essex libraries and mobile library stops are currently located. Other maps, showing libraries in relation to areas of deprivation and where there are clusters of libraries are in the Needs Assessment that supports this strategy. Data information for this map can be found at [essex.gov.uk/libraries-consultation](http://essex.gov.uk/libraries-consultation).

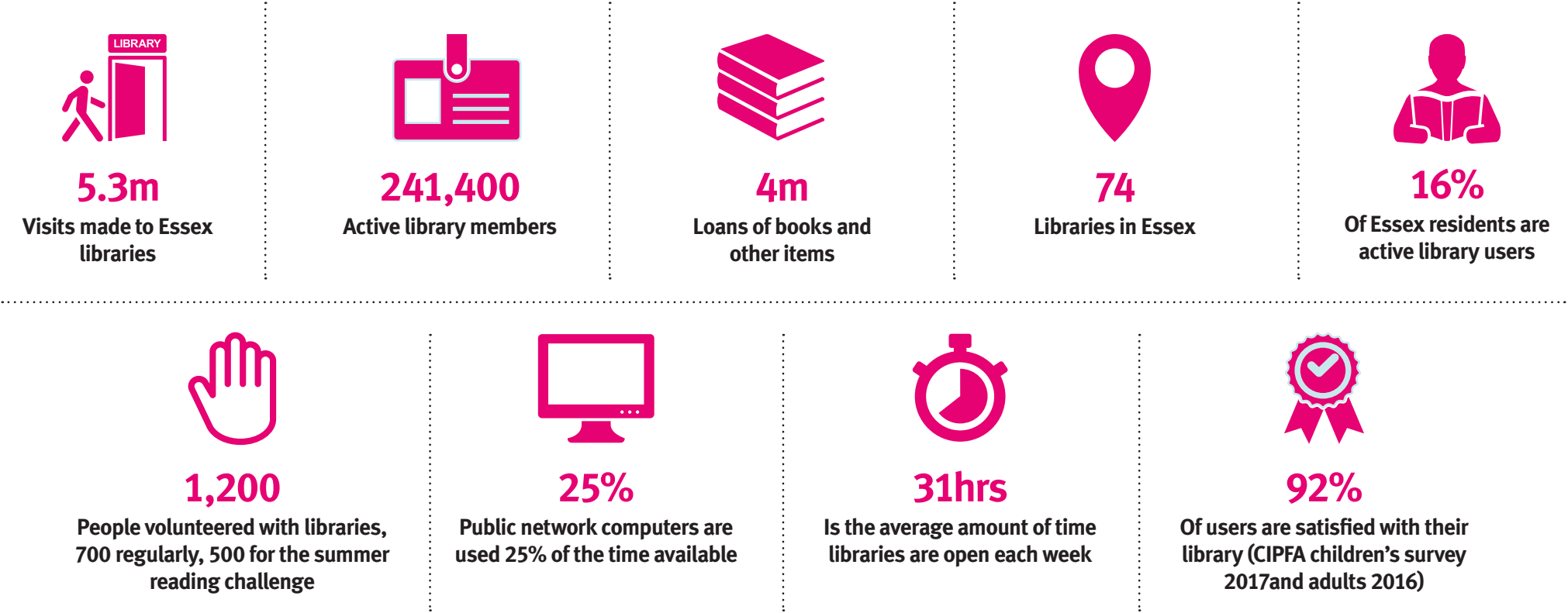








# Essex libraries use in 2017-18



## National Context

Essex County Council has a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a ‘comprehensive and efficient’ library service that lends books and other materials free to people who live, work or study in Essex and want to use it.

We have looked at best practice around the country and guidance from the government’s Libraries Taskforce, but most importantly we have listened to the views of Essex residents and their needs. This is a library strategy for Essex.

# What Essex people say

In spring 2018 Essex County Council ran public engagement and research to find out what people think about libraries, what they value and what their priorities for future library services are.

This included a countywide survey, interviews with users, focus groups with young people and public events for community groups, elected representatives and the public. More than 3,000 people responded. A summary of the research and engagement is published as a supporting document to this strategy.

## Key points

- **Books and reading** are still far and away the top priority: that's what 90% of users visit libraries for now and what survey respondents say is priority for the future
- **People use library services at different stages of their lives.** Children and young people are most likely to use them; Women use them more than men. Life changes such as becoming a parent, losing a job or retiring are triggers for using them more. People who don't use library services say they either don't need them or don't have time. Working age men are least likely to use them.
- **People value well-informed staff and volunteers** to help them and users are satisfied with the service they get.
- **People value having a local library.** Two out of five visit more than one library, either because they are near home and work, to access the books or materials they are interested in or, because the opening hours at different libraries are convenient to them.
- **Libraries are valued as safe social spaces** to find a quiet space, help, information, learning, social activities or simply shelter.
- **People want to get involved.** Around 1,200 people already volunteer in libraries, One in four would consider volunteering and eight community-run libraries are now open.
- **Some people want activities, some want quiet.** Some people want to be able to access more services and do more things in libraries; others worry that too many activities take the focus away from books and reading and libraries are no longer the quiet spaces they value. They suggested having quiet booths, zones, days or designated 'quiet libraries'.
- **Libraries are seen as valuable public spaces** that could be hired for community use in the evenings and at weekends: as rehearsal spaces or performance venues, for art exhibitions, for meetings and public celebrations.
- **Many recognise the budget constraints** and that hiring out spaces generates income to support the service. But there is a tension between this and the impact that charging for space might have on voluntary groups.
- **Young people do not feel libraries are designed and delivered to meet their needs.** The layout of libraries is a priority for them, to give space for study, reading, games and chilling out. They also want more digital provision and libraries open in the evenings.



## Top six public priorities (% level of support)



**89%**

Quality and range of  
books and other stock



**70%**

Well informed staff  
or volunteers to assist



**66%**

A local library



**71%**

Adult learning classes



**55%**

Providing health  
information and advice



**62%**

Convenient opening  
times



**35%**

A range of children's  
events and activities



**34%**

Access to computers



**54%**

Accessing other council  
services, e.g. council  
tax/housing



**55%**

Groups/activities run  
by the community

## What else could your library be used for (% level of support)

# Why do we need a new strategy?

*The way people use libraries and their expectations of public services are changing. Financial and demographic challenges are increasing. Standing still is not an option.*

Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England, 2016-2021, Department for Culture, Media and Sport. <sup>ii</sup>

Libraries remain a valued part of the communities they serve. We have continued to invest in the service, for instance offering eBooks, improving our online catalogue and opening a new children's library in Chelmsford. But in the last five years, traditional use of libraries has significantly fallen.

*“Free activities: that’s really important. There are lots of single mums in Loughton - they may only have libraries as a place to go for free, to access activities for their little ones, and for themselves. It can be lonely for them.”*

Female Loughton library user, age 55

We know there are significant budget pressures ahead. The council can no longer afford to spend as much on its services as before and must consider all options to deliver services in new and more efficient ways.

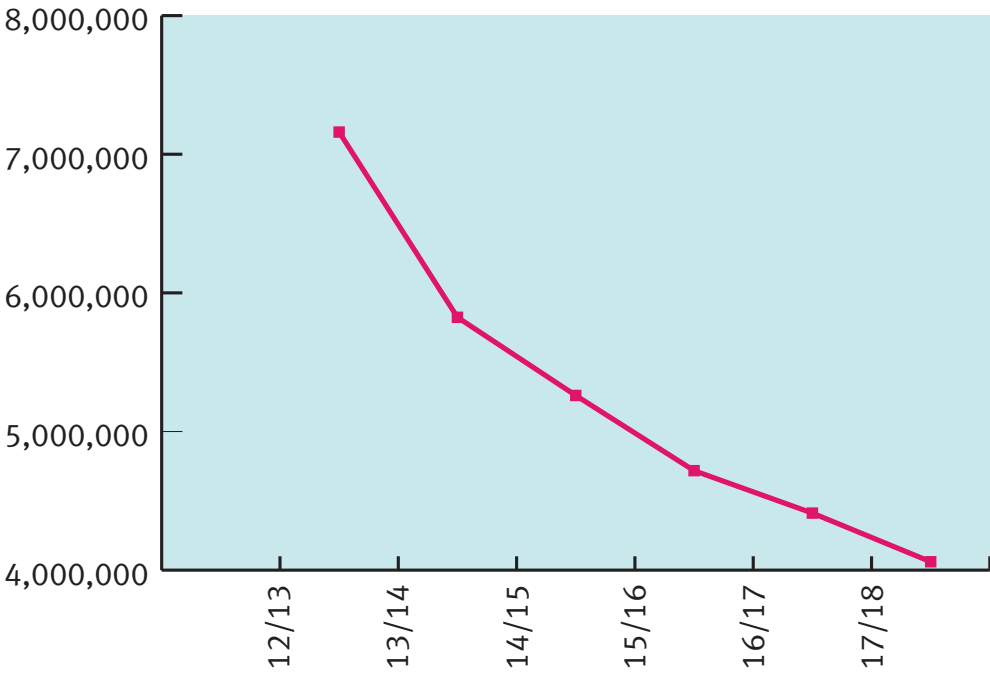
Technology is fast developing and the way people use libraries is changing. The number of people visiting libraries to borrow books is steadily falling. In the last five years, loans of books and other material have dropped 43%. Demand for public network computers fell 22% over the same period. The number of active library users (people who have used their library card in the last year) fell by 17% (from 291,000 to 241,400). <sup>iii</sup>

At the same time, online demand is rising. Loans of eBooks, eAudio and eMagazines rose 205%, from 61,000 to 186,000 over the period as these options became more readily available (eMagazines were not available before 2014) and as more people gained online access and devices.

According to an annual survey of electronic device use in the UK, 85% of adults owned a smartphone, in 2017, up from 52% in 2012; 78% own a laptop (up from 73%) and 68% own a tablet (up from 16%). The study also found that 10% of adults use an eReader daily and the percentage of 55 to 75 year olds owning smartphones rose from 29% to 71% between 2012 and 2017. It forecast that this upward trend would continue. <sup>iv</sup>

Graph 1: Annual loans

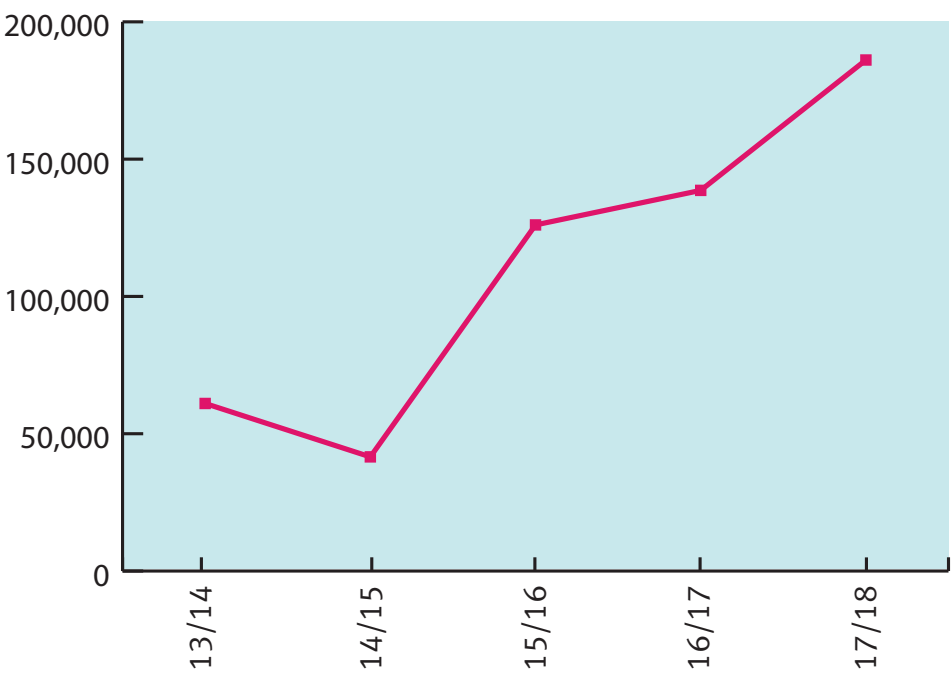
Year	Amount
2012/13	715,9974
2013/14	582,3790
2014/15	525,9998
2015/16	471,7576
2016/17	441,1379
2017/18	406,0467



Graph 2: Loans of eBooks, eAudio and eMagazines

Year	Amount
2013-14	61,018
2014-15	41,571
2015-16	126,042
2016-17	138,620
2017-18	186,099

Covers eBooks and eAudio  
and eMagazines from June 14



Technology presents us with a great many opportunities, and we are keen to re-imagine how residents' needs may be met in a digital world.

People in Essex are changing too. Essex's population is forecast to grow by 20% between 2014 and 2039, to 1.7m.<sup>v</sup> It is currently 1.48m. One in five of the population are aged over 65. By 2039 it is predicted that there will be 61% more over 65 year olds and 16% more under 16 year olds.

The impacts are varied, with a significant association with child poverty and lower educational attainment. These challenges are not consistently spread across Essex so our library service therefore needs to be able to 'flex' to recognise and respond to differing needs.

*"We'd like chill out zones, quiet spaces, extended computer time, cafes, loan-an iPad, after school revision activities and post-school takeover time from 3-7pm."*

Participant in a focus group for young people aged 12 to 18

We know that many Essex residents experience feelings of loneliness or isolation.<sup>vi</sup> These feelings do not discriminate by age or gender but we know people in rural areas, older people and new parents can be particularly affected. Libraries have a vital role to play in this. For example, Rhymetime sessions for babies and toddlers are activities where new parents can meet and socialise.

Libraries reach and support the whole community regardless of age, gender, socioeconomic status or educational attainment. This is reflected in what people want from their library, be that a quiet place to study, a shared space for community events, or access to books to encourage a love of reading from early years to old age. This does however create challenges. We need spaces that work for all these audiences and needs.

Whilst we do not underestimate these challenges, the opportunities to create a sustainable service that has a lasting impact on the lives of Essex residents are great.

Doing nothing is not an option. If we do not reshape the service it will become increasingly irrelevant to people's lives, use will continue to fall while the costs of maintaining our ageing estate of 74 buildings will continue to rise.

Within five years it is highly likely that funding will run out and we will be forced to close libraries without a clear plan or alternative provision.

## Budget and funding

The financial outlook for all local government is challenging and as a public body it is important we spend taxpayers' money wisely. Demand for services is increasing and becoming more complex. Government funding is reducing. Over the last five years Essex County Council has saved £597 million. This track record has enabled the council to maintain services and also invest for the future. However, we still face substantial challenges.

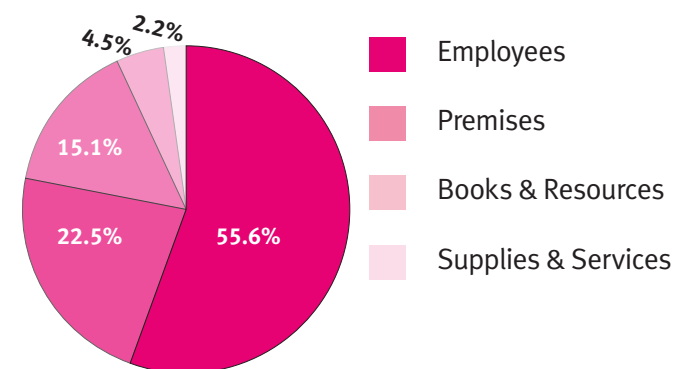
By 2021 the county council will need to identify £186 million a year of savings or income generation.<sup>vii</sup> The library service is required to contribute as much as possible and we expect the pressure on budgets to continue beyond 2021. We also anticipate that capital costs to maintain and refurbish the aging estate of 74 library buildings will increase over the next five years.

We need to target capital towards improving library spaces most in demand and take opportunities to generate financial benefits from development or sale of sites no longer required, that can be invested back into services.

Essex spends £13.25 a year per head of population on libraries, the fourth highest spend in England and 28% more than the average of £10.37.<sup>viii</sup> We would need to reduce libraries revenue by circa £3m to match county average spend on libraries per head. The cost per active library user in Essex is £80.<sup>ix</sup>

Essex Libraries budget 2018/19	
Gross expenditure	£12,953.000
Income	£1,590.000
Net expenditure	£11,363.000

## How it is spent



55.6%	Employees
22.5%	Premises
15.1%	Books & Resources
4.5%	Supplies & Services

# Our priorities

Our priorities are informed by what the people of Essex have told us.

To meet our statutory duty and the challenges ahead, and to seize new opportunities, we need to understand who uses the service, what their needs are and how needs are changing. We have looked at the results of our public engagement (p15), what comparable library services are doing and at what our own data tells us to inform our priorities. These are:

## **Put books and reading at the heart of what we do.**

Books are still at the top of the list of things people expect from libraries. Book borrowing remains by far and away the main activity people use libraries for: 90% of users say they come into borrow books and one in four do so at least every two weeks. The section about our Core Offer contains more information about this priority.

**Create safe social spaces** where people can read and study quietly or socialise and do activities without disrupting each other. People told us this was important. Whilst some said they would like to be able to access more services and do more things in library spaces, others worried that they would lose the quiet space that is so important to them. Our priority is to understand both these views and create spaces that can meet a whole range of needs.

**Invest in and support our staff and volunteers** so they remain well informed and have the right skills and equipment. We also heard about the value that people place on well-informed staff and volunteers. People are at the heart of the library service and ensuring they have the right skills and equipment is a priority (see p35) for more about this priority.

**Create consistently good customer experiences** wherever and whenever our library services are accessed. Customer satisfaction with Essex Libraries is high: 88% of library users in the 2018 household survey are satisfied with their local library service. But satisfaction varies from site to site and we know we can improve the online service.

**Create a library service that fits people's lives and is convenient.** Opening hours and convenience are important to library customers. Our priority is to use eLibrary and 'smart library' technology and work with communities to create a library service that continues to meet the needs of current users but also encourages new and returning users to the service.

*"I feel safe here. No one is horrible to me; the staff are always nice and help me."*

Chelmsford library user

*"At home there's a TV everywhere, and in every room someone is watching TV or playing the Xbox and you can't read. In the library It...feels like you're in a place of nature – comfy chairs and you can imagine things when you're reading."*

Children's focus group participant, aged 7-16 years

# Our core offer and tiered approach

We propose to deliver a core offer through a range of physical and online services and take a tiered approach, based on evidence of need, to where we provide library services around the county in future. The needs assessment and the approach we have designed will enable Essex County Council to meet its statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service to all who desire to use it.

*“We have to be careful not to lose the whole idea of the library –there still needs to be areas where people can concentrate and read without major noise and disruption.”*

Survey respondent

## Our core offer

Over time, the range of activities taking place in libraries has expanded so they are, in a way, offering all things to all people. We think it is useful to define our core, free service. The core offer will be delivered through the following network:

- Libraries run by ECC alone or in partnership with other groups or organisations
- eLibrary services
- Mobile libraries
- Home library service.

The future service will reflect the Universal Offers<sup>x</sup> from libraries and the priorities our customers told us about as follows:

**Books** – we will make available for loan adults and children’s fiction, non-fiction and audio books. We will review the library stock and how we spend the Book Fund to keep our stock modern, fresh, available in a range of formats and responsive to customer needs and trends. We will use insight from customer usage and best practice to define stock levels for each service tier and to target our spending on books. We will provide access to the library catalogue to search available materials, request materials, make payments, renew loans.

**eLibrary** (includes online services) – customers can already access a wealth of eBooks and reference material, browse our catalogue, reserve items and book events online. We will explore new technologies and how we can optimise current technologies to make it easier for customers to access library materials anywhere, anytime from their own devices. We will continue to invest in eContent such as eBooks, eAudio and online reference resources.

**Digital access** – We will continue to offer public access computers – targeting the resources where there is the highest need – and help people to develop their digital skills and confidence.

**People** – staff and/or volunteers will help people access library services and materials, and sign-post services offered by partners. We will support staff and volunteers to develop new skills and work in different ways as library services evolve.

**Activities** – our staff will continue to deliver activities for the community that provide cultural and creative experiences such as Essex Book Festival. We will continue to provide story times, Rhymetimes for young families, Summer Reading Challenge and other activities for children. We will offer a safe space for community led activities such as knit and natter and local book groups.

**Learning** – our staff will signpost learners to reference materials and our libraries will continue to provide space for study.

**Space and Place** – we will seek investment to provide modern, fresh, flexible spaces where people can easily find the information and resources they need and which are welcoming and practical for a range of age groups and diverse needs.

To ensure best value and best fit of our future service, we will review non-core services, for example:

- InterLibrary Loans
- Performance sets (music scores and play sets)
- Collecting performance sets at any location
- Newspapers - physical and digital
- Access to online courses.

We will also encourage volunteers and other organisations to take on running as many activities as possible, to free up library staff to concentrate on delivering the core service in a professional and effective way.

## A tiered approach

A tier model for Essex library services has been developed to ensure that a library service is provided in appropriate locations across the county according to the needs of the community.

This approach focuses on library services, not buildings. The tiered approach is based on evidence of need for a library service taking account of proximity to other libraries, usage, population, social deprivation and social isolation. Library services could be provided in different ways and from different spaces than we currently use. Over the life of the strategy the service offer could change, depending on changing needs, the level of community involvement and resources available.

*“When I go into the library at Hadleigh or Rayleigh the computer services are always being used. I think this is a crucial service for those with no internet access.”*

Survey respondent



We have conducted a countywide analysis of need for libraries, taking account of a combination of factors. We have used evidence from national and local sources such as the Office for National Statistics, the NHS and our library systems as well as feedback from users and staff. The Library Services Needs Assessment for 2018-19 is published as a supporting document to this strategy.

It explains the approach in more detail and contains the evidence on which the tiers will be decided.

We will monitor these factors over time to check provision is still appropriate to needs.

Based on the needs assessment, we propose placing current libraries into four tiers, continuing to provide a public library service in tiers 1 and 2 and supporting community or other partner organisations to run library services in tier 3.

The criteria we will use to assess need for library services in each location are shown in table 1 (opposite).

Over the next five years we will look to reduce the number of library buildings that we manage. We will maintain at least one tier 1 hub library in each district, in a main town with good transport links and shopping facilities, which is also likely to be a centre for employment.

We will also maintain a network of tier 2 services and offer support to communities to run tier 3 services around the county.

We will seek partnerships to support ECC provision of library services in tier 2 and support community groups or other partners to run library services in tier 3. This creates the opportunity for library services in tier 3 to be run by people who live and work in the community and who best understand the unique needs of their community. We think local groups can deliver a service that 'best fits' local needs and helps to deliver reading learning and improve literacy in their community.

See Community involvement on p38 for more about community-run libraries.

**Table 1: Library service needs assessment evaluation criteria**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Evaluation criterion</b>	<b>Weighting of category</b>
<b>Location</b>	Proximity to other libraries. Libraries clustered within two miles, by foot (Google Maps) of each other will be ranked at lower need*	<b>30%</b>
<b>Usage</b>	Active users	<b>25%</b>
<b>Population</b>	The number of libraries per head of population in each district. Based on current figures, not projected growth. Districts with more people per library ranked higher for need	<b>25%</b>
<b>Deprivation</b>	The deprivation level of the lower-layer super output area (LSOA) the library's postcode is in, as identified in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)	<b>15%</b>
<b>Social Isolation (district)</b>	Prevalence of new parents** and % of residents over 65 as indicators of higher risk of social isolation	<b>5%</b>
	Weighted score (100%)	<b>100%</b>

\*A local library was important to 66% of survey respondents; 39% of library users travel to more than one library (BMG Research survey for Essex Libraries, 2018). 63% of Essex library users walk to the library (CIPFA survey of adult users, 2016); Travel distance by car or public transport has not been taken into account at this stage. This will be considered when making decisions on the future of individual libraries.

\*\* Measured by fertility rates in each district. New parents and older people are recognised as being at risk of social isolation. <sup>xi</sup>

**Table 2: Tier descriptions and alignment to our core offer**

	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>	<b>Tier 4</b>
	A comprehensive and efficient service provided by ECC to meet its statutory duty		Not required to meet ECC's statutory duty	
<b>Brief description</b>	Hub libraries at least one per district/borough, may also rent/lease space to other service providers. Location normally in the main town but informed by local knowledge such as proximity to other facilities, transport and population size.	Library services in areas where there is a need for a library, managed by ECC and delivered in partnership with the community or other partners	Library services where no library is needed in order to have a comprehensive and efficient network, but where ECC wishes to support the provision of library services run by a community organisation or other partners with ECC support.	Locations with low evidence of need. A library service in these locations is not required as part of a comprehensive service
<b>Management and Support</b>	Managed by ECC as part of our statutory provision of a comprehensive network	Managed by ECC as part of our statutory provision of a comprehensive network and delivered in partnership with the community or other partners	Run by the community or other partners with ECC support. If no suitable offer for a location is received and accepted within six months of Cabinet approval of the strategy, we intend to re-consult on the future of that library. This six-month period may be extended to up to 12 months if proposals have been received but not agreed - or if we believe that deliverable proposals are likely to be forthcoming during that period	Not required as part of a comprehensive library service although it may be possible for a community library to be run in these settlements, if a suitable proposal from a community or partner organisation is received.

**Table 2: continued**

	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>	<b>Tier 4</b>
<b>Library Location</b>	Main Town	Throughout Essex, where there is need for an ECC library	Throughout Essex, where ECC believes it is desirable to provide a library and a suitable partner has been found	
<b>Opening times and smart library access</b>	Minimum 40 staffed hours per week, Monday to Saturday. plus smart library (self- service) where viable. We will look to extend opening hours, including into the evening if this can be resourced by volunteers or can be made affordable	Typically 16-32 hours per week plus smart library (self-service) where viable. We will look to extend opening hours, including into the evening if this can be resourced by volunteers or can be made affordable	To be agreed in partnership	
<b>Range of books and stock</b>	Wide range of stock	Mid range of stock with opportunity to search and request stock from other libraries	Mid - Low, to be agreed in partnership	
<b>Digital access (computers and advice)</b>	Yes	Yes	No	

**Table 2: continued**

	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>	<b>Tier 4</b>
<b>People</b>	Majority ECC employees, with volunteer support	A mix of ECC employees and community volunteers	To be agreed in partnership but with majority community volunteers	
<b>Activities</b>	A high level of activities promoted by ECC	Some ECC activities with opportunity for community to participate	Some opportunity for ECC activities but activities will mainly depend on community provision	
<b>Space and place</b>	Space for reading, study and activities in a town centre location	Space for reading and study, typically in a shared, accessible location; space for activities may be in the library space or elsewhere in the vicinity	To be agreed with partner	

**Table 3: Essex libraries by tier per district**

The tables on the following pages place each of the 74 libraries into one of the four tiers, using the criteria described above.

District	Library	Proposed Tier
<b>Basildon</b>	Basildon	1
	Billericay	1
	Fryerns	4
	Laindon	2
	Pitsea	2
	Vange	4
	Wickford	1

District	Library	Proposed Tier
<b>Braintree</b>	Braintree	1
	Coggeshall	3
	Earls Colne	3
	Halstead	2
	Hatfield Peverel	4
	Kelvedon	4
	Sible Hedingham	4
	Silver End	4
	Witham	1

District	Library	Proposed Tier
<b>Brentwood</b>	Brentwood	1
	Ingatestone	3
	Shenfield	3

District	Library	Proposed Tier
<b>Castle Point</b>	Canvey Island	1
	Great Tarpots	3
	Hadleigh	3
	South Benfleet	3

District	Library	Proposed Tier
<b>Chelmsford</b>	Broomfield	4
	Chelmsford	1
	Danbury	4
	Galleywood	4
	Great Baddow	2
	North Melbourne	2
	South Woodham Ferrers	2
	Springfield	3
	Stock	4
	Writtle	4

District	Library	Proposed Tier
<b>Colchester</b>	Colchester	1
	Greenstead	2
	Prettygate	4
	Stanway	3
	Tiptree	3
	West Mersea	3
	Wivenhoe	3

**Table 3: continued**

District	Library	Proposed Tier
<b>Epping Forest</b>	Buckhurst Hill	4
	Chigwell	4
	Chipping Ongar	2
	Debden	4
	Epping	2
	Loughton	1
	North Weald	4
	Waltham Abbey	2

District	Library	Proposed Tier
<b>Harlow</b>	Great Parndon	3
	Harlow	1
	Mark Hall	4
	Old Harlow	2
	Tye Green	4

District	Library	Proposed Tier
<b>Maldon</b>	Burnham-on-Crouch	2
	Maldon	1
	Southminster	4
	Wickham Bishops	4

District	Library	Proposed Tier
<b>Rochford</b>	Great Wakering	4
	Hockley	3
	Hullbridge	4
	Rayleigh	1
	Rochford	2

District	Library	Proposed Tier
<b>Tendring</b>	Brightlingsea	3
	Clacton	1
	Frinton	3
	Harwich	2
	Holland-on-Sea	4
	Manningtree	3
	Walton	3
	West Clacton	3

District	Library	Proposed Tier
<b>Uttlesford</b>	Dunmow	2
	Saffron Walden	1
	Stansted	4
	Thaxted	4

## How we will work

**Alternative delivery models:** Essex Libraries are currently delivered in-house, managed by ECC. There are alternative delivery models that some other authorities use, such as setting up a local authority trading company, transferring the whole service to a commercial company or charitable trust, or partnering in a joint venture. At this time ECC intends to keep the service in-house, albeit community and Tier 3 libraries will be run by a partner organisation.

We will continue to review options over the life of the strategy.

**Engagement** - we will review our communication channels and develop a communication and marketing approach that maximises digital communication and makes accurate and timely information about our services, activities and events available to customers to easily access in a self-service way.

We will market library services to attract new customers and improve the future sustainability of the service.

**Logistics** - we will review the current reservations system, management systems and logistics network to ensure the service is provided as efficiently as possible.



# Resources

In the context of such significant budget pressure over the coming years, the council needs to do more than simply identify savings each year. It must reshape and reimagine services to make them streamlined, sustainable and fit for the future. We need to think very differently about how we operate, be more innovative, entrepreneurial and commercially minded.

Reducing the size of the library service estate will save on running and capital costs and free up resources to invest in improving other aspects of the service. Withdrawing library services from tier 4 locations, where they are not required to provide a comprehensive library offer will save an estimated £974,000.

As plans develop we will seek capital investment to modernise library spaces.

We will explore additional sources of funding for our services including:

- Grants for specific projects such as the recent redevelopment of Chelmsford Children's Library funded by Chelmsford City Council through the Community Infrastructure Levy and Arts Council England
- Encouraging local fundraising to support local delivery of library services
- Generating income from hire of library space, chargeable events, sale of complementary products and by reviewing our current chargeable services
- Moving some services to lower cost digital delivery channels where appropriate.

## What about the buildings?

This strategy is about the service, not the buildings. But we know that library buildings are often seen as valuable community assets and many people will be concerned about their future use. We will work in partnership to make the most efficient use of public buildings, whether owned by the council, public bodies or community organisations. Most library services will be in shared spaces by 2024.

Once library locations have been placed in tiers, we will review running costs and the condition of library buildings in Tier 1 and 2 with a view to bringing all services up to a consistent, modern standard and finding the most effective ways to respond to local needs. This includes considering most appropriate location for the service.

In future, library services could be provided from a range of outlets, such as shared locations with other services, new spaces provided as part of housing or retail developments or co-located in community centres, shops, leisure centres or other locations.

We would expect community libraries would be run from premises owned or paid for by the community groups. Buildings that are no longer required by the library service will be incorporated into the council's property strategy.

# Our eLibrary

We use the term eLibrary to cover a range of online services. Customers can currently browse the catalogue and reserve books online to collect at their local library. They can download ebooks, read newspapers and magazines, book events, volunteer or find out about the home library service or mobile library timetable.

*"I prefer using technology for learning because stuff in books are not updated, for example the recent resignation of the Home Secretary won't be in a book"*

Children's focus group participant

Public engagement has highlighted a need to target and tailor our services to new generations of tech-savvy users. Younger users in particular use technology on a daily basis and want to be able to study and access services online.

To make this ambition a reality, we will review our processes and technology to make it easy to do as much as possible online: communicate with our staff, transact and pay for things we charge for, such as room bookings and some events (core services are all free).

This will include:

- Improving our management system to enable efficient operating processes and deliver a high quality customer experience
- Bringing e-content such as eBooks into the main library catalogue so that all resources can be searched and accessed in one place
- Exploring "smart library" technology to enable access to library buildings, materials and services outside of staffed opening hours (see highlight box below)
- Improving the range of payment options available to customers
- Updating our website
- Reviewing our electronic communication channels and 'online chat with a librarian' service
- Reviewing the content and availability of eBooks and eAudio Books
- Investing in our public computers and reviewing print services
- Exploring the option of loaning eReaders to increase range of accessible materials and access to eBooks
- Exploring options for improving access to library services on mobile devices such as smart phones
- We will help customers to access eLibrary services by reviewing our help and guidance, which may include adding step by step video guides on the website e.g. downloading eBooks, searching the catalogue.

## Smart libraries

Smart libraries can increase opening hours and use of library services by enabling customers to use their library card to enter the library outside staffed hours. It is similar to the secure ATM lobbies some banks have. People could browse, study, borrow and return books using self-service machines or even hire the library for meetings or activities. We will explore the potential this technology offers.

# Opening hours and access

Opening hours are important to our customers: 62% of survey respondents said convenient opening hours were important to them. Alternative opening hours, for example, evening opening, would encourage 39% of respondents to use libraries more.

But this is one aspect of library services that is most difficult to get right. The council cannot afford to provide more staffed opening hours but if we change opening hours to suit some users, they won't necessarily suit others.

Since we last reviewed opening hours in 2011, technology and lifestyles have changed, affecting what library users need and what they see as convenient.

Our aim is to create an overall pattern of library opening that will maximise access to libraries through a combination of:

- Staffed opening hours
- Smart library technology
- Community supported opening hours
- Improved eLibrary which people can access 24 hours a day.

By staffed we mean paid ECC employees and unpaid library volunteers. Some libraries are already opened outside the staffed hours by volunteers from other groups or organisations that share space with libraries. We will seek to encourage more of this.

We will draw on a wide evidence base, including usage data to develop a consistent approach to opening hours across the tiers and respond to changes in demand over time.

See the table on p27 for the opening hours we propose to offer at libraries in each tier, based on current evidence.

# Our People

## Employees

Our library employees are at the heart of our business. Research and engagement feedback shows they are hugely valued and trusted by our customers.

Essex Libraries is committed to ensuring that our employees have the skills and competencies they need to help deliver our future vision. Having well informed staff or volunteers was the 2nd highest priority for respondents (70%) to the countywide survey. This view was mirrored across both library users and non-users.

As the service evolves we will support employees to develop skills and be able to work in different ways, such as being out and about in the community more, collaborating with partners and keeping up to date with technology.

We will train and support our staff so they feel valued and can continue to deliver the brilliant service our customers appreciate. As the service changes, we will support staff to build on the expertise they already have to act with honesty, integrity and empathy, to help customers use library services easily and to resolve any issues they have.

We will recognise the good work of our employees to motivate them to continuously improve the service. To deliver a modern, fit for purpose library service, we will prioritise ensuring our employees develop the following skills:

- Excellent customer service
- Deep local knowledge to enable effective signposting to services and activities
- Digital knowledge and expertise to support customers in accessing information and improving their skills
- Securing opportunities to generate income and external funding to enable us to improve our settings and service offer.

This approach will enable us to offer a consistent experience for our customers across library services.

## Volunteers

Essex Libraries offers a wide variety of volunteering opportunities, including delivering the home library service, helping to run clubs and activities and supporting the annual Summer Reading Challenge.

In 2017-18, 1,200 residents, aged from 14 to 94, volunteered in our libraries. All of our volunteering opportunities are advertised online at [volunteersessex.org/news/library-volunteers](https://volunteersessex.org/news/library-volunteers).<sup>xii</sup>

Volunteers play a vital role in supporting and enhancing our library service and will continue to do so in the future. It is important to Essex Libraries that our volunteers complement the work delivered by our paid staff and work alongside them, enabling us to develop and improve the experience of our customers whilst helping to meet our budgetary challenges.

We aim to ensure our volunteers feel valued and get something worthwhile from the time they give us. In order to do this, we will work closely with Volunteer Essex to ensure their interests and skills are well matched to our opportunities and that they are fully trained and properly supported by our paid staff and fellow volunteers.

We will also take every opportunity to recognise and celebrate the contribution they make to the library service and our customers.

Our volunteers will also be supported to ensure that our customers experience a consistent level of service wherever they access our services.

## Customers

Our customers are diverse, of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. We will continue to provide our services in a way that has regard to our duty under the Equalities Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. An equalities impact assessment will inform the implementation of this strategy. This includes having a range of stock that reflects and celebrates our diverse community in Essex, and promotes good relations across all equality areas including race, disability, gender, religion and sexual orientation, making library spaces and services accessible to people with disabilities, having transgender-friendly membership and providing a home library service for people who can't get to the library owing to age, disability or caring responsibilities.

We will continue to seek feedback and use insight about customer preferences to update our stock and services over time.







## Community involvement

Essex Libraries are intrinsically connected to our communities. We have an active membership of over 241,000 residents and work closely with community groups and partner organisations across the county.

We see our libraries as supporters of community life and part of the cultural infrastructure of Essex. Our libraries act as community hubs; places where people socialise, volunteer, access vital community services through partners and exchange information and ideas. We will provide vibrant, accessible spaces to enable communities to prosper.

Public engagement shows there is an appetite among residents and groups to be more involved with libraries. One in four survey respondents would consider volunteering in libraries while eight community-run libraries are now open and more interest in opening community libraries was shown at the public events. We will engage our communities to ensure that they can provide valuable input on aspects of the services including our approach to stock purchasing.

## Community-run libraries

Eight community libraries currently exist in Essex. They are volunteer-run and owned and managed by local groups, not the council. They do not form part of the statutory library provision of the county. Some have existed for many years, others are new. In 2017 alongside the mobile libraries review we supported some communities to set up community libraries in places that didn't already have one.

Current community-run libraries are at: Beaumont-cum-Moze, Chrishall, Finchingfield, Great Bromley, Jaywick Library Access Point, Lamarsh, Ramsey and Steeple Bumpstead.

We want to hear from groups interested in setting up community-run libraries in tier 3 locations, where no library is needed in order to have a comprehensive and efficient network, but where ECC could support the provision of library services run by a community or other partner organisation with ECC support.

We will look to identify and reach agreement with partners within six months of Cabinet approval of the strategy. If no suitable offer for a location is received and accepted within six months we intend to re-consult on the provision of a library.

This period may be extended to up to 12 months if proposals have been received but not agreed - or if we believe that deliverable proposals are likely to be forthcoming during that period.

We are also interested in hearing from organisations interested in partnering ECC to run services in tier 2, where there is a need for a library service and will consider viable offers from community groups in tier 4 locations.

We hope community organisations will take the opportunity for people who live and work in the community and who best understand the unique needs of their community to run services in ways that fit local needs.

Many community-run libraries now operate successfully across the country. The government's Libraries Taskforce describes two emerging models: "a community managed library which is delivered by the community, rarely has paid staff, but often has some form of ongoing local authority support and may be part of the public library network. Or, a community supported library, which is led and funded by the local authority, has paid professional staff and is supported by volunteers."







# What does good look like?

We will consider this strategy to have achieved our ambition for libraries if:

- Overall use of library services, whether online or in person, increases
- Smart technology and working in partnership to maximise opening hours means people can access libraries at times that suit them
- We have made the service financially sustainable
- Customers understand the core library offer and make good use of it, as measured by customer surveys and user insight
- Customers receive consistently good service across all library services, as measured by reported satisfaction rates in regular CIPFA surveys
- We know what our customers need and target books and materials to meet those needs
- The service is economic, efficient and effective
- Libraries are continuing to help create great places to grow up, live and work and to help people get the best start and age well
- We regularly monitor how the service is meeting needs and have accurate information to enable us to measure the impact and outcomes
- Income from activities helps reduce costs or enhance the service we provide
- The service is reaching new communities and bringing in new customers
- Libraries help people to help themselves and live full and independent lives
- We have reduced costs and increase effectiveness through co-location with community based services such as Job Centres, Citizens Advice Bureau, Post Office, other voluntary and community groups.







# Glossary

**CIPFA**

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy; collates bi-annual survey data from library users across England and Wales; analyses data from library authorities and provides benchmarking information for library authorities

**Digital access**

Ability to see and use library services and information online; within a library: access to public network computers and help or advice to learn digital skills.

**eBooks**

Books available in digital format online

**eLibrary**

Essex Libraries' online offer; includes the website, online catalogue, eBooks and eMagazines to download.

**Online services**

Another term for eLibrary. Also refers to being able to access other websites and services

**PN**

Free-to use public network computers, available in libraries across the county, connected to the internet.

**Smart library**

Technology that enables card holders to swipe in to gain secure access to libraries outside staffed opening hours; connects membership, security, power and lighting systems so they can operate without staff present.

# Appendices

These appendices are published as supporting documents to the draft strategy. They are available online at [essex.gov.uk/libraries-consultation](http://essex.gov.uk/libraries-consultation) or ask to see them at your local library.

Essex Library Services Needs Assessment 2018

Your Community, Libraries and You, public engagement summary report

Equality Impact Assessment

<sup>i</sup> Source: CIPFA Library Statistics 2016-17

<sup>ii</sup> Source: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Libraries Deliver, 2016

<sup>iii</sup> Source: Appendix 2 - Essex Library Services Needs Assessment 2018

<sup>iv</sup> Source: <https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/technology-media-and-telecommunications/articles/mobile-consumer-survey.html>

<sup>v</sup> Source: Headline statistics from Sub-National Population Projections 2014, Essex Insight [www.essexinsight.org.uk/Resource.aspx?GroupID=40&ResourceID=1314](http://www.essexinsight.org.uk/Resource.aspx?GroupID=40&ResourceID=1314)

<sup>vi</sup> *Social Isolation in Essex*, ECC Strategic Planning & Commissioning, 2013; *Social Isolation & Loneliness: Literature & best practice review, research and recommendations*, ECC Organisational Intelligence; *Social Isolation of Pregnant Mothers and Families with Young Children*, ECC Organisational Intelligence, July 2016

<sup>vii</sup> ECC Organisation Strategy 2017-2021

<sup>viii</sup> CFO Insights, per capita spend of 27 county library authorities 2016-17

<sup>ix</sup> CIPFA benchmarking data 2016/17

<sup>x</sup> Source: [www.librariesconnected.org.uk](http://www.librariesconnected.org.uk)

<sup>xi</sup> *Social Isolation in Essex*, ECC Strategic Planning & Commissioning, 2013; *Social Isolation & Loneliness: Literature & best practice review, research and recommendations*, ECC Organisational Intelligence; *Social Isolation of Pregnant Mothers and Families with Young Children*, ECC Organisational Intelligence, July 2016

<sup>xii</sup> [www.volunteersex.org/news/library-volunteers](http://www.volunteersex.org/news/library-volunteers)

This information is issued by:  
**Essex County Council**  
**Essex Libraries Service**

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The information contained in this document can be translated, and/or made available in alternative formats, on request. It is also available in large print and Easy Read.

Published November 2018.

## **Appendix 2 – Draft Essex Library Services Needs Assessment 2018**

### **1. Introduction**

This Essex Library Services Needs Assessment provides data on different aspects of the library service and the communities they serve. It contains data about the usage of Essex County Council Library Services and about demographic factors. It has been produced to inform the draft Essex Future Library Services Strategy 2019-2024.

The report outlines five proposed criteria by which the need for a library service in an area will be assessed: location (proximity to other library outlets, which is given the highest weighting), population, usage, deprivation and risk of social isolation. The assessment then draws a conclusion on the overall priority ranking for a library location based on the combined criteria. Current library locations have been placed into four tiers, based on the evidence. These tiers are explained in more detail in the draft strategy.

The data and priority ranking are intended to help the council to assess what a comprehensive and efficient library service for Essex should be today, and to inform the future vision, strategy and library service offer.

The data used in this assessment has been taken from a range of sources including our library management systems records for April 2017 to March 2018, responses to public engagement and research in spring 2018, the National Office of Statistics, the Department for Communities and Local Government (Indices of Deprivation) and Google Maps. The data and sources are explained in each section of the report with full listing of data sources at the end of the report.

When this needs assessment refers to 'districts' it means the areas of the 12 borough, city or district authorities in the county. This needs assessment relates to library services within the geographic area served by Essex County Council. It does not consider needs within Southend or Thurrock authority areas.

### **2. Executive Summary**

The needs assessment has been prepared to inform public consultation and subsequent decision-making about Essex Future Library Services Strategy 2019-2023. It brings together information about Essex, its residents, their needs for a library service and the usage of the 74 static libraries in Essex.

Essex is a complex and diverse county, covering 3,400 square km, with a mix of rural and urban populations and varying levels of deprivation.

Essex currently manages 74 static libraries, two mobile library vehicles, online services and a home library service. It also supports eight libraries run by local communities which are not part of its core offer. On average Essex provides a managed library for every 17,325 residents compared to the national average of one library for every 22,425 people, based on the 2017 CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) benchmarking survey result.

The provision of the library service is not evenly distributed throughout the county with some towns having three libraries within two miles walking distance of each other. It is appreciated not all users will be able to walk two miles to their nearest libraries and therefore reasonable consideration is given to locating libraries in areas with good public transport or parking availability.

Where residents are unable or have difficulties accessing their nearest library building, Essex offers a range of alternative solutions such as the mobile library service, home library service, friends and family memberships and online library service.

In the last five years, use of the library service has dropped by 43% from over 7.1m loans a year in 2012/13 to fewer than 4.1m loans in 2017/18. Demand to use public network computers in libraries has also fallen 22% in the last five years. This reducing demand for libraries follows the national trend as people have greater access to alternative information sources with improvements to broadband and mobile technologies. In March 2018 241,400 people, equal to 16% of, Essex residents, were active members of Essex libraries service, down 17% in five years. An active member is somebody who has used their library card in the last year.

Library services contribute to Essex County Council's strategic aim to help create great places to grow up, live and work. This is particularly important in areas of deprivation where libraries can be a safe place for communities to come together, supporting children's literacy, digital access and adult literacy, providing space for local charities, and helping to reduce unemployment.

Essex has used the Indices of Multiple Deprivation to understand the levels of deprivation across the county. The Index of Multiple Deprivation, commonly known as the IMD, is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England and is the most widely used index of deprivation. The small areas are known as lower super output areas and have a mean population of 1,500. Libraries based in areas of most deprivation such as Clacton, Harwich and Greenstead are given extra weighting as a result.

Libraries also have a significant role to play in the prevention of social isolation within communities. Whilst there is no definitive measure of social isolation and anyone in

the community is potentially at risk of becoming isolated, we are aware that new parents and older people are at particular risk of social isolation<sup>1</sup>. The library service runs “rhyme time” events at all of its managed libraries, as part of the maternity mental health offering and supports local clubs for older people. The data shows that children under 9 years old and adults over 60 years of age account for 45% of the library services customers.

As a result of the increased risk of social isolation within these population groups we have used fertility rates as well as the percentage of older people over 65 to indicate the risk within individual communities of social isolation.

Compiling this assessment has revealed that we do not have a full picture of library users and their needs. Essex County Council does not have any data about customers that are using the library service without making transactions, for example people studying or using resources in the library without borrowing items, attending events, or using the library as a place to meet friends or attend clubs.

To find out what people thought about libraries, in spring 2018 we ran public engagement and research on the future of library services. This included public events, a countywide household survey, interviews with library users and focus groups with children and young people. The results of this are attached in an appendix to the draft Essex Future Library Services Strategy, titled “*Your community, libraries and you*”.

The proposed ranking and data used are shown in the data tables below. This has been used to place each library location into one of four tiers, according to evidenced need for library services.

### **3. Statutory Duties**

Essex County Council has statutory duty as a library authority under the **Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964**:

“To provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof.....”, “All persons” means all those who live, work or study full time in the county.”

“In fulfilling its duty .... A library authority shall in particular have regard for the desirability of securing .... that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books... and other materials sufficient in number and range and quality to meet the general requirements and special requirements both of

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<sup>1</sup> *Social Isolation in Essex*, ECC Strategic Planning & Commissioning, 2013; *Social Isolation & Loneliness: Literature & best practice review, research and recommendations*, ECC Organisational Intelligence [date]; *Social Isolation of Pregnant Mothers and Families with Young Children*, ECC Organisational Intelligence, July 2016



adults and children; and of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and of providing advice as to its use and of making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required by persons using it.”

### **Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equalities Act 2010**

The Public Sector Equality Duty places the Council under a statutory duty:

“A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

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

The protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

## **4. Library Data**

### **4.1. Location**

In spring 2018 Essex County Council undertook its largest programme of public engagement and research on the future of library service in recent history. The survey showed that 66% of the 2,995 respondents identified having a local library as a key consideration in using the library service.

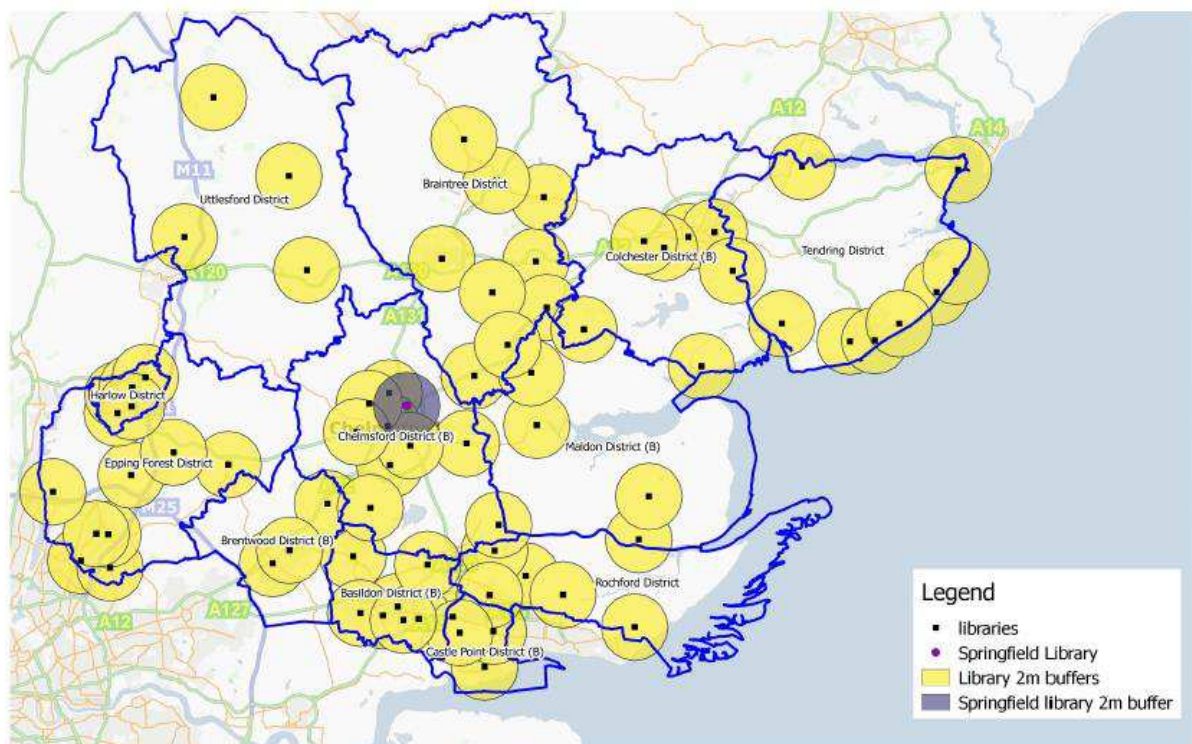
The membership data shows that the two largest user groups of Essex libraries by age are children under 9, (23%), and people over 60, (22%). Both of these groups may find it difficult to travel significant distances to their local library and therefore Essex considers access to local libraries as the primary driver for to needs assessment.

When considering access to library service it has looked at the distribution of libraries across the county and has found that there are clusters of libraries in close proximity, e.g. two miles walk from another library or libraries. These clusters of libraries are normally in urban areas of the county – areas generally served by regular public transport links.

Towns like Basildon and Harlow have the densest clustering of libraries with three libraries available within a two mile walk of the main library. In Chelmsford and large towns such as Colchester we also see moderate clustering. There is also some

clustering in the Epping Forest, Brentwood, Tendring and Castle Point districts as shown in the map below:

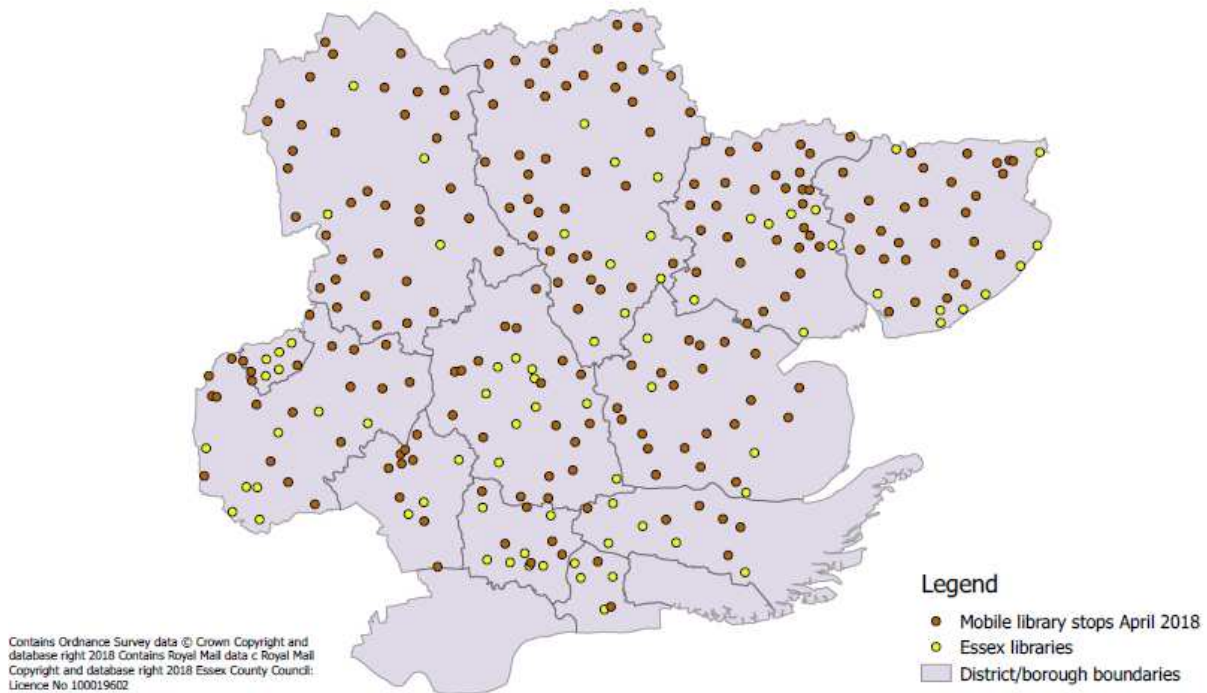
**Essex libraries with 2 mile buffers**



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2018 Contains Royal Mail data © Royal Mail Copyright and database right 2018 Essex County Council: Licence No: 100019602

There are libraries in areas of the county that are not within a two mile radius of a current static library. In these areas Essex County Council meets the need of residents through the provision of alternative library service offers including the mobile library service, access to the home library service, online library offer and friends and family membership. We also support eight community libraries that are not part of the current core service.

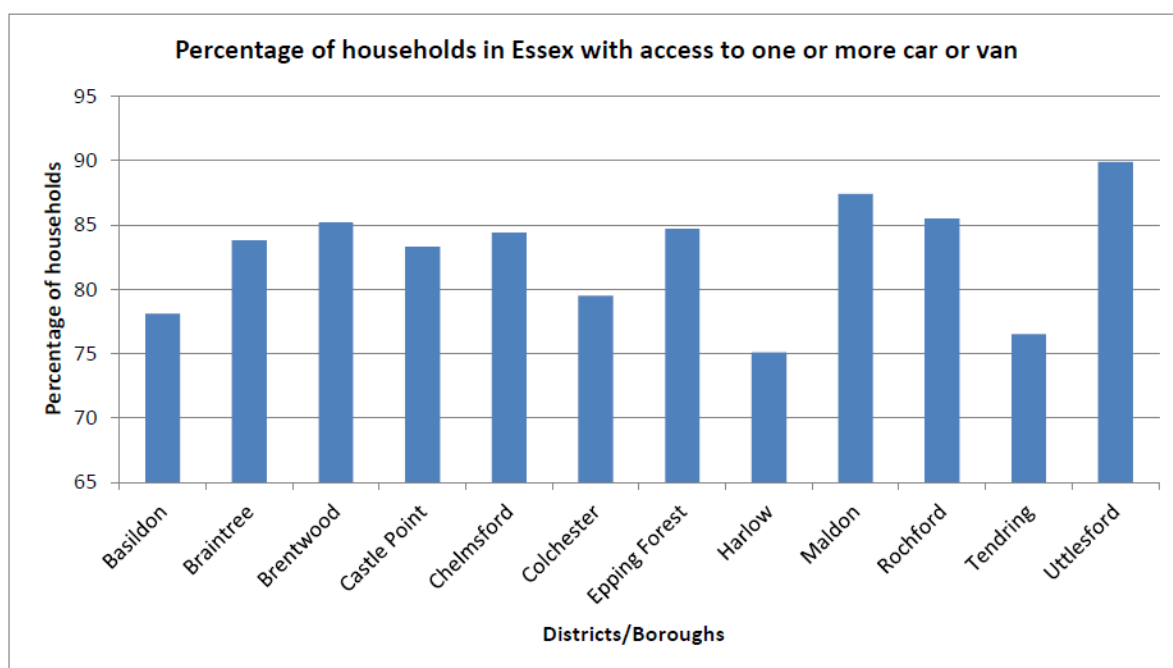
## Essex libraries and mobile library stops @ April 2018



We have assumed there is no 'clustering' between ECC libraries and those run by other authorities. Residents may cross county borders to access libraries that are most convenient but this has not been taken into consideration for the needs assessment.

### 4.1.1. Transport

Data from the 2011 Census shows that 477,067 households in Essex, 82% of the total have access to a car or van. This chart, using 2011 census data, shows the percentage of households with access to cars or vans:



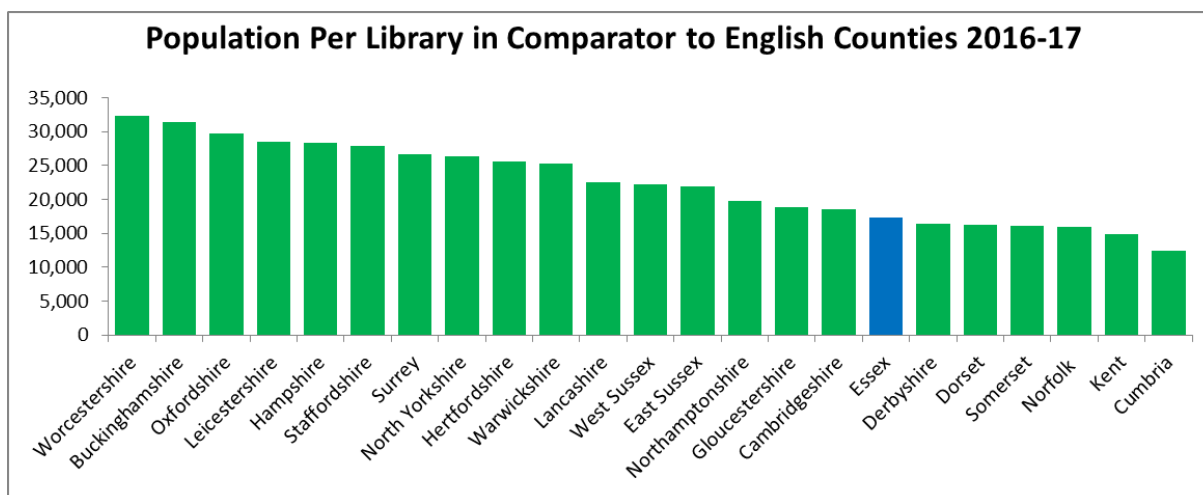
#### 4.1.2. Proximity to Other Services

Libraries are generally located within town centres, villages or close to other facilities e.g. shops and community centres. There is no reason to keep a library if it is the only community service in the area if there is no need for a library service.

#### 4.2. Population

This section considers the relative size of populations within each district, in relation to the number of libraries.

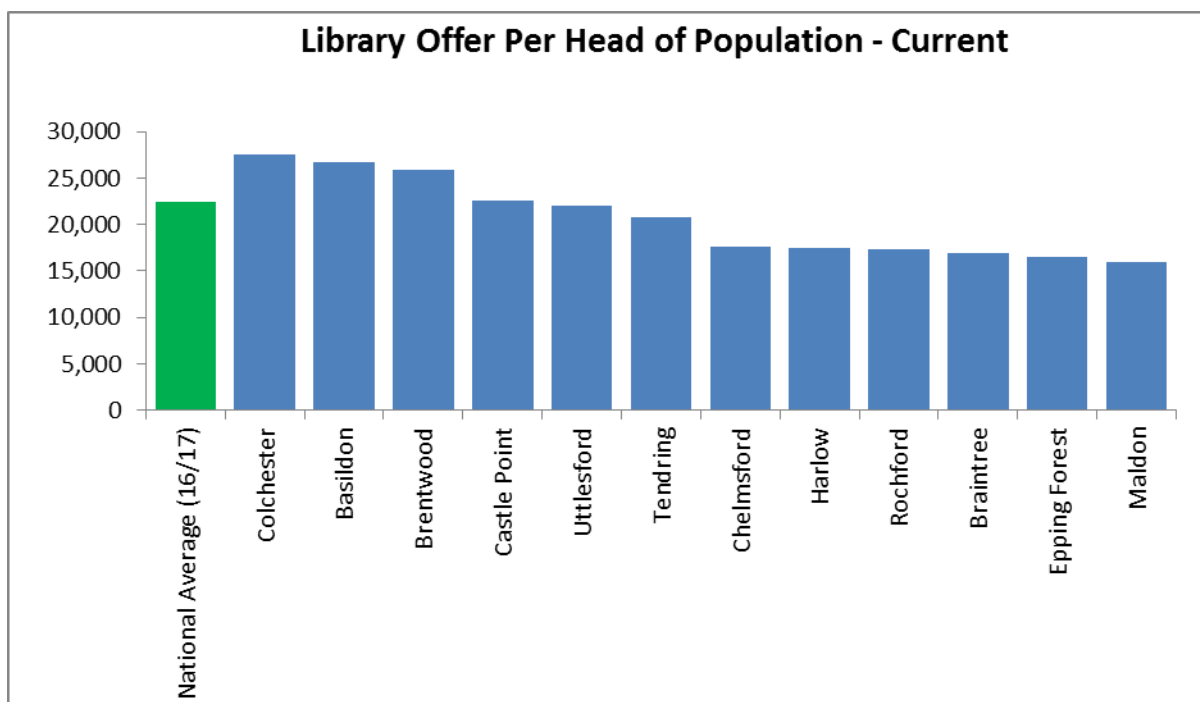
The libraries offer services to the county's population of 1.5m residents based on the forecast population for 2018. A managed library is provided for every 17,325 residents of Essex compared to the average of one library for every 22,425 people from comparators in the 2017 CIPFA benchmarking survey results. This is shown in the table below.



In considering how best to measure the population served by each managed library Essex County Council used the 2018 forecast population of the district, divided by the number of managed libraries within the district boundaries and applied this to each library within the district.

Whilst there is an understanding that libraries differ in terms of size, opening hours and variety of stock, this analysis demonstrates the difference in provision of libraries across the county in comparison to population size and allows direct comparison of how our service offer changes between districts. It also allows comparison with the provision made by other library authorities.

The data shows that there are significant variations in the library offering across the county. Maldon district has a managed library for every 16,000 residents – giving more libraries per head than the national average - whilst Colchester borough has a managed library for every 28,000 residents, which is lower than in the Essex and national average, as shown in the table below.



Whilst the library service offering across the county is currently below the benchmarked average provision, in some districts the provision of libraries per head of population is above the benchmark. The strategy, supported by the needs assessment looks to provide a consistent library service offering across all districts of the county.

The needs assessment recognises that whilst some districts have more libraries per head of population than the benchmarked average, a significant reduction in service would have a major impact on communities. Therefore, it is proposed that no more than 50% of libraries in a district will be in Tier 4 (see section 4.6).

Consideration was given as to whether we could measure population by ward catchment area. This would have required subjective judgements to be made about which libraries residents visited and would have led to double counting or segments of the population being missed. The public engagement household survey also identified that 39% of library users visit more than one library. Therefore, the population analysis has been completed at district level.

#### **4.2.1. Infrastructure and Growth**

Essex's population is forecast to grow by 20% by 2035, to 1.7m. Colchester is forecast to have the highest growth, with 42,000 new residents, and Uttlesford to have the highest percentage growth, at 32.2%. New communities are being planned across Essex. Crossrail will come as far as Shenfield; Crossrail 2, under consideration, has the potential to serve Harlow and south Essex, while expansions

at Harwich and London Gateway ports and Stansted airport are all likely to contribute to this growth<sup>2</sup>.

Development plans and forecast population growth will continue to be considered in the needs assessment and provision of the library strategy 2019–2024. As these forecasts are subject to multiple variables and change, no specific volumes have been collected and added to the data evaluated.

### **4.3. Usage**

This criterion considers how well used each library is.

The current usage of Essex libraries is an important factor in determining the local need for a library service.

The assessment uses the number of active users in each library (library members who used their library card in the year from April 2017 to March 2018).

Data has been collected from our library management systems showing when and where people have used their library card to make a transaction. This includes: borrowing an item, renewing a loan, using public network computers or using library wifi. We have looked at the transactional data of each user as we are aware that 39% of library users use more than one library<sup>3</sup>.

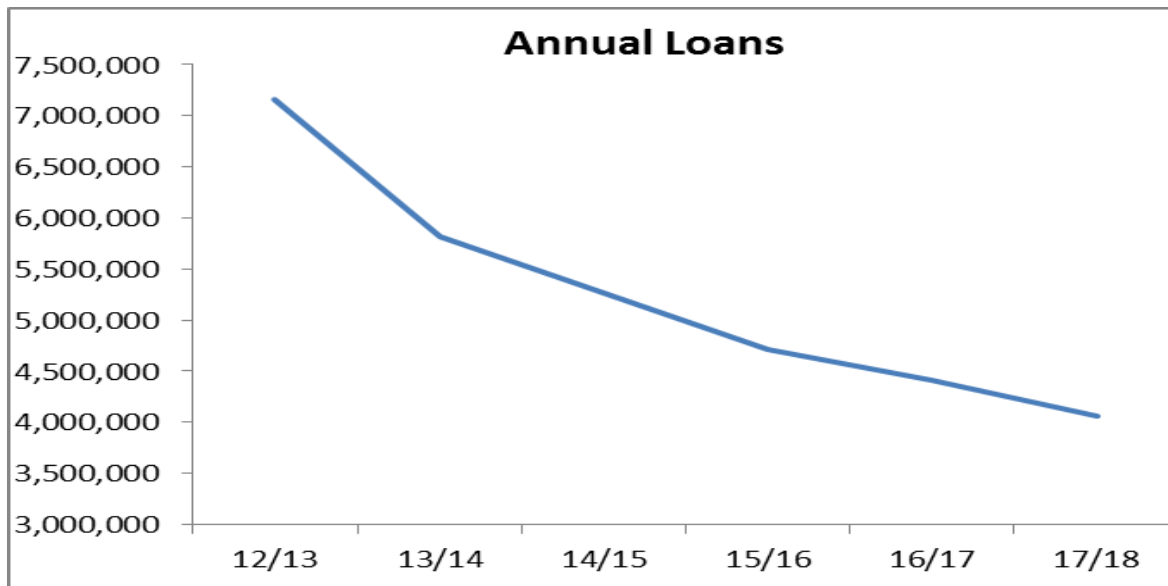
In line with national trends, Essex County Council has seen a significant decrease in usage of library services over the last five years. The graphs below show the decline in demand for the primary service offer of libraries with loans decreasing 43% from over 7.1m loans a year in 2012/13 to less than 4.1m loans in 2017/18.

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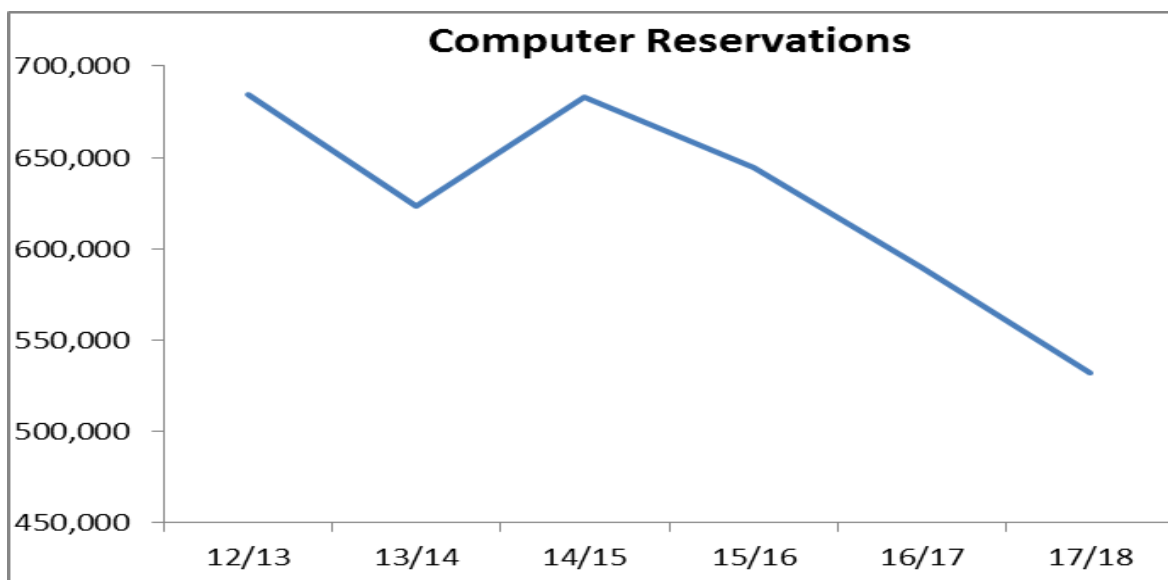
<sup>2</sup> Sources: <http://www.essex.gov.uk/Environment%20Planning/Development-in-Essex/Pages/Major-Infrastructure-and-Projects.aspx> and <http://www.essexhighways.org/Transport-and-Roads/Highway-Schemes-and-Developments/Major-Schemes.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> *Your community, libraries and you: engagement summary report*, July 2018, Essex County Council





Demand to use public network computers has also fallen 22% in the last five years. This has declined from 684,000 in 2012/13 to 532,000 reservations (sessions) in 2017/18.



In March 2018 241,400 people, equivalent to 16% of the Essex population, were active members of the libraries service. An active member is defined as someone who has used their library card to access a library service within the last 12 months. Membership is open to anybody who lives, works or studies in the county.

Whilst there is information recorded for the footfall in libraries and attendance of events this has been excluded from the needs assessment as it is not felt to be a reliable source of data.



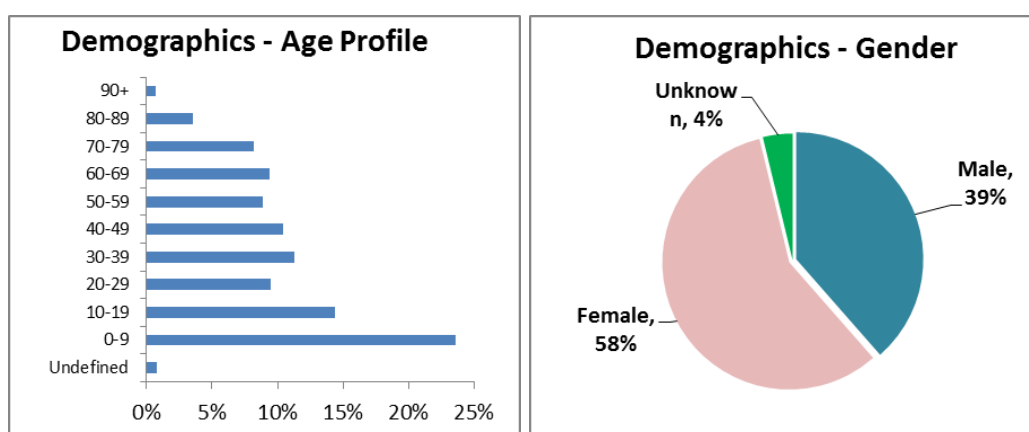
We are aware that footfall figures can be distorted in some locations by people using libraries as a shortcut between other locations. Also, we do not have comprehensive footfall records for all libraries, limiting the ability to compare. Attendances at events are not always recorded accurately and include a significant proportion of attendees who have not registered.

Requests for centralised services such as the music service, online transactions - including those for e-books, training resources, magazines and newspapers - and mobile library use have also been excluded as they do not relate to specific static libraries and can be accessed from any location, including customer's homes. If online resources have been accessed from a public network machine or using the library wifi they will be included in data about the technology offer of libraries.

In completing the analysis of the usage data we are aware of some limitations. The data has been collected from transactions. It does not inform us about customers that are using the library service without making transactions. Examples include customers who use the library service for studying or research, attending events, to meet friends or attend clubs, without borrowing anything or using their library card will not be recorded.

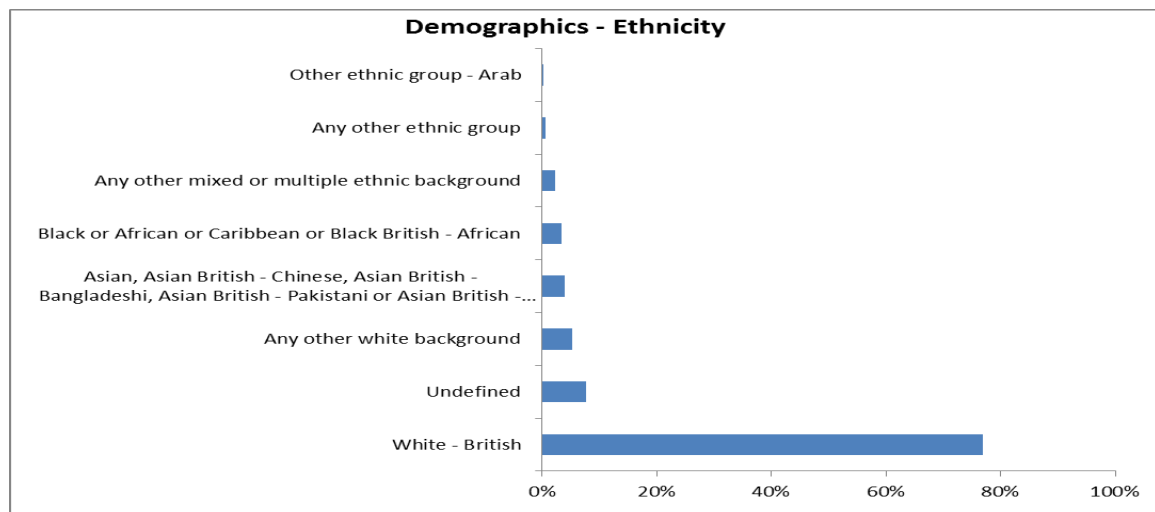
#### 4.3.1. Demographic Analysis

Library services are disproportionately used by females, who make up 58% of users. Children under 9 years of age account for 23% of users and adults over 60 years of age account for 22% of users as shown in the graphs below.



The ethnicity of library users generally reflects the ethnicity of Essex residents with 77% of users coming from white British backgrounds but with slightly higher

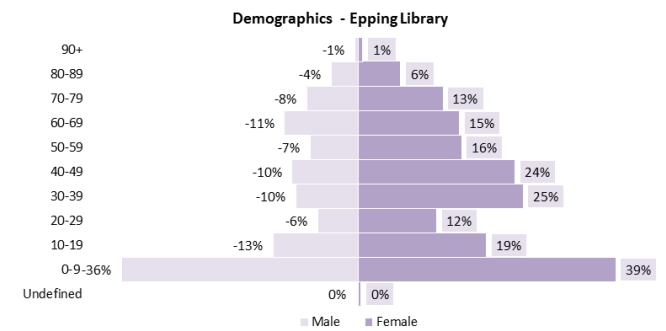
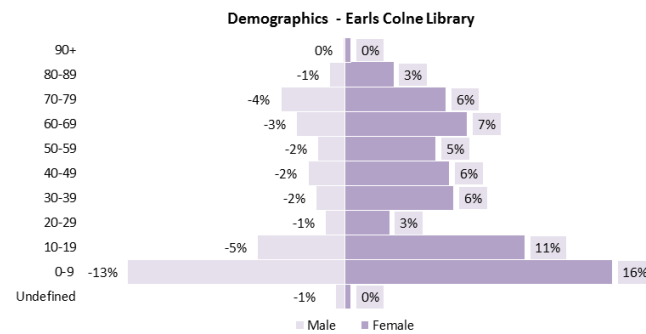
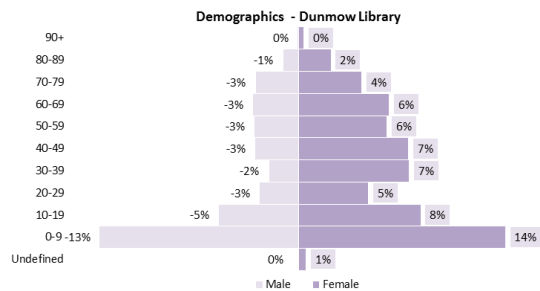
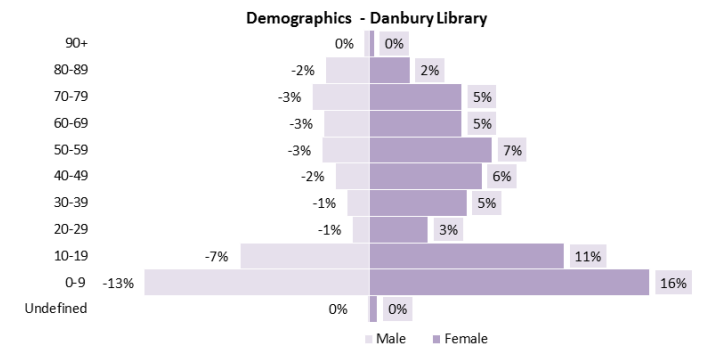
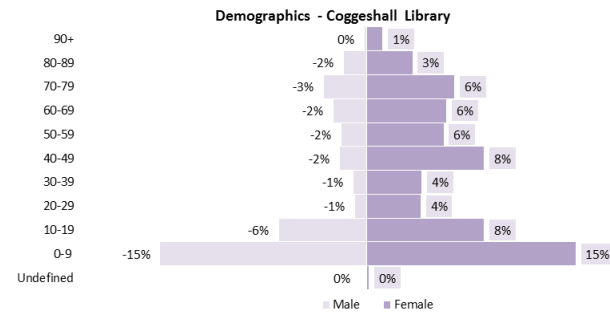
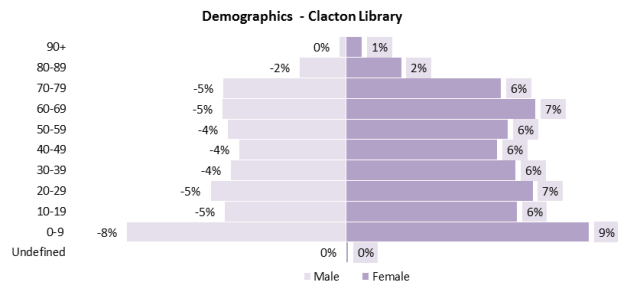
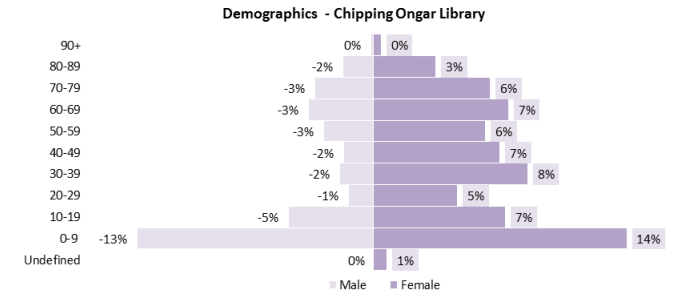
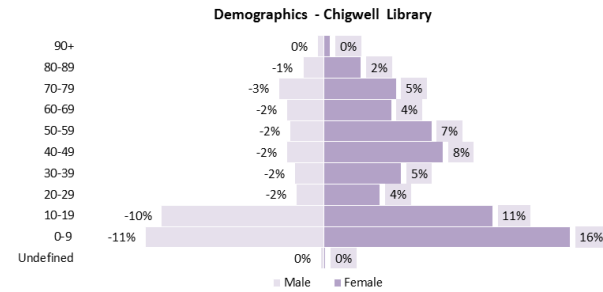
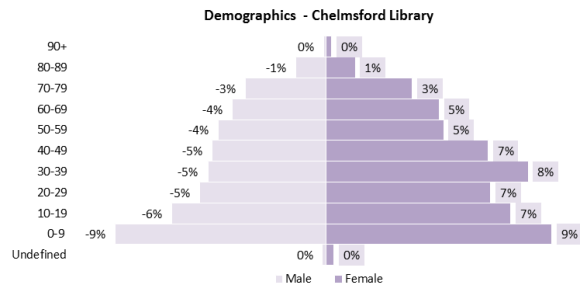
representation among Black & minority ethnic (BME): 7% of the Essex population report being from a BME background compared to 11% of library users.<sup>4</sup>

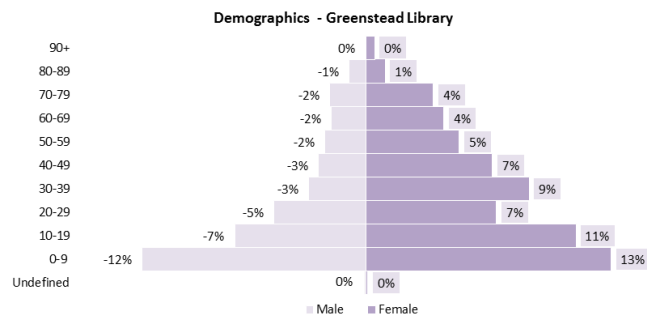
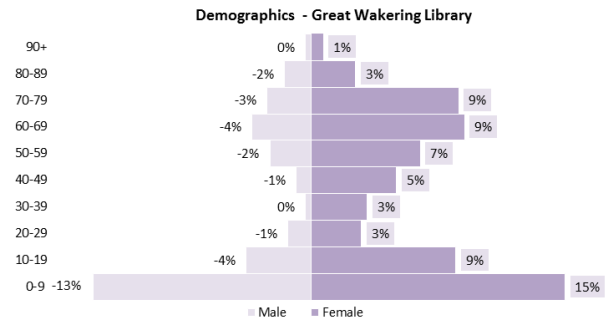
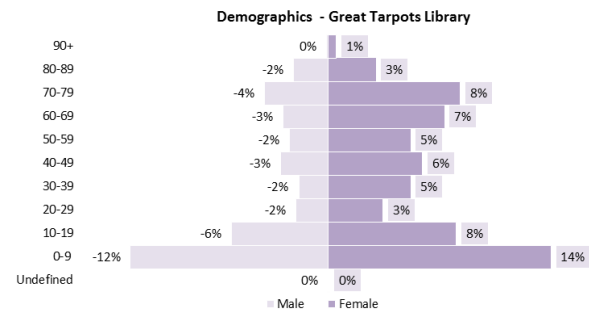
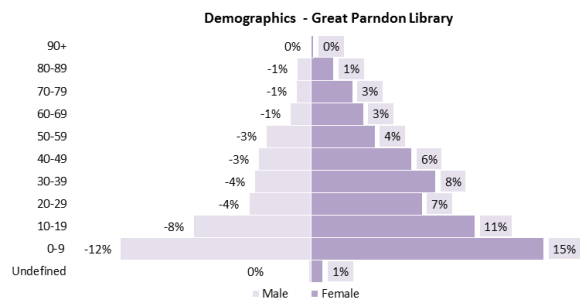
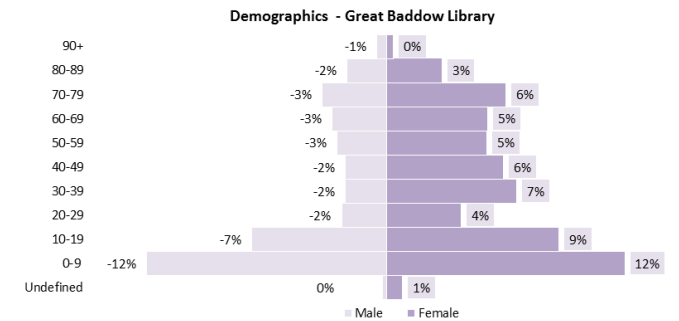
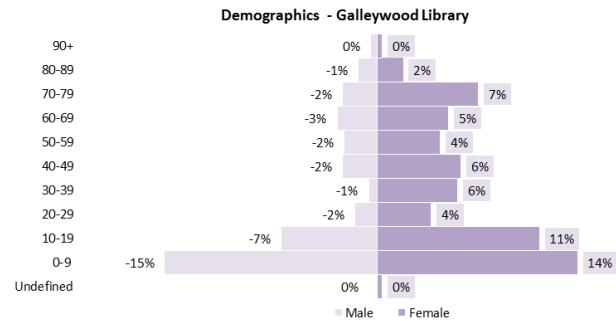
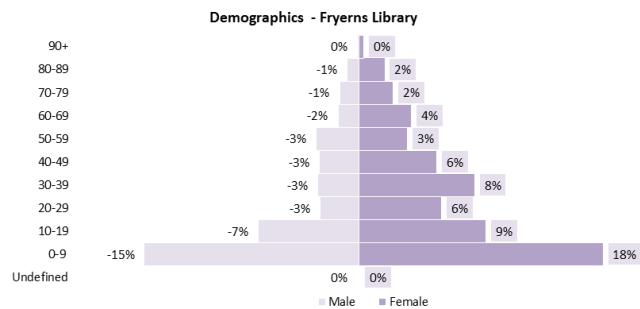


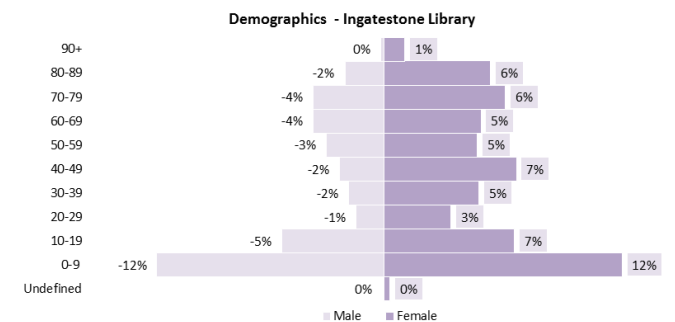
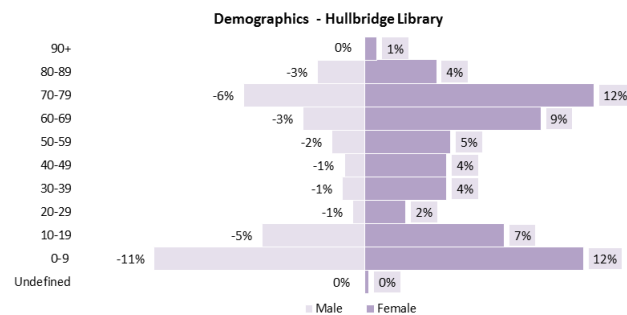
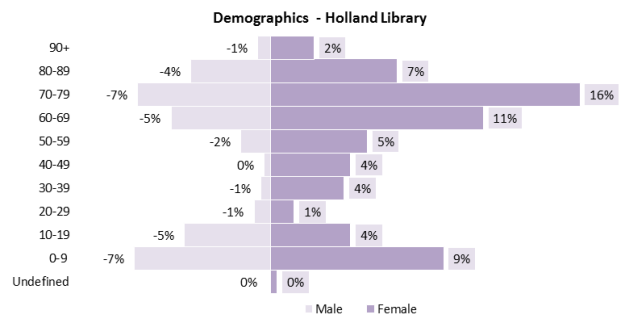
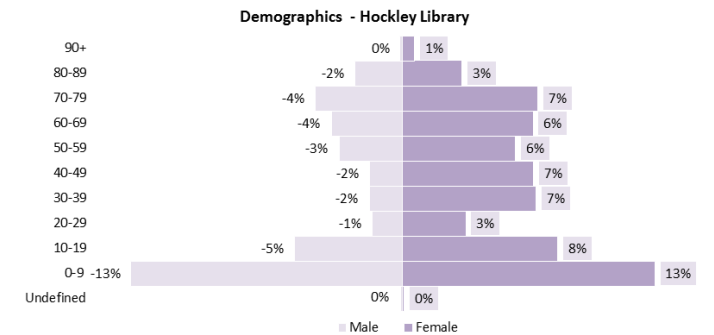
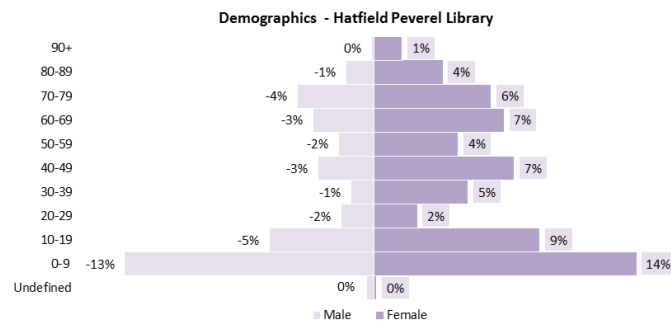
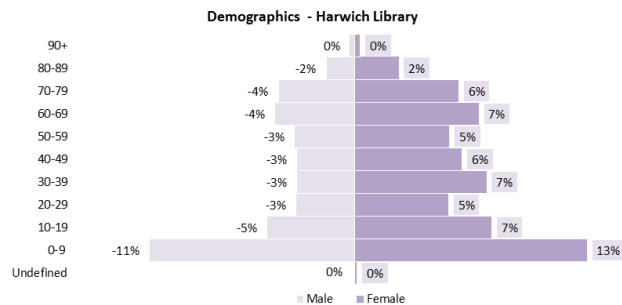
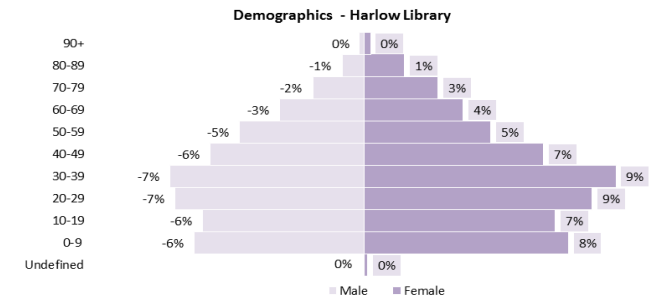
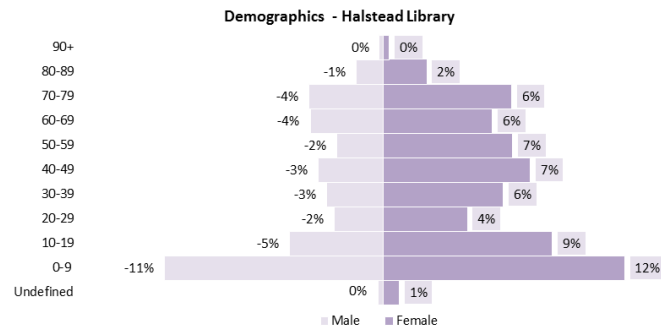
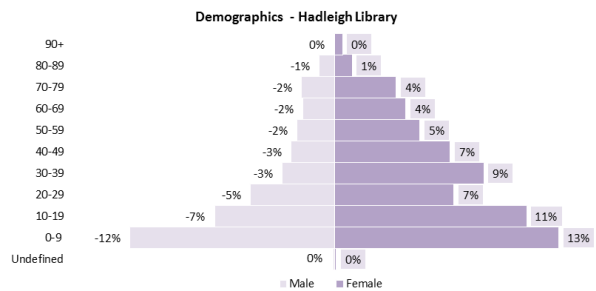
<sup>4</sup> Source: Mobile Libraries review, EqIA, September 2017, from Census Data, ONS 2011 and Essex Libraries' user data, 2016-17.

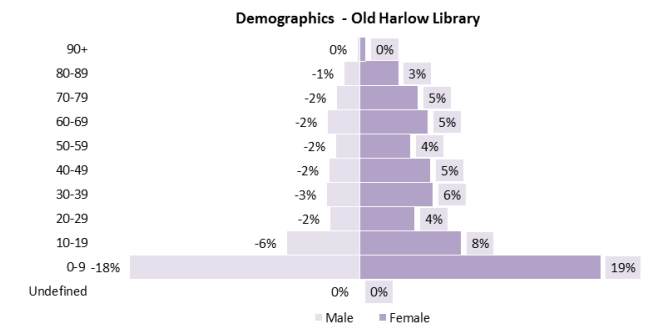
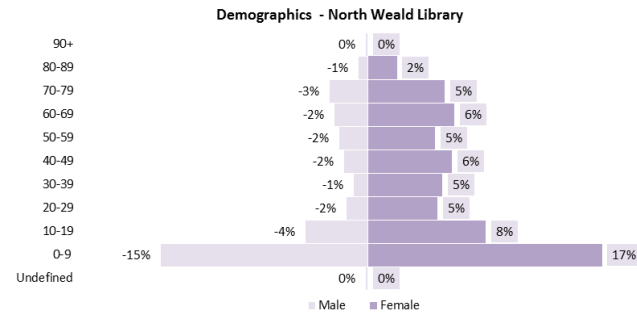
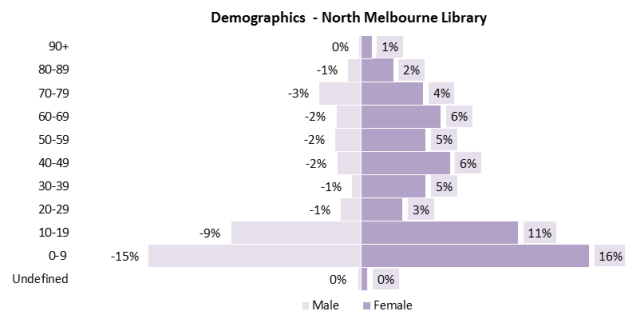
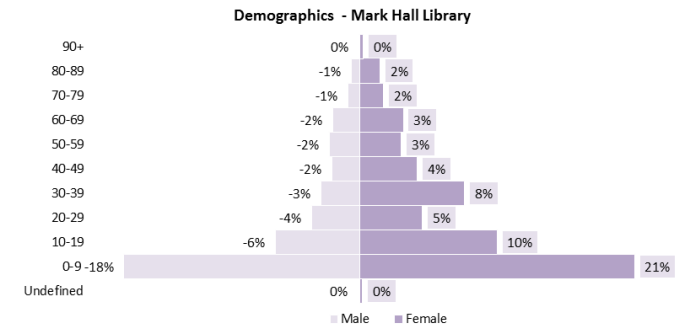
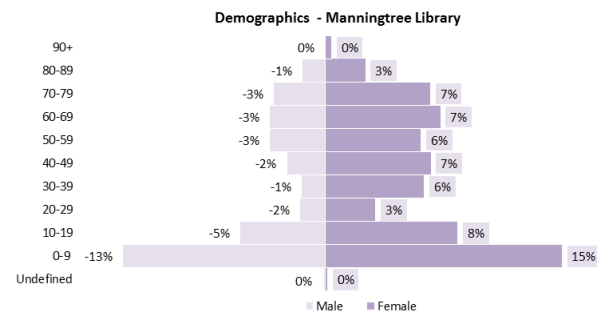
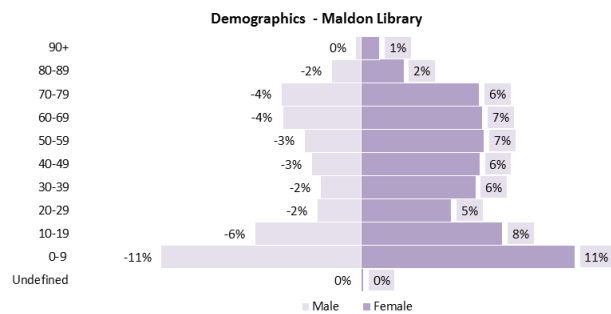
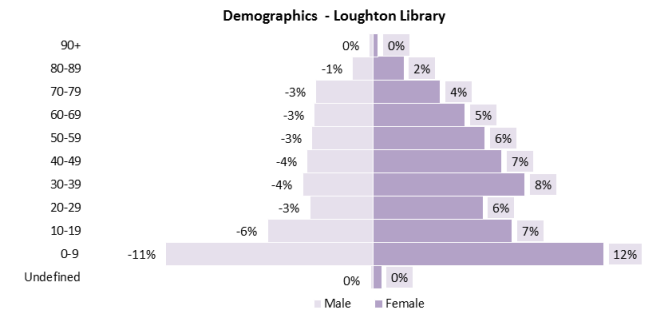
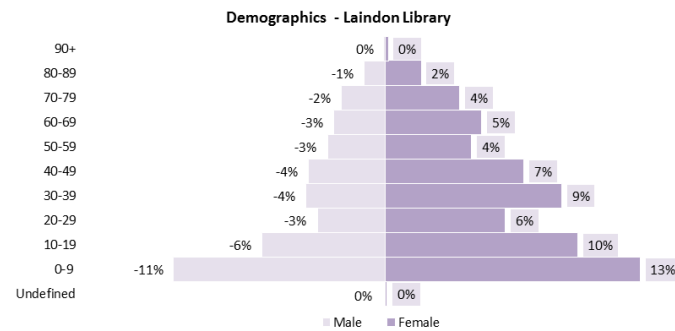
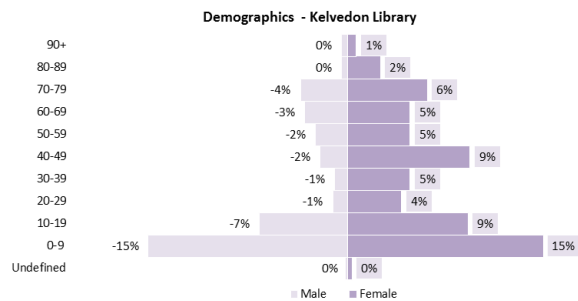
Graphs below show the age and gender of users at each library in Essex (excluding undefined users for gender)

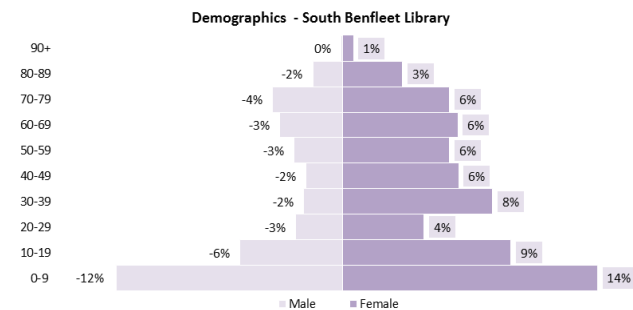
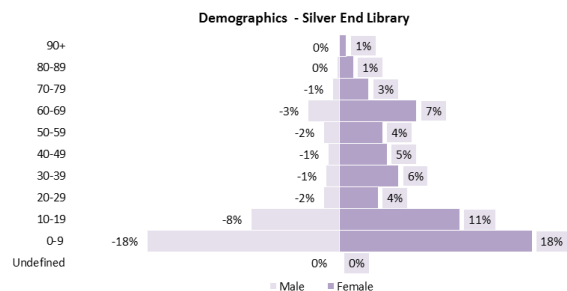
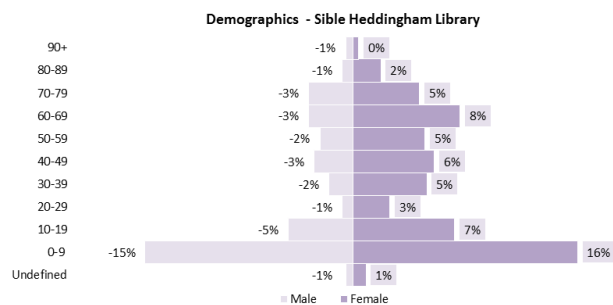
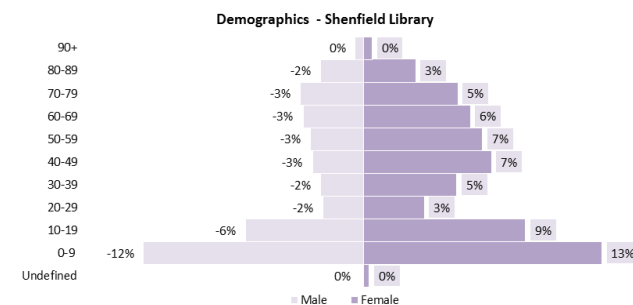
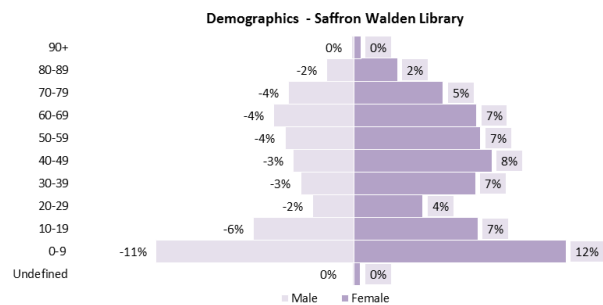
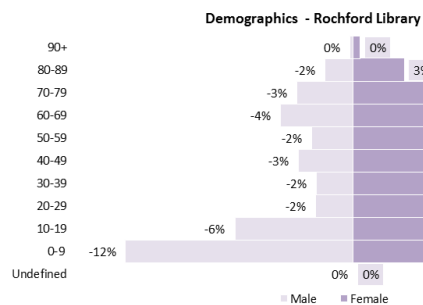
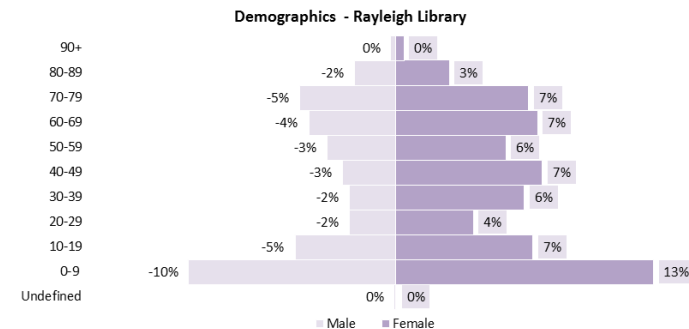
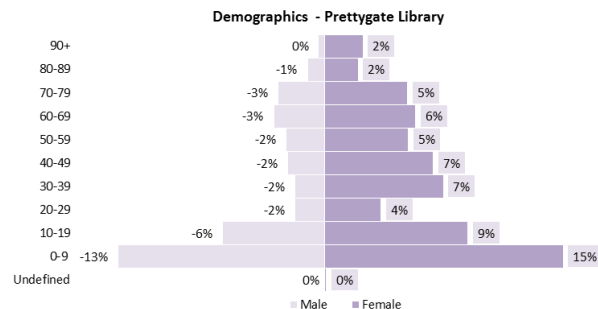
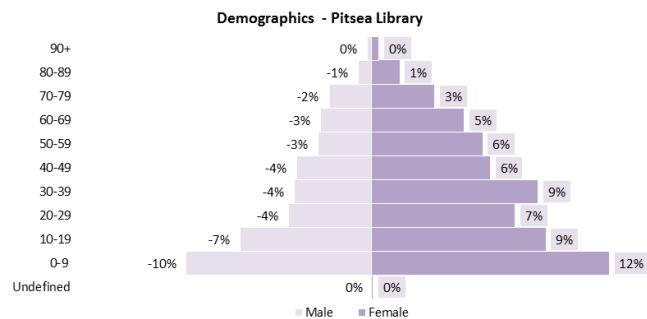




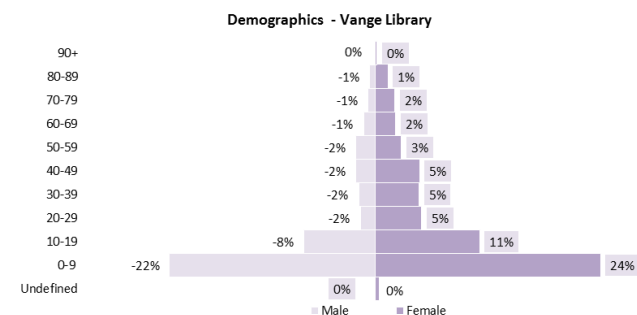
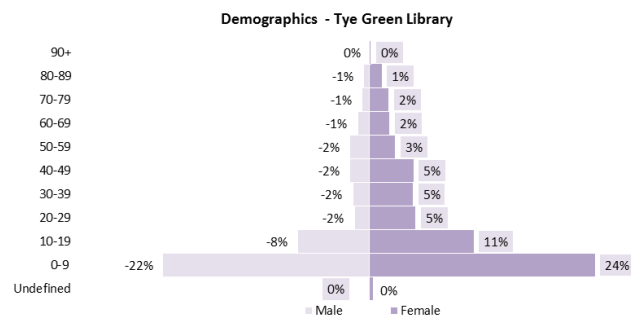
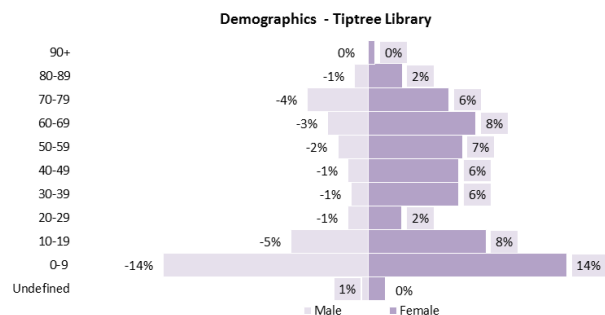
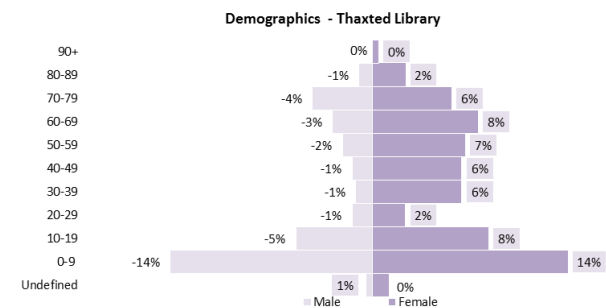
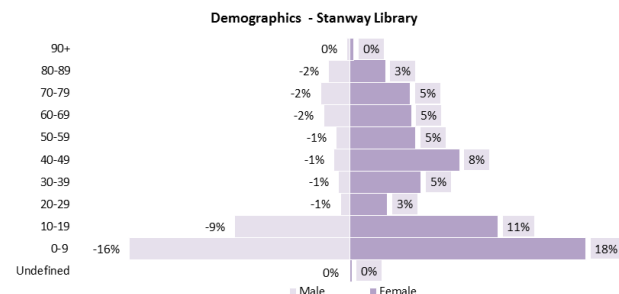
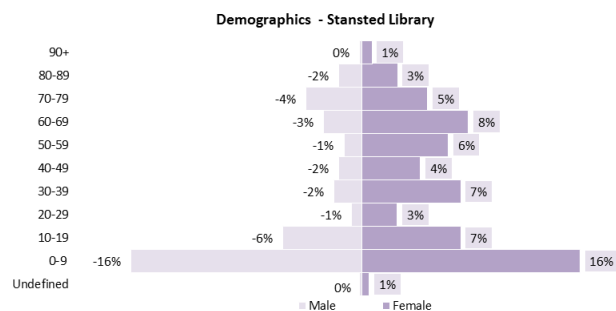
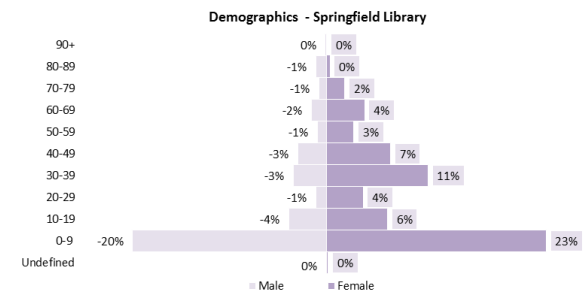
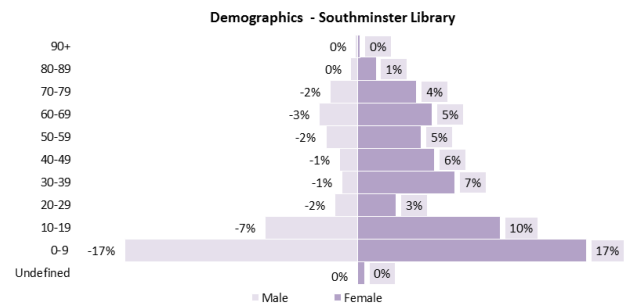
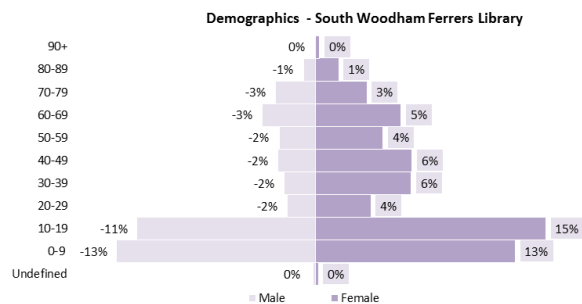


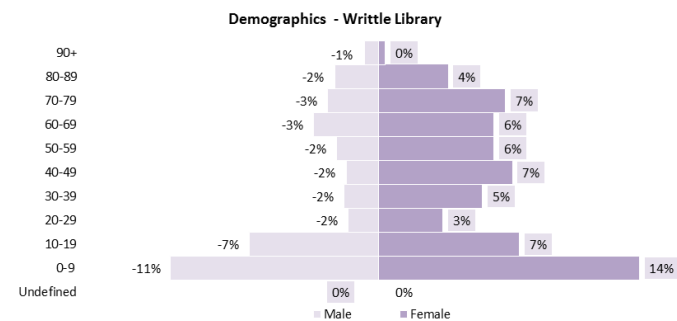
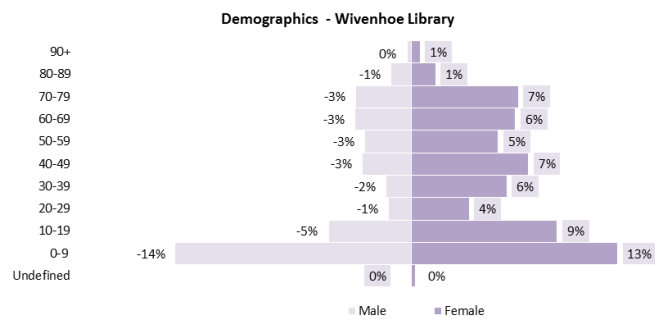
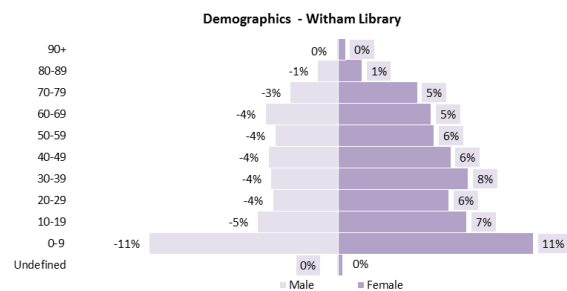
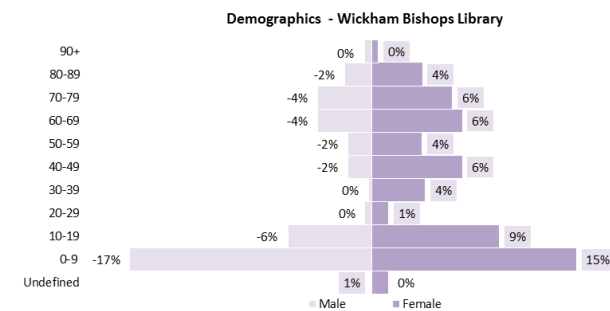
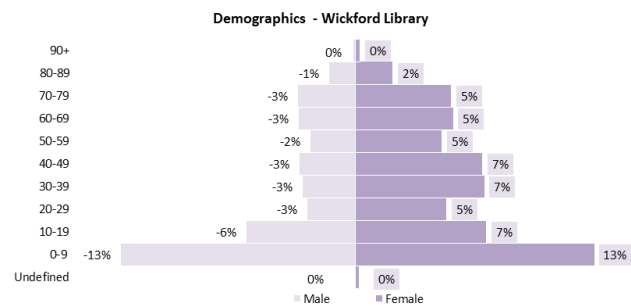
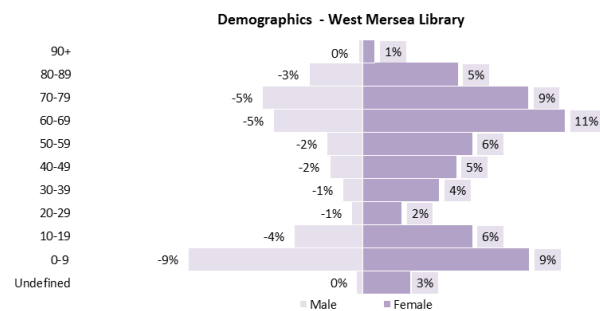
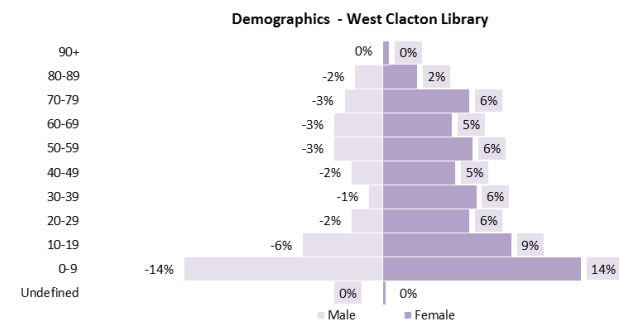
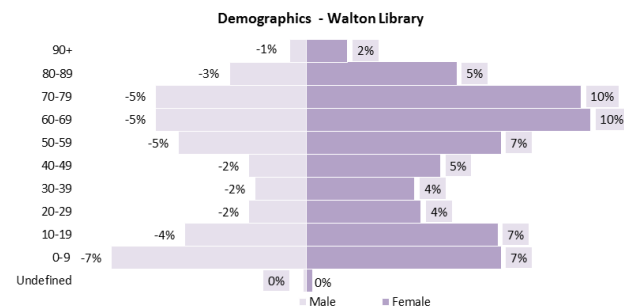
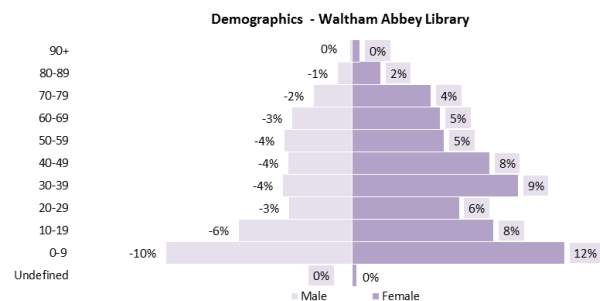












#### 4.4. Deprivation

This section considers levels of social deprivation within the lower-layer super output area (explained below) in which each library is situated.<sup>5</sup>

Library services contribute to Essex County Council's strategic aim to help create great places to grow up, live and work. This is particularly important in areas of deprivation where libraries can be a safe place for communities to come together, and where people can access services to support literacy, residents returning to work, local charities, digital access and adult literacy.

Essex County Council has used the Indices of Multiple Deprivation to understand the levels of deprivation across the county. The Index of Multiple Deprivation, commonly known as the IMD, is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England and is the most widely used index of deprivation. Lower layer super output areas (LSOAs) are small areas or neighbourhoods, designed to be of a similar population size, with an average of approximately 1,500 residents or 650 households. There are 32,844 Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England. They were produced by the Office for National Statistics for the reporting of small area statistics.

The IMD combines information from seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation. The domains are combined using the following weights:

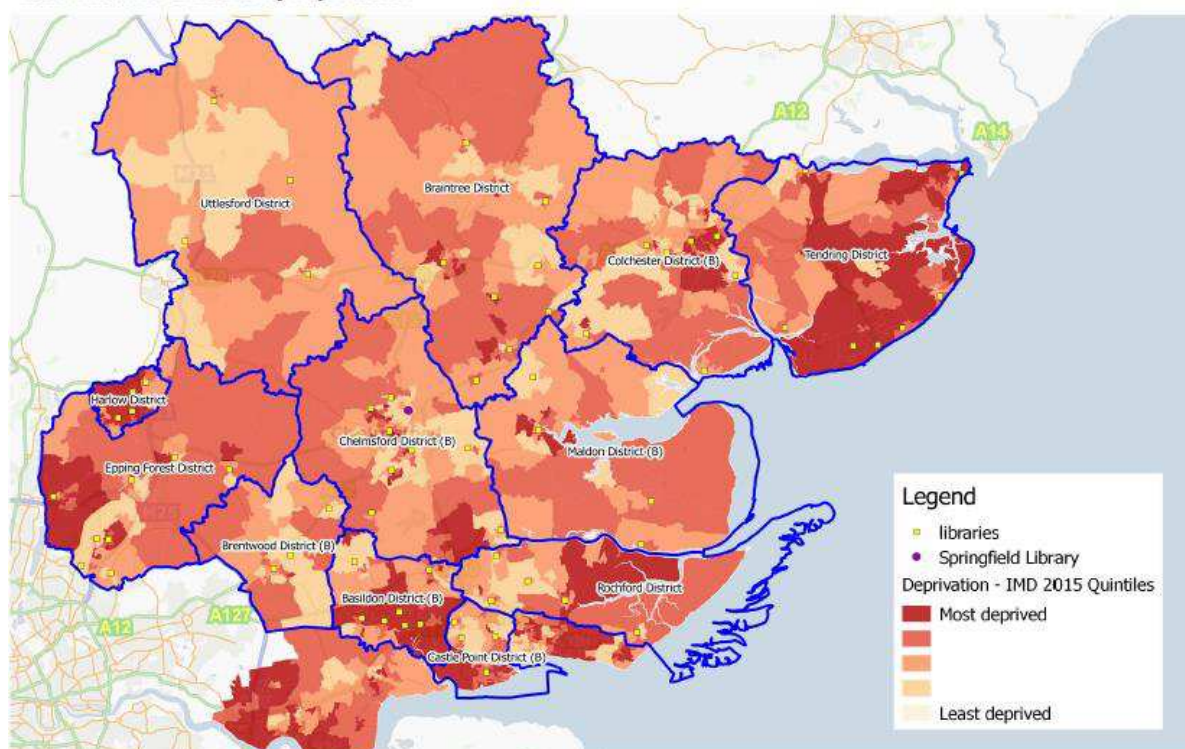
- Income deprivation (22.5%)
- Employment deprivation (22.5%)
- Education, skills and training deprivation (13.5%)
- Health deprivation and disability (13.5%)
- Crime (9.3%)
- Barriers to housing and services (9.3%)
- Living environment deprivation (9.3%)

The weights were derived from consideration of the academic literature on poverty and deprivation, as well as the levels of robustness of the indicators.

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<sup>5</sup> Sources- *Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2015*  
*Mosaic, ECC Insight and intelligence, 2017*

### Essex libraries & LSOAs by deprivation



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During the research we have not identified a direct correlation between usage of the library service and the level of deprivation in surrounding areas. However, deprivation is still a driver for the location of library services as people in deprived areas have fewer resources available to them than people in affluent areas to access services, buy books, computers or services or travel to other locations. Therefore, library services based in areas of most deprivation such as Clacton, Harwich and Greenstead are given higher weighting as being important community assets.

## 4.5. Social Isolation

This criterion considers the relative risk of social isolation within each district.

Social Isolation and loneliness are different. Social isolation is an objective measure of the number of someone's interactions. Loneliness is a feeling resulting from a perceived lack of meaningful interactions, or a discrepancy between an individual's desired level of interactions versus their achieved level of social interactions. An individual may be isolated without feeling lonely and vice versa. There are greater negative impacts associated with loneliness.

Loneliness can lead to multiple physical and psychological problems as well as increased health and social care service use.

Social isolation and loneliness are not limited to older people and can impact anyone at different periods there life. They are not linked to deprivation or geographical location and there are therefore are no accurate measures to predict where or when social isolation or loneliness may occur.

In order to consider the risks of social isolation in the needs assessment we have identified two groups within the population with a heightened risk, as identified in research and literature reviews by Essex County Council's insight team<sup>6</sup>. As there is no nationally recognised measure of social isolation we have used whole population data to provide a risk assessment. The two groups considered are new parents and older people over 65.

#### 4.5.1. Older People

The risk to this section of the population has been referred to in ECC's analysis of social isolation and loneliness referred to above. Research suggests that almost a third of over 65s feel lonely at some point in time. Persistent loneliness and frequent feelings of loneliness have the biggest detrimental impact on an individual's health and wellbeing and an estimated 5-7% fall into this category. [This means that of the circa 350,000 Essex residents who are over 65](#), approximately 20,000 over 65s in Essex are persistently and/or frequently lonely, with a further 89,000 occasionally lonely<sup>7</sup>. With the forecast aging population, this at-risk cohort will grow by approximately 50% within the next 20 years.

In order to measure this risk indicator we have reviewed the population of over 65s in the county, assuming where there is a larger proportion of the population who are over 65 there is a higher need for libraries as one possible way of support.

Library membership records show that over 60s make up 22% of library services users. Groups such as "knit and natter" use the library frequently attracting this audience. Face to face interviews with library users during the public engagement in spring 2018 found that retirement was a trigger for people using libraries more and that older people value libraries as places they can read, pass the time and socialise<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> *Social Isolation in Essex*, ECC Strategic Planning & Commissioning, 2013; *Social Isolation & Loneliness: Literature & best practice review, research and recommendations*, ECC Organisational Intelligence [date]; *Social Isolation of Pregnant Mothers and Families with Young Children*, ECC Organisational Intelligence, July 2016

<sup>7</sup> *Social Isolation & Loneliness: Literature & best practice review, research and recommendations*; *ONS population projection 2018, c 352,000 over 65s in Essex*.

<sup>8</sup> *Your community, libraries and you: engagement summary report*, July 2018, Essex County Council

#### **4.5.2. New Parents**

The second group we have identified at being at risk of social isolation is new parents who are going through a significant change in their lives and can often feel isolated from friends and family. This is particularly true of parents on maternity leave, shared parental leave or adoption leave who do not have the support networks during the day. In the interviews with library users mentioned above, becoming a first time parent was identified as a trigger for using libraries more.

In order to measure this risk indicator we identified the fertility rates across the county, assuming that higher rates of fertility are going to increase the number of new parents.

The library service has done a lot of work in supporting maternal mental health programmes, working with the children's centres and public health, running regular baby and toddler Rhymetimes, an annual Summer Reading Challenge for children and young people and other events aimed at parents and children. Libraries also offer dedicated children's libraries, sensory walls and spaces for children and parents to meet.

#### **4.6. Tiering**

Based on the evidence of all the analysis gathered, this needs assessment ranks each library and places it into one of four tiers.

##### **4.6.1 Tier 1**

Tier 1 has been considered based on the clear current need to maintain hub library services in main settlements. It reflects Essex County Council's commitment to ensure that there is a distribution of hub libraries across Essex in areas of high population density and usage.

A hub library should provide access to a full range of library services and have the longest weekly opening hours.

##### **4.6.2 Tier 2**

Tier 2 libraries have been identified as being locations where there is currently a need for a library service based on the current usage.

##### **4.6.3 Tier 3**

Tier 3 libraries have been identified as being in locations where no library provision is required in order to provide a comprehensive and efficient service but where it would be desirable if library facilities could be made available. The draft strategy proposes

that these will be run by the community but they are likely to operate to a different model than the current Community Libraries.

#### **4.6.4 Tier 4**

Tier 4 libraries have been identified as being locations where it is not necessary to provide a library service.

## **5 Prioritisation and rationale for tier allocation**

Careful consideration has been given to a range of indicators contained in the evidence above in the process of determining priorities for a comprehensive and efficient service.

The indicators have been grouped into five domains: Location, Population, Usage, Deprivation and Social Isolation in order to determine the demographic need. Within each of the domains, the individual indicators have been attributed equal value, each indicator has been ranked and the rankings added together to give an overall domain score.

Weighting of each domain has been in the following way:

- Location, 30%, assessed on clusters of libraries with lowest priority given to libraries within two miles walking distance of their nearest neighbours
- Population, 25%, assessed on the number of libraries per head of population in each district
- Usage, 25%, assessed on the number of active members at each library
- Deprivation, 15%, assessed on the deprivation level of the lower-layer super output area (LSOA) the library's postcode is in, as identified in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ,
- Social Isolation Risk Factors 5%, assessed on fertility rates and population over 65 in each district.

### **5.1 The scoring process**

1. Identify the hub libraries for each district. These were placed into Tier 1
2. **First round of scoring:** Score each of the remaining libraries on the five criteria identified above.
3. The locations/libraries with the lowest overall scores (50 and below) are considered not to have a significant need for a library service in that location.
4. **Second round of scoring:** Re-score the other libraries (not including those identified as Tier 4) to allocate remaining libraries services into tier 2 & 3 based on the output of their scores.



During this process, all tiers were analysed to:

- take account of the impact on other libraries in each district if some were closed
  - make sure there was an adequate spread of libraries across each district
  - make sure no more than half the libraries in any one district were in tier 4.
5. In the second round, library locations with a score of 75 and above were placed in tier 2, locations with a score of 53 to 74 were placed in tier 3.

## **6 Summary**

Need for library services across, Essex has been assessed on the basis of evidence relating to five criteria: location, population, usage, deprivation and social isolation. The combined evidence has been used to rank the level of need for library services in each current library location.

The proposed ranking and data used are shown in the data tables below. This has been used to place each library location into one of four tiers, according to evidenced need for library services. Further information and impact of proposed changes to the library service based on this need assessment is shown within the Essex Future Library Services Strategy 2019-24.

Based on the evidence analysed in this needs assessment, Essex County Council's statutory duty can be met by providing library services at locations in Tiers 1 and 2, in conjunction with the provision of e-library, mobile library and home library services.

Tier 4 libraries account for 11% of current library activity and therefore 89% of users will continue to have access to library services in the same or similar location, depending on the level of community interest in running libraries in tier 3 locations.

Tier 1 accounts for 55.5% of current usage, Tier 2 17% of usage and Tier 3 17% of usage.

## Data Sources

Data Name	Date Represented	Date Produced	Source
District	August 2018	2018	Legislation
Postcode	March 2018	2018	Internal Library Dashboard
Number of libraries within two miles of walking distance	August 2018	August 2018	Google Maps
Population	2016	2016	ONS 2016-based Subnational Population Projections
Library offer per head of population (district)	2016/2018	2016/2018	ONS 2016-based Subnational Population Projections and Internal data held on where libraries fall within the districts
Loans & Renewals Issued	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2018	Library Management System
WIFI Usage	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2018	Netloan
Computer Reservations	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2018	Netloan
Active Users Loan & Renewals	April 2017 to March 2018	August 2018	Library Management System
Active Users WIFI	April 2017 to March 2018	August 2018`	Netloan
Active Users	April 2017 to March 2018	August 2018	Library Management

<b>Data Name</b>	<b>Date Represented</b>	<b>Date Produced</b>	<b>Source</b>
			System and Netloan
Indices of Deprivation Decile	2015	2015	2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation
Older People (65+)	2015 mid-year	2016	ONS © Crown Copyright 2016
Fertility Rate per 1,000	2011-2015	2017	ONS © Crown Copyright 2017
Population Per Library 2016/17	2016/17	2017	CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy)
Demographics by User	2017/2018	April 2018	Extracted from Library Management System
Loans/Renewals Trend Data	12/13 to 17/18	August 2018	Extracted from the Library Management System
Computer Reservations Trend Data	12/13 to 17/18	August 2018	Extracted from the Library Management System

General			Location	Population		Usage			Deprivation	Social Isolation	
Library	District	Post Code	Number of Libraries within 2 miles walking distance	Population	Library offer per head of population (district)	Active Users Loans & Renewals	Active Users WIFI	Active Users	Indices of Deprivation Decile	Older People (65+) District %	Fertility Rate per 1,000 Population District
Tier 1											
Basildon	Basildon	SS14 1EE	3	187,097	26,728	5,278	1,207	6,216	2	17	69
Billericay	Basildon	CM12 9AB	0	187,097	26,728	5,853	453	6,145	10	17	69
Braintree	Braintree	CM73YL	0	152,630	16,959	6,915	991	7,594	5	19	62
Brentwood	Brentwood	CM14 4BP	1	77,783	25,928	6,164	891	6,763	8	20	62
Canvey	Castle Point	SS8 7RB	0	90,451	22,613	3,327	334	3,556	5	25	57
Chelmsford	Chelmsford	CM1 1QH	1	176,421	17,642	19,222	3,399	21,418	5	19	60
Clacton	Tendring	CO15 1SF	1	145,523	18,190	4,931	746	5,434	1	29	66
Colchester	Colchester	CO1 1JB	2	192,625	27,518	14,536	3,072	16,599	3	17	62
Harlow	Harlow	CM20 1HA	3	87,115	17,423	5,418	1,734	6,744	2	15	76
Loughton	Epping Forest	IG10 1HD	1	131,979	16,497	5,463	1,128	6,268	9	20	66
Maldon	Maldon	CM9 5FW	0	63,949	15,987	5,188	609	5,582	5	24	56
Rayleigh	Rochford	SS6 7BX	0	86,579	17,316	5,611	479	5,927	5	23	53
Saffron Walden	Uttlesford	CB10 1ES	0	88,311	22,078	5,966	742	6,401	9	19	61
Wickford	Basildon	SS12 0AG	0	187,097	26,728	4,723	366	4,947	5	17	69
Witham	Braintree	CM8 2AQ	0	152,630	16,959	4,622	682	5,117	7	19	62
Tier 2											
Burnham	Maldon	CM0 8HQ	0	63,949	15,987	1,289	120	1,372	5	24	56

General			Location	Population		Usage			Deprivation	Social Isolation	
Library	District	Post Code	Number of Libraries within 2 miles walking distance	Population	Library offer per head of population (district)	Active Users Loans & Renewals	Active Users WIFI	Active Users	Indices of Deprivation Decile	Older People (65+) District %	Fertility Rate per 1,000 Population District
Chipping Ongar	Epping Forest	CM5 9AB	0	131,979	16,497	1,655	148	1,746	5	20	66
Dunmow	Uttlesford	CM6 1FS	0	88,311	22,078	3,435	330	3,678	9	19	61
Epping	Epping Forest	CM16 5DN	0	131,979	16,497	1,850	223	1,987	5	20	66
Great Baddow	Chelmsford	CM2 7HH	1	176,421	17,642	2,501	306	2,698	9	19	60
Greenstead	Colchester	CO4 3QE	1	192,625	27,518	1,966	297	2,149	1	17	62
Halstead	Braintree	CO9 1HU	0	152,630	16,959	2,329	188	2,460	5	19	62
Harwich	Tendring	CO12 3JT	0	145,523	18,190	2,550	241	2,716	1	29	66
Laindon	Basildon	SS15 6AG	1	187,097	26,728	3,025	507	3,384	6	17	69
North Melbourne	Chelmsford	CM1 4UU	1	176,421	17,642	1,551	122	1,615	3	19	60
Old Harlow	Harlow	CM17 0DW	1	87,115	17,423	1,656	112	1,730	6	15	76
Pitsea	Basildon	SS13 3DU	1	187,097	26,728	1,720	383	2,022	2	17	69
Rochford	Rochford	SS4 1PX	0	86,579	17,316	1,702	180	1,820	3	23	53
South Woodham Ferrers	Chelmsford	CM3 5JU	0	176,421	17,642	3,696	461	3,919	7	19	60
Waltham Abbey	Epping Forest	EN9 1EL	0	131,979	16,497	1,975	340	2,216	4	20	66
Tier 3											
Brightlingsea	Tendring	CO7 0BZ	0	145,523	18,190	1,276	55	1,310	5	29	66
Coggeshall	Braintree	CO6 1UH	0	152,630	16,959	897	31	912	7	19	62
Earls Colne	Braintree	CO6 2PA	0	152,630	16,959	869	20	882	5	19	62

General			Location	Population		Usage			Deprivation	Social Isolation	
Library	District	Post Code	Number of Libraries within 2 miles walking distance	Population	Library offer per head of population (district)	Active Users Loans & Renewals	Active Users WIFI	Active Users	Indices of Deprivation Decile	Older People (65+) District %	Fertility Rate per 1,000 Population District
Frinton	Tendring	CO13 9DA	1	145,523	18,190	1,918	141	2,014	6	29	66
Great Parndon	Harlow	CM18 7PP	2	87,115	17,423	1,711	408	2,034	3	15	76
Great Tarpots	Castle Point	SS7 5UH	1	90,451	22,613	1,586	112	1,665	6	25	57
Hadleigh	Castle Point	SS7 2PD	0	90,451	22,613	3,027	179	3,149	5	25	57
Hockley	Rochford	SS5 4PZ	0	86,579	17,316	2,208	132	2,291	8	23	53
Ingatestone	Brentwood	CM4 9EU	0	77,783	25,928	946	94	994	9	20	62
Manningtree	Tendring	CO11 1AD	0	145,523	18,190	2,472	125	2,548	7	29	66
Shenfield	Brentwood	CM15 8NJ	1	77,783	25,928	3,838	340	4,071	10	20	62
South Benfleet	Castle Point	SS7 5HD	1	90,451	22,613	1,960	108	2,027	7	25	57
Springfield	Chelmsford	CM1 6GX	1	176,421	17,642	2,408	160	2,503	9	19	60
Stanway	Colchester	CO3 0RH	1	192,625	27,518	1,509	38	1,533	8	17	62
Tiptree	Colchester	CO5 0SX	0	192,625	27,518	1,563	106	1,635	9	17	62
Walton	Tendring	CO14 8AE	1	145,523	18,190	791	70	838	2	29	66
West Clacton	Tendring	CO16 8BE	0	145,523	18,190	519	82	575	2	29	66
West Mersea	Colchester	CO5 8QA	0	192,625	27,518	1,493	117	1,567	8	17	62
Wivenhoe	Colchester	CO7 9AB	0	192,625	27,518	1,327	54	1,361	10	17	62
Tier 4											
Broomfield	Chelmsford	CM1 7AH	1	176,421	17,642	973	43	1,003	9	19	60

General			Location	Population		Usage			Deprivation	Social Isolation	
Library	District	Post Code	Number of Libraries within 2 miles walking distance	Population	Library offer per head of population (district)	Active Users Loans & Renewals	Active Users WIFI	Active Users	Indices of Deprivation Decile	Older People (65+) District %	Fertility Rate per 1,000 Population District
Buckhurst Hill	Epping Forest	IG9 5AZ	0	131,979	16,497	1,100	115	1,163	9	20	66
Chigwell	Epping Forest	IG7 6QX	0	131,979	16,497	807	86	863	8	20	66
Danbury	Chelmsford	CM3 4NQ	0	176,421	17,642	1,115	27	1,127	10	19	60
Debden	Epping Forest	IG10 3SA	1	131,979	16,497	326	42	352	4	20	66
Fryerns	Basildon	SS14 2NN	2	187,097	26,728	1,349	142	1,459	4	17	69
Galleywood	Chelmsford	CM2 8PU	1	176,421	17,642	1,122	84	1,179	7	19	60
Great Wakering	Rochford	SS3 0EQ	0	86,579	17,316	424	24	439	9	23	53
Hatfield Peverel	Braintree	CM3 2DP	0	152,630	16,959	740	39	762	6	19	62
Holland	Tendring	CO15 5UR	1	145,523	18,190	610	24	626	6	29	66
Hullbridge	Rochford	SS5 6ET	0	86,579	17,316	810	43	831	9	23	53
Kelvedon	Braintree	CO5 9BA	0	152,630	16,959	639	13	641	6	19	62
Mark Hall	Harlow	CM20 3AP	3	87,115	17,423	1,077	116	1,166	3	15	76
North Weald	Epping Forest	CM16 6BZ	0	131,979	16,497	538	45	569	9	20	66
Prettygate	Colchester	CO3 4EQ	2	192,625	27,518	3,561	201	3,689	10	17	62
Sible Hedingham	Braintree	CO9 3PX	0	152,630	16,959	687	24	698	9	19	62
Silver End	Braintree	CM8 3RQ	0	152,630	16,959	405	18	418	4	19	62
Southminster	Maldon	CM0 7AD	0	63,949	15,987	477	30	499	5	24	56
Stansted	Uttlesford	CM24 8AQ	0	88,311	22,078	401	0	401	10	19	61

General			Location	Population		Usage			Deprivation	Social Isolation	
Library	District	Post Code	Number of Libraries within 2 miles walking distance	Population	Library offer per head of population (district)	Active Users Loans & Renewals	Active Users WIFI	Active Users	Indices of Deprivation Decile	Older People (65+) District %	Fertility Rate per 1,000 Population District
Stock	Chelmsford	CM4 9BQ	0	176,421	17,642	349	14	354	5	19	60
Thaxted	Uttlesford	CM6 2LD	0	88,311	22,078	433	11	442	8	19	61
Tye Green	Harlow	CM18 6LU	3	87,115	17,423	1,729	170	1,855	3	15	76
Vange	Basildon	SS16 4ET	3	187,097	26,728	1,179	276	1,390	2	17	69
Wickham Bishops	Maldon	CM8 3NU	0	63,949	15,987	485	13	489	9	24	56
Writtle	Chelmsford	CM1 3DT	0	176,421	17,642	989	42	1,012	10	19	60



**First round of scoring: All libraries except those placed in Tier 1, highest to lowest score**

First round of scoring only identifies Tier 4 libraries. Tier 2 and 3 are calculated on the second round of scoring

Library	Location	Usage	Population	Deprivation	Social Isolation - Older People	Social Isolation - Fertility Rate	First Round Score	Final Tier	Comment
Harwich	30	20	5	15	2.5	1.8	74		
Hadleigh	30	20	11	9	2.2	0.6	73		
Greenstead	20	17.5	18	15	0.6	1.2	72		
Pitsea	20	15	16	13.5	0.4	2.2	67		
West Mersea	30	12.5	18	4.5	0.6	1.2	67		
Laindon	20	20	16	7.5	0.4	2.2	66		
Tiptree	30	12.5	18	3	0.6	1.2	65		
Dunmow	30	20	10	3	1.2	1	65		
Waltham Abbey	30	17.5	2	10.5	1.4	2	63		
Manningtree	30	17.5	5	6	2.5	1.8	63		
Shenfield	20	22.5	15	1.5	1.6	1.6	62		
Rochford	30	15	3	12	1.8	0.2	62		
Halstead	30	17.5	3	9	1	1.4	62		
South Woodham Ferrers	30	20	4	6	0.8	0.8	62		
Wivenhoe	30	10	18	1.5	0.6	1.2	61		
Epping	30	15	2	9	1.4	2	59		
Chipping Ongar	30	15	2	9	1.4	2	59		
Ingatestone	30	7.5	15	3	1.6	1.6	59		
Brightlingsea	30	10	5	9	2.5	1.8	58		
West Clacton	30	5	5	13.5	2.5	1.8	58		
Hockley	30	17.5	3	4.5	1.8	0.2	57		
Stanway	20	12.5	18	4.5	0.6	1.2	57		
South Benfleet	20	15	11	6	2.2	0.6	55		
Great Tarpots	20	12.5	11	7.5	2.2	0.6	54		
Burnham	30	10	2	9	2	0.4	53		
Earls Colne	30	7.5	3	9	1	1.4	52		
Frinton	20	15	5	7.5	2.5	1.8	52		
Walton	20	7.5	5	13.5	2.5	1.8	50		
North Melbourne	20	12.5	4	12	0.8	0.8	50		
Thaxted	30	2.5	10	4.5	1.2	1	49	Tier 4	
Old Harlow	20	15	4	7.5	0.2	2.5	49		Removed from Tier 4 as would result in more than 50% of Harlow libraries in Tier 4
Fryerns	7.5	12.5	16	10.5	0.4	2.2	49	Tier 4	
Coggeshall	30	7.5	3	6	1	1.4	49		Removed from Tier 4 as would result in more than 50% of Braintree libraries in Tier 4

Library	Location	Usage	Population	Deprivation	Social Isolation - Older People	Social Isolation - Fertility Rate	First Round Score	Final Tier	Comment
Prettygate	7.5	20	18	1.5	0.6	1.2	49	Tier 4	
Buckhurst Hill	30	10	2	3	1.4	2	48	Tier 4	
Silver End	30	2.5	3	10.5	1	1.4	48	Tier 4	
Southminster	30	5	2	9	2	0.4	48	Tier 4	
Hatfield Peverel	30	5	3	7.5	1	1.4	48	Tier 4	
Kelvedon	30	5	3	7.5	1	1.4	48	Tier 4	
Chigwell	30	7.5	2	4.5	1.4	2	47	Tier 4	
Danbury	30	10	4	1.5	0.8	0.8	47	Tier 4	
Stock	30	2.5	4	9	0.8	0.8	47	Tier 4	
Writtle	30	10	4	1.5	0.8	0.8	47	Tier 4	
Stansted	30	2.5	10	1.5	1.2	1	46	Tier 4	
Great Baddow	20	17.5	4	3	0.8	0.8	46		Removed from Tier 4 as would result in more than 50% of Chelmsford libraries in Tier 4. Closing both Great Baddow and Galleywood libraries would leave too much of a gap in this area and Great Baddow has a higher need for a library service.
Springfield	20	17.5	4	3	0.8	0.8	46		Removed from Tier 4 due to current operating model
Hullbridge	30	7.5	3	3	1.8	0.2	46	Tier 4	
Vange	0	12.5	16	13.5	0.4	2.2	45	Tier 4	
Great Parndon	7.5	17.5	4	12	0.2	2.5	44		Removed from Tier 4 as would result in more than 50% of Harlow libraries in Tier 4
North Weald	30	5	2	3	1.4	2	43	Tier 4	
Sible Hedingham	30	5	3	3	1	1.4	43	Tier 4	
Wickham Bishops	30	5	2	3	2	0.4	42	Tier 4	
Holland	20	5	5	7.5	2.5	1.8	42	Tier 4	
Galleywood	20	10	4	6	0.8	0.8	42	Tier 4	
Great Wakering	30	2.5	3	3	1.8	0.2	41	Tier 4	
Debden	20	2.5	2	10.5	1.4	2	38	Tier 4	
Broomfield	20	7.5	4	3	0.8	0.8	36	Tier 4	
Tye Green	0	15	4	12	0.2	2.5	34	Tier 4	
Mark Hall	0	10	4	12	0.2	2.5	29	Tier 4	

**Second round of scoring: libraries not placed in Tier 1 or Tier 4, highest to lowest score**

Second round of scoring for Tier 2 and 3 libraries adjusted for Tier 4 libraries

Library	Location	Usage	Population	Deprivation	Social Isolation - Older People	Social Isolation - Fertility Rate	Second Round Score	Final Tier
Waltham Abbey	30	17.5	25	10.5	1.4	2	86	Tier 2
Pitsea	30	15	25	13.5	0.4	2.2	86	Tier 2
South Woodham Ferrers	30	20	25	6	0.8	0.8	83	Tier 2
Epping	30	15	25	9	1.4	2	82	Tier 2
Chipping Ongar	30	15	25	9	1.4	2	82	Tier 2
North Melbourne	30	12.5	25	12	0.8	0.8	81	Tier 2
Dunmow	30	20	25	3	1.2	1	80	Tier 2
Halstead	30	17.5	22	9	1	1.4	81	Tier 2
Greenstead	20	17.5	24	15	0.6	1.2	78	Tier 2
Rochford	30	15	19	12	1.8	0.2	78	Tier 2
Harwich	30	20	8	15	2.5	1.8	77	Tier 2
Great Baddow	30	17.5	25	3	0.8	0.8	77	Tier 2
Burnham	30	10	24	9	2	0.4	75	Tier 2
Old Harlow	30	15	20	7.5	0.2	2.5	75	Tier 2
Laindon	20	20	25	7.5	0.4	2.2	75	Tier 2
Hockley	30	17.5	19	4.5	1.8	0.2	73	Tier 3
Hadleigh	30	20	11	9	2.2	0.6	73	Tier 3
West Mersea	30	12.5	24	4.5	0.6	1.2	73	Tier 3
Stanway	30	12.5	24	4.5	0.6	1.2	73	Tier 3
Great Parndon	20	17.5	20	12	0.2	2.5	72	Tier 3
Tiptree	30	12.5	24	3	0.6	1.2	71	Tier 3
Earls Colne	30	7.5	22	9	1	1.4	71	Tier 3
Wivenhoe	30	10	24	1.5	0.6	1.2	67	Tier 3
Springfield	20	17.5	25	3	0.8	0.8	67	Tier 3
Coggeshall	30	7.5	22	6	1	1.4	68	Tier 3
Manningtree	30	17.5	8	6	2.5	1.8	66	Tier 3
Shenfield	20	22.5	15	1.5	1.6	1.6	62	Tier 3
Brightlingsea	30	10	8	9	2.5	1.8	61	Tier 3
West Clacton	30	5	8	13.5	2.5	1.8	61	Tier 3
Ingatestone	30	7.5	15	3	1.6	1.6	59	Tier 3
South Benfleet	20	15	11	6	2.2	0.6	55	Tier 3
Frinton	20	15	8	7.5	2.5	1.8	55	Tier 3
Great Tarpots	20	12.5	11	7.5	2.2	0.6	54	Tier 3
Walton	20	7.5	8	13.5	2.5	1.8	53	Tier 3

# Your community, libraries and you.

Be part of the conversation

Visit: [libraries.essex.gov.uk](https://libraries.essex.gov.uk)



Innovation

Getting  
involved

Community  
heart

Front door  
to services

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# Introduction

Libraries have traditionally been at the heart of communities delivering reading, literacy, learning, culture and well-being. But communities, lifestyles and expectations are changing so libraries need to change too. Traditional library use – people coming in to borrow books – is falling as more people find more of their information and entertainment online. The nature of the county is changing too. Our population is set to grow by a fifth as we approach the mid-century and there will be more residents under 16 and over 65 years old. Planning ahead for the library service is therefore essential.

Before we started to make plans, we wanted to find out what the people of Essex need from libraries and to invite people to work with us to reshape the service so that it is relevant to people's lives now, fit for the future and sustainable.

So, in spring 2018 we embarked on the biggest exercise of research and public engagement that Essex County Council has done about libraries in more than a decade. We surveyed residents to get the views of a range of people, whether they use libraries or not. We interviewed library users to get more in depth

insight into their views and needs. We met children and young people, through focus groups in mainstream and special schools and also with the Young Essex Assembly. We held events across the county for community leaders, library users and members of the public to share their ideas. We also delved deep into our own monitoring data to find out what it can tell us about how, where and when people are using libraries, what the trends are and where we could improve.

Books and reading are still at the top of the list of things people expect from libraries. They also value well-informed staff and volunteers including the safe space libraries provide for reading, socialising, studying and activities. I was particularly struck by the enthusiasm and wealth of ideas that people shared at the public events. I was also impressed at how many people said they'd be interested in volunteering to help libraries. We already have over 1,200 regular and occasional library volunteers and a small but growing network of community run libraries. This confirms to me that, whilst change is unstoppable, so are the people of Essex and that we share an appetite for getting stuck in and working

together to make a difference for our communities. There is now a lot of work to do to analyse all the evidence we have covered and develop our plan for the future of libraries. For starters, this report provides a summary of all that we found out and makes for interesting reading, so I hope you enjoy it and want to work with us to shape the libraries of the future.



**Cllr Susan Barker**

Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate



# Executive summary

In spring 2018 Essex County Council conducted extensive public engagement and research about libraries. This was the largest exercise of its kind in more than a decade and included a countywide survey, interviews with library users, focus groups with young people and public events for community groups, elected representatives and the public.

Nearly 3,000 people responded to the survey, 273 library users were interviewed, five focus groups were held with children and young people and more than 250 people came and shared nearly 900 ideas and comments at the public events.

This has given the council a comprehensive picture of what people think about Essex libraries, how they use them now, how they would like to use them in future, and the role libraries play within communities now or can play in future.

## Key findings

1. Books and reading are still the most important thing about libraries, both for library users and non-users. 'The quality and range of books' was identified as the top priority in the survey. Book borrowing is by far and away the main activity people use libraries for: 90% of users say they come in to borrow books and one in four do so at least every two weeks.
2. Libraries become more or less important to people at different stages of their lives. Children and young people are most likely to use libraries. Women are more likely to use them than men and life changes such as becoming a parent, losing a job or retiring are triggers for using libraries more. People who don't use libraries say they either don't need them or don't have time. Working age men are least likely to use them.
3. In addition to books, libraries are valued as safe social spaces where people can come to find a quiet space, get help, information or, support learning, socialise and take part in activities or simply find a place to sit for a while.
4. There is an appetite to get involved. One in four survey respondents would consider volunteering for libraries, eight community-run libraries are now open and more interest in opening community libraries was shown at the events.
5. Some people want to be able to access more services and do more things in libraries, with many suggestions being made at the events for different clubs, activities, health sessions or advice drop-ins or to have cash machines or Post Office counters under the same roof. But others worried that the focus of libraries was being diluted, that books were no longer the priority and that they would lose the quiet space that was so important to them. Quiet booths, zones, days or designated 'quiet libraries' were suggested.
6. Library buildings are seen as valuable public spaces that could be hired for community use in the evenings and at weekends: as rehearsal spaces or performance venues, for art exhibitions, for meetings and public celebrations.

7. Many recognised the budget constraints facing public services and that hiring out spaces was one way to generate income to support the library service. But there was a tension between this and the impact that charging for space might have on voluntary groups.
8. Young people do not feel libraries are designed and delivered to meet their needs. The layout of libraries was a top priority for them, desiring space for study, reading, games and chilling out. They also wanted more digital provision and libraries open in the evenings.
9. People value well-informed staff and volunteers to help them and users are satisfied with the service they get.
10. People also value having a local library. But, two-fifths of library users visit more than one library, mostly because the location is convenient to where they live or work, to access the books or materials they are interested in or, because the opening hours at different libraries are convenient to them.

Themes that emerged from the events were that libraries need more or better promotion, people were interested in hiring and using library spaces for other activities, libraries help reduce social isolation, the service offer could be extended, the focus on increasing skills and knowledge should be retained and more could be done to encourage young library users and bring young and old together.








All this information is now being looked at in detail to begin to develop a forward plan and strategy for the future of the service. That is likely to be published for consultation by early spring 2019. In the meantime, investment in some buildings and improvements to the service will continue. Local ideas that volunteers can act on straight away have been passed to local library managers.



# What we did

As a library authority, Essex County Council (ECC) has a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof\*. To be able to do that we need to understand who wants to use the service, what their needs are and how their needs are changing. We also have to monitor how well we are delivering the service to ensure it remains efficient as demands and resources change.

Libraries help meet the council's strategic priority to create great places to grow up, live and work. Libraries Connected (formerly the Society of Chief Librarians) have defined six universal offers and two promises that libraries deliver:

	<b>Reading</b> – providing a modern reading offer.		<b>Culture</b> – being places where people can experience diverse and vibrant cultural events.
	<b>Information</b> – helping people access information and services.		<b>Learning</b> – being a space for lifelong learning.
	<b>Digital</b> – offering digital skills, services and access.		<b>Children's promise</b> – starting children and young people on a journey of reading and learning and engaging with them as they grow.
	<b>Health</b> – contributing to the health and wellbeing of communities.		<b>Six steps</b> – to provide a nurturing reading and learning environment for blind and partially sighted people.

But are we and our users, clear about all that libraries offer, and what our core offer should be? We wanted to find out.

Our objectives in commissioning this research and engagement were to:

- Gather evidence to inform future decisions and further consultation if needed, about the shape of the library service
- Better understand public perceptions of libraries and library services
- Bust myths or misperceptions about libraries
- Increase public understanding of why libraries need to change and the challenges they face
- Gather ideas for what people need in their communities and from libraries
- Increase community involvement and identify some people who want to work with us.

## Countywide survey

Independent research company, BMG Research, ran a postal survey of 25,000 households across Essex, selected at random, to find out the views both of users and non-users of libraries.

BMG Research drew addresses from Royal Mail's Postal Address File, the most complete list of residential addresses available, to provide a representative sample against deprivation across each Essex district. Any member of the household aged 18+ was able to take part, but responses were limited to one per household.

The survey was open from 12 February to 26 March and recipients could respond by post or online. It was not open to people other than the selected households, to make sure it was representative.

Questions asked about people's priorities for the library service, experience of using library services in Essex, the difference that libraries can make, library services in future, volunteering and getting

involved with libraries. It also asked respondents for information about themselves, such as employment status so that the responses can be analysed to help identify different needs.

## Face to Face interviews

Researchers from ECC's Research and Citizen Insight team conducted in-depth interviews with library users at 22 libraries around the county. The libraries were selected to ensure we had a range of views from different types of libraries: large urban ones, small rural ones, libraries in small and medium sized towns and villages, and suburban libraries outside of town centres. Interviews were carried out during weekday mornings and afternoons and also on the weekend to attract as diverse a sample as possible. The interviews covered a similar range of questions as the survey, but allowed for more conversation and in-depth exploration of points the interviewees raised. In total, 273 people were interviewed between 5 February and 15 March.

## Engagement events

Eleven public events were held across the county throughout March. All were held on weekday evenings, from 7 to 9pm and the primary audience for these was community leaders and groups. Invitations were sent to all town and parish, district, borough and city councils, partner organisations that work with libraries already and community groups that the library service had details for. The events were also open to the public and were advertised at libraries and through the service's social media feeds and e-letters. Voluntary sector umbrella bodies in the districts and boroughs were also invited to attend and have a representative on the panel at each event and they helped publicise the events to their networks and contacts.

At each event there was a panel of speakers, chaired by Cllr Susan Barker, ECC Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate, or her deputy, Cllr Mark Durham. Make-up of each panel varied but included, where available, one of the two heads of service for Essex Libraries, the district/borough/city council cabinet member or committee chair with a community brief, a representative of the local council for voluntary service (CVS) or other voluntary sector umbrella and

a representative from the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE).

Attendees were invited to consider three key questions:

- What does your community need?
- What role can libraries play?
- How can you help make it happen?

After a panel discussion, attendees were invited to share and develop ideas within four zones:

**Community heart:** What assets does your community have, what is missing and what role can libraries play?

**Getting involved:** How are you currently involved with libraries and how would you like to be in future?

**Innovation:** An opportunity to rethink what libraries can be to meet the way people live in the 21st century.

**Front door to services:** What services do you have and need in your community? Can libraries be a place to access more services?

# What you said

We already know a fair bit about use of our libraries and what users think from our records and a regular nationwide survey of library users. In 2017-18 there were:



**5.3m**

Visits made to Essex libraries



**232,240**

Active library members



**4m**

Loans of books and other items



**74**

Libraries in Essex



**16%**

Of Essex residents are active library users



**1,200**

People volunteered with libraries, 700 regularly, 500 for the summer reading challenge



**25%**

Public network computers are used 25% of the time available



**31hrs**

Is the average amount of time libraries are open each week



**92%**

Of users are satisfied with their library (CIPFA children's survey 2017 and adults 2016)

# Residents' survey

The countywide survey had 2,995 responses (12%); 73% were from households that use Essex Libraries; 27% were from non-users. Two thirds of responses (65%) were from women. We also know that females are more likely to be library users throughout their lives and that life changes such as having a child, becoming unemployed and retiring are triggers for using libraries more.

## Key findings

- The quality and range of books was the top priority for libraries, among all respondents, whether they use libraries or not.
- Two thirds of respondents had used an Essex library in the previous year
- Not needing the service or not having time are the top reasons why people don't use libraries
- Two in five current users use more than one library building. Multiple use is more likely among people who live in a suburb, a small town or a village, or if their main library is only open part time.
- Book borrowing is by some distance the main activity Essex libraries are used for. More than a quarter of service users (27%) do this weekly or fortnightly.
- Access to free books and computers, a place open and accessible to all and a trusted source of advice and information are the main impacts libraries have, say users
- Adult learning, health information & advice and other council services were the top three suggestions for other things to use libraries for
- One in four would find a community centre or village hall a convenient location for library services but nearly half would not find any other location convenient
- Just over half (52%) of library users use the website: 11% to access e-books and magazines, 9% for online learning
- Nearly a quarter of respondents would be interested in volunteering for the library service and 15% would consider helping to run a community library.

## Top 6 public priorities (% level of support)



**89%**

Quality and range of books  
and other stock



**70%**

Well informed staff  
or volunteers to assist



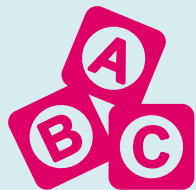
**66%**

A local library



**62%**

Convenient opening times



**35%**

A range of children's events  
and activities



**34%**

Access to computers



# Main reason for using more than one library? (% of people)

**60%**

Convenient location  
of library

**44%**

To access the range of books  
and/or other materials I am  
interested in

**30%**

I use libraries near my home  
and near my workplace

**26%**

Opening hours

**11%**

To access the range  
of groups and/or  
social activities I am  
interested in

**6%**

To access the range  
of computer and digital  
facilities I want

**5%**

Assistance given by  
staff and volunteers

# What do you use your library for? (% of people)



**90%**

Borrowing books



**37%**

Reading newspapers,  
magazines or books



**30%**

Borrowing DVDs,  
CDs or audio books



**27%**

Library computers



**20%**

Study space



**18%**

Library wifi on  
own devices



**16%**

Baby, toddler or  
children's activities



**13%**

Community activities



**11%**

Work space



**11%**

Social activities  
including book groups



**11%**

Meeting space



**11%**

Using other  
professional services



**6%**

Health and wellbeing  
services



**4%**

Applying for jobs



**1%**

Applying for benefits

# What else could your library be used for? (% of library services)



**71%**

Adult learning classes



**55%**

Providing health  
information and advice



**54%**

Accessing other council services,  
e.g. council tax/housing



**55%**

Groups/activities run  
by the community

# Interviews with library users

***“You have all these groups of people from all walks of life. Everyone thinks the library is a safe place, and they respect it. The library should be the hub of the community, not just a building for books.”***

Library user

***“Ordering online – the service is brilliant and I get a follow up call to say books are in. [This is] helpful with a little library to have the catalogue and the range is great.”***

Library user, Burnham-on-Crouch

***“I read 3 or 4 books a week. They tell me the good books to read, and order them in for me. I haven’t got a computer.”***

Female library user, aged 62, North Melbourne

***“Free activities: that’s really important. There are lots of single mums in Loughton - they may only have libraries as a place to go for free, to access activities for their little ones, and for themselves. It can be lonely for them.”***

Female library user, aged 55, Loughton

***“I come here to study because it’s quiet and I can work uninterrupted. At home, my parents will ask me to watch my siblings, and they will be noisy. I like the availability of computers.”***

Female library user, aged 16, Basildon

***“I use the Wi-Fi for university work. Wi-Fi is fast, free and reliable. Easy to sign in and I get unlimited amount of internet.”***

Male library user, aged 23, Brentwood

# Introduction

## Key findings

### People value the service for multiple reasons

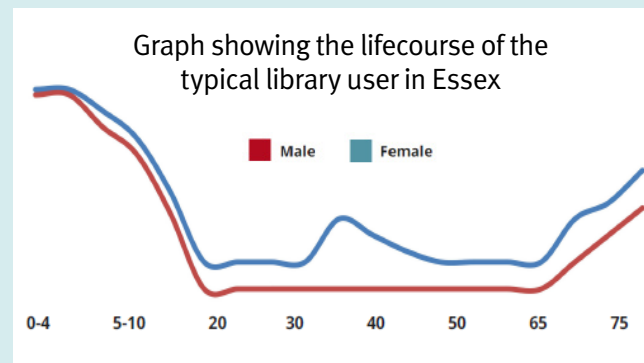
Library users value its books, its safety, its free services, the quiet space, the possibility to pass time, assistance and information, the access to support, socialisation and group activities, education and learning, encouraging independence, the children's activities and the shelter inside the library buildings.

### What users value depends on their current needs and available free time

The range of library users is truly universal; the service is used by various age groups from different socio-economic backgrounds, with usage peaking at particular points in their life courses.

### Lifecycle of the typical library user in Essex

People using the service at these different points in their life course will indeed require and prioritise different parts of the service depending on the time they have available and their particular need at that specific point in their life course. In addition to this



typical path, becoming unemployed at working age may trigger increased usage due to the need for job seeking or to pass time.

### Some full-time students do not feel the library service accommodates their studies

The library service is perceived by many to serve mainly young children and older people. Respondents spoke passionately about the significant gap in provision for primary and particularly secondary school age children studying for their exams. Users feel that opening hours could be better alternated to cater for working people and for full-time students.

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### Younger generations use technology for everyday learning and reading

The younger generation of readers and learners are extremely tech-savvy and are encouraged to use technology at school, college and university as a part of their everyday learning. Therefore they feel that the library services should move with the times by providing more digital learning services and more young-people friendly options in their offer.

### The layout of a library space is important

The layout of the library space is important to many users who feel that it sets the tone of how people use the space. People feel the layout of the libraries could be improved to offer more 'designated not segregated' spaces to encompass areas for more varied functions for all ages.

# What children and young people said

Young people do not feel libraries are designed and delivered to meet their need, for example library opening hours do not extend to evenings. Young people prioritised the layout of libraries above anything else, desiring multi-purpose spaces for study, reading, games and chilling out. Key to meeting the needs of young people includes addressing the gap in provision of reading material for pleasure and studying.

Through the focus groups, we found strongly held views among young people that the current library service is designed mainly for babies, toddlers and elderly people. They did not feel that the service catered enough for the needs and priorities of young people particularly not for students.

***“The library doesn’t extend the hours during exam time. The opening hours seems to be all catered for older people. Why can’t they shut during the day and open in the evening? It’s our future; the older population have had their careers.”***

Young people focus group,  
aged between 12-18 years old

***“There is a gap [in library provision] for those in year 7 and year 10 when reading is not pushed as much (as in primary school). In secondary school reading is not cool.”***

Young people focus group,  
aged between 12-18 years old

***“We’d like chill out zones, quiet spaces, extended computer time, cafes, loan-an-iPad, after school revision activities and post-school takeover time from 3-7pm.”***

Young people focus group,  
aged between 12-18 years old

***”Would like more study books like GCSE like KS3, KS4 and KS5 for teenagers.”***

Face-to-face exit interview, Springfield

***“What does the public library give me that Costa can’t?”***

Young people focus group,  
aged between 12-18 years old



# Your community, libraries and events

Two hundred and fifty nine people came to the events. People did not have to give any more details than their name but some named the group or organisation they were representing. There were:



18

Town or parish councils



10

District, borough or city councils



9

Essex County Council members



4

Public agencies, such as health providers



8

Voluntary sector umbrella bodies



9

Voluntary organisations



16

Community groups



8

Library volunteers

Nearly 900 ideas or suggestions were made over the course of the events. Some recurring themes came up:

- **Need for better promotion and publicity:** This issue received more comments than any other. Many attendees felt that library users did not know about all the services you can access and things you can do in libraries and that outreach to people who don't use library services could be better.
- **Interest in hiring libraries for other activities when they are closed:** People could see the potential of these large and flexible spaces for rehearsals, performances, businesses and groups; there was also interest in use of space during opening hours for clubs, activities and advice services.
- **Reducing social isolation:** Attendees recognised the value of libraries as a safe social space where people could come to meet others, get help, some peace and quiet or just to keep warm and dry.
- **Extending the services offer:** Sharing the library space with specialist advice services, other public services or commercial enterprises.

- **Retaining focus on increasing skills & knowledge:** In other ways beyond just provision of educational materials.
- **Encouraging young library users AND bringing different generations together:** To stay relevant to users in future libraries need to appeal more to young people. Libraries were also seen as a place where young and old could learn from and help each other.

## Community heart

It was obvious that across Essex there are some really strong community groups and networks and valued community buildings. There are more than 300 charity and voluntary groups in Chelmsford city area, Lorraine Jarvis, Chief Officer of Chelmsford Centre Supporting Voluntary Action told the Chelmsford event. Great Parndon Community Association was identified as a valued resource in Harlow, running several centres in the locality. Organisations such as U3A (the University of the Third Age) and Women's Institutes were mentioned as strong networks that are already involved with libraries but could be more so.

However, at some events participants were less sure about what community resources were available, such as village halls and some commented that libraries were some of the only public buildings left in places where banks, post offices and pubs had closed.

Libraries were seen as potential hubs for public functions, such as street parties, royal weddings, memorials and celebrations.

Public toilets and kitchen facilities would encourage people to spend more time in libraries and do different activities there. Someone also suggested having a central booking system and clear pricing policy for hiring rooms and spaces in libraries, to make them easier for groups and businesses to book.

## Getting involved

An idea from the Epping Forest event was to have a book selection panel, made up of library users, to choose books and other media for libraries to purchase. The proposer felt this would involve people in a core library activity and make the service more democratic.

Clive Emmett, Chief Officer of CVS Uttlesford felt there was untapped volunteer capacity across the district and that libraries and CVS could work more closely to help match people with volunteering opportunities.

Attendees from eight communities were interested in finding out more about community libraries, to take information back to discuss with neighbours or colleagues in their parish council or community group.

Twenty seven people put their names down to get involved in helping to set up new activities or work more closely with their local library on initiatives in future.

## Innovation

At seven events (Brentwood, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping Forest, Harlow, Maldon and Rochford) people liked the idea of using the library for a community cinema or film club. People were inspired by hearing about Billericay and Writtle libraries already host successful community cinemas and thought it could be a novel addition for their town or village.

Creches were suggested as valuable additions to libraries, to make it easier for parents to visit. This came up at four events (Basildon, Braintree, Epping Forest and Rochford), most often suggested as a paid for service that would bring some income to libraries. One person also suggested a buggy park, that parents could pay 50p a time to use, would help parents and prevent buggies filling the library space.

Convenience and flexibility: to make it easier for people to access books at times convenient for them, Amazon-locker style pick-up points were suggested at the Epping Forest event.

Several suggestions were made about enhancing library membership to better promote libraries and bring new users in. These included offering loyalty card style rewards, recommend-a-friend membership, having a combined leisure and library card, and 'library plus' membership levels that could enable people to use their card to access the library when it was closed or receive parcel and online deliveries.

## Front door to services

Libraries already help people access a wide range of local services, either by operating out of the same building, providing space for regular drop-ins or advice sessions, or by sign-posting people to other services.

Across all the events there was interest in libraries doing more of this. People could see the library as a safe place, at the heart of communities, where people would come for advice, information or to see other service providers such as local councils, Citizens Advice or job clubs.

There was a call at Saffron Walden for a Job Centre presence in the library. At the moment, people have to travel to Braintree to visit a job centre. However, it was acknowledged that a previous arrangement with the Job Centre had not continued.

Other suggestions for services that could operate from libraries, either all the time or on an occasional basis, were:

- Bank ATMs or Post Office counters
- Police or police community support officer drop ins
- Blood donor sessions
- Flu jab sessions
- Health advice
- Weight-management weigh ins and advice sessions.

There was also some appetite for libraries and other services to operate out of one shared building, including suggestions that libraries and ‘blue light’ services (police, ambulance and fire) could share buildings.

Some also suggested taking libraries out to other spaces, such as district council offices and supermarkets.

### Ideas for more of the things libraries already do

More than 40 suggestions were about doing more arts and crafts in libraries. These included open mic poetry, creative writing, card making, teaching knitting to children, more Knit and Natter (already very popular), craft clubs, art exhibitions, photography groups, play reading and theatre and music performances.

Clubs were another popular suggestion, including chess clubs, Lego clubs, jigsaw and games clubs, virtual book clubs and creating a network of book clubs which could meet, share and support each other.

Libraries are valued as places to learn. Requests for more language classes, including English, came from Basildon, Braintree, Brentwood, Epping Forest and Harlow. They are also seen as places tutors can use and people suggested 11 topics they would either like to teach or learn in libraries, including life skills, first aid, adult literacy and numeracy. Essex ACL is the council’s adult community learning provider so there may be scope to explore these ideas with them.

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### Lego

Lego is popular with all ages. Many libraries already run ‘block builders construction clubs’ for children (we cannot call them Lego clubs if we have other makes of construction toy blocks donated). But people at Braintree also saw potential to use Lego for team building, or to have a building blocks library.

## Significant local issues/ ideas

### Be noisy or be quiet?

The potential conflict between running clubs, activities and entertainment and providing quiet spaces for reading, studying or relaxing worried some. The issue came up at Basildon, Brentwood, Epping Forest, Harlow, Maldon and Rochford. At Harlow somebody suggested having a designated 'quiet library' within a cluster of local libraries. At several events people suggested having sound proofed booths for quiet study or confidential conversations, or designated quiet zones in larger libraries; people thought that would be more difficult in the smaller libraries.

### Charging for space hire

In 2017 Essex Libraries introduced a sliding scale of charges for hiring rooms, spaces or whole libraries. This was done to cover the costs of providing the space and help meet the challenge of reduced funding for local government. Commercial, basic

and concessionary rates were introduced and library managers have discretion to give existing hirers six months to raise funds or make alternative arrangements. But some attendees were concerned that charges were a challenge for voluntary organisations, and unfair if the group was providing a service of social benefit, complementary to council services. One person at Maldon asked, "Why are voluntary groups charged to use or hire the library, when they are already charged for this service through tax?"

Another commented, "As somebody who runs an Essex wide charity we have had to hold back because we can no longer afford to use libraries."

Cllr Susan Barker replied, "If there are exceptional circumstances we won't charge. However, if an organisation is funded by Essex County Council, to provide them with free access to rooms within the library would be like providing them with a second grant. That would not be sustainable. It is a fine balance. We should look again at the charges and we need to look at how our libraries can be sustained, what uses can be made out of them."

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### Ethnic minorities and libraries

Some at the events voiced a perception that Essex Libraries' staff and users do not reflect the diversity of the local population. In fact just under 7% of the Essex population identify as Black, Asian or other ethnic minorities; just under 11% of Essex Libraries' active members do.

Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups were invited to the events but, apart from one individual, were not recorded as attending. The director of one network was interviewed separately and shared comments from members of other BME groups.

She said that visibility was the most important issue for BME people: if they could see other BME groups and individuals in libraries and if the library service was visible at BME events, black and minority ethnic people would feel more comfortable using libraries. A regular presence for a BME group, that people would get to know about, would help.

Books and materials in minority languages, such as Swaheli story books, and space for BME elders to play culturally relevant board games would also help.

Busy lives, lack of transport and cultural differences could be barriers to BME people using libraries more.

***“I used to use the library for printing but this option is no longer readily available because most of the computers are in use all the time.”***

BME library user

***“If there was a coffee shop where you could read and relax that would be good.”***

BME resident

***“In the past I have run African storytelling and tales by moonlight in the library. I would love this to be continued, especially during Black History Month.”***

African library user, Braintree

***“Technology has taken over as you can now read books on your Kindle and children and young people are always on their Playstations etc.”***

Witham library user

***“More could be done to outreach to the Bangladeshi community to make the library more inviting.”***

Colchester resident

***“There is a lack of information about libraries, i.e. registration to make clear it is a free service.”***

BME resident

Although no direct experiences of discrimination were cited, the comment below suggests that experience of discrimination elsewhere makes some parents wary of visiting libraries.

***“Parents being over protective if they have experienced discrimination, hence keeping their children within safe boundaries at home.”***

BME resident

### **Young people and bringing old and young together**

Most of the attendees were adults but there were many suggestions for how to reach out to and better meet the needs of young people. An idea from Harlow was to do a schools survey to find out what young people actually want. A Colchester attendee suggested running a challenge prize – for young people or adults – to write and submit or perform a play describing their vision for the future of libraries. A chill out zone for young people was suggested at Chelmsford, while at Clacton somebody said libraries could be hired out to youth clubs in the evenings.

Ways to bring old and young together included offering mentoring and personal development services to young people, connecting them with older people; inviting young people to volunteer to teach IT skills to older people and other adults; and providing space for elders to meet and read to pre-school age children.

## Community libraries

At Braintree, Clacton and Colchester there were attendees from villages interested in talking about setting up a volunteer-run community library. The council's Cabinet agreed to support groups interested in setting up these volunteer-run libraries when it agreed changes to the mobile library service. They are seen as an alternative option for places that don't have a library, or where the mobile library service has been withdrawn, as they can offer longer opening hours and do more to help reduce social isolation.

By June 2018 there were eight community-run libraries in the county. You can find links to them on the [Essex Libraries](#) website. Please note, the council is not able to respond to any new expressions of interest at the time of writing.

## Questions about community libraries

Question	Answer
<b>How many books does ECC supply?</b>	An initial stock of 200 is supplied. Titles depend on the genres chosen by the community library. They are refreshed every three to six months
<b>What training is available?</b>	Training and guidance is given on how to set up and run a library, how to manage membership, and legal requirements, such as equalities and data protection (GDPR)
<b>What advice or other support is available?</b>	ECC will signpost groups to sources of funding and other support, such as from the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE), which supports village halls. A named link officer at a local ECC library will keep in touch and provide additional advice
<b>Where does the legal risk sit, with ECC or with the community library?</b>	Community libraries are owned and managed by the community, so the risk is theirs, not ECCs. However, they would not be penalised if loss or damage to stock was within the normal range
<b>Can an 'Essex Community Libraries' logo or brand be created to help with publicity?</b>	ECC has no plans to provide a logo or brand but community libraries could get together to devise one themselves



## Southminster

At Maldon library a separate discussion was held with Southminster parish councillors and residents about the future of the library there.

Southminster is a growing village and participants felt that the library was a central part of the local community for all age groups.

The library there has been closed during cold weather for the last two winters because it shares a building with the old police station, now closed, and the heating is in that part of the building and cannot be accessed. Essex County Council is looking into possible solutions and talking to organisations in Southminster so the event was an opportunity to seek the views of Southminster residents.

Essex Libraries are following up on possible solutions with Southminster Parish Council and others.

## Some comments from the events

***“People are not using the library anymore as things can be assessed online at home. We could use the library as a centre for all sorts of activities in the evenings. Things like poetry, opera or other open and volunteer events. Voluntary groups could use it, such as U3A and they could pay a small fee. Bring people in from outside, draw in a crowd and make the library more alive with these things.”***

Maldon resident

***“The thing to do is make libraries bigger and introduce a commercial crèche, to earn some money from it.”***

Braintree resident

# What next?

Since the events we have started to look in detail at all the information and insight gathered. We will use this to help inform a comprehensive and strategic approach to shaping a fit for future, financially sustainable and community focused library service. We are involving library staff to help with this, as they know the service and their users very well.

We expect to be able to publish a draft strategy later in 2018 or early 2019, which we will then consult on before going ahead with it.

In the meantime we have set aside some money to continue investment we have already started in some of our buildings – for instance, a new children and young people's library opened at Chelmsford in March and an accessible room is due to open later this year. We will also carry on making improvements to the service that can be done before our strategy is finalised.

If you have an idea for an activity you would like to run in your local library or you want to volunteer to help out there, please contact your library manager or supervisor, or [apply online](#) to become a volunteer.

You can find out about our services, events and space for hire, and keep up with news about Essex Libraries at [libraries.essex.gov.uk](http://libraries.essex.gov.uk)

# Appendices

## Events list

All events were held in libraries unless stated otherwise. All were open to people from any district.

### 5 March: Saffron Walden Library, Uttlesford

#### Panellists:

- Cllr Susan Barker, ECC Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Customer (Chair)
- Cllr Vic Ranger, Uttlesford District Council Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships
- Suzanna Shaw, ECC Director of Customer Services
- Clive Emmett, CVS Uttlesford, Chief Officer

### 7 March: Great Baddow Library, Chelmsford

#### Panellists:

- Cllr Susan Barker, ECC Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Customer (Chair)
- Cllr Mark Durham, ECC Deputy Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Customer
- Cllr Susan Sullivan, Chelmsford City Council Cabinet member for Safer Communities
- Sue Shepherd, Rural Community Council of Essex, Village Halls & Community Buildings Advisor
- Lorraine Jarvis, Chelmsford Centre Supporting Voluntary Action, Chief Officer
- Suzanna Shaw, ECC Director of Customer Services

### 12 March: Great Parndon Library, Harlow

#### Panellists:

- Cllr Susan Barker, ECC Cabinet member for Culture, Communities and Customer (Chair)
- Cheryl Arthur, ECC Head of Telephone and Digital Access
- Jemma Mindham, Rainbow Services, Harlow, Chief Executive
- A panellist was invited from Harlow District Council but was unable to attend

### 13 March: Colchester Adult Community Learning centre

#### Panellists:

- Cllr Susan Barker, ECC Cabinet member for Culture, Communities and Customer (Chair)
- Cllr Tina Bourne, Colchester Borough Council Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities
- Nick Shuttleworth, Rural Community Council of Essex Executive Director
- Kim Simmons, Community 360, Colchester Senior Engagement Officer
- Cheryl Arthur, ECC Head of Telephone & Digital Access

### 14 March: Rayleigh Library, for Rochford and Castle Point

#### Panellists:

- Cllr Mark Durham ECC Deputy Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Customer (Chair)
- Suzanna Shaw, ECC Director of Customer Services
- Victoria Marzouki, Rayleigh, Rochford and District Association for Voluntary Service, Chief Officer
- Panellists were invited from Rochford and Castle Point councils but were unable to attend.

### 19 March: Loughton Library, Epping Forest

#### Panellists:

- Cllr Susan Barker, ECC Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Customer (Chair)
- Councillor Helen Kane, Epping Forest District Council Cabinet Member for Leisure and Community Services
- Alex Garnett, ECC Head of Systems, Compliance & Customer
- A panellist from Voluntary Action Epping Forest was invited but unable to attend

**20 March: Brentwood Library**

## Panellists:

- Cllr Susan Barker, ECC Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Customer (Chair)
- Cllr Chris Hossack, Brentwood Borough Council Chair, Community, Health and Housing Committee
- Cheryl Arthur, ECC Head of Telephone & Digital Access
- A panellist from Brentwood Council for Voluntary Service was invited but unable to attend

**21 March: Basildon Library, for Basildon and Castle Point**

## Panellists:

- Cllr Mark Durham ECC Deputy Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Customer (Chair)
- Alex Garnett, ECC Head of Systems, Compliance & Customer
- Panellists were invited from Basildon Borough Council, Castle Point Council and Basildon, Billericay and Wickford CVS but were unable to attend

**26 March: Clacton Adult Community Learning centre, Tendring**

## Panellists:

- Cllr Mark Durham, ECC Deputy Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Customer (Chair)
- Lisa Andrews, Community Voluntary Services Tendring, Deputy Chief Officer
- Cheryl Arthur, ECC Head of Telephone & Digital Access,
- Dan Land, Tendring District Council, Chair of Community Leadership and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

**27 March: Braintree Library**

## Panellists:

- Cllr Susan Barker, ECC Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Customer (Chair)
- Alex Garnett, ECC Head of Systems, Compliance & Customer
- Councillor Peter Tattersley, Braintree District Council Cabinet Member for Health & Communities
- Kim Simmons, Community 360, Senior Engagement Officer

**28 March: Maldon Library**

## Panellists:

- Cllr Susan Barker, ECC Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Customer (Chair)
- Sarah Laskar, Maldon & District Community Voluntary Service (CVS), Director
- Sue Shepherd, Rural Community Council of Essex Village Halls & Community Buildings Advisor,
- Cheryl Arthur, ECC Head of Telephone & Digital Access

# How events were publicised

Posters were displayed at all libraries and in nearby shops and community centres. All district, borough, city, town and parish councils were sent invitations for their members or officers to attend. They were also asked to help publicise the events, as were the voluntary sector umbrella bodies for each district. We are grateful for the extra publicity they gave. The events were also publicised through ECC e-newsletters to library subscribers and volunteers and other potentially interested audiences. Finally, posts were sent out on Essex Libraries' and Essex County Council's social media feeds.

## Questions we promised to answer after the events

**Loughton:** North Weald is open three days a week, why has the service offer reduced?

**Answer:** North Weald is open six days a week and the offer hasn't reduced: North Weald Parish Council run the library on Mon, Weds & Fri, so there is a limited service. (Mostly self service). Opening times: Mon 9:15am – 1:15, Tues 2pm – 5pm, Weds 9:15am – 1:15pm, Thurs 10am – 7pm, Fri 9:15am – 1:15pm, Sat 9am – 1pm.

**Loughton:** Why do you need to sign on to wi-fi using a library card?

**Answer:** International standards for IT networks recommend this as best practice. If you use your card no one else using the system can see you are logged on. It is more secure than simply using a password and protects you from others seeing what you are doing or hacking your device.

**Loughton:** What happened to recent initiatives such as seed swaps, repair club and music?

**Answer:** These were a few years ago as part of a project at Loughton to stimulate and encourage community use of the library.

There wasn't much interest in the seed bank and people took seeds but didn't replenish them.

The repair club wasn't popular enough to continue.

We are not sure what music activities the question refers to but music events do happen in libraries.

Since the project, more groups, organisations and individuals have used the library for community activities and we welcome new ideas.

**Colchester:** Are books still the priority?

**Answer:** Yes books are still the priority. However, the amount and type of stock on display varies depending on demand. We know that demand for non-fiction titles is falling, and the number of people coming in to libraries to borrow books is falling too.

People use libraries for other things to: as a first point of contact for information, help with searching for jobs or using computers and to access other services or events on offer in libraries. With continuing pressures on budgets, we need to respond to changing needs, be efficient and find new income to support the service.

**Great Parndon:** Are we meeting needs for different ethnic groups?

**Answer:** More than 150 languages are spoken in Essex. Libraries have different language books which can all be found on the catalogue but would be difficult

to provide in every language. Dual language children's books can be found in a small number of libraries. We buy books and materials representing a range of cultures and ethnicity and host cultural events and language classes. If you would like to order a book in a particular language or on a particular subject, or to book space in a library for a cultural event let us know.

We buy books and materials representing a range of cultures and ethnicity and host cultural events and language classes. If you would like to order a book in a particular language or on a particular subject, or to book space in a library for a cultural event let us know.

**Braintree:** What is the rationale for limiting the wi-fi? Why isn't it available 24/7? If we were to extend opening hours this would need to change?

**Answer:** The wi-fi is on the same network as the public computers and they are set to go off ten minutes before the library closes. Hirers can access the wi-fi if they use a library outside normal opening hours, for a small fee.

**Maldon:** Can we donate books to libraries?

**Answer:** Yes, we can accept donated books that are in good condition, up to date, in a format we stock, and in demand. If people donate other books we may sell them to raise money to buy more new books. We cannot guarantee to use donated books in a particular library.

**Maldon:** Who chooses the books for each library? There seem to be very few classics.

**Answer:** A central team selects new books and manages the stock but local staff and library users can feed into the process. If there is a title or genre you would like to borrow, let your local library staff know. If there are fewer classics it indicates that they are less popular.

**Clacton:** What is the age range of volunteers?

**Answer:** Volunteers range from 14 year olds who help with the Summer Reading Challenge to over 80 year olds who help in a variety of roles. There is no upper age limit.

**Clacton:** How do people know what is involved in volunteering?

**Answer:** Links to volunteering role descriptions are on the Essex Libraries website or you can ask staff for more details or to shadow an existing volunteer to find out more.

This information is issued by:  
**Essex County Council**  
**Essex Libraries Service**

Contact us:  
**libraries@essex.gov.uk**  
**www.libraries.essex.gov.uk**  
**0345 603 7628**

Essex Libraries Service  
Essex County Council  
County Hall, Chelmsford  
Essex, CM1 1QH

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The information contained in  
this document can be translated,  
and/or made available in alternative  
formats, on request.

Published July 2018.



# Equality Impact Assessment

## Context

1. under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Essex County Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, i.e. have due regard to:
  - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
  - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
  - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
  - age
  - disability
  - gender reassignment
  - marriage/civil partnership
  - pregnancy/maternity
  - race
  - religion/belief
  - sex/gender
  - sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. The EqIA will be published [online](#):
8. All **Cabinet Member Actions, Chief Officer Actions, Key Decisions** and **Cabinet Reports must be** accompanied by an EqIA.
9. For further information, refer to the EqIA guidance for staff.

10. For advice, contact:

Shammi Jalota [shammi.jalota@essex.gov.uk](mailto:shammi.jalota@essex.gov.uk)

Head of Equality and Diversity

Corporate Law & Assurance

Tel 0330 134592 or 07740 901114

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Essex County Council

## Section 1: Identifying details

Your function, service area and team: Corporate and Customer Services

If you are submitting this EqlA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team: Corporate and Customer Services

Title of policy or decision: Future Library Services Strategy 2019/20 – 2023/24

Email: libraries@essex.gov.uk

Date of completing the assessment: 31 August 2018

## Section 2: Policy to be analysed

2.1	<p>Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?</p> <p>This is a draft Library Services Strategy that will go through public consultation and engagement to inform the final version on future of libraries service, which is due in Summer 2019.</p> <p>This is therefore a provisional Equality Impact Assessment (EqlA) prepared to inform the consultation described below. This EqlA will be updated in light of response to consultation. The updated assessment will be used to inform the decision made.</p> <p>In terms of the consultation itself we will ensure that it is widely publicised and is available for completion in a variety of accessible formats.</p>
2.2	<p>Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision):</p> <p>The aim of the policy is to determine how the Council will provide a comprehensive and efficient library service to people in Essex in the light of a decline in usage, and in the context of the council's overall financial position.</p> <p>Aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have books and reading at the heart of our library service offer</li><li>• Have a smaller number of libraries more effectively focused on meeting the needs of communities but with increased library membership and use</li><li>• Work in partnership with our communities to run and improve library services</li><li>• Offer a consistently good customer experience</li><li>• Have a comprehensive eLibrary offer and embrace digital technology.</li></ul> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To provide a library service in appropriate locations across the county according to the needs of the community</li><li>• Ensure that there is a consistent approach in the library services provided in</li></ul>

	<p>the future.</p> <p>What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (i.e. decommissioning or commissioning a service)?</p> <p>We propose to deliver a core offer through a range of physical and online services and take a tiered approach, based on evidence of need, to where we provide library services around the county in the future. The Needs Assessment and the approach we have designed will enable Essex County Council to meet its statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service to all who desire to use it.</p>
2.3	<p>Does or will the policy or decision affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• service users</li> <li>• employees</li> <li>• the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities?</li> </ul> <p>Yes, all of the above</p> <p>Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?</p> <p>Yes. We intend to increase involvement from community and partner organisations to support with delivering the library service. The library service could be provided in different ways and from different spaces which may affect partner organisations, positively or negatively.</p>
2.4	<p>Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>The draft proposal will reduce the number of library services that the council manages throughout the county. As a result, it is proposed that there will be fewer library services overall and more library services will be delivered by the community, from different spaces.</p>
2.5	<p>Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes?</p> <p>The proposed changes will help the council achieve its strategic priorities in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieving more with less as library services evolve -limiting costs and driving growth in revenue.</li> <li>• It will reduce running costs for the library service, focusing on delivering a library service where it is needed within the community, helping to make libraries financially viable. Online reservations, access to the Home Library Service mobile library services will ensure that the surrounding community still have access to library services.</li> <li>• Providing spaces and resources to help people in Essex increase skills and prosper</li> <li>• Providing safe, welcoming and stimulating spaces for all users to learn</li> </ul>



	<p>engage and remain connected to their communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-imagine how residents' needs can be met in a digital world</li> <li>• Supporting staff and volunteers to deliver great customer service</li> </ul>
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### **Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation<sup>1</sup>**

As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, eg service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).

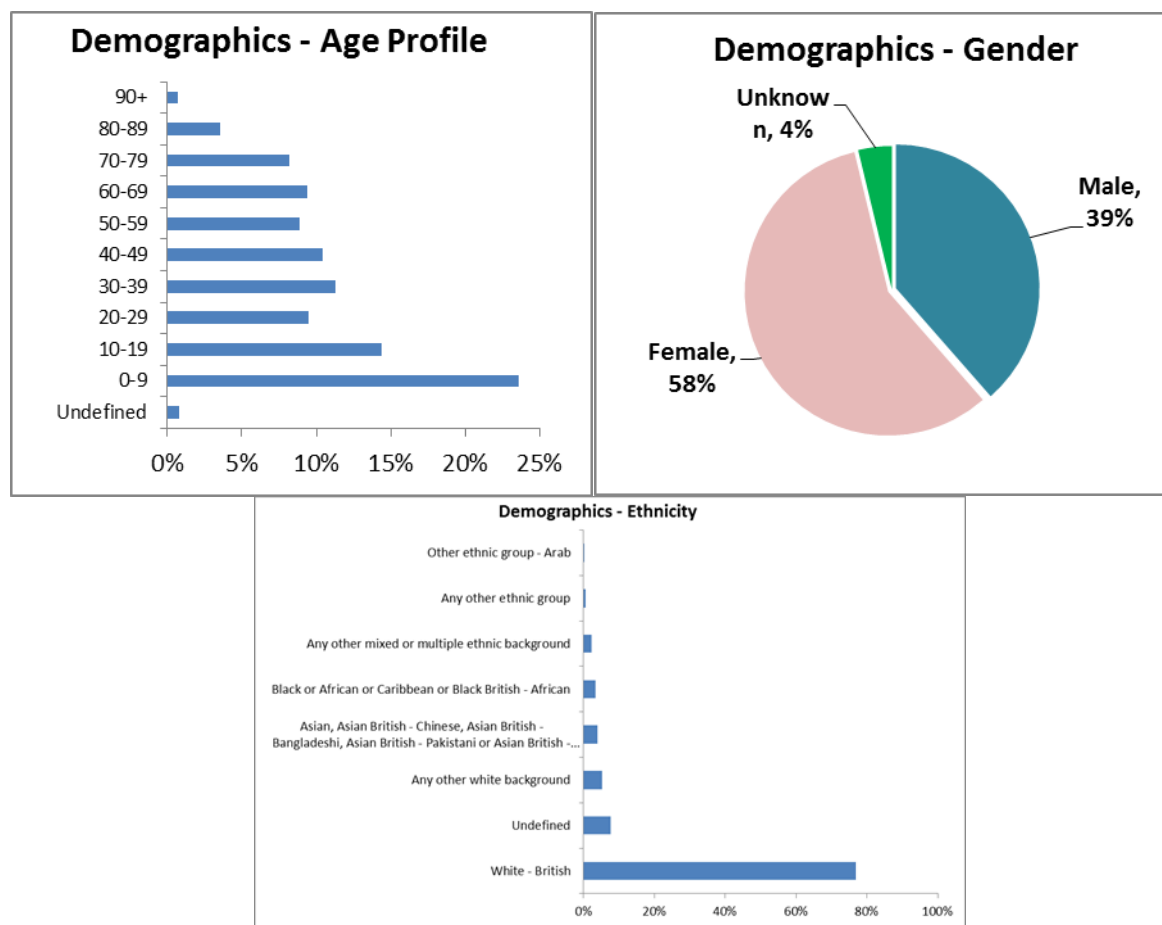
What does the information tell you about those groups identified?

### From the Needs Assessment:

Library services are disproportionately used by females making up 58% of users.

Under 9s account for 23% of users, over 60s account for 22% of users and majority of users are White - British, as shown in the graphs below.

BME communities are over represented in the user base – 7% of the Essex population report being from a BME background compared to 11% of library users.



Libraries also have a significant role to play in the prevention of social isolation within communities. Whilst there is no definitive measure of social isolation and anyone in the community is potentially at risk of becoming isolated we are aware that new parents and older people over 65 are at particular risk of social isolation.

### Older people population

Library membership records show that over 60s make up 22% of library services users and groups such as “knit and natter” use the library frequently attracting this audience. Face to face interviews with library users during the public engagement in spring 2018 found that retirement was a trigger for people using libraries more and that older people value libraries as places they can read, pass the time and socialise.

	<p><b>New parents</b></p> <p>In the interviews with library users, becoming a first time parent was identified as a trigger for using libraries more.</p>
3.2	<p>Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision?</p> <p>We have asked users what they want to see for the future of the library service. The purpose of this Cabinet report is to agree the proposed direction, subject to consultation.</p> <p>Thus there will be a full consultation about these proposals if they are agreed by Cabinet</p> <p>We don't collect additional information or plan to do any equality monitoring. We do use population data and will be considering how we attract non-library users to the service going forward, part of this may include equality monitoring of customers.</p>



3.3	<p>If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary. Please include any reasonable adjustments, e.g. accessible formats, you will provide as part of the consultation process for disabled people:</p> <p>Subject to approval by Cabinet in November 18, a 12 week public consultation and engagement will be run.</p> <p>The primary channel for response will be an online survey, hosted on Essex Insight, where all ECC surveys are hosted. This site complies with level "A" of the <a href="#">WAI guidelines</a> on accessible websites and is working towards level AA compliance.</p> <p>Respondents who cannot respond online will be offered the option of completing the survey over the phone. The council's contact centre will also respond to phone enquiries about the consultation.</p> <p>The survey will ensure that views of children, young people, adults and organisations can be captured.</p> <p>A large print version of the survey and information about the draft strategy will be made available on request. An Easy Read version of the survey and information about the draft strategy will be produced and made available to people with learning or communications difficulties.</p> <p>The consultation will be publicised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A dedicated section on <a href="http://libraries.essex.gov.uk">libraries.essex.gov.uk</a> that summarises the draft strategy proposals and provides links to the draft strategy, supporting documents, the surveys and further information.</li> <li>• Posters will be displayed in all libraries, ECC poster sites and made available to community venues and organisations. Notices and information will also be displayed on TV screens in those libraries that have them. Subject to resources, a short film/ film clips will be produced, for display in libraries and use on social media.</li> <li>• Library staff will be briefed on the draft strategy and the consultation plan so they can help people find out about it and respond.</li> <li>• A series of drop-ins will be held at selected libraries around the county, to provide opportunities for people to find out more before completing the survey and to ensure that we obtain qualitative insight to support the online survey.</li> <li>• A publicity campaign using traditional and social media promotion: using ECC networks and targeting local and regional media.</li> <li>• Stakeholders including town and parish councils and community groups will be informed of the consultation and how people can get involved. Other authorities in Essex will be asked to cascade the information to their elected members. All active library users will be contacted to inform them of the</li> </ul>
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	<p>consultation, where they can find out more information and how they can respond. This contact will be digital by default, either by email or text message but will be by post to users who have told us that is their preference.</p> <p>Essex's Citizen Insight and Inclusive Communications Essex are involved to ensure the consultation is designed in such a way as to reach and be accessible to groups likely to be affected.</p> <p>This EqlA will be revisited and updated once engagement with the public is complete. The draft Library service strategy will be amended if necessary in light of the views expressed before being presented to Cabinet members for decision, accompanied by the updated EqlA in Summer 2019.</p>
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## Section 4: Impact of policy or decision

Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know.

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over 65+ population</li> <li>0-9 years population</li> </ul> <p>The above groups are the largest user groups for library service and are likely to be more impacted by the changes than any other ages.</p> <p>However, young people told us that they wanted longer opening hours and we wish to achieve this as part of the proposal. If we are able to achieve this then there will be a positive impact for young people.</p>	H
Disability – learning disability	We have limited data on usage. If further travel is required, this may also increase the risk of isolation and further impacting on mental health issues.	M
Disability – mental health issues	We have limited data on usage. If further travel is required, this may also increase the risk of isolation and further impacting on mental health issues.	M/H
Disability – physical impairment	<p>Negative Impact - fewer library services may mean that there may be a need to travel to alternative locations.</p> <p>Positive Impact – investment in remaining library spaces will make them more accessible. If further travel is required, this may also increase the risk of isolation and further impacting on mental health issues.</p>	H

Disability – sensory impairment (visual, hearing and deafblind)	<p>Negative Impact - fewer library services mean further travel may be required. Libraries will maintain a core offer, however dependent on tier placement some library services will see a reduction in stock, which could also see a reduction in audio books and large print books.</p> <p>Positive – looking to invest in e-library service.</p>	H
Gender/Sex	Negative – Women at all ages will be disproportionately impacted as they form the majority of the library users.	H
Gender reassignment	<p>No current data on usage.</p> <p>A change to the library service is not expected to have a disproportionate impact on this group.</p>	L
Marriage/civil partnership	No impact	L
Pregnancy/maternity	Negative – fewer library services means that further travel may be required for some people. New mothers form a large part of the library user group as they attend rhyme time, registration services for births and baby weigh-ins.	H
Race	Negative – fewer library services mean that further travel will be required for some people. BME communities are over represented amongst library users generally. We do not yet have data as to the breakdown of the ethnicity make up of users of different libraries. We need to draw a comparison with usage of library services against the local make-up of the population. Although we need to get data, we have no particular reason to believe that these proposals will impact on BME communities more than library users generally.	M
Religion/belief	<p>We do not collect this information.</p> <p>A change to the library service is not expected to have a disproportionate impact on this group.</p>	L
Sexual orientation	No current data on usage. It is unlikely that any LGBT groups will be impacted due to a change of stock or support groups.	L
<b>Cross-cutting themes</b>		

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Socio-economic	<p>There will be a negative impact on some people as some people will need to travel further to visit a library service. Social deprivation is spread throughout Essex but we have tried to prioritise the retention of library services which serve a deprived areas as this formed part of the criteria that assessed need in order to minimise impact.</p> <p>The Index of Multiple Deprivation, commonly known as the IMD, is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England and is the most widely used index of deprivation. Libraries based in areas of most deprivation such as Clacton, Harwich and Greenstead are therefore prioritised as being essential community assets.</p> <p>See Needs Assessments 2018-19</p>	M
Environmental, eg housing, transport links/rural isolation	<p>There will be a negative impact on some people as some people will need to travel further to visit a library. Location has been taken into consideration and formed part of the criteria that assessed need to minimise impact.</p> <p>See Needs Assessments 2018-19</p>	M

## Section 5: Conclusion

		Tick Yes/No as appropriate	
5.1	Does the EqlA in Section 4 indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If ' <b>YES</b> ', use the action plan at <b>Section 6</b> to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.

## Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

What are the potential adverse impacts?	What are the mitigating actions?	Date they will be achieved.
Fewer libraries services	Provide longer opening hours, through Smart Technology and volunteer support, as part of the proposal	Duration of strategy: 2019 -2024
Fewer library services means that further travel may be required for some people.	<p><b>Pregnancy/maternity</b> Fertility rate data taken into consideration and formed part of the criteria, that assessed need to minimise impact</p> <p><b>Environment (demographic changes):</b> Location has been taken into consideration and formed part of the criteria, that assessed need to minimise impact</p> <p><b>Race:</b> To will explore additional data to draw a comparison with usage of libraries against the local make up of population.</p> <p>Investment in remaining library spaces will make them more accessible.</p> <p><b>Socio – economic:</b> We have tried to prioritise the retention of library services which serve a deprived areas as this formed part of the criteria that assessed need in order to minimise impact.</p>	<p>Oct 2018</p> <p>Oct 2018</p> <p>Oct 2018 – Feb 2019</p> <p>Duration of strategy: 2019 – 2024</p> <p>Oct 2018</p>
Reduction in stock in some libraries dependent of tier	Looking to invest in e-library service.	Duration of strategy: 2019 -2024



**Section 7: Sign off**

**I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately.  
(A typed signature is sufficient.)**

Signature of Head of Service: S Jalota

Date: 31.08.18

Signature of person completing the EqlA: A Roachford

Date: 31.08.18

**Advice**

Keep your director informed of all equality & diversity issues. We recommend that you forward a copy of every EqlA you undertake to the director responsible for the service area. Retain a copy of this EqlA for your records. If this EqlA relates to a continuing project, ensure this document is kept under review and updated, eg after a consultation has been undertaken.



		AGENDA ITEM 6
		<b>PSEG/15/18</b>
Committee:	Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	22 November 2018	
DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS		
Enquiries to:	Lisa Siggins, Democratic Services Officer 033301 34594 lisa.siggins@essex.gov.uk	

The following dates have been identified as committee activity days for this Committee:

**Thursday 23 May 2019**  
**Thursday 20 June 2019**  
**Thursday 18 July 2019**  
**Thursday 26 September 2019**  
**Thursday 17 October 2019**  
**Thursday 28 November 2019**  
**Wednesday 18 December 2019**  
**Thursday 23 January 2020**  
**Thursday 20 February 2020**  
**Thursday 19 March 2020**  
**Thursday 23 April 2020**

Please note that Members are requested to keep the full days open in their diaries for conducting committee business as a variety work and meetings are likely to be planned during the course of those days.

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