

Options appraisal for the future of the library service

London Borough of Croydon

Report from RedQuadrant



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1. Executive Summary

This report is designed to provide a range of options that Croydon Council can consider as you work to develop a modern, relevant and effective library service, within a national and local context of decreasing local authority budgets. It draws on four reports that we produced in the earlier stages of our investigation (attached as appendices):

- The results of the early engagement exercise with public, staff and stakeholders;
- An analysis of current performance and need;
- A review of assets; and
- A best practise review

This report brings the findings together to propose possible routes forward for the library service as you seek to improve the current service. We have drawn together options that could improve the current service (working within current budgets) as well as options that would deliver savings should these be required at a future point.

Background

Croydon Library service operates thirteen libraries within the borough attracting almost two million visits a year. From 2012 until January of this year, delivery of the service was outsourced to Carillion plc. Following the latter's collapse, Croydon Council immediately took the service back in house. Whilst this change was undertaken as an emergency measure, to ensure the uninterrupted continuation of the service to the public, it is now an appropriate time for Croydon to review the possible options for delivering its library service.

Local authority finances are under ongoing pressure everywhere, including in Croydon, and libraries are not exempt from those pressures. It is therefore timely to assess a broad range of options now, including some that could potentially deliver savings, not only to identify ways to improve the current service but also to be prepared to adapt to future financial pressures.

The council is developing its new operating model with a focus on prevention. Libraries are well placed to deliver prevention activities in areas of education, health and wellbeing, communities, digital, routes to work, support for aging residents and more. To fully realise libraries' potential in these areas within the local government financial context, you will need to assess your priorities for the service and may need to reduce expenditure in some areas in order to invest in new.

Modern public libraries

Public libraries are widely valued, even by people who do not currently use them. Most people see libraries as an important community service. The research suggests that public libraries are valued because: they are trusted; they are one of the few public services that people often think of as 'theirs'; and they are widely perceived to be important for groups

such as children, older people and people on low incomes. Further, libraries are seen as a social leveller, with an ability to bring people together.

The most successful modern libraries are those that understand their role as part of the wider council vision and, working where necessary with partners, deliver a range of opportunities that respond effectively and efficiently to the needs of their local community.

To do this they:

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

While the core functions of libraries are seen by most people to be the lending of books and providing access to reference materials, there has been a recent surge of innovation (or rediscovery of old ideas) over the last 10 to 15 years. These changes have been motivated by drivers such as declining book lending, budget reductions, or new ideas about the role of libraries in society and in the digital age.

As local government service delivery models evolve, aided by the dawn of the digital age, libraries present new opportunities to serve a wider purpose and address broader social, cultural and economic outcomes for local authorities.

Local government finances have been under unprecedented pressure in the last ten years and despite being a statutory service, libraries are not exempt from this pressure. As a statutory function, the council has a duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service, but the approach to meeting the financial challenge in respect of libraries has varied considerably across the country. Whilst some areas have seen a reduction in the number and quality of libraries, more imaginative approaches have emerged elsewhere. Closer working with the community, more partnerships, effective use of volunteers and more efficient use of assets are all key elements to preserving the value of libraries in an era of reduced resources.

How your libraries are used

We have analysed the current patterns of usage in your libraries and compared them to other outer London boroughs. We found that:

- Croydon libraries are comparatively well used when compared to outer London in general, with above average visits per capita. The pattern of usage is more akin to inner

city areas, with less borrowing per customer but more PC usage, and other types of usage likely to be higher.

- More than half of your library use is at Croydon Central library. Three other libraries - Ashburton, Selsdon and Thornton Heath had more than one hundred thousand visits in 2017/18. At the other end of the scale, Sanderstead library only had thirty six thousand visits.
- In 2017/18, Croydon spent less on its library service for a borough of its size than the majority of authorities in outer London. This is reflected in lower than average staffing levels, stock budgets and most other library costs. However, it is now apparent that the external contract for library service delivery was priced at well below the market rate and may not have covered the direct costs of the service.
- Overall, Croydon is a very efficient service when judged by cost per visit, which derives from an ability to attract customers despite low levels of investment, and from high staff productivity. However, it should be noted that there is likely to be a law of diminishing returns on library investment: a more basic library service can be delivered at a relatively low cost, but providing additional services is likely to cost more. This rule does not, however, apply if a greater range of services is provided through the means of partnership or co-location.

Customer need

Libraries are a universal service – that is they are provided for all who live, work or study in the area. However, the needs of different parts of the community, whether considered by demographic or socio-economic characteristics, vary with geography. In particular, people who are more economically disadvantaged may have high needs for the services that libraries provide. There are strong links between deprivation and poor health, and often with a lack of educational qualifications. The majority of social deprivation in Croydon is in the north western part of the borough, although there are pockets of high deprivation elsewhere.

Unlike the national picture, there is no exact correlation between library usage and deprivation within Croydon, but some of the wards with the highest deprivation are also those with the highest library use. This is a factor that needs to be considered when developing your library strategy, but as a universal service, libraries should not be targeted at only the deprived areas; people from all backgrounds should be able to enjoy libraries and some of the more affluent areas of the borough have high levels of library use.

We analysed current patterns of library usage amongst different groups of people. We were able to analyse users by age, gender and their borrowing patterns. Just over 15% of Croydon's residents are active users of the library service; of these, over half do not borrow books but use computers or Wi-Fi at in the libraries. There is considerable variation between the proportions of the population using libraries in different parts of the borough.

In common with most public library services, active users account for a greater proportion of the population at large when they are children; children also borrow proportionately

more books than adults. The age group least likely to use libraries is the 15-59 range; this group is also the least likely to borrow.

Amongst children and the over 60s, a greater proportion of the population use libraries if they live close to a library, but this is not the case with working age people. Older people from deprived areas are less likely to use a library, even if there is one locally.

In common with most public library services, more women than men use libraries as a whole, but less so at Croydon Central, New Addington, South Norwood and Thornton Heath libraries. Men are less likely to borrow than women. Men are more likely to use libraries if they live in areas where unemployment and deprivation are high.

Full data is not held by the library service on the ethnicity of its members and this makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions. However, from the data that is held, it appears that Asian and Black people are well represented in the service and that White British people are not, and that Black people are less likely to borrow but more likely to use a computer when using a library.

Customer demand

We carried out a light touch engagement during February and March this year to find out what people wanted from their library service. The great majority of respondents were current library users. The key themes that emerged were:

- More events and activities, cultural and social, in libraries for all age groups;
- Attractive buildings;
- Better and newer stock;
- Support with getting online;
- Help with getting employment or starting a business;
- Longer opening hours;
- Cafés; and
- Better homework help

Options for governance

It is now becoming standard practice for local authorities, when considering strategic options for cost savings, to look at alternative governance. Whilst we understand that you have committed to keeping the library service in house at this point in time, we have provided options for governance for completeness.

There are four main sourcing options open to local authorities:

Make	Buy	Share	Divest
In-house transformation	Outsourcing to private sector	Shared services	Transfer to Community
Continuous improvement	Outsource to third Sector	Shared management	Spin-out to mutual or trust
Arm's length trading company	Private-sector joint ventures	Public sector joint ventures	Devolve to district or Parish
			Closure

Each of these sourcing options has advantages and disadvantages. Options other than in-house transformation require considerable preparation and in some cases investment. It is important that the future shape of the service should be defined before considering buying, sharing or divesting – this is so that contractual arrangements are fit for purpose from the outset and contracts are not subject to major revisions early in the process resulting from change in patterns of delivery. Should you consider making significant changes to your library offer (for example, revising your opening hours or closing branches) or workforce, we recommend that you should carry out these changes whilst the service is still in house, although you may then want to review the governance of your service.

Consortium working is a means of achieving efficiencies through joint purchasing arrangements which is independent of governance status – in-house, outsourced or shared services can all participate in consortia. Consortia typically purchase library stock and/or IT systems. The London Libraries Consortium consists of almost half of the library authorities in the capital and may be appropriate for Croydon if a change in your library management system is contemplated.

Asset review: your existing libraries

We undertook a review of the existing libraries and the council's community based corporate estate.

We examined each of Croydon's libraries and evaluated their potential against three criteria:

- Is the library well located to serve its community, or would it benefit from a new location?
- Are the current facilities at the library appropriate to meet the needs of the local community, or would the library need additional space or facilities? What immediate or long-term improvements could be made to the library to facilitate better customer experience, more economical working and better use of space?

- Are there opportunities for the library to work with other statutory, third sector or business organisations, either through the sharing of space or the release of some space?

The findings of this evaluation are summarised below, including recommendations for the exploration of some opportunities to relocate where the current location is not ideal:

Ashburton

The library is located near the intersection of two main roads, and at a short distance from the Lower Addiscombe Road shopping area. 26% of households in Ashburton ward had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is free parking within a short distance of the library. Public transport is good with easy access to both tram and bus routes. We believe it is of an appropriate size for its community. A large (currently unused) room at the rear of the library could provide an opportunity to offer additional services in partnership (through space sharing or colocation). Minor improvements to the building are required.

Bradmore Green

The library is located at a short distance from Marlpit Lane, but at some distance from the local rank of shops. Only 16% of households in Coulsdon East ward had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is free parking around the library with some reserved parking. There is a good bus service from Coulsdon. A wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport. However, much of this area is also accessible to Coulsdon library with similar journey times, the exception being the Old Coulsdon area. We believe that the current building is of appropriate size for the community it serves. Minor building improvements are required. There is little opportunity for space sharing or colocation within the current building. The site has a large footprint but may not be in the best location for any extension or redevelopment.

Broad Green

The library is located on Canterbury Road, at some distance from major roads or shops. 43% of households in Broad Green and West Thornton wards had no access to a vehicle in 2011. Due to good bus services in Mitcham Road and Purley Way, the library is relatively accessible by public transport. A wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport. There is limited parking around the library, and this is of particular concern for customers with mobility issues. The single space design of the building is not suitable for the many activities and events provided at the library, which would be better served if there were separate meeting rooms.

Moving the library from its present location would risk isolating the current users, many of whom live very close to the current location. It could be possible to replace it on the current site, giving a potential to integrate with a community and children's centre and to provide commercial/community space and staff touchdown points.

Coulsdon

The library is well located in the shopping district of Coulsdon. Only 13% of households in Coulsdon West ward had no access to a vehicle in 2011, the lowest for any library catchment area. There is parking around the library, but it is subject to restrictions. The library is well served by public transport. A wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport. It might be possible to relocate, and this is worth considering if significant benefits would arise from colocation. Minor improvements are required to the current building, and there is the opportunity to extend it to facilitate colocation or staff touchdown points. It may also be feasible to redevelop the site to incorporate a modern library facility and housing, given the prime high street location.

Croydon Central

The library is well located close to the central shopping area of Croydon. 42% of households in Fairfield, Wadham, Croham and Addiscombe wards had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is plenty of parking around the library, but it is subject to restrictions and charges. The library is exceptionally well served by public transport by trams, buses and trains. Much of the borough is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport.

The internal arrangement would benefit from review – there is an opportunity to use less space but more efficiently whilst retaining study space and public computers. We understand that integration with the museum and gallery is being considered.

New Addington

The library is located at the end of the New Addington shopping precinct. 39% of households in New Addington and Fieldway wards had no access to a vehicle in 2011, lower than other deprived areas presumably due to relatively poor transport links. There is parking around the library, but it is subject to restrictions. New Addington is connected to Croydon by tram and there are frequent buses, but public transport times are greater than for other libraries and only the immediate vicinity and some of the Selsdon area can be reached in 30 minutes. Minor improvements to the current building are required. There is an opportunity to work more closely with CALAT in the current location. It may be possible to relocate this library and it would be worth doing so if significant benefits could be derived from colocation. We understand there is a longer-term proposal being considered to locate the library in a purpose built centre collocated with health services and adult education, closer to the leisure centre.

Norbury

The library is located on the London Road about 650m south of the station, and with few shops in the immediate vicinity. 34% of households in Norbury ward had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is free parking around the library. The library is well served by public transport. A wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport.

Situating the library in the area closer to Norbury station would be likely to generate more footfall. However, we have not located an alternative site, so this may not be possible. In the current library building, there are opportunities to reconfigure the ground floor, and to

release at least half the building space. If that were done there would be considerable opportunities for colocation and for staff touchdown points.

Purley

The library is located on Banstead Road at some distance from the district shopping area. The area is isolated from much of the shopping area and from the large Tesco superstore because the A23 effectively creates a large traffic island. Banstead Road in any case has few local facilities and the area feels isolated from the thriving town centre. 20% of households in Purley and Kenley wards had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is parking near the library, but some of it is charged for. The library is well served by public transport being on the A23 axis. A wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport.

There could be an opportunity to move elsewhere. Within the current building there is the opportunity to rearrange, releasing space for potential space sharing and colocation, and a need to make minor improvements to the building.

Sanderstead

The library is located on Sanderstead Hill in an area where there are almost no community facilities or shops. Only 12% of households in Sanderstead ward had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is abundant free parking near the library, and the library is well served by frequent buses. We recommend exploring opportunities to relocate elsewhere. Some improvement is required to the layout of the existing building. If this is done some space could be released, creating a possible opportunity for colocation.

Selsdon

The library is located as part of the Sainsburys supermarket complex and at a short distance from the shopping area. Only 14% of households in Selsdon and Heathfield wards had no access to a vehicle in 2011. The adjacent supermarket car park is free for up to two hours. The library is well served by frequent buses. A wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport.

There is an opportunity for improvements to the layout. The limited space precludes colocation but there should be the opportunity to work better with partners in the building.

Shirley

The library is located at the end of the Shirley shopping area. 22% of households in Shirley ward had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is free parking within a short distance of the library. The library is well served by frequent buses along the A232. The library is not ideally located to serve the needs of more deprived communities locally. Given the age, layout and condition of the current building we recommend carrying out feasibility of redevelopment on the current site and/or relocation/colocation in order to achieve greater accessibility for more deprived communities in the local area. There are opportunities to consider relocation. If remaining in the current building there is an opportunity to rearrange and perhaps to release space.

South Norwood

This library is to be relocated in 2019 to a purpose-built facility. You will need to ensure a flexible, modern design aligned to community priorities to derive the most benefit from this relocation/development.

Thornton Heath

Thornton Heath library is located on Brigstock Road about 500m from the commercial centre of Thornton Heath. 39% of households in Thornton Heath, Bensham Manor and Upper Norwood wards had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is free parking within a short distance of the library, but it is often difficult to find a parking space. The area is well served by buses. The location is not ideal, but it is not feasible to relocate. We recommend investigating opportunities to extend or rearrange the current building, and for colocation.

Best practise: what works elsewhere

In section 8 of the report, we look at what happens in other authorities and cite some examples of good practise that we think are particularly pertinent to Croydon:

- Libraries at the centre of culture;
- Community and council hubs;
- Libraries delivering on health;
- Combatting social isolation;
- Digital inclusion; and
- Libraries as learning centres

Strategy and how to get there

Our suggested strategic themes for the service are set out in the table below:

Library services based on community need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence based planning• Continuous engagement• Different solutions for different communities• Buildings and services where they are needed
Libraries at the heart of culture in Croydon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Libraries as cultural venues• Leading the literature and spoken word offer• A strategic approach to cultural programming
Sustainable, relevant services through partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Closer working with council, other organisations and the community• Libraries as enablers rather than delivering• Partnerships that bring opportunities for Croydon people

Options for library provision

We recognise that councils are under increasing financial pressure and libraries are no different. In section 10 we present a range of options that could provide improvements to the current service at no extra cost, and/or address the need to reduce library service spend in the future if required. These include:

- Changes to staffing levels;
- Adjusting the hours of the libraries to suit current business levels;
- Making better use of volunteers across the service;
- Closing some libraries; and
- Relocating, redeveloping or reconfiguring libraries to better serve their communities

A new model of delivery

When looking at library usage we have established that:

- Croydon Central library attracts people from across the borough and beyond;
- Selsdon and Thornton Heath libraries attract people from beyond their catchment area; and
- Other branches are used mainly by local people

We therefore propose that a new approach should be adopted to library delivery in Croydon, ranking libraries as either area hubs, branch libraries or local libraries.

The main hub is the central library, serving the entire borough. This library will provide a comprehensive range of stock, including specialist collections. Study space and public computers will continue to be a key element of library provision. There is a full range of partnerships to deliver activities and events. Staffing levels will permit an extensive range of staff led activities. Croydon Central is within 30 minutes' transport time for most of the borough.

The area hub libraries would be Thornton Heath and Selsdon, serving the north and south of the borough respectively. Book stock will be at a lower level than at the Central library. There is a full range of partnerships to deliver activities and events. Staffing levels will permit a range of staff led activities. Thornton Heath library is within 30 minutes travelling time of most of the north of the borough. Selsdon is easily accessible by public transport from much of the east of the borough including New Addington.

Branch libraries are Ashburton, Coulsdon, New Addington, Norbury, Purley and South Norwood libraries serving district centres within the borough. These are essential local libraries serving their communities but where partnership activities can take place.

Local libraries are Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Sanderstead and Shirley libraries, generally serving local areas within the borough. These will provide a basic library function and in some of our options are suitable for partial or full operation by volunteers. Broad Green is located in an area of significant deprivation, but more people living in the immediate area of the library use other libraries, especially Croydon Central.

Options for consideration:

Currently all libraries are open for a similar number of hours and on either 5 or 6 days. However, opening patterns do not align to usage patterns. For example we have observed queues of customers waiting to access Central Library at opening time whilst some smaller libraries receive minimal visits throughout the middle of the day. The council has a range of options that can be considered, either in order to reduce library service expenditure should this be a future requirement or to realign current library resources and expenditure to better meet service demand.

The tables below set out the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed options:

Option 1: Make changes to staffing levels whilst maintaining the current library service	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current service maintained • Easy to implement • Ensures flexibility across the service • Self-service installation brings greater efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not address imbalances in opening hours or service provision

Option 2: Change library opening hours to reflect usage patterns	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All libraries retained and staffed • Offer better matched to customer demand so that the busiest libraries have the greatest hours • Easy to implement • Increased hours at hub libraries and Ashburton • Increased late opening hours at three libraries • Reduction in opening hours at some libraries could be offset by Open + technology • Some deprived areas would see increases in opening hours – around Thornton Heath and South Norwood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some libraries still poorly located • At local libraries, staffing levels would permit only the operation of a basic library service with few activities delivered by staff, although this could be supplemented by partnerships and volunteers • Some deprived areas would see reductions in opening hours – but at New Addington a reduction could be offset by new technology and better cross service working, the Shrublands area is within reasonable travelling time of Ashburton library with enhanced hours and the Tollers Lane area is within reasonable travelling time of Coulsdon library

Option 3: Make extensive use of volunteers	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All libraries retained • Offer better matched to customer demand so that the busiest libraries have the greatest hours • Extended hours in the evening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer lead in time to forge links with local volunteering organisations and to train volunteers • Recruiting sufficient volunteers may be difficult and volunteers can be less reliable than paid staff

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased late hours at five libraries, including opening to 8pm at three libraries Some deprived areas would see increases in opening hours – around Thornton Heath and South Norwood Provides a service at a time appropriate for working people Option 3B would generate £67K savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for large reductions in hours at local libraries although this could be offset by Open + technology Option 3A would cost £9.1K more than the current budget
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Option 4A: achieve savings by closing libraries	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximises savings Capital receipt from sites of closed libraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction of service to residents without enhancement elsewhere Adverse public reaction Possible challenge from DCMS and/or through Judicial Review Some deprived areas left at greater distance from a library
Option 4B: close libraries and invest	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concentrates services at busiest libraries Considerable uplift in service at five libraries More staff at Central and hub libraries to provide more customer support and activities Capital receipt from sites of closed libraries Tollers lane area served by an enhanced Coulsdon library with good public transport links Shrublands area served by an enhanced Ashburton library with reasonable public transport links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some areas are further from a library, particularly Hamsey Green Adverse public reaction in affected areas Possible challenge from DCMS and/or through Judicial Review Some deprived areas left at greater distance from a library

Option 5: Relocating, redeveloping and reconfiguring libraries to better serve their communities

Relocating

Strengths¹

- Potential to achieve a more even distribution of libraries
- Opportunities to serve deprived communities more effectively
- Can focus on areas of higher population density
- Potential to reduce travel distances for some residents
- Can create more colocation and partnership opportunities
- Opportunity to target provision at areas of known population growth, thus anticipating future demand
- Opportunity to serve a wider catchment area
- Able potentially to attract more customers, especially of working age, if Open + is installed at new site

Weaknesses

- Moving closer to some communities can mean moving further from others – need to ensure those with mobility challenges, e.g. older residents, are not adversely affected
- Costs involved may not be justified by the benefits, if minimal
- May not be able to realise profit from sale of vacated building or site, or identify alternative use by the council, especially if listed status may mean that an alternative use is more difficult to identify

Redeveloping and reconfiguring

Strengths

- Ensures library remains at the heart of the community that it serves while offering an improved service
- Can create more colocation and partnership opportunities
- Can use redevelopment as opportunity to offer improved facilities in a deprived area
- By creating more space can offer a wider range of services
- Alternatively surplus space could be rented out to generate income
- Able potentially to attract more customers, especially of working age, if Open + is installed as part of redevelopment

Weaknesses

- May be investing in a building that is not in the best possible location, e.g. close to communities, on good public transport
- Need to consider whether changes in population patterns mean that the library is no longer in the best possible location
- Protections such as listed status may inhibit plans to reconfigure

¹ Note that some strengths and weaknesses may be unique to specific libraries so each opportunity needs to be carefully assessed on its own merits

2. Introduction

This report summarises our findings so far from:

- The early engagement exercise in March and April 2018;
- The data analysis and assessment of need;
- Our review of your assets;
- Our review of best practise; and
- Our discussions with you

It sets out a range of options for you to consider as you plan the future of Croydon's library service.

It is designed to provide a range of options that you can consider as you work to develop a modern, relevant and effective library service, within a national and local context of decreasing local authority budgets.

There is an opportunity to define a new direction for the service that will respond to identified needs and outcomes and give the library service a more pivotal role at the heart of the Council's local community and cultural agendas.

The report draws on four reports that we produced in the earlier stages of our investigation (attached as appendices):

- The results of the early engagement exercise with public, staff and stakeholders;
- An analysis of current performance and need;
- A review of assets; and
- A best practise review

Modern public libraries

Public libraries are widely valued, even by people who do not currently use them. Most people see libraries as an important community service. The research suggests that public libraries are valued because: they are trusted; they are one of the few public services that people often think of as 'theirs'; and they are widely perceived to be important for groups such as children, older people and people on low incomes. Further, libraries are seen as a social leveller, with an ability to bring people together.

The most successful modern libraries are those that understand their role as part of the wider council vision and, working where necessary with partners, deliver a range of opportunities that respond effectively and efficiently to the needs of their local community.

To do this they:

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

Arts Council England (2016) suggests that 'Public libraries are trusted spaces, free to enter and open to all. In them people can explore and share reading, information, knowledge and culture. Libraries contribute to the wider goals of both national and local government and the communities that they serve.'

While the core functions of libraries are seen by most people to be the lending of books and providing access to reference materials, there has been a recent surge of innovation (or rediscovery of old ideas) over the last 10 to 15 years. These changes have been motivated by drivers such as declining book lending; budget reductions; or new ideas about the role of libraries in society and in the digital age.

A particular challenge is the development of a long-term strategy that anticipates and can adapt to the trend towards digital content and 'virtual' services replacing the need for 'hard' materials and spaces within which to house them. If a library contains no books in 10 years' time, what will it be its purpose?

As local government service delivery models evolve, aided by the dawn of the digital age, libraries present new opportunities to serve a wider purpose and address broader social, cultural and economic outcomes for local authorities.

3. Strategic context

In this section we set the scene for this review. An analysis of the needs of the borough together with the council's own drivers underpins the strategic context and we see how the library service can actively contribute to achieving the council's vision and priorities for its residents.

We then look at the wider background for the review and identify national and regional influences on the library service,

Finally, we examine the legal and equalities frameworks in which public libraries sit and how this affects any changes to the service.

3.1 The Croydon context

The Croydon Community Strategy brings together the priorities and outcomes of the main partner agencies working in Croydon and focuses them on making it:

- **A great place to learn, work and live** where we will deliver new jobs and new homes for our residents, enable our local economy to grow, develop an exciting cultural offer and evening economy, in a safe and pleasant environment;
- **A place of opportunity for everyone** where we will tackle poverty and deprivation, prevent homelessness, and support children, families and individuals to achieve their full potential and live a long healthy life through a good start, an excellent education, support to develop and maintain the resilience and self-reliance modern life requires, and providing holistic support to those that need it; and
- **A place with a vibrant and connected community and voluntary sector** where we will enable and empower our communities to connect and collaborate in developing community-led responses to the many challenges we face.

The borough's cultural strategy is in development; the aspirations of the Borough of Culture bid in 2018 have formed the starting point and are set out below:

- Improve young people's lives
- Positive reputational change for Croydon
- Put culture and people at the heart of regeneration
- Build healthier and stronger communities
- Build a strong and vibrant cultural sector

We have used the vision and aspirations to develop the strategic themes for the library service, set out in section 9.

The library service in Croydon

You have recently brought the service back in house after six years of provision by Carillion plc. Local authority finances are under ongoing pressure everywhere, including in Croydon, and libraries are not exempt from those pressures. Therefore, you cannot rule out the need to make further savings in the future. However, the service is now very lean, and any future savings requirements are likely to have a negative impact on the level of service provided if libraries continue to be delivered in exactly the same way as they are currently. It is therefore timely to assess a broad range of options now, including some that could potentially deliver savings, not to only identify ways to improve the current service but also to be prepared to adapt to future financial pressures.

Libraries are valued by the public and are of political importance. Croydon's Labour administration committed in its 2018 manifesto to keep thirteen libraries open, to refurbish library buildings and to improve the book stock. This is a welcome commitment but may need some investment, or re-direction of current budgets, as you have an aging asset portfolio. Additionally, very little investment has been made in ICT over the last 4 years.

It is clear that there are real opportunities for the library service in Croydon. The council is developing its new operating model with a focus on prevention. Libraries are well placed to deliver prevention activities in areas of education, health and wellbeing, communities, digital, routes to work, support for aging residents and more. To fully realise libraries' potential in these areas within the local government financial context, you will need to assess your priorities for the service and may need to reduce expenditure in some areas in order to invest in new.

In making these decisions you will also need to consider how well local communities are served by the current service and you may want to take the opportunity to address issues of low usage and/or poor accessibility in certain areas of the borough, and building stock less fit for a modern-day library service, particularly where the current location of libraries may negatively impact more deprived communities. You will also want to consider whether low levels of footfall in some libraries justify ongoing investment within this context.

Having said that, libraries are a universal service and all areas of the borough and communities need to be considered when making any changes to the service available to the public.

3.2 National and regional influences

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

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

- are shaped by local needs;

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

DCMS has produced a national strategy document for public libraries² that sets out seven outcomes for libraries to deliver against:

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

This approach has enabled library services to easily communicate the benefits of partnership working to potential partners. We have used this model as the basis for our work with you.

Arts Council England (ACE), although it doesn't have any statutory responsibility for public libraries, plays a national role in support, development and advocacy. How that is reflected in local library services will be determined by each council based on their own priorities and the needs of their communities.

3.3 The legal context

There are two key pieces of legislation to consider in relation to the provision of library services and any changes made to that provision. In very simple terms, authorities need to prove that all residents have equal access to library services, regardless of their circumstances, and that the library service is an adequate one to meet their needs.

Challenge can come from the public, as in the case of Brent and Camden councils, or from the Secretary of State, who can intervene, and did so in the Wirral inquiry.

² Libraries Deliver DCMS 2016

Firstly, the Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964 requires first tier English local authorities to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' public library service. Local authorities must:

- Provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons in the area that want to make use of it;
- Promote the service; and
- Lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area

Although the definition of 'comprehensive and efficient' is frustratingly vague, authorities can leave themselves open to challenge if not seen to comply.

It is therefore necessary to assess local need and prove that a library service, once the proposed changes have been made, still meets the requirements of the legislation. This can be done through public and stakeholder consultation, alongside data analysis.

Equalities

The second important area of legislation for library services is equalities legislation, principally the Equality Act (2010) which brings together nine separate pieces of legislation into one single act simplifying the law and strengthening it in important ways to help tackle discrimination and inequality.

The need to carry out an effective equalities impact assessment is central to ensuring that decisions are made fairly.

What happens when authorities get it wrong?

Proposals to close twenty libraries and transfer ten to volunteers in Lincolnshire library service in 2013 were successfully challenged by campaigners through a judicial review due to the flawed nature of the consultation. The court found that the decisions had effectively been made before the consultation had ended. They had also failed to consider alternative proposals from a charitable organisation to run the service.

Surrey County Council's plans were overturned in the High Court on the basis the council had failed to discharge its public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010 by not providing members with sufficient information to make an informed decision. The decision to hand over ten of the county's libraries to untrained volunteers meant that the service's ability to meet the needs of its population had not been properly considered.

In 2011, Brent Council faced a judicial review over the closure of six out of twelve libraries and the transformation of its library service. One of the charges was that its consultation had 'failed to assess the need for library services in its area rationally' at the beginning of the process. The challenge was ultimately unsuccessful, and it was held that the consultation had been robust. Even with this finding, the resulting delay in implementing the changes was costly to the council. The cost of a successful challenge would have been significantly higher.

The challenge to Brent council also included the charge that the council failed to comply with the requirements of the Equalities Act to have 'due regard' to the needs to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups in the community. A substantial Equalities Impact Assessment (informed by consultation) was evidence in court to prove this was not the case.

4. Current performance and assessment of needs

We undertook an assessment of the performance of Croydon's library service as a whole, when compared to other outer London boroughs. From this we reached a number of conclusions:

- Croydon libraries are comparatively well used when compared to outer London in general, with above average visits per capita. The pattern of usage is more akin to inner city areas, with less borrowing per customer but more PC usage, and other types of usage likely to be higher. The proportion of active borrowers³ in the population is low, but this is a phenomenon of the different pattern of usage.
- More than half of your library use is at Croydon Central library. Three other libraries - Ashburton, Selsdon and Thornton Heath had more than one hundred thousand visits in 2017/18. At the other end of the scale, Sanderstead library only had thirty six thousand visits.
- In 2017/18, Croydon spent less on its library service for a borough of its size than the majority of authorities in outer London. This is reflected in lower staffing levels, stock budgets and most other library costs. However, it is now apparent that the external contract for library service delivery was priced at well below the market rate and may not have covered the direct costs of the service.
- Nevertheless, there are low numbers of staff per resident and per visit. This is quite striking since not all of your libraries are equipped with self-issue technology, normally one of the principal enablers of a low staffed service. You make good use of volunteers, although some other London boroughs far exceed Croydon in this respect.
- There may be scope to increase income from libraries, either through external funding or through customer generated income.
- Overall, Croydon is a very efficient service when judged by cost per visit, which derives from an ability to attract customers despite low levels of investment, and from high staff productivity. However, it should be noted that there is likely to be a law of diminishing returns on library investment so that delivering a more basic library service can be obtained with relatively low costs, but that providing additional services are likely to cost more. This rule does not, however, apply if a greater range of services is provided through the means of partnership or co-location.

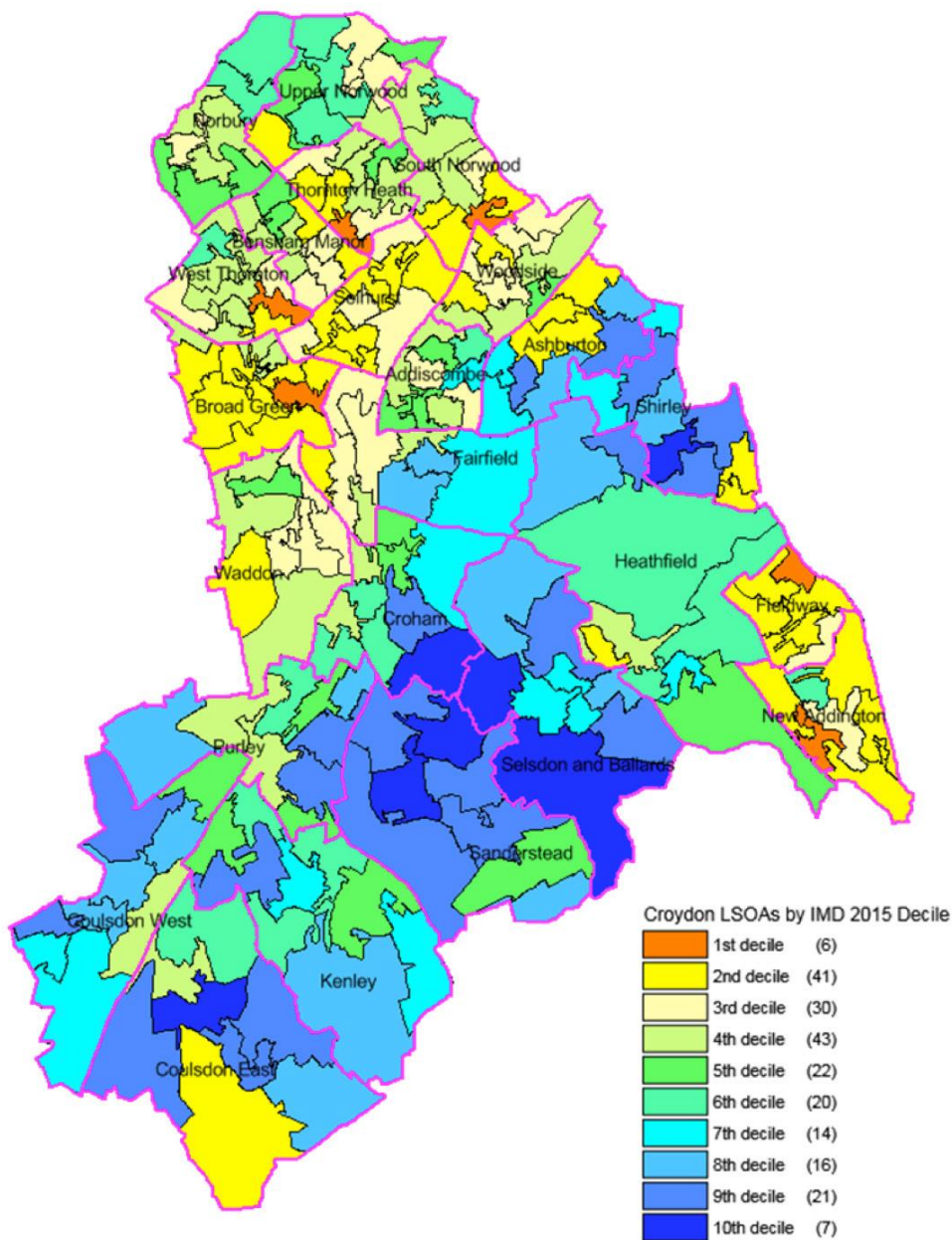
We have already referred to the statutory duty on local authorities to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. To comply with this duty, and also to best serve residents, the council should take into account the needs of the population, not only as a whole but also when considered on a localised basis.

Libraries are a universal service – that is they are provided for all who live, work or study in the area. However, the needs of different parts of the community, whether considered by demographic or socio-economic characteristics, vary with geography. In particular, people

³ Those library members who have borrowed an item of stock in the last year

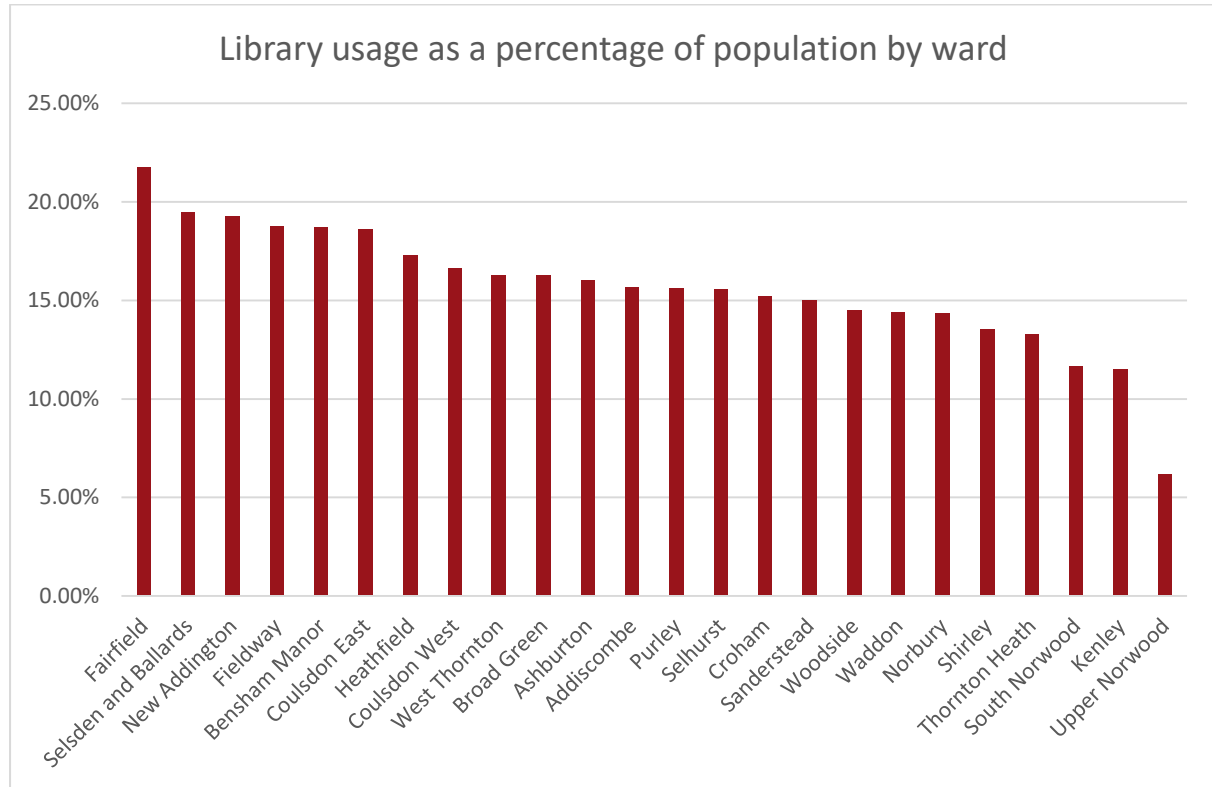
who are more economically disadvantaged may have high needs for the services that libraries provide – at a national level, whilst one third of all people use libraries, in the poorest areas the figure is one half⁴. There are strong links between deprivation and poor health, and often with a lack of educational qualifications.

The majority of social deprivation in Croydon is in the north western part of the borough, although there are pockets elsewhere – the New Addington and Fieldway areas, the Shrublands estate and the Tollers Lane area of Old Coulsdon. Relative areas of deprivation are shown in the map below, where the first decile indicates the greatest deprivation. In the north, some areas of Upper Norwood in particular, but also parts of Norbury, South Norwood, Addiscombe and Woodside had lower levels of deprivation.

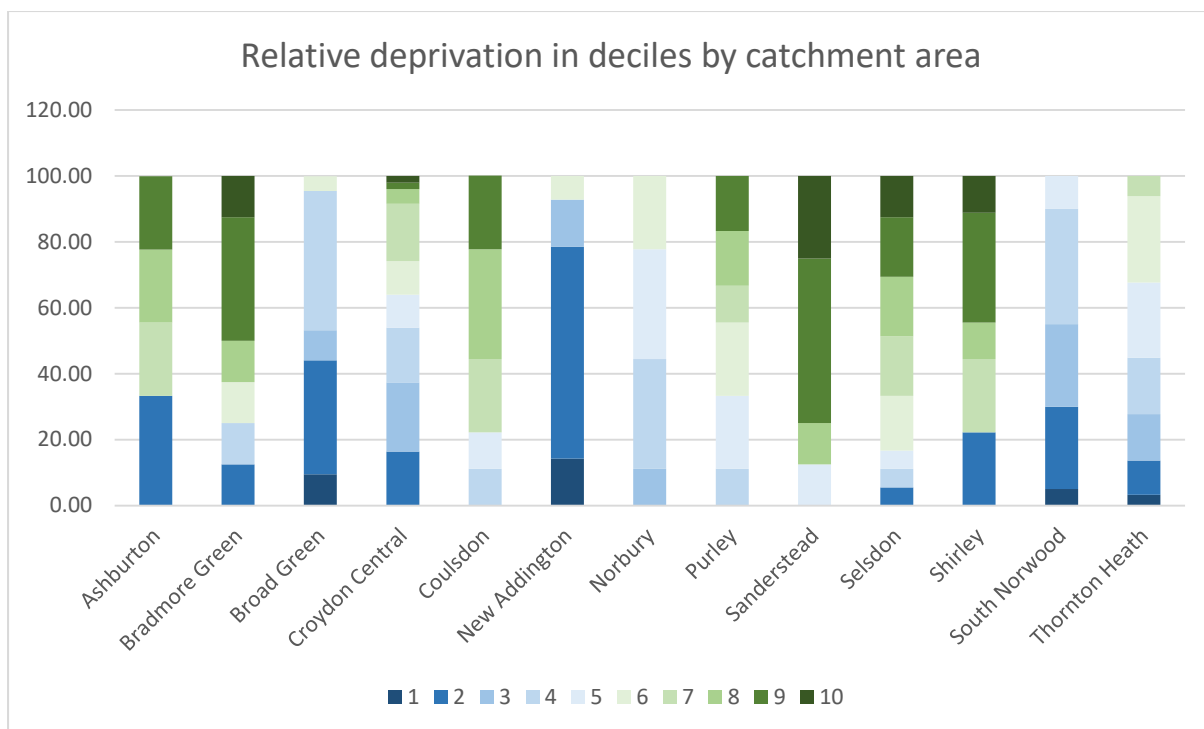


⁴ ONS, Taking Part Quarter One Statistical Analysis 2014

Unlike the national picture, there is no exact correlation between library usage and deprivation within Croydon, but some of the wards with the highest deprivation are also those with the highest library use, as shown in the graph below. Conversely, other areas with high deprivation such as South Norwood and Thornton Heath have low levels of library usage.



In our analysis of library usage and needs we allocated nominal catchment areas to each of Croydon’s existing libraries and analysed socio economic characteristics. Using this methodology, the degree of deprivation near each library becomes clear, as shown in the graph below:



The highest levels of deprivation are in the localities of Broad Green, New Addington and South Norwood libraries, whilst the lowest is in Sanderstead library. This pattern is reflected when unemployment is considered, although there was also relatively high unemployment around Thornton Heath library. There was a higher incidence of people reporting poor or very poor health in the same areas. Although the distribution of people with no qualifications did not show the same characteristics, with far less variation between most areas, the New Addington area had a much greater concentration than anywhere else in the borough, with over one third of adults with no qualifications.

Again, in Croydon there is no correlation between library use and unemployment, lack of qualifications and poor health that can be demonstrated through a comparison with library data and demographic information. However, as we point out below, men are more likely to use libraries if they live in areas where unemployment and deprivation are high.

In the south of the borough, the number of households without access to a vehicle was lower than the north. Public transport is good throughout the borough with almost the whole population living within thirty minute's travel time of the central library. The density of routes is greater in the north, reflecting the density of the population.

As a universal service, libraries should not be targeted at only the deprived areas; people from all backgrounds should be able to enjoy and benefit from libraries and some of the more affluent areas of the borough have high levels of library use.

We also analysed current patterns of library usage amongst different groups of people. We were able to analyse users by age, gender and their borrowing patterns. We were also able to provide an indicative analysis by ethnicity, although the data held by the library service is incomplete and it is possible that this skewed the results obtained. We were not able to analyse library users by the other protected characteristics of disability, maternity, marriage

and civil partnership, religion, sexual orientation and gender reassignment because the library service does not collect data on those themes from its customers.

We have identified a number of key features of Croydon's library service:

Usage

- Just over 15% of Croydon's residents are active users⁵ of the library service, a total of 59,204 people. A further 7,346 active users live outside the borough, and 617 did not provide full addresses;
- Over half of active users of the service do not borrow books; this is especially the case at Croydon Central, Thornton Heath and New Addington libraries;
- There is considerable variation between the proportions of the population using libraries in different parts of the borough:
- Croydon Central has a large catchment area so its high usage is not so disproportionate to other branches especially when its role as a central library is taken in account;
- Norbury and Coulsdon also serve their own areas well;
- Broad Green library is not the library of choice even for people living in Broad Green ward, and serves its potential catchment area less well than any other branch;
- Upper Norwood ward has a far lower proportion of library users than the rest of the borough; and
- The wards with the highest number of library users are Fairfield, Selsdon and New Addington

Age

- In common with most public library services, active users account for a greater proportion of the population at large when they are children; children also borrow proportionately more books than adults;
- The age group least likely to use libraries is the 15 -59 range. This group is also the least likely to borrow;
- The age profile of branches varies considerably as does the proportion of the local community using libraries;
- A high proportion of the catchment area population in the 0 -14 age group are using Ashburton, Norbury, Selsdon and Coulsdon libraries;
- For the 15 -59 age group, Croydon Central, Coulsdon, Norbury and Selsdon have high usage within the population; and

⁵ Library members who have borrowed stock or used a public computer in a library in the last year

- For the 60+ age group, Selsdon, Croydon Central, Coulsdon and Shirley libraries have the best usage within the population
- Wards that contain a library have better library usage by young people and the 60+ age group than wards that do not contain a library, but this is not the case with the working age group;
- People aged 60+ more likely to use a library if the ward that they live in has a higher proportion of people of that age group; and
- Older people from deprived areas are less likely to use a library

Gender

- Also in common with most public library services, more women than men use libraries as a whole, but less so at Croydon Central, New Addington, South Norwood and Thornton Heath libraries. Men are less likely to borrow than women;
- Men are more likely to use libraries if they live in areas where unemployment and deprivation are high

Ethnicity

Full data is not held by the library service on the ethnicity of its members and this makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions.

From the data that is held, it appears that:

- Asian and Black people are well represented in the service while White British people are not;
- The high proportion of Asian people is due almost entirely to members at Broad Green library;
- The highest proportion of Black people in relation to the population is at New Addington, South Norwood, Thornton Heath and Croydon Central libraries;
- The proportion of library users who are White British is matched to the population at Bradmore Green and Coulsdon libraries, but they are particularly under-represented at Broad Green, Croydon Central, New Addington, South Norwood and Thornton Heath libraries;
- White people from a non-British or Irish background are generally well represented; and
- Black people are less likely to borrow but more likely to use a computer when using a library

These factors are crucial when developing a forward strategy for Croydon's libraries. The fact that individual branches are better used by one group of the community than others

can be regarded as an opportunity to provide targeted services, but there is also an impetus to match services to broader local and borough wide need.

The table below sets out some suggestions for target audiences at individual library branches, bearing in mind that the library service is already attracting a disproportionately high number of young people – 32% of library users are aged under 15 but only 24% of the population:

Ashburton	Increase working age and retired users. Continue to provide good services for children and teens
Bradmore Green	Increase usage, in particular by working age people. Serves Tollers Lane area of high deprivation so partnerships around employment and health
Broad Green	Increase usage by older people, especially older Asian users. Area of high deprivation so partnerships around employment and health, and activities for men
Coulsdon	Usage is broadly reflective of population.
Croydon Central	Build partnerships at a borough wide level for adults. Children’s library less well used but may serve immediate area
New Addington	Area of high deprivation so partnerships around employment and health, and activities for men. Adult education should be a priority
Norbury	Increase usage by men of all ages
Purley	Not well used in comparison to the population; increase usage by people of all ages
Sanderstead	Poorly used by working age people but suitable for older people’s partnerships in the current location.
Selsdon	Increase usage by men of all ages. High proportion of older users and therefore build partnerships appropriate for them. Serves Monks Hill, an area of high deprivation, so partnerships around employment and health, and activities for men.
Shirley	Poorly used by working age people but suitable for older people’s partnerships in the current location.
South Norwood	Not well used in comparison to population – this may change when the library relocates to near the train station. Area of high deprivation so partnerships around employment and health, and activities for men. Needs to attract more older users

Thornton Heath	Serves some areas of high deprivation so partnerships around employment and health, and activities for men. Increase usage by older people
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5. Outcomes of customer/stakeholder engagement

This was a light touch engagement exercise over a short period, so we tried to get as diverse a range of voices as possible to inform our development of future options:

- We ran an online public survey through the Get Involved portal, which ran from February 22nd to March 26th, 2018. Paper copies were also available in libraries. The survey was promoted online, through social media and by library staff;
- We ran structured discussions with two community groups: a drop-in session for BAME people with disabilities and an independent book club that meets in South Croydon;
- Three half-day staff workshops took place in March: approximately 40 staff attended in total; and
- We held stakeholder meetings and/or phone calls with council officers and other stakeholders

The engagement exercise, although brief, has given us a wealth of ideas and a sense of what Croydon's libraries could be. Many of the suggestions and ideas reflect things that are already happening in libraries and could be improved. There is an appetite for partnership with libraries in relevant council services such as CALAT, employment, public health and communities. We have some indications of what could be done to attract new users and new communities which, when matched with the needs analysis, will help to shape our recommendations.

Above all we found a wealth of creativity and a passion for libraries amongst the staff that must be utilised and developed. Staff engagement and development is crucial to the success of any future plans.

Full details are contained in the Engagement Report appendix. In summary, we can say that:

Library users would like to see:

- More events and activities, cultural and social, in libraries for all age groups;
- Attractive buildings;
- Better and newer stock;
- Support with getting online;
- Help with getting employment or starting a business;
- Longer opening hours;
- Cafes; and
- Better homework help

Staff feedback was:

- Good feelings about coming back in house. Frustration of libraries sitting apart from rest of council;
- Buildings need sorting out;
- Public awareness of libraries low, better marketing needed;
- Staff anxiety about capacity to deliver events and activities;
- Opportunities to build council and community partnerships;
- Homework clubs were so popular and need to be brought back;
- Many, many ideas for social and cultural activity in libraries;
- Need a fresh look at the different communities living in Croydon; and
- Opportunities to welcome refugees.

Internal partner conversations told us:

- Put libraries on the cultural map in Croydon by providing venues;
- Libraries should be at the centre of Croydon's cultural scene, especially around spoken word and literature;
- Libraries could be at the centre of the council's new locality based strategy;
- Employment and welfare services could be delivered in libraries;
- Appetite for closer working partnerships with:
 - CALAT;
 - The Youth Engagement team;
 - The 'Live Well' team;
 - Gateway and early intervention; and
 - The employment team

6. Governance options

It is now becoming standard practice for local authorities, when considering strategic options for cost savings, to look at alternative governance. There are four main sourcing options open to local authorities:

Make	Buy	Share	Divest
In-house transformation	Outsourcing to private sector	Shared services	Transfer to Community
Continuous improvement	Outsource to third Sector	Shared management	Spin-out to mutual or trust
Arm's length trading company	Private-sector joint ventures	Public sector joint ventures	Devolve to district or Parish
			Closure

Of course, within the different models there are several permutations. For instance, you could join forces with another authority to outsource, or join an existing arrangement.

In a period of rapid change for public library services, the following permutations or applications of these models are emerging as the preferred options for one or more authorities:

- Outsourcing to an external commercial or not-for-profit provider (e.g. Bromley, Dudley, Greenwich, Lincolnshire and Wandsworth – all outsourced to GLL; also, the previous contracts between Ealing, Harrow and yourselves, and Carillion);
- Establishing a mutual, led by the former in-house team (e.g. York, Suffolk, Nottinghamshire, Devon);
- Entering into joint management with others (e.g. former partnership between Bromley and Bexley, Bournemouth and Poole, in the process of being set up);
- Commissioning others, usually community organisations or similar, to run some libraries (many examples, including Lewisham, Leicestershire, Warwickshire); or
- Hand over library buildings to be used by other bodies to run a service, unsupported by the authority (e.g. some volunteer-run libraries in Buckinghamshire (others there are council-supported), some in Lancashire, Lincolnshire and many others)

The above options are explored in more depth below – their advantages and disadvantages, their potential relevance to your strategy, and some expanded examples.

One important thing to remember is the advantage of making changes internally first before changing the management model. Make your savings first or someone else will!

6.1 Outsourcing

This is the model that you had previously, with Carillion. Since that company folded, the only current supplier to the UK market is Greenwich Leisure Limited, GLL, which operates as a not-for-profit company. They currently run libraries in Bromley, Dudley, Greenwich, Lincolnshire and Wandsworth, and CIPFA figures indicate that use of their services stands up well in comparison to council-run ones. They claim to be more cost-effective than a commercial company (because they don't have to pay shareholders) and more efficient than in-house provision, because of economies of scale.

From what we have seen, Carillion appeared to run the Croydon library service at a lower than current market rate. For example, the contract was put in place before the current Croydon administration's commitment to pay all staff (included those delivering outsourced services) the London Living Wage. . It must therefore be borne in mind that the costs of an outsourced service may well be higher than the cost of the Carillion contract.

Any consideration of this option would necessitate a procurement exercise, to test the market, and could be combined with exploration of alternatives such as provision by another local authority (who might also tender for such a contract) or through a mutual (see below).

The main advantage usually cited is the potential to invest in libraries and administer them more efficiently through the company's existing infrastructure, thereby reducing back office and support costs. However the example of Carillion shows that this is not always the case, although GLL would argue that they achieve this ambition.

The disadvantages include:

- Commercial companies are liable for business rates (as a not-for-profit GLL may be eligible for rate relief - although this represents a cost to the council and would impact on the total amount of business rates collected by the council);
- Challenges in resourcing in-house capacity to manage the contract effectively;
- Potential difficulty in varying the contract scope if further savings need to be delivered;
- An external company still incurs the same costs in running a service as a local authority so if they are to make saving there is a risk that service quality suffers;
- The frequently cited 'more commercial approach' can be equally adopted in-house if the right skills are developed; and
- Can be time consuming and expensive to set up

6.2 Mutuals

There are several successful examples of library services being provided through a mutual, all established relatively recently. The oldest is Suffolk's Industrial and Provident Society, set up in 2012. Others are York Explore (covering libraries and archives), Inspire Nottinghamshire (covering libraries, archives, arts and learning), and Libraries Unlimited in Devon (providing library services there and in Torbay).

All of the above are staff and community-owned social enterprises. The advantages of this model are:

- A saving on 80% of business rates plus VAT exemption (although, to note, this impacts the amount of business rates collected by the council);
- Removal from constraints of the local authority (e.g. around branding, job roles, partnerships);
- Access to sources of funding from which local authorities are excluded; and
- Potential to buy-in support services that may be cheaper, such as HR, payroll etc.; and
- Freedom from local authority bureaucracy, meaning that decisions can be taken more quickly and 'thinking outside the box' actively encouraged

Disadvantages cited include the risk of isolation from council policies and decision making that could affect the service, and inability to inform such decision-making (although it could be argued that library services **within** many local authorities are regrettably marginalised to the same extent). There is also the potential for tax law to change and the benefits thus to be reduced.

Most of the mutual cited above were set up prior to the introduction of new Public Contracts Regulations in 2015. These stipulate that contracting authorities are required to make known their intention to award a contract for social and other specific services by means of a contract notice or a prior information notice, to which a commercial or other external provider might respond. This makes it unlikely that any authority pursuing this route now could decide, as others have done in the past, to establish a mutual led by its current in-house management team without going through a procurement process to establish whether that is the best option.

6.3 Joint management

In this model two or more authorities combine their libraries under a single management team, with shared back-office support. There are potentially many advantages:

- Economies of scale: one management team, one team of specialists, one frontline staffing team;
- Enables strategic planning on a wider geographical scale;
- The larger entity has a higher profile and potentially an enhanced ability to attract grant funding;

- There is more potential for rationalisation/relocation/co-location of library service points;
- It offers an opportunity to review and refine internal processes, adopting the best practice from across the authorities;
- Pooling of existing budgets creates enhanced buying/bargaining power;
- Widening of existing partnerships and development of new ones;
- Residents have access to a wider range of resources; and
- There are wider strategic planning possibilities

Although geography is not a pre-requirement for such an arrangement, almost all examples are from authorities which neighbour each other (Essex for some time ran Slough Libraries but this was rather an example of outsourcing than joint management). That suggests four potential partners for yourselves:

- Bromley – unlikely to be interested in such an arrangement given their current deal with GLL
- Lambeth – probably unlikely to be interested, undergoing considerable change internally, but the existing partnership around Upper Norwood Library might open doors to a conversation
- Merton – have slimmed down their core team (relying instead on volunteers) to such an extent that they would see few options for savings in such an arrangement
- Sutton – could possibly be interested and would be worth a conversation should you decide to explore this option further

Another consideration could be closing libraries located close together but across borough boundaries. Whilst there is a risk of legal challenge to such an approach, if it could be demonstrated that there was a considerable overlap in catchment areas, this risk would be minimal.

6.4 Commissioning of others

In this model the authority enters into an arrangement with another party (or several) to deliver a library service, usually on a branch by branch basis and almost always to a community organisation (or sometimes in a large county, to a parish council). The authority retains a degree of control through a contract or specification which determines certain service offers that must be delivered, in return for some support (financial and/or otherwise). These offers are likely to include a minimum number of hours per week when the library must be open, provision of an appropriate range of lending materials, delivery of specific programmes such as the Summer Reading Challenge. The support offered in return could be a financial contribution towards the running of the library (e.g. building at peppercorn rent, one member of staff, books or other materials). Alternatively (or in

addition) the authority could provide training for volunteers, access to online materials, input to programmes, facilitation of joint working across community-led branches etc.

By providing an appropriate level of support, and by stipulating in the contract an appropriate minimum level of service, the council can ensure that the branch can be considered part of its statutory provision of libraries.

In London, the approach taken by Lewisham illustrates a 'mixed economy' of provision which has had some success. A small number of libraries (currently three) are run by the council as hubs, with the remainder outsourced to partners. These partners include local community groups and charities but also an SME. This extract from a council report shows the type of partnership entered into:

The proposal is to retain the library as the core of the building, but to develop additional services that would make the organisation sustainable in the longer term. These services may include a café, developing existing office spaces into work spaces for renting out to local business people, afternoon music recitals with cream teas from the café and evening jazz and music recitals with a bar, digital inclusion to include IT for children and the older people, a Kumon educational centre, childcare and children's activities, film shows, healthy eating cookery clubs and an arts, heritage and history centre. The proposed activities would complement and enhance the community library whilst offering opportunity for income generation. One of the strengths of this proposal is that it has grown from two of the key local community organisations. The proposed activities have come from the interests and needs of their memberships who are all local residents. The continued involvement of local residents is an integral part of the project.⁶

Similarly, an appeal for a potential partner for another community library on their website demonstrates the level of support the council is contributing:

In return for ensuring that Manor House remains open to the public and working with our library service to promote and support the library presence in the building, you will be able to use the rest of the building to deliver activities that have social value, offer community benefits, and support the core drivers of your business.

We will not be seeking any rental income in return for your support for the community library and in recognition of the community benefits you will provide. The running costs of the building will be shared, with you taking on the utilities, rates and day-to-day maintenance and the Council retaining responsibility for the structural repairs.⁷

It seems possible that a similar model could work well for some of your libraries.

6.5 Divesting

In this model the local authority effectively steps away from any involvement in the provision of services in some library branches. These libraries no longer count as part of the

⁶ LB Lewisham Council Report, Libraries Savings Programme Update, July 2016

⁷ <https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/libraries/Pages/Community-Libraries-2015.aspx>

authority's statutory provision of services, and the authority has no control over any aspect of the service offer – opening hours, range of materials, activities etc. Effectively, the authority has closed a library and another, run by others, has opened in its place.

Where libraries have been handed over to community groups or similar to run, with no local authority support, this has usually been as a result of the council making a decision to close the facility and that decision being strongly contested by residents. In other words, this is rarely a direct decision taken by a council but is rather the outcome of a different decision, i.e. to close a library.

The advantages are that residents are given the opportunity to provide something in the place of a much-loved (but often under-used) service, and that if the process is managed sensitively good relations are maintained with the community. There are examples in several places of communities making a success of such a library, e.g. Primrose Hill Community Library in Camden. This was set up after Camden made a decision to close Chalk Farm Library (and several others in the borough) in 2012. Community groups came together to raise funding and as volunteers and were able to reopen the library. The building is open four days a week as a lending library and on the other three days is available for commercial hire and community events. The council did provide a one-off grant to get them started but no ongoing support.

The disadvantages include the fact that these libraries can't be included as part of the authority's statutory provision and therefore do not protect the authority from challenge as to whether it is meeting these statutory requirements. A poorly-run or unsuccessful community library may reflect badly on the council even though it has no direct involvement in its provision. The authority has no say in what services are provided, or how.

Closure is also an option in this category. Many libraries across the country have been closed in recent years, largely because of budget cuts. Where a decision is made to close a library, it will need to be based on a range of considerations, including: whether the Council is still fulfilling its statutory duty; how the needs of the area it serves are being met; and a proper consideration of the options. In judging whether a Council's decision is reasonable, the courts will take into account the authority's financial position. The legal considerations are set out in Section 2.

Alternative governance models				
Model	Process & governance	Potential benefits for Croydon	Potential risks for Croydon	Examples
Outsourcing to an external commercial or not-for-profit provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authority produces a specification and invites tenders; Option to drive down costs in advance of outsourcing (although that can make the prospect less attractive); Managed through a contract and an agreed fee, ranges from 5 to 15 years with break clauses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to invest in libraries and administer them more efficiently through the company's existing infrastructure, thereby reducing back office and support costs; GLL (main provider in the market) claim to be more cost-effective than a commercial company (because they don't have to pay shareholders) and more efficient than in-house provision, because of economies of scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liable for business rates; Difficult to ring-fence surplus for reinvestment; May not be enough in-house resource to manage contract effectively; Potential difficulty in varying contract scope if further savings are to be delivered; Company has to make further service changes to reduce costs: service quality suffers; Sustainability if not profitable; Time consuming and expensive to set up; Recent history with Carillion may make politically unacceptable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bromley, Dudley, Greenwich, Lincolnshire and Wandsworth (all run by GLL); Torbay (run by Libraries Unlimited, the Devon mutual)

<p>Transfer to mutual or charitable trust</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authority produces a specification and invites tenders; Board of trustees formed, with reps from authority, community etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saving on 80% of business rates plus VAT exemption; Removal from constraints of local authority; Access to funding from which local authorities are excluded; Can buy in support services that may be cheaper, such as HR, payroll 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of political control; Potential sustainability issues; Time consuming and expensive to set up; Recent legislation precludes automatic transfer for existing leadership – have to tender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suffolk Libraries, an Industrial and Provident Society; York Explore (libraries and archives); Inspire Nottinghamshire (libraries, archives, arts and learning); Libraries Unlimited in Devon
<p>Joint management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two or more authorities agree to combine their libraries under a single management team, with shared back-office support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economies of scale: one management team, one team of specialists, one frontline staffing team; Enables strategic planning on a wider geographical scale; Increased buying and negotiating power Larger entity has a higher profile and enhanced ability to attract grant funding; More potential for rationalisation/relocation/co 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political differences and different priorities can cause friction; What if one partner decides to pull out? Political changes and different priorities between the authorities could jeopardise the arrangement; Larger partners could be seen as dominant; If not co-terminus, management may be seen as distant; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triborough Libraries; Bromley/Bexley (now disbanded); Bournemouth and Poole

		<p>-location of library service points;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables review and refinement of internal processes • Pooling of existing budgets, enhanced buying/bargaining power; • Widening of existing partnerships; • Residents have access to a wider range of resources; • Wider strategic planning possibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could take longer to get political and senior officer agreement; • More complex governance arrangements • Complex financial model necessary if levels of investment are different across authorities 	
Commissioning of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority contracts another party (or several) to deliver a library service, usually on a branch by branch basis; • Service specification determines certain delivery requirements; • Authority provides a degree of support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can ensure that the branch can be considered part of statutory provision of libraries by providing an appropriate level of support, and by stipulating in the contract an appropriate minimum level of service, the council; • Savings in staffing costs and sometimes on wider budgets; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of loss of control over services offered (beyond those stipulated in the contract); • Staffing savings partly offset by need to provide support; • Challenges from staff who see their roles being passed to others; • Volunteers may represent only some 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lewisham; • Bexley; • Leicestershire; • Bath and North East Somerset; • Bradford; • Buckinghamshire; • Doncaster; • North Yorkshire;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can strengthen relationships with community groups; • Volunteers are usually from the local community and therefore close to users; • Already have successful example at Upper Norwood 	sections of the community, leaving others feeling isolated from the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheffield; • Staffordshire; • and many others
Divest to others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority effectively closes a library but may provide initial support to enable another group to take it over; • No on-going support provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savings on all costs associated with that library; • May help smooth relationships with local communities impacted by library closures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries can't be included as part of statutory provision and therefore do not protect from challenge as to whether authority is meeting these statutory requirements; • A poorly-run or unsuccessful community library may reflect badly on the council even though it has no direct involvement in its provision; • Authority has no say in what services are provided, or how 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primrose Hill Community Library, LB Camden; • Preston Library, LB Brent; • Low Fell and four others in Gateshead; • North Harrow Community Library

6.6 Consortium working

Many local authorities are working in consortia for the procurement of services such as Library Management Systems (LMS). Some authorities are also working to better exploit their stock across local authority boundaries.

The London Libraries Consortium (LLC)

The LLC is a consortium of local authorities who share their library management system (LMS) and supporting technical solutions such as customer facing web applications. It is the country's largest library management consortium and consists of 16 London boroughs and one outer London borough:

- Barking and Dagenham
- Bexley
- Brent
- Enfield
- Ealing
- Hackney
- Harrow
- Havering
- Kingston
- Lewisham
- Luton
- Merton
- Newham
- Redbridge
- Sutton
- Tower Hamlets
- Waltham Forest

The London Borough of Havering is the current lead authority for the consortium and they manage the contract framework. Members call off from this framework to be part of the consortium. Whilst for many elements, individual authorities can choose whether or not to procure through the framework, procurement of the library management system in use in the LLC is mandatory.

A new library management solution is currently being procured by the London Borough of Sutton with central government support from the Libraries Taskforce. The new contact arrangements are expected to be in place by spring 2019.

The consortium is keen to expand and to act as a key part of one of the recommendations of 'Libraries Deliver' report to deliver a single digital platform across England's public libraries. The consortium currently reports membership interest from an additional 10 boroughs including a couple of neighbouring counties.

The governance of the LLC comprises of the following boards:

- Strategy Group – Responsible for taking forward the strategic leadership of the LLC and comprises of 6 elected posts who are library leads from member authorities. An additional position on the Strategy Group is in place for the lead contracting authority.
- Board – This group has a representative from every member authority who is normally the lead officer responsible for libraries. The group approves all strategic and expenditure recommendations.
- User Group – This group includes a technical lead from all authorities who meet regularly with the system provider to ensure that technical improvements and developments are made. They are also responsible for overseeing the data management of the consortium.

Axiell is currently LLC's technology partner and provides the library management system, Open Galaxy and customer facing interactions through its Arena portal. The system is managed by Axiell on a single server, connecting to all LLC libraries.

Benefits

For customers the LLC offers access to over 150 libraries in the consortium and 6 million items of stock all through one library card. Each year, over 200,000 users take advantage of the chance to borrow stock from another borough. This greatly reduces the need for inter-library loans outside the consortium, and since no charges are made for cross authority loans within the LLC, also reduces costs. The internal management of these loans is also considerably simpler than the management of inter library loans and reduces pressure on stock teams and branch staff.

Most LLC members have come together to procure a joint transport system. Provided by an external contractor, this service collects and delivers stock from all branches of participating authorities on a daily basis and carries both inter- and intra-authority stock. This means that if you were to join the LLC and participate in the joint transport, you would be able to dispense with your own courier with the possibility of making savings.

For member authorities, the consortium enables them to do more with less –providing access to facilities that they could not afford on their own; to the expertise and resources of all its members; and to significant savings each year.

At the core of the consortium is the library management system but members also procure contracts jointly for stock, transport and other e-resources. Members report making significant savings as a result of being part of the consortium including:

- Over £8.2m of cumulative savings on the library management system since the consortium was formed in 2004.
- £2.1m of cumulative savings over the last 3 years on other contracts, such as those for book stock and transport.
- £60,000 saved on training and development over the last 3 years.
- Ability to reduce the transport fleet and make efficiencies in the couriering of items both at a regional and borough level.

Alternative options - join another LMS framework

The LLC is not the only library management system consortium in England. In the south east there is another prominent consortium called SELMS who use the Spydus library management system. Geographically the membership of SELMS extends further but membership is lower, and the consortium only procures the LMS together. There are similar consortiums in other parts of the country and the potential that some of these, including the LLC, may merge in the future.

The challenge with any consortium is that the buying power of each consortium means that there is fierce competition amongst a small number of LMS providers and this could lead to a reduction in choice in the future.

Alternative options - procure a stand-alone LMS

It is a major undertaking to change from one library management system to another and current procurement law means that the process is lengthy and expensive. However, most local authorities have procurement regulation that mean that the value of the current contract must be assessed regularly, and this may involve going through a tendering process. Joining the LLC may well involve a change to your current library management system (the LLC are currently procuring a new system and the result of this is not yet public knowledge). If you would in any case have to go through a tendering exercise in the next few years, then consideration of membership of the LLC as an alternative to procurement would be logical.

Some authorities still resort to procuring a stand-alone LMS provider as they are concerned about the sharing of stock with other authorities and feel that can procure a solution more quickly and control contract arrangements more efficiently. Whilst there are benefits in this option the reduced buying power means that some LMS providers may not bid and some contractors may favour higher spend customers and apply developments more to them. This option is also likely to be the least cost effective.

If you do not have to re-procure a library management system for some time, then the benefits conferred by the LLC would have to be carefully weighed against the cost and effort of the change. In this case you may be better advised to wait until you have made other changes to the library service before embarking on such a route; not least because the costs could vary considerably between different options for library provision.

7. Review of existing assets

We undertook a review of the existing libraries and the council's community based corporate estate.

There are thirteen libraries in Croydon. Croydon Central Library accounts for more than half of the visits for the entire service and is the only library which can be said to have a borough wide function, although it also serves as a local library for the area in which it is located. Thornton Heath and Selsdon libraries also attract customers from a wider area than the immediate locality. The other libraries generally serve a more local population. In addition, the library at Upper Norwood is funded partially by Croydon and Lambeth councils, and is operated by a local trust. There have been no closures of libraries in Croydon in the last twenty years.

The Croydon Local Plan⁸ states 'Croydon is a borough made up of a series of varied and distinctive neighbourhoods and areas, which are referred to here as 'Places'', and identifies the sixteen Places within the borough. There are libraries in each of these Places with the exception of Waddon and South Croydon, which are well served by Croydon Central library. South Norwood library is scheduled to be relocated to a site 200m further west in 2019. However, whilst some libraries are located at the heart of the community which they serve, others are less well situated. This presents opportunities for possible relocation of some libraries.

The distribution of libraries broadly reflects the pattern of settlement so that libraries are closer together in the north of the borough, which is more densely populated. With the exception of New Addington library, no library in Croydon is more than 1.7 miles from another branch⁹. The great majority of Croydon residents live within one mile of their nearest library. However, residents in parts of South Croydon, Croham Hurst, Addington Village live more than one mile from a library, whilst the southern parts of Kenley and Hamsey Green are significantly more than one mile from a library.

The population of the borough is expected to grow over the next decades and the council is seeking to deliver 32,890 new homes in the period 2016 – 2036. The highest growth will be in central Croydon and a significant amount of development has already taken place there. Other areas of high growth are predicted to be the Broad Green, Waddon and Purley areas¹⁰. Given the enormous changes to technology and therefore society in the last two decades, it is wise to be cautious in predicting what future demand from customers will be in the more distant future. However, population growth must be a factor in determining the eventual network of libraries in Croydon.

The majority of Croydon's libraries are in purpose-built buildings, mostly dating from before the Second World War. There is no strong relationship between the size of the library building and the usage of that library, and a number of the libraries would benefit from a change in layout. Four libraries – Croydon Central, Ashburton, Selsdon and New Addington –

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https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/articles/downloads/Croydon%20Local%20Plan%202018_0.pdf

⁹ New Addington library is 3.1 miles from the next nearest library which is Shirley

¹⁰ Croydon Local Plan

are co-located with other council services, a school and a supermarket. This means that there are opportunities to use library buildings more fully, perhaps in partnership with other organisations, and where there is sufficient demand, to extend or replace existing buildings.

As public transport links are good within the borough, nearly all areas are within thirty minute's travel time by public transport to an existing library and most are within twenty minutes. There are three pockets within the borough that are more than one mile from a library - South Croydon, Kenley and Addington Village.

We examined each of Croydon's libraries and evaluated their potential against three criteria:

1. Is the library well located to serve its community, or would it benefit from a new location? This criterion is judged in the context of proximity to a district centre, other local community provision and transportation access.
2. Are the current facilities at the library appropriate to meet the needs of the local community, or would the library need additional space or facilities? Conversely, is there an over-provision of space at the library? What immediate or long term improvements could be made to the library to facilitate better customer experience, more economical working and better use of space?
3. Are there opportunities for the library to work with other statutory, third sector or business organisations, either through the sharing of space or the release of some space?

The findings of this evaluation are summarised below, including recommendations for the exploration of some opportunities to relocate where the current location is not ideal:

Ashburton

The library is located near the intersection of two main roads, and at a short distance from the Lower Addiscombe Road shopping area. 26% of households in Ashburton ward had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is free parking within a short distance of the library. Public transport is good with easy access to both tram and bus routes. We believe it is of an appropriate size for its community. A large (currently unused) room at the rear of the library could provide an opportunity to offer additional services in partnership (through space sharing or colocation). Minor improvements to the building are required.

Bradmore Green

The library is located at a short distance from Marlpit Lane, but at some distance from the local rank of shops. Only 16% of households in Coulsdon East ward had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is free parking around the library with some reserved parking. There is a good bus service from Coulsdon. A wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport. However, much of this area is also accessible to Coulsdon library with similar journey times, the exception being the Old Coulsdon area. We believe that the current building is of appropriate size for the community it serves. Minor building improvements are required. There is little opportunity for space sharing or colocation within the current

building. The site has a large footprint but may not be in the best location for any extension or redevelopment.

Broad Green

The library is located on Canterbury Road, at some distance from major roads or shops. 43% of households in Broad Green and West Thornton wards had no access to a vehicle in 2011. Due to good bus services in Mitcham Road and Purley Way, the library is relatively accessible by public transport. A wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport. There is limited parking around the library, and this is of particular concern for customers with mobility issues. The single space design of the building is not suitable for the many activities and events provided at the library, which would be better served if there were separate meeting rooms.

Moving the library from its present location would risk isolating the current users, many of whom live very close to the current location. It could be possible to replace it on the current site, giving a potential to integrate with a community and children's centre and to provide commercial/community space and staff touchdown points.

Coulsdon

The library is well located in the shopping district of Coulsdon. Only 13% of households in Coulsdon West ward had no access to a vehicle in 2011, the lowest for any library catchment area. There is parking around the library, but it is subject to restrictions. The library is well served by public transport. A wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport. It might be possible to relocate, and this is worth considering if significant benefits would arise from colocation. Minor improvements are required to the current building, and there is the opportunity to extend it to facilitate colocation or staff touchdown points. It may also be feasible to redevelop the site to incorporate a modern library facility and housing, given the prime high street location.

Croydon Central

The library is well located close to the central shopping area of Croydon. 42% of households in Fairfield, Wadham, Croham and Addiscombe wards had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is plenty of parking around the library, but it is subject to restrictions and charges. The library is exceptionally well served by public transport by trams, buses and trains. Much of the borough is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport.

The internal arrangement would benefit from review – there is an opportunity to use less space but more efficiently whilst retaining study space and public computers. We understand that integration with the museum and gallery is being considered.

New Addington

The library is located at the end of the New Addington shopping precinct. 39% of households in New Addington and Fieldway wards had no access to a vehicle in 2011, lower than other deprived areas presumably due to relatively poor transport links. There is parking around the library, but it is subject to restrictions. New Addington is connected to

Croydon by tram and there are frequent buses but public transport times are greater than for other libraries and only the immediate vicinity and some of the Selsdon area can be reached in 30 minutes. Minor improvements to the current building are required. There is an opportunity to work more closely with CALAT in the current location. It may be possible to relocate this library and it would be worth doing so if significant benefits could be derived from colocation. We understand there is a longer-term proposal being considered to locate the library in a purpose built centre collocated with health services and adult education, closer to the leisure centre.

Norbury

The library is located on the London Road about 650m south of the station, and with few shops in the immediate vicinity. 34% of households in Norbury ward had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is free parking around the library. The library is well served by public transport. A wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport.

Situating the library in the area closer to Norbury station would be likely to generate more footfall. However, we have not located an alternative site, so this may not be possible. In the current library building, there are opportunities to reconfigure the ground floor, and to release at least half the building space. If that were done there would be considerable opportunities for colocation and for staff touchdown points.

Purley

The library is located on Banstead Road at some distance from the district shopping area. The area is isolated from much of the shopping area and from the large Tesco superstore because the A23 effectively creates a large traffic island. Banstead Road in any case has few local facilities and the area feels isolated from the thriving town centre. 20% of households in Purley and Kenley wards had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is parking near the library, but some of it is charged for. The library is well served by public transport being on the A23 axis. A wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport.

There could be an opportunity to move elsewhere. Within the current building there is the opportunity to rearrange, releasing space for potential space sharing and colocation, and a need to make minor improvements to the building.

Sanderstead

The library is located on Sanderstead Hill in an area where there are almost no community facilities or shops. Only 12% of households in Sanderstead ward had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is abundant free parking near the library, and the library is well served by frequent buses. We recommend exploring opportunities to relocate elsewhere. Some improvement is required to the layout of the existing building. If this is done some space could be released, creating a possible opportunity for colocation.

Selsdon

The library is located as part of the Sainsburys supermarket complex and at a short distance from the shopping area. Only 14% of households in Selsdon and Heathfield wards had no

access to a vehicle in 2011. The adjacent supermarket car park is free for up to two hours. The library is well served by frequent buses. A wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport.

There is an opportunity for improvements to the layout. The limited space precludes colocation but there should be the opportunity to work better with partners in the building.

Shirley

The library is located at the end of the Shirley shopping area. 22% of households in Shirley ward had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is free parking within a short distance of the library. The library is well served by frequent buses along the A232. The library is not ideally located to serve the needs of more deprived communities locally. Given the age, layout and condition of the current building we recommend carrying out feasibility of redevelopment on the current site and/or relocation/colocation in order to achieve greater accessibility for more deprived communities in the local area. There are opportunities to consider relocation. If remaining in the current building there is an opportunity to rearrange and perhaps to release space.

South Norwood

This library is to be relocated in 2019 to a purpose-built facility. You will need to ensure a flexible, modern design aligned to community priorities to derive the most benefit from this relocation/development.

Thornton Heath

Thornton Heath library is located on Brigstock Road about 500m from the commercial centre of Thornton Heath. 39% of households in Thornton Heath, Bensham Manor and Upper Norwood wards had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is free parking within a short distance of the library, but it is often difficult to find a parking space. The area is well served by buses. The location is not ideal, but it is not feasible to relocate. We recommend investigating opportunities to extend or rearrange the current building, and for colocation.

7.1 Relocation

We identified seven opportunities to relocate libraries. These were either because the existing library is poorly located in relation to the community it serves or because a more beneficial service could be provided to customers, and a more efficient use of resources obtained, if libraries were co-located with other functions.

- **Bradmore Green** library is not well located and could be relocated to serve other communities better whilst still serving its existing users
- **Broad Green** library could be reconstructed on the same site, or if a suitable opportunity arose, could be relocated elsewhere. However this could move it away from the Broad Green estate, an area of significant deprivation

- **New Addington** library could be relocated and proposals are being considered to locate the library in a purpose built centre collocated with health and adult education, closer to the leisure centre.
- **Norbury** library could be moved to an area of higher footfall, but the benefits may be marginal.
- **Purley** library could be relocated elsewhere to increase footfall, move the library closer to other local amenities and reduce accessibility issues.
- **Sanderstead** library, which is poorly used and located, could be relocated elsewhere. We recommend investigating locations with good public transport connections to a wider spread of communities, especially those more than one mile from any existing library.
- **Shirley** library could be relocated elsewhere to serve additional communities better whilst still serving its existing users

In addition to this South Norwood library is already scheduled to move in 2019 closer to Norwood Junction station.

It should be noted that the options above are based on our assessment of the current location. We have not been commissioned to identify suitable alternative sites.

7.2 Better use of space

We also considered how the space in the existing libraries could be better used and whether other organisations could also be accommodated. Within the existing buildings we found

- A significant opportunity at Norbury library within the existing building;
- Opportunities at Coulsdon and Thornton Heath libraries especially if the buildings were extended;
- Some opportunity in the existing Purley library;
- Limited opportunities in some other libraries; and
- A significant opportunity to redesign Croydon central library as part of the wider Clocktower complex, ensuring closer integration with the museum and gallery, and possibly CALAT.

8. What works elsewhere

In this section, we look at what happens in other authorities and cite some examples of good practise that we think are particularly pertinent to Croydon. The full benchmarking and best practise reports are appended – see Appendices 1 and 3.

8.1 Libraries at the centre of culture

Get It Loud in Libraries programmes high quality, live music events in libraries in towns and cities throughout the UK. The organisers have consistently demonstrated a talent for identifying new and emerging artists on the cusp of breaking through to the mainstream. The programme is delivered in geographic areas that are generally outside the major metropolitan centres, with low live music provision – especially for young people and families. Incorporated into the work is the GILIL Academy which supports young people’s participation and talent development in creative and cultural activities. Through doing this, the programme seeks to challenge and change perceptions of libraries and to engage new audiences, particularly young people in using these unique and valuable community assets.

The back area of **Wimbledon Library**, has been transformed into a flexible space to be used for both the library and as a performance and exhibition space, now known as **Merton Arts Space**. Opportunities for professional artists will be created and residents will be able to participate in a range of arts activities. This is a newly developed, fully flexible space to be used for both library and arts activities, with an initial 12-month arts programme serving as a template for the future of the space to increase participation in both library and arts activities across the borough. Below is a sample of the range of listed events:

- Peter Morley, illustration artist
- Club Soda workshops for adults with learning difficulties culminating in a multimedia cabaret
- Film screening: The event will feature an internationally renowned Persian-Canadian award-winning film maker Hussein Martin Fazeli
- Saudha (melody of love and shadows) (Bangla festival)
- Wimbledon Choral society and Wimbledon community chorus
- Merton Arts Trail
- Song writing Workshop
- Bookfest with Jessie Burton
- Festival of Adventurous Music
- Heroes of Fringe comedy festival
- Attic – Great Expectations
- Wimbledon College of Art – show of model boxes

8.2 Libraries as community/council hubs

Wigan Life Centre is a one-stop location for everything service-based that the local authority can offer the public. Services offered include Active Living, Biodiversity, Bereavement Services, Hospitality, Grounds Maintenance, Play, a Learning Centre, Arts and Sports Development.

North Ormesby Community Hub in Middlesbrough contains a library, children's centre, young people's services, dance studio and boxing gym. There are many rooms available to run community activities. In the heart of the building is a kitchen and open plan area, and the centre runs healthy eating courses. They also have an arrangement with a local bakery, and collect surplus produce at the end of each day that is made available free the following morning for local people to collect. The library used to stand alone in a small, fairly non-descript, building, but has become more of a destination for a wide range of local people.

Warwickshire Direct and Libraries deliver front-desk services for the local police service from a range of sites across the County as part of a wider network of one-stop-shop services. At the outset, a comprehensive manual was developed for staff and supported by training. Nowadays, a range of specific services are provided – ranging from crime and incident reporting to lost and found property support. The service was originally provided on a payment-per-contact basis, and subsequently a block service contract across the county.

8.3 Libraries delivering on health

Suffolk Libraries have partnered with Suffolk Family Carers and Suffolk Mind to create a new mental health service, IAGES (Information, Advice, Guidance and Emotional Support). The aim is to make information and support more visible and accessible, and help people better understand their wellbeing. The library service has appointed a coordinator for the Mental Health and Wellbeing Information Service whose role is to help provide information on local services and to promote events in the libraries and the community that can support mental health and wellbeing. The service also aims to support library staff, to ensure they are able to access useful and up-to-date information for customers.

Creative Alternatives is an award-winning arts and well-being programme for people living in **St Helens** experiencing stress, anxiety or depression. It offers a regular programme of visual arts and creative writing activities in libraries that can help to rebuild confidence and improve mental well-being. Whilst creativity is at the heart of what they do the emphasis is on enjoying yourself, meeting new people and having some time to relax. Once referred on to the Creative Alternatives programme you can take part in a weekly group for up to 12 weeks. Workshops are led by trained artists who will support and guide you through a creative process using a variety of artistic techniques, creating a relaxing space with friendly faces and a time that's just about you.

8.4 Libraries combatting social isolation

Suffolk Libraries host 'Chat and chill' sessions, aimed at women who are newly arrived in Britain and whose English is very limited. It's not a language-teaching course but rather a group to help women acclimatise to British culture, helping to equip them with everyday skills such as banking, making doctors' appointments, talking to their child's teacher, etc. A range of soft and hard skills are gently taught through a really informal programme.

Members are helped to integrate, practice their English, make friends and feel welcome. Many go on to learn further skills at spin-off sessions and take part in community activities. The scheme also helps the women make friends as it's an isolating and lonely thing to come to a new country.

Women who have been coming a long time, who are then quite confident, become ambassadors for this in communities and help spread the word to people who might need it or bring them along. For example, they help with keeping this group on schools' radars who often see mothers who need that support. The sessions are free and the library only asks for a few pence donation for the tea, coffee and biscuits on offer. As it is women only, it is seen as a safe space to discuss issues which worry the women, and proper signposting to appropriate services takes place.

8.5 Libraries and digital inclusion

In March 2016 **Leeds** became the only library authority in England to be honoured at the National Coding Awards, winning two 'Highly Commended' awards in recognition of events held as part of National Coding Week 2015. The service worked with Leeds CoderDojo to help design coding sessions for adults, and devised an activity called 'Hour of Code' (a 'fun hands-on introduction to computer programming'). Besides Code Clubs, they offer sessions on Raspberry Pi and Minecraft Pi, plus practical digital sessions which are more about using tools than creating them.

The library service is also taking a lead role within the city to deliver and coordinate digital literacy activities for people of all ages and abilities. Their ambition is for a 100% Digital Leeds where everyone in the city has the opportunity to access the internet and the chance to develop their digital skills and confidence.

8.6 Libraries as learning centres

Fab Lab, hosted by two libraries in Devon, is the UK's first public library-based digital Fabrication Laboratory. It houses 3D printers, CNC Routers, Raspberry Pi, 3D scanning machines, digital sewing machines, solder stations and lightboxes. An open-access community resource, it runs courses and workshops on how to use these machines, and aims to foster learning, helping library visitors become creators rather than just consumers.

Somerset Libraries have created a new space for individual and collaborative working and learning at Taunton Library, known as the Glass Box. The space utilises the former Tourist Information Centre and is a shop front within the library building – hence the name. The aim is to support business start-ups, digital making and skills development within a flexible space hosting a range of digital maker and business events from Code Club to digital skills training for businesses.

9. Overall strategy: what to do and how to get there

Below are our suggested strategic themes, you may want to change the wording, but we believe the sentiments are the right ones:



These have been developed from the research we have carried out so far:

- Looking at the strategic aims of the council;
- Reviewing the current library service and who uses it;
- Assessing need, in terms of the borough's demographics and what residents might need from a library service;
- Talking to public, staff and stakeholders; and
- Looking at what works elsewhere

Below are our suggestions for development and improvement in the context of these themes:

9.1 Library services based on community need

- Develop an evidence-based approach to stock and services provided. Use performance data, customer feedback and continuous engagement with Croydon communities to decide what stock and services you provide. Using evidence will enable you to tailor services to suit each library or community. One size does not fit all.
- Use the same evidence-based approach to digital stock.
- Use our findings from the needs assessment in section 4 to target specific groups of non-users. For example, what can you do to bring more Asian over-60s into Broad Green?
- The same approach applies to library buildings, permanent or temporary. Build in a flexible, opportunistic approach to future planning so that when new housing developments appear, or centres of communities change, libraries can be part of the equation.
- The library service, with its buildings out in the communities, could be a pilot project in the Council's new locality-based strategy. This is also an ideal opportunity to raise the profile of the service within the council and for people to understand what modern libraries are for.
- Find creative ways to have an ongoing dialogue with people in Croydon to ensure that the services meet their needs. Work with others to access those who don't currently use libraries and find out what might draw them in.
- Libraries are ideal places for digital enablement projects. People who have limited access to the internet can use the computers or the wifi and those with limited IT skills can be helped and trained.
- Volunteering in libraries, if managed well, can bring benefits to individuals and flexibility to the service. We talk about volunteering in more detail in section 1.

9.2 Libraries at the heart of culture in Croydon

- Croydon has a burgeoning and exciting cultural scene, but libraries currently sit very much on the edge of that. Libraries should be at the centre of that cultural offer, leading the way on literature and spoken word.
- Libraries are a perfect venue for small scale cultural events such as poetry readings, comedy and intimate musical or theatre performances.
- Artist, poets, musicians and writers can have residencies in libraries; helping to develop culture in Croydon, attract new audiences and change the public perception of libraries.

- Creativity has clear and proven benefits to health and wellbeing. Libraries can, for example, partner with mental health charities and attract funding for creative projects that benefit the community.
- Libraries can offer opportunities for people to create and exchange ideas, enabling co-creation, for example, Devon Library's Fab Lab creative making spaces. Some library services provide access to music studios which enables new business development such as Studio12 in Leeds Central Library.

9.3 Sustainable and relevant through partnership working

- Introduce the concept to staff and potential partners that libraries are places that can **host** events, workshops, courses, craft clubs and social get-togethers but not necessarily **deliver** them. Become enablers rather than deliverers. Leave the activities to the experts and let busy library staff concentrate on customer service and core development.
- Develop closer working/partnerships with council and other local services, such as adult social care, public health, employment services and charities.
- As the potential focal point of a community libraries are uniquely placed to co-locate with other community-based services, such as CALAT, planning, housing, benefits and environmental services. In addition, some could host surgeries for other public service agencies for example, health, the police and citizen's advice. Libraries can also serve as touch down spaces for council staff working out in the community.
- Make better use of library space, including considering hiring parts of buildings to partners and community groups, on an hourly rate, including when libraries are closed, or even permanently.
- Our stakeholder engagement told us that there was a keen appetite from certain services to work more closely with libraries, specifically:
 - CALAT
 - The Youth Engagement team
 - The 'Live Well' team
 - Gateway and Early Intervention
 - Employment team
- There is also potential for co-location with private sector partners such as post offices. Many libraries offer themselves as parcel pick up points; generating a small income whilst attracting more people into libraries.
- Consider joining a consortium for the operation and development of your library management system and procurement of stock. In section 6 we have included a case study of the London Libraries Consortium (LLC).

- A number of library authorities have introduced, or are piloting, systems such as Open + which allow access to a limited range of services by opening libraries, at least for part of the day, without staff. Customers are able to access library buildings (or specific areas) using smartcards. Borrowing and return of books can be done using self-service machines; computers and space can be used for study and community groups can have meetings without the need for library staff to be present. The machines can also provide access to a wider range of council services and support payments. A more cautious approach is to use the technology to extend or maintain opening hours. This model has been used in Denmark for some time as a national scheme but is relatively new to the UK.

10. Options for library provision

We recognise that councils are under increasing financial pressure and libraries are no different. In this report we present a range of options that could provide improvements to the current service at no extra cost, and/or address the need to reduce library service spend in the future if required. These include:

- Changes to staffing levels;
- Adjusting the hours of the libraries to suit current business levels;
- Making better use of volunteers across the service;
- Closing some libraries; and
- Relocating, redeveloping or reconfiguring libraries to better serve their communities

In section 6, we discussed a number of options for the governance of your library service. Whilst these may be an efficient means of delivering your library service, we recommend that you make any changes to your service whilst it is run in house and then consider changing the governance of the service. For this reason, governance is not included in the options for delivery. Similarly, although we have discussed a range of options for community libraries, we recommend that volunteer run libraries are established in house, and the arrangement reviewed in the future.

In creating options for the future delivery of the library service in Croydon, we have considered a number of key factors.

10.1 Serving the needs of the community

Any future model must be matched to the needs of local communities within Croydon, which we have demonstrated vary considerably from area to area. This means that different libraries should provide functions best suited to their local populations, although they should also provide an offer universal to the service. Whilst in Croydon, there is no correlation between deprivation and the use of libraries, at a national level this is the case, and libraries can be an important means to improving employment, health and educational attainment especially in deprived areas. The provision of appropriate activities and development of partnerships should be suited to the local area. Where there are deficiencies in library usage in an area, efforts should be made to redress these. Working aged people are under-represented amongst the service's current users. An extension of library hours into evenings would help to redress this imbalance. Section 3 contains a table that sets out suggestions for target audiences for individual libraries.

10.2 The Localisation agenda

Croydon council is committed to ensuring that residents are able to access the right services, at the right time and in the right place. With a focus on prevention and early intervention to support independence and resilience, the aim is to design place-based, integrated services that are delivered to help residents find the information and support they need within their local community and are tailored to local need.

Whilst the concept is still under development, libraries are well placed to support a locality-based approach. For example, libraries can contribute both to the delivery of local services in providing space for engagement and activities, and also as a ‘touchdown’ point for staff working in a particular locality and needing temporary desk space.

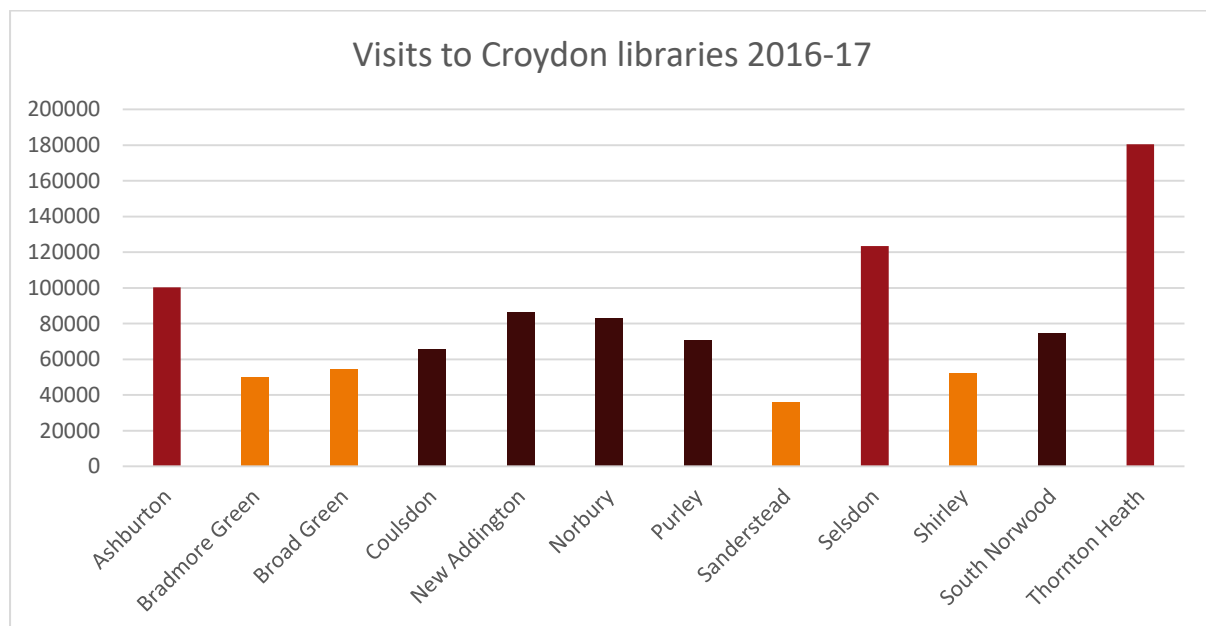
10.3 Future savings

Local government finances have been under great strain for several years and this is unlikely to change in the near future. Whilst some local authorities including Croydon have sought to limit the savings from the library service, it must be acknowledged that there may come a point where significant savings will have to be made.

We have therefore presented some options which could deliver savings if needed in the future, whilst preserving the key elements of the service, and we have been mindful of the need for economy in the development of all our options.

10.4 The hub and spoke model of delivery

There are considerable differences between the current use of branches. In the graph below the central library is omitted as it accounts for almost half of the visitors to the service and would distort the picture. Libraries with less than fifty thousand visits per year are shown in orange, those with between fifty and one hundred thousand visits in brown and those with more than one hundred thousand in red.



In developing all of our models, we have adopted a hub and spoke approach to the delivery of library services. The central library attracts people from across the borough and beyond. Selsdon and Thornton Heath libraries attract people from beyond their local area. Other branches are used mainly by people from the local area.

We therefore propose that a new approach should be adopted to library delivery in Croydon, ranking libraries as either area hubs, branch libraries or local libraries.

The main hub is the central library, serving the entire borough. This library will provide a comprehensive range of stock, including specialist collections. Study space and public computers will continue to be a key element of library provision. There is a full range of partnerships to deliver activities and events. Staffing levels will permit an extensive range of staff led activities. Croydon Central is within 30 minute's transport time for most of the borough.

The area hub libraries are Thornton Heath and Selsdon, serving the north and south of the borough respectively. Book stock will be a lower level than at the Central library. There is a full range of partnerships to deliver activities and events. Staffing levels will permit a range of staff led activities. Thornton Heath library is within 30 minutes travelling time of most of the north of the borough. Selsdon is easily accessible by public transport from much of the east of the borough including New Addington.

Branch libraries are Ashburton¹¹, Coulsdon, New Addington, Norbury, Purley and South Norwood libraries serving district centres within the borough. These are essential local libraries serving their communities but where partnership activities can take place.

Local libraries are Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Sanderstead and Shirley libraries, generally serving local areas within the borough¹². These will provide a basic library function and in some of our options are suitable for partial or full operation by volunteers. Broad Green is located in an area of significant deprivation, but more people living in the immediate area of the library use other libraries, especially Croydon Central.

Upper Norwood library is out of the scope of our work, but we should mention that the proportion of the population who are Croydon library members in Upper Norwood ward is by far the lowest in the borough. It is therefore very likely that people are using Upper Norwood library. Croydon Council contributes some of the costs to the Upper Norwood Library Trust, and in the light of this data, a degree of support is appropriate. For statistical purposes you could consider collecting data from the library trust, so that you have a more accurate picture of the use of the libraries that you fund.

10.5 Methodology

Your libraries at present

Your libraries are currently all staffed and open for between 33.5 and 53.5 hours a week, making a total of 567.5 hours a week across the borough.

Since the library service was taken in-house, you have done a considerable amount of work to establish what the current costs of delivering your service are, since you are having to make new arrangements with contractors and other parts of the council to replace those formerly provided by Carillion, as well as addressing anomalies in the pay structure and elsewhere. This means that exact costs have still not been finalised. The budget figures that

¹¹ We have matched the tier 1 and 2 libraries to those where you will have hub supervisors. However, the usage of Ashburton library is such that it could be considered a tier 2 library, and when we consider opening hours we have treated it as such

¹² Shirley does serve a district centre, albeit a small one, but the visitor levels are on a par with the other tier 4 libraries

we have used are therefore subject to some change, and any savings that we have projected must be approximations.

Overall staffing costs account for almost 2/3 of the libraries budget and library opening hours are dependent on staffing levels and policies – unless other options such as increased volunteering and use of technology are adopted. Therefore any options pertaining to the delivery of budget savings across the library service, by necessity must consider staffing levels and costs.

You are currently planning to make changes to the staffing model in library branches. At the time of writing this report, the full details of these changes were not available. However, it is understood that the annual cost of front-line staffing in your libraries, once these changes are complete, will be around £1.5M and this will equate to approx. 55.67 fte. These figures have therefore been used below for the purposes of comparison.

Premises costs for the libraries are composed of facilities management charges¹³, rent/PFI charges¹⁴, national non-domestic rates (NNDR)¹⁵ and utilities charges. These costs amount to £575K annually.

Each year, you pay £356K for provision of ICT to customers and staff, and for your library management system and self-service technology and £275K on library stock. Libraries generate £100K income.

We have used these figures as a baseline to compare to the estimated future costs of the front line service in each model.

We have also taken into account the fact that you will be reconfiguring the central library and relocating South Norwood library. These assumptions are built into all of our models.

We have taken into account the current performance of libraries, including visitor statistics and costs.

Currently all libraries are open for a similar number of hours and on either 5 or 6 days. However, opening patterns do not align to usage patterns. For example we have observed queues of customers waiting to access Central Library at opening time whilst some smaller libraries receive minimal visits throughout the middle of the day. The council has a range of options that can be considered, either in order to reduce library service expenditure should this be a future requirement or to realign current library resources and expenditure to better meet service demand.

Our calculations

There are three factors which can determine the staffing levels of a library. These are

¹³ The facilities management cost of the central library is not paid for by the library service and is excluded from these figures

¹⁴ A PFI charge of £58K is paid at Ashburton library and rent of £15K at New Addington. All the other libraries are freehold

¹⁵ The NNDR cost of the central library is not paid for by the library service and is excluded from these figures

- The regular workload of the library – transactional work, shelving and stock work and delivery of events;
- Ensuring the safe evacuation in the case of emergency; and
- Facilitating externally provided events, liaising with partners and volunteer supervision

We have taken into account annual leave, bank holidays and sickness when calculating future staffing levels. In some options, we have suggested staffing levels at smaller libraries which would require only one member of staff on duty at certain periods, although this could be supplemented by volunteers. We recommend that a risk analysis of each of the libraries considered be undertaken before introduction.

Using volunteers in libraries

Option 3 focuses on the use of volunteers in libraries to carry out front line duties. However, we recommend the recruitment of volunteers in all models as this will enhance the service that you are able to deliver.

In some options, we are proposing that some local libraries would be staffed by one person for some periods. We recommend that you carry out a risk assessment on loan working on a site by site basis. Where we have included this in an option, we have indicated the libraries to which it applies.

Throughout the options we present below, we recommend the use of volunteers to enhance services and in some cases, volunteers are essential to the successful delivery of the model.

Volunteering can be a rewarding activity; volunteers normally fall into three categories:

- People looking to expand their skill set and increase their employability;
- People who see volunteering as an opportunity to meet others; and
- People wishing to give something back to society

Volunteering in a library is often seen as a good route back into work, not least because libraries regularly recruit at an entry level and a knowledge of the service is a distinct advantage. Libraries are also a good place to engage with other people.

Having a mix of staff that reflect the demographics of the local community is desirable, and the same is true of volunteers. Although the service will depend on who actually offers to help, efforts to recruit from a range of age and ethnic groups will be beneficial.

Many organisations are seeking volunteers and the market is now very competitive. To move to a model reliant heavily on volunteers is a quantum shift for the library service and it will require robust policies and procedures supported by committed management to embed this change into the service. There are a number of steps that we recommend that you take, especially if considering volunteer-operated libraries.

- Ensure that you have a person in the service with responsibility for volunteer coordination, who will lead on the co-ordination and deployment of volunteers whilst working on wider structures. Supporting volunteers properly takes time and if you have a lot of volunteers, then you may need more than one post.
- Work closely with local volunteering agencies, especially Croydon Voluntary Action post with the view to developing a partnership arrangement under a partnership agreement. Work with them and use their expertise to refine policies and procedures for libraries and to support with marketing and recruitment and staff training.
- All staff need to take ownership for supporting volunteers and this can be further enhanced through revised job descriptions. First impressions are essential and if volunteers do not feel they are being adequately supported then it is likely that they will not remain committed to the organisation. It is important to embed supervisory skills for volunteers amongst staff so that they are adequately equipped to ensure smooth delivery.
- Embed these skills within job descriptions of all front line staff.
- Ensure that you have appropriate policies and procedures for ensuring that there is clear delineation of roles and expectations both of staff and volunteers. Policies and procedures will reflect the expectations and if necessary provide clear guidance on addressing issues. Whilst volunteers don't have a contract of employment, policies and procedures help reinforce expectations and also lay out the support that is available to them.
- Role descriptions are essential for ensuring that staff and volunteers are clear on what is expected. Beyond describing the duties of the role, they can also indicate where the placement will be, what skills are required and what the time commitment is. A signed agreement within the role description reinforced by robust policies and procedures can help to ensure suitability and reliability.
- Recruitment of volunteers is only the start – retention is also important. A good volunteering scheme will factor in induction processes and ongoing training and support, as well as some social activities. Whilst the economic contribution to the organisation is huge there also needs to be acknowledgement that in order to make it a success you need to invest in our volunteers, which includes giving them access to sufficient learning and development opportunities and recognition of achievement. This is particularly important for those wishing to improve their skills.
- A co-ordinated push on recruiting volunteers is likely to lead to significant interest in the new volunteer opportunities and is something that should be encouraged. Volunteers are likely to find out about volunteering opportunities through a variety of channels and some already mentioned about local publications and newsletters as good sources of information. You should work with your corporate communications team and partners to develop a marketing strategy.

- Develop a smooth application process for potential volunteers that can either be filled in online or in person. Agree steps with partners for the initial assessment of potential volunteers and interview arrangements

10.6 Options

Option 1: Make changes to staffing levels whilst maintaining the current library service

This option assumes that:

- all of your libraries remain in their current location;
- they maintain their current opening hours;
- self-service is installed at the remaining 3 branches;
- some changes are made to CSA levels;
- a cohort of ‘relief’ staff - who can work at any library - is introduced; and
- volunteers can supplement staff

One thing to bear in mind: given that you already run a lean service, any changes you make to staffing levels in libraries will leave relatively little scope for further reductions. This makes it critical that the structure has as much flexibility as possible. Libraries experience peaks and troughs, particularly for events and activities, and sickness and leave can have a major impact at branches with low staffing levels.

Given that the details of your current staffing reorganisation have not been finalised, we have assumed a current front line staff of 55.69 fte for the purpose of the options appraisal below.

Option 1 proposes a total of 51 FTE in branches (supervisors and CSAs) and a floating cohort of 3 FTE staff – 1 supervisor and 2 CSAs.

This option makes small savings in staffing, although it requires some capital investment and is assumed in all the other options.

Option 1: Make changes to staffing levels whilst maintaining the current library service			
Change in staffed hours	Change in FTEs	Net saving (£)	Capital costs (£)
0	-1.19	£21k	35k for self-issue technology in the remaining libraries

Option 1: Make changes to staffing levels whilst maintaining the current library service

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current service maintained • Easy to implement • Ensures flexibility across the service • Self-service installation brings greater efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not address imbalances in opening hours or service provision

Option 2: Change library opening hours to reflect usage patterns

The current pattern of opening hours does not reflect business levels or potential demand. This option redistributes the staffed opening hours of libraries across the service, whilst retaining an unstaffed presence at some smaller libraries outside those hours. Both models ensure a greater range of hours across the borough at libraries which are both most used and also within easy reach of the great majority of the population.

We should mention that currently you have no system for assessing the times that visitors enter and leave the library. You would benefit from this so that you can keep library hours under review and ensure that you are not open at unpopular times.

There are two variants with this option:

- Option 2A: Maintain the current level of overall hours and make no savings, but with some capital investment
- Option 2B: Reduce the current level of overall hours and make savings of £110k, but with some capital investment

Option 2A would make the following changes to weekly hours:

- Overall weekly library opening hours would increase by half an hour
- Increase weekly hours at Croydon Central, Thornton Heath, Selsdon and Ashburton libraries to 54 including one evening a week to 7pm. These libraries are open six days a week¹⁶
- Change weekly opening hours at Coulsdon, New Addington, Norbury, Purley and South Norwood libraries to 44. These libraries are open five days a week
- Change weekly opening hours at Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Sanderstead and Shirley libraries to 33. These libraries are open four days a week.
- Reductions in opening hours at the local libraries and at New Addington could be offset by the introduction of Open + technology.

¹⁶ Current opening hours are shown in Annex 3

- At New Addington, this may entail considerable alterations to the structure of the buildings so if you are intending to relocate the library at a later date (see option 5), then you may be advised to delay this change until the move. Closer cooperation with the CALAT and Access Croydon staff within the existing building could enable a greater spread of staffing.
- On the staffing model that we have suggested, there would be some periods where only one member of staff is on duty at Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Sanderstead, Shirley and South Norwood libraries.

Option 2B would make the following changes to weekly hours:

- Overall weekly library opening hours would decrease by 24 hours
- All libraries open at 9.30 am
- Otherwise the changes are as proposed in option 2A.

The changes in opening hours for each option are shown in the table below¹⁷

Library	Option 2A Change in weekly hours Budget neutral	Option 2B Change in weekly hours Save 110k
Ashburton	+9.5	+6.5
Bradmore Green	-11.5	-11.5
Broad Green	-2.5	-2.5
Coulsdon	-0.5	-3
Croydon Central	+0.5	-2.5
New Addington	-8.5	-11
Norbury	-0.5	-3
Purley	-0.5	-3
Sanderstead	-1.5	-1.5
Selsdon	+9.5	+6.5
Shirley	-12.5	-12.5

¹⁷ Current opening hours are shown in Annex 3

South Norwood	+9.5	+7
Thornton Heath	+9.5	+6.5
Total	0.5	-24

	Change in staffed hours	Change in FTEs	Net saving (£)	Capital costs (£)
Option 2A	+0.5	-0.44	2k	35k for self-issue technology in the remaining libraries Plus cost of Open + in 5 libraries
Option 2B	-24	-4.69	110k	35k for self-issue technology in the remaining libraries Plus cost of Open + in 5 libraries

Option 2: Change library opening hours to reflect usage patterns	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All libraries retained and staffed • Offer better matched to customer demand so that the busiest libraries have the greatest hours • Easy to implement • Increased hours at hub libraries and Ashburton • Increased late opening hours at three libraries • Reduction in opening hours at some libraries could be offset by Open + technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some libraries still poorly located • At local libraries, staffing levels would permit only the operation of a basic library service with few activities delivered by staff, although this could be supplemented by partnerships and volunteers • Some deprived areas would see reductions in opening hours – but at New Addington a reduction could be offset by new technology and better cross service working, the Shrublands area is within

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some deprived areas would see increases in opening hours – around Thornton Heath and South Norwood 	<p>reasonable travelling time of Ashburton library with enhanced hours and the Tollers Lane area is within reasonable travelling time of Coulsdon library</p>
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Option 3: Making extensive use of volunteers throughout the service

In all of our options, we recommend making more extensive use of volunteers to enhance or maintain the service. By concentrating the use of volunteers at the smaller branches, a greater increase in opening hours and staffing levels at larger branches can be achieved than by a reallocation of hours alone.

We have proposed two variants to this option, one which retains some staff in all libraries but makes extensive use of volunteers in the local libraries and is almost budget neutral, and one that sees the local libraries entirely volunteer run, although supported by core staff.

We have assumed that volunteers may be in the library without staff, and that they will be able to effect an emergency evacuation should the need arise.

In option 3A, the following changes are made:

- Croydon Central, Selsdon and Thornton Heath libraries are fully staffed and have opening hours of 61 per week across six days, including opening until 8pm on four weekdays. This will permit working people to use the libraries who may not currently be able to, and enable longer studying periods. Some targeted partnership activities can also be run in the evenings. Enhanced hours at Selsdon library will compensate for the slightly reduced hours at Sanderstead library.
- Ashburton and Coulsdon libraries are fully staffed and open for 54 hours per week across six days, including one evening to 7pm. Enhanced hours at these libraries will compensate for the loss of hours at Shirley and Bradmore Green respectively.
- New Addington, Norbury, Purley and South Norwood libraries are fully staffed and open for 44 hours per week across five days.
- Broad Green library is partially staffed so that a member of staff is on site for most of the hours that the library is open. The floating staff that we have suggested could fill the remaining gaps. The library is open for 36 hours a week across six days. This is at a higher level than the other tier 4 libraries, as it is often more difficult to recruit volunteers in areas of high deprivation.
- Bradmore Green, Sanderstead and Shirley libraries are partially staffed and open for 30 hours a week across five days.

This option sees a slight increase to the staffing budget and a considerable increase to the hours offered. This is because the number of ‘floating staff’ is increased to 4. There will also

need to be some capital investment, but the exact cost of this can only be determined once a detailed assessment of the alterations needed to accommodate Open + has been carried out.

Option 3B anticipates the need to make a higher degree of savings and sees some libraries fully run by volunteers.

- Croydon Central, Selsdon and Thornton Heath libraries are fully staffed and have opening hours of 61 per week across six days, including opening until 8pm on four weekdays.
- Ashburton, Coulsdon and New Addington libraries are fully staffed and open for 54 hours per week across six days, including one evening to 7pm.
- Norbury, Purley and South Norwood libraries are fully staffed and open for 45 hours per week across five days.
- Broad Green library is partially staffed. The library is open for 15 hours a week across five days. This is at a higher level of staffing than the other local libraries, as it is often more difficult to recruit volunteers in areas of high deprivation.
- Bradmore Green, Sanderstead and Shirley libraries are fully volunteer run. We have suggested that they be open for 15 hours a week across five days.

We have adopted a cautious approach to the number of hours that can be maintained in a volunteer run library due to the difficulty of attracting suitable numbers of volunteers. We may well be proved wrong. Open + technology can also increase the hours offered in these sites.

This option offers a budget saving of about £72k but a decrease in the overall hours of the service. The number of ‘floating staff’ is increased to 3, and there will also need to be some capital investment, but the exact cost of this can only be determined once a detailed assessment of the alterations needed to accommodate Open + has been carried out.

Library	Option 3A Some partially volunteer run libraries Small increase in cost of £4k	Option 3B Some fully volunteer run libraries Save 72k
Ashburton	+9.5	+9.5
Bradmore Green	-14.5	-29.5
Broad Green	+0.5	-20.5
Coulsdon	+9.5	+9.5

Croydon Central	+7.5	+7.5
New Addington	-8.5	+1.5
Norbury	-0.5	+0.5
Purley	-0.5	+0.5
Sanderstead	-4.5	-19.5
Selsdon	+16.5	+16.5
Shirley	-15.5	-30.5
South Norwood	+9.5	+0.5
Thornton Heath	+16.5	+16.5
Total	25.5	-37.5

	Change in staffed or volunteer supported hours	Change in FTEs	Net saving (£)	Capital costs (£)
Option 3A	+25.5	-0.19	Additional cost of £4k	35k for self-issue technology in the remaining libraries Plus the cost of Open + in 5 libs
Option 3B	-37.5	-3.19	72k	35k for self-issue technology in the remaining libraries Plus the cost of Open + in 5 libs

Option 3: Make extensive use of volunteers

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All libraries retained• Offer better matched to customer demand so that the busiest libraries have the greatest hours• Extended hours in the evening• Increased late hours at five libraries, including opening to 8pm at three libraries• Some deprived areas would see increases in opening hours – around Thornton Heath and South Norwood• Provides a service at a time appropriate for working people• Option 3B would generate £67K savings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Longer lead in time to forge links with local volunteering organisations and to train volunteers• Recruiting sufficient volunteers may be difficult and volunteers can be less reliable than paid staff• Potential for large reductions in hours at tier four libraries although this could be offset by Open + technology• Option 3A would cost £9.1K more than the current budget

Option 4A: Achieve savings through the closure of libraries

This option considers the closure of some libraries, either to deliver savings or to enhance the service provided in other libraries.

Library closures are often seen as a last resort when considerable savings have to be made, as closures can have a detrimental effect on residents and be liable to challenge. However this is not always the case. It is expensive to provide lots of buildings, many of which are poorly used, and the savings generated from closure of buildings can be reinvested into other libraries. We have referred to Brent council's closure of half its libraries in 2011; in this instance a major capital programme in the remaining libraries helped to generate additional customers and visitor levels have risen by almost 70%.

As Mr Justice Ouseley noted in the *Bailey v London Borough of Brent* in 2011:

“A comprehensive service cannot mean that every resident lives close to a library. This has never been the case. Comprehensive has therefore been taken to mean delivering a service that is accessible to all residents using reasonable means, including digital technologies”

Libraries should be in easy reach of all residents. The current distribution of libraries does not completely reflect the pattern of settlement. There is no current standard on how many libraries should be provided for a given number of residents, nor any standard on acceptable distances to the nearest library.

There are therefore opportunities to consider both the relocation of libraries and a change in the number of libraries provided. We suggest that the libraries considered for closure should be one or more of the local libraries, with Sanderstead as the least busy and most poorly located as the library selected if only one were to be closed.

In order to demonstrate the savings from the closure of each of those branches, we have shown their costs in the table below. To make this clear, we have assumed that staffing and hours at all other libraries remain the same.

Library	Estimated staff costs¹⁸ (£000s)	Premises costs (£000s)	ICT costs (£000s)	Stock spend (£000s)¹⁹	Income (£000s)	Total (£000s)
Bradmore Green	38	29	9	9	-2	82
Broad Green	40	36	14	12	-2	100
Sanderstead	30	28	10	12	-3	77
Shirley	44	33	10	14	-5	96

The strengths and weaknesses of closing a library without enhancing the rest of the service are shown in the table below

Option 4A: achieve savings by closing libraries	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximises savings • Capital receipt from sites of closed libraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of service to residents without enhancement elsewhere • Adverse public reaction • Possible challenge from DCMS and/or through Judicial Review • Some deprived areas left at greater distance from a library

Option 4B: close libraries and re-invest

We have also included an example of what could be done if libraries were closed and the savings were re-invested in the remaining libraries. Some capital investment would be

¹⁸ Since you have not yet decided how your CSAs and supervisors will be divided between the libraries, we have estimated the number of staff likely to be in each of these branches

¹⁹ We have allocated stock spend to libraries on the basis of the proportion of the total stock at that branch

required, although the exact amount cannot be determined without detailed planning for those libraries which are to have Open + installed.

In this example:

- Bradmore Green, Sanderstead and Shirley libraries are closed
- Ashburton, Coulsdon, Croydon Central, Selsdon and Thornton Heath libraries are fully staffed and have opening hours of 61 per week across six days, including opening until 8pm on four weekdays.
- New Addington is open for 50 hours a week over six days
- Norbury, Purley and South Norwood libraries are fully staffed and open for 42.5 hours per week across five days.
- Broad Green library is fully staffed and open for 33 hours a week across six days.
- Staffing levels at the hub libraries are enhanced beyond the need to cover additional hours thus enabling more customer support and staff led activities
- This option is almost budget neutral necessitating an increase in costs of £500.
- The capital receipt from the sites of the closed libraries could contribute to corporate savings or be used to enhance the remaining libraries

The effect on opening hours is shown below²⁰.

Library	Option 4B Close three libraries and enhance the service at the remainder
Ashburton	+16.5
Bradmore Green	Closed
Broad Green	-2.5
Coulsdon	+16.5
Croydon Central	+7.5
New Addington	-2.5
Norbury	-2.0

²⁰ Current opening hours are shown in Annex 3

Purley	-2.0
Sanderstead	Closed
Selsdon	+16.5
Shirley	Closed
South Norwood	+8.0
Thornton Heath	+16.5
Net change	-52.0

	Change in staffed or volunteer supported hours	Change in FTEs	Net saving (£)	Capital costs (£)
Option 4B	-52.0	+5	Saving of 4k	35k for self-issue technology in the remaining libraries Plus the cost of Open + in 1 lib

Option 4B: close libraries and invest	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concentrates services at busiest libraries Considerable uplift in service at five libraries More staff at Central, hub and branch libraries to provide more customer support and activities Capital receipt from sites of closed libraries Tollers lane area served by an enhanced Coulsdon library with good public transport links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some areas are further from a library, particularly Hamsey Green Adverse public reaction in affected areas Possible challenge from DCMS and/or through Judicial Review Some deprived areas left at greater distance from a library

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shrublands area served by an enhanced Ashburton library with reasonable public transport links | |
|--|--|

Option 5: Relocating, redeveloping and reconfiguring libraries to better serve their communities

This option proposes that some libraries be relocated in better positions to reach local communities better. These are by their nature longer term aspirations. Unlike the other options, this is more of a menu from which some or all of the proposals can be selected. Also, unlike other options, we have not been able to cost either the capital or revenue costs of such relocations as there are too many variables to factor in. Each of the libraries considered are discussed below.

Bradmore Green: The position of the library is not one that would be adopted if starting anew, as libraries benefit from proximity to local services. Bradmore Green is 1.2 miles from Coulsdon library. There could be an opportunity in the future to consider relocating the library further south east to better serve residents in the Old Coulsdon area. If this were to be done, then a location in the centre of Old Coulsdon would be preferable, being close to the deprived Tollers Lane area where residents are less likely to be able to travel some distance to a library. Any relocation should consider the possibility of colocation with another organisation. The new library would remain a local library and would be suitable for partial or total operation by volunteers.

Broad Green: Although Broad Green library is not ideally located, being away from a major road or shopping area, there is no single point which would be beneficial to the communities served. There are three options that could be considered: retain the library on the same site, thus benefitting from the new school and the existing community and children’s centres; relocate to the Mitcham Road which would be closer to the deprived Broad Green estate; or relocate to the London Road which would be nearer to Croydon University Hospital, one of the major employers in Croydon but further from the Broad Green estate.

Of these, staying on the same site is the option that we would recommend as the council already owns the freehold and given the very local nature of library usage at the branch. The council is already engaged in a regeneration project to improve the Canterbury Recreation Ground and the vicinity and we recommend that the library team work closely with the regeneration team in developing proposals. The new library would remain a local library and would be suitable for partial operation by volunteers.

If funding were available, a small Open + facility at the hospital would be beneficial to the 3,800 staff and the tens of thousands of patients.

Coulsdon library: Coulsdon library is already well located in the town centre. The plot upon which the library is built is considerably larger than the building, and there is potential to expand the current building or to redevelop onto this space. This could be used to facilitate co-location and to provide staff touchdown space as part of the localisation agenda.

Alternatively, there may be an opportunity for co-location with a future NHS development which has the potential for efficiencies through staff sharing.

New Addington library: Although the library is in a good location close to the shopping parade, there is an opportunity to improve on this. A Health and Wellbeing Centre is planned to be constructed next to the existing community centre and it is proposed that the library should also occupy this building. This would move the library further towards the shopping parade. Colocation with a health facility can be mutually beneficial, with patients able to use the library facilities whilst they wait and opportunities for shared reception and staff areas. We understand that construction is proposed to start in 2020 but we recommend early engagement with the health providers well before this. Based on current usage, the library would remain a branch library.

Norbury library: Whilst it would be possible to relocate the library, this is likely to deliver only marginal benefits and would probably not justify the investment. However, the current building is far too large for a district library and much of it is not used. If the current building is to be retained, then there are two options for colocation. Either the library would remain on the ground floor, while the first floor, with or without a lift, could be demised to another organisation, or a shared facility could be provided on the ground floor with some library functions and partner office space on the first floor. In the latter case, operating a split level library is normally more expensive in terms of staffing so this option should only be considered if there can be some form of shared staffing arrangement. Some released space could be considered as staff touchdown points. The upper floor could also be considered as a commercial letting opportunity at full market value in order to generate income to support the library service. The library would remain a branch library.

Purley library: The library is located on Banstead Road at some distance from the district shopping area. The area is isolated from much of the shopping area and from the large Tesco superstore because the A23 effectively creates a large traffic island. Banstead Road in any case has few local facilities and the area feels isolated from the thriving town centre. Visitor figures are lower than might be expected within the context of its area.

There may be opportunities to relocate closer to the shopping area or the Tesco superstore. The library would remain a branch library and if co-location with another organisation is achieved, for joint operation.

Sanderstead library: The location of Sanderstead library is poor, given the absence of other facilities likely to attract people in the immediate vicinity. That said, the library is easily accessible by bus and car from Hamsey Green – one of the areas of the borough most distant from a library - while Selsdon, though accessible by car, can only be reached by changing buses.

Two possible options for relocation to better provide for underserved communities are to the North West towards South Croydon or to the south east towards Hamsey Green. We have not identified any specific locations.

Although South Croydon is well connected to central Croydon and its library, the area is one of a few places in the borough which is more than a mile from a public library. Locating a

library here would mean that the entire Sanderstead ward would be within twenty minutes of the library by public transport, with the additional bonus of serving Kenley, another area more than one mile from a Croydon public library (although Kenley is geographically closer to Purley, public transport links are better to South Croydon). Co-location with another organisation could be a possibility.

Location at Hamsey Green might be considered as this area currently has few council facilities, although part of the area is outside the borough. If this were to happen, then almost the entire area of Sanderstead ward would be within a twenty minute radius by public transport. An Open + facility might suffice for this location.

Shirley library: The current library is not very well located and this is reflected in its usage. Ashburton library is also easily accessible by public transport from Wickham Road. There is an area of significant deprivation to the south of the current location which could be suitable for a local library to replace Shirley library; this could be suitable for complete or partial operation by volunteers.

Combining options

Whilst, to a degree Option 3 (using volunteers) builds on option 2 (changing opening hours), it is possible to combine elements of various options. We recommend the increased use of volunteers throughout, and relocated libraries may be provided in a number of management models.

10.7 Making decisions

We have presented several options here with varying degrees of change to the service delivered and cost. We have been clear that to close libraries without any other enhancement of the service (option 4A) is the option of last resort in order to generate savings as soon as possible, and that this approach carries the risk of challenge. The current financial position of the service suggests that this is not an option you need to consider at present.

Each of the other options presented has merits and it is our belief that option 5 would deliver the best service for the people of Croydon, but it is also likely to be the costliest and the one which will take most time to deliver. Option 5, if adopted, should therefore be a long term aspiration. If the council decides to make significant changes to the service provided to the public, it is vital that the views of both library users and other stakeholders should be taken into account when reaching that decision. Consultation should present a range of meaningful options for consideration – the council should not simply seek views on a single route forward.

Appendix 1: Analysis of library usage and need

Executive summary

We undertook an assessment of the performance of Croydon's library service as a whole when compared to outer London boroughs. From this we reached a number of conclusions:

Croydon libraries are comparatively well used when compared to outer London in general, with above average visits per capita. The pattern of usage is more akin to inner city areas, with less borrowing per customer but more PC usage, and other types of usage likely to be higher. The proportion of active borrowers²¹ in the population is low, but this is a phenomenon of the different pattern of usage.

More than half of your library use is at Croydon Central library. Three other libraries - Ashburton, Selsdon and Thornton Heath had more than one hundred thousand visits in 2017/18. At the other end of the scale, Sanderstead library only had thirty six thousand visits.

In 2017/18, Croydon spent less on its library service for a borough of its size than the majority of authorities in outer London. This is reflected in lower staffing levels, stock budgets and most other library costs. However, it is now apparent that the external contract for library service delivery was priced at well below the market rate, and may not have covered the direct costs of the service.

Nevertheless, there are low numbers of staff per resident and per visit. This is quite striking since not all of your libraries are equipped with self-issue technology, normally one of the principal enablers of a low staffed service. You make good use of volunteers, although some other London boroughs far exceed Croydon in this respect.

There may be scope to increase income from libraries, either through external funding or through customer generated income.

Overall, Croydon is a very efficient service when judged by cost per visit, which derives from an ability to attract customers despite low levels of investment, and from high staff productivity. However, it should be noted that there is likely to be a law of diminishing returns on library investment so that delivering a more basic library service can be obtained with relatively low costs, but that providing additional services are likely to cost more. This rule does not, however, apply if a greater range of services is provided through the means of partnership or co-location.

We have already referred to the statutory duty on local authorities to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. To comply with this duty, and also to best serve residents, the council should take into account the needs of the population, not only as a whole but also when considered on a localised basis.

Libraries are a universal service – that is they are provided for all who live, work or study in the area. However, the needs of different parts of the community, whether considered by demographic or socio-economic characteristics, vary with geography. In particular, people who are more economically disadvantaged may have high needs for the services that libraries provide – at a national level, whilst one third of all people use libraries, in the

²¹ Those library members who have borrowed an item of stock in the last year

poorest areas the figure is one half²². There are strong links between deprivation and poor health, and often with a lack of educational qualifications.

The majority of social deprivation in Croydon is in the north western part of the borough, although there are pockets elsewhere – the New Addington and Fieldway areas, the Shrublands estate and the Tollers Lane area of Old Coulsdon. In the north, some areas of Upper Norwood in particular, but also parts of Norbury, South Norwood, Addiscombe and Woodside had lower levels of deprivation.

Unlike the national picture, there is no exact correlation between library usage and deprivation within Croydon, but some of the wards with the highest deprivation are also those with the highest library use. Conversely, other areas with high deprivation such as South Norwood and Thornton Heath have low levels of library usage.

The highest levels of deprivation are in the localities of Broad Green, New Addington and South Norwood libraries, whilst the lowest is in Sanderstead library. This pattern is reflected when unemployment is considered, although there was also relatively high unemployment around Thornton Heath library. There was a higher incidence of people reporting poor or very poor health in the same areas. Although the distribution of people with no qualifications did not show the same characteristics, with far less variation between most areas, the New Addington area had a much greater concentration than anywhere else in the borough, with over one third of adults with no qualifications.

Again, in Croydon there is no correlation between library use and unemployment, lack of qualifications and poor health that can be demonstrated through a comparison with library data and demographic information. However, as we point out below, men are more likely to use libraries if they live in areas where unemployment and deprivation are high.

In the south of the borough, the number of households without access to a vehicle was lower than the north. Public transport is good throughout the borough with almost the whole population living within thirty minute's travel time of the central library. The density of routes is greater in the north, reflecting the density of the population.

As a universal service, libraries should not be targeted at only the deprived areas; people from all backgrounds should be able to enjoy libraries and some of the more affluent areas of the borough have high levels of library use.

We also analysed current patterns of library usage amongst different groups of people. We were able to analyse users by age, gender and their borrowing patterns. We were also able to provide an indicative analysis by ethnicity, although the data held by the library service is incomplete and it is possible that this skewed the results obtained. We were not able to analyse library users by the other protected characteristics of disability, maternity, marriage and civil partnership, religion, sexual orientation and gender reassignment because the library service does not collect data on those themes from its customers.

We have identified a number of key features of Croydon's library service:

²² ONS, Taking Part Quarter One Statistical Analysis 2014

Usage

- Just over 15% of Croydon's residents are active users²³ of the library service, a total of 59,204 people. A further 7,346 active users live outside the borough, and 617 did not provide full addresses;
- Over half of active users of the service do not borrow books; this is especially the case at Croydon Central, Thornton Heath and New Addington libraries;
- There is considerable variation between the proportions of the population using libraries in different parts of the borough:
 - Croydon Central has large catchment area so its high usage not so disproportionate to other branches especially when its role as a central library is taken in account;
 - Norbury and Coulsdon also serve their own areas well;
 - Broad Green library is not the library of choice even for people living in Broad Green ward, and serves its potential catchment area less well than any other branch;
 - Upper Norwood ward has a far lower proportion of library users than the rest of the borough; and
 - The wards with the highest number of library users are Fairfield, Selsdon and New Addington

Age

- In common with most public library services active users account for a greater proportion of the population at large when they are children; children also borrow proportionately more books than adults;
- The age group least likely to use libraries is the 15 -59 range. This group is also the least likely to borrow;
- The age profile of branches varies considerably as does the proportion of the local community using libraries;
 - A high proportion of the catchment area population in the 0 -14 age group are using Ashburton, Norbury, Selsdon and Coulsdon libraries;
 - For the 15 -59 age group, Croydon Central, Coulsdon, Norbury and Selsdon have high usage within the population;
 - For the 60+ age group, Selsdon, Croydon Central, Coulsdon and Shirley libraries have the best usage within the population;

²³ Library members who have borrowed stock or used a public computer in a library in the last year

- Wards that contain a library have better library usage by young people and the 60+ age group than wards that do not contain a library, but this is not the case with the working age group;
- People aged 60+ more likely to use a library if the ward that they live in has a higher proportion of people of that age group; and
- Older people from deprived areas are less likely to use a library

Gender

- In common with most public library services, more women than men use libraries as a whole, but less so at Croydon Central, New Addington, South Norwood and Thornton Heath libraries. Men are less likely to borrow than women;
- Men are more likely to use libraries if they live in areas where unemployment and deprivation are high

Ethnicity

Full data is not held by the library service on the ethnicity of its members and this makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions.

From the data that is held, it appears that:

- Asian and Black people are well represented in the service and that White British people are not;
- The high proportion of Asian people is due almost entirely to members at Broad Green library;
- The highest proportion of Black people in relation to the population is at New Addington, South Norwood, Thornton Heath and Croydon Central libraries;
- The proportion of library users who are White British is matched to the population at Bradmore Green and Coulsdon libraries, but they are particularly under-represented at Broad Green, Croydon Central, New Addington, South Norwood and Thornton Heath libraries;
- White people from a non-British or Irish background are generally well represented; and
- Black people are less likely to borrow but more likely to use a computer when using a library

These factors are crucial when developing a forward strategy for Croydon's libraries. The fact that individual branches are better used by one group of the community than others can be regarded as an opportunity to provide targeted services, but there is also an impetus to match services to local and borough wide need.

1. Introduction

We are working with you on a strategic review of Croydon's library service and the first stage is to find out what Croydon residents want from their libraries.

Every public service should be designed around the needs of its customers (and potential customers) and public libraries are no exception.

This needs assessment uses library data measured against local demographic and equalities information. We have been able to build up a picture of current library usage and productivity, local need and demand, and assess how well the current service meets the needs of Croydon's communities across the borough.

This will be the evidence that underpins our recommendations for the future of Croydon's libraries.

2. Background

Meeting residents' needs

Library services have statutory obligations, they need to ensure that they are providing a 'comprehensive and efficient' service that meets the needs of the population, according to the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. When significant changes to a library service are considered, it is essential that these are based on a clear understanding of local needs and that any negative impact on the service's ability to respond to those needs is minimised. Additionally, any new service strategy should similarly be underpinned by an evidence-based analysis of need.

A needs assessment also helps ensure compliance with the public-sector equality duty (PSED) set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The duty relates to groups who share any of the "protective characteristic" of age, sex, pregnancy and maternity, disability, race, marriage and civil partnership, religion or belief, sexual orientation. The Equality Act outlines that due regard involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people; and
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Understanding the impact of libraries on needs

There have been a number of reports and studies looking at the impact of libraries on various areas of need. A selection of these are summarised below.

Economic/financial impact

Literacy skills whether traditional or digital, underpin success in all walks of life, and libraries have a key role to play in ensuring that children in particular have the building-blocks for future academic and employment success. A longitudinal study by Nuffield College, Oxford²⁴, found that, of all the free-time activities teenagers do, reading is the only activity that appears to help them secure a good job.

A 2011 research report by the DFE, 'Investigating the role of language in children's early educational outcomes'²⁵, looked at the importance of early communication skills in preparing children for school, and concluded that 'The number of books available to the child, the frequency of visits to the library, parents teaching a range of activities and the number of toys available are all important predictors of the child's expressive vocabulary at 2 years.' Furthermore, creating a good communication environment through these activities is 'a more dominant predictor of early language than social background'.

This report drew on data from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC), 'Children of the Nineties', a study of a birth cohort initiated in the early 1990s, which provides one of the richest sources of data about the home background and early experiences of children as well as assessment of their abilities as they enter school. It recognises that, 'those children who owned more books and were taken to the library more frequently at age 2 achieved higher scores on the school assessment when entering primary school'.

In December 2011 the Department of Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) published a report, 'New Challenges, New Chances; the Further Education and Skills System Reform Plan: Building a World Class Skills System'²⁶. The objectives cited included focusing public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including those in rural areas and people on low incomes with low skills, with the intention to 'support access, and progression in its widest sense, for people who are disadvantaged and who are furthest from learning and therefore least likely to participate.' These audiences for learning are among those whom public libraries are arguably well-positioned to serve.

Social/community impact

To quote Public Library News²⁷:

'Life is unequal because prices and incomes are unequal. Public libraries partially came about because it was recognised that this inequality meant that some people who most needed books were being denied them. This was not an altruistic act on the part of the Victorians and later generations. Rather, it was an enlightened realisation that the country would benefit if all could have access to the immense educational, democratic and social welfare advantages of the book and the newspaper. Children of even the very poor could, with the help of their local public library, learn all that even the most privileged child could and thus go on to great

²⁴ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/foodanddrink/8435031/Reading-as-teenager-gets-you-a-better-job.html>

²⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/181549/DFE-RR134.pdf

²⁶ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmbis/557/55702.htm>

²⁷ <http://www.publiclibrariesnews.com/>

things, providing a meritocracy of great economic benefit to the nation. Similarly, working people would have a positive outlet for their energies and could learn what they needed to learn, regardless of their financial resources. They could then go on to better things, again to the nation's benefit. Finally, the elderly could have access to the universe of knowledge and fiction, which would be of immense benefit to their social welfare.'

A 2010 study by researchers at the University of Strathclyde, 'Public libraries as impartial spaces in a consumer society: possible, plausible, desirable?'²⁸, looked at the changing role of public libraries in an increasingly commercial world and concluded that 'the role of the public library is to provide a space promoting community knowledge, citizenship, personal growth, democratic access to information, building trust and challenging preconceived ideas' and that therefore they 'should strive to retain their impartiality'.

Personal/individual impact

Libraries have a positive impact on individuals' health and well-being. The Reading Agency's evaluation of the first year of the Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme found that:

- 91% of service users surveyed said the book they had read had been helpful; 79% said it had helped them understand more about their condition, 73% said it had helped them feel more confident about managing their symptoms, and 37% said that their symptoms had reduced or got better.
- All prescribers surveyed agreed the scheme had been helpful for patients. Nearly all said that the recommended reading had helped people feel more confident about managing their symptoms.
- Just under half of prescribers surveyed felt the scheme had saved them consultation time. Other identified benefits include greater patient insight and learning, help with recovery, treatment in line with the stepped care model, and reduction in the need to refer on for further care.

As well as the individual impact there is also of course a societal impact here, as keeping people healthy reduces pressure on the NHS and its funding. Public Health Devon carried out an evaluation of the scheme there²⁹ and concluded that 'working in partnership with the libraries is an effective delivery model to reaches all groups of the population including those in lower socioeconomic groups' and that 'there is reasonable evidence that the scheme reaches those where the prevalence of mental ill health is higher.'

Understanding where libraries make the difference

While most of the studies cited above, and many others, are focused on understanding the impact of public libraries, it is important to note that it can be difficult to isolate their impact from that of other institutions working to similar objectives. Studies that use qualitative

²⁸ <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/03074801011094831>

²⁹ Available to download from <https://readingagency.org.uk/adults/impact/research/reading-well-books-on-prescription-scheme-evidence-base.html>

evidence, that involve participants and that are carried out over a period of time tend all to be more successful in identifying library-specific benefits. It is also helpful to make use of proxy measures where appropriate; for example, if reading books has a beneficial impact on a teenager’s chances of employment success, as described above, and if public libraries lend books to teenagers and provide programmes that encourage them to read, which they do, we can conclude that public libraries make an important contribution to young people’s employability and life chances.

Studies which don’t show a causal link between public library activity and impacts, and which cannot demonstrate clear proxies, should be regarded with caution, but may not necessarily be wrong in their claims.

DCMS and ‘Libraries Deliver’



The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has produced a national strategy document for public libraries³⁰ that sets out seven outcomes for libraries to deliver against:

- cultural and creative enrichment;
- increased reading and literacy;

³⁰ Libraries Deliver DCMS 2016

- improved digital access and literacy;
- helping everyone achieve their full potential;
- healthier and happier lives;
- greater prosperity; and
- stronger, more resilient communities

This approach has enabled library services to easily communicate the benefits of partnership working to potential partners.

3. Croydon: library service strategic aims

The service aims to provide an effective, modern and relevant library service to the people of Croydon, contributing to the Council's key objectives. We have suggested the following strategic approach:



The assessment of needs which follows must be seen in the context of the above, which helps to identify those needs to which the library service is best placed to respond.

4. Croydon: needs assessment

What we did

In order to develop a full picture of those needs of Croydon communities to which the library service does and/or could provide a response, we reviewed all available data on the library service and on the authority as a whole, including:

- service-specific policies and plans;
- relevant council-wide reports;
- CIPFA returns;
- demographic information;
- active users v. total population per library catchment area and across the borough, as well as for the home library service; and
- usage patterns of each library (overall levels of use broken down by broad demographic groups)

Our analysis of financial and service data informed a 'value for money' assessment of the current library service which can be used to benchmark proposed future alternative models

Performance and financial summary: value for money appraisal

This section focuses on comparisons between Croydon Library Service (CLS) and other outer London library authorities. This gives an indication of the value for money which CLS provides.

Within individual library authorities there are often considerable variations between the performance and costs of individual library branches and services. Also, these are generally not reported through CIPFA but can be analysed through internal service data. The second part of this section therefore focuses on variations within CLS and gives an indication of how effective spending is within the service.

However, any comparisons either at a local or wider level can only be regarded as indicative. Different accounting regimes in different authorities can distort the picture and the exact nature and quality of the service provided is not always reflected in derived figures. The latest available CIPFA comparative data is also for 2016/17, and in a world where local government resources are shrinking quickly other authorities are likely to have changed during the last year. It is nonetheless possible to identify areas where performance and costs are considerably different from the average to determine relative value for money and to indicate areas for improvement.

To establish relative and performance value for money Croydon Library Service was compared with the eighteen other library authorities in outer London. There are considerable differences between outer London boroughs in terms of their demographic and socio-economic composition, and these factors will influence the exact nature of library

provision, but there are also many similarities – all boroughs have areas of deprivation and communities with a higher level of need. The London Borough of Haringey made no return to CIPFA in 2017 and therefore have been included in the analysis below. Croydon is compared with eighteen other authorities.

Since the return to CIPFA for 2016/17 was compiled by Carillion, the costs included only reflected Carillion’s actual expenditure, and not the cost to Croydon Council. To make a more accurate comparison to other authorities, financial data has been revised to include all expenditure on libraries by the council, with the exception of Upper Norwood Library.

It should be noted that Croydon Council also makes an annual grant towards the costs of the Upper Norwood Library Trust. Whilst this library is undoubtedly used by Croydon residents, it does not constitute part of the statutory provision of libraries within the borough, and neither the cost nor the any other data relating to that library have been included in this analysis.

<p>Expenditure by population</p>	<p>Croydon spends £9.11 per head of population on its library service. This is well below the outer London average of £13.09, and only Enfield spends less. This may be partially explained by different accounting methodologies in different boroughs, but the figure is supported by similarly low comparisons within the elements of the budget, for example staffing and stock.</p>
<p>Provision of libraries</p>	<p>Croydon has slightly fewer libraries per head of population than the outer London average, and is also below the average for the total number of weekly opening hours.</p>
<p>Usage by population</p>	<p>Active borrowers: Just under 9% of the population of the borough are ‘active borrowers’ – people who have borrowed from the library service within the last year³¹. This is below the average of 12.7% for outer London as a whole but must be considered in the context that many of Croydon’s customers are using the libraries for purposes other than to borrow stock.</p> <p>Visits: There are over 1.9 million individual annual visits to Croydon libraries by customers – an average of 5.02 per resident and slightly above the outer London average. The number of visits per hour the libraries are open is well above the average.</p>

³¹ The CIPFA figures use active borrowers, which is a rather less effective measure than active members, which is used elsewhere in this report. However, it is the only figure available for comparisons between boroughs.

	<p>Issues and PC usage: Your libraries have considerably fewer issues per head of population than the outer London average, but well above the average number of PC bookings, despite a lower number of PCs per head. Each visit results in only 0.42 issues, almost the lowest in outer London.</p> <p>This pattern is in line with many inner city areas and reflects the dense urban settlement of the north of Croydon. Although as a transactional service, it is possible to monitor accurately many aspects of library business, there are customers who are using libraries in a way that does not generate statistics – to study without using fixed computers, to browse, to read newspapers and simply to socialise. It is very likely, but not provable using CIPFA data, that your libraries have a high degree of this usage.</p>
<p>Provision of staff</p>	<p>Staffing is the single highest element of expenditure in any library service and it is vitally important that staffing costs are controlled to achieve value for money. The number of staff provided per head of population in Croydon is well below the average for outer London.</p> <p>The average cost per member of staff is close to the average for the comparator group. Staff costs per visitor are very low, indicating high levels of productivity, although as CLS has a low proportion of issues to visits, the staff cost per issue is higher. Similarly, staffing costs for each hour open are also low.</p>
<p>Staff spending and productivity</p>	<p>Croydon spends £2.3 million on staffing, well below the average in outer London in terms of spending per head of population, and the actual number of members of staff per head of population is about 80% of the outer London average. Staffing accounts for almost two thirds of the total budget.</p> <p>The pattern observed previously where Croydon performs better in relation to visits than to issues is reflected in staff productivity figures, so that the number of visits per member of staff is well above the average but the issues per member of staff is below the average.</p> <p>Volunteers in Croydon give slightly under the average per resident for outer London, but this figure is skewed by three</p>

	<p>boroughs with very high levels of volunteering, and Croydon is performing relatively well in this respect. The ratio of volunteer hours to paid members of staff is fourth highest in outer London.</p>
<p>Stock spending and efficiency</p>	<p>Croydon spent 65p per head of population on stock in 2016/17. This is less than 60% of the outer London average and only two other boroughs – Ealing and Harrow – spend less. However, the number of items bought during the year was only slightly below the outer London average, indicating that Croydon purchases a greater proportion of less expensive books. Similarly the time that it would take to replace the entire book stock at the current rate of purchase – known as stock turn – is 8.86 years. This is very close to the outer London average.</p> <p>It has been noted above that Croydon libraries are used for more activities other than stock issue when compared with other outer London authorities. However, the use of Croydon’s stock is close to the average, both in terms of issues per total stock held and also issues per new acquisition.</p>
<p>Other library costs</p>	<p>Other than staff and stock, library spending in the CIPFA report is divided into premises; computing; supplies, services and transport; third party; and support services.</p> <p>Premises costs are very low – rather less than half the outer London average cost per library. We have not yet seen your budget figures and it may be that this does not reflect the true situation; sometimes, part of the premises costs for a library service are borne by other departments within shared spaces.</p> <p>Computing costs – normally the provision of a library management system, self-issue technology and PC booking software – are very high in Croydon, at well over twice the outer London average. Again this may be explained by inter departmental allocation of costs but this area could merit further investigation.</p> <p>Supplies, services and transport costs a little below the average for outer London.</p> <p>Costs for both third party and support services were recorded as zero in Croydon’s CIPFA return. When the costs</p>

	<p>provided by Croydon Council are taken into account, these are still low as is to be expected in an outsourced service. There is some variation on how individual authorities report third party figures and in any case, this accounts for a small percentage of the overall library budget in outer London. In a library service which is delivered in-house, support service costs are an allocation of the costs of central services within the council – finance, HR, IT, legal etc. – but in a spun-out service, many of these are provided by the contractor as part of their contract, and usually as a management fee.</p>
<p>Revenue income</p>	<p>Revenue income for libraries can be divided into specific and general income. Specific income can be commissioned activity from other parts of the council, for example to provide adult education within the library service, specific grants or charges for providing services to other library authorities. Most authorities in outer London, including Croydon, do not receive any commissioned income to their library services, but the majority receive some grant money, and four provide services to another authority. Only Croydon and Waltham Forest receive no specific income.</p> <p>The remainder, general income, is largely derived from fees, fines and bookings in most services. Croydon’s non-corporate income in 2016/17 was £128,186, which is less than half the outer London average. This was the equivalent of a spend of 7p per customer visit, less than a third of the average, and amounted to only 3.55% of gross spending with only Brent, Ealing and Newham performing less well in outer London. By contrast, Merton and Enfield generated over 10% of gross spending through general income. There is clearly scope to increase income generation in Croydon libraries, both in terms of specific grants and general income.</p>
<p>Value for money</p>	<p>The ultimate determinate of the value that a library service delivers is the cost for each visit.</p> <p>Cost per visit in Croydon is £1.82 and is the second lowest in outer London. Of this, £1.19 is the staff cost per visit, again the second lowest.</p> <p>Although stock issue is less important in Croydon than in some other services and issues are comparatively lower, Croydon’s cost per issue is £4.32, still lower than the outer</p>

	London average of £4.21, and the staff cost per issue is £2.84, only slightly above the average of £2.47.
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Summary of comparison with other outer London boroughs

- Croydon spends less on its library service for a borough of its size than the majority of authorities in outer London. This is reflected in lower staffing levels, stock budgets and most other library costs.
- Yet the libraries are comparatively well used, with above average visits per capita. The pattern of usage is more akin to inner city areas, with less borrowing per customer but more PC usage, and other types of usage likely to be higher. The proportion of active borrowers in the population is low, but this is a phenomenon of the different pattern of usage.
- The low amount of spending on staff translates into low numbers of staff per resident and per visit. This is quite striking since not all of your libraries are equipped with self-issue technology, normally one of the principal enablers of a low staffed service. You make good use of volunteers, although some boroughs are far exceeding Croydon.
- Although your stock budget is low, you are purchasing almost the same number of items per resident as the outer London average. This means that you are likely to be purchasing more low value items. This is not necessarily a failing – the internet has reduced demand for adult non-fiction, generally higher priced items, and online resources can help fill this gap. Our current contract does not include a detailed examination of your stock budget, but further exploration may be beneficial.
- CIPFA only allows a high-level comparison on your expenditure on areas other than staffing and stock, and there is potential for considerable variation between authorities because of their accounting processes, but at first glance your property costs appear to be very low and your computer costs are very high. What is more certain is that there is scope to develop library income considerably, and whilst this will not be the ‘magic bullet’ to address all financial pressures (no English library authority generates more than 17% of net expenditure through general income), increasing income could offset the effects of future savings targets or expand the service without additional investment.
- Overall, Croydon is a very efficient service when judged by cost per visit, which derives from an ability to attract customers despite low levels of investment, and from high staff productivity. However, it should be noted that there is likely to be a law of diminishing returns on library investment so that delivering a more basic library service can be obtained with relatively low costs, but that providing additional services are likely to cost more. This rule does not, however, apply if a greater range of services is provided through the means of partnership or co-location.

How well do Croydon's library users reflect the population of the borough?

Population profile

Croydon is a diverse borough, with a clear split between its northern and southern wards, with the northern area exhibiting many of the characteristics of an inner-city area whilst the south is generally more akin to the leafy suburbs, with a lower population density, less ethnic diversity and a generally older and more affluent population. The New Addington area is an outlier in the south, with higher levels of deprivation and an age profile more similar to the north of the borough but with less ethnic diversity. Croydon is well served by public transport, particularly in the north of the borough.

This section compares the demographic characteristics of the residents of Croydon with those of the library users and identifies where there are gaps. Data for the population is drawn from the 2011 Census, except where there is more recent data from the Office of National Statistics or other sources. Population estimates were most recently revised in 2016 including gender breakdowns and educational attainments, estimates of deprivation were most recently made in 2015, but other data used in this section is drawn from the census, now seven years in the past. Between 2011 and 2016 the population of Croydon grew by 5.2% and it should be borne in mind that some characteristics will have altered; nevertheless, this is the most recent data available.

From the libraries side, data is drawn largely from the libraries management system, which can record certain characteristics of individual library users. The data used for comparison is library active users – those people who have borrowed from the libraries, booked a computer or logged onto the library Wi-Fi in the last year. This is more accurate than the active borrower figure recorded by CIPFA as it gives a better picture of those using the libraries. The degree to which this data has actually been recorded varies between those characteristics – for example, the age of 99.2% of library active users is held, but the disability status of only 1.2% of users has been recorded. This is likely to be explained partially by customers not wishing to provide the data and partly because some members joined the library before this data was collected.

Population

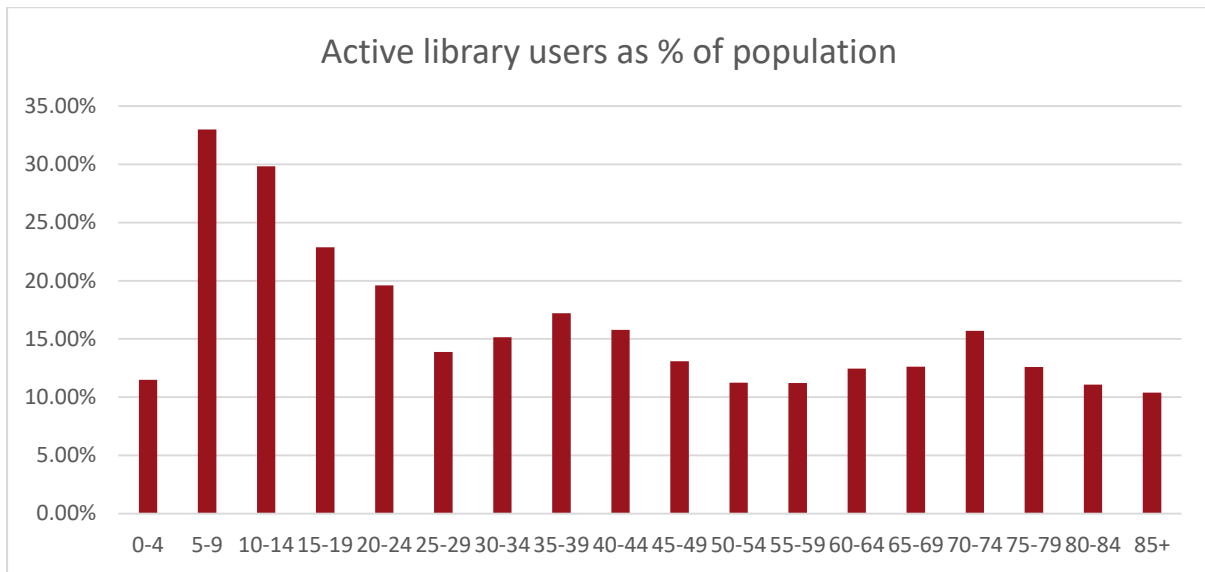
The population of Croydon was estimated to be 382,304 in 2016, having grown by 18,926 since 2011. The number of active members using the library service was 64,812, or 16.95% of the population³². It should be noted that this is a far higher figure than the 8.9% of the population who are active borrowers and is in line with the relatively low borrowing as a proportion of total business within the service.

Age

Croydon is a young borough, with over a quarter of the total population aged below 20. This is reflected and exaggerated in the usage of the library service, where over 38% of active users are under 20. Within this age group, the highest usage is between ages 5 and 9, with 33% of the total population using libraries. Library usage declines in people in their twenties,

³² This includes 253 active users who are visited by the Home Library Service

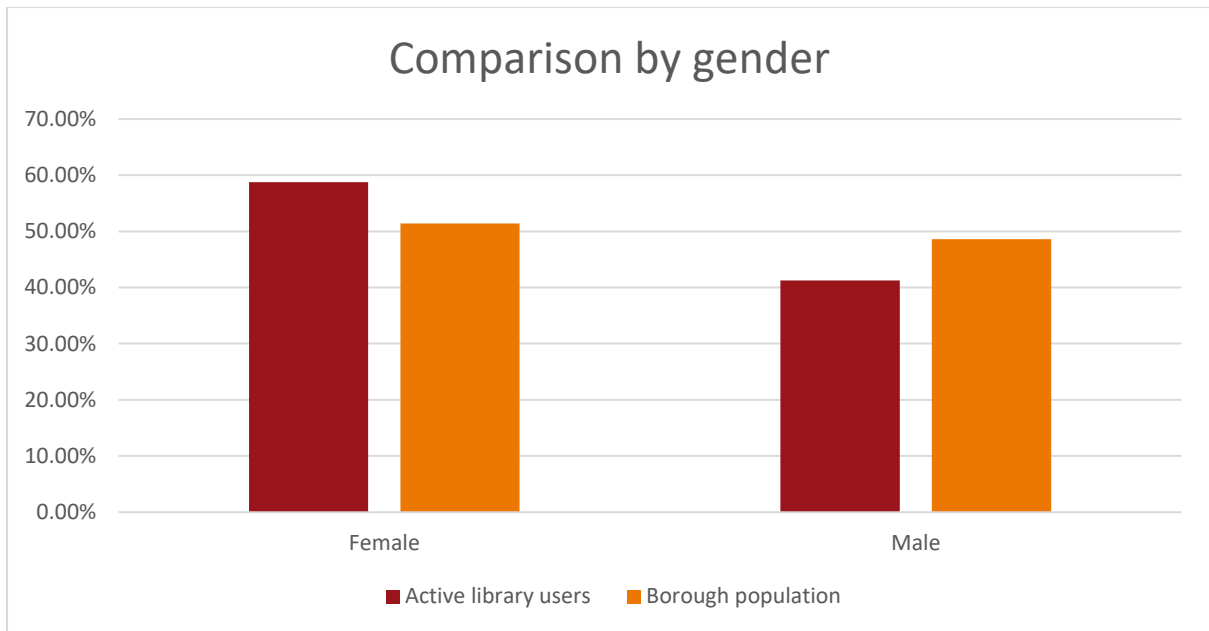
rises in the thirties and then declines again until retirement age when there is a spike until the mid-seventies. This not untypical pattern of usage is shown in the graph below.



It is to be expected that library usage will decline in the very old, who may experience more mobility issues. However, as the graph shows, less than 15% of working age people are using the libraries. Given the benefits that libraries can confer on people in this age bracket, not only book borrowing but also access to the internet and computers, information on employment, health and lifelong learning, there is scope to grow usership amongst the working population.

Gender

Data is held on the gender of 96.5% of active users. Of these, 36,732 were female and 25,811 were male, a ratio of almost two to one. In the borough as a whole, there is more parity between the genders, with only 51.4% of the population being female. This disparity between library users and the population at large is shown in the graph below.

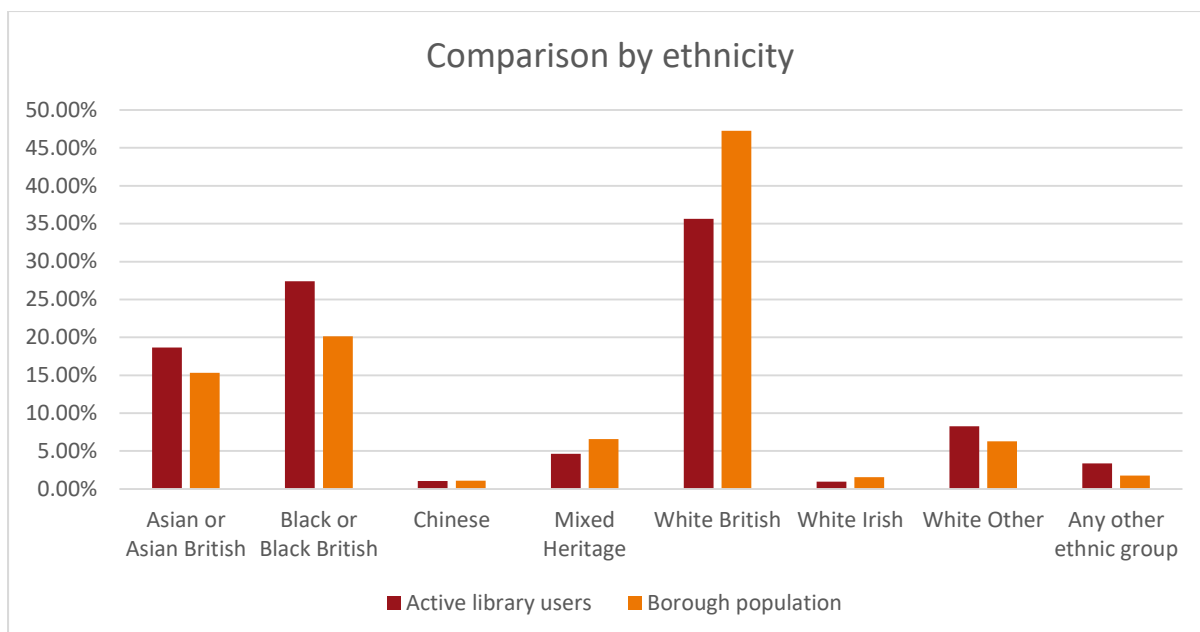


Due to time constraints, we have not investigated whether this varies between different sectors of the population (for example in different age or ethnic groups), but this does suggest that there is further work required to attract male customers.

Ethnicity

The ethnicity of only 33.7% of library active users is held by the library service. This means that whilst the data held may be an accurate sample, there is also a possibility that more data is held about members of some communities than others, thus skewing the results. Furthermore, the data for the borough population is now seven years old and many have changed. With these caveats in mind, it is possible to provide some analysis, although this should be viewed with caution. Ethnic categories are in line with those collected by the library service.

A comparison between the ethnic composition of the borough and that of active library users is shown in the graph below.



There are striking discrepancies with high usage by those of Asian or African decent, but under-representation by white British and Irish people. People from other backgrounds are also well represented. Within the Home Library Service (not included in the graph above), over 82% of active users are white British.

The discrepancies could be apparent – they are due to less data held on some communities than others, or real – the data held reflects the true situation, or a combination of the two. However, there is a reasonable strong correlation between the percentage of data held at each branch and the percentage of white British users at that branch³³. This implies that white British people are not disproportionately under recorded in the library data, and therefore that the differences between communities is likely to be real. However, without more exact data it is impossible to be certain.

Health and disability

Croydon libraries does collect data on disability. However, this data is very incomplete – out of 64,812 active users, no data is held on 41,794. Of the remaining 23,018, only 744 reported any type of disability. Whilst it is likely that disabled people are under-represented in library usage, and perhaps quite considerably so, it is probable that a greater proportion than 1.15% of active users have some form of disability. In some library services, concessions are granted to disabled people in the form of exemptions or reductions of charges, or extended loan periods, but this is not the case in Croydon. There is therefore no incentive to provide information on disability to the library service which may go some way to explain the very low figures.

In the borough as a whole, 48% of people described themselves as in very good health, 35.4% in good health, 12% in fair health, 3.5% in poor health and 1.1% in very poor health.

³³ Pearson correlation $r=0.49$, indicating that there is less than a 10% chance of this result occurring by chance.

14.1% of the population were limited in their day to day activity due to their health or disability. These figures were very similar to the London average.

Without further data from the library service, it is impossible to assess accurately how well Croydon libraries are serving disabled residents.

Education, employment and transport

The table below shows the educational attainment of the working age population of Croydon.

Education level	Level description (equivalent qualification)	% of population
4 or higher	First degree or higher	31.9
3	A level	11.4
2	GCSE grade A* - C	15.2
1	GCSE grade D – G	13.8
Apprenticeship		2.1
Other qualifications (including those gained abroad)		8.0
No qualifications		17.6

Croydon has a greater concentration of people with levels 1 and 2 qualifications than the London average, but fewer with level 4.

82.4% of the working age population of Croydon was economically active in September 2017 – this includes those employed both full and part time, self-employed, looking for work or full time students. This figure had increased from 72.3% at the time of the 2011 census. No figures after 2011 are available at ward level, and these figures are used in the ward level assessments below. However, it should be borne in mind that economic inactivity has changed since that time.

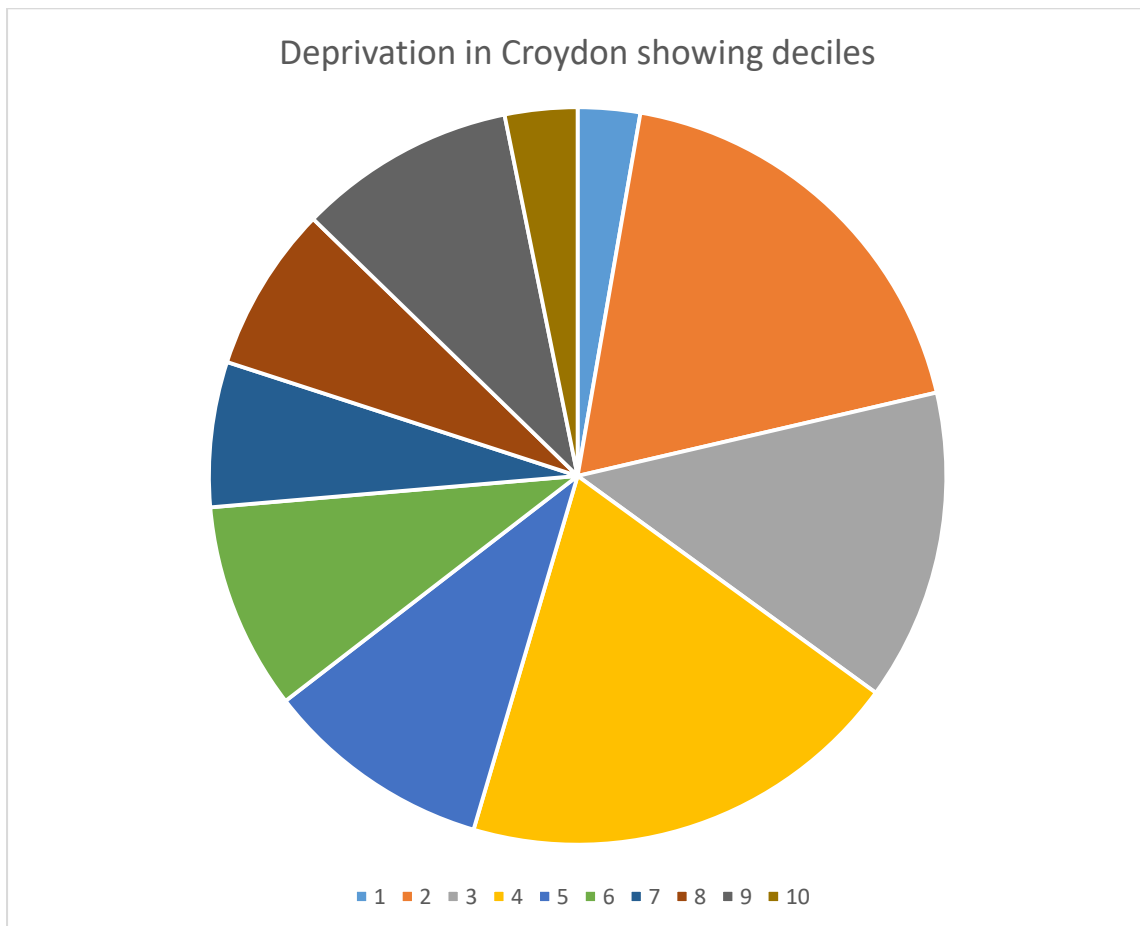
In Croydon 36% of households have no access to a vehicle. This is less than the average for England as a whole of 26%. There are considerable variations between different parts of the borough, and these are discussed below.

The library service does not collect information on educational attainment or economic status of its members, or of access to vehicles, but these are considered below when discussing library catchment areas.

Deprivation

Deprivation is calculated through a number of indices which produce a score for each area. These scores are ranked and the degree of deprivation is usually expressed by a percentage which indicates how the area performs in the national rankings, so that a score of 90% would indicate that the area is in the least deprived tenth for that index. Each index is calculated for groupings called super output areas; these are typically smaller than wards. A high degree of deprivation does not necessarily mean a lack of wealth in that area.

Croydon as a whole ranks 64th of 152 upper tier authorities in England, where 1st is the most deprived. Within London it is roughly at the midpoint as a borough. Deprivation in Croydon exhibits the same north-south divide that is observed in other characteristics. Most wards have a spread of areas which are deprived and those which are less deprived, but broadly speaking, the north has more areas which are more deprived and the south more areas which are less deprived, the exceptions to this rule being the two wards around New Addington. The deprivation composition of Croydon is shown in the chart below.



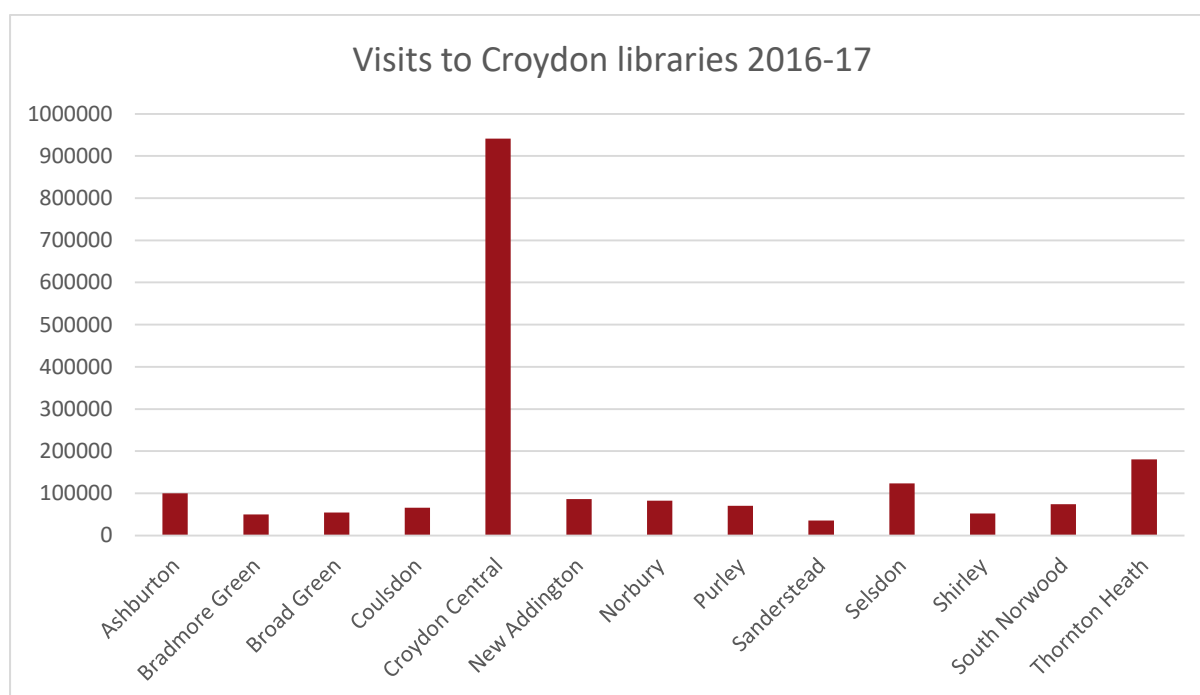
5. Comparison of library branches within Croydon

Croydon Library Service comprises 13 libraries. The Upper Norwood library is run by an independent trust although it currently received some funding from both Croydon and Lambeth Councils and serves an area where Bromley, Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark meet³⁴. With the exception of New Addington, which is geographically remote from the rest of the borough, no library is more than 1.5 miles³⁵ from another Croydon library³⁶.

Most library services within metropolitan areas have a single library that serves as a main hub for the entire authority and has a wider range of stock and more facilities and may be open for longer hours than the other libraries in the authority. Typically, this library has greater business levels than the other branches. This is the situation in Croydon, but it is more exaggerated than in many authorities as almost half of the total number of visits to the service are made at Croydon Central Library. The Central Library is one of the busiest public libraries in the country.

Visits

The number of visits made to each library is shown in the graph below.

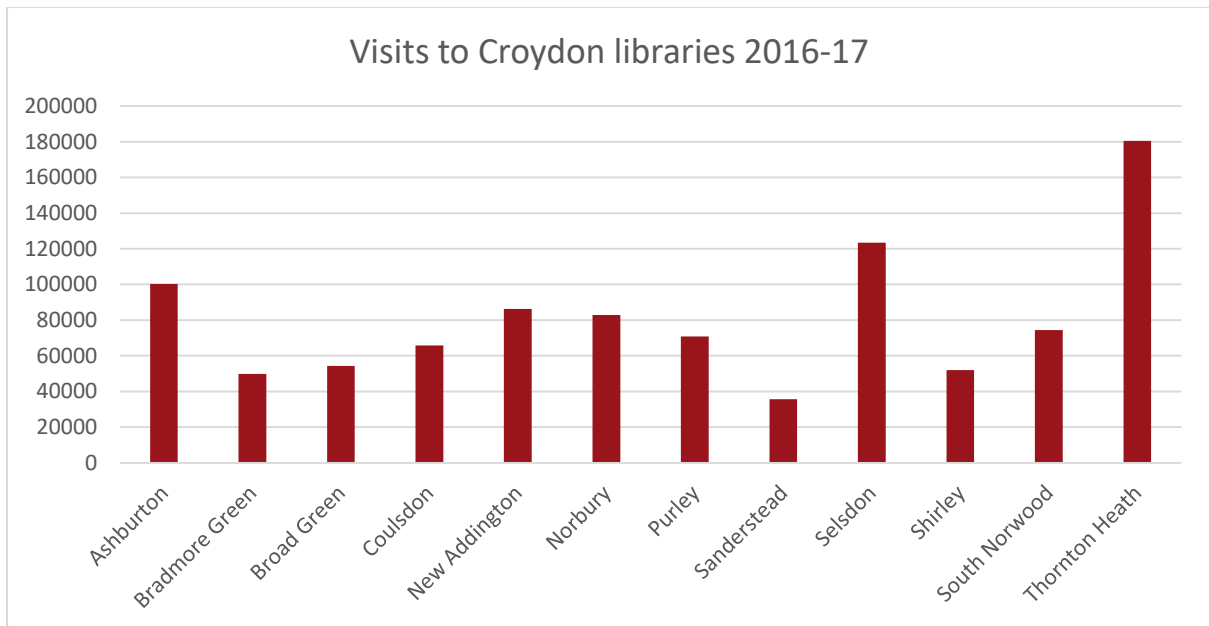


As the primacy of Croydon Central library tends to obscure the data for other branches, the graph below omits Croydon Central library.

³⁴ Upper Norwood Library is not within the scope of this report, but reference is made to it where appropriate

³⁵ Walking route calculated with Google maps

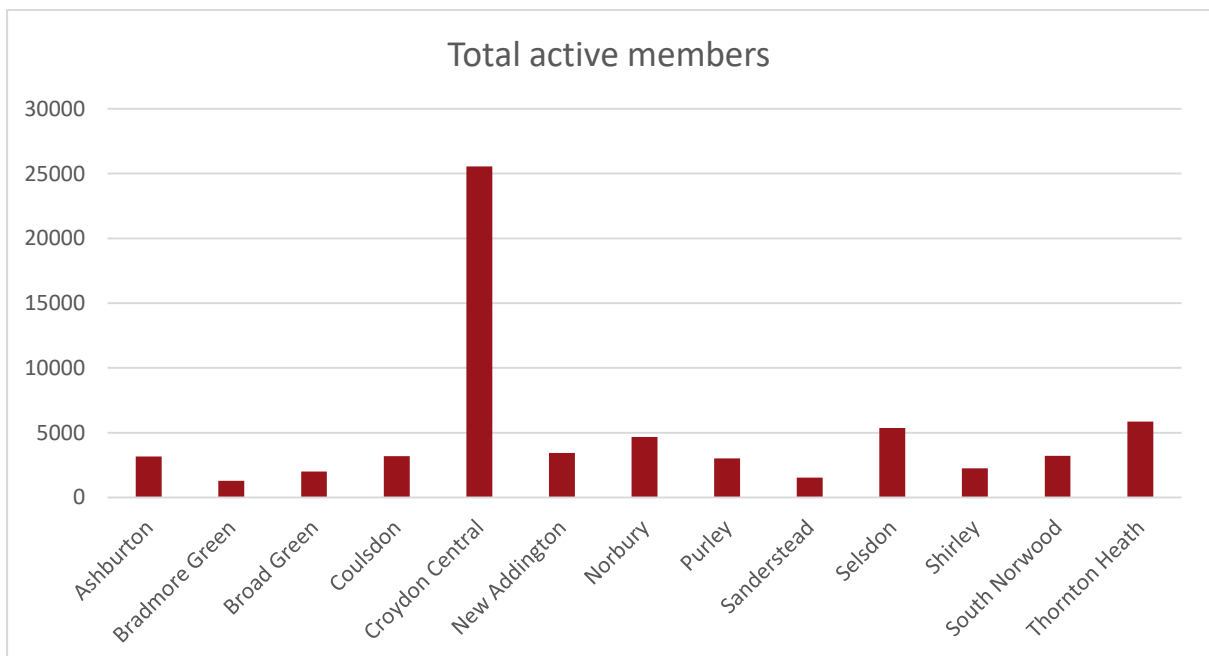
³⁶ Some are also close to libraries in another borough



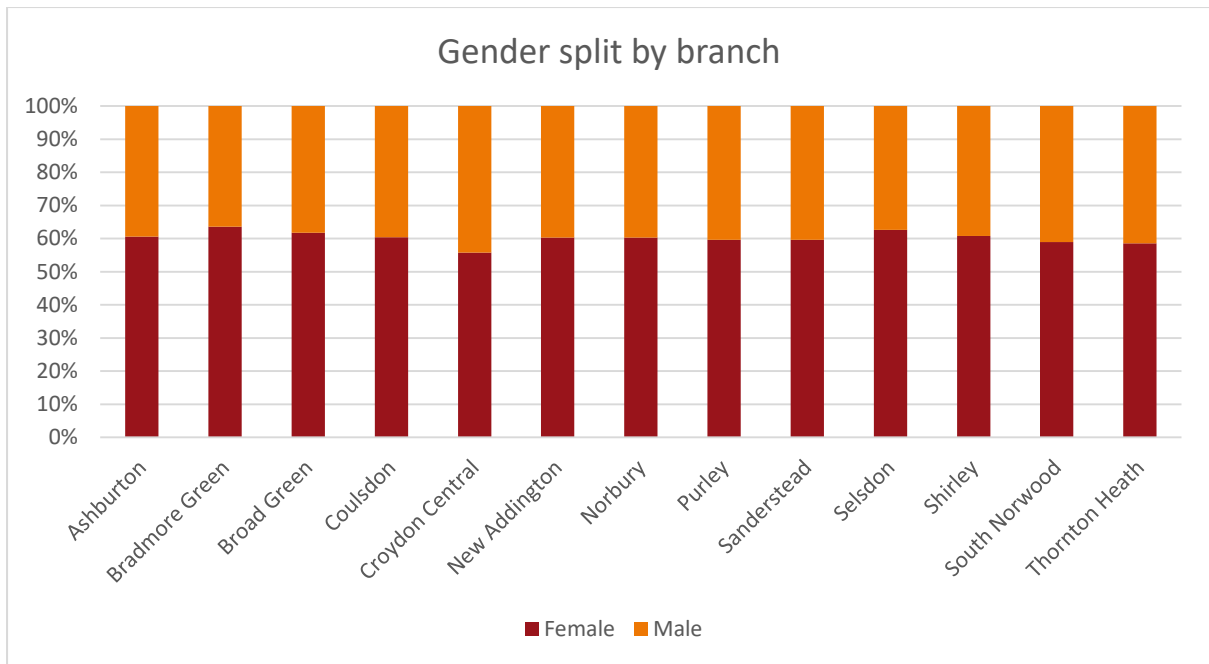
Other than the central library, only three branches have more than 100,000 visits per annum, and both Bradmore Green and Sanderstead have less than 50,000.

Membership

We have used the number of active users registered at each branch to complete our analysis of membership. Membership is assigned to the branch the person joined the library service at and does not always reflect place of residence or patterns of usage of the library. It is however, the best data that we have to assess the users of each branch.

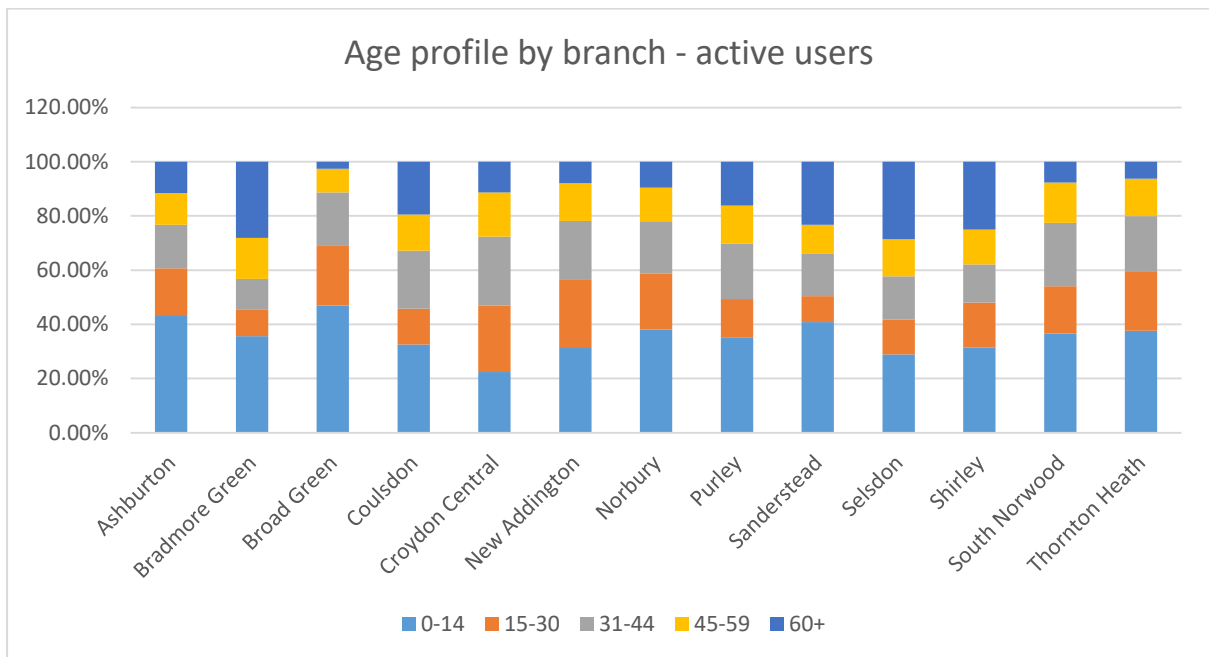


The distribution of members roughly reflects the number of visits to each branch with a pre-eminence at Croydon Central, although Ashburton has fewer members than its visits would suggest and Norbury has more.



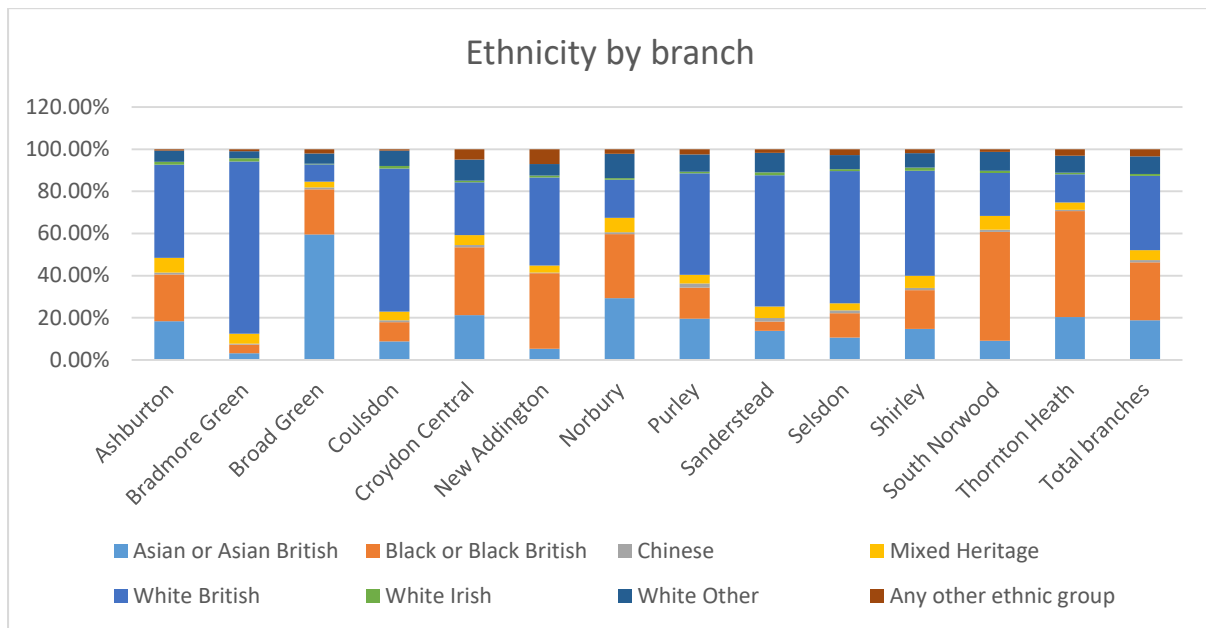
There is remarkably little difference between the proportion of male and female members in each branch. Only Croydon Central has less than 58% female membership.

However, there are very distinct differences in the age profiles of branches.



Only 22% of active members at Croydon Central are under 14, and 29% at Selsdon. Ashburton, Broad Green and Sanderstead all have more than 40% of members in this age group. Croydon Central's membership is predominantly working age. There are very small numbers of over 60s using South Norwood, Thornton Heath and particularly Broad Green.

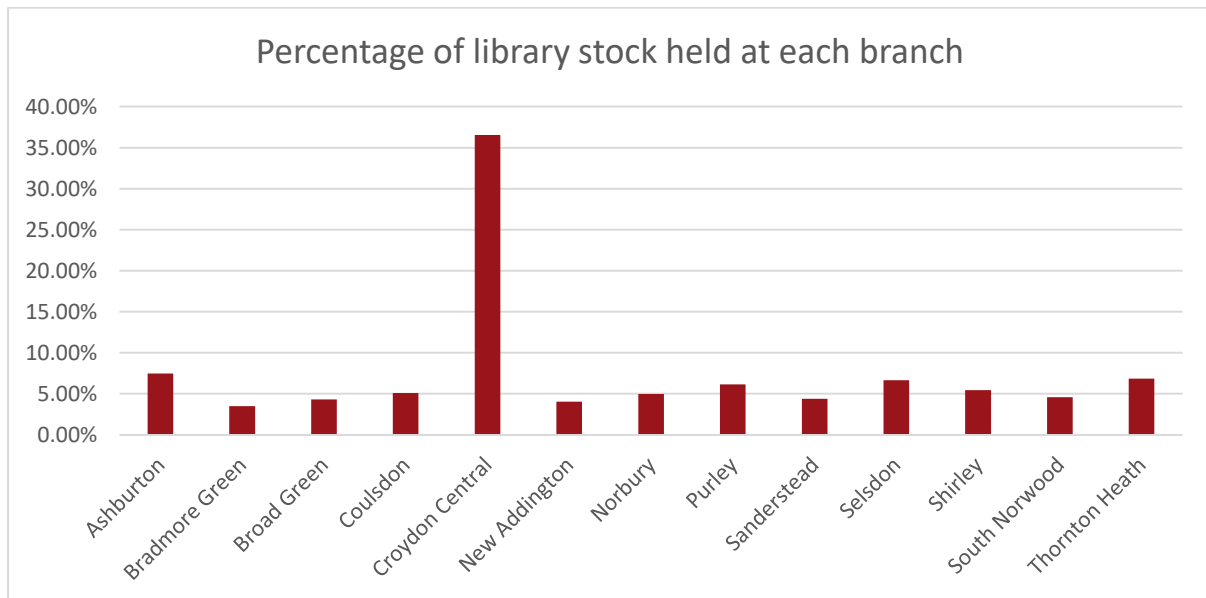
Similarly, there is significant variation in the ethnic profile of each branch.



The degree to which these reflect the local population is discussed in section 5.

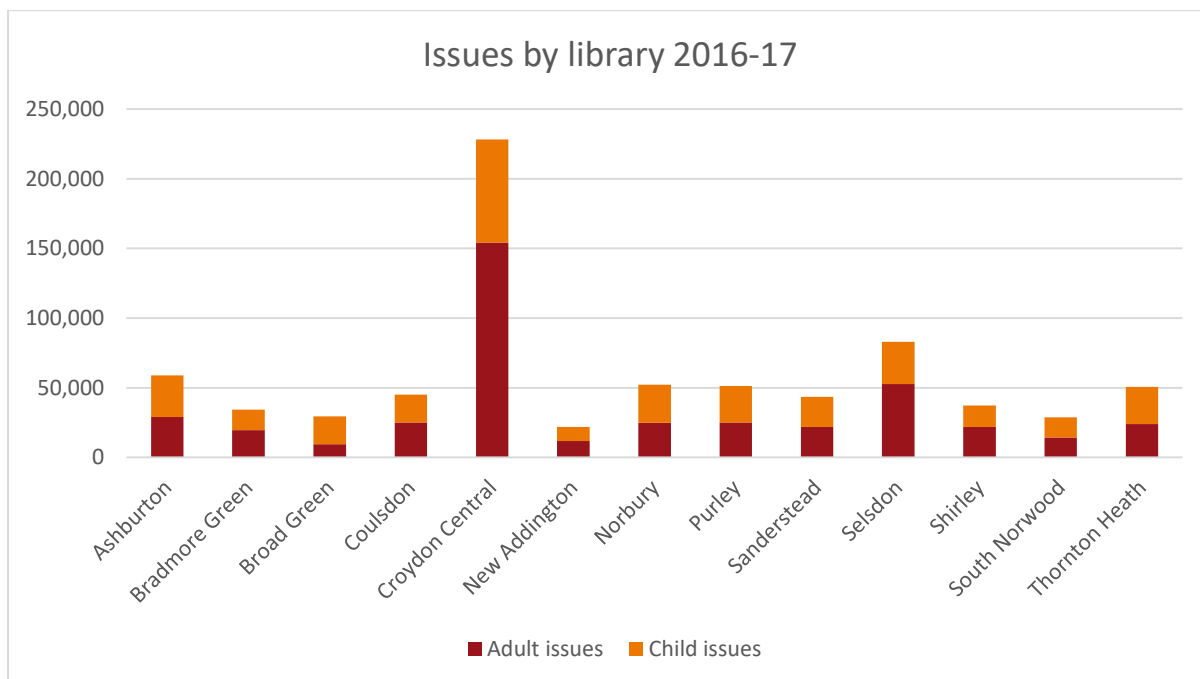
Stock

As one might expect, the greatest amount of stock is held at the central library:



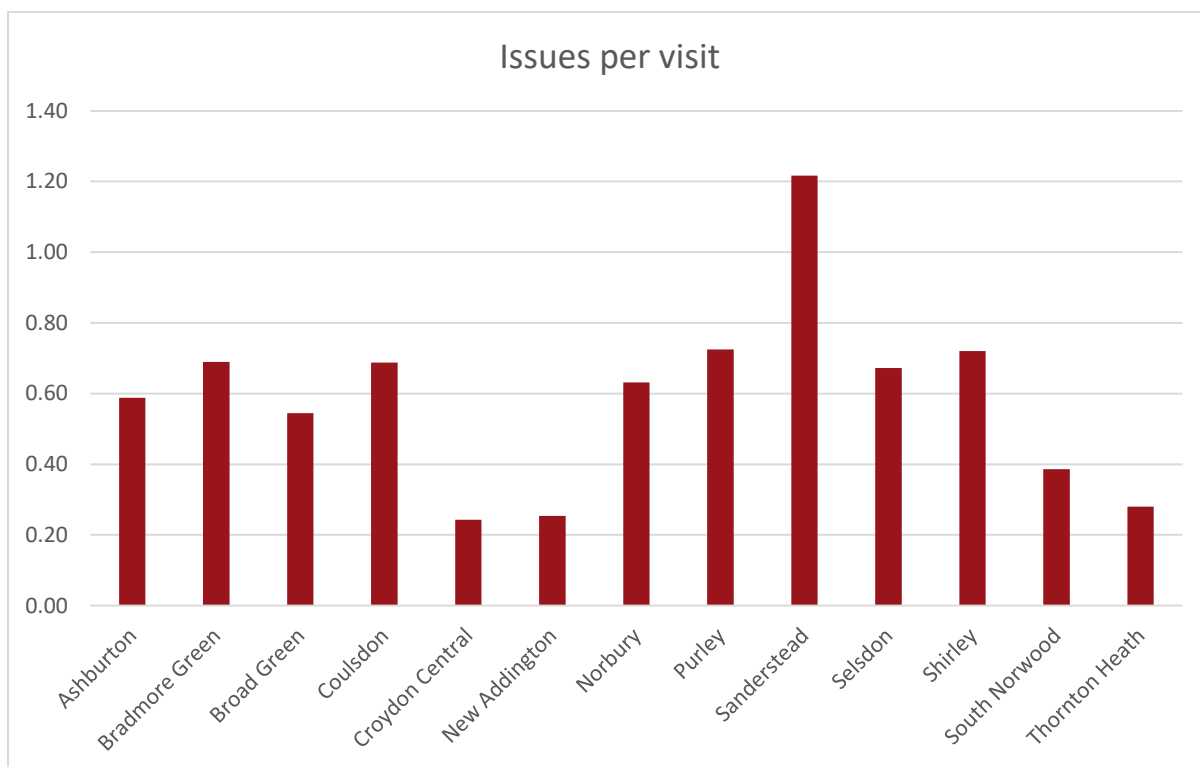
Other than the central library, Ashburton, Thornton Heath, Selsdon and Purley libraries all have over 20,000 stock items while Broad Green and New Addington have less than 15,000.

Issues



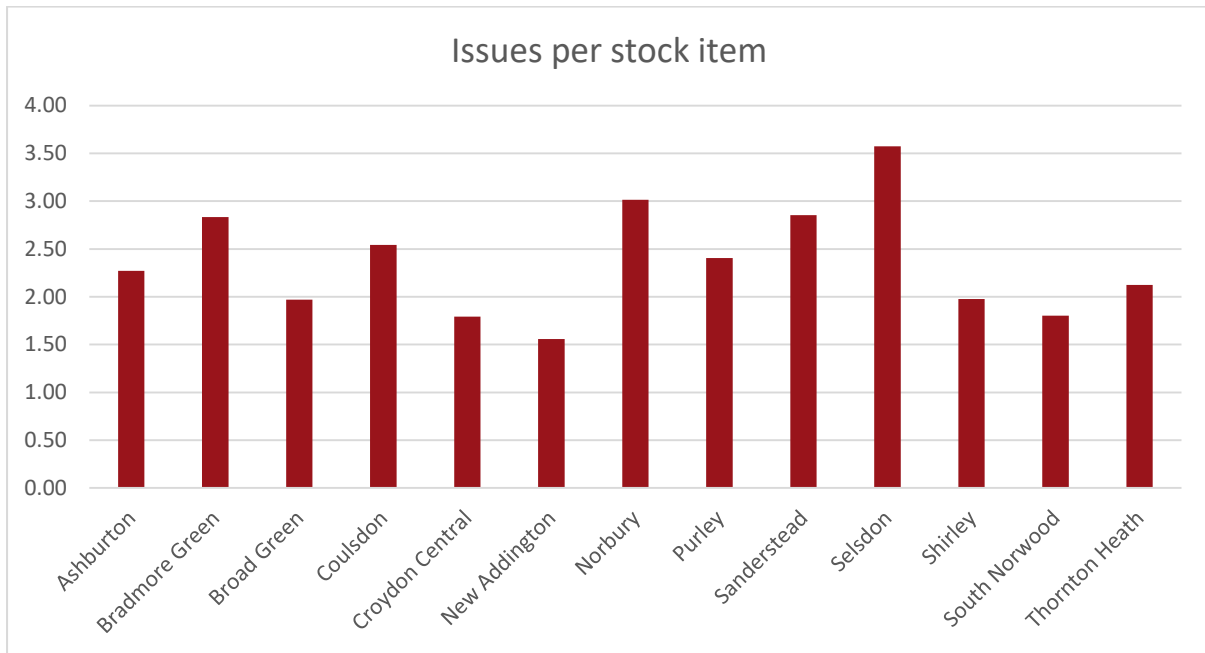
Whilst Croydon Central has more issues than any other branch, it accounts for less than 30% of issues across the service. Over 10% of issues are made at Selsdon, whilst Broad Green and South Norwood have less than 4% and New Addington less than 3%.

The pattern of usage is illustrated more starkly when the number of issues made per visit to the library is examined.



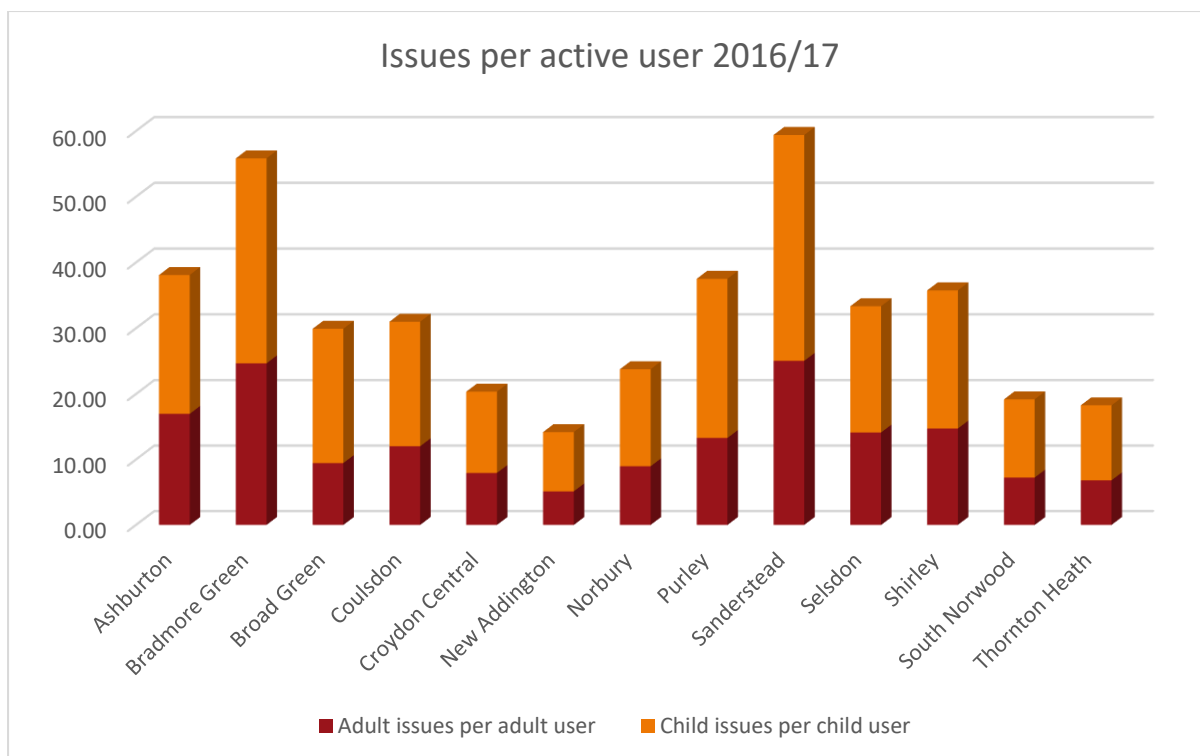
This graph shows that customers are using their visit to the library in order to borrow books most at Sanderstead, and least at Thornton Heath, New Addington and Croydon Central. As demonstrated below, it is at these three libraries where the proportion of customers using only PCs and Wi-Fi is the highest.

To assess how well stock is used at each branch, the graph below shows issues per item of stock in 2016-17.



This shows good rates of usage at Selsdon, Norbury and Bradmore Green but poorer rates at Croydon Central and New Addington. The explanation in those two cases may be very different. Croydon Central is likely to have a large amount of stock either for reference or which is used only in the library, whilst New Addington has a very low amount of stock and it may be that there is not sufficient choice to encourage borrowing.

Whilst libraries do not collect data on the split between visits of adults and children, it is possible to assess the relative use of stock by calculating the number of issues per year of adult stock divided by adult members at the branch and doing the same for children. This is not to say that no adults borrow children's stock or vice versa but does give an indication of the relative usage.

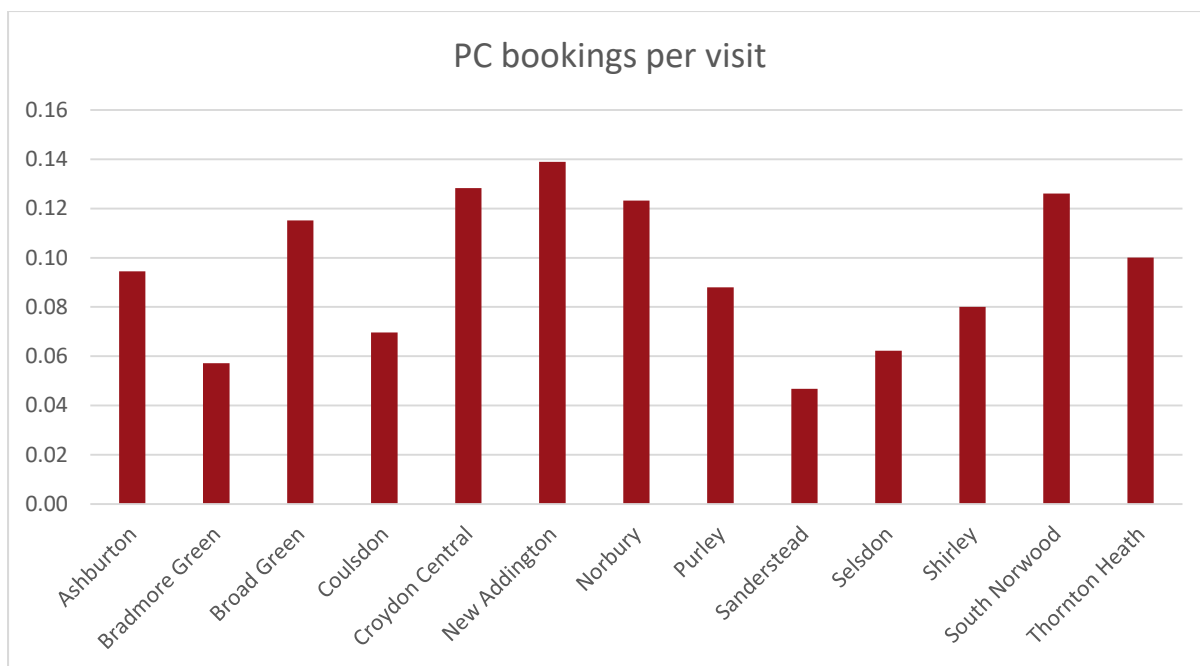


As noted above, there is a disproportionate number of active users under 16, but this graph shows that children are borrowing (or being borrowed for) to a much greater extent than adults. This trend is particularly evident at Sanderstead, Norbury and Purley. A caveat to this approach is that membership of a particular branch does not always imply use of that branch.

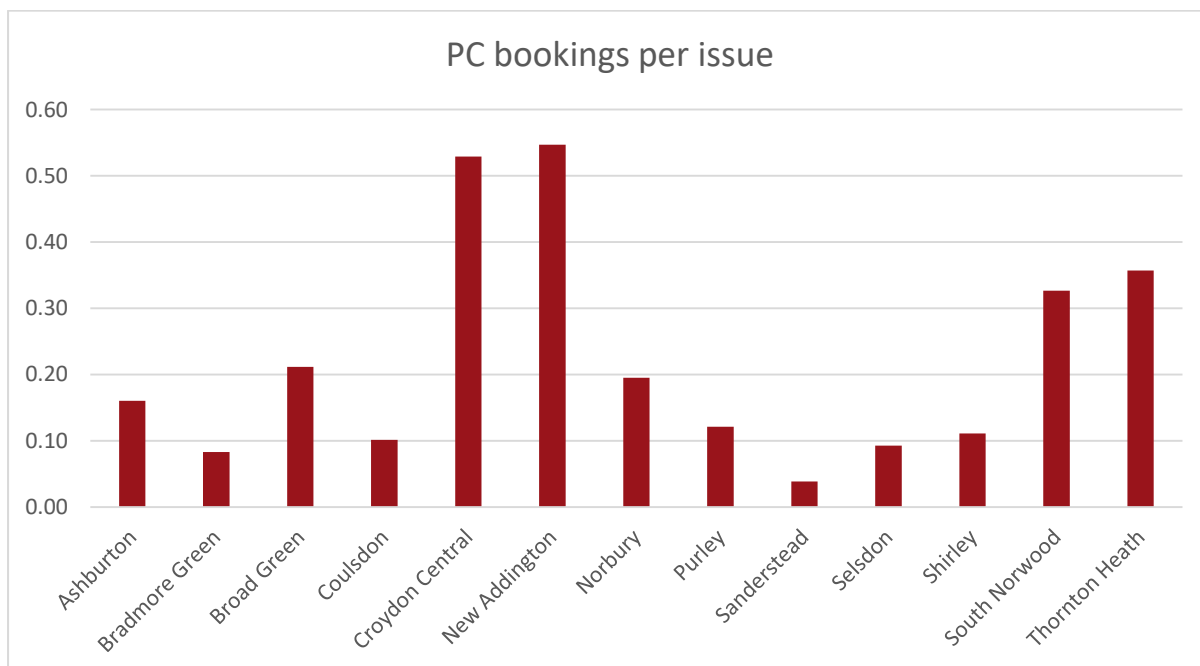
PC usage

We have been provided information on the number of PC bookings for each site, but we have no direct information on Wi-Fi usage, which has generally increased considerably in public libraries. It is also not possible to record use of the library for private study, without using a computer or Wi-Fi. However, the use of PCs can be treated as an approximation for all these activities.

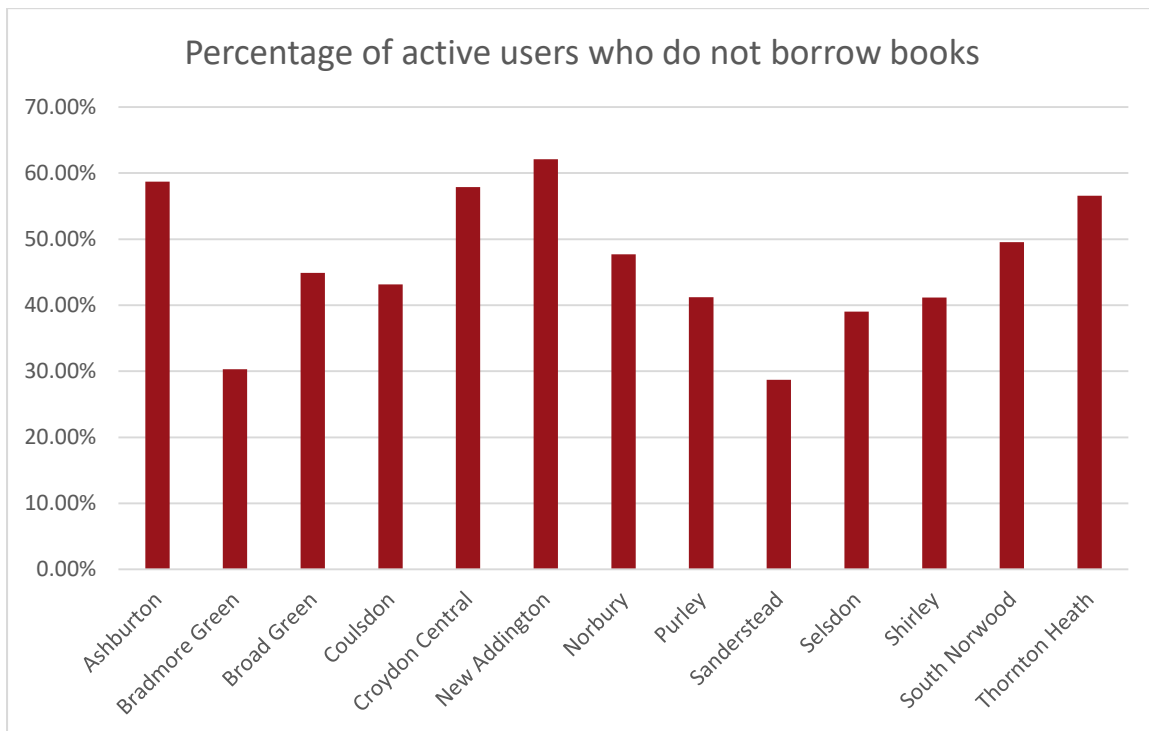
The graph below shows the number of PC bookings in 2016/17 divided by the number of visits at each branch.



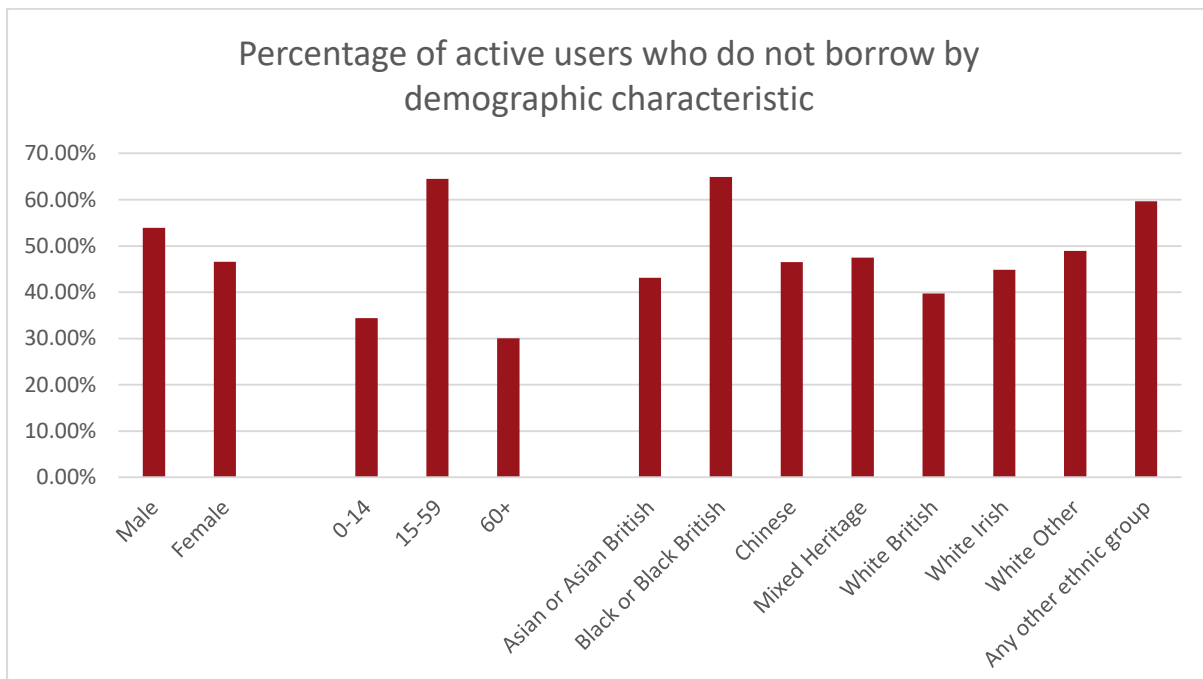
This shows high levels of computer usage at New Addington, Croydon Central, South Norwood and Broad Green. Whilst not quite the inverse of the issues per visit graph, it does demonstrate a north-south divide in patterns of usage. This is emphasised if the proportion of PC bookings per issue is examined:



We have also been given data, correct at February 2018, for the number of library active users who have not borrowed books. This means that we can calculate the number of active users who have used the PCs and/or the Wi-Fi. The figure for the service as a whole is 51.5% of all active users. Croydon is unusual, and to be commended, for collecting data on active users rather than borrowers, and so it is difficult to assess how this proportion compares to other library services; but it seems likely that this is high, even for inner city areas where book borrowing is a relatively less important function of libraries.



This graph has similarities to the PC bookings per issue graph but shows very high proportions of non-borrowing at New Addington, Ashburton and Thornton Heath. This is particularly interesting when it is considered that whilst Ashburton and Thornton Heath have high levels of children as users, New Addington has a very low level. Therefore, this type of usage is not limited to one age group.



Since this is an important factor in the use of libraries, non-borrowing customers have been broken down by other characteristics. Men are less likely to borrow than women, working age people than other age groups and Black people more than any other group.

It is clear that there are significant variations between the use of branches. Some of these variations can be explained by differences in the local population, and these are discussed in section 6. However, what is clear is that Croydon's libraries are used by representatives of a broad range of the community, and although there are opportunities for improvement, it can truly claim to be a universal service.

6. Analysis of library membership by branch catchment area

To establish how well each branch is serving its local area, we have compared library membership with nominal catchment areas.

To do this, we have allocated each ward in Croydon to a particular library to form a catchment area and then compared the characteristics of members of that library with the characteristics of the population of the catchment area. We have used current active membership to do this.

6.1 Defining library catchment areas

There are several ways that library catchment areas could be defined. By one measure, all points which are closer to a particular library than any other would form a catchment area. This has two disadvantages – first that it is not possible to obtain census or other data to compare with library usage for catchment areas defined in this way, and secondly it ignores the fact that many people for all sorts of reasons do not use their nearest library preferring one further away. As mentioned in section 4.2, membership of a particular library is not always an indicator of use of that library, but nevertheless this remains a good approximation.

It is also possible to define a catchment area by selecting those wards adjoining the library or where it is most likely that residents will use a particular library. A third method is to analyse current patterns of membership and allocate wards to the library which has most use by residents of that ward. These two last methods allow comparisons with Census data.

To allocate wards to each library catchment area, we have carried out an analysis of the postcodes of all library members, drawn from an anonymised dataset. With one exception, people who live in a ward that contains a library are most likely to use that library, and these wards have been allocated to the library contained within them.

However, it is less easy to allocate wards that do not contain a library. More library users in Addiscombe, Croham, Selhurst and Waddon wards use Croydon Central than any other library, and these have been allocated to Croydon Central. Library users in Bensham Manor ward are most likely to use Thornton Heath library; those of Kenley ward, Purley library; in Fieldway ward, New Addington library; and in Heathfield ward, Selsdon Library. In Upper Norwood ward, where there is in any case a low proportion of library users, the most used library is Croydon Central, but this is in no way a library local to the area. Upper Norwood has therefore been allocated to Thornton Heath library. Similarly, although more residents of Woodside ward use Croydon Central library than Ashburton library, it has been allocated to South Norwood. There is no one library that library users in West Thornton ward above all of the others, with a significant proportion using Croydon Central, Thornton Heath and Broad Green. West Thornton has been allocated to Thornton Heath library as it is adjacent to Broad Green ward. In Broad Green ward, the majority of library users use Croydon Central, but it would be nonsensical not to include the ward in the catchment area of Broad Green library.

Like many urban areas, Croydon has one library – Croydon Central – which serves the borough as a whole as well as acting as a local library for the people that live close to it.

36.5% of all visits are made to Croydon Central library, and library users living in all areas of the borough are members there, although there are significant differences in the proportions between different wards. It follows that Croydon Central appears to serve its catchment area better than the other libraries, and this should be borne in mind when making comparisons.

The allocation of wards to library catchment areas is shown in the table below.

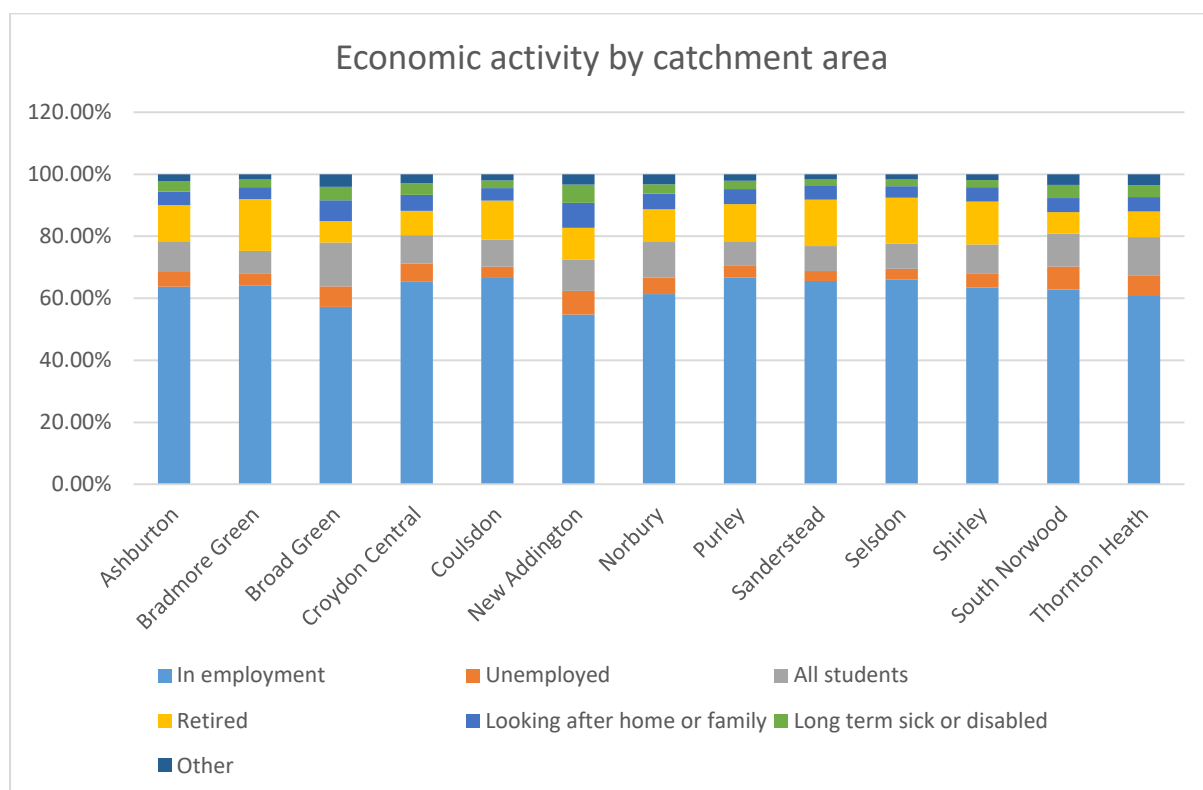
Ward	Library catchment area	Percentage of resident library members using allocated library
Addiscombe	Croydon Central	71%
Ashburton	Ashburton	43%
Bensham Manor	Thornton Heath	58%
Broad Green	Broad Green	25%
Coulsdon East	Bradmore	48%
Coulsdon West	Coulsdon	62%
Croham	Croydon Central	56%
Fairfield	Croydon Central	87%
Fieldway	New Addington	57%
Heathfield	Selsdon	47%
Kenley	Purley	45%
New Addington	New Addington	66%
Norbury	Norbury	44%
Purley	Purley	47%
Sanderstead	Sanderstead	40%
Selhurst	Croydon Central	59%
Selsdon and Ballards	Selsdon	77%
Shirley	Shirley	56%
South Norwood	South Norwood	55%

Thornton Heath	Thornton Heath	56%
Upper Norwood	Thornton Heath	27%
Waddon	Croydon Central	78%
West Thornton	Thornton Heath	27%
Woodside	South Norwood	30%

6.2 Characteristics of library catchment areas

If these catchment areas are used, there are quite distinct variations between the catchments of different branches. Those characteristics that can be compared with data for library users are discussed in the next section. Using the data which cannot be compared to library usage, it is possible to develop a picture of the socio-economic characteristics of the catchment areas.

The 2011 census collected information on the economic activity of working age residents³⁷. Whilst unemployment has reduced since that date in Croydon, this remains a good indicator. The profiles of each catchment area are shown below.

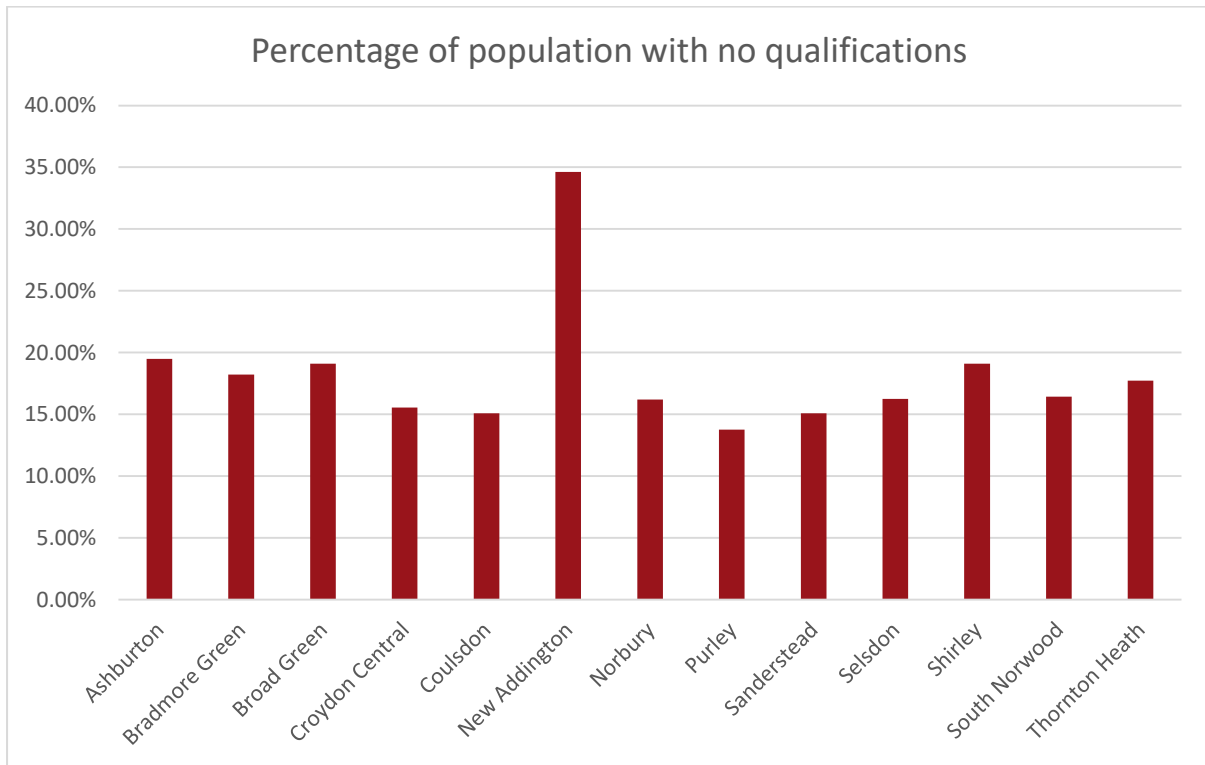


It is clear from this that the lowest levels of employment and highest of unemployment are in the catchment areas of Broad Green and New Addington libraries, whilst the opposite is

³⁷ Those aged 16 - 74

true for libraries in the south of the borough. Libraries in the south have fewer students in their catchment areas with the highest proportions in Broad Green and Thornton Heath. The opposite is true for retired people with Bradmore Green library having the highest proportion³⁸. There are high incidences of the long-term sick and people looking after families in Broad Green and New Addington.

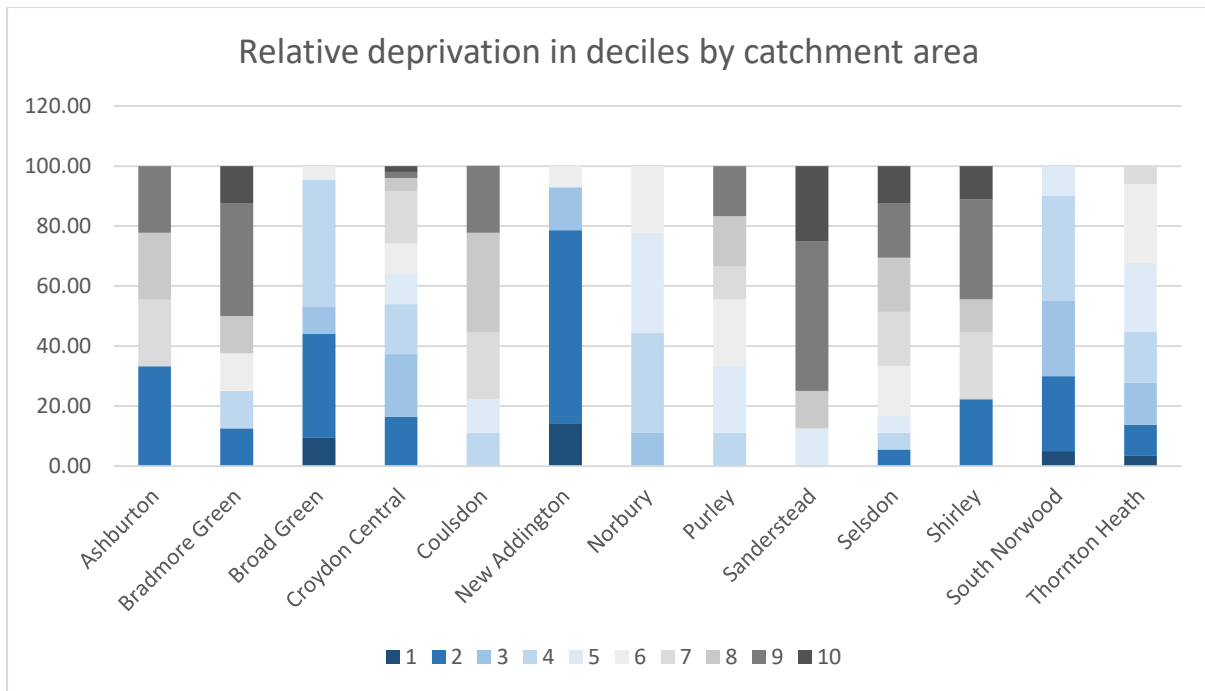
A slightly different pattern emerges when looking at qualifications.



With the exception of New Addington, where almost 35% of working age people have no qualifications, there is much less variation between the catchment areas although it is generally the catchment areas in the south which have the lowest figures.

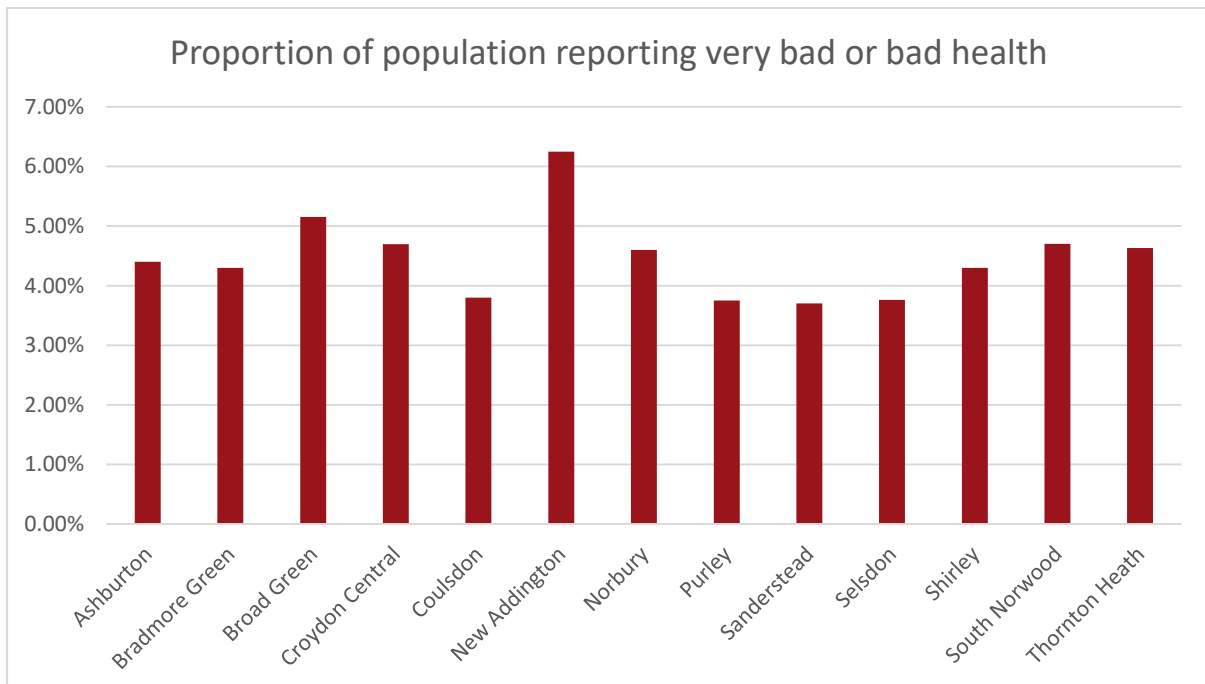
Published indices for deprivation, calculated in 2015, rely on complex data from a variety of sources and it is notoriously difficult to combine different areas. Furthermore, the data focusses only on deprivation and ignores affluence in the same area. However, the diagram below gives an approximation of the incidence of deprivation in each catchment area. Deprivation is divided into deciles, where 1 is the most deprived and 10 the least.

³⁸ This would be considerably higher if people aged over 75 were included.



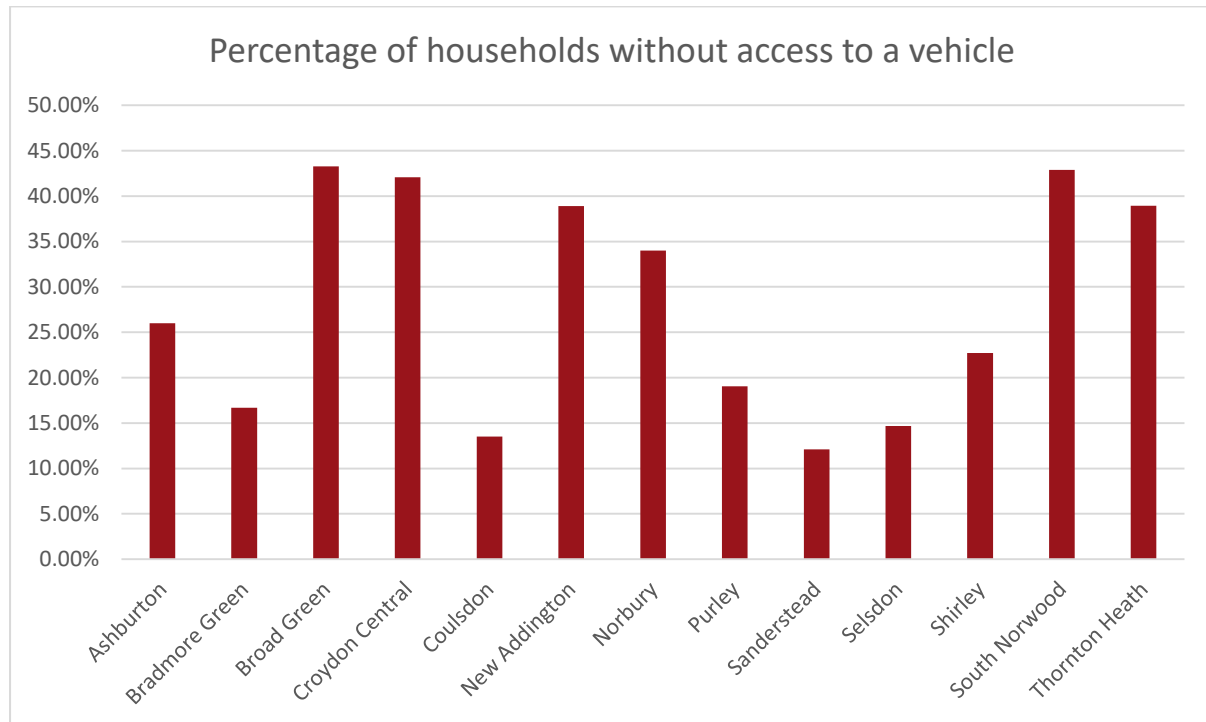
In this diagram, the blue colours indicate high levels of deprivation. Catchment areas for New Addington, Broad Green and South Norwood libraries exhibit the highest levels of deprivation, and Norbury and Thornton Heath also have significant levels. Ashburton has pockets of high deprivation and Croydon Central is mixed. The libraries in the south of the borough generally have catchment areas with low deprivation, and especially Sanderstead.

The same pattern is shown when looking at residents who reported their health as poor or very poor in the 2011 census.



Once again, the north of the borough shows a higher incidence of poor health, and the south a lower incidence, although Bradmore Green with an elderly population has relatively high levels.

The pattern of households without access to a vehicle is slightly different.

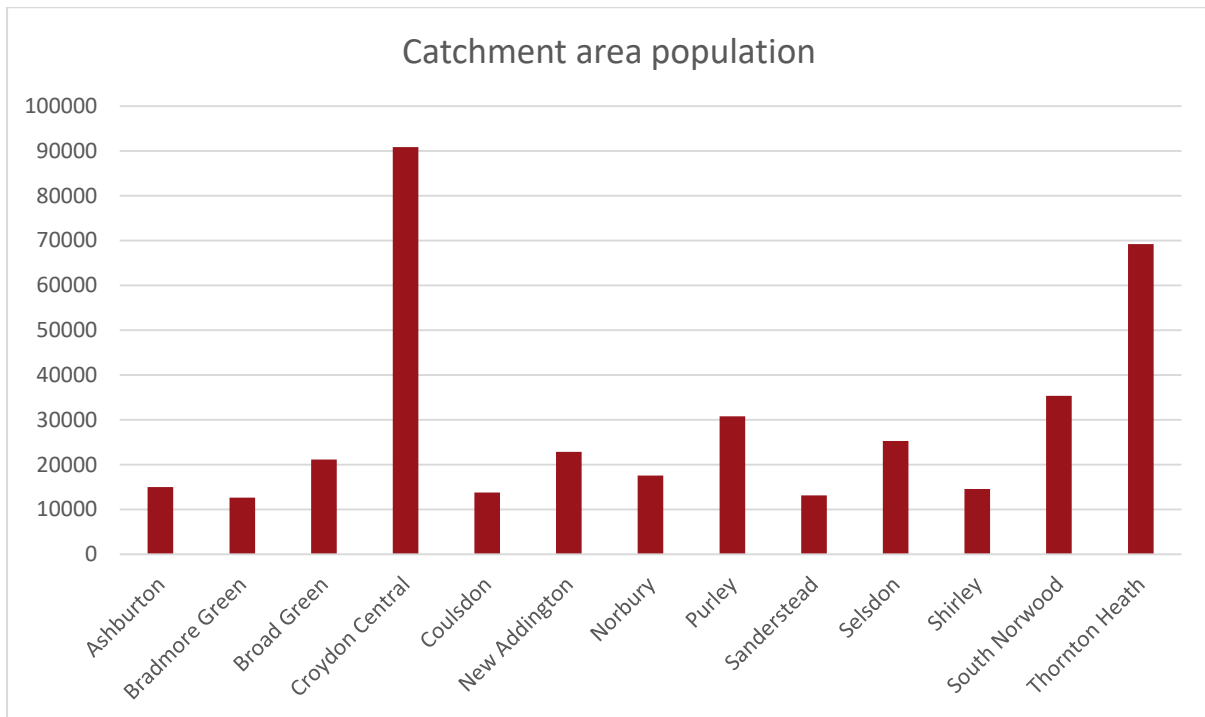


Although there is the same broad north-south split, Broad Green, South Norwood, Croydon Central and Thornton Heath all exceed New Addington. This is likely to reflect not only socio-economic trends but also better public transport and more difficult parking in the north of the borough.

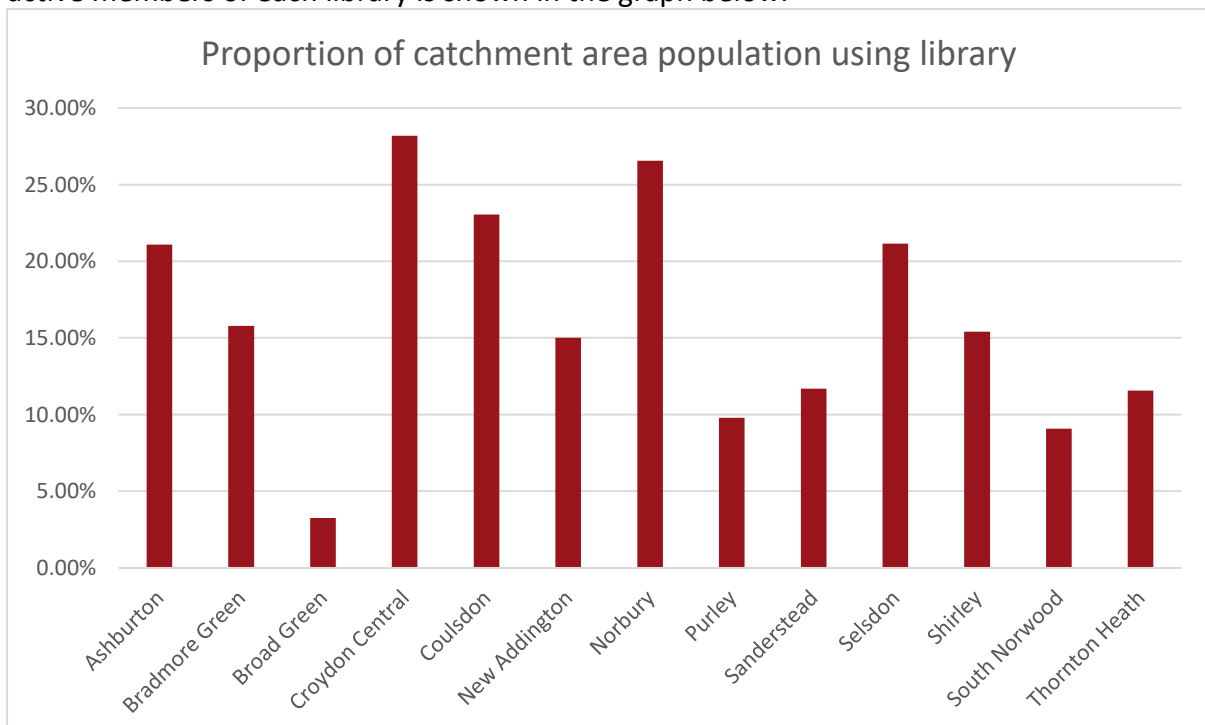
Libraries are a universal service and as section 5 demonstrates Croydon's libraries are used by a wide range of sectors of the community. Nevertheless, this analysis indicates that there are areas within the borough with high levels of unemployment, deprivation and poor health; and that many of these areas also have low levels of access to private transport. Whilst these indicators are not the only key to assessing need for a public library, information and computer access provided by the library service to these groups can be a significant factor in improving life chances, and these should be bourn in mind when setting strategic priorities.

Library users compared to the demographics of library catchment areas

The catchment areas are quite different in the size of the resident population.

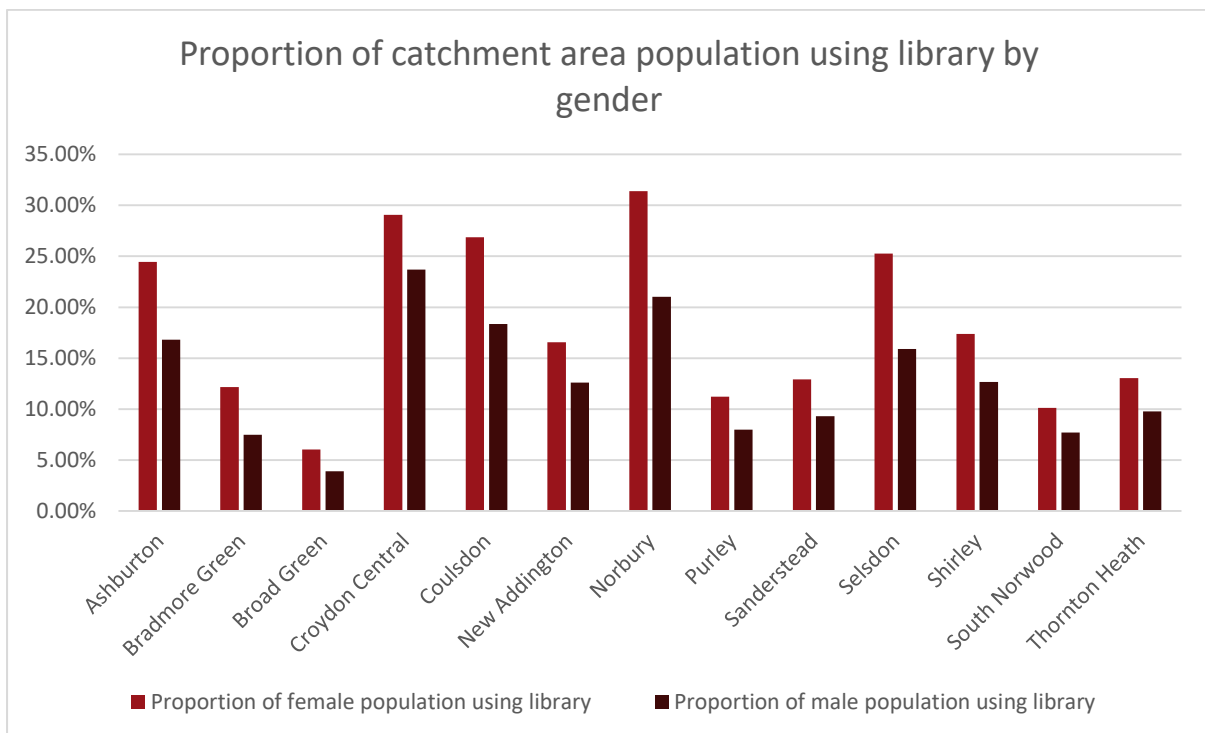


As is to be expected, Croydon Central, with a catchment area of five wards serves a greater population as a local library than any other branch, in addition to its central library functions. The libraries that are close to other branches tend to serve a single ward and therefore a lower population, demonstrated by low figures for Ashburton and Shirley; and Bradmore Green and Coulsdon. The percentage of the catchment area population who are active members of each library is shown in the graph below.



Although Croydon Central is the highest proportion, it does not show the great disparity that its high visit numbers and its role as a central library might suggest. Norbury, Coulsdon, Selsdon and Ashburton are all serving more than 20% of residents. At the other end of the scale, Broad Green serves only 3.24% of residents within the catchment area. This is because residents in the two constituent wards of the catchment area use other libraries as well as the local branch³⁹. If Croydon Central is excluded, there is a tendency for libraries that serve two or more wards to attract a lower percentage of the population; whilst there will be many factors affecting this, one of them is likely to be a reluctance to travel.

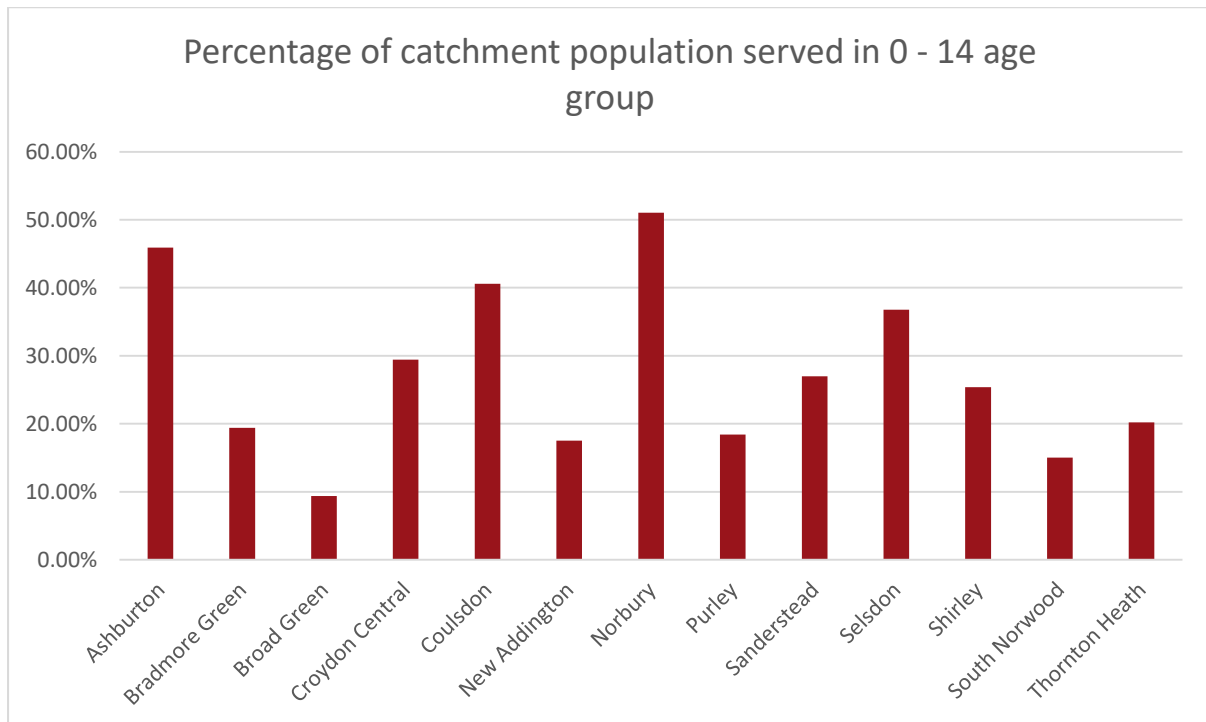
This pattern is reflected when broken down by gender. As noted above, a greater proportion of female residents are using the library than men.



However, there are some differences between the branches. At Croydon Central, the difference between female and male users as a proportion of the population is the lowest, and there are other low values in New Addington, South Norwood and Thornton Heath.

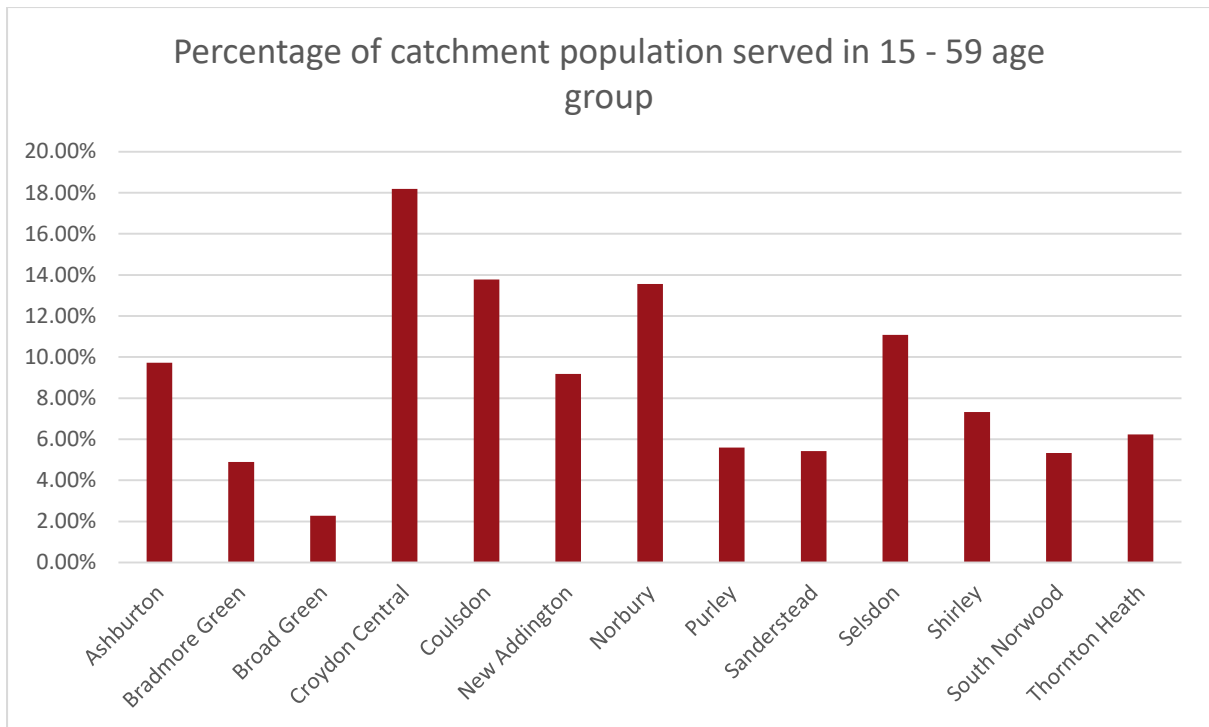
³⁹ 60% of library users who are Broad Green residents use Croydon Central and 30% of West Thornton residents.

When considering how library users in different age groups are using libraries, some interesting variations arise.

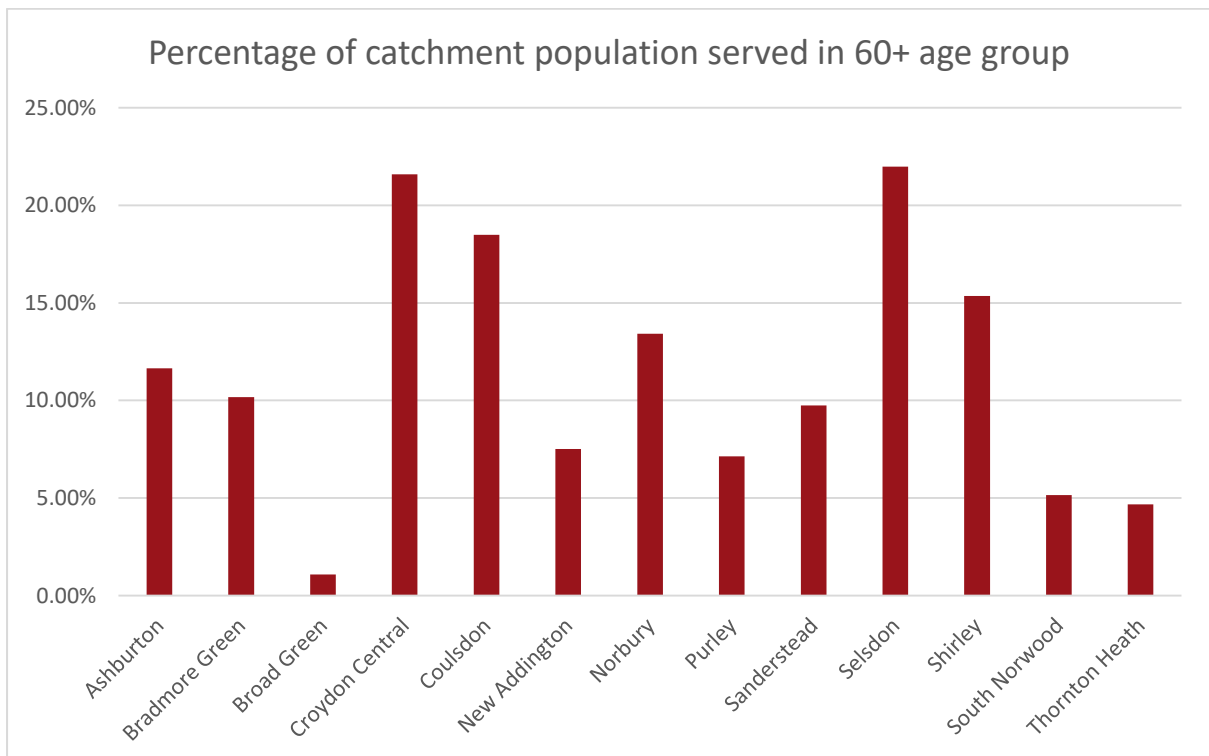


Young people account for a high proportion of Croydon library users. There are very high usage levels in the age 0 -14 range at Ashburton and Norbury libraries; this is at least partially accounted for in the former case by the location of the library in a school. Selsdon and Coulsdon libraries are also well used by this age group. Croydon Central, despite its role as a central library, is not as well used as any of these. Less than 20% of the catchment population is using the libraries at Bradmore Green, Broad Green, New Addington, Purley and South Norwood libraries. Broad Green is particularly low as the overall usage of the library in comparison to the resident population is low, but young people make up a greater proportion of actual users there, as noted in section 4.2.

Library usage declines in the age group 15 -59 in the library service with rather less than 15% being active members.



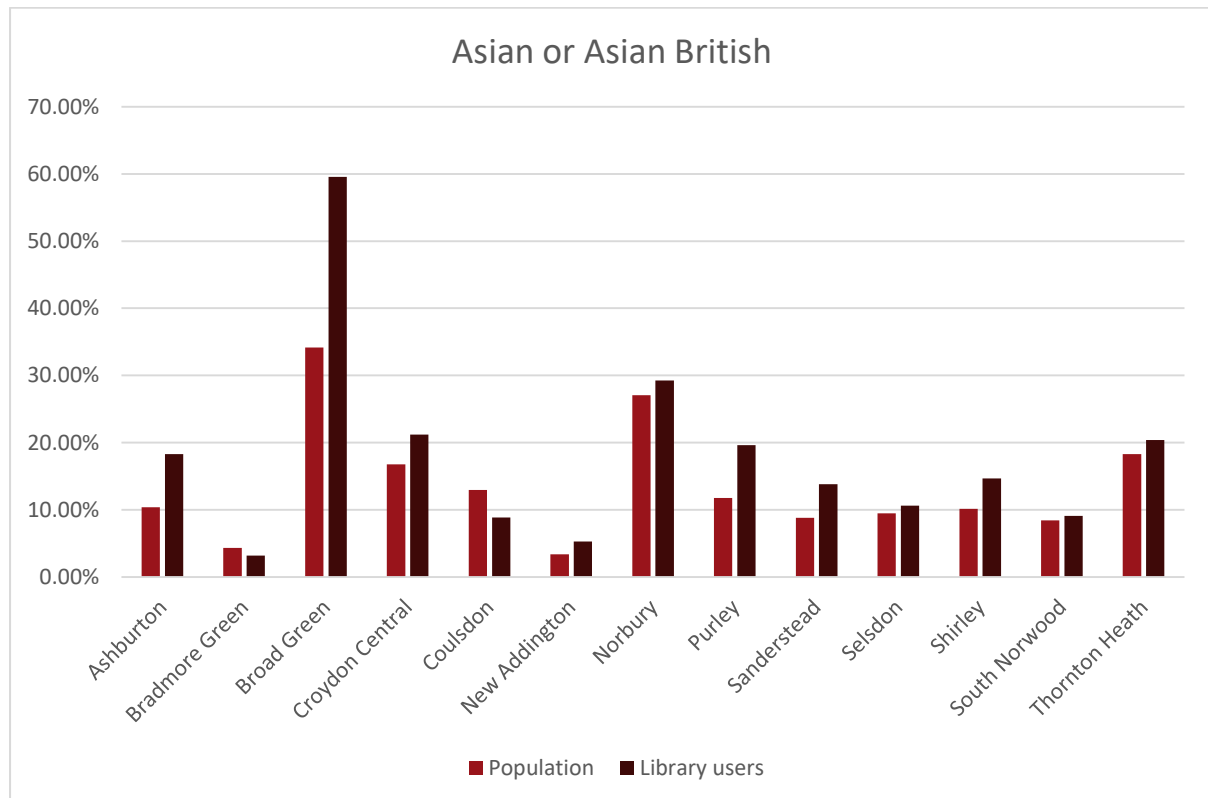
Croydon Central shows the highest rate of usage amongst the local population, although this is likely to be due more to its role as a central library rather than greater local usage. Coulsdon, Norbury and Selsdon libraries are also reaching more than 10% of the local populations. Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Purley, Sanderstead and South Norwood are used by less than 6% of local residents.



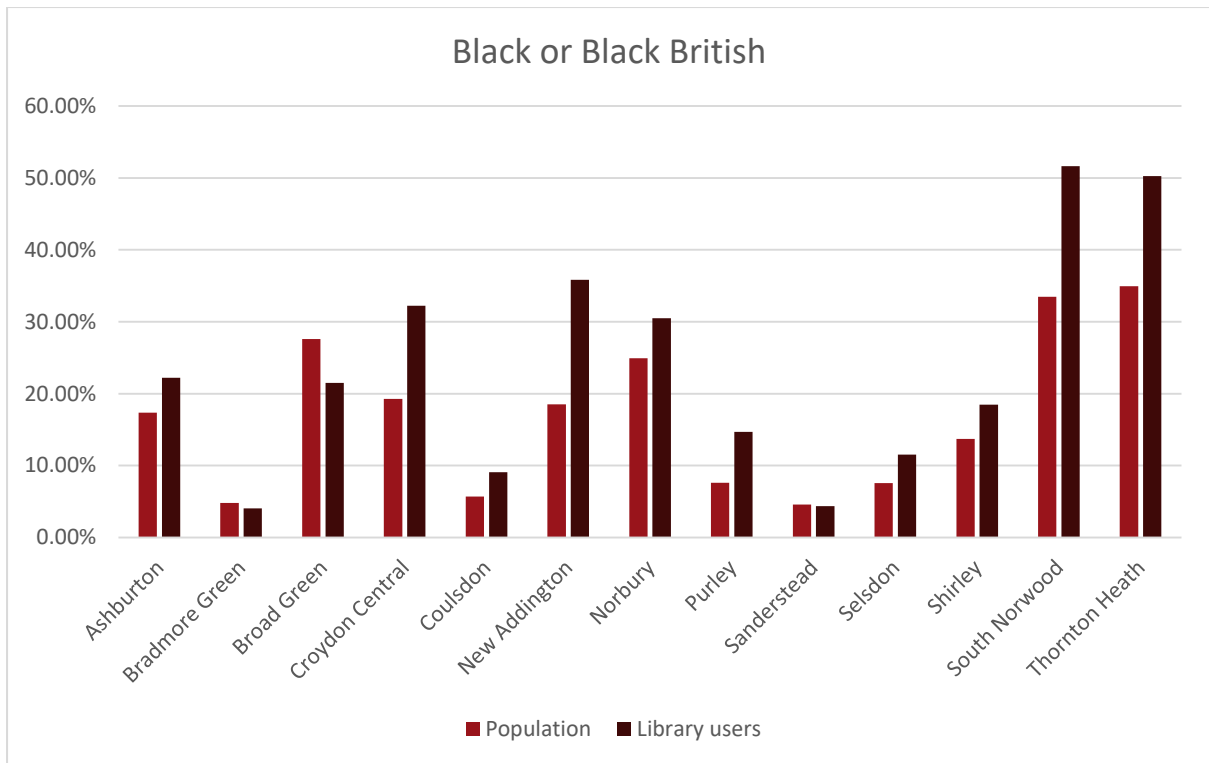
For the over 60 population, Selsdon, Croydon Central, Coulsdon and Shirley libraries are all well used when compared to their catchment areas. Bradmore Green and Sanderstead are

only around the average despite being in areas with older populations. There is low usage in Broad Green, Thornton Heath and South Norwood by this age group.

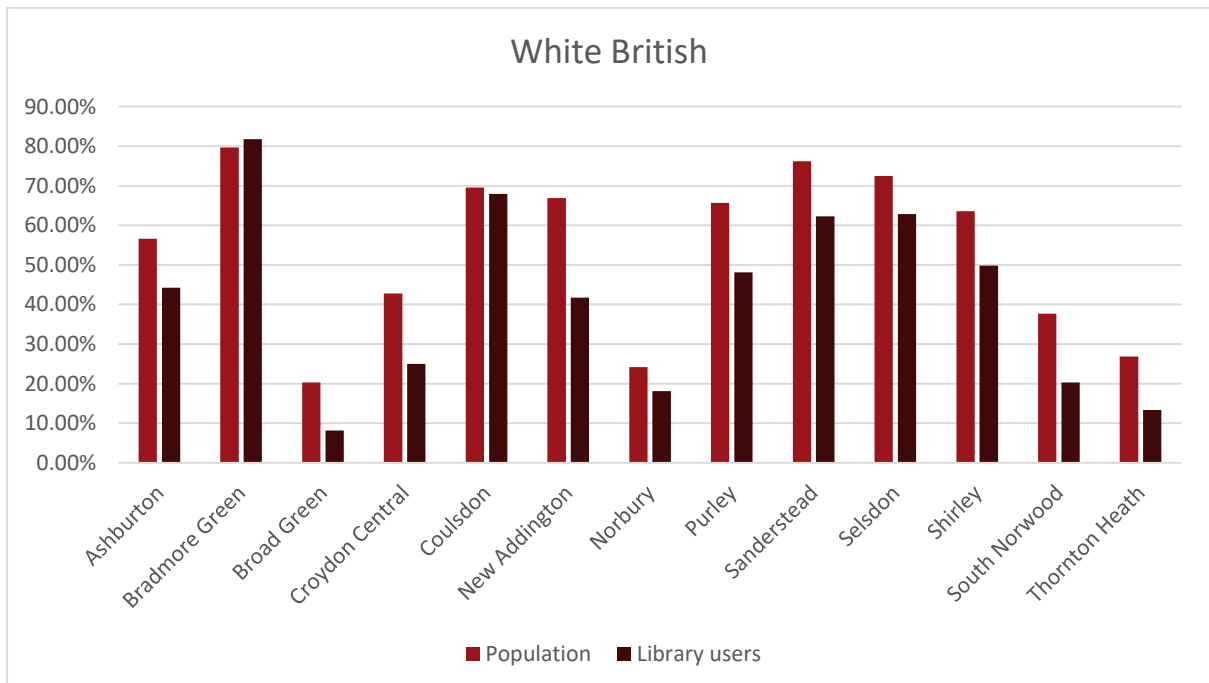
As noted above, the ethnicity of only just over a third of library users has been recorded. This means that any comparisons between library usage and catchment areas may not be accurate, and particularly so when the numbers of people in a particular group are small. However, comparisons for the four major ethnic groups within Croydon are shown below in the form of the percentage of the population in that group compared with the percentage of library users whose ethnicity is known.



There are more Asian users of Croydon’s libraries than the population would imply, but as this graph shows, this is accounted for largely by Broad Green library, although Ashburton, Purley and Shirley libraries also show significantly higher usage by Asian people. Broad Green is very well used by Asian library members.

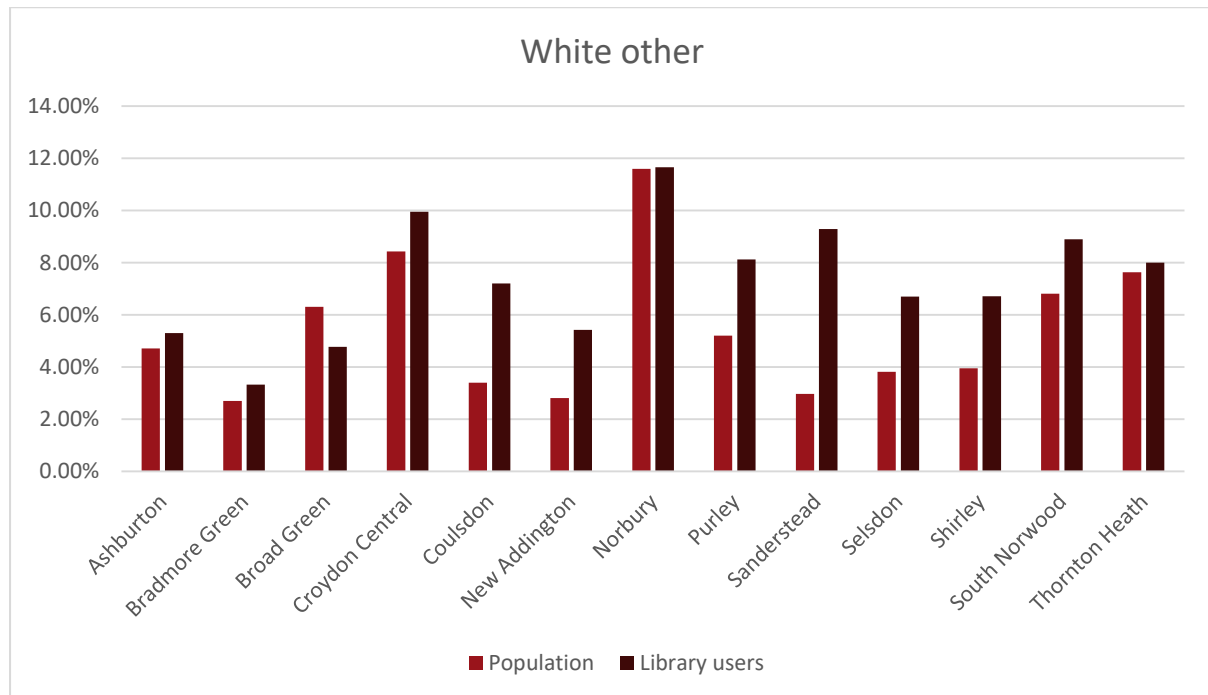


Black people are also well represented as library users across the borough, but this is especially the case at New Addington, South Norwood, Thornton Heath and Croydon Central libraries. At Broad Green, fewer black people are using the library than would be suggested by the population of the catchment area.



Generally, white British people appear to be under-represented in the usage of Croydon's libraries, although due to the limited amount of data held this difference may be more apparent than real. At Bradmore Green and Coulsdon, library usage is matched to the

population but there are significant under-representations at Broad Green, Croydon Central, New Addington, South Norwood and Thornton Heath.



White people from backgrounds other than British or Irish are slightly better represented amongst library users than the population at large but this is not the case within all catchment areas. This group is well represented at Sanderstead, Coulsdon, New Addington, Selsdon, Shirley, and South Norwood, but less well so at Broad Green. At Norbury and Thornton Heath usage is matched to the population.

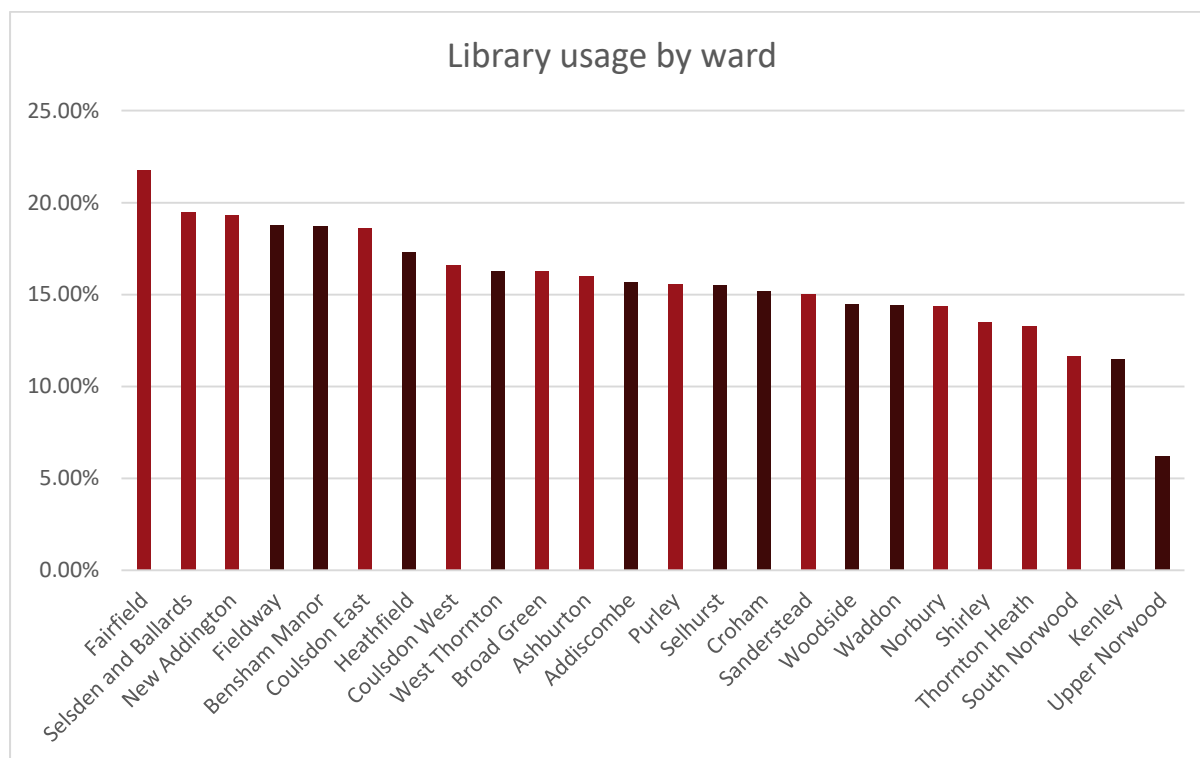
There are significant variations between the use of Croydon’s libraries when compared to their local areas. Some are reaching a high proportion of the population are some are not; some libraries reach a particular gender, age group or ethnic group better than others in the locality. This should not necessarily be regarded as a weakness of the service but may be seen as an opportunity to provide more targeted services, tailored to the actual users of that branch.

7. Analysis of library users by ward

Although an analysis of library usage by catchment area is important to assess how well individual libraries are serving local need, it is also important to examine how Croydon's libraries are used by different areas within the borough. This approach ignores which branch people chose to use, but whether or not they use any of Croydon's libraries. As with the catchment area analysis, we have used active members of the library to do this, based on their postcodes.

The quality of the postcode data held by the library service is very high. It was possible to identify the areas in which 98.5% of active members live. The data supplied to us was anonymised.

Slightly over 10% of Croydon's library members provided addressed outside the borough. This is not unusual in a library service – the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 stipulates that library authorities must allow a service to anyone who lives, works or studies in the area, and it is unusual for the service to be denied to anyone else⁴⁰. Just over 88% of library active users live in Croydon.

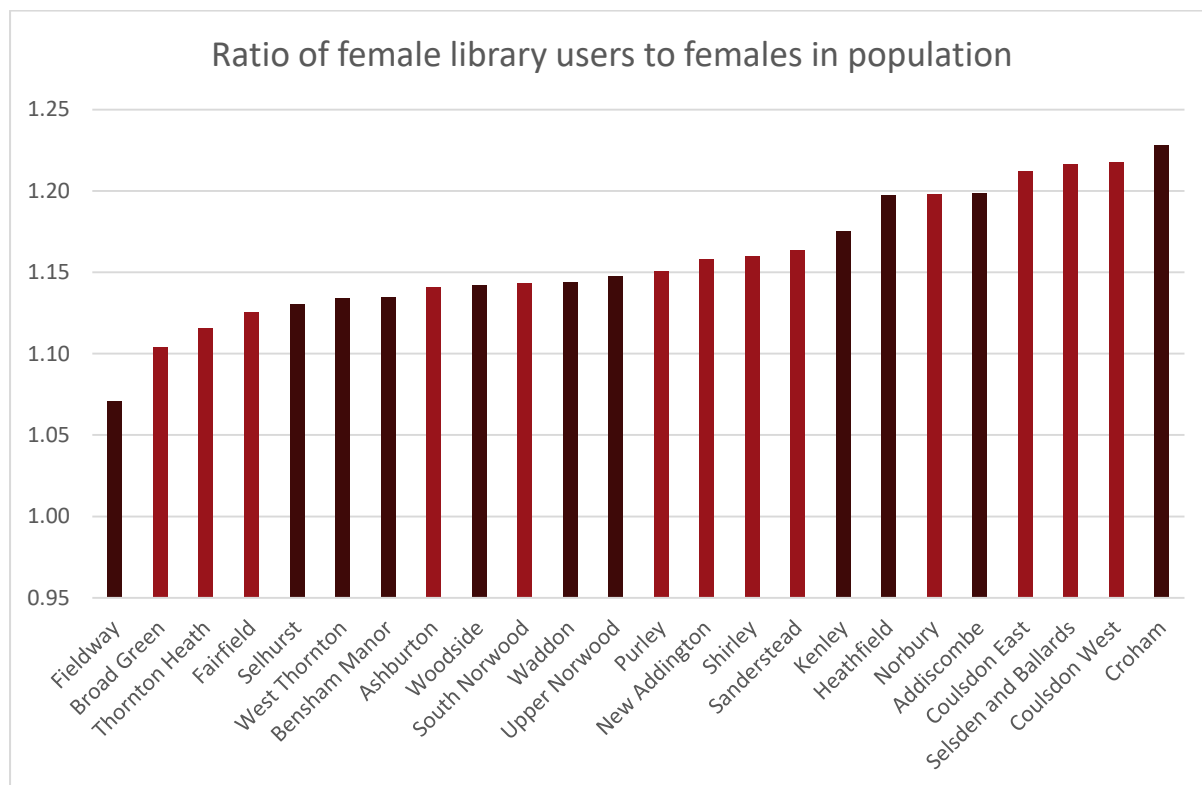


The graph above shows the percentage of the ward population who are library users. Throughout this section, the columns in dark red are wards which contain a library. There is no obvious relationship between proximity to a library and usage. Upper Norwood ward has less than half of the average usage for the borough. Reasons for this are not clear but may be the distance to the nearest Croydon library for those in the north of the area, the presence of Upper Norwood library and the separate identity of the Crystal Palace area,

⁴⁰ Authorities would normally wish to encourage visitors to the area for any reason as a means of increasing trade, and filtering out those who do not have a statutory reason to use the library service is a great drain on staff time

which spans five boroughs and may have a northward facing perspective. The New Addington and Fairfield area has a high degree of library usage, which is not reflected in branch usage.

Interestingly, and possibly contrary to expectation, there is no significant correlation between library usage in a ward and the characteristics of unemployment⁴¹, lack of qualifications⁴², deprivation⁴³ and poor health⁴⁴.



The graph above shows how well-balanced usage of Croydon’s libraries is in each ward in respect of gender. Again, there is no correlation between gender imbalance and proximity to a library, or to rates of library usage⁴⁵. However, there are significant negative correlations comparing gender imbalance to unemployment⁴⁶ and deprivation⁴⁷. This means that males are more likely to use a library in areas where unemployment or deprivation is high.

⁴¹ Correlation coefficient is -0.09

⁴² Correlation coefficient for those with no qualifications is 0.26

⁴³ Correlation coefficient against percentage of super output areas in deprivation deciles 1 – 4 is 0.01

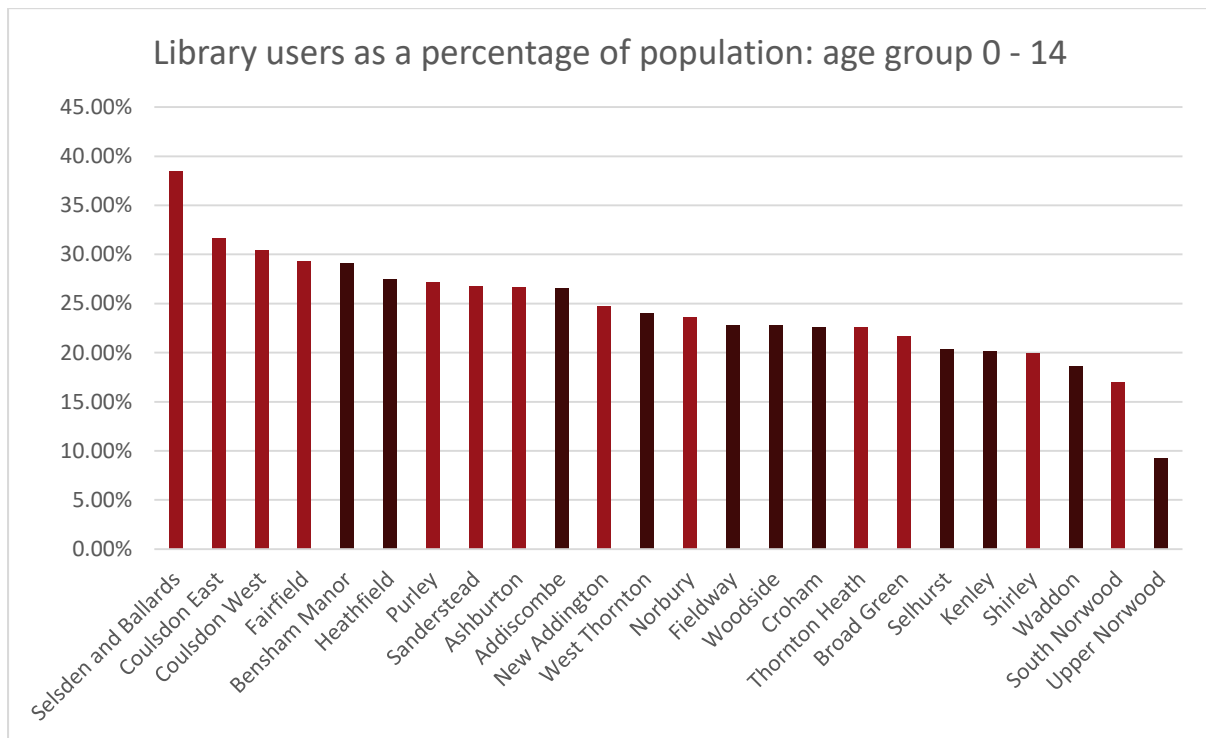
⁴⁴ Correlation coefficient against percentage of people reporting bad or very bad health is 0.11

⁴⁵ Correlation coefficient is 0.01

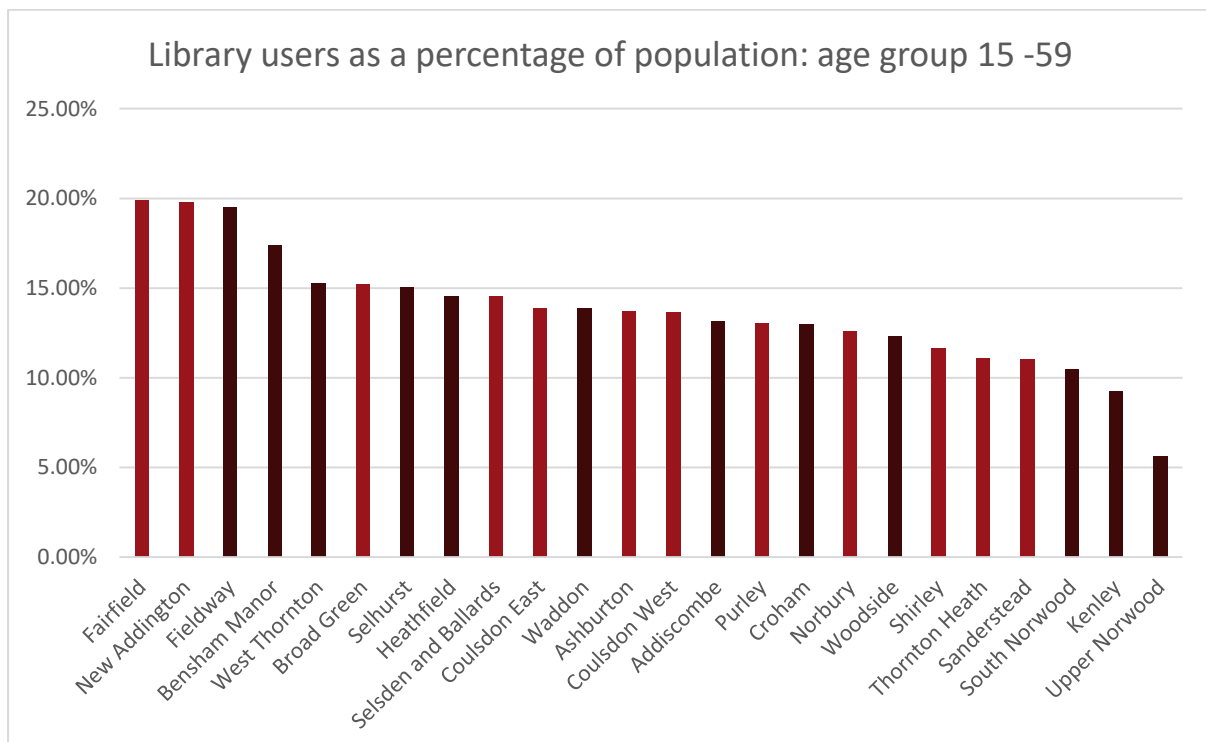
⁴⁶ Correlation coefficient is -0.73

⁴⁷ Correlation coefficient is -0.66

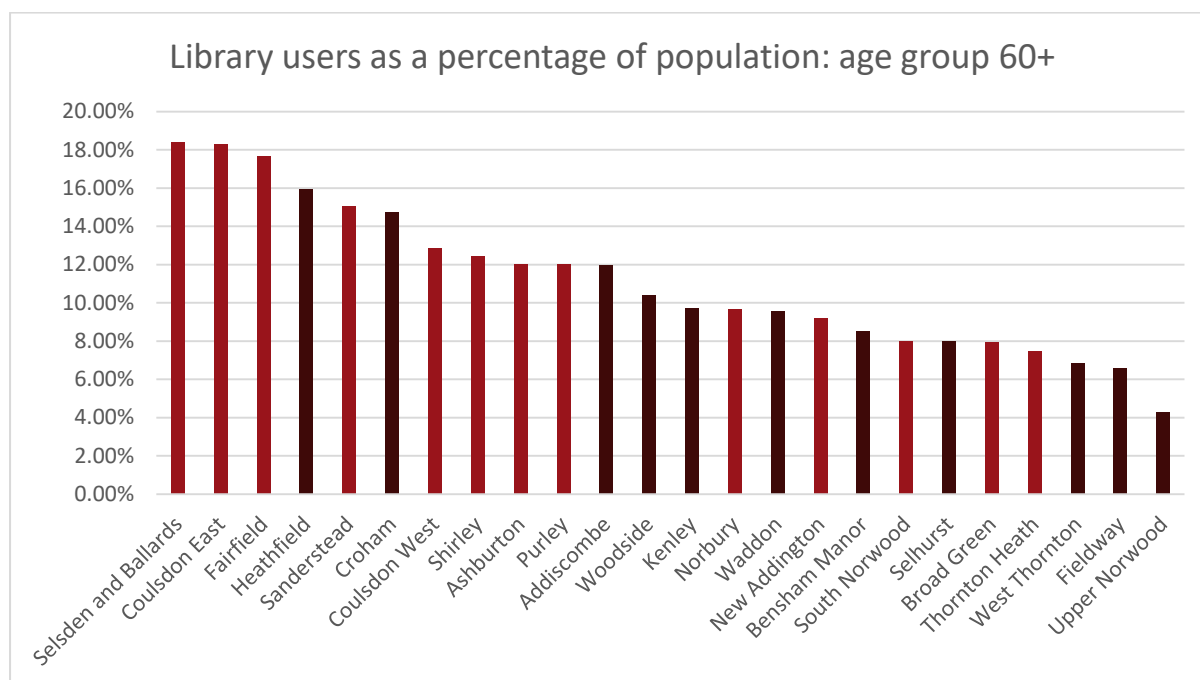
When divided by age, slightly different trends emerge.



In the younger age group, there is a greater likelihood of being a library user if there is a branch in the home ward, but that is not consistent across the borough. Sanderstead, Norbury and Purley wards perform better than their overall usage might suggest, and New Addington, Broad Green and Fieldway perform less well.



In the age group which includes most working age people, the pattern is very different. There is no obvious relationship between proximity to a library and usage, probably due to place of work. The highest usage by this age group is in Fieldway and Addington wards. Selhurst and Waddon perform better than their overall usage might suggest, and Coulsdon West, Sanderstead and Selsdon and Ballards perform less well. There is no strong correlation between library usage in this age group and unemployment⁴⁸.



In general, wards containing a library tend to have a higher level of library usage than wards that do not; this is likely to be related to difficulty in reaching the library. There are high levels of engagement in much of the south of the borough and lower levels in the north and New Addington area; this may be related to low access to vehicles in those areas. Interestingly, there is a significant correlation between areas with high levels of 60+ and high levels of engagement with that population⁴⁹, in other words the higher the proportion of over 60s in a ward, the greater the likelihood that an older person will use a library.

There is also a significant negative correlation between deprivation and library use in the over 60s⁵⁰. This implies that older people in more deprived areas are less likely to use a library. There is a weaker, but still statistically significant, negative link between 0- 14-year olds and deprivation, so that children in more deprived areas are less likely to use a library. Although not meeting statistical significance, the correlation between 15 -59-year olds is positive, implying that working age people may be more likely to use a library if they live in a deprived area.

We have not provided any ward level analysis based on ethnicity because in some cases the dataset that we have is small and this is prone to producing misleading trends.

⁴⁸ Correlation coefficient is 0.28

⁴⁹ Correlation coefficient is 0.70

⁵⁰ Correlation coefficient is -0.55

Of the 10.4% of active members who live outside the borough, nearly 70% live in other London postcodes⁵¹. It is likely that this group largely work or study in Croydon and that Croydon residents are members of other library services to the same degree. Around 17% live in each of the London SE and London SW areas, 11% in the Merton and Sutton areas of the CR postcode, 10% in Sutton and 7% in Bromley. 15% live in Surrey immediately to the south of Croydon – for example, Caterham, Woldingham, Whyteleafe, Chipstead, Warlingham – and 3% in the Redhill area.

The remainder of addresses are from all over the country, indeed only 11 out of 121 UK postal areas are unrepresented, with library users having addresses from the Shetland Islands to Jersey. This is probably due mainly to students providing a home rather than a term time address, and to a lesser extent to people working away from home.

This analysis of that sector of Croydon's population who use libraries has produced some interesting results. The use of libraries by a wide range of the population has meant that there is no statistical link between library usage and unemployment, lack of qualifications, deprivation and health in the general population, but that men are more likely to use libraries in areas of high unemployment. Over 60s are less likely to use libraries in areas of high deprivation, and both the younger and older age groups are more likely to use a library if they live close to one. Older people are also likely to use a library if they live in an area where there are many other older people.

⁵¹ SE, SW, W, NW, N, E, EC, WC and Bromley, Enfield, Harrow, Ilford, Kingston on Thames, Romford, Sutton, Twickenham and Uxbridge

8. Summary and conclusions

We have identified a number of key features of Croydon's library service

- Croydon's libraries serve every part of the community and are truly a universal service. However, males and people aged between 15 and 59 are less likely to use a library than others. This may also be true of White British people.
- Library users account for a greater proportion of the population at large when they are children; children also borrow proportionately more books than adults
- Over half of active users of the service do not borrow books; this is especially the case at Croydon Central, Thornton Heath and New Addington libraries
- Males, working age people and Black people are less likely to borrow when using a library
- There is considerable variation between the proportion of the population using libraries in different parts of the borough.
 - Croydon Central has large catchment area so its high usage not so disproportionate to other branches especially when its role as a central library is taken in account
 - Norbury and Coulsdon also serve their own areas well
 - Broad Green library is not the library of choice even for people living in Broad Green ward, and serves its potential catchment area less well than any other branch
 - Upper Norwood ward has a far lower proportion of library users than the rest of the borough
- The wards with the highest number of library users are Fairfield, Selsdon and New Addington
- Far more women than men use the libraries as a proportion of the population, but this is less apparent in the catchment areas of Croydon Central, New Addington, South Norwood and Thornton Heath libraries. The greatest gender balance is in Fieldway ward
- The age profile of branches varies considerably
 - A high proportion of the catchment area population in the 0 -14 age group are using Ashburton, Norbury, Selsdon and Coulsdon libraries
 - For the 15 -59 age group, Croydon Central, Coulsdon, Norbury and Selsdon have high usage within the population
 - For the 60+ age group, Selsdon, Croydon Central, Coulsdon and Shirley libraries have the best usage within the population

- Full data is not held by the library service on the ethnicity of its members and this makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions. It appears that Asian and Black people are well represented in the service and that White British people are not. From the data that has been collected it seems that:
 - The high proportion of Asian people is due almost entirely to members at Broad Green library
 - The highest proportion of Black people in relation to the population is at New Addington, South Norwood, Thornton Heath and Croydon Central libraries
 - The proportion of library users who are white British is matched to the population at Bradmore Green and Coulsdon libraries, but they are particularly under-represented at Broad Green, Croydon Central, New Addington, South Norwood and Thornton Heath libraries
 - White people from a non-British or Irish background are generally well represented
- There is significant variation in the degree of deprivation and health within the borough
- The libraries with potential catchment areas with most deprivation are New Addington and Broad Green
- New Addington has a catchment area with greatest proportion of people with no qualifications
- The catchment areas of New Addington, Broad Green and South Norwood libraries are the most deprived and have worse rates of health
- In the south of the borough, people have more access to vehicles
- There is no correlation between library use and unemployment, lack of qualifications, deprivation and poor health that can be demonstrated through a comparison with library data and demographic information.
- Men are more likely to use libraries if they live in areas where unemployment and deprivation are high
- Wards with a library are better used by young people and the 60+ age group if wards that do not contain a library, but this is not the case with the working age group
- People aged 60+ more likely to use a library if the ward that they live in has a higher proportion of people of that age group
- Older people from deprived areas are less likely to use a library
- These factors are crucial when developing a forward strategy for Croydon's libraries. The fact that individual branches are better used by one group of the community than others

can be regarded as an opportunity to provide targeted services, but there is also an impetus to match services to local and borough wide need.

Appendix 2

Early Engagement Report

Introduction: how we engaged

This report sets out the results of the early engagement with the public, staff and internal stakeholders on the future of Croydon's library service.

This was a light touch engagement exercise over a short period, so we tried to get as diverse a range of voices as possible in order to inform our development of future options:

- We ran an online public survey through the Get Involved portal, which ran from February 22nd to March 26th 2018. Paper copies were also available in libraries. The survey was promoted online, through social media and by library staff;
- We ran structured discussions with two community groups: a drop in session for BAME people with disabilities and an independent book club that meets in South Croydon;
- Three half-day staff workshops took place in March: approximately 40 staff attended in total; and
- Stakeholder meetings and/or phone calls with:
 - Kirsteen Roe
 - Stephen Tate
 - Alan Nimmo
 - Paula Murray
 - Asha Vyas
 - Jane Strange
 - Anesa Kritah
 - Catherine Black
 - Debbie McCormack
 - Jack Bedeman
 - Klasiena Habibi
 - Mark Norrell
 - Stephen Wingra

The results: what people said

Although we engaged with people in a number of ways, we tried to be consistent in the questions we asked.

Our overall aim was to find out:

- What people thought of the current service if they used it;
- What improvements they thought could be made;
- Which of the outcomes for libraries (identified by the DCMS Libraries Taskforce) were relevant to Croydon’s libraries;
- What partnerships were possible/suitable with other council services and local agencies; and
- What opportunities there were in terms of shared premises

3.1 The survey

844 people completed the survey, the vast majority of which (97%) were library users.

There was reasonable coverage across the borough in terms of the libraries that the respondents used

Croydon Central	481	60.28%	Purley	122	15.29%
Ashburton	119	14.91%	Coulsdon	102	12.78%
Selsdon	144	18.05%	Shirley	76	9.52%
Sanderstead	120	15.04%	South Norwood	53	6.64%
Bradmore Green	82	10.28%	New Addington	37	4.64%
Broad Green	68	8.52%	Home Library	3	.38%
Thornton Heath	95	11.9%			
Norbury	95	11.9%			

846 people responded to the survey either online or in person.

Who completed the survey

Of those that provided their gender, 70% were female. This is rather higher than the 59% figure for active library users.

There was a considerable over-representation of older age groups compared to both the population of Croydon and to active library users. Less than 2% of respondents were aged under 16, less than 4% under 25, and less than 14% were under 35. However, 38% were aged between 35 and 64 and over 26% were aged over 65.

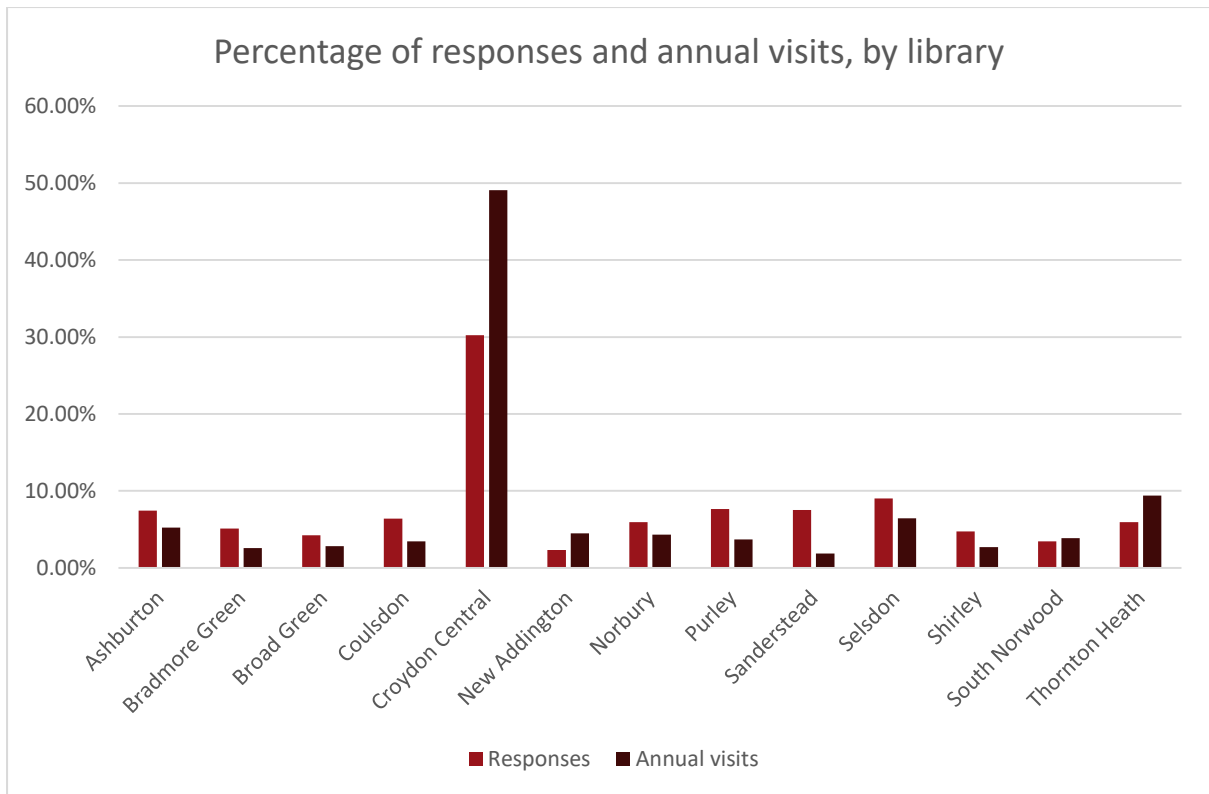
Only 13% of the borough's population is aged over 65, and only 10% of active library users are in this age group. 22% of the borough's population is aged under 16 and 31% of active library users are in this age group.

64% of respondents identified themselves as white British and no other ethnic group amounted to more than 10% of respondents. This is higher than the proportion of white British people in the borough as a whole, which is 47%. Data on ethnicity is only held for about one third of active library users and therefore may not reflect the true picture; however, for those that data is held, only 36% are white British.

The number of respondents is equivalent to only 1.3% of active library users, and it has already been demonstrated that the participants are not representative of overall usage. However, the data does provide interesting insights into patterns of library usage, albeit within a small group.

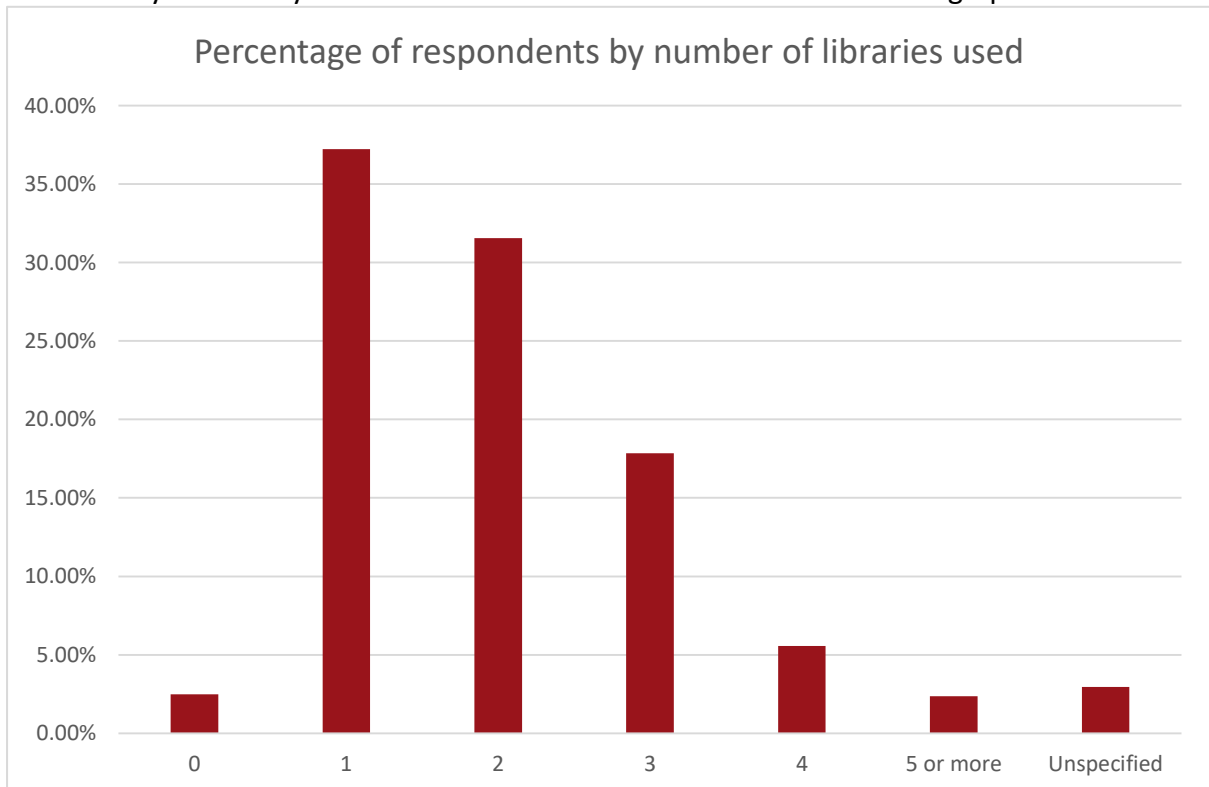
Of the 846 people who responded to the survey, 97.5% said that they used one or more Croydon library. Three people said they used the Home Library Service, although all of these respondents also used other Croydon branches.

Respondents were asked to indicate which of Croydon's libraries that they used. This is shown in the graph below, together with the proportion of the total visits to Croydon's libraries.

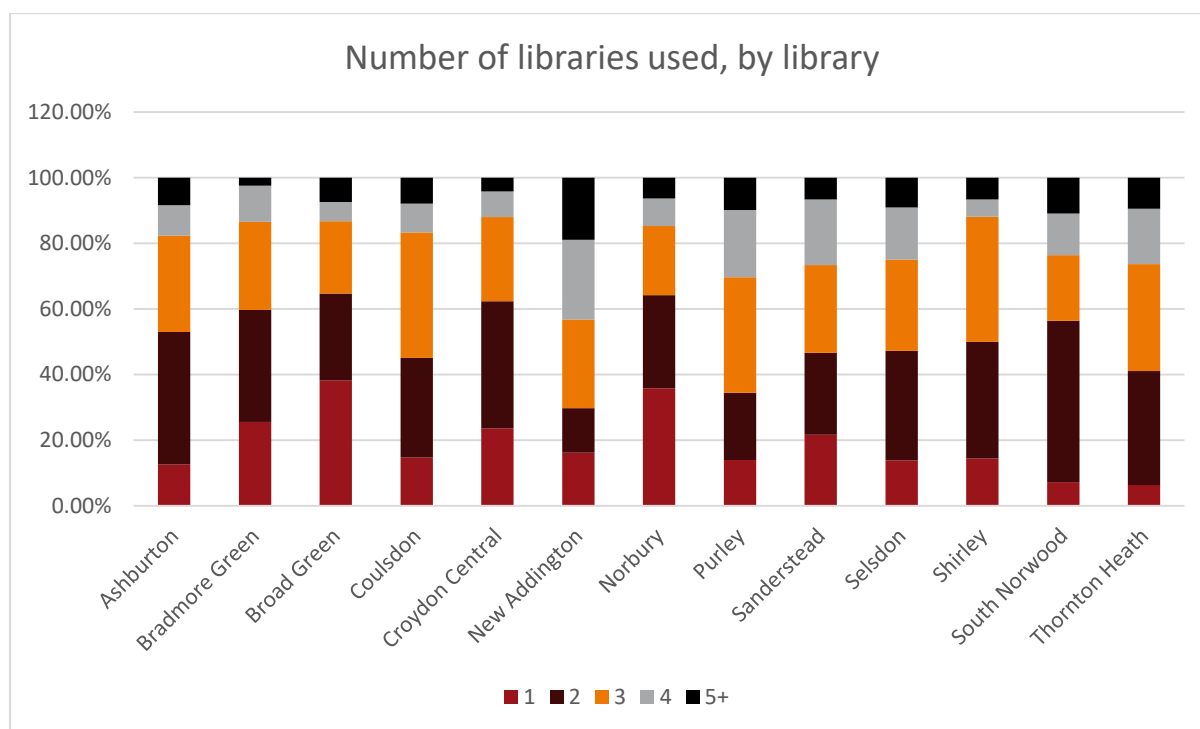


From this graph, it is apparent that there was an under-representation of users at Croydon Central, New Addington, South Norwood and Thornton Heath libraries and an over-representation at the other libraries, especially Sanderstead.

About 60% of respondents used more than one library. This is useful because the data collected by the library service does not record this. This is shown in the graph below.



If this is broken down by individual libraries, varying patterns of use are shown:



This shows that respondents using Broad Green and Norbury libraries are less likely to use another library as well. Respondents using New Addington, Purley, Sanderstead and Selsdon libraries were more likely to use two or more other libraries. However, this data should be treated with some caution as some sample sizes are very small.

More than 50% of respondents using almost every branch library also used Croydon Central, the exceptions being Bradmore Green, Broad Green and Coulsdon. There were also some instances of more than 40% of users of one branch using another individual branch. These are Bradmore Green (Coulsdon), Coulsdon (Bradmore Green and Purley), New Addington (Selsdon), Sanderstead (Selsdon), and Selsdon (Sanderstead).

We also carried out an analysis of the postcodes of respondents. Of the 846 responses, 569 gave valid Croydon postcodes, 28 lived outside the borough and 249 did not provide a postcode or provided a postcode which could not be identified. To ensure consistency with our earlier reports, we have used the pre-2018 ward divisions when analysing this data. There were fewer than ten responses from New Addington, Fieldway and Upper Norwood wards, and forty or more from Coulsdon East, Fairfield and Sanderstead wards.

The small numbers and variation in the data means that any analysis should be treated with extreme caution. With this in mind, more than 25% of respondents living in almost every ward used Croydon Central library, the exceptions being Coulsdon East, Norbury, Purley, Upper Norwood and Woodside. Other than the central library, in some wards with a library located in them did more than 25% of respondents use an individual library and always for the library located within that ward; these were Ashburton, New Addington, Norbury, Sanderstead and Selsdon and Ballards. More than 25% of New Addington respondents also used Thornton Heath library. 60% of respondents living in Norbury ward used Norbury

library – this was the highest for any ward. Only 11% of respondents living in both Broad Green and Thornton Heath wards used their local library.

When analysed by library, there were two wards where more than 20% of respondents who said they used a particular library; these were Coulsdon East and Norbury. Coulsdon East showed a high proportion of respondents using both Bradmore Green and Coulsdon libraries, whilst almost 38% of respondents in Norbury ward used Norbury library.

More generally, the picture was of only a loose correlation between place of residence and use of a local library. With the exception of New Addington and South Norwood, all libraries had respondents from the majority of wards using the library.

Responses to the questions

In terms of what elements of the current library offer were most important, *access to books* came out on top, followed by *getting information, quiet space, access to computers and space for children's activities*.

In answer to the question *How do you think the library service could be improved?* Answers were varied. Below, we have grouped them into themes. The issues highlighted are the most repeated:

What could improve?

Book stock:

- More and more recent books;
- Better catalogue;
- More books for under 5s;
- Improved reservation service;
- A book stock that represents all Croydon's communities;
- More classics;
- Seasonal promotions;
- Large print for care homes;
- Wider range of fiction;
- Alphabetical fiction;
- Longer loan period;
- Update the non-fiction;
- Update the audio books;
- Better display and cleaning of books;
- More stock circulation;
- Organise the books and shelves more clearly; and

- Borrow Box is not very effective

Staff:

- A better welcome;
- Bring back librarians;
- Better queue management;
- **Not enough book knowledge**; and
- Clarity needed on acceptable customer behaviour

Services:

- **Better opening hours, open Sundays, 7 days a week, evening opening;**
- **Cafés;**
- Somewhere to eat packed lunch;
- Plug in for laptops and chargers;
- More study space and tables;
- Jigsaw lending, toy library;
- More eBooks and digital content;
- Improve the home library service;
- Re open local studies;
- Ability to book computers remotely;
- **Update computers;**
- More IT support, particularly for those who need to access applications etc online;
- Tourist information;
- Business resources, such as COBRA;
- Investment in new technology;
- Card payment;
- Collaborate with other services; and
- Make sure self-service works properly

Events and activity:

- Improved marketing and publicity;
- More for young people;
- More work with local writers;
- Creative writing;

- Spoken word;
- Talks;
- Promote the arts;
- Self-help classes; parenting, mindfulness or health and wellbeing;
- Events for adults, not just children;
- Events for the elderly;
- Evening classes;
- Less books, more community activity;
- **More educational and learning events;**
- Have museum exhibitions in libraries; and
- Health sessions and clinics

Community:

- Liaise with local businesses;
- More volunteering opportunities;
- Work with the community in a creative way;
- Space for community meetings in the evening; and
- Skills and language swaps

Children and young people:

- More children's events;
- Much more teen fiction; and
- **Better homework help**

Buildings:

- Norbury needs redevelopment;
- Purley needs a café and brightening up;
- Conference/meeting rooms;
- Central Library looks tired;
- Thornton Heath not accessible enough;
- Small improvements like lighting and colour;
- Ensure there are quiet spaces, and noisy ones!
- **Sort out building problems quickly;**
- **Buildings could be multifunctional;**
- Café for families at Bradmore Green;

- More space could be hired out;
- **Better toilets**; and
- **Make use of the garden spaces**

What activities and services they would like to see

Based on the seven outcomes for libraries set out by the DCMS Libraries Taskforce, we asked what respondents would like to see in the future.

Events and activity: art, theatre, music, poetry, crafts	441	61.94%
Events and activities for children	403	56.6%
Help to get people online and use digital technology	383	53.79%
Help to get people into employment or start their own business	270	37.92%
English language classes and help for new arrivals to the UK	250	35.11%
Courses and talks on issues such as money management, health and careers	345	48.46%
Meeting space for business	142	19.94%
Somewhere to meet people	221	31.04%
A cafe	367	51.54%
Health checks and information	228	32.02%
Access to other council services, such as benefits advice	296	41.57%
Anything else?	54	7.58%

What types of books would they like to see

Popular fiction	534	73.25%
Children's books	427	58.57%

Fantasy	214	29.36%
Classics	411	56.38%
Biography	370	50.75%
Self help	288	39.51%
Careers	217	29.77%
Cookery	262	35.94%
Crafts	260	35.67%
DIY	228	31.28%
Gardening	254	34.84%
Health	316	43.35%
Anything else?	121	16.6%

3.2 Community groups

We visited two groups: a BAME disability drop-in group in central Croydon and an independent book group that meets monthly in South Croydon. We had lively discussions at both and the key points are set out below:

BAME disability group:

Library usage

They used the libraries with varying frequencies, between weekly and quarterly.

All used the libraries for borrowing and finding information. Three people also used the libraries for private study and for using the PCs. Two used Wi-Fi, two for photocopying and three as a place to meet and socialise.

Of those that didn't use libraries, two lived outside the borough and one just didn't use them. A visually impaired member thought that libraries had nothing to offer them.

All library users and several others agreed that the library buildings are accessible for disabled people (but see below).

Thoughts and ideas

There was a general discussion of how libraries could be improved, what group members would like to see more of and what is not working.

General

There was a request for water dispensers in libraries, but members had different ideas about whether eating and drinking should be allowed in the whole library, in designated areas or not at all. There was general agreement that mobile phones should not be permitted. Some members thought that staff were not sufficiently challenging of poor behaviour.

Some members thought that the public PCs were unreliable.

All library users agreed that staff were generally friendly and helpful.

Disability issues

Some members using wheelchairs reported that the PC booking terminals were not suitable for them and cited examples of when staff had been unavailable to help them book on. This was particularly the case at Central library, where the feeling of the group was there were not enough staff. PC booking systems generally were reported as long winded or inadequate, especially when staff intervention was required.

The lift at Croydon Central is sometimes out of order meaning that many disabled people cannot reach the upper floors. However, library staff had been helpful in arranging an alternative.

There was a suggestion that the library might stock braille books, but a visually impaired user said that they did not read braille, and was not aware that libraries stocked audio books.

A carer reported that it was difficult to park near to the libraries, especially as some carers do not have blue badges.

Further ideas are discussed in the activities section.

Activities

There was a call for more social activity in libraries, such as bingo sessions. Film screenings would be popular with the majority of the group and would encourage them to use libraries.

The group generally thought there should be more opportunity for exercise classes, and particularly chair exercise for wheelchair users.

The group were very receptive to the idea of advisory sessions in libraries. There were particular requests for the Citizen's Advice Bureau, Department of Work and Pensions, and Job Centre Plus.

There was also strong support for events and/or concessions for carers, health check-ups and other related activities, and for more signposting to council and other statutory services. CV writing and business start-up support were also popular.

The group agreed that it would be better if these sessions were delivered by specialists rather than library staff.

Services to children

Members thought that the activities provided for children were good, but would like to see more interactive reading sessions, where children were encouraged to read out loud. Some members thought that more nursery school visits could be arranged.

Some members thought that children's areas could be improved as they looked a bit worn out. Streatham Library was cited as a good example of a children's library.

Book stock

Even though at the start of the session, all library users identified borrowing as their principal use of the libraries, there was much less discussion and strong opinion about the stock that should be offered. The suggestions that were made were:

- Fashion
- True crime
- Crime fiction
- Arts and crafts
- Accounting, especially study aids
- Running a small business

Only one member expressed a desire for more e-books, although several had Kindles. Two members said they might consider e-books for holidays but normally preferred print format. Overall, the group were very welcoming and positive, and there was a good deal of engaged discussion. When asked if they would be prepared to share their expertise in delivering sessions on appropriate subjects, they agreed enthusiastically.

South Croydon Book Club

This is an independent book club that meets on Sunday mornings in a pub in south Croydon. None of the ten members were regular users of Croydon libraries, with some preferring to use libraries near to their workplace. They were a diverse group, both in terms of age and ethnicity. Below are their comments on why they don't use Croydon libraries and suggestions on what might make them interested again.

- Library book groups not well organised and it is difficult to get the right books. They have chosen the independent route so that they can read what they really want to;
- Croydon's libraries not attractive and need sprucing up. People do not like to go into a tired and shabby building when there are so many attractive spaces now;
- The book stock is not good and the non-fiction is out of date;
- Those who were parents said that their kids go to Croydon libraries to study; they thought it was probably more a social thing;

- Some of them use better libraries near to work: Marylebone, Willesden Green, West Norwood, Wimbledon;
- They thought that libraries could do more for those with learning disabilities and that the neutral and inclusive nature of library spaces made them particularly suitable for this;
- There was a comment that young adult books were often in kids' section and that this was off-putting;
- Someone said that they thought Southwark libraries have a much better ebook selection;
- There was a general feeling that Croydon Clocktower is in need of refurbishment and that the spaces in the building are wasted. Much more could be made of the library and cultural space.
- They thought that the Ideas Stores were a very good model that would suit Croydon;
- Everyone loved Wimbledon library and its performance space;
- They think that libraries need to attract the trendy audience (Wimbledon does);
- There was a call for late events and takeovers at Clocktower, in the way that national museums do;
- They liked the 'fablab' idea that is seen in some library services around the country: giving customers a chance to experiment with the latest creative technology;
- There was a general feeling that most people were unaware of what does happen in Croydon libraries and that advertising was poor; and
- They all thought that having adult learning in libraries made sense

3.3 Staff workshops

We held three staff workshops, with frontline staff, supervisors and managers. In all workshops we looked at how Croydon's libraries could deliver against the DCMS Libraries Taskforce seven outcomes. We also did a SWOT analysis of the library service. The results are summarised below:

Managers: seven outcomes

Happy and healthy	Cultural and creative enrichment
Could do healthy food demos and cooking Promotions through GPs for example tablets in GP surgeries to access online magazines Dementia friendly exercise	Using libraries as a performance space Work with museums and events and exhibitions LMP and brit school

Mindfulness HIV health checks Expand the range of health activities	
Reading and literacy	Greater prosperity
Different types of reading groups to encourage those who don't normally read The reading agency need to change the SRC Reading groups for young children who are struggling with their literacy Providing stock people want to attract them to use the library Right stock for the right location	Partnership with the British library business start-up support funding pending Pitch market and sell events
Digital access and literacy	Achieving potential
Upgrading IT equipment and Wi-Fi Volunteers to help use devices and promote the library resources Digital zones and volunteers in all libraries Promote online resources	Enrol children when they are born or compulsory enrolment when joining a Croydon school Expand the careers offer: job clubs The right structure and the right staffing Spotify authors display posters in libraries Assist children and parents to make choices Literacy and class visits and homework clubs
Communities	
Promote services more widely e.g. newspapers posters at bus stops and train Community champions and engagement groups More outreach to schools and nurseries, children centres and community groups Opportunities for out of hours community u usage Police surgeries and libraries Space for charities to meet NHS health checks	
Supervisors: Seven outcomes	
Happy and healthy	Cultural and creative enrichment

<p>We could have exercise classes, could try again Regular health advice Partnership working for books on prescription Health talks medical checks Classes such as yoga Quiet space in which to set and order your thoughts Social groups for the elderly lady Would like to offer more social activities for older people Healthy exercise sessions with chair based fitness Yoga and meditation services Nutritional advice Mindfulness colouring sessions NHS health checks Relevant displays of stock Providing space for children centres, the police and Calat There is a huge issue around communication between branches and across the service</p>	<p>Build links in the community Need for overall events coordination Resources for materials Access is an issue at broad green Not enough children's events at Central Not doing festivals Rhyme time storytimes crafty things we do fantastic under five sessions ,Reading challenge and homework help clubs Would like to do more craft activities for children and adults but there is a lack of resources and staff Specialise library collections e.g. a crime library Doing adult craft activities but not enough people coming Reading reports for adults Crochet knitting groups chess club More appealing events also workshop activities for adults Activities for children Good to have the same staff at libraries to provide a friendly face We need to bring back the homework clubs and run them properly</p>
<p>Reading and literacy</p>	<p>Greater prosperity</p>
<p>Could do with more reading groups The Summer Reading Challenge is better Better links with local schools we don't currently work with high schools We could teach more skills with IT classes language classes and theory tests We could do more work with adults who have English as a second language We could do more promoting different kinds of reading groups Stock centrally bought can order locally but have to justify No classics</p>	<p>The self-service system and its functionality need to be revisited We can sell stationary and have coffee shops in libraries and we can rent out spaces We need more connected partnerships: we do it currently but we're not very good at it We can offer business start-up resources careers advice We can have book sales</p>
<p>Digital access and literacy</p>	<p>Achieving potential</p>

<p>People say ‘the library staff will do it for us’ We need more work and job related IT sessions Staff training needed Wi-Fi and the IT are in a terrible state We need more knowledge on how to help people fill in forms online One-to-one training IT training with volunteers is very good We should build partnerships to be able to help people improve their digital skills We should have tablets and laptops available for staff for things like class visits</p>	<p>We can offer space for job clubs and careers advice Homework clubs should be improved with books that support school studies Volunteering for all ages All staff to run sessions over peak hours We can offer language courses Nutritional courses In Addiscombe there is a young writers group Work with outside agencies like Headstart to promote more opportunities for young people We need laptops projectors and screens for local talks in libraries We need resources that work and sufficient staff numbers We need to be have less emphasis on numbers more on the quality of the work and the outcomes</p>
<p>Communities</p>	
<p>We should work with community centres and youth centres We can partner with local organisations More youth led events such as open mike we could be doing this more and better Councillor’s surgeries Development community consultation We’re not doing enough out reach into the community Tourist information We can have opportunities for carers to experience events close to home Libraries are safe place for all We should build more connections with local schools and partnerships with the police Fun activities such as dance martial arts and gaming</p>	

Frontline staff: Seven outcomes

<p>Happy and healthy</p>	<p>Cultural and creative enrichment</p>
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<p>Life skills for teens Healthy eating and meal preparation group Working with Croydon charities with young mums with meal budgets who get a bag of food at the end Providing space for holistic exercise sessions run by volunteers Provide space for St Christopher's death cafe Mums and dads can meet other adults at rhyme time in the same situation and make new friends Healthy living session to include include blood pressure check diabetes and talks about healthy lifestyle</p>	<p>We should be more closely linked with the councils cultural services don't understand why we're not We need plasma screens The social media needs to be current communications with schools guidance on careers There is a finance issue with the reading groups We could have more library takeovers and open mike sessions it would be good if there were more LGBT activities We need more a world awareness of other cultures such as Slavic and Baltic Need better displays in the libraries Youth enrichment and well-being group's film club</p>
<p>Reading and literacy</p>	<p>Greater prosperity</p>
<p>Some of the homework clubs are closed we really need to look at this because they're enormously We could have mathematics course Refresher courses English reading groups Do not charge kids today for their homework printing Look at stock circulation Reinstate homework clubs in all libraries Computer code club part of children's education at school have an external group coming in to teach them Have a better selection of books in libraries not one size fits al Groups range of different manga for young children and teens: Japanese Korean Chinese Teen activities inspire creativity and new friendships Have a better book trail</p>	<p>We should refer customers to careers advice give some help with writing CVs</p>
<p>Digital access and literacy</p>	<p>Achieving potential</p>

<p>More social media updates Staff need to be able to do that The council website needs to be more easy to follow Better IT better computers Have kindle available to use in libraries Each branch should have its own social media account and Improve the IT system</p>	<p>Have more study spaces and this could be seasonal doesn't have to be all year round Outsource the job clubs and the CV clubs</p>
<p>Communities</p>	
<p>There is so much we could do to welcome refugees to Britain We should have English classes in partnership with Calat The role that we have in bringing mothers and children together is so important Teens are missing from the library 13 to 16-year-olds we need to encourage them to come in and understand their needs</p>	

3.4 Stakeholder conversations

We spoke to a variety of council managers and potential partners for the library service. Stakeholders we spoke to are listed at the beginning of this appendix. The highlights of conversations are set out below in appropriate categories:

Buildings and spaces

- The buildings need updating. Buying more books won't necessarily increase usage, need better spaces
- Put a library into the New Addington leisure centre
- Could generate income by renting space, especially in Central
- More flexible spaces, moveable shelving
- Don't need 13 libraries
- Lot of comment on the neutrality of library spaces and how they lend themselves to engagement with communities, including clients with challenges
- Safety, including from knife crime is a concern for parents and children in Croydon. Libraries could be safe spaces for young people to go to after school. There are many families living in cramped spaces, e.g. B & Bs, which aren't conducive to doing homework. Libraries need the resources and facilities to enable young people to do their homework. Young people want to do their homework with other local young people between 3pm and 6pm. Some high schools close at 2.30pm., Early help and partnerships service lead

Partnerships

- Libraries should be linked to the council's new localities strategy
- Put libraries on the cultural map in Croydon by providing venues
- There should be collaboration around the provision of information across the council.
- The Council is going to be more proactive and take a more preventative approach. This is a huge opportunity for libraries to work with other council departments and teams in order to reach harder to reach people.
- Libraries should be at the centre of Croydon's cultural scene, especially around spoken word and literature;

- Would be good to explore collaborative working (with Employment team) in stages (there's a tendency in Croydon to rush into things rather than testing new ideas).
- Could be an opportunity to work together (with Communities team) in supporting community groups – some libraries could be in key locations and be the only physical space for communities to meet in their area
- Would be interested in exploring potential for a Library of Things, so that communities could borrow items they need e.g. to put There could also be a link around social prescribing, and in particular use of the mobile library as a focus for community activity. Should also look at similar assets in the borough such as the playbus and outreach bus, both of which are run by Third Sector organisations. Is there any potential for a cross-over of services?
- Communities Team have relationships with lots of community groups and other organisations, but not yet a strategic approach – this is something she's looking to develop. Libraries could be part of that strategy and key in terms of offering a space for groups to meet.
- Communities Team could provide introductions to key infrastructure groups and jointly develop signposting to all the services available in the community.
- Adult Education: The layout, location and service offer all need to be reviewed. Many of the users of the adult learning and training services are from disadvantaged backgrounds – so there's an opportunity for other services to engage with them, where they are in partnership.
- There used to be a really thriving family learning programme, run between Childrens centres, schools, CALAT and other third sector partners. Perhaps this could include libraries and be re-energised.
- If there are going to be partnerships between other services and libraries, thought needs to be given to reception staff and their skills
- Libraries could be 'touch points' for people by providing computer terminals through which they could access council information. Libraries could be a 'location' or a 'front door' to council services. They could use the Customer Contact Centre's webchat service from library buildings.
- Lots of crossover with Early Help and Partnerships: Anything related to family learning supports what they is trying to achieve
- The Youth Engagement Team is very keen to work with libraries. They could also provide training for library staff in working with young people
- Locating Live Well Hubs in libraries

- Library staff and Live Well staff together could skill up / enable people to live happier healthier lives. 'A library, even in its most basic form is playing a part in people's health'.

Activities and services

- We should look at 'pop up' libraries in suitable venues across the borough
- Volunteer programme could be much better, missed opportunities
- Better use of social media needed
- Could run welfare surgeries in libraries, in areas with the greatest need
- Libraries could house other council/community services
- Talk to non-users, not enough people find the libraries relevant
- Employment team could run CV workshops in libraries
- Look at cross-training of staff and closer collaboration further down the line
- Would also like to explore whether there could be a more formal mechanism for those taking books out to housebound service clients to report back on any concerns about customers.
- Would be interested in exploring potential for a Library of Things, so that communities could borrow items to put on events or improve the local environment (tools, AV equipment, awnings, etc.)
- Libraries should be signposting other council and community services
- There could be specific support projects for new mums in libraries
- Information sessions for young people – e.g. 'pop-up' sessions giving information about screening for STDs (a huge issue)
- Information about support for financial issues could be provided in libraries.
- The Customer Contact Centre offers libraries and third sector partners the opportunity to buy laptops for £29 to help familiarise the public with digital services.
- Early intervention workers could meet parents, carers and young people in libraries which provide a neutral public space. Some parents have their own negative feelings about meeting in school building, which may be based on their own experiences of education. For some, it is also easier to have the conversations away from 'difficult partners'.
- Perhaps the council's 'digital champions' could run sessions in libraries.
- Parenting programmes could be run in libraries. They are better spaces.

- Developing more inclusive events – for people who are challenged by the prevailing environment/culture – so that they feel the library is an accepting place. For instance, people with autism.
- Developing libraries as dementia-friendly places – possibly at designated times of the week.

Conclusions

The engagement exercise, although brief, has given us a wealth of ideas and a sense of what Croydon's libraries could be. Many of the suggestions and ideas reflect things that are already happening in libraries and could be improved. There is an appetite for partnership with libraries in relevant council services such as CALAT, employment, public health and communities. We have an inkling of what could be done to attract new users and new communities which, when matched with the needs analysis, will help to shape our recommendations.

Above all we found a wealth of creativity and a passion for libraries amongst the staff that must be utilised and developed. Staff engagement and development is crucial to the success of any future plans.

In summary, we can say that:

Library users would like to see:

- More events and activities, cultural and social, in libraries for all age groups;
- Attractive buildings;
- Better and newer stock;
- Support with getting online ;
- Help with getting employment or starting a business;
- Longer opening hours;
- Cafés; and
- Better homework help

Staff feedback was:

- Good feeling about coming back in house. Frustration of libraries sitting apart from rest of council;
- Buildings need sorting out;
- Public awareness of libraries low, better marketing needed;
- Staff anxiety about capacity to deliver events and activities;
- Opportunities to build council and community partnerships;
- Homework clubs were so popular and need to be brought back;
- Many, many ideas for social and cultural activity in libraries;

- Need a fresh look at the different communities living in Croydon; and
- Opportunities to welcome refugees

Internal partner conversations told us:

- Put libraries on the cultural map in Croydon by providing venues;
- Libraries should be at the centre of Croydon’s cultural scene, especially around spoken word and literature;
- Libraries could be at the centre of the council’s new locality based strategy;
- Employment and welfare services could be delivered in libraries;
- Appetite for closer working partnerships with:
 - CALAT
 - The Youth Engagement team
 - The ‘Live Well’ team
 - Gateway and early intervention
 - Employment team

This report will feed in to the future options report for Croydon’s library service that will be subject to public consultation later this year.

Appendix 3: Trends and developments in other library services

Defining a modern library service

The most successful modern libraries are those that understand their role as part of the wider council vision and, working where necessary with partners, deliver a range of opportunities that respond effectively and efficiently to the needs of their local community.

To do this they:

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

Arts Council England (2016) suggests that 'Public libraries are trusted spaces, free to enter and open to all. In them people can explore and share reading, information, knowledge and culture. Libraries contribute to the wider goals of both national and local government and the communities that they serve.' Models for the future of libraries tend to focus on:

- Library as multi-purpose council service centres;
- Library as community 'hub'; and
- Library as learning centres

These ideas are well reflected in the Idea Store programme in **Tower Hamlets**, where the council has replaced most of its libraries and adult education centres with new-build or refurbished centres which integrate classrooms with library facilities, known as Idea Stores.

Case study: Tower Hamlets

In the late 1990s, the council decided that all twelve library buildings and seven adult education centres were either in the wrong place or in the wrong type of building and developed a joint Library and Lifelong Learning Development Strategy which would replace them gradually with seven new integrated centres, called 'Idea Stores', at the heart of their local shopping centres. The Idea Store programme required a substantial capital investment and fundraising programme. The strategy described how, alongside the lending library and reference section, each library, to be known as an Idea Store, would also offer: adult and further education classrooms, open learning centres, public access IT and Internet terminals, homework clubs, study space, and a creche.

The changes initially helped to treble visits to the new libraries in comparison with those they replaced, moving the borough from the bottom decile in London's library visit league

table to the top decile. Before Idea Stores, Tower Hamlets had the most per capita libraries in the capital, but they were in the wrong places and were too small. They now have two million visits per year from just seven locations. But although it achieved a significant improvement in unit costs as a result of the startling increase in user numbers, the programme did not reduce expenditure in the library service; in fact, it increased as a result of the introduction of seven day and evening opening across much of the service.

These Idea Stores are 'continuing to be successful' (Public Libraries News, 2016). The newest Idea Store at Watney Market (opened in May 2013) successfully provides adult, youth and children's library services together with learning spaces, all this complemented by a ground-floor space which hosts a range of community facilities including advice on council and health services. Visitors to Watney Market Idea Store are more than double the number that used the old library.

While the core functions of libraries are seen by most people to be the lending of books and providing access to reference materials, there has been a recent surge of innovation (or rediscovery of old ideas) over the last 10 to 15 years. These changes have been motivated by drivers such as declining book lending; budget reductions; or new ideas about the role of libraries in society and in the digital age.

According to Blair McPherson (Director of Community Services, Lancashire County Council, 2010), 'Libraries are not about borrowing books. Libraries are not about housing books. Libraries are one of the vehicles for local councils to deliver community cohesion, social inclusion, community engagement and equality and diversity. Libraries are a place where you can access the internet. Libraries are venues for homework clubs, mother and toddler groups, rock concerts, Councillors' surgeries, and benefit advice sessions. Libraries work with schools to promote reading, with adult learning to promote life skills, with the Prison Service to promote numeracy and literacy, and with social services to promote safeguarding children and adults. Libraries are local, they are community centres. The best attract all ages and all sections of the community. If we didn't have local libraries, then people like me would be inventing them.'

The Arts Council support this with the findings of their 2013 report 'Envisioning the library of the future', stating that libraries should be 'the hub of the community; (somewhere that is) fully exploiting digital technology; resilient'.

A particular challenge is the development of a long-term strategy that anticipates and can adapt to the trend towards digital content and 'virtual' services replacing the need for 'hard' materials and spaces within which to house them. If a library contains no books in 10 years' time, what will it be its purpose?

As local government service delivery models evolve, aided by the dawn of the digital age, libraries present new opportunities to serve a wider purpose and address broader social and economic outcomes for local authorities.

The library's role

Libraries as community and/or council hubs

Community hubs are local places at the heart of their communities, offering and hosting a wide range of services, public events and activities, and spaces to meet friends and contribute to community life. They are places where people may spend as much or little time as they like without having to spend any money.

Many libraries across the country have linked with or hosted council service centres. With the rationalisation of property in many authorities, libraries are often the only public buildings in outlying areas. Although the general trend is away from face to face services and towards the 'digital by default' approach, there is still a substantial section of the population unprepared for this. Additionally, as set out in the section on commissioning, libraries lend themselves to the delivery of other services, particularly related to health and wellbeing.

Using libraries as community hubs involves:

- Libraries as a resource for local communities to collaborate;
- Libraries as places to access other services;
- Partners working with libraries to support community activity; and
- Libraries being commissioned to deliver other services

Case study: Swiss Cottage Library

Swiss Cottage Library, run by Camden Council, is part of a 'civic-cultural centre' which includes a leisure centre, community centre, doctor's surgery, children's play areas, cafés, all located in a landscaped open public park, linked to Hampstead Theatre.

Case study: Wigan Life Centre

Wigan Life Centre is a one-stop location for everything service-based that the local authority can offer the public. Services offered include Active Living, Biodiversity, Bereavement Services, Hospitality, Grounds Maintenance, Play, a Learning Centre, Arts and Sports Development.

Case study: North Ormesby Community Hub, Middlesbrough

North Ormesby Community Hub in Middlesbrough contains a library, children's centre, young people's services, dance studio and boxing gym. There are many rooms available to run community activities. In the heart of the building is a kitchen and open plan area, and the centre runs healthy eating courses. They also have an arrangement with a local

bakery, and collect surplus produce at the end of each day that is made available free the following morning for locals to collect. The library used to stand alone in a small, fairly non-descript, building, but has become more of a destination for a wide range of local people.

Case study: Slough MBC, Britwell Centre

In 2013 Slough closed a small under-performing library, freeing up land for new housing, and moved the service into a new community centre. The Britwell Centre includes a brand-new library and incorporates informal learning, a café, neighbourhood wardens and council contact centre all within the same space. As part of the move, a new approach to developing and managing staff ensured that that everyone working in the centre, regardless of service area, shared the same vision and a strong focus on customer need rather than service silos. Managers focused on developing communications and designing systems that would facilitate a joined-up process for customers and a 'one team' approach across all the services to be based in the centre.

Libraries delivering on health

There has been a major step change in the way in which public libraries are helping to improve the health and well-being of local people. Recent research shows that libraries are the trusted place to go for health support and that there is a high level of trust in public library staff. Libraries provide non-stigmatised community space, skilled staff and assisted on-line access.

Reading Well Books on Prescription helps people manage their mental health and wellbeing by providing accredited self-help reading through public libraries. Books can be prescribed by GPs or other health professionals but are also available on self-referral for anyone to borrow. There are book lists available for common mental health conditions and dementia, and a young people's mental health list is being developed.

The scheme, launched in June 2013, works because it brings together a quality assured book list that is endorsed by health bodies and can be trusted by health professionals, with the unique ability of libraries to reach a wide range of people, encouraging self-management and early intervention.

Case study: Warwickshire Libraries

In Warwickshire libraries have been commissioned to deliver a Books on Prescription scheme by the local Mental Health Supported Capital Fund, the Children and Young People's Mental Health commissioner, Public Health and Adult Social Care. They were given £70,000 to set up and run the scheme in the first two years followed by smaller amounts for new book collections. This led them to integrate a Books on Prescription Service with other local services, including the Wellbeing Hubs and the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies service.

As the scheme evolved, additional funding was secured for dementia and young people's mental health book lists

Since the inception of the project, the relationship with Public Health has developed strongly with the potential for further joint work. The value of libraries has been highlighted in terms of footfall, access and reach to all areas of the community and to partners.

Case study: Suffolk Libraries

Suffolk Libraries have partnered with Suffolk Family Carers and Suffolk Mind to create a new mental health service, IAGES (Information, Advice, Guidance and Emotional Support). The aim is to make information and support more visible and accessible, and help people better understand their wellbeing. The library service has appointed a coordinator for the Mental Health and Wellbeing Information Service whose role is to help provide information on local services and to promote events in the libraries and the community that can support mental health and wellbeing. The service also aims to support library staff, to ensure they are able to access useful and up-to-date information for customers.

Case study: Sandal Library, Wakefield

Sandal Library in Wakefield was redesigned so that people living with dementia would feel comfortable, supported and more independent. Planned in partnership with the Alzheimer's Society, Sandal Library became the district's first dementia friendly public building and is likely to be the first fully dementia friendly library building in the country. Practical things include: a colour scheme which is deep red making it warm, friendly and calming; furniture, such as chairs and sofas, which have a plain design and are easy to get in and out of; a reduction of reflective surfaces; grey skirting boards and door frames making it easier for people to recognise them against the magnolia coloured walls, plus signage and guiding to help people recognise symbols and words. Since reopening, it has become a beacon of good practice for other authorities, and for health professionals all over the country. Its local community have also enthusiastically supported their new local library and it has become a vibrant hub of community life.

Libraries combatting social isolation

As a focal point in a community the library can play a significant role in combatting social isolation. For many who live alone, simply having contact with staff, volunteers and/or other customers in the library building can be as significant as any service the library might provide. But libraries are increasingly offering programmes targeting particularly isolated groups such as the elderly, new arrivals in the country, people with learning difficulties etc.

Case study: Suffolk Libraries

Suffolk Libraries host 'Chat and chill' sessions, aimed at women who are newly arrived in Britain and whose English is very limited. It's not a language-teaching course but rather a group to help women acclimatise to British culture, helping to equip them with everyday skills such as banking, making doctors' appointments, talking to their child's teacher, etc. A range of soft and hard skills are gently taught through a really informal programme. Members are helped to integrate, practice their English, make friends and feel welcome. Many go on to learn further skills at spin-off sessions and take part in community activities. The scheme also helps the women make friends as it's an isolating and lonely thing to come to a new country.

Women who have been coming a long time, who are then quite confident, become ambassadors for this in communities and help spread the word to people who might need it or bring them along. For example, they help with keeping this group on schools' radars who often see mothers who need that support. The sessions are free and the library only asks for a few pence donation for the tea, coffee and biscuits on offer.

As it's women only, it's seen as a safe space to discuss issues which worry the women, and proper signposting to appropriate services takes place.

Libraries and digital inclusion

Libraries can make a significant contribution to increasing digital inclusion and participation. Digital inclusion improves people's lives. It saves money, is essential to find work, improves health, helps stay connected and develops important skills. It enables a skilled workforce, competitive economy, strong communities and a successful society. People need the right skills, access, motivation and trust to get online and enjoy the benefits of digital inclusion. As more of our lives take place online those who are on the wrong side of the digital divide will be increasingly disadvantaged.

As Kathy Settle, Chief Executive of the Libraries Taskforce, has said: 'Trained library staff, supported by volunteers, help local people use online services covering areas like benefits, business, health and wellbeing. They can also provide the training and support individuals need to become independent users of digital services. And they don't only help communities at a basic level - increasingly they offer ways for people to develop and use more advanced digital skills, through activities such as code clubs and facilities like makerspaces and Fablabs.'

Case study: Tinder Foundation pilots

The Tinder Foundation, in partnership with the Libraries Taskforce, ran a pilot project in early 2016, with participating library services delivering basic digital skills support to those in their communities without these skills.

Projects included:

- Cumbria Libraries, where 20 student volunteers trained as ‘digital champions’ and were led by library staff to support more than 120 people out in their communities. Students were able to get placement experience for their course, while clients got one-to-one attention that could focus on their individual requirements and interests.
- A partnership between Newcastle Libraries and a local housing association has seen more than 120 council tenants get to grips with computers and the internet.
- Barnet Libraries where the library service bought 20 new tablet computers, and used them in branch libraries to run beginner’s sessions for local people - using the Learn My Way learning website. So far, they have run 19 six week classes at seven libraries, helping 83 people get to grips with tablets and make the most of the internet.

Case study: Leeds Libraries

In March 2016 Leeds became the only library authority in England to be honoured at the National Coding Awards, winning two ‘Highly Commended’ awards in recognition of events held as part of National Coding Week 2015.

The service worked with Leeds CoderDojo to help design coding sessions for adults, and devised an activity called ‘Hour of Code’ (a ‘fun hands-on introduction to computer programming’). Besides Code Clubs, they offer sessions on Raspberry Pi and Minecraft Pi, plus practical digital sessions which are more about using tools than creating them.

The library service is also taking a lead role within the city to deliver and coordinate digital literacy activities for people of all ages and abilities. Their ambition is for a 100% Digital Leeds where everyone in the city has the opportunity to access the internet and the chance to develop their digital skills and confidence.

Libraries as cultural centres

In recent years, libraries have increasingly been seen to incorporate cultural activities within their service offerings, with some operating as “a cultural village” within a community.

Case study: Canada Water Library

Canada Water Library, Southwark is open 72 hours a week; it includes a ‘Culture Space’ for 150 people run by Albany Theatre group (including all bookings and publicity). Space is used for concerts (opens to outside area) and roller skating. The local authority’s Revenue and Benefits team uses meeting rooms twice a week for surgeries.

Libraries as learning centres

Libraries have traditionally been recognised as places to study, providing a quiet space in which to work and giving access to reference materials. Some Victorian libraries also had space for lecture rooms. Many libraries continue to offer adult education classes and many introduced homework clubs. The Idea Stores in Tower Hamlets, described earlier in this section is a good current example.

Case study: Dudley Libraries

Dudley Libraries used the Reading Ahead scheme's Six Book challenge approach to Skills for Life and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes within the borough to encourage learners to increase their literacy skills in a more innovative way. Initial visits were arranged to classroom settings where the benefits of reading were promoted along with the resources and facilities available in libraries. The tutor embedded the challenge within the curriculum. Collections of books suitable for the group (whose literacy levels were very low or non-existent) were sourced and purchased by the libraries. All learners joined the library and used these collections for the challenge.

In the process of completing the challenge, they were inspired to write their own stories in the style of the books they had been reading. These were based on their own life experiences and were intended to be used by other people with similar literacy skills. As part of their personal progression whilst participating in this year's challenge, they are intending to publish the books on a suitable platform which will be available in the borough's libraries.

Case study: Taunton Library

Somerset Libraries have created a new space for individual and collaborative working and learning at Taunton Library, known as the Glass Box. The space utilises the former Tourist Information Centre and is a shop front within the library building – hence the name. The aim is to support business start-ups, digital making and skills development within a flexible space hosting a range of digital maker and business events from Code Club to digital skills training for businesses.

The efficiency of libraries: trends from elsewhere

Automation and self service

The development of RFID and self-service technology has revolutionised library services around the world, providing opportunities for innovation in both customer service and resource management. Self-service frees library staff from routine transactions, such as issuing and discharging books, and enables them to interact with customers on the 'shop floor' and deliver activities and events. It has also led to staffing efficiencies in many authorities.

Whilst self-service technology is now widespread, the full benefits are not always achieved. Self-service enables a reduction in the staffing levels necessary to provide a service to the public, but the continued provision of staff during transition periods can impede the uptake of self-issue by customers due to the perceived relative ease of staff-led transactions. Some redesign of libraries (e.g. the removal of large 'issue desks') may be necessary to encourage customers to use self-service technology. It is also necessary to ensure that as much stock as possible is capable of being processed in this way. Most self-service kiosks now accept cash payments but the addition of chip and pin technology not only further reduces the need for staff intervention but also attracts customers who no longer rely on cash as their main route for payment.

Now, as resources diminish even further, some authorities are using technology to open libraries, at least for part of the day, without staff. Customers are able to access library buildings (or specific areas) using smartcards. Borrowing and return of books can be done using self-service machines; computers and space can be used for study and community groups can have meetings without the need for library staff to be present. The machines can also provide access to a wider range of council services and support payments. A more cautious approach is to use the technology to extend or maintain opening hours. This model has been used in Denmark for some time as a national scheme but is new to the UK.

Beyond giving the library service a modern image, a key benefit of self-service is that it frees up staff time and can enable a quantum leap in the function and role of library staff. Traditionally a large percentage of time for the majority of staff has been taken up with 'transactional' activities: handling the issue and return of loan items and the charges and payment associated with these. Self-service moves the focus towards engaging with customers and helping them to better access the library stock and services, or even to extend the range of council or other services on offer. If done well (see below: 'Success factors') this can improve front-line service delivery and the customer experience, as well as offering tangible savings in the total staff time required to operate the library.

A further key benefit is that this kiosk-based technology allows library entrance and counter areas to be refitted to give a more open, welcoming and modern first impression of the library. Old-style 'barrier' desks with the staff behind and the customer on the other side are replaced by staff service points, or pods, that take up much less space and facilitate a different sort of customer/user relationship, an approach that banks, amongst others, are now widely adopting.

Quantifiable benefits in staff time will be greatest at busier libraries as smaller libraries may already be operating with a minimum level of staffing. However, for smaller libraries, self-service can be considered alongside options to move to single-staffing and/or increased use of volunteers.

Case study sixteen: Peterborough Libraries and Open+

Open+ is now available in all libraries across Peterborough. It gives customers access to library materials, public computers and spaces to meet or study.

Customers need to register for Open+ to use the library during unstaffed hours. A PIN is provided to gain access to libraries and use the computers. Only over 16s have access,

minors can only use Open+ when accompanied by an adult. There are CCTV cameras in place and automated recordings let customers know when the building is closing.

There are core times of the day when staff are present but the technology has enable longer opening hours.

Case study: The Hayridge, Cullompton, Devon

'The Hayridge is a modern, multi-purpose building incorporating a small but well-equipped library, bookable meeting spaces, a café, and secure space for peripatetic council employees to hot desk while working in the Cullompton area. The meeting spaces are used by a mixture of community groups and professional organisations looking for a room to hold meetings or training sessions; income from the rooms helps to offset the cost of running the library. The meeting rooms are in use much longer than the library opening hours – on a typical weekday, the library is manned 9-5pm, but the meeting rooms are accessible from 8:30 am to 9:30 pm.

Cullompton is a small market town which largely acts as a dormitory for people working in the nearby cities of Exeter and Taunton, as well as Tiverton just a few miles away. Extending library access into the evenings and at weekends enables us to support the reading and information needs of the many people in the area who are normally working elsewhere during regular daytime library opening.

Open+ allows us to extend library opening, and provide access to the meeting rooms, outside of normal hours without additional staffing. The library is now open until 8am – 9:30 pm weekdays and 8-5:30 pm Saturdays. At the same time, Open+ has improved security by logging access through the main doors and providing much more extensive (and better quality) CCTV coverage inside the building. There have been no security issues since launch.'

Taken from Public Library News

Case study: Self-service in Harrow's libraries

The London Borough of Harrow introduced RFID self-service at all its 11 libraries in 2010/11 as part of a wider change project with its then transformation partners Capita. Although project management costs may have been somewhat high, the implementation was characterised by an exhaustive planning process and an insistence that the library self-service kit should interface with chip and pin payments and the council's own accounting systems.

The entrance/counter/reception area at each library was refurbished to create a more welcoming environment with self-service terminals strategically placed and small staff 'pods' still clearly visible but off to one side. Prior to implementation all staff attended a

course to introduce them to the new way of working with customers and to build their confidence.

During implementation (which was achieved over a total period of 4-5 months) a team of 'promotions' specialists, highly experienced in customer care and meeting/greeting, was trained and then deployed for three weeks at each large library, and two at the smaller branches, working alongside the staff to give them confidence: every member of the public who entered the library was introduced to the new terminals and shown how to use them, a process maintained by the staff on an ongoing basis and repeated with customers as many times as needed to ensure their confidence in using self-service.

Public (and staff) reaction was overwhelmingly good and because of the approach taken every library immediately achieved a success rate of at least 95% of transactions going through the self-service terminals (in some instances this rose to 98%) which was maintained in the months that followed.

Use of volunteers

A growing number of library authorities now work with communities to build sustainable library services, with local people:

- supporting public libraries;
- managing them, in some places; and/or
- taking on ownership and management of library buildings

Community libraries offer a way to manage local resources and support the public library service. Success in encouraging people to volunteer requires dedicated commitment and co-ordination, often in partnership with local voluntary sector agencies.

Case study: the role of volunteers in Merton libraries

Volunteers carry out a wide variety of roles in Merton's libraries, including meeting and greeting, supporting children's activities, helping customers use the IT facilities and helping to promote libraries in the community. They also help with basic library tasks, such as shelving books.

In 2015/16, 669 volunteers contributed 36,004 hours of volunteer time; this is believed to be the highest volunteer contribution in any London library service. 43% of the total hours contributed to the service (staff plus volunteers) are delivered by volunteers. The initiative is a partnership between Merton Libraries and Merton Voluntary Service Council (MVSC).

This level of volunteering is the result of a sustained commitment by the Council and by the management and staff in the library service. Initially, specific resources were dedicated to supporting and recruiting volunteers. No staff are now employed solely with

the responsibility of recruiting volunteers as all staff have responsibility for recruiting and supporting volunteers as a core part of their job descriptions.

Governance and alternative service delivery models

It is now becoming standard practice for local authorities, when considering strategic options for cost savings, to look at alternative governance. There are four main sourcing options open to local authorities:

- Making your own: in-house delivery or an arms-length company;
- Buying-in from someone else: outsource to a private company, another authority, the third sector or entering into a private joint venture;
- Joining up with others in the public sector: shared, or partly shared, services with other authorities; and
- Transferring to others: transfer to community management; transfer to a mutual or charitable trust; devolve to district or parish

Of course, within the different models there are a number of permutations. For instance, a service could join forces with another authority to outsource, or join an existing arrangement.

All of these options will necessitate some kind of contract or service level agreement (SLA) to maintain quality, and such contracts and SLAs are complex to develop and need managing. And whatever options are considered and chosen for future delivery of library services, authorities need to ensure that:

- They continue to fulfil their statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' public library service; and
- The core service is free at the point of delivery

Case study: City of York

York's library and archives service (Explore) was one of the first in the country to spin out into a public service mutual organisation, using £100,000 worth of advice and support from the Cabinet Office, Mutuals Support Programme. One third is owned by staff and two thirds by its community members. As a public service independent of the council, Explore has a clear voice and purpose and is able to generate greater involvement of local people in all aspects of the service, encouraging flexibility, innovation and partnership building with the community. In addition to keeping all their libraries open the ambition is to use libraries as community hubs, such as a health & wellbeing centre in partnership with local GP practices.

Explore is also working alongside Be Independent, York's adult social care public service mutual, to help 3,500 elderly housebound residents to become more digitally active.

Tablets and face-to-face training have been provided so that these residents can access the internet through portable Wi-Fi devices. These are being used for activities such as talking via Skype to family and friends, online banking, food shopping and choosing library books. The hope is that this will support digital inclusion of the elderly within York, take library services directly to the housebound, and, more broadly, help residents to win back some independence.

Case study: Suffolk

All 44 libraries and the mobile, school and prison library services are directly delivered by an independent organisation which is an industrial and provident society with charitable status. It has a long-term contract with the county council to ensure the service is delivered to an agreed specification and to work with local community groups to develop locally-focused services at each library. The council remains the statutory authority with responsibility for provision of the library service and monitors its performance through a framework that forms part of the contract.

Suffolk Libraries is a membership organisation and has been working to encourage local people to form community groups which are then formally adopted as part of the society. Working with library staff, these groups have helped with fundraising activities, developing new ways of encouraging people to discover their library and helping them to improve what they offer their customers. For example, the Aldeburgh Library Foundation recently won Project of the Year at the Suffolk Adult Learners awards and the Friends of Thurston Library have helped to pilot a project to lend e-reader devices to people.

Case study: FBC Centre, Wokingham Borough

The FBC Centre opened in April 2010. It is a £4.5M build community hub that is owned and managed by Finchampstead Baptist Church (FBC) and built in partnership with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and Finchampstead Parish Council. The hub incorporates a multi-purpose sports hall, meeting rooms, cafe, library, children's centre and spaces for groups to meet.

Originally the land was owned by WBC and the church was looking for a site to build their new church in that community. The council gave the land and contributed to the building costs with Sure Start funding and are paying rent for the library space. Funding also came from Sport England, but the major part of the funding was raised by the church community.

The centre is managed by the church and operational costs are shared between the partners: WBC, parish council and the police. There is an advisory board of all partners which oversees operations. The centre had a three year business plan to break even but did so in its second year.

Commissioning

Essentially, commissioning is a process for deciding how to use the total resources available to improve outcomes in the most efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable way. People with the money – commissioners – buy services in-house or from providers in the public, private or third sectors.

Too often the word commissioning is purely seen as procurement or the contracting out of services, but it is more than that. Instead, commissioning, undertaken strategically, offers a mechanism for an organisation to address fundamental questions about what it is seeking to achieve, why and for whom. Commissioning is therefore a strategic policy-making process rather than just a procurement exercise. It is not a one-off process: the commissioning cycle is a continuous process of analysing, planning, doing and reviewing services against the desired outcomes

For library services, being commissioned to deliver services for other organisations (or council services) can be beneficial in several ways. The commissioned services can bring new audiences and increase membership and usage and they can replace services currently delivered by library staff (often in a less outcome focused way than if they were to be commissioned).

Libraries have a reputation in the community as safe and neutral spaces, open to all. Many services that have direct impact on day to day life can be delivered in libraries and this is beginning to be realised in areas such as health, adult social care and children's services. These areas have the ability, and the budget, to commission libraries. The Culture Commissioning Programme⁵² aims to strengthen the commissioning of arts and culture organisations to deliver better outcomes for people and communities, and while library services are currently under-represented in the programme there is no reason why they should not get more involved.

Additionally, the library service itself can commission others, such as community and voluntary groups to deliver specific elements of the library service. Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole of course already do this with the RVS delivering the housebound library service through a service level agreement.

Case study: Devon County Council

Devon County Council was one of 10 councils that received support in kind as part of the DCLG Delivering Differently programme. They selected libraries, youth and day care services in order to design and test new models of delivery.

The Delivering Differently programme provided a framework to enable the council to take forward a conversation with local communities about new approaches to delivering local services. The three communities of Totnes, Tavistock and Ottery were chosen as pilot areas to explore new approaches as part of the challenge. A series of events and consultation sessions were delivered to enable the communities in the pilot areas to

⁵² <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/public-services/cultural-commissioning-programme>

select which new approaches they wanted to explore in further detail. The priorities identified included:

- Totnes developing a model of micro-commissioning around supporting older people; and creating a community facility at the Mansion House;
- Tavistock developing new approaches to delivering day-care services; and carrying out an asset-mapping exercise to identify the potential for using assets differently across public and voluntary sectors in the area; and
- Ottery opening up community-wide conversations to shape locally-driven responses to service changes; and creating a new multi-use community hub at the St Saviours site.

Consortium working

Across the country there are now countless examples of authorities joining together in consortia to achieve value for money and efficiency. Most library services now buy their stock and their library management systems through a consortium agreement. Many of these consortia are now adopting a more strategic approach with ambition to become more than just a buying mechanism.

Case study nine: The London Libraries Consortium (LLC)

The LLC is a partnership of 16 London borough library services committed to delivering excellence and providing value for money. This is achieved through a shared library management system and catalogue. Additionally, eight authorities in the LLC purchase stock jointly and of these, two share stock management staff. All share a transport contract that has driven down delivery costs substantially.

As systems and services are shared, there are benefits to the customer too. They now have the ability to borrow from over 240 libraries across London, with access to over 7 million items, all from a single library card. Users are given much more flexibility, as they can now borrow an item from one library and return it to another within the LLC.

Income generation

One way for public libraries to develop and strengthen their sustainability is to generate income. However, the starting base is low. Total income generated from library services in 2014 represented just 8.3% of total expenditure. Fines and fees should be excluded from the equation as they are not commercial elements, although in libraries where chip and payment has been introduced, income from fine collections has increased.

The Arts Council/Locality report: Income Generation for Public Libraries (2014) suggests that

- Library service providers and commissioners can secure investment to innovate and generate additional income to facilitate service enhancement and/or improve their overall resilience;
- An entrepreneurial approach to developing new paid-for products, services and facilities could improve footfall and impact trends in library usage, appealing to new audiences; and
- Income generation could support the diversification and evolution of services beyond the current legal definition of statutory library services – for example, to facilitate access to new digital technologies and sources / types of information.

There is a wide range of options to consider, including:

- Commercial retail units in library spaces – post offices, stationers, bookshops;
- Commercial letting of rooms, offices in library buildings;
- Renting serviced office facilities for small businesses;
- Hire of quality space for parties (especially children’s parties), weddings, private events;
- Libraries as delivery pick up points e.g. Amazon lockers;
- Library shops;
- Selling withdrawn stock online;
- Charging for premium services, over and above the core offer e.g. a yearly subscription service instead of fines, access to computers;
- Charging for events and activities; and
- Sponsorship

Case study: Jubilee Library

The Jubilee Library in Brighton on the south coast of England has a bookshop, the Booklover Store, which doubles as an information point. Positioning near the entrance has been critical to its success, and some people come specifically to shop there despite keen competition from the shops nearby. The shop has been stocked with users firmly in mind; for example, as the library is used a lot by families with young children, the party gift market is consciously catered for; and items with local connections are stocked with tourist footfall in mind. The shop builds on the prevalence of local talent, e.g. greetings cards designed by local artists, as well as stocking a wide range of items designed to appeal to booklovers.

Appendix 4: Croydon libraries asset review

Introduction and context

1.1 The brief

You asked us to undertake a review of existing Council assets to identify opportunities for optimising use of assets as part of the Council's wider asset review.

"This work should undertake a review of the Council's community-based corporate estate, in consultation with the Council's estates management service, to identify opportunities to increase service delivery in the libraries facilities. This should look at each library facility in the context of the local area, other corporate assets and their current / potential usage, and gaps in community provision."

This report examines the current provision of library buildings within Croydon and taking into account their location, usage and potential, identifies opportunities for making better use of existing buildings and the potential to relocate to deliver a broader and more efficient service, and to match facilities to community demand.

1.2 Croydon's libraries

There are thirteen libraries in Croydon. Croydon Central Library accounts for more than half of the visits for the entire service, and is the only library which can be said to have a borough wide function, although it also serves as a local library for the area in which it is located. Thornton Heath and Selsdon libraries also attract customers from a wider area than the immediate locality. The other libraries generally serve a more local population. In addition, the library at Upper Norwood is funded partially by Croydon and Lambeth councils, and is operated by a local trust. There have been no closures of libraries in Croydon in the last twenty years.

The Croydon Local Plan⁵³ states "Croydon is a borough made up of a series of varied and distinctive neighbourhoods and areas, which are referred to here as 'Places'", and identifies the sixteen Places within the borough. There are libraries in each of these Places with the exception of Waddon and South Croydon, which are well served by Croydon Central library. South Norwood library is scheduled to be relocated to a site 200m further west in 2019. However, whilst some libraries are located at the heart of the community which they serve, others are less well situated. This presents opportunities for possible relocation of some libraries.

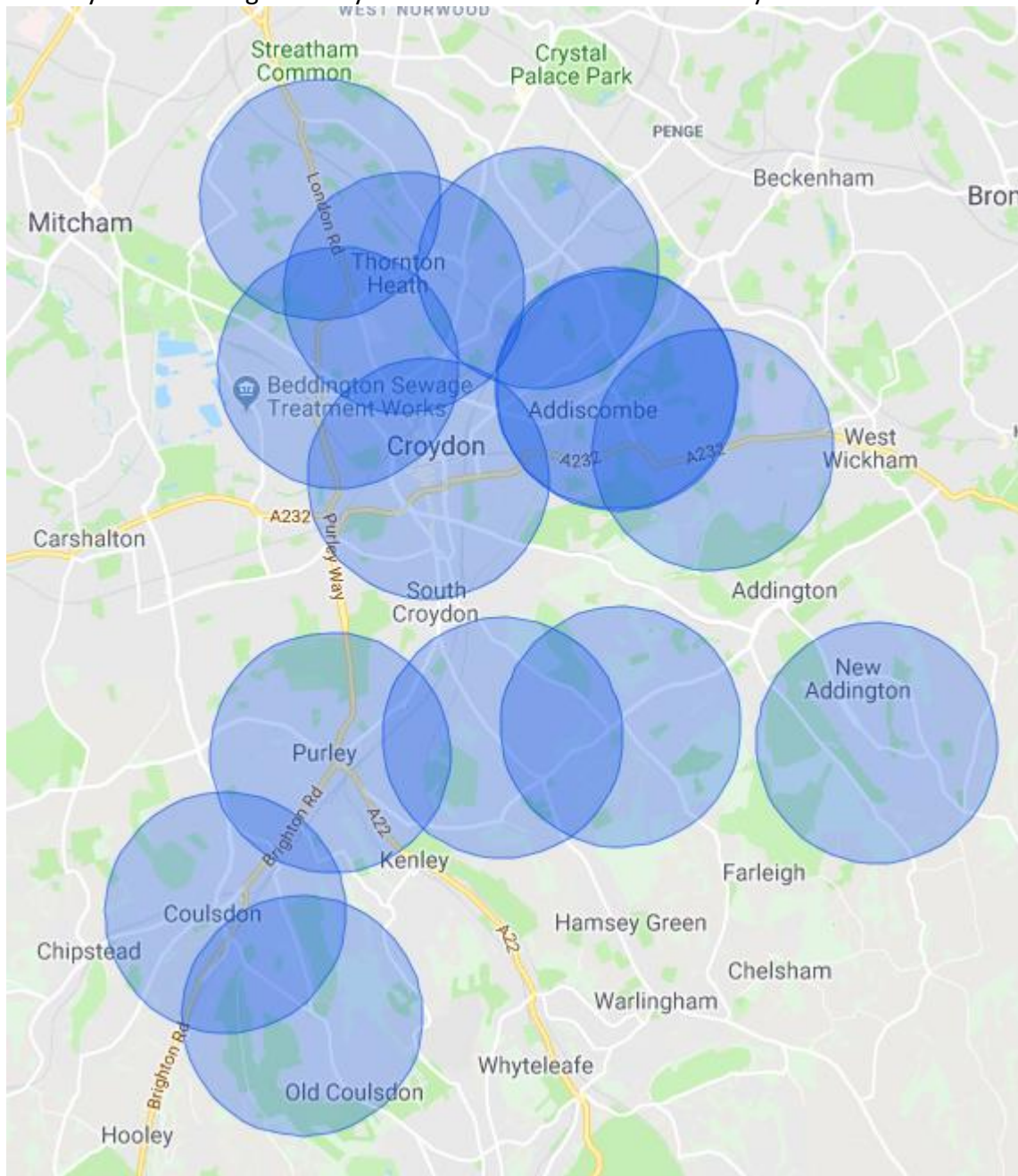
The distribution of libraries broadly reflects the pattern of settlement so that libraries are closer together in the north of the borough, which is more densely populated. With the exception of New Addington library, no library in Croydon is more than 1.7 miles from another branch⁵⁴. The great majority of Croydon residents live within one mile of their

⁵³

https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/articles/downloads/Croydon%20Local%20Plan%202018_0.pdf

⁵⁴ New Addington library is 3.1 miles from the next nearest library which is Shirley

nearest library. However, residents in parts of South Croydon, Croham Hurst and Addington Village live more than one mile from a library, whilst the southern parts of Kenley and Hamsey Green are significantly more than one mile from a library.



The distribution of libraries is shown on the map above, with the circles showing a one mile radius around each library. There are no national standards currently in place for public libraries, but in the period 2002 – 2008, the standard for outer London boroughs was that 99% of households should live within one mile of a library. Croydon, together with 12 other outer London boroughs, did not reach this standard.

The population of the borough is expected to grow over the next decades and the council is seeking to deliver 32890 new homes in the period 2016 – 2036. The highest growth will be in central Croydon and a significant amount of development has already taken place there. Other areas of high growth are predicted to be the Broad Green, Waddon and Purley

areas⁵⁵. Given the enormous changes to technology and therefore society in the last two decades, it is wise to be cautious in predicting what future demand from customers will be in the more distant future. However, population growth must be a factor in determining the eventual network of libraries in Croydon.

The majority of Croydon's libraries are in purpose-built buildings, mostly dating from before the second world war. There is no strong relationship between the size of the library building and the usage of that library, and a number of the libraries would benefit from a change in layout. Four libraries – Croydon Central, Ashburton, Selsdon and New Addington – are co-located with other council services, a school and a supermarket. This means that there are opportunities to use library buildings more fully, perhaps in partnership with other organisations, and where there is sufficient demand, to extend or replace existing buildings.

As a general comment, we would recommend improvement to the internal signposting and shelf top signs in all of your libraries. We mention this here rather than reiterating the point for each library.

1.3 Strategic context

The Croydon Community Strategy 2016 sets out the council's vision for the borough:

- A great place to learn, work and live where we will deliver new jobs and new homes for our residents, enable our local economy to grow, develop an exciting cultural offer and evening economy, in a safe and pleasant environment.
- A place of opportunity for everyone where we will tackle poverty and deprivation, prevent homelessness, and support children, families and individuals to achieve their full potential and live a long healthy life through a good start, an excellent education, support to develop and maintain the resilience and self-reliance modern life requires, and providing holistic support to those that need it.
- A place with a vibrant and connected community and voluntary sector where we will enable and empower our communities to connect and collaborate in developing community-led responses to the many challenges we face.

The Croydon Local Plan also includes a number of objectives pertinent to libraries:

Strategic Objective 2:

Foster an environment where both existing, and new, innovative, cultural and creative enterprises can prosper.

Strategic Objective 4:

Reduce social, economic and environmental deprivation, particularly where it is spatially concentrated, by taking priority measures to reduce unemployment, improve skills and education and renew housing, community and environmental conditions.

Strategic Objective 6:

⁵⁵ Croydon Local Plan

Provide and promote well designed emergency services, community, education, health and leisure facilities to meet the aspirations and needs of a diverse community.

Strategic Objective 7:

Conserve and create spaces and buildings that foster safe, healthy and cohesive communities.

Libraries are well placed to deliver on these objectives, both as a community hub where access is not restricted to a particular section of the population and as an agency to promote learning, improvement of skills, provision of information and creative and cohesive communities.

Libraries are, to many residents, the public face of a local authority. They are often the most visited indoor service that a council can provide, and have a high profile with the public as a trusted brand. In recent decades, libraries have built on their traditional role as a provider of books and information and a place to learn to contribute to improving skills and employability, raising health awareness, supporting entrepreneurs and cultural activities, often through partnership. Libraries can foster community cohesion. Whilst libraries are a universal service which should provide for the entire population, they are particularly well placed to help to challenge deprivation, social exclusion and isolation, and to build community cohesion. The growth of volunteering in libraries has contributed to a sense of belonging, and the opportunities that partnership brings can strengthen bonds between the community and voluntary sectors.

1.4 Working with community partners

As we have indicated above, there is a potential to work with outside organisations within libraries. This can take place at three levels. Firstly, organisations holding regular or one off sessions in libraries – for example, benefits advice. Some sessions like this are already happening in Croydon and can normally take place without extensive alteration, although some libraries would benefit from a dedicated meeting space. Secondly, surplus library space can be leased to community partners, perhaps with the rental being determined partly by the benefit to the community. Thirdly, there may be some opportunities for a co-located service. This is already happening at New Addington, where the library is in the same building as CALAT and a nursery. However, this approach need not be limited to council-funded organisations and, unlike New Addington, could involve a degree of staff sharing.

Speaking to potential third party colocation partners was not within the scope of the research we were asked to undertake and therefore we have not spoken to any third sector or other bodies which may be suitable partners, and our recommendations are generic rather than specific in most cases.

1.5 Localisation

Croydon council is committed to localisation of its services – the embedding of services in local neighbourhoods rather than a centralised provision. Whilst the concept is still under development, this will lead to a greater distribution of council functions. Libraries can contribute both to the delivery of local services in providing space for engagement and

activities, and also as a ‘touchdown’ point for staff working in a particular locality and needing temporary desk space.

1.6 Methodology

This report considers each of Croydon’s libraries and evaluates potential against three criteria:

- Is the library well located to serve its community, or would it benefit from a new location? This criterion is judged in the context of proximity to a district centre, other local community provision and transportation access.
- Are the current facilities at the library appropriate to meet the needs of the local community, or would the library need additional space or facilities? Conversely, is there an over-provision of space at the library? What immediate or long term improvements could be made to the library to facilitate better customer experience, more economical working and better use of space?
- Are there opportunities for the library to work with other statutory, third sector or business organisations, either through the sharing of space or the release of some space?

Each library is considered in terms of its current performance and usage trends, accessibility by private and public transport and demographic information.

Data on library performance is taken from information provided to us by the library service, and demographic data is taken from our earlier Needs Analysis, where it is more thoroughly referenced.

We have identified other council owned assets from a list provided to us by your facilities management service (annex 2).

The libraries

2.1 Ashburton library

Ashburton library is housed in a purpose-built building, constructed in 2007, and is part of the Oasis Academy complex. The building is leased to the council on a private finance initiative basis.

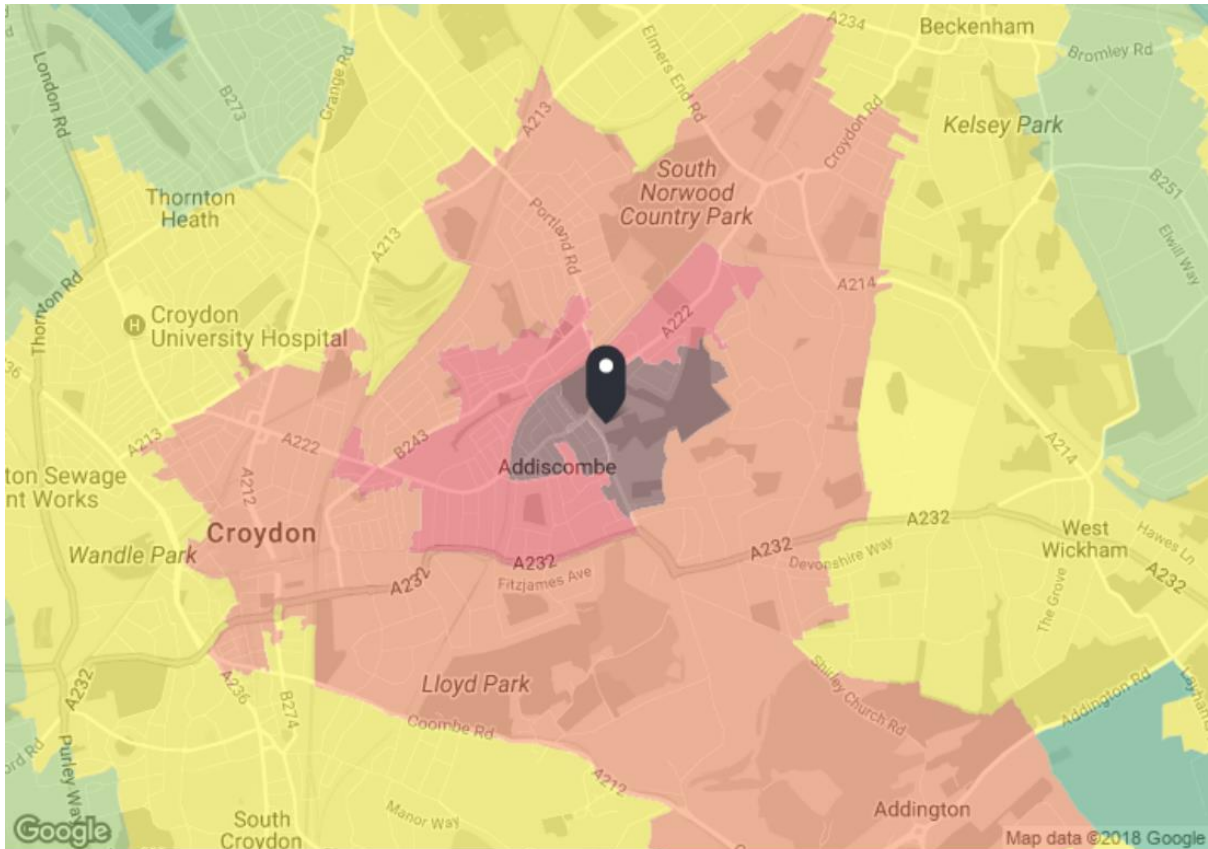
The library has a floor area of 571 square metres and is comprised of two large spaces, one for the general library and one for children. There are adequate staff offices. A large meeting room is currently being converted from surplus space in the library, which will ease pressure on the children's library where an extensive programme of events for both adults and children is currently held.

Ashburton library is the fourth busiest library in the borough with just over 100,000 visits in 2016/17. Visits have increased by 5% since 2012. On average 45 people visit the library for each hour that it is open. The library has 10 bookable public PCs which are the fifth most well used in the borough. Almost 59% of the library's active users do not borrow books, the second highest in the borough.

Unsurprisingly, given its location close to the Academy, over 43% of members are aged 14 or less, compared to 30.5% for the borough. 64% of members of the library live in Ashburton, Woodside and Addiscombe wards. There are significant areas of deprivation within the catchment area of the library, with 33% of super output areas in Ashburton ward being in the lowest two deciles.

Location

The library is located near the intersection of two main roads, and at a short distance from the Lower Addiscombe Road shopping area. 26% of households in Ashburton ward had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is free parking within a short distance of the library. Public transport is good with easy access to both tram and bus routes. The map below shows that a wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport.



TIM output for Base Year

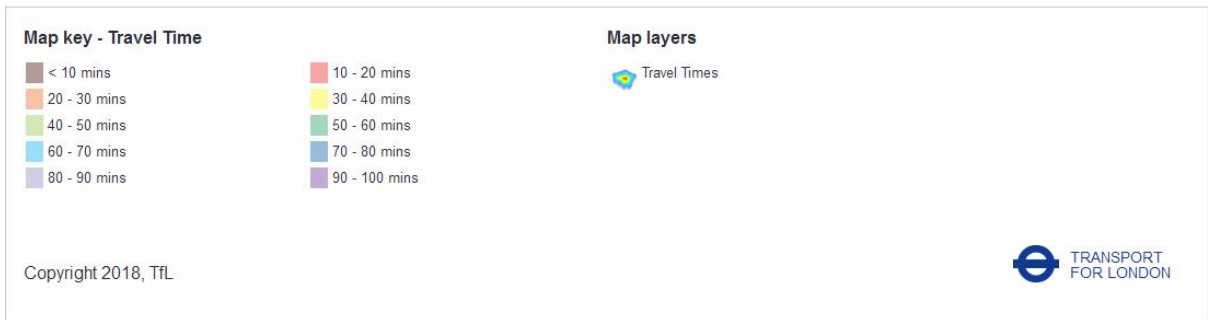
Scenario: Base Year Mode: All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

CR9 7AL

Croydon CR9 7AL, UK

Easting: 534874, Northing: 166649

Code: NT096/05A



Other than schools, there are few council-owned community facilities in the proximity of the library.

We do not recommend that the library is considered for relocation, given that it is well placed to serve households along the Lower Addiscombe Road and Shirley Road axes and also accessible from Woodside ward. Its proximity to the Academy is beneficial for students.

Size, arrangement and facilities

The library is rather larger than most branches in Croydon, but this is justified by the relatively high usage. The arrangement (once the meeting room has been created) is suitable for the purpose, but the library would benefit from the provision of more moveable shelving to facilitate flexible use of space. Computer provision and study space are adequate to meet current demand. The area is expected to see modest population growth in the next eighteen years, but the size of the building will be able to absorb additional business levels. The library is not very obvious from the street due to much larger signage for the Academy and this could be improved. Similarly, internal signposting could be improved.

Opportunities for space sharing or co-location

Although one of the larger branch libraries, the space available is not disproportionate to current business levels. The current library would not be an obvious candidate for apportioning space to another body. However, in the wider context of the huge strain on local government finances, it would be possible to reduce the area currently occupied by the library to create space for rental if this were necessary. There may also be opportunities for closer working with the Academy.

2.2 Bradmore Green library

Bradmore Green library is housed in a purpose-built inter war building which is the freehold of the council.

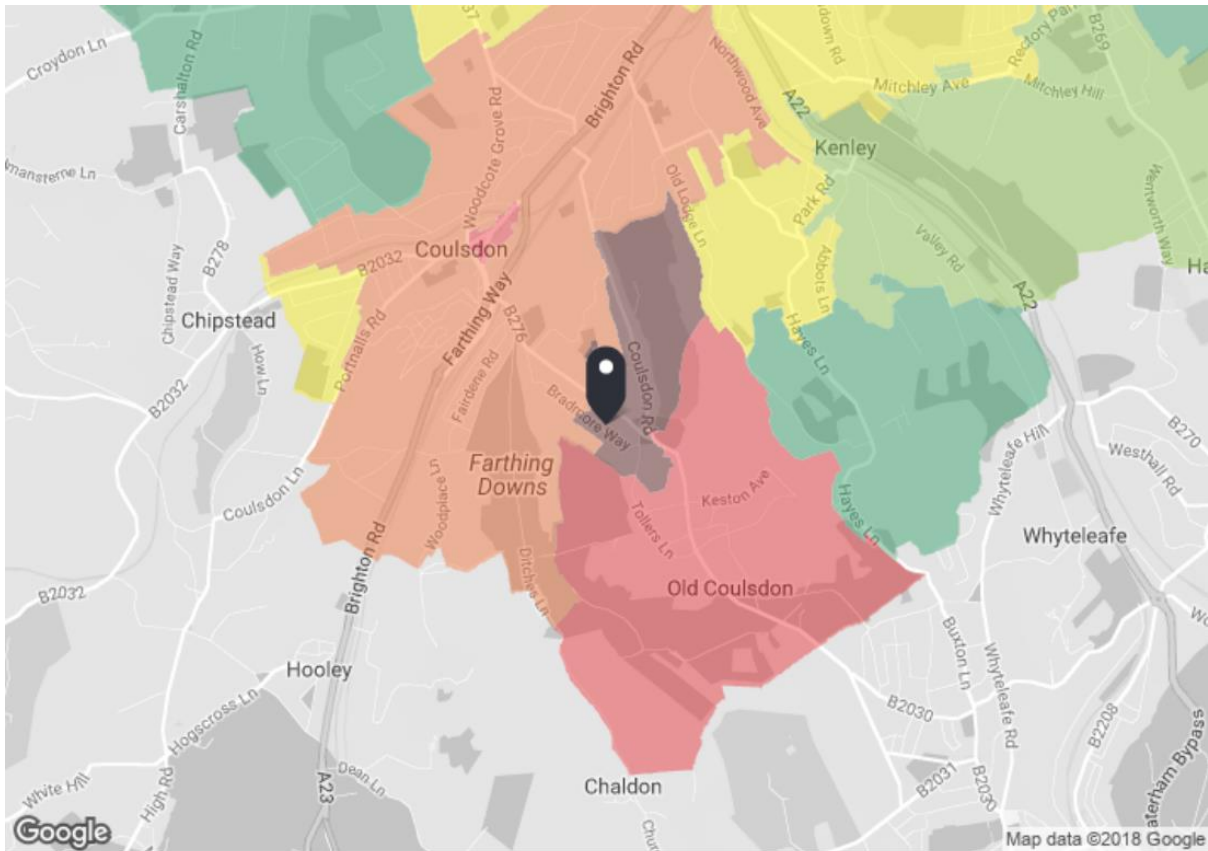
The library has a floor area of 176 square metres and is comprised of a single space for all library purposes and staff facilities.

Bradmore Green library is the second least busy library in the borough with around forty nine thousand visits in 2016/17. Visits have decreased by 14% since 2012, the second largest decline in the borough. On average 22 people visit the library for each hour that it is open. The library has 4 bookable public PCs which are the ninth most well used in the borough. Only 30% of the library's active users do not borrow books, the second lowest figure in the borough.

35% of members are aged 14 or less, slightly higher than the 30.5% for the borough as a whole. 28.5% of members are over 60. Three quarters of members live in Coulsdon East ward, which is the most localised concentration of any of Croydon's libraries. Whilst much of this ward is affluent, there is a significant area of deprivation in the Tollers Lane area, and 25% of super output areas in the ward being in the lowest four deciles.

Location

The library is located at a short distance from Marlpit Lane, but at some distance from the local rank of shops. Only 16% of households in Coulsdon East ward had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is free parking around the library with some reserved parking. There is a good bus service from Coulsdon. The map below shows that a wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport. However, much of this area is also accessible to Coulsdon library with similar journey times, the exception being the Old Coulsdon area.



TIM output for Base Year

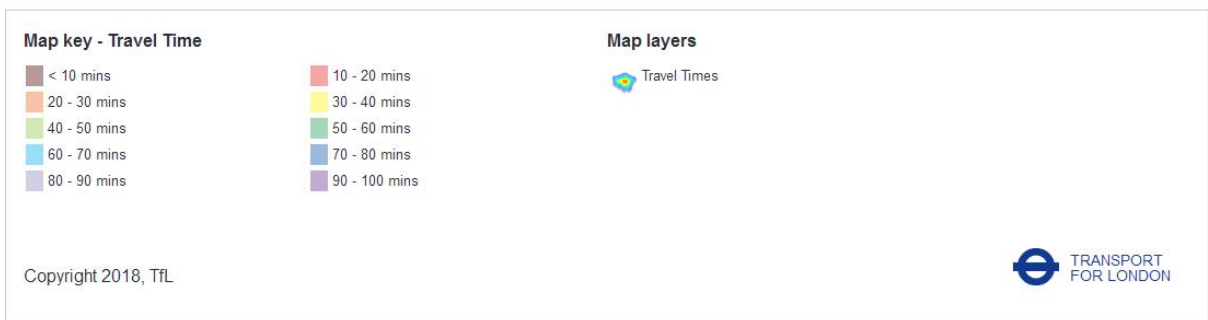
Scenario: Base Year Mode: All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

CR5 1PE

Bradmore Way, Coulsdon CR5 1PE, UK

Easting: 530679, Northing: 158268

Code: NT096/05A



Other than schools, there are few council-owned community facilities in the proximity of the library.

The position of the library is not one that would be adopted if starting anew, as libraries benefit from proximity to local services. Bradmore Green is 1.2 miles from Coulsdon library. Consideration could be given to relocating the library further south east to better serve

residents in the Old Coulsdon area. If this were to be done, then a location in the centre of Old Coulsdon would be preferable, being close to the Tollers Lane area where residents are less likely to be able to travel some distance to a library.

Size, arrangement and facilities

The library is small – around half the average size for a branch library in Croydon but business levels are low and declining. For a library of this size a single room is adequate, but the library would benefit from the provision of more moveable shelving to facilitate flexible use of space. There is little study space in the library and this could be improved. The current library has a rather shabby appearance and would benefit from some redecoration and new furniture. The area is expected to see only limited population growth in the next eighteen years and it may be that a replacement library could offer appropriate facilities on a reduced floor area.

Opportunities for space sharing or co-location

Although the library is not well used, it is difficult to see how the existing layout would permit accommodation of another organisation. If the library is relocated, there may be opportunities for sharing space with another organisation.

2.3 Broad Green library

Broad Green library is housed in a purpose-built building about twenty years old which is the freehold of the council.

The library has a floor area of 233 square metres and is comprised of a single space for all library purposes and staff facilities.

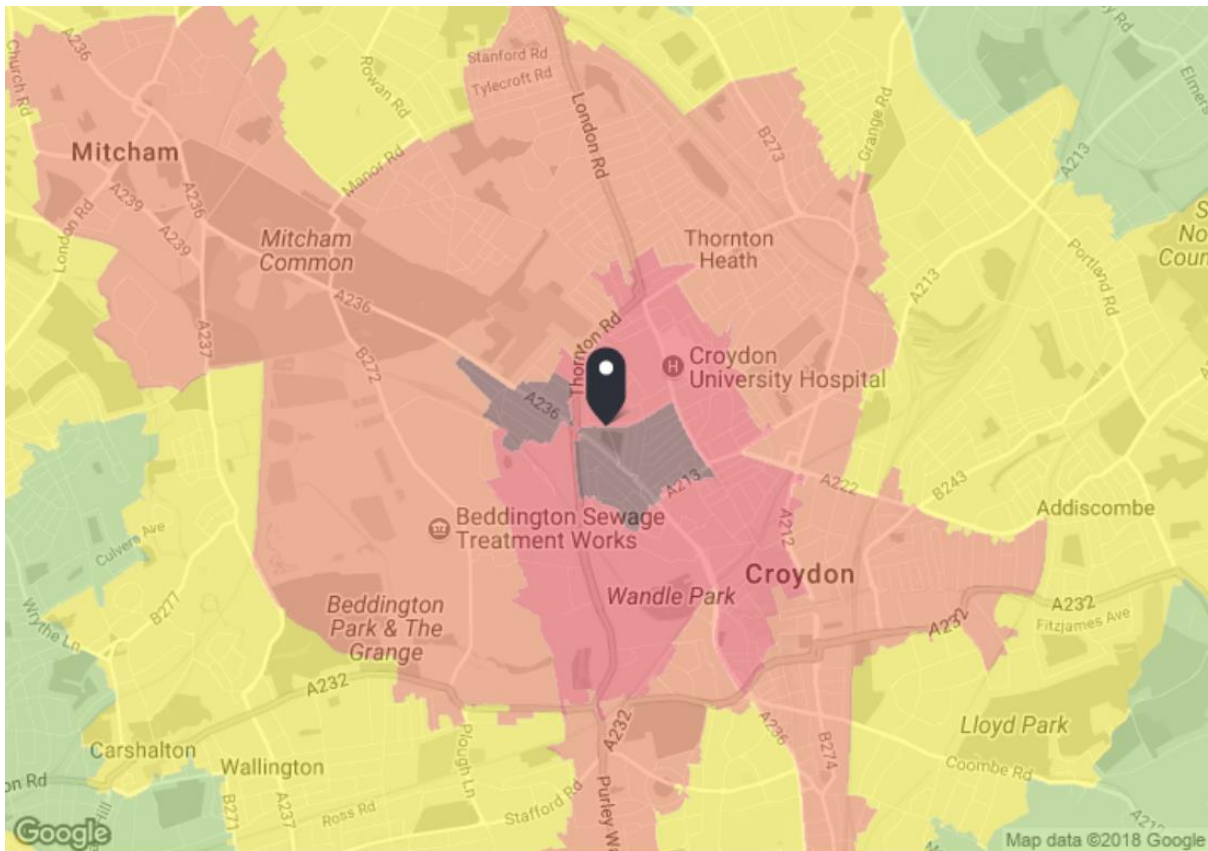
Broad Green library is the tenth busiest library in the borough with around fifty four thousand visits in 2016/17. Visits have decreased by 11% since 2012. On average 30 people visit the library for each hour that it is open, and visits might be higher if the library were open for more than the current 34.5 hours per week. The library has 12 bookable public PCs which are the third least well used in the borough, although this is partially due to equipment failure. 44% of the library's active users do not borrow books, the seventh highest figure in the borough. The library offers a wide range of additional activities, many delivered by external organisations.

47% of members are aged 14 or less which is the highest proportion in the borough as a whole. Only 2.5% of members are over 60, by far the lowest proportion. Almost three quarters of members live in Broad Green and West Thornton wards, which is a more localised concentration than the average for Croydon's libraries. These two wards have the second highest concentration of deprivation of any library catchment area in Croydon, with over 95% of super output areas being in the lowest four deciles.

Location

The library is located on Canterbury Road, at some distance from major roads or shops. 43%% of households in Broad Green and West Thornton wards had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is limited parking around the library, and this is of particular concern for customers with mobility issues. Due to good bus services in Mitcham Road and Purley Way,

the library is relatively accessible by public transport. The map below shows that a wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport.



TIM output for Base Year

Scenario: Base Year Mode: All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

CR0 3HH
 Canterbury Rd, Croydon CR0 3HH, UK
 Easting: 531070, Northing: 166819

Code: NT096/05A

Map key - Travel Time		Map layers	
< 10 mins	10 - 20 mins	Travel Times	
20 - 30 mins	30 - 40 mins		
40 - 50 mins	50 - 60 mins		
60 - 70 mins	70 - 80 mins		
80 - 90 mins	90 - 100 mins		

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A new school is being developed next to the library and there is a community centre and a children’s centre on the same site.

Although Broad Green library is not ideally located, being away from a major road or shopping area, there is no single point which would be beneficial to the communities

served. There are three options that could be considered: retain the library on the same site, thus benefitting from the new school and the existing community and children's centres; or relocate to the Mitcham Road which would be closer to the deprived Broad Green estate; or relocate to the London Road which would be nearer to Croydon University Hospital, one of the major employers in Croydon but further from the Broad Green estate. Since the council already owns the freehold, the first may be the preferred option, especially given the very local nature of library usage at the branch. The council is already engaged in a regeneration project to improve the Canterbury Recreation Ground and the vicinity and we recommend that the library team work closely with the regeneration team in developing any proposals.

Size, arrangement and facilities

The library is small but not disproportionately so compared to other libraries with similar business levels. However, what distinguishes Broad Green from other libraries is the degree of community activity – indeed it could be said that the library is fulfilling the role of a community hub as much as a public library. Although there is some moveable shelving to facilitate flexible use of space, the library would benefit from separate meeting rooms to allow these activities to take place without interfering with regular library use. There is little study space in the library and this could be improved, especially bearing in mind the number of younger users. The current library has persistent problems with a leaking roof. The area is expected to see high limited population growth in the next eighteen years. This means that the current space, which is already inadequate, will be under further pressure. Initial conversations with council colleagues have indicated that a long term aspiration may be the rebuilding of the library on the current site.

Opportunities for space sharing or co-location

In its present configuration, the library offers little opportunity for colocation or partnership due to the available space. However, a redeveloped building on more than one floor could facilitate closer working relationships with the community and children's centres, opening up the possibility of economies through staff sharing. Other community organisations could be accommodated in the same building helping to build a critical mass as a place of destination, and the space could be used for staff touchdown as part of the localisation agenda. Informal arrangements could also be made with the new school.

As an alternative proposal, a relocated library might be considered at Croydon University Hospital. In 2016/17, 3,887 people worked at the hospital⁵⁶, probable the largest concentration anywhere in the borough. This would also present opportunities to partner with hospital volunteers to provide reading material for patients. However, as we have already alluded to, this would put the library at some distance from the Broad Green estate and closer to Thornton Heath library.

⁵⁶ Croydon Health Services annual report 2016/17

<https://www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk/download.cfm?doc=docm93jjjm4n428.pdf&ver=1090>

2.4 Coulsdon library

Coulsdon library is housed in a purpose-built inter war building which is the freehold of the council.

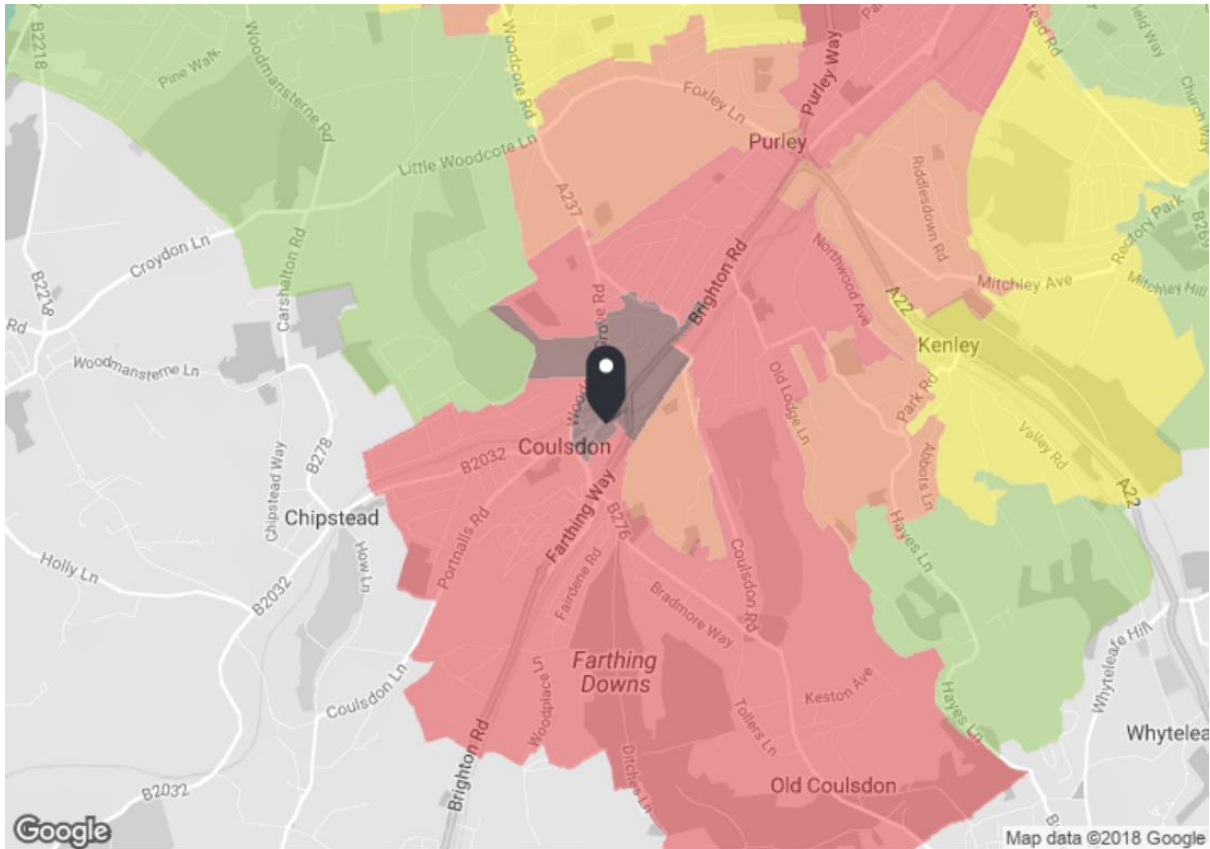
The library has a floor area of 337 square metres. It is largely on one floor but some staff facilities are on an upper floor.

Coulsdon library is the ninth busiest library in the borough with around sixty six thousand visits in 2016/17. Visits have decreased by 3% since 2012. On average 30 people visit the library for each hour that it is open. The library has 7 bookable public PCs which are the second least well used in the borough. 43% of the library's active users do not borrow books, the eighth highest figure in the borough.

32% of members are aged 14 or less, slightly above the borough average. 19.5% of members are over 60, considerably above the average. Two thirds of members live in the two Coulsdon wards, and 18% live outside the borough. These two wards are some of the most affluent in Croydon, and the area of highest deprivation within them – Tollers Lane – is at a considerable distance from the library.

Location

The library is well located in the shopping district of Coulsdon. Only 13% of households in Coulsdon West ward had no access to a vehicle in 2011, the lowest for any library catchment area. There is parking around the library, but it is subject to restrictions. The library is well served by public transport. The map below shows that a wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport.

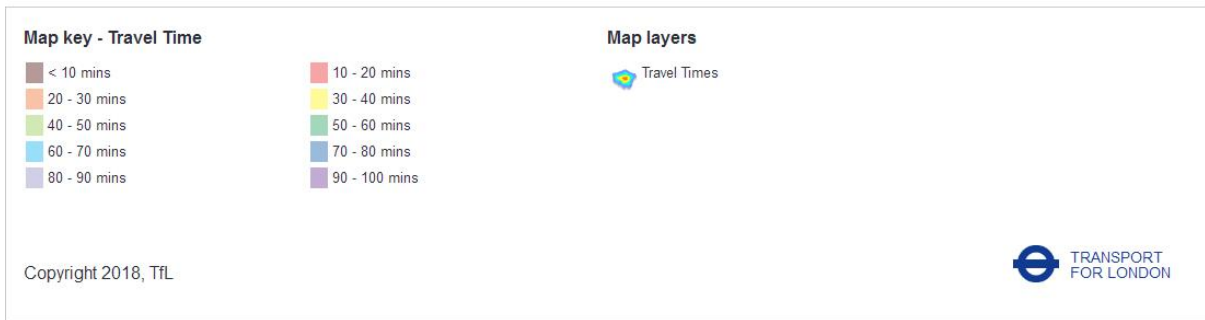


TIM output for Base Year

Scenario: Base Year Mode: All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

CR5 2NN
 Victoria Rd, Coulsdon CR5 2NN, UK
 Easting: 529917, Northing: 159644

Code: NT096/05A



The library is close to Coulsdon leisure centre.

For a library in a good location, Coulsdon is not well used. This may be due to the proximity of Bradmore Green library. However, it is difficult to see how the current location in the town centre could be improved upon, unless a form of colocation were to be considered; this is discussed below.

Size, arrangement and facilities

The library is larger than the average for branch libraries. Although there is some moveable shelving to facilitate flexible use of space, the library would benefit from separate meeting rooms to allow activities to take place without interfering with regular library use. There is little study space in the library and this could be improved. The area is expected to see medium limited population growth in the next eighteen years.

Opportunities for space sharing or co-location

The plot upon which the library is built is considerably larger than the building, and there is potential to expand the current building or to redevelop onto this space. This could be used to facilitate co-location and to provide staff touchdown space as part of the localisation agenda. Alternatively, there may be opportunities to co-locate with the leisure centre which has the potential for efficiencies through staff sharing.

2.5 Croydon Central library

Croydon Central library occupies much of the Croydon Clocktower building, built in 1894- 6 as the town hall for Croydon and subsequently extended. The building is the freehold of the council. The building also contains Croydon Museum, Croydon Archives, the David Leen cinema and the Braithwaite Hall as well as a cafe.

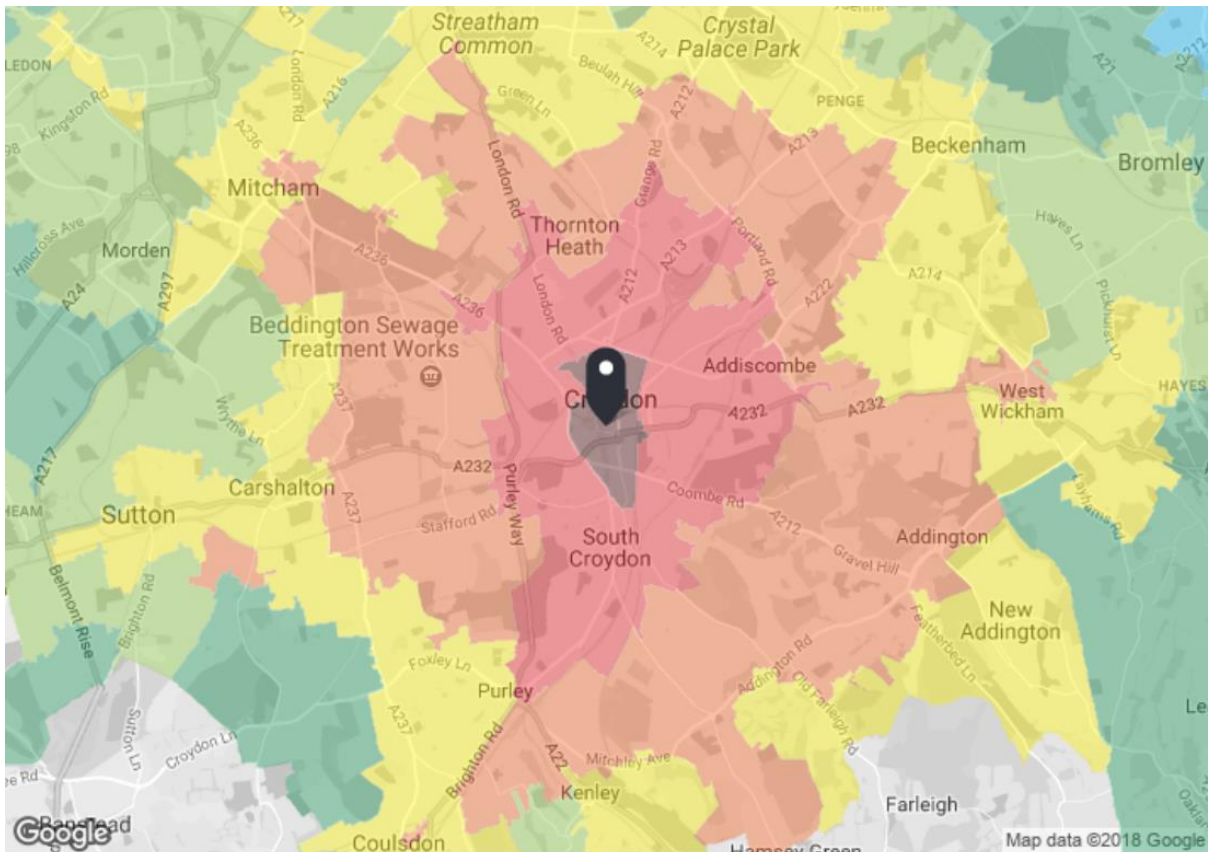
The library is currently arranged over four floors with a children's library on the ground floor and a reference area on the third floor.

Croydon Central library is by far the busiest library in the borough and one of the most used public libraries in the country with around nine hundred and forty thousand visits in 2016/17. Visits have increased by 11% since 2012. Almost half of all visits to Croydon's libraries are accounted for by the Central library. On average 352 people visit the library for each hour that it is open. The library has 80 bookable public PCs which are the most well used in the borough. 58% of the library's active users do not borrow books, the third highest figure in the borough.

Only 22% of members are aged 14 or less, which is the lowest in the borough. Two thirds of members are aged between 15 and 59, considerably above the average. Library members live in all areas of the borough, although around 10% live in Fairfield, Wadham and Addiscombe wards. In each of these wards, more than 70% of all library users are members of Croydon Central library, and more than half of library users in Croham ward are also members. Although Croham is relatively affluent, there are pockets of high deprivation in the other wards (and of course more generally across the whole borough). 53% of all super output areas in these four wards are in the four deciles with most deprivation.

Location

The library is well located close to the central shopping area of Croydon. 42% of households in Fairfield, Wadham, Croham and Addiscombe wards had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is plenty of parking around the library, but it is subject to restrictions and charges. The library is exceptionally well served by public transport by trams, buses and trains. The map below shows that much of the borough is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport.



TIM output for Base Year

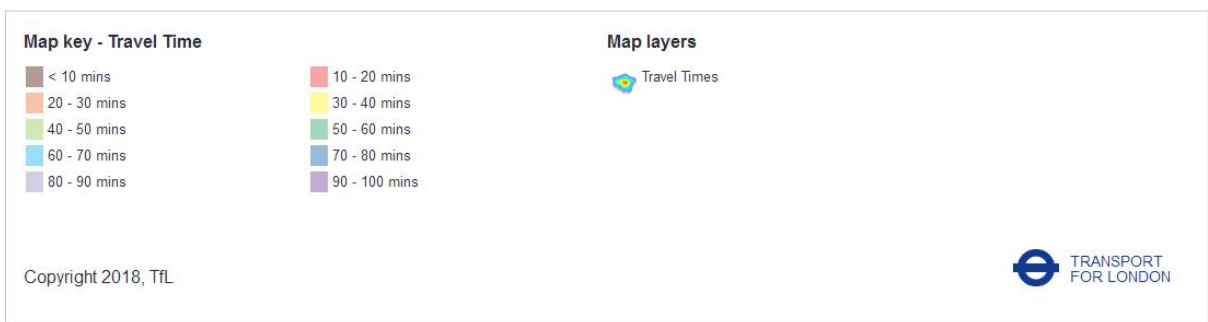
Scenario: Base Year Mode: All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

CR9 1ET

Croydon CR9 1ET, UK

Easting: 532418, Northing: 165393

Code: NT096105A



There are multiple council owned facilities within the immediate vicinity including the council’s principal offices at Bernard Weatherill House.

Given both the highly accessible location and the co-location of other facilities, Croydon Central library is unsuitable for relocation.

Size, arrangement and facilities

There is the potential to reconfigure the library. In our opinion, there is an opportunity to reduce some book stock, particularly older and outdated reference sources. We would recommend in any reconfiguration that you to preserve as much study space and public computer provision as possible, as this is one of the principal uses of the library, a pattern which is not replicated at any branch library.

Opportunities for space sharing or co-location

If any reconfiguration of the library is considered, these should be done in conjunction with other services operating from the Clocktower such as adult learning and the museum. This would enable opportunities for making the best use of staff time across all the functions in the building to be explored.

2.6 New Addington library

New Addington library is housed in a modern building which is the freehold of the council. The building is also occupied by CALAT, a café, a nursery and an Access Croydon desk.

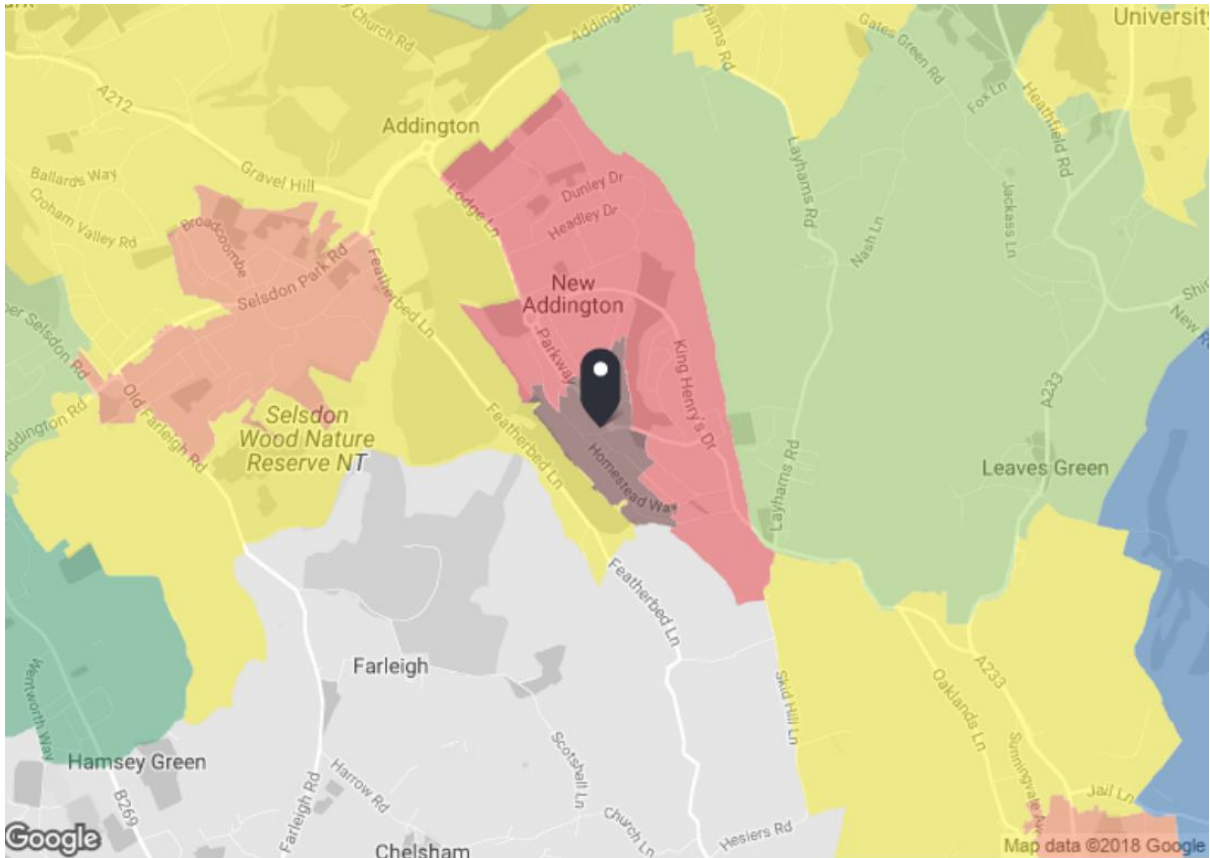
The library is spread across two floors and as there are no obvious boundaries between CALAT, the café and the library, they blend into one another. Staff facilities are shared with CALAT.

The building has around eighty five thousand visits in 2016/17, but these include visits for other purposes than the library. Visits to the building have increased by 11% since 2012, but it is uncertain whether this is due to library activity. The library has 13 bookable public PCs which are the seventh most well used in the borough. 62% of the library's active users do not borrow books, the highest figure in the borough.

31% of members are aged 14 or less, slightly above the borough average. 8% of members are over 60, considerably below the average. Three quarters of members live in New Addington and Fieldway wards, and 7% live outside the borough. In no other ward are more than 1.5% of library users members of New Addington library. These two wards are some of the most deprived in Croydon, with 78% of super output areas in the lowest two deciles.

Location

The library is located at the end of the New Addington shopping precinct. 39% of households in New Addington and Fieldway wards had no access to a vehicle in 2011, lower than other deprived areas presumably due to relatively poor transport links. There is parking around the library, but it is subject to restrictions. New Addington is connected to Croydon by tram and there are frequent buses but public transport times are greater than for other libraries and only the immediate vicinity and some of the Selsdon area can be reached in 30 minutes. This is shown in the map below.



TIM output for Base Year

Scenario: Base Year Mode: All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

CR0 0DJ

Chertsey Cres, New Addington, Croydon CR0 0DJ, UK

Easting: 538420, Northing: 161920

Code: NT096105A

Map key - Travel Time		Map layers
< 10 mins	10 - 20 mins	Travel Times
20 - 30 mins	30 - 40 mins	
40 - 50 mins	50 - 60 mins	
60 - 70 mins	70 - 80 mins	
80 - 90 mins	90 - 100 mins	

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There are a number of community facilities owned by the council in the area including a community centre, a leisure centre, a probation centre and the Octagon cyber café and nursery.

The library is relatively well placed to serve its community. However, there is an opportunity to relocate the library which is discussed below. The area is expected to see medium limited population growth in the next eighteen years but a library of the current size is adequate if meeting rooms are made available.

Size, arrangement and facilities

The existing library is unusual in that its boundaries are not well defined. Although this poses problems for counting visitors and stock security, it does create a feeling of openness and accessibility. The café is of great benefit to the library and the other activities in the building help to draw in potential customers. The library is very poorly signposted and the casual observer might not guess that the building was anything but a CALAT facility.

Opportunities for space sharing or co-location

Although the library is in a good location within the district centre, there is an opportunity to improve on this. A new multi-purpose health and community building for New Addington is being considered. This would be constructed next to the new leisure centre and there is potential for the library to also occupy this building. This would move the library further towards the shopping parade. Colocation with a health facility can be mutually beneficial, with patients able to use the library facilities whilst they wait and opportunities for shared reception and staff areas. We are not aware of any timescales for the construction of the health centre but we recommend early engagement with the health providers.

If the library is to remain in the building, there should be a more joined up approach to service delivery – in particular we recommend that the Access Croydon team are more integrated with the library service. There are a number of meeting rooms in the building but we understand that the library service only has limited access to them, and we recommend that these should be jointly managed by the library service and CALAT. Beyond this there is considerable scope for working more closely together with joint initiatives, perhaps involving external partners and CALAT programmes supported by appropriate stock.

2.7 Norbury library

Norbury library is housed in a two storey purpose-built 1931 building which is the freehold of the council. The building is locally listed.

The library has a floor area of 1136 square metres, which is the greatest of any library except Croydon Central. Much of this area is not currently used since only the ground floor of the library is open to the public and most of the upper floor has no disabled access.

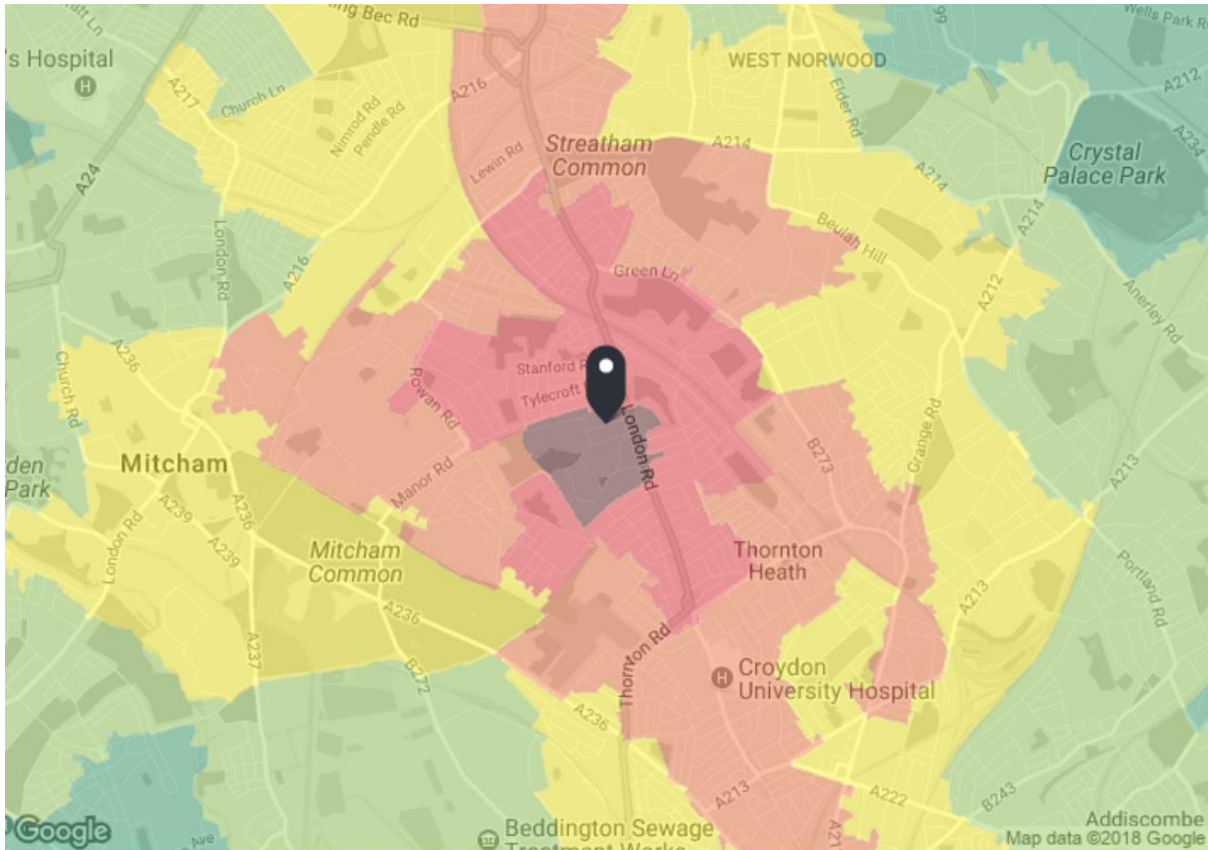
Norbury library is the sixth busiest library in the borough with around eighty three thousand visits in 2016/17. Visits have decreased by 4% since 2012. On average 37 people visit the library for each hour that it is open. The library has 11 bookable public PCs which are the sixth well used in the borough. 48% of the library's active users do not borrow books, the sixth highest figure in the borough.

38% of members are aged 14 or less, well above the borough average. 9.5% of members are over 60, below the average but consistent with local demographics. 42% of members live in Norbury ward and 16% live outside the borough. Norbury ward is an area of moderate deprivation with 78% of super output areas in the more deprived half of deprivation.

Location

The library is located on the London Road about 650m south of the station, and with few shops in the immediate vicinity. 34% of households in Norbury ward had no access to a

vehicle in 2011. There is free parking around the library. The library is well served by public transport. The map below shows that a wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport.



TIM output for Base Year

Scenario: Base Year Mode: All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

SW16 4UW
 Beatrice Ave, London SW16 4UW, UK
 Easting: 530669, Northing: 169013

Code: NT096I05A

Map key - Travel Time		Map layers
< 10 mins	10 - 20 mins	Travel Times
20 - 30 mins	30 - 40 mins	
40 - 50 mins	50 - 60 mins	
60 - 70 mins	70 - 80 mins	
80 - 90 mins	90 - 100 mins	

Copyright 2018, TfL TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

Other than schools, there are few council owned assets near the library.

The current business levels demonstrate that the library is of value to the local community in its current location. It is possible that the library may benefit from relocation to a place nearer the station, but there are no council owned facilities in that area.

Size, arrangement and facilities

The large size of the library building would allow some areas to be released to another organisation. It is possible that with careful planning not all of the ground floor would be required for library purposes and certainly the current arrangement is unsuitable and inefficient. The library would benefit from a separate meeting room. However, if community use is to be made of the upper floor then disabled access would have to be installed.

Opportunities for space sharing or co-location

If the current building is to be retained then there are two options for colocation. Either the library would remain on the ground floor and the first floor, with or without a lift could be demised to another organisation, or a shared facility could be provided on the ground floor with some library functions and partner office space on the first floor. In the latter case, operating a split level library is normally more expensive in terms of staffing so this option should only be considered if there can be some form of shared staffing arrangement. Some released space could be considered as staff touchdown points. The upper floor could also be considered as a commercial letting opportunity at full market value in order to generate income to support the library service.

2.8 Purley library

Purley library is housed in a single storey purpose-built 1936 building which is the freehold of the council. The building is grade II listed; the listing includes some interior features including shelving and an obsolete desk.

The library has a floor area of 589 square metres, which is large for a branch library in Croydon. The library consists of a general library, separate children's and study areas and a wide corridor where public computers are located. There is a separate meeting room.

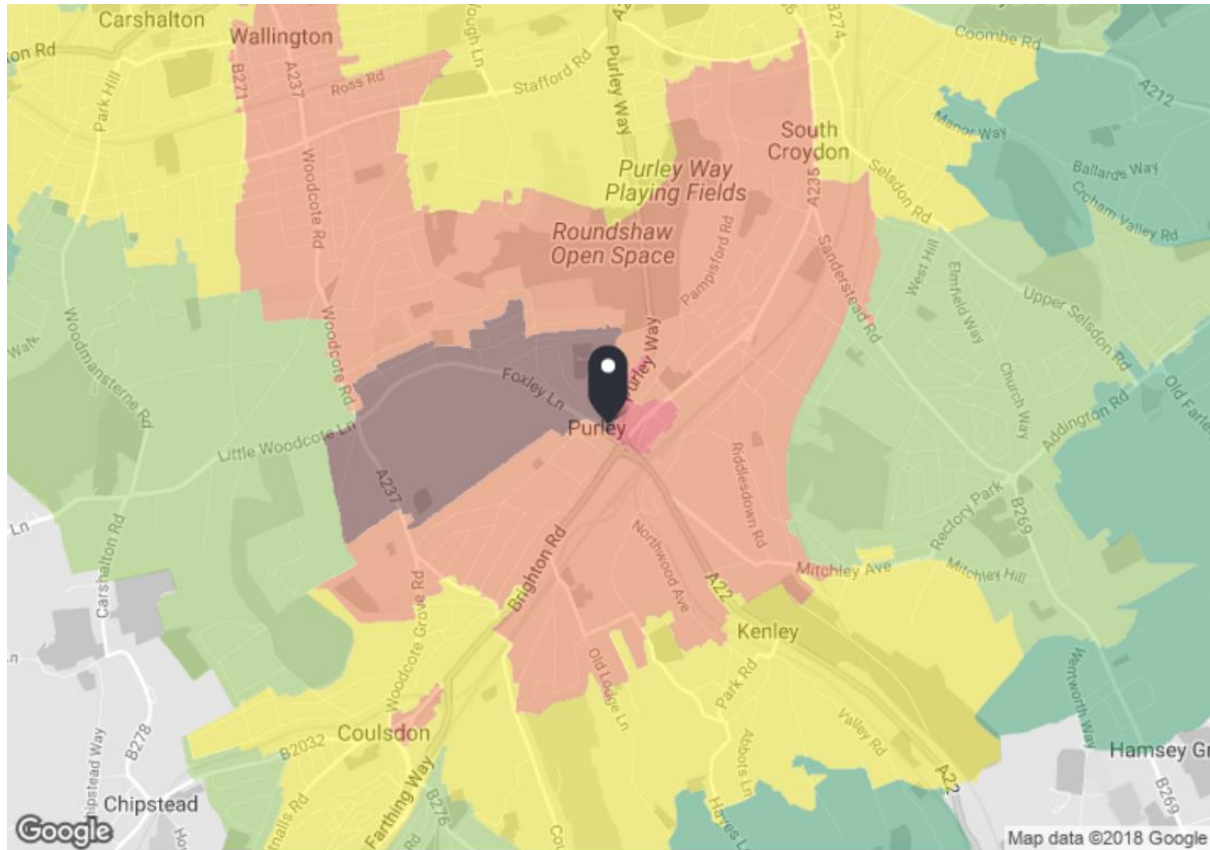
Purley library is the eighth busiest library in the borough with around seventy one thousand visits in 2016/17. Visits have increased by 11% since 2012. On average 32 people visit the library for each hour that it is open. The library has 8 bookable public PCs which are the eighth well used in the borough. 41% of the library's active users do not borrow books, the ninth highest figure in the borough.

38% of members are aged 14 or less, above the borough average. 16.2% of members are over 60, above the average and consistent with local demographics. 61% of members live in Purley and Kenley wards and interestingly 11% live in Coulsdon West ward, a figure that is not reciprocated in the usage of Coulsdon library. Purley and Kenley wards are an area of low deprivation with 11% of super output areas in the fourth decile.

Location

The library is located on Banstead Road at some distance from the district shopping area. The area is isolated from much of the shopping area and from the large Tesco superstore because the A23 effectively creates a large traffic island. Banstead Road in any case has few

local facilities and the area feels isolated from the thriving town centre. 20% of households in Purley and Kenley wards had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is parking near the library, but some of it is charged for. The library is well served by public transport being on the A23 axis. The map below shows that a wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport.



TIM output for Base Year

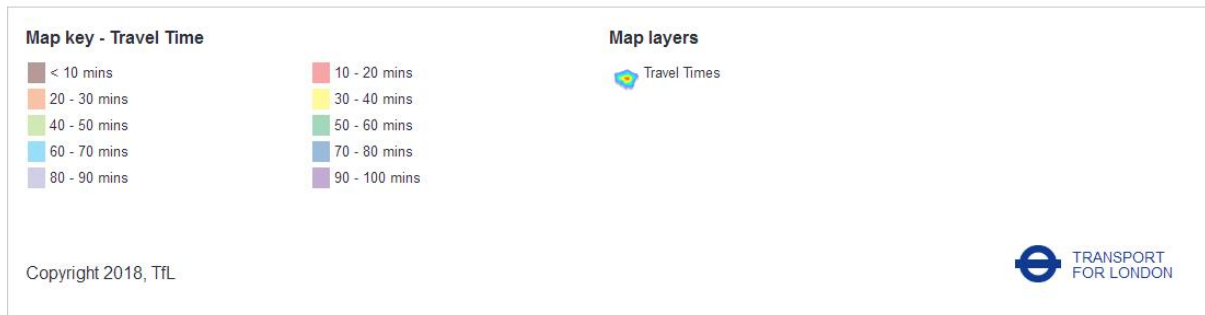
Scenario: Base Year Mode: All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

CR8 3YH

Purley CR8 3YH, UK

Easting: 531148, Northing: 161691

Code: NT096/05A



The library is at a short distance from Purley leisure centre, but is isolated from it in the same way that the library is isolated from the town centre.

The location of Purley library is not ideal. The majority of people visiting Purley are visiting the Tesco superstore, the High Street or both. A location close to either of these would be preferable to the current location. The success of Selsdon library demonstrates that a colocation with a supermarket can be desirable, if this were ever a possibility.

Any decision to relocate the library would raise the issue of what might happen to the existing building. Although in many ways the building could be suitable for conversion to business or community use, the listed interior features would present a constraint, particularly some of the free standing shelving.

Size, arrangement and facilities

The current library is large for its business levels, although the area is expected to experience high population growth over the next eighteen years. Despite being an attractive building, the library does not present a welcoming appearance; some of the listed features inside the library look rather tired and prevent a more modern and inviting arrangement. However, this is not insurmountable, and the library would benefit from a rearrangement of functions within the building to make better use of the current study room to house some book stock and the public computers. Whilst we would not recommend a major reduction in book stock, as the library has high lending rates, there may be some scope to use the listed shelving for more face on book displays, thus making the area more attractive. The listed issue desk could be made into a feature, and some thought could be given to reducing clutter. If the council decided there were a longer term aspiration to relocate the library, then the timescale for that relocation would be crucial in deciding whether any significant investment in the layout of the current building would be justified for a limited term solution.

Opportunities for space sharing or co-location

If the current building is to be retained then it does give some opportunity for colocation with another organisation, but perhaps is most suitable as touchdown space for council staff, with an expansion of public computers in the study space.

2.9 Sanderstead library

Sanderstead library is housed in a purpose-built 1936 building which is the freehold of the council consisting of a main floor and a basement.

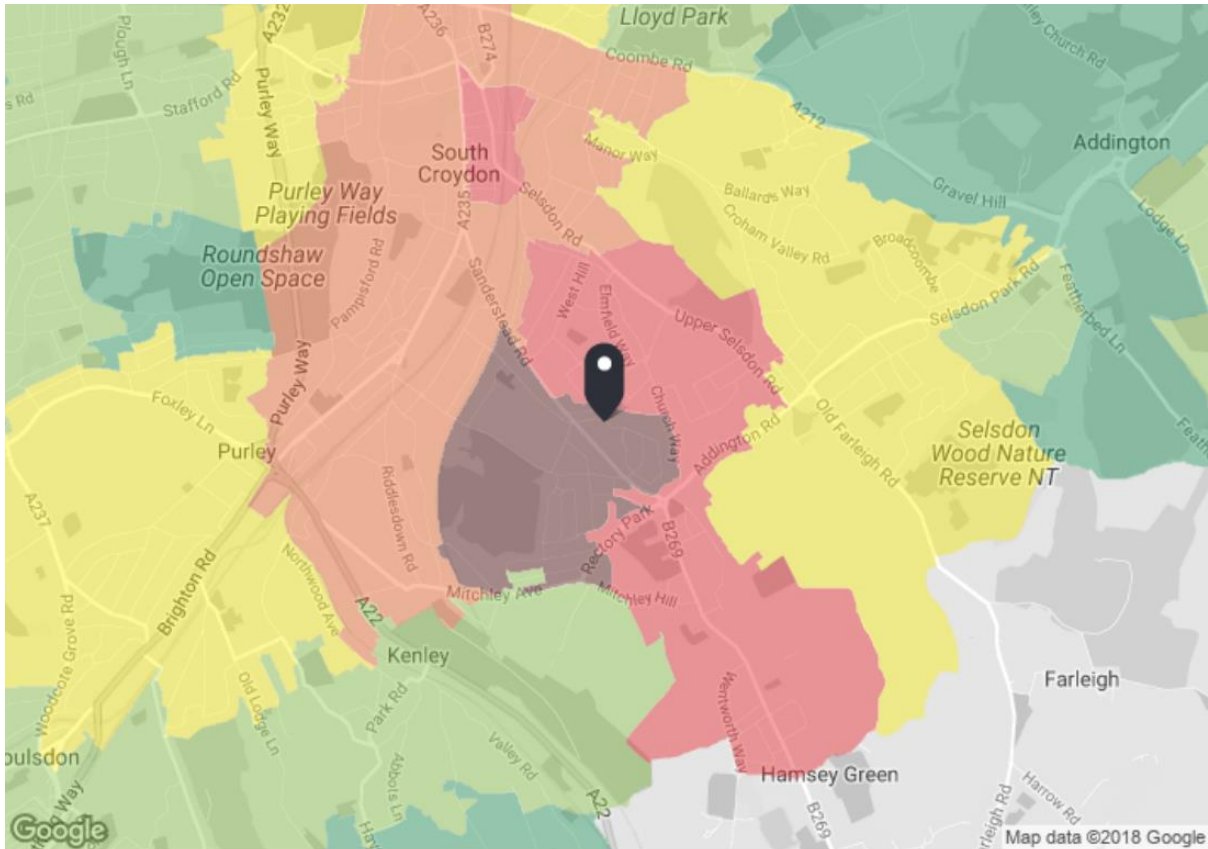
The library has a floor area of 215 square metres, and is one of the smallest branch libraries. The library is a single space on the ground floor, with staff accommodation in the basement. There are also toilets for the public in the basement, which is reached by a steep and narrow staircase.

Sanderstead library is the least busy library in the borough with around thirty six thousand visits in 2016/17, although the library is open for fewer hours than most branch libraries. Visits have decreased by 15% since 2012, the largest decline in the borough. On average 21 people visit the library for each hour that it is open, again the lowest level in the borough. The library has 5 bookable public PCs which are the least well used in the borough. Only 28% of the library's active users do not borrow books, the lowest figure in the borough.

40% of members are aged 14 or less, above the borough average. 23% of members are over 60, above the average and consistent with local demographics. 49% of members live in Sanderstead ward and 16% live in Croham ward. Only 39% of library active users who live in Sanderstead ward are members of Sanderstead library. Sanderstead ward is an area of low deprivation with 12.5% of super output areas in the fifth decile; the most deprived area is in the Hamsey Green district.

Location

The library is located on Sanderstead Hill in an area where there are almost no community facilities or shops. Only 12% of households in Sanderstead ward had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is abundant free parking near the library. The library is well served by frequent buses. The map below shows that a wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport.



TIM output for Base Year

Scenario: Base Year Mode: All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

CR2 0HL
 Farm Fields, South Croydon CR2 0HL, UK
 Easting: 533586, Northing: 161932

Code: NT096I05A

Map key - Travel Time

 < 10 mins	 10 - 20 mins
 20 - 30 mins	 30 - 40 mins
 40 - 50 mins	 50 - 60 mins
 60 - 70 mins	 70 - 80 mins
 80 - 90 mins	 90 - 100 mins

Map layers

 Travel Times

Copyright 2018, TfL



The location of Sanderstead library is poor, given the absence of other facilities likely to attract people in the immediate vicinity. That said, the library is easily accessible by bus and car from Hamsey Green. If the library were to be relocated, there would be little point in a new location in the Limpsfield Road shopping district, as that is less than one mile from Selsdon library. However, a new location at Hamsey Green might be considered as this area currently has few council facilities, although part of the area is outside the borough. If this were to happen, then almost the entire area of Sanderstead ward would be within a twenty minute radius by public transport.

Perhaps a more viable proposal for relocation is at South Croydon. Although South Croydon is well connected to central Croydon and its library, the area is one of a few places in the borough which is more than a mile from a public library. Locating the library here would mean that the entire Sanderstead ward would be within twenty minutes of the library by public transport, with the additional bonus of serving Kenley, another area more than one mile from a Croydon public library (although Kenley is geographically closer to Purley, public transport links are better to South Croydon).

Size, arrangement and facilities

The current library is large for its business levels, and the area is expected to experience low population growth over the next eighteen years. If the library is to remain in its current location, the issue of access to customer toilets is one that we recommend be addressed urgently, as the present arrangement appears unsafe, especially when the high proportion of older users and children is considered. It is doubtful, given current usage, whether the level of public computers should be maintained. The library would benefit from mobile shelving to increase flexibility. With careful planning, some of the space could be released for community or business purposes, and the large site upon which the library is built would allow for expansion of the building, despite the presence of a protected tree. If the library were to be replaced on the same site, a suitable use might be a residential block incorporating a small library.

Opportunities for space sharing or co-location

As discussed in the previous section, if the library were reconfigured, some space could be released for community or business purposes, although there is a question about whether organisations willing to pay a commercial rent or conferring sufficient community benefits could be identified given the library's location. Alternatively this could be used as a staff touchdown point but it is doubtful if there would be much demand.

2.10 Selsdon library

Selsdon library is housed in a complex consisting of a Sainsbury's supermarket, the library, a community hall and the Selsdon Centre for the Retired. The complex was opened in 2003.

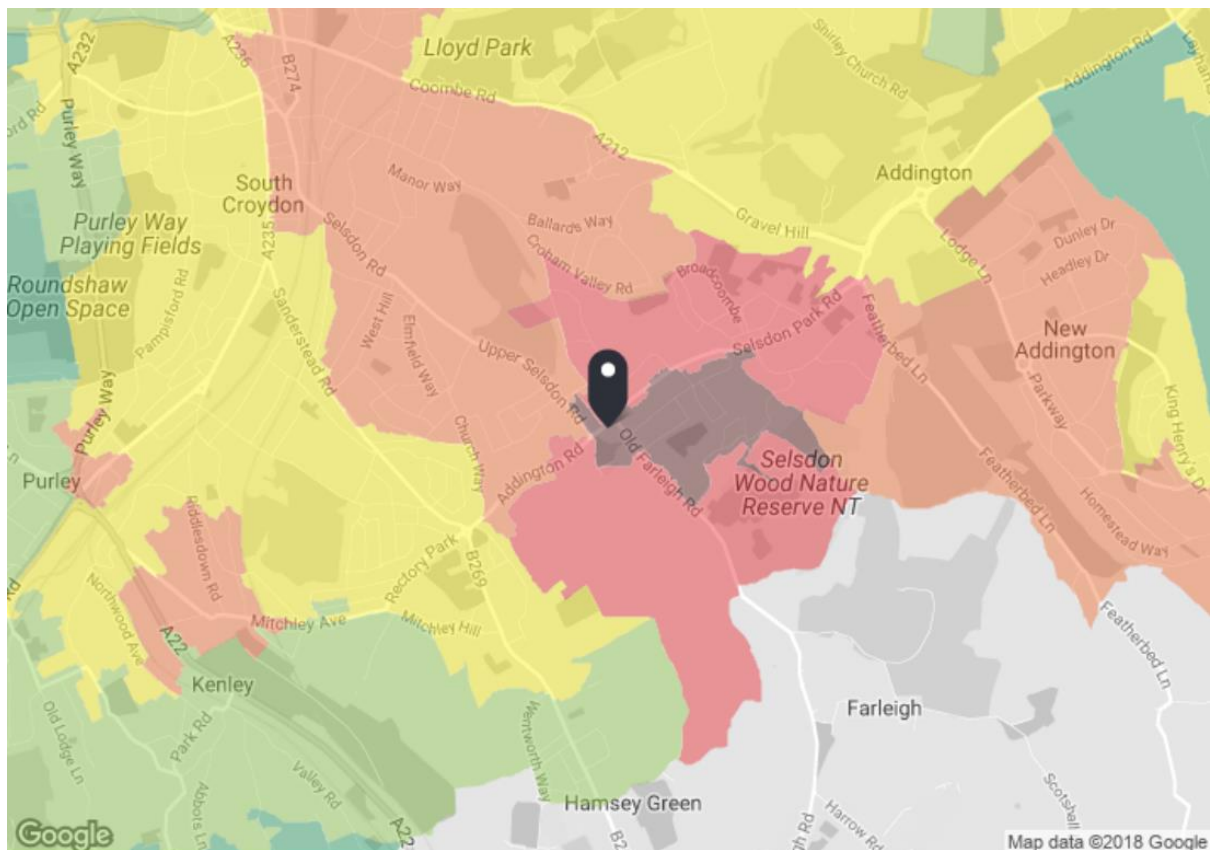
The library has a floor area of 535 square metres. The library is a large open plan space with a separate children's library, and with sufficient staff accommodation.

Selsdon library is the third busiest library in the borough with around one hundred and twenty three thousand visits in 2016/17. Visits have decreased by 7% since 2012. On average 55 people visit the library for each hour that it is open, again the third highest in the borough. The library has 7 bookable public PCs which are the fourth well used in the borough. 39% of the library's active users do not borrow books, the eleventh figure in the borough.

29% of members are aged 14 or less, slightly below the borough average. 29% of members are over 60, the highest in the borough. 42% of members live in Selsdon and Heathfield wards and 10% live in Sanderstead ward. Selsdon and Heathfield wards are the most affluent in Croydon with 11% of super output areas in the fourth decile or below; the most deprived area is in the Monks Hill district.

Location

The library is located as part of the Sainsburys supermarket complex and at a short distance from the shopping area. Only 14% of households in Selsdon and Heathfield wards had no access to a vehicle in 2011. The adjacent supermarket car park is free for up to two hours. The library is well served by frequent buses. The map below shows that a wide area is within 30 minutes travel time by public transport.



TIM output for Base Year

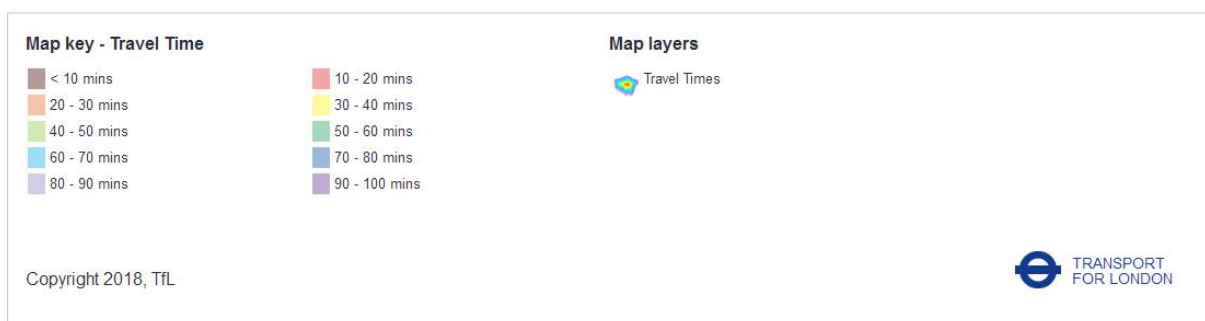
Scenario: Base Year Mode: All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

CR2 8LA

Addington Rd, South Croydon CR2 8LA, UK

Easting: 534992, Northing: 162135

Code: NT096105A



The location of Selsdon library is would be difficult to improve upon, and the distance to the Monks Hill area is less than one mile. However, the size of the library is of some concern.

Size, arrangement and facilities

Although the library is larger than the average branch, we believe that business levels and the range of facilities offered are restricted by the available space. In particular, there is very little study space for a relatively busy library and the high usage of the public computers indicates that demand is not fully met. These facilities are particularly important for attracting younger people. It is difficult to see how the library could be expanded on the current site, although negotiations could be started with the land owner. The furniture in the library is now exhibiting signs of wear thus detracting from the generally attractive appearance of the library, and mobile shelving would confer flexibility. The library is not well signposted inside the complex and since the entrance is behind a supermarket trolley store, it is not easy to locate. Some of your consultants had been using the supermarket for some months before noticing the library. The area is expected to experience low population growth in the next eighteen years.

Opportunities for space sharing or co-location

As space is at a premium in the library, there are few opportunities for co-location. However we recommend better cooperation with the Selsdon Centre for the Retired, especially given the high proportion of over 60s using the library. There could also be more links with the community centre, even to the extent that the hall could be hired to provide additional study space at periods of high demand. The possibility of working more closely with Sainsbury's should also be explored.

2.11 Shirley library

Shirley library is housed in a purpose built inter war building.

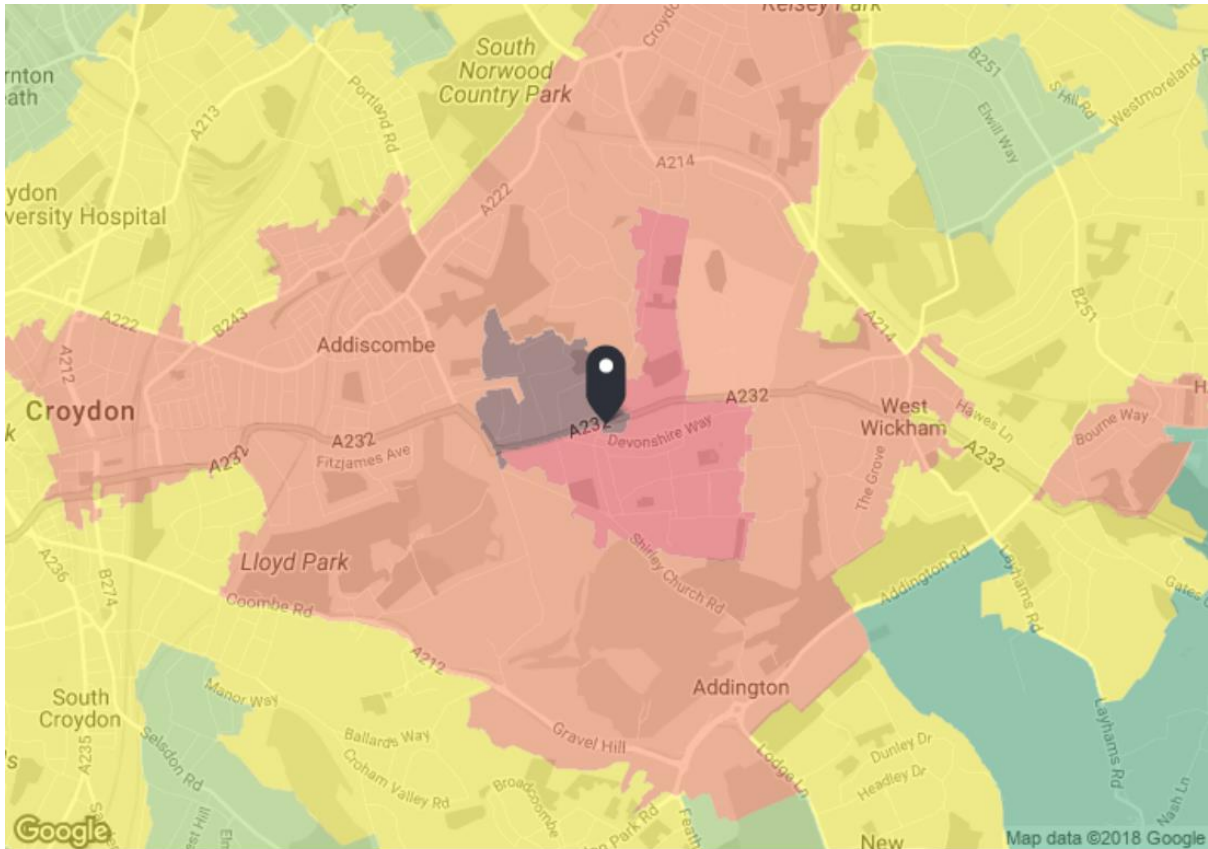
The library has a floor area of 268 square metres. The library consists of a large general area, but with two awkwardly shaped rooms serving as the children's library and rather inconvenient staff accommodation.

Shirley library is the third least busy library in the borough with around fifty two thousand visits in 2016/17. Visits have decreased by 11% since 2012, the third largest decline. On average 23 people visit the library for each hour that it is open, the second lowest in the borough. The library has 6 bookable public PCs which are the tenth well used in the borough. 42% of the library's active users do not borrow books, the tenth figure in the borough.

31% of members are aged 14 or less, near the borough average. 25% of members are over 60, higher than the average but reflecting the demographic of the area. 48% of members live in Shirley ward and 16% live in Heathfield ward. Shirley ward is generally affluent but 22% of super output areas are in the second decile of deprivation; the most deprived areas are in the south of the ward near the Shrublands estate.

Location

The library is located at the end of the Shirley shopping area. 22% of households in Shirley ward had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is free parking within a short distance of the library. The library is well served by frequent buses along the A232. The map below shows that most of the ward is within 20 minutes travel time by public transport.

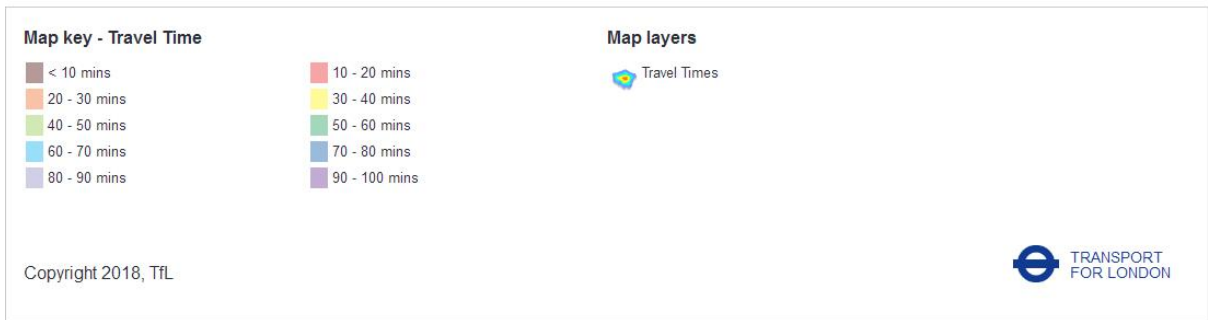


TIM output for Base Year

Scenario: Base Year Mode: All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

CR0 8BH
 Wickham Rd, Croydon CR0 8BH, UK
 Easting: 536178, Northing: 165822

Code: NT096/05A



There are no other council owned facilities in the immediate vicinity.

The visitor numbers at Shirley library are not as high as might be expected for an area with some pockets of high deprivation, and whilst the library is close to local shops, it is not in the heart of the shopping area. This may be partly due to some residents using Bromley council’s West Wickham library.

The current library is not very well located and this is reflected in its usage. Ashburton library is also easily accessible by public transport from Wickham Road. There is an area of significant deprivation to the south of the current location which could be explored as a

possible alternative local library to replace Shirley library; this could be suitable for complete or partial operation by volunteers.

Size, arrangement and facilities

The library is not well laid out but its size is adequate for current business levels. The area is expected to experience moderate population growth in the next eighteen years, and it may be that the space will no longer be adequate by that time. The library appears shabby and much of the furniture and especially the shelving is in need of replacement. Demolition of interior walls to create an open plan library and mobile furniture would increase flexibility, and careful programming could avoid conflicts between noisy children's activities and the need for quiet from other library users. There is little study space in the current library, although space restrictions may make it difficult to increase this.

Opportunities for space sharing or co-location

It may be possible, if the current library were not reconfigured, to release all or part of the children's library for other uses. However, this is not a course we would recommend unless financial pressures demanded it.

2.12 South Norwood library

South Norwood library is housed in a purpose built building probably dating from the 1970s. The library is due to be replaced in 2019 by a new facility as part of a mixed use development in Station Road.

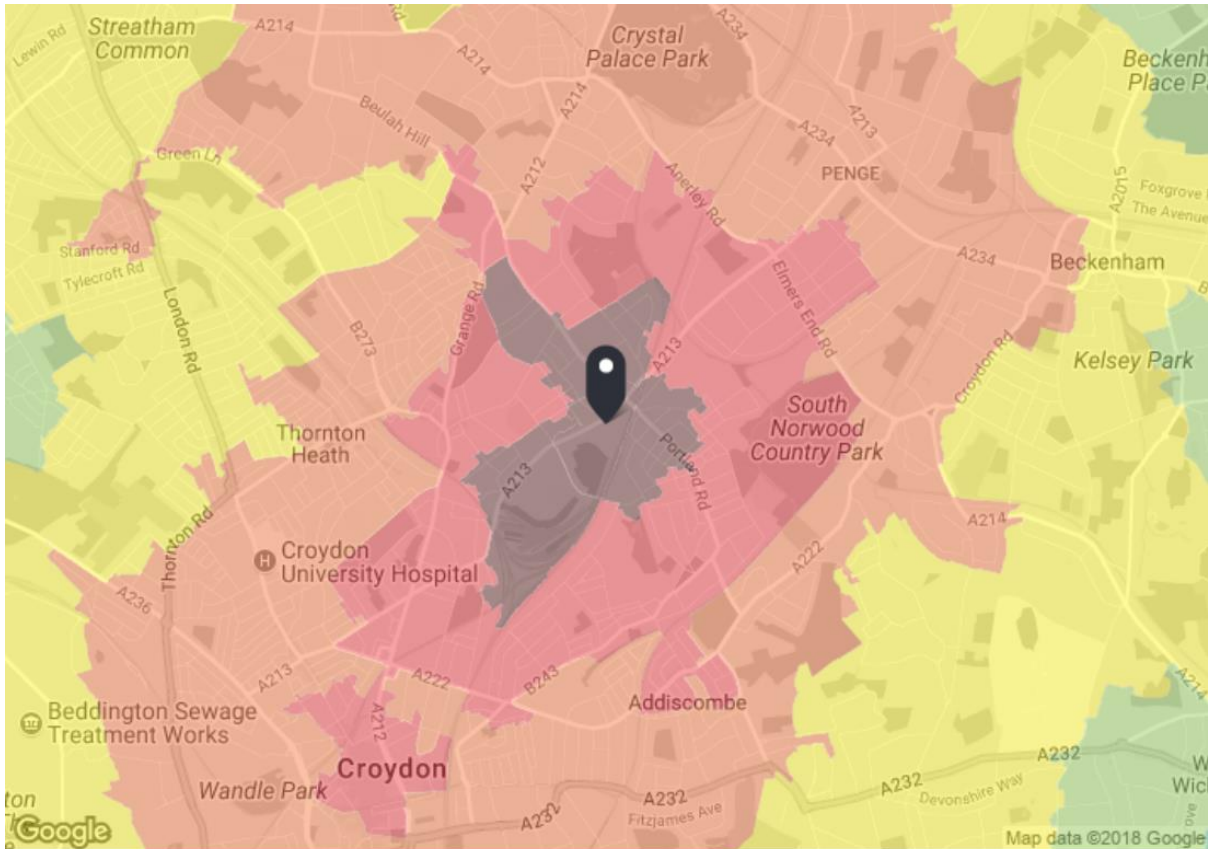
The current library has a floor area of 351 square metres, arranged over five levels. We have only seen an indicative layout for the new library and do not have a floor area, although it appears to be considerably smaller than the current building. We understand that it is to be open plan and designed with maximum flexibility in mind.

South Norwood library is the seventh busiest library in the borough with around seventy four thousand visits in 2016/17. Visits have increased by 41% since 2012, by far the largest growth in the borough. On average 43 people visit the library for each hour that it is open, the fourth highest in the borough. The current library has 11 bookable public PCs which are the third best used in the borough. 50% of the library's active users do not borrow books, the fifth highest figure in the borough.

36% of members are aged 14 or less, above the borough average. 8% of members are over 60, much lower than the borough average. 58% of members live in South Norwood and Woodside wards and 14% live in Selhurst ward. South Norwood and Woodside wards are the most deprived in the borough, with no super output areas in the lower half of deprivation.

Location

The new library will be better located than the existing, with good transport links including being close to the railway station. There is free parking within a short distance of the library. The map below shows that the new location is in easy reach of large parts of northern Croydon.



TIM output for Base Year

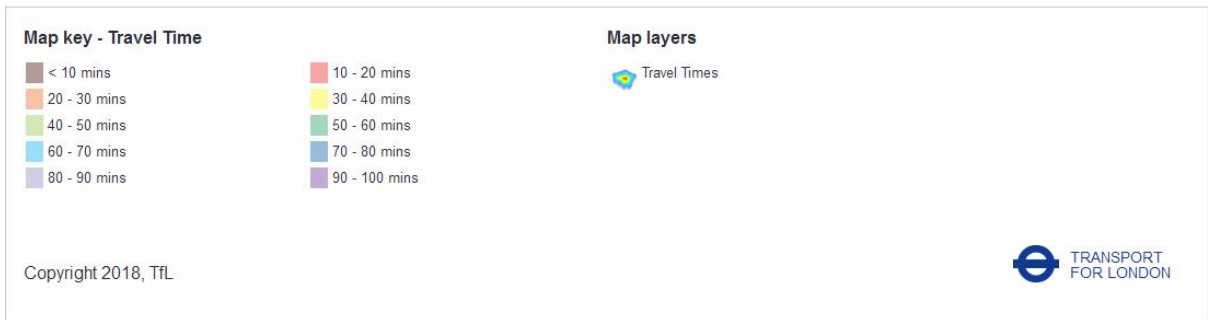
Scenario: Base Year Mode: All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

SE25 5AJ

Station Rd, London SE25 5AJ, UK

Easting: 533911, Northing: 168271

Code: NT096/05A



There are few other council owned facilities in the immediate vicinity.

The new location for the library will be a considerable improvement on the old.

Size, arrangement and facilities

South Norwood is expected to experience moderate growth in the next eighteen years. However, whilst the flexible design for the new library is to be commended, and we understand that the number of public computers is to be maintained, we must express

some concern about the size of the library, especially considering the rapid growth in usage and the high levels of deprivation in the area.

Opportunities for space sharing or co-location

Given the expected floor space of the new library, there are no opportunities for colocation.

2.13 Thornton Heath library

Thornton Heath library is housed in a purpose built Edwardian Carnegie library and much extended in 2010.

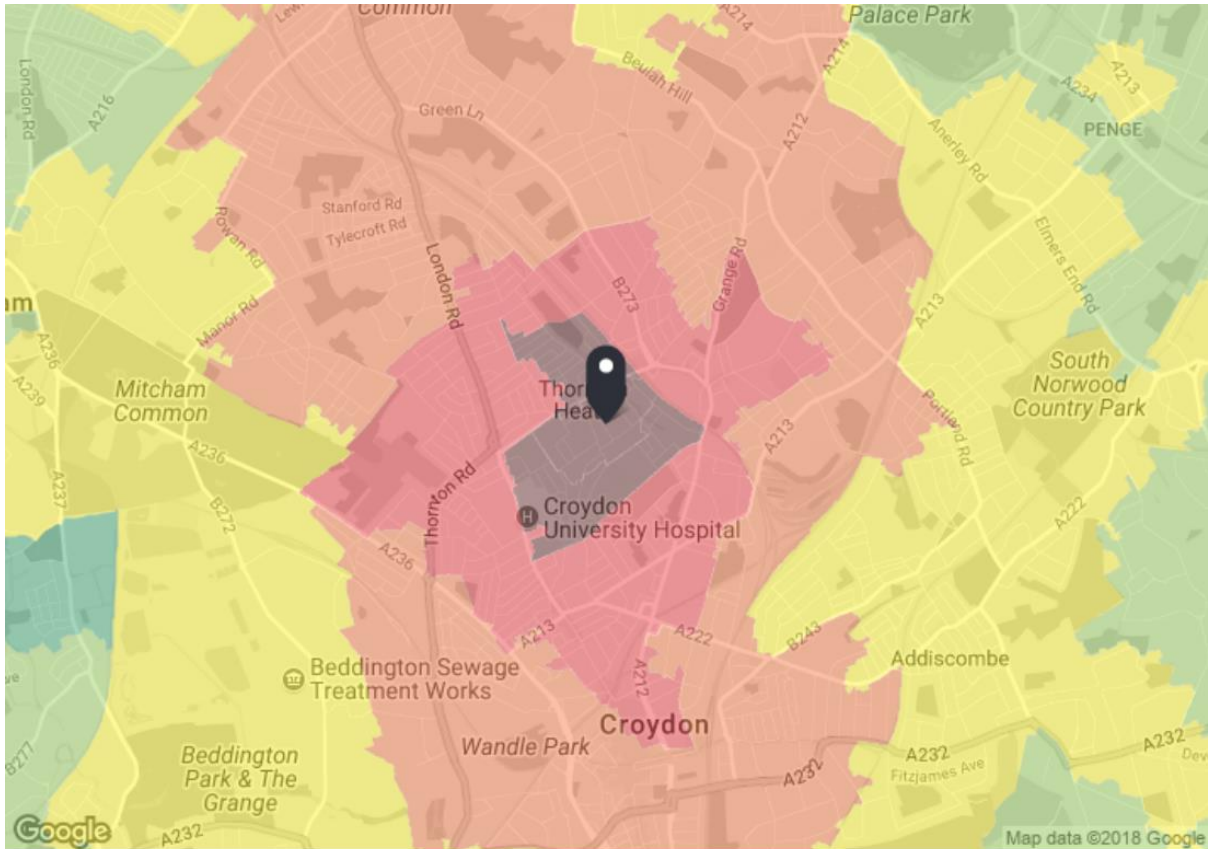
The current library has a floor area of 768 square metres on two floors. The original building, although attractive, is a slightly difficult arrangement around a central octagon and all on the upper floor. This has been extended with a thoughtful design creating additional upper floor space and a lower floor. The upper floor contains the general library with separate rooms for public computers and private study, and a comfortable reading area. The lower floor includes a children's library with access onto a garden, two large meeting rooms and staff accommodation.

Thornton Heath library is the second busiest library in the borough with around one hundred and eighty four thousand visits in 2016/17. Visits have remained constant since 2012. On average 81 people visit the library for each hour that it is open, the second highest the borough. The current library has 16 bookable public PCs which are the second best used in the borough. 57% of the library's active users do not borrow books, the fourth highest figure in the borough.

37% of members are aged 14 or less, above the borough average. 6% of members are over 60, much lower than the borough average. 54% of members live in Thornton Heath, Besham Manor and Upper Norwood wards, although library membership is much lower in Upper Norwood, presumably due to the presence of Upper Norwood library. A further 13% live in West Thornton ward. Thornton Heath, Besham Manor and Upper Norwood wards are generally a deprived area with two thirds of super output areas in the lower half of deprivation.

Location

Thornton Heath library is located on Brigstock Road about 500m from the commercial centre of Thornton Heath. 39% of households in Thornton Heath, Besham Manor and Upper Norwood wards had no access to a vehicle in 2011. There is free parking within a short distance of the library, but it is often difficult to find a parking space. The area is well served by buses. The map below shows that library is in easy reach of large parts of northern Croydon.

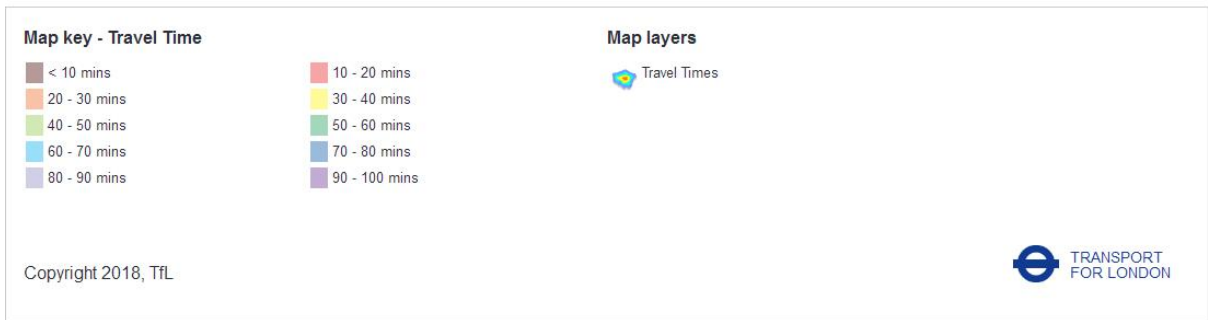


TIM output for Base Year

Scenario: Base Year Mode: All public transport modes, Time of day: Between peak times, Direction: To location

CR7 7BJ
 Berne Rd, Thornton Heath CR7 7BJ, UK
 Easting: 532071, Northing: 167912

Code: NT096/05A



There are few other council owned facilities in the immediate vicinity.

Whilst the location of the library is not ideal, as it would benefit from being closer to the centre of Thornton Heath, the amount of investment in the building and the high usage make relocation unfeasible.

Size, arrangement and facilities

The area is expected to experience low growth in the next eighteen years. The upper floor of the library may benefit from a more open plan approach although the design of the

building may restrict this. The number of study spaces are adequate for the library, but there may be a demand for more public computers. The meeting rooms are well used and we would not recommend that the number is reduced. However, the garden space outside provides an opportunity for further expansion.

Opportunities for space sharing or co-location

If the library was to be extended into the garden, it would create an ideal opportunity for colocation. The high usage of the library and the location in a deprived part of the borough is likely to be an attraction to other organisations. Alternatively, or perhaps as well as, the library could serve as a staff touchdown point, especially if the meeting rooms were sometimes available for confidential sessions with the public.

Areas more than one mile from a library

We have already identified three areas in the borough which are more than one mile from a library. These are South Croydon, Kenley and Addington Village. Whilst Kenley and Addington Village are not expected to experience major population growth in the next eighteen years, the converse is true for South Croydon.

If our proposal to relocate Sanderstead library to South Croydon were adopted, this would address the issue in that area. Kenley ward has a high level of car ownership – only 16% of households did not have access to a vehicle in 2011. It also has good public transport links with South Croydon. We therefore conclude that Kenley would be more than adequately provided for by a library in South Croydon.

Addington Village has a small population and is well connected to New Addington and hence its library by tram. We do not recommend that the council consider building a library here, although support could be given to a community organisation if one were to come forward.

11. Conclusion

Our findings and recommendations are summarised in the table below.

Library	Location	Size, arrangement and facilities	Opportunities for space sharing and colocation
Ashburton	Well located	Appropriate size Minor improvements	Would be possible to release space but not ideal
Bradmore Green	Poorly located. Opportunity to move elsewhere	Appropriate size Minor improvements	Little opportunity on current site but may be possible in a new location
Broad Green	Location not ideal. Could be possible to relocate elsewhere	Library not large enough for purpose. Could be replaced on current site	If replaced on current site, opportunity to integrate with community and children's centre and to provide commercial/community space and staff touchdown points
Coulsdon	Well located but possible to relocate if significant benefits from colocation	Minor improvements	Opportunity to extend current building to facilitate colocation or staff touchdown points
Croydon Central	Well located	Opportunity to use less space more efficiently whilst retaining study space and public computers	Integration with museum and gallery already considered
New Addington	Well located but possible to relocate if significant benefits from colocation	Minor improvements	Opportunity to work more closely with CALAT if in current location. Opportunity to relocate to new health centre

Norbury	Location not ideal. May be possible to relocate elsewhere	Opportunity to release at least half the building space. Opportunities to reconfigure the ground floor	If space was released then considerable opportunities for colocation and staff touchdown points
Purley	Poorly located. Possible opportunities to move closer to retail	Opportunity to rearrange and to make minor improvements	Opportunity to release space in current building.
Sanderstead	Poorly located Opportunities to relocate elsewhere	Some improvement required to layout. Some space could be released.	Possible opportunity for colocation if space released
Selsdon	Well located	Opportunity for improvement to layout	Limited space precludes colocation but opportunity for working better with partners in building
Shirley	Opportunity for relocation elsewhere	Opportunity to rearrange and perhaps to release space	Limited opportunity
South Norwood	The library is to be relocated in 2019	Concern about space available	No opportunity
Thornton Heath	Location not ideal but not feasible to relocate	Opportunity to extend and to rearrange	Good opportunities for colocation

Annex 1: library data sheets

Ashburton library

General	Purpose built large single storey library about 15 years old, part of school complex
Tenure	Rental
Location	Fairly good, just outside shopping street, but at intersection of main roads. Probably not much passing footfall except academy
Parking	Free parking within short distance
Nearest Library	Shirley, 1.2 miles
Co-location	Yes, Oasis Academy
Size	571
Visits	100348
% change visits 2012 - 2016	+4.5%
Hours	44.5
Visits per hour	45.1
Stock total	29575
Issues	59026
Returns	34338
Issue/return ratio	1.11
PCs	10 [11]
PC usage %	42.6%
Study space	20+13
Staff FTE	3.94
Visits per FTE	25440
Issues per FTE	14757

Active users	3161
% non-borrowing active users	58.7%
Arrangement	Extensive adult library Large children's library, but with no central shelves to allow space to be used for events Staff room and office One staff access point
Use of space	No vacant areas No mobile shelving Furniture owned by management company
Signage	It is not obvious that the site contains a library from the outside, particularly approaching from the south. Little signage internally
Self-issue	Yes 2 kiosks
Meeting rooms	None

Bradmore Green library

General	Purpose built small single storey inter war library
Tenure	Freehold
Location	Not very good. On side street at some distance from local centre. Little potential for passing footfall
Parking	Reserved parking
Nearest Library	Coulsdon 1.2 miles
Co-location	No
Size	180

Visits	49801
% change visits 2012 - 2016	-13.5%
Hours	44.5
Visits per hour	22.4
Stock total	12116
Issues	34329
Returns	9858
Issue/return ratio	0.55
PCs	4 [3+2]
PC usage %	32.0%
Study space	3
Staff FTE	3
Visits per FTE	19920
Issues per FTE	13732
Active users	1285
% non-borrowing active users	30.3%
Arrangement	Single octagonal space with adult and child sections Workroom and office One staff access point
Use of space	Difficult to envisage how a library of this size could be used except as a single space
Signage	Large sign outside quite visible, no directional street signage Inadequate signage inside
Self-issue	No
Meeting rooms	None

Broad Green library

General	Purpose built small single storey library about 20 years old
Tenure	Freehold
Location	Poor, not close to shopping area but essentially a library for very local community
Parking	Poor. One dedicated space but not regulated
Nearest Library	Thornton Heath 1.2 miles
Co-location	No, but next to children's centre
Size	236
Visits	54409
% change visits 2012 - 2016	-10.6%
Hours	35.5
Visits per hour	30.7
Stock total	15047
Issues	29615
Returns	6729
Issue/return ratio	0.43
PCs	12 [8+5]
PC usage %	29.4
Study space	4+1
Staff FTE	3
Visits per FTE	21764
Issues per FTE	11845

Active users	2000
% non-borrowing active users	44.9
Arrangement	Single space with small workroom. Children's area at front One staff access point
Use of space	It appeared that much of the usage was by groups which were held in the main library space. No mobile shelving
Signage	Visible sign outside. Little internal signage
Self-issue	Yes
Meeting rooms	No
Potential for expansion	No

Coulsdon library

General	Purpose built two storey interwar library constructed in L shape
Tenure	Freehold
Location	In Coulsdon High Street with passing footfall
Parking	Some nearby but restricted
Nearest Library	Bradmore Green 1.2 miles
Co-location	No
Size	590 sq m
Visits	65806
% change visits 2012 - 2016	-3.4%
Hours	44.5
Visits per hour	29.6

Stock total	17798
Issues	45234
Returns	30130
Issue/return ratio	1.27
PCs	7 [6+2]
PC usage %	28.3%
Study space	7+2
Staff FTE	3
Visits per FTE	21935
Issues per FTE	15078
Active users	3176
% non-borrowing active users	43.2%
Arrangement	<p>Adult library occupies most of ground floor with separate children's library</p> <p>First floor very small and only staff facilities, and reached only by a staircase</p> <p>One staff access point</p>
Use of space	No unused areas. No mobile shelving
Signage	<p>Notice outside but potential for more prominent signage</p> <p>Little interior signage</p>
Self-issue	Yes
Meeting rooms	No

Croydon Central library

General	Large purpose built library built around 1900, and over 4 floors. Part of town hall
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	complex. Escalator and lift access to all floors, but only one lift
Tenure	Freehold
Location	In town centre although just away from main shopping streets. Near council offices and sufficiently large to be destination in own right
Parking	Restricted
Public transport	Very good. Close to multiple bus routes connecting all parts of the borough and to trams. A few minutes' walk from East Croydon station
Nearest Library	Broad Green 1.5 miles
Co-location	Yes, Café adjoining, museum and archives,
Size	Not known
Visits	941282
% change visits 2012 - 2016	+6.7%
Hours	53.5
Visits per hour	351.9
Stock total	127260
Issues	228220
Returns	114147
Issue/return ratio	0.95
PCs	66 (72 adult, 8 child, 10 training)
PC usage %	68.4%
Study space	142+24
Staff FTE	10
Visits per FTE	94128

Issues per FTE	22822
Active users	25561
% non-borrowing active users	57.9%
Arrangement	<p>Ground floor with large reception desk and quick picks. Separate children's library</p> <p>First floor: Adult stock,</p> <p>Second floor: Adult stock and training room, LSU</p> <p>Third floor: Adult and ref stock, HLS</p> <p>Staff access points 1 Pod – Children's Library – 1 PC</p> <p>1 Counter – Reception – 2 PCs</p> <p>2 Pods – Level 1 – 2 PCs</p> <p>1 Pod – Level 2 – 1 PC</p> <p>1 Pod – Level 3 – 1 PC</p> <p>1 Desk – Level 3 – 1 PC</p>
Use of space	<p>Ground floor underused prime space. A lot of staffing resource required for this area</p> <p>First floor: Generally good</p> <p>Second floor: Generally good</p> <p>Third floor: Mainly study and PC space. Some obsolete reference stock taking up space</p>
Signage	Obvious from outside and directional signage.
Self-issue	<p>Yes, 1 – Children's Library</p> <p>4 – Reception</p> <p>1 – Level 1</p>
Meeting rooms	Training room

New Addington library

General	Part of a modern complex housing CALAC, a café, the library and a nursery. Not originally built as a library. Library is on two floors with lift access.
Tenure	Council freehold
Location	At the end of the main high street in New Addington but at a slight distance from the shops
Parking	Some parking nearby but restricted/difficult to find a place
Nearest Library	Shirley 3.1 miles
Co-location	Yes
Size	Not known
Visits	86358, but because of the position of the gate counter this includes all users of the building
% change visits 2012 - 2016	+11.4
Hours	52.5
Visits per hour	32.9 (but see above)
Stock total	14063
Issues	21922
Returns	14611
Issue/return ratio	1.27
PCs	13 (12+2)
PC usage %	35.2%
Study space	13+6
Staff FTE	4

Visits per FTE	24674
Issues per FTE	6263
Active users	3431
% non-borrowing active users	62.1
Arrangement	<p>The library is essentially in two parts, connected only through parts of the building in non-library use. The ground floor part is a single open space with a children's library and part of the adult library, mainly large print books. The space has meeting rooms to one side.</p> <p>On the first floor there is a further portion of the adult library with more study space and the majority of the PCs.</p> <p>Staff accommodation is shared with CALAC.</p> <p>There are staff access points on each floor.</p>
Use of space	<p>There are no unused areas of the library.</p> <p>No mobile shelving</p>
Signage	<p>Although CALAC was very well signposted in the high street including lamp post banners, the library was not and even on the building itself, there was only one line on a much larger notice mentioning the library. There was no shelf signage.</p>
Self-issue	Yes
Meeting rooms	See above

Norbury library

General	<p>A purpose built library constructed in 1931 on two storeys and with a basement, but with a complex arrangement of rooms. Locally listed. No access to first floor except by staircases</p>
Tenure	Freehold

Location	At some distance from the centre of Norbury, and although on a main road, with limited potential for passing footfall
Parking	Free parking within short distance
Nearest Library	Thornton Heath 1.2 miles
Co-location	No
Size	1192
Visits	82842
% change visits 2012 - 2016	-3.8%
Hours	44.5
Visits per hour	37.2
Stock total	17368
Issues	52329
Returns	33894
Issue/return ratio	1.23
PCs	11 (6+6)
PC usage %	41.7%
Study space	10+4
Staff FTE	4
Visits per FTE	20711
Issues per FTE	13082
Active users	4675
% non-borrowing active users	47.7%
Arrangement	All of the public facilities are on the ground floor. There is a large main library, a children's library to the rear, and a separate computer space. There is also a corridor like study area. The staff areas are mainly at

	<p>the rear of the building in a complex of small and inconvenient rooms.</p> <p>The first floor is largely disused and contains a sizeable hall and projection room, as well as two other rooms which are supported on stilts.</p> <p>The basement is unused except for a boiler room.</p> <p>Oddly the main entrance is on a side road</p>
Use of space	The portions of the library in public use seem large for the current business levels and the arrangement seems less than ideal
Signage	There is a small notice on the outside but the library would not be obvious to the casual passer by. There is little internal signage.
Self-issue	Yes
Meeting rooms	No

Purley library

General	A purpose built library of 1936 on one floor and a basement. Grade II listed including some interior features. No lift
Tenure	Freehold
Location	At some distance from Purley High Street and also the Tesco Extra. Always on a side street, road improvements have meant that a portion of the A23 must be crossed to reach it from any direction. Little chance of any passing footfall
Parking	Paid parking within short distance
Nearest Library	Coulsdon 1.7 miles
Co-location	No

Size	610
Visits	70828
% change visits 2012 - 2016	+10.9%
Hours	44.5
Visits per hour	31.8
Stock total	21352
Issues	51325
Returns	31377
Issue/return ratio	1.18
PCs	8 (7+2)
PC usage %	35.0
Study space	30+12
Staff FTE	4
Visits per FTE	20237
Issues per FTE	14664
Active users	3013
% non-borrowing active users	41.2%
Arrangement	<p>The library is well provided for in terms of space. There is a main adult library, a large children's library, a study area and a meeting room. The lobby of the library is used for some public PCs. There is also a large workroom.</p> <p>The basement has no public access and is used for some storage.</p>
Use of space	<p>The adult library appears cluttered but this is partly due to the original shelving which is listed. The study area and the children's library are spacious. The lobby is not much</p>

	more than a corridor and unsuitable for its current use.
Signage	There is a sign outside the library which is visible but it is not likely to be noticed by motorists who will be concentrating on the complex road arrangement. There are few pedestrians on the street. Inside there is minimal signage
Self-issue	Yes
Meeting rooms	Yes

Sanderstead library

General	A purpose built two storey library of 1936, with main library on upper floor. No lift to lower floor. Tree with TPO in grounds
Tenure	Freehold
Location	In a residential district and not near any shops. Very little potential for passing footfall
Parking	Reserved and free parking
Nearest Library	Selsdon 1.3 miles
Co-location	No
Size	260
Visits	35741
% change visits 2012 - 2016	-14.8%
Hours	34.5
Visits per hour	20.7
Stock total	15235
Issues	43481
Returns	10121

Issue/return ratio	0.44
PCs	5 (4+2)
PC usage %	19.4%
Study space	7+8
Staff FTE	3
Visits per FTE	14296
Issues per FTE	17393
Active users	1537
% non-borrowing active users	28.7%
Arrangement	A single space on the upper floor with adult and children's areas. Lower floor consists of public WCS and staff room
Use of space	No unused space. Stairs are unsuitable for public
Signage	Clear sign outside. No internal signage
Self-issue	No
Meeting rooms	No

Selsdon library

General	A purpose built library within a larger complex containing a Sainsburys store, a café, a community centre and a retired peoples centre
Tenure	Peppercorn lease
Location	Next to a major supermarket and at the end of Selsdon shopping area. Very high potential for passing footfall
Parking	Free car park for Sainsburys
Nearest Library	Sanderstead 1.3 miles

Co-location	Yes
Size	535
Visits	123445
% change visits 2012 - 2016	-7.3%
Hours	44.5
Visits per hour	55.5
Stock total	23235
Issues	83020
Returns	56131
Issue/return ratio	1.29
PCs	7 (6+2)
PC usage %	49.3
Study space	6+1
Staff FTE	4
Visits per FTE	35270
Issues per FTE	23720
Active users	5352
% non-borrowing active users	39.0%
Arrangement	A large open plan space with a separate children's area. Staff accommodation at rear. There are two staff access points, although the one in the children's area is not always in use
Use of space	No mobile shelving so lacks flexibility
Signage	There is a sign outside the building but it is dwarfed by the supermarket sign. There is also a street sign. Inside the complex, although there is a sign above the library door, the signposting to the library is not obvious and is in the corporate brand of the

	centre rather than the council. Customers approaching from the underground car park would not see any sign to the library. Inside the library there is shelf signage but it looks worn and somewhat homemade.
Self-issue	Yes
Meeting rooms	No

Shirley library

General	A small single storey purpose built library dating from the interwar period
Tenure	Freehold
Location	At one end of Shirley shopping area with some potential for passing footfall
Parking	Reserved and free parking
Nearest Library	Ashburton 1.2 miles
Co-location	No
Size	279
Visits	51980
% change visits 2012 - 2016	-11.2%
Hours	44.5
Visits per hour	22.9
Stock total	18955
Issues	37434
Returns	10701
Issue/return ratio	0.54
PCs	6
PC usage %	30.5%

Study space	2+2
Staff FTE	3
Visits per FTE	17327
Issues per FTE	12478
Active users	2244
% non-borrowing active users	41.2%
Arrangement	One adult library with two small rooms serving as a children's library. The library has a rather awkward layout due to the original design
Use of space	There are no unused areas. There is no mobile shelving so the library lacks flexibility
Signage	There is a sign outside the library which would be visible to pedestrians but probably not to motorists
Self-issue	No
Meeting rooms	No

South Norwood library

General	A purpose built library of the 1960s or 1970s on floor floors, split so that the rear portion of the building is half a floor below the front half
Tenure	Freehold
Location	At a little distance from South Norwood High Street but on a main road. Limited potential for passing footfall
Parking	Reserved and free parking
Nearest Library	Thornton Heath 1.4 miles
Co-location	No

Size	365
Visits	74455
% change visits 2012 - 2016	+40.7%
Hours	34.5
Visits per hour	43.2
Stock total	15960
Issues	28750
Returns	18878
Issue/return ratio	1.25
PCs	11
PC usage %	49.5
Study space	14+4
Staff FTE	4
Visits per FTE	21723
Issues per FTE	8214
Active users	3213
% non-borrowing active users	49.5%
Arrangement	Adult study on lowest level; entrance reception and staff accommodation second level, adult library third level, children's library top level. There is also a high level gallery with adult PCs
Use of space	The design of the building means that
Signage	External sign visible from the road. Little internal signage
Self-issue	Yes
Meeting rooms	NO

Thornton Heath library

General	Edwardian Carnegie library with extension and renovation in 2010, on two levels with street access on upper floor and garden access on the lower
Tenure	Freehold
Location	At some distance from Thornton Heath shopping area but with good access by bus. Limited potential for passing footfall.
Parking	Restricted parking
Nearest Library	Broad Green and South Norwood both 1.2 miles
Co-location	No
Size	768
Visits	180482
% change visits 2012 - 2016	+0.0%
Hours	44.5
Visits per hour	81.1
Stock total	28831
Issues	50602
Returns	30385
Issue/return ratio	1.14
PCs	16 (13+4)
PC usage %	50.8%
Study space	20+4
Staff FTE	4
Visits per FTE	45121
Issues per FTE	12651

Active users	5849
% non-borrowing active users	51.5%
Arrangement	Upper floor: main library arranged around a central octagon. Separate study and ICT areas. Reading area in extension. Lower floor: Children's library, community meeting room and learning space. Workroom, staff facilities and office
Use of space	The original design of the building restricts the use of space and the upper floor feels cluttered. In contrast the lower floor is well arranged.
Signage	Little signage and no shelf top signs
Self-issue	Yes
Meeting rooms	Yes

Annex 2: Community assets owned by Croydon Council

Below is the list of council owned community assets provided to us.

<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Ward</u>
Norwood Grove Mansion	2 Asset(s)	*Norbury
Rockmount Lower(infants) School	Infants School only	*Upper Norwood
Rockmount Upper (junior) School	Junior School only	*Upper Norwood
Downsview J. & I. School	Modern primary school	*Upper Norwood
Westwood High School	Girls Secondary School	*Upper Norwood
Sylvan Road,17 - Phil Edwards Centre	Detached house used for special needs purpos	*South Norwood
Kensington Avenue J. & I. School	Primary school	*Upper Norwood
David Livingstone I. & J. School	Primary school	*Upper Norwood
Norbury Manor J. & I. School	Primary School	*Norbury
Stanford Road (Harlow Hall)	Community Hall	*Norbury
Craignish Avenue(no.4)	Special needs respite centre	*Norbury
Northwood Road, 40	Use as a Community Centre	*Thornton Heath
Beulah Family Church, Beulah Crescent	New Build Learning Disability Resource Base	*Thornton Heath
Woodvale Avenue (Waterside Centre)	Community Centre & Sports Hall	*South Norwood
Norbury Library	2 Asset(s)	*Norbury
Ederline Avenue(norbury Tennis Club)	Private Tennis Club	*Norbury
Norbury Crescent(endeavour Hall)	Scout Hall	*Bensham Manor
Beulah J. & I. School	Primary School	*Thornton Heath
Winterbourne Nursery (formerly Acorn House)	Nursery (formerly Acorn House)	*Bensham Manor
Winterbourne Youth Centre	Youth Centre	*Bensham Manor

High Street,Thornton Heath.Leisure Centre	New Leisure complex	*Thornton Heath
London Road, Thornton Heath (no.942)	Residential Group Home	*Bensham Manor
Winterbourne J. & I. School	Primary School	*Bensham Manor
Thornton Heath Early Years Centre	Nursery	*Thornton Heath
Zion Road Strand House	Council Offices	*Thornton Heath
Whitehorse Manor J. & I. School	Primary school	*Selhurst
Priory Special School	Special needs school	*South Norwood
South Norwood Library Selhurst Rd..194	Public Library 2	*South Norwood
(Youth Centre/Shiloh Church	Asset(s)	*South Norwood
Regina Road childrens centre	Youth Centre & leased Church	*South Norwood
Gonville I. & J. School	New childrens centre	*South Norwood
Thornton Heath Library	Primary school	*West Thornton
Bensham Manor Special School	2 Asset(s)	*Bensham Manor
Charnwood Road(st. Columba's Hall)	Special Needs school	*Bensham Manor
Alverston Gardens, Heavers Farm Scout Hut	Sports Club	*Selhurst
Alverston Gardens(no.75)	Scout Hall & adj. land	*Selhurst
Heavers Farm I. & J. School	Childrens home	*Selhurst
South Norwood J. & I. School	New school buildings	*Selhurst
Portland Road, 44b	Primary School	*Woodside
Crossfield Nursery	Vacant youth club/Required for regeneration	*Woodside
Portland Road. Swimming Pool	Nursery School	*Woodside
Sandown Road(CYTO Theatre)	2 Asset(s)	*Woodside
Sandown Road, South Norwood CALAT Centre	Old school premises used as a theatre	*Woodside
	Former Secondary school now used for adult ed	*Woodside

Rylands Junior & Infants School	Primary school	*Woodside
Croydon Sports Arena Mitcham Road Cemetery	5 Asset(s)	*Woodside
Thornton Road Mortuary	2 Asset(s) Public Motuary 2 Asset(s)	*West Thornton
Ecclesbourne I. & J. School	Modern primary school	*Bensham Manor
Edith Road ,67 - Hut Dagnall Park Selhurst	ATC corp hut	*Selhurst
Early Years Centre - Selhurst Road(Heavers Farm Centre)	Nursery School	*Selhurst
West Thornton J. & I. School	Adult training centre	*Selhurst
West Thornton Community Centre	Primary school	*West Thornton
Queens Road Cemetery	Community Centre	*West Thornton
Boulogne Road Depot(Whitehorse Resource Base)	2 Asset(s)	*Selhurst
Broadmead Infants & Junior School	Depot	*Selhurst
Davidson I. & J. School	Primary school & nursery	*Selhurst
Woodside J. & I. School	Primary school	*Addiscombe
Ashburton Library (former)	Primary school	*Addiscombe
Ashburton J. & I. School	2 Asset(s)	*Ashburton
Stroud Green Way, Addiscombe Boys Club	Primary school with no playing field	*Ashburton
Tollgate J. & I. School	Youth Club	*Ashburton
Longheath Gardens Community Centre	Primary school	*Ashburton
Monks Orchard J. & I. School	Community facility	*Ashburton
Alfriston Avenue / Peppermint Close	Primary school	*Ashburton
Canterbury Road,Broad Green Library	Scout Hall	*Broad Green
	New Library & Community Hall	*Broad Green
Elmwood I. & J. School	Older style primery school	*Selhurst
Windmill Road Land adj 145/7	Garage compound & vacant land	*Selhurst

Prestwood Gardens - No.1	Former community facilities & caretakers hut	*Selhurst
Whitehorse Road,89 - Community Resource Centre	New Community Resource Centre Community group offices ,Community Centre etc	*Selhurst
Willis Road(no. 14) Cromwell Road(no.47A) Grenaby Avenue(Gingerbread) St. James's Road,171 - Cherry Orchard Centre	Former rent office now in community use	*Selhurst
Freemasons Road, Part Of Davidson Lodge	Nursery facility Adult Training Centre	*Selhurst
Morland Ave- Sir Philip Game Centre/Judo Club Orchard Way(no. 178) Valley Park Healthy Living Centre	Community Centre Youth/Sports/Judo Club or Community/Recreation Detached bungalow New Community & Health Centre	*Addiscombe *Addiscombe *Shirley *Broad Green
Kingsley J. & I. School	Primary School on Council Housing estate Home for people with Mental Health Problems	*Broad Green
Lennard Road, 28	Residential Group Home	*Broad Green
Lennard Road, 24 Lathams (Wasteland To N. Of Gypsy Site) Lathams Way, Demountable Homes Site	Vacant Land	*Broad Green
Enterprise Close(Units 1/11)	Vacant residential land	*Broad Green
Factory Lane Highway Maintenance Depot	11 Industrial Units Highway Maintenance Depot	*Broad Green
Factory Lane - Refuse Transfer Station	Refuse Transfer Station & offices	*Broad Green
Mitcham Road, 56a		*Broad Green
Oval J. & I. School	Primary school	*Addiscombe
Tunstall Nursery	Day Nursery	*Addiscombe
Ashburton Road(no.58) Orchard Way J. & I. School		*Addiscombe
	Primary school	*Shirley

Beckmead Special School	Special needs school	*Shirley
Factory Lane, Stubbs Mead Depot	Veolia	*Broad Green
Church Street (Ramsey Court)	Converted Almshouses	*Fairfield
	Offices let to	
Church Street(no. 132)	Community Group	*Fairfield
	First floor offices - Sub-Let	
Church Street, 29/33		*Fairfield
Central Library Complex	2 Asset(s)	*Fairfield
Robert Street, Davis House. Now Basement?	Storage in basement & 8th floor	*Fairfield
Robert Street, Davis House - part 1st floor	1st floor offices in 1960' refurbished block	*Fairfield
Civic Offices Complex, Park Lane/Fell Road	Council Offices	*Fairfield
Fairfield Halls	Public Halls	*Fairfield
High Street Croydon 267/279 -South	G,1st2nd floor s/c	
London Hse	offices over shops	*Fairfield
Chatsworth Road (Chatsworth Hall)	Autism service to be FJC	*Fairfield
	Detached house used for special needs	
Coombe Road(no.45)	purpose Residential Group	*Fairfield
Heathfield Road(no.14)	Home	*Fairfield
Lantern Hall, 190	Daycare centre for	
Church Road	mentally handicapped	*Fairfield
Park Hill J. & I. School	Primary School	*Fairfield
	Special needs unit(Out of school service)	
Cotelands Centre		*Fairfield
Shirley Windmill & Visitors Centre	Shirley Windmill & land surrounding	*Heathfield
Shirley Library	Public Library	*Shirley
Spring Park Road-		
Shirley Tennis Club	Tennis club & pavilion	*Heathfield
Pinewoods Scout Camp	Scout Camp	*Heathfield
Benson I. & J. School	Primary School	*Shirley
Spring Park J. & I. School	Primary school	*Shirley
Broom Road Depot	Depot	*Shirley

Shrublands Avenue, Shirley Community Centre	Community Centre	*Shirley
Shrublands Ave No.25- Shrublands Family Centre	Shrublands Family Centre	*Shirley
Oak Avenue(no.167) Bramley Hill(no.11) - Peter Sylvester Centre	Childrens home Social Services Mental Health team offices	*Shirley *Shirley *Waddon
Dering Place - Eldon Phab Centre	Clubhouse & adj. land	*Waddon
Howard J. & I, School	Primary school	*Waddon
Birdhurst Road 53 (was No.41Glazier House)	Children Centre	*Croham
St. Peters J. & I. School	Primary school	*Croham
Coombe Lane, Central Nursery, Addington Palace	Pllant nursery Historic Palace Day Care Centre for Physically & Learning Dif	*Croham *Heathfield *Waddon
Purley Way(Waylands Centre)		
Redgates Special School	Special needs school	*Waddon
Waddon Infants School	Primary school	*Waddon
Duppas Junior School	Primary school	*Waddon
Imperial Way,3	Sheltered workshop	*Waddon
Waddon Way (Bowling Club)	Bowling green together with anci. land & blgs	*Waddon
Waddon Youth Centre	Modern youth centre	*Waddon
Waddon Way Community Centre & Social Club	Community Centre	*Waddon
St. Giles Special School	Special needs school	*Waddon
Purley Oaks J. I. School	Primary School Farm plus training centre ,flats & Play field	*Croham *Heathfield
Heathfield Estate Gilbert Scott J. & I. School	Primary school	*Heathfield
John Ruskin College (part)	New Coteland Centre	*Heathfield
Forestdale I. & J. School	Modern primary school	*Heathfield
Fieldway Family Centre	Family centre	*Fieldway
Applegarth J. & I. School	Primary School & playing field	*Fieldway
Wayside CALAT centre, Fieldway	Let	*Fieldway

Fieldway Community Centre	Purpose built community centre	*Fieldway
Castle Hill I. & J. School	Primary school	*Fieldway
Dunley Drive(Scout H.Q R/o No. 235)	Scout hall & adj. land	*Fieldway
Alwyn Close (British Legion)	Purpose built social club	*Fieldway
Goldcrest Way. Youth & Community Centre	Youth Club	*Fieldway
Wolsey J. & I. School	Primary School	*Fieldway
Ridgeway J. & I. School	Primary school	*Sanderstead
Langley Oaks	Residential OAP home	*Selsdon & Ballards
Foxearth Road Scout Hut r/o Selsdon I & J Sch	Scout Hut & adj. land	*Selsdon & Ballards
Selsdon New Library & Public Halls	part of new Sainsburys development on	*Selsdon & Ballards
Monks Hill Sports Centre, Selsdon High School	Sports Centre Residential Group	*Heathfield
Heather Way(no.11)	Home	*Heathfield
Courtwood I. & J. School	Modern primary school	*Heathfield
Featherbed Lane (Bears Wood Scout Camp)	Scout Camp	*Heathfield
North Downs Crescent(over 21 Club)	Licensed club building	*New Addington
North Downs Rd (land Adj.75 & access adj.59)	Animal Welfare Clinic	*New Addington
Salcot Crescent(Pop Inn Adj. No. 3)	Purpose built community centre	*New Addington
Salcot Crescent Day Hospital/Scout H.Q	Day Hospital	*New Addington
Calleydown Crescent(no.47a)	Residential Childrens Home	*New Addington
Rowdown J. & I. School	Primary School	*New Addington
North Downs Crescent.		
Fishers Farm Depot Central Parade, Addington Area Office	Council Depot New Addington area office Former Public W.C's	*New Addington *New Addington
Central Parade Cyber Cafe, (former P.C.'s)	converted to Cyber Cafe	*New Addington
Queen Elizabeth's Drive(T.A Hut)	TAVR hut	*New Addington

Chertsey Crescent, 111 (Probation Office)	Purpose built probation offices & car park	*New Addington
Central Parade, Addington Community Centre	Community Centre	*New Addington
Central Parade CALAT Centre	New CALAT Centre	*New Addington
Central Parade. New Addington Pool	2 Asset(s)	*New Addington
Addington Heights	2 Asset(s)	*New Addington
New Addington Family Support Centre	Childrens Day Nursery	*New Addington
Fairchildes I. & J. School	Primary School	*New Addington
Purley Library	2 Asset(s)	*Purley
Pampisford Road(nos.26/28)	Converted detached house	*Purley
Purley Nursery	Day Nursery	*Purley
High Street,Purley - Swimming Pool	2 Asset(s)	*Purley
Purley Oaks Depot	To be new G&T Site	*Purley
Farmfields Soakage Field	Soakage field let to scouts	*Sanderstead
Sanderstead Library	2 Asset(s)	*Sanderstead
Farmfields Scout Hall	Site for scout hall	*Sanderstead
Greenvale J. & I. School	Modern primary school	*Selsdon & Ballards
Friends Road(no.8)	Residential Group	*Purley
Gresham J. & I. School	Home	*Purley
Woodcote J. & I. School	Primary school	*Sanderstead
St. Nicholas Special School	Primary School	*Coulsdon West
Beaumont J. & I. School	Special needs school	*Kenley
Roke J. & I School(new Site)	Primary School	*Kenley
Godstone Road Shelters,	New primary school	*Kenley
Kings Walk Scout Hall r	Civil Defence shelters under Riddlesdown	*Kenley
Chipstead Valley J. & I. School	Scout hall & adj. land	*Sanderstead
Coulsdon Nursery	Primary Schools	*Coulsdon West
Chipstead Valley Rd,	Nursery School	*Coulsdon West
Coulsdon Youth Centre	Directly managed youth centre	*Coulsdon West
Smitham J. & I. School	Primary school	*Coulsdon West
Fourth Drive Scout Hall	Scout hall & adj. land	*Coulsdon West

Coulsdon Library Hillars Heath Road(land R/o 20/23)	2 Asset(s)	*Coulsdon West
Hayes J. & I. School	Scout Hall & adj. land	*Coulsdon East
Kenley J. & I. School	Primary school	*Kenley
Kenley J. & I. School	Primary School	*Kenley
Wattenden J. & I. School	Primary school	*Kenley
Old Coulsdon Bowls Club(part)	1 Asset(s)	*Coulsdon East
Bradmore Green Library	2 Asset(s)	*Coulsdon East
Keston J. & I. School	Primary School	*Coulsdon East
Happy Valley/Parsons Pightle Various Clubs	4 Asset(s)	*Coulsdon East

Annex 3: Current opening hours of libraries in Croydon

Library	Total weekly opening hours at present
Ashburton	44.5
Bradmore Green	44.5
Broad Green	35.5
Coulsdon	44.5
Croydon Central	53.5
New Addington	52.5
Norbury	44.5
Purley	44.5
Sanderstead	34.5
Selsdon	44.5
Shirley	44.5
South Norwood	34.5
Thornton Heath	44.5

