

Technical Appendix 6: Libraries

1.0 Service Overview

- 1.1 As Local Libraries Authority, Hertfordshire County Council has a duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for everyone who lives, works, or studies in the County under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act. Hertfordshire County Council is committed to maintaining and modernising its libraries to continue to meet the changing needs of service users and to cope with additional demand brought about by new development. This commitment is reinforced in the 10 year [Inspiring Libraries Strategy](#).
- 1.2 Libraries are no longer a place solely to borrow books. They function as a community hub offering services and facilities to cater for a range of community needs including those of children, students, job seekers, and the elderly. Libraries offer free, authoritative, non-judgemental information services and supported access to online resources and services. They provide access to books, audio material, magazines, newspapers and community language material in both physical and digital formats, public computers, new and emerging technologies, Wi-Fi, the internet and online services as well as ICT-based and other learning opportunities to ensure that no one gets left behind. They also offer neutral places to promote community wellbeing and enable people to connect within their communities.
- 1.3 In 2016 the Libraries Taskforce published Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-21. This report sets out seven outcomes libraries deliver for their communities, placing libraries at the heart of 'stronger, more resilient communities':

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Libraries are open to everyone. Their staff understand their community's needs and are trusted to provide reliable guidance and support on a wide range of issues when people need help. So they're vital to help public services reach out into communities. Libraries already bring people together in welcoming community hubs which host local events and provide a shared sense of place for their users - ever more important in an increasingly digital age.

They're uniquely placed to help local government and its partners deliver their strategic objectives, whether linked to community cohesion, health and wellbeing, economic growth, promoting independent living or increasing life chances. They also have an important role in reducing social inequalities; 35.8% of people living in the most disadvantaged areas visit their library.

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- 1.4 “[Inspiring Libraries: A new strategy for Hertfordshire Library Service 2014-2024](#)” sets out the vision and direction for the service over the next ten years, and provides a framework for future decisions about service priorities. The strategy is based on three main themes:

- The library as a vibrant community asset;
- The digital library; and
- The library as an enhanced gateway to reading, information and wellbeing.

1.5 Hertfordshire's 46 library buildings are promoted in three different tiers in order to clarify the services available:

- **Tier 1** Centrally located in large towns, these offer the broadest range of stock and services, and are open for the longest hours. They are staffed by library staff, and Hertfordshire County Council invite volunteers to support the delivery of some services and activities.
- **Tier 2** Located in smaller towns, these provide core library services and offer a wide range of popular stock. Additional services will be tailored to meet local need/demand. They are staffed during core hours, and Hertfordshire County Council seeks to extend access through volunteer supervised self-service.
- **Tier 3** In smaller communities and villages, these libraries provide self-service access to library services, including the issue and return of books, access to computers/technology and study space and staff assistance via a video link to another library. Hertfordshire County Council invite local communities to add value to these self-service facilities through volunteer support and the provision of additional activities and services as decided by the local community. Seven of the larger Tier 3 libraries retain an element of paid library staff.

2.0 Library Projects

2.1 Hertfordshire County Council is committed to the provision of good quality library services to local communities and is continuously exploring new ways of delivering the service. Over the next ten years it is likely opportunities for improving library buildings will come through co-locating libraries with other services. Sharing buildings can provide increased opportunities for customers to access a number of services in one visit.

2.2 Hertfordshire County Council believes its libraries need to be updated to continue to improve the service offered and cope with additional demand brought about by increasing numbers of users resulting from new development. This will be carried out in the context of the Inspiring Libraries Strategy 2014-2024. New development puts pressure on services in a variety of ways and single or a combination of different solutions may be used in response.

2.3 Where additional capacity is required options to extend the public space available to deliver services will be considered where possible. This could be by the addition of an extension to the building however, this is often not possible so a variety of different approaches will be considered for example:

- Converting space previously used by staff into public space through the reduction in the number or size of office, workroom or storage space.
- Making staff space available for community use at certain times to meet demand for space for community groups.
- Libraries have been reconfigured to allow more flexible use of space so that areas become multifunctional and can be used by different customer groups at different times of the day.
- ICT suites have been configured so that they can be cordoned off to allow delivery of classes for part of the time in response to increased demand for ICT learning activities.
- Traditional large enquiry desks have been replaced with smaller enquiry “pods” with the use of more flexible ICT to increase space for public use.

2.4 Sometimes increased pressure on services can be alleviated through the use of innovative furniture solutions not previously available:

- Traditional shelving has been replaced with shelving on wheels which allows more flexible use of space and larger spaces to be created for activities. Examples of this include mobile shelving in children’s areas to enable increased numbers of children to attend regular story time activities or the introduction of wheeled shelving in the adult library to enable a space to be created to accommodate larger numbers for evening activities such as author’s talks.
- Seating has been improved to allow provision of compact comfortable seating, for example, sofas in children’s areas in response to demand from families for somewhere to sit to read with their children
- Desktop PCs have been replaced with more flexible benching and seating to accommodate increased demand for space for customers who wish to use their own devices on public Wi-Fi facilities

2.5 Any increase in population puts additional demand on the stock of the library service, whether this is physical stock or “virtual stock” in the case of electronic resources. Most electronic resources are licensed on the basis of being available to only one user at any one time, increased demand means purchasing additional “copies” in the same way as we would with physical books. Increased pressure on stock can be across all stock areas but certain types of development may put more pressure on certain categories of stock. For example, sheltered housing will put pressure on large print books and audio books and the demand for the Home Library Service. Developments aimed at young families will increase demand for children’s stock. Affordable housing may see pressure on stock used to support learning activities as well as pressure on computers and printing to support job seeking.

2.6 Where it is not possible to meet increased demand through the above the Library Service can also respond by making services available in different ways or for longer periods of time, spreading the load and easing the pressure at busy periods.

- 2.7 One solution has been to make some the services available for longer periods of time where certain sections of the library are open on a self-service basis, with support from staff or volunteers. This sometimes requires some reconfiguration of the building and/or the addition of hardware and software to deploy an ICT solution.
- 2.8 Self service facilities can also be extended to enable customers to self-serve and reduce the need to queue for staff assistance, for example self-service printing from public PCs.
- 2.9 The development of online services also enables residents in new developments to access some services remotely, relieving pressure on the static service points.
- 2.10 On occasion the demographic of a new development may prompt the need to provide a service for which there was previously little or no demand. For example, a residential development of one bedroomed flats aimed at 20 to 30 year olds, will create demand for e-services. Whereas developments comprising larger family housing may bring more established families with teenage children, thereby prompting the demand for new services, such as a wider range of ICT facilities and access to emerging technologies.
- 2.11 Planning obligations will be determined on a case by case basis and may take the form of on-site provision (including build costs and land).

3.0 Assessing need and calculating demand

- 3.1 Provision for library services will be required from developments within the catchment area of the library that will be impacted upon by the development. Libraries in urban areas also serve surrounding rural areas and villages. Therefore, the need for contributions (and the expenditure of any library contributions received) from development in these locations may be based on the nearest library. However, contributions will be sought for the library that will be most affected by a proposed development. This may not necessarily be the local community library in all cases but a larger sub-regional library with a wider variety of library functions that draws its catchment from the geographical area of the proposed development.
- 3.2 Hertfordshire County Council has no current plans for additional libraries within the county although the promotion of very large strategic sites (in excess of 3,000 units) may require new library buildings to be considered. The drive for efficiencies and co-location of facilities is likely to influence overall space requirements and any opportunities for co-location will be actively explored. Such projects may also provide opportunities to increase publicly accessible library floor space.
- 3.3 Planning obligations towards library services are assessed using the Hertfordshire County Council Demographic Model which forecasts the number of people able to access library services likely to emerge from different types, sizes and tenures of dwellings. Details are available alongside this Guide.

- 3.4 Where the mitigation for a site impact might be met by the expansion or improvement of an existing facility, and additional land is not required, Hertfordshire County Council uses costs based on national standards for resources and costs from recently undertaken reconfiguration projects. These costs are combined with census data from the Hertfordshire County Council Demographic Model to ensure that obligations sought are fair and reasonable, based on the specific number and type of units on an individual site.
- 3.5 The county council contribution is essentially based on population and on three elements, a contribution towards book stock, library equipment and buildings.
- 3.6 New developments will always place additional demands on the stock in terms of physical (hard copy) books and eBooks/ eAudio books. The National Library Standard upper threshold cites a recommended stock level of 1532 items per 1000 population. As of Nov 2020, the average price is £18.96 per stock item. This includes an allowance for physical books, eAudio books and eBooks and totals £29,046 per 1,000 population.
- 3.7 The rapid changing pace of technology has seen user demand change with less reliance on static personal computers and increased demand for power and wi-fi enabled spaces for Bring Your Own Device users as well as a demand for the library to offer access to new technologies where people can experiment and test these out in a safe space. 'Creatorspace' and 'Creatorspace Out of the Box' offer these opportunities in addition to the standard IT offer in libraries. Based on current ICT provision, costs would be £778 per 1,000 population.
- 3.8 Fit out costs for shelving, furniture and display equipment are a further £301 per m² based upon current fitting out costs of new provision in Hertfordshire (£9,030 per 1,000 population).
- 3.9 There are a wide variety of potential reconfiguration projects that could be implemented to increase the capacity of an existing library to enable it to meet the demands of future growth. This will depend on the existing size and layout of each library and the amount of structural work required to implement the reconfiguration. Based on recent examples of reconfiguration projects at Welwyn Garden City and Hitchin libraries, completed in Q12022, reconfiguration projects are expected to cost £4,880 per 1,000 population.
- 3.10 Where new or expanded facilities are required, the capacity of the library will be determined based on a service requirement of 30m² of public library space per 1,000 population, based upon the Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) advice. Build costs are £2,823 per m² based on BCIS 1Q2019 (£84,690 per 1,000 population).
- 3.11 With indexation to Q12022, the five elements referred to above result in the following cost per person:

- Stock costs £30.90 per person;
- Tech equipment costs: £0.82 per person;
- Fit out costs: £9.41 per person;
- Reconfiguration of floorspace: £48.80 per person
- Building costs: £90.11 per person;

Potential total to increase resources: £41.13 per person.
 Potential to increase resources and reconfigure layout: £89.93 per person.
 Potential total to increase resources and floorspace: £131.24 per person.

- 3.12 The project identified to mitigate the impact of a development will have a bearing on the costs associated with a request for library service contributions. Projects expected to involve the development of new or extended floorspace or significant internal remodelling will incur building costs.
- 3.13 In circumstances where it can be evidenced that the cost to expand or redevelop a site is in excess of S106 funds to be achieved through the application of these charges, such as might be the case for sites located on brownfield sites, on constrained sites, or sites with planning limitations e.g. located on a flood plain, then a proportionate bespoke cost of providing the new site or expanding the existing site and/or purchasing additional land to do so may be sought from the developer.
- 3.14 An indication of estimated costs is provided in the tables below.

Project to increase resource requirements (£41.13 per person):

HOUSES				FLATS			
1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed
£55	£98	£142	£171	£54	£102	£124	£171

Project to increase resource requirements and reconfigure floorspace (£89.93 per person):

HOUSES				FLATS			
1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed
£123	£221	£321	£385	£123	£231	£280	£385

Project to provide an expanded or new centre (£131.24 per person):

HOUSES				FLATS			
1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed

£173	£311	£452	£543	£173	£325	£395	£543
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3.15 Where there is no scope to reconfigure the existing facility to improve performance and land is currently unavailable to extend the library, a new facility may be proposed. A new library is only likely to be sought on major new housing sites although proportionate contributions may be sought towards a new build project.