

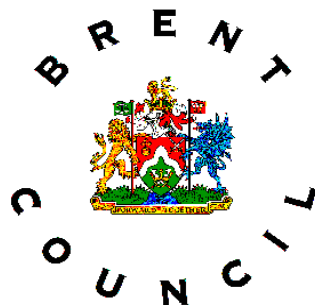
Executive 8th October 2007

Appendix A: Draft Library Strategy 2008-2012

Brent Council

Draft Library Strategy

2008-2012



Contents	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Brent – the place	3
3. Strategic influences and developments	7
4. Brent Libraries Today	14
4.1 Services	14
4.2 Performance	16
4.3 Finance	21
5. Consultation and Best Practice	24
6. Key Findings and Vision	29
7. Priorities and Actions	32
8. Recommendations	35
Appendices	
1. CPA – Brent Libraries performance	36
2. Key consultations since 2002	37

1. Introduction

Public libraries are changing. New services, changing community needs and customer expectations mean that many public library buildings are no longer fit for delivering services to 21st century customers. Libraries in Brent are no exception: research and consultation have shown the need to reconfigure the service and its delivery. Brent Libraries are popular with and well loved by their customer base. The service has a highly skilled and dedicated workforce, who deliver a wide range of services to Brent's communities. However, there are many residents in Brent who do not use libraries and who have no idea of what public libraries can offer to help support their life choices.

So, Brent Council now faces significant challenges to modernise its public libraries offer for customers, whilst at the same time preserving the core service of lending books and developing reading skills. It is clear that resources need to be spent on more books, extending opening hours and other service improvements to benefit all Brent residents. Although satisfaction rates amongst library users are relatively high (86% think our services are good), only 18.2% of the population are active borrowers of books.

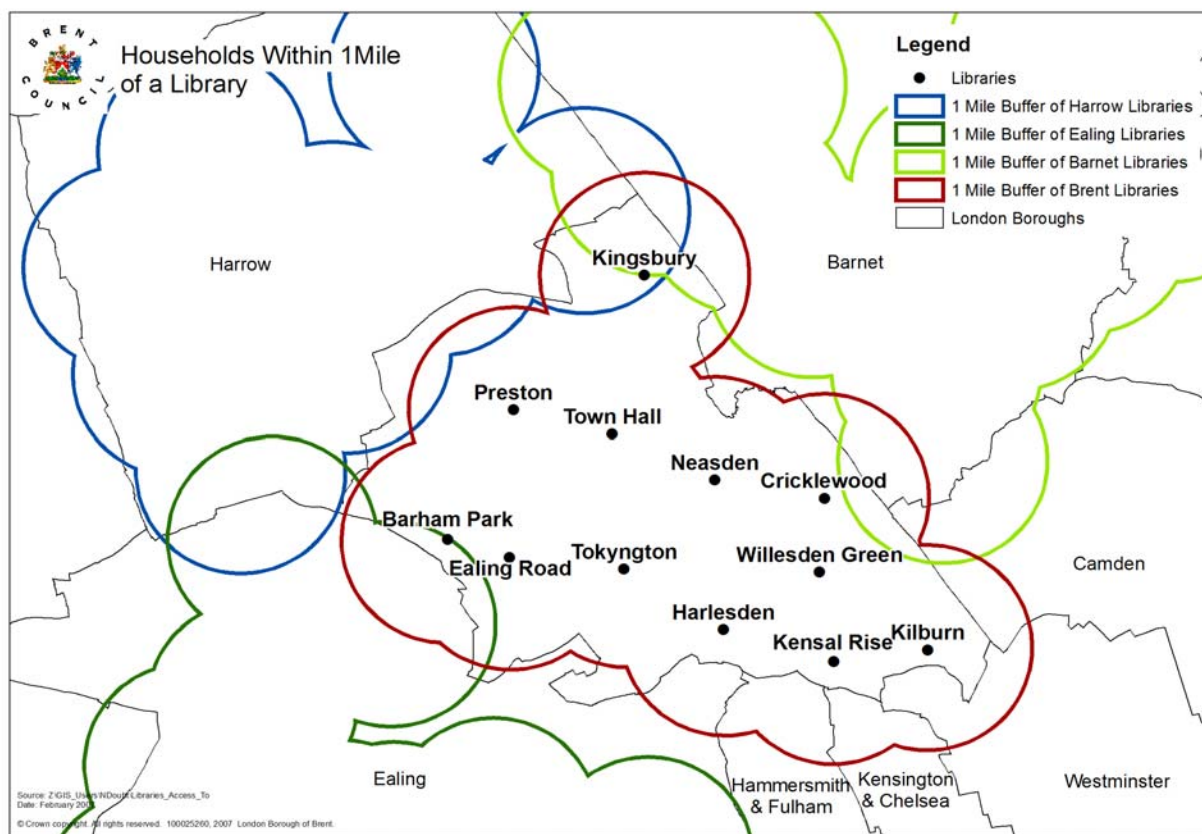
This strategy aims to address the challenges faced by Brent Libraries in attracting more visitors and readers and proposes a way forward for the library service. It has been produced after analysis of available performance information, a wide range of consultation and research and taking into account key national, regional and local influencing factors. The key findings have been translated into priorities and actions with options for implementation which will begin the process of transforming an already improving service into a high achieving one that can meet the demands and needs of all of Brent's residents.

"I like the library very much. Some members of staff are a pleasure ...and are pro-active and helpful. Would like to have it open for longer hours"

2. Brent – the place

The London Borough of Brent is in North West London and, though an outer London borough, it shares many characteristics of inner London authorities. Brent covers approximately 4,325 hectares and is crossed by two of the main arterial routes into London and is divided by the North Circular Road. The borough can be broadly characterised as more affluent in the north (north of the North Circular Road) and generally more deprived to the South; and includes the significant regeneration areas of South Kilburn and the area around the new Wembley Stadium which will deliver a brand new centre to the borough.

Brent shares boundaries with seven other authorities, all of which contain significant library facilities close to the borough boundaries (see map 1). It is essential that these are taken into account in planning Brent's library facilities. Customers are likely to choose to use the library nearest to where they live, work or shop rather than whether or not they are within Brent's administrative boundaries.



This map shows the proportion of households living within a mile of a library. The map includes those areas covered by libraries in other authorities.

Brent has a population of 271,400¹, living in approximately one hundred thousand households². This is the second most ethnically diverse population in the country: over half of the population are from black and minority ethnic communities. The proportion of Brent’s residents from black and minority ethnic groups rises to three quarters of the population for children in the council’s schools. Over 130 languages are spoken with Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Somali and Urdu being the main minority languages. One hundred and twenty thousand people work in the borough³. Unemployment stands at 5 per cent, which is above the London and national average, and there are significant levels of local deprivation. Overall, Brent is the 13th most deprived London borough, with five wards falling within the ten per cent most deprived in Britain⁴. The unemployment levels in these wards are nearly six times the national average. These wards are generally in the south of the borough. Significant regeneration activity is currently taking place in the borough to address these issues.

Political Structure

The London Borough of Brent is divided into 21 Wards, each represented by 3 ward Councillors, totalling 63 councillors in all. The Borough is currently represented nationally by three Members of Parliament and by an MEP in Europe.

Demographics

¹ Mid year 2006 estimates based on 2001 census
² Census 2001
³ Annual labour force survey, 2002
⁴ DETR Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000

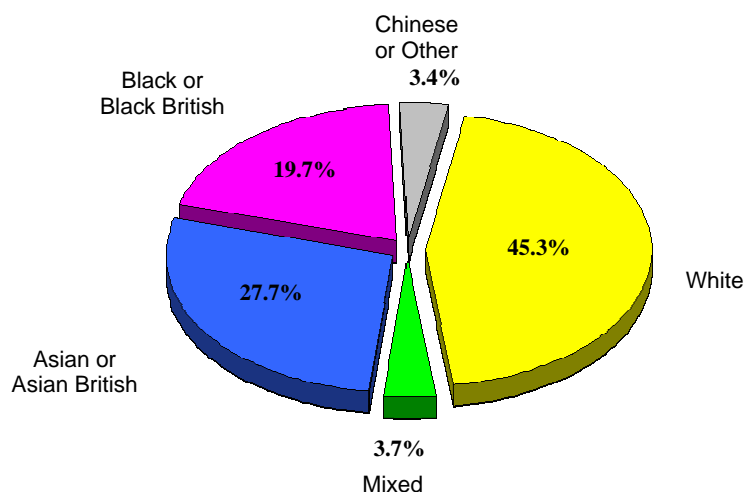
Brent has a rapidly growing population. The growth rate over the past ten years has exceeded 3%, but in the last two years this has increased considerably. Current estimates suggest are that there are 271,400 residents in Brent⁵ living in 99,991 households⁶. Brent has a typical balance between men and women residents; 49% of Brent's population are male and 51% are female⁷. Nearly 8% of Brent's residents migrate to Brent from other areas every year – 2% from other countries and 6% within the UK. There is also significant movement within the borough with 5% of the population moving within Brent to another area within Brent every year. Thus some 14.6% of the borough's residents will live at a different address each year⁸. Brent has a large, diverse and growing population of refugees and asylum seekers. It is estimated that these groups represent about 5% of the borough's total population of which over 50% speak little or no English.

Age

Brent is a relatively young borough in relation to the rest of the UK with an average age of 35.4⁹. A large proportion of Brent population (37%) is constituted by those aged between 20-40 years old. However, nearly a quarter of the borough's population are under 19 years old and 16% of the borough are over 60 year old. Although the present population of Brent is relatively young, a growth in the proportion of older people is predicted. In the next 20 years there will be a slight decrease in residents under 44 years old and a significant increase in the 45-64 age groups combined with an increase of all age groups over 65 years old.

Ethnic Groups

Brent is one of the most culturally diverse (non – white) boroughs in Europe and the diversity within our ethnic minority communities itself is second-to-none. Black and Minority Ethnic Groups in Brent now make up the majority of the population. The chart below shows the ethnic breakdown of the Borough:



OVERVIEW OF ETHNICITY OF BRENT RESIDENTS

Source: Census 2001

⁵ Mid year 2006 estimates based on 2001 census

⁶ Census 2001

⁷ Census 2001

⁸ Census 2001

⁹ All information in this section is taken from the 2001 census

It is clear from this chart that Brent's population is extremely diverse. In addition, it is worth noting that there is even greater diversity within the younger population. 73% of pupils in Brent schools are from ethnic minority communities. 45% of pupils speak English as an additional language and over 130 different languages are now spoken in our schools with Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Somali and Urdu being the main minority languages. Brent also has a community consisting of a variety of different religions. The largest religious group in Brent are Christians (48 %) followed by Hindus (17 %) and Muslims (12 %).

Local Economy and Employment

Brent is traditionally a manufacturing borough but the local economy is in a process of change with manufacturing in decline and with significant growth in real estate, renting and business activities. Retail and wholesale are the largest employing sectors. Alongside many small and medium sized businesses, Brent is also home for a number of 'blue chip' companies including: Guinness, Heinz, United Biscuits, Delta Airlines, Air France and Elf Oil UK Ltd. Park Royal, London's largest business park is located in the southwest corner of the borough. More than a thousand companies are based here. However, there are areas of high unemployment, in Brent and the borough-wide unemployment rate of 5%¹⁰ is above the London average and over 40% above the national figure. However, there are ward variations and unemployment is as high as 17% in priority neighbourhoods such as South Kilburn and St Raphael's – nearly six times higher than the national average. Within the overall figures for Brent, the proportion of residents classified as long term unemployed in Brent is a third higher than the national average.

Behind the basic unemployment figures there are stark facts:

- The rate of economic inactivity within Black and Minority Ethnic groups is 31%
- 29% of Brent residents have basic or no numeracy skills
- 17% of Brent residents have basic or no literacy skills
- 51% of Brent residents of working age have basic or no ICT skills

Poverty and Deprivation

Brent is a borough of diversity, where affluent suburban areas sit next to areas displaying the characteristics of inner city London. Poverty and social exclusion, particularly in the south of the borough, are significant issues. The gap between rich and poor is growing and the number of households on low incomes is increasing. Some areas of Brent are amongst the most deprived in the UK with some falling within the top 10% most deprived wards in the Country (*Index of Multiple Deprivations 2000*). Over half of Brent's households have an income below the London average. Within Brent's most deprived neighbourhoods, 20% of households have a gross income of less than £100 per week. 40% of households have an income entirely made up of benefits. There are also significant skills barrier for a large proportion of Brent residents who do not have the necessary basic skills to use and access some services.

¹⁰ Annual labour force survey, 2002

Issues for Brent Libraries

The make-up of Brent's population and skills base clearly has a direct impact on library services and Brent's library service needs to respond to the needs of all residents in terms of library provision such as materials and ICT for speakers of languages other than English, to support employability and for the children and young people of the borough. Many of the residents from the newer communities may have no idea what a public library service can offer in terms of life enhancement. Brent's library service needs to respond to these often unspoken needs.

3. Strategic influences and developments

3.1 Statutory Framework

Brent Council has a statutory duty to provide a public library service as laid down by the **Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964**, which states that library authorities must provide: "...a *comprehensive and efficient service to all those who wish to make use thereof.*" In 2001, Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) defined modern public library services with the publication of "*Comprehensive and Efficient and Modern Public Libraries: Standards and Assessment*". The initial 33 standards outlined in this document were revised to 10 **Public Library Service Standards (PLSS)** which all library authorities are expected to meet:

Standard	Definition of standard	Brent performance 2006-7
PLSS 1	99% of households should live within 1 mile of a static library	99.3%
PLSS 2	Libraries should provide a total of 128 opening hours aggregated per 1,000 population	105.9
PLSS 3	100% of libraries open more than 10 hours a week must offer public access to the Internet	100%
PLSS 4	Libraries should provide 6 electronic workstations per 10,000 residents; with for the public access to the Internet and the library online catalogue	6.03
PLSS 5	Percentage of requests for books met within 7 days (50%), 15 days (70%) and 30 days (85%)	7 days: 69% 15 days: 80% 30 days: 89%
PLSS 6	Outer London Boroughs must receive 8,600 library visits per 1,000 population per year	6954
PLSS 7	94% of customers aged 16 + must rate the library service as 'good' or 'very good' in the annual Public Library User Satisfaction Survey	86%
PLSS 8	77% of customers under the age of 16 must rate the library service as 'good' or 'very good' in the annual Public Library User Satisfaction Survey	68%
PLSS 9	There must be 216 additions to library stock annually per 1,000 population	205
PLSS 10	The lending stock must be replenished every 6.7 years	7.3 years

Table 1: Public Library Service Standards

Brent Libraries currently meets only four out of the ten Public Library Service Standards - PLSS 1, 3, 4 and 5. DCMS is currently revising the performance management framework for public libraries, with new guidelines expected to be produced by April 2008.

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport has default powers under the existing legislation, exercisable where there has been a complaint or where she has reason to believe that a library authority may be failing to carry out its duties. These powers were exercised in the case of the London Borough of Haringey where the local authority was deemed to be failing in its provision of public library services and external consultants were brought in to manage a change programme. The library service has now returned to local authority control after significant improvements were made.

3.2 National and regional influences

3.2.1 Framework for the Future

In 2003, the DCMS published its strategy for modern public libraries: “**Framework for the Future**”. This ten year vision aimed to “...*promote public libraries, give them improved visibility and set out why libraries matter.*” The central themes of the strategy are:

- **Books , reading and learning:** knowledge, skills and information at the heart of economic and social life
- **Digital citizenship:** access to more information through the internet
- **Community and civic values:** libraries as safe, welcoming neutral spaces open to all the community

3.2.2 Museums, Libraries and Archives Council

In 2003, **CABE** (the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) and the **Museums, Libraries and Archives Council** (MLA) published ‘*Better Public Libraries*’, which highlighted the importance of innovation and creativity in the design of public libraries. A further report from the MLA in 2005: ‘*21st Century Libraries*’ states:

‘New configurations of books, information, electronic access to learning, and related services can be delivered in many ways and through a range of media. Even so, buildings will always play an important role, whether as adaptations or refurbishments of existing building stock, joint ventures with other public or commercial services in shared (or ‘co-located’) premises, or in dedicated new library buildings which speak to the changing needs of the 21st century.’

3.2.3 Parliamentary Select Committee on Public Libraries

The **2005 Parliamentary Select Committee on Public Libraries** report highlighted the fact that many public libraries are run down; need repair and redecoration, present major access problems, and are not fit for a modern public library service.

The 2006 report by **Museums, Libraries, Archive Council, London** 'At the Heart of the Community' echoed these findings:

'Building refurbishment or redesign can be highly effective at increasing library membership and use. Many London public library services are aware of this and in the past ten years there have been 26 new libraries built and 91 refurbished and in most of these there has been a marked and sustained increase in library use. However, sources of capital investment for renewal or refurbishment of public libraries are limited, and library services must look for funding support and proven strategies for reducing cost. Dual or multi-use buildings provided in partnership with other services can save costs and deliver benefits to users.'

3.2.4. Blueprint for Excellence

In 2007 MLA produced the draft of their new policy document 'Blueprint for Excellence', setting out the priorities for public libraries over the next three years. Similar in emphasis to 'Framework for the future', but with a clearer focus on community engagement, the document states:

The core offer will be a universal entitlement for children, young people, families and communities to:

- *an accessible local library – in village, town, suburb, city centre – as a place of resource and expertise at the centre of community life*
- *a library service working in partnership to engage with communities and enable people to access resources and expertise, information and knowledge*
- *a global, interactive information, resources and communications service, 24/7, for learning knowledge and inspiration.*

To reach this goal requires challenge and change so that public libraries will have:

- *the right level and quality of resources, services and facilities*
- *a culture of responding to and leading on community expectations and need*
- *effective and efficient leadership and management*
- *ongoing improvement and contribution to the priorities of local government provision and performance*
- *recognition by national, regional and local policy makers of the vital importance of public libraries to personal, family and community development.*

3.2.5 Neighbourhood Agenda

It is recognised that libraries are uniquely placed to undertake work in the key areas of the broad **Neighbourhood Renewal** agenda. They have long term and ongoing relationships with their local communities that have resulted in a wealth of initiatives engaging with local interests and needs. The enduring nature of these relationships means this work can be embedded into the local communities and provide a lasting resource.

3.3 Comprehensive Performance Assessment: The Culture Block

The **Comprehensive Performance Assessment** (CPA) was introduced in December 2001, in order to measure the performance of all single tier, district and county councils and assess their capacity to deliver both functions and services to their local communities. In 2005, the Audit Commission introduced 'The Harder Test', a new framework for CPA from 2005 to 2008. This included the Cultural Service Assessment (also known as the '**Culture Block**') which was designed to take a broader view of councils' performance and partnerships compared with the previous 'Libraries and Leisure' Service Block. However, library performance indicators still form at least half of the current Culture block including performance against the Public Library Service Standards.

In Brent, although the number of visits to libraries and the customers' and resident's satisfaction indicators are in the middle threshold for CPA, there are significant concerns over the library stock performance indicators: the number of loans and the availability of stock to borrow, These are likely to be in the lower threshold for CPA in 2007/8 and this performance will therefore contribute negatively towards the overall Council CPA rating. (See *Appendix 1: CPA Culture Block – Brent Libraries performance*)

3.4 Best Value Review Libraries, Museum and Archive

In 2003 Brent Council conducted a **Best Value Review** of its Libraries, Museum and Archive. The review found that library buildings were inflexible for the desired customer base and range of activities. It recognised that for Brent's libraries to fulfil their potential a radical re-think would be necessary, new partnerships would need to be explored and a wider range of facilities provided. Key recommendations were:

- Examine library locations and possible partnerships
- Carry out major improvements to Willesden Green Library
- Improve staffing at strategic levels providing high quality, innovative services
- Increase facilities such as first stop shops, public toilets, study spaces, possibility of homework clubs in all libraries
- Increase ability to meet Public Library Standards on opening hours, number of visitors, etc
- Brent Council to be seen as providers of 'excellent' library service with modernised library buildings providing a wide range of services and facilities
- Brent Libraries to be seen as partner of choice attracting increased external funding

"I have come to the library for fifty years and my children loved it also. I would like it to open on Fridays"

3.5 Cultural Services Inspection 2004/2007

In August 2004 the **Audit Commission** delivered a positive report on Brent's Cultural Services, describing services as *"good with promising prospects for improvement"*. The library service was praised as a strong service, particularly for the recent improvements to Ealing Road Library and the resulting increase in usage. The inspection did however identify that the building stock is deteriorating and that this is an issue that needs to be addressed.

In July 2007 the Audit Commission revisited Brent's cultural services to monitor progress. Further improvements to the library buildings and services were noted and praised but the report also highlighted the need to increase the number of Brent residents who use their libraries.

"Let us make noise in the library!"

3.7 Current local strategic influences

3.7.1 Brent's Corporate Strategy 2006-2010 highlights Brent Council's vision, values and priorities for the next four years. It sets out the key issues to be tackled and the council's commitment to building a better borough for all. The strategy sets out the Council's vision for libraries:

"We will continue to modernise the library service to reflect the information and leisure needs of a diverse, urban community particularly through greater use of new communication technology and new ways to access other council services."

The Corporate Strategy specifically commits to the following by 2010:

- *Increasing the number of visitors to libraries to the national average per 1,000 population*
- *Increasing the percentage of children and young people satisfied with our Library services to 77%*
- *Increasing the percentage of people who find the item they want in a library to 94%*

3.7.2 Brent Council's Community Strategy 2006 – 2010 represents a combined statement of the needs and priorities of local people. The strategy, drawn up by 'Partners for Brent', the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in the Borough, sets out a vision for the Borough as follows:

"Brent will be a prosperous and lively borough, full of opportunity and welcoming to all. A place that will thrive for generations to come, whose future will be determined by local people."

Below this overarching vision the Community Strategy sets out some further aspirations which are relevant to the future development of library services in Brent:

"Brent will be a great place to live in and to visit. It will be safe, clean, green and lively. Local people will be confident that our streets and open spaces are safe places"

to be and that our green spaces and leisure facilities will be worth visiting. Residents will care for their surroundings, appreciate where they live and enjoy what Brent has to offer"

"Brent will be a prosperous, healthy place where there are opportunities for all. A place where income and employment levels will be higher than the London average, where businesses thrive and where residents will enjoy good health and be able to make healthy choices"

Clearly the library service in Brent needs to reflect these aspirations both in terms of the quality of facilities and the services that are on offer within them.

3.7.3 Local Development Framework (LDF). Brent's Local Development Framework Core Strategy (October 2006) identifies the spatial vision for Brent which includes the following objectives:

- **Revitalise Town and Local Centres** - through the maintenance and enhancement of their vitality and viability, by improving accessibility and by securing new development proposals
- **Promoting Tourism & the Arts** - for the benefit of Brent residents, businesses, workers and visitors and maximise their regenerative effect. Special regard is to be had to the role of Wembley as a key attractor
- **Protecting, Providing and Enhancing Open Space and Leisure and Recreational Activities** - for the enjoyment of Brent residents now and in the future
- **Meeting the Community's Diverse Needs** - continue to deliver a responsive, sensitive and fair service to all members of Brent's diverse community, including the provision of a range of community facilities

The LDF identifies a number of growth areas in the borough to accommodate the predicted population growth in the capital (as outlined in the GLA London Plan) and in the borough. These Growth Areas include the Wembley and South Kilburn regeneration areas and also areas such as Burnt Oak/Colindale and Alperton but existing town centres will also be required to accommodate the needs of a growing population. The growth areas will require new or enhanced services to support residents, such as schools, health provision and libraries. The library service needs to work closely with the planning department to ensure that opportunities are maximised and that the service is accessible to new as well as established residents.

3.7.4 Brent's Cultural Strategy 2006-9. The Cultural Strategy provides an overview of culture in Brent and outlines a series of priorities for the area in the coming years. It also outlines Brent's vision of culture as a key factor in ensuring community cohesion in one of the most diverse boroughs in Europe. The strategy identifies three key priorities for the borough's cultural providers:

- Civic Pride
- Safe, healthy, cohesive communities
- Employment - building a cultural economy

The Cultural Strategy outlines specific priorities for Brent Libraries, including ensuring that library buildings meet 21st century needs, extending opening hours and increasing stock levels.

3.7.5 A New Civic Centre for Brent. Brent Council is planning to replace the existing Town Hall and outlying council offices with a state of the art Civic Centre which will place the Council in the heart of the Wembley regeneration area. Potential sites have been identified and a detailed user brief for the new building is being finalised along with a detailed tender for the design and procurement of the Civic Centre. A key component of the new Civic Centre is a substantial new central library for the borough (replacing the existing Town Hall Library), helping to ensure that the Civic Centre is accessible to all residents, and the vision for the Civic Centre includes this: *‘A further component of the Wembley Vision is the need for Wembley to be a new Cultural and Educational Centre. Clearly a new central library will help contribute to this aim, and has the potential to both act as a stimulant for further cultural facilities within the regeneration area and also to set a benchmark standard for future such facilities.’*

This is an important project for the library service and, if the Civic Centre plans are realised, will be a major investment in library services for the borough. Library services in the Wembley area will then need to be reviewed and potentially reconfigured depending on the finally chosen location for the Civic Centre.

3.7.6 Future of Customer Contact Review 2007. The ‘Future of Customer Contact’ 2007 proposes local accessible customer contact points shared with other service units or organisations and establishes a pilot project linking a library and new customer contact point. The existing Kingsbury Library is being relocated to the current One Stop Shop site on the busy Kingsbury Road to provide a modern and attractive library space, including the latest ICT for customers, with the integrated customer contact service. This new service will provide a model for the future and will be used to pilot the delivery of modern library and customer contact services in Brent with self-service, floor-walking staff, bookshop-style display of stock and discrete private interview rooms. It will also provide a much more accessible library, close to the main shopping area and good transport links, with improved performance against key CPA indicators such as numbers of visits and numbers of books loaned. The library opening hours will be reviewed as part of the process of relocation.

“I find the staff very helpful and friendly as I use this library quite often and do a lot of reading. I feel relaxed and at ease at all times.”

4. Brent's Libraries Today

Library services are part of the Libraries, Arts & Heritage Service in Brent Council's Environment and Culture Department (Arts and Learning Division). The service employs around 200 library staff, many of whom work part time, evenings and weekends. £5.4 million was spent on libraries in 2006/7; an average spend per head of population of £20.35 per year which is £3.00 lower than the Outer London average. 9% of this is spent on books and other materials for loan. In return for this expenditure, the Council achieves approximately 1.9 million library visits per year and 1.6 million issues. However, neither of these figures yet meet the national standards or targets for public libraries.

4.1 Current library services

Brent Council delivers its public library service from twelve static library buildings, a mobile library, a Home Visit service for older or disabled people, and outreach collections in Adult Homes:

- The largest library is the recently refurbished **Willesden Green Library**, based in the Willesden Green Library Centre which also houses the new Brent Museum, a One Stop Shop, a cinema, a café, a book shop and an art gallery. Located on Willesden High Road and open seven days a week, this library is the busiest in the borough loaning the most books and receiving the most visitors.
- **Harlesden Library** is in a prime high street location, close to shops and transport links. The library is housed in a Victorian building on three floors, currently inadequately laid out for modern purposes. An application for Big Lottery funding to transform the library, creating a library, learning and customer contact centre in partnership with Brent Adult and Community Education Service (BACES) and the One Stop Service was submitted in March 2007 and, if successful, will transform the face of learning and library services in this area of deprivation in the south of the borough.

"Harlesden Library is a pleasant place to come to with pleasant efficient and knowledgeable staff. There are lots of activities and events always being organized which I feel contributes overall to the wellbeing of the community"

- **Kilburn Library** is located on the busy Salusbury Road, close to Queens Park tube station. This Victorian building is in need of modernisation although the children's library was refurbished in 2004.
- **Ealing Road Library** is situated at the Wembley end of Ealing Road, close to shops and transport. The library is located on a large plot of land with room for expansion. Ealing Road is currently Brent's second busiest library. The library was refurbished in 2003, resulting in a massive increase in usage which has

been consistently sustained. The library has a high proportion of customers from Asian backgrounds, reflecting its location in one of the major Asian shopping areas of London.

- **Preston Library** is in the north of the borough, located close to shops and transport links. Preston is a popular local library, performing well for its size but the building is too small to meet growing customer demands. There is potential to extend on the current site.
- **Town Hall Library** is located in Brent Town Hall (Wembley Park) and is Brent's third busiest library. However, the library is in need of refurbishment and investment in stock as issues are declining here. A new library is included in the plans for the new Brent Civic Centre (paragraph 3.7.5) which will transform library provision in Wembley.
- **Kingsbury Library** is currently situated in on Stag Lane in the north of the borough, away from transport routes and shops. Despite increases in opening hours, usage is declining. The new 'Kingsbury Link' shared service centre with a modern 21st century library and customer contact point will open on Kingsbury Road early in 2008 (paragraph 3.7.6).
- **Neasden Library** is located on Neasden High Road, part of the shopping centre and close to transport links, although Neasden itself is somewhat isolated by and suffers from its proximity to the North Circular. The library is currently on the first floor which affects access, visibility and levels of usage. Neasden Library is on leased premises and the current lease runs until 2012.
- **Kensal Rise Library** is an large and attractive Victorian building, covenanted by All Souls College, Oxford as a public library. The library is in a residential street, away from the main road. Kensal Rise has the lowest usage of all Brent's libraries.
- **Cricklewood Library** sits in a pleasant, quiet location in a residential street by Gladstone Park and is also subject to a covenant by All Souls College. The library has no transport links close by and usage suffers accordingly; the library is the second least busy in the borough. The library also currently houses Brent Archive.
- **Tokington Library** was purpose built in the 1970s and is located on a side-street off the Harrow Road in Wembley, near the junction with the North Circular. Usage of this library, though low, has increased since the opening of a health centre next door.
- **Barham Park Library** occupies part of a Grade 2 listed building situated in Barham Park and shared with Brent Parks Service. It is located on a bus route but away from Wembley town centre and is in need of redesign and refurbishment.

- The **Mobile Library** visits roadside stops and community venues across the borough. However, the vehicle is outdated and will not comply with new Vehicle Emission regulations which will mean it must be replaced or decommissioned by July 2008.
- The **Home Visit Service** goes to over 400 households, bringing library services to customers who are unable to visit libraries through illness or disability. This service plays a key role in reaching customers who are unable to visit their local libraries and needs to be reviewed to ensure value for money improvements within existing resources are implemented.
- The **Outreach Service** loans deposit collections to sheltered accommodation for older people, adult homes and day centres, offering book collections to those unable to travel to a library. This service also requires a review for improvement/redesign within existing resources.

Library services on offer include:

- Books, CDs, and DVDs for loan in a range of formats and languages, including latest bestsellers
- Access to a wide range of information and advice
- 24 hour online access to library catalogue, loan renewals and online information and study resources
- Free public internet and email access in every library, wi-fi access in larger libraries
- ICT learning centres
- Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages materials and projects
- School class visit programmes and homework support
- Annual programmes of events and activities, including Black History, reading promotions, Summer Reading Scheme, holiday activities, cultural celebrations, reading groups, Family Learning sessions, ICT training
- Advice surgeries
- Study spaces
- Art exhibitions, displays and workshops
- Meeting rooms for hire and venues for training/adult education courses
- BRAIN Community Information website

4.2 Current Performance Information

Two key indicators of the success of a library service are the number of visits that it receives and also the number of items (books, CDs, DVDs etc) that are loaned. Over a four year period (2003-2007), total visits to libraries have increased by 15.7% but total loans of library stock have decreased by 11.2%. This follows national trends but there are wide differences between the performances in individual libraries. Other factors that need to be analysed include the demographics of the library customers and how these reflect the overall make-up of the borough.

4.2.1 Visits to library buildings

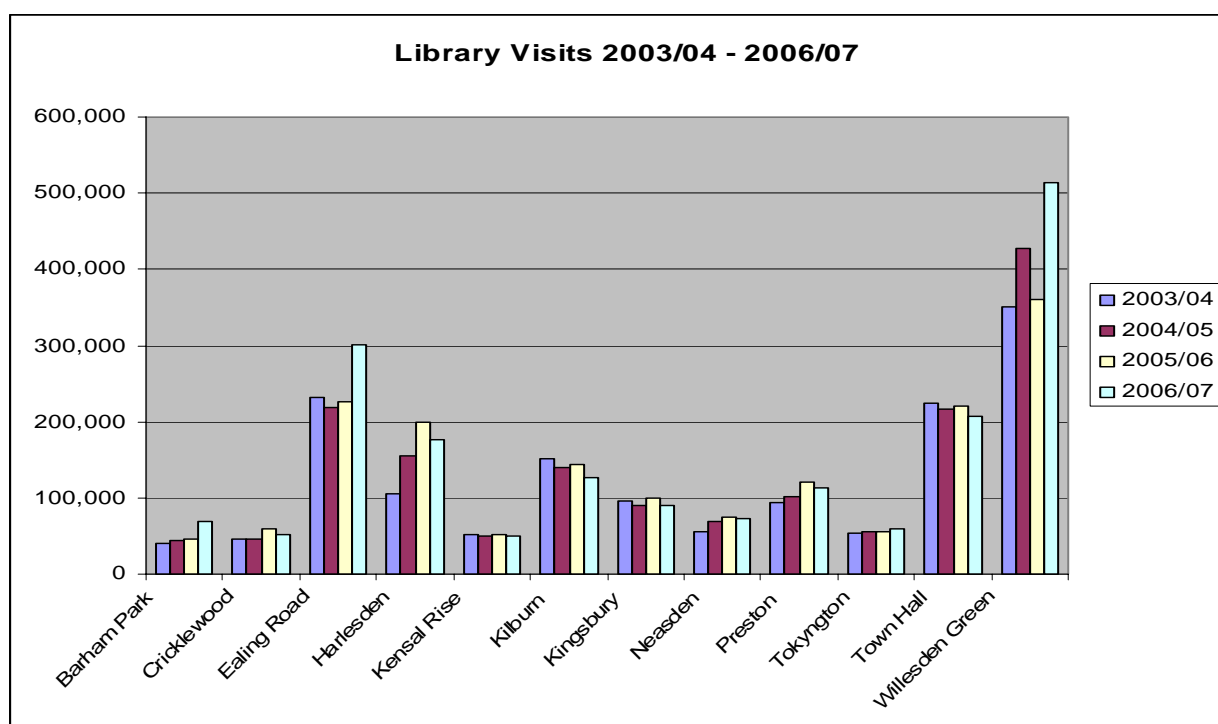


Chart 1: Library buildings visits trends

Chart 1 compares the share of visits between libraries which are measured by electronic visit counters at the entrance to each library. The number of visits is measured as one of the Public Library Service Standards (see 3.1 above). Willesden Green Library receives the most visits (a drop in 2005/6 reflects temporary closure during refurbishment) and has increased by 43% in 2006/7 compared to the previous year following refurbishment in March 2006. In fact, Willesden Green's 2006-7 visits performance is the highest for the four year period. This improvement is sustained, with the first six months of 2007/08 continuing to show an increase in visits (of around 10%) on the same period in 2006/07.

In contrast, Kensal Rise receives the least visits and has decreased by 6% in 2006/07 compared to 2005/06 and an overall decrease over the four year period of 4%. Tokyngton Library, although one of the smaller branches, has shown an improvement in visits performance since the opening of a health centre next door; and Neasden Library also shows an overall increase of 8% over the four year period, possibly following on from improvements to Neasden Lane where it is located.

4.2.1 Loans of library stock

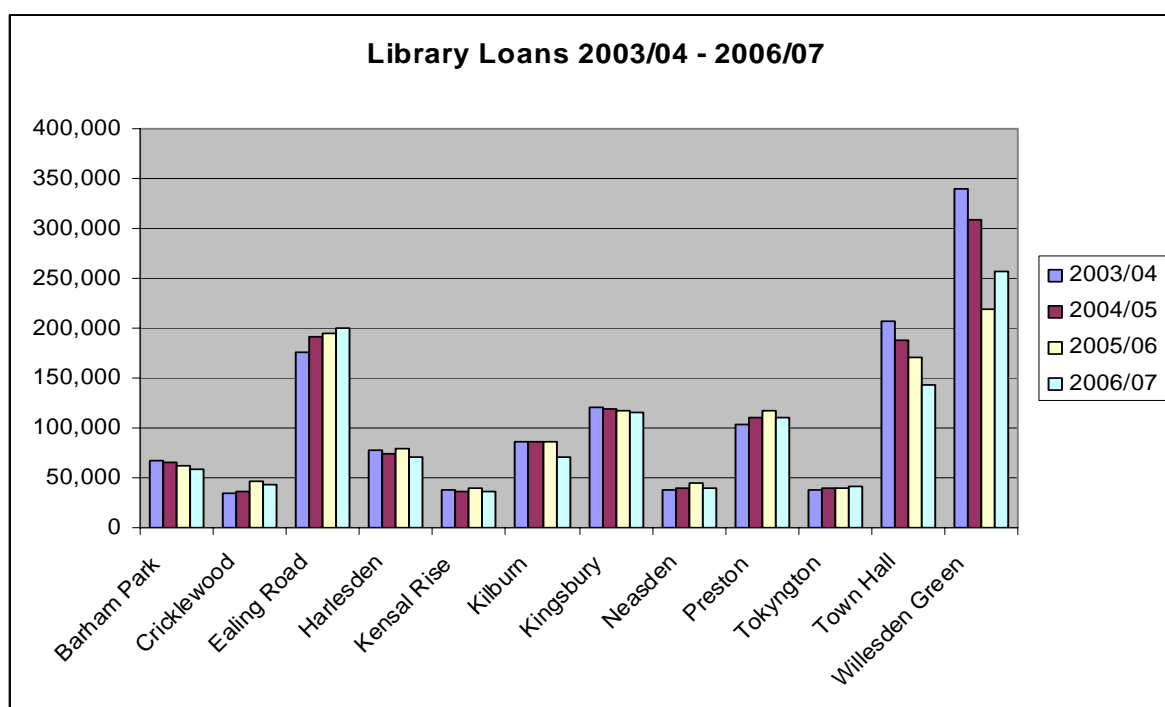


Chart 2: Library loans trends

Brent’s libraries loan books, CDs, DVDs, videos, magazines and computer games and loans are recorded and analysed through the electronic library management system. Library issues (loans) from library buildings are decreasing over the four year period in Chart 2 above, by 10.5%. However, individual performance varies between locations, with Ealing Road Library, for example, showing a 12.4% increase over four years whereas Barham Park is showing a 16.3% decrease. Tokyngton again shows signs of improvement, with a 12% increase, whilst Neasden’s figures declined in 2006/07 compared to 2005/06. Willesden Green’s loans show some signs of recovery after a steep decline between 2003/04 and 2006/07 and this is borne out by the first quarter of 2007/08 where loans have increased by **check figure** over the same period in 2006/07.

4.2.2. Correlation

It is clear that baseline figures need further interpretation as the level of usage also depends on the services on offer, the proportion of opening hours etc. The charts below compare how each of the twelve libraries are performing in terms of issues and visits in relation to hours of opening and the floorspace of each library.

Chart 3 (below) demonstrates that whereas Willesden Green and Ealing Road Libraries are performing well above their comparative share of opening hours in terms of visits and loans (issues), other libraries such as Tokyngton and Cricklewood are not performing as well as their share of the opening hours would indicate. This has implications for whether the pattern of opening hours in some branches needs to be reviewed to maximise performance at peak times for customers.

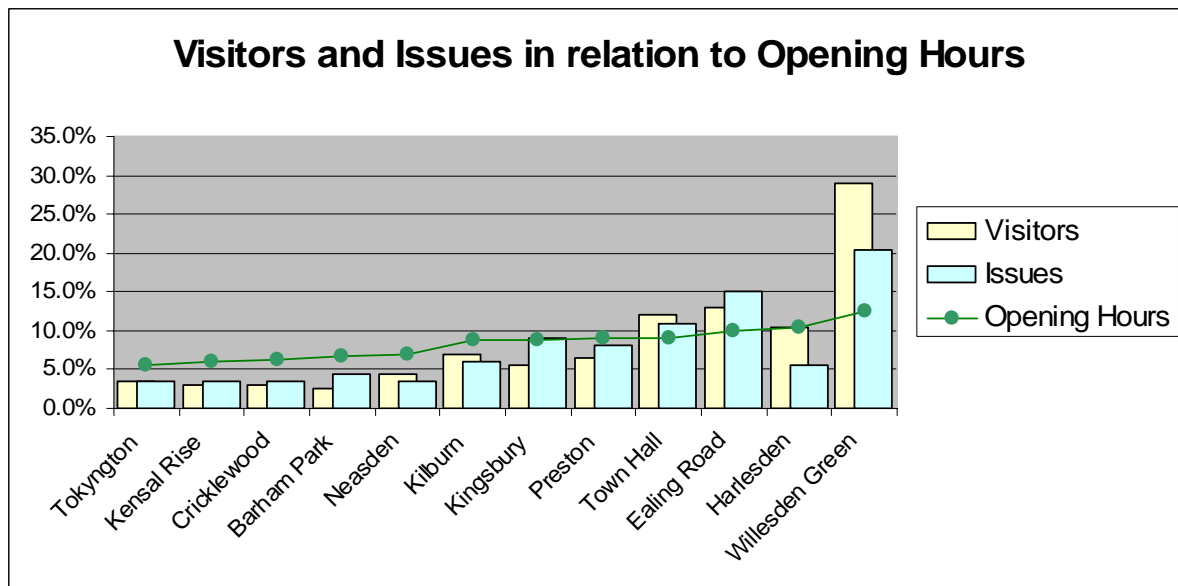


Chart 3: Visits and loans compared to opening hours 2006/07

Chart 4 below looks at comparative performance between library buildings in terms of their proportion of the total floorspace. It is clear from this that the size of a library does not necessarily predicate a high performance in terms of visits and loans. For example, Kilburn Library is larger in size than Ealing Road but not performing as well; and the same is true of Kingsbury and Preston Libraries comparatively. Other factors determining higher performance would include opening hours, stock levels, location, condition of exterior/interior etc.

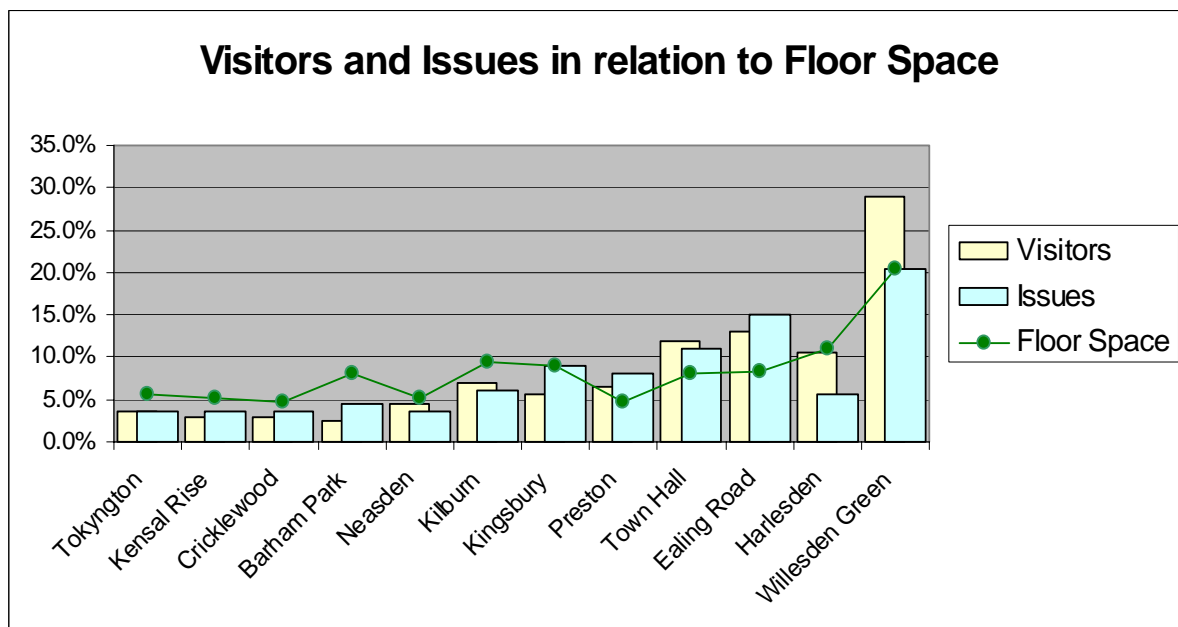


Chart 4: Visits and issues compared to floorspace 2006/07

4.2.3. ICT usage in buildings

While performing adequately on visitor numbers, Harlesden Library has a notably low number of loans (issues) in relation to both floor space and opening hours. This may be at least partly explained by the PLUS (Public Library User Survey) 2006 customer survey which indicates that more users visit Harlesden to use the PCs than at any other library (47% at Harlesden compared to the average of 33%). The survey shows that PC usage at libraries is a higher priority for users of libraries in the less affluent south of the borough:

1	Harlesden	47.0%
2	Kilburn	43.0%
3	Tokyington	42.2%
4	Willesden Green	38.5%
5	Kensal Rise	31.9%
6	Cricklewood	31.3%
7	Barham Park	29.4%
8	Town Hall	29.3%
9	Ealing Road	28.8%
10	Neasden	25.6%
11	Kingsbury	23.2%
12	Preston	13.5%
	Overall	32.9%

"It would be nice if the library can offer Wi-Fi hotspots so that readers can bring in their own laptop / handheld computers to access the internet and avoid the queue for computers"

Table 2 Computer usage PLUS 2006

4.2.4 Stock Performance in buildings

Chart 5 below compares how library stock is performing in each of the libraries in ratio to the total stock held at each library. Kensal Rise issues 1.79 books a year for every book in stock. Preston Library issues almost three times as many as this (4.81).

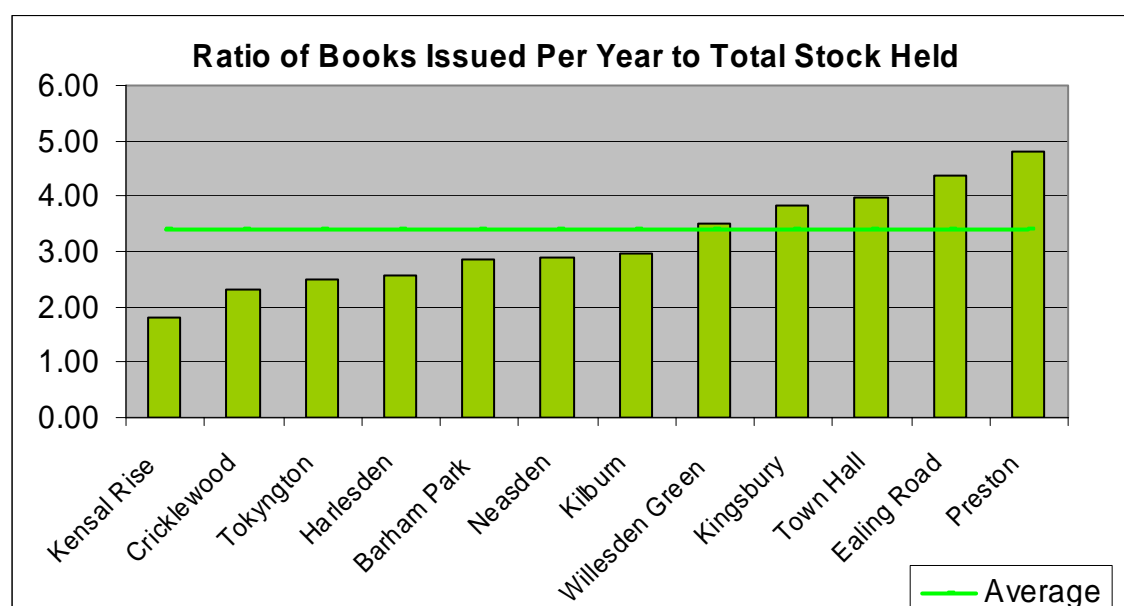


Chart 5 Stock performance (Based on issues from April-Dec 2006 and "snapshot" of stock held at each library at 8 February 2007)

4.2.5 Other services

The mobile library currently operates on a fortnightly rota for 22 hours per week serving approximately 850 customers. 70 per cent of the customers are children from schools, day nurseries, etc (some of whom also visit library buildings as part of the school class visit programme). In 2006/7, loans of materials from the mobile were the fifth lowest in the borough and had declined by 4.5 % on the previous year. The current vehicle is F reg. (i.e. first registered between 1/8/88 and 31/7/89) and will not meet the new Vehicle Emissions Regulations operating from 2008 without either substantial alterations (not considered to be cost effective on a vehicle of this age) or complete replacement. The Home Visit service currently delivers books etc to around 400 customers who are housebound due to illness, disability or other social factors. The outreach service delivered around 14,500 books and other materials to day nurseries, adult homes and other community locations in 2006/07.

It is clear that there is some overlap or duplication between the services delivered from library buildings, the mobile library, the Home Visit service and the outreach service. With over 99% of Brent's residents living within a mile or less of their nearest library building, it would be more cost effective and reach a wider customer base to concentrate resources in these buildings rather than the mobile library; whilst redefining the services to those who are housebound and in community organisations to ensure that the most vulnerable residents are able to receive library services.

4.3 Financial performance

Revenue and capital

The gross revenue budget for libraries in 2007/8 is £6.3 million; net budget is £5.7 million. Chart 6 below demonstrates how this budget is spent across the service:

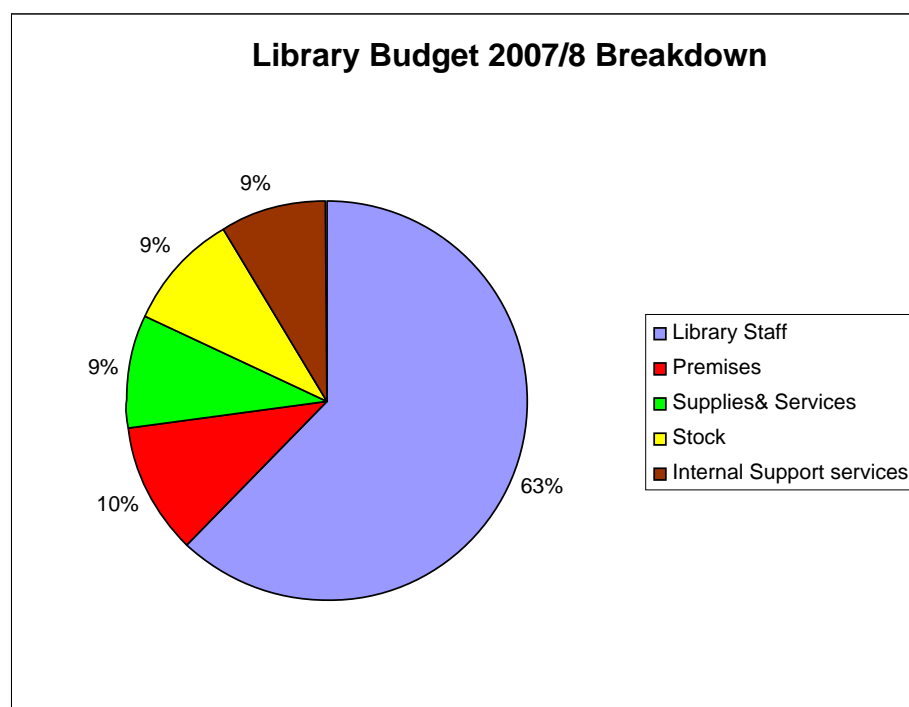


Chart 6 Percentage breakdown of 2007/8 revenue budget

In addition to the revenue budget, capital resources have been identified for 2007/8 to address some of the essential repairs and maintenance issues in the current library buildings. However, these would not cover the cost of a replacement mobile library vehicle (see paragraph 4.2.5 above) or any refurbishment programmes for library buildings.

Income

Income is mainly derived from hire of CDs and DVDs, overdue fines and rent of space for community use. Income raised from these sources can never be significant in the overall funding of the service and, from comparisons with other authorities, are unlikely to be more than 5% of the total libraries budget. Additionally, in line with national trends, income from hire of audio visual is declining rapidly as libraries struggle to keep pace with digital developments. To counter the threat of a significant income deficit, the need to develop an income generation strategy and look at creative and innovative income streams is paramount. This is a priority in the 2007-8 service plan.

External funding opportunities

There are a number of external funding opportunities for libraries for both large and small projects which have been used to develop library services elsewhere:

- The Big Lottery Community Libraries fund: *e.g. Brent Libraries is submitting a bid to develop Harlesden Library in to a library/learning centre in partnership with BACES*
- Heritage Lottery Fund for heritage linked projects
- Private Finance Initiatives (PFI). (However, it is very unlikely that any future PFI credits would be available for standalone libraries or projects under £20 million)
- Planning gain e.g. Section 106
- Arts Council funding linked to their literature development strategy
- Funding for specific projects from organisations such as the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the Reading Agency.
- Business sponsorship

4.4 Library customer demographics

The data collected by the library management system includes a breakdown of customers by ethnicity, age, gender and disability where customers have supplied that information on joining a library. Currently the service does not collect data on faith groups or sexuality.

4.4.1 Ethnicity analysis

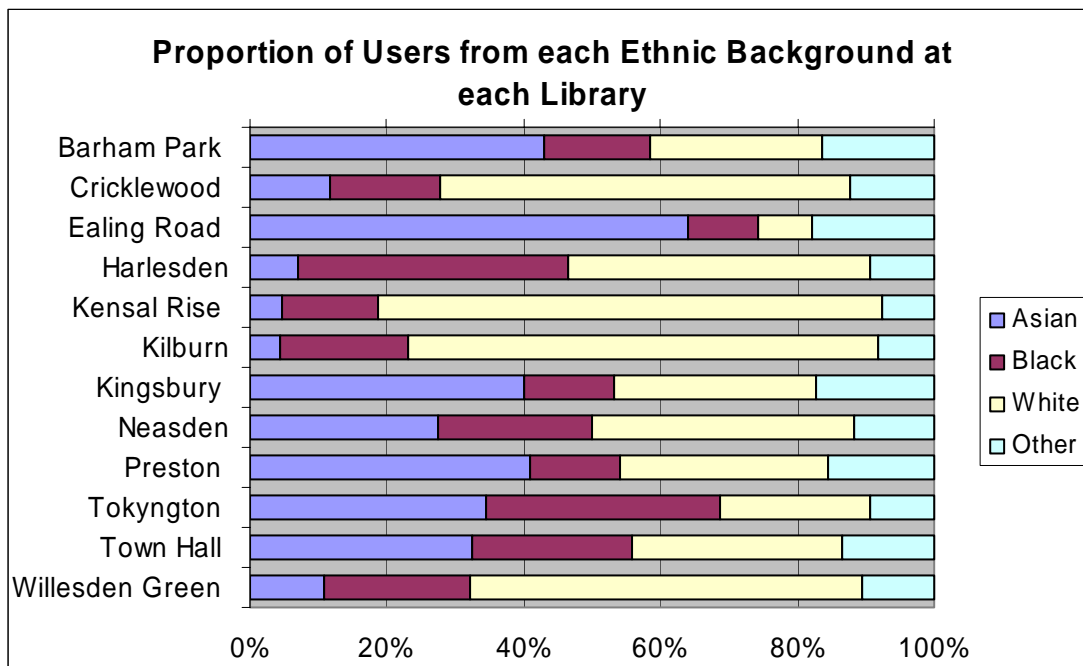


Chart 7

4.4.2 Age analysis

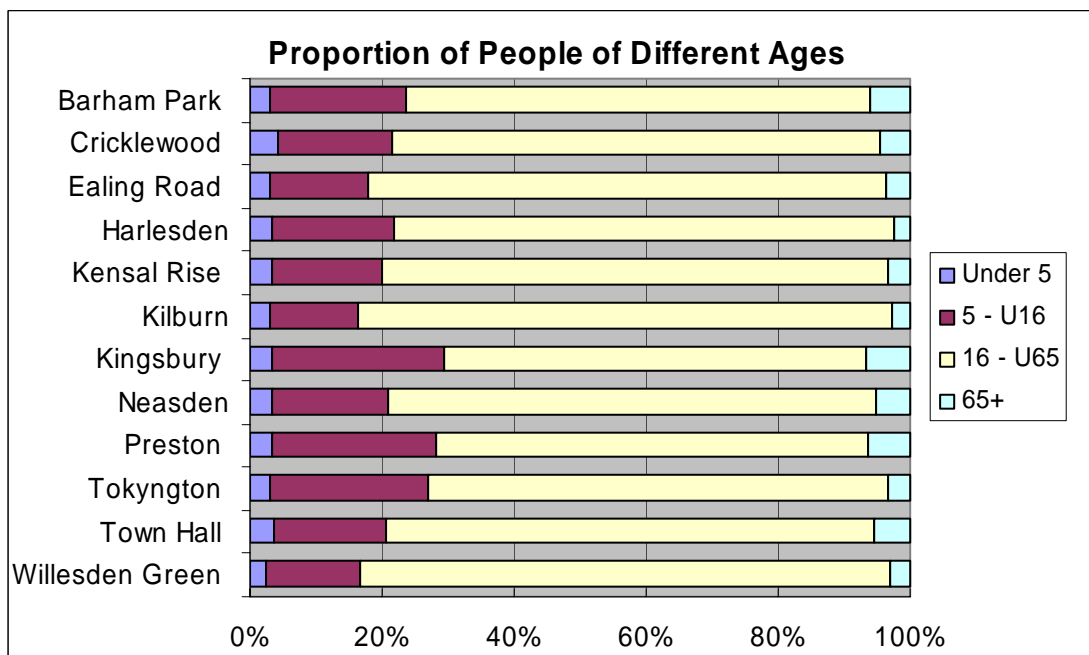


Chart 8

4.4.3 Gender analysis

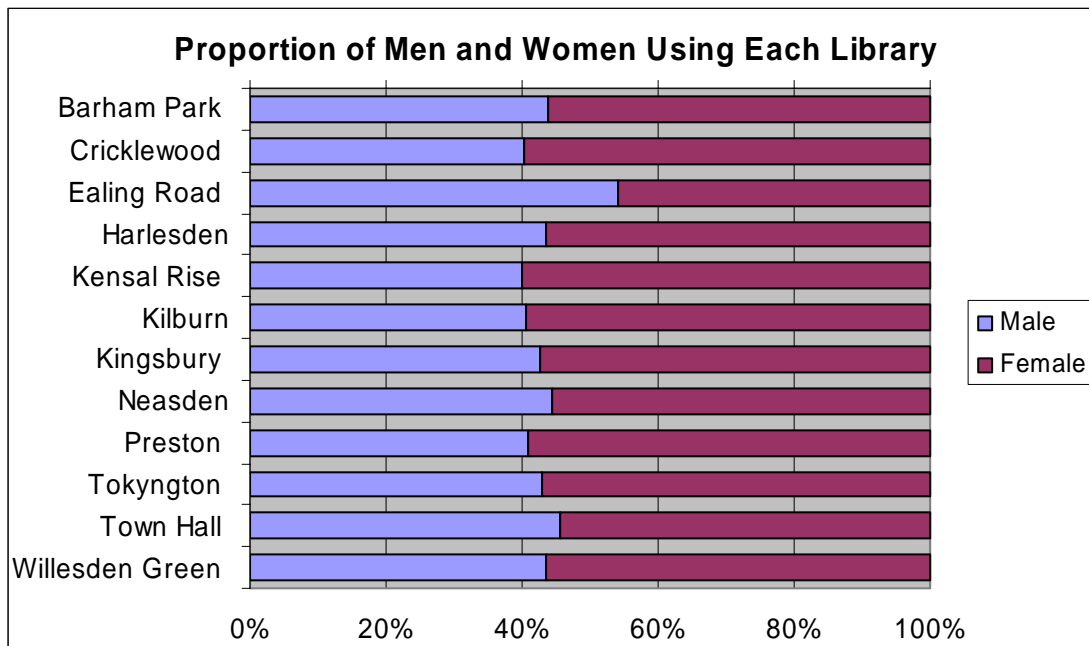


Chart 9t

4.4.4 Disability analysis

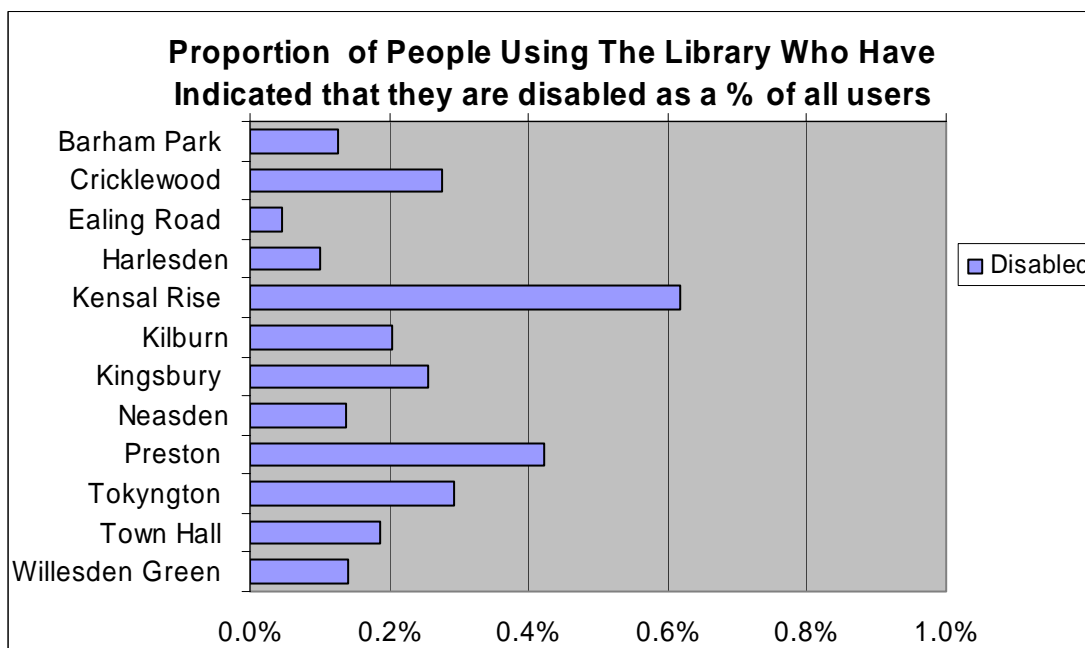


Chart 10

4.5 Benchmarking

One of the current measurements of the CPA framework is around efficient use of budgets, expressed as the cost per library visit. Brent is in the middle threshold for this target and the table below benchmarks Brent's performance against other London authorities. Brent has the 12th lowest cost per visit in all of London out of 32 boroughs (excluding Corporation of London), and the 11th lowest out of the 20 Outer London boroughs. The actual cost per visit in Brent is £2.99 in 2006/7. Brent's library stock performance in comparison to other London authorities for the indicator relating to stock: the number of books purchased per 1,000 population (C12) is second to bottom in London and bottom amongst the outer London authorities. Our performance is currently low because there were reductions in stock spending in 2005/6 and 2006/7. Spending the full stock budget allocation of £550,000 in 2007/8 will put Brent in the middle range across London.

Table 3 below, based on 2005/6 figures, benchmarks Brent's performance in comparison to the rest of London in terms of expenditure in relation to the number of service points and the size of the population.

Authority	Population estimates June 2005	No of service points (inc mobiles)	Net expenditure 2005/6 Actual	Per capita
Westminster	244,400	12	£9,445,542	£38.65
Islington	182,600	10	£6,947,097	£38.05
Camden	226,100	14	£7,785,408	£34.43
Tower Hamlets	213,200	11	£6,892,286	£32.33
Hackney	207,700	7	£6,198,991	£29.85
Harrow	225,615	11	£6,552,725	£29.30
Kensington & Chelsea	196,200	6	£5,593,592	£28.51
Richmond upon Thames	186,300	13	£5,214,083	£27.99
Hounslow	212,500	11	£5,555,722	£26.14
Newham	246,200	11	£6,349,970	£25.79
Sutton	177,700	11	£4,479,159	£25.21
Enfield	280,500	17	£6,954,278	£24.79
Bromley	301,900	16	£7,429,904	£24.61
Southwark	257,700	14	£6,339,395	£24.60
Bexley	220,300	12	£5,233,047	£23.75
Redbridge	251,500	10	£5,856,810	£23.29
Haringey	224,500	12	£5,100,765	£22.72
Barnet	329,700	18	£7,436,416	£22.56
Wandsworth	281,400	13	£6,326,727	£22.48
Lewisham	247,500	12	£5,544,435	£22.40
Lambeth	269,100	9	£6,008,995	£22.33
Greenwich	228,100	15	£5,042,277	£22.11
Hammersmith & Fulham	179,900	7	£3,971,196	£22.07
Barking & Dagenham	164,500	11	£3,444,291	£20.94
Havering	226,200	10	£4,394,096	£19.43
Brent	270,100	13	£5,057,697	£18.73
Kingston Upon Thames	153,000	7	£2,858,562	£18.68
Waltham Forest	224,100	12	£4,048,536	£18.07
Merton	194,700	7	£3,224,005	£16.56
Croydon	342,700	15	£5,589,314	£16.31
Average	232,197	12	£5,695,844	£24.76

Table 3: CIPFA 2005/06 Actual figures

5. Consultations & Best Practice

5.1 Consultation findings

Appendix 2 shows the key consultations since 2002 that have influenced the strategy.

Alongside customer comments and suggestions (some of which are included in this document), they demonstrate consistent themes:

- Extend or reconfigure opening hours to suit customer needs
- Improve access to / and locations of library services
- Improve ICT facilities
- More provision for study and homework
- More books
- Refurbish buildings
- Provide services to meet all community needs

The table below outlines the results of the 2006 Public Library User Survey. Overall satisfaction rating for libraries as a whole has risen slightly from 83.8% last year to 85.6% this year.

It must be borne in mind that although customer satisfaction levels are high, only 18.2% of Brent residents used their library card on a regular basis in 2006/7.

		Opening Hours	Seating and Tables	Condition of Inside of Library
1	Barham Park	70.70%	77.70%	74.50%
2	Ealing Road	90.10%	63.10%	78.00%
3	Willesden Green	90.60%	81.10%	86.10%
4	Cricklewood	56.60%	64.10%	71.60%
5	Kingsbury	81.80%	71.60%	69.50%
6	Town Hall	80.40%	70.00%	59.10%
7	Harlesden	88.10%	67.50%	66.60%
8	Kilburn	80.10%	70.10%	55.70%
9	Tokyington	53.40%	65.90%	64.80%
10	Kensal Rise	47.10%	78.90%	81.30%
11	Preston	88.50%	58.40%	67.70%
12	Neasden	69.50%	63.10%	61.20%
	Mobile	86.10%	54.10%	75.90%
	Overall	85.00%	69.60%	72.40%

Table 4; 2006 Public Library User Survey

Chart 11 below illustrates the satisfaction with opening hours in graph form, showing customers are less satisfied with opening hours in the smaller libraries

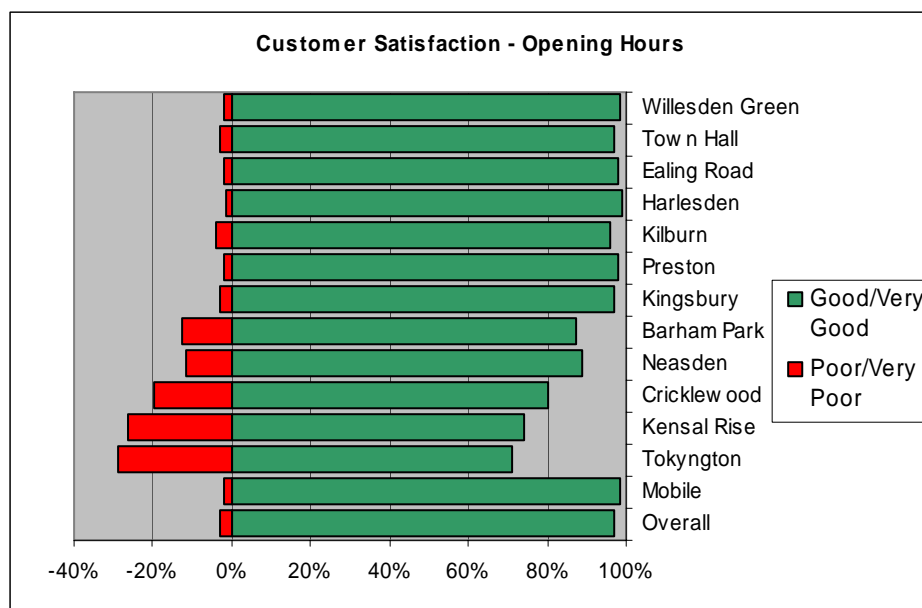


Chart 11 Satisfaction scores PLUS survey 2006

"I am very happy to use these facilities until I was made redundant. I hadn't been in a Brent library for more than ten years. I now visit regularly to apply for jobs over the internet. Thank you so much for offering this otherwise I'd have no chance of gaining work again"

5.2 Best Practice

In response to the Government's vision for public libraries, councils across the country are tackling the issues of under-investment in libraries and the need for modernisation. This has resulted in an upswing in the usage of libraries and library buildings being seen as key community resources and even winning architectural awards (Jubilee Library, Brighton; Bournemouth Central Library; Peckham Library). For instance:

In **Tower Hamlets** the Council is investing millions of pounds to create a network of adult education, library and information services, known as Idea Stores, in 7 state-of-the-art buildings in local shopping centres. Four of these have opened in the last three years. As well as the traditional library service, much valued by residents, they offer a wide range of adult education classes, along with career support, training, a crèche, meeting areas, cafes and arts and leisure pursuits. The message from Tower Hamlets' households taking part in London's most comprehensive opinion survey about libraries was stark and simple: they wanted a high-quality, modern library service which provided a far greater range of services than at present. Despite

recognising the excellent effort of staff on behalf of residents, customers were dissatisfied with the quality, location and nature of the service they were getting.

In **Newham** The Gate replaced a small poorly accessible library and separate local service centre. It has made a significant impact on the way in which local people access and make use of services and has been the subject of national and international attention with visitors from over 50 organisations. In its first year, it has achieved a 64% increase in issues compared to the old library and a 315% increase in visitors. 82% of its active users are from ethnic minorities. The co-location of the Library and Local Service centre means that customers can receive housing benefit services, enquire about free school meals, home helps for elderly relatives and access the whole range of Council services under the same roof as the library. Library staff "floor walk" and are proactive in offering help to customers, whilst the implementation of smart card and self-service technology has freed staff to concentrate on customer service.

In **Croydon** a local secondary school was due to be rebuilt through a PFI project. The opportunity then arose for the local library, the local adult education service and the council's music service to become part of the 'Ashburton Learning Village'. The existing public library building had become unsuitable for the requirements of a modern day library. The building had no disabled access to the children's library on the first floor and there were problems associated with its location in a public park. The Learning Village opened in May 2006 and the library has already seen a 13% increase in visitor figures.

Part of **Hampshire** County Council's programme of modernising cultural services, Discovery Centres are new, community focused facilities, relaunching library services in a modern, welcoming environment with a range of other information services, including IT facilities, museum and local history exhibitions and resources, meetings and exhibition areas The contents of each Discovery Centre will vary, each tailored to the local community.

Sutton Library re-opened in January 2005 following a major refurbishment. It is now the first fully operational self-service public library in the country where customers can personally check their books in and out electronically at a bank of self issue/self return units. Facilities include a reader's lounge; café and shop; state-of-the art IT facilities; 'sound showers' to listen to music and a fantastic new children's library themed around the world's environments. The whole concept of the new library has been designed around the needs of the users.

Case Study: Ealing Road Library

Ealing Road Library is situated at the heart of the Asian community in Wembley, in a vibrant and busy shopping area.

In 2002, Brent Libraries was awarded a People's Network Excellence Fund to install a multicultural ICT Centre in the Library. Although Ealing Road was still Brent's third busiest library and the local community obviously valued and supported their service, the library itself was in need of a massive facelift, with dark, dingy areas, mismatched desks and chairs and fixed wooden shelving that looked very old-fashioned. The service decided to match the government ICT funding and refurbish the library completely. Brent Libraries recognised that there was an opportunity to promote equal opportunities and community cohesion by planning and managing the refurbishment in such a way that the local residents could be fully involved in the project, and so that the finished library truly reflected multi-ethnic Brent.

Local residents and businesses were involved in consultations and visits. Results showed that customers and non-customers wanted:

- A quiet reading area – not too near the children's area
- A teen area, with designated tables/chairs for young people
- Space for events
- Photos/painting above shelves
- Paintings or artwork on the front of the gallery
- Increased opening hours

The staff worked with designers, using the colour schemes that customers had suggested, to design a library that had a number of innovative features for Brent:

- Young people's area with CD listening post
- Multilingual ICT Centre providing transliteration software and word processing facilities in the 10 most widely spoken languages in Brent, and online learning resources aimed as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students
- Specially designed signage in the ten most commonly spoken languages in Brent in the ICT area
- Accessible ICT workstations offering free internet and email access with special adaptive technology for those with visual and physical disabilities
- Sunday opening to complement the opening hours of the shops/restaurants in the area

The levels of usage and satisfaction that have occurred as a result of the refurbishment are remarkable and prove the effects of modest investment. Within the first four months of opening there was a **46%** increase in the number of visits to the library and a **6%** increase in books issued.

By March 2005, visitors had increased by **88%** and issues by **16%** on 2002/3 figures. In 2006/7 Ealing Road was the second busiest library in Brent after Willesden Green, although it is a fraction of the size.

Case Study Willesden Green Library

Willesden Green Library opened in 1989 as Brent's flagship library. The library is part of a centre, managed by the library service that also housed a One Stop Shop, a cinema, a café and an art gallery.

Although still Brent's highest performing library; by 2005, Willesden Green was in dire need of refurbishment. Customer satisfaction levels and complaints were increasing and staff morale was low. The building was dingy with inadequate lighting and a shortage of study space. The new Brent Museum was due to move to Willesden Green Library Centre and it was felt that, in order to maximise the potential of the centre, the library should be completely refurbished.

The library reopened in March 2005 with a whole range of new services and improvements including:

- seven day opening
- a brand new children's library
- 'Whatever' - the new area for young people, with music listening posts, gaming and dedicated internet access
- new designed space for class visits and activities
- substantial investment in new books, DVDs and CDs
- redesigned study space with improved lighting
- 40 more PCs with free internet access
- wireless connection for laptops
- self service machines for issuing and discharging books

Following the refurbishment, , visits to the new Willesden Green Library rose by **43%** on the previous year and issues by **5%** (bucking the national trend where issues are falling). Customer satisfaction levels have also risen and the future is bright for the centre, which now also houses the Brent Museum.

"This library is good in providing services to the public. The library plays a very important role in any individuals life and this library is successful in doing this by providing excellent services to the people. My age is between 20-24 years and I just want to give only one suggestion that this library providing good programs for small children but they should have more activities for me"

6. Key Findings and Vision for the future

Brent Libraries does not currently meet all of the national standards for public libraries and this has a significant impact on the council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment. It is clear from this and other factors, such as the results of the Best Value Review in 2003, the research and consultation work conducted since then and the analysis of key performance indicators, that it is time for a step change in the quality of library service delivered to the residents of Brent. This step change requires a review of how resources are allocated, where services are delivered from, which services are appropriate for the 21st century and a mapping and realignment of staff skills to match the new delivery. The following priority themes have emerged from the research and consultation:

- ***Assets and resources***
- ***Access and usage***
- ***Awareness and image***

6.1 Assets and resources

6.1.1 Buildings/vehicles

- The library service is currently delivered in the main from buildings that are not adaptable, are in a poor state of repair and in need of modernisation
- The positive effects of refurbishment/new build/relocation have been demonstrated both in Brent and across the country
- It is essential to investigate co-location or partnership working with internal/external providers and shared services to maximise available resources
- The existing mobile library will not comply with new Carbon Emission legislation and must be replaced or decommissioned by July 2008

6.1.2 Staff

- The role of library staff has changed significantly over the last ten years with the advent of online facilities, customer expectations and the need to respond to new communities with a wide range of differing needs
- The staffing of libraries in Brent needs to adapt to these changes with a focus on customer needs and community engagement, flexibility and the acquisition of new skills

6.1.3 Stock

- Library stock needs significant updating to be comprehensive and relevant to the needs of all Brent residents.
- Brent Libraries needs a modern stock policy which relates to national/regional/local priorities and initiatives
- Library stock needs to be managed, promoted and monitored to ensure that it is wide ranging, relevant and value for money

6.1.4 Financial resources

- Current revenue financial allocations are not sufficient to either sustain the library service as it is currently configured, make major improvements or to meet the requirements of all of the national Public Library Standards
- Major capital funding needs to be sourced to make significant improvements
- Income streams are constantly changing and library services need to be adaptable and proactive in order to maximise available funding

6.2 Access and usage

6.2.1 Physical accessibility

- Brent Libraries does not currently meet the national targets for visitors, the proportion of Brent residents who belong to the library or stock lending.
- Opening hours across Brent Libraries are not consistent or reflective of customer needs or modern patterns of usage and should be reviewed
- However, the national Public Library Service Standard on opening hours is likely to remain unachievable in Brent in the short to medium term
- Some of the current buildings are at a distance from main town centres. A pragmatic approach to signage and marketing need to be taken to ensure that these buildings attract more visitors.
- Library buildings are key community learning/meeting places in addition to the traditional role of borrowing books and existing Brent libraries do not all have space/flexibility to accommodate this
- Mobile library services, home visit services and outreach provision need to be reviewed and modernised to ensure that these key service offer maximum accessibility to Brent residents

6.2.2 ICT services

- Online services and self service are increasingly popular methods of accessing libraries
- Brent Libraries needs to develop and extend ICT services to increase usage, widen access and enable new, efficient ways of working

6.2.3 Service priorities

- National priorities for libraries have been identified as children and young people's services, digital citizenship, lifelong learning and reader development and these activities need to be at the core of service delivery
- Libraries have a key role in information supply/dissemination and as contact points for the Council and Brent Libraries needs to be part of the new Council wide customer contact offer
- Libraries need to be supporting cultural initiatives such as the London 2012 Olympics, Brent's festivals programme and the healthy living agenda

6.2.4 Diversity

- Brent is an ethnic majority borough with one of the largest number of nationalities and languages spoken in the country. Brent Libraries should and can be in the forefront of developing library services that meet the needs of diverse communities.
- Brent Libraries needs to be part of London wide and local initiatives around easier access to library services e.g. London wide library membership,

streamlined joining process and targeted membership campaigns aimed at hard to reach groups

- The way that library services are delivered to residents who are unable to physically visit needs to be reviewed and modernised to ensure maximum coverage and effectiveness.
- Library stock needs to be available in a variety of formats and languages to reflect the needs of all Brent residents including people with disabilities
- Library services need to reflect the communities they serve, in terms of staff, stock, events and activities promoting community cohesion

6.3 Awareness and image

6.3.1 Image

- Out dated perceptions of public libraries are still held by many Brent residents despite the introduction of a range of new services and activities
- There is a need to change the 'brand' image of libraries to attract non-users and lapsed users, young people and BME groups

6.3.2 Marketing

- New marketing techniques adopted from retail are transforming the image of many libraries across the country and Brent Libraries needs to learn from this
- Imaginative and professional communication techniques should be used to promote library services to a wide range of groups in the community, using methods and channels appropriate to the audience

6.3.3 Partnerships

- Innovative methods of delivering services with other public and private partners (e.g. 'Books on prescription', volunteer schemes) are helping to raise awareness of the potential of library services to deliver on shared agendas and Brent needs to be leading on this.
- Following the example of the Kingsbury Link and Harlesden projects, Brent Libraries needs to consider further partnerships and shared projects with other Brent Council services to maximise customer access and offer value for money services.
- Working through agencies such as the London Libraries Development Agency, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council London and the Association of London Chief Librarians ensures that Brent Libraries benefits from regional and sub-regional initiatives to change perceptions of libraries and market services
- Customer panels and 'Friends' groups can provide regular and meaningful consultative forums, fund raising support and active participation in stock selection

6.4 The Vision for Brent Libraries:

From the findings above and following extensive consultation with libraries staff and stakeholders, the following ambitious vision for Brent Libraries has been developed for the next 4 years:

By 2012, Brent Libraries will have:

- 21st century library buildings and services
- Opening hours that meet community needs
- More visits and issues every year
- More issues per head of population than any other London borough
- Services accessible in any language and in any format
- ICT services at the cutting edge of library technology
- Information and advice available 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- The best programme of events and activities in London
- A reputation as the leading public library service in England for equalities and diversity

7. Priorities and actions

7.1 Assets and resources

7.1.1 Buildings/vehicles

- a) A programme of refurbishment/modernisation for all libraries should be put in place
- b) Capital funding for relocation and improvements should be sourced from external grants, public/private financing and Brent Council capital programmes
- c) The potential to link library and learning services should be actively pursued with appropriate BACES locations
- d) The potential to further the partnership with the One Stop Service should be investigated

7.1.2 Staff

- a) The management structure of Brent Libraries, both at strategic and operational levels, needs to be reorganised to ensure maximum effectiveness. Frontline posts should be reviewed to enable the delivery of modern library services meeting community needs.
- b) A programme of intensive retraining should be undertaken so that staff are equipped with the skills needed for a modern library service
- c) Succession planning and employment practices need to be reviewed to ensure that staff at all levels reflect the diversity of the borough. Successful schemes such as the Brent partnership with PATH National in employment and training should be extended.

7.1.3 Stock

- a) The stock policy should be revised to identify key priorities such as management, modern methods of promotion, range and relevance
- b) Stock selection and acquisition processes should be streamlined to ensure value for money
- c) Retail principles should be adopted in the display and promotion of stock
- d) Stock performance targets should be set and reviewed regularly to meet Public Library Service Standards and the requirements of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Culture Block

7.1.4 Outreach Services

- a) The mobile library, home visit and outreach services should be reviewed and reconfigured, with the decommissioning of the elderly mobile vehicle and a new system of visits and deposited collections created. New and more effective ways of reaching those Brent residents who are unable to visit a library must be developed

7.1.5 Income

- a) An income strategy should be fully implemented in order to maximise available funds
- b) Retail opportunities in libraries such as merchandising, commercial partnerships and charging for enhanced services should be actively sought
- c) Online and electronic payments should be implemented immediately
- d) Hall and meeting room hire charges should be reviewed to maximise income whilst encouraging community use
- e) Targets for sponsorship and external funding for library activities and events should be set and monitored

7.2 Access and Usage

7.2.1 Customer Focus

- a) Frontline processes should be reviewed and new ways of working introduced, such as floor-walking, self service terminals and quick choice sections
- b) Opening hours should be realigned to suit customer needs, with standardised hours across the borough such as more weekend opening
- c) Library membership processes should be simplified immediately to encourage wider access to services, including from hard to reach groups
- d) Brent Libraries should actively sign up to the proposed London-wide membership for public libraries and work with other Brent council services to deliver joint smartcard services
- e) Study space/facilities should be included in any refurbishment/redesign of library buildings
- f) Improved performance management should flow through all levels of the service
- g) Brent Libraries should ensure that Charter Mark is retained to maintain the highest levels of customer service
- h) Learning activities such as Silver Surfers, homework clubs, Family Learning and ICT Learning should be extended to all libraries, working with key providers/partners

7.2.2 ICT

- a) The new Library Management System will be introduced by October 2007 and its functionalities must be used to full potential
- b) Ageing library security systems should be replaced by new technologies such as RFID to ensure consistency and modern standards of stock security across all libraries
- c) Self service issue and return terminals should be introduced at all locations and actively promoted to customers

- d) SMS and email alerts for overdue, renewals and for marketing purposes should be introduced
- e) ICT services such as WiFi, online reference resources, e-learning and adaptive technologies for people with disabilities should be widely promoted to ensure maximum use

7.2.3 Equalities and Diversity

- a) Brent Libraries should actively and appropriately market library service to all sections of the community
- b) All library buildings should be fully accessible with adaptive technology for people with disabilities
- c) Library stock, events and activities should be available in appropriate languages and formats at the point where customers need them
- d) Brent Libraries should work with partners to provide Skills for Life training and Family Learning to enhance the life choices and employability of Brent residents
- e) Barriers to access for travellers and other transient communities should be removed wherever possible

7.3 Awareness and Image

7.3.1 Marketing/Communication

- a) Library services, events and activities should be targeted at key audiences to encourage library usage, reading and learning
- b) Creative marketing methods should be used to reach the widest audiences and challenge outdated perceptions of libraries. Consideration should be given to the appointment of a marketing post.
- c) Customers should be engaged in the development of a modern image for Brent Libraries
- d) Performance information should be readily and regularly available for all customers
- e) The customer comments and suggestions system should be enhanced to include online facilities and regular, wider communication of outcomes to customers

7.3.2 Community engagement

- a) Valued Customer Panels should be set up for all libraries so that local people can actively determine the nature of their library services
- b) Existing and proposed consultative forums such as the Youth Parliament, the Citizen's Panel and the BME Forum should be utilised to engage all sections of the community in library services
- c) Consultation and feedback from customers through evaluation of events etc should be used to target and inform service development
- d) Targeted work with key communities should be carried out to increase library membership and usage to meet local and national targets.

8. Recommendations

- **An increase in the revenue budget for libraries of £300,000 from 2008/9 onwards to meet the current deficit and to maintain current spending on stock, opening hours etc**
This would bring stability to the service and enable steady progress in transforming the library offer to Brent residents.

- **Capital investment in a long term modernisation programme (continuing on from improvements at Ealing Road and Willesden Green libraries) beginning with the following libraries:**
 - a) *Kingsbury Link* (£400,000 capital funding already identified 2007/8). A new joint library/customer service centre on the site of the One Stop Shop in Kingsbury Road will be opened in early 2008 to replace the existing library on Stag Lane and One Stop Shop service.
 - b) *Harlesden Library & Learning Centre*. £250,000 match funding in 2008/9 towards a funding application of c£1.7 million submitted to the Big Lottery to develop a new joint library/learning centre with BACES on the site of the current Harlesden Library. This capital funding will be repaid by the potential capital receipt of the existing Harlesden BACES building when the new centre is complete in autumn 2009.
 - c) *Neasden Library*. £180,000 to be identified for Neasden Library in 2008/9 to relocate the library from the first floor to the ground floor of the current site
 - d) *Town Hall Library*. A new flagship library will be delivered as part of the Civic Centre project by 2011. Capital investment may be dependant on a review of the location and number of libraries within the Wembley area once a Civic Centre site has been chosen

- **The library service to pursue increased partnership and shared services in all remaining library buildings to deliver value for money**
- **The cessation of the mobile library service from April 2008**
- **A review of the Home Visit service and the outreach deposit service to deliver improvements in service within existing resources.**
- **A reconfiguration of library opening hours to better meet expressed community needs within existing resources**
- **A review of the management and frontline structures, staff training and current working practices to ensure a responsive and fully equipped library staff for the 21st century**
- **A programme to market and promote modernised library services to Brent residents**

Appendix 1: CPA Culture Block – Brent Libraries performance

Key

	Lower Threshold
	Mid-Threshold
	Upper Threshold

Indicators C11 and C12 are made up of sub indicators and their overall threshold depends on the level reached by their sub indicators

	2006/7 Performance	CPA Upper Threshold	CPA Lower Threshold
C2a: PLSS 1 Proportion of households living within a specified distance of a static library.	99.31%	N/A	99%
C2b: PLSS2 Aggregate scheduled opening hours per 1,000 population for all libraries	105.8	128	102.4
C2c: PLSS 6 Number of library visits per 1000 population	6954	8600	6020
C3a: PLSS 3 Percentage of static libraries providing internet access.	100%	N/A	100%
C3b: PLSS 4 Total no. of electronic workstations available to users per 10,000 population	6.1	6	4.5
C4: Active borrowers as a % of the population	18.2%	27.3%	20.4%
C6: BV 119b Resident Satisfaction Libraries	66% ⁽¹⁾	72%	63%
C11: The overall threshold is based on the individual thresholds reached by the three subindicators (below)	One component lower, one mid, one higher	All above lower threshold and at least one upper	More than one at lower threshold
C11a: PLSS 5 ⁽²⁾ Requests supply time within: 7days	69%	50%	45%
15 days	80%	70%	63%
30 days	89%	85%	76.5%
C11b: PLSS 9 Annual items added through purchase per 1,000 population	205.8	216	183.6
C11c: PLSS 10 Time taken to replenish the lending stock on open access or available on loan* (years)	7.3	6.7	8.71
C12: The overall threshold is based on the thresholds reached by the two subindicators (below)	One component lower one upper	Both above lower, at least one higher	Both lower, or one middle and one lower
C12a: Stock turn - Book issues per 1000 population/books available for loan per 1000 population	3.72 (excl deprivation)	6.7	5.2
C12b: Stock Level - Books available for issue per 1,000 population	1150	1532	1108
C13: Cost per visit (Libraries)*	£2.99	3.2	2.4
C14a: PLSS7 Satisfaction - Assessment of users 16 and over of their library service	86%	87%	75%
PLSS8: Satisfaction - Assessment of users 16 and under of their library service (proposed for 2007/8)	68%	82%	72%

(1)

APPENDIX 2: Key Consultative exercises since 2002 with key findings

April 2002: Have Your Say – Over 2000 children & young people's surveyed as part of the Best Value Review of Libraries, Museum and Archive (BVR)

- 27% of young people felt that their lives would be improved if Libraries provided more space to do homework.

Nov 2002 MORI Residents attitude survey

- 55% of residents used libraries

Dec 2002 User & Non-User Report (BVR)

Facilitated focus groups found:

- Current opening hours do not reflect the requirements of modern living (ie more evening and weekend opening required)
- Satisfaction with the range of books and materials provided
- Customer satisfaction amongst library users was good.
- Non-users felt that customer service could be improved as could the display of books to make them more appealing.
- Library sites have poor signage to direct potential users towards it.

Nov 2003 Public Library User Survey (PLUS)

Library users over 16

- 85.3% satisfaction with Brent Libraries

Nov 2003 Brent Resident Satisfaction Survey

- 56% of residents were satisfied with Library Services provided in the borough.

July 2004 Libraries, Sports and Parks survey of target non users

To determine why certain groups are non or low users of specific services provided by London Borough of Brent

Focus groups of refugee children, adult refugees, disabled young people, carers of children and young people with disabilities, carers of looked after children, 14-19 year olds

- Opening hours are restrictive and mean limitations for use amongst all user groups – particularly at small branch libraries
- PC use is key to refugee groups, but needs language interpretive software
- Those with disabilities found parking and lack of suitable spaces in the library disincentives to use.
- 14 – 19 year olds don't want to waste time waiting to go on PCs etc and prefer to pay and get instant access.

Oct 2004 Children's PLUS survey - Library users under 16

- Dissatisfaction with smaller libraries
- inadequate space for study
- not enough computers,
- inconvenient opening hours

Summer 2005 Staff consultations

To determine content of strategy for Brent Libraries

- Need to reconfigure staffing to fit needs of modern service
- Need to improve buildings/location
- Challenging demands of meeting needs of all residents
- Improve ICT offer

Sept 2005 – Young peoples’ consultation for new Willesden Green Library

To determine the design of the new area for young people in the refurbished library

- Need for meeting place for young people
- Wide range of activities requested
- More books specifically for young people

Sept/Oct 2005 Brent Residents Attitude Survey

- 57% of residents said they were satisfied or fairly satisfied with Brent’s Libraries.
- 75% of Library users said they were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with Brent’s Libraries..
- Only 17% of residents felt that Libraries were one of the 3-4 most important services that the council provides.
- 52% of households interviewed used libraries in 2005, a drop from 55% in 2002.

Nov 2005 Adult PLUS survey - Library users over 16

- 83.8% thought library services were good or very good

Dec 2005 Brent Internet Use Survey - to find out patterns of internet use across the borough

- 17% of residents use libraries to access the internet on a regular basis (an increase of 5% on the same survey the previous year)

May 2006 Library Managers’ consultation on strategy for Brent Libraries

To develop a vision for the future of Brent Libraries

- Vision as outlined in section 5.4

July 2006 Key stakeholder consultation - to determine future of Brent Libraries and possible partnerships

- Stakeholders and partners from council departments and external organisations
- Partnerships identified eg BACES, OSS for shared services
- Identified need to improve buildings and look at locations/means of service delivery
-

Sept 2006 Adult PLUS Survey - library users over 16

- 86% thought library services were good or very good (2.2% increase on 2005)

Nov 2006 Brent Resident Satisfaction Survey

- 67% of residents were satisfied with library services provided in the borough (an increase of 11% on 2003 survey results)

January 2007 Harlesden community consultation - to form the Big Lottery bid for a library/learning centre, making sure the project meets community needs
Library users, non- users, children and young people, schools, community and voluntary organisations

- Open learning facilities in the library
- Increase ESOL and basic skills capacity
- Support for unemployed people, including work experience
- A dedicated space for young people
- Exciting children's library
- Stock and resources to meet community needs
- A building to be proud of

May 2007 Kingsbury community consultation

- 83% were happy with the proposed move of the library to a high street location
- 63% would use the new library for reading and borrowing, 40% would want to access advice or information about the council.
- Residents wanted a bold design with an attractive shopfront
- More events and activities requested