

New chapter for Haringey's libraries



Council Leader Claire Kober explains how the council is bucking the trend and looking to expand the role of libraries

We've come a long way since the days when libraries were seen only as places for quiet reflection and checking out the latest best-sellers.

These days Haringey's nine libraries are abuzz with all sorts of activities – and do much more than the traditional lending of books, important though this is.

'Something for everyone' may be a well-worn phrase – but it really does apply to what's on offer. They are places where people can meet up for everything from playing with their children – to reminiscing with friends, health checks and much, much more.

Now we are planning to offer even more by transforming the buildings into community hubs for access to an even greater range of council services.

Among possibilities being considered are:

- Having customer care staff based in libraries – offering advice, help and support for all council services
- Expanding drop-in sessions, and lunch clubs, for older people

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- Offering advice to families that is currently available at children's centres
- Providing facilities for people to pay council bills.

In addition to all of this, we will also continue to offer free internet

access - which is important in a borough where one in five residents can't get on the web at home - along with running adult learning courses for people needing help with their English or other basic skills needed to get qualifications.

In short, our libraries already play an essential role in the life of the borough – and are about to buck the trend of closures in other areas by building on this contribution and offering even more for local residents.

Far from bearing the brunt of government-imposed spending cuts, as seems to be happening elsewhere, we want to see libraries expand their roles as the lifeblood of many local communities.



If you'd like more information about libraries in the borough, go to

www.haringey.gov.uk/libraries
or call 020 8489 1000