

Chance to have your say

# Future library provision in East Barnet and New Barnet

Consultation document



# 1. Introduction and background

**Barnet Council recognises that libraries are a universal and unique service that offers learning opportunities to all from the early years through to retirement.**

**Our ongoing ambition is for libraries to continue to:**

- help all children in Barnet to have the best start in life; developing essential language, literacy and learning skills, and developing a love of reading from an early age
- provide residents with the skills to live independently; to improve their health and wellbeing, and to get a job and progress whilst in work
- bring people together, acting as a focal point for communities and assisting resident groups to support their local area.

Despite economic growth, Barnet Council faces a significant budget gap of £61.5million between now and 2020. This means that many of the council's services have to make savings and do things differently to ensure we can continue providing the services we know that residents value and rely on.

After a comprehensive review and extensive consultation with residents and library users we have committed to retaining all 14 of the current libraries, as well as the Home & Mobile and digital library service as part of the new strategy for the Library Service. More information about these wider changes can be found on the website [www.barnet.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/libraries).

Residents tell us that co-locating library services with other services is a good way to tackle some of the financial challenges faced by the Library Service. In this document we set out the opportunity to provide new, modern, fit for purpose library facilities for local residents through re-providing and re-locating East Barnet

Library to the Victoria Recreation Ground.

The opportunity to provide new library facilities in this part of the borough has arisen from the council's decision to invest in new leisure facilities to replace those offered at Church Farm.

This decision followed extensive consultation with local residents. More information about the consultation and these proposed new leisure facilities can be found at [tinyurl.com/z3kgc9d](http://tinyurl.com/z3kgc9d).

As part of the library strategy, East Barnet Library will be a community-led Partnership Library from April next year, in a reduced space within the current building. More information on the wider libraries strategy can be found at [tinyurl.com/ztnfkd5](http://tinyurl.com/ztnfkd5).

Over the next eight weeks we will be consulting with Barnet residents to seek views on the council's proposal to relocate the community-led Partnership Library to the new premises at the Victoria Recreation Ground in early 2019 when the new leisure facilities are scheduled to be delivered.

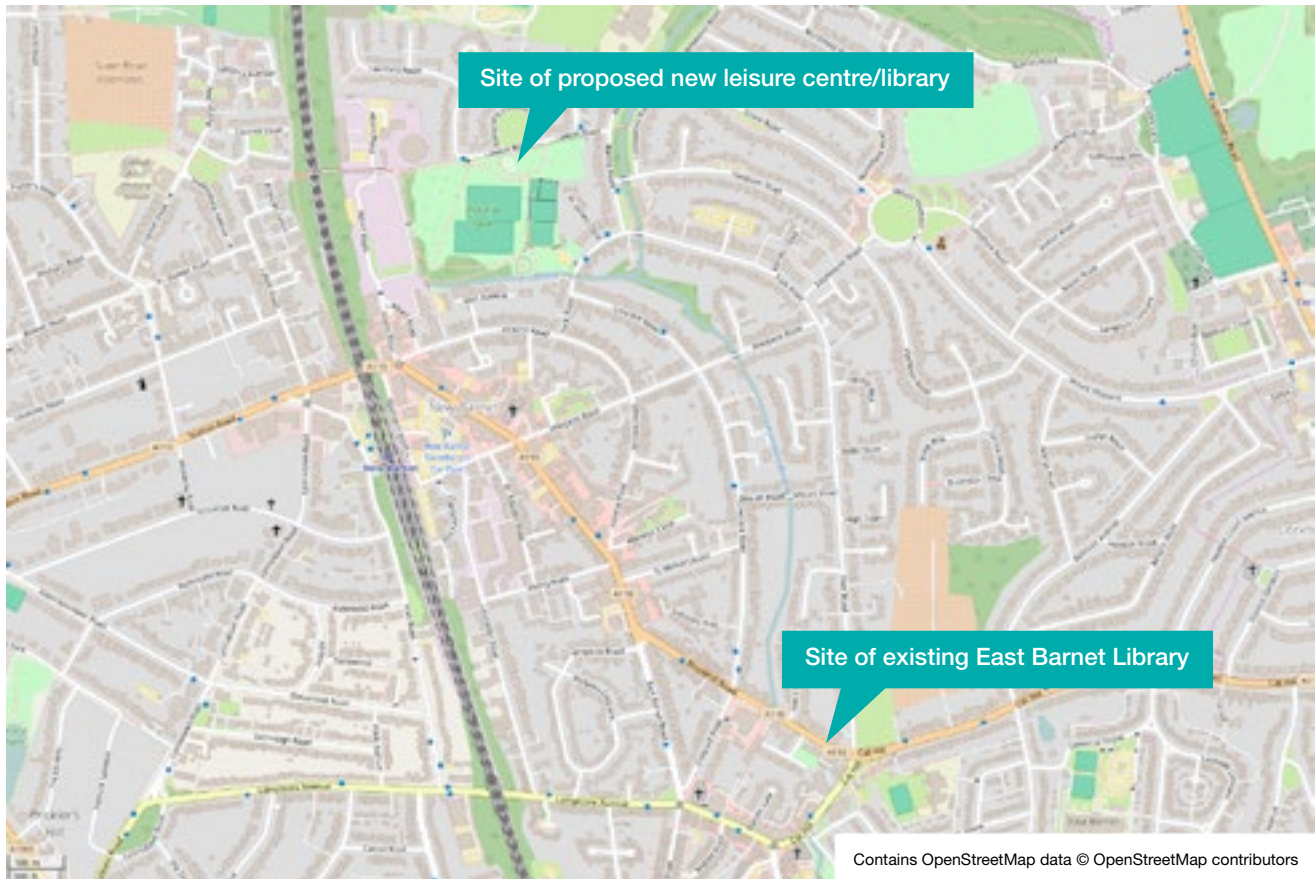
**Within this document we have provided detailed information:**

- about the new proposal
- how to give your views
- dates of drop in sessions we are running, where officers will be available to answer any further questions.

## Proposed future library location

The proposed future site for East Barnet Library is 0.9 miles north-west from the existing building. It is well connected by public transport with a number of bus routes and New Barnet train station a 5 minute walk away. There is a direct

bus route (number 384) from Crescent Road near the current library to Lawton Road opposite the proposed future location, a journey taking approximately 10 minutes. The map below indicates the current and proposed future location for the library.



Relocating the library to the new premises within the leisure centre would provide brand new library facilities with lower running costs for the Partnership Library organisation in addition to reduced maintenance costs for the council. It would potentially enable the council to realise a capital receipt from developing or selling the existing building. This would be used to fund the move as well as generate much needed resources to the council at a time when there are increasing budget pressures on local services. Until the new premises are ready, the Partnership Library will continue to be run from the reduced space at the current site.

## 2. Why move the library?

### Usage

The current library building requires significant investment in order to successfully offer library services in the longer term. A unique opportunity has arisen to provide new facilities co-located with leisure services which are well used by residents. Over time, library usage has been falling and co-locating library services alongside well-used leisure facilities is likely to attract users to the library as well as improving convenience for those residents who use both services.

### Footfall

All libraries in Barnet have seen usage fall by more than 25% in the last 10 years, however East Barnet has seen the greatest reduction in usage of 52% in this time period. In contrast, projected footfall at the new leisure facility is more than 3 times that of the current library. When residents were consulted on the council's proposals for future leisure provision in Barnet, 65% of respondents said they would consider accessing library services from a leisure centre. It is likely that the library would see a significant increase in use through the proposed relocation. From April 2017 East Barnet Library will be operating as a Partnership Library as part of the future library strategy meaning it will be managed by a community-led organisation with ongoing support from the council. Any increase in income generated through greater use of the library following the relocation to the proposed leisure facility will therefore be re-invested into the Partnership Library and the local community.

### Transport links

The proposed new site is within a 5 minute walk from a number of bus routes and New Barnet train station.

### Other facilities available for local residents

In addition to the new location providing co-located leisure facilities, there will also be a cafe on site and more parking than at the present library site.

### Good example of this model working well

There are already many examples of libraries having been successfully co-located with other community facilities, both in London and elsewhere in the UK. For example, Sutton Council has co-located one of their libraries with three other community-led services, including a leisure centre. The library now attracts more visitors, many of whom wouldn't have otherwise used a traditional, stand-alone library. Hillingdon Council, likewise, has a library in a building shared with a leisure centre.

### What is the alternative?

If the library does not move to co-locate with the new leisure facility, library services will remain on the current site unless or until an alternative future proposal is successful. The current library building requires significant investment in the longer term and alternative avenues for addressing this condition will continue to be pursued.

As part of the current library strategy, the overall size of the library (within the building) will be significantly reduced from April 2017. The library, whether it remains in its current position or moves to the proposed new leisure facility, will be approximately the same size.

### 3. What feedback do we want from you?

We are seeking your views on:

- the proposed relocation of East Barnet Library to the Victoria Recreation Ground
- how likely you would be to use the proposed new library.

We will be asking some additional questions to understand a bit more about you and your use of Barnet's Library Service.

## 4. How to give your views

We welcome and value the input from all our residents on these proposals and there are various ways you can give your views:

- complete our online questionnaire at [engage.barnet.gov.uk](https://engage.barnet.gov.uk)
- come along to one of our drop-in sessions where you can view the plans in full and give your views. Please see the timetable below for the drop-in sessions
- complete a paper questionnaire. Printed copies of the questionnaire will be available at East Barnet Library
- alternatively you can request a paper copy of the questionnaire - please email [changinglibraries@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:changinglibraries@barnet.gov.uk) or call 020 8359 7024 detailing your name and address.

### Details of drop-in sessions

Venue	Date	Drop-in between
East Barnet Library	Tuesday 15 November	2 – 4pm
East Barnet Library	Tuesday 15 November	6 – 8pm
East Barnet Library	Thursday 17 November	11am – 1pm
New Barnet Community Centre	Thursday 1 December	11am – 1pm
St James Church, New Barnet	Thursday 1 December	4 – 8pm
New Barnet Community Centre	Monday 12 December	10am – 12noon

### What happens next?

Following the end of the consultation, all views will be taken into consideration and a final recommendation will be put forward to Members in January.

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For more information:  
tel: 020 8359 7024 email: [changinglibraries@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:changinglibraries@barnet.gov.uk)  
or visit [engage.barnet.gov.uk](http://engage.barnet.gov.uk)