Bradford Libraries Service
STRATEGIC REVIEW

City of
BRADFORD
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Contents

Part 1:
Background and
Overview

1.1 Bradford Libraries Strategy 2020 - 2025

The previous 5-year strategy for Bradford Libraries was adopted in March 2020. It followed an extensive review and public consultation. The vision for the service was described as:

"To enhance the quality of life for people and communities, be inclusive and vibrant, support wider district priorities, enable users to learn, engage, and stay connected to their communities, and focus on local outcomes."

This vision was guided by key principles:

- To provide an inclusive, free, and safe space for everyone.

- Be a community hub that reflects local needs and supports improved outcomes.

- Maintain core library functions in line with statutory requirements.

- Connect with other services to offer information, advice, and signposting, ensuring every contact counts.

- Embrace creativity and align with broader cultural goals.

- Work in partnership with organisations, local groups, and educational institutions for better outcomes.

The strategy was supported by an annual £700,000 investment from Public Health, which helped offset planned savings and retain all libraries. This investment recognised the library service's role in supporting four key areas of wellbeing:

- Tackling poverty

- Reducing social isolation

- Supporting employment opportunities

- Promoting school readiness

Since 2020, the Library Service has embedded this model and partnered with various organisations to align with Council priorities. This approach has allowed libraries to deliver a broader range of services, particularly in support of the four key public health priorities.

Bradford Libraries have achieved significant improvements over recent years, demonstrating their vital role in supporting communities and adapting to changing needs. These achievements highlight the Service's commitment to high-impact initiatives, leveraging funding opportunities, and driving innovative solutions.

Through strategic partnerships, targeted investments, and a focus on inclusivity and community wellbeing, the libraries have expanded their reach and impact, solidifying their position as community hubs of learning, creativity, and support to people. Key highlights include transformative projects, substantial funding successes, and pioneering innovations that continue to make a difference in people's lives.

Highlights of the last 5 years include

A huge increase in participation at library events and activities

65%
increase in the number of events (from 2,982 in 2019-20 to 4,936 in 2023-24)

73%
more people attending (from 34,232 in 2019-20 to 59,463 in 2023-24)

Including record participation in our popular annual **Summer Reading Challenge** and innovative **Rhyme Challenge** schemes

Despite a decrease in overall staffing levels and funding for stock

Refurbishment at 10 out of 12 Council library buildings

Making them more modern, accessible and flexible for community / partner use, almost all externally funded through:

£200,000
Arts Council England's Libraries Improvement Fund

£190,000
Community Infrastructure Levy contributions, and

£150,000
UK Shared Prosperity Funding

Ready for Bradford's year as UK City of Culture in 2025

Innovative new collaborations

Automatic library membership from birth
working with the Bradford Registration Service

Joining the
British Library's Business & Intellectual Property centre network
with outlets to support startup businesses in City, Shipley, and Keighley libraries

Delivering the
Create Connect Make project
with The LEAP to engage new audiences in cultural activities and combat social isolation at Keighley Library.

Doing more to support individuals and communities

Achieving recognition as
Libraries of Sanctuary
working to support refugees and asylum seekers

Securing a recurrent £100,000 contribution from Adult Services to deliver
information and referral services helping people to stay independent for longer

Establishing dedicated roles to address
Health & Wellbeing
and Adults/Inclusion priorities, and delivering staff training to support wellbeing and mental health

Improving the Libraries IT offer

New replacement Library Management System and new self-service kiosks

£50,000 Arts Council funding for improved digital facilities, including

Wi-Fi-enabled printing and self-service tablets

£42,000 grant funding from the Good Things Foundation for

Digital Inclusion work and equipment

Replacement of public PCs
in libraries by end March 2025

Increasing environmental sustainability

Replacing library delivery vans with
new electric vehicles
funded by the Clean Air Zone scheme

Improving and encouraging the use of
library gardens
with funding obtained as part of the
Culture Nature initiative

New investment
of £400,000 Council capital and more than £441,000 external capital funding in Bradford Libraries over the last 5 years.

1.2. Overview of Bradford Libraries

The Council has a legal obligation under the Public Libraries & Museums Act of 1964 to provide a *comprehensive and efficient* library service for all residents, workers, and students in the district. Bradford Libraries fulfil this duty by offering a wide range of services and resources, including:

- Traditional books for loan alongside large print, e-books and e-audio.

- A comprehensive range of reference resources including online databases, e-newspapers, and e-magazines.

- Free access to public PCs, Wi-Fi, and tablets.

- Study spaces, warm spaces, and meeting rooms for hire.

- Jigsaws and games

Library Network

Bradford Libraries operate across 27 locations in the district:

- 10 Council run libraries (City, Keighley, Shipley, Bingley, Eccleshill, Ilkley, Laisterdyke, Manningham, Wibsey and Wyke),

- 15 independent community managed libraries (Addingham, Allerton, Bolling, Burley, Denholme, Great Horton, Heaton, Holme Wood, Idle, Menston, Queensbury, Silsden, Thornbury, Thornton, Wilsden), and

- 2 'hybrid' libraries (Baildon and Clayton) which are community managed supported with one paid member of Council staff.

The **statutory service** includes the 10 Council-run and 2 Hybrid libraries, alongside two specialist Local Studies Libraries in Bradford and Keighley, which house books, documents, photographs, and maps about the local area. See the map below which shows the locations of all the libraries.
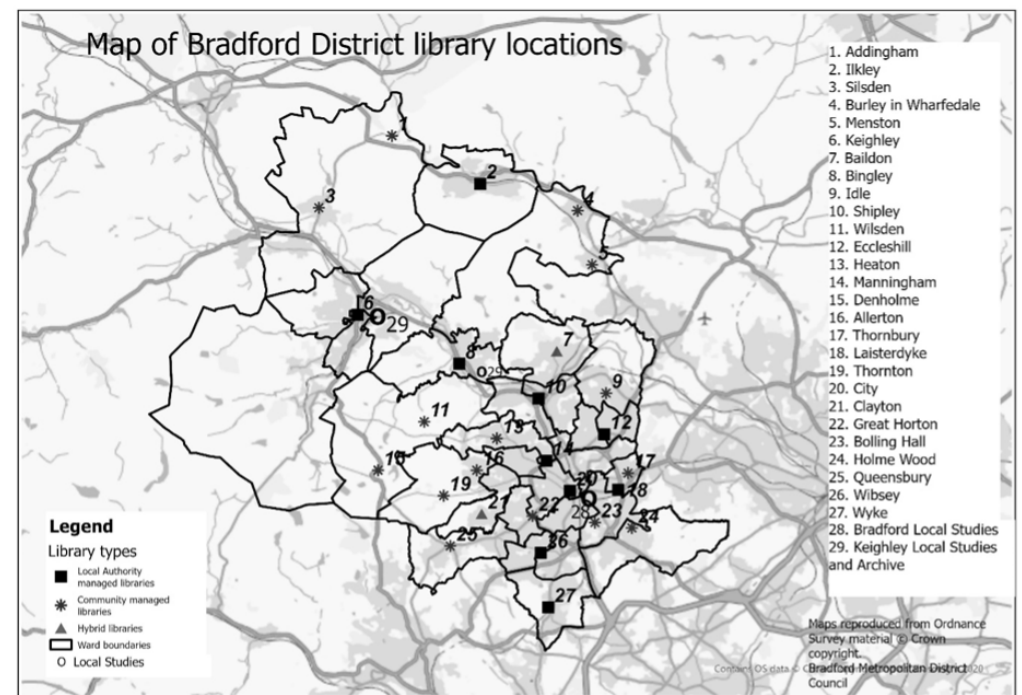
Detailed profiles for each of the 12 Council and Hybrid libraries are attached in Appendix E.

Accessibility and Inclusion

The Council also has a duty under the Equalities Act is essential to ensure library services are accessible, inclusive, and equitable for everyone in the community. By catering to diverse needs, libraries promote fairness and equal access, breaking down barriers for individuals with disabilities, language challenges, or other difficulties. This approach ensures that everyone has the opportunity to benefit from the resources and services libraries provide. Bradford Libraries discharges its duties under the Equalities Act by:

- 24/7 online library access

- Providing materials in alternative formats such as large print, audio, and foreign language resources.

- The Home Library Service, which issued 1,398 items in 2023-24 to approximately 200 housebound customers unable to visit a library.

- Reducing physical barriers to access by providing aids such as automatic opening doors, ramps, accessible toilets etc. where possible.

Delivering Value to Communities

Bradford Libraries are far more than traditional book-lending services. They act as vibrant community hubs that provide a wide range of resources, support, and opportunities for learning, creativity, and connection. By serving as local access points, libraries bring vital services closer to people, making it easier for residents to engage with educational tools, cultural experiences, and essential information.

This accessibility is especially important in a district as diverse as Bradford, where libraries can adapt to the unique needs of each community.

Through partnerships with local organisations, Bradford Libraries extend their impact, contributing to health and wellbeing initiatives, education, and cultural enrichment. These partnerships enable libraries to help tackle broader challenges and enhance residents' quality of life. Bradford Libraries deliver exceptional value, strengthening communities and helping to enable personal growth across the district.

1.3 Key Performance Indicators

Performance information is critical to developing a new strategy and delivery model for Bradford Libraries as it provides a clear and measurable understanding of how the service is utilised and where improvements can be made. By analysing visitor numbers, event participation, digital engagement, and service outcomes, the service has identified areas of strength and pinpoint challenges that need to be addressed to better serve the community.

In financial year 2023-24 Bradford Libraries served 818,099 visitors, issued 651,722 items, hosted 72,180 sessions on public PCs, enrolled 15,184 new members, and provided nearly 5,000 events attended by 32,916 children and 26,547 adults.

Performance indicator	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 projection
Visits	734,859	818,099	846,946
Loans	436,696	651,722	633,713
PC sessions	64,008	72,180	72,136
Events	3,419	4,936	5,070
Adult attendees	20,193	26,547	44,095
Child attendees	21,583	32,916	34,368
New members	15,026	15,184	14,431

The data shows significant increases in library visits and event attendance, highlighting the growing importance of libraries as hubs in their communities to access a wide range of services and activities. Borrowing and computer use appear to have reached a plateau, with book lending inevitably impacted by the low level of funding available for new stock, and computer use impacted by a range of historical issues affecting the level and performance of the IT offer in libraries.

This evidence reinforces the need to continue expanding and diversifying services to meet the evolving needs of residents. It also demonstrates the success of past initiatives which can guide future investments and programming priorities.

Benchmarking

The increases in participation at Bradford Libraries shown above is in line with national trends, reported by **DCMS** as follows: "*the use of public libraries across [2023-24] increased from 24% to 30%, representing nearly one in three adults in England (around 13.7 million) using public libraries in the last twelve months. 25% of adults had engaged with libraries physically in the previous 12 months to being surveyed, a 6% increase from 2022/23 (19%). The corresponding figure for digital engagement was 14%, a 1% increase from 2022/23 (13%) (Participation Survey 2023-24, DCMS). This appears to continue the trend of re-establishing people's habits and patterns of use after the Covid-19 pandemic significantly disrupted these.*"

According to **CIPFA**, "following the end of the pandemic, in-person visits to libraries have increased by 71% since 2021-22, from 1,215 per 1,000 people in 2021-22 to 2,082 per 1,000 people in 2022-23. The number of books borrowed has also increased by 24% to 2,316 per 1,000 people, from 1,868 books in 2021-22". **CIPFA CEO, Rob Whiteman**, said: "*It's encouraging to see service points and book issues increasing since the end of the pandemic, but while funding and income levels are slightly recovering, they still lag behind the rising demand for services. Libraries certainly require on-going support.The fact that in-person visits and volunteers have dramatically recovered shows demand for library services is strong. Libraries are clearly valuable to the communities they serve. Sustained funding is crucial if they are to remain a vital part of the community.*"

1.4 Budget

Since 2010, Bradford Libraries have evolved to meet the changing needs of the community while achieving nearly £6 million in savings (a 68% reduction in budget), including £175,000 saved in 2025-26 through adjustments to opening hours.

Previous savings have included the following changes to the library service:
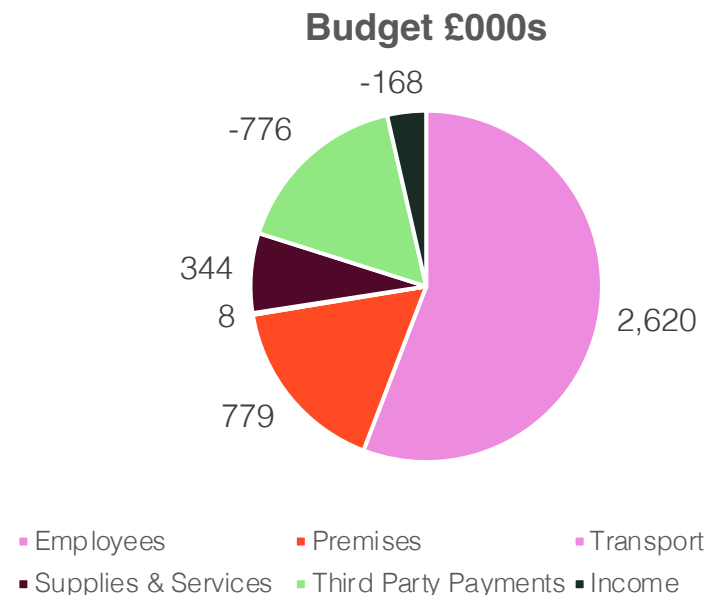
- 17 out of 29 libraries transferred to community management, entirely run by volunteers (two have subsequently closed), and 2 libraries moved to the Hybrid model (one staff member supported by volunteers)

- A significant reduction in senior management posts

- Closure of the Schools Library Service

- Closure of the Mobile Library Service

- Reduction in first line management (team leaders) down from 12 to 3 posts

- Severe cuts to the library book fund (see below)

These changes, while necessary in the past, mean that the forward-looking strategy now needs to focus on sustainability and long-term service delivery.

National benchmarking statistics from CIPFA for 2021-22 showed the average expenditure on libraries nationally was £9,982 per 1000 population (a drop of 17% from the previous year), giving an average budget of £5.202m. This compared with expenditure of just £6,444 per 1,000 population in Bradford, with expenditure of £3.358m that year.

Previous benchmarking shows our budget for stock and resources is particularly low, with £167,400 expenditure representing just £315 budget per 1,000 population (31p per head) compared to an average nationally of £1,043 per 1000 population (£1.04 per head). This is the least expenditure nationally bar one according to CIPFA statistics and the lowest regionally. Expenditure on library stock reduced from £621,675 in 2010 down to £167,400 in 2020, a reduction of 73% over that time. Clearly this has a significant impact on the range of library stock the service can provide, and all options for reinvesting in the stock fund should be explored.

The 2024-25 budget for libraries totals £2.807m gross including £776,000 of third party payments (this includes contributions from Public Health and Adult Social Care) and a £168,000 income target. An overview and budget breakdown is shown in the diagram below:

Budget £000s

- Employees
- Premises
- Transport
- Supplies & Services
- Third Party Payments
- Income

Values shown on pie chart: -168, -776, 344, 8, 779, 2,620

Sustainable Library Funding

The Strategic Needs and Performance Assessment (Appendix A) provides a robust foundation for informed decision-making, particularly in addressing future financial challenges for the library service, likely to emanate from the overall budget challenge for the Council in finding £50m savings each year to reach a sustainable budget in 2030.

To help achieve a sustainable funding model, the following strategic approaches are proposed:

- **Engage Local Support:** Seek further financial contributions from town and parish councils to bolster the sustainability of libraries, particularly in areas where local capacity allows for greater community investment.

- **Expand Volunteer Participation:** Increase the number of volunteers supporting Council libraries. Explore opportunities to transition libraries in lower-need areas towards Hybrid models or, where appropriate, fully community-managed models.

- **Tailor Council Financial Contributions:** IConsider introducing a flexible funding model with options to reduce the Council's financial contributions to Community-Managed Libraries (CMLs) based on each community's capacity to enhance their support.

These strategies will aim to balance financial sustainability with the continued delivery of high-quality, inclusive library services, ensuring that libraries remain a cornerstone of Bradford's communities. Alongside these possible approaches, the Council is set to make savings of c£500,000 through the move of City Library into Council-owned premises at Britannia House.
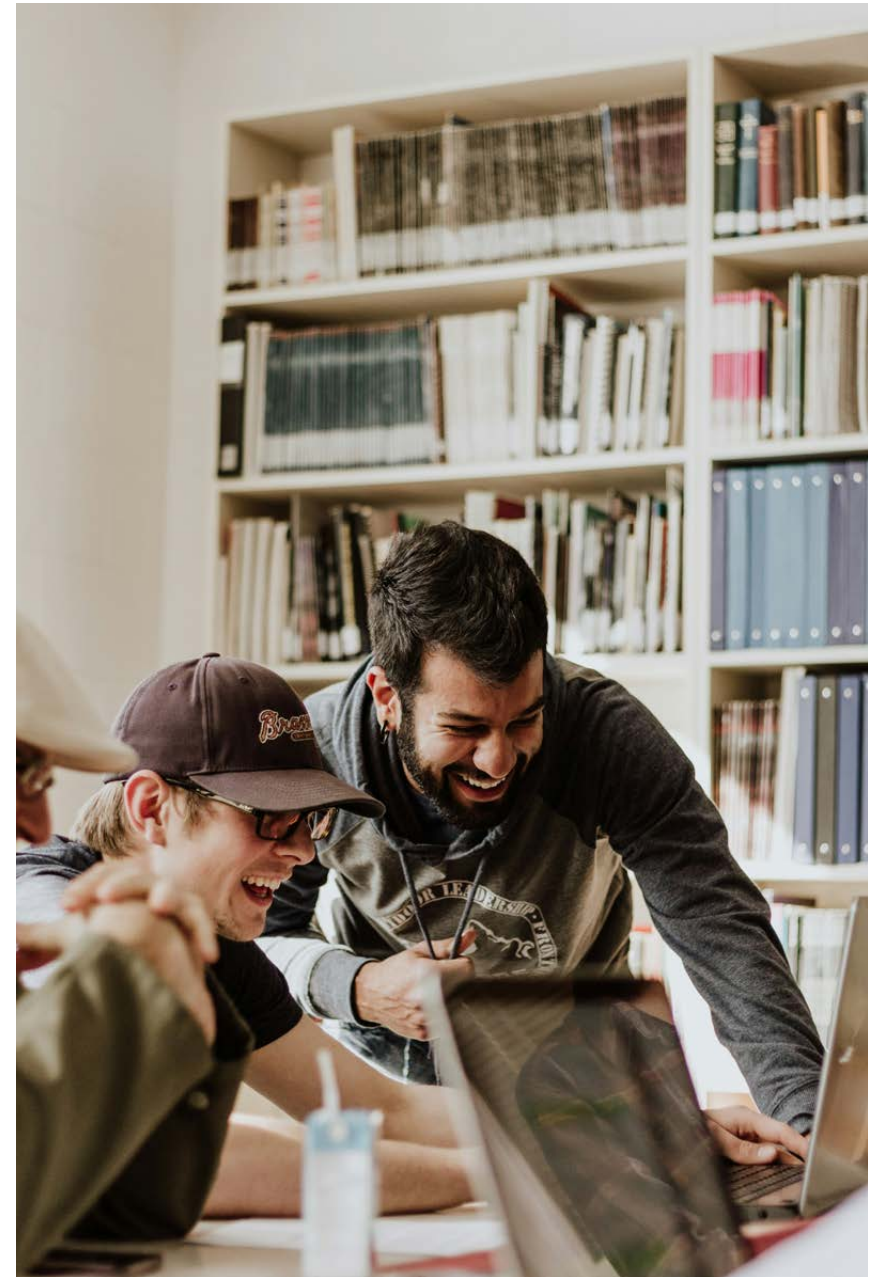
Part 2:
Strategic Review of
Bradford Libraries

2.1 Strategic Needs and Performance Assessment

The strategic needs and performance assessment forms the foundation for ensuring Bradford Libraries deliver equitable, impactful, and sustainable services. This comprehensive review evaluates all 27 lending libraries across the district, categorising them based on usage and community needs to align resources with the areas of greatest impact. The methodology and results of this assessment are set out in Appendix A.

Key Findings
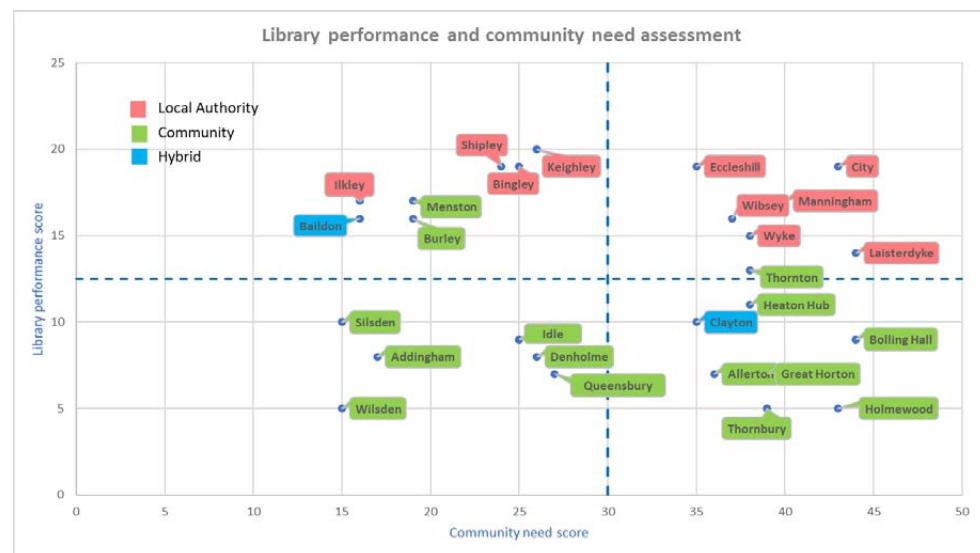
High Use, High Need (top right)**:** 6 Council managed libraries are identified in this category – City, Eccleshill, Laisterdyke, Manningham, Wibsey and Wyke. Libraries in this category are essential community hubs, providing well-used, vital services in areas with significant social and economic challenges. The Council libraries in this category will remain fully funded by the Council to ensure they continue meeting critical needs.

High Use, Lower Need (top left)**:** Four Council managed libraries (Ilkley, Shipley and Keighley), Baildon Hybrid library and 2 Community Managed Libraries (Menston and Burley) are all well used libraries that are located in areas with greater capacity for local support. Opportunities exist to enhance sustainability through increased community contributions or volunteering.

Lower use in areas of high need (bottom right): Clayton Hybrid library and 6 Community Managed Libraries (Allerton, Bolling Hall, Great Horton, Heaton Hub, Holme Wood, and Thornbury) are all identified in this category. While less frequented, these libraries serve populations in areas of relatively higher need where people are less likely to be able to travel to other facilities or to be able to contribute to sustaining them (through volunteering), and these libraries can be used to support local needs. Therefore, it could be harmful to expect these communities to make an increased contribution to sustaining these libraries, however an option could be to cap the Council's financial contribution in future.

Lower use in areas of relatively lower need (bottom left): 6 Community Managed Libraries are identified in this category (Addingham, Denholme, Idle, Queensbury, Silsden and Wilsden). Libraries in this category could transition to become even more independent, with an option for the Council to provide reduced support whilst working in partnership with other agencies to ensure basic services remain accessible.

2.2 Mapping library accessibility ensuring equity of provision

The mapping assessment (Appendix B) provides an analysis of the geographic distribution of Bradford Libraries, ensuring that statutory library provision meets the needs of the district's diverse communities. By mapping catchment areas and proximity measures (5-mile, 2-mile, and 1-mile radii).

This confirms that statutory library provision is geographically well-distributed, with all populated areas within five miles of a library, and most residents located within two miles of a library. This ensures residents across the district have access to resources, particularly in areas of high deprivation where libraries play a key role in reducing inequalities.

Key Findings

Comprehensive Coverage: All settled parts of the district are within a 5-mile radius of a statutory library, ensuring good geographic accessibility for the majority of residents.

Equity in Service Distribution: Areas of high deprivation or community need are well-served by nearby libraries, aligning with the strategic goal of reducing inequalities.

Strategic Location of Libraries: Libraries are positioned to maximise

community impact, with statutory provision concentrated in areas of higher population density.

Localised Challenges in Accessibility: The 1-mile radius mapping highlights areas where walking-distance access may be limited, which could present challenges for those without access to transportation.

By integrating mapping data with performance and demographic insights, Bradford Libraries aims to refine its service delivery model, ensuring resources are directed to areas of greatest need and maximising the impact of library services across the district.

Guiding Future Strategy

The findings from this assessment will inform a sustainable delivery model that maximises the libraries' impact. By focusing resources on high-need areas, exploring partnerships, and adapting lower-use libraries to community-led models, the service can remain sustainable while addressing ever changing needs of our citizens.

2.3 Conclusion

The findings from the strategic needs and performance and mapping assessments confirm that Bradford Libraries are well-positioned to meet the needs of the district's diverse communities. The current statutory library provision remains well distributed, ensuring all populated areas have access to essential library services. Libraries in areas of high need continue to play a vital role as community hubs, providing support for education, wellbeing, and social connection.

The needs assessment and mapping work clearly shows that the current statutory library provision for Bradford remains right sized and fit for purpose to serve the needs of the district and provide appropriate geographic spread and should not be reduced further. This does not mean that the governance and funding arrangements cannot be changed, however the Council should retain overall responsibility for ensuring the sustainability of this network of libraries

While the library network is fit for purpose, the assessment highlights areas requiring targeted action. These include addressing gaps in digital inclusion, ensuring sustainability for community-managed libraries, and enhancing accessibility for underserved populations. By using the insights from mapping, performance data, and demographic analysis, the service can continue to refine its delivery model to focus resources where they are most needed.

Moving forward, the strategy must balance the need for financial sustainability with the aim to provide equitable and accessible services. With investments in partnerships, technology, and innovative service delivery, Bradford Libraries can continue to thrive.

2.4 PESTLE analysis

The PESTLE analysis undertaken as part of the Needs Assessment provides a framework for understanding the external factors shaping the future of Bradford Libraries. By evaluating Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legislative, and Environmental influences, this assessment identifies challenges and opportunities that are used to inform strategic planning and service delivery. See Appendix C.

Strategic Implications from PESTLE Analysis
The PESTLE analysis highlight themes and challenges that need to be addressed in the new library strategy to ensure Bradford Libraries remain resilient, sustainable, and impactful. Libraries should clarify and enhance their role in relation to the following themes:

Contribution to the Government's Key Missions:
Libraries have an important role to play in terms of:

- Supporting **economic growth** by assisting people to increase their skills and employability

- Supporting people to maintain their own health and wellbeing, helping to **reduce demand on the NHS** and adult care services

- Contributing to **community safety** by offering safe and inclusive spaces in communities where people can meet and combat isolation

- **Breaking down barriers to opportunity** by offering free access to a range of tools and resources for digital inclusion, learning and engagement

- Promoting awareness of environmental sustainability and solutions including the use of **clean energy**

These roles also fit well with the **Council's Priority Outcomes**:
> **Outcome 2:** Residents achieve good health and wellbeing
> **Outcome 3:** Sustainable economic growth and decent work for all
> **Outcome 4:** Safe, sustainable and inclusive communities
> **Outcome 5:** Action at all levels to address climate and environmental change

(alongside Outcome 1: Children have the best start in life, which Bradford Libraries already does much to support).

Adapting to Economic Challenges:

With Bradford Council needing to save £50 million annually until 2030, libraries must diversify income streams while maintaining their role as accessible and inclusive spaces. This requires innovative funding approaches, increased collaboration with external partners, and leveraging existing assets like refurbished buildings and digital infrastructure.

Responding to Social Needs:

Bradford's young and diverse population, combined with high levels of deprivation and migration, highlights the need for libraries to act as inclusive hubs. This includes building on the Libraries of Sanctuary initiative to support refugees and asylum seekers and addressing growing concerns around social isolation and wellbeing.

Harnessing Technological Opportunities:

Advancements in technology and increased reliance on a 'digital by default' approach emphasises the importance of digital literacy. Libraries must enhance digital access, embrace innovations such as AI where beneficial, and create opportunities for people to enhance

their digital skills, providing trusted, quality information content and helping people to combat misinformation.

Promoting Sustainability:

Libraries can play a significant role in environmental education and awareness. Efforts to create green library spaces, enhance recycling programmes, and promote sustainable behaviours align with both Council and community priorities.

Legislative Stability:

While no major changes to library-specific legislation are anticipated, potential shifts in employment law and funding regulations could impact operational models. The strategy must remain agile to accommodate these changes.

2.5 SWOT analysis

An initial SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis has also been carried out for the Service and is set out in Appendix D.

Insights from the SWOT Analysis

Building on Strengths:

- Recent investments in library buildings have created modern, accessible spaces that support community needs and cultural activities.

- The strong cultural programming, digital infrastructure, and partnerships with Public Health and other organisations are assets that can be used to reach more residents.

Addressing Weaknesses:

- Marketing and public awareness of library services remain challenges. There is a need to enhance the library service's profile and communicate its modern, diverse offerings more effectively.

- Training gaps for staff, particularly in digital and customer-facing skills, require attention to ensure consistent service quality.

- Customer engagement – there is a need to establish methods to collect regular feedback and to engage with customers (particularly under-served audiences) so the service can be more responsive and use this in planning and shaping services.

Leveraging Opportunities:

- The City of Culture 2025 provides an unparalleled opportunity to showcase the libraries' role as cultural and community hubs.

- Expanding volunteer involvement and collaboration with neighbourhood services can strengthen the libraries' sustainability and reach.

- The opportunity to bid for regularly funded status with Arts Council England should not be missed.

Address Threats

- Any future funding constraints risk overstretching resources. A revised strategy must advocate for sustained funding and explore additional revenue streams.

The revised library strategy must aim to address these issues, balancing financial sustainability with the social, cultural, and educational roles of libraries. By focusing on partnerships, leveraging technology, and enhancing community engagement, Bradford Libraries can adapt to these challenges and continue to thrive.

2.6 Connecting the Strategic Review to the Draft Strategy

The findings from the Strategic Review provide a clear picture of the challenges and opportunities facing Bradford Libraries. By evaluating usage data, community needs, and the external factors influencing service delivery, the review highlights the essential role libraries play as hubs for learning, culture, and wellbeing across the district. These insights form the foundation for the Draft Strategy.

Taken together, the Strategic Assessment of Bradford Libraries highlights themes and challenges that need to be addressed in the new library strategy to ensure Bradford Libraries remain resilient, sustainable, and impactful.

The Draft Strategy builds on these insights, presenting a new vision for Bradford Libraries as vibrant, impactful, and sustainable places that enrich the lives of all who live, work, and study in the district. It outlines a roadmap for the next five years, balancing innovation with the enduring values of free and equitable access to knowledge, culture, and community resources.

Part 3:
Draft Libraries
Strategy 2025-2030

Our

As we look to the future, our aim is to ensure Bradford Libraries remain vibrant, impactful, and accessible to all, even within the constraints of a reduced budget. This strategy builds on the successes of the previous five years, adapting to changing needs, economic challenges, and emerging opportunities while staying true to our vision of delivering outstanding library services that make a real difference to people's lives.

The 2024 Libraries Review, which informs the strategy for 2025 and beyond, prioritises building a resilient and adaptable library service that can continue to thrive in a challenging financial climate. While minor savings may still be required due to ongoing Council budget pressures, the primary objective is to refresh and update the Vision and delivery Model, first established in 2010. Guided by extensive data analysis and input from staff, councillors, customers, and partners, the new strategy will reframe the role of libraries, ensuring they continue to enrich lives and serve as essential hubs for learning, culture, and community support.

Future

Building a thriving future for Bradford Libraries

3.1 A Continued Commitment to Excellence in Public Libraries

Bradford Libraries align with the national vision for public libraries, as outlined in the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) **Ambition for Libraries** strategy. Our libraries are vital hubs for communities, offering access to services and support that empower individuals and enrich lives.

Libraries are vital community hubs - bringing people together and giving them access to the services and support they need to help them live better. Our ambition is for everyone to:

- choose to use libraries, because they see clear benefits and positive outcomes from doing so

- understand what library services offer, and how they can make the most of what's available to them

- be introduced to new ideas and opportunities, then given confidence and quick and easy access to tools, skills and information they need to improve their quality of life

- receive trusted guidance through the evolving information landscape and build the skills needed to thrive in a changing world

To achieve these ambitions, Bradford Libraries Service contributes to 7 outcomes that are critical to individuals and communities:

- cultural and creative enrichment

- increased reading and literacy

- improved digital access and literacy

- helping everyone achieve their full potential

- healthier and happier lives

- greater prosperity

- stronger, more resilient communities

Bradford Libraries Service has been designed around these outcomes, which are strongly linked to the Council's priorities, the *Universal Library Offers*, and key Public Health outcomes, which Bradford Libraries are funded to support.

3.2 Adapting to a Changing District

The new strategy builds on past successes while addressing the evolving needs of Bradford's communities and the challenges of a dynamic district. With a strong focus on Bradford's status as the UK City of Culture in 2025, the strategy sets a path to ensure libraries remain relevant, impactful, and financially sustainable in a complex operating environment.

Key considerations include:

Bradford's City of Culture 2025

Libraries will play an important role in celebrating this historic year, acting as vibrant cultural hubs that host events, exhibitions, and activities. This once-in-a-generation opportunity will spotlight the libraries' contributions to arts, culture, and community life, enhancing the skills and experience of staff, increasing the number of volunteers involved in the service, and raising the profile of libraries, leaving a lasting legacy for the district. This will pave the way for a bid to Arts Council England for regular funding through National Portfolio Organisation status.

Ongoing financial challenges

With Bradford Council needing to save £50m annually until 2030, libraries must continue to innovate and adapt to deliver services more efficiently while exploring new funding streams and community partnerships to sustain operations. This will include continuing to review governance models, increasingly relying on community contributions, and seizing opportunities for new income streams.

Addressing rising inequalities

High levels of deprivation, illiteracy, health inequalities, and child poverty across the district emphasise the critical role of libraries as safe, warm, accessible spaces that offer resources and support to those most in need.

Localities model

Libraries are already trusted and valued hubs in their communities that have increased the number of services they offer and the range of partners they work with in recent years. They are ideally placed to develop further as multi-agency hubs working with public, private and voluntary sector partners at the core of the Council's vision for the localities model for working together at community level. Recent refurbishments have paved the way to make libraries more accessible and flexible, modern and welcoming with more opportunities for other organisations to use the space for meetings, sessions and events of all kinds.

Leading on environmental sustainability

Climate change demands that libraries adopt greener practices, such as energy-efficient buildings and sustainable service models, while also engaging communities with initiatives that promote environmental awareness and action. The acquisition of electric vans to deliver the Service's transport needs is a good first step, as is the development of library gardens as community green spaces. Now, our libraries need to further develop their role as places that inform about and encourage sustainable practices.

Navigating digital and technological shifts

As technology evolves, libraries must continue to bridge the digital divide seen by some of our citizens, by offering cutting-edge tools, digital literacy programmes, and trusted guidance to help communities navigate an increasingly complex digital world. Libraries are ideally placed to offer opportunities for people to engage with new technologies in a safe, trusted place, and to access tools that they could otherwise be denied them due to cost or access constraints.

By recognising these broader challenges, Bradford Libraries aim to remain central to community life, delivering services that adapt to change while enriching the lives of all who live, work, and study in the district.
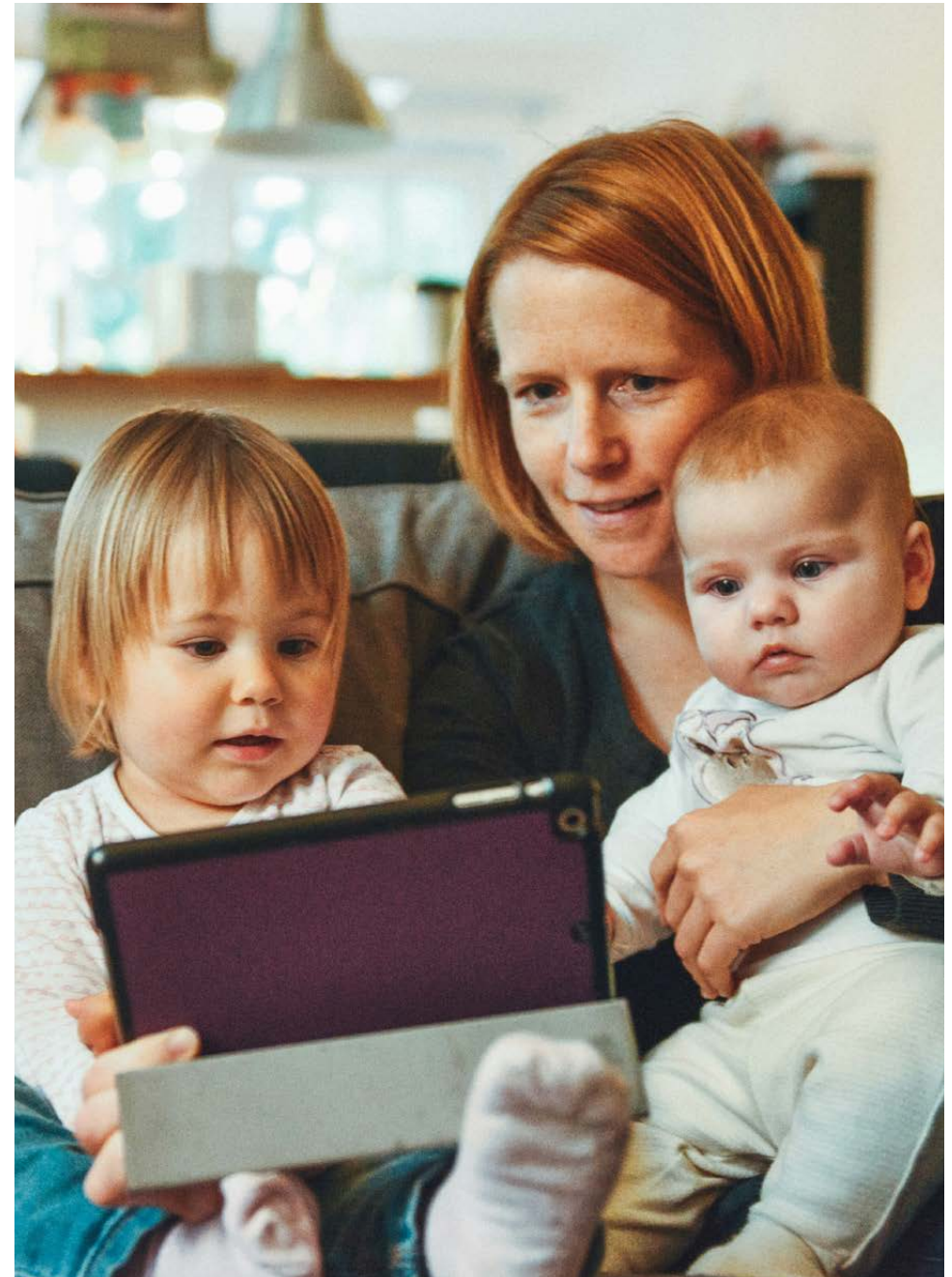
3.3 Fit with wider Council priorities and strategies:

The Library Service has an important role to play in supporting the delivery of a wide range of Council priorities:

- Better skills, more good jobs and a growing economy
- Better health, better lives
- Safe, strong and active communities
- Good start, great schools
- A sustainable district
- An enabling Council

and Council strategies and services including:

- Digital Inclusion Programme
- Bradford District Children and Young People's Strategy
- Early Help & Prevention
- Adult Social Care
- Cultural Strategy - Culture is our Plan 2021-2031
- Heritage Action Plan 2022 - 2031
- Bradford District Economic Strategy
- Skills & Learning
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Locality Plans
- Wellbeing

It is important that these contributions are recognised and fully incorporated into the Council's strategies and plans so that the role of libraries and its offer is better understood and utilised across the Council.

3.4 Vision for Bradford Libraries

To be a hub at the heart of communities - a free, welcoming space which fosters an environment of care and collaboration, enhances the quality of life, and provides the tools and resources for people to thrive, enrich their lives, and become empowered, engaged citizens.

Our libraries will:

- Enable people to improve their lives with inspiration, through connections, support, knowledge and skills
- Offer a safe inclusive accessible space at heart of communities where everyone is welcome
- Serve as the trusted, friendly face of the Council
- Be central to key policies and strategies of the Council including school readiness, social cohesion, skills into employment, digital inclusion, wellbeing etc.

3.5 Our Mission

To deliver the best possible library services for all who live, work, or study in Bradford, ensuring free access to knowledge, culture, and learning while meeting statutory responsibilities within available resources.

3.6 Our Values

Our values reflect our commitment to serving as an inclusive and enabling resource for everyone in the Bradford district. They guide everything we do, ensuring our services remain accessible, equitable, and impactful.

- Free, open, and impartial access for all.

- Respect and celebration of community diversity.

- Commitment to high-quality, professional services.

- Collaboration with partners for better outcomes.

- A focus on environmental sustainability.

These principles underpin our efforts to create a welcoming, innovative, and sustainable library service that truly meets the needs of our communities.

3.7 Aims and Outcomes

Through high-quality resources, digital tools, and welcoming spaces, Bradford Libraries will:

Help give every child the best start in life
By fostering an early love for reading and learning, libraries play a crucial role in supporting early childhood development. Programmes such as rhyme time sessions, school readiness initiatives, and access to diverse educational materials empower children to succeed from an early age.

Support community health and wellbeing
Libraries offer safe, inclusive spaces where individuals can access resources and services that promote mental and physical health. From hosting wellbeing workshops to providing information on local health services, libraries contribute to healthier, happier communities.

Provide access to rich cultural experiences
By hosting events such as author talks, creative workshops, and cultural performances and exhibitions, libraries bring people together and celebrate creativity. These experiences help to enrich lives, build connections, and showcase the district's diverse cultural heritage.

Equality and sustainability in all activities
Libraries champion equality by offering free access to resources and inclusive programming for all, regardless of background or ability.

They also support sustainability by adopting green practices, such as energy-efficient facilities and recycling initiatives.

3.8 Priorities

1. To further develop libraries as locality hubs

Libraries are ideally placed to act as local hubs in their communities and as the front face for Council services. They are accessible, free, safe, trusted and neutral spaces at the heart of communities that already work with a range of partners, and have potential to work with an even wider range of public, voluntary and private sector partners.

Recent investment using Arts Council England funding and developer contributions has enabled our libraries to become more accessible, flexible, modern and welcoming, allowing them to be used by a wider range of services and partners for everything from 1:1 advice sessions, small meetings, and larger meetings and events, both during and outside of library opening hours.

There is scope for them to be used for activities as diverse as health checks, exercise classes, 'day centre' activities, virtual appointments by computer or phone, pop up exhibitions and advice sessions, councillor surgeries, digital transactions and support, adult education online and in small classes, cultural events and performances and much more. The best libraries already offer some of these and continue to expand their offerings, working with partners.

What we need, to continue this development, is to:

- Raise awareness of what libraries can offer with partners across the district, strengthening the links with – and using the support of - neighbourhood teams and local councillors to

spread the message with their contacts.

- Find a way to enable ad hoc out of-hours use of libraries when library staff are not available.

2. To recognise and continue to develop libraries role as Safe Spaces

Similarly, libraries are ideally equipped to act as safe havens within communities where people can go to get help and support. Libraries have already worked to become:

- **Friendly Wifi** certificated, offering access to the internet that is filtered and safe for children and families to use

- **Libraries of Sanctuary**, providing support to refugees and asylum seekers

- Warm spaces offering a place to relax, connect and have a hot drink during the cold winter months

- Family friendly spaces

- Safe spots for victims of domestic violence

- Connected to their local police network via PCSOs

- Referral agents who can connect people to local agencies and services that can support them

- With potential to become hate crime reporting centres

To continue this development we need to:

- Integrate more with the Council's Community Safety Team and consider what more libraries can do to help people to be and feel safe in their communities

3. To increase the support of volunteers

The statutory libraries network in Bradford is already well supported by the 200+ volunteers running our 15 Community Managed Libraries and supporting our 2 Hybrid libraries. However, there is scope to increase the support and participation of volunteers in Council libraries, and an urgent need to do so given our resources are dwindling. There have been a high number of unscheduled library closures in recent years, many of which are due to staff shortages, which could increase with the further reduction in frontline roles.

There are a wide range of roles that could provide added capacity and support to paid staff such as:

- Assistance with events management
- Digital buddies supporting people with low digital skills
- Assistance with sorting and processing of book donations
- Listing and indexing of local studies collections

To take this forward we need to:

- Work with the Museums Volunteer Co-Ordinator to recruit, train and manage more volunteers
- Collaborate with the BD25 Team to work with their event volunteers and provide legacy pathways for these volunteers into opportunities post-2025.

4. To achieve financial sustainability

Section 1.4 of this report highlights that the funding of Bradford Libraries falls significantly behind library services elsewhere, both nationally regionally; this is particularly true of the stock fund where historic cuts have resulted in stagnant loan figures and long waiting lists for titles. With Bradford Council needing to save £50 million annually until 2030, it will be challenging to secure additional revenue funding. Libraries must diversify income streams while maintaining their role as accessible and inclusive spaces.

This requires innovative funding approaches, increased collaboration with external partners such as Arts Council England, West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Town and Parish Councils, and better marketing of existing assets like refurbished buildings and digital infrastructure to increase income. A particular opportunity is the next round of bids to Arts Council England for regularly funded (National Portfolio Organisation) status from April 2027. There is also an opportunity to increase the number of volunteers working with Council libraries to increase capacity, and this could be an important legacy from the volunteering strand of the City of Culture year.

Local councils have already chosen to assist in various ways e.g. by purchasing daily newspapers for libraries, when these were no longer funded centrally, or contributing to the redevelopment of library gardens. There may be scope to increase the support provided by local parish and town councils to their local libraries, through discussion.

This could be by exploring the potential for extending the Hybrid model to more libraries, particularly where there is a high level of social capital locally, or other ways that local councils might contribute financially to sustaining the local library.

To do this we need to:

- Engage with Town and Parish Councils, and existing Community Managed Libraries, to explore the 'art of the possible'

- Continue to use CIL contributions to help fund replacement stock and equipment

- Make the most of external funding opportunities including from ACE and WYCA

5. To cement libraries' role in the cultural landscape

The huge increase in activities and events in libraries in recent years, and successes with externally funded cultural projects such as *Create Connect Make, StoryTrails,* the *Libraries Digital Network,* and *The Big Tasty Read,* have demonstrated what the service is capable of and increased understanding of libraries role in the wider cultural landscape across the district. We need to capitalise on this by bidding to Arts Council England for NPO status in the next round bidding for funds available from April 2027. This would be a fitting legacy from Bradford's year as City of Culture in 2025.

To do this we need to:

- Bid for National Portfolio Organisation status with Arts Council England for funding from April 2027 onwards

6. To appeal to new audiences

Male customers make up only 1/3 of registered library membership across Bradford Libraries. Whilst there are higher numbers of males making unregistered use of the library service, it is clear we need to do more to serve this part of the local population. For this reason, our Arts Council England funded project, in collaboration with The Reading Agency, *The Big Tasty Read,* will focus particularly on engaging male audiences in reading and using libraries during City of Culture year in 2025 and beyond.

Teenagers and Young People aged 18-25 are also under-represented as library users, and we need to do more to engage them and co-produce the library services of the future with them, to meet their needs. For this reason, our participation in *The Libraries Digital Network* externally funded project during 2025 will bring exciting VR and AR experiences to libraries as a way to engage younger people, including care leavers. We will use this opportunity to find out what young people want from libraries of the future.

To do this we need to:

- Use our City of Culture 2025 projects to engage with audiences who are currently under-represented in libraries

- Continue to engage with young people, including through schools and the City of Culture Youth Forum to engage them in shaping library services of the future

7. To ensure we are strategically managing our building stock

Strategically, the Council acknowledges that co-locating library services as part of integrated, multi-agency hubs in communities is often the ideal solution for maximising use and financial viability of all the co-located services. There are many good examples of such hubs in smaller communities, for example the TFD Centre in Holme Wood. It is important that any such moves improve or maintain the visibility of – and footfall to – libraries, as well as their financial

sustainability. Poorly located co-located libraries, for example on school sites, can have a detrimental effect on library usage.

The Council's recent review of assets identified the opportunity to relocate City Library from its current location into a corporate Council building in the city centre (Britannia House), increasing the library's visibility, accessibility and financial sustainability. This move is set to take place in early 2026. Similarly, the Bradford Local Studies Library is expected to move out of its current location in Margaret Macmillan Tower into alternative premises, enabling the disposal of that building. It is anticipated the service will align with the move to Britannia House and plans are currently being finalised to ensure best use of space.

A key opportunity for managing and maintaining library buildings is to utilise Community Infrastructure Levy contributions from developers to improve and offset increased demand and wear and tear on library buildings. Since 2020, £191,000 of CIL contributions have been used to increase the accessibility of libraries across the district.

Another consideration is increasing the environmental sustainability of library buildings, in order to reduce operating costs and to contribute to the Council's goals in relation to tackling climate change.

8. To ensure retention and recruitment of staff in order to have a skilled and talented workforce

Over 60% existing Customer Service Assistant in our libraries are over 55 with less than 5% under the age of 25. The workforce is remarkably static, but this age profile poses a risk over the next 5-10 years as staff with a wealth of experience look to retire. However, it also presents an opportunity to recruit a younger workforce with a different range of skills, particularly around the use of new technology, that could appeal to younger audiences and help to plan new services and attract new customers.

A key challenge is in providing training and continuous professional development, which is crucial for library staff to keep up with evolving community needs and technological advancements. Challenges include the lack of dedicated budget for training, as well as the lack of time away from the public service for our frontline staff. To combat this, the Service is adopting a strategy of planning scheduled closed times through the year to enable any in-person training to be delivered. In addition, the Service makes use of bite-sized online learning for staff wherever possible, which can be accessed using staff computers.

It is also important to create opportunities for career development, which have become much more limited due to the significant reduction in supervisory and management roles within the Service, with a large gap between frontline staff and first line management roles. To help close this gap, the Service has recently recruited its first manager role with an apprenticeship route to gaining skills and qualifications, supporting the transition between from customer facing to managerial roles.

In terms of the diversity of the libraries workforce, it clearly does not currently reflect the population of Bradford as a whole. As well as its predominantly older aged workforce (see above) it is also predominantly female (76.1%) with only 17.8% of the workforce from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities. This does not reflect the demographics of the district which has the one of the youngest populations in the country, has an even split of male and female (50.5% female) and 39% from BME communities. It is clear that the Service needs to be proactive and use staff turnover as an opportunity to improve the diversity of the workforce. Working with more volunteers and work experience students is another way the service can provide pathways into employment from a more diverse intake.

9. To cement libraries' role in providing digital access and building digital skills

Libraries have an extremely important role in providing access to digital tools for those who are unable to access these for themselves, due to cost, lack of skills, or personal circumstances, a role acknowledged by the Government in developing its new Digital Inclusion Action Plan, see **How public libraries break down barriers to digital inclusion – DCMS Libraries**. This enables people to be connected, to learn new skills, to seek employment, and a host of other benefits.

To build on this, we need to continue to upskill staff, work with more volunteers, regularly upgrade library IT, and play a full role as part of the Council's Digital Inclusion strategy.

Appendix

Appendix A: Methodology and results of community needs and library performance assessment

Introduction

The methodology used for the assessment of library performance and community needs has been derived from similar examples used in other library authorities as well as examples provided by the Libraries Team at DCMS. A useful session was held by the Libraries Connected support group for libraries facing s114 to share and discuss different methodologies. It is worth noting that there is no standard or set methodology for this purpose, each library authority must determine for itself how to undertake this analysis and what criteria to use. There are choices to be made throughout. Officers have attempted to take a logical and proportionate approach and have sensed checked this with our data analysis and service transformation colleagues within the Council, as well as a representative from the Health Determinants Research Consortium work.

Methodology

Two sets of data have been created, one for library performance and one for community needs. These are attached as two separate spreadsheets.

For the analysis of library performance, the following criteria were used:

- Number of library visitors per annum per hour open
- Number of item loans per annum per hour open
- Proportion (%) of available PC session hours used per annum
- Number of active borrowers (used their library card in last 12 months)
- Number of active borrowers per 10,000 population served

For the analysis of community need for the population served, the following 12 criteria were used:

- 0-4-year olds – 2021 census
- Under 16-year-olds - 2021 census
- 65+ year olds - 2021 census
- Unemployment benefit claimants
- Children aged 0-19 in relative low-income families
- Households in fuel poverty
- People with no qualifications
- Index of multiple deprivation 2019 score
- Community needs index score

- Digital exclusion risk index score

- Proportion of working aged people receiving personal independent payment (PIP)

- Disabled: day-to-day activities limited a lot - 2021 Census

Whilst there are many additional criteria that could be used, the Review group prioritised criteria that reflect the characteristics of people who typically need to use our libraries (children and young people, older people, unemployed people, people on low incomes, people who may be digitally excluded, disabled people).

Critical to both sets of data was the need to define the catchment population for each library. Rather than using a crude measure of distance from the library, the review group used the postcodes of actual library users registered to each library to map where each library draws its users from, plotting the number of postcodes in each ward. To avoid overlaps and defining the catchment too widely, only those wards that contributed 90% of the registered user postcodes were used for each library.

Summary of performance scores

Library	Visitors per hour open	Active Borrowers	Active borrowers per 10,000 population.	Total Item Issues per hour open	Use per hours available %	Total Score
Addingham	2	1	1	2	2	8
Allerton	1	2	2	1	1	7
Baildon	3	3	4	3	3	16
Bingley	4	4	4	4	3	19
Bolling Hall	2	1	1	1	4	9
Burley	4	3	4	3	2	16
City	4	4	3	4	4	19
Clayton	2	2	2	2	2	10
Denholme	2	1	1	2	2	8
Eccleshill	4	4	3	4	4	19
Gt Horton	1	2	1	1	2	7
Heaton Hub	2	3	3	2	1	11
Holmewood	1	1	1	1	1	5
Idle	2	2	2	2	1	9
Ilkley	3	4	4	4	2	17
Keighley	4	4	4	4	4	20
Laisterdyke	3	3	2	2	4	14
Manningham	4	4	3	3	3	17
Menston	3	3	4	4	3	17
Queensbury	1	1	2	2	1	7
Shipley	4	4	3	4	4	19
Silsden	1	2	4	1	2	10
Thornbury	1	1	1	1	1	5
Thornton	3	2	2	3	3	13
Wibsey	3	3	3	3	4	16
Wilsden	1	1	1	1	1	5
Wyke	3	3	3	3	3	15

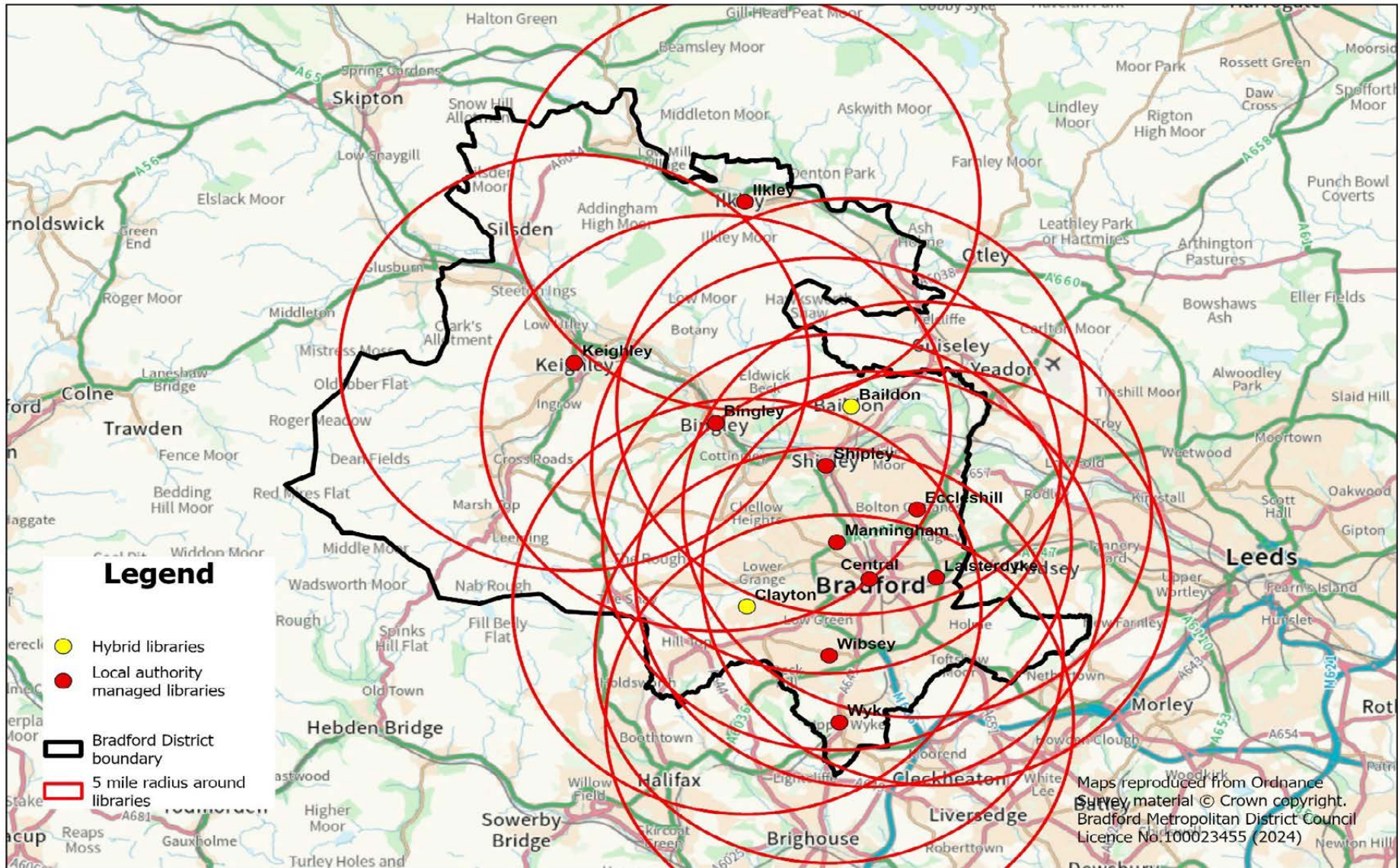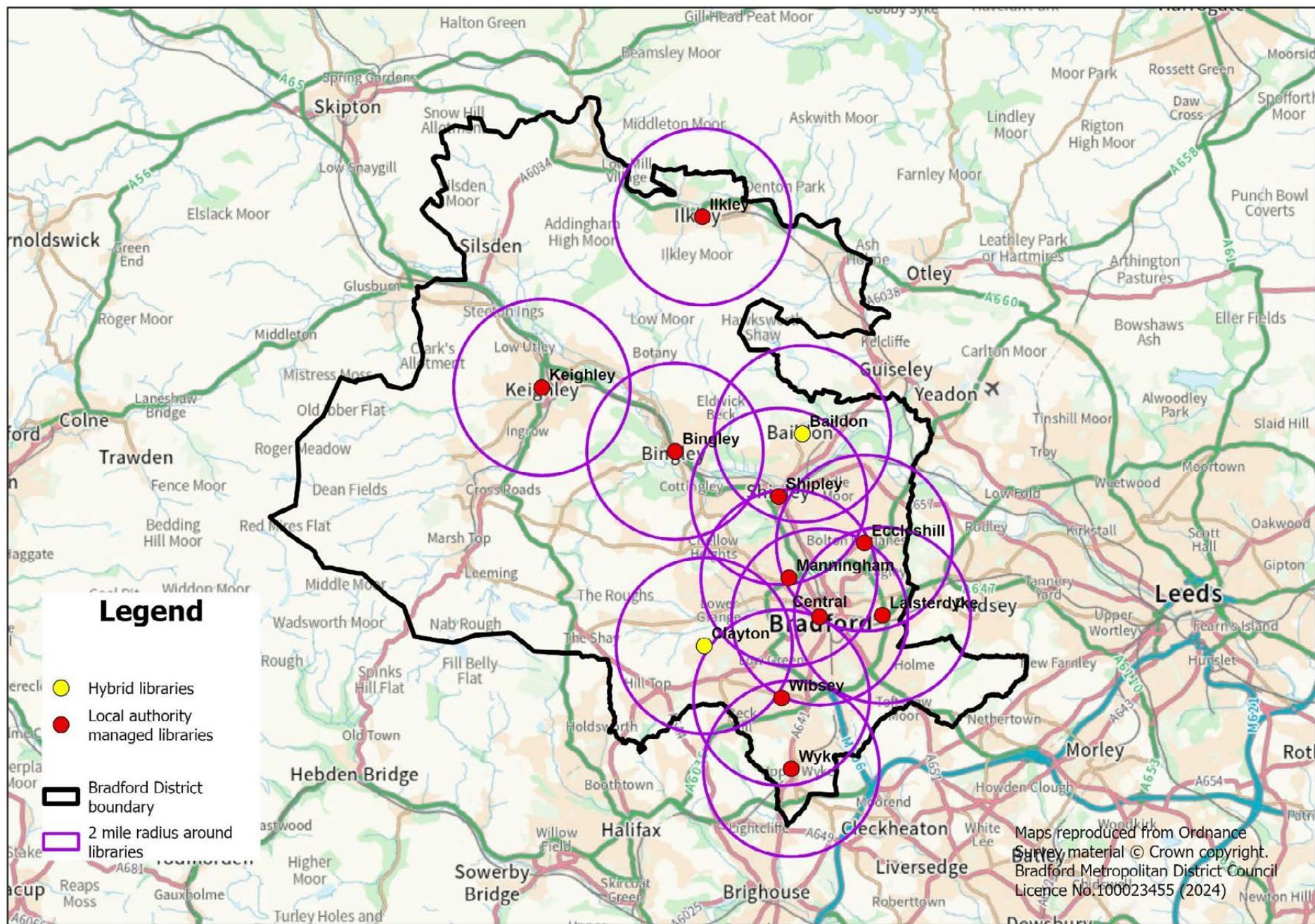| Library Ranking (high to low)	Scores
Keighley	20
Bingley	19
City	19
Eccleshill	19
Shipley	19
Ilkley	17
Manningham	17
Menston	17
Baildon	16
Burley	16
Wibsey	16
Wyke	15
Laisterdyke	14
Thornton	13
Heaton Hub	11
Clayton	10
Silsden	10
Bolling Hall	9
Idle	9
Addingham	8
Denholme	8
Allerton	7
Gt Horton	7
Queensbury	7
Holmewood	5
Thornbury	5
Wilsden	5

Summary of Community Need scores

Library	Population aged 0-4	Population aged under 16	Population aged 65+	Unemployment benefit claimants	Children aged 0-19 in relative low-income	Households in Fuel Poverty	People with no qualifications	Index of Multiple Deprivation Score	Community Needs Index 2023 Needs	Digital Exclusion Risk Index (DERI)	Personal Independence Payment (PIP)	Disabled under the Equality Act	TOTAL SCORE	Library Ranking (high to low)	TOTAL
Addingham	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	17	Bolling Hall	44
Allerton	3	3	2	3	4	3	3	3	2	3	3	4	36	Laisterdyke	44
Baildon	2	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	16	City	43
Bingley	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	25	Holmewood	43
Bolling Hall	4	4	2	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	44	Manningham	40
Burley	1	2	4	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	19	Great Horton	39
City	4	4	1	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	43	Thornbury	39
Clayton	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	35	Heaton Hub	38
Denholme	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	26	Thornton	38
Eccleshill	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	35	Wyke	38
Great Horton	4	3	1	4	4	4	3	4	2	4	3	3	39	Wibsey	37
Heaton Hub	4	4	1	4	4	4	4	3	1	3	3	3	38	Allerton	36
Holmewood	4	4	1	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	43	Clayton	35
Idle	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	25	Eccleshill	35
Ilkley	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	16	Queensbury	27
Keighley	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	26	Denholme	26
Laisterdyke	4	4	1	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	44	Keighley	26
Manningham	4	4	1	4	4	4	4	4	1	4	3	3	40	Bingley	25
Menston	1	2	4	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	19	Idle	25
Queensbury	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	4	2	2	2	27	Shipley	24
Shipley	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	24	Burley	19
Silsden	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	15	Menston	19
Thornbury	3	4	1	3	4	4	4	4	2	4	3	3	39	Addingham	17
Thornton	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	4	3	4	4	38	Baildon	16
Wibsey	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	37	Ilkley	16
Wilsden	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	15	Silsden	15
Wyke	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	4	3	4	4	38	Wilsden	15

Scatter chart showing scores in quartiles

Library performance and community need assessment

- Local Authority
- Community
- Hybrid

Library performance score (y-axis)
Community need score (x-axis)

Shipley, Keighley, Bingley, Ilkley, Menston, Baildon, Burley, Eccleshill, City, Wibsey, Manningham, Wyke, Laisterdyke, Thornton, Heaton Hub, Silsden, Clayton, Idle, Bolling Hall, Addingham, Denholme, Allerton, Great Horton, Queensbury, Wilsden, Thornbury, Holmewood

Appendix B: Maps showing 5 mile, 2 mile and 1 mile radius from Council/Hybrid libraries

Legend

🟡 Hybrid libraries

🔴 Local authority managed libraries

⬛ Bradford District boundary

🟣 2 mile radius around libraries

Maps reproduced from Ordnance Survey material © Crown copyright. Bradford Metropolitan District Council Licence No.100023455 (2024)

Legend

🟡 Hybrid libraries

🔴 Local authority managed libraries

🔵 1 mile radius around libraries

⬛ Bradford District boundary

Appendix C: PESTLE Analysis for 2025-2030 – Bradford Libraries

Topic	Response
Political / Professional	
• Wars, conflict and instability internationally • Political views increasingly polarised, leading to social division • Recent change of UK government, uncertainty about future of national Library Strategy • Increasing importance of combined authorities in regional decision making and as a source of funding	• Important **role for libraries in promoting social cohesion**, breaking down barriers and building understanding between people • **Link Bradford Library Strategy to Govt's 5 key missions** and priorities • **Find ways to advocate for libraries with** – and where possible, secure funding from - **WYCA**
Economic	
• A period of austerity – the Council needs to save £50m annually for 5 years to reach financial stability by 2030 • General state of UK economy impacting on customers and communities	• Need to continually **find new income streams** • Need to **identify options for potential future savings** • May be **increased need for free library services** due to the impact of the economy on local people
Social	
• Bradford has one of the youngest populations in the country • Bradford has a very diverse population, with high numbers of migrants	• Continue to **respond to the needs of our young population** and **build a service that is relevant for the future** • Continue to build on Libraries of Sanctuary work to **support refugees and asylum seekers**
Technological	
• Increasing risks from hacking, spread of mis/disinformation, and foreign interference • Rise of Artificial Intelligence – likely to replace many human career functions over time • The way people access and consume information, reading and culture is changing requiring investment in new technologies whilst still supporting those left behind by change	• Important **role for libraries in providing trusted, quality information** and **information literacy skills** • **Consider how AI can be harnessed**, as well as any necessary safeguards • Continue to **seek funding to upgrade library IT facilities and** increase **electronic resources** • Libraries play an **important role in digital inclusion**
Legislative	
• No move from Govt to change the legislation relating to libraries • New legislation can impact the service e.g. employment law relating to casual employees; rates relief rules could change, as it has done with Museums	• Continue to **monitor new legislation as it applies to libraries**
Environmental	
• Climate change and the need to adopt and promote environmental awareness and sustainable behaviours	• Need to increase the **environmental sustainability** of the service • Important role for libraries in **building environmental awareness and supporting people to live more sustainably**

Appendix D: SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Buildings – recently upgraded interiors that are modern, welcoming, accessible, fit for purpose with flexible meeting spaces to host community and cultural meetings and events, thanks to ACE, CIL, WYCA and capital funding. **Children's offer** – strong early years and children's offer that is well aligned with Family Hub and Early Years partners. Rhyme Challenge and automatic library membership for newborns via Registration are particular strengths **Cultural offer** – strong programme of events and activities including open mic, creative writing work workshops, zine fairs, music and drama performances etc. **Health offer** – excellent partnership with Public Health, building on 4 key determinants of wellbeing; dedicated P/T post. **Libraries of Sanctuary status** – awarded in recognition of our work to support refugees and asylum seekers **Gardens** – funding support to develop gardens at Shipley, Manningham, Laisterdyke and Eccleshill; two successful Culture Nature projects in partnership with Natural England **Digital inclusion** – strong partnership with Council's Digital Inclusion leads and Good Things Foundation to provide tablets and data for customer use **Digital infrastructure** – new LMS, self-service kiosks, Hublets, tablets, wifi enabled printing, updated public PCs **Local Studies & Keighley Archives –** extensive collections, knowledgeable staff, content rich microsite, regular events **Community Managed and Hybrid Libraries -** 17 libraries partially or fully supported by volunteers and local parish / town councils, sustained for more than 10 years **Adaptability of the service** – constantly changing and adapting to new circumstances and requirements **Library Service USPs** - trusted, neutral, responsive, community focused, free, safe, welcoming, library staff	**Buildings –** some libraries undersized (City, Baildon) **Book stock offer** – one of the worst funded in country resulting in paucity of new stock and e-lending offer, long waiting lists **Marketing –** generally poor perception and low awareness of the modern library offer, no budget for marketing, lack of senior / political understanding of potential. Broad remit can make marketing messaging too complex **Young People's offer –** offer for teens and young adults needs further development and engagement with this hard-to-reach group **Under-representation of male library members** – who represent only 1/3 of total membership **Digital & Information offer –** staff training required to increase skills and confidence to help others **Staff** – large training backlog for frontline staff, lack of training budget to develop staff, capacity very stretched at all levels of the structure **Customer engagement** – currently lack regular / ongoing feedback and engagement mechanism with customers
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
Bid for National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status – positioned as a legacy from BD25 **Consortium working as part of Libraries Connected Yorkshire & Humber** – with opportunity to share Library Management System and expertise **Volunteers –** the service would benefit from the support of more volunteers to provide capacity, and the support of the Museum Service in managing them **Localities working** – making libraries more sustainable by cementing their place at the heart of localities with touchdown and meeting space, virtual teamworking with partners **City of Culture 25 –** opportunity for greater exposure and recognition and future funding Libraries are often **well placed to adapt to new provision** e.g. providing Warm Spaces – they are free, open to everyone, have an inclusive culture, extensive reach into the community, well networked and placed at the heart of communities. **Income generation** from better marketing and easier booking of library meeting rooms and spaces for hire	**Funding** –rising costs, further savings, spread too thinly, risk to contributions from Public Health / Adults / Children's services, inability to respond to changes in demand and use due to poor resourcing. Leads to unreliable service (opening hours / IT) further impacting on usage. **City library** – lack of space in new premises to realise full potential **Local Studies & Archives –** uncertainty re future location (Bradford); shortage of space (Keighley) **Outdated perception of libraries** especially by those who do not use them

Appendix E: Library Profiles

Baildon Library
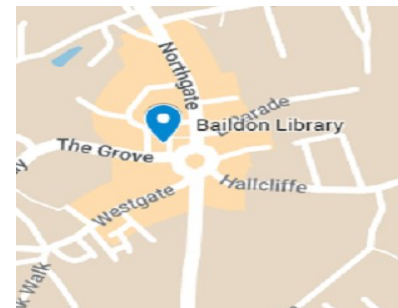
Address	Opening Hours (33 hours per week)
2-4 Northgate Baildon Shipley BD17 6JX	Monday: 9.30 - 5.00 Tuesday: 9.30 - 5.00 Wednesday: 9.30 – 2.00 Thursday: 9.30 – 2.00 Friday: 9.30 – 2.00 Saturday: 9.30 – 2.00

Locality area

Shipley

Description:

Baildon Library is one of two 'hybrid' libraries in the district, run as a partnership between the Library Service (which provides one member of staff for each hour open) and Baildon Town Council (which provides a Volunteer Co-ordinator and volunteers to run the library).

The library is currently accommodated in a small temporary premises (72 m2) which is an ex-shop unit, following the disposal for redevelopment of the former Ian Clough Hall which housed the library. The temporary library is well located next to a bus stop in the central shopping area of the town and shares the premises with Baildon Town Council offices. There is public pay & display parking nearby. Children's activities are currently carried out in church halls around the town.

Discussions are taking place with stakeholders including Baildon Town Council to look at options for securing a permanent solution.

Performance (2023/4)

Visits   15,171
Loans   17,380
PC sessions   728

44

Regular activities	- Monthly book club - Weekly under 5s story times - 1-2-1 family history support sessions - Monthly Baildon Contact Point (including representatives from the Police, Neighbourhood Watch and the Town Council); - Learn My Way basic IT learning sessions

Financial outturn for 2023/4 (rounded to nearest £'000)

Premises	£33,000
Staff costs	£43,000
Supplies & Services	£ 2,000
Income	(£ 1,000)
Total net expenditure	£77,000

Library catchment area	
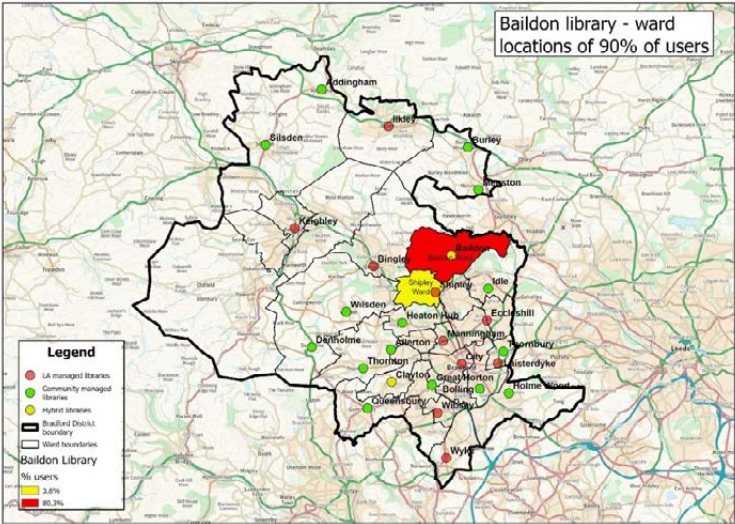
Bingley Library
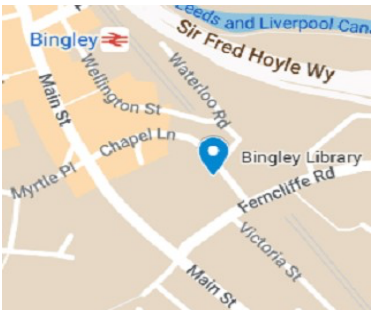
Address	Opening Hours (46 hours per week)
5 Rise shopping Centre Bingley BD16 1AW	Monday: 9.00 – 5.00 Tuesday: 9.00 – 7.00 Wednesday: 9.00 – 5.00 Thursday: 9.00 – 7.00 Friday: 9.00 – 12.00 Saturday: 9.00 – 4.00

Locality area

Shipley

Description:

The library is located to the rear of the 5 Rise Shopping Centre opposite a public pay & display car park. The library space is 915 m2 and was fully refurbished in 2008. The Council has a 125-year lease on a peppercorn until 2134 and pays a service charge.

During 2023, the library benefited from alterations funded by Arts Council England Libraries Improvement Funding which enabled improvements to the layout. The library now has a small meeting room and flexible space (with movable shelving) that can be hired out for meetings and events, along with facilities for making refreshments.

Performance (2023/4)

Visits	60,119
Loans	66,881
PC sessions	3,563

Regular activities	• Story Time: Monday, 2.15pm to 3pm, term time only • Rhyme Time: Thursday, 2.15pm to 3pm, term time only • Book Group

Financial outturn for 2023/4 (rounded to nearest £'0,000)

Premises costs	£103,000
Staff costs	£118,000
Supplies & Services	£ 21,000
Income	(£ 2,000)
Total net expenditure	£241,000

Library catchment area

Bingley library - ward locations of 90% of users
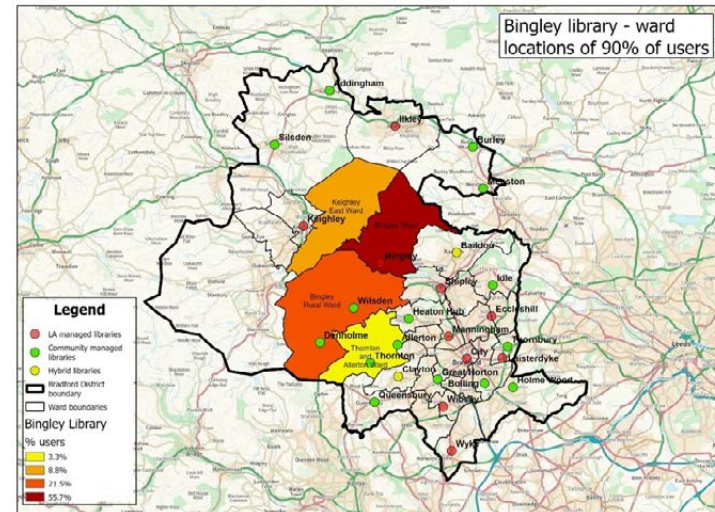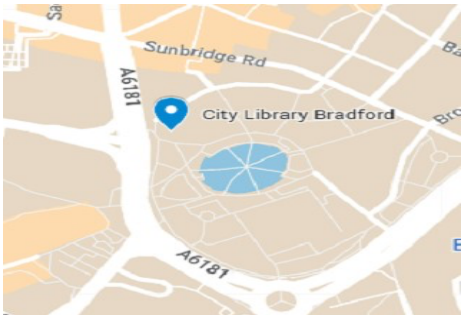
City Library

Address	Opening Hours (53 hours per week)
Centenary Square 9 Aldermanbury Bradford BD1 1SD	Monday: 9.00 – 5.00 Tuesday: 9.00 – 7.00 Wednesday: 9.00 – 7.00 Thursday: 9.00 – 7.00 Friday: 9.00 – 5.00 Saturday: 10.00 – 5.00

Locality area

Bradford West

Description:

City Library is accommodated over two floors in a modern leased building overlooking Centenary Square and the Mirror Pool, next to Starbucks. The library moved here from its previous location in Margaret MacMillan Tower (where it occupied 7 floors) in 2014. Despite the high cost of the leased premises, the library is under-sized for a Central Library serving the city and district, and this restricts the range of stock, facilities and activities that can be offered at the library. There is one small meeting room on the first floor (the Carnegie Room) for meetings of up to 20 people: https://www.bradford.gov.uk/libraries/services-in-our-libraries/meeting-rooms/
City Library can hold up to 60,000 books, 40 computers, and offers free Wi-Fi. It is by far the busiest library for visitors, serving people from across the district and beyond, but is not the highest lending library. The library also has a small Business & Intellectual Property information offer which is part of the regional network: https://www.bradford.gov.uk/libraries/services-in-our-libraries/bipc-local-at-city-library-bradford/   The library hosts larger events in evenings and at weekends, such as open mic sessions, Zine Fairs and talks, by moving the shelving.

Plans are now being finalised for moving City Library into Britannia House in the city centre which will save up to £500,000 pa on rental costs and service charges. This will provide a much more visible and accessible location in the newly pedestrianised area overlooking Norfolk Gardens, Broadway and Hall Ings, all on the ground floor. The library will benefit from being in a building directly managed by the Council. Existing furniture and equipment will be reused in the newly redecorated space.

Performance (2023/4)

|	
Visits	186,033
Loans	58,696
PC sessions	24,313

|	
Activities	• Rhyme Times on Wednesday morning at 10am Story Times on Saturday mornings at 11am • Work Club Thursday 10am to 12 noon Learn My Way Sessions Tuesday 2pm to 4pm • Chess for All (over 6 to adults) - Saturdays 10am to 12pm • Sisterhood Poetry Open-Mic last Friday of every month 7-9pm Bradford Open Mic every two months last Wednesday 7-9pm • Creative writing course Saturday 10 -12 • Death Café third Tuesday of every month

Financial outturn for 2023/4 (rounded to nearest £'000)

Premises costs	£527,000
Staff costs	£273,000
Supplies & Services	£ 20,000
Income	(£ 6,000)
Total net expenditure	£814,000

Library catchment area	
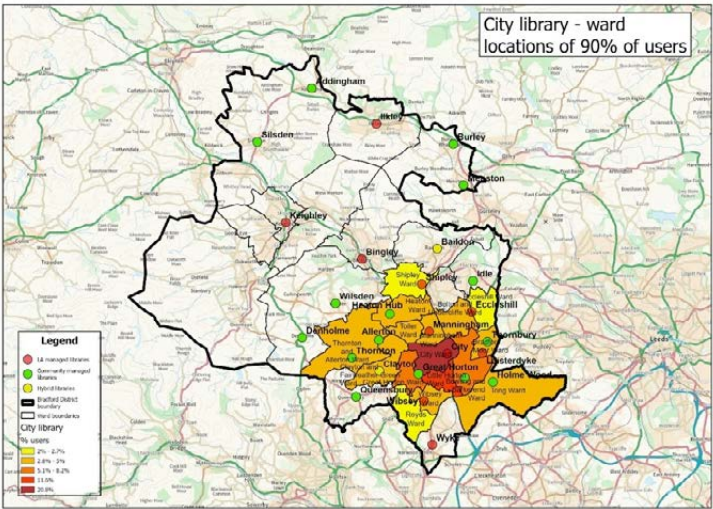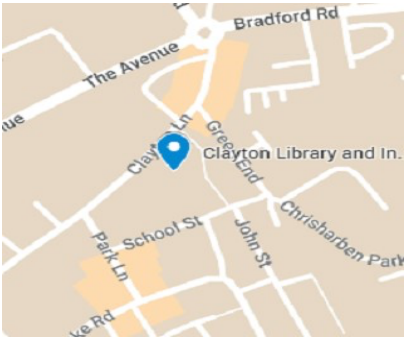
Clayton Library

Address	Opening Hours (25 hours per week)
Old School House Clayton Lane Bradford BD14 6AY	Monday: 9.30 – 5.00 Tuesday: 9.30 – 2.30 Wednesday: closed Thursday: 9.30 – 7.00 Friday: closed Saturday 9.30 – 12.30

Locality area

Bradford West

Description:

Clayton Library is one of two 'hybrid' libraries in the district, run by a partnership between the Council (which provides one member of staff for each hour open) and Clayton Community Association (which provides a Volunteer Co-ordinator and volunteers to run the library).

The library is accommodated in an old school building (132 m2) which is owned by the Council and part leased to the Parish Council which has its office in the building.

Clayton Library benefited from full refurbishment in 2024, funded by Arts Council England Libraries Improvement Funding supplemented by CIL funding, which enabled the introduction of automatic opening doors, public accessible toilet, kitchenette, and a new flexible layout with movable shelving. This allows a wider range of activities and events to take place in the library in line with the Council's vision and model for libraries.

Performance (2023/4)

Visits	6,543
Loans	10,243
PC sessions	216

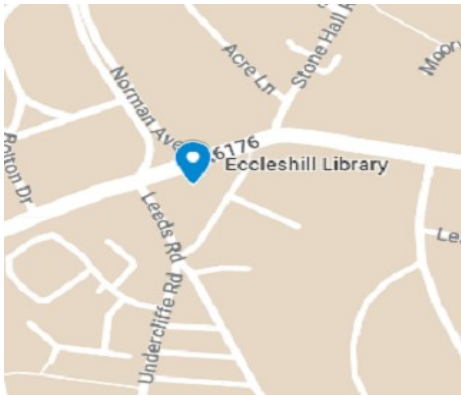| Regular activities	
	• Knit and natter every Monday, 1.30pm to 3pm • Story time with craft is every Thursday 10 to 11am (term time only)

Financial outturn for 2023/4 (rounded to nearest £'000)

Premises	£16,000
Staff costs	£29,000
Supplies & Services	-
Income	-
Total net expenditure	£45,000

Library catchment area

Clayton library - ward locations of 90% of users

Legend
- LA managed libraries
- Community managed libraries
- Hybrid libraries
- Bradford District boundary
- Ward boundaries

Clayton library
% Users
- 6.3%
- 12.4%
- 70.5%
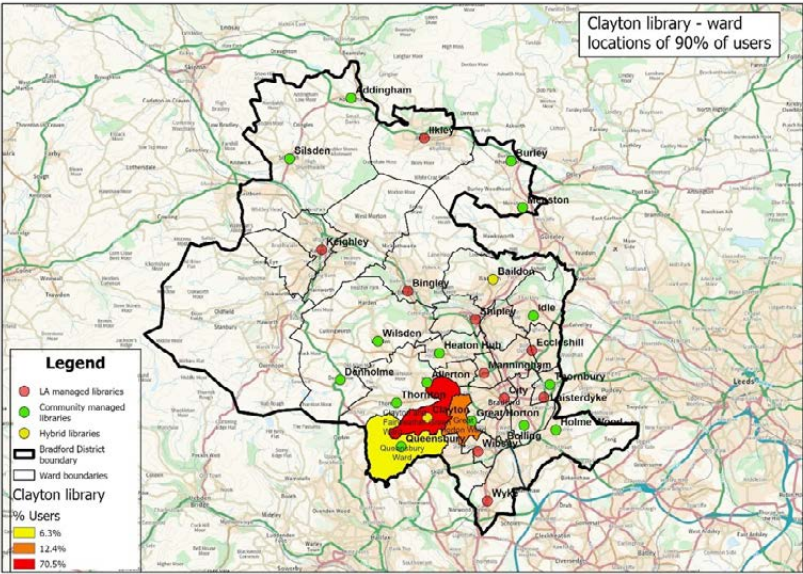
Eccleshill Library

Address	Opening Hours (46 hours per week)
Bolton Road Bradford BD2 4SR	Monday: 9.00 – 7.00 Tuesday: 9.00 – 5.00 Wednesday: 9.00 – 7.00 Thursday: 9.00 – 5.00 Friday: 9.00 – 12.00 Saturday: 9.00 – 4.00

Locality area

Bradford East

Description:

Eccleshill Library is located in a purpose-built standalone building of 811 m2, with dedicated car park at the rear. It benefits from a separate children's area, staff workroom with touchdown facilities for Council staff, and an upstairs meeting room that can accommodate 50 people: https://www.bradford.gov.uk/libraries/services-in-our-libraries/meeting-rooms/.   In 2024, the library was refurbished with funding from Arts Council England Libraries Improvement Funding, supplemented by CIL funding. This provided new flexible layouts in the adults and children's areas, refurbishment of the upstairs meeting room and introduction of a new small meeting room on the ground floor. The library now has movable shelving, enabling a wider range of events and activities to take place, in line with the Council's vision and model for libraries. The library was also made more accessible, with a new entrance for disabled customers adjacent to the car park, as well as an accessible public toilet on the ground floor.

Performance

Visits	85,985
Loans	54,864
PC sessions	5,794

Regular activities	- Monday: Storytime, 2pm to 2.30pm. - Monday Rhymetime, 2.30pm to 3pm - Tuesday: Knit and Knatter, 9.30am to 11.30am - Tuesday: Play and Learn, 1pm to 2pm (by the Early Year's Alliance) - Wednesday: Supportinos, 5pm to 7pm (for 11 to 18 year olds). For teenagers to come and meet youth workers, activities include mental health support, board games, arts and crafts etc. - Thursday: Duplo Builders 9am to 11am - Friday: Art Group 9.30am to 11.30am - Book group, Learn My Way

Financial outturn for 2023/4 (rounded to nearest £'000)

Premises	£63,000
Staff costs	£107,000
Supplies & Services	£ 2,000
Income	(£ 5,000)
Total net expenditure	£167,000

Library catchment area	
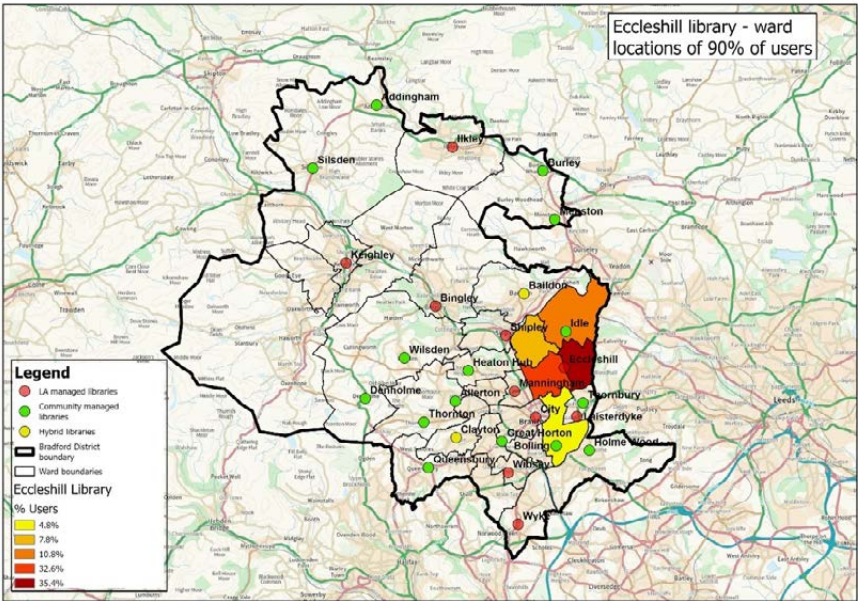
Ilkley Library
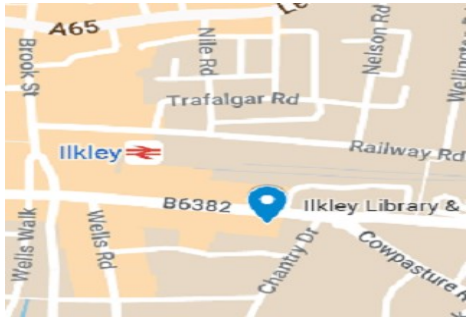
Address	Opening Hours (46 hours per week)
Station Road Ilkley LS29 8HA	Monday: 9.00 – 7.00 Tuesday: 9.00 – 5.00 Wednesday: 9.00 – 5.00 Thursday: 9.00 – 7.00 Friday: 9.00 –12.00 Saturday: 9.00 – 4.00

Locality area
Keighley

Description:

Ilkley Library is located in a purpose-built historic, Grade II listed 'Carnegie' library building of 406 m2, adjacent to Ilkley Town Hall. There is public parking on street and at the supermarket opposite. On the ground floor there are separate adults and children's sections, a local history room, separate reference area / meeting room, and a small office. On the side of the library is the Ilkley Visitor Information Service, which also provides disabled access into the building. Upstairs are staff offices and kitchen. The library is particularly popular with students for study after school hours.

In early 2025 the library benefitted from Arts Council England Libraries Improvement Funding, supplemented by CIL funding, which enabled refurbishment of the library including the introduction of an accessible public toilet on the ground floor, a kitchenette in the small office, and new movable shelving on one side of the library. This enables the space to be used for a wider range and larger events and activities, in line with the Council's vision and model for the service.

Performance (2023/4)

|	
Visits	53,742
Loans	59,346
PC sessions	3,388

|	
Regular activities	• Story time on a Thursday between 10am and 10.45am • Creative writing group called 'Well Together' meet every Wednesday 1pm to 3pm • 'A Novel Approach' reading group every third Thursday of the month • Creative Writing Course Fridays 4-6pm Learn My Way

Financial outturn for 2023/4 (rounded to nearest £'000)

Premises	£ 40,000
Staff costs	£145,000
Supplies & Services	£ 4,000
Income	(£ 2,000)
Total net expenditure	£187,000

Library catchment area	
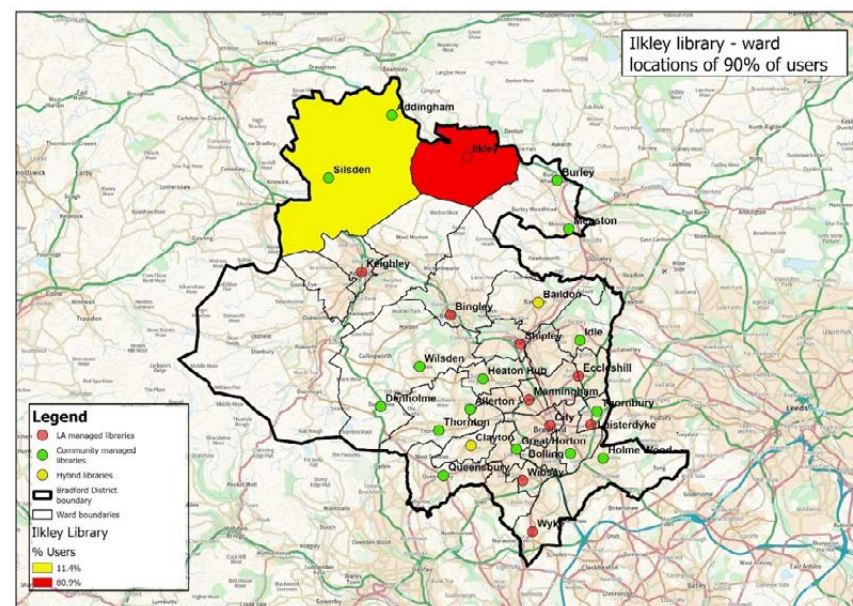
Keighley Library
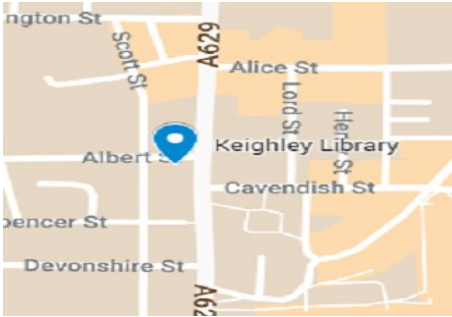
Address	Opening Hours (46 hours per week)
North Street Keighley BD21 3SX	Monday: 9.00 – 7.00 Tuesday: 9.00 – 5.00 Wednesday: 9.00 – 7.00 Thursday: 9.00 – 5.00 Friday: 9.00 – 12.00 Saturday: 9.00 – 4.00

Locality area

Keighley

Description:

Keighley Library is located in a purpose-built, Grade II listed 'Carnegie' library building of
1929 m2 – the first Carnegie library to be built in England. It is an impressive building on two floors, with the children's and adult's libraries on the ground floor, and the upper floor occupied by Keighley Local Studies and Archives. Previous refurbishment provided an accessible side entrance and accessible toilet on the ground floor for disabled customers. An annexe was built on to one side of the building as a later addition and provides offices and meeting rooms.
Keighley is one of the busiest libraries in the district. More recently, capital funding has been used to introduce two glass meeting 'pods' which are well used by partners and small meetings, as well as by customers for quiet study. The LEAP funded Connect, Create Make project engaged a wide range of new users and creative activities into the library: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pgf33raWV4Q
In early 2025, the Council's UK SPF funding enabled full refurbishment of the ground floor of the library, including new and improved furniture and equipment, redecorations, additional new book stock, and improved layout.

Performance (2023/4)

|	
Visits	88,775
Loans	59,664
PC sessions	9,243

Regular activities

- Monday 9.30am to 10.30am Early Years Alliance Play and Learn group.
- Wednesday 11am to 12 noon Duplo sessions; 1pm to 3pm Knit and Natter
- Thursday 3.30pm to 5.30pm Chess (all ages and abilities welcome)
- Friday 1.30pm to 2.45pm Duplo session
- Saturday 11am to 11.45am Rhyme/Storytime & Story Explorers
- First Wednesday of every month from 3.30pm to 4.30pm - Inclusive session for families with children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities
- Book Group, Creative writing course, Journaling club, Poetry reading group, Friendship group.

Financial outturn for 2023/4 (rounded to nearest £'000)

Premises	£194,000
Staff costs	£155,000
Supplies & Services	£ 13,000
Income	(£ 22,000)
Total net expenditure	£340,000

Library catchment area
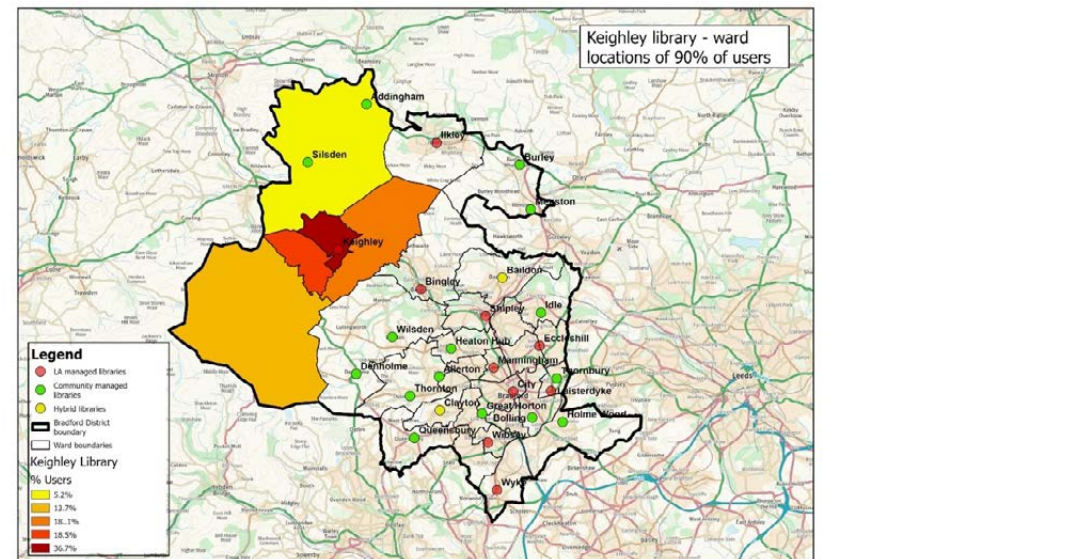
Laisterdyke Library

Address	Opening Hours (37 hours per week)
Address: Manse Street Laisterdyke Bradford BD3 8RP	Monday: 9.30 – 5.00 Tuesday: 9.30 – 5.00 Wednesday: 9.30 – 12.30 Thursday: 9.30 – 7.00 Friday: 9.30 – 12.30 Saturday: 9.30 – 4.00

Locality area

Bradford East

Description:

Laisterdyke Library is located alongside Laisterdyke Community Centre. The library occupies 161 m2 including the open plan library and a small staff workroom / kitchen. Toilet facilities are shared with the Community Centre. There is also a community garden which recently benefited from redesign: https://www.the-leap.org.uk/programmes-1/change-space-living-wall. In 2024, the library underwent refurbishment including essential maintenance works to the roof and electrics and redecorations. The library was closed for some months; this obviously impacted on usage figures for the library.

The library also benefited from Arts Council England Libraries Improvement Funding and had a small glass meeting 'pod' installed to allow confidential and 1:1 meetings to take place, e.g. ESOL teaching. The space can now be more flexibly used for activities and events.

Performance (2023/4)

|	
Visits	21,383
Loans	8,628
PC sessions	2,000

|	
Regular activities	- Monday, 1.30pm to 4pm: knit and natter, jigsaws and games - Tuesday, 10am to 11am: basic computer class - Tuesday, 9.30am to 10.30am and 10.30am to 11.30am: Rhymetime/Storytime - Tuesday, 10am to 2pm: Employability support - Wednesday, 10am to 12 noon: Employment support - Thursday 2pm to 4pm: Social get together, for all ages. - Friday once a month Police Contact Point, Drop in

Financial outturn for 2023/4 (rounded to nearest £'000)

Premises	-
Staff costs	£95,000
Supplies & Services	£17,000
Income	(£1000)
Total net expenditure	£111,000

Library catchment area	
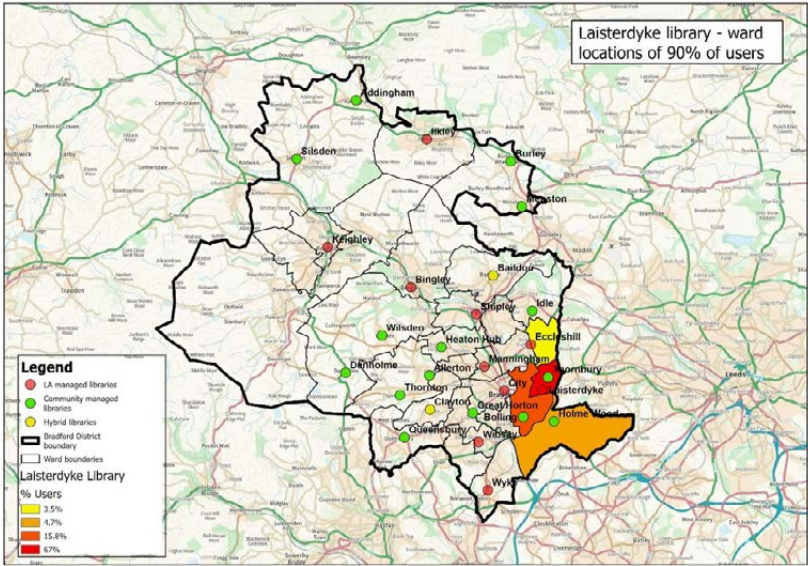
Manningham Library
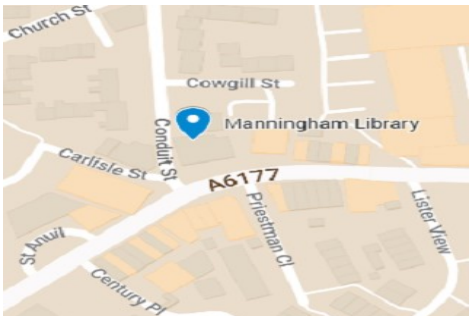
Address	Opening Hours (43.5 hours per week)
Carlisle Road Bradford BD8 8BB	Monday: 9.30 – 2.00 Tuesday: 9.30 – 5.00 Wednesday: 9.30 – 5.00 Thursday: 9.30 – 7.00 Friday: 9.30 – 2.00 Saturday: 9.30 – 3.30 Sunday: 12.00 – 4.00

Locality area

Bradford West

Description:

Manningham Library is located in a Grade II listed building built in 1910. In 2008 it underwent significant refurbishment and extension, funded by the Big Lottery, which enabled a new accessible entrance at the rear of the library, together with the creation of a community garden. The library occupies 520 m2 and has separate adults and children's areas, accessible public toilet, large meeting room with kitchenette and Council touchdown space on the first floor.

In 2024 the library benefitted from Arts Council England Libraries Improvement Funding to enable a more flexible shelving arrangement in the adults area so that more large scale activities and events can take place, as well as the installation of a new small meeting room for community and partner use. The library also gained funding from Natural England to improve the garden space and encourage its use as well as local walks from the library.

Performance (2023/4)

|	
Visits	64,882
Loans	29,512
PC sessions	5,255

|	
Regular activities	- Monday: Storytime, 4pm to 4.30pm - Wednesday Sensory Play 10am to 10.30am (coming soon) - Wednesday: CV help sessions. 1pm to 2pm. Booking required. (from 5th March 2024) - Thursday: Duplo Play 10.30am to 11.30am (coming soon) - Friday: Rhymetime, 1.30pm to 2pm - Sunday: Colouring, 1.30pm to 2pm - Book group

Financial outturn for 2023/4 (rounded to nearest £'000)

Premises	£81,000
Staff costs	£138,000
Supplies & Services	£2,000
Income	(£3,000)
Total net expenditure	£218,000

Library catchment area
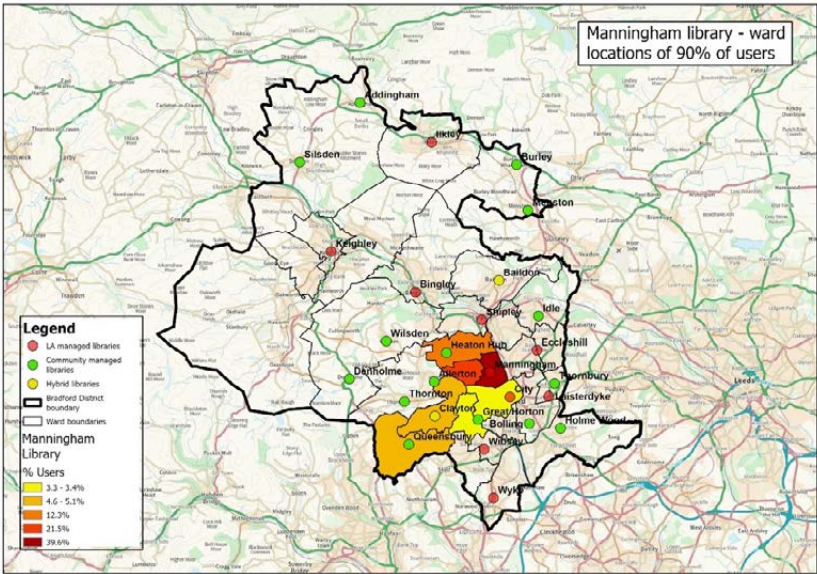
Shipley Library
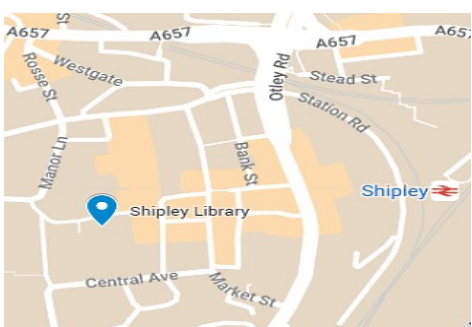
Address	Opening Hours (46 hours per week)
2 Wellcroft Shipley BD18 3QH	Monday: 9.00 – 12.00 Tuesday: 9.00 – 7.00 Wednesday: 9.00 – 7.00 Thursday: 9.00 – 5.00 Friday: 9.00 – 5.00 Saturday: 9.00 – 4.00

Locality area

Shipley

Description:

Shipley Library is located in a purpose-built modern building in the centre of the shopping area of Shipley, adjacent to Asda and public car parking. The library benefits from popular meeting rooms that can accommodate up to 100 people, as well as a community garden, accessible public toilets and a changing places facility. It issues more items than any other library across the district. As well as the library, the building houses the Library Service central stock and distribution function (including cataloguing, reserve stock, reading groups, Bookstart materials, van delivery service, and Home Library Service etc.) as well as the Council's Leaving Care Service, in a total building space of 1343 m2.

In 2024 the library benefited from Shipley Towns Funding to create an Enterprise Hub at the library, supporting business start ups and entrepreneurs: https://www.bradford.gov.uk/browse-all-news/press-releases/shipley-business-enterprise-hub/ . Shipley Town Council has helped fund improvements to the community garden, which is also being supported by local volunteer groups.

Performance (2023/4)

|	
Visits	99.176
Loans	71,700
PC sessions	10,980

| **Regular activities**	• Craft and Chat weekly, Thursday 1.30pm to 4pm • Learn My Way weekly, Friday 2pm to 4pm (booking required as there is a waiting list) • Under 5 Story Time and Craft weekly, Tuesday 2pm to 2.45pm • Book group Writers group

Financial outturn for 2023/4 (rounded to nearest £'000)

Premises	£163,000
Staff costs	£109,000
Supplies & Services	£4,000
Income	(£24,000)
Total net expenditure	£252,000

Library catchment area	
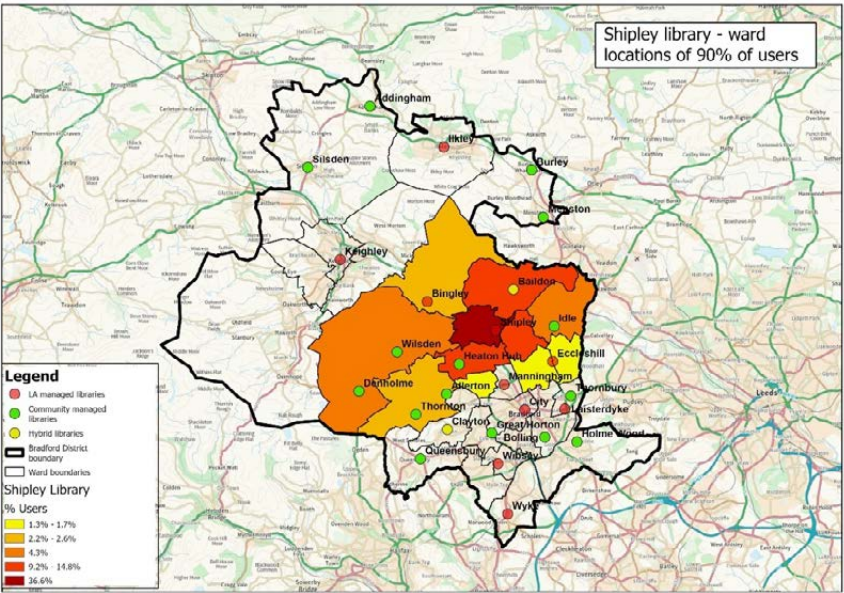
Wibsey Library
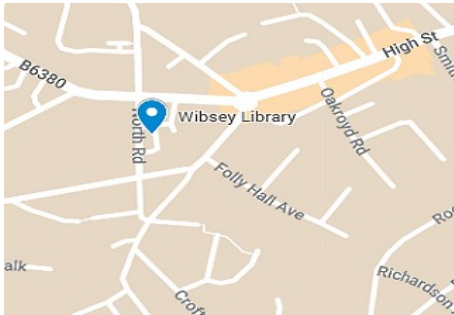
Address	Opening Hours (37 hours per week)
North Road Wibsey Bradford BD6 1TR	Monday: 9.30 – 5.00 Tuesday: 9.30 – 5.00 Wednesday: Closed Thursday: 9.30 – 7.00 Friday: 9.30 – 4.00 Saturday: 9.30 – 3.30

Locality area

Bradford South

Description:

Wibsey Library is located in a standalone building, a former church hall that was converted to a library. Occupying 183 m2, the library was fully refurbished in 2022 with capital funding provided as one of the pilots for the Council's new vision and model for the library service. The library is the only publicly accessible Council building in this area of the district.

The library is now bright and modern, with fully flexible shelving, enabling larger events and activities to take place outside of library opening times, alongside automatic opening doors, a small meeting room, kitchenette and accessible public toilet. The pilot project also brought a wider range of partner services to use the library, which hosts councillor surgeries, locality meetings and more children's activities than before.

Performance (2023/4)

|	
Visits	27,940
Loans	37,254
PC sessions	2,171

|	
Regular activities	- Monday, 10am: Rhymetime - Monday, 10am: Knit and Natter - First Tuesday of every month, 2pm to 4pm: Reconnecting Veterans - First Thursday of the month, 2pm: Book Group - Saturday, 11am: Storytime with crafts - Saturday, 2pm: Afternoon Tea Party (alternate Saturdays)

Financial outturn for 2023/4 (rounded to nearest £'000)

Premises	£23,000
Staff costs	£107,000
Supplies & Services	£2,000
Income	(£2,000)
Total net expenditure	£130,000

Library catchment area	
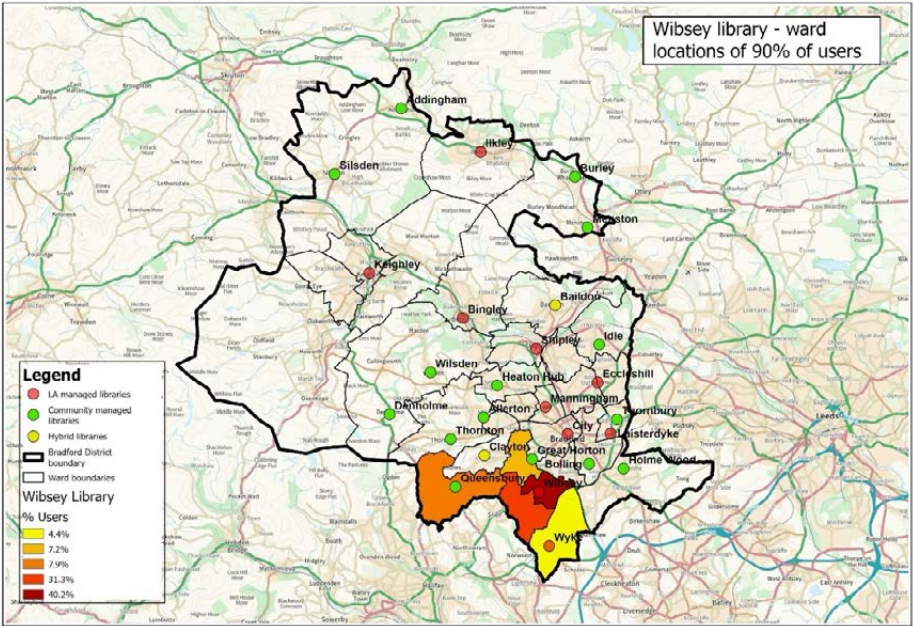
Wyke Library
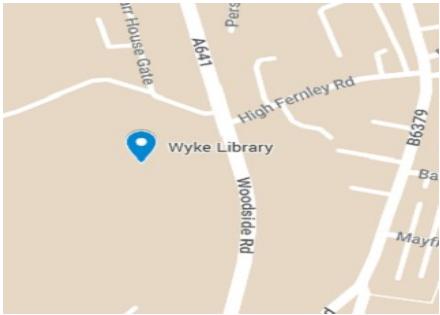
Address	Opening Hours (37 hours per week)
Appleton Academy Woodside Road Wyke Bradford BD12 8AL	Monday: 9.30 – 12.30 Tuesday: 9.30 – 5.00 Wednesday: 9.30 – 12.30 Thursday: 9.30 – 7.00 Friday: 9.30 – 5.00 Saturday: 9.30 – 4.00

Locality area

Bradford South

Description:

Wyke Library is located in modern, purpose-built accommodation as part of the Appleton Academy school site, occupying 234 m2. There is parking on site. The freehold belongs to Bradford Council, which leases the school buildings to the Academy.

In 2023 the library benefited from Arts Council England Libraries Improvement Funding to create a small meeting room and kitchenette in the library. This supports use by partner services for small meetings, and the kitchenette for larger meetings and events.
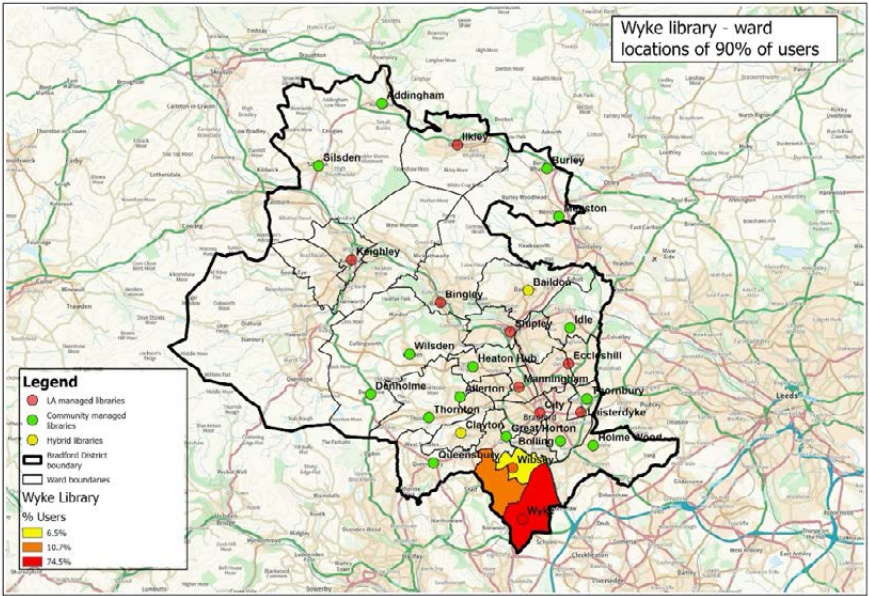
Performance (2023/4)

Visits	15,928
Loans	19,353
PC sessions	1,526

Regular activities	• Tuesdays, 2pm: Rhyme Time (Term Time) • Thursdays, 10am: Baby Friendship • Fridays, 10.30am: Story and Craft Time • Book group • Learn My Way

Financial outturn for 2023/4 (rounded to nearest £'000)

Premises	£25,000
Staff costs	£122,000
Supplies & Services	£2,000
Income	(£1,000)
Total net expenditure	£148,000

Library catchment area

Wyke library - ward locations of 90% of users