

Libraries Do! Explore, Read, Learn Connect

Camden Libraries Strategy

2026 –2031

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Foreword

Cabinet Member intro

Introduction

“We welcome everyone into Camden’s Library spaces as the go-to place in our communities for free resources and activities. We inspire learning and reading choices and enrich lives.”

Libraries Do! Explore, Read, Learn, Connect: Camden Libraries Strategy 2026-2031 has been designed with Camden’s residents, the Camden Libraries’ team, and key partners to capture and celebrate the vitality around the service, and its achievements to date as a much loved and valued service. Camden Libraries puts people at the heart of what it does and activates interventions that make a difference to residents’ lives. The service is ambitious and experimental, driven by doing, and by meeting the needs of its residents. It has seen physical visits to libraries continuing to increase, with a 23% increase when comparing October to December 24/25 with October to December 25/56. Camden Libraries is recognised both internally and externally as a ‘can-do’ service that others want to work alongside. We want to build on this position of strength and success.

Libraries in Camden are an active force, driven by and for people. They are a universal resource, here for everyone, breaking down social isolation; building communities; fighting digital exclusion; offering refuge and sanctuary; signposting to support; improving wellbeing; giving people purpose through contribution; and refreshing souls through reading choices and cultural programming. We heard all of this during our engagement work as we developed this strategy. We also heard how loved the service is by residents, and how respected the service is within the sector and by its’ partners. We credit this to the commitment of the Camden Libraries’ team, and the people focused vision of the service.

A consistent, high-quality reading and information offer was seen as a priority, and we are delighted that our [Camden Reading Together Strategy 2025-30](#), which complements *Libraries Do!*, is already working towards delivering this. *Camden Reading Together 2025-30* is Camden’s first borough wide strategy, developed with other Council teams and external partners including [The Reading Agency](#), wholly dedicated to reading for pleasure and delivered through a steering group who contributed to its development.

Libraries Do! recognises that Camden Libraries are vital neighbourhood spaces that respond to the local needs of residents, and through collaboration with partners, they offer spaces, resources, facilities and places for connection that are relevant and vibrant. This new strategy for Camden Libraries sets out how the service will continue to develop over the next five years. It has the following key themes that have emerged through what we have heard:

-  People and Place
-  Elevating the Basics
-  Cohesion, Inclusivity and Relevance

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 Partnerships and Outreach

 Telling Our Story

By delivering against these themes Camden Libraries will continue to be a celebrated, wired-in and dynamic service. We will work hard to deliver the ambitions within this strategy and ensure it resonates with, and delivers for, the communities of Camden.

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Libraries in Camden

Camden Libraries are key physical, free, and inclusive spaces in neighbourhoods, open to all that live and work in, or visit, Camden. They are perceived as safe havens, an anchor of the community, faithful companions, and places of quiet transformation. Residents view them as living spaces or a third place beyond home and work.

Camden Council's statutory library provision operates from 9 static libraries across the borough and a Home Library Service. In addition, there is a Local Studies and Archives Service at Holborn Library. Most (99%) of Camden residents are no more than a 30-minute walk from a Camden library compared with 97% for the London average. There are 3 community run libraries in the borough (Primrose Hill, Belsize and Keats) which operate independently from the Council and do not form part of Camden's statutory library offer.

Collections for Camden Libraries include physical and digital lending stock; online resources including newspapers and magazines and learning resources. The service has a monthly events programme delivered in partnership and promoted via an e-newsletter [What's on this month - Camden Council](#). 2,793 events were hosted in libraries in 24/25 with 28,805 people attending an event. Through the cultural programme Camden Libraries support community cohesion and reduce loneliness.

Celebrating Camden Libraries

Key achievements for the service include:

Culture & Creativity	Health & Wellbeing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing pianos for free play, including donated pianos, working with the Camden Music Service and the Lang Lang International Music Foundation. • Creative and Cultural partnerships with The Bloomsbury Festival and through the Black British Ballet project. • Hosting performances by the Old Vic theatre. • Living Knowledge Network exhibitions and events in partnership with the British Library. • Craft sessions. • Creative writing sessions. • Art walls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pancras Square Libray's Community Café, responding to the We Make Camden Food Mission by delivering an affordable, nutritious food offer to residents. The cafe has created a true community hub with food and additional offers including a preloved clothes rail and introduction of partner activities in the space. • Workshops delivered by Arts for Dementia • Delivering health drop-ins in partnership with Camden's Public Health team. • <i>Sharing Spaces</i> in five Camden Libraries initiated in partnership with Think & Do. These spaces have pre-loved clothes rails and promote energy saving ideas and offer activities that are based on community needs. • Delivery of a creative writing course in partnership with MIND at Camden Library.
Information & Digital	Reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital lending by adults and physical lending is higher than the average when compared to other local authority library services.¹ • Digital drop ins. • A partnership with ShiftED to deliver analogue making with children and young people at Holborn Library. • Fixing the digital divide offering data and device banks in partnership with the Good Things Foundation. • Library of Things at Swiss Cottage and Kentish Town Libraries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of the Camden Reading Together 2025-30 strategy. • A variety of reading groups, some of which are themed, e.g., a Play Reading group. • Shared Reading groups, led by library staff who have been trained by The Reader to deliver reading experiences that support connection and wellbeing. • An author talk programme at West Hampstead Library. • An annual book fund allocated to support reading choices and respond to community needs identified by each library.

¹[Library Loans Review report for Libraries Connected](#). Independent Mind, October 2025.

Children, Families & Young People	Partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gifting of Read and Share with Baby library card registration packs to all newborns in Camden, working with Camden’s Registration Service. • Delivery of free book gifting for children through the Children’s Book Project and through the Dollywood Foundation Imagination Library which is funded by the People’s Postcode Lottery. • Increasing children’s engagement with the Summer Reading Challenge (SRC). 2025 saw an increase of 7% of children starting the challenge and a 21% increase in children completing compared to 2024. The SRC 2025 was launched at the British Library with 250 primary school children attending. Additional funding from The Reading Agency supported a programme of outreach which resulted in 325 new library memberships. • Delivering a LEGO robotics offer has led to greater connections with home schooled families and contributed to the Holiday Activities and Food Programme. • Funding from The Reading Agency and The Mercers Company Fund to train the Camden Libraries’ team to deliver Chatterbooks reading clubs to encourage 7–11-year-olds to build lifelong reading habits. • Pilot for Talking With Your Toddler programme with Speech and Language UK and the LGA (Local Government Association). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camden was the 1st London Borough to belong to the British Library’s Living Knowledge Network and the 2nd library service in the UK to have a Clare Learning space at Holborn library. • Working with the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) to improve the accessibility of computer services. A LibraryOn grant, supported by Arts Council England, upgraded a computer in each library and trained the Camden Libraries’ Team to enable them to support the visually impaired to download e-books onto Envoy Connect, an accessible device. • Twinning with Soloniansky Library, Kiev, sharing ideas and support, gifting a collection of young people’s books and a Camden Libraries library card, planning an exhibition produced by them for Summer 2026. • Supporting research through our partnerships with universities to develop community building and understanding libraries’ role in the social infrastructure of the borough and the impacts they have in neighbourhoods and for residents.

Who we work with

Working in partnership is one of Camden Libraries' key strengths and a key theme for *Libraries Do!* We are continuously seeking new partnerships and collaborations that support the service to deliver [We Make Camden](#) and the [Universal Library Offers](#). Camden Libraries have a range of established internal and external partnerships at local, regional and national levels and over time this will grow organically as new interventions are planned focused on resident needs and interests.

The National Context for Libraries

Statutory Duty

Public library services are funded and either run or commissioned by local government. Library authorities (unitary, county or metropolitan borough councils) have a statutory duty under the [Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964](#) to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons, for all those who live, work or study in the area. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) superintend and promote the improvement of the public library service provided by councils in England and secure the proper discharge by councils of their functions as library authorities. *Libraries Do!* is aligned with the [Independent Review of English Public Libraries](#), commissioned by DCMS in 2024.

Whilst Camden Libraries continue to develop and seek inward investment, many library services across the country are facing significant challenges due to resourcing constraints. Over the last three years, the service has generated £1,471,000 through various sources including S106, the Community Infrastructure Levy, and external funding from [Arts Council England](#), [Clare Duffield Foundation](#), [The Mercers Company](#), [The National Lottery Community Fund's Climate Action Fund – Our Shared Future](#) and the [National Lottery Heritage Fund](#). A key example of the benefit of this inward investment is the refurbishment of Holborn Library in 2025, with the funding supporting the creation of attractive, flexible spaces enabling partner organisations to co-locate and collaborate with the service.

Libraries Connected & the Universal Library Offers

The [Universal Library Offers](#) were developed by [Libraries Connected](#),² an independent charity that supports, promotes and represents the public libraries sector, and “provide a framework for a high-quality library service and demonstrate the power of libraries to enrich lives.”³ They help to build consistency in the national public library offer. The Universal Library Offers are integral to the services Camden Libraries offer, they are woven through day-to-day programming and showcased through partnerships and projects:

Culture and Creativity

Enabling local communities to enjoy high-quality arts and cultural experiences through libraries.

² Libraries Connected is an independent charity that supports, promotes and represents public libraries. Camden Libraries are a member of Libraries Connected and part of the Libraries Connected London Region

³ <https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/projects/universal-library-offers>. Each offer is underpinned by the [Vision and Print Impaired People's Promise](#), developed by Share the Vision, and [The Children's Promise](#), developed by [Libraries Rising](#) which sets out what the public library service offer to children and young people should be.

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Health and Wellbeing	Supporting the health and wellbeing of communities through services that inform, engage, and connect.
Information and Digital	Ensuring communities can access quality information and digital services, learn new digital skills and feel safe online.
Reading	Building a literate and confident society by developing, delivering and promoting creative reading activities in libraries.

Arts Council England

Arts Council England (ACE) is the national development agency for libraries in England. It supports libraries to develop their practice; advocates for their value, impact and public benefit; and invests in projects, research, and infrastructure across the public library sector that reflect ACE's strategy Let's Create which recognises libraries as a vital cultural and creative resource, and that investment in libraries helps to improve lives, regenerate neighborhoods, supports local economies and brings people together. It convenes and chairs the *English Public Library Strategic Working Group* and administers the *Libraries Development Framework*, a programme that library services can apply to become part of to demonstrate and evidence their commitment to ongoing development, innovation, and best practice.

Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)

CILIP: the library and information association are the leading voice for the information, knowledge management and library profession. Their new strategy is Empowering Impact. Camden Libraries, an Employer Member, which brings great benefits to the Camden Libraries' Team. Camden attend the Innovative Public Library meetings which are convened by CILIP and Camden Libraries are one of the first three Green Library Hubs funded by the National Lottery Community Fund's Climate Action Fund – Our Shared Future. The project will enable Camden Libraries and the British Library to work collaboratively on raising awareness of climate action.

The Local Strategic Frame for Camden Libraries

Libraries Do! helps to deliver the key missions of [We Make Camden](#), the Council's vision for the future of Camden:

Diversity: By 2030, those holding positions of power in Camden are as diverse as our community - and the next generation is ready to follow.

Camden Libraries are in different communities across the borough, offering a Cultural Calendar inspiring a diverse programme of activities and events which respond to, and represent, community and resident's interests and needs. We are committed to inclusive practise to ensure all who visit us feel empowered to get involved. The service provides resources in a range of formats to aid accessibility and inclusivity, such as audio and large print, and each library has an accessible computer. The Home Library service delivers items to those who can't physically reach a library. Kilburn and Swiss Cottage Libraries offer changing places facilities supporting people with severe disabilities and their carers when they are out in the community.

Young people: By 2025, every young person has access to economic opportunity that enables them to be safe and secure.

Camden Libraries support young people through volunteering and work experience opportunities. Libraries are vital spaces for young people for studying and connection, and for free access to physical and digital resources to support learning and recreational reading. Libraries offer employability support to help young people find their pathway, working with partners like [The Apex Project](#) and [ShiftED](#) to connect young people's interests to employment and training and delivering activities to children and young people, boosting resilience.

Food: By 2030, everyone eats well every day with nutritious, affordable, sustainable food.

Camden libraries promote healthy eating by providing access to information and reading choices via books, free Wi-Fi and public access computers. Our partnerships help us to deliver more including the Community Café at Pancras Square, run by [Lifeafterhummus](#), who use food waste to create affordable food for residents, and with [Think & Do](#) through [Sharing Spaces](#) which bring residents together to share ideas, green initiatives, swap clothes and share a meal. Libraries are part of the Holiday Activities and Food programme, are food donation points for the City Harvest, offer seed banks and visit the Euston Food Bank to promote library membership and run activities.

Estates and neighbourhoods: By 2030, Camden's estates and their neighbourhoods are healthy, sustainable and unlock creativity.

Camden Libraries are free, safe, trusted, neutral neighbourhood spaces in the heart of their local communities, supporting community cohesion and connection, bringing different cultures together. Libraries are one of the council's frontline services, bridging the gap between residents and the Council and in the unique position of being able to facilitate residents directly connecting with those making decisions that affect them. They offer spaces where Councillor surgeries and neighbourhood teams can connect with residents and offer support. We work with the Camden Public Health Team to deliver free health checks and with the Property Management Team to support residents with housing repair issues. A breadth of activities are hosted in our libraries from knitting and play reading groups to mahjong and homework clubs.

Camden Libraries supporting inclusive economic growth

Like our missions, inclusive economic growth is a long-term goal for the Council, shaping the future of Camden's communities, creating broad prosperity rethinking the local authority as a producer of value. The Council will work with Camden residents and partners to shape what such a focus means and how it can help build a future the people of Camden want to see. Inclusive economic growth will come from different sectors and benefit everyone, improving jobs, education, health and living standards.

Camden Libraries, as one of the 'innovation clusters' across the borough, are valued and supported places used by, and for, the community, supporting local businesses and entrepreneurship through offers such as [The Workary at Holborn Library](#) and the business support sessions delivered in partnership with the [British Library](#). Libraries can support growth, reduce inequalities and play a key part in the strategy to support employment and skills, business support, and climate change. For example, libraries work with the [Apex Project](#) supporting young people into employment; a plan to work with [Good Work Camden](#) in the refurbished Kilburn Library; and the formal and informal learning programme which forms part of the [Camden Reading Together Strategy 2025-30](#).

Camden Libraries supporting sustainability

Camden Libraries, working with others, are contributing to the Climate Action Challenge in multiple ways. Three library buildings have been decarbonised since 2021, and other libraries have benefitted from the introduction of LED lighting and improved ventilation systems. The Green Library Hubs project funded by the [National Lottery Community Fund's Climate Action Fund – Our Shared Future](#) will see Pancras Square Library become a Green Library Hub and the Green Library Co-ordinator will deliver programmes at the Hub and in other libraries and outreach venues. There are two [Library of Things](#) one at Swiss Cottage Library and the other at Kentish Town Library. Camden Libraries presented at the Green Libraries Conference in 2025. Sharing Spaces have been introduced in the libraries initiated in partnership with [Think & Do](#). These spaces have pre-loved clothes rails and promote energy saving ideas and offer activities that are based on community needs. Camden Libraries are working with the [Children's Book Project](#) to collect good quality book donations which [Children's Book Project](#) collect, curate and gift to families in school and early years settings. The libraries have used some of these books to create pop-up libraries in community venues in response to [Camden Reading Together 2025-30](#).

Camden Libraries Strategy 2026-31

Our commitment to you, our residents and communities

“We welcome everyone into Camden’s Library spaces as the go-to place in our communities for free resources and activities. We inspire learning and reading choices and enrich lives.”



These are complemented by the key aims of the [Camden Reading Together 2025-30](#): **Reading, Skills, Connect, Wellbeing.**

The Themes Explored

Libraries Do! People and Place

Putting Camden Libraries at the heart of their local communities

What we heard:

- ✚ **People:** it is the team, the residents and the partners that make Camden Libraries warm, inclusive, living spaces, that are loved and bring communities together.
- ✚ **Data:** it is critical that the services we provide meet the needs of all the different communities using libraries, and that data is used to measure our impact and keep us on track.
- ✚ **Community resilience:** libraries are neighbourhood spaces and facilitators of community resilience, built around place. You'd like to retain good provision across the borough in buildings which are fit for purpose, in the right locations, and open at the most convenient times.
- ✚ **Co-location and connection:** libraries act as spaces for partners and organisations to connect with residents.
- ✚ **Spaces:** making our library spaces as flexible, clean, attractive and welcoming as possible is important to you.
- ✚ **Active social spaces, places of self-improvement and belonging:** libraries are neutral, peaceful, safe havens where you engage in your own way and at your own pace. They are social and playful spaces, places where you can interact with others, be curious, or equally sit quietly and reflect and still feel connected to others.

People and Place: our goals

There is more to do. Over the next 5 years we will:

- ✚ **Secure libraries as key neighbourhood spaces:** build on existing inward investment in our buildings to future proof and provide welcoming, accessible, flexible and safe spaces in the best locations, open at the most relevant times and supporting connection.
- ✚ **Focus on our communities:** build on our commitment to listen and adapt to changing needs or if something isn't working.
- ✚ **Explore collaborations that support community resilience and connection, foster local early intervention and prevention:** collaborate with Council teams, Community and external partners, where their missions and values align with *We Make Camden* and *Libraries Do!* to ensure residents can access relevant support, information and activities.
- ✚ **Continue to use data:** tailor and measure the impact of the service and our partnerships to ensure we meet community needs.
- ✚ **Utilise the Local Studies and Archives service:** collect, preserve, make accessible, and foster interest in, the history and documentary heritage of the area today known as London Borough of Camden.

By 2031 we will have:

- ✚ **Continued our inward investment plans:** including refurbishing Kilburn Library as a key neighbourhood space.

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- ✚ **Reviewed opening hours:** assessing, within the available resource, whether a shift in the opening hours at some libraries might enhance the offer, and make the options for out of hours use by community groups and others clearer.
- ✚ **Developed a social impact assessment with the Insights, Learning, and Impact Team:** to understand and measure the impact of the events programme, and other interventions, so that the service can better demonstrate the preventative value of its offer on people's lives, communities, cultures and wellbeing.
- ✚ **Supported Inclusive Economic Growth:** including boosting the learning offer by hosting open days for employers, training and education providers, and developing financial literacy programmes with a focus on young people.
- ✚ **Delivering Camden Reading Together Strategy 2025-30:** supports the reduction in loneliness, which is a growing societal challenge, but reading engagement can offer an evidence-based solution. Approximately 1 in 5 readers cites reading as a key factor in alleviating loneliness, and libraries will play a key role.

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Libraries Do! Elevating the Basics

Elevating the foundations of the service to deliver a successful and resilient library service

What we heard:

- ✚ **The core offer:** getting the basics right and consistent across the network of libraries is vital. The [Local Government Association](#) Library Peer Challenge Report for Camden Libraries, in 2023, also reinforced this.
- ✚ **The team:** Camden Libraries is a loved and respected service with a welcoming team; the team's skills need to adapt to deliver a future proofed service which can respond to a changing world.
- ✚ **Local and national information:** libraries are a key source for accessing trusted information and help you make sense of the volume of information and misinformation in the AI world.
- ✚ **Supporting digital access:** libraries act as a first point of access for digital inclusion and support those who are digitally excluded. They are essential in providing digital support and access via public computers, free Wi-Fi and skills.
- ✚ **Learning:** it is important to have formal and informal learning opportunities in libraries.
- ✚ **Health & Wellbeing:** there is potential to develop further use of library spaces to support health and wellbeing for individuals including their mental health and resilience in communities responding to [Camden's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-30](#). Libraries can support public health, health literacy, and expand social prescribing and volunteering opportunities.

Elevating the Basics: our goals

There is more to do. Over the next 5 years we will:

- ✚ **Deliver high-quality reading choices:** ensure Camden Libraries provide a tailored, diverse and resident led reading choices offer which delivers best value for money.
- ✚ **Deliver high-quality experiences through a cultural and learning programme:** a range of activities, events, creative health experiences, exhibitions, informal and formal learning opportunities aligned with the [Universal Library Offers Calendar](#) and user feedback, so that everyone can enjoy culture and creativity, and thrive.
- ✚ **By delivering the Camden Reading Strategy 2025-30:** we will widen understanding of reading and the library space; celebrate the joy of reading and nurture lifelong learning; embed reading across council services and community spaces; improve access to reading and language development for all; promote reading to support better health and wellbeing; build skills and pathways into meaningful employment; strengthen community connections through shared reading activities.
- ✚ **Support the Camden Libraries' team:** a focused training plan to equip the team to deliver a high-quality service to residents to ensure a future proofed service that is responsive and inclusive.
- ✚ **Build on the digital offer:** to ensure residents that need digital access and support know that libraries are the place they can go to for this support.

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- ✚ **Develop the Local Studies and Archive Service:** review the current storage of collections and continue to respond to The National Archives resilience tool.
- ✚ **Implement Camden Reading Together 2025-30:** utilise the strategy to widen understanding of reading and the library space; build skills and pathways into meaningful employment; support Camden residents to live well; promote and support better health and wellbeing; nurture lifelong learning, the joy of reading, and language development.
- ✚ **Conduct access audits and introduce peer assessments:** continue to conduct access audits for library buildings as part of redevelopment projects and introduce peer assessments of spaces to inform the layout, presentation, wayfinding and signposting.

By 2031 we will have:

- ✚ **Continued to develop local library plans:** tailored to the local offer, ensuring consistency of the core offer across our network.
- ✚ **Revitalised the Camden Libraries' team's training plan:** to support the team to deliver service expectations including a robust information service with a social prescribing approach.
- ✚ **Achieved Arts Council England's Libraries Development Framework status:** demonstrating Camden Council's commitment to development, innovation, and best practice in Camden Libraries.
- ✚ **Gained The National Archive's Archive Service Accreditation:** for Camden's Local Studies and Archives service.
- ✚ **Achieved auto enrolment for library membership of all primary aged children:** with more children (aged 0-11 yrs) accessing the library offer.
- ✚ **Refreshed the Library Service's Digital Plan:** delivered a refreshed network of public computers; offering data and device banks in all libraries; explored the opportunities to offer devices for loan; reviewed our library management system and considered options to ensure the best experience for users, and that the most cost-effective model is adopted.
- ✚ **Delivered the Camden Reading Together Strategy 2025-30:** working with others to champion reading choices and informal and formal learning.

Libraries Do! Cohesion, Inclusivity and Relevance

Libraries as places of sanctuary, shaping offers to meet resident's needs and sharing spaces to connect residents of all ages and cultures

What we heard:

- ✚ **Accessibility:** Libraries should be welcoming to all and meet diverse needs.
- ✚ **Connectedness, wellbeing, and reducing loneliness:** libraries can bring people from different cultures and generations together through events, shared conversations, the exchange of hobbies, ideas and more.
- ✚ **Representation and diversity:** libraries need to continue to be shaped by the diverse communities that surround them, they should collaborate with, and be representative of, the communities they interact with through the services and collections they offer.

Cohesion, Inclusivity and Relevance: our goals

There is more to do. Over the next 5 years we will:

- ✚ **Ensure the library offer is accessible, welcoming, inclusive and representative:** working with partners to better understand needs.
- ✚ **Reflect our communities:** in the people working and volunteering in our libraries.
- ✚ **Build on our existing programme and displays:** to bring a high-quality offer across the whole borough, appealing to all ages and cultures with a focus on connecting people.
- ✚ **Position the library as a platform for dialogue:** a dynamic space where residents from all backgrounds can connect with each other and with local decision-makers.
- ✚ **Provide services that represents the cultures within Camden:** through the [Universal Library Offers Calendar](#) and user feedback, and by using data to inform the selection of resources and programming.

By 2031 we will have:

- ✚ **Achieved the Library of Sanctuary award:** celebrating Camden Libraries as a place of welcome for the wider community.
- ✚ **Created spaces in our libraries for people with specific needs:** embedded and considered differing needs when configuring spaces, choosing resources and displaying information.
- ✚ **Established clear forums for engagement and dialogue:** to celebrate our borough's rich cultural heritage and diverse voices, fostering open conversations about key issues.
- ✚ **Developed a volunteer framework and a range of volunteer roles:** for people of all ages to help them find connection, purpose and learn new skills, supporting opportunities for employment.
- ✚ **Delivered a programme of regular community days:** involving the community in stock selection to ensure the libraries collections meet community needs and made it easier for residents to make suggestions.
- ✚ **Delivered against the [Camden All Age Autism Strategy 2025-2030](#) implementation plan:** ensuring there is information about support for autistic residents and sensory packs available in all libraries and ensured our library buildings are autism friendly.

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Libraries Do! Partnerships & Outreach

Working with others to ensure relevance and meet need. We bring people, communities, and organisations together to maximize our joint abilities and talents to deliver more.

What we heard:

- ✚ **Connectors:** Camden Libraries are a trusted and valued partner locally, regionally and nationally. By continuing to be forward thinking, innovative connectors and “leading lights” in the sector, Camden Libraries are going above and beyond to support partners and the community.
- ✚ **Responsive:** Camden Libraries are responsive to partnership opportunities and ambitious in their approach to collaboration and partnership working.
- ✚ **Deepening strategic partnerships:** to achieve maximum strategic impact, it is vital that Camden Libraries can leverage internal and external support to build capacity, skills and resilience, to increase its profile, and to share best practice.

Partnerships and Outreach: our goals

There is more to do. Over the next 5 years we will:

- ✚ **Broaden collaboration and continue to build new partnerships and nurture existing relationships:** to optimise outreach and collaboration for the benefit of Camden’s residents and the wider libraries sector, working with partners who align with *Libraries Do!* we will wire libraries into Camden’s ecosystems, and at regional and national level, giving resilience and sustainability to the service.
- ✚ **Enhance Camden Libraries role in Inclusive Economic Growth:** seeking ways in which partnerships and outreach can support Camden Libraries to deliver against the Inclusive Economic Growth agenda.
- ✚ **Work with partners to explore funding opportunities:** build on Camden Libraries strengths as a trusted and valued partner and the service’s funding success to date, to leverage support and explore opportunities to bring additional funding to develop services and added value for Camden’s residents and communities.
- ✚ **By delivering Camden Reading Together 2025-30 strategy:** to build skills, confidence and community through partnership working and the council-wide promotion of reading. This approach will support Camden residents to live a good life.

By 2031 we will have:

- ✚ **Established a partnerships framework:** shared with local, regional and national partners to support the delivery of *Libraries Do!* so partners understand who we are, who we currently work with and which supports us to secure additional inward investment and resource to deliver benefit to our residents and communities.
- ✚ **A robust outreach plan to expand our audiences:** enabling connection and delivery with partners and residents, expanding our audiences and engaging with those not currently using the service, embedded outreach activities in our annual milestones, for example working with Camden’s Leisure Team to deliver the [Summer Reading Challenge](#) as part of Camden’s Parks Outreach Programme.

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- ✚ **Developed the Green Library Hub:** supported Camden's communities to take action on climate change and residents to become more involved in climate action, delivered via a programme of green activities, events and outreach led by our Green Hub co-ordinator working with our partners the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals ([CILIP](#)), the [British Library](#), [Julie's Bicycle](#), and community-based partners and evaluated by [CAG consultants](#).
- ✚ **Explored and secured funding opportunities available through Arts Council England:** achieved success with our applications to the Libraries Improvement Fund, National Lottery Project Grants and secured National Portfolio Status, enabling us to deliver more for the residents and communities of Camden.
- ✚ **Developed our approach to supporting Inclusive Economic Growth:** successfully able to demonstrate how libraries contribute to the Inclusive Economic Growth agenda.

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Libraries Do! Telling Our Story

Connecting with residents and partners in a deeper way

What we heard:

- ✚ **Better, broader and stronger promotion:** the library service holds a personal connection with people. The Camden Libraries' team need to connect directly with audiences within and outside of the library space and articulate the breadth of libraries' physical and digital offers. Social media is a key tool for promoting the service.
- ✚ **Multiple languages and accessible formats:** library collections and information should be available in multiple languages and accessible formats.
- ✚ **Library Ambassadors:** residents could be more involved. A new role of Library Ambassador could be a way to do this, as well as community and partner representation on any steering group created to take *Libraries Do!* forward.
- ✚ **Changing perceptions:** the service should speak with others, including community centres and locality groups, so that what libraries offer complements what is available elsewhere and to ensure residents needs are met.

Telling our Story: our goals

There is more to do. Over the next 5 years we will:

- ✚ **Work with our residents, communities and partners:** to tell our story, to promote our services and learn about how we can improve and develop our services.
- ✚ **Ensure the service has more exposure:** through increased advocacy, internally and externally, including direct use by the Camden Libraries' team of social media to connect in a deeper way and shift perceptions of what libraries can do.

By 2031 we will have:

- ✚ **Refreshed and further developed a clear communication plan:** improved the way we advocate and engage with people to better coordinate the production and distribution of information about what we offer, in multiple languages and accessible formats, linked to key campaigns and service offers. Activate a Camden Libraries social media account on Instagram to build direct connection with residents.
- ✚ **Developed a group of Camden Libraries Ambassadors:** involved Camden's communities and our partners to work with Camden Libraries to oversee the delivery of *Libraries Do!* and [Camden Reading Together 2025-30](#).
- ✚ **Developed a Youth Advisory Panel:** directly impacting on service design.

What will success look like?

Libraries interact with residents across different ages and backgrounds, as well as organisations and community groups across the borough. We want to assess what change has been delivered over the period of *Libraries Do!* and how libraries have an impact on people's lives in Camden.

We will gather data and upskill libraries staff to collect data to measure success and contribute to the Council's wider ambition to increase understanding of people's experience. Our metrics for success will be based on the [Good Life Camden](#) framework which describes what it means to live a good life in Camden and how that can be measured. We will use both qualitative and quantitative data collection, as well as our own administrative data, to understand the experience of general library visitors as well as specific groups, including those who might not visit libraries. We will also continue to use customer insights and feedback to shape and adapt our resources, collections and services.

Our **annual action plan** will set out how we will deliver each of the themes set out in the strategy to ensure we are on track to achieve our goals by 2031. Progress against the annual action plan will be published in an updated annual action plan to enable residents to see in one place the actions to be taken in the year, the overall progress towards the targets by 2031, and the remainder of what it to be achieved.

Libraries Do! Themes	Preliminary outcomes
<p>People and Place <i>Putting Camden Libraries at the heart of their local communities.</i></p>	<p>More visits to our libraries We will aim for a 10% increase across digital and physical visits by 2031.</p> <p>More community involvement. We will have more volunteers and volunteer hours per year by 2031.</p> <p>Improved library spaces.</p> <p>Using data to ensure we are making an impact and meeting needs.</p>
<p>Elevating the Basics <i>Elevating the foundations of the service to deliver a successful and resilient library service</i></p>	<p>Opening times are reflective of the communities they serve, within the available resource.</p> <p>The Camden Libraries' Team has the skills they require to meet the needs of residents.</p> <p>There is a clear plan for the digital offer.</p>
<p>Cohesion, Inclusivity and Relevance <i>Libraries as places of sanctuary, shaping offers to meet resident's needs and sharing spaces to connect residents of all ages and cultures</i></p>	<p>More Connectedness. We will monitor how people feel and interact in the libraries, and how the libraries act as a space to connect across different backgrounds and population groups.</p> <p>Collections will be shaped by residents through community days giving residents the opportunity to contribute to book selections.</p>

<p>Partnerships & Outreach <i>Working with others to ensure relevance and meet need</i></p>	<p>More engagement through Cultural experiences. The number of people attending events will increase by 5% by 2031 and levels of satisfaction about what events are on offer across Camden Libraries.</p> <p>Contributed to inclusive economic growth through pathways to employment including a range of volunteer roles: for people of all ages to help them find connection, purpose and learn new skills, supporting young people in partnership with the Apex Project and through informal and formal learning opportunities.</p>
<p>Telling our story <i>Connecting with residents and partners in a deeper way</i></p>	<p>Telling our story in a more amplified and strategic way.</p> <p>Involved the community through Ambassador roles</p>

Get involved

Your voice

Your voice should continue to shape the services and decisions that affect your life. Participation in Camden is about creating meaningful opportunities for you to lead change, hold us accountable, and see your ideas activated. We will build an approach to participation which will ensure that Camden Libraries:

- provide safe, welcoming environments where you feel comfortable sharing your views and ideas.
- enable you to express your ideas in accessible and inclusive ways tailored to your needs.
- actively listen and act on your contributions so you can see that your input leads to meaningful change.

To achieve this, we will form a Libraries Ambassadors' Group who will work with us as we deliver the *Libraries Do!* strategy over the next five years. We may develop a group for each library to help create a local approach.

Get involved with your local library

There are already so many great ways you can get involved with your local library:

- Find out what's going on at your local library by dropping in and speaking with a member of the Camden Libraries' team.
- Have an idea for an activity or book you'd like to see in the library? Chat with one of the Camden Libraries' team. We are open to new ideas and activities.
- Try something new at your local library – you could try borrowing an eBook, check what services you can access or find out what events are coming up.
- Think about volunteering at your local library – it's a wonderful way to meet people, make friends and feel connected to your community.

Appendix A

Get in touch: libraries@camden.gov.uk

Check out our website at www.camden.gov.uk/libraries

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