

Response to Consultation on Essex Future Library Services Strategy

Compiled by the Essex County UNISON Branch

**Introduction**

UNISON is the trade union representing library staff in Essex County Council. This response is made in line with our responsibility to represent the views of our members, but also to restate our belief in the community values that libraries uphold.

UNISON has visited all Essex County Council libraries in an attempt to speak to as many staff as possible. We have also written to our members to gather their views on the proposed cuts to library services in Essex. Some of their comments are included anonymously at the end of this submission.

Books, education and knowledge are at the heart of libraries. During this process UNISON has discovered that libraries offer so much more. Much of the ECC report focuses on fewer books being borrowed, but this is only one measure of how libraries are used. They are an essential part of local communities.

One of the recurring things that staff told us was the number of library users that complete benefit applications or job applications using the computers. These are Essex residents that do not have IT access at home and this is the only way to apply for jobs. This is especially so in the more rural areas where there is not a local Job Centre Plus. The same applies to Universal Credit.

Libraries are also about somewhere for the most vulnerable to go. This may be the elderly attending Knit and Natter groups, or parents attending Rhyme Time. These are residents that do not fit the ECC report definition of a library user because they may not borrow books while they are there.

This is not a decision that should be made on statistics but on the community values that libraries uphold.

**The Strategy**

The draft strategy begins with a page on why a new strategy is necessary. It remarks that ECC has continued to invest in the service. This is, at best, economical with the truth particularly bearing in mind that the book and resources fund has been cut in probably every year for the last ten. Even when it was maintained at the previous year’s notional level, cuts were made to enable other commitments to be achieved or shortfalls to be made up. Staff has been cut, not just in libraries but in the ‘support' areas which enable the service to be developed, new ideas to be identified and implemented, and in ensuring that service and stock is appropriate.

There is also reference to financial pressures. We note that Cabinet members did not accept (publicly on BBC radio in November) that financial savings were the reason for the strategy. There is reference to new and more efficient ways of working. We believe that the way to develop these is to invest in the service and not cut it. Similarly, ECC Libraries has always been innovative in developing technology to assist in delivering the service. This should continue. However it does not mean that the physical side of the library service should be diminished. We accept that use is changing but the strategy appears to ignore the fact that one of the ways in which this is happening is that people want to make more use of library buildings as community foci, and that such things as Universal Credit are putting even more demand in the direction of the service.

The strategy has five priorities and we will comment on each of these in turn.

**Put books and reading at the heart of what we do**

Books - We agree with all of the words in the paragraph with this heading under the Core offer section. What it does not cover is how this will be done with an ever-diminishing number of experienced staff both to monitor stock use etc and to be aware and involved in developments in this area outside the confines of ECC.

**E-library and online services**

It is telling that these two things are conflated. The development of online services is to be supported. E-books and e-audio should be developed as well but there appears no cognizance of the fact that, for instance, the main publishing houses (Hachette etc) are not making their stock available to public libraries, or are, limiting the use (Harper Collins require the book to be re-acquired after 26 loans.) In addition Essex has already suffered from the incompatibility of the different platforms for this stock which is why it now only has one supplier.

**Digital access**

Again, we support this but if 25 libraries close and another 19 may not offer internet access (or if they do, not to the same extent) how will residents who have no electronic devices (because they have not chosen / been able to get the skills to use them, or because they cannot afford them) use the service? Even if the computers still at one of the Tier 1 or 2 libraries, getting there may be a much bigger issue than it would if one could walk around the corner.

**People**

We support the idea but there is no indication of how it is to be achieved. Staff working in libraries are busy (despite the Cabinet member’s remarks about ‘standing around’) and in any case to do the training would take them out of the library itself – so who would be available to assist the public then?

There have been volunteers working in ECC libraries for many years and we do not propose that they all leave. However, we are strongly of the view that they should not be asked to do work which till now has been done by paid staff. Even if they are not doing this kind of thing, getting enough volunteers and training, managing them to do even some of the tasks that it appears they will be asked to undertake, will itself require resources. This goes just as much and possibly more for volunteers who may be recruited if any or all of the tier 3 libraries are run by the community. ECC should recognise that the support given to Springfield library has had to be much greater than the original plans and there is no reason why this won’t be the case elsewhere. Or perhaps it will be reduced if Tier 3 libraries are not part of the statutory service.

**Activities**

We welcome the statement that employees will continue to deliver the activities listed (and no doubt others.) During our visits to libraries we compiled a list of what goes on (see appendix.) This is unlikely to be a complete list and should not be news to ECC. However, continuing to run all these with fewer staff seems at best a huge leap of faith.

**Learners**

Continuing what already happens is fine but who will signpost these people in the places where libraries have closed? ECC is trying to work in a joined-up fashion – links with Adult Community Learning etc would surely enable both sides to do more.

**Space and place**

Investment to provide (or improve?) these is welcome. However, it leaves unresolved the fact that if you can’t get to the place it doesn’t matter how nice and fresh it is. We note that even tier 1 & 2 libraries may in due course be sited elsewhere. This is not in itself a bad thing - co-location is already happening in a number of places in Essex. However, re-siting or co-locating other services in existing buildings should be done in a way that ensures that space for, and quantity of, bookstock and other core library services is not displaced by other users. We understand that the ground floor of Harlow library is to be occupied by a bank while the library service moves upstairs. If true, this sounds like an egregious example of such ‘downsizing'.

We note that amongst other things, access to physical and digital newspapers, and to online courses are to be reviewed. Given the statements in the Core offer about the digital offer and on learners, this surely should have been part of the work done before this consultation was launched and should be done before any final plan is determined.

**The Tiered approach**

As will be seen above, we are not in favour of downgrading, let alone closing any library branches. Libraries have for many years been grouped together for different purposes (e.g. determining levels of stock, opening hours etc) and this is reasonable. However, we cannot endorse closures. The fact that the 19 community run libraries will not be part of the statutory provision means that, in our view ECC will be failing its statutory obligation. If they were part of that obligation they would need proper resourcing. So we do not support in any way, the community (volunteer) run approach.

We note that it seems that Tier 3 and 4 library buildings would not be available to the communities that might wish to run a library out of them (whether we support it or not.) This implies that part of the strategy is a cash raising plan to use the receipts made from sale of the buildings to defray costs such as redundancy, or to bail out other services.

**Resources**

There are four bullet points in this page detailing ideas for supporting required resources. Applying for grants is long-established, as is income generation, though in the latter case care needs to be taken not to do so in such a way as to kill off the service by raising prices to unaffordable or unappealing levels.

Encouraging local fundraising appears to go alongside community run libraries which we oppose anyhow. If it is to be used to support Tier 1& 2 libraries (or any that are retained if option 1 is chosen) it must be seen as an extra and not become, for instance, a way of funding adequate stock supplies.

Moving to lower cost delivery channels seems fine on the page but once again takes no notice of those who cannot access such channels. These people must be protected.

**ELibrary**

We do not need to say much under this heading, having commented on it above. However it shows the ignorance of the compiler of the report that it includes the sentence: ‘bringing e-content such as eBooks into the main library catalogue so that all resources can be searched and accessed in one place’. This has been the case since ECC first took on e-books. The problem once again has been lack of resources to add the catalogue records or create them in the few instances where the supplier does not do so.

**Smart Libraries**

A library without staff is at best only half a library. More important in many, if not all staffless libraries of which we are aware, children are unable to access them unless in accompanied (and thus let in) by an adult. If Essex plans to use this model its commitment to its young people’s ability to study in peace and improve their literacy etc, will surely suffer.

**Opening hours**

In the same way that closing or removing libraries from the statutory obligation will inevitably see a decrease in use, reducing opening hours in the libraries that remain will do the same.

**Employees, volunteers, Customer, community involvement, community run libraries**
We do not need to add much to what we have said above, However we agree that ‘libraries act as community hubs; places where people socialise, volunteer, access vital community services through partners and exchange information and ideas. We will provide vibrant, accessible spaces to enable communities to prosper.’ What we cannot accept is that this needs to rely on the community coming forward to maintain a popular service. We reiterate that investment is needed for staff to go out and sell the service – and in some cases deliver at least some thing in non-library spaces.

**What does good look like?**

* *Overall use of library services, whether online or in person, increases.* This beggars belief. With nearly half as many buildings, fewer opening hours, fewer staff and more distance to be able to reach a library, we cannot see how this can possibly be achieved.
* *smart technology and working in partnership to maximise opening hours means people can access libraries at times that suit them.* See above concerning children’s access when there are no staff on the premises
* *we have made the service financially sustainable.* How does that work? You cannot charge for lending books. This goal appears to mean that someone will count meaningless beans.
* *customers understand the core library offer and make good use of it, as measured by customer surveys and user insight*. Will that include non-users and work on how to attract them to use the service?
* *customers receive consistently good service across all library services, as measured by reported satisfaction rates in regular CIPFA surveys.* To our knowledge this would mean a continuation of current practice
* *we know what our customers need and target books and materials to meet those needs.* With fewer staff and lower resources fund how is this to be done?
* *the service is economic, efficient and effective.* Three buzzwords which if prefaced by ‘in’ or ‘un’ would point up the lack of meaning.
* *libraries are continuing to help create great places to grow up, live and work and to help people get the best start and age well.* Good but how will they do this if they are miles from the nearest library and can’t get there?
* *we regularly monitor how the service is meeting needs and have accurate information to enable us to measure the impact and outcomes.* Again, one would hope this already happens.
* *income from activities helps reduce costs or enhance the service we provide.* We repeat that ECC need to ensure that they do not drive people away by introducing or increasing charges
* *the service is reaching new communities and bringing in new customers.* We fail to see how this will happen with fewer staff in libraries and in the erstwhile support services to actually do the work.
* *libraries help people to help themselves and live full and independent lives.* But only if they can get there - Universal Credit and Job-seekers Allowance applicants beware.
* *we have reduced costs and increase effectiveness through co-location with community-based services such as Job Centres, Citizens Advice Bureau, Post Offices, other voluntary and community groups.* But not at the cost of less space, facility and visibility for the library.

**Comments from UNISON members:**

Libraries are a lifeline for the elderly, the lonely and new parents. Their value here is inestimable. They know that there is always someone to talk to and pass the time of day with or signpost to other services they may need.

I wonder how a volunteer would cope with some of the issue s we deal with e.g. assisting people with mental health issues, asking  people to leave  for inappropriate behaviour, calling an ambulance for a girl collapsed on drugs, handling aggressive behaviour etc.

When the library I work in became a Community Hub the idea was that community groups could come in and a lot of services would be available under one roof, we had stop smoking clinics, weight management clinics pension information, citizens advice, and careers to name but a few. But as the powers that be put up the price for renting the areas so they left. Also we lost a lot of book stock to make room for some of these services whilst at the same time having the book fund slashed.

The shelves in the adult library have not been changed in 30 years, the interiors/exteriors are drab and uninviting as a result of years of chronic under-funding working on the basis of underfund, under stock, reduction of library use, therefore underfund under stock, the cycle continues. Instead of investing and innovating we have been systematically run down, so people don’t want to use the service so they can get away with, shutting libraries, in a few years they will be spending vast amounts of money more than the paltry £2m the want to save, dealing with social isolation and loneliness.

Not every person can deal with the latest technology and there needs to be places that can help to facilitate computer usage, we could be used for so much, meeting places, weight, stop smoking clinics, flu jab clinics. Mobile police stations, public information, benefits, cafes, craft groups, toddlers groups, theatre groups etc the list could be endless depending on space and facilities.

**APPENDIX**

Visits to Tier 4 Libraries

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| LIBRARY NAME | INFORMATION COLLECTED |
| BROOMFIELD | The following groups are run here - Weekly Baby and Toddler Rhyme Time, Weekly Stay and Play Sessions for Babies and Toddlers, Monthly Coffee and Crime Book Group, Monthly Block Builders Construction Club. |
| BUCKHURST HILL | The following activities take place – Rhyme time and Book Clubs. Additional services available here include battery recycling, printing and photocopying, room hire which is used by local groups. |
| CHIGWELL | Activities here include - Musical Babies Class, Book groups, Photocopying and Printing, Meeting place used by tutors with excluded children, school visits, nursery visits, blue badge appointment service, charities use the building, battery recycling. |
| DANBURY | Regular activities include: Rhyme time, Photocopying / Printing facility, Book groups, Children’s centre use the facilities, Craft sessions, Basic computing courses, Health visitors use for weigh in, Parish councillor surgery held here, Recycling centre, Schools use it for book club, Schools visits take place here.  |
| DEBDEN | Activities include - Weekly games afternoon, Weekly Baby and Toddler Rhyme Time, Weekly Toddler Toy Time. |
| FRYERNS | Activities include Create and Craft, Rhyme time babies, Knitting group, Children’s creative activities, Recycling bags, Internet usage and printing, Job Club - Signposting and CVs, Book Sales, E-learning, Housebound book service, Schools visits, visits from ECL and Charles Harper House. Housebound service run by six volunteers. Small electrical and battery recycling. Library space hire. |
| GALLEYWOOD | Regular activities include: Rhyme time, Stay and Play, Adult Craft and knitting sessions, Cribbage group, Book Groups, Creative Writing Club, Knit and Natter, Informed Galleywood local information, Children’s Centre, Friday Frolics Puzzles and Games, French and Scrabble groups, Parish Councillors monthly surgery, ad hock school and nursery visits. |
| GREAT WAKERING | Activities include baby and toddler groups, knitting group, Two book groups, Home library service run by volunteers, Schools Visits, Printing, Copying, Room Hire, battery recycling. |
| HATFIELD PEVEREL | Activities include Printing and Photocopying, Recycling point, Book Groups, Room and space hire.  |
| HOLLAND ON SEA | Regular activities include Baby & Toddler clubs, Cooking clubs, Rhyme time, Craft events, Recycling batteries and small electrical goods, supplying recycling sacks. |
| HULLBRIDGE | Activities include - Cribbage evenings, Tablet and Laptop IT sessions, Home library service (volunteers), rhyme time, Knitter Knatter group, and Art gallery. Battery and small electrical recycling. |
| KELVEDON | Staff would not talk to a trade union after being advised by manager not to. However website advises that the following activities are available - Weekly Baby and Toddler Rhyme Time session, Monthly Children’s Craft sessions. This is also the location of the Feering and Kelvedon Local History Museum on Saturday Mornings. |
| MARK HALL | The following activities are available Weekly Baby and Toddler group and Monthly reading group. |
| NORTH WEALD | Weekly Baby and Toddler Rhyme Times and Knit Lit groups are held as well as access to computers, printing and photocopying. |
| PRETTYGATE | 80 people use the home library service, free computers, printing and photocopying service. Toddler Rhyme Time, tutors bring pupils in for 1-1 sessions, recycling materials depot, charity card stall and toy library. Registrars use the facility, drop in sessions for borough council are held here. |
| SIBLE HEDINGHAM | Weekly code club and weekly toddler story time and craft club is held. |
| SILVER END | Weekly Baby and Toddler Rhyme times are held here. |
| SOUTHMINSTER | Activities include weekly Block Builders Construction Club and Baby and Toddler Rhyme Times. |
| STANSTED | Activities include rhyme time, book clubs, school visits.  |
| STOCK | Activities include schools visits, reminiscence club, Summer Holiday read, art gallery, recycling bags and batteries. Nearest libraries Billericay and Galleywood not accessible by foot as no footpaths. |
| THAXTED | This building is the library, parish council, CAB and food bank for Thaxted. If funding goes everything will disappear. The office is used by Uttlesford Council and it is a tourist information office. Home library services are run from Saffron Walden. Help is given to visitors with printing, job search form filling, computers and Wi-Fi. Room can be rented and hearing aid battery recycling can be done here. Also place where residents can collect and leave emergency care line equipment. If this library shuts nearest library is 6 miles away. |
| TYE GREEN | Additional activities – Rhyme time, Three school class visits happen on most days, Help with Blue Badge forms, printing, photocopying, Wi-Fi, job seekers assistance, battery recycling, Family History group, Home library service is run from Staple Tye library. Weekly visits by Royal Association for the Deaf. Provide rent space from library for healthy living sessions, excluded children have tutoring here. |
| VANGE | Hearing aid battery recycling, recycling bags collection point, Book Club, Basic IT skills, Christmas crafts, Hearing Help (hearing aid support), Summer reading event for children, Job club and CVs, Blue Badge application support, Baby and Toddler groups, Local schools visits, Peabody Trust surgery, Microbit lending, Internet, Printing and copying, homework space for children and students. |
| WICKHAM BISHOPS | Weekly baby and toddler rhyme time and monthly parish council services take place here. |
| WRITTLE | Building left in trust by wealthy villager and stated must be used for community education purposes. Local MP holds regular surgeries there. Other activities include Reading Groups, Tea Mornings, Toddler Groups, Armchair Yoga, Evening Cinema, Chess club, Craft afternoons. Mencap run the library on Monday afternoons. |

Visits to Tier 3 Libraries

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| LIBRARY | INFORMATION COLLECTED |
| BRIGHTLINGSEA | Activities: Help with IT run by volunteer, Rhyme time and baby and toddler group, traditional board games club, block builders construction club, local councillor drop in sessions, half term events for children, craft events, school visits, winterfest events for mental health awareness, 11 book clubs, music club, teachers from local school use library to take out books for school lessons because of lack of funding available in local schools for books, tutor and pupil sessions. Parents advise their children the library is a place of safety and to go to as there there is no longer a local police station. There are no computer facilities anywhere else in town and the bus service is very poor. |
| COGGESHALL | Activities include Baby weigh, code club, community tea that links up with the community bus for collections, knit and coffee, free IT coaching, home library services, school visits, summer reading challenge, school holiday events, rhyme time, cheeky monkeys rhymes stories and crafts. |
| EARLS COLNE | Activities include rhyme time and baby and toddler, book groups, recycling and 1-1 computer support. |
| FRINTON | Baby and toddler Rhyme Time sessions take place and learn my way IT courses. |
| GREAT PARNDON | Baby and toddler Rhyme Time sessions take place, Monthly councillor drop in sessions and a monthly chess club. |
| GREAT TARPOTS | Knitting group, ancestry group, Two baby and toddler rhyme time groups, Class visits from 8 catchment schools, Help with Blue Badge form completion, recycling bags, recycling of batteries, printing, internet, Four book groups, housebound library service run by volunteers, Natwest bank drop in surgery for public, Summer Holiday read, Puzzle swap. |
| HADLEIGH | Poetry group, puzzle group, Castle Crafters, Games club, CAV (volunteer) group, 15 reading groups, book club, Mother and Toddler, Mini-Professor rents space, Three playgroups, Three orchestral groups, Knitter Knatter group, widows and widower groups, computer courses for elderly. Social workers meet children here, scouts do their reading badge, people with learning disabilities use computers here, staff help public complete disabled badge forms, printing copying, school visits, petitions, recycling of batteries and small electrical items. OU courses, archive groups, magazines and social services leaflets. |
| HOCKLEY | IT help, IT taster sessions, Baby and Toddler rhyme time, Knit and Knatter, Christmas cards, newspapers, internet, printing and copying  |
| INGATESTONE | Activities available included printing and photocopying. Battery recycling, hearing aid battery service, space hire, rhyme time, baby and toddler, book groups. |
| MANNINGTREE | Activities include school class visits, family history sessions, Eleven book groups, order books in for WEA groups, pick up point for Great Bromley library, recycling facilities for small electrical and batteries, bus pass forms assistance, charity Christmas card shop, museum run by local history group three times a week for two hour sessions, photocopying and printing |
| SHENFIELD | Knitter knatter, rhyme time, internet, job applications, help with Blue Badge completion, newspapers, school visits, Summer Holiday read, homework clubs. |
| SOUTH BENFLEET | Births, marriages and deaths registrars appointments in rented space, photocopying, printing, internet, baby and Toddler group, baby massage, Peabody Housing surgery, PROVIDE smoking cessation, tutoring for excluded children, Job search, housebound book service, Lego club, Newspapers, Help with Blue Badge completion, schools visit once per school per term, nurseries visit, Summer Holiday reading event, art gallery, Benflett archive, recycling bags, book groups, visits from special schools. |
| SPRINGFIELD | This is a library that is already run by volunteers with no paid staff and as such opening hours depend on availability of volunteers. However there is a recycling point for small electrical items and batteries and recycling bags collection, printing and photocopying, |
| STANWAY | The following takes place - Weekly baby and toddler rhyme time sessions |
| TIPTREE | Activities include knitting groups, book groups, puzzle exchange, recycling, printing and photocopying and home library service |
| WALTON ON NAZE | Activities include school visits, councillor surgery, carers first, teen talk for troubled teenagers, recycling point, homeless and addicts use the library regularly as a safe place, home library service for 20 users. The bus service is very poor in the area so will be difficult for people to go elsewhere. Forms such as bus passes and blue badge are done here |
| WEST CLACTON | Activities include Baby and toddler rhyme time, dementure care and craft group, family history group, knit and natter, nurseries take the children there by bus, book groups, work experience with adjoining college, tutors and pupils, autistic school regularly visit. Not used like a normal community library as attached to a college.  |
| WEST MERSEA | Website advises the following takes place - Weekly block builders club and weekly Stretch and Tone classes |
| WIVENHOE | Activities include book groups, rhyme time, baby and toddler, recycling, printing and photocopying knit and natter, craft sessions |

Visits to Tier 2 Libraries

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| LIBRARY | INFORMATION COLLECTED |
| BURNHAM ON CROUCH | Activities include rhyme time for toddlers, book groups, home library service for approximately 10 users, recycling point for small electrical and batteries and recycling bags, photocopying and printing |
| CHIPPING ONGAR | Activities include tutoring daily, home library service, rhyme time, baby and toddlers, bus timetables, photocopying/printing, IT tuition by volunteers, Staff help community with online applications service, Lego club, book groups, CAB drop in once a month |
| DUNMOW | Activities include rhyme time, book groups, recycling, printing and photocopying |
| EPPING | Services here include Support 4 Sight group, Brambles Wellbeing Hub run by Virgin, Games mornings, Registrar of Births Marriages and Deaths, book groups, printing photocopying and internet/Wi-Fi, battery recycling, room hire, recycling sacks.  |
| GREAT BADDOW | The following services available - Basic computer coaching, Weekly Welcome new baby and you, donations for the rucksack project. |
| GREENSTEAD | The following services are available - Weekly baby and toddler rhyme time |
| HALSTEAD | The following services available - Weekly baby and toddler Rhyme Time sessions, monthly book club, BDC verification service. |
| HARWICH | Activities include Home library service, book groups, Barnardos centre works out of the library, rhyme time, box office works out of the library, work club, school visits, recycling, and home tutoring by tutors. Addicts and homeless use the library as a safe space |
| LAINDON | Activities include school holiday read, IT problem solving run by a volunteer, art gallery space, Peabody Trust surgery (rents space), recycling small electrical items, knitting group, playgroup 0-5 years, Home Library service, Blue Badge Assessments (space is rented out), Internet/Wi-Fi, community archive, ESOL, community archive technical group and school visits four times a week. |
| NORTH MELBOURNE | The following services available - Weekly baby and toddler rhyme time and community tea time sessions |
| OLD HARLOW | Activities include, rhyme time, book groups, battery recycling, printing/photocopying |
| PITSEA | Printing, copying, internet, space hire, hearing aid battery collection, recycling bags collection, room hire |
| ROCHFORD | Ancestry, Baby and toddler group, free tablet tuition, small electronics recycling, Block builders construction for kids, Learn my Way computer instruction, Peabody drop in (rent space), Family history club, Job club, knit and knatter, Registry of Births Marriages and Deaths, Blue Badge assessments (rent space), Local councillors surgery, Police drop in surgery, home library service run by volunteers. |
| SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS | Weekly work club and Rhyme time session take place. |
| WALTHAM ABBEY | The following services are available Weekly board games club, weekly toddler rhyme time sessions and Peabody drop in session |

Visits to Tier 1 Libraries

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| LIBRARY | INFORMATION COLLECTED |
| BASILDON | Rhyme time, book clubs, craft events, IT support, printing and photocopying, cafe, sensory wall, battery recycling, registration services by appointment, CAB, jobcentre plus and carers first |
| BILLERICAY | Baby and toddler rhyme time, Rucksack Project for the homeless, Basic computer coaching, book groups, printing copying, Wi-Fi, Hearing aid batteries, battery recycling, space hire, gallery space, recycling sacks and caddies, CAB, Registration of births marriages and deaths, and cinema. |
| BRAINTREE | The following is available - Printing and photocopying, computers and Wi-Fi, room space for hire, small electrical and battery recycling, scanner, Braintree council recycling sacks, registration services, baby and toddler rhyme time, Braintree book talk, Essex sight audio book group. |
| BRENTWOOD | Activities include book groups, rhyme time, printing copying and Wi-Fi, Registration of Births Marriages and Deaths, recycling sacks Book Rest Cafe (ECL) room hire and gallery space. |
| CANVEY ISLAND | Activities include weekly reading group and monthly book talk group and weekly craft group |
| CHELMSFORD | Printing and photocopying, computers and Wi-Fi, hearing aid battery service, small electrical and battery recycling point, scanner, kinetic bike(charge your mobile by pedal power), sensory wall, space for hire, council clear recycling sacks, registration by appointment, Chelmsford central child and family wellbeing hub, baby and toddler rhyme time, code club |
| CLACTON | Printing and copying and computer and Wi-Fi, it support, cafe, children’s library that does baby and toddler group, rhyme time, craft events, Clacton and District local history society exhibition, Teen talk every Tues, Weds & Thurs, rucksack project, book clubs, home library service |
| COLCHESTER | Printing and photocopying, computers and IT support, battery recycling, cafe, sensory wall, registration services by appointment, council services, CAB, Community 360, welcome new baby and you, Dedham art society exhibitions, rhyme time, baby and toddler, school visits, book groups, craft events |
| HARLOW | Activities available include Baby and Toddler rhyme time, Peabody Trust clinic, Rucksack project for homeless, RAD info sessions, book groups, printing copying and Wi-Fi, gallery space. |
| LOUGHTON | Activities include baby rhyme time, CAB, Book Rest cafe, book groups, printing copying and Wi-Fi, battery recycling sensory wall, room hire, gallery space, National Jazz archive, Loughton Town Council, recycling sacks. |
| MALDON | The following is available - Knitter Knatter, Aphasia group drop in, Maldon Children's Centre, Births Marriages and Death Registration, book groups, printing copying Wi-Fi, room hire, battery recycling and laptop support sessions. |
| RAYLEIGH | Additional activities include Baby and Toddler rhyme time, Local tuition groups, weekly coding club |
| SAFFRON WALDEN | ERO archive access point, printing and photocopying, battery recycling and small electrical recycling, space for hire, food donation point, basic computer coaching for beginners, lets draw monthly art club, story time for preschool 2+, rhyme time baby and toddlers, craft events |
| WICKFORD | Activities include Baby and Toddler rhyme time , Crochet group, printing copying and Wi-Fi, book groups |
| WITHAM | Printing and copying, small electrical and battery recycling, computers and Wi-Fi, kinetic bike(charge your mobile by pedal power) space for hire, recycling bags, inclusive communication Essex, Colchester institute learning shop, registration services by appointment, Braintree council benefit verifications, baby and toddler rhyme time, block builders construction club, craft events |