Birmingham City Council

Help us to shape the future of Birmingham Libraries

Consultation Survey Analysis

February 2017

Version 1.0

Produced by the Strategic Research Team, BCC

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1. Executive Summary

Birmingham City Council held a public consultation to gather the public's views on the proposed changes to its Community Library Services, between 25th October 2016 and 27th January 2017. This report presents the main findings from the consultation survey, which had **1,947 responses.**

The survey was open to all of the public and not designed to be statistically representative of Birmingham's population; it reflects the views of the people who chose to respond. 92% of the respondents were library users, so views of people who don't use libraries will largely not be captured.

1.1 How libraries are used and what they should do

- The majority of respondents (56%) use a Birmingham library service several times a month, and mostly borrow/ reserve/ read books and find information.
- Most walk to use the services, and travel 2 miles or less to their preferred library.
- Morning and afternoons, and Saturdays are the most popular times for using a library.
- Less than a quarter say that hiring meeting rooms or volunteering opportunities are important functions of a library. Borrowing books is still seen as the most important.
- The unsuitability of current opening times was a common theme – this was the main reason why respondents hadn't used a library and when asked what would encourage them to use a library more, better opening times was mentioned a lot. Thursdays, weekends, mornings and evenings were popular in terms of preferred opening times, and many commented that they wanted them open as long as possible and to be flexible to meet the needs and lifestyles of users.
- Other ways which would encourage more use include better or more library book stock, activities and events for all but especially for children, and drinks facilities or coffee shops.

1.2 Library of Birmingham website

- Nearly a third of respondents have never used the library website.
- The most popular reasons for not using the website were that they do not want or need to use it (40%) or they did not know the website existed (36%).
- Features that would encourage more use include one catalogue for books and E-books, personalised book recommendations and children's online reading challenges.

1.3 Views on the tiered model of proposals

- More respondents disagree than agree with the various aspects of the proposals, particularly the proposed changes to the opening times. 63% disagree with the proposals overall.
- More agree than disagree with the library option statements, particularly 'it is better to keep a library open with reduced hours, than to close it' (87% agree total).
- The option statement with the least agreement is 'library services do not have to be delivered from the current library building if a better property solution exists' (38% agree total).
- 44% say the proposed opening times affect their ability to use library services a great deal, and 31% say a little. 14% say not at all.

- 45% disagree with the £1 reservation charge, whilst 39% agree.
- Overall, 43% respondents disagree that the proposals protect a future for Library Service, compared to 24% who agree.
- There was overwhelming opposition to community library changes, stating that they undermine the important role of library in the local communities, with respondents concerned for vulnerable groups not having adequate access to a library. There were strong feelings that libraries should be invested in, rather than cut, and that the council had a 'duty' to run a fully funded library service.
- Respondents felt that libraries were not protected by the proposals. Rather, respondents feared that the proposals would make libraries difficult to access and library users would be discouraged to visit a library.
- Sutton library's closure had much opposition. This was the most frequently mentioned library in the consultation. It is considered a major asset to the community and any mentioned that if Sutton library closes, accessing an alternative library would be too inconvenient and impossible for many people. There was also some opposition to the proposed closure of Aston library.
- Library users valued the knowledge and friendliness of library staff, which could not be provided by technology.
- Some agreed with the proposals; although often reluctant and unhappy about the cuts, they thought that the proposals would cause the least damage to the service.
- There were also respondents who made suggestions on how the library could make further savings, through income generation or shared services.
- Some stated that there wasn't enough information for them to make any comments on the proposals.

1.4 Community-led libraries

- Of those who can contribute to delivering library services in their local library, most can provide up to 4 hours per week.
- 65% would like more information or details of who to contact about being involved in delivering services. 38% say nothing would encourage them to support delivering services.
- The top two options that should be considered by the council are 'Sharing library space with other services' (47%), and 'Partnering with local groups to lead and develop the libraries offer' (37%).
- There was a strong consensus that libraries should be run by professional staff that have the skills, experience, and expertise to run the service. Some would only volunteer if libraries were going to be closed and disagreed with volunteering if it meant making library staff redundant.
- Many respondents did not support using volunteers and stated that the council have a statutory duty to provide library services for local communities, that library services are a public service, and therefore the council should be responsible for delivering these services.

It is important that the Library Service takes on board the findings and explore further the concerns raised, provide more information so that people are better informed, and try and reduce the impact of any changes to specific groups. Where suggestions have been made, these could be looked into further, by engaging with local communities and working with them to find appropriate solutions.

2. Introduction

Birmingham City Council held a public consultation to gather the public's views on the proposed changes to its Community Library Services, between 25th October 2016 and 27th January 2017.

As part of this consultation, an online survey via the council's Be Heard consultation and engagement platform, and paper copies of the survey, were the main channel for the public to respond to the consultation and comment on the proposed changes.

The survey also asked about current library use and feedback on services, as well as suggestions for improving aspects of the libraries. The survey also provided the opportunity for individuals or groups to register their interest to run library services in their local community.

This report is an analysis of the survey responses. These findings will form part of the insight gathered by the Library Service during the consultation period, including public meetings and a survey for children, to support Cabinet and Senior Managers in their decisions on the future of the service.

2.1 Representativeness and consultation approach

The consultation survey was open to all of the public; it was not designed to be statistically representative of the Birmingham population. Therefore, it is important to highlight that the results will largely only reflect the views of those who chose to respond.

However, alongside this survey there were also six focus groups consisting of both library users and non-library users across different demographics groups. The aim of the focus groups was to gain a richer understanding of the potential impact of the proposed changes on specific groups.

2.2 Format of report

All questions were optional. Not all of the respondents answered all questions, so the number of respondents varies per question. The percentages are based on the total number of respondents to the question, not the consultation overall; i.e. respondents who did not provide a response to the question are excluded when calculating percentages.

For some questions, respondents could choose more than one answer, so the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Tables with all of the counts, percentages, and number of respondents who did not provide a response to each question in the survey are in Appendix 1.

3. Total Responses and Demographics of Respondents

There were **1,947 responses** to the consultation survey.

The majority of the respondents are residents of Birmingham (92%) and library users (92%).

Table 1:

Respondent Type (can choose more than one)	Number of respondents	% of total respondents
Library user	1,775	91.8%
Resident of Birmingham	1,771	91.6%
Represent a community group	82	4.2%
Other	73	3.8%
Represent a voluntary organisation	59	3.1%
Birmingham library staff	53	2.7%
Represent/own a local business	44	2.3%
Library Service at Home user	43	2.2%
Represent a school	32	1.7%
Represent a public sector organisation	26	1.3%
Volunteer at a Birmingham library	20	1.0%
Individual interested in running a library	19	1.0%
Birmingham councillor	14	0.7%
Represent a group interested in running a library	10	0.5%
Parish/town councillor	6	0.3%
MP	1	0.1%

8% (145 responses) were by employees of the council, and 1% of responses were by councillors.

3.1: Age, Gender and Sexual Orientation

Table 2: Age of respondents

Age	% of total respondents	% Birmingham population (ONS mid-year 2015 estimates)
Under 18	1.0%	25.5%
18-24	2.2%	12.3%
25-34	9.8%	15.3%
35-44	21.5%	12.7%
45-54	15.0%	12.0%
55-64	17.8%	9.0%
65-74	20.9%	6.7%
75-84	8.6%	4.5%
85+	3.1%	1.9%

Respondents are generally aged 35-74yrs. However, more than twice the proportion of people aged 65+yrs (34%) responded compared to the Birmingham resident population (13%).
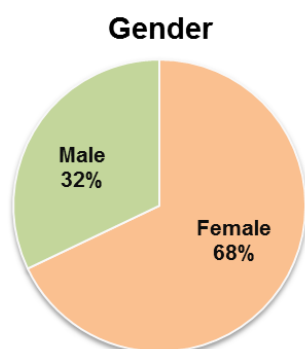
Figure 1:

Gender

Figure 2:

Sexual Orientation
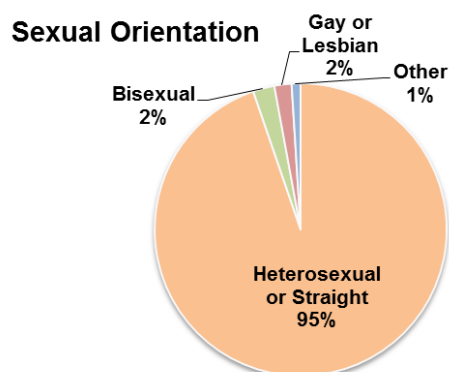
Around two-thirds of respondents are female.

The majority are heterosexual or straight.

3.2: Ethnicity and Religion

Figure 3:

Religion

- % of Total respondents
- % Birmingham population (Census 2011)
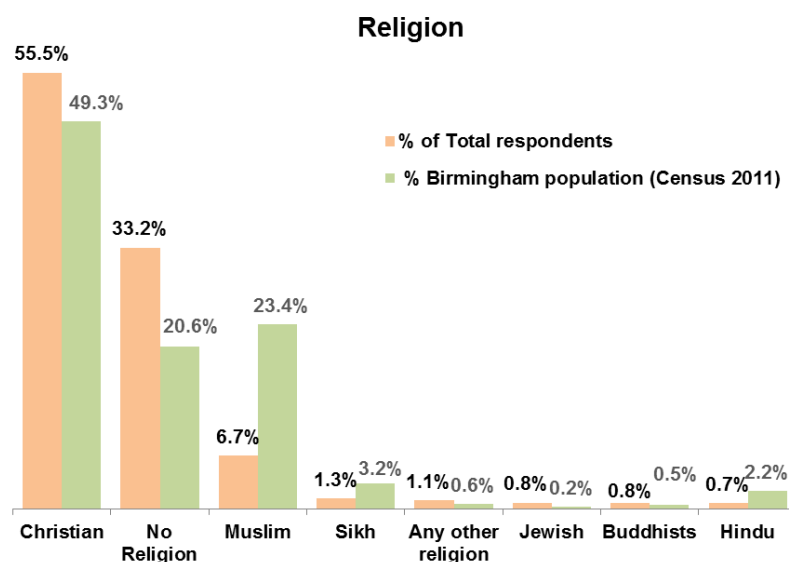
Just over half (56%) of respondents are of Christian religion.

The proportion of 'no religion' is far higher compared to the proportion for Birmingham residents overall, whilst Muslim, Sikh and Hindu are underrepresented amongst the respondents.

Christian includes Church of England, Catholic, Protestant, and all other Christian denominators.

Figure 4:

Ethnicity

- % of Total respondents
- % Birmingham population (Census 2011)
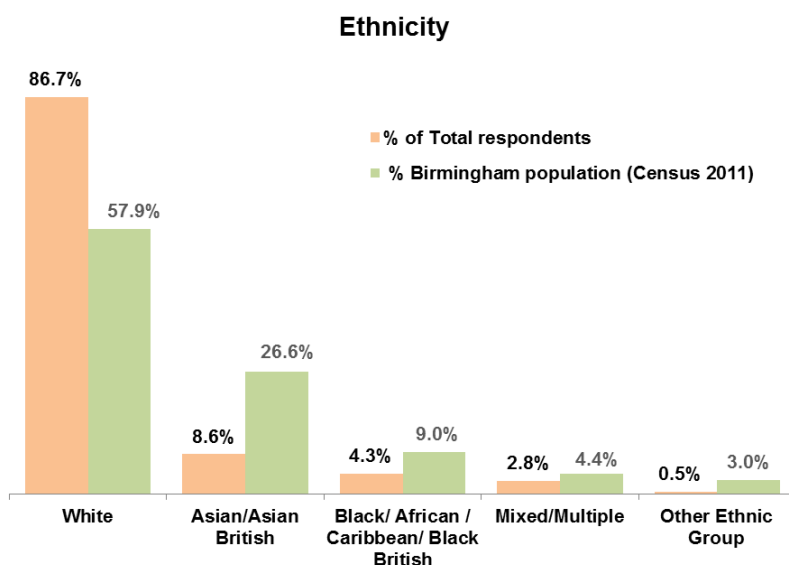
87% of respondents are of White ethnic background, which is much higher than found in the Birmingham resident population (58%).

All other ethnic groups are underrepresented, particularly Asian/Asian British and other ethnic groups.

3.3: Physical or mental health conditions and caring responsibilities

Figure 5:

Physical or Mental Health Conditions lasting 12mths

Yes 18%
No 82%

Figure 6:

Caring Responsibilities

Yes 41%
No 59%

18% stated they have a physical or mental health condition lasting 12mths or more, and the majority of these respondents have conditions related to mobility.

41% have a form of a caring role, with the majority being a primary carer of a child or children.

3.4: Location based analysis – ward of respondents

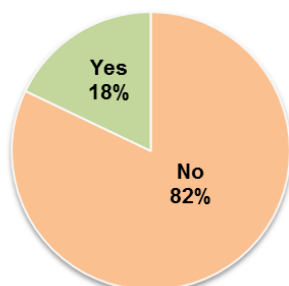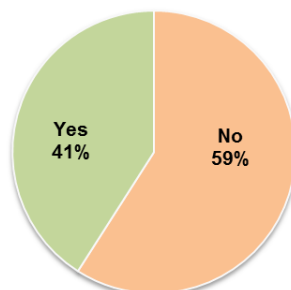No. of respondents per ward
Community Libraries Consultation 2016/17

- 4 - 20
- 21 - 37
- 38 - 57
- 58 - 127
- 128 - 194

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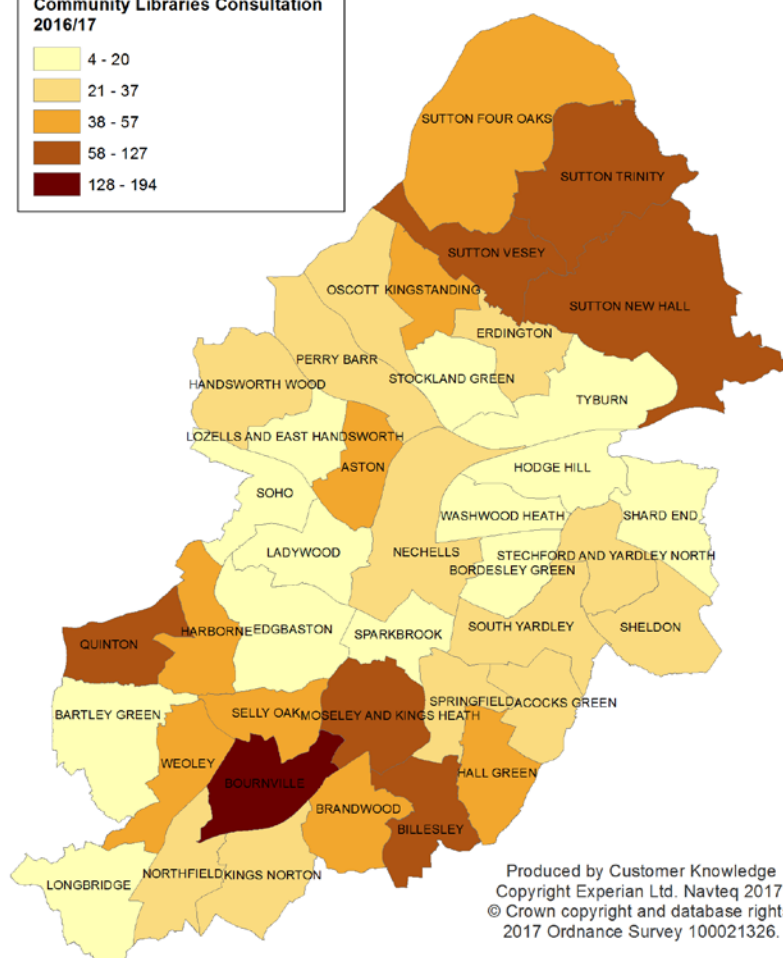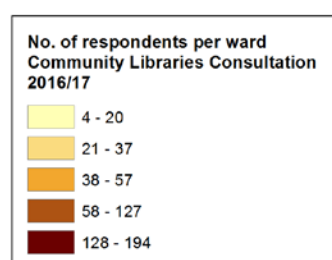
Table 3: Top 10 wards of respondents

Ward	% of total respondents
Bournville	11.9%
Sutton Vesey	7.8%
Sutton New Hall	5.4%
Quinton	5.1%
Billesley	5.0%
Moseley and Kings Heath	4.9%
Sutton Trinity	4.7%
Sutton Four Oaks	3.5%
Selly Oak	3.4%
Hall Green	3.2%

There is at least one response from each ward. Bournville had the most respondents (194) whilst Washwood Heath had the least (4).

Six of the wards are located next to each other in the south of the city, accounting for 31% of responses (Selly Oak, Bournville, Brandwood, Billesley, Hall Green and Moseley & Kings Heath).

In terms of districts, Sutton Coldfield had the most respondents (21%).

Map 1: Ward of respondents – based on respondents who live in Birmingham and have provided a valid postcode (1,627 respondents)

3.5: Location based analysis – Mosaic Public Sector segmentation

Mosaic Public Sector is a UK segmentation classification by Experian designed specifically for use by the public sector, describing the social and service needs of people and households. Using the postcode, it classifies a person into one of 15 segment groups, and provides an understanding of their living environment, demographics, income, and lifestyle.

Table 4: MPS segment group of respondents – based on those who have provided a valid postcode

Experian Mosaic Public Sector - Group	Number of respondents	% of respondents	% of Birmingham population
A Country Living Well-off owners in rural locations enjoying the benefits of country life	0	0.0%	0.0%
B Prestige Positions Established families in large detached homes living upmarket lifestyles	161	9.5%	3.9%
C City Prosperity High status city dwellers living in central locations and pursuing careers with high rewards	39	2.3%	1.0%
D Domestic Success Thriving families who are busy bringing up children and following careers	232	13.6%	4.6%
E Suburban Stability Mature suburban owners living settled lives in mid-range housing	90	5.3%	2.9%
F Senior Security Elderly people with assets who are enjoying a comfortable retirement	197	11.6%	5.5%
G Rural Reality Householders living in inexpensive homes in village communities	0	0.0%	0.0%
H Aspiring Homemakers Younger households settling down in housing priced within their means	196	11.5%	8.2%
I Urban Cohesion Residents of settled urban communities with a strong sense of identity	219	12.9%	27.4%
J Rental Hubs Educated young people privately renting in urban neighbourhoods	118	6.9%	8.6%
K Modest Traditions Mature homeowners of value homes enjoying stable lifestyles	76	4.5%	5.3%
L Transient Renters Single people privately renting low cost homes for the short term	92	5.4%	7.0%
M Family Basics Families with limited resources who have to budget to make ends meet	117	6.9%	13.4%
N Vintage Value Elderly people reliant on support to meet financial or practical needs	119	7.0%	6.3%
O Municipal Challenge Urban renters of social housing facing an array of challenges	30	1.8%	4.8%
Unclassified	14	0.8%	0.9%
Total	**1,700**	**100.0%**	100.0%

Segment D had the highest proportion of respondents, followed by segments I, F, and H (all highlighted in the table). These segments have a mix of demographics, incomes, and life stages.

Segment D - Domestic Success

This group is highly overrepresented compared with its proportions as a whole in Birmingham. This group are high-earning families with school-age children who live affluent lifestyles in upmarket suburban homes in sought-after neighbourhoods. They tend to have successful careers in higher managerial and professional roles, but also have the highest proportion of part-time/housewife employment status. They are keen internet and tablet users. The majority of respondents in this group come from Bournville or the Sutton Coldfield wards.

Segment I - Urban Cohesion

This is the second highest group of respondents, although it is highly underrepresented compared to its Birmingham proportions. It is the largest segment in Birmingham, composed of highly diverse, settled extended families and older people who live in multi-cultural city suburbs, often with a strong community feel. Household incomes overall are moderate, derived from work in lower managerial, intermediate and semi-routine occupations. They are keen on communication using the latest smartphones. Segment I respondents come from a wide spread of wards, with many coming from Aston and Springfield.

Segment F- Senior Security

This group is highly overrepresented compared to its Birmingham proportions. This is the most elderly group of all, their average age is 75, and almost all are retired. Women outnumber men. They are still living independently with relatively good health, in comfortable homes that they own, with state pensions often supplemented by private pensions. They prefer more traditional forms of communication. Respondents come from a wide spread of wards, with many coming from Sutton Vesey and Quinton.

Segment H - Aspiring Homemakers

This group is slightly overrepresented compared to its Birmingham proportions and is one of the youngest segment groups. Often, they have only recently bought their first home in private suburbs, which they have chosen to fit their modest budget. They are typically young families, couples without children, or singles in their 20s and 30s. They tend to be full-time employed, and often on good starter salaries. They are keen social network users with a lot of smartphone apps. 30% of respondents in this group come from Bournville and Selly Oak wards.

Therefore, based on Mosaic Public Sector segmentation respondents to this consultation are of mixed backgrounds and lifestyles but particularly are: high-income families with young children; comfortably retired; young families or couples; or diverse extended families or older people with modest incomes.

4. Findings – How libraries are used

Respondents were asked about their current use of library services, including mobile libraries and libraries at home services. Questions included which libraries they used, how often and when they used them, how they travelled to them, and what they use libraries for.

Respondents were asked which specific library or library service they used most often, and could choose up to three and indicate if they used it 'most often', '2nd most often' or 3rd most often'.

Table 5: Top 5 Libraries ranked by 'most often'

Library	Number of Respondents
Stirchley	206
Sutton Coldfield	167
Yardley Wood	129
Quinton	120
Kings Heath	107

Table 6: Top 5 Libraries ranked by total mentions

Library	Number of Respondents
Library of Birmingham	637
Sutton Coldfield	343
Stirchley	260
Kings Heath	231
Yardley Wood	167

Stirchley had the highest number of respondents ranking it as the library they used **'most often'** (11% of total responses for 'most often'). This was closely followed by Sutton Coldfield (9%) and Yardley Wood (7%).

When looking at the combined total of 'most often', '2nd most often', and '3rd most often', the **Library of Birmingham** is ranked highest as it had the highest total number of respondents who included it somewhere in the rankings (i.e. many people chose it as their second and third most used library).

Figure 7: How often the respondent visits or uses a library service - percentage
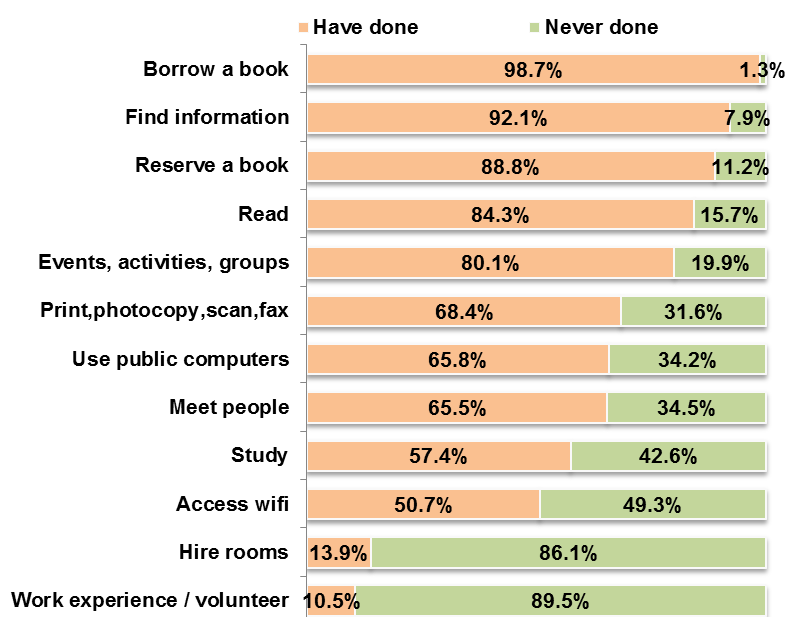

The majority of respondents (56%) use a Birmingham library service **several times a month**.

Most walk to use a library service (63%), followed by car or motorbike (39%).

86% travel **2 miles or less** to their preferred library.

Morning and afternoons are the most popular times for using a library service, whilst Saturdays are the most popular days.

Figure 8: How libraries are used by respondents – ranked by activity most respondents have done

Activity	Have done	Never done
Borrow a book	98.7%	1.3%
Find information	92.1%	7.9%
Reserve a book	88.8%	11.2%
Read	84.3%	15.7%
Events, activities, groups	80.1%	19.9%
Print,photocopy,scan,fax	68.4%	31.6%
Use public computers	65.8%	34.2%
Meet people	65.5%	34.5%
Study	57.4%	42.6%
Access wifi	50.7%	49.3%
Hire rooms	13.9%	86.1%
Work experience / volunteer	10.5%	89.5%

The more traditional functions of a library are the main functions that respondents have used a library for, i.e. to borrow/reserve/read books and find information.

Most respondents state that they use a library **several times a month or a few times a year** for these activities.

5. Findings – What community libraries should do

Respondents were asked to specify which library functions they consider the most important, when local libraries should be open, the reasons for not using a library in Birmingham, and the kind of things that would encourage them to use a Birmingham library more. Respondents could choose as many answer options as they liked to each of these questions, as well as provide free text comments to some questions.

Table 7: Important functions of a library

Function (more than one choice permitted)	Number of respondents	% of total respondents
Borrow books	1,827	95.7%
Access to information	1,392	72.9%
A quiet place to sit and/or read	1,339	70.1%
Reserve books	1,287	67.4%
Public computers	1,245	65.2%
A place to study	1,152	60.3%
Library events/activities/groups	1,074	56.3%
Printing/photocopying/scanning/fax services	908	47.6%
Access to free Wi-Fi	843	44.2%
A space to meet people	657	34.4%
Meeting rooms to hire	435	22.8%
Volunteering opportunities / work experience within the library	410	21.5%

96% state that **borrowing books is an important function of the library**. Less than a quarter of respondents say that hiring meeting rooms or volunteering opportunities are important.

In terms of the **days and times that a library should be open**, respondents were able to choose any of the time options (morning 9-12, afternoon 12-3, late afternoon 3-6, and evening 6-9) for any days of the week, 30% of respondents chose most or all the times and days.

Generally, Thursdays (any time) and mornings (any day except Sundays) were popular.

Specifically, of all combinations of days/times, **Saturday morning** (1,505 respondents) and **Saturday afternoon** (1,406 respondents) had the highest number of respondents.

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353 respondents used the free text box to make any other comments on opening times – the most common comments are summarised:

Evenings, late afternoons, and weekends were the most popular options, with people wanting later opening times to accommodate those who cannot go during the day. Opening times should focus on being accessible for those who work, for schoolchildren, students and working families.

Many of those who mentioned evenings did not have a specific day in mind, as long as there were evening openings some of the time.

"I think there needs to be some evening and weekend service for those people who work in the day time. If hours were to be reduced, I would rather see libraries open late afternoon and evening than daytime-only."

"Maybe on some days libraries should to open later in the mornings, 10 or even 11 a.m., but stay open later in the afternoon, as indicated, until 6, or 7?"

In terms of weekends, Saturday was the most popular day to be open, with those who mentioned Sundays having differing views.

There were many who wanted libraries to be **open every day or for as long as possible**, with no specific days mentioned.

Some suggested that library opening times/days should be **flexible depending on local need** - e.g. hours based upon specific local usage or nearby libraries staggering their opening times/days:

"Libraries should be open on a range of days and times so that users have options on which libraries to use when they want to visit a library."

"Option to open late nights and weekends across a district rather than individual libraries."
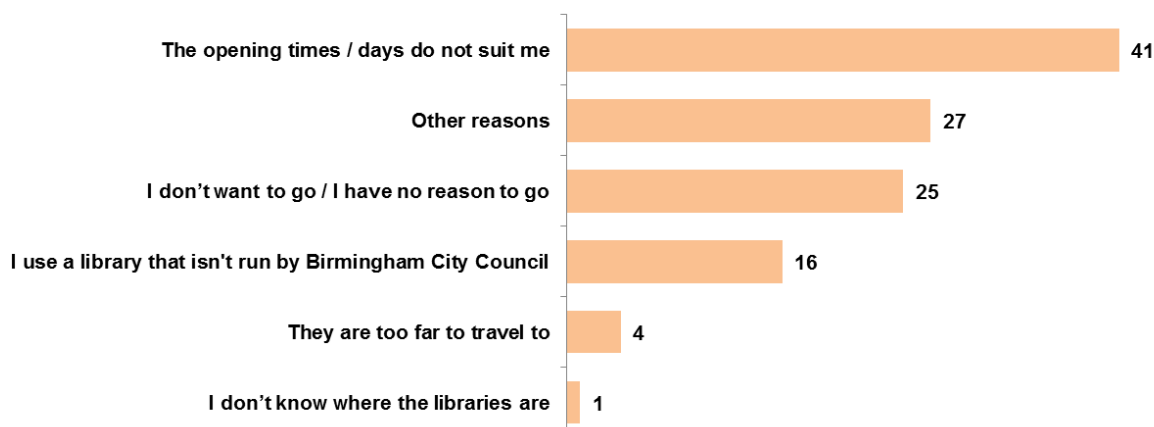
Of the 102 respondents who completed this question, most stated that the **current opening times/days were not suitable**, and this was also the most common reason where respondents chose 'other reasons' and gave a free text response.

Respondents were then asked what would encourage them to use a library in Birmingham more – the most common option was **'more suitable opening times'** (43%), which is unsurprising considering the responses and comments for the two questions above.

33% chose 'more suitable opening days' and 22% chose 'more improved services or facilities'.

It should be noted that 41% stated nothing would encourage them as they go as often as they need or want.

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337 respondents used the free text box to make any other comments on what would encourage them to use libraries more.

Overall, new books and equipment, additional activities and events, coffee shops and facilities would encourage respondents to use libraries more, as would an increase in opening hours and days of the week.

Purchasing new books: Respondents were concerned about the quality and quantity of books in libraries, and there was a consensus that a larger selection of books is needed, and that funding should be provided to ensure this happens. Some respondents stated it had been around two years since new books had been purchased.

Opening hours: Respondents were concerned that many libraries in Birmingham have reduced their opening hours and days, which has impacted people greatly. Changes in opening hours across some libraries have not been communicated effectively, with some people turning up to find the library is closed. Some cannot visit the library during opening times as it coincides with their working patterns. With fewer evening and weekend opening hours, working people are more likely to be affected by these cuts; this will also impact on children with working parents/guardians. A number of comments suggested that libraries should be open for 24 hours a day.

"It is not a question of more suitable opening hours, but just that they should be open for more days, for longer, and branch libraries should be given a chance to attract users before they are closed by the council. Unfortunately reducing library hours only creates a spiral of decline, reducing the number of users able to access it."

Activities & events including children: 55 comments were received about having activities and events at libraries, of which 27 were about children activities. Examples included talks with professionals, exhibitions, creative stories, and performances. Respondents felt that events and activities for both young and older people would encourage them to use libraries more. It is possible that people attending certain events are likely to find out about other events and attend them, too.

28 comments were about having better community engagement at libraries, including working with support/local groups to strengthen community engagement and help bring local people together.

Drinks facilities: Respondents felt that drinks facilities could help encourage use of the libraries and create a comfortable relaxing atmosphere, as well as encourage groups of people to meet. It would also help generate revenue for libraries.

"Introduce a coffee shop and integrate it into the library. This would raise revenues and go some way to offsetting running costs. Libraries need to be run on a more commercial basis."

There were some positive comments received about the current services provided, including facilities to borrow and return books from different library locations: *"The service is great and the coordination between libraries and being able to return books from the central library to Selly Oak is a real boon!"*

Respondents also used the free text box as an opportunity to comment on concerns they had about the library service:

Respondents commented that they did not support libraries closing and felt closing libraries would cause a barrier to community engagement. There was a strong sense of feeling that professional, experienced, paid staff should be running library services and that volunteers should not be running the service alone, but possibly in conjunction with professional staff. A few respondents stated that they would volunteer to stop local libraries from shutting down. Fewer staff working in libraries and the use of untrained volunteers could lead to longer queues and waiting times, therefore resulting in unsatisfied library users.

The reduction in some of the services was raised as a concern from respondents. They felt that the cuts in services impact on vulnerable people.

"Cuts in funding has meant a reduction the loss of literacy outreach is doing our children no service, especially for the most in need, who may have no access to books or encouragement to read at home" and *"I am a deaf BSL user, my deaf daughter, who is 3 years old loves coming to the library to choose books, but I find it a challenge to communicate with staff about what new books you have, what events are going on and so on."*

6. Findings – Views on Library of Birmingham website

Respondents were asked whether they use the Library of Birmingham website, to rate specific features of the website, and to specify all the reasons for why they may not have used the website and what would encourage them to use it.

Figure 10: How often the respondent uses the Library of Birmingham website - percentage

Several times
a month
24.8%

A few times
a year
25.7%

Never
32.3%

Several times
a week
9.3%

Once a year
or less
7.9%

Nearly a third of respondents have never used the library website. Otherwise, the majority have used it several times a month or a few times a year.

Table 8: Rating of website features

Website features	Excellent / Good	Fair	Poor / Very Poor	Don't Know	Total
Library catalogue	63.5%	16.5%	4.4%	15.5%	100%
Reservations and renewals	68.6%	13.0%	2.5%	15.9%	100%
E-books, e-Mags and e-Audio loans	24.3%	9.9%	4.9%	60.9%	100%
Online joining	32.6%	9.4%	2.7%	55.3%	100%
Finding nearest library / open times	69.8%	13.9%	3.1%	13.2%	100%
General information	64.5%	18.3%	4.1%	13.2%	100%
Online resources	34.0%	8.6%	3.1%	54.3%	100%
Event and activity information	48.8%	17.9%	5.8%	27.4%	100%
Overall appearance	58.6%	26.1%	7.3%	8.0%	100%
Ease of use	57.5%	26.6%	8.9%	7.0%	100%

Generally, more respondents rate the various features of the website as excellent or good, rather than poor or very poor. In particular, **finding nearest library / open times, and reservations/renewals services** has the highest rating of excellent or good. E-books, e-Mags and e-Audio loans services have the lowest proportion of excellent / good rating due to the high proportion of 'don't know'. 9% state that the website is poor or very poor for ease of use.

The most popular reasons for not using the website were that respondents **do not want or need to use it** (40%) or they **did not know the website existed** (36%).

Respondents were asked if they agree or disagree on whether certain features would encourage them to use the website – features with the highest number of respondents agreeing were **one catalogue for books and E-books** (763 respondents), **personalised book recommendations** (689), and **children's online reading challenges** (681).

7. Findings – Views on the tiered model proposals

This section is related to the questions on the tiered model proposals. Respondents were asked if they agree or disagree with various aspects of the tiered model proposals, how the proposed opening times would impact them, if they agree or disagree with a £1 reservation charge, and to give any comments on why they agree/disagree with the proposals and how the proposals could be improved.

Figure 11: Agreement with aspects of the tiered model and overall

	Total Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Total Disagree	Don't know
Grouping into four tiers with different levels of service	28.5%	18.3%	47.4%	5.8%
Libraries selected for each tier	20.1%	22.1%	45.0%	12.8%
How it was decided	15.6%	23.2%	43.0%	18.1%
Proposed changes to opening hours	17.4%	15.2%	61.7%	5.8%
Proposal overall	16.2%	14.9%	63.1%	5.8%

Total Agree = agree + strongly agree; Total Disagree = disagree + strongly disagree.

More respondents disagree than agree with all the aspects of the proposals, particularly proposed changes to the opening times.

63% disagree with the proposals overall.

How the tiered model was decided had the highest proportion of 'neither agree nor disagree' and 'don't know'. This seems to tie in with a number of comments that there wasn't enough information for respondents to make any comments on the proposals.

Figure 12: Agreement with statements

Respondents were asked to state if they agree or disagree with a list of seven statements.

Statement	Total Agree	Neither	Total Disagree	Don't know
Reading; Learning; Health; Digital and Information as main focus	69.5%	14.9%	5.8%	9.9%
Better to keep library open with reduced opening hours, than to close it	87.4%	5.0%	6.3%	1.4%
If a library is to close then the service at a neighbouring library should be enhanced	80.9%	9.2%	7.4%	2.5%
Community groups wanting to work in partnership with libraries should receive staff support, books and IT	73.7%	12.7%	8.7%	4.9%
Customers should be encouraged to use the self-service kiosks so that staff can concentrate on dealing with enquiries, delivering sessions for children and adults and outreach work	51.1%	19.5%	27.0%	2.5%
Library services do not have to be delivered from the current library building if a better property solution exists	37.8%	21.0%	36.2%	5.0%
Small one-off grants that enable the community to work in partnership should be made available for service proposals in Tier 4	49.3%	22.8%	16.2%	11.6%

More agree than disagree with all of the above statements, particularly that it is better to keep a library open with reduced hours, than to close it.

The statement with the least agreement and closer margin between agree and disagree is: Library services do not have to be delivered from the current library building if a better property solution exists (38% agree and 37% disagree).

44% say the proposed opening times affect their ability to use library services a great deal, and 31% say a little. 14% say not at all.

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621 respondents used the free text box to make suggestions on how the proposals could be improved.

There was **overwhelming opposition to community library cuts**, stating that they undermine the important role of library in the local communities in terms of social cohesion and education, with respondents concerned for vulnerable groups (children, elderly, deprived households) not having adequate access to a library. There were strong feelings that **libraries should be invested in**, rather than cut, and that the council had a 'duty' to run a fully funded library service. Very few respondents explicitly agreed with the cuts.

Sutton library's closure had much opposition. This was the most frequently mentioned library in the consultation (18% of respondents mentioned it, with 15% explicitly against closure). This is a popular library, regarded as centrally located and easily accessible by its proponents. There was concern over Boldmere and Walmley having hours reduced when Sutton library is being closed;

instead, respondents felt those hours should be increased. **Mere Green was often mentioned negatively**, in terms of less accessibility compared to Sutton Coldfield.

"Instead of increasing the opening hours at Mere Green (they already have a greater allocation of opening hours) why wasn't Boldmere library considered for additional opening hours. For people living this side of Sutton Coldfield town centre Mere Green is a long way to travel. "

On a related note, there was criticism over how accessibility via public transport and adequate car parking facilities had not been a prioritised criterion within the tiers, and that **focusing on distance alone was flawed.**

"Ensure that convenient public transport links exist between where the library was, to where the new location is.   People without internet who depend on library services the most are often elderly or disadvantaged and are more likely to be without personal transport."

Aston was mentioned by 18 respondents.

There were comments around the underestimated value of trained, experienced staff, and deep concerns over staff being replaced by community groups/volunteers, or self-service kiosks. Many respondents believed that **community groups/volunteers do not have the experience**, qualifications or commitment of librarians, and that the staff role has been underrated, and that it is about more than books, but a wider social support role within the community.

Changes to library opening hours were mentioned many times. **Many were against library opening hours being reduced and therefore being less accessible for particular groups** (depending on when the library is being closed). This particularly included the reduction in Boldmere and Walmley, as already mentioned. Alternatively, a few suggested that it is preferable to reduce hours in libraries over closing any branches.

There were a number of respondents who thought that **'failing' libraries should be closed**, with their staff and resources consolidated to larger 'super' libraries.

"Close the libraries that are very poorly used or the buildings that are no longer in a fit state and increase the staffing levels and opening hours at the libraries that are viable."

A number of respondents commented that there **wasn't enough information for them to make any comments on the proposals**, from wanting to know proposed opening times to those who had missed the information on which libraries were in each tier.

Although the responses to this consultation were overwhelmingly about opposition to library cuts/closures, some respondents did provide specific suggestions to the proposals, including alternative venues (e.g. churches, schools, and charities), shared services with other public sector organisations, and income generation examples, particularly having coffee shops based within libraries for extra income.

"Maybe Virgin or Microsoft libraries are a bit ambitious but what about trying to get local businesses to sponsor book buying ....e.g. the Homebase DIY collection, the crime fiction collection sponsored by a local security firm, or a cookery collection sponsored by a local cafe or restaurant. Books in exchange for publicity, it might make things happen."

In terms of the proposed **£1 reservation charge**, **45% disagree,** whilst 39% agree and the rest don't know or neither agree or disagree.

Figure 13: Agreement that the proposals protect a future for the Library Service

Respondents were asked if they agree or disagree that the proposals will protect a future for Birmingham's Community library Service.

Just over two-fifths (43%) disagree with this.

33% neither agree nor disagree or don't know, which is more than the number who agree in total (24%).

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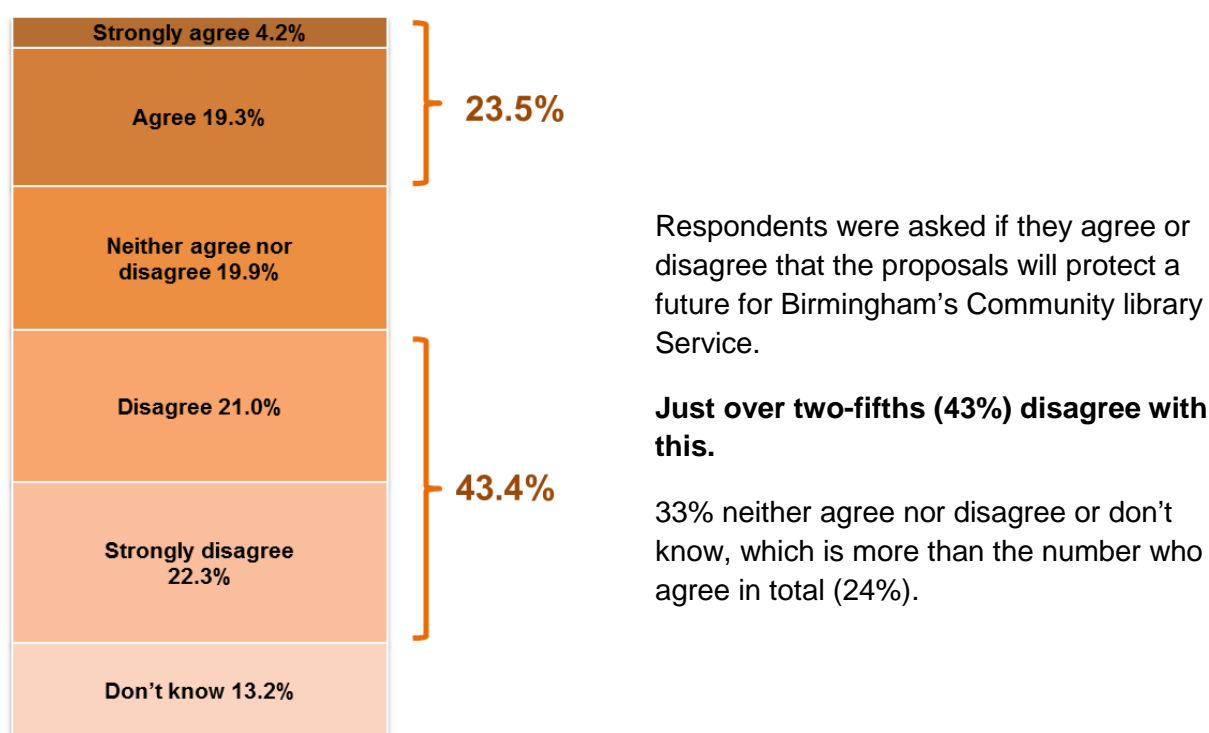
806 respondents used the free text box to explain their response to the above question of whether they agree the proposals protect a future for the library service.

There was an overarching, **widespread opposition to the proposals.** Respondents commented that libraries are an essential, statutory service and the proposals only undermine the role that they play. Libraries are important by: providing essential resources, books, internet access, knowledgeable staff and safe, quiet spaces for the community (especially for those who don't have these resources at home). Also, libraries play an important community role, by educating children, fostering greater social cohesion, and by providing a free space for vulnerable persons and groups.

Respondents felt that **libraries were not protected by the proposals**. Rather, respondents feared that the proposals would make libraries difficult to access and library users would be discouraged to visit a library.

148 respondents commented on staff. There was a widespread concern for how libraries would survive under the new proposals with a reduction of experienced library staff. Respondents wanted a library service provided by trained, experienced and knowledgeable staff, but the **proposals were**

seen to undermine the expertise of library staff and the professional service which they provided.

Although many express enthusiasm over volunteers getting involved with libraries, they should not replace existing members of staff, since volunteers do not have the skills and experiences to provide an adequate library service:

"Knowledge of library staff is key to ensuring services run smoothly and in my opinion libraries cannot be run properly by volunteers who have no knowledge of how a library should be run and operated."

By reducing staff levels, or by replacing library staff with volunteers, library users feared an unreliable service:

"The staffing levels proposed are so low that there are bound to be unscheduled closures which will make people reluctant to attend for fear of a wasted journey."

The value of library staff was felt to be further undermined by proposing further implementation of self-service machines. **Library users valued the knowledge and friendliness of library staff, which could not be provided by technology**. Again, if self-service is to be implemented, it should not be at the detriment of library staff; especially since self-service machines could fail, and library users (especially the elderly) have struggled to use the machines and would always need (and want) to speak to knowledgeable staff.

Respondents also commented on the proposed closures, with **Sutton Coldfield the most frequently mentioned library** (78 respondents). Respondents were confused by the decision to close a recently refurbished library. They stated that Sutton Coldfield library is centrally located and easily accessible and many different groups (especially; school children and the elderly) rely upon it, and so, Sutton is considered a major asset to the community. Many mentioned that if Sutton library closes, **accessing an alternative library would be too inconvenient and impossible** for many people:

"It is no good increasing the hours at Mere Green library as this is on the other side of the town. A visit to Mere Green would involve a car or bus journey."

In comparison, only 11 different comments addressed **Aston library**. However, there was a similar sentiment that increasing opening hours at a neighbouring library did not compensate for Aston's closure, and library users are unlikely to travel to an alternative library.

Beyond Aston and Sutton libraries, many respondents commented that the proposals will only work for those with the means to travel to an alternative library, whereas this wasn't an option for many people; nor will they feel encouraged to do so. **Elderly persons who are less mobile and young families would particularly suffer without having a library within walking distance.** Many commented that it is unlikely that library users would continue to visit a library if it meant having to take public transport.

Many respondents wanted **libraries to be open for as long as possible and opposed reductions to opening hours**. They fear that the proposed reductions would give people less opportunity to visit their library, resulting in reduced footfall and underused libraries, providing the council with further justification to close libraries in the future:

"By further cutting library hours, more and more people will be unable to access their local library, leading to less usage and eventual closure of the libraries."

Respondents stated how the proposals, and further cuts and closures in the future, would **impact certain people and vulnerable groups in particular**. 95 respondents mentioned **children/young people** in their comments, and that libraries are essential for providing free books and resources for children, especially for those who do not have access to these resources at home.

"How do children whose parents are short of cash access books, the internet, homework help and reading groups?"

In particular, there was anxiety over losing the educational function of library services, which would affect children in particular. Libraries play an important role in education, by encouraging children to read from a young age, by providing a space for children to complete their homework, and by holding school visits where staff could engage with school children. Thus, there was a concern that future generations were going to miss out without a substantial library service that encouraged learning and reading from a young age.

Many argued that the council were undermining their role in providing a substantial service which is equally accessible to all. Many respondents felt that the tiers were divisive, by providing an uneven and inconsistent service which would **leave the most deprived members of the community without access to vital resources.**

"I fear that people will lose their jobs, and those who live in the more deprived areas of the city who need access to library services the most will be at a disadvantage, especially the young and the elderly."

In particular, the proposal to implement a £1 reservation charge would discourage library users from accessing books.

"Whilst I could afford to pay a pound for reservations, not everyone can and this proposal will disproportionately affect those who are less well off"

There were also some comments that were with positive or understanding of the council. **Some agreed with the proposals**; although often reluctant and unhappy about the cuts, they thought that the proposals would cause the least damage to the service.

"Something has to change and this looks like a compromise that tries to give a service across the city still so that people can access different things. It is better than a one size fits all approach."

There were also respondents who made suggestions on how the library could make further savings, through **income generation or shared services.**

"I would like to be part of this idea by running our day nursery from Sparkhill library and working in the library."

"Why not hire out the video games that the younger generation spend so much time and money on. With wifi access allow ebooks for which a fee could be charged. Brainstorming ideas would yield numerous ideas that could expand not reduce the library service."

8. Findings – Community led libraries

Finally, in this section of the survey respondents were asked a number of questions relating community involvement in libraries and whether they would be interested in delivering services at their local library.

When asked **how many hours a week** they could contribute to delivering library services in their area, 57% of respondents stated 'none'.

Of those who can contribute, the majority can provide up to **4 hours per week** (81% of respondents who can contribute).

173 respondents have provided their contact details to register their formal interest in getting involved in running a local library service. These will be passed to the library service to follow up on.

Respondents were then asked what would encourage them to get involved in supporting a local community library – half of those who responded want **more information about how it would work** and 15% want more details of who to contact about being involved in delivering services. 38% say nothing would encourage them to support delivering services.

275 respondents used the free text box to comment on what would encourage them to get involved.

There was a strong consensus (24% of respondents who commented) that **libraries should be run by professional staff that have the skills, experience, and expertise to run the service**. One respondent stated: *"Librarianship is a skill and only Aberystwyth University offers a librariarship degree now"*. Some suggested that whilst the use of volunteers could support the service, those run only by volunteers may impact on the delivery of library services and that it would be unreasonable and unacceptable to expect volunteers to offer the same service as professional staff.

Volunteers delivering library services without the support of professional staff might also have an impact on the number of people visiting libraries. Some respondents felt that volunteering could work alongside properly trained and paid staff to help maximise opening times for libraries; that **using volunteers could help to keep libraries open for more days and longer hours**, and running costs might be smaller.

Respondents stated that they would like to keep library services open to support local communities in coming together but that they themselves could not due to **lack of time** because of family and work commitments (23%), or that they are too old to volunteer (6%), or unable to because of health issues (3%).

"If I didn't have to work, and didn't have two small children"; "As I work at different hours and on varying days of the week, I could not commit to any particular time to volunteer"; and "I am my husband's fulltime carer…".

Many respondents did not support using volunteers and stated that the council have a **statutory duty to provide library services** for local communities, that library services are a public service, and therefore the Council should be responsible for delivering these services.

"Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 gives Birmingham City Council a statutory duty to provide "a comprehensive and efficient library service"; and *"Community libraries are a public service and should be provided by the local council - they are not a business and do not have to make a profit".*

Some respondents stated that they already pay for these services by paying their council tax.

"I work full time and pay council tax for this service" and *"Libraries are a statutory right which I help fund through my council tax"* and *"I believe libraries should be staffed and run by professionals. I wish to be able to use a library without feeling guilty that I in some way should be volunteering there, when my taxes should already pay for it".*

Some respondents would **only volunteer if libraries were going to be closed** and **disagreed with volunteering if it meant making library staff redundant**. They felt that library staff have the skills and expertise to run local libraries and would not want to take that away from them.

"As long as this is not a way of reducing services and making librarians redundant"; "Reassurance that this wouldn't be instead of employing professional librarians" and "If it was to close I would get involved in helping it to stay open".*

Some respondents were unclear as to what is expected from them as a volunteer to work in libraries and could not find this information. Prior to agreeing to volunteer, they would **need to know what the expectations of volunteers are**. Additional to this, a few respondents wanted to know the age restrictions in volunteering as they had had children or grandchildren that may want to volunteer.

A few respondents felt that if they were to volunteer that there should be an **incentive** for them to do so. Examples included travel expenses or being paid for the work they do.

Some respondents felt they already supported their local library by visiting and using them: *"I believe that I support my local libraries by using them in the way they were intended to be used".*

A further question asked respondents what information or support would they need to help run a tier 3 library in partnership with the council.

65 respondents used the free text box to comment, and of these a number stated that they **do not support communities running libraries**, and that library services should be delivered by the council, and staffed by professional librarians and experienced paid staff.

Where respondents did comment on what they would need to run a library, they mentioned more information on how it would work, clear guidelines and lines of responsibilities, financial details and running costs, and training.

A few stated that they would need more information before they could decide if they could support or make any further suggestions.

Respondents were asked to select from a list, all of the options that they think the council should consider for their local library.

Table 9: Options the council should consider for a local library

Share the current library space with other services i.e. Housing Associations, advice agencies, community meeting rooms, business start-ups etc., thereby retaining but reducing the space available for traditional library services but offering a wider variety of service provision.	**768**
Partnering with a local community group/organisation to lead and develop the library offer within that locality possibly attracting local sponsorship or funding.	**598**
Allow staff in Community Libraries in Birmingham to operate the service through a not for profit staff led mutual organisation	**372**
Providing an electronic access point within the community for enquiries to be made for book requests and delivery.	**212**
Moving aspects of the library offer into the building of other service providers.	**185**
Providing a mobile library service stop instead.	**74**

The top two options that they chose were **sharing library space with other services** and **partnering with local groups to lead and develop the libraries offer**. This is also reflected in some of the comments above, where respondents state that sharing spaces should be considered.

Only a small proportion want mobile library stops instead of a local library to be considered.

9. Conclusion

Generally, respondents disagree with most aspects of the tiered model proposals.

Respondents have highlighted concerns that the proposed changes would negatively impact on vulnerable groups, including children and the elderly, and would lead to less people using the services overall.

Many already feel that the opening hours are restrictive and not enough, and so are particularly against reductions to opening hours and to staff, citing that experienced and knowledgeable librarians are essential to libraries. Many do not understand or agree to the use of volunteers or community-led delivery.

It is important that the Library Service takes on board the findings and explores further the concerns raised, provide more information so that people are better informed, and to try minimise the impact of any changes to specific groups. Where suggestions have been made, these could be looked into further, by engaging with local communities and working with them to find appropriate solutions.

Specifically, further discussion with users of Aston library and Sutton Coldfield library may be required to alleviate concerns and find a solution that meets the needs of both the users and the council.

Finally, it is recommended that the findings of this consultation and how they have been used are shared with users and groups that may be impacted, to show that they were listened to and their concerns have been considered.

Appendix 1 – All responses for closed survey questions

BCC employee	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
No	1,659	92.0%
Yes	145	8.0%
Total Respondents	**1,804**	**100.0%**

No response / prefer not to say = 143

Age Group	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Under 18	25	1.0%
18-24	40	2.2%
25-34	183	9.8%
35-44	378	21.5%
45-54	272	15.0%
55-64	330	17.8%
65-74	374	20.9%
75-84	164	8.6%
85+	50	3.1%
Total Respondents	**1,816**	**100.0%**

No response / prefer not to say = 131

Gender	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Female	1,145	67.9%
Male	541	32.1%
Total Respondents	**1,686**	**100.0%**

No response / prefer not to say = 261

Sexual Orientation	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Heterosexual or Straight	1,241	94.7%
Bisexual	31	2.4%
Gay or Lesbian	25	1.9%
Other	13	1.0%
Total Respondents	**1,310**	**100.0%**

No response / prefer not to say = 637

Religion	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Christian (including church of England, Catholic, Protestant, and all other Christian denominators)	877	55.5%
No Religion	525	33.2%
Muslim	106	6.7%
Sikh	21	1.3%
Any other religion	17	1.1%
Jewish	12	0.8%
Buddhists	12	0.8%
Hindu	11	0.7%
Total Respondents	**1,581**	**100.0%**

No response / prefer not to say = 366

Do you have caring responsibilities? (can choose more than one)	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
None	914	59.0%
Primary carer of child/children under 18	432	27.9%
Primary carer of disabled child/children	22	1.4%
Primary carer of disabled adult (18 and over)	42	2.7%
Primary carer of older person/people (65 and over)	85	5.5%
Secondary carer	101	6.5%
Total Respondents	**1,548**	

No response / prefer not to say = 399

Ethnic Group	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
White (Total)	**1,441**	**86.7%**
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	1,325	79.7%
Other White European (including Mixed European)	40	2.4%
Irish	35	2.1%
Any other White background	25	1.5%
Jewish	7	0.4%
Polish	6	0.4%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	3	0.2%
Asian/Asian British (Total)	**144**	**8.6%**
Pakistani	42	2.5%
Bangladeshi	19	1.1%
Indian Sikh	17	1.0%
British Asian	17	1.0%
Indian Other	17	1.0%
Chinese	12	0.7%
Kashmiri	12	0.7%
Afghani	2	0.1%
Sri Lankan	2	0.1%
Any other Asian background	2	0.1%
Filipino	1	0.1%
Vietnamese	1	0.1%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British (Total)	**71**	**4.3%**
Black British	33	2.0%
Caribbean	16	1.0%
African	16	1.0%
Any other Black/African/Caribbean background	3	0.2%
Somali	3	0.2%
Mixed/Multiple (Total)	**47**	**2.8%**
White and Black Caribbean/African	25	1.5%
White and Asian	14	0.8%
Any other mixed background	8	0.5%
Other Ethnic Group (Total)	**8**	**0.5%**
Any other ethnic group	4	0.2%
Arab	3	0.2%
Kurdish	1	0.1%
Total Respondents	**1,663**	**100.0%**

No response / prefer not to say = 284

Physical or mental health condition/illness lasting 12mths+	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
No	1,362	82.1%
Yes	297	17.9%
Total Respondents	**1,659**	**100.0%**

No response / prefer not to say = 288

If yes, do any of these conditions or illnesses affect you in any of the following areas? (can choose more than one)	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Mobility (e.g. walking short distances or climbing stairs)	144	34.2%
Stamina or breathing or fatigue	72	17.1%
Mental Health	70	16.6%
Hearing (e.g. deafness or partial hearing)	70	16.6%
Dexterity (e.g. lifting and carrying and carrying objects, using a	48	11.4%
Vision (e.g. blindness or partial sight)	41	9.7%
Learning or understanding or concentrating	24	5.7%
Memory	22	5.2%
Other (please specify)	21	5.0%
Socially or behaviourally (e.g. associated with autism, attention deficit disorder or Asperger's syndrome)	9	2.1%
Total Respondents	**421**	

No response / prefer not to say = 1,526

Ward of home address	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
BOURNVILLE	194	11.9%
SUTTON VESEY	127	7.8%
SUTTON NEW HALL	88	5.4%
QUINTON	83	5.1%
BILLESLEY	81	5.0%
MOSELEY AND KINGS HEATH	80	4.9%
SUTTON TRINITY	76	4.7%
SUTTON FOUR OAKS	57	3.5%
SELLY OAK	55	3.4%
HALL GREEN	52	3.2%
BRANDWOOD	49	3.0%
ASTON	48	3.0%
HARBORNE	47	2.9%
WEOLEY	45	2.8%
KINGSTANDING	40	2.5%
STECHFORD AND YARDLEY NORTH	37	2.3%
ERDINGTON	34	2.1%
PERRY BARR	34	2.1%
NORTHFIELD	29	1.8%
ACOCKS GREEN	29	1.8%
NECHELLS	29	1.8%
SPRINGFIELD	28	1.7%
OSCOTT	26	1.6%
KINGS NORTON	24	1.5%
SOUTH YARDLEY	24	1.5%
HANDSWORTH WOOD	23	1.4%
SHELDON	21	1.3%
STOCKLAND GREEN	20	1.2%
LONGBRIDGE	18	1.1%
EDGBASTON	18	1.1%
SPARKBROOK	18	1.1%
LADYWOOD	18	1.1%
BARTLEY GREEN	15	0.9%
SHARD END	12	0.7%
LOZELLS AND EAST HANDSWORTH	11	0.7%
TYBURN	10	0.6%
SOHO	9	0.6%
HODGE HILL	9	0.6%
BORDESLEY GREEN	5	0.3%
WASHWOOD HEATH	4	0.2%
Grand Total	**1,627**	**100.0%**

No response / prefer not to say = 247; live outside Birmingham = 73

Q2. How often use library	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Several times a week	512	26.8%
Several times a month	1,073	56.1%
A few times a year	273	14.3%
Once a year or less	25	1.3%
Never	29	1.5%
Total respondents	1,912	100.0%

No response = 35

Q4. Method of transport (can choose more than one)	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Bicycle	95	5.0%
Bus	516	27.3%
Car/Motorbike	732	38.7%
Train	131	6.9%
Walk	1,195	63.1%
Other	15	0.8%
Total respondents	1,893	

Q3. Libraries services used - Ranked by Total Mentions	Most often	2nd most often	3rd most often	Total
Library of Birmingham, Centenary Square	93	340	204	637
Sutton Coldfield	167	125	51	343
Stirchley	206	39	15	260
Kings Heath	107	63	61	231
Yardley Wood	129	20	18	167
Quinton	120	33	13	166
Harborne	57	73	26	156
Boldmere	101	27	16	144
Walmley	72	44	11	127
Hall Green	67	35	24	126
Northfield	58	38	26	122
Mere Green	45	48	24	117
South Yardley	82	16	13	111
Erdington	45	29	31	105
Perry Common	69	21	8	98
Acocks Green	26	40	25	91
Kings Norton	34	33	21	88
Aston	57	17	7	81
Tower Hill	59	13	3	75
Weoley Castle	41	17	12	70
Selly Oak	27	23	17	67
Handsworth	38	9	10	57
Kingstanding	10	30	13	53
Druids Heath	20	23	9	52
Balsall Heath	16	16	18	50
Sheldon	21	11	2	34
Sparkhill	13	12	9	34
Birchfield	10	11	10	31
Shard End	24	2	4	30
Glebe Farm	17	1	9	27
Bloomsbury	21	4	1	26
Library Service at Home	4	9	9	22
Spring Hill	5	9	7	21
Ward End	8	8	2	18
Mobile Library Service	4	3	8	15
Small Heath	4	9	2	15
Bartley Green	4	3	4	11
Frankley	9	1	1	11
Kents Moat	2	4	1	7
West Heath	1	1	1	3

Q5. How far travel to a library	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Less than one mile	872	47.2%
1-2 miles	720	38.9%
More than 2 miles	257	13.9%
Total respondents	1,849	100.0%

No response = 98

Q6. When visit a library (can choose more than one)	Morning	Lunchtime	Afternoon	Evening	Total
Monday	523	203	465	86	1,277
Tuesday	521	201	504	95	1,321
Wednesday	245	115	255	36	651
Thursday	398	211	601	232	1,442
Friday	480	197	479	60	1,216
Saturday	799	368	615	50	1,832
Total responses (not total respondents)	**2,966**	**1,295**	**2,919**	**559**	**7,739**

Q7. How often use Library services - Read	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Several times a week	233	20.1%
Several times a month	375	32.3%
A few times a year	287	24.7%
Once a year or less	83	7.2%
Never	182	15.7%
Total respondents	1,160	100.0%

No response = 787

Q7. How often use Library services - Borrow a book	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Several times a week	275	15.8%
Several times a month	1,056	60.8%
A few times a year	355	20.4%
Once a year or less	29	1.7%
Never	23	1.3%
Total respondents	1,738	100.0%

No response = 209

Q7. How often use Library services - Reserve a book	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Several times a week	103	8.3%
Several times a month	399	32.1%
A few times a year	453	36.4%
Once a year or less	149	12.0%
Never	139	11.2%
Total respondents	1,243	100.0%

No response = 704

Q7. How often use Library services - Use public computers	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Several times a week	179	16.4%
Several times a month	200	18.3%
A few times a year	229	21.0%
Once a year or less	110	10.1%
Never	374	34.2%
Total respondents	1,092	100.0%

No response = 855

Q7. How often use Library services - Access wifi	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Several times a week	112	12.4%
Several times a month	137	15.2%
A few times a year	138	15.3%
Once a year or less	71	7.9%
Never	445	49.3%
Total respondents	903	100.0%

No response = 1,044

Q7. How often use Library services - Study	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Several times a week	109	11.7%
Several times a month	148	15.9%
A few times a year	173	18.6%
Once a year or less	104	11.2%
Never	396	42.6%
Total respondents	930	100.0%

No response = 1,017

Q7. How often use Library services - Print,photocopy,scan,fax	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Several times a week	103	9.5%
Several times a month	222	20.4%
A few times a year	298	27.4%
Once a year or less	121	11.1%
Never	343	31.6%
Total respondents	1,087	100.0%

No response = 860

Q7. How often use Library services - Find information	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Several times a week	178	13.4%
Several times a month	423	31.8%
A few times a year	520	39.1%
Once a year or less	103	7.8%
Never	105	7.9%
Total respondents	1,329	100.0%

No response = 618

Q7. How often use Library services - Events, activities, groups	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Several times a week	101	8.7%
Several times a month	295	25.4%
A few times a year	391	33.6%
Once a year or less	144	12.4%
Never	232	19.9%
Total respondents	1,163	100.0%

No response = 784

Q7. How often use Library services - Meet people	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Several times a week	152	14.9%
Several times a month	231	22.6%
A few times a year	187	18.3%
Once a year or less	99	9.7%
Never	353	34.5%
Total respondents	1,022	100.0%

No response = 925

Q7. How often use Library services - Hire rooms	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Several times a week	10	1.3%
Several times a month	32	4.1%
A few times a year	25	3.2%
Once a year or less	42	5.4%
Never	676	86.1%
Total respondents	785	100.0%

No response = 1,162

Q7. How often use Library services - Work experience / volunteer	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Several times a week	18	2.3%
Several times a month	18	2.3%
A few times a year	25	3.2%
Once a year or less	22	2.8%
Never	704	89.5%
Total respondents	787	100.0%

No response = 1,160

Q8. Important functions of a library (can choose more than one)	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Borrow books	1,827	95.7%
Access to information	1,392	72.9%
A quiet place to sit and/or read	1,339	70.1%
Reserve books	1,287	67.4%
Public computers	1,245	65.2%
A place to study	1,152	60.3%
Library events/activities/groups	1,074	56.3%
Printing/photocopying/scanning/fax services	908	47.6%
Access to free Wi-Fi	843	44.2%
A space to meet people	657	34.4%
Meeting rooms to hire	435	22.8%
Volunteering opportunities / work experience within the library	410	21.5%
Total respondents	1,909	

No response = 38

Q9. Preferred opening days/times (can choose more than one)	Morning (9-12)	Afternoon (12-3)	Late afternoon (3-6)	Evening (6-9)	Total
Monday	1,396	1,332	1,329	528	**4,585**
Tuesday	1,393	1,336	1,340	600	**4,669**
Wednesday	1,153	1,085	1,106	502	**3,846**
Thursday	1,322	1,326	1,389	849	**4,886**
Friday	1,391	1,325	1,340	547	**4,603**
Saturday	1,505	1,406	1,119	338	**4,368**
Sunday	341	402	291	135	**1,169**
Total responses	**8,501**	**8,212**	**7,914**	**3,499**	

Q10. Reasons not use a library past 12mths (can choose more than one)	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
The opening times / days do not suit me	41	40.2%
I don't want to go / I have no reason to go	25	24.5%
Other reasons	27	26.5%
I use a library that isn't run by Birmingham City Council	16	15.7%
They are too far to travel to	4	3.9%
I don't know where the libraries are	1	1.0%
Total respondents	102	

No response = 1,845

Q11. What would encourage more use of libraries (can choose more than one)	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
More suitable opening times	744	43.4%
Nothing, I already use it as often as I want	705	41.1%
More suitable opening days	564	32.9%
More of improved services / facilities	382	22.3%
Other	130	7.6%
Nothing, I don't want to use a library	13	0.8%
Total respondents	1,716	

No response = 231

Q12. How often use LOB website	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Several times a week	171	9.3%
Several times a month	457	24.8%
A few times a year	474	25.7%
Once a year or less	145	7.9%
Never	596	32.3%
Total respondents	1,843	100.0%

No response = 104

Q13. LOB website features rating	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Know
Library catalogue	280	507	205	39	16	192
Reservations and renewals	401	401	152	20	9	186
E-books, e-Mags and e-Audio loans	95	170	108	40	14	664
Online joining	136	219	103	20	9	603
Finding nearest library / opening times	345	502	169	24	14	160
General information	278	502	221	39	10	159
Online resources	134	255	98	26	10	622
Event and activity information	174	395	209	45	23	319
Overall appearance	215	488	313	65	22	96
Ease of use	244	455	323	84	24	85

Q14. Why never used LoB website (can choose more than one)	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
I don't need or want to use it	277	40.3%
I didn't know the website existed	244	35.5%
I don't have access to the internet	108	15.7%
Other	73	10.6%
It's difficult to use or find what I need	48	7.0%
Total respondents	687	

No response = 1,260

Q15. Features to encourage more use of LoB website	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
One catalogue for books and E-books	340	423	420	71	46	209
Online reading groups	142	295	501	167	87	251
Personalised book recommendations	206	483	431	119	69	179
Children's online reading challenges	282	399	336	88	76	264
Online payment of fines	200	431	400	109	72	207
Improved library service online mobile app	244	343	428	83	64	266

No response = 1,260

Q.16 Agreement with aspects of the proposal	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Grouping into four tiers with different levels of service						
Libraries selected for each tier	73	271	379	358	412	220
How it was decided	66	200	395	358	373	308
Proposed changes to opening hours	79	226	266	550	531	101
Proposal overall	67	219	263	468	644	102

Q17. Agreement with statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Reading; Learning; Health; Digital and Information as main focus	573	632	258	62	38	171
Better to keep library open with reduced opening hours, than to close it	982	634	92	74	42	26
If a library is to close then the service at a neighbouring library should be enhanced	852	603	165	75	58	45
Community groups wanting to work in partnership with libraries should receive staff support, books and IT	625	681	225	68	86	87
Customers should be encouraged to use the self-service kiosks so that staff can concentrate on dealing with enquiries, delivering sessions for children and adults and outreach work	335	583	350	308	177	45
Library services do not have to be delivered from the current library building if a better property solution exists	186	482	371	332	309	89
Small one-off grants that enable the community to work in partnership should be made available for service proposals in Tier 4	321	540	398	117	166	203

Q18. Extent proposed opening times affects ability to use library	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
A great deal	780	43.7%
A little	544	30.5%
Don't know	220	12.3%
Not at all	241	13.5%
Total respondents	1,785	100.0%

No response = 162

Q20. Agreement to £1 reservations charge	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Strongly agree	222	11.9%
Agree	512	27.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	263	14.1%
Disagree	354	19.0%
Strongly disagree	487	26.1%
Don't know	29	1.6%
Total respondents	1,867	100.0%

No response = 80

Q21. Hours contributing to delivering library services - per week	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Less than 2 hours	188	10.8%
2-4 hours	204	11.8%
4-6 hours	51	2.9%
6-10 hours	23	1.3%
More than 10 hours	20	1.2%
None	984	56.7%
Don't know	266	15.3%
Total respondents	1,736	100.0%

No response = 211

Q22. Type of group or organisation (can choose more than one)	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Currently share a building with a library	54	23.2%
Interested in having a library service occupy space in our premises	11	4.7%
Interested in moving our business/service/group into an existing library building	22	9.4%
Have a building that could be available to host a community-led library	13	5.6%
Interested in offering aspects of a library service i.e. books for loan or public Wi-Fi	34	14.6%
Other	126	54.1%
Total respondents	233	

No response = 1,714

Q24. What would encourage more involvement (can choose more than one)	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Nothing	488	37.2%
More information about how this would work	660	50.3%
More information on who to contact about it	191	14.6%
Other	138	10.5%
Total respondents	1,311	

No response = 636

Q26. Options BCC should consider for your local library (can choose more than one)	No. of respondents
Share the current library space with other services i.e. Housing Associations, advice agencies, community meeting rooms, business start-ups etc., thereby retaining but reducing the space available for traditional library services but offering a wider variety of service provision.	768
Partnering with a local community group/organisation to lead and develop the library offer within that locality possibly attracting local sponsorship or funding.	598
Allow staff in Community Libraries in Birmingham to operate the service through a not for profit staff led mutual organisation	372
None of the above	316
Don't know	269
Providing an electronic access point within the community for enquiries to be made for book requests and delivery.	212
Moving aspects of the library offer into the building of other service providers.	185
Providing a mobile library service stop instead.	74
Total respondents	1,625

No response = 322

Q27. Agreement proposals protect future for Library Service	No. of respondents	% of total respondents
Strongly agree	76	4.2%
Agree	345	19.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	357	19.9%
Disagree	377	21.0%
Strongly disagree	400	22.3%
Don't know	236	13.2%
Total respondents	1,791	100.0%

No response = 156