Public Document Pack

Hampshire County Council

NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting	Culture and Communities Select Committee
Date and Time	Tuesday, 28th July, 2020 at 10.00 am
Place	Remote meeting
Enquiries to	members.services@hants.gov.uk

John Coughlan CBE
Chief Executive
The Castle, Winchester SO23 8UJ

FILMING AND BROADCAST NOTIFICATION
This meeting will be recorded and broadcast live on the County Council's website.

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members who believe they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting must declare that interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3 Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter is discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore all Members with a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting should consider whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, consider whether it is appropriate to leave the meeting while the matter is discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 3 - 6)

To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 January 2020.

4. DEPUTATIONS

To receive any deputations notified under Standing Order 12.

5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive any announcements the Chairman may wish to make.

6. LIBRARY SERVICE TRANSFORMATION - STRATEGY TO 2025 (Pages 7 - 226)

To consider a report of the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services setting out proposals for the Library Service Transformation and Strategy to 2025.

7. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 227 - 230)

To consider the Committee's forthcoming Work Programme.

ABOUT THIS AGENDA:

On request, this agenda can be provided in alternative versions (such as large print, Braille or audio) and in alternative languages.

ABOUT THIS MEETING:

The press and public are welcome to observe the public sessions of the meeting via the webcast on the County Council's YouTube channel.

AT A MEETING of the Culture and Communities Select Committee of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on Thursday, 16th January, 2020:

Chairman:
p Councillor Anna McNair Scott

p Councillor Christopher Carter
p Councillor Fred Birkett
p Councillor Ann Briggs
p Councillor Peter Chegwyn
p Councillor Rod Cooper
p Councillor Dominic Hiscock
p Councillor Michael White
p Councillor John Bennison
p Councillor Jackie Branson
p Councillor Zilliah Brooks
p Councillor Daniel Clarke
p Councillor Pal Hayre
p Councillor Rob Mocatta

86. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies. Councillor Carew attended the meeting to observe at the agreement of the Chairman.

87. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

88. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

89. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

90. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman noted that the Consultation on proposed changes to Hampshire's Library Service was live and there had been over 7000 responses so far.

91. **2020/21 REVENUE BUDGET REPORT FOR RECREATION AND HERITAGE**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services (CCBS) and Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources covering the Revenue Budget Report for Recreation and Heritage services.

The Committee were provided with the context in relation to the wider County Council budget, the Local Government Finance Settlement and the Council's reserves strategy.

Members were reminded that a savings target of £80m was agreed as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy in 2018, and the proposals to meet this target were agreed in November 2019. It was noted that the focus is now on implementation and delivery, including service specific public consultations, to engage with service users and key stakeholders.

The Committee were also provided with an overview of the key departmental challenges including;

- balance of funding, cash limit, income and recharges,
- delivering Transformation to 2021 savings.

The recommendation was proposed, and a vote was held with the following outcome;

For	11
Against	3

Resolved: That the Culture and Communities Select Committee support the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage as set out in Section B on page 11 of the pack.

92. **2020/21 REVENUE BUDGET REPORT FOR COUNTRYSIDE AND RURAL AFFAIRS**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services (CCBS) and Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources providing the Revenue Budget Report for Countryside and Rural Affairs services.

This item was considered alongside the previous item.

The recommendation was proposed, and a vote was held with the following outcome;

For	11
Against	3

Resolved: That the Culture and Communities Select Committee support the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Member for Countryside and Rural Affairs as set out in Section B on page 23 of the pack.

93. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received the report of the Director of Transformation and Governance which set out the Committee's upcoming work programme.

The following items were proposed to be added:

- Energise Me – Update Briefing
- Transforming the County Council's Country Parks
- Climate Change and Environmental Briefing

These items would be considered by the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services (CCBS) along with the Chairman of the Select Committee to find the most suitable timings and meeting allocations.

Resolved: That the Work Programme, subject to the additions set out above, was agreed.

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HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Culture and Communities Select Committee
Date:	28 July 2020
Title:	Library Service Transformation – Strategy to 2025
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

Contact name: Emma Noyce – Head of Library Service

Tel: 0370 779 8373 **Email:** emma.noyce@hants.gov.uk

Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Culture and Communities Select Committee on the outcomes of Hampshire County Council's *Consultation on Proposed Changes to Hampshire's Library Services,* published in January 2020. The report makes recommendations to the Executive Member regarding the future of Hampshire's Library Services, seeking approval for proposals including changes to the way council-run library services are delivered, delivering library services differently within local communities, making further spending efficiencies and generating additional income.

Recommendations

2. Following endorsement by the Library Task and Finish Group, the Culture and Communities Select Committee recommends to the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage that he:

   i) Approves the achievement of £1.76 million savings through the Libraries Transformation Programme.
   ii) Approves the operations target to be increased by £75,000 to £1.115 million in order to compensate for the under delivery of the income generation target.
   iii) Approves the Library Vision to 2025.
   iv) Confirms that that he is satisfied that the Library Service described in paragraph 66 meets the statutory requirements of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, comprising a comprehensive and efficient service which meets the needs of those who live, work and study in Hampshire.
   v) Approves the closure of the eight libraries listed in paragraph 153: Blackfield, Elson, Fair Oak, Horndean, Lee-on-the-Solent, Lyndhurst, Odiham and South Ham.
   vi) Approves a reduction in opening hours across the Service averaging 20%, together with proposals to standardise hours as far as practical.

vii) Approves a second public consultation to confirm the actual *opening times* at each council-run library and delegates authority to determine *opening times* to the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services in consultation with the Executive Member.

viii) Approves the Library Service's plan to withdraw support from Lowford, Kingsclere, Milford-on-Sea and North Baddesley community-managed libraries and help them to transition to an independent community library model.

ix) Instructs the Library Service to explore different and more effective ways to deliver services for Hampshire's most deprived communities, initially in Leigh Park, Havant and Bridgemary, taking into account any opportunities to support communities in Elson.

x) Agrees the plans to deliver efficiencies of £146,000 from library resources.

xi) Approves the Library Service's plans to generate income through room hire and leases; reviewing current fees and charges; and encouraging fundraising, sponsorship and donations to the Service.

xii) Notes that the Income Generation target set out within the consultation document will not be met within the required timescales and therefore adjusts other savings targets accordingly.

xiii) Gives due regard to the Equalities, Human Resource and Financial impacts of each of the recommendations and agrees the mitigation proposed.

xiv) Notes the timelines for implementation.

Executive Summary

3. The report outlines the strategy for a transformation programme to provide a comprehensive, high quality and affordable Library Service which enables the delivery of £1.76 million savings by April 2021 and provides for financial stability beyond this date.

4. In January 2020, Hampshire County Council published its Consultation on Proposed Changes to Hampshire's Library Service ('the consultation')[1]. This consultation set out a vision for the future delivery of library services in Hampshire and outlined the changes which would be required to deliver that vision whilst meeting budget reduction targets.

5. This report seeks approval for the future vision, providing a summary of the consultation responses and shows how the proposals contained within the consultation have been revised and developed to reflect the views of individuals and organisations. Human resource, legal, financial and climate

[1]Hampshire Library Service Consultation - https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/consultations/library-consultation

change implications are included in this report and Equalities Impact Assessments have been undertaken.

6. Since the consultation was published in January 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused changes to the way that the Library Service operates and is expected to have long term consequences for the financial position of both Hampshire's Library Service and the County Council[2] as a whole. This has two key impacts on the proposals discussed in this report:

   i) The Income Generation target included in the consultation will not be met within the required timeframe and, therefore, other planned activities will need to deliver more to make up for this loss (specifically through increasing operational savings);
   ii) Even with further government support, a significant savings programme beyond 2021 will be required if the County Council is to remain financially viable due, in part, to the anticipated lasting economic impact of Covid-19.

7. Since the publication of the consultation, an additional early achievement saving of £70,000 has been delivered (through salary savings and additional income generation in 2019/20), and a further £210,000 early achievement saving has been identified in 2020/21 salary budgets. The effect of this early achievement, balanced against the predicted under-achievement of the income generation target means that there remains an overall deficit of £75,000 in the programme. It is proposed that the operations target be increased from £1.040 million to £1.115 million to meet this deficit.

8. Whilst delivering the planned savings for Tt2021, it is also imperative that any decisions made now put the County Council in the best possible position to meet future challenges.

9. The consultation contained a range of proposals to achieve the £1.76 million savings target including two different options for changing the way council-run library services are delivered. Of the two options presented, the County Council preferred the option to close 10 libraries and reduce opening hours by 15% - partly due to the longer term savings which could be made if this course of action were followed. Whilst this still remains the preferred approach, the County Council has absorbed the consultation feedback, taken account of equalities impacts and shifted from its previously preferred approach, while ensuring that it is not unduly constrained from taking further cost-saving steps should the need arise.

10. Accordingly, the report recommends a compromise from its previously preferred approach, with the number of libraries proposed for closure reduced from ten to eight and a reduction in opening hours averaging 20% in all remaining libraries. Appropriate mitigation and changes to proposals

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[2]Cabinet report 15 May 2020 https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s53568/2020-05-15%20REPORT%20TO%20CABINET.pdf?LO=1

have been made in acknowledgement of impacts highlighted through the consultation process.

11. The report also seeks approval to transition the four Tier 4 council supported Community Libraries to independent community-managed libraries although, again in response to consultation feedback, amendments to previous proposals are put forward to mitigate for key impacts.

12. If the recommendations in this report are implemented, the eight council-run libraries and four council-supported community-managed libraries would no longer form part of Hampshire's statutory Library Service. Community organisations would be welcome to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

13. The report recommends that the remaining proposals put forward be agreed, all of which received support in the consultation, including generating income, delivering efficiencies and re-provisioning some council-run libraries to better meet public need.

14. The County Council has assessed the evidence submitted and remains confident that the statutory requirement to provide a comprehensive and efficient Library Service, taking into account community need, will continue to be met with these changes in place. If approved, the changes to the Library Service will be largely completed by the end of December 2020.

Contextual information

15. Hampshire's Library Service currently comprises:

- 48 Tier[3] 1-3 Council-run Libraries (including three Discovery Centres)
- Four Tier 4 community-managed Libraries
- Online Library Service including eBooks, eMagazines and digital resources.
- Home Library Service
- School Library Service
- Learning in Libraries
- Specialist Library Services, events and activities – a range of services for individuals and groups

16. The annual revenue budget for the Library Service in 2019/20 was £11 million and the Service generated a further £2.8 million of income. Approximately 482 staff (294 full time equivalent posts) work in the Library

[3] See Appendix 1 for more information detail about Library Tiers

Service alongside 42,000 hours of support a year from around 1,250 volunteers who help deliver public Library Services.

17. The County Council was facing an anticipated budget 'gap' of £80 million by April 2021, due to growing demand for statutory services, rising costs and inflation and reduced Government funding. From 5 June to 17 July 2019 the Serving Hampshire - Balancing the Budget consultation sought residents'[4] and stakeholders' views on options to help it deliver a balanced budget. The results of the Balancing the Budget consultation and the County Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy[5] were discussed at a meeting of the County Council on 7 November 2019 and informed the contents of the Library Service Consultation.

18. The Library Service Consultation was published on the 9 January 2020 and closed on the 18 March 2020.

19. On the 16 March 2020, the UK Government advised everyone in the UK against "non-essential" travel and contact with others, to work from home if possible and to avoid visiting social venues to curb the spread of Covid-19. On the 20 March, a range of venues, including Hampshire's Libraries, were told by the Government to close. Residents of all ages have accessed our significantly enhanced digital library and online services as the traditional physical library offer has been unavailable.

20. The Library Service is currently implementing a phased recovery plan which has included the safe resumption and phased expansion of the Home Library Service, the introduction of a new contactless book lending service called 'Ready Reads'[6] and, from early July, the phased reopening of Library buildings. However, although Library buildings are open, this is with restricted hours, significantly restricted capacity and a reduced range of services. Events, activities, groups and clubs have not yet resumed, in accordance with current Government advice.

21. As part of the Library Service's response to the impacts of Covid-19, some new services have been introduced and other existing services have been expanded. The popularity of newly introduced services such as Ready Reads and the enhanced social media content (which includes content for different age groups), together with the increased breadth of the digital lending offer and expanded Home Library Service, is such that these services are likely to continue for the long term, beyond the period of Covid-19 related restrictions.

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[4] More information about the Serving Hampshire – Balancing the Budget consultation can be found at: www.hants.gov.uk/balancingthebudget

[5] The Medium Term financial strategy document can be found at https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=21194#mgDocuments

[6] See Appendix 1 for more detail about the Home Library Service and Ready Reads

Savings strategy

22. By law the County Council is required to deliver a balanced budget and cannot plan to spend more than is available. At the time of publishing the consultation, in January 2020, it was anticipated that the Library Service would need to make a total contribution of £1.76 million to the Council's overall savings target of £80 million by April 2021 (Tt2021).

23. The closure of all Hampshire's Libraries due to the Covid-19 pandemic meant that all fees and charges relating to lending and reserving books were suspended, and sources of income such as room hire and events immediately stopped.

24. The Covid-19 impact on the Library Service's financial position is, therefore, significant. In the first quarter of 2020/2021 income was down by an average of £95,000 per month when compared to the same period last year. Whilst income is predicted to slowly recover from July/August 2020 onwards, as Libraries reopen and some customers return, many income generating activities (such as events, activities and room hire) have not yet been able to resume. Forecasts indicate that full-year income will be down by approximately £570,000 against last year's total, and that it will take some time before income recovers to levels seen in previous years due to changes in customer behaviour and wider economic pressures.

25. The County Council was already anticipating a further round of savings beyond Tt2021 in order to address ongoing budgetary pressures. The longer term economic impact of Covid-19 looks likely to significantly increase these pressures; the Medium Term Financial Strategy Update [7]report presented to Cabinet and County Council earlier this month set formal savings targets for Departments based on a Transformation to 2023 Programme of £80 million and, for the Culture, Communities and Business Services Department, this has resulted in a further savings target of £3.253 million. Given the spend profile for the Department, the Library Service will again need to make a proportionate contribution to this future spending reduction.

26. Whilst proposals to meet future savings targets will be subject to further consultation as appropriate, it is essential that any decisions made at this point put the Library Service in the best possible position to face these future financial challenges and are made bearing in mind the need to retain flexibility to accommodate future financial challenges to the Service.

27. The consultation set out the proposals to achieve the £1.76 million anticipated savings through a range of projects and activities. By December 2019, the Library Service had already achieved £170,000 of its saving target through ongoing cost reduction from delivery efficiencies, additional income

[7] Medium-term financial strategy mid-July 2020
https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s53375/MTFS%20-%20Cabinet%20FINAL.pdf?LO=1

and vacancy management. By April 2020, this early achievement of savings had increased to £240,000 (with an additional £20,000 income generated and an additional £50,000 staff saving through vacancy management).

28. Recovery of the pre-Covid-19 income levels will not be possible, at least in the short term, and it is therefore evident that the remaining £335,000 additional Income Generation target is no longer achievable.

29. It is therefore recommended that the £335,000 target for additional income generation be deferred until 2023, and that the saving contribution made by changes to how services are delivered (Operations) be increased by £335,000 to make up for this shortfall. This means that the total amount still to be found from Operations is now £1.325 million (an increased contribution of £285,000 from the £1.040 million originally consulted on once the additional early achievement of £50,000 has been taken into account).

30. Due to robust budget management and the ongoing scrutiny of all vacancies in the Library Service, a further £210,000 savings have been identified in the staffing budget which can be put towards this £1.325 million target. This means that the sum to be found through a combination of branch closures and reduction in opening hours is reduced to £1.115 million.

31. The table below shows the savings set out in the consultation, the revised plan following additional early achievement in 2019/20 the final revisions taking account of the impacts of Covid-19 and additional planned early achievement:

Activity	**Proposed saving (as published in the consultation) £'000**	**Interim revised figures (due to additional early achievement by April 2020) £'000**	**Final proposals (including early achievement planned in 2020/21 and Covid-19 impact) £'000**
Early savings – completed in 2019/20	170	240	240
Early savings – planned in 2020/21	0	0	210
Changing how services are delivered by closing libraries/reducing opening hours (Operations)	1,040	990	1,115
Transition of Tier 4 Libraries	49	49	49
Increase in Income	355	335	0
Efficiencies	146	146	146

Total	1,760	1,760	1,760

Other options considered and discounted

32. **Find savings elsewhere:** Officers have considered alternative proposals put forward by respondents to deliver additional savings or generate additional income. These suggestions are discussed more fully in the relevant sections below. Whilst many sensible proposals have been put forward, these are either already part of the existing savings plans, or are not deliverable within the current savings strategy timescales and therefore will be considered as part of a future programme of savings beyond Tt2021. This option has therefore been discounted.

33. **Retain all targets as consulted on, only achieve £1.685 million savings:** This would mean that the Library Service **would not** achieve the required £1.76 million in savings (due to the under-achievement of the £335,000 Income Generation target). The £1.76 million sought from the Library Service is a small part of the County Council's overall £80 million deficit to 2021 and the whole organisation is likely to be similarly affected by the worsening economic position, facing similar pressures around achievement of Tt2021 savings targets. Given the worsening long term financial position, it is essential that the Tt2021 savings are delivered as planned. This option has therefore been discounted.

34. **Achieve more than £1.76 million in savings through a further increase in the Operations target**: This option has been given serious consideration but would require changes over and above that which have been consulted on and would therefore require additional consultation. Instead, the preferred approach is to deliver only what is required for Tt2021 at this stage, but in a way which is mindful of longer term pressures. The option to over-achieve has therefore been discounted.

35. **Achieve the £1.76 million but with a different balance of closures and opening hour reductions:** It remains the case that there are a range of combinations of closures and opening hour reductions which would still deliver the operational savings required, and it is noted that consultation feedback indicated that respondents would prefer the lions share to be taken from opening hours rather than closures. Full reasons for discounting this option are provided in paragraphs 84-94 and 161-164 but, broadly speaking, this option would adversely impact the busiest libraries and would not position the Library Service well should future savings need to be made. This option has therefore been discounted.

Conclusion

36. Savings targets need to be adjusted as the planned £335,000 additional income cannot now be delivered within the required timeframes. However, prudent and robust financial management means that an additional £50,000

salary savings have already been achieved in 2019/20 and a further £210,000 salary savings have been identified for 2020/21. This means that the overall programme deficit is £75,000.

37. It is recommended that the operations target be increased by £75,000 to £1.115 million in order to compensate for the under delivery of the income generation target.

Legal and statutory considerations

38. Under Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964[8] ('the 1964 Act'), each upper tier or unitary Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' Library Service. There is no specific definition of what constitutes a comprehensive and efficient service – it is for each authority to judge based on, among other things, local community needs and available resources. The 1964 Act requires Hampshire County Council to 'lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area'.

39. In addition, the County Council must comply with, amongst other things, the Equality Act 2010[9] and Localism Act 2011[10].

40. In fulfilling its duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient service, the 1964 Act indicates the library authority shall in particular have regard to the desirability to provide a number of things, including:

- the keeping of adequate stocks of books, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter and other materials sufficient in number, range and quality to meet both the general requirement and any special requirements of both adults and children; and
- encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and providing advice and support about how to use and access services, information and resources.

41. Hampshire County Council is required to facilitate access to services by people that live, work or study in Hampshire taking account of the geography, population and features of Hampshire.

42. This report considers changes to Hampshire's Libraries in light of the statutory duty of the County Council as set out in the 1964 Act and summarised above. Paragraph 66 provides a discussion on how the recommendations, if implemented, support the Library Service's strategic vision and ensure that that Hampshire County Council can continue to

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[8] Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 - http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/75
[9] The Equality Act 2010 - https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance
[10] Localism Act 2011 - http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted

provide a comprehensive and efficient Library Service, designed to meet the needs of local communities.

43. Within the consultation responses, a number of additional suggestions were made for generating income or making savings which are considered within this report. Some suggestions are not able to be considered (eg a Library Tax or paying for basic services) as they would currently be unlawful under the terms of the 1964 Act.

Public Consultation Methodology

44. In September 2019[11] the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage agreed a 10-week public consultation on the proposed changes to Hampshire Library Service from 9 January to 18 March 2020. Information Packs and Response Forms were available in both virtual and hard copy formats and as standard, audio and Easy Read versions, with other layouts available on request. Printed copies were available in Libraries. The consultation and analysis were carried out by the specialist Insight and Engagement Team at Hampshire County Council. An email inbox was set up to respond to consultation enquiries as they came in. Postcards with the details of the consultation and how to respond were also available in all 52 libraries. See Appendix 2 for further details.

45. A dedicated webpage providing full details of the consultation timeframe, public drop-in events and links to the consultation documents and online questionnaires was created. Publicity included the Hampshire media (via press releases to newspapers, radio and television), direct contact with local parish, town and district councils throughout the county, an email to over 150,000 library customers and 500 Hampshire schools as well as through regular posts to the County Council's over 100,000 social media followers and to 12,000 County Council staff. In addition, Officers undertook five staff roadshows at libraries around Hampshire and had a separate meeting with Trade Union representatives. All affected library staff and their union representatives have been informed on the staffing implications of the proposals and staff were invited to provide their comments and feedback through the consultation response form.

46. Less structured opportunities for public, community and organisation engagement were also provided and accepted. These included:

    - 21 public drop-in meetings in libraries around the county and a public meeting in Emsworth;

[11] September 2019 decision day minutes - https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s38289/2019-09-19%20EMRH%20Final%20Update%20on%20Library%20Strategy%202016-2020%20and%20Draft%20Strategy%202020%20-%202025%20002.pdf

- meetings with parish councils, district councils, community organisations, Members of Parliament, and Elected Members;
- the acceptance of free text responses via letter, email and social media;
- petitions from affected communities.

47. All County Councillors have been made aware of the consultation and all of those with a closure in their division were offered the opportunity to meet with officers. Many County Councillors also attended their local drop-in session and responded to the consultation through the consultation response form.

48. At its meeting on 3 September 2018, the Culture and Communities Select Committee (12) set up a cross party Task and Finish Group to develop a new Library Strategy to 2025[12]. Over the last 20 months the group has met nine times, working with Officers on the development of a new 2025 Library Strategy. The Group has received presentations and discussed many different aspects of the Service. Recent meetings have focussed on the outcomes of the public consultation and the proposed changes to the Service, as outlined in this report. Feedback from the Group has been incorporated into the proposed changes and the Group endorses all the recommendations in the report.

The Task and Finish Group consisted of the following members:	The Task and Finish Group meetings were held on:
• Councillor Anna McNair Scott (Chair) • Councillor John Bennison • Councillor Jackie Branson • Councillor Peter Chegwyn (until February 2020) • Councillor Daniel Clarke (until February 2020) • Councillor Rob Mocatta • Councillor Michael White	• 8 November 2018 at Hampshire County Council offices in Winchester • 21 January 2019 at Leigh Park Library • 25 February 2019 at Eastleigh Library • 29 April 2019 at Gosport Discovery Centre • 26 June 2019 at Aldershot Library • 2 October 2019 at HCC HQ in Winchester • 20 February 2020 at HCC HQ in Winchester • 2 June 2020 – a virtual meeting • 10 July 2020 – a virtual meeting

[12] Select Committee Report – 3 September 2018
https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=176&MId=3588

49. Responses and feedback received through all of the channels described above have been taken into account as part of the consultation analysis.

Public Consultation Findings

50. A full report on the public consultation findings can be found in Appendix 2. For the purposes of this report, 'respondent' means the people that chose to participate in the open public consultation by completing the questionnaire, 97% of whom were library members and 96% were active library users.

51. 21,200 people and organisations responded to the Library Service Consultation online, by post and by telephone - see Table 1 below. Some people chose to submit, or expand on, their response via channels such as email, letter, telephone or social media comments. In addition, around 1,400 people attended drop in meetings and around 5,400 people signed petitions. All submissions to the County Council were included in the findings analysis, bringing the total number of responses to around 28,000 – see Table 1 below.

52. Six petitions relating to the proposed changes of Blackfield, Lyndhurst and Odiham Libraries and Kingsclere, Lowford (Bursledon) and North Baddesley community-managed Libraries were received with signatures of between 420 and 1,724. The Friends of Chineham Library submitted a detailed report rather than a petition. See Appendix 2 for a link to the petitions submitted and a list of organisations which responded to the consultation.

Table 1 Summary of engagement with the consultation:

Consultation Responses	**Number**
Open Consultation responses – Individuals (including Library staff and volunteers)	20,397
Open Consultation responses – Organisations	161
Open Consultation responses – Democratically Elected Members	56
Responses from those who did not specify a respondent type	224
Unstructured responses by email and letters direct to Hampshire County Council	196
Social media comments made direct to Hampshire County Council	166
Unstructured response by email made after the consultation closed	2
Sub Total	**21,202**
Participation in public drop-in meetings and Emsworth public meeting	c1,400
Six Petitions (total number of signatures)	5,364
Total	**c28,000**

53. Most respondents (70%) agreed that the Library Service needs to adapt to respond to the changing demands being placed on it. While respondents continued to place value on the universal service offered by local libraries and their role in developing children's literacy, they also recognised the potential to deliver this alongside other services (e.g. access to technology, learning and activities), via new avenues (e.g. as community hubs or at outreach locations), or new technologies (e.g. digital books).

54. Asked how they would prefer £1.04 million savings achieved, the consultation found that most respondents (58%) would prefer that all libraries remain open, and that operational savings be achieved through opening hour reductions. Around one in five supported closures (21%) and the same number suggested another approach (21%).

55. The consultation also sought views on a range of delivery efficiencies that could generate around £146,000 ongoing saving. Overall, respondents agreed that all proposed efficiency measures should be considered, with all but one supported by a majority of respondents.

56. 83% of respondents agreed that the Library Service should investigate options to generate income and 77% felt the Library Service should explore ways to deliver differently in deprived communities. Most respondents (70%) indicated that they would continue to use their local library if it was independent of the County Council and managed by the local community, although this question may have been interpreted slightly differently by respondents depending on whether or not the respondent was a current user of a Tier 4 community-managed library or a Tier 3 council-run library.

57. During the consultation period, meetings were also held with several Parish Councils to discuss the possibility of the Parish Council taking over the running of the library or raising its precept to pay the Library Service to continue running the library. These discussions continued after the consultation finished but, understandably, none of the Parish Councils were prepared to get involved formally at this stage.

58. In summary, the consultation demonstrated support from residents for:

- adapting to meet changing demands placed on the Library Service;
- exploring different ways to deliver services in deprived communities;
- investigating options to generate income in order to contribute to the running of the Service;
- making delivery efficiencies;

and indicated:

- a preference for savings to be made through the reduction and standardisation of opening hours, rather than closures.

Future Vision for Library Services in Hampshire

59. The consultation set out the need for Hampshire's Library Service to evolve to ensure that it remains relevant and accessible to its users. As well as more general population changes in Hampshire, it was particularly noted that physical visits to library buildings are in decline nationally, and that this trend was mirrored in Hampshire. Meanwhile, digital content is becoming more widely available and digital lending continues to grow rapidly.

60. In response, the draft vision published in the consultation set out the direction of travel to 2025 that would ensure the Library Service is run efficiently and positioned to meet the changing demands placed on it, taking account the current and future needs of communities.

61. This vision took account of information which was gleaned through the development of the Libraries' Transformation Strategy to 2020[13] and further local and national evidence on what service users value and how demand for library services continues to change. All of this information helped to shape the vision. The consultation[14], published in January 2020, was a continuation of the research and evidence gathering process which has for some time underpinned the longer term transformation strategy for Hampshire's Library Service.

62. The Library Service's emerging future vision to 2025 proposes three priorities, with a particular focus on seven areas:

    1. Promoting reading, with a focus on children's literacy and the Early Years
        i. Providing a service for everyone
        ii. Developing children's literacy, particularly within the Early Years (0-5 years).
        iii. Investing in Hampshire's Digital Library.

    2. Supporting healthy, creative communities
        i. Establishing council-run libraries as 'community hubs'.
        ii. Taking the Library Service into communities.
        iii. Delivering a programme of learning and activities that meet the needs of library users.

    3. Investing in digital services.
        i. Providing access to technology, prioritising those at risk of digital exclusion.

63. Respondents to the consultation agreed that all seven areas should be an important focus for the Library Service. In particular, they valued a universal

[13] The Library Transformation Strategy to 2020 - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/libraries/LibraryServiceTransformationStrategyto2020ApprovedVersion.pdf
[14] The Hampshire Library Consultation 2020 - https://www.hants.gov.uk/library-consultation

Library Service and its role in developing children's literacy. However, the potential to deliver this alongside other services, via new channels or new technologies, was also recognised. No changes are therefore proposed to the overall vision.

64. In order to deliver this vision, whilst meeting budget reduction targets, the following changes to the way that library services in Hampshire are delivered were proposed:

changes to how council-run library services are delivered, including:
- closing up to 10 libraries and /or
- reducing and standardising staff opening hours;

delivering library services differently within local communities, through:
- transitioning Tier 4 Council-supported, community-managed libraries into independent community-managed libraries
- exploring better ways to deliver library services in Hampshire's most deprived communities:

making further efficiencies; and

generating additional income.

65. Most respondents (70%) agreed that the Library Service needs to adapt to respond to the changing demands being placed on it. The extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with the specific changes proposed are discussed in the sections below, but overall this provides a strong mandate for change.

A comprehensive and efficient service

66. If the recommendations in this report are agreed, the County Council's Library Service will comprise:

- A network of **40 physical libraries**. These libraries will be reasonably accessible to all residents; where libraries have been proposed for closure, these are reasonably close to the nearest alternative library[15] open for around 1,200 staffed hours a week.
- Library buildings hosting a **comprehensive lending offer and a range of other public services**, with a particular focus on activities relating to children's literacy and wellbeing, community activities and digital access and support. Opening times will be informed by community need. Outside of staffed opening hours, libraries will be available for hire or lease and, where appropriate, volunteer groups or other

[15] Reasonable access as defined by the County Council is defined as around 20 minutes by car or 30 minutes by public transport from the nearest alternative library building.

organisations will be able to open buildings to allow access for basic library functions (such as self-service borrowing or access to IT).

- **Different delivery models** ensuring that the Library Service is able to support those communities who do not currently engage with traditional library services, particularly in areas of deprivation.
- **A range of options for people who are unable to visit their local library**, but still wish to borrow physical books including development of the existing Home Library Service and Good Neighbour Schemes, and the newly introduced Ready Reads Service.
- **A Group Membership scheme** which will enable Tier 3 and Tier 4 libraries which have transitioned into independent models to access fresh stock and Hampshire's stock reservation service.
- A range of **specialist services and membership schemes** including Music, Drama and Reading Groups.
- **A comprehensive, and growing, digital library open 24/7**. In 2018/19, Hampshire had the highest eBook lending figures of any library in the UK[16] and digital lending has increased significantly in 2019/20. Hampshire will continue to invest to expand the breadth and depth of the digital library.
- A range of well used **digital resources and reference materials** to support learning, reading and study.
- A lively and active **online presence**. Hampshire's Social Media and YouTube channels are well followed and will continue to host a range of activities and content including Rhymetime, Storytime, book reviews, groups, activities and information.
- A targeted **Learning in Libraries offer** focusing on health and wellbeing, employability skills and digital support delivered both physically and digitally.
- A high performing subscription based **School Library Service** supporting children's literacy and a lifelong love of reading for pleasure for schools in Hampshire and beyond.
- A **financially sustainable** business model with services funded by a balance of revenue contribution and generated income where appropriate.

67. The detailed assessment of local need set out in the Library Service Consultation Information Pack, together with the significant amount of research and engagement undertaken, provides, in our view, clear evidence that the Library Service described in paragraph 66 is both comprehensive

[16] CIPFA report - https://www.cipfa.org/policy-and-guidance/publications/p/public-library-statistics-201920-estimates-and-201819-actuals-excel

and efficient service, meeting the current and future needs of those who live, work or study in Hampshire.

68. It is recommended that the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage approves the Library Vision to 2025.

69. It is recommended that the Executive Member confirms that he is satisfied that the Library Service described in paragraph 66 meets the statutory requirements of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, comprising a comprehensive and efficient service which meets the needs of those who live, work and study in Hampshire.

Changes to council-run libraries – general summary

70. The consultation sought to understand whether members of the public, groups, organisations, business and other key stakeholders would prefer the Service to be restructured through:

- a combination of up to ten library closures and a reduction in opening hours for all other council-run libraries of around 15%; or
- keeping all council-run libraries open and applying opening hour reductions across all libraries of around 25%; or
- another approach that would continue to meet community need within the available budget.

71. The consultation found that most respondents (58%) would prefer that all libraries remain open, and that operational savings be achieved through opening hour reductions. Around one in five supported a combination of closures and opening hour reductions (21%) and the same amount suggested another approach (21%).

72. Most respondents explained their preference in general terms – for example, they felt that their chosen option was the best, fairest or most cost-effective approach (56% and 68% respectively). Almost half (49%) of those who wanted libraries to remain open were concerned about disadvantaging certain groups – in particular, children, the elderly and those without access to transport. See Appendix Two for a summary of themed comments received.

73. One in five respondents (21%) dismissed the two options proposed by the Library Service in favour of another approach to deliver savings. The consultation provided the opportunity for respondents to make suggestions about alternative approaches for the Library Service to make savings. Around 4,000 alternative suggestions were received and these are summarised in Appendix Two. Many of these suggestions related to property costs or income, and these are considered within the relevant sections of this report. However, some were more general, as follows:

74. *38% of respondents felt that the County Council should look elsewhere to find the savings – stating that library services were too important to cut.* As stated in paragraph 25, the County Council has a budget deficit of £80 million by April 2021, with further savings required beyond this date – a position now made considerably worse by the Covid19 pandemic. This being the case, all parts of the organisation are under significant pressure to make savings, and the level attributed to the Library Service is proportionate to savings sought elsewhere.

75. *27% of respondents felt that the Library Service could make savings by changing the services that were delivered.* Paragraphs 199-203 deal with savings through delivery efficiencies, and the level of services provided will be kept under constant review beyond Tt2021. Suggestions included partnerships and co-locating with other services such as post offices and childcare facilities or reducing the range of services provided or the opening hours.

76. *16% of respondents suggested changes to staffing arrangements to reduce costs, including ideas to reduce the number of paid staff by using volunteers more, or reducing back office and management costs*. The Library Service already welcomes the support of 1,250 volunteers (the equivalent of 22 Full Time Equivalent posts) and the further development of volunteer roles will be considered. The potential for volunteer support to increase opening hours beyond that staffed by the County Council is discussed in paragraph 177.

77. With regards to wider staffing costs, this comment is accepted and considerable efforts have already been made to reduce staffing costs across the whole Service through the scrutiny of all vacancies. This has already given rise to substantial 'early achievement' (paragraph 27) and it is expected that this ongoing vacancy management could contribute a further £210,000 to the revised operations target of £1.325 million (paragraph 30).

78. After April 2021, all management and back office roles will be reviewed if the changes proposed in this report are implemented and these savings will contribute to future plans. It remains the case that the closure of libraries enables greater additional savings in staffing to be made than would be the case with just opening hour reductions alone, due to the reduced size of the portfolio.

79. The combined effects of early achievement and additional staff savings mean that a saving of £1.115 million is sought from a combination of opening hour reductions and closures.

Changes to council-run libraries - Options for closing some libraries

80. The consultation proposed the closure of up to 10 council-run libraries. It was considered that the Library Service could continue to offer a comprehensive and efficient service, particularly taking into account the following factors:

- library catchments overlap and services are duplicated across relatively small geographical areas – many library customers access more than one building;
- fewer people are visiting library buildings and more people are accessing digital services; and
- having fewer library buildings would enable savings on utilities, stock, deliveries, property maintenance and management time, in addition to reducing staffing costs.

81. In order to identify how changes to the libraries might be made, whilst still maintaining a comprehensive and efficient Library Service, a detailed assessment of local need and efficiency was undertaken and explained within the consultation information pack. All 48 council-run libraries were ranked according to three sets of equally weighted criteria derived from 2018/19 data as follows:

    - usage (visits, computer use and book issues- per hour open);
    - access (% of users that only use one library branch); and
    - cost (running cost per hour open).

82. This generated a ranking for all 48 council-run libraries where libraries in the lower section of the list were then considered against further criteria including the library tier, accessibility, community need, property, impact and other relevant information. At this stage some libraries were excluded from consideration for closure (Stubbington, Eastleigh and Bishop's Waltham) and others were identified as locations where services could be delivered differently due to the significantly high levels of deprivation in those areas (Bridgemary, Leigh Park and Havant). Having considered lower ranking libraries against these criteria, and having adjusted the list to take account of community need, 10 libraries were proposed for closure in January 2020.

83. The consultation was published using data from the last complete year of figures (2018/19). 2019/20 data has been since been assessed and any significant changes in performance have been taken into account. Additionally, the growth in population criteria has been updated to include some new information. Any impacts from this revised data have been taken into consideration below.

<u>General comments on library closures</u>

84. Whilst the preference of the County Council was to achieve savings through a combination of closures and opening hour reductions, the overall preference of the public is not to close any libraries but, rather, to seek savings through the reduction of opening hours only.

85. Whilst most respondents supported the proposal for the Library Service to make savings in order to be affordable and sustainable, many people

expressed considerable concern about the proposed closure of up to 10 Council run libraries. This resulted in considerable media interest, with much of the coverage focused on the proposals to close libraries.

86. Whilst 21% of respondents preferred the option to close libraries, over three quarters of responding Hampshire Library Staff (78%) preferred this option. Other respondent types that were more likely to support closures were Hampshire Library Service volunteers (34%) and employees of Hampshire County Council (31%).

87. The responses to the consultation on the closure of council run Libraries were collated and themed to enable the Service to understand the impacts that were of most concern to customers. From this it was established that a negative impact on the education of children and young people, specific vulnerable groups and the time and cost implications of having to travel to an alternative branch were of most concern.

88. The detailed comments that respondents made have been carefully considered. However, the reasons put forward in paragraph 80 for the County Council's preference for closures to be considered in combination with a reduction in opening hours closing libraries remain largely unchanged.

89. Moreover, since the publication of the consultation, the Covid-19 crisis has caused the Library Service to think radically differently about the way it delivers library services to the residents of Hampshire. Three areas stand out:

- Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, Hampshire Council had the highest number of eBook issues of any English County during 2018/19:- an offer which was already increasing in popularity year on year. In 2019/20 the total digital lending (including books, magazines, audiobooks and newspapers) was 1.015 million items. This surpassed the combined total annual lending of physical resources from Hampshire's five highest lending libraries. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, digital borrowing has risen sharply. For example, digital lending in May 2020 was double the figure it was in May 2019 (161,000 issues versus 76,000 issues respectively). Significant investment has been made to increase and broaden the range of digital titles stocked, and active users of the digital platforms have increased by 41% from 23 March to 30 June 2020 (including people of all ages).
- A wide range of digital content has been made available through Hampshire Libraries' social media accounts and YouTube channel. This includes Rhymetime, Storytime, book reviews, learning, groups, clubs and other activities. From 23 March to 12 July, Hampshire Libraries' Facebook posts reached over a million users (up 211% on the same period last year); in that same period 281 videos were published and viewed over 100,000 times. Whilst this content does not fully replace the benefits of face-to-face activities taking place in libraries, it

offers an alternative way for people to access and participate in library services.

- Contactless library services have been expanded and broadened. The existing Home Library Service and Good Neighbour schemes are expected to expand to accommodate an increased number of people either unable or unwilling to leave their home, whilst the newly introduced 'Ready Reads' service offers a way of obtaining physical books through a contactless collection offer.

90. Each of these examples highlight how the Library Service is demonstrating agility in responding to the changing needs of communities, broadening the already comprehensive offer and offering further potential mitigation against the closure of physical branches.

91. The consultation responses have not given Officers reason to change their view that, with the range and breadth of library services across Hampshire, the Service will remain comprehensive and efficient, with the preferred option of up to 10 fewer physical libraries operating reduced opening hours; a digital library always available online; a significant online presence; the School Library Service; contactless library services (such as Ready Reads and the Home Library Service); a Learning in Libraries offer and a range of specialist library services.

92. Crucially, the closure of libraries offers further long-term financial sustainability beyond the savings immediately achievable. If 10 libraries were to close, the total savings available by April 2021 would be up to £564,000. This would include immediate savings related to branch-based staff, property costs, consumables, stock and utilities. However, a smaller portfolio of libraries to resource would mean further significant savings can be made beyond April 2021 relating to management costs, support staff and the ongoing cost of renewing service-wide contracts. The longer term savings would make a significant contribution of around £200,000 to the now inevitable future financial savings targets.

93. However, the general preference of respondents was that savings should be found through the reduction of opening hours alone, with no closures. This preference has been noted, as have specific consultation responses which have enabled the County Council to adjust some recommendations and address any key adverse impacts where possible.

94. This expression of preference (including the supporting comments) has caused a shift in what it proposed from what had previously been the preferred position. It is therefore now proposed that the number of libraries identified for closure be reduced from ten to eight, with a reduction in opening hours averaging 20% in all remaining libraries. This proposal recognises the public preference for fewer closures and takes account of key impacts raised, but still positions the County Council well to make further savings beyond April 2021. This balance would deliver the required savings, providing an efficient service which meets local need.

Comments on the 10 Libraries identified for potential closure

95. As part of the consultation, respondents were given specific opportunity to comment on any of the 10 libraries identified for potential closure and/or to suggest alternative ways in which the Library Service could support the needs of customers whose libraries may close.

96. A total of 5,271 comments were submitted, with representation from both users and non-users of these libraries. The charts on pages 31-35 in Appendix 2 show the top 10 themes arising in the comments for each specific library, along with a comparison to the overall proportion of comments relating to each theme.

97. More generally, a range of comments suggested that respondents felt that the comprehensive review methodology (summarised in paragraph 81 and 82) placed too much importance on the 'Access' weighting and in particular the '% of library customers that use only one library branch' or Unique users.

98. Two particular issues were raised:

- Firstly, it was argued that libraries outside the Hampshire County boundaries may be used by adjoining local communities, but that usage information is not shared between Library Authorities. For example, Emsworth residents may use Southbourne Library in West Sussex but Hampshire Library Service is unable to measure this usage and so the majority of Emsworth library users appear to be solely using Emsworth library. This may unfairly favour libraries on the edge of the County over those more centrally located.
- Secondly it was suggested that the unique user indicator was too blunt and that a customer would lose their 'unique' user status if they visited an alternative library even just once in a 12 month period. It was felt that this methodology did not properly acknowledge the number of users affected.

99. Whilst the 'unique user' data remains an important indicator of the pattern of usage of libraries across Hampshire and the overlap of provision, Officers acknowledge the consultation feedback. The Library Service has therefore revised the Comprehensive Review methodology to reduce the importance of the unique user data, by including the total number of library members that used a library within the past year.

100. This revision has meant that there are some amendments to the rank order of libraries as published in the consultation, the most relevant of which are summarised below:

- Both Emsworth and Chineham now rank noticeably higher than the other eight libraries proposed for closure; and

- The rank order of Whitchurch and Overton (both Tier 3 Libraries) has changed, placing them beneath Chineham and Emsworth in the rankings.

101. Additionally, the revised Comprehensive Review was published using 2018/19 data, as this was the most recent complete dataset available. 2019/20 data has been compared with the published data to identify whether there have been any material changes. Any variations in the data between the 2018/19 and the 2019/20 figures have been evaluated and considered as part of the process for developing the recommendations in this Report

102. Having due regard to the consultation responses and evidence of impact provided for each specific library proposed for closure, each library is therefore considered in turn in Appendix 4 and the position summarised below:

Blackfield Library

103. Blackfield Library is open for 14.5 hours per week and has 474 borrowers, of which 62% have already used an alternative Library within Hampshire. It has a catchment population of 10,990; the Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 6.5 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). It offers the public access to core services but provides little opportunity for activities or events due to the limited space available. Data shows it typically has an average of 6 visits and 12 book issues per hour open, which ranks Blackfield as the lowest performing library in Hampshire for issues and visits.

104. The overall use of Blackfield Library is particularly low, reflected in the low level of consultation responses for this library. No single theme predominated within the comments about Blackfield Library**.** Just over a quarter of those who left comments (27%) stated that the library should not close and the same proportion highlighted that the library provided a valued service (27%). However, the proportion of respondents who valued the Service was notably lower for Blackfield than for the other nine libraries (50%), and the proportion of respondents who stated their support for closure was notably higher (13% vs 5% on average). The location of Blackfield Library in a relatively deprived area (10% vs 5% on average), with limited alternative provision available to meet local need should it close (14% vs 5% on average) were specific concerns.

105. The education attainment in the Blackfield catchment is 4.6 (which is lower than the Hampshire average of 7.0). The School Library Service already supports the local schools to Blackfield Library with high quality stock (reading for pleasure and curriculum) providing a viable alternative for children and young people who are unable to travel to an alternative library. Due to the rural nature of the catchment area, travel concerns were raised as an issue, but travel times by both private and public transport from Blackfield to the library at Hythe are well within reasonable limits.

106. The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to the small number of people adversely impacted, should Blackfield Library be removed from the portfolio. This would be achieved by supporting existing customers through the digital services, Ready Reads, the Home Library Service, Good Neighbour scheme or to visit the nearest alternative library at Hythe. It is therefore considered that the Library Service could offer adequate mitigation if Blackfield Library were to close. See Appendix 4 for more information.

Chineham Library

107. Chineham Library has a catchment population of 60,708. The Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 8.0 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). The Library is currently open for 38.5 hours per week and has 4,848 borrowers, of which 49% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. Chineham Library offers the public access to core services and a variety of activities and events. Data shows it typically has an average of 39 visits and 45 book issues per hour it is open.

108. Responses relating to Chineham Library focused on convenience and high levels of use, with a sense of surprise that it was on the list of potential closures. Almost half of the comments highlighted the valued service that Chineham Library provided (47%) with particular mention of the range of services, its value to the local community and their appreciation of the library and its staff. The convenience and ease of using Chineham Library was another key theme (28% vs 20% on average), with respondents citing the handiness of the location, how people who live nearby can walk there for a visit and those who need to can easily park, leading to many people commenting on how often they visited (21% vs 15% on average).

109. Whilst the nature of the impacts cited for Chineham are similar to those mentioned for many other libraries proposed for closure, these impacts would affect significantly more people due to the higher number of active users of Chineham Library. Suggestions have been made that consideration should be given to hiring out space at Chineham Library to reduce property costs, and that the methodology used should be reviewed to revise the approach to the treatment of unique users which, it was felt, unfairly disadvantaged the customers of some libraries (see paragraphs 97 - 101). This revised methodology has moved Chineham from the bottom group in the rank order.

110. It is therefore proposed that Chineham Library be retained on the basis that the costs can be reduced and, when taken together with the number of people adversely impacted and the position of Chineham in the revised Comprehensive Review (paragraphs 97 – 101), it means that Chineham is no longer considered to be a poorly performing library. See Appendix 4 for more information.

Elson Library

111. Elson Library is open for 31.5 hours per week, has 1,443 borrowers of which 54% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. It has a catchment population of 20,003, the Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 5.2 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). Elson Library offers public access to core services and a range of activities and events. Data shows it typically has an average of 23 visits and 16 book issues per hour open which ranks it amongst the lowest performing libraries in Hampshire.

112. 52% of the comments submitted for Elson Library explained that the library provides a valued service, with corresponding comments relating to Elson's value as a community hub (25% vs 19% on average) and route to accessing other services (14% vs 8% on average). Comments mentioning frequency of use (28%) were particularly prominent when compared to the average (15%) – especially use by children (12% vs 7% on average). However, responses suggested less concern about travelling to another library (19%) when compared to others (26% on average).

113. There is clearly a lot of local appreciation for the community facilities offered by Elson Library. However, a high proportion of respondents (over 70%) also used another library (most frequently Gosport Discovery Centre).

114. Educational attainment in Elson is 3.5 which is lower than the Hampshire average of 7.0 and this was raised as a concern during the consultation and the public drop in session. The Service will be developing new ways of working in this area via Bridgemary Library using alternative community buildings in Elson to ensure that the Library Service Vision and commitment to children's literacy is achieved. The majority of primary schools in the catchment area are existing members of the School Library Service.

115. In addition to the new ways of working outlined in the paragraph above, the Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to people adversely impacted, should Elson Library be removed from the portfolio. This would be achieved by supporting existing customers through the digital services, Ready Reads, the Home Library Service, the Good Neighbour scheme or to visit the nearest alternative library at Gosport. It is therefore considered that the Library Service could offer adequate mitigation if Elson Library were to close. See Appendix 4 for more information.

Emsworth Library

116. Emsworth Library is open for 35 hours per week, has 2,227 borrowers of which 38% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. It has a catchment population of 18,822, the Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 7.5 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). It offers the public access to core services but provides little opportunity for activities or events due to the available space. Data shows it typically has an average of 37 visits and 26 book issues per hour open which ranks it amongst the lower performing Libraries in Hampshire.

117. Comments relating to Emsworth Library also highlighted the valued service provided, with 51% of all submitted comments reflecting this point. Respondents were particularly vocal about how the library is a vital part of the community (31% vs 19% on average) and felt that service efficiencies or income generation could help to keep the library open (17% vs 10% on average).

118. Emsworth Library has a high level of community support and a higher number of unique users than any other library proposed for closure (although this is considered in paragraphs 97-101). Using the revised comprehensive review methodology has moved Emsworth out of the lower ranking, suggesting that it should be retained. During the consultation period, a proposal came forward from the community to relocate the library into Emsworth Community Centre at a significantly lower cost. This proposal was discussed at a public meeting in Emsworth on 10 February 2020, attended by approximately 200 people, where it received strong support, so long as the library continued to be run by the Library Service. Since then Emsworth Community Association has submitted an Expression of Interest to host the library in their Community Centre at minimal cost, provided that it is run by the Library Service. This alternative proposal is considered a positive way forward and would change the financial viability of Emsworth Library by making it significantly cheaper to run.

119. It is therefore proposed that Emsworth Library is retained on the basis that it can be moved to Emsworth Community Centre at significantly lower cost and, when taken together with the position of Emsworth in the revised rankings, would mean that Emsworth is no longer considered to be a poorly performing library. See Appendix 4 for more information.

Fair Oak Library

120. Fair Oak Library is open for 18.5 hours per week, has 1,254 borrowers of which 46% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. It has a catchment population of 20,259, the Index of Multiple Deprivation is 9.1 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). It offers the public access to core services but provides little opportunity for activities or events due to the available space. Data shows it typically has an average of 30 visits and 27 book issues per hour open which ranks Fair Oak as one of the lower performing libraries in Hampshire.

121. A key theme of consultation responses for Fair Oak Library was that it was needed to support future population growth. 37% mentioned that the library should not close (compared to 22% on average) – driven in part by a perception that it would be needed to support the increasing numbers of people moving into new housing in the area (20% vs 7% on average). Respondents also reflected that the library provides a valued service (44%), noting in particular its value to the community (26% vs 19% on average) – although they were less likely to comment on the convenience of its location (13% vs 20% on average).

122. The Library Service has taken into account the predicted population growth across the County, including the Fair Oak area, along with other changing patterns of demand for the services it provides. Officers are satisfied that surrounding libraries (Eastleigh, Hedge End and Bishop's Waltham) provide sufficient coverage, and have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the Fair Oak community.

123. A second key theme raised were the concerns about the difficulty and expense of travelling by public transport to Eastleigh Library. This is located on the first floor of the Swan Shopping Centre which is some distance from the nearest bus stop. The longer-term Library Asset Strategy (see paragraph 156) identifies that Eastleigh Library's high operating costs and poor location skewed its performance. It is believed that relocating the library to a more suitable building that better met the needs of the community will significantly improve the performance and accessibility of this library.

124. The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to the small number of people adversely impacted, should Fair Oak Library be removed from the portfolio. This would be achieved by supporting existing customers through the digital services, Ready Reads, the Home Library Service, the Good Neighbour scheme or to visit one of the many alternative libraries at Bishop's Waltham, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, or Hedge End. It is therefore considered that the Library Service could offer adequate mitigation if Fair Oak Library were to close. See Appendix 4 for more information.

Horndean Library

125. Horndean Library is open for 17 hours per week, has 876 borrowers of which 51% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. It has a catchment population of 16,004, contains 2.2% of 20% most deprived in the country although the Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 8.8 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). It offers the public access to core services but provides little opportunity for activities or events due to the available space. Data shows it typically has an average of 18 visits and 21 book issues per hour open which ranks it amongst the lowest performing libraries in Hampshire.

126. Comments relating to Horndean Library tended to sit on, or slightly below the overall average in all areas, although the closure of a valued service was a common factor (40% vs 50% on average), along with concerns about travelling to an alternative library, should Horndean close (27%). Respondents expressed concern that the closure of Horndean Library will impact negatively on those who live within the catchment area bringing about potential inequalities (49%).

127. The catchment of Horndean Library covers some very rural areas of county and customers living in these areas may experience some challenges in reaching an alternative library due to infrequent bus services. However, the actual number of customers affected is relatively low due to the low use of

this library and some may own a car to access libraries. Customers unable or unwilling to travel to an alternative branch are able to access the Online Digital Services provided by the Library Service. Internet and Broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure.

128. A slightly higher than average proportion of respondents supported the closure of Horndean Library. Whilst the impacts of travelling to an alternative library were a concern for some respondents, the journey to Waterlooville Library is considered reasonable.

129. The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to the small number of people adversely impacted, should Horndean Library be removed from the portfolio. This would be achieved by supporting existing customers through the digital services, Ready Reads, the Home Library Service, the Good Neighbour scheme or to visit the nearest alternative library at Waterlooville. It is therefore considered that the Library Service could offer adequate mitigation if Horndean Library were to close. See Appendix 4 for more information.

Lee-on-the-Solent Library

130. Lee-on-the-Solent Library is open for 25.5 hours per week, has 1,723 borrowers of which 56% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. It has a catchment population of 12,389, the Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 8.2 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). It offers the public access to core services and offers a range of activities and events. Data shows it typically has an average of 32 visits and 27 book issues per hour open which ranks it amongst the lower performing libraries in Hampshire.

131. Of the catchment population for Lee-on-the-Solent Library 34% are over 60 (above the Hampshire average of 25%). Respondents comments about the Library had a greater focus on elderly library users who could be disadvantaged by the proposed closure (17% vs 10% on average). People valued the ability to be able to walk to the Library and expressed concerns about travelling to other libraries (29%), which, it was felt, older people may find particularly difficult (13% vs 9% on average).

132. Whilst concerns were raised regarding the ability of some residents to travel to the nearest alternative libraries (Stubbington and Gosport) these journey times are nonetheless considered reasonable. Given the age profile of this community, special efforts would be made to promote the Home Library Service, Ready Reads, Good Neighbour Scheme and digital offer.

133. The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to the small number of people adversely impacted, should Lee-on-the-Solent Library be removed from the portfolio. It is therefore considered that the Library Service could offer adequate mitigation if Lee-on-the-Solent Library were to close. See Appendix 4 for more information.

Lyndhurst Library

134. Lyndhurst Library is open for 17.5 hours per week, has 789 borrowers of which 46% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. It has a catchment population of 5,754, the Index of Multiple Deprivation is 7.4 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). Of the catchment population for the Library 38% are over 60 (above the Hampshire average of 25%). It offers the public access to core services but provides little opportunity for activities or events due to the available space. Data shows it typically has an average of 15 visits and 16 book issues per hour open which ranks Lyndhurst as one of the lowest performing libraries in Hampshire.

135. Around a third of respondents who commented on Lyndhurst Library (34%) said that the library provided a valued service. However, this was a less prominent concern than for other libraries (50%) and compared to the perceived issues of travelling to an alternative.

136. People valued the ability to be able to walk to the Library and expressed concerns about travelling, 39% of comments relating to Lyndhurst Library referred to issues around travelling to alternative libraries, compared to 26% on average, with inconvenience of travelling further being a particular concern (29% vs 20% on average). 22% felt that those without access to transport would be disadvantaged, particularly specific groups such as older people.

137. The catchment of Lyndhurst Library covers some very rural areas of county and customers living in these areas may experience some challenges in reaching an alternative library due to infrequent bus services. However, the actual number of customers affected is relatively low due to the low use of this library and some may own a car to access libraries. Customers unable or unwilling to travel to an alternative branch are able to access the Online Digital Services provided by the Library Service. Internet and Broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure.

138. Travel impacts are an understandable concern for Lyndhurst Library users. Whilst 46% do already use an alternative library, it is recognised that the heavy levels of traffic in summer months particularly can add to travel concerns. However, when compared to alternative libraries, a relatively small number of people are impacted and it is considered that these people could be supported through the promotion of Ready Reads, Home Library Service, Good Neighbour Scheme, digital offer or to visit the nearest alternative library at Totton or Lymington. It is therefore considered that adequate mitigation could be provided if Lyndhurst Library were to close. See Appendix 4 for more information.

Odiham Library

139. Odiham Library is open for 18 hours per week, has 678 borrowers of which 39% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. It has a catchment population of 7,443, the Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 8.8 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). It offers the public access to core services but provides little opportunity for activities or events due to the limited available space. Data shows it typically has an average of 20 visits and 14 book issues per hour open which ranks it amongst the lowest performing Libraries in Hampshire.

140. People valued the ability to be able to walk to the Library and expressed concerns about travelling, with 42% focusing on the difficulties of travelling to an alternative library (compared to 26% on average). The comments highlighted that it would be inconvenient for people to travel further to an alternative library (32%), particularly for elderly people (11% vs 5% on average) and those without access to their own transport (14% vs 5% on average), often due to perceptions of limited availability of public transport in the local area. Around a quarter of respondents who commented on Odiham Library (26%) said that the library provided a valued service. However, this was a less prominent concern than for other libraries (50%) and compared to the perceived issues of travelling to an alternative.

141. Respondents to the consultation were concerned that those without access to a private vehicle would be significantly impacted if Odiham Library were to close as public transport within the area is limited (31%). However, only 2.5% of households in the catchment do not have access to a car, compared with Hampshire average of 5.8%.

142. The catchment of Odiham Library covers some very rural areas of county and customers living in these areas may experience some challenges in reaching an alternative library due to infrequent bus services. However, the actual number of customers affected is relatively low due to the low use of this library and some may own a car to access libraries. Customers unable or unwilling to travel to an alternative branch are able to access the Online Digital Services provided by the Library Service. Internet and Broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure.

143. The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to the small number of people adversely impacted, should Odiham Library be removed from the portfolio. This would be achieved by supporting existing customers through the digital services, Ready Reads, the Home Library Service, the Good Neighbour scheme or to visit the nearest alternative library at Alton. It is therefore considered that the Library Service could offer adequate mitigation if Odiham Library were to close. See Appendix 4 for more information.

South Ham Library

144. South Ham Library is open for 26 hours per week, has 2,065 borrowers of which 52% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. It has a

catchment population of 50,157, the Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 7.1 (the Index runs from 1 - most deprived - to 10 - least deprived). It offers the public access to core services but provides little opportunity for activities or events due to the limited available space. Data shows it typically has an average of 32 visits and 37 book issues per hour open which ranks it amongst the lower performing Libraries in Hampshire.

145. More so than any other library, comments relating to South Ham Library focused on the impact that closure could have on specific groups (27% vs 19% on average). South Ham was highlighted as a more deprived area which needed a library to support less wealthy residents (16%, vs 10% on average who may not otherwise be able to access reading materials and groups), or be able to travel to an alternative. The proportion of the population with no cars in the catchment is 6.4%, above the Hampshire average of 5.8%. The catchment also contains 3.6% of the 20% most deprived areas and IMD score of 7.1.

146. The time and cost of travel to an alternative Library was a concern to respondents of the public consultation. The Library Service recognises that additional costs will be incurred by people travelling to Basingstoke Discovery Centre, either by public transport or in a private vehicle. Customers unable or unwilling to travel to an alternative branch are able to access the Online Digital Services provided by the Library Service.

147. The Education Attainment in the South Ham catchment is 5.9 (which is lower than the Hampshire average of 7.0). The majority of local schools in the catchment area are subscribers to the School Library Service providing high quality stock (reading for pleasure and curriculum). This may be a viable alternative for children and young people who are unable to travel to an alternative library.

148. Whilst comments about the loss of a valued public service are noted, South Ham library is situated within a bigger community venue. It is possible that many of the community services which are valued by South Ham customers could be provided through alternative operators. Two community groups have come forward to express interest in taking over the space currently occupied by the library.

149. South Ham Library provides a base for the School Library Service serving over 100 schools in north east Hampshire and adjacent counties which may be impacted on the proposed closure. The School Library Service will retain a presence in north east Hampshire.

150. The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to the small number of people adversely impacted, should South Ham Library be removed from the portfolio. This would be achieved by supporting existing customers through the digital services, Ready Reads, the Home Library Service, the Good Neighbour scheme or to visit the nearest alternative library at Basingstoke Discovery Centre. It is therefore

considered that the Library Service could offer adequate mitigation if South Ham Library were to close. See Appendix 4 for more information.

Closure summary

151. Taking into account all of the detailed points raised for each branch, together with changes to the rank order through the adjustment to the methodology as a result of consultation feedback, it is proposed that Chineham and Emsworth be removed from the list of libraries proposed for closure.

152. Although Whitchurch and Overton now rank below Chineham and Emsworth, these libraries are not currently proposed for closure. As the closure of these libraries has not been the subject of public consultation, the impacts of the closure of these libraries has not been properly explored in a public forum. In addition, the second stage of the methodology to identify branches for potential closure (as explained in paragraph 81) would indicate that these libraries should not be proposed for closure because:

- both libraries have a catchment area which covers a significant part of rural Hampshire and, if they were removed, some customers would not have reasonable access to an alternative branch;
- Whitchurch Library is in a building which is leased to 2032 and, therefore, it would not be practicable to exit from this lease at this stage; and
- Overton Library is the nearest alternative branch to Kingsclere Community and, as such, provides mitigation for the withdrawal of support from Kingsclere Library.

For these reasons, it is not recommended to close either Whitchurch or Overton Library as part of the current proposal. However, the performance of both libraries will be kept under review.

153. The proposals for the closure of up to 10 Council run libraries are therefore summarised in the table below:

Library	**District/ Borough**	**Ownership of current building**	**Recommendation**
Blackfield	New Forest	Freehold	Close
Chineham	Basingstoke	Freehold	Retain with reduced operating costs
Elson	Gosport	Freehold	Close
Emsworth	Havant	Leasehold	Retain and move to reduce operating costs
Fair Oak	Eastleigh	Freehold	Close
Horndean	East Hants	Freehold	Close

Lee-on-the-Solent	Gosport	Freehold	Close
Lyndhurst	New Forest	Leasehold	Close
Odiham	Hart	Freehold	Close
South Ham	Basingstoke	Freehold	Close

154. The eight libraries proposed for closure (plus the four Tier 4 community managed Libraries) account for just 5% of Hampshire County Council's total issues and visits and, therefore, together with the mitigation proposed and the increasing popularity of the digital library, it is considered that the closure of these libraries would not affect the County Council's ability to maintain a comprehensive and efficient service.

155. The total savings generated by the closure of the eight libraries listed is £340,000. Additional savings, contributing to future savings targets, could be made through the relocation of Emsworth and additional income generated through hiring out space at Chineham Library.

Library Assets and Investment Programme

156. The consultation responses provided a number of alternative suggestions for making savings through the reduction of property costs. These included renegotiating leases, sharing space with partners and relocating to cheaper buildings. These suggestions are all welcomed and form part of the Library Services longer term asset plans: for example, the particular costs and poor location of Eastleigh Library were mentioned in the consultation. Efforts will be made to reduce property costs where possible and if library relocations are proposed, these will be subject to further local consultation.

157. Consultation respondents and residents that attended the public drop in events asked what would happen to the buildings of libraries that closed. In summary, subject to the decision made on branch closures it is likely that:

- The leases would be ended for Emsworth Library and Lyndhurst Library.
- Emsworth Library will move to the existing Community Centre under new lease arrangements which will significantly reduce the operating costs.
- Chineham Library will remain part of the Library Service estate but either a partner will be found to share the building running costs or the library will be relocated within the shopping centre with reduced running costs.
- The remaining seven freehold buildings would be offered to the community for the running of Independent Community Managed libraries or for other community purposes. If no viable expressions of interest are forthcoming, the building would firstly be offered other public sector providers before being let commercially or sold.

- Any capital returns arising from the sale of properties would be returned to the Library Service for future capital investment in buildings and services.

158. It is important to note that the County Council would welcome approaches from community groups or other organisations who wished to take over the running of community services. If approaches are made, adequate time would be provided for negotiations and transfer, and it is possible that organisations will be able to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000. for the costs of transitioning into independent library models.[17].

159. The Library Services will provide initial support to community organisations to transition to independent community managed libraries including both advice and training, as well as sign posting to longer term alternative source of funding, advice and training support. There is an established community library network, which the organisations will be eligible to join.

Conclusion

160. In view of comments made by respondents and Hampshire residents during the consultation, it is recommended that a decision is taken to close the eight libraries listed in paragraph 153.

Changes to opening hours of council-run libraries

General comments

161. Libraries in Hampshire operate a range of opening hours. Whilst Tier One libraries are open for longer hours than Tier Three libraries, there is currently no standard allocation of hours within tiers. Branch opening times vary as a result of many years of historical decisions.

162. The consultation proposed a reduction of opening hours across all council-run libraries in Hampshire. The reduction in hours was proposed to be achieved through a blanket reduction of hours across all libraries **or** through the standardisation of hours, with the principle that libraries within the same tier should have comparable opening hours.

163. The consultation indicated that 58% of respondents preferred that changes to library services be made through the reduction of opening hours rather

[17] https://www.hants.gov.uk/community/grants/grants-funds-list?filter=.Culture-Communities-and-Business-Services

than the closure of libraries, with comments noting that customers would be able to adjust the time of their visit.

164. Whilst a reduction of 25% of opening hours was generally supported, paragraphs 84-94 explain why a balance of closures and savings is preferred. In addition, impacts on customers have been considered. Put simply, a reduction in opening hours across all libraries is likely to adversely affect more people than a combination of a reduction of hours and the closure of some poorly performing branches.

165. This table illustrates the higher impact of opening hour reductions versus closures:

Scenario	**Number of hours reduction**	**Impacts**
8 closures and 20% reduction in hours	c.500	Proportionally more hours lost from libraries identified for closure – these tend to be smaller and more poorly performing with a low hourly footfall (up to 30 people per hour)
2 closures and 25% reduction in hours	c.500	Hours lost from all libraries – proportionately more hours lost from larger busier libraries with a higher footfall (up to 185 people per hour)

166. Whilst some consultation respondents have indicated that if hours changed they could simply change the time of their visit, it is not expected that all customers would be able to adapt their visit times. It is therefore considered that a more limited reduction of opening hours would reduce the impacts on the overall number of people adversely affected.

167. This being the case, this report recommends a reduction in opening hours averaging 20% in all remaining libraries. This would generate a saving of c. £775,000 for the Library Service (This saving is based on an average reduction of around 40 – 50 full time equivalent staff. The actual savings figure will not be possible to calculate until after the public consultation on *opening times* referenced in paragraph 175 has been completed).

<u>Standardisation</u>

168. More than half of all respondents (56%) supported the proposal for standardisation of hours. Further analysis showed all respondent types were more likely to support than oppose the principle that all libraries within the same tier should have comparable opening hours. 26% of respondents did not know whether they supported standardisation.

169. Officers agree that the standardisation of hours would be a fairer county-wide approach to the allocation of hours than the current system (which reflects historic factors and not current need). It is proposed that the

standardisation of hours within tiers is applied according to the following principles:

- The standardisation model should be based on the current tier system.
- The objective is to bring opening hours into better alignment within each tier and reduce the range of different hours. There are currently 28 different bands of opening hours and it is proposed to reduce these to 4 bands as follows:
    - Tier 1 libraries (including Discovery Centres) to be allocated 41.5 hours (5 full days and one half day);
    - Tier 2 libraries to be allocated either 34 hours (4 full days and 1 half day) or 26.5 hours (3 full days and 1 half day);
    - Tier 3 libraries to be allocated either 26.5 hours (3 full days and 1 half day) or 16 hours (4 half days).
- To bring libraries into line with each other, the opening hours of some libraries will reduce by more than 20% (the maximum reduction is 39%) and some libraries may have their hours reduced only very slightly or, even, increased (the maximum increase in hours is 39%). The total reduction of hours across the Service is around 20%.
- It is proposed that no library should operate with fewer than 16 hours (or 4 half day sessions) as this is not considered to be an efficient use of public resources.
- The allocation of hours within tiers is based on groupings of comparable libraries (the comparison is based on number of issues, visits and computer use).
- It is noted that the opening hours for libraries at the top of Tier 3 share the same opening hours as those at the bottom of Tier 2. This is because the libraries within these groups share comparable usage figures.
- It is therefore noted that the tiers of libraries need to be reviewed in the future, when the changes proposed in this report have been implemented.
- The pattern of either 16, 26.5, 34, or 41.5 hours has been developed to ensure standard session times (7.5 hour full-day and 4 hour half-day sessions). This enables a much more efficient deployment of the workforce, providing flexibility whilst enabling the standardisation of shift patterns and consistent opening times for customers to visit their local libraries.

170. Overton Library is proposed to have its opening hours increased from 11.5 to 16. This is reflective of the desire to ensure that no library is open for less than 16 hours a week. Overton is also one of the nearest branches to Kingsclere (6.2 miles away) and the increase of opening hours in Overton could support mitigation proposed for the withdrawal of support to Kingsclere council supported community-managed library.

171. A detailed breakdown of how this would affect individual branches is included at Appendix 3. The table below reflects the outcome of standardisation on the range of opening hours within each tier.

	Current Hours		Proposed Future Hours	
	Range	**Difference in range**	**Range**	**Difference in range**
Tier 1 (including Discovery Centres)	50 - 62	**12**	41.5	**0**
Tier 2	34 - 50	**16**	26.5 - 34	**7.5**
Tier 3	11.5 - 35.5	**24**	16 - 26.5	**10.5**

How hours are reduced

172. Whilst the section above shows how many hours each tier of library might be allocated (*opening hours*), how these hours are spent (*opening times*) will differ from library to library according to a range of factors including local community preferences and business need.

173. Respondents were given the opportunity to indicate their preference for ways to change the opening times; the responses are ranked in the table below:

Option	**1st preference**	**2nd preference**	**First two preferences**
Opening libraries at 9:30am	45%	26%	71%
Closing libraries at 5:00pm	14%	30%	44%
Half day closures of libraries	14%	24%	38%
Whole day closures of libraries	18%	8%	26%
Lunch time closures of libraries	9%	13%	22%

174. Opening libraries at the later time of 9:30am was the preferred option; this provides a 3% reduction in hours and a saving of £165,000. The second preference was to close libraries at 5:00pm, this provides a 6% reduction in hours and a saving of £255,000. Therefore, half day and whole day closures will be required, in addition to changes to the opening and closing times to achieve the overall 20% reduction and associated savings required. How these are applied will be assessed on a branch by branch basis, using the

consultation responses for each branch, and considering changes required to support standardising the opening hours per tier.

175. Although the Executive Member is asked to approve the opening hour allocations per branch, as set out in Appendix 3, at this Decision Day, a further public consultation on how this allocation of hours translates into opening times for each individual branch will be conducted during August 2020, for a period of two weeks. This further consultation is necessary ensure opening times properly reflect local need. The proposals set out in the August 'Opening Times' consultation will be based on feedback provided through the current consultation process.

Further considerations

176. Whilst a reduction of opening hours averaging 20% across Hampshire's libraries is a significant change, consultation respondents indicated that they would be able to change the time of their visits to accommodate the new hours.

177. It is important to note that these recommendations affect the hours that libraries are staffed by Hampshire County Council. Throughout the consultation in the public drop-in sessions, through the consultation responses and in other feedback, respondents have raised the question as to whether libraries could be opened outside these staffed hours with the support of volunteers. Officers have considered these proposals and agree that where a local group was willing (this group being responsible for the recruitment, rostering and management of volunteers), then local agreements with volunteer groups to open libraries outside of hours – offering basic services such as access to space, book lending (provided through the existing self-service machines) and IT, would be welcomed.

178. Further feedback has been received through the consultation as to what degree the twin aims of reducing opening hours and increasing income from room hire are mutually exclusive. Respondents valued space that libraries provided to enable the local community to use and come together to meet or hold activities to reduce social isolation and support wellbeing. Again, it is recognised that library buildings, and rooms within buildings, could still remain available to hire to groups outside staffed opening hours with the right processes in place.

179. Consideration has been given to the wider impacts of reducing library opening hours and how this may affect people who are unable to access libraries during working hours. The opening times for each library will take into account local feedback – provided both through this consultation and the further consultation in August and current evidence on usage. It is noted that the significantly increased take up and increased provision of Hampshire's digital library and social media content would provide further mitigation for individuals adversely affected by the reduction in opening hours.

Recommendations

180. It is recommended that the Executive Member approves a reduction in opening hours across the Service averaging 20%, together with proposals to standardise hours as far as practical.

181. It is recommended that the Executive Member approves a second public consultation to confirm the actual opening times at each council-run library and delegates authority to determine opening times following this consultation to the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services in consultation with the Executive Member.

Delivering libraries services differently within local communities

182. The Library Service has identified two further opportunities to deliver services differently. The first is the transition of council-supported community-managed libraries into independent community managed libraries and the second is to maximise engagement with the Library Service by specific deprived communities where current library usage is low.

Transition community-managed Libraries to an independent model

183. The Library Service network includes four Tier 4 council supported community-managed libraries in Kingsclere, Lowford (also known as Bursledon), Milford-on-Sea and North Baddesley. These libraries are managed by community groups, run by volunteers and supported by a regular visit by a member of Library Service staff. Hampshire County Council provides books, some equipment and public Wi-Fi.

184. As set out in the Library Service consultation information pack, these libraries issue fewer items and have fewer members than other council-run libraries in Hampshire, including those libraries recommended for closure elsewhere in this report. The four Tier 4 Community Libraries account for around 0.5% of the total issues and library members of Hampshire's libraries. Although the running costs are currently shared with communities, and are therefore comparatively lower than Tier 3 libraries, the four Tier 4 libraries still cost the County Council approximately £49,000 per year to run in total. Further, the capacity of the Library Service to continue to support this model, particularly the weekly staff visits, buddy branch support and weekly delivery, will be negatively impacted by recommendations elsewhere in this report.

185. The consultation sought views on the proposal to withdraw support from these community-managed libraries and assist the community organisations to transition to an independent model, giving them greater autonomy to deliver services as they and local communities wish.

186. A detailed summary of consultation views regarding transitioning community-managed libraries to independent community libraries can be found in

Appendix 5. Consultation responses generally supported the transition to independent community managed libraries:

- The majority of respondents (70%), would continue to use their library if it was independent of the County Council and managed by the local community.
- With the exception of Kingsclere Community Library users, users of Tier 4 community-managed libraries felt that an independent community-managed library model could meet the needs of their local community.
- If community-managed libraries were to close, instead of transitioning to an independent model, the majority of respondents were unsure that the needs of the community could be met by existing Library Services.

187. The most commonly cited impacts were:

- The availability of a fresh supply of stock.
- The ability to reserve specific items from other libraries across Hampshire.
- The accessibility of alternative council-run library branches due to transport issues.

188. Meetings between Officers and partner organisations delivering community-managed libraries supported the view that the aspects of Hampshire's Library Service support most valued by partners and organisers are the refresh of stock and provision of a reservation service to provide a specific title for a customer. Concerns were also raised about the systems and mechanisms which would be needed to be put in place to enable community-manged libraries to transition to independent models (for example, access to computerised library management systems).

189. Any existing Tier 4 community-managed library will be invited to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000. To support independent community-managed libraries, the Library Service will extend the current Group Membership offer (see Appendix 1) to include these new organisations. This will enable them to refresh their physical stock by accessing all items within the Hampshire Library Collection in an efficient community led manner which also allows service users to reserve specific items to be collected locally.

190. The Library Services will provide initial support to community organisations to transition to independent community managed libraries including both advice and training, as well as sign posting to longer term alternative sources of funding, advice and training support. There is an established community library network, which the organisations will be eligible to join.

191. With the mitigation proposed, it is considered that the key impacts raised by community library organisations and their customers are addressed. Whilst concerns were raised about the loss of community facilities through the closure of these libraries, given the position that community-run libraries already pay their property costs and arrange their own staffing, there should be no reason why these services would need to close if the County Council withdraws its support. It is noted, however, that the withdrawal of much of the County Council's support means that these libraries would no longer be part of the County Council's statutory network. The mitigation suggested, together with the coverage of other local libraries (including the extension of Overton Library's opening hours) and wide range of digital and contactless services offered, means that the removal of these four libraries from the statutory network does not affect the County Council's position that a network of 40 council-run libraries remains comprehensive and efficient as described in paragraph 66 of this report.

192. It is recommended that the Executive Member approves the Library Service's plan to withdraw support from Lowford, Kingsclere, Milford-on-Sea and North Baddesley community-managed libraries and help them to transition to an independent community library model, offering mitigation to offset key impacts identified.

<u>Explore ways to deliver library services differently in deprived communities</u>

193. The consultation proposed exploring different ways to deliver library services in communities, such as in Leigh Park, Havant and Bridgemary, where there is a community need for the support that libraries can provide, but current library usage is low. This could include offering library services in locations frequently visited by the community, and alongside other services and activities. It is important to note these proposals do not link to savings targets and were included to ensure that the needs of these particular communities are properly met in the future.

194. This proposed approach was well supported by respondents, with 77% agreeing or strongly agreeing overall, compared with 9% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. The high level of agreement from all respondents (76%) was reflected in the views groups who could most be impacted by the proposed changes - namely users of Bridgemary, Havant and Leigh Park libraries (76%), and those from households on lower incomes (76%). A large majority of businesses, groups and organisations (81%), and Democratically Elected Representatives (80%) also indicated agreement with the proposal.

195. The preferred option was to explore how library services in deprived areas could be delivered in schools, with over half of respondents (55%) selecting this option, and 37% also suggesting that pre-schools could fulfil the role. Community buildings (48%) were also a popular option.

196. Looking ahead beyond 2021, the Library Service has identified that this also presents an opportunity to work more strategically across the Havant and Gosport communities (Leigh Park has an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

score of 2.7 and Bridgemary with an IMD of 2.4 are the two most deprived communities in Hampshire), particularly to support identified community need for literacy and early years development. Leigh Park and Havant would serve the wider Havant communities in this way and Bridgemary would serve Bridgemary, Rowner and Elson communities in Gosport (which would serve as additional mitigation for the proposed closure of Elson Library discussed in paragraphs 114 and 115). If successful, this is a model which could be explored more widely across the Service.

197. Each community will have different circumstances and needs, and therefore a model for how services will be provided differently in the future has not yet been developed. The next stage will be to engage with these local communities to better understand specific factors affecting their use of libraries and need for services, and develop plans for how these needs might be met.

198. It is recommended that the Executive Member instructs the Library Service to explore different and more effective ways to deliver services for Hampshire's most deprived communities, initially in Leigh Park, Havant and Bridgemary, taking into account any opportunities to support communities in Elson.

Delivering efficiencies

199. Alongside operational changes, the Library Service consulted on proposals to continue to deliver an efficient service, thereby maximising savings while meeting the changing needs of library users. Efficiency plans have been identified which could generate around £181,000 of savings; £35,000 has already been achieved from rationalisation of poorly used physical magazines (this sum is included within the £170,000 early achievement quoted in paragraph 27) leaving a remaining £146,000 of savings planned through delivering efficiencies. Respondents were asked whether the Library Service could deliver savings from:

- withdrawal, relocation or reduction of poorly used collections and resources such as Driving Theory Test Pro, Ancestry, RB Digital Comics, Oxford University Press and Encyclopaedia Britannica Online;
- making it easier for people to manage their library accounts and to pay library fees and charges promptly;
- reducing transportation, postage and other costs; and
- reducing Go-Online internet ready public access computers in line with reducing customer demand.

200. Respondents generally agreed that all the proposed efficiency measures should be implemented, however, many felt that plastic library cards should be retained even if a library app was available to use to access library services.

201. All respondents were given the opportunity to identify the potential impacts of changes with the main impact being on people who cannot afford mobile devices or internet access at home who therefore would find it difficult to access library services in future. Respondents between the ages of 65 and 85+ disagreed with the withdrawal of poorly used audio books in CD and cassette formats and respondents with household income of up to £10,000 were more likely to disagree with the efficiency proposals about removing underused physical resources. It was also suggested that partially sighted customers would be more greatly impacted if they find online formats less accessible.

202. In order to mitigate these equality impacts to groups of people with protected characteristics including age, poverty, disability and gender, the Library Service will provide support to customers who visit library buildings or receive audio books through the Home Library Service to help them learn to use alternative formats before the current collections are withdrawn. The recent Covid-19 pandemic has required customers who preferred physical formats to try to use digital formats and the Library Service has received positive feedback from customers that now are confident to use digital formats downloading eBooks or eAudio books to their device. In addition, since 20 March 2020, the Library Service has stopped buying newspapers and magazines as libraries were closed. A reduced number of newspaper titles from national to local will be provided in future but, in the meantime, a full range of eNewspapers is available.

203. It is recommended that the Executive Member agrees the plans to deliver efficiencies of £146,000 from library resources with the appropriate mitigation to reduce the equalities impacts identified by respondents.

Generating income

204. Alongside operational changes, the Library Service consulted on proposals to continue to generate additional income to offset costs. The proposals were to:

    - increase income generated from room hire and leases within council-run libraries;
    - review current fees and charges;
    - and to encourage fundraising, sponsorship and donations to the Service.

205. 83% of respondents agreed that the Library Service should seek to generate additional income to contribute to the running of the Service, compared with 6% of respondents who disagreed.

206. In addition to the proposals outlined in the consultation, respondents were given the opportunity to submit ‘further comments’ about the options proposed; 2,108 such comments were received. The two most frequently

mentioned suggestions reflected those already proposed by the Library Service: hiring out spaces to organisations, groups and businesses or partnering with other services (such as the Post Office) (30% of comments) and increasing the number of paid-for services (29% of comments).

207. 6% of respondents who disagreed with the prospect of the Library Service generating additional income were asked which ideas they disagreed with specifically. Of these, 39% disagreed that there should be a review on current fees and charges applied at libraries. Respondents who commented on the potential impact of reviewing current fees and charges to generate income suggested that any increase in fees could discourage the use of libraries in general, as they could be perceived as less affordable. Respondents reflected that libraries should remain accessible to all, despite income or background.

208. It is proposed that all three avenues for generating income are progressed. With regard to the concerns raised regarding the danger of fees and charges discouraging people from using the Library Service (and the potentially higher impact of this on customers with low incomes) a balance will always be made between the need to cover costs for the provision of certain services and the needs of those customers who might be adversely affected, with concessions considered where appropriate.

209. Whilst it is noted that there was some enthusiasm from respondents for paying a basic charge or subscription for library services, this is not permissible under current legislation. However, consideration will be given to how best this goodwill can be harnessed – for example, by seeking voluntary donations or cost recovery for certain enhanced services such as Ready Reads.

210. As described in paragraphs 28 and 29, the consultation anticipated the potential to generate an additional £355,000 in surplus income annually (over and above the annual £2.8 million income already generated each year by the Library Service) as a contribution to the total Tt2021 target of £1.76 million. However, since publishing the consultation, the impact of Covid-19 and the ensuing financial pressures have had a serious impact on the Library Service's financial position including its ability to generate income. Despite some early achievement of £20,000 by April 2020, it is now highly unlikely that the Income Generation proposals will generate **any** of the additional remaining £335,000 annual income within the timeframe of the Tt2021 budget reductions; instead the immediate focus will be on the recovery of lost income and return to the pre-Covid-19 levels of income.

211. The income generation proposals nonetheless remain an important element of the Library Service's future strategy and therefore it is proposed that the Income Generation target is retained, but deferred beyond Tt2021 to contribute to a longer term financial strategy to allow Officers time to focus on recovering the income which has been lost through the Covid-19 related disruption.

212. It is therefore recommended that the Executive Member approves the Library Service's plans to generate income through room hire and leases; reviewing current fees and charges; and encouraging fundraising, sponsorship and donations to the Service. It is further recommended that the Executive Member notes that the Generating Income target set out within the consultation document will not be met within the required timescales and therefore adjusts other savings targets accordingly (as detailed in paragraph 29 above).

Equalities

213. At the start of the public consultation, nineteen Equalities Impact Assessments (EIAs) were drafted to cover the proposed changes to the Library Service. They took into consideration people with protected characteristics including age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The EIAs have been reviewed and updated as a result of the public consultation feedback and they have been used to inform the decision recommended to be taken by the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage. Copies are published on the County Council's website and links provided in Appendix 6 of this report.

214. The EIAs outline the background to the proposed changes, current service delivery and the proposed changes to the Library Service. The County Council has considered the impact of the proposed changes on those with protected characteristics and the actions that would be taken by the County Council to mitigate this impact. Equalities impacts are considered in two parts. The first is in relation to service users and the second in relation to staff.

<u>Impact on Service Users – all changes</u>

215. In order to maintain a comprehensive and efficient library service the Library Service believes that the following mitigation actions are important, although they do not relate to any specific protected characteristic.

- The Library Service will continue to signpost members of the public to free and paid for services within the local community.
- The Library Service has considered the percentage growth in Hampshire's population to 2025 and the changing ways that customers are choosing to access its services when making the recommendations in this report. The predicated population growth in individual catchment areas ranges from 0% to 21%, but the Library Service believes it has sufficient capacity and access points to meet any future demand generated by population growth.
- Any community organisation wanting to set up or transition to an independent community library, where a library or a community-managed library is proposed for closure, will be welcome to apply for a

one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

- To support independent community libraries, the Library Service will extend it current group membership offer to include these new organisations. This will enable them to refresh their physical stock by accessing items in the Hampshire Libraries network in an efficient community led manner and to allow service users to reserve specific items to be collected locally.
- There is an opportunity for community volunteers to keep council run libraries open outside the standard hours if they wish to do so.

Impact Upon Service Users – Library Vision to 2025

216. The Library Service's emerging future vision to 2025 is set out in paragraph 62.

217. The protected characteristics covered in the paragraphs below are about the Library Vision to 2025, the delivery of a comprehensive and efficient service, delivering efficiencies and generating income. There are separate detailed EIAs for The Library Vision, Delivering Efficiencies and Generating Income. Paragraphs 218 to 235 summarise these impacts and mitigations for protected characteristics.

AGE - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM to LOW; Impact after mitigation – LOW to POSITIVE

218. The Library Strategy to 2025 has been written to provide a service that is relevant to the needs of the communities it serves. The Library Service serves the whole county but is well used by young families and older residents. The Vision specifically targets those who may benefit from library services most, including these age groups. Collections, activities and resources are available for all ages in many different formats across the county. Statutory library services are free, regardless of age. A number of free services have been designed specifically for young children such as Rhymetime and Storytime and for adults such as providing access to technology and support to improve their digital literacy.

DISABILITY - Impact before mitigation – LOW to NEUTRAL; Impact after mitigation – LOW to NEUTRAL

219. **Specific issues**: The Library Service does not request or keep data relating to customer disability. However, 18% of respondents to the consultation identified that they had a long term disability that limited their day to day activity. Library customers who have a disability, including those with reduced mobility or who use the library to support their wellbeing and

mental health may need to access an alternative branch, or their existing branch at different days/times. During the consultation and the drop in sessions, some users explained that they chose to attend the smaller, less busy branches due to the nature of their disability. Customers also explained how the digital services supported their specific disabilities such as dyslexia and visual impairment.

220. **Mitigating actions:** Free library services will continue to be provided in range of formats. Services users will be supported to use alternative formats.

RACE - Impact before mitigation – LOW Impact after mitigation – LOW

221. **Specific issues**: The Library Service does not ask its customers to identify their ethnicity, and therefore does not have any data specifically identifying the race or ethnicity of users. However, 97% of respondents to the consultation identified themselves as white, whereas the Hampshire population profile is 95% white. The Service is aware that in Aldershot a high proportion of its users are from the Nepali community and are regular users of Go-Online public computers available in Aldershot Library. These individuals may be adversely impacted by any reduction to Go-Online terminals.

222. **Mitigating actions:** The Library Service is an inclusive, accessible service open to all supporting healthy, creative communities including, where possible, developing community hubs to enable a range of services which can be accessed in one visit. In areas such as Aldershot the needs of the local community will be considered before any reduction in the number of Go-Online public computers are made. As part of the free comprehensive services, books and resources are already provided in foreign languages and this is continually reviewed based on customer demand.

GENDER - Impact before mitigation – between NEUTRAL and MEDIUM
Impact after mitigation – between NEUTRAL and LOW

223. **Specific issues**: The gender of active users is recorded on the Library Management System. Records show that 47% of customers identify as female, 25% identify as male, 3% identify as other and 25% have not identified their gender. The Hampshire population profile is 51% female, whereas 68% of respondents to the consultation identified themselves as female.

224. **Mitigating actions:** The Library Service responds to customer demand by monitoring waiting lists and purchasing new stock accordingly, which means the Service spends more money on books and resources that appeal to female customers.

225. The Library Service is an inclusive, accessible service open to all supporting healthy, creative communities including, where possible, developing

community hubs to enable a range of services under one roof that can be accessed in a single visit.

226. Monitoring of the Library Collections has confirmed that they are poorly used but this cannot determine usage by gender.

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY - Impact before mitigation - NEUTRAL Impact after mitigation – POSITIVE

227. The Library Service is an inclusive, accessible service open to all supporting healthy, creative communities including, where possible, developing community hubs to enable a range of services under one roof. This could include accessing community midwives, health visitors or other services for pregnant women and young families in a single visit.

228. The Library Service already delivers a comprehensive and efficient services for everyone including both physical and digital services and is focusing on Children's Literacy and Early Years as part of its Vision to 2025. Free digital access to services such as Rhymetime and children's eBooks and eAudiobooks have been invested in significantly during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the public response and uptake of these new services has been very positive.

POVERTY - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM Impact after mitigation - POSITIVE

229. The Library Service is an inclusive, accessible service open to all supporting healthy, creative communities including, where possible, developing community hubs to enable a range of services under one roof that can be accessed in a single visit.

230. The Library Service provides a wide range of predominately free services to its customers. These include Rhymetime, Storytime, providing access to technology, Go-Online public computers and support to improve digital literacy. Some services incur fines or charges, with concessions available for those that most need them.

231. Hampshire is often seen as a wealthy county but has areas of significant deprivation. The Library Service Vision to 2025 recognises the importance of promoting reading and developing children's literacy as well as supporting healthy and creative communities. There is commitment to take the Library Services into deprived communities, where library usage is low compared with the catchment population, such as Leigh Park, Havant and Bridgemary.

RURALITY - Impact before mitigation – LOW Impact after mitigation – LOW

232. Hampshire has a number of very rural communities. Internet and broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure, which means that more

people in rural areas have access to the digital Library Service offer. The Library Service has invested significantly in digital titles of both eBooks and eAudio books since the outbreak of Covid-19.

233. Customers who are unable to travel to a library could choose to use digital services, Ready Reads, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour scheme. Further information can be found in the additional information section below.

234. For the groups which are categorised under the EIA criteria listed below, there is NEUTRAL impact:

- Sexual Orientation
- Religion and Belief
- Gender Re-assignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

235. This is because the Hampshire County Council Library Service is a trusted and an inclusive service, which has a clearly defined Vision to 2025 focused on reading, healthy, creative communities and digital services for those who live, work or study work in Hampshire. This ensures that the needs of service users in relation to the above criteria will continue to be fully met.

Please find the detailed EIAs for:

Library Service Vision to 2025: Comprehensive and Efficient Service – https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-vision-to-2025-comprehensive-and-efficient-service.pdf

Library Service Vision to 2025: Delivering Efficiencies – https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-vision-to-2025-delivering-efficiencies.pdf

Library Service Vision to 2025: Generating Income – https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-vision-to-2025-generating-income.pdf

Impact Upon Service Users – Branch Closures

236. In developing the Library Vision to 2025 the Library Service carefully considered the needs of the communities across the county and to ensure that it continues to provide a comprehensive and efficient service. These considerations included

- Eastleigh Library – The high operating costs and poor location skewed the performance of this library. It is believed that relocating the library to a more suitable building (paragraph 156) that better meets the needs of the community will significantly improve the performance of this library, therefore it was decided that it would not be put on the list for proposed closure.

- Bishop's Waltham – This Library provides coverage for a number of rural communities. If it were to close then people in these communities would be above the acceptable travel time to their nearest library, therefore it was decided that it would not be put on the list for proposed closure.
- Bridgemary, Havant and Leigh Park Libraries – These Libraries have significantly high levels of deprivation in their catchment areas and whilst usage of Library Services is low it is considered there is need for the kind of support that libraries could provide (see paragraphs 193 - 198).
- Stubbington Library - This Library performs relatively poorly but needs to be retained as mitigation for the closure of Lee-on-the-Solent library. Lee-on-the-Solent Library has around 50% fewer people in its catchment area than Stubbington, therefore the impact of proposing to close Stubbington would have been greater.
- Chineham Library - Having reviewed the responses of the consultation the Library Service has taken into consideration the number of users that would have been impacted by the closure of Chineham and has removed this library from the list of proposed closures.
- Emsworth Library - During the public consultation the Emsworth community came forward with an option to reduce the cost of running their branch by moving it into the nearby community centre. This would reduce the costs of running Emsworth Library and therefore take it out of the poorest performing libraries. As a result, Emsworth has been taken out of the list of proposed closures.

AGE - Impact before mitigation – Between MEDIUM and LOW dependant on Branch Impact after mitigation - LOW for all Branches

237. **Specific issues:** The Library Service serves the whole county but is well used by young families and older residents. The proposed closure of eight libraries would primarily impact these groups who would have further to travel to their nearest library (Appendix 4).

238. It is recognised that some older residents and those with young families may find it more challenging to travel to an alternative library. Libraries proposed for closure with a higher than average population aged 0-17 years are Odiham and South Ham. Libraries proposed for closure with a higher than average population aged over 60 years old are Blackfield, Fair Oak, Horndean, Odiham and Lee on the Solent.

239. **Mitigating actions for all ages**: Journey times to the next nearest library for the customers of the eight libraries recommended for closure would be around 20 minutes by car and around 30 minutes by public transport.

240. The increase in the use of the digital offer is a core element of the Library Service Vision (see section 9), however the Covid-19 period has seen many

existing users transition to the use of digital for the first time (see paragraph 89). It is expected that some service users will choose to continue to access library services in this way, rather than returning to the more traditional offer. Appendix 1 provides more information on Library Services.

241. **Mitigating actions for 0-17 years:** In areas where data shows educational attainment is lower than average, very careful consideration has been given to the closure of libraries. The Service will be developing new ways of working in these areas to ensure that the Library Service Vision and commitment to children's literacy is achieved.

242. The School Library Service is felt to be a viable alternative for children and young people who are unable to travel to an alternative library. Group Memberships are available to pre-schools to support Early Years providers in accessing and promoting high quality books for young children and families. More informarion about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

243. **Mitigating actions for over 60 years:** Vulnerable and isolated residents, including older people, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital Library Services, apply to the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour Scheme. More informarion about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

DISABILITY - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM Impact after mitigation - LOW

244. **Specific issues:** Library customers will need to travel to alternative branches which may have a greater impact on customers with disabilities, including those with reduced mobility or who use the library to support their wellbeing and mental health.

245. **Mitigating actions:** Vulnerable and isolated residents, including older people, who are unable to travel to an alternative library, could choose to use the digital Library Services and apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour Scheme. More information about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

246. The Library Service will signpost any groups that meet regularly in the libraries that are recommended for closure to alternative locations. These include groups that support people's wellbeing and mental health.

GENDER - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM - Impact after mitigation - MEDIUM

247. **Specific issues**: The gender of active users is recorded on the Library Management System. Records show that 47% of customers identify as female, 25% identify as male, 3% identify as other and 25% have not identified their gender. The Hampshire population profile is 51% female,

whereas 68% of respondents to the consultation identified themselves as female.

248. **Mitigating actions:** The Library Service responds to customer demand by monitoring waiting lists and purchasing new stock accordingly, which means the Service spends more money on books and resources that appeal to female customers.

249. The Library Service is an inclusive, accessible service open to all supporting healthy, creative communities including, where possible, developing community hubs to enable a range of services under one roof that can be accessed in a single visit.

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY - Impact before mitigation – NEUTRAL to LOW Impact after mitigation - NEUTRAL to LOW

250. **Specific issues:** During the consultation process a number of parents highlighted how valuable visiting their local library had been when they had very young children, this was particularly important to parents who had experienced postnatal depression and/or anxiety (see Appendix 2).

251. Rhymetime and Storytime sessions are currently run by all but the smallest council run libraries. Respondents highlighted the importance of these activities and events run by the Library Service in supporting mental wellbeing and social cohesion.

252. **Mitigating actions:** People who are unable or unwilling to travel to an alternative branch can access an increased range of digital services, these include Rhymetime and Storytime via social media. Whilst it does not fully replicate the benefits of a face to face services, this digital offer may be suitable for parents and families that prefer not to access one of the busier branches, either due to their health, cost of travel or physical considerations. The Library Service proposes to retain a comprehensive online/social media presence for young families providing them with greater flexibility and the potential to access these sessions online at a time of day to suit their routine. More informarion about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

POVERTY - Impact before mitigation - Between MEDIUM and NEUTRAL Impact after mitigation – Between MEDIUM and NEUTRAL

253. **Specific issues:** Customers using the eight libraries that are recommended for closure will have to travel to an alternative library which will be a longer journey; this likely to cost them more. During the consultation, a third of respondents identified potential impacts of the proposed closures and of those, 3% were specifically about the cost of transport to an alternative library see Appendix 2 for details.

254. Lower educational attainment scores can be linked to areas of deprivation. Branches proposed for closure with lower educational attainment than the Hampshire average are Blackfield, Elson, Fair Oak and South Ham.

255. There are areas of digital deprivation across Hampshire and in these areas, people are dependent on the provision of the free Go-Online public computers, free public Wi-Fi and low cost printing facilities in libraries. Many people use the Go-Online public computers to apply for jobs or to access/manage their benefits. The cost of accessing these services outside the library can be prohibitive for those in poverty. These individuals could be adversely impacted by branch closures

256. **Mitigating actions:** Some people who are currently able to walk or cycle to their local branch may no longer be able to travel to the library in this way. The majority of users already have to travel by car or public transport to access their local library.

257. Library service users over the national retirement age who are resident in Hampshire are able to apply for a free bus pass for travel after 9:30am. A number of the alternative branches have bus stops very close by, such as Chandler's Ford, Hythe and Stubbington Libraries, Gosport and Winchester Discovery Centres.

258. A large number of libraries that will be retained have some free parking onsite or close to the branch.

259. Where libraries have a lower than average IMD educational attainment score and are on the potential closure list, (Blackfield, Elson, Fair Oak and South Ham) local schools will be actively encouraged to subscribe to the School Library Service. Group Memberships are available to pre-schools to support Early Years providers in accessing and promoting high quality books for young children and families. More information about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

RURALITY - Impact before mitigation - MEDIUM and NEUTRAL
Impact after mitigation – Between MEDIUM and NEUTRAL

260. **Specific issues:** Hampshire has a number of very rural communities. Respondents to the consultation expressed concern that rural communities would be losing another service that they felt was essential. Respondents also mentioned that rural bus services were poor or had recently been reduced.

261. **Mitigating actions:** The key principles of acceptable travel time to branches was not challenged by people responding to the consultation, so it is believed that traveling 20 minutes by car and around 30 minutes by public transport is acceptable. Feedback from the consultation suggested that these travel times may not be achievable at certain times of day or in some

places due to school holiday traffic. However, overall it is considered that the travel times and distances are acceptable.

262. Vulnerable and isolated residents living in rural areas, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital service, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour Scheme.

263. Internet and Broadband services in the majority of rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure. The Library Service has seen a significant reduction in the use of Go-Online public computers, suggesting that demand for this service is in decline. For example, Odiham has the lowest usage of Go-Online public computers in the County suggesting a high level of household internet access.

264. For the groups which are categorised under the EIA criteria listed below, there is NEUTRAL impact
    - Sexual Orientation
    - Race
    - Religion and Beliefs
    - Gender Re-assignment
    - Marriage and Civil Partnership

265. This is because the Hampshire County Council Library Service is a trusted and an inclusive service, which has a clearly defined Vision to 2025 focused on reading, healthy, creative communities and digital services for those who live, work or study work in Hampshire. This ensures that the needs of service users in relation to the above criteria will continue to be fully met.

    Please find the link to detailed EIAs:

    Blackfield Library – https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-blackfield-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

    Elson Library - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-elson-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

    Fair Oak Library - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-fair-oak-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

    Horndean - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-horndean-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

Lee-on-the-Solent Library - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-lee-on-the-solent-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

Lyndhurst Library - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-lyndhurst-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

Odiham Library - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-odiham-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

South Ham - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-south-ham-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

Impact Upon Service Users – Reduction in Opening Hours

AGE - Impact before mitigation MEDIUM Impact after mitigation - MEDIUM

266. **Specific issues**: Library services are traditionally accessed more by older people and by children and families and as such these groups would be affected more by a reduction in opening hours than the population as a whole.

267. **Proposed mitigating actions**: Vulnerable and isolated residents, including older people, may need to access their library on different days or at different times, as a result of the reduction in opening hours. They would also have the option of travelling to an alternative branch or using digital services.

268. The Library Service provides a comprehensive digital offer for those who cannot or prefer not to travel to an alternative branch are able to access and increased range of digital services. More information about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

269. A second public consultation on opening times will take place in August 2020. This will allow customers to feedback on the preferred opening hours/days in their local library.

270. Currently branches are only open when paid members of staff are on the premises. The Library Service is actively exploring ways in which the branches can be kept open for additional hours when no paid members of staff are on site.

DISABILITY - Impact before mitigation - MEDIUM Impact after mitigation – MEDIUM

271. **Specific issues**: Library customers may need to visit their local library at different times or on different days which may have a greater impact on customers with disabilities, including those with reduced mobility or who use the library to support their wellbeing and mental health.

272. **Proposed mitigating actions:** As above for age in paragraphs 266-270. In addition, the Library Service will work closely with any groups that meet regularly in the branches should their arrangements/group be impacted by changes in opening hours. The Service will ensure that these groups are still able to meet in branches. These include groups that support people's wellbeing and mental health.

RACE - Impact before mitigation – LOW Impact after mitigation – LOW

273. **Specific issues**: The Library Service does not ask its customers to identify their ethnicity, and therefore does not have any data specifically identifying the race or **ethnicity** of users. The Service is aware that in Aldershot a high proportion of its users are from the Nepali community, who may be adversely impacted by any reduction in opening hours.

274. **Proposed mitigating actions:** The Library Service is an inclusive, accessible service open to all. In areas such as Aldershot the needs of the local community will be considered before any changes are made and communities will be encouraged to participate in the second public consultation regarding changes to opening hours.

GENDER - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM Impact after mitigation – MEDIUM

275. **Specific issues:** The gender of active users is recorded on the Library Management System. Records show that 47% of customers identify as female, 25% identify as male, 3% identify as other and 25% have not identified their gender. The Hampshire population profile is 51% female, whereas 68% of respondents to the consultation identified themselves as female.

276. Proposed mitigating actions: The Library Service responds to customer demand by monitoring waiting lists and purchasing new stock accordingly, which means the Service spends more money on books and resources that appeal to female customers.

277. Library customers would have reduced access to Library Services and may need to access their library at different times or on different days of the week, which will have a greater impact on women because they visit their local library more frequently.

278. The Service is unable to assess the full impacts until the consultation is complete and decisions can be made based on the responses. A second local consultation on opening hours will follow in Summer 2020, giving

customers the opportunity to comment on specific opening hour of their local library.

279. The detailed EIA will be completed following the public consultation on opening times which will take place in August 2020.

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY - Impact before mitigation - LOW Impact after mitigation – LOW

280. **Specific issues:** During the consultation process a number of parents highlighted how valuable visiting their local library had been when they had very young children, this was particularly important to parents who had experienced postnatal depression and/or anxiety (Appendix 2).

281. Rhymetime and Storytime sessions are currently run at all but the smallest council run libraries. Respondents highlighted the importance of these activities and events run by the Library Service in supporting mental wellbeing and social cohesion. The change in opening hours may impact the times or days that these sessions take place, and it is possible that, in some libraries, fewer sessions will take place each week.

282. **Proposed mitigating actions:** The Library Service will continue to offer Storytime and Rhymetime via social media, in addition to sessions in branch, so even if some sessions are no longer available it would be possible to travel to an alternative library, or access daily sessions online at a time that suits their routine. More information about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

POVERTY - Impact before mitigation – LOW Impact after mitigation – LOW

283. **Specific issues:** Hampshire is often seen as a wealthy county but has areas of significant deprivation and people that depend on accessing their library as a warm, safe and trusted space. These individuals will be impacted by any reduction in opening hours at their local library.

284. **Proposed mitigating actions**: Library customers would have reduced access to Library Services and may need to access their library at different times or on different days of the week, vulnerable individuals may be particularly impacted by these changes.

285. The Service is unable to assess the full impacts until the consultation is complete and decisions can be made based on the responses. A second local consultation on opening hours will follow in Summer 2020, giving customers the opportunity to comment on specific opening hour of their local library.

286. The detailed EIA will be completed following the public consultation on opening times which will take place in August 2020.

RURALITY - Impact before mitigation – LOW Impact after mitigation – LOW

287. **Specific issues:** Hampshire has a number of very rural communities. Respondents to the consultation expressed concern that rural communities would be losing another service that they felt was essential. Respondents also mentioned that rural bus services were poor or had recently been reduced.

288. **Proposed mitigating actions:** A second public consultation on opening hours will take place in August 2020. This will allow customers to feedback on the preferred opening hours/days in their local library.

289. Currently branches are only open when paid members of staff are on the premises. The Library Service is actively exploring ways in which the branches can be kept open for additional hours when no paid members of staff are on site.

290. Internet and broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure, which means that more people in rural areas have access to the digital Library Service offer.

291. For the groups which are categorised under the EIA criteria listed below, there is NEUTRAL impact
    - Sexual Orientation
    - Religion and Belief
    - Gender Re-assignment
    - Marriage and Civil Partnership

292. This is because the Hampshire County Council Library Service is a trusted and an inclusive service, which has a clearly defined Vision to 2025 focused on reading, healthy, creative communities and digital services for those who live, work or study work in Hampshire. This ensures that the needs of service users in relation to the above criteria will continue to be fully met.

    Please find the link to detailed EIA for OH Reduction - Service User Impact - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-staffed-hours-reduction-service-user-impacts.pdf

Impact Upon Service Users – Relocating Emsworth Library

293. Emsworth Library is retained on the basis that it can be moved approximately 500 metres to Emsworth Community Centre with significantly lower running costs.

    AGE - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM Impact after mitigation - LOW

294. **Specific issues:** Emsworth Library has a higher than average population of people over 60 years old who will need to travel to a new location and may need to visit on different days and at different times.

295. **Mitigating actions:** Emsworth Community Centre is not in the centre of the village, but it has parking outside and is close to bus stops. The Library Service will explore ways that the branch could be kept open for additional hours by volunteers from the community.

DISABILITY - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM Impact after mitigation - LOW

296. **Specific issues:** Travelling to a new location may have a greater impact on customers with disabilities, including those with reduced mobility or who use the library to support their wellbeing and mental health.

297. **Mitigating action:** Whilst the community centre is not in the centre of the village it has disabled parking outside and is close to bus stops. The reduction in staffed opening hours will mean that people may have to visit at different times and/or on different days, however the Library Service will explore ways that the branch could be kept open for additional hours by volunteers from the community.

298. The Library Service will prioritise the needs of any groups that already meet regularly at Emsworth Library and help them minimise the impact of the changes on their arrangements/group. These include groups that support people's wellbeing and mental health.

GENDER - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM Impact after mitigation - MEDIUM

299. **Specific issues:** The gender of active users is recorded on the Library Management System. Records show that 47% of customers identify as female, 25% identify as male, 3% identify as other and 25% have not identified their gender. The Hampshire population profile is 51% female, whereas 68% of respondents to the consultation identified themselves as female.

300. **Mitigating actions:** The Library Service responds to customer demand by monitoring waiting lists and purchasing new stock accordingly, which means the Service spends more money on books and resources that appeal to female customers.

301. The Library Service is an inclusive, accessible service open to all supporting healthy, creative communities including, where possible, developing community hubs to enable a range of services under one roof that can be accessed in a single visit.

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY - Impact before mitigation - LOW
Impact after mitigation - LOW

302. **Specific issues**; Rhymetime and Storytime sessions are run at Emsworth Library. Respondents highlighted the importance of these activities and events run by the Library Service in supporting mental wellbeing and social cohesion.

303. **Mitigating actions;** The Library Service is an inclusive, accessible service open to all supporting healthy, creative communities including, where possible, developing community hubs to enable a range of services under one roof. This could include accessing community midwives, health visitors or other services for pregnant women and young families in a single visit.

304. The Library Service already delivers a comprehensive and efficient services for everyone including both physical and digital services and is focusing on Children's Literacy and Early Years as part of its Vision to 2025. Free digital access to services such as Rhymetime and children's eBooks and eAudiobooks have been invested in significantly during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the public response and uptake of these new services has been very positive.

305. If parents or carers are unable to travel to the new library location or the times of the sessions are no longer convenient then the existing digital offer access an increased range of digital services. During the Covid-19 lockdown the Library Service has been delivering Rhymetime and online Storytime via social media. The Library Service proposes to retain a comprehensive online/social media presence for young families providing them with greater flexibility and the potential to access these sessions online daily.

306. For the groups which are categorised under the EIA criteria listed below, there is NEUTRAL impact
    - Sexual Orientation
    - Race
    - Religion and Belief
    - Gender Re-assignment
    - Marriage and Civil Partnership
    - Poverty
    - Rurality

307. This is because the Hampshire County Council Library Service is a trusted and an inclusive service, which has a clearly defined Vision to 2025 focused on reading, healthy, creative communities and digital services for those who live, work or study work in Hampshire. This ensures that the needs of service users in relation to the above criteria will continue to be fully met.

Please find the link to detailed EIA for Emsworth Relocation - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-relocating-emsworth-library-service-user-impacts.pdf

Impact Upon Service Users – Transitioning of Community-Managed Libraries to an Independent Community Library Model

308. There are two alternatives for community-managed libraries:
    1. The council supported community-managed library transitions to an independent community library, or
    2. The community-managed library closes and customers will have to travel to an alternative branch.

309. The following paragraphs set out the mitigation provided to support all protected characteristics.

310. Whilst concerns were raised about the loss of community facilities through the closure of these libraries, given the position that community-run libraries already pay their property costs and arrange their own staffing, there should be no reason why these services would need to close if the County Council withdraws its support.

311. Any existing community-managed library will be invited to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into an independent library model. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

312. The Library Services will provide initial support to community organisations to transition to independent community managed libraries including both advice and training, as well as sign posting to longer term alternative sources of funding, advice and training support. There is an established community library network, which the organisations will be eligible to join.

313. In response to the consultation feedback the Library Service will extend the current Group Membership offer to include independent community libraries. This will enable them to refresh their physical stock by accessing all items within the Hampshire Library Collection in an efficient community led manner which also allows service users to reserve specific items to be collected locally. As well as support from the Library Service, partners will be sign-posted to sources of funding and advice to support any equipment and training needs.

AGE - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM Impact after mitigation - LOW

314. **Specific issues:** The Library Service serves the whole county but is well used by young families and older residents. All four community-managed libraries have a higher population over 60 years old than the Hampshire

average and it is recognised that some older residents and those with young families may find it more challenging to travel to an alternative library. The proposed changes would primarily negatively impact these groups.

315. If the community-managed libraries transition to independent community libraries some services currently available to customers may change.

316. If the community-managed library closes, customers will have to travel to an alternative library. Respondents agreed that a journey time by public transport of 30 minutes or a car journey of 20 minutes was reasonable (See Statutory Section of Report Section 6). The nearest libraries to the community managed libraries can mostly be reached in this timeframe; respondents that used Kingsclere Community Library identified difficulties travelling to an alternative library from Kingsclere in terms of the journey time and availability of public transport.

317. **Mitigating Actions:** If the community-managed libraries transition to an independent community library model the Library Service services can continue to be delivered within the community. The Library Service will extend the group membership offer to enable customers to access new stock and reservations, which would prevent the need for travel to an alternative library.

318. The School Library Service is a viable alternative for children and young people who are unable to travel to an alternative library. Group Memberships are available to pre-schools to support Early Years providers in accessing and promoting high quality books for young children and families. More informarion about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

319. If the any of the community-managed libraries close vulnerable and isolated residents, including older people, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services and apply for the Home Library Service and Good Neighbour Scheme. More information about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

DISABILITY - Impact before mitigation – LOW Impact after mitigation - LOW

320. Specific issues: if the community-managed libraries transition to independent community libraries some services currently available to customers may change.

321. If the community-managed library closes, customers that use them would need to travel to alternative branches, which may have a greater impact on customers with disabilities, including those with reduced mobility or who use the library to support their wellbeing and mental health. Respondents agreed that a journey time by public transport of 30 minutes or a car journey of 20 minutes was reasonable. The nearest libraries to the community

managed libraries can mostly be reached in this timeframe; respondents that used Kingsclere Community Library identified difficulties travelling to an alternative library from Kingsclere in terms of the journey time and availability of public transport.

322. **Mitigating Actions:** If the community-managed libraries transition to an independent community library model the Library Service services can continue to be delivered within the community.

323. If any of the community-managed libraries close vulnerable and isolated residents, including those with disabilities, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, apply of the Home Library Service and Good Neighbour Scheme. More informarion about Library Services can be found in Appendix 1.

GENDER - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM Impact after mitigation - MEDIUM

324. **Specific issues:** The gender of active users is recorded on the Library Management System. Records show that 47% of customers identify as female, 25% identify as male, 3% identify as other and 25% have not identified their gender. The Hampshire population profile is 51% female, whereas 68% of respondents to the consultation identified themselves as female.

325. **Mitigating actions:** The Library Service responds to customer demand by monitoring waiting lists and purchasing new stock accordingly, which means the Service spends more money on books and resources that appeal to female customers. Customers will still be able to access the Hampshire Library Service resources if the library transitions to an independent community-managed library via the Group Membership offers. See appendix 1 for more information.

POVERTY - Impact before mitigation - Between MEDIUM and NEUTRAL Impact after mitigation – Between MEDIUM and NEUTRAL

326. **Specific issues:** If one or more of the community-run libraries closed then their customers would have to travel further to reach the next nearest library and this will cost more. The one community-run library which has area of high deprivation (Pilands Wood community) within its catchment is Lowford. If one of more of the community-managed libraries transitioned to become an independent library then free public access computers may not be made available.

327. **Mitigating actions:** Lowford library's area of high deprivation (Pilands Wood) is already within the catchment area of Netley Library. It is less than 2 miles from Pilands Wood community to Netley Library and about 1 mile to the Lowford Community Library. Both Netley and Lowford libraries have free parking.

328. Library service users over the national retirement age who are resident in Hampshire are able to apply for a free bus pass for travel after 9:30am.

329. In some areas other community organisations provide free internet access, such as in North Baddesley.

RURALITY - Impact before mitigation - Between MEDIUM and NEUTRAL
Impact after mitigation – Between MEDIUM and NEUTRAL

330. **Specific issues**: Kingsclere and Milford-on-Sea community-managed libraries are both located in villages. If they were to close then there is reasonable access by car to their nearest alternative libraries, but the buses are infrequent. If they were to transition to become an independent library then free public access computers may not be made available.

331. **Mitigating actions:** Internet and Broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure.

332. Vulnerable and isolated residents living in rural areas, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour scheme.

333. For the groups which are categorised under the EIA criteria listed below, there is NEUTRAL impact

- Sexual Orientation
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Gender Re-assignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity

334. This is because the Hampshire County Council Library Service is a trusted and an inclusive service, which has a clearly defined Vision to 2025 focused on reading, healthy, creative communities and digital services for those who live, work or study work in Hampshire. This ensures that the needs of service users in relation to the above criteria will continue to be fully met.

Please find the link to the detailed EIAs:
Kingsclere - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-kingsclere-transition-to-independent-library-or-close.pdf

Lowford - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-lowford-transition-to-independent-library-or-close.pdf

Milford-on-Sea - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-milford-on-sea-transition-to-independent-library-or-close.pdf

North Baddesley - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-north-baddesley-transition-to-independent-library-or-close.pdf

Impact Upon Staff

335. The details below have been updated from the original EIA published in January 2020, prior to the start of the consultation. There will be a second public consultation on Opening Times in August 2020 which will clarify the library opening times. Once this has been completed a staff consultation will be carried out. The staff impacts EIA will be updated as a result of both of these consultations.

336. The recommendations to close eight council run libraries (paragraph 153), to agree a reduction in opening hours averaging 20% (paragraphs 161-181) and to transition Tier 4 community-managed libraries to an independent model (paragraph 183-192) are being made to support achievement of a £1.164 million operational saving required due to budget reductions. The Library Service would continue to operate 40 libraries across the County, ensuring a comprehensive and efficient service is still provided.

337. The Library Service employs around 294 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff (as of 1 April 2020), comprising 482 individuals of which 77% work part time. A reduction of 40 to 50 FTE staff including the ending of fixed term contracts is expected as a result of the closures and opening hour reductions. In the first phase, the majority of staff reductions will be through a reduction of Library Team Assistants (LTAs) as management and back office staff will be subject to a further phase of review in 2021. Staff reduction figures are only indicative at this stage. Further information about the HR impact on staff can be found in Paragraphs 356 - 361.

338. The 10-week public consultation started on 9 January 2020 and closed on 18 March 2020. 339 library staff responded to the Library Service Consultation, of which 78% preferred to option to close up to 10 libraries combined with a 15% reduction and standardisation of opening hours (Appendix 2).

339. Staff awareness sessions were run across the county prior to the launch of the consultation to explain the process to staff and to give them an opportunity to ask questions of officers that attended. A staff consultation will commence in autumn 2020 to explain the impacts to staff roles.

AGE - Impact before mitigation - MEDIUM Impact after mitigation - LOW

340. **Specific issues:** 31% of Library Service staff are aged 55 and over, compared with 27% for Hampshire County Council. Staff continuing to work for the Library Service could be required to relocate to an alternative branch, to work different hours and/or work on different days of the week.

341. **Proposed mitigating actions**: Subject to the decisions taken on 28 July 2020 by the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage and a short second public consultation on standardised opening times which will take place in August 2020, a staff consultation is planned for September 2020. This will provide staff with the opportunity to express an interest in their preferred working hours, days and in which libraries.

342. Staff vacancies in branch have been carefully managed for the last 12 months. Any staff recently recruited have been employed on fixed term contracts. There are currently 28.1 FTE Library Team Assistants and 1.8 FTE Library Team Managers employed on fixed term contracts. Generally, these will be ended prior to any permanent staff being made redundant, but this will be dependent on where fixed term contacts are located and the relative level of need for staff reduction.

343. To reduce the impact on staff there will be a voluntary redundancy (VR) offer, which would be open to all eligible staff in scope of the review, who have more than two years of service.

344. The impact of the changes on age has been assessed as Low as all staff already work in clusters at up to six alternative libraries to their base location and there will be a staff consultation prior to any contractual changes being made.

DISABILITY – Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM Impact after mitigation – LOW

345. **Specific issues**: 7% of Library Service staff have disclosed having a disability, compared with 3.5% for Hampshire County Council. Staff continuing to work for the Library Service could be required to relocate to an alternative branch, to work different hours and/or work on different days of the week.

346. **Proposed mitigating actions**: The actions to mitigate for the disability impacts are the same as those identified under AGE (see paragraphs 340-344). One additional factor is that reasonable adjustments will continue to be made, where appropriate.

GENDER - Impact before mitigation – MEDIUM Impact after mitigation – MEDIUM

347. **Specific issues:** The Library Service employs 486 staff. 87% are female and 13% are male, compared to 76% female and 24% male staff working for

Hampshire County Council. Staff continuing to work for the Library Service could be required to relocate to an alternative branch, to work different hours and/or work on different days of the week. A staff consultation will be held in autumn 2020 to match staff to shifts on offer at each library.

348. **Proposed mitigating actions**: The actions to mitigate for the Gender impacts are the same as those identified under AGE (see paragraphs 340 - 344). Established Hampshire County Council policies and procedures will be followed during the staff consultation, to ensure that changes are applied consistently and fairly.

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY - Impact before mitigation - MEDIUM Impact after mitigation – LOW

349. **Specific issues:** The Library Service has a number of staff who are pregnant or on maternity or paternity leave at any one time.

350. **Mitigating actions:** All staff will be invited to participate in the staff consultation. Established Hampshire County Council policies and procedures for Pregnancy and Maternity will be followed during the staff consultation, to ensure that changes are applied consistently and fairly.

POVERTY - Impact before mitigation - LOW Impact after mitigation - LOW

351. **Specific issues:** Staff continuing to work for the Library Service could be required to relocate to an alternative branch, to work different hours and/or work on different days of the week. Many of the staff working in libraries work part time and are low paid. The cost of public transport to travel between branches or to park at a branch can be high.

352. **Proposed mitigating actions:** Any staff continuing to work for the Library Service from an alternative branch would be able to apply for travel assistance, should the criteria set out in the Hampshire County Council Expenses Policy be met. The proposed staff consultation will confirm the staff impacts associated with travel to alternative branches if this is required.

RURALITY - Impact before mitigation - LOW Impact after mitigation - LOW

353. **Specific issues:** Some Library staff live and work in rural areas. Staff continuing to work for the Library Service could be required to relocate to an alternative branch, to work different hours and/or work on different days of the week.

354. **Proposed mitigating actions:** The actions to mitigate for the Rurality impacts are the same as those identified under age (see above paragraph 323 - 327).

355. The proposals had a NEUTRAL impact on the groups which are categorised under the EIA criteria listed below:

- Sexual Orientation
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Gender Re-assignment
- Marriage or Civil Partnership

Please find the link to detailed EIA for Opening Hour Reduction & Library Closures – Staff Impact - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-closure-of-libraries-and-opening-hour-reduction-staff-impacts.pdf

HR considerations

356. The proposed changes to the Hampshire Library Service would have a significant human resource and staff implication. Trade Unions, staff and residents have raised questions and concerns over the impact of staff reductions and the effect on lower paid library staff. The Library Service employs approximately 482 staff (294 full time equivalents (FTE) posts) with 1,250 (around 22 FTE) trained volunteers working alongside.

357. The Library Service has reduced staff levels throughout 2018-2020 in a planned and sensitive way by reviewing vacancies as they arise to deliver savings from natural turnover and redeployment of staff. Staff appointed within the past 2 years have generally been recruited on temporary or fixed term contracts; there are currently 28 FTE Library Team Assistants (LTAs) and 1.8 FTE Library Team Managers (LTM) employed on temporary or fixed term contracts. Following the Decision, the County Council will begin a consultation with staff and Trade Unions about the workforce implications of the Decision in accordance with its human resources policies and procedures.

358. The proposed changes to the Library Service of eight closures and a reduction in opening hours averaging 20% in the remaining 40 council-run libraries would require a reduction of around 40 to 50 full time equivalent (FTE) LTA staff. This approximate figure would include ending many of the fixed term contracts mentioned in the paragraph above. This may lead to redundancies arising from a reduced workforce of the staff roles in scope. In addition, for staff that remain within the Service there are potential changes to work bases, working hours, work patterns and employment contract terms and conditions arising from the proposals.

359. Whilst it is noted that the initial redundancies are likely to affect staff employed as LTAs in the first instance, as part of a further exercise after April 2021, all remaining roles in the Service will be reviewed (including management and support functions) to reduce the scale of the workforce proportionately to match the scale of the Service.

360. All possible steps will be taken to minimise compulsory redundancies arising from the proposed service changes. This will include a Voluntary Redundancy offer where appropriate for eligible staff.

361. It is recommended that the Executive Member delegates authority to the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services to devise and implement the necessary human resource changes including the restructuring and reduction in the workforce, seeking formal approval as appropriate.

Climate Change

362. The proposed changes to the Library Service set out in this report have a neutral impact on the carbon footprint and energy consumption of the Library Service in terms of buildings, deliveries by suppliers and both staff and customer travel. There would be a reduction in energy consumption (a positive impact) by the Library Service if eight small libraries closed and also a small reduction in energy consumption for the remaining 40 council run libraries if there is an average 20% reduction in open hours. Staff travel to the eight libraries proposed for closure would cease and there will be up to 50 FTE fewer library staff that are required to travel to a library workbase as part of their role. It is acknowledged that the proposed decision is likely to have a negative impact to energy consumption from the closure of eight small libraries as customers will need to travel further to access an alternative library. However, some customers will already visit the town where the alternative library is located and would be able to combine their visit with other activities such as shopping. The combination of the low position and low negative impacts to energy consumption are therefore neutral overall.

363. The proposed changes to the library Service have limited impact on the ability of the Library Service to be resilient to the impacts of climate change – e.g. flooding, heat waves. Generally refurbishment and investment to library buildings is prioritised to the larger, busier, Tier 1 and Tier 2 libraries and so the proposed network of 40 libraries will be more resilient to the impact of climate change, although this has not been a consideration in selecting libraries for closure. The smaller Tier 3 library buildings which are proposed for closure are generally in need of modernisation and therefore less resilient to the longer term impacts of climate change.

Implementation timeline

364. Following the Decision Day on 28 July, work will commence immediately on the implementation of proposals.

365. Through July and August 2020, libraries will be operating on significantly reduced opening hours (approximately 50% reduction) as part of the Covid-19 Service recovery. A second public consultation on Opening Times will be held in August 2020. Service hours will be increased and transitioned from their Covid-19 recovery hours to their new operating hours following this second consultation and, when appropriate, within the overall context of the Covid-19 situation.

366. It is anticipated that the majority of library closures will take effect from 1 January 2021. This will give a period of time for the Library Service to negotiate with any interested parties who wish to take on the running of services or buildings. However, there may be one or two cases where (particularly in leasehold libraries) there may be reason to bring the closure forward from this date (such as the timing of a lease renewal date).
367. It is proposed that community-managed libraries be given appropriate notice of the intention to withdraw support, and that these libraries become fully independent with effect from 1st April 2021. This will give the community library management group eight months to arrange for the transition of services.

368. Work to re-provision some libraries to better meet community need and projects to generate additional income are longer term pieces of work and, although they will commence immediately, will continue into 2021 and beyond.

369. The proposals set out to Deliver Efficiencies will be dependent on when contracts come up for renewal and will be complete by April 2021.

370. A staff consultation will be held between September and November 2020, with these staffing changes largely implemented by April 2021. Further, targeted staff consultations may be required in 2021 to consider support and managerial staffing levels.

Financial Summary

371. As per the recommendations in sections 1 and 5, the proposals in this report deliver £1.76 million in savings. The table below sets out the targets originally consulted on, together with the revised proposals:

Activity	**Proposed saving as published in consultation £'000**	**Revised saving proposed £'000**
Early savings – completed in 2019/20	170	**240** (including an additional £50,000 operations contribution and £20,000 income generation contribution)

Early savings planned 2020/21	0	**210**
Changing how services are delivered by closing libraries/reducing opening hours (Operations)	1,040	**1,115** (comprising: • £340,000 from the closure of 8 libraries; • £775,000 from opening hour reductions.
Transition of Tier 4 Libraries	49	**49**
Increase in Income	355	**0**
Efficiencies	146	**146**
Total	1,760	**1,760**

372. The Medium Term Financial Strategy Update report (July 2020) set formal savings targets for Departments based on a Transformation to 2023 Programme of £80m and, for the Culture, Communities and Business Services Department this has resulted in a further savings target of £3.253 million. It is likely that the Library Service will again need make a proportionate contribution to this future spending reduction.

373. Due consideration has been given to a range of financial options and it is recommended that the right course of action is to deliver £1.76 million in savings through the combination of activities proposed in this report. This will enable the Library Service, its staff and its customers, to move forward with confidence, reducing levels of uncertainty about future changes and enabling the Service to fully focus on developing its offer according to the vision set out in paragraph 62.

Conclusions

374. The 10 week public consultation into the draft Library Strategy 2025 resulted in one of the largest responses ever received by the County Council. Analysis of the 21,2000 responses has led to many changes being made to the draft Vision to 2025 and the plans to deliver savings.

375. This report seeks approval of the draft Library Vision to 2025 and associated changes to the way services are provided. The report also proposes a revised approach to the savings strategy to offset recent impacts of the Covid-19 crisis and provide the Library Service with greater long-term financial stability.

376. The responses to the consultation have enabled Officers to better understand the impacts of any changes, meaning amendments to original proposals have been made where necessary and additional mitigation has been planned to lessen the impacts where appropriate.

377. This report clearly evidences the fact that community need has been carefully considered and that, with the proposed changes in place, the County Council will continue to provide a comprehensive and efficient service which is compliant with all relevant legislation.

378. The findings from the public consultation were discussed with the Library Task and Finish Group on 10 July and all the recommendations in this report were endorsed by Group. This report will also be considered by the Culture and Communities Select Committee at its meeting on 28 July 2020.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Corporate Strategy

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	Yes
Maximising well-being:	Yes
Enhancing our quality of place:	Yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
Title	Reference	Date
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
Title		Date
Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964		**1964**

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document	Location
None	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;

b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;

c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionally low.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

18 Equalities Impact Assessments have been published for the potential eight closures of Council-run libraries, changes to the four Tier 4 community managed libraries, reduction to opening hours, delivering efficiencies, income generation, staff impacts and other impacts of the Draft Library Vision to 2025. They have been reviewed and updated as a result of the extensive public consultation and used to inform the basis of the recommendations to the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage.

https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/equality/equality-impact-assessment/culture-communities-business

Impact on Crime and Disorder:

There is no impact on crime and disorder.

About the Library Service

As a Library Authority, Hampshire County Council is required by law[1] to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' Library Service for those who live, work and study in Hampshire. There is no specific definition of what constitutes a comprehensive and efficient service – it is for each authority to judge based on, among other things, local needs and available resources – see paragraph 66.

As part of the legislation, there is a requirement for the County Council to provide free lending and the facility to access books and resources. However, other regulations enable the County Council to act under its own discretion to apply charges for the provision of certain services including:

- reservation of items;
- fines for late returns; and
- material which requires an 'electronic device' to access.

The Library Service comprises:

Public Library Service – currently delivered through a network of 48 council-run libraries, four community-managed libraries, and an online library – which includes book and magazine lending, other lending e.g. CDs, DVDs, music and drama sets, audio books, and reference materials. Council-run libraries also deliver child/ adult learning, leisure activities, events, special collections (such as Naval in Gosport; Military in Aldershot; Aviation in Farnborough; Railway in Winchester and Jane Austen in Alton) and local studies.

Libraries are categorised into four tiers:

- Tier One libraries (including three Discovery Centres) are the largest and busiest libraries, providing the widest range of services. They have a catchment population of over 50,000, tend to be found in the biggest towns and are open longest - usually six days a week, including some evenings.
- Tier Two libraries are found in medium sized towns and are open on five days each week. They have a catchment of around 30,000 to 70,000 people.
- Tier Three libraries are located in smaller towns and villages and are open fewer days each week. Typically, they are small spaces (when compared to Tier One or Tier Two libraries) in a community building often with partners co-located. Tier Three libraries have a catchment population of around 10,000 – 40,000 people.
- Tier Four libraries (known as 'community-managed libraries') are managed by volunteer community organisations. Typically, the community is responsible for: the building management and costs; health and safety; staffing, which the County Council supports through a regular visit by a paid member of Hampshire Libraries staff; and the provision of books, self-service terminals, Go-Online public computers and free public Wi-Fi (all paid for by the County Council).

[1] www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-libraries-as-a-statutory-service/libraries-as-a-statutory-service. Statutory Instrument: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/75/contents

All Tier One, Tier Two and the majority of Tier Three libraries have print and copying facilities and free public IT – including Go-Online public computers and free public Wi-Fi.

School Library Service – A subscription-based service (all costs are fully covered by the subscription) for schools to support children's learning and education. As of July 2020, 470 schools buy into the Service which includes 21 independent and/or out of county schools.

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Home Library Service – A service coordinated by library staff and delivered by volunteers to vulnerable and isolated customers who are unable to visit a library in person. The service is free for customers that cannot get to the library due to ill-health, disability or caring responsibilities.

Online Library Service – Customers can download a wide range of free resources including eBooks, eMagazines, eAudio Books and eResources onto their eReader, desktop, laptop or mobile device. In addition, customers can reserve and renew books and make payments online.

Learning in Libraries – National Adult Learning grant funding (£423,586 for 2019/20) supports a year-round schedule of events and classes in council-run libraries. These are open to people of all levels of experience who wish to get involved and learn new skills.

Ready Reads – The Ready Reads service was launched on Monday 8 June 2020, in response to the first phase of the Library Services move to re-open libraries in Hampshire as safely as possible following the Covid-19 pandemic. *Ready Reads: We Select You Collect* is a new book collection service, where the Library Service select books, according with the customer's preferences, for collection from the customer's chosen library. Customers can express their preference by calling a central phone number, or via a form online. Customers are given a collection time when either they or their nominated collector can visit the library to collect the book selection. Books are held for a maximum of 7 days before they are returned to the library shelves.

Group membership – Existing Group memberships include

- **Carer Memberships** – care homes, sheltered accommodation and playgroups are among the groups that can benefit from this group membership. The group can borrow up to 100 items from a library at one time, audiobooks are free to borrow and up to 10 items can be reserved at one time for free. There are no overdue charges.

- **Good Neighbour scheme** - Is available to customers unable to visit the library in person. This scheme will allow a nominated person to be responsible for a customer's book loans and returns. Library staff can assist the nominated person in choosing books for the customer. The group can borrow up to 30 items from a library at one time. There are no overdue charges.

More information about types of membership and services can be found at https://www.hants.gov.uk/librariesandarchives/library/resources/homelibraryservice

Definitions:

- **Active User** – total number of library members using a specific library within the past year, includes renewals and loans
- **Unique User** – total number of library members who only use one library branch
- **Catchment** – An area around a library where a population of active users live who have used a library in the past 12 months
- **Issue** – an item from the library collection that is borrowed, including renewals
- **Community Need** – Information about income, employment, education, health, crime, living environment and barriers to housing and services to measure the needs of a specific community. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (known as IMD) is a standard and universally used Central Government measure of relative deprivation for communities in England published in 2019. All areas in England are ranked from the most deprived to the least deprived and are then split into 10 equal groups called deciles. Decile 1 contains the most deprived areas and Decile 10 the least deprived.

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Library Service Consultation

Consultation on proposed changes to Hampshire's Library Service

Consultation analysis

May 2020

Hampshire County Council

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Introduction

Context and aims

From 9 January to 18 March 2020, Hampshire County Council consulted residents and stakeholders across Hampshire on proposed changes to Hampshire's Library Service.

The County Council faces an anticipated budget shortfall of £80 million by April 2021. This is due to national austerity measures, combined with demographic and inflationary pressures. The Library Service's anticipated contribution to the County Council's overall savings target is £1.76 million.

Informed by feedback from the County Council's *Serving Hampshire* - Balancing the Budget (2019) consultation, the Library Service developed a range of proposals both to support its future vision and deliver anticipated savings. These included options to:

- **change how council-run library services are delivered**, including:
    - closing up to 10 libraries; and/ or
    - reducing and standardising staffed opening hours;
- **deliver library services differently within local communities**, through:
    - transitioning Tier Four council-supported, community-managed libraries into independent community-managed libraries; and
    - exploring better ways to deliver library services in Hampshire's most deprived communities;
- **make further efficiencies**; and
- **generate additional income**.

The Library Service consultation sought views on these options and their potential impacts, and invited alternative suggestions as to how savings could be delivered.

Information on each of the above options was provided in an Information Pack, that clarified that a combination of these would be needed to deliver the future vision for Hampshire Libraries, within the anticipated available funding.

The consultation was widely promoted to residents and stakeholders through a range of online and offline channels, including a series of drop-in events around Hampshire, dedicated website and phone service. Information Packs and Response Forms were available in both virtual and hard copy formats and as standard, audio and Easy Read versions, with other layouts available on request. Feedback was also welcomed via email, letter, or as comments on social media.

In total **21,200** responses were submitted across all channels. The views provided through this consultation have been shared with the Library Service and will be used to inform decisions by the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage in summer 2020.

Summary of key findings

Future vision for the Library Service

Most respondents (70%) agreed that the Library Service needs to adapt to respond to the changing demands being placed on it. Although respondents continued to place value on the universal service offered by local libraries and their role in developing children's literacy, they also recognised the potential to deliver this alongside other services (e.g. access to technology, learning and activities), via new avenues (e.g. as community hubs or at outreach locations), or new technologies (e.g. digital books).

Response to proposed operational savings

Over half of the consultation respondents preferred that the proposed £1.04 million operational savings were achieved through 25% opening hour reductions (58%), compared to just under one quarter who preferred closures alongside a 15% opening hour reduction (21%).

Most respondents explained their own preference in general terms – for example, they felt that their chosen option was the best, fairest or most cost-effective approach (56% of those who chose no library closures and 68% who chose a smaller reduction in hours). Almost half (49%) of those who wanted libraries to remain open were concerned about disadvantaging certain groups – in particular, children, the elderly and those without access to transport.

Comments relating to individual libraries also highlighted these themes:

- Comments about Blackfield and South Ham Libraries noted their location in a deprived[1] area that needs a library to support children/ the less wealthy.
- Responses relating to Chineham focused on convenience and high levels of use.
- Elson and Emsworth were highlighted as vital community hubs. Comments relating to Elson suggest the library is well used, but also that people were relatively less concerned about travelling to an alternative library.
- A key focus for Fair Oak was that the library should remain open due to the high levels of development in the area.
- Comments relating to Horndean focused on the valued service it provided to the community.
- Comments about Lee-on-the-Solent focused on the large elderly population of library users who may find it difficult to travel to an alternative venue.
- Travel concerns were also paramount within comments for Lyndhurst and Odiham libraries.

Should opening hour reductions be applied, respondents would prefer these to be achieved through shorter days (ideally fulfilled through opening later in the morning

[1] People may be considered to be living in poverty if they lack the financial resources to meet their needs, whereas people can be regarded as deprived if they lack any kind of resources, not just income.

(71%[2]) and earlier closing (43%), rather than half day (38%), full day (26%) or lunchtime (22%) closures.

Most respondents (56%) would support the standardisation of hours within library tiers[3].

One in five respondents (21%) dismissed the two options proposed by the Library Service in favour of another approach to deliver £1.04 million in operational savings - primarily by raising income (35%), by considering alternative options for managing the library estate (34%) or by seeking to resolve the budget pressures elsewhere in the County Council or with support from national Government (38%).

Delivering services differently

Whilst most respondents (70%) indicated that they would continue to use their local library if it was independent of the County Council and managed by the local community, many respondents were uncertain as to whether existing library services or an independent community-managed library model could adequately replace the services offered by Tier Four[4] libraries (40% and 39% respectively were unsure or neither agreed nor disagreed with these alternatives).

However, over three quarters of respondents (77%) felt that the Library Service should explore different ways to deliver services in deprived communities – particularly via schools (55%) or in community buildings (48%).

Income and efficiencies

On average, around two-thirds of respondents (67%) agreed with the efficiency savings proposed by the Service. The most popular suggestions related to managing debt on library accounts (circa 80% agreement), whereas the least popular were reducing the need for plastic library cards by exploring the use of a library app accessed on a mobile device (46% agreement), and reducing the number of Go-Online internet-ready computers, in line with reducing demand (57% agreement).

Over eight out of ten respondents (83%) felt that the Library Service should look to generate income. Those not in agreement (6%) primarily opposed reviewing current fees and charges.

Impacts

When asked about potential impacts arising from the consultation proposals, reduced access to library resources was the most common concern (45%). This included activities, facilities and staff expertise, as well as physical items such as books.

This was particularly the case where it was difficult for people to travel to an alternative library or change the times that they visited (43%).

[2] Proportions based on percentage choosing option within their top two preferences.
[3] There are four library tiers in Hampshire, which group libraries with similar features - predominantly size of catchment area population.
[4] Tier Four libraries are managed by volunteer community organisations but supported by the Hampshire Library Service.

Most commonly (70%), respondents noted that the proposals could have a differential impact according to age – with children and young people (51%) and older people (29%) most affected.

There was also clear concern about the impacts on local communities should libraries close (29%), primarily relating to their importance as a community resource, a social space and a focal point for the local area.

Unstructured responses

Similarly, to the views shared via the Response Form, the unstructured responses to the consultation outlined views and experiences of the Library Service, addressed the consultation proposals and their potential impacts, and offered ways to deliver library services differently. Some respondents also shared feedback on the consultation process.

A number of comparable themes were reported – most notably a general preference for reduction in opening hours over closures, concerns about needing to travel to an alternate library if libraries were closed, impacts of the proposed service changes on elderly, those with disabilities, or other vulnerable people, and illustration of the benefits that libraries bring to respondents and those around them.

Responses to the consultation

Who responded?

In total the consultation received **21,200** responses.

There were **20,838** responses to the consultation using the Response Form. The **20,838** responses were submitted via different formats and breaks down as: **17,096** via the online Response Form; **2,883** via the paper Response Form and **859** via the Easy Read Response Forms. Where specified, responses break down as follows:

20,397 were from individual respondents

161 were from groups, organisations or businesses

56 were from Democratically Elected Representatives

In this consultation analysis the references to 'all respondents' relates to all **20,838** respondents who completed the Response Form.

Of these respondents:

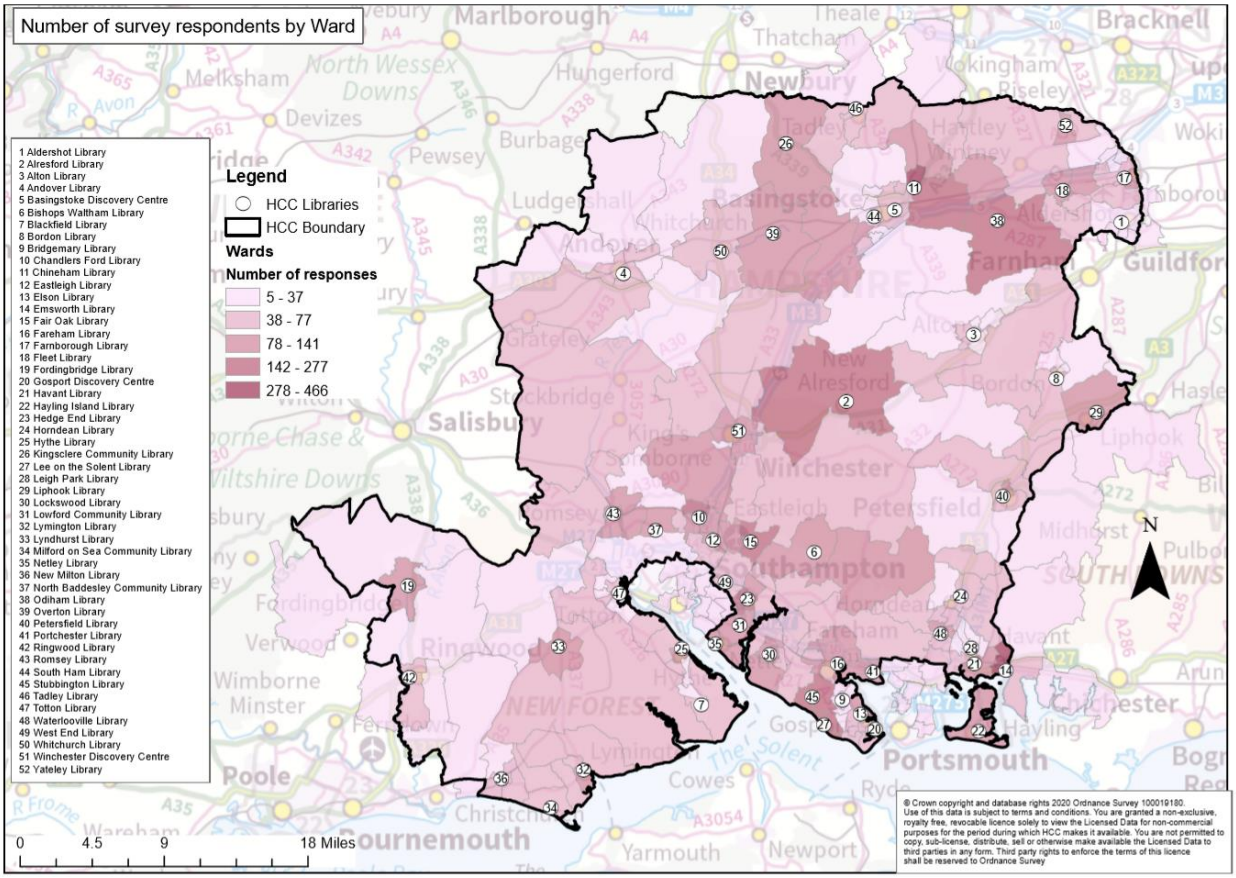
- **14,590** (70%) did not use any of the ten libraries identified for potential closure;
- **3,627** (17%) used at least one of the libraries identified for potential closure, as well as other libraries;
- **2,269** (11%) uniquely used the Hampshire Libraries identified for potential closure; and
- **352** (2%) of respondents did not disclose which libraries they use.

362 separate unstructured responses were also received within the consultation period. **196** of these were submitted by email or letter and **166** through comments on social media channels. A summary of these responses is included separately within this consultation analysis.

Location of respondents

Respondents were asked to provide their postcode. The consultation heard from respondents located across the county and beyond[5].

The heatmap (below) shows the distribution of respondents located within 15 miles of Hampshire. Darker colours on the map show a higher density of responses received.



97% of respondents to the consultation who provided a valid postcode resided within the Hampshire County administrative area, whilst 3% lived outside of this area.

Further location maps are used within this consultation analysis to illustrate how the response varied across 244 different Wards in and around Hampshire. Please note that the maps include the views of the 14,947 respondents who provided a valid postcode of over 5 digits that matched the official post code dataset (Code Point from Ordnance Survey) in GIS. The range of responses in each Ward varies from 5 to 466 and uses natural break intervals as defined by GIS.

[5] The County Council is required to provide a library service to those who live, work and study in Hampshire, so all views regardless of respondent residence are highly important.

Interpreting the data

This consultation analysis summarises key findings from the public consultation. Due to self-selection bias the respondents do not provide a representative sample of the Hampshire population.

Pages 10 – 100 of this document summarise the responses received via the consultation Response Form.

This analysis only considers actual responses – where 'no response' was provided to a question, this was not included in the analysis. As such, the totals for each question may amount to less than 20,838 (the total number of respondents who replied to the consultation Response Form). All consultation questions were optional.

Open-ended responses were analysed by theme, using an inductive approach. This means that the themes were developed from the responses themselves, not pre-determined based on expectations, to avoid any bias in the analysis of these responses. These macro (overarching) and micro (sub-level) themes were brought together into code frames[6] . Responses were also coded to identify potential impacts on protected characteristics[7].

Respondents could disclose if they were responding as an individual, providing the official response of an organisation, group or business or if they were responding as a Democratically Elected Representative. Given the relatively low number of organisations/ Democratically Elected Representatives that responded, their views should primarily be considered as specific rather than generalisable. However, analysis has been completed by 'respondent type', using indicative percentages for each closed question in order to help illustrate any contrast between their views and those of individuals – recognising that organisations/ Democratically Elected Representatives provide both an 'expert' view and speak on behalf of a larger audience. A list of the organisations, groups, businesses and Democratically Elected Representatives responding on behalf of their constituency is provided on pages 113 to 118.

Notable variances from the average response by user type, library used and other core demographics are also highlighted where appropriate throughout this consultation analysis.

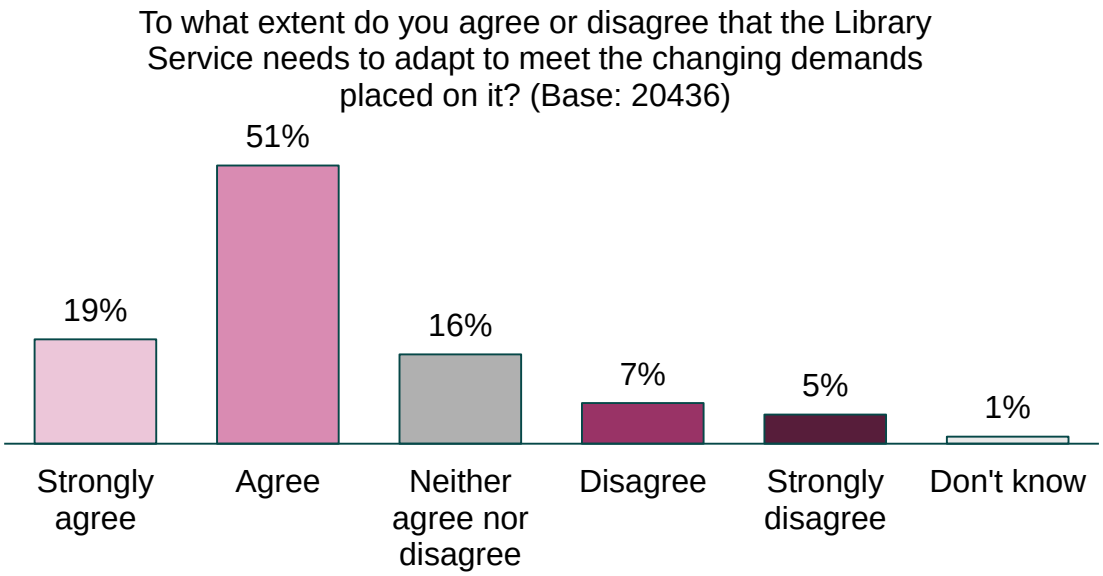
[6] Please note that micros will not add up to macros as comments are multi-coded and may contain more than one micro within a macro. Additionally, some comments will have been coded directly into a macro theme.
[7] Protected characteristics include: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation, as well as impacts on staff, the environment and digital exclusion.

Findings from the consultation

Section One: Future vision for Hampshire's Library Service

Since the publication of the Libraries' Transformation Strategy to 2020, the County Council has continued to gather evidence, nationally and locally, on what service users value and how demand for library services continues to change. Evidence suggests that, in the coming years, Hampshire faces real challenges and opportunities relating to population change and advancing technologies[8]. The Library Service believes that it needs to evolve to reflect these changes and to ensure that it remains relevant and accessible to users.

The majority of respondents to the Library Service Consultation recognised this position, with 70% in agreement that the Library Service needs to adapt to meet the changing demands placed on it.



Analysis by respondent demographics alongside respondents' relationship with, and use of, the Library Service revealed that the need for change was recognised by a majority of all groups, with respondents who worked (88% agreement) or volunteered (82% agreement) for the Library Service showing a particular awareness of this position.

Respondents who did not provide their demographic details tended to have higher disagreement with the need for change. There was also notable opposition amongst respondents with no access to the internet, with 23% disagreeing - almost double the average.

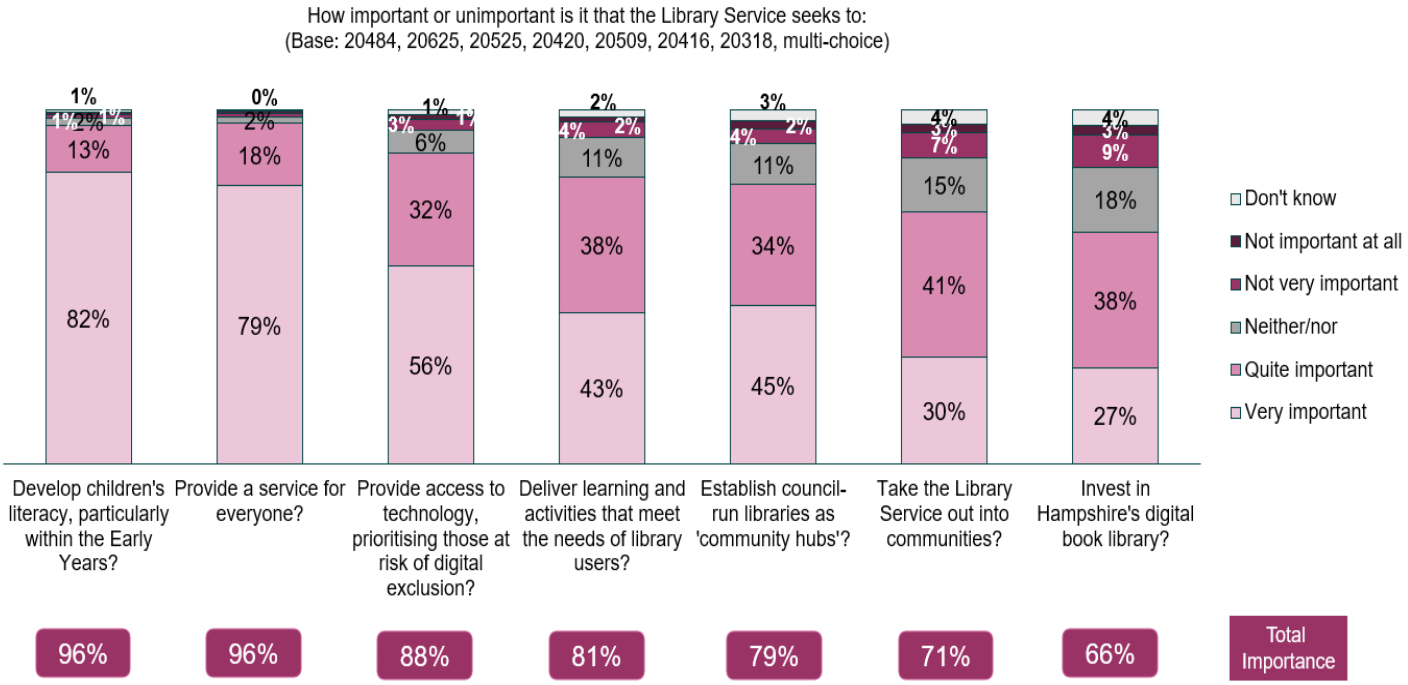
Looking across the library portfolio, users of Elson (19%) and Fair Oak (19%) libraries were those most likely to disagree that the Service needed to adapt.

[8] Hampshire 2050 Commission of Inquiry

The Library Service's emerging future vision proposes three priorities:

- promoting reading, with a focus on children's literacy and the Early Years;
- supporting healthy, creative communities; and
- investing in digital services.

Alongside these, the vision places a particular focus on seven areas, as outlined in the chart below.



Respondents to the consultation agreed that all seven areas should be an important focus for the Library Service. In particular, they valued a universal Library Service and its role in developing children's literacy. However, the potential to deliver this alongside other services, via new channels or new technologies, was also recognised.

Across five of the seven areas, the highest levels of disagreement came from respondents who had never used Hampshire libraries, and those whose use of the library had lapsed. The exceptions to this were:

- the focus on investment in Hampshire's digital book library, where disagreement was again highest amongst those without internet access (22%); and
- the option of taking the Library Service out into communities, which respondents aged under 16 (23%), and those with a Black ethnic background (28%) were most likely to disagree with.

Section Two: Changing how council-run library services are delivered

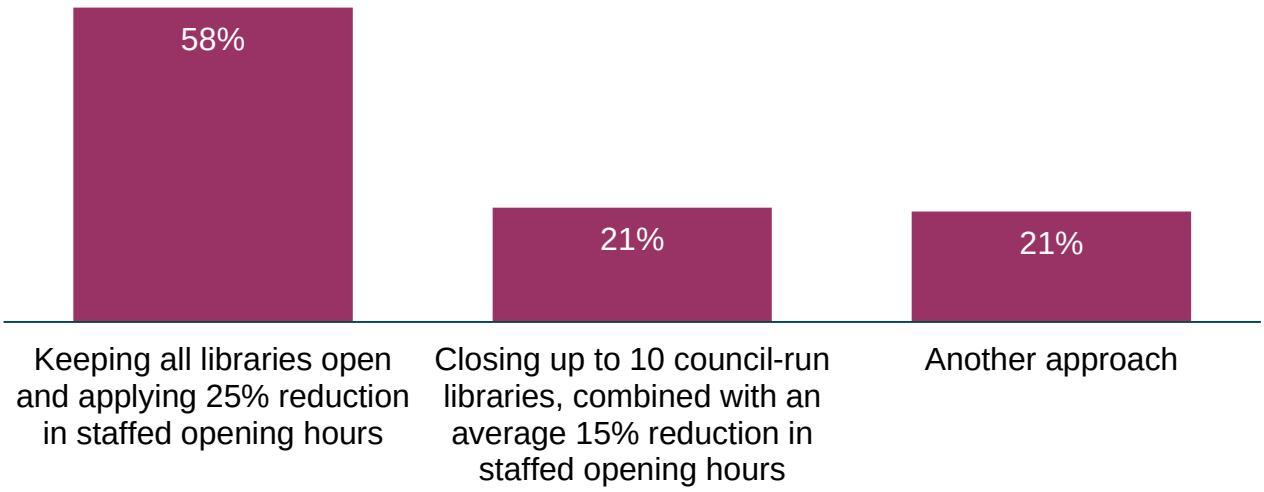
This section outlines the consultation response to proposals to reduce operational costs by £1.04 million by changing how council-run library services are delivered, including respondents' rationale for their preference.

The consultation sought to understand whether members of the public, groups, organisations, business and other key stakeholders would prefer the Service to be restructured through:

- keeping all council-run libraries open and applying opening hour reductions across all libraries; or
- a combination of some library closures and a more limited reduction in opening hours for all other council-run libraries; or
- another approach that would continue to meet community need within the available budget.

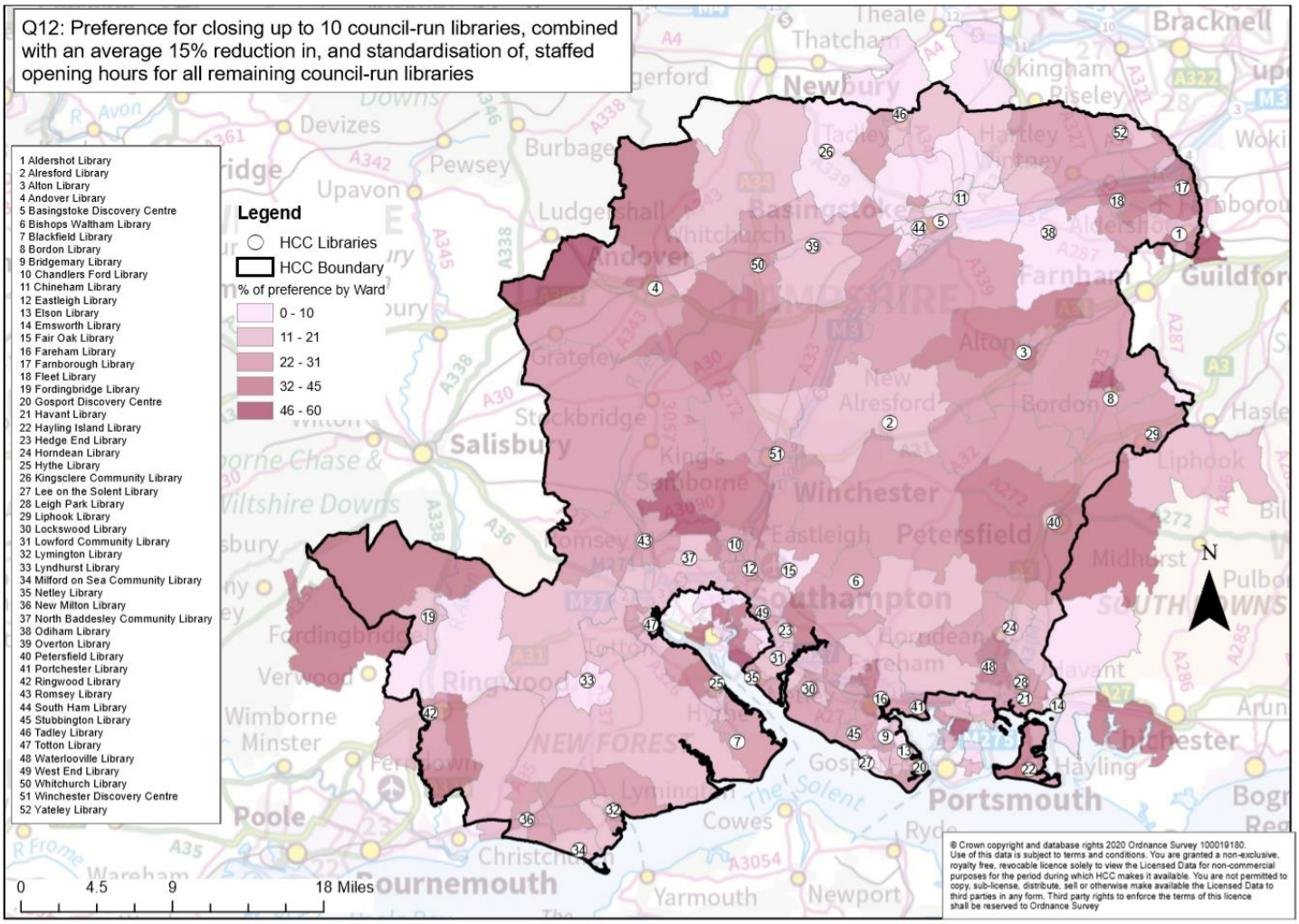
The consultation found that most respondents (58%) would prefer that all libraries remain open, and that operational savings be achieved through opening hour reductions. Around one in five supported closures (21%) and the same amount suggested another approach (21%).

Would you prefer that the £1.04 million operational savings are achieved through: (Base: 20543)



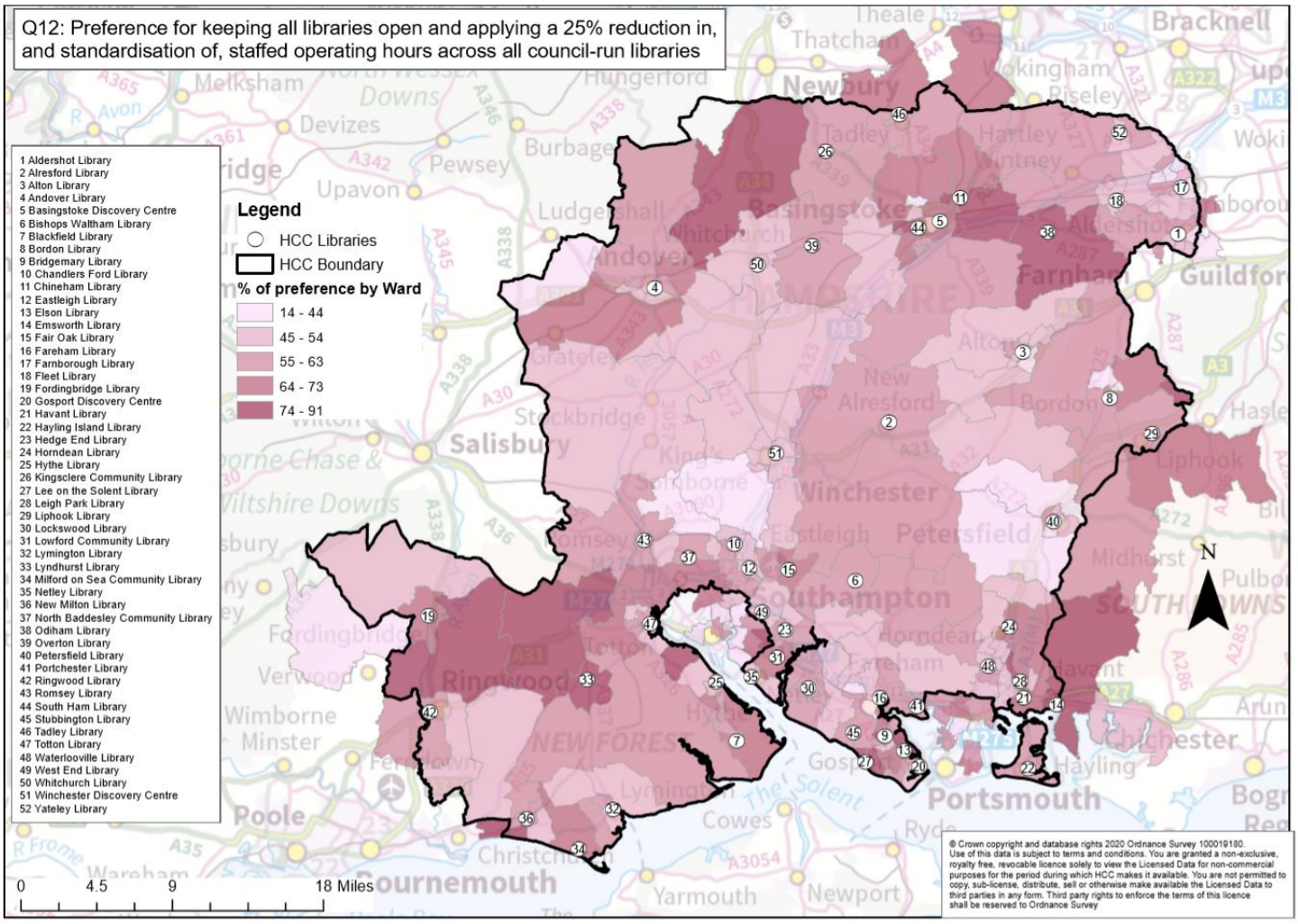
Support for a 25% reduction in opening hours with no library closures was highest amongst older respondents, with 68% of those aged 75-84 and 75% of those aged 85 or over in favour of this option, and amongst respondents who were unique users of the libraries identified for potential closure (79% - see below for further details).

There was minority preference for closing up to 10 council-run libraries combined with an average 15% reduction in, and standardisation of, staffed opening hours across most of the county. Areas that were least supportive were mainly located around the libraries identified as potential candidates for closure – particularly Kingsclere, Chineham and Odiham in the north of the County and around Lyndhurst, South Ham and Fair Oak. Those most likely to prefer this option were located to the west of Andover, north of Fordingbridge and in pockets close to Bordon, Baddesley and Romsey town centre.



19% of 468 respondents from outside of Hampshire preferred this option.

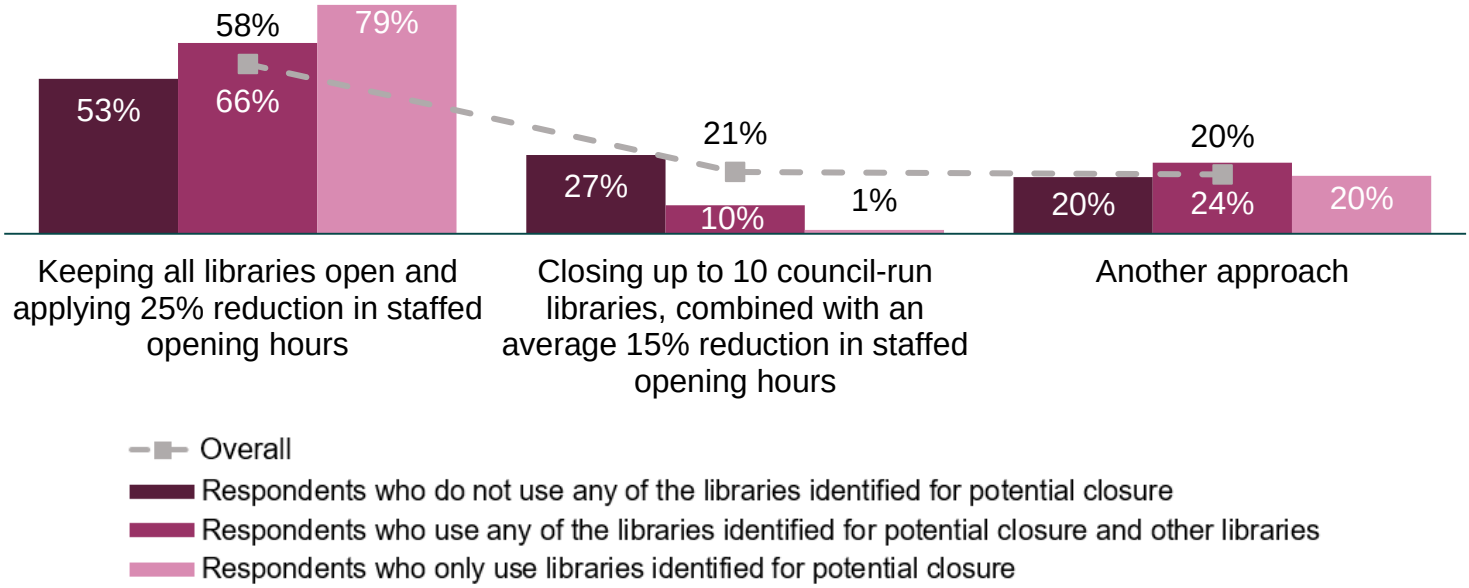
There was a majority preference for keeping all libraries open and applying a 25% reduction in, and standardisation of, staffed operating hours across all council-run libraries across much of the county. Areas with the highest levels of support were sited around Whitchurch, Odiham, Hook and Loddon and the northern New Forest. Those least likely to prefer this option included areas around Petersfield and to the west of Winchester.



62% of 468 respondents from outside of Hampshire preferred this option.

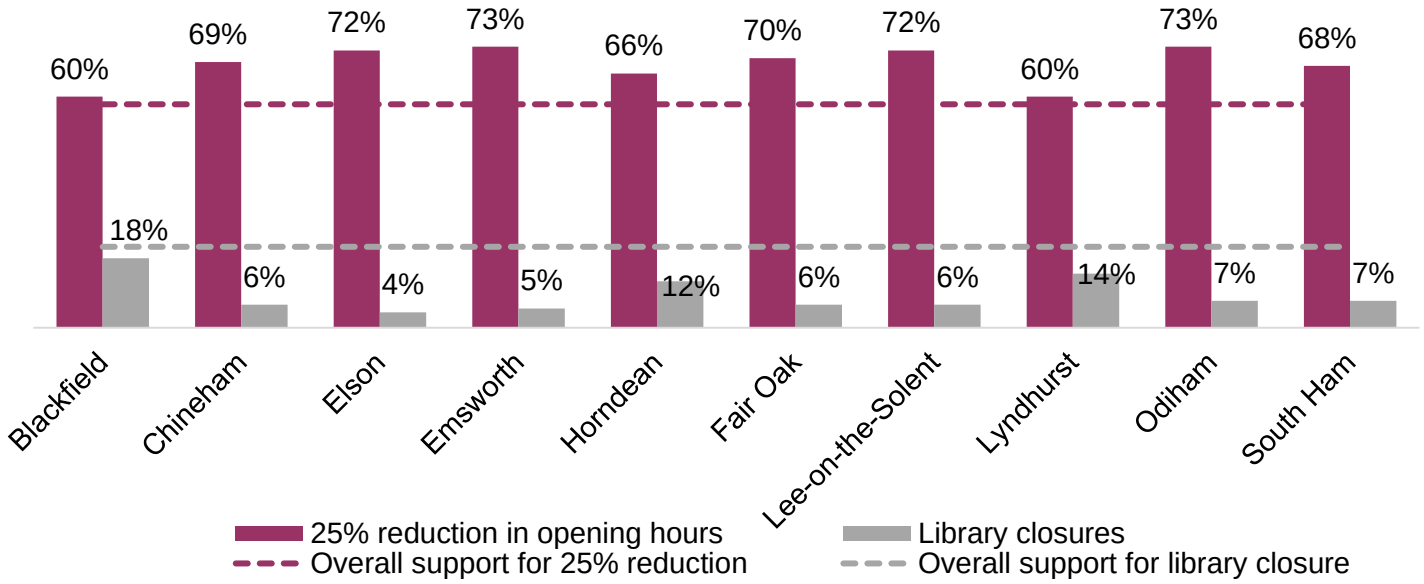
Respondents who uniquely used any of the 10 libraries identified for potential closure, were most likely to prefer that all libraries remain open[9].

Would you prefer that the £1.04 million operational savings are achieved through:
(Base: 20543, 14414, 3590, 2237)



When looking at each library specifically the level of support for all libraries to remain open ranged from just above average (Blackfield and Lyndhurst library users: 60%) to significantly so (Odiham and Emsworth library users: 73%).

Preference of those respondents who use libraries identified for potential closure
(Base: 115, 1737, 560, 983, 512, 306, 352, 944, 321, 553)



[9] These respondents accounted for approximately 11% of the respondent sample.

With the exception of respondents who worked for Hampshire Library Service, the option to reduce opening hours by 25% was the single most preferred choice amongst all types of respondents. However, it did not quite achieve majority support amongst the following defined groups:

- employees of the Hampshire Library Service (10%);
- Hampshire Library Service volunteers (48%);
- Democratically Elected Representatives (43%);
- 'lapsed' users of the Hampshire Library Service (44%);
- respondents who self-describe their gender (42%); and
- users of:
    - Netley Library (42%);
    - Aldershot Library (46%);
    - Farnborough Library (46%);
    - Petersfield Library (49%);
    - West End Library (49%);
    - Whitchurch Library (47%);
    - Winchester Discovery Centre (47%); and
    - the Online Library (48%).

In contrast to other respondents, over three quarters of responding Hampshire Library Service staff (78%) preferred the option to close up to 10 libraries combined with a 15% reduction and standardisation of opening hours[10].

Other respondent types that were notably more likely than average to support this option were:

- Hampshire Library Service volunteers (34%);
- employees of Hampshire County Council (31%);
- 'lapsed' users of the Hampshire Library Service (34%);
- users of Farnborough Library (35%); and
- users of Netley Library (34%).

Some types of respondents preferred to offer an alternative approach to the two options put forward by the Library Service – including Democratically Elected Representatives (46%), and organisations, businesses or groups (32%).

Other respondent types that were notably more likely than average to offer 'another approach' were:

- users of North Baddesley Community Library (35%);
- users of Kingsclere Community Library (32%);
- respondents who self-describe their gender (32%); and
- respondents who usually travel around Hampshire using a mode of transport 'other' than private, public or active transport. (30%).

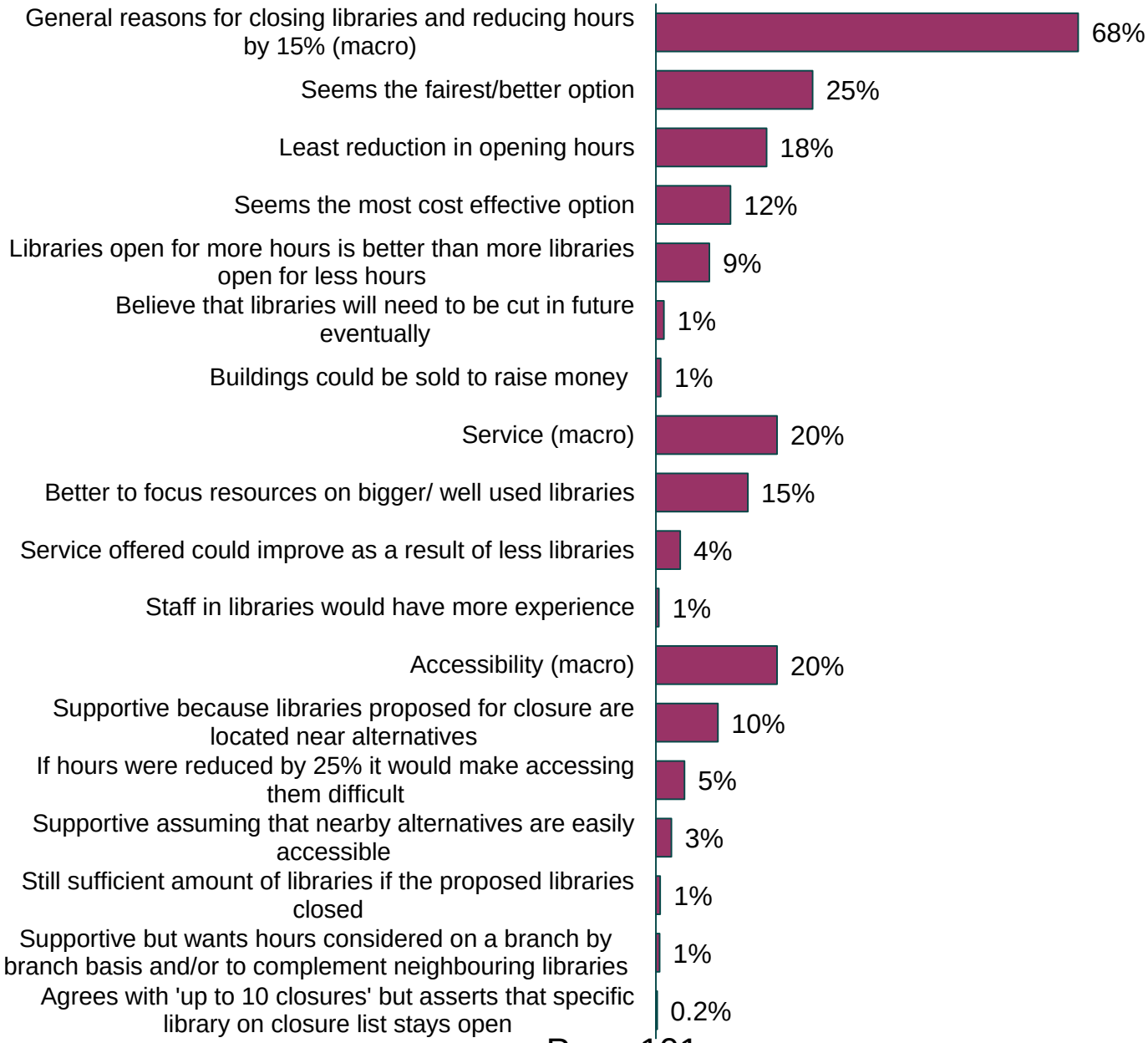
[10] 339 library staff responded to the consultation. Those who preferred the option of closing up to 10 libraries combined with a 15% reduction in opening hours included staff who use the libraries identified for potential closure.

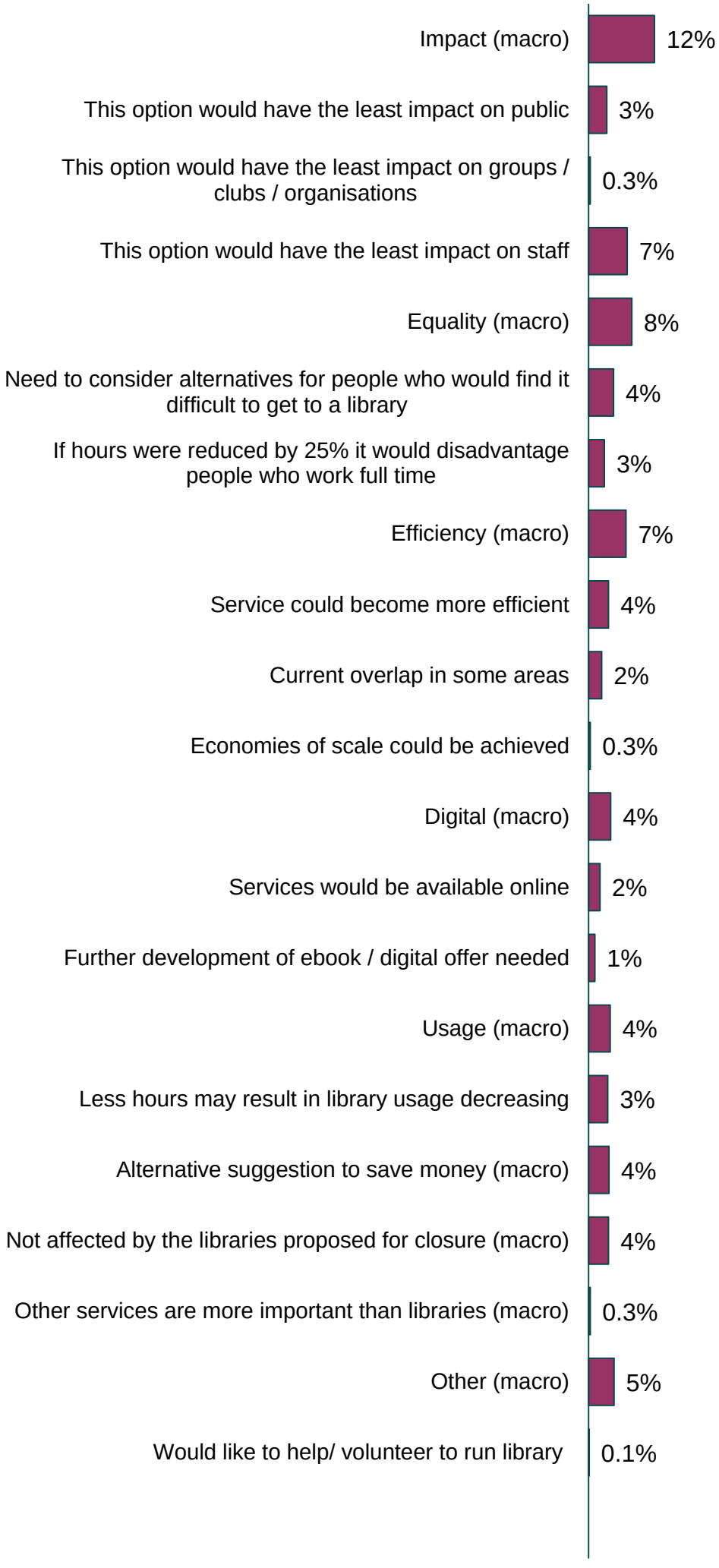
Rationale for preferring up to 10 library closures, together with an average 15% reduction in, and standardisation of, opening hours

One in five respondents (21%), including 50 businesses, groups and organisations (15%) and 6 Democratically Elected Representatives (11%), would prefer that the Library Service achieved the proposed £1.04 million operational savings by closing up to 10 libraries combined with an average 15% reduction in staffed opening hours.

Of these, 3,271 (75%) provided a comment to explain their preference. Most often these were quite general reasons (68%), such as the option being 'better' or 'fairer', but many provided further detail relating to aspects such as the resultant level of service (20%) and use (4%), the accessibility of the library buildings (20%), the level of impact on certain groups (12%) and characteristics (8%) and how the Service could operate in future by becoming more efficient (7%), or more digital (4%).

Reason given for choosing 'closing up to 10 libraries combined with an average 15% reduction in, and standardisation of, staffed opening hours for all remaining council-run libraries' - quantified verbatim
(Base: 3271, multi-code)




Impact (macro) 12%
This option would have the least impact on public 3%
This option would have the least impact on groups / clubs / organisations 0.3%
This option would have the least impact on staff 7%
Equality (macro) 8%
Need to consider alternatives for people who would find it difficult to get to a library 4%
If hours were reduced by 25% it would disadvantage people who work full time 3%
Efficiency (macro) 7%
Service could become more efficient 4%
Current overlap in some areas 2%
Economies of scale could be achieved 0.3%
Digital (macro) 4%
Services would be available online 2%
Further development of ebook / digital offer needed 1%
Usage (macro) 4%
Less hours may result in library usage decreasing 3%
Alternative suggestion to save money (macro) 4%
Not affected by the libraries proposed for closure (macro) 4%
Other services are more important than libraries (macro) 0.3%
Other (macro) 5%
Would like to help/ volunteer to run library 0.1%

This section provides further information about the key themes identified in the graph above.

Key theme - General reasons for closing up to 10 libraries and reducing opening hours by 15%

2,222 respondents gave quite general reasons for supporting the closure of up to 10 libraries combined with a 15% reduction in opening hours.

One quarter (25%) of the supportive comments stated that combining some closures with a smaller reduction in hours would be the fairest or the better option out of the two options proposed – many felt that the quality of libraries should be prioritised over quantity.

> *It is clearly the lesser of two evils and library management appears to have appraised the situation in arriving at it being one of the only two options.*
>
> *Regret that any would need to close, however if this is the only way to provide a high quality, properly staffed, Library Service, then so be it. To provide an over-stretched service that is often unavailable would not be beneficial.*
>
> *It's not ideal and this choice is to be stuck between a rock and a hard place, but the libraries you have ear-marked for closure are the logical choices and I think it's better to close those than to restrict opening hours across all libraries.*
>
> *It seems to offer the best reconciliation between accessibility and efficiency.*

(825 comments mentioned this option being the fairest/ best)

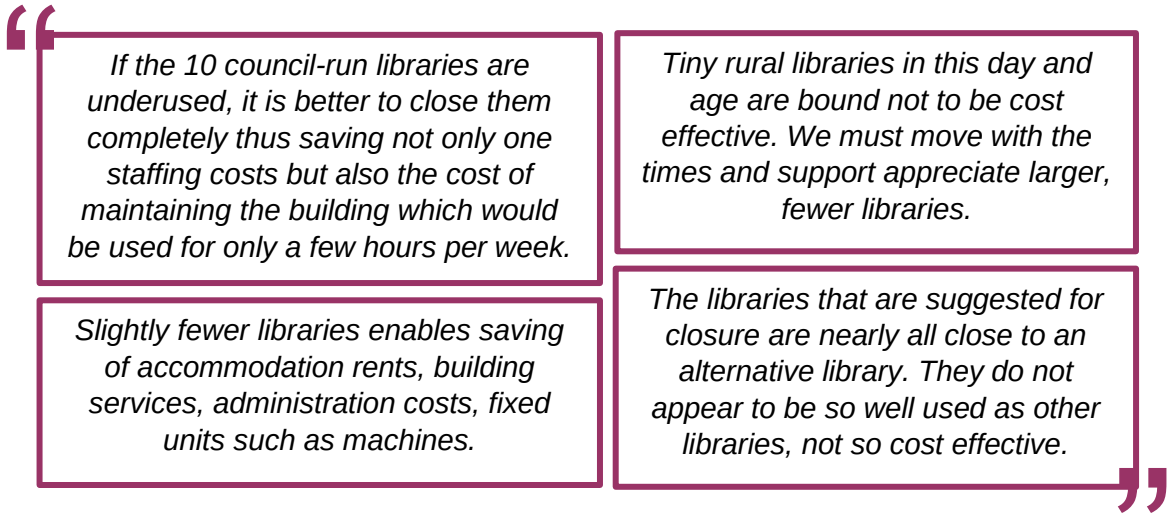
Over one sixth (18%) of the comments stated support for this option as it would result in a smaller reduction in library opening hours – many felt that a reduction of 25% may be too high and could cause more of a negative impact.

> *Cutting the hours, a library is open will quite probably reduce the number of people using it so I prefer to keep hours cut at a minimum.*
>
> *A 15% reduction in opening hours is preferable to a 25% one for a library which is used constantly throughout the week & a much loved place to visit for a lover of books!*
>
> *This option keeps the remaining libraries in the County open as much as possible. This is vital as they provide a very important resource and community space.*
>
> *To have standardisation of staffed opening hours is a positive move. Average of 15% in hours is in my opinion a less painful option than 25%.*

(582 comments mentioned that this option resulted in the least reduction in hours)

Furthermore, almost one in 10 comments (9%) stated that libraries open for more hours would be better than more libraries being open for less hours.

Over one in 10 comments (12%) commented that closing up to 10 libraries and reducing hours by approximately 15% presented the most cost-effective option.



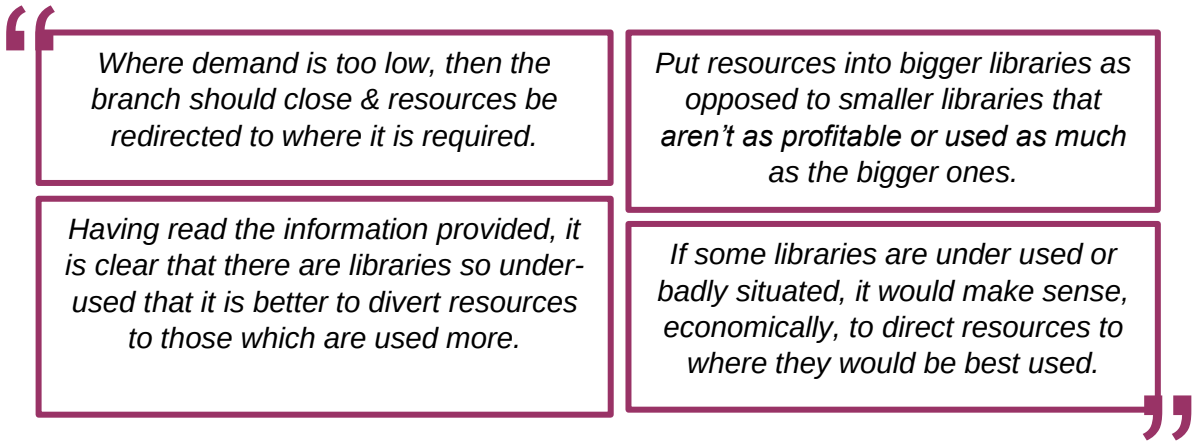
(392 comments mentioned that this option seemed the most cost effective)

Other comments within this theme mentioned a feeling of inevitability that libraries would need to close at some stage in the future and that the library buildings could be sold off to support the remaining ones.

Key theme - Service

638 respondents who preferred that some library closures should be targeted to achieve the £1.04 million operational savings focused on the need to retain a high-quality service in a smaller number of libraries rather than diluting the service provided across all libraries.

Around one sixth (15%) of the comments noted that it would be better to focus resources on the bigger, and best-used libraries rather than the smaller, lesser used ones. Many stated this would be best use of the available budget.



(483 comments mentioned focusing resources on bigger/ well used libraries)

Some (4%) of the comments reflected that the service offered could be improved as a result of having fewer libraries in operation – aided by more targeted investment of available funding and resources.

Best option out of the 3 presented as it should improve service generally and provide a solid platform for the future.

I would prefer to have a more comprehensive and varied service in bigger libraries with more opening hours, than visit smaller local branches where there is less on offer for myself and my family.

I think that closing the smaller, under-used libraries and amalgamating them with larger libraries would enable those libraries left open to provide a better choice and better service for the library user overall.

This way the libraries remaining open and be run to a high standard, with appropriate investment and can be developed continuously in order to provide for all of the users.

(126 comments mentioned libraries being able to offer a higher quality service if some close)

A few comments (1%) mentioned that a reduction in the number of libraries would help to ensure that libraries continued to be run by professional staff, rather than needing to rely on volunteers to remain open.

This would mean a less watered-down effect of the expertise of staff to help with public needs be it electronic or book wise.

Our most valuable resource is the knowledge/ help of the Library staff which I witness in action every time I visit my local library. We cannot lose that talent and it would seem to me that the 15% reduction is the most secure way of achieving this end.

Will provide a higher percentage of experienced staff in libraries. Volunteers are great but I believe having trained library staff is very important.

(15 comments mentioned library staff having more experience)

Key theme - Accessibility

637 respondents explained that they were supportive of closing up to 10 libraries and a 15% opening hour reduction because they felt that this approach would enable more people to retain good access to library services.

One in 10 (10%) of the comments emphasised that the libraries identified as potential candidates for closure were located near to alternative libraries – helping to mitigate the impact.

> *Unnecessary luxury to keep open libraries that are only used by a small percentage of the community where other local options are available within reasonable distance.*
>
> *The 10 libraries selected for closure appear to be the most obvious and can be covered most easily via nearby libraries.*
>
> *The Information Pack provided practical details enabling an informed decision to be made the proposed closure of 10 libraries is a compromise that appears to be a sensible decision based on usage and alternatives being available within a reasonable distance.*
>
> *Many of the libraries proposed for closure are geographically close to other larger libraries. If the number of visitors to these libraries has significantly reduced, then there seems little justification in keeping them open.*

(326 comments mentioned libraries identified as potential candidates for closure being located near alternatives)

Similarly, over 80 comments (3%) submitted were supportive of the proposed option of closing up to 10 libraries and making a smaller opening hours reduction but only on the assumption that those identified for potential closure were near to alternative library services.

> *Whilst I do not endorse the closing of any library the option I have chosen would appear to be the most beneficial to all. This is on the understanding that the Service/ council is correct in its undertaking that those affected by closure have reasonable access to alternate library services.*
>
> *As long as the next nearest library is within reasonable travelling distance (15 to 20 mins).*
>
> *As long as people can access another library within a short distance of a closed library, I see no reason why smaller under used libraries could not close.*
>
> *So long as the ones closed are within easy distance of other libraries it is better to keep the other libraries open for a reasonable number of hours.*

(83 comments mentioned being in support of library closures assuming there were alternatives nearby)

One in 20 comments (5%) focused on the alternative option of avoiding closures and reducing opening hours by 25% and noted that this would make library services difficult to access for a larger number of people.

> *If reduce by 25% may make it difficult for people to attend so have a great detrimental effect on numbers using the services.*
>
> *A 25% reduction in opening hours risks decreasing the viability of the libraries and so making future closures more likely. I find it hard enough to get to the library when it is open already.*
>
> *A 15% reduction to staff hours, whilst excessive, would not be as bad as a 25% reduction which would make it much harder for the public to access their libraries and so, lead to a lessening of public use and further staff losses over time.*
>
> *A 25% reduction in opening hours may restrict too many users from being able to access their library.*

(151 comments mentioned a 25% reduction in hours having an impact on accessibility)

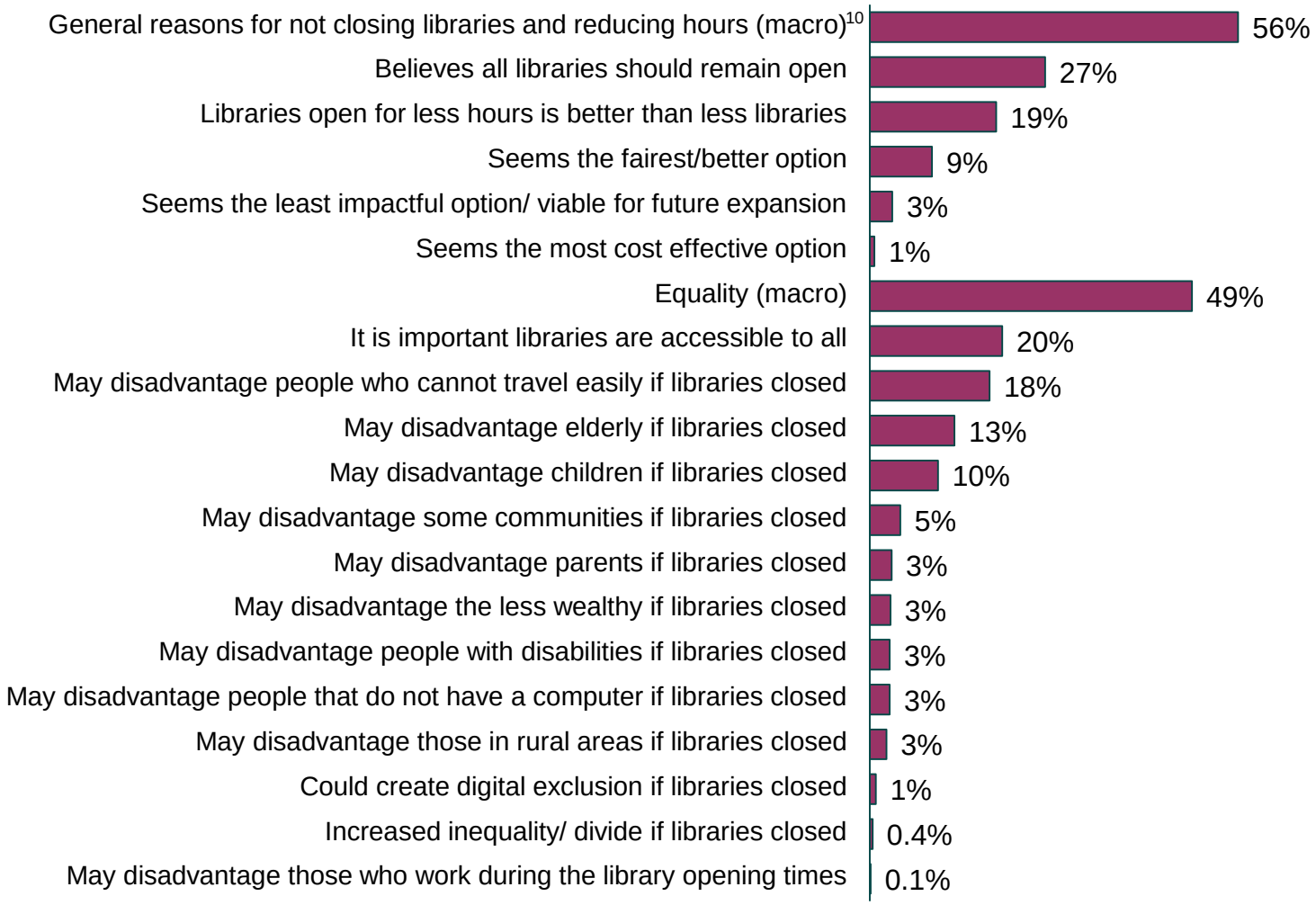
Other comments about accessibility mentioned that if the proposed libraries closed there would still be a sufficient amount of libraries available; support for the closures but that opening hours need to be considered by individual libraries or alternate with the neighbouring library; and support for the closures with the exception of specific libraries from the identified list.

Rationale for preferring a 25% reduction in, and standardisation of, library opening hours, with no library closures

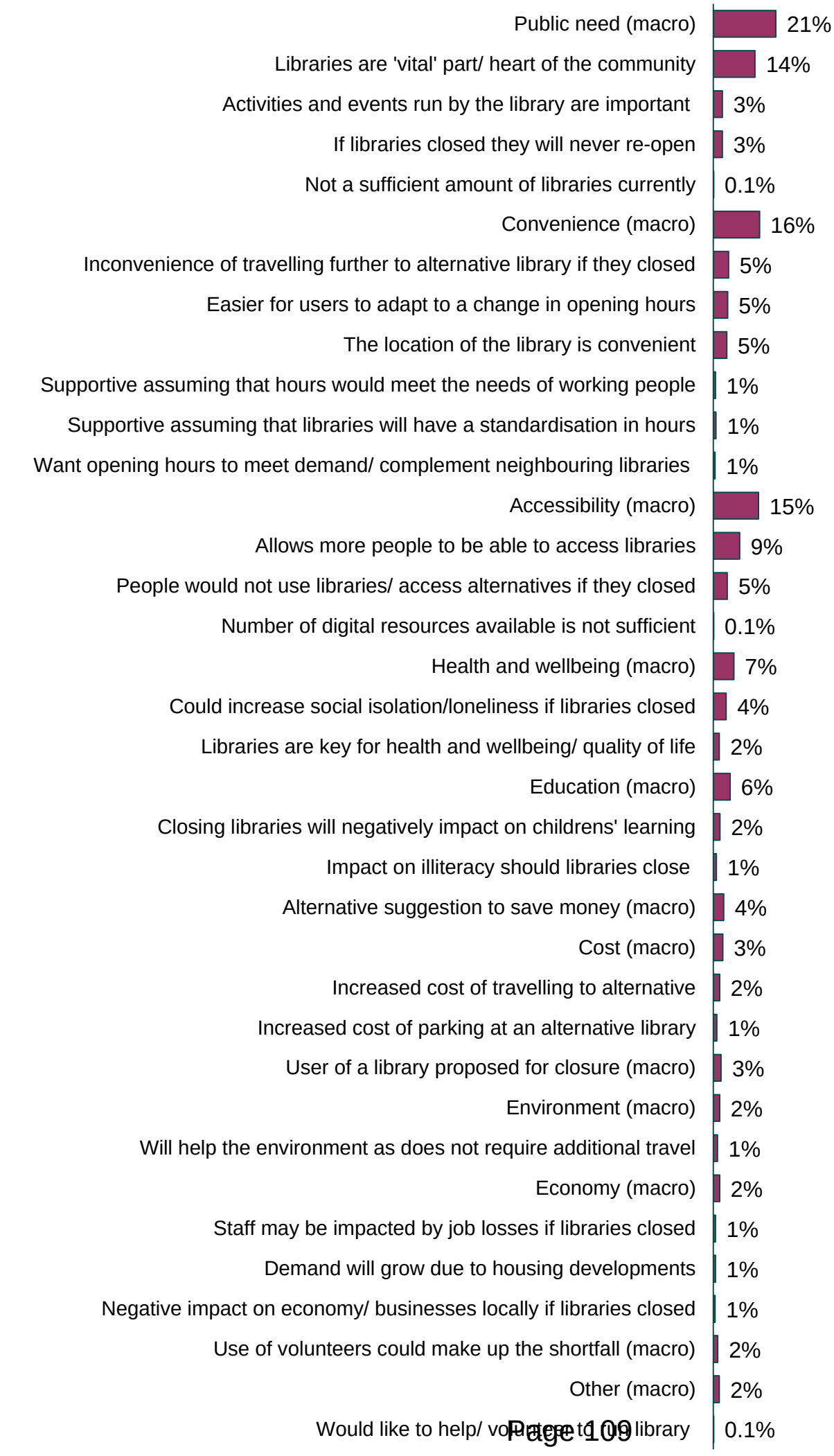
Over half of the consultation respondents (58%), including 84 businesses, groups and organisations (53%) and 23 Democratically Elected Representatives (43%), would prefer that the Library Service achieved the proposed £1.04 million operational savings without closing any libraries.

9,561 people (80%) provided a comment to explain their preference for a 25% reduction in opening hours. Many respondents (56%) provided quite general reasons for their view – in particular a general belief that all libraries should remain open. Those who provided specific detail mentioned aspects such as the need to ensure equal or universal access to services (49%), to provide a service that met public need (21%), the convenience of current libraries (16%) versus the accessibility of a revised service (15%), and a range of impacts including health and wellbeing (7%), education (6%), financial (3%), economic (2%), and environmental (2%), that may occur if libraries closed.

Reason given for choosing 'keeping all libraries open and applying a 25% reduction in, and standardisation of, staffed operating hours across all council-run libraries'
- quantified verbatim (Base: 9651, multi-code)



[11] Open-ended responses were analysed by theme, using an inductive approach. This means that the themes were developed from the responses themselves, not pre-determined based on expectations, to avoid any bias in the analysis of these responses.


Public need (macro) 21%
Libraries are 'vital' part/ heart of the community 14%
Activities and events run by the library are important 3%
If libraries closed they will never re-open 3%
Not a sufficient amount of libraries currently 0.1%
Convenience (macro) 16%
Inconvenience of travelling further to alternative library if they closed 5%
Easier for users to adapt to a change in opening hours 5%
The location of the library is convenient 5%
Supportive assuming that hours would meet the needs of working people 1%
Supportive assuming that libraries will have a standardisation in hours 1%
Want opening hours to meet demand/ complement neighbouring libraries 1%
Accessibility (macro) 15%
Allows more people to be able to access libraries 9%
People would not use libraries/ access alternatives if they closed 5%
Number of digital resources available is not sufficient 0.1%
Health and wellbeing (macro) 7%
Could increase social isolation/loneliness if libraries closed 4%
Libraries are key for health and wellbeing/ quality of life 2%
Education (macro) 6%
Closing libraries will negatively impact on childrens' learning 2%
Impact on illiteracy should libraries close 1%
Alternative suggestion to save money (macro) 4%
Cost (macro) 3%
Increased cost of travelling to alternative 2%
Increased cost of parking at an alternative library 1%
User of a library proposed for closure (macro) 3%
Environment (macro) 2%
Will help the environment as does not require additional travel 1%
Economy (macro) 2%
Staff may be impacted by job losses if libraries closed 1%
Demand will grow due to housing developments 1%
Negative impact on economy/ businesses locally if libraries closed 1%
Use of volunteers could make up the shortfall (macro) 2%
Other (macro) 2%
Would like to help/ volunteer to run library 0.1%

This section provides further information about the key themes identified in the graph above.

Key theme – General reasons for not closing libraries and reducing opening hours by 25%

5,379 respondents gave quite **generalised reasons for their support** of the proposed option to keep all libraries open and apply a 25% reduction in opening hours.

Over one quarter of comments (27%) emphasised that all libraries should remain open – many stressed that the Library Service was universal and that everyone should have access to it.

> *I understand that money needs to be saved but I feel it is important to keep all libraries open.*
>
> *Because I would like to see all libraries open, at least some of the time to allow access to everybody wherever they live.*
>
> *I wouldn't want to see any of the libraries closed as they are a focal point for all ages - especially those who have no transport or limited access to public transport.*
>
> *Libraries are important for local communities & keeping them open for all to use is very important.*

(2554 comments mentioned that all libraries should remain open)

Around two in 10 comments (19%) stated that having libraries open for fewer hours would be better than having fewer libraries available overall in Hampshire.

> *Rather there be a library for most of the public than not at all.*
>
> *Better to keep all libraries available if only on one or 2 days a week. To close libraries is a backward move.*
>
> *I think it is so important that as many areas as possible have their own library, even if it means they are not open as much as one would like, so this is the lesser evil.*
>
> *I would rather have reduced access than no access at all.*

(1845 comments mentioned that having libraries open for less hours would be better than having fewer libraries overall)

Around one in 10 (9%) comments asserted that the proposed option to reduce opening hours by 25% was the fairest option out of the two put forward by the Library Service – many emphasised that it would be unfair for some communities to lose their library access and others retain it.

> *Seems the fairest. Why should one area lose their services and not another. All children in every area need to be able to go to library if they want.*
>
> *This is the fairest option and means all communities will continue to have a library resource.*
>
> *Changes would be fairly distributed between all areas. Targeting specific libraries would create unfair disadvantage to the area.*
>
> *This is the fairest way to ensure a full range of options remain open and accessible to all across the country.*

(908 comments mentioned that keeping libraries open would be the fairest/ better option)

Other general reasons given for keeping libraries open and reducing the opening hours by 25% were that the option seems the most cost-effective, the least impactful or allows for opening times to be increased again in future should financial circumstances change. Some comments proposed a trial of shorter opening hours to test the concept.

Key theme – Equality

4,697 respondents focused on **equality of access** to library services as a reason for choosing to keep all libraries open, with many highlighting specific groups that they felt would be disadvantaged should some libraries close.

One fifth of comments (20%) stressed the importance of ensuring that libraries were accessible to all.

> *EVERYONE needs to be able to access library services, LOCALLY. Not everyone can afford a mobile phone or broadband. Not everyone can afford a car or can drive, and the bus services are poor or non-existent.*
>
> *Everybody should have easy access to a local library to encourage reading.*
>
> *Give all an equal opportunity to access the Service.*
>
> *Everyone should have access to library services and closing libraries does not meet that objective.*

(1930 comments mentioned the importance of library accessibility to all)

Around two in 10 comments (18%) said that a 25% reduction in opening hours was preferable as if libraries close it could disadvantage those without access to transport or those who would find it difficult to travel to an alternative library. This was particularly the case where local bus services were perceived to be poor, or where library buildings or respondents' homes were not located near to bus stops. The perception that increasing distance would lead to decreasing use of libraries was also reflected in the 'Convenience' and 'Accessibility' themes.

> *Allowing people in all areas to still have access to a library instead of people in 10 areas having to travel further afield. We have hardly any public transport in Odiham, so people have to be able to drive to get out of the village. By closing Odiham Library, it would limit people being able to access a Library Service.*
>
> *There need to be as many libraries as possible in the community to meet the needs of people who do not have their own means of transport.*
>
> *If libraries are closed, this limits access for a large number of people. Not everyone has their own transport and public transport is either non-existent or unreliable.*
>
> *Transport in the area is not good and there is great risk of many people being unable to access library facilities.*

(1744 comments mentioned difficulties accessing alternative libraries if libraries closed)

13% of comments focused on the negative impact of closures on elderly people in particular. This was commonly due to perceptions of limited mobility, access to private transport, access to digital alternatives and ability to carry heavy items, along with the rationale that they would be more adaptable to reduced hours.

> *They provide an important community facility particularly for the elderly who I believe are increasingly intimidated and excluded by technological advances.*

> *I live in a town with an elderly population, many of those elderly persons are non-drivers. They would find it difficult to carry heavy books back on the bus.*

> *Emsworth Library is at the very heart of our community. It is well used and is an important facility for our older residents who may not be able to access libraries in other towns.*

> *For less able or the elderly without transport it would be easier to use their local library on only a couple of days a week, than have access to one several miles away on a daily basis.*

(1233 comments mentioned the elderly being disadvantaged if libraries closed)

One in 10 comments (10%) referenced the potential impact that library closures could have on local children. Many felt it may restrict their accessibility to books and could result in a reduced desire to read – whereas a reduction in hours would still enable access for those who could adapt to the new opening times.

> *If Odiham closed it would directly disadvantage many young children who use this service to expand their reading resources.*

> *Both children love visiting and choosing their books from the library… My children's opportunity to "read" will diminish drastically if Chineham Library closes.*

> *The children's sections of libraries have been very important for my children affording them access to a wide range of books we would not have been able to afford to buy them.*

> *Young children must have access to books from a library close to home as some parents can't afford to buy books or travel further to another library.*

(997 comments mentioned children being disadvantaged if libraries closed)

Other groups that respondents felt could be unfairly impacted by library closures included some communities, parents, those less wealthy, those less able, those without computers or internet access, those residing in rural areas and those working during library opening times. Also, concerns were raised about creating digital exclusion and increased inequality if libraries were to close.

Key theme – Public need

2,064 comments emphasised the public need for libraries, and in particular their value to the local community, as a reason for supporting the option to keep all libraries open and apply a 25% reduction in opening hours.

Around one sixth (14%) of comments mentioned that libraries provided a vital service to smaller communities, often providing a central focus where other resources had closed down. Many of these comments focused on the wider range of services that could be lost through closures – including the building space that enabled the community to come together.

> *Libraries are EXTREMELY important to communities - by closing 10 you will be denying those communities of a vital hub/ service/ meeting place and building which would be detrimental to all ages.*

> *Strongly believe that libraries are part of the community and by closing some you will be restricting use for too many people. It is essential that people feel part of their local community. By making libraries more 'vibrant' and inclusive it will encourage more people to use them.*

> *Everyone needs access to the libraries they are the hub of the community I would prefer them to be open with reduced opening hours than closed altogether.*

> *The Lee on the Solent Library is essential to the community, it provides more than books, it is a hub for young and old.*

(1323 comments mentioned the libraries being vital/ the heart of the community)

Some comments (3%) flagged that the events and activities run by the Library Service played an important role in supporting mental wellbeing and social cohesion. Closing libraries would mean reduced access to these opportunities for those in impacted communities.

> *Each library, particularly smaller branch ones, provide many social groups, clubs and activities within their community, some groups running more than once a week. Should said libraries close these groups will have nowhere else to meet that will suffice their needs and could therefore have an impact on the health and wellbeing of some people.*

> *It is not just a place to borrow books!! There are Rhymetime and Storytime sessions for the very young, these give the children and their carers/ parents the chance to create friendships, swap ideas, give each other tips and advice and help them to build confidence.*

> *The library enhances the life of many people in Lee providing a community hub including education for the very young through rhyme and Storytimes, and book clubs and a variety of groups for older people. At a time when loneliness is high on the political agenda, closing this facility would be detrimental to the wellbeing of many in Lee on Solent.*

> *The library is used by all ages and offers a trusted safe place for all. There are many groups attended by all ages, young mums, dads, and grandparents come to Rhymetime and Storytime all these sessions offer health and wellbeing, respite, and help to alleviate loneliness and they promote social inclusion.*

(321 comments mentioned the importance of library activities and events)

The same proportion (3%) noted concerns that if libraries were to close, they would never re-open, whereas a larger reduction in opening hours could be reversed in the future if funding improved.

> *Once you shut a library it would be lost for ever and it would be very difficult to reinstate. If you keep them but reduce the hours there is the option to increase the hours if the financial climate improves in the future.*
>
> *I feel it is important to retain all those library facilities that we already have - even those that are possibly underused. Once closed/ removed there will be no future return as has been shown in the past when other facilities have been cut.*
>
> *If fully closed, it is far more unlikely they would ever open again. Flexibility is key, as the future will always contain developments that are unforeseen.*
>
> *Once closed a library will never re-open as it would require too much cost to set-up again. However, a library with reduced hours could hope to increase them again in the future.*

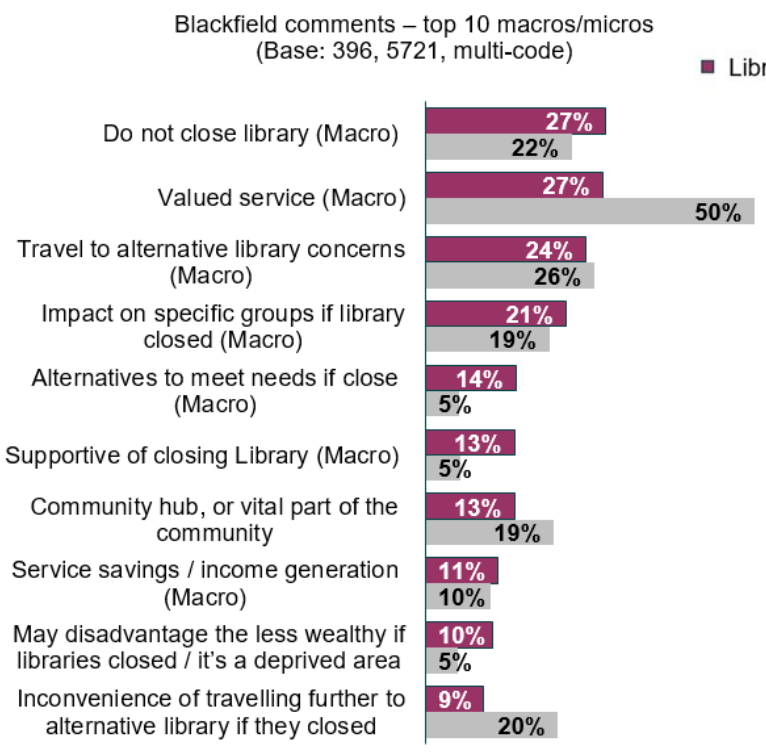
(290 comments mentioned that if libraries closed, they would never re-open)

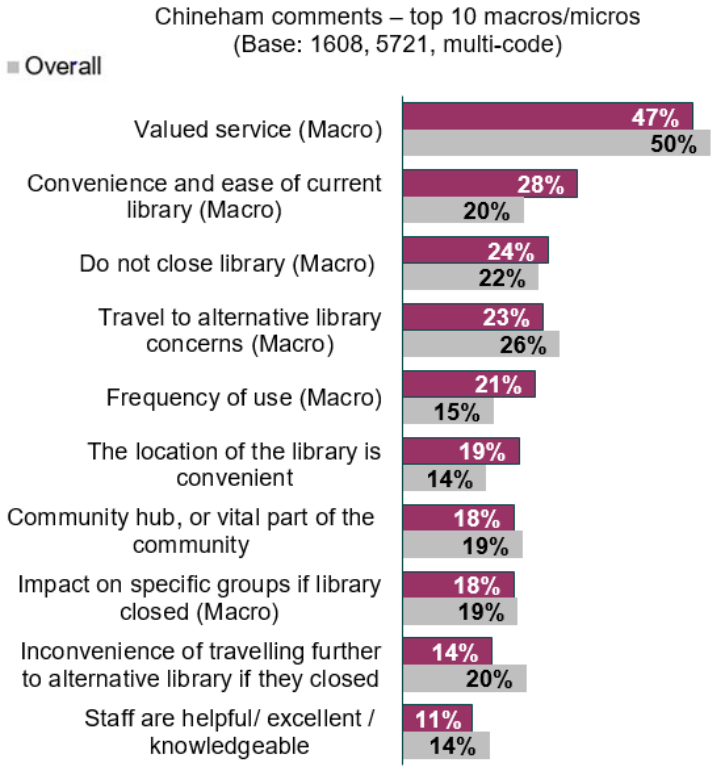
Comments on the 10 Libraries identified for potential closure

As part of the consultation, respondents were given specific opportunity to comment on any of the 10 libraries identified for potential closure and/or to suggest alternative ways in which the Library Service could support the needs of customers whose libraries may close.

A total of 5,271 comments were submitted, with representation from both users and non-users of these libraries. The charts below show the top ten themes arising in the comments for each specific library, along with a comparison to the overall proportion of comments relating to each theme.

No single theme predominated within the comments about **Blackfield Library**. Just over a quarter of those who left comments (27%) stated that the library should not close and the same proportion highlighted that the library provided a valued service (27%). However, the proportion of respondents who valued the Service was notably lower for Blackfield than for the other nine libraries (50%), and the proportion of respondents who stated their support for closure was notably higher (13% vs 5% on average). The location of Blackfield Library in a relatively deprived area (10% vs 5% on average), with limited alternative provision available to meet local need should it close (14% vs 5% on average) were specific concerns.

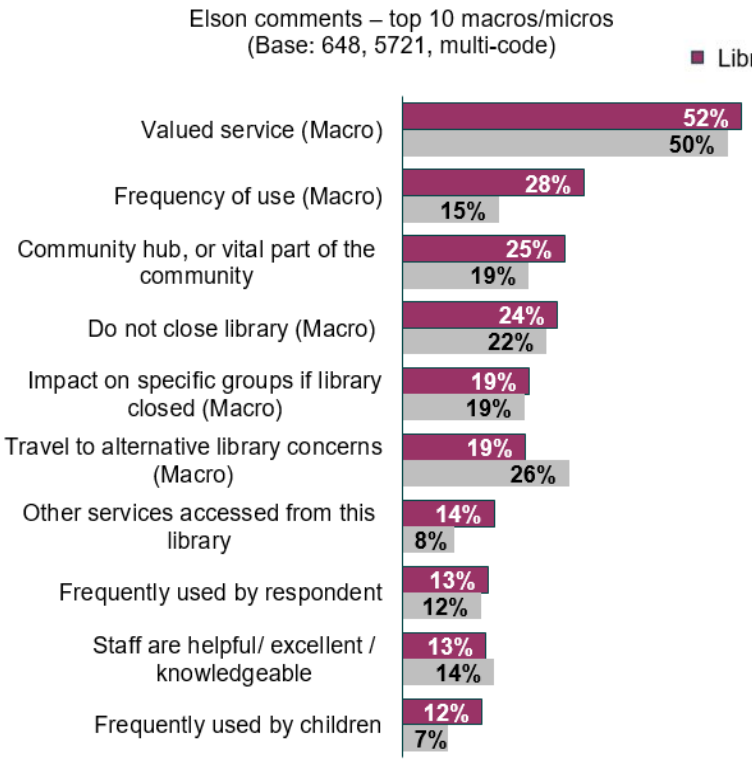


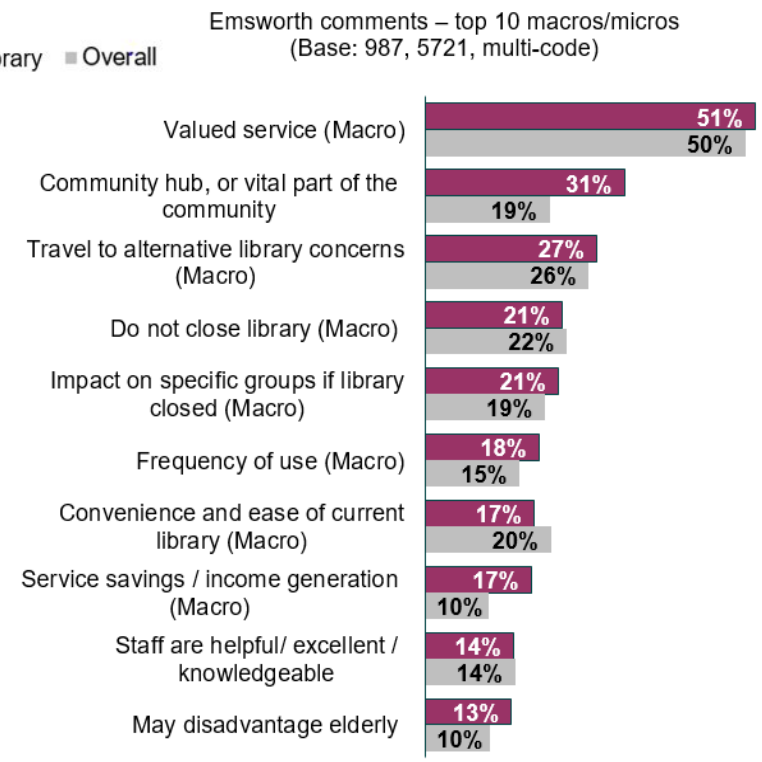


Responses relating to **Chineham Library** focused on convenience and high levels of use, with a sense of surprise that it was on the list of potential closures. Almost half of the comments highlighted the valued service that Chineham Library provided (47%) with particular mention of the range of services, its value to the local community and their appreciation of the library and its staff. The convenience and ease of using Chineham Library was another key theme (28% vs 20% on average), with respondents

citing the handiness of the location, how people who live nearby can walk there for a visit and those who need to can easily park, leading to many people commenting on how often they visited (21% vs 15% on average).

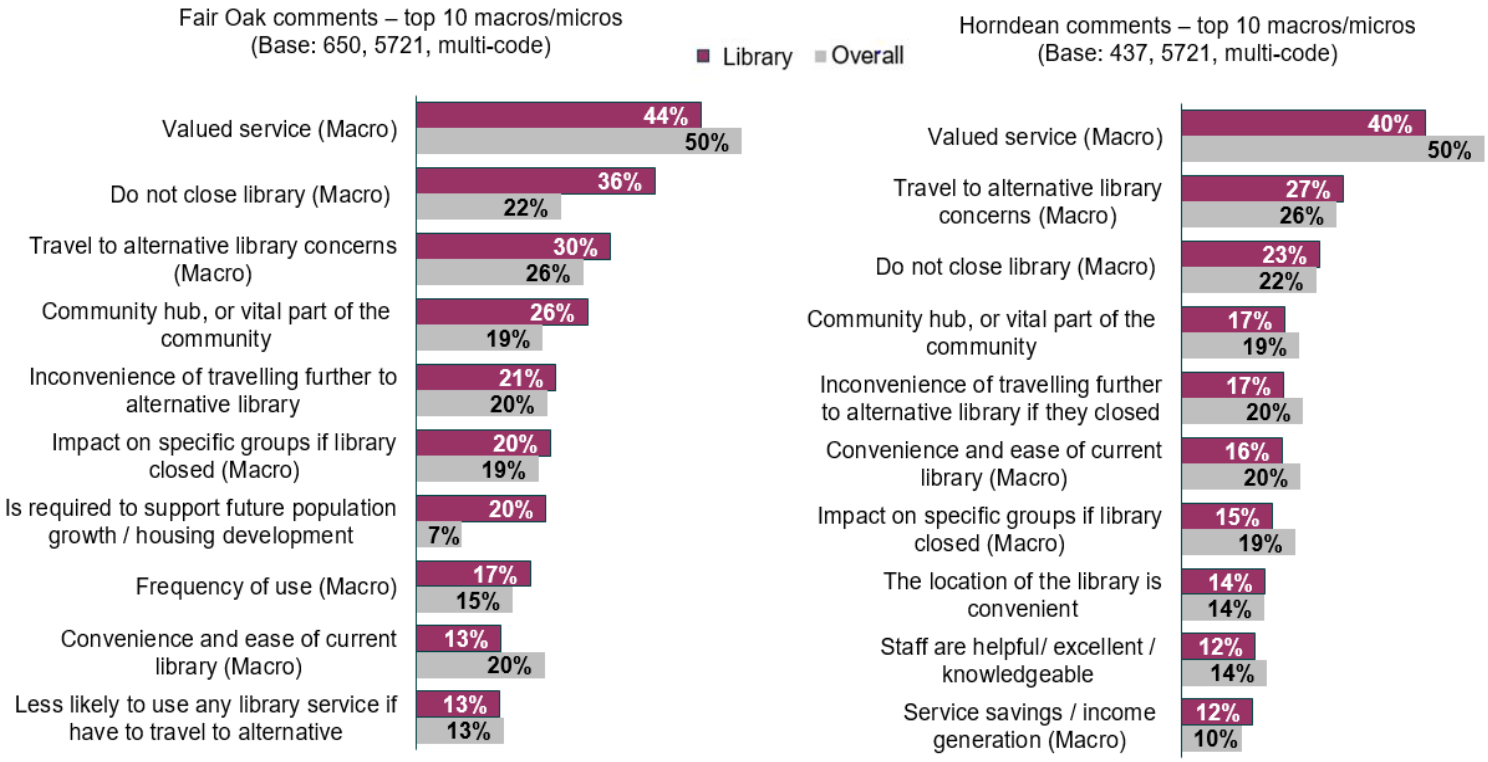
52% of the comments submitted for **Elson Library**, explained that the library provides a valued service, with corresponding comments relating to Elson's value as a community hub (25% vs 19% on average) and route to accessing other services (14% vs 8% on average). Comments mentioning frequency of use (28%) were particularly prominent when compared to the average (15%) – especially use by children (12% vs 7% on average). However, responses suggested less concern about travelling to another library (19%) when compared to others (26% on average).





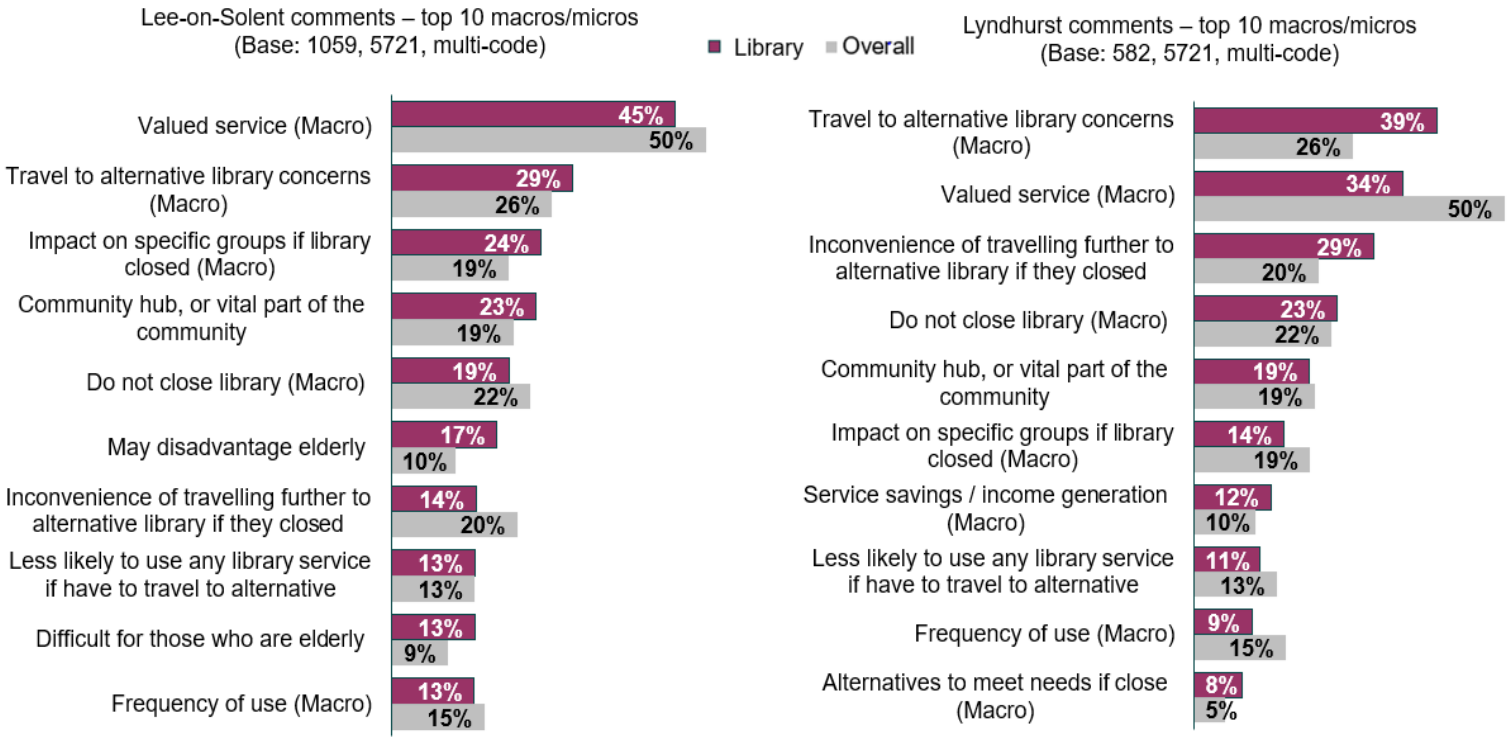
Comments relating to **Emsworth Library**, also highlighted the valued service provided, with 51% of all submitted comments reflecting this point. Respondents were particularly vocal about how the library is a vital part of the community (31% vs 19% on average) and felt that service efficiencies or income generation could help to keep the library open (17% vs 10% on average).

A key focus for **Fair Oak Library** was that it was needed to support future population growth. 37% mentioned that the library should not close (compared to 22% on average) – driven in part by a perception that it would be needed to support the increasing numbers of people moving into new housing in the area (20% vs 7% on average). Respondents also reflected that the library provides a valued service (44%), noting in particular its value to the community (26% vs 19% on average) – although they were less likely to comment on the convenience of its location (13% vs 20% on average).



Comments relating to **Horndean Library** tended to sit on, or slightly below the overall average in all areas, although the closure of a valued service was a common factor (40% vs 50% on average), along with concerns about travelling to an alternative library, should Horndean close (27%)

Compared to other libraries, comments about **Lee-on-the-Solent Library** had a greater focus on elderly library users who could be disadvantaged by the proposed closure (17% vs 10% on average). Often this was mentioned in concerns about travelling to other libraries (29%), which, it was felt, older people may find particularly difficult (13% vs 9% on average).

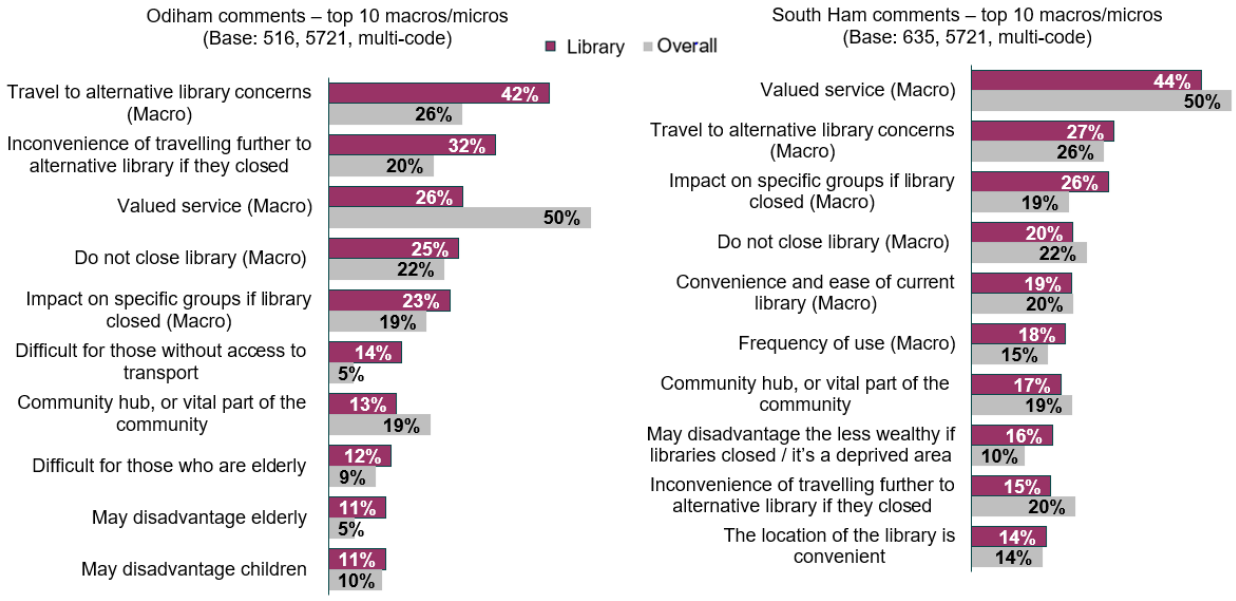


Travel concerns were also paramount for Lyndhurst and Odiham libraries.

39% of comments relating to **Lyndhurst Library** referred to issues around travelling to alternative libraries, compared to 26% on average, with inconvenience of travelling further being a particular concern (29% vs 20% on average).

Respondents commenting on **Odiham Library** expressed similar concerns, with 42% focusing on the difficulties of travelling to an alternative library (compared to 26% on average). Again the comments highlighted that it would be inconvenient for people to travel further to an alternative library (32%), particularly for elderly people (11% vs 5% on average) and those without access to their own transport (14% vs 5% on average), often due to perceptions of limited availability of public transport in the local area.

Around a third of respondents who commented on Lyndhurst Library (34%) and a quarter of respondents who commented on Odiham Library (26%) said that the library provided a valued service. However, this was a less prominent concern than for other libraries (50%) and compared to the perceived issues of travelling to an alternative.

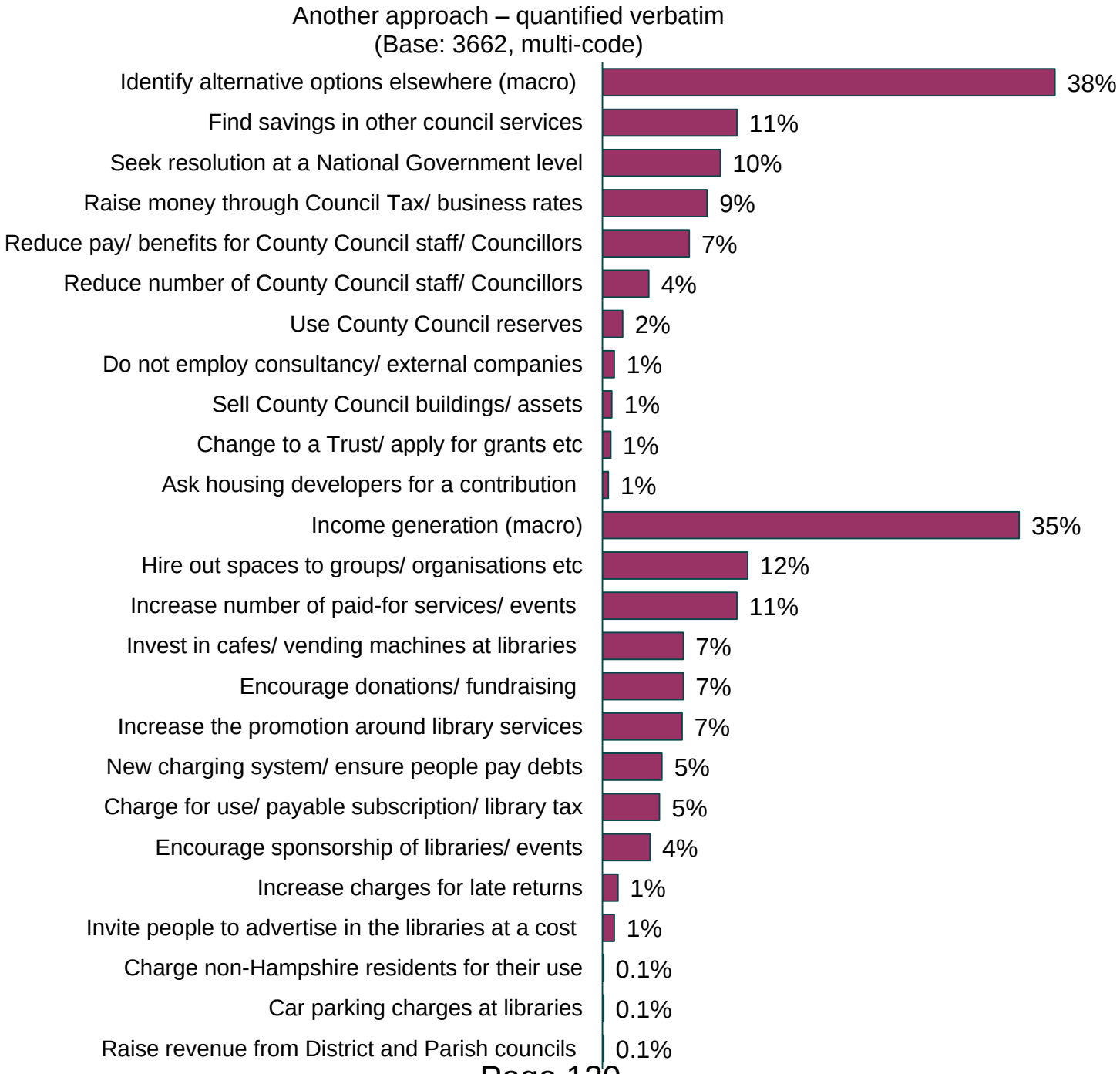


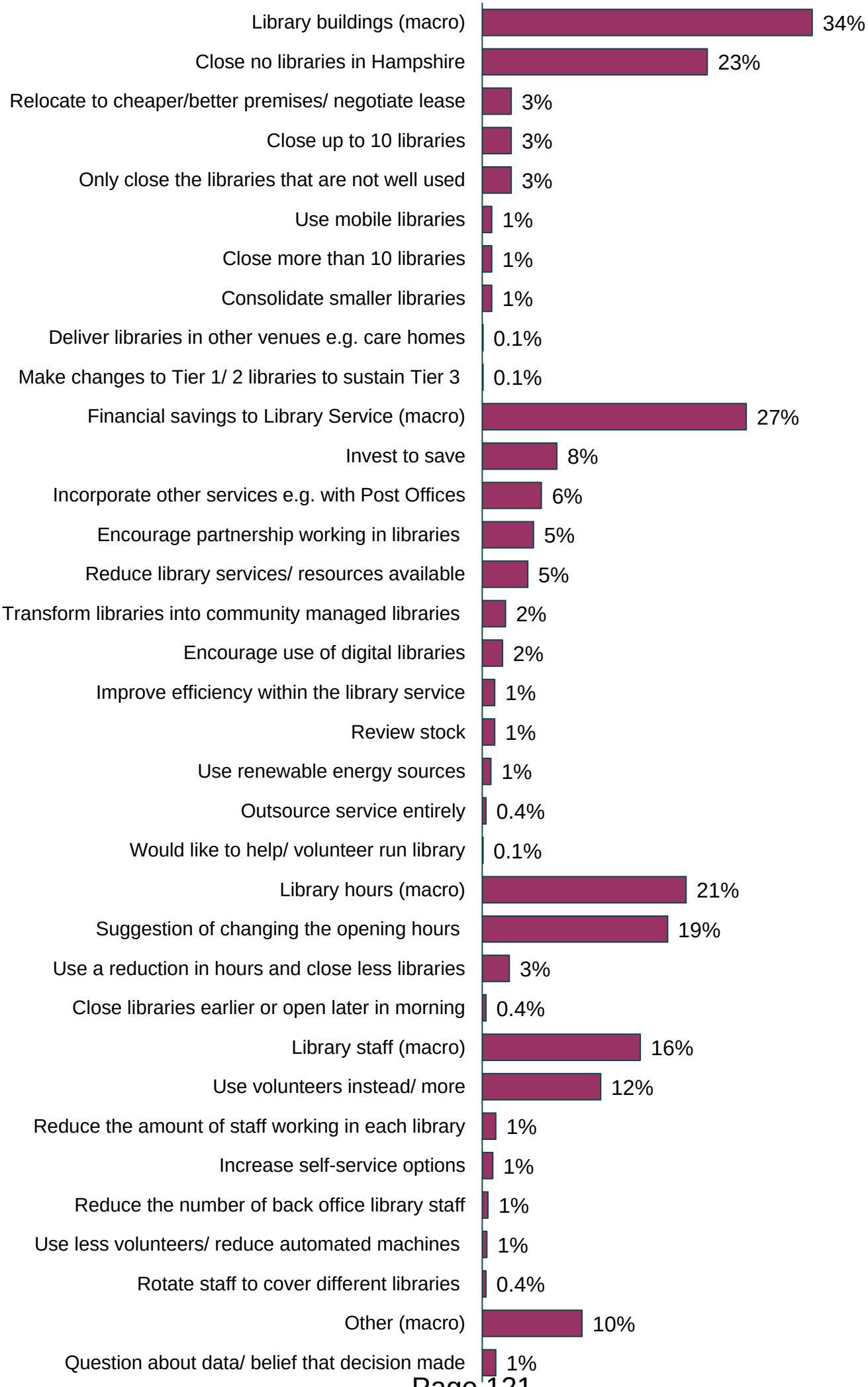
More so than any other library, comments relating to **South Ham Library** focused on the impact that closure could have on specific groups (27% vs 19% on average). Similarly to Blackfield, South Ham was highlighted as a more deprived area which needed a library to support less wealthy residents (16%, vs 10% on average who may not otherwise be able to access reading materials and groups), or be able to travel to an alternative.

Suggestions for 'another approach'

One in five respondents (20%), including 50 businesses, groups and organisations (32%) and 25 Democratically Elected Representatives (46%), dismissed the two operational savings options proposed by the Library Service in favour of another approach.

Of these, 3,662 (87%) put forward alternative options to generate £1.04 million. The most common suggestions were that these funds should be identified from outside of the Library Service (38%) or through income generation (35%). A similar number (34%) proposed other approaches relating to the combination of library buildings and opening hours. Other comments offered suggestions of how to generate financial savings within the Service (27%), alternative ways to deploy library staff (16%), and on opening hours (21%).




Library buildings (macro) 34%
Close no libraries in Hampshire 23%
Relocate to cheaper/better premises/ negotiate lease 3%
Close up to 10 libraries 3%
Only close the libraries that are not well used 3%
Use mobile libraries 1%
Close more than 10 libraries 1%
Consolidate smaller libraries 1%
Deliver libraries in other venues e.g. care homes 0.1%
Make changes to Tier 1/ 2 libraries to sustain Tier 3 0.1%
Financial savings to Library Service (macro) 27%
Invest to save 8%
Incorporate other services e.g. with Post Offices 6%
Encourage partnership working in libraries 5%
Reduce library services/ resources available 5%
Transform libraries into community managed libraries 2%
Encourage use of digital libraries 2%
Improve efficiency within the library service 1%
Review stock 1%
Use renewable energy sources 1%
Outsource service entirely 0.4%
Would like to help/ volunteer run library 0.1%
Library hours (macro) 21%
Suggestion of changing the opening hours 19%
Use a reduction in hours and close less libraries 3%
Close libraries earlier or open later in morning 0.4%
Library staff (macro) 16%
Use volunteers instead/ more 12%
Reduce the amount of staff working in each library 1%
Increase self-service options 1%
Reduce the number of back office library staff 1%
Use less volunteers/ reduce automated machines 1%
Rotate staff to cover different libraries 0.4%
Other (macro) 10%
Question about data/ belief that decision made 1%

This section provides further information about the key themes identified in the graph above.

Key theme – Identify alternative options elsewhere

1,391 respondents recommended that, rather than make operational changes within the Library Service, a resolution should be sought outside of the Library Service – either elsewhere within the County Council or at a national Government level.

Over one in 10 (12%) of these comments suggested prioritising the Library Service over other services provided by the County Council and asked if other services could make savings instead.

> *The libraries should be properly funded so that they are open all the time for everyone. There are other areas of council funding that would be more appropriate to be cut.*
>
> *Council budget reductions should be met by making cuts to other services, in my opinion.*
>
> *Keep them as they are and take the £1.04 million from children's services.*
>
> *Reduce street lighting after midnight? Stop the free books for kids - they have to borrow from the library. Stop wasting money on the wrong road repairs.*

(413 comments mentioned reducing other council services instead of libraries)

One in 10 comments (10%) recommended that a resolution to the savings should be sought at national Government level rather than local Government level, primarily through additional or ringfenced funding. However, a slightly smaller proportion (9%) preferred that money be raised via local Council Tax or business rates.

> *Central government should supply more funding to local government, to be raised by general taxation, and HCC members should lobby central government to provide these funds. HCC is not a poor authority in any case and, if necessary, should raise more money for libraries through increasing local taxes from the rich, or using current income better. Then it would not be necessary to close any libraries or reduce opening hours.*
>
> *The current government has imposed these cuts on local authorities, and our Elected Representatives should be fighting on our behalf to preserve services which enrich our society.*
>
> *Raise Council Tax or get central government to contribute more!*
>
> *Raise Council Tax across all Hampshire residents to keep and improve existing services.*

(352 comments mentioned seeking resolution at a national level and 315 comments mentioned raising money through Council Tax or business rates)

A number of respondents targeted changes to Hampshire County Council (HCC) employees or Councillors to prevent library services being reduced – suggestions included a reduction in pay and/ or benefits (8%) and a reduction in the number of Councillors and staff employed (4%).

> *I have no idea, other than to suggest lower pay for the top end of HCC employees, no civil servant should be paid above the Prime Minister who in my opinion, is the top civil servant in the land!*
>
> *Reduce senior management numbers in HCC and/ or apply 10% reduction to salary of everyone on a basic salary above £60k per annum at HCC.*
>
> *Reduction in the salaries, expenses, wasted revenue by Councillors, council officers - all those on the gravy train - reduce unnecessary spending there.*
>
> *Get rid of the highly paid staff in your offices in Winchester and scale back the amount of offices for those 'fat cats' you waste more money than you save!*

(269 comments mentioned reducing employee/ councillor pay and 142 comments mentioned reducing the number of employees/ councillors)

Other suggestions made within this theme were using County Council reserves, limiting the use of consultants or external companies, selling County Council buildings or assets, converting libraries to a trust model, applying for grants/ lottery funding and asking housing developers for contributions.

Key theme – Income generation

1,290 respondents felt that the Library Service should look to generate income to help retain local libraries and opening hours at the current level.

Over one in 10 comments (12%) mentioned that space or rooms within the library buildings could be hired out to groups or organisations for private use both inside and outside of opening hours.

> *Let outside groups rent the library space when it is normally closed to use the facilities for reading groups, knitting groups, talks, small cinema evenings etc.*
>
> *Think outside the box and come up with ideas to help raise £1m rather than reduce it, e.g. hire out buildings to organisations for meetings etc.*
>
> *Instead of looking to strip back on services why not try to generate income from the space and resources. Offer smart or agile working spaces with Wi-Fi for companies.*
>
> *Rent the library out to local groups for meetings by making sure the book racks are on wheels and having a stock of collapsible tables and chairs.*

(434 comments mentioned hiring out space to groups or organisations)

The same proportion (12%) suggested that the Library Service increase the number of paid-for events or services that are offered in the libraries. A common theme was that events and services that were currently free could be charged for and fees could be increased for those where a charge was already applied.

> *Can you increase charges e.g. for reservations, or for certain loans (audiobooks)? I'd happily pay more for library services rather than see the availability be reduced. I also note that the "BorrowBox" app that lets me borrow eBooks and e-audiobooks is embarrassingly good but completely free.*
>
> *Reinvent and expand the range of activities and functions within each branch, complimentary to the role and purpose of a library, some of which should be fully chargeable and income-generating...*
>
> *Charge more for ordering books and fines. My wife and I would be prepared to pay extra rates to finance libraries as long as the extra goes to libraries.*
>
> *Put on history and educational plays and talks in libraries for a charge, have online access for a charge.*

(415 comments mentioned increasing the number of paid-for events or services)

A further 7% of comments suggested investing in cafes or refreshment facilities to help increase income and footfall.

> *I think that the libraries would benefit from having cafes inside, such as in your Fareham branch whereby businesses can rent the space and the money would be fed back into the branch.*
>
> *It should be considered that libraries have a potential to bring in their own revenue by becoming a community hub, through methods such as cafés and space hire.*
>
> *Possibly put coffee bars in little used libraries to raise money and encourage usage. It seems ridiculous that we are in this situation when this country is so wealthy.*
>
> *If there was a cafe, a 'book' cafe, where people could buy old library books or donate books for others to buy together with having food and drink available would encourage more people to read and give an enjoyable place for book clubs or individuals to meet.*

(243 comments mentioned adding refreshment facilities to libraries)

Other common alternatives put forward to generate income included: encouraging donations; increasing promotion of libraries; applying a new charging system/ ensuring people pay their debts; implementing a library tax or subscription charge and encouraging sponsorship.

Key theme – Library buildings

1,227 respondents focused on how the Library Service could adapt the library estate, including different combinations of closures and opening hour reductions that could enable the Library Service to operate within a reduced budget.

Around one quarter (24%) of the comments proposed that no library buildings in Hampshire should be closed. They emphasised that access to libraries was important for everyone across the county and if closed they could not be re-opened.

> *Closing any of the libraries should not be contemplated. Alternative libraries will not be accessible or will be expensive to get to because of bus fares/ petrol costs/ car parking... More effort should be made to come up with more imaginative ways to maintain the current situation.*
>
> *DO NOT CLOSE any libraries. They are a safe haven. A place of learning - discovery & tranquillity in our communities. They are essential to wellbeing.*
>
> *On no account should libraries be closed. Once they have been closed they will never be reopened and the Library Service will be told to close more libraries when the next financial crisis strikes.*
>
> *I don't think that libraries can be all things to all people, but I do think that being accessible to the many by both geography and range of services are the fundamentals.*

(850 comments mentioned not closing any library buildings in Hampshire)

The relocation of specific libraries to cheaper premises, and re-negotiating the lease of buildings to save on costs (3% of comments) were also suggested.

> *Do the libraries operate in council owned premises? If not, are rent reductions possible/ lease renegotiations? Who is supplying the infrastructure and are optimum contracts actually in place for electricity/ broadband/ heating etc before making irreversible cuts?*
>
> *I have been but rarely go to Eastleigh library. It is in a totally inappropriate location. the consultation document says it is in a poor location (definitely an understatement) and "expensive". It is leasehold. So why not move it as top priority.*
>
> *Move out of the expensive locations (such a Winchester City Centre) to much cheaper sites.*
>
> *Slightly smaller cheaper buildings to run for main libraries and save smaller libraries.*

(113 comments mentioned relocating libraries or negotiating the lease)

A similar number of comments stated that closing up to 10 libraries (3%) would be acceptable and sensible – particularly where libraries were costly to run or not as well used.

Keep current libraries that are regularly used open with full staffing but close only the small libraries that are not regularly used.

If necessary, I believe that some of the 10 listed libraries could be closed if there were other easily accessible libraries as an alternative.

Preferred option would be closing up to 10 HCC libraries under HCC umbrella but continue with some libraries being run by other organisations.

Close the proposed ten libraries however to help with income I propose that more childrens activities should be held.

(102 comments mentioned closing up to 10 libraries and 96 comments mentioned closing the libraries that are less used)

Other common suggestions relating to library buildings included: using more mobile libraries; closing more than the 10 proposed libraries and consolidating the smaller libraries.

Key theme – Financial savings to the Library Service

970 respondents put forward alternative approaches that related to making financial savings and efficiencies within the Library Service.

Around one in 10 (8%) of the comments proposed that the Service should invest more money in order to increase income generation and maintain or improve the current Library Service.

Don't deliver the savings - instead get out into the community and encourage more people; particularly the young (pre-school/ infants), to use the libraries - and invest in e-books - anything to get them reading and interested.

Instead of cuts investment is better. Bring the library into the modern day and improve online services, audio books etc. Bring people into libraries and show young people the beauty of books.

Speculate to accumulate! Invest in an imaginative promotional campaign via any appropriate media, so that increased footfall occurs, (providing strong evidence that our local libraries all need to remain open as an essential service to the community).

(274 comments mentioned investing in libraries to generate income)

A similar proportion (6%) suggested that libraries could incorporate other services within them – with Post Offices being the service most commonly proposed.

> *Converting the use of libraries where possible to include other council or public services e.g. Post Office, Healthcare services, Registration of Births Deaths Marriages, Council Offices, Citizens Advice Bureau.*

> *Finding an income stream, for example, since the post office at the Chineham Centre closed down we are in need of a post office, perhaps it could be incorporated into the library.*

> *Achieve additional funding through innovative methods i.e. hosting post office, bank or building society facilities, coffee shops etc. Each of these should be area specific and should only have a positive impact on local facilities i.e. none of these should impact on local businesses by generating a rival. They should complement and fill gaps in local facilities.*

> *Combine doctor's surgery with the library facility. Put Post Offices into the libraries as the shops/ banks close down. Day care facilities for parents into the libraries. Combine elderly day care facilities with the library. Combine Tourist information centres and libraries. Provide well run cafe facilities in the library (coffee/ tea, cake, biscuits etc). Introduce Citizens Advice centres into the libraries.*

(217 comments mentioned incorporating other services into libraries)

The same proportion (6%) of comments recommended that libraries should work in partnership with other organisations – both to share costs and encourage footfall - with a range of public services mentioned.

> *Joining with other community services so have shared spaces and shared costs, hopefully reduced costs and greater footfall.*

> *…change all libraries into community hubs - transform their use in partnership with professionals like health visitors, youth workers, health and social care, education.*

> *Before contemplating closures and opening hour reductions, other avenues should be investigated such as more voluntary support, sharing premises with other users or commercial partnerships/ sponsorship.*

> *Libraries must adapt with the changing needs and demands of the market; commercial partnerships are a proven way to achieve financial gains and expand the user/ stakeholder pool.*

(195 comments mentioned encouraging partnership working)

Other commonly proposed alternatives outlining how the Library Service could generate financial savings included: reducing services and resources offered; transforming libraries into community-managed models; encouraging the use of digital libraries; improving efficiency within the Library Service and reviewing the stock available.

Key theme – Library hours

782 respondents felt that another approach to changing opening hours could be considered.

Around two in 10 (19%) of the comments gave a specific suggestion for changing the opening hours – many believed that hours should be aligned to meet the needs of its users.

> *I think you should keep all the libraries open and reduce the staff operating times by varying amounts (according to need and use), setting up voluntary schemes to provide cover when there are no staff.*
>
> *Supply and demand should govern the opening times. If the demand is there, then the library should remain as it is.*
>
> *I would prefer a reduction of hours to closures, but this need not be done mechanically. For example, manage hours across local pairs of libraries, e.g. Lee on Solent and Stubbington, to ensure that between them they provide a service throughout the week.*
>
> *I agree with the idea of shutting the 10 libraries and standardising the opening hours of the remaining libraries. However I would reduce tier 1 libraries to 52 each, tier 2 libraries to 30 hours each and tier 3 libraries to 12 hours each. This would reduce overall hours but leave all libraries with a good opening period.*

(680 comments mentioned a change in operating hours)

Additionally, 16 respondents specified that libraries could reduce their opening hours at either or both ends of the day – opening later in the morning and closing earlier in the evening. However, some noted that there should be opportunity for at least one day to open later to ensure those who work have access.

3% of comments highlighted that the two options proposed in the consultation were too extreme and suggested a compromised approach with less library closures and a smaller than 25% reduction in opening hours would be more acceptable.

> *It seems to me that the first two options you provide are guiding the respondents to an "all or nothing" response. Maybe it would be sensible to have a more nuanced approach which, in its simplest format could close just a handful of libraries (regrettable, of course), combined with a variable reduction in the staffed opening hours of the libraries remaining open.*
>
> *Standardise and reduce opening hours but not close so many libraries.*
>
> *Find a middle ground between the two options, e.g. Close less libraries with a reduction in hours not as high as 25%, with a view to minimising loss of access to communities.*
>
> *Following the information given in the Information Pack, I would suggest a combination of measures. The Libraries with the highest cost per hour of opening could be closed.*

(101 comments mentioned reducing hours in combination with closing fewer libraries)

Key theme – Library staff

581 respondents felt that costs could be reduced by changing how the libraries were staffed.

Around one sixth (13%) of the alternative approaches, proposed using volunteers to help run libraries and save money by reducing staffing costs. It was felt that people would be willing to volunteer – especially if it meant saving their local library from closing.

> *Increase the use of volunteers. I know that many local residents where I live would happily volunteer over the thought of losing our library.*
>
> *Train volunteers to work either alongside paid library staff or to staff libraries during hours when they would otherwise have to close.*
>
> *Many libraries are supported in this way and perhaps the use of volunteer people could be effective if some basic 'library' education was offered to support and instruct volunteers. I have met and spoke to several well-educated people who state they would be interested. I am sure there are many more.*
>
> *I moved from Surrey last year. They were able to keep libraries opening by using more community volunteers.*

(446 comments mentioned using volunteers more/ instead of librarians)

1% of comments advised a reduction in the number of staff working in the library – arising from a perception that they were currently over-staffed and the money saved on staffing could be used to maintain the Service.

> *Reduce staff numbers keeping the same hours… The number of staff working in the library often seems unnecessarily high, with plenty of unoccupied time.*
>
> *In combination with closures and reduction in opening hours, I often feel there are too many staff at the libraries in Basingstoke there are usually a couple of staff seemingly with nothing to do, and often I see the same in Winchester.*
>
> *If you reduce library opening times, people will drift away from the resource and usage will go down and once a library is lost are never likely to be replaced. Perhaps reduce staffing to two number per shift depending on size of library.*
>
> *Reducing the number of staff employed in the existing libraries.*

(49 comments mentioned reducing staff numbers in libraries)

A small number of comments suggested that self-service options could be a way to successfully reduce costs but maintain or even increase library opening hours. Some suggested additional self-service machines resulting in less staff being required and others felt that libraries could be open 24/7 un-manned but with secure access doors. In contrast, 17 comments pertained to reducing the amount of automated machinery and using fully qualified staff instead.

> *Why not use the 'Open Plus' model to keep libraries open during unstaffed hours? Borrowers access the library with their card.*
>
> *Stop messing about with the system and go back to having qualified librarians that communicate and help the general public. They must be cheaper than those machines that just sit there with no communication skills especially when things go wrong.*
>
> *Providing a more self-service and automated mechanism, requiring less staffing requirements. So, its correct to reduce staffed operating hours yet should not translate to the library being closed for longer.*
>
> *Reduce the need for so many staff by having more machines to borrow books on.*

(38 comments mentioned more automation in libraries and 17 comments mentioned less automation in libraries)

Other suggestions relating to staffing within libraries included reducing the number of back office library staff and rotating staff between different libraries.

Alternative approaches suggested by organisations, groups, businesses and Democratically Elected Representatives

32% of organisations and 46% of Democratically Elected Representatives felt that an alternative approach would be a better option to those proposed. Of these, 43 organisations, groups or businesses and 25 Democratically Elected Representatives submitted alternative suggestions to the two operational savings options. Base sizes are low and, in general, the suggestions made by these respondents typically followed the same pattern as those made by individuals, with some particular distinctions[12].

Organisations, groups and businesses proved more likely than average to suggest not closing any libraries in Hampshire (35% vs 23%).

> *Keep all libraries open and find the cost saving through reduction of administration and management staff and costs.*

> *Keep all the libraries open and invest in them to make them more stimulating and interesting environments.*

They were also more likely to suggest ways to generate income (54% vs 35%) – specifically hiring out space to groups or businesses but at a different rate (26% vs 12%).

> *Encourage wider community use of library spaces for local meetings, classes, including for e.g. Pilates. Reducing charges for voluntary groups would enable space to be used by them more often (e.g. recent increases in charges in Discovery Centres has meant that some voluntary groups cannot afford to use them anymore, so the spaces go unused, not earning any revenue).*

> *Use the facilities for training etc to generate additional income, advertise room bookings for groups etc to use, more activities for children which can have a fee.*

Groups, organisations and businesses also focused more prominently on changes to library staff (26% vs 16%)– particularly increasing the use of volunteers to support the Service (21% vs 12%).

> *Developing the volunteer programme, with training, and clear duties for each volunteer.*

> *Use of volunteers or offering work experience to adults with learning disabilities.*

Groups, organisations and businesses were less likely than average to suggest identifying savings options elsewhere within the County Council (28% vs 38%).

.

Democratically Elected Representatives proved more likely than average to suggest identifying alternative savings options elsewhere (68% vs 38%) – particularly via finding savings from other council services (28% vs 11%).

> *Spend less on central administration and on highways.*

> *The £1.04m is a drop in the ocean for the County Council budget and the savings could easily be made in other areas that won't affect those that rely on our libraries.*

In addition, they were also more likely to suggest seeking resolution at a national Government level (20% vs 10%).

> *Vigorously and publicly at all levels oppose the Government austerity measures and ensure that every citizen is aware of this and where the blame lays.*

> *Please seek more funding from government or utilise money from the County Council' reserves. Hampshire's conservative MP's should put pressure on the Prime Minister rather than continue to feather their own nest.*

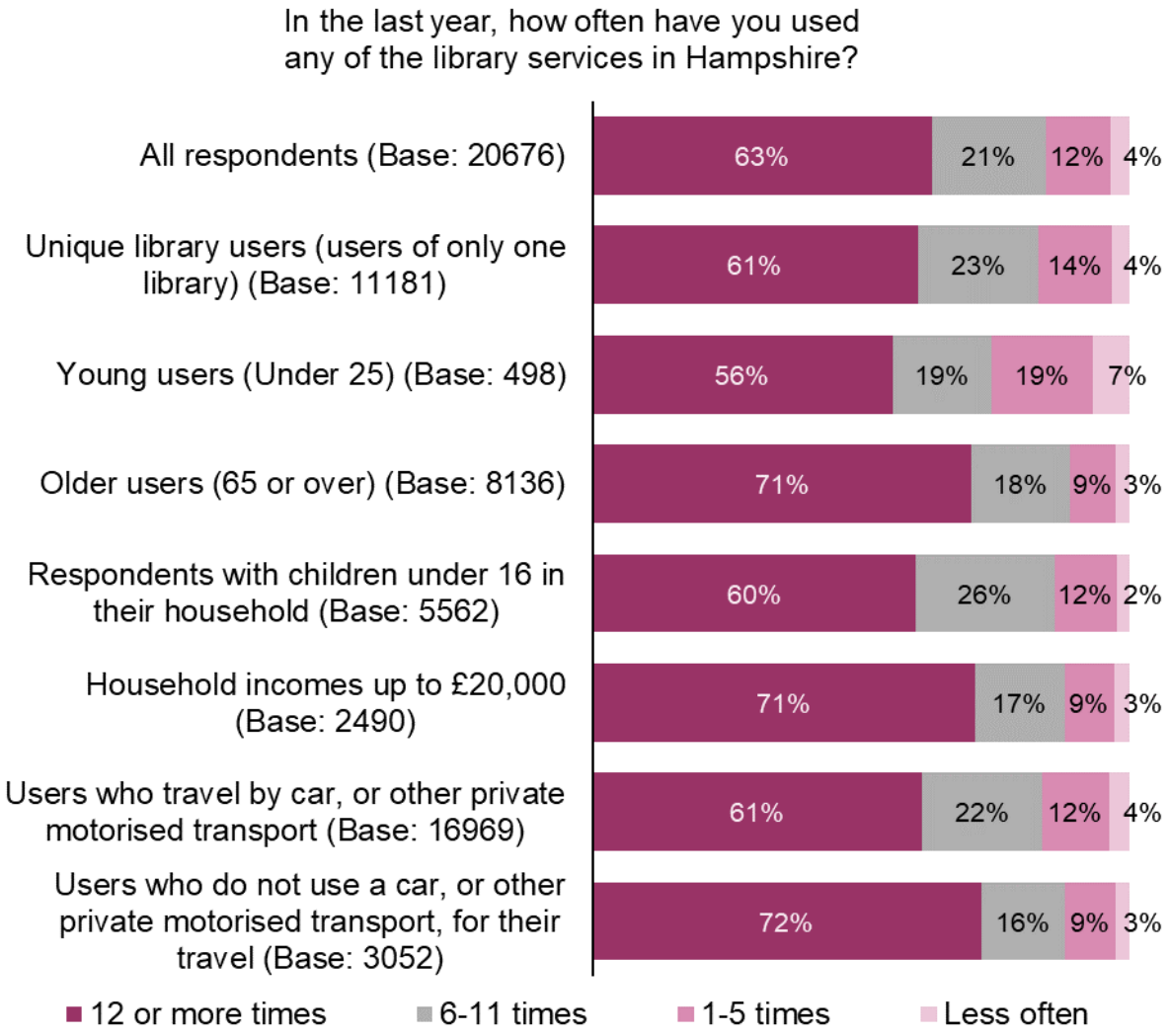
However, Democratically Elected Representatives were less likely than average to suggest making changes to library hours (8% vs 21%) or identifying ways to generate income for the Service (20% vs 35%).

Section Three: Staffed opening hour preferences

The consultation proposed changes to staffed opening hours at libraries in Hampshire. These could be achieved through a range of options including opening later, closing earlier or closing for all or part of a day.

Usage context: Frequency of use

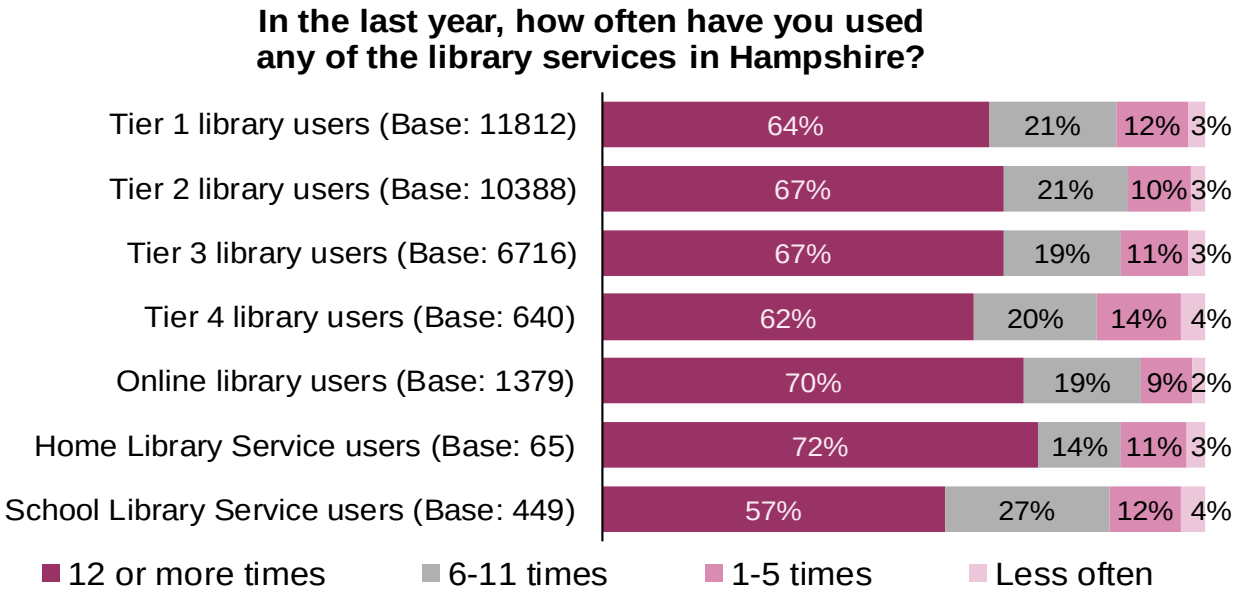
Overall, 63% of respondents used libraries 12 times or more per year, and only 4% stated that they used libraries less frequently than once per year.



Usage frequency was higher amongst older respondents (71%), those on lower incomes (71%), and those who did not travel by car or other forms of private motorised transport (72%). By comparison, younger respondents (aged under 25) were more likely to use libraries less often than once per year (44%, compared with 37% overall).

When broken down by the types of libraries used, Home Library Service and Online Library users were the most frequent users, with over seven in 10 using libraries at least 12 times per year (72% and 70% respectively). Frequent library usage was also slightly higher for Tier Two[13] and Tier Three[14] libraries (both 67%), than for Tier One[15] (64%).

Tier Four[16] library users (62%), and users of the School Library Service (57%), had used the least frequently throughout the past year.



Respondents who used more than one library in the previous 12 months were more likely to be frequent library users (69% used libraries 12 or more times) than those unique users who only visited one library (63%).

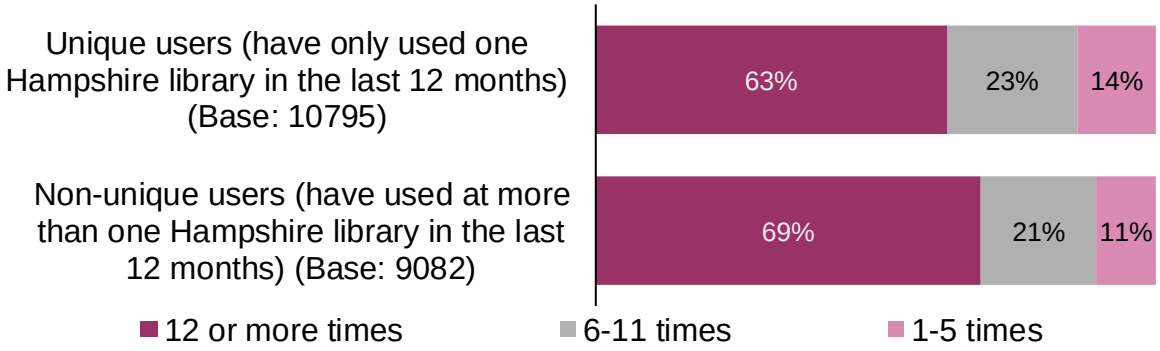
[13] Tier Two libraries are found in medium sized towns and are open on five days each week. They have a catchment of 30,000 to 70,000 people.

[14] Tier Three libraries are located in smaller towns and villages and are open fewer days each week. Typically, they are smaller spaces in a community buildings often with partners co-located. They have a catchment population of 10,000 to 40,000 people.

[15] Tier One libraries (including Discovery Centres) are the largest and busiest libraries, providing the widest range of services. They have a catchment population of over 50,000, tend to be found in the biggest towns and cities and are open longest – usually six days a week, including some evenings.

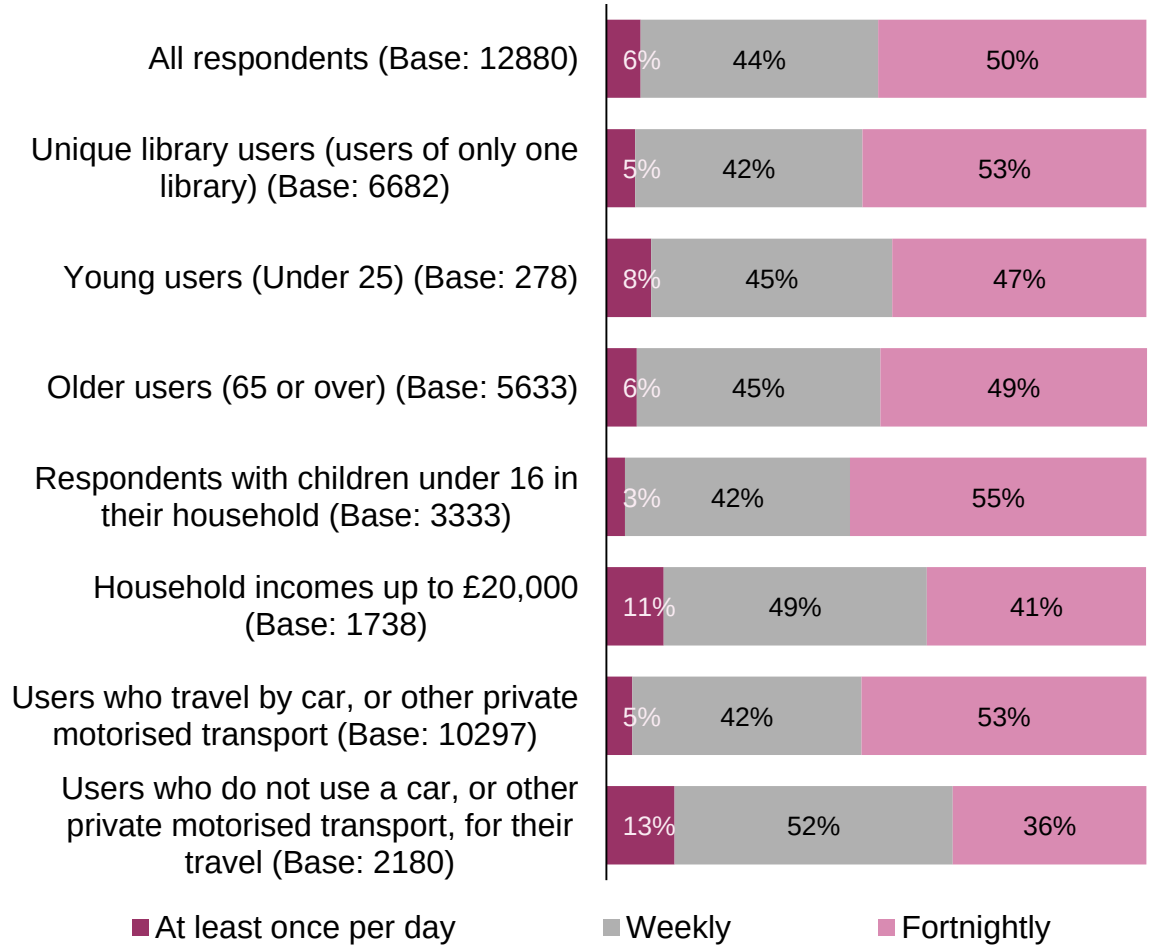
[16] Tier Four libraries (known as 'community-managed libraries') are managed by volunteer community organisations, with some support from the County Council.

In the last year, how often have you used any of the library services in Hampshire?



Of the respondents who used libraries 12 or more times per year, the large majority used libraries either weekly (44%) or fortnightly (50%).

In the last year, how often have you used any of the library services in Hampshire?



Of these frequent library users, respondents on household incomes of up to £20,000 (11%) or who did not travel by private motorised vehicle (13%), were more likely to use libraries at least daily, when compared with the overall response (6%).

Visit context: Preferred visiting times for libraries

19,966 respondents indicated the times and days when they preferred to visit the library, as illustrated in the table below[17].

	Overall	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Overall		**63%**	**67%**	**61%**	**68%**	**70%**	**66%**	**16%**
Morning (8am-10am)	**28%**	12%	12%	11%	11%	13%	18%	4%
Mid-morning (10am-12pm)	**76%**	37%	39%	36%	38%	40%	49%	11%
Lunch (12pm-2pm)	**40%**	19%	20%	20%	20%	22%	24%	8%
Afternoon (2pm-5pm)	**62%**	32%	36%	32%	37%	38%	29%	10%
Evening (5pm-7pm)	**21%**	12%	12%	11%	14%	13%	6%	3%

The most popular preferred visiting days were Tuesday (67%), Thursday (68%) and Friday (70%), with the least preferred day to visit being Sunday (16%) when only two libraries are open. The most preferred visiting times were mid-morning (10am-midday, 76%), and afternoons (2pm-5pm, 62%), with the least preferred being evenings (5pm-7pm, 21%).

The most preferred specific times to visit were Saturday mid-mornings (49%), Friday mid-mornings (40%), and Tuesday mid-mornings (39%). The least preferred were Saturday (6%) and Sunday evenings (3%), Sunday mornings (8am-10am) (4%), and Sunday lunchtimes (8%) – although this is likely to reflect more limited opening at these times[18].

[17] Data may include visits to the online library as well as physical library buildings.

[18] Andover Library and Winchester Discovery Centre are the only libraries open on a Sunday. Horndean Library and Milford-on-sea Community Libraries are the only libraries closed on a Saturday.

Analysis of data by respondent type shows that use of libraries at weekends was preferred amongst younger respondents (78% on Saturdays, 36% on Sundays) and those from households with children aged under 16 (77% on Saturdays, 22% on Sundays).

Those who preferred to visit on weekdays included older respondents (between 64% and 74% per weekday), and those from households on lower incomes (between 62% and 73% per weekday).

	Overall	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Overall	19,966	63%	67%	61%	68%	70%	66%	16%
Unique library users (users of only one library)	10,838	60%	65%	58%	65%	67%	62%	14%
Young users (Under 25)	464	53%	60%	59%	60%	62%	78%	36%
Older users (65 or over)	7,912	67%	73%	64%	71%	74%	56%	7%
Respondents with children under 16 in their household	5,462	54%	57%	54%	60%	61%	77%	22%
Household incomes up to £20,000	2,413	66%	71%	62%	71%	73%	61%	11%
Users who travel by car, or other private motorised transport	16,408	62%	67%	61%	68%	69%	66%	15%
Users who do not use a car, or other private motorised transport, for their travel	2,954	65%	68%	62%	69%	70%	65%	16%

The number of libraries visited, or the mode of transport used to access them did not have a significant impact on the days that respondents preferred to visit libraries.

Younger and older respondents also differed in the times that they preferred to visit the library, with younger people preferring afternoons (72%) and older people preferring morning visits (78%). Compared to the average, younger respondents also showed a particular preference to visit during lunchtimes (56% vs 40%), and evenings (35% vs 21%), whereas older people were least likely to prefer to visit during lunchtimes (30%) and evenings (9%) – as well as before 10am (19%).

	Base	Morning (8am-10am)	Mid-morning (10am-midday)	Lunch (midday-2pm)	Afternoon (2pm-5pm)	Evening (5pm-7pm)
All respondents	19,966	28%	76%	40%	62%	21%
Unique library users (users of only one library)	10,838	26%	75%	36%	59%	18%
Young users (Under 25)	464	27%	64%	56%	72%	35%
Older users (65 or over)	7,912	19%	78%	30%	58%	9%
Respondents with children under 16 in their household	5,462	38%	78%	46%	68%	27%
Household incomes up to £20,000	2,413	23%	75%	38%	59%	18%
Users who travel by car, or other private motorised transport	16,408	28%	77%	40%	63%	21%
Users who do not use a car, or other private motorised transport, for	2,954	28%	74%	41%	59%	22%

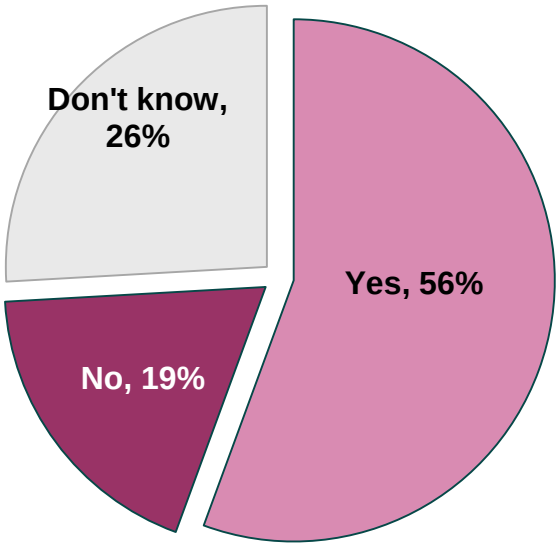
Respondents with children under 16 in their households had the broadest preferred range of visit times – with higher preference than average for visitation after midday. Households on incomes of up to £20,000 preferred to visit in mid-mornings (75%) and during the afternoon (63%).

The number of libraries visited, or the mode of transport used to access them, did not have a significant impact on the times of day that respondents preferred to visit libraries.

Views on the standardisation of library opening hours

The County Council proposed standardising library opening hours for libraries of the same tier.

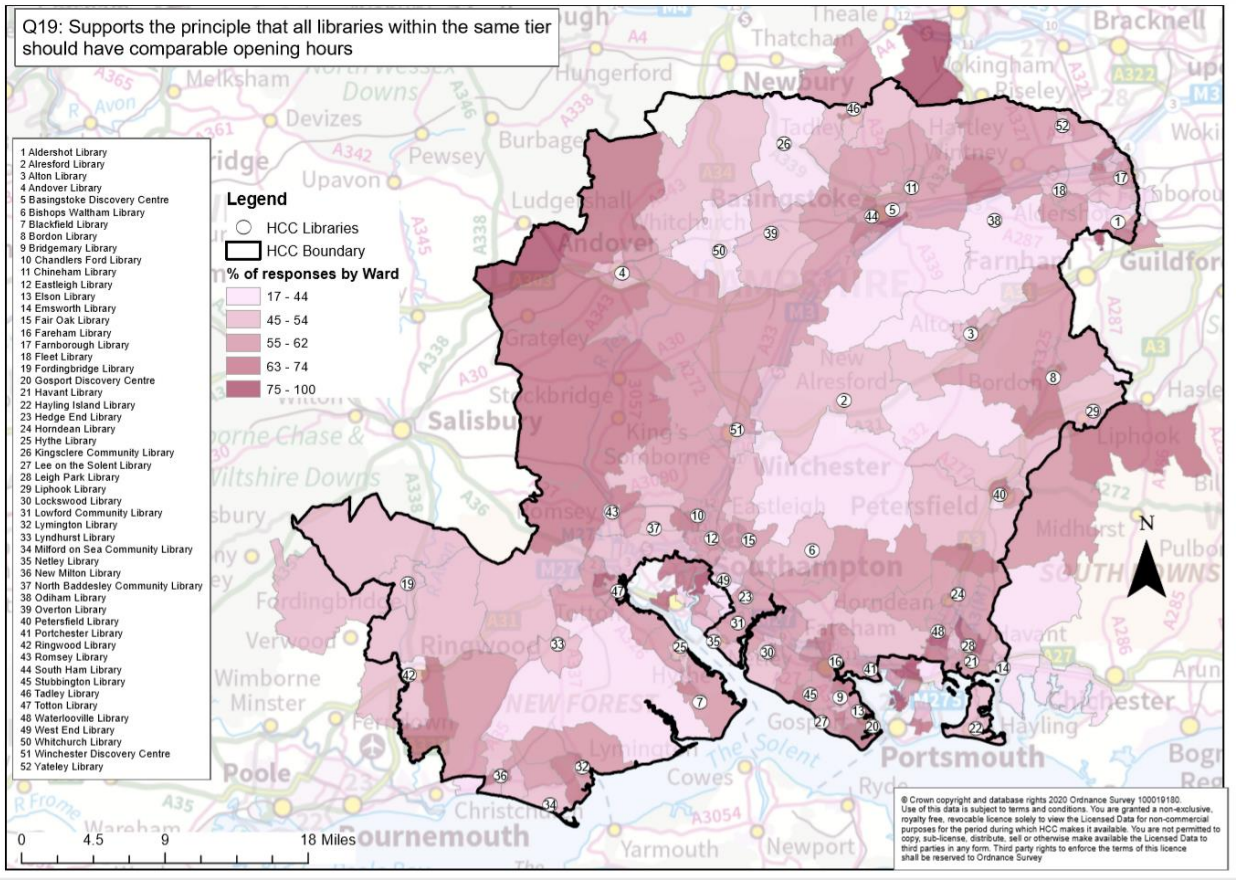
More than half of all respondents (56%) supported this proposal, with around one fifth of respondents (19%) being unsupportive.



Would you support the principle that all libraries within the same tier should have comparable opening hours?

(Base: 19481)

Levels of support varied across the County, with higher support towards the South and East, and lower support in the areas around Odiham, Alton, Kingsclere and Whitchurch, as well as the south-central New Forest



All respondent types were more likely to support than oppose the principle that all libraries within the same tier should have comparable opening hours.

The highest levels of support (with at least 60% saying 'yes') were amongst those:

- aged 16 to 24 (60% said 'yes', 20% said 'no');
- aged 75 to 84 (61% said 'yes', 15% said 'no');
- from 'mixed or multiple ethnic' backgrounds (62% said 'yes', 20% said 'no');
- from households with incomes up to £10,000 (63% said 'yes', 15% said 'no');
- employed by Hampshire County Council (67% said 'yes', 22% said 'no'); and
- who used the following libraries:
    - Bordon (61% said 'yes', 16% said 'no');
    - Bridgemary (60% said 'yes', 20% said 'no');
    - Fareham (60% said 'yes', 18% said 'no');
    - Gosport Discovery Centre (61% said 'yes', 16% said 'no');
    - Leigh Park (62% said 'yes', 15% said 'no'); and
    - Waterlooville (60% said 'yes', 17% said 'no').

However, there was no clear majority of support amongst the following groups:

- respondents who visit libraries more than once a day (46% said 'yes', 27% said 'no');
- respondents with a 'black ethnic' background (44% said 'yes', 38% said 'no');
- respondents from 'any other' ethnic group (46% said 'yes', 31% said 'no');
- respondents aged under 16 (44% said 'yes', 22% said 'no')
- 'lapsed' library users (47% said 'yes', 22% said 'no')
- groups, organisations and businesses (42% said 'yes', 33% said 'no');
- Democratically Elected Representatives (42% said 'yes', 33% said 'no'); and
- respondents who visit the following libraries:
    - Alresford (47% said 'yes', 23% said 'no');
    - Bishops Waltham (48% said 'yes', 25% said 'no');
    - Emsworth (48% said 'yes', 22% said 'no');
    - Kingsclere Community Library (40% said 'yes', 29% said 'no');
    - Lowford Community Library (49% said 'yes', 21% said 'no');
    - North Baddesley Community Library (43% said 'yes', 23% said 'no');
    - Odiham (46% said 'yes', 26% said 'no');
    - Whitchurch (40% said 'yes', 24% said 'no'); and
    - the Home Library Service (48% said 'yes', 28% said 'no').

Verbatim comments suggested that many respondents felt that operating hours should be aligned with demand rather than standardised across the tiers.

> *I fail to see why 'standardisation' of operating hours is necessary? Surely this should relate to anticipated hours of demand.*

> *I agree with the approach to close 10 libraries, but do not agree with the standardised opening hours. Surely opening hours should be in response to user needs and demand in each locality.*

> *I can't see why standardising opening hours is helpful - if you're going to reduce the hours each library is open then you should try and cover times across the region.*

> *I don't understand the drive to standardise opening hours. Surely opening hours should reflect the local environment and need.*

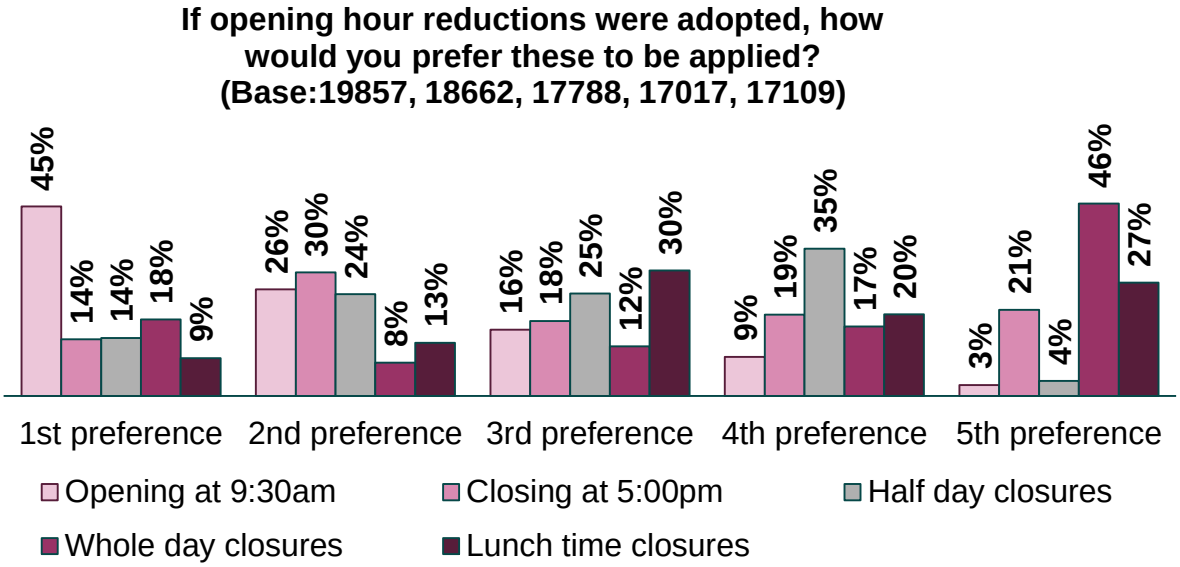
(782 comments mentioned 'another approach' to operating hours)

Preferences for opening hour changes

Five ways to change library opening hours were suggested in the consultation. These were:

- whole day closures of libraries;
- half day closures of libraries;
- lunch time closures of libraries;
- opening libraries at 9:30am;
- closing libraries at 5:00pm.

Respondents were given the opportunity to indicate their preference for each.



Looking at each respondent's two most preferred options, these are ranked as follows.

Option	1st preference	2nd preference	First two preferences
Opening libraries at 9:30am	45%	26%	71%
Closing libraries at 5:00pm	14%	30%	44%
Half day closures of libraries	14%	24%	38%
Whole day closures of libraries	18%	8%	26%
Lunch time closures of libraries	9%	13%	22%

As such, should opening hour reductions be applied, shorter days (ideally fulfilled through later opening times), were preferred to full day closures. The least popular option was to close libraries at lunch time.

The frequency that each option appears amongst the two most preferred by different respondent types is shown below, with the top two preferences for each shown in boldface.

		Top two preferred options				
	Base	Whole day closures	Half day closures	Lunch time closures	Opening at 9:30am	Closing at 5:00pm
All respondents	17,017	26%	38%	22%	**71%**	**43%**
Unique library users (users of only one library)	9,034	27%	38%	21%	**70%**	**43%**
Young users (Under 25)	466	12%	22%	38%	**77%**	**51%**
Older users (65 or over)	6,167	31%	**44%**	18%	**65%**	40%
Respondents with children under 16 in their household	4,883	21%	31%	26%	**75%**	**46%**
Household incomes up to £20,000	1,946	27%	40%	22%	**68%**	**43%**
Users who travel by car, or other private motorised transport	14,236	27%	39%	22%	**71%**	**43%**
Users who do not use a car, or other private motorised transport, for their	2,333	24%	36%	25%	**69%**	**46%**
Tier 1 library users	9,770	23%	35%	19%	**75%**	**46%**
Tier 2 library users	8,630	26%	37%	22%	**72%**	**42%**
Tier 3 library users	5,382	28%	**43%**	27%	**63%**	39%
Tier 4 library users	519	29%	**44%**	22%	**67%**	38%
Users of libraries proposed for closure	4,771	28%	**41%**	25%	**65%**	**41%**
Organisations, groups and businesses	120	31%	35%	24%	**69%**	**41%**
Democratically elected representatives	36	14%	34%	23%	**86%**	**43%**

The option to open libraries at 9:30am was the first preference for all of these respondent types.

For most respondent types, the second preference was to close libraries at 5pm. However, four types of respondents noted an alternative preference for half day closures. These were:

- older users (aged 65 or over);
- Tier Three library users;
- Tier Four library users; and
- users of libraries identified for potential closure (chose both early closing and half days).

Lunch time closures were the least preferred option for most of the respondent types, with the exception of:

- younger respondents (aged under 25);
- respondents from families with children under the age of 16;
- respondents who do not use private motorised transport; and
- Democratically Elected Representatives.

For these types of respondent, the option least likely to be amongst the two most preferred was to implement whole day closures at libraries.

The table below shows the two most popular options (based on the frequency that they were selected as one of the two most preferred options) split by the preferred library visiting times of respondents.

As can be seen, the most preferred option, regardless of preferred visiting time, was for libraries to open at 09:30. This included respondents who would be most affected by this change – those who stated that they preferred to visit libraries before 10am.

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Overall</th><th>Mon</th><th>Tues</th><th>Weds</th><th>Thurs</th><th>Fri</th><th>Sat</th><th>Sun</th></tr>
<tr><td>Overall</td><td colspan="8" rowspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Morning (8am-10am)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Mid-morning (10am-12pm)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lunch (12pm-2pm)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Afternoon (2pm-5pm)</td><td colspan="8">Most preferred option:
Opening at 9:30am

Second most preferred option:
Closing at 5:00pm</td></tr>
<tr><td>Evening (5pm-7pm)</td><td colspan="6">Most preferred option:
Opening at 9:30am

Second most preferred option:
Half day closures</td><td colspan="2">Most preferred option:
Opening at 9:30am

Second most preferred option:
Half day closures/ Lunch time closures
(equal popularity)</td></tr>
</table>

Most groups, when split by preferred visiting times also chose closing libraries at 5:00pm as one of their most preferred options. However, the group who would be most directly impacted by this change, those who preferred to visit libraries in the evening, chose half day library closures as their second most popular option.

Verbatim comments also suggested that respondents felt that retaining at least one evening opening each week was important for people, such as full-time workers, who were unable to visit during the day.

> *I am very much in favour of one late opening per week (e.g. a 7pm closing time on Thursdays).*

> *And close the libraries at 7pm at least one day in the week for people who work shifts and cannot get to libraries before 4pm…*

> *Revising the opening hours, to include evenings and weekends, to make it accessible to those working and at school and close on days in the week i.e. Mondays and open later on the other weekdays.*

> *Cut hours at the early part of the day, no need to open before 10am, close all at 4:30pm, must have one late night to 6:45pm.*

(782 comments mentioned 'another approach' to operating hours)

Section Four: Delivering library services differently within local communities

There are four Tier Four community-managed libraries in Hampshire, that are delivered in partnership with community organisations. These libraries are run by volunteers and supported with a regular visit by a paid member of Hampshire Libraries staff, alongside the provision of books, equipment and public Wi-Fi.

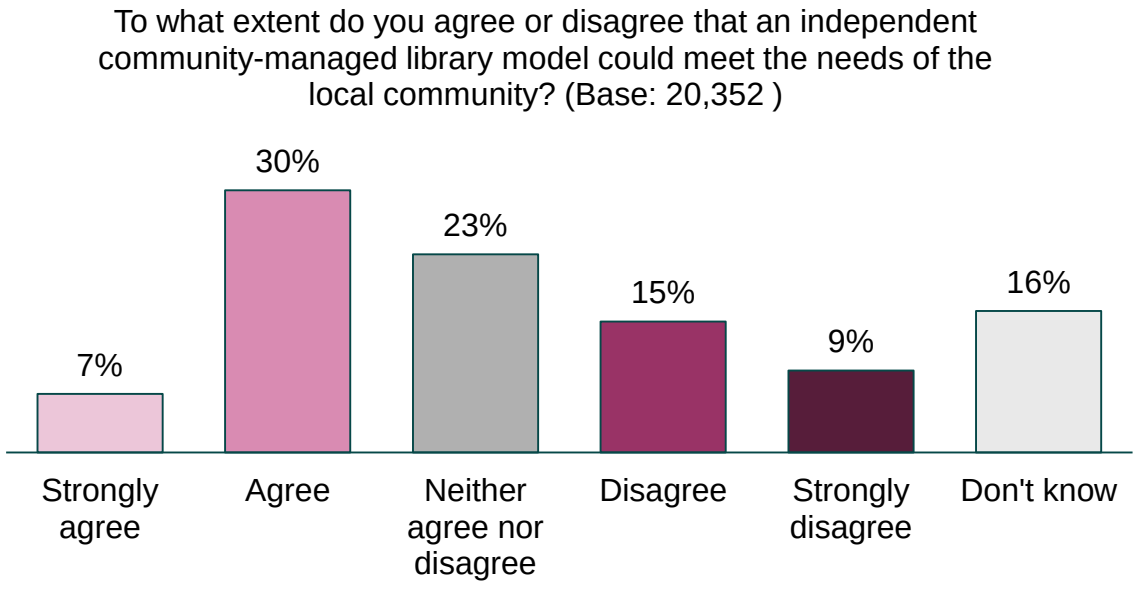
The community-managed libraries are:

- Kingsclere Community Library;
- Lowford (also known as Bursledon) Community Library;
- Milford-on-Sea Community Library; and
- North Baddesley Community Library.

The County Council proposed to withdraw support from Tier Four libraries, which would help to reduce costs by around £49,000 per annum. This could either result in the community organisations having greater autonomy in delivering an independent service (e.g. as an independent community-managed library), or these libraries closing.

Respondents were asked whether they believed that independent community-managed libraries could meet the needs of the local community.

37% of respondents felt that this model of delivery could meet local community needs, compared with 24% who did not.



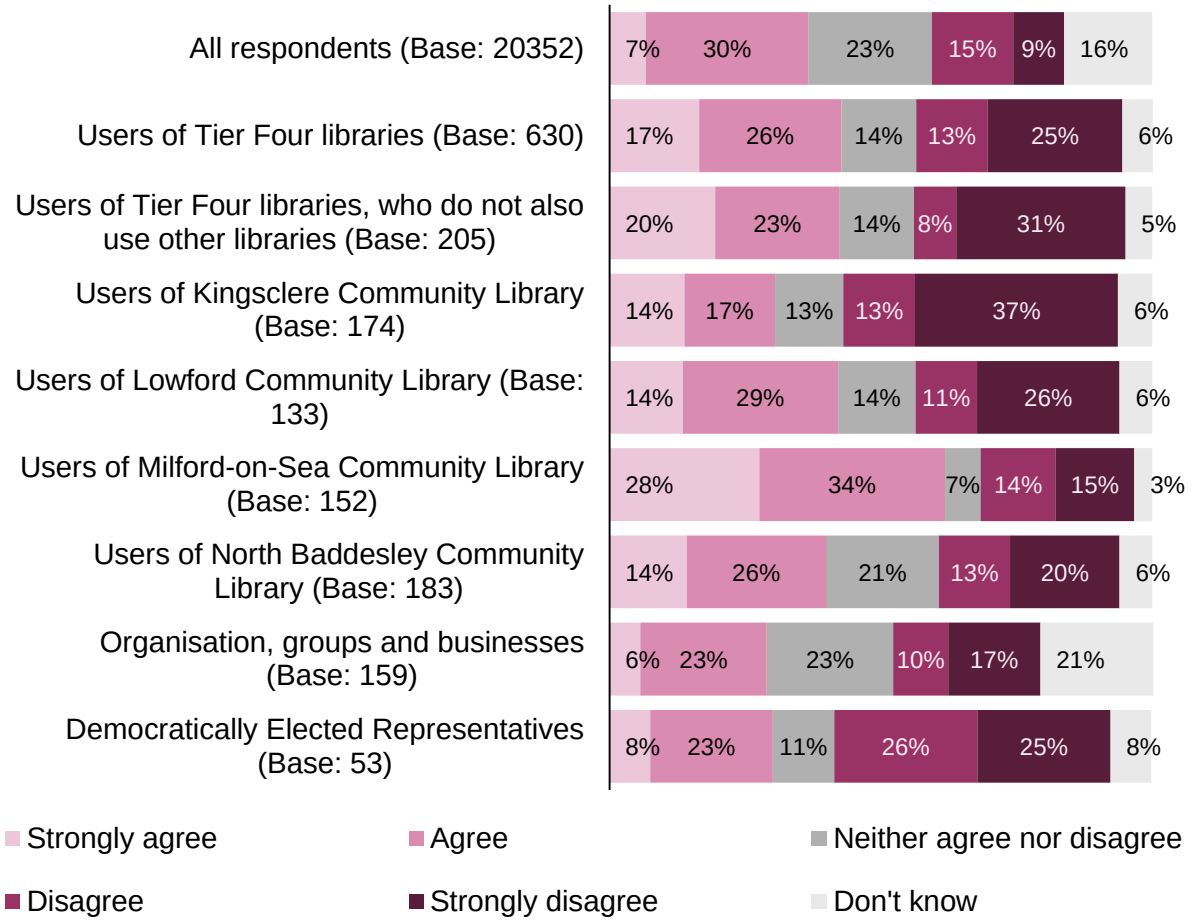
However, almost four in ten respondents (39%) felt unclear as to the viability of this approach, with 23% neither agreeing nor disagreeing and 16% stating that they ‘did not know’ whether it would be viable or not.

Organisations, groups and businesses were particularly uncertain as to whether the needs of a local community could be met by independent community-managed

libraries, with 23% neither agreeing nor disagreeing and 21% stating that they did not know if this option would work.

Users of Tier Four libraries generally had a clearer perspective, but still remained divided as to whether an independent community-managed library model could work. 43% of Tier Four library users agreed that this approach could meet the needs of local communities, but 38% felt that it could not. These contrasting views were consistent amongst Tier Four library users, regardless of whether they were unique users or also used other libraries.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that an independent community-managed library model could meet the needs of the local community?



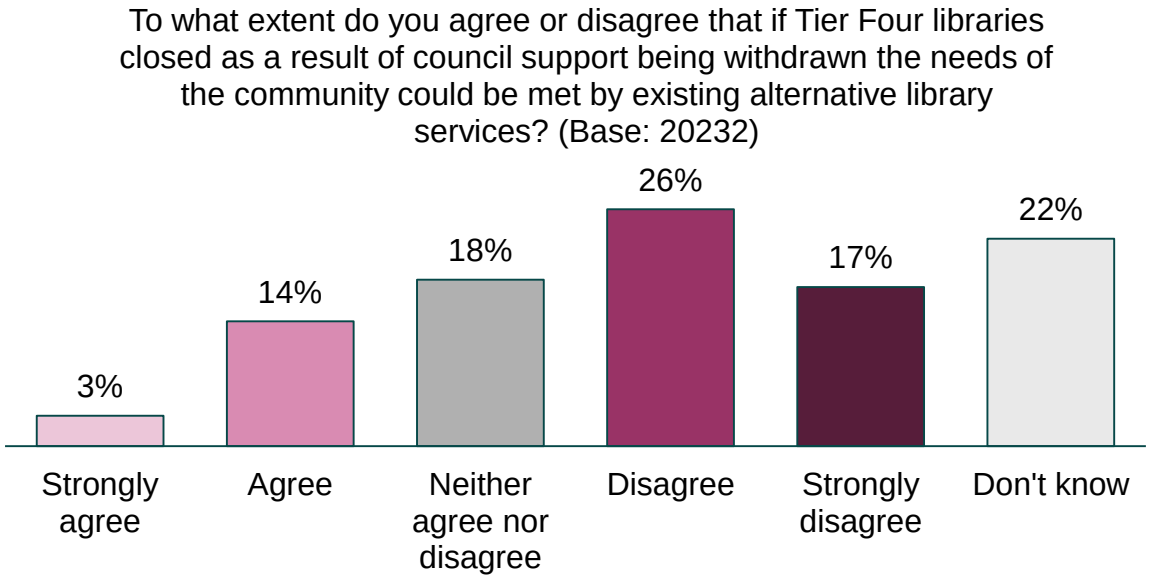
Looking across the Tier Four libraries, users of Kingsclere Community Library were most likely to be in disagreement that independent community-managed libraries could meet the needs of the local community (51%), and users of Milford-on-Sea Community Library were most likely to be in agreement that they could (62%).

Most Democratically Elected Representatives also felt that this type of library provision would not meet the needs of the local community (51%).

Views on the ability of existing alternative services to meet demand if Tier Four libraries were to close

Overall, respondents were unconvinced that the needs of the community could be met by existing alternative library services should Tier Four libraries close.

Less than two in 10 respondents (17%) felt certain that this was a viable proposition, with 43% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.



However, many respondents (40%), were either undecided (18%) or unclear (22%) as to whether existing library services could fill the gap should Tier Four libraries close – primarily those respondents who did not use Tier Four libraries.

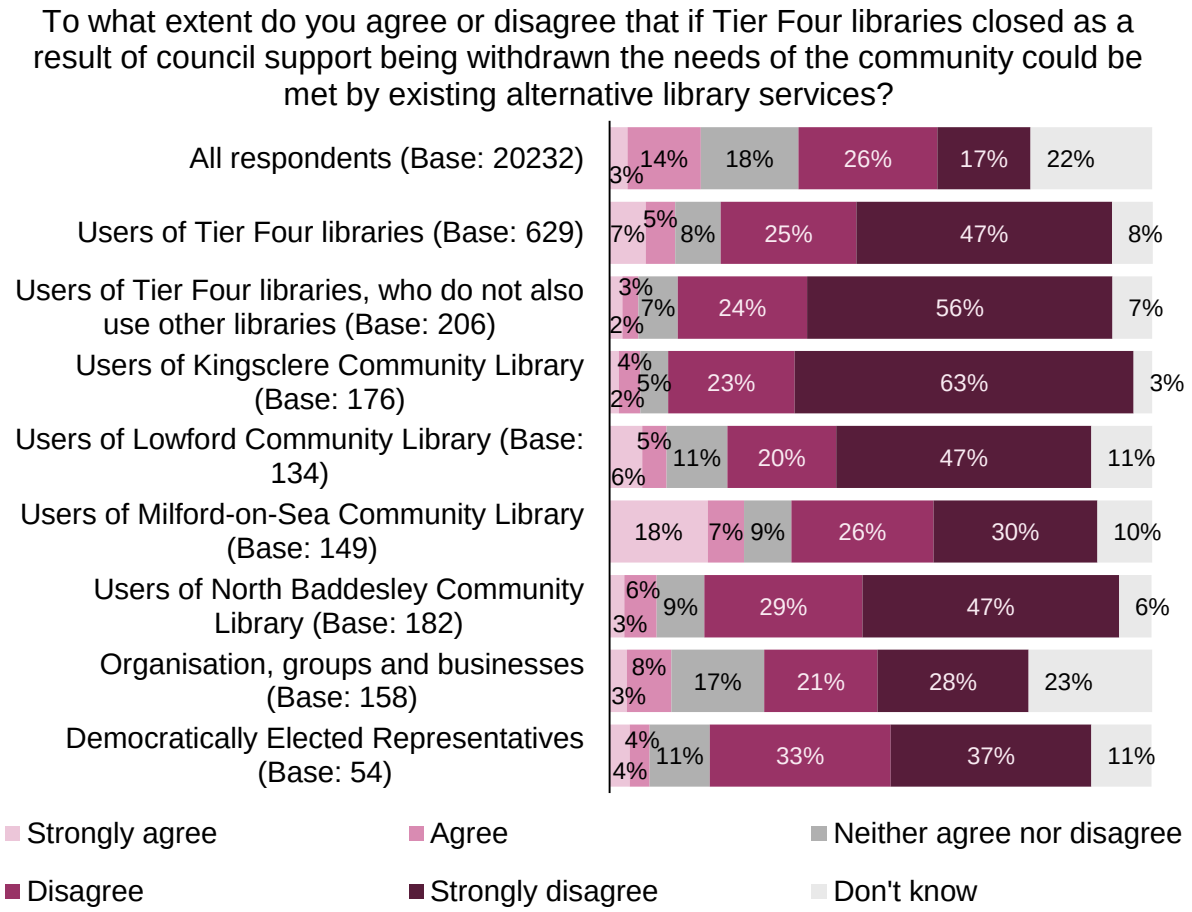
In contrast to the overall levels of uncertainty, users of Tier Four libraries were very clear that their needs would not be met, with almost three quarters of these respondents (72%) of this view – and 47% strongly so.

These respondents felt that supporting Tier Four libraries was important – particularly as the costs of doing so seemed small in the context of the savings required.

> *I also question as to why HCC wishes to remove support from the tier 4 libraries (when only achieving a minimal reduction of £49,000) as they need to have that support in order to remain viable and a resource for the local community.*

> *The cost of running tier 4 libraries - the closest to me and the type I use most frequently is tiny. According to the Information Pack it is £49,000 pa and the closure of these sites will have a disproportionate impact on those less able to make alternative arrangements.*

Unique users of Tier Four libraries were even clearer, with 80% disagreement that the needs of their community could be met by the existing alternative libraries, and over half (56%) stating this particularly strongly.



There was, however, some variance in views across each of the Tier Four libraries. Although users of all four libraries generally disagreed that that the needs of their community would be met by the existing alternatives, the level of disagreement ranged from 86% of Kingsclere Community Library users to 56% of Milford-on-Sea Community Library users.

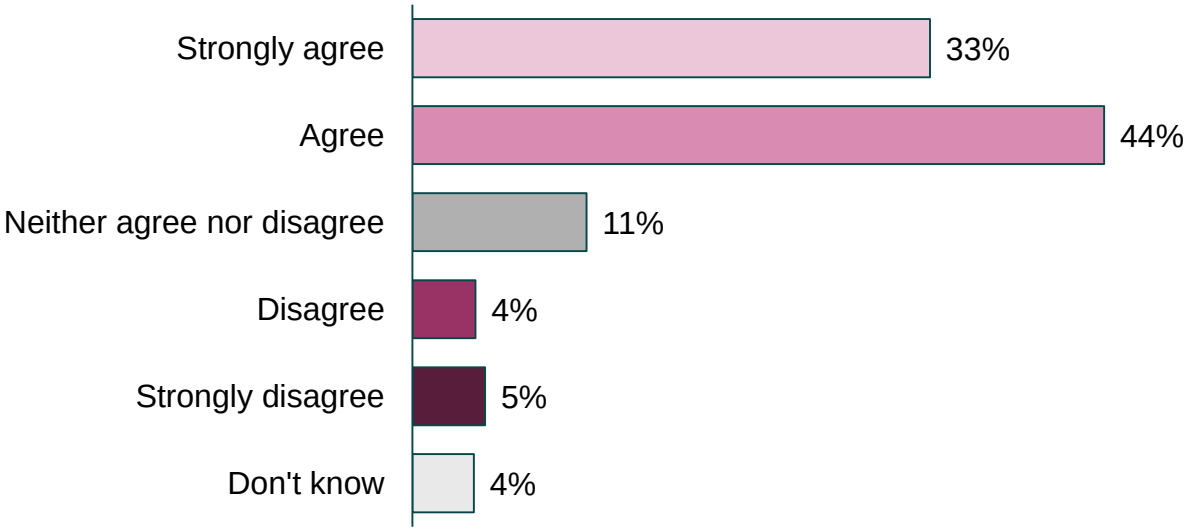
Disagreement was also higher amongst Democratically Elected Representatives (70%), than amongst organisations, groups and businesses (49%).

Exploring different ways to deliver library services in deprived communities

The consultation proposed exploring different ways to deliver library services in communities, such as in Leigh Park, Havant and Bridgemary, where there is a need for the support that libraries can provide, but current library usage is low. This could include offering library services in locations frequently visited by the community, and alongside other services and activities.

This proposed approach was well supported by respondents, with 77% agreeing or strongly agreeing overall, compared with 9% who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that Hampshire Library Service should explore different ways to deliver library services in deprived communities? (Base: 20,430)



Some respondents used verbatim comments to back up their support for delivering library services differently to deprived communities.

> *I believe that if usage is low in "deprived" areas that it is logical to seek alternative means to promote and deliver services irrespective of savings.*

> *I would say that exploring relocation of some libraries - perhaps in more deprived areas - is a really good idea. If a library was part of a school, for example, parents might be more encouraged to take their children in to them.*

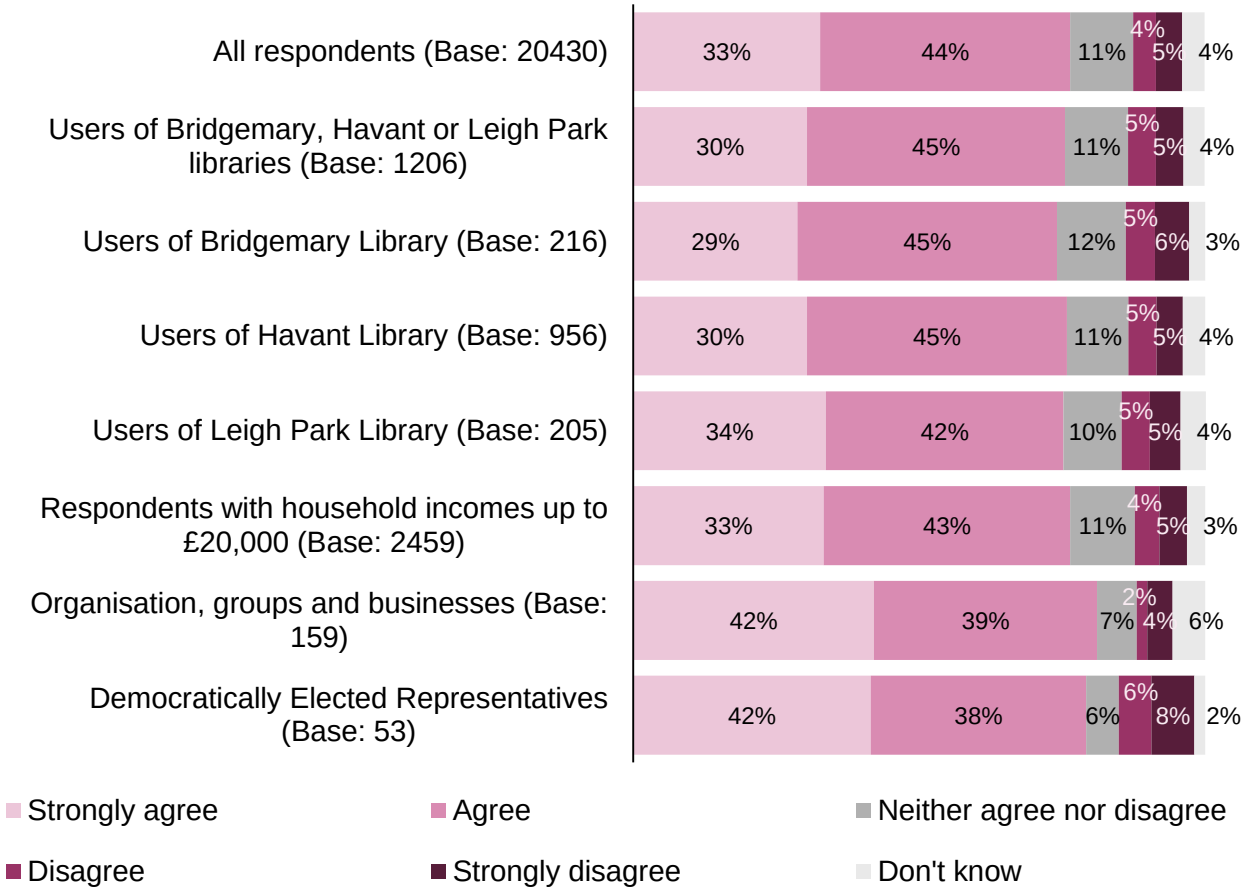
Others felt that the efforts of the Library Service could be better spent elsewhere.

> *I'm not convinced that the Library Service should have a brief to resource deprived communities, as your evidence suggests that libraries are not used much in these communities, in these cases resources would be better funnelled into providing books through school libraries…*

> *…but as research shows, those in deprived areas don't use the service very often, so it's a waste of money offering them a wide range of services.*

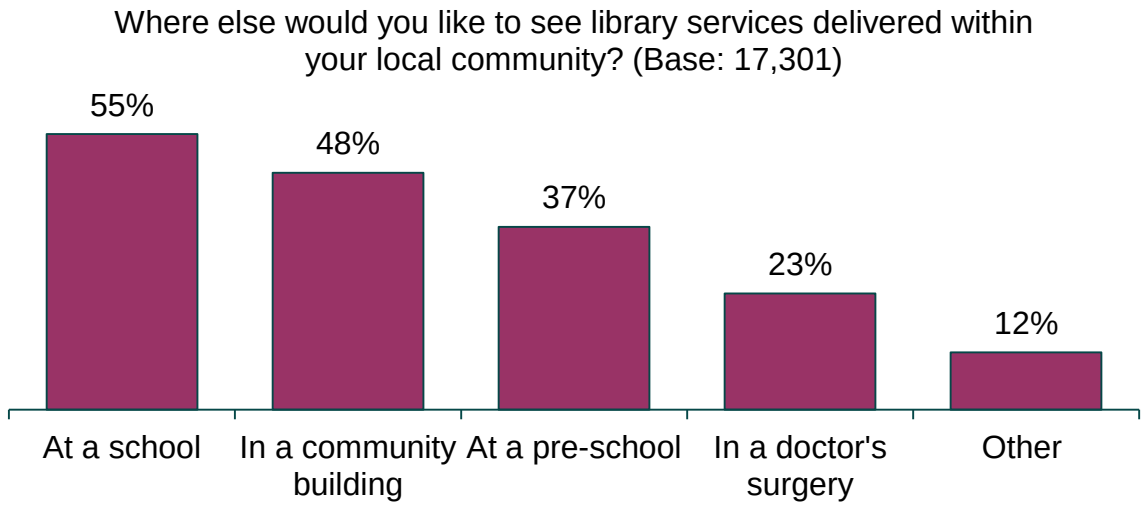
The high level of agreement from all respondents (76%) was reflected in the views groups who could most be impacted by the proposed changes - namely users of Bridgemary, Havant and Leigh Park libraries (76%), and those from households on lower incomes (76%).

To what extent do you agree or disagree that Hampshire Library Service should explore different ways to deliver library services in deprived communities?

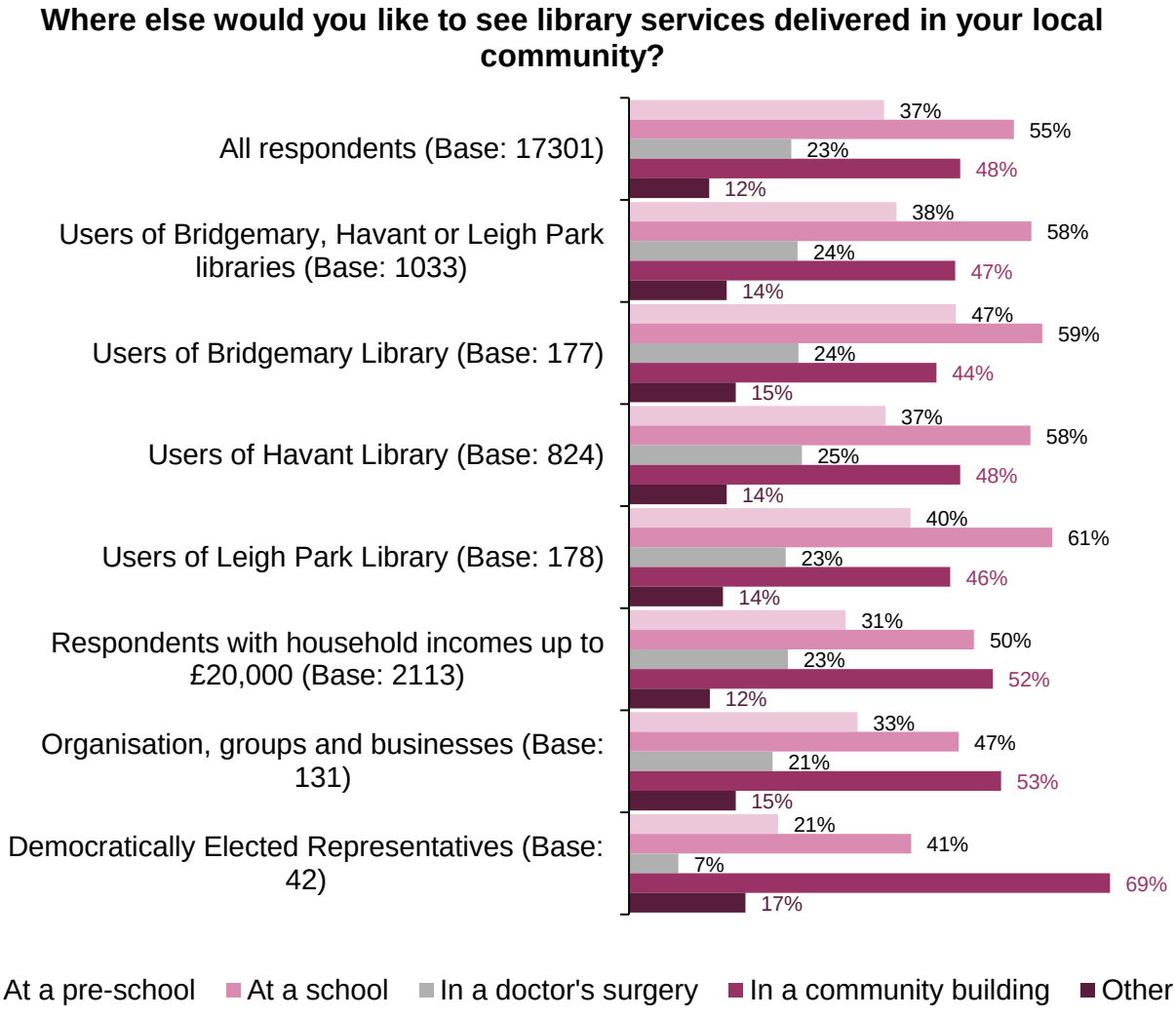


A large majority of businesses, groups and organisations (81%), and Democratically Elected Representatives (80%) also indicated agreement with the proposal.

The preferred option was to explore how library services in deprived areas could be delivered in schools, with over half of respondents (55%) selecting this option, and 37% also suggesting that pre-schools could fulfil the role.



Schools were also the most popular location amongst users of Bridgemary, Havant and Leigh Park libraries, and households on incomes of under £20,000.



Almost half of respondents (48%) indicated that a community building would be a suitable location for library services. The majority of responding organisations, groups and businesses (53%) and Democratically Elected Representatives (69%) felt that community buildings would be the most suitable locations for library services.

When asked to state which type(s) of community buildings would be appropriate, users of Bridgemary, Havant and Leigh Park libraries, respondents with household incomes up to £20,000, organisations, groups, businesses and Democratically Elected Representatives all felt that the three most appropriate community buildings were a:

- community centre;
- village hall; and
- church/ parish hall.

Community buildings where library services could be delivered in deprived communities.

	Mentions by group			
	Overall	**Users of Bridgemary, Havant and Leigh Park libraries**	**Respondents with household incomes up to £20,000**	**Organisations, groups, businesses and Democratically Elected Representatives**
Base (number of comments)	**4,915**	**278**	**581**	**60**
Community centre	47%	62%	50%	55%
Village hall	29%	14%	26%	27%
Church/ parish hall	22%	20%	22%	13%
Council office	8%	3%	10%	10%
Leisure centre/ gym/ sports facilities	7%	7%	6%	5%
Pub/ café	4%	4%	3%	8%
Place of education	2%	2%	1%	3%
Shopping centre/ supermarket	2%	1%	2%	2%
Children's centre	1%	3%	1%	2%
Scout/ Guide hut	1%	0%	1%	2%

12% of respondents suggested an ‘other’ way of delivering services within deprived communities. The two most common suggestions were to provide outreach at shopping centres/ supermarkets or in pubs/ cafes.

‘Other’ suggestions as to where library services could be delivered in deprived communities.

	Mentions by group			
	Overall	**Users of Bridgemary, Havant and Leigh Park libraries**	**Respondents with household incomes up to £20,000**	**Organisations, groups, businesses and Democratically Elected Representatives**
Base (number of comments)	**805**	**63**	**97**	**12**
Shopping centre/ supermarket	23%	21%	16%	25%
Pub/ cafe	18%	24%	16%	25%
Church/ parish hall	14%	14%	19%	8%
Community centre	7%	3%	7%	8%
Place of education	7%	5%	8%	8%
Leisure centre/ gym/ sports facilities	6%	11%	4%	-
Existing library building	5%	3%	3%	17%
Care facility	4%	3%	4%	-
Village hall	3%	2%	6%	-
Hospital	3%	3%	3%	-
Post office	3%	5%	3%	-
Mobile library	3%	6%	4%	-
Empty premises	3%	3%	4%	8%
Doctors'/ GPs' surgeries	3%	3%	5%	-
Council office	3%	5%	1%	17%

Views varied as to a third option. Organisations, groups, businesses and Democratically Elected Representatives preferred that existing library buildings or council offices be used, whereas individual respondents again focused on church or parish halls.

Section Five: Delivering efficiencies

Overview of proposals

To ensure that the Library Service continues to deliver an effective and efficient service whilst meeting the changing needs of library users, several possible efficiencies were put forward to respondents. Taken together, these efficiencies could generate around £146,000 of ongoing savings. Respondents were asked whether the Library Service should consider:

- withdrawing, relocating or reducing poorly used collections and resources;
- making it easier for people to manage their library accounts and to pay library fees and charges promptly; and
- reducing transportation, postage and other costs.

Summary of responses

Overall, respondents agreed that all proposed efficiency measures should be considered, with all but one supported by a majority of respondents. The most favoured options were those which related to possible administrative efficiencies for library membership accounts:

- 86% of respondents thought that the Library Service should explore ways to reduce the amount of debt accrued on library membership cards;
- 82% of respondents thought that library members that have not cleared charges should have restricted ability to borrow books; and
- 76% agreed that new membership cards should not be sent to customers in the post.

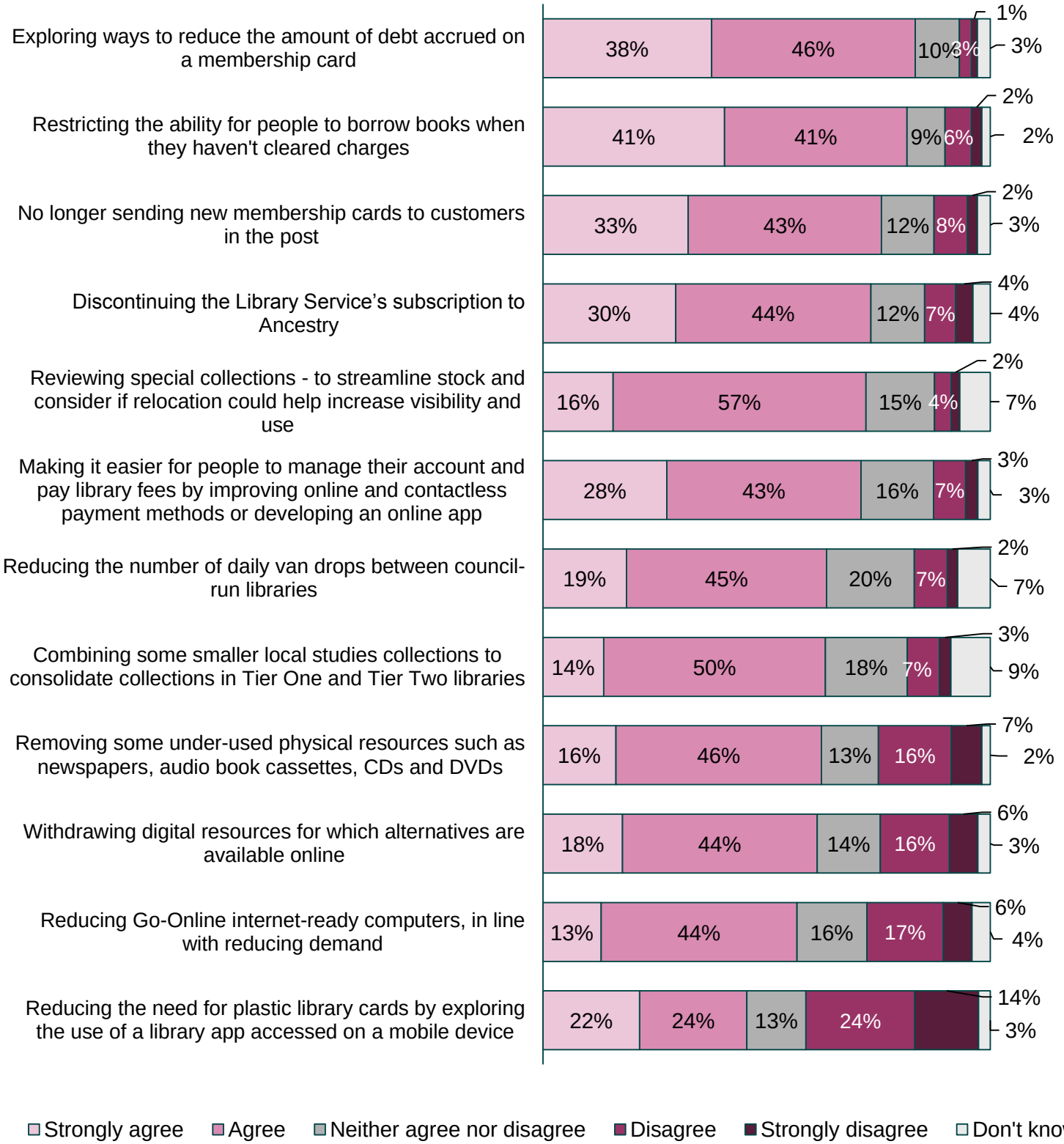
Efficiencies which related to the reduction of resources and shifting service users to online approaches showed the highest levels of disagreement, specifically:

- 23% of respondents disagreed that underused physical resources such as newspapers and audiobooks, should be removed to make efficiencies;
- 22% of respondents disagreed that certain digital resources that have other alternatives online should be removed;
- 23% of respondents disagreed that there should be a reduction in the number of Go-Online internet-ready computers in line with reducing demand; and
- 38% of respondents disagreed that there should be a reduction in the need for plastic library cards by exploring the use of a library app that would be accessed via a mobile device.

Groups that had consistently higher disagreement than average were those that stated they did not have access to an internet connection at home – with this group disagreeing with 10 out of the 12 efficiency proposals.

Respondents with an annual income of up to £10,000 per year were also more likely to disagree compared to the average respondent – with this group disagreeing with six out of the 12 proposals.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Library Service should consider:
(Base: 20354, 20341, 20307, 20453, 20178, 20364, 20286, 20282, 20339, 20366, 20288, 20434)



Reducing the need for plastic library cards by exploring the use of a library app accessed on a mobile device – key variances

Overall, 46% of respondents agreed that reducing the need for plastic library cards and exploring the use of a library app should be considered in order to make efficiencies, compared to 38% who opposed this method. This was the lowest agreement and highest disagreement for any of the proposed efficiency savings.

Disagreement increased markedly by age, with 62% of those aged 65-74, 64% of those aged 75-84 and 68% of those aged 85 or over disagreeing with this option. By contrast, younger age groups were much more likely to be open to the idea – for example 69% of those aged 16 to 44 agreed with this approach – notably higher than the overall respondent average (40%).

Agreement with this proposal also rose in line with household income. Those who stated they had a total annual income of up to £10,000 were more likely to disagree with the proposal (56%) compared to the average (38%). Those on higher income brackets were more likely to be open to this idea than the average respondent, with more than half of all respondents in income brackets of £30,000 or above, agreeing that a library app could be explored.

Those respondents with a disability that affects them 'a lot', were more likely than the average to disagree, with over half (54%) disagreeing with this option. 49% of those who stated that they were volunteers for the Library Service also disagreed with this proposed option - above the respondent average of 38%. However, the group that were the most likely to disagree (by a significant margin) were those that mentioned they do not have an internet connection at home (74%).

> *Elderly library users rely on the help of staff, on books and on non-digital methods (such as having a library card as opposed to a mobile device card). Embracing the future of technology in the context of libraries is important, but not to the detriment of users who need traditional means.*

> *I understand for the older generation it may be difficult for them to use an app instead, however for the majority of us, phones and other devices are used by almost everyone so it wouldn't be a problem for us not to have a library card.*

> *Not everyone can afford the technology… and not everyone wants to be forced to use it.*

> *I think the reduction in plastic is a great idea but should be available for people who cannot manage or have smart phones.*

All respondents were given the opportunity to identify the potential impacts of changes. Those who commented on the impact of the proposed app-based library 'card' cited that it may disadvantage those who cannot afford mobile devices. Others mentioned that those inexperienced with mobile devices may find it difficult to adapt and, as a result, their ability to access the library in general could be reduced.

> *If the Library Service moves to making everything electronic e.g. removal of Library Card and replacing with an app, it would mean I could no longer use the library.*

> *Not everyone can afford costly non-essential broadband costs/ fees and living in a 'not spot' (as I do) for mobile reception means no easy downloading to devices - if they can be afforded!*

> *My eyesight means that audio books are essential for me and digital devices tend to be too complicated with small buttons that cannot be easily learnt or used by older people.*

> *I borrow books to read and listening books having to renew with a phone app would not be suitable also re; computers these are a lifeline to people who do not have them at home.*

> *Doing away with library cards would mean I could no longer borrow any books. My mobile phone is for emergencies only (having an accident etc) and does not take apps and I would not be prepared to spend a great deal of money buying the latest mobile for just that item. If members wish to have an app on their phone fine but do not deprive others of a card.*

Removing some under-used physical resources such as newspapers, audio book cassettes, CDs and DVDs – key variances

62% of respondents were in agreement that removing some under-used physical resources such as newspapers, audio book cassettes, CDs and DVDs would be a good way to create efficiencies, with 23% of respondents disagreeing.

Those without internet access were again the largest group to disagree with this option with 41% of respondents disagreeing. Between 27% and 31% of those in groups between the ages of 65 and 85+ disagreed with this option, especially when compared to those aged 25 to 44 where disagreement ranged between 16% and 17%. The age group with the highest disagreement was those aged 85 and over, with 31% of people in this group disagreeing. Those who were affected by a disability or health problem 'a lot' were also more likely to disagree (31% overall disagreement).

Respondents who stated that their total annual household income was up to £10,000 were also more likely to disagree, with 34% of respondents in this group opposing this idea, compared to 51% in agreement. Between 67% and 78% of those in groups earning above £30,000 agreed that the Service should remove under-used physical resources.

Respondents who stated that they access collections materials at libraries (such as playsets, vocal scores and other special collections), and those that access CDs, DVDs, audio book cassettes and newspapers, were also more likely than the average to disagree (37% and 34% overall disagreement respectively).

> *I am concerned that some older people might not manage the digital version and would hope that a small stocks of audio books on CD could be kept.*

> *"Primarily use Audio Books (including CD, MP3 and BorrowBox). Any reduction in the availability or range or audio books would affect me."*

> *"My relative is registered severely partially sighted and uses audio books to help her continue her love of books."*

> *"Using the library and borrowing not only books but magazines, which I would not afford will be a great loss to me."*

Respondents that commented on the impact of potentially removing some physical resources often reflected that these were a valued part of their library visit. Some suggested that removing audio-cassettes or audio CD's would impact greatly on those that have a visual impairment, whilst others felt that elderly people may be disadvantaged as could find online formats less accessible.

> *I also enjoy DVD's; audio books, and other 'ancillary' services, a reduction in these would affect my library use.*

> *We also value things like access to newspapers, language learning CDs and access to various courses.*

> *Older generations do not use digital resources. Several library users find it difficult to physically read books so rely on CDs & other recorded material.*

> *I am partially sighted so the removal or audio book CDs I would be disappointed with.*

Reducing Go-Online internet-ready computers in line with reducing demand – key variances

Over half (57%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there should be a reduction of Go-Online internet ready computers, in line with demand. This compared to 23% who disagreed.

Respondents without access to an internet connection at home displayed the highest levels of disagreement, with higher opposition (46%) than support (41%).

Many of those who usually access digital resources at libraries were also likely to disagree (39%), although the proportion who did agree was slightly higher (46%).

Those with an income of less than £10,000 a year were another group that were likely to disagree with this proposed option (36%) compared to the average respondent (23% disagreement). However, 50% of this group agreed with the proposal.

Younger age groups were more likely than the average to disagree with this option – specifically, 35% of those aged 16 to 24 disagreed compared to the average of 23%. Just under half of this group (49%) agreed with this option. Verbatim comments suggest that younger groups find having access to internet-ready computers an important asset for the library.

Those who stated that they were Black, African, Caribbean or Black British tended to disagree more than the average respondent (37% disagreement). In contrast,49% of this group agreed with this efficiency measure.

38% of those who submitted an official response from an organisation, group or business disagreed, which was higher than the average (23% disagreement), - compared to 43% who agreed.

> *I have no home internet/ no smart phone and any close/ loss of internet would impact my life.*

> *I need to use the computer after school as there is not one at home.*

> *It would be impossible for Genealogy group to run without sufficient computers.*

> *I have been using the library for many years now for books and the internet as I cannot afford a computer and Wi-Fi at home…*

A key concern about the impact of potentially reducing Go-Online computers was that this would limit access to the internet – particularly for those who rely heavily on the library for internet usage and among those who do not own a home computer.

> *Due to a restricted senior budget I am not on broadband at home, therefore I like to use the library to access the internet.*

> *I rely on heavily in using my local library for the internet as I don't have a computer of my own at home.*

> *The impact on me personally it would impact my ability to look for, and apply for jobs, as well as update my CV. It would also impact my ability to remain connected with friends with whom I communicate with via email. In turn this would impact my mental health/ wellbeing.*

> *These could impact on me greatly as I rely on visiting the library to borrow books and audio c.ds as I cannot afford to have internet or buy books.*

> *I run a computing education business for 3-15 year olds and 50+… The libraries could be a key place to hold sessions of the future and encourage a new era of children and the families to attend. This is an additional revenue stream for the libraries who wish to engage…*

Withdrawing digital resources for which alternatives are available online – key variances

62% of respondents were in agreement that certain digital resources that have other online alternatives should be removed, whilst 22% of respondents disagreed with this approach.

Democratically Elected Representatives were much more likely than the average respondent to disagree with this option, with 44% disagreeing and 46% agreeing.

Those without internet access at home were more likely to disagree (37%) compared to the average respondent (22%), whilst 45% of this group agreed with the measure.

Those with an income of up to £10,000 were more likely to disagree than the average respondent, with 29% of this group in disagreement. By contrast, those who earned £30,000 or above were more likely to agree compared with the average respondent, with agreement ranging between 67% and 73%.

Younger age groups, but specifically those aged under 16, were more likely to disagree (32% overall disagreement) than the average (22% disagreement), with 50% of those under 16 agreeing with this proposed efficiency.

Respondents that usually access 'collections' (such as playsets, vocal scores and other special collections) (31%) and those who access learning resources through the Library Service (31%) were also more likely to disagree than the average (22%).

A common theme that access to online information for educational purposes could be reduced. This was due to the view that alternative free services may not provide the same level or range of information.

> *I have used the library to supplement my university libraries, this often includes local collections and online Encyclopaedias. I consider these resources that should be common and easily accessible to all.*

> *We would not have lots of different books to read, feeding our imagination. We would not be able to research our homework.*

> *If library services are discontinued, in any areas, it will have an adverse effect on the education of the young…They should be increasing not decreasing.*

> *While the Encyclopaedia Britannica Online and Oxford University Press online reference collection may be available elsewhere online, they are only available via subscription sites, to which most do not have access. I sometimes find I need to look up a reference in the full Oxford English Dictionary and feel that that is one facility which the library should not remove. Surely this at least should be provided as a public educational service.*

> *I also access the digital library resources from the computer there and some of the digital resources are only available free e.g. British Newspaper Archive and others by using them in the library.*

> *The whole thing needs to stay in place as it is as once it's gone that's it never to reopen you have to remember that not every person has internet and other services at home.*

Section Six: Income generation

Overview of proposals

Alongside potential operational changes and efficiencies, the Library Service consulted on proposals to generate additional income in order to contribute to the running of the Service.

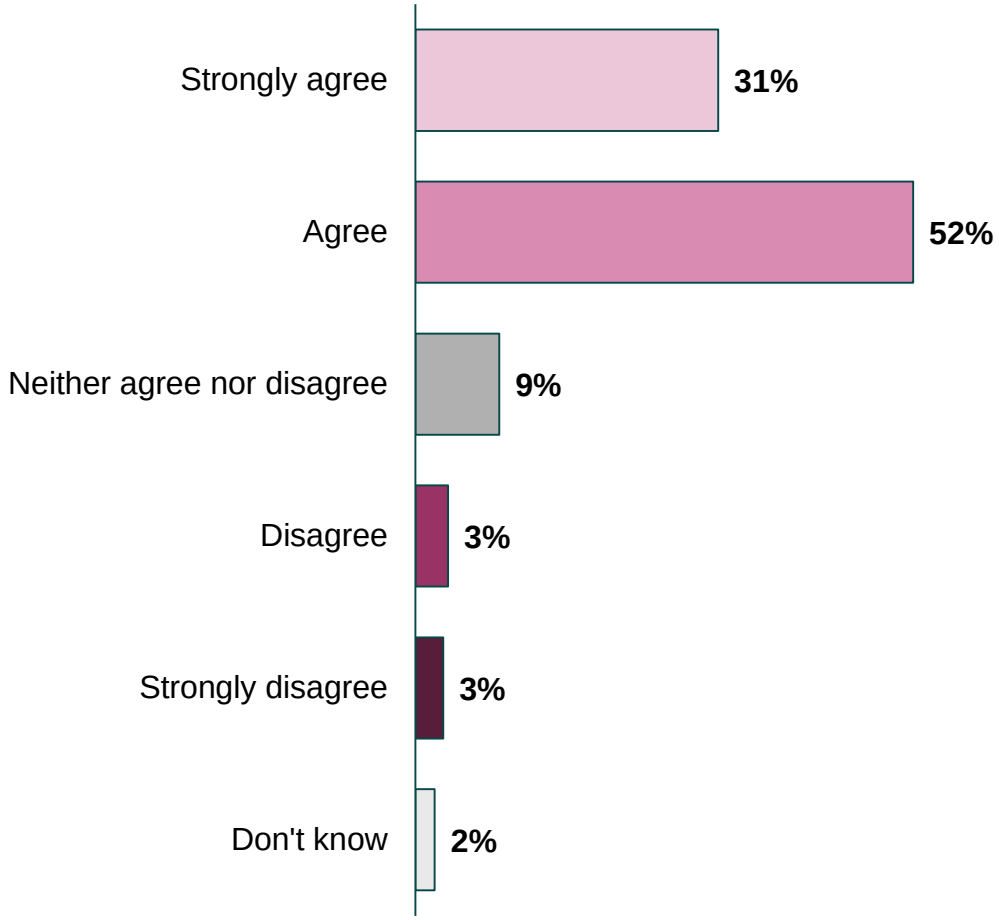
The Library Service believes that there is potential to generate an additional £355,000 per year by potentially:

- increasing the income generated through room hire and leases within council-run libraries;
- reviewing current fees and charges; and
- encouraging fundraising, sponsorship and donations to the Service.

Overall response

83% of respondents agreed that the Library Service should investigate options to generate income, compared to 6% that disagreed.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Library Service should investigate options to generate income in order to contribute to the running of the service? (Base: 20,537)



Key variances

When considering how different types of respondent answered, those that stated that they currently work for the Library Service were more likely than any other respondent type to agree that the Service should look to generate income to contribute to the running costs of the Service (91% agreement). Similarly, those that mentioned they currently volunteer for the Library Service were also more likely to agree (90%) than the average (83%).

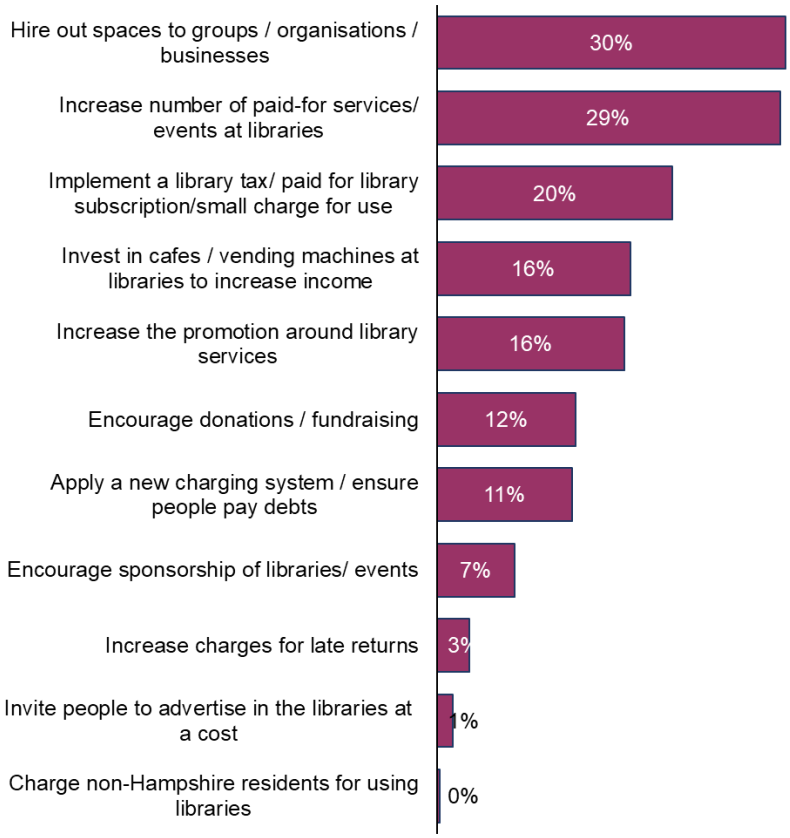
In addition, those who stated that they have a total annual household income of between £90,000 - £100,000 were also more likely to agree with the proposal to generate income than the average respondent, with 90% of this respondent type agreeing to the proposed measures.

Suggestions for generating income

Respondents were given the opportunity to submit 'further comments' about the options proposed. 4,186 of the respondents who agreed that the Library Service should generate income left a comment.

2,108 of these respondents volunteered ideas for income generation.

'Further comments' relating to income generation.
(Respondents in agreement with generating income. Base 2,108. Multi-code)

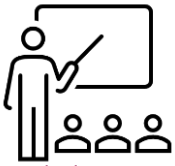


Two of the five most frequently mentioned suggestions were ones which respondents were presented with – namely hiring out spaces to organisations, groups or businesses (30% of comments) and increasing the number of paid-for services or events (29% of comments):

Hiring out spaces within libraries to groups, organisations and or businesses (623 comments). Respondents mentioned how libraries could be hired out to groups for educational or recreational activities for a charge.

> *Encourage existing groups to use the library as a venue and charge appropriate fees.*

> *Maybe some of the premises could be used for Medical/ Care/ Group gatherings. Have Pop-up Retail stalls for local business.*



Increasing the number of paid-for services or events at libraries (613 comments). A variety of suggested classes and events were given, such as running additional parent/ child groups or educational classes for a set fee.

> *Please run more baby, toddler and children's groups to generate income and increase provision for these in the community.*

> *Consider running tech courses for different groups. We run a coding club and it was extremely difficult to find a venue in this area that could offer Wi-Fi etc.*

When looking at variances for this suggestion, respondents that were employees of the Library Service were more likely to mention that there should be an increase in the number of paid-for services or events at libraries.

Similarly, those respondents that stated they have a household income of between £90,000 and £100,000 were most likely to cite this idea:

> *Charges for persons using the library for business/ commercial enterprises, possible creation of drop-in business hub area in unused space/ rooms Incentivise library volunteers with a capped number of free reservations per year.*

> *If there are opportunities for increased income generation then job losses should be a last resort. We still see staff as an expense and not an asset.*

> *Local authors/ writers are big advocates of libraries. Appealing to them and using them to run events attracting people to the libraries (and asking for donations/ selling tickets/ asking for suggested donation towards tickets) could help generate additional funds.*

Unique ideas were also given, such as implementing a 'library tax' or charges for use of the library (20% of comments), investing in cafes or vending machines (16% of comments) or increasing the promotion of library services (16% of comments):

Implementing a library tax or to introduce a paid for library subscription or small charge (421 comments). Suggestions included setting an annual fee in order to ensure libraries stay in local areas. Others suggested applying a small fee for each book borrowed, perhaps adopting a 'means tested' system to ensure vulnerable groups are still able to access services free of charge.

> *Operate a subscription style fee which funds keeping the library in the local community.*

> *A small fee for every book borrowed by adults. An annual fee to belong to the library. This could be voluntary or means tested.*

Investing in cafes or vending machines in libraries to increase income (345 comments). Cafes were suggested as a good way to attract more residents into libraries as well as being used to generate income for the Service.

> *Cafes in a library run by community where profits go back into funding library services.*

> *It could further commercialise its services by having a food and drink counter whenever possible and viable.*

Increasing the promotion around library services (334 comments). Often respondents mentioned that the Library Service could invest in ways to engage the general population to encourage library visits, perhaps by advertising events, groups and other activities and services the library has to offer.

> *Libraries could be transformed by better, wider-reaching communication of what they do.*

> *Maybe think about other ways of tapping into the public thinking on libraries. I feel many folks have no real idea of what's on offer, or what might be possible from conversations I've had.*

When looking at variances for this suggestion, those that were current employees of the Library Service were more likely to mention raising the profile of Hampshire Libraries in order to encourage visits (29%).

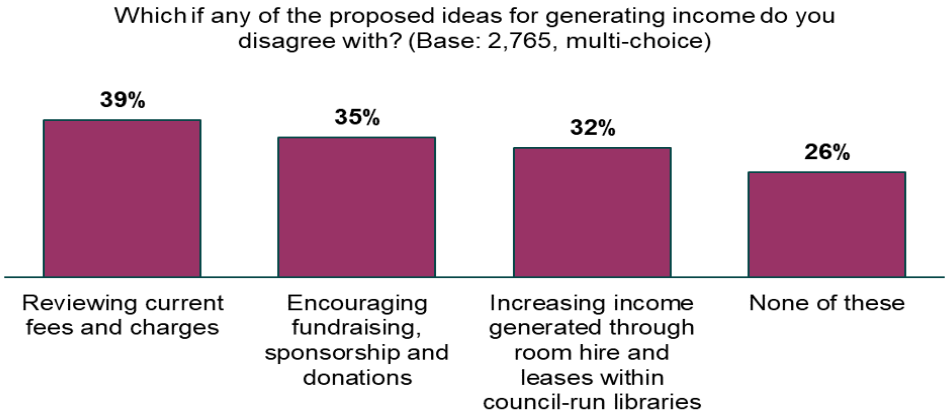
> *Change the way of promoting libraries to outside the library community - much promotion is done on local library Facebook, but it is high volume groups that need to include our promos.*

Encouraging donations to the Service was not as frequently mentioned (12% of comments) despite it being a suggestion put forward via the consultation.

Respondents that disagreed with the Library Service generating income

Respondents who disagreed with the prospect of the Library Service generating additional income were asked which ideas they disagreed with specifically.

39% of these respondents disagreed that there should be a review on current fees and charges applied at libraries.



Respondents that commented on the potential impact of reviewing current fees and charges to generate income suggested that any increase in fees could discourage the use of libraries in general, as they could be perceived as less affordable. Respondents reflected that libraries should remain accessible to all, despite income or background.

> *Fees on books discourages lending. There should be no fees on children's books.*

> *I understand the fees for reserving books, but it would be a deterrent if they rose too much. I think the aim should be to encourage people to borrow more books so my preference would be not generating more income from the borrowing of books but rather from other areas.*

> *I do not wish the current charges to be revised. Using a Library Service should be accessible for all, it should not seek to obtain money, in the form of fees and charges, from those in the community who are unable to afford this. This would result in some members of the community avoiding the Library Service.*

> *The recent hike in fees for inter-library loans was devastating to my husband: we cannot afford £20 per request and the books he needs are too rare or expensive to... - buy. I am concerned that fees and charges will be hiked again, and we will be priced out of other services too.*

> *I disagree with increasing fees and charges. This will not affect the more affluent users but will discourage those with lower incomes from using the library and it is for them that the libraries exist.*

> *An increase in current fees and charges could lead to a further reduction in people using the libraries.*

> *Raising fees and charges will price people out of system.*

Section Seven: Perceived impacts of the consultation proposals

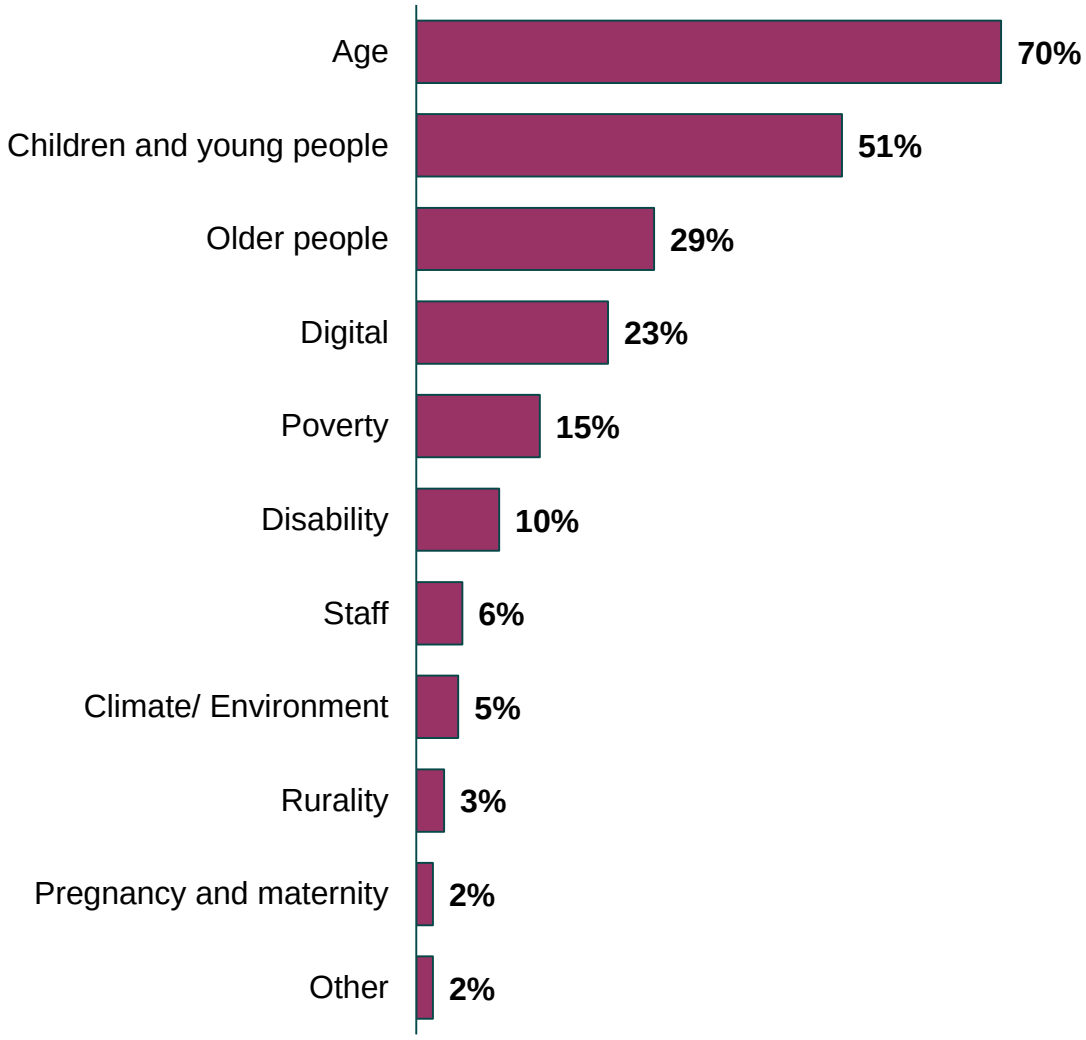
In order to help identify possible effects of the proposed changes to the Library Service, respondents to the consultation were invited to describe the potential impacts the proposals could have on themselves, or the constituency, organisation, group or businesses that they represented.

1,071 respondents stated that the proposals would not have any impact on them.

5,919 of the comments received mentioned impacts on specific groups of people. Most commonly, respondents noted that the proposals could have a differential impact according to age, with children, young people and older people most affected.

Additionally, around one quarter (23%) of respondents stated that the impacts could disproportionately impact those who do not have access to digital technologies e.g. internet access. Those less affluent or with disabilities were also commonly mentioned.

Perceived impact on equalities characteristics:
(Base: 5919, multi-code)

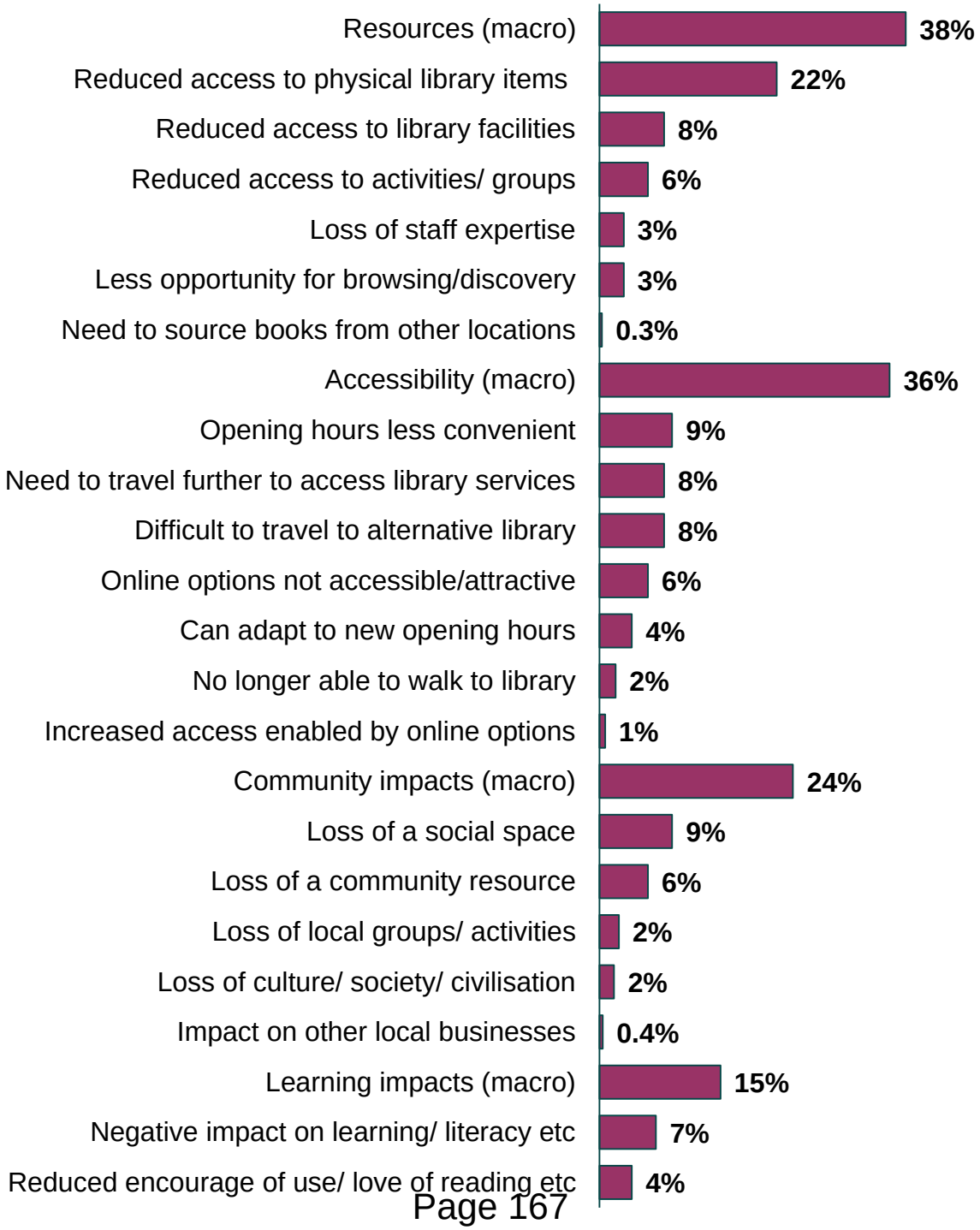


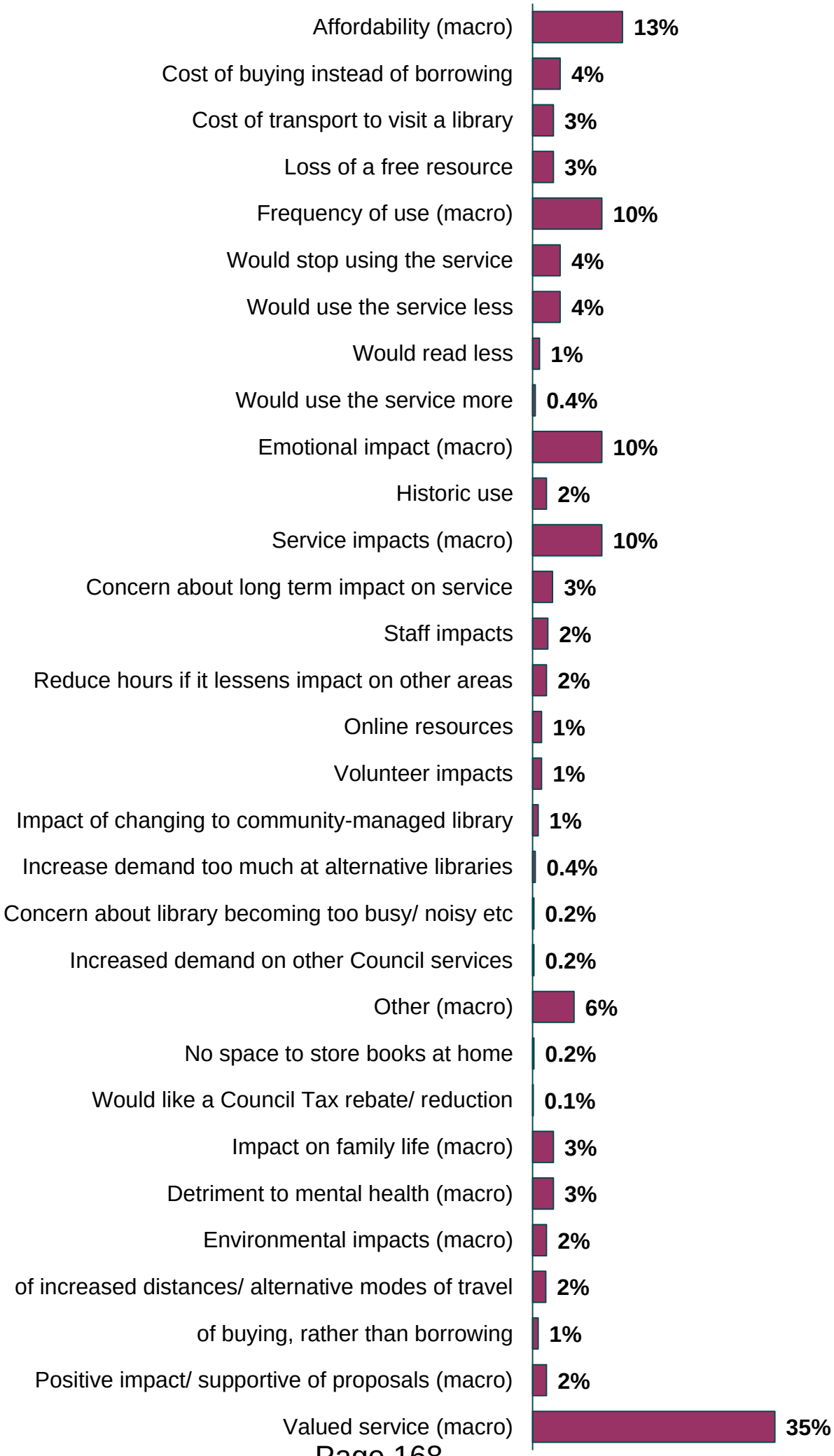
12,519 comments detailed perceived impacts.

Almost four in ten of these comments (38%) focused on the future availability of library resources and a similar proportion (36%) on the accessibility of the library buildings, with respondents also highlighting the impact of reduced access on learning (15%) and on those who could not afford the alternatives of travelling further or buying books (13%). Around a quarter (24%) stressed the potential impacts on the local community, particularly where libraries were identified for potential closure.

Around one third (35%) of respondents used the opportunity to state the value that the service provided but did not always specify an impact.

Impact of proposals – quantified verbatim
(Base: 12519, multi-code)




Affordability (macro) 13%
Cost of buying instead of borrowing 4%
Cost of transport to visit a library 3%
Loss of a free resource 3%
Frequency of use (macro) 10%
Would stop using the service 4%
Would use the service less 4%
Would read less 1%
Would use the service more 0.4%
Emotional impact (macro) 10%
Historic use 2%
Service impacts (macro) 10%
Concern about long term impact on service 3%
Staff impacts 2%
Reduce hours if it lessens impact on other areas 2%
Online resources 1%
Volunteer impacts 1%
Impact of changing to community-managed library 1%
Increase demand too much at alternative libraries 0.4%
Concern about library becoming too busy/ noisy etc 0.2%
Increased demand on other Council services 0.2%
Other (macro) 6%
No space to store books at home 0.2%
Would like a Council Tax rebate/ reduction 0.1%
Impact on family life (macro) 3%
Detriment to mental health (macro) 3%
Environmental impacts (macro) 2%
of increased distances/ alternative modes of travel 2%
of buying, rather than borrowing 1%
Positive impact/ supportive of proposals (macro) 2%
Valued service (macro) 35%

This section provides further information about the key themes identified in the graph above.

Key theme – Resources

4,699 respondents commented on the impact that proposed changes could have on resources – in particular the reduction of access to physical library resources e.g. books.

More than two in 10 comments (22%) noted that the proposals would mean people had less access to the physical library items that they enjoyed or relied on. Often, they cited concerns about the cost of accessing these items elsewhere. Respondents also noted that digital alternatives would not be suitable for everybody.

> *I use the library regularly and would miss the ability to get information (reference books) and reading material.*
>
> *As an isolated person I like to read the Times and the FT several days a week. I cannot afford to purchase these papers. If they were not available my visits per month would decline to one.*
>
> *I use the Library Service on a regular basis particularly using audio books and ordering playsets for a play-reading group. Without the library and it's staff, my life would not be so rich in knowledge and pleasure, education and discussion.*
>
> *The cuts planned by the council would reduce the availability of access to resources. Not everyone wants to be digital.*

(2694 comments mentioned a reduced access to physical library items)

Around one in 10 comments (8%) reported that the proposals would reduce their access to library facilities. The majority noted concerns about losing access to computer or printing facilities, although the perceived impact on groups who use library space was also a recurring feature. Organisations and groups were particularly concerned about this, with 16% worried about the impact of reduced access to library facilities.

> *This may exclude groups from being able to hire rooms, further isolating people who rely on these groups for social contact.*
>
> *I use the library computers, photocopying etc. This would be a huge loss if it was removed.*
>
> *The loss of libraries will negatively impact those of us with limited or no internet access. Those of us who are isolated, by age or ill-health or homelessness.*
>
> *I use the library to be able to access the internet to apply for jobs. Without this resource, I would find it significantly harder to get back to full-time work.*

(1021 comments mentioned a reduced access to library facilities)

Some of the comments (6%) highlighted that the proposals to close libraries, reduce opening hours or increase fees could reduce their access to activities or groups that were usually held in the library. Many were concerned that this could limit their opportunities for social interaction. More than one in 10 organisations and groups (12%) were worried about the impact caused by a reduction in access to activities or groups.

> *If increases in fees were large, it would divert me from using as many activities as I currently do. I visit the library 3 times weekly at present.*
>
> *Libraries offer a great service for my children, giving us the option to discover books together through different activities such as rhyme times, Lego building etc. To not have access to this would remove us from a social opportunity.*
>
> *As I am learning to read this will make it more difficult for me. My baby brother won't have the benefit of borrowing books from the library when he's older or taking part in rhyme time or other activities. This means mummy won't meet other mummies during the day when I'm at school.*
>
> *Could make my membership of a study group and of a book group difficult to continue.*

(769 comments mentioned a reduced access to activities or groups)

Other concerns about the impact on resources focused on a loss of staff expertise, less opportunity for browsing and the need to buy or obtain physical resources from other sources (such as online).

> *We would not be able to enjoy taking our grandson to the Chineham Library where he enjoys browsing the collection of books for his age.*
>
> *Keep the staff as they are knowledgeable and reliable. Volunteering can easily lead to unreliable closures, struggling to find people and the library staff not being so knowledgeable.*
>
> *Reading is a pleasant way of relaxing and informing. Losing access to a library would mean having to buy more books.*

(833 comments mentioned the perceived impact of reduced resources)

Key theme - Accessibility

Another main theme that emerged from the verbatim comments was the potential impact on access to the library buildings. The majority of these comments expressed concern, although some felt that they would be able to adapt to proposed changes and saw an opportunity to improve their access to online library services.

Around one in 10 (9%) of the respondents who mentioned an impact stated that a change in opening hours for libraries would inconvenience them. Those who work full-time were particularly concerned that a change in hours could impact their ability to access a library at all.

> *If library hours are reduced outside office hours, it would make it very difficult for me to visit the library.*

> *It may drive us away from using the Library Service if they were not available at a convenient time.*

> *Reduced hours would be irritating. My library is already closed for one day each week.*

> *Less able to borrow books at convenient time or day.*

(1,090 comments mentioned opening hours being less convenient)

Over a thousand comments (8%) explained how people would need to travel further to use an alternative library. This was a focus amongst respondents whose local library was identified for potential closure.

> *At the moment I can walk or cycle to my nearest library and use it as an incentive to do so. If local network of libraries closes it will necessitate vehicle/ car journeys so moving away from a healthy and environmentally sounder position.*

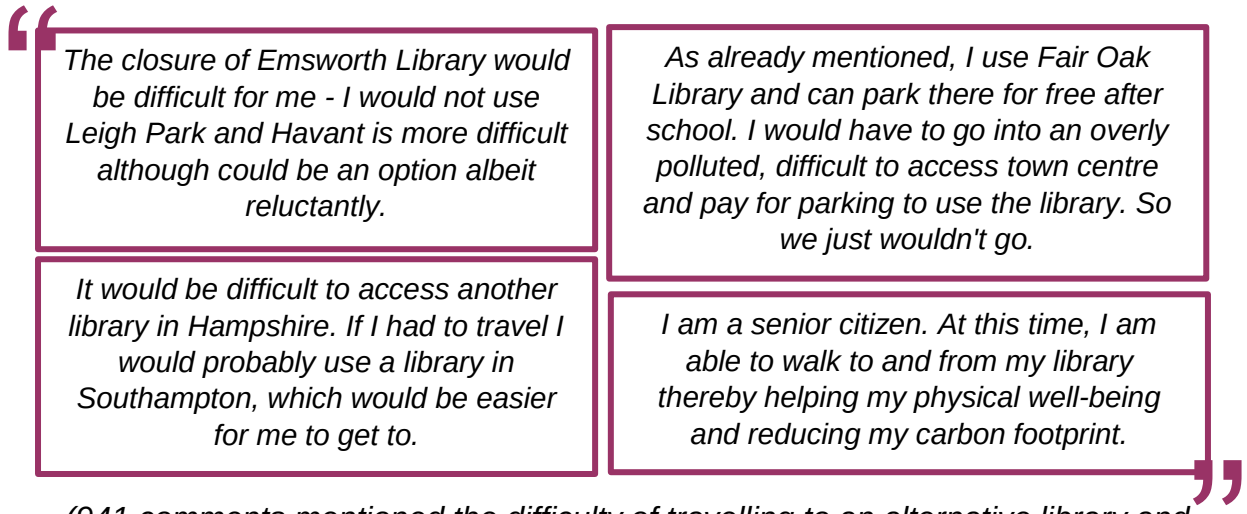
> *My local library is Lee on the Solent. I can walk to my library. My next closest libraries are Stubbington or Gosport. I would have to pay to park at either of these and use a car and this will increase my carbon footprint.*

> *I probably won't use the library as I would either have to go 8 miles out of my way to Tadley or pay to park and hike across Festival Place for Basingstoke.*

> *I would have to travel further to access library no good bus service in Bramley. Would have to use Basingstoke library and incur parking costs.*

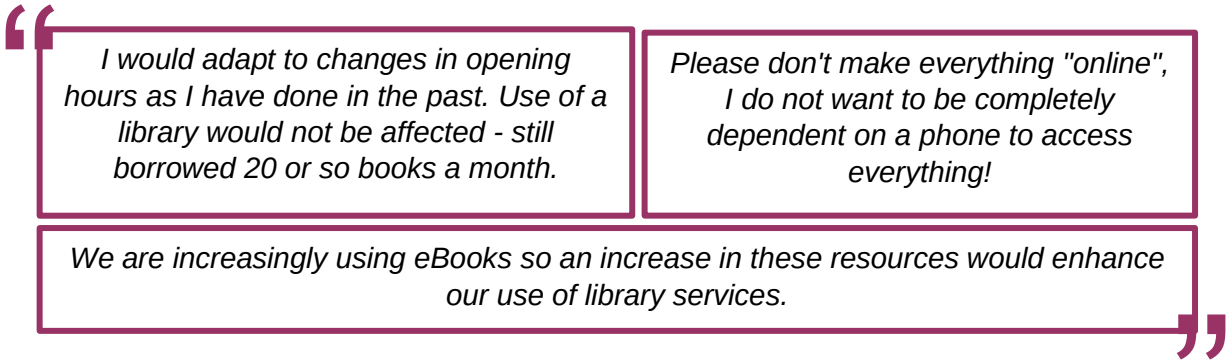
(1,046 comments mentioned travelling further to an alternative library)

A similar proportion (8%) reported the difficulties they could experience if required to travel to an alternative library. There was particular concern about the difficulty the elderly and those without access to transport could face. Around one quarter of Democratically Elected Representatives (23%) raised their concerns about the potential impact of difficulties in accessing an alternative library. Some (2%) respondents highlighted impacts associated with no longer being in walking distance of their local library.



(941 comments mentioned the difficulty of travelling to an alternative library and 302 comments mentioned no longer being able to walk to the library)

Other accessibility-related impacts included a need to adapt to new opening hours and/ or to accessing library services online. Although some respondents felt that this would be feasible, there was recognition that these alternatives may not be attractive or possible for everyone.



(1280 comments mentioned other impacts on accessibility)

Key theme – Community impacts

Around one quarter (24%) of respondents reported perceived community impacts – principally, the loss of a social space and a place for the community to engage.

Around one in 10 (9%) noted that the proposed changes could reduce social interaction within their community. Many of these stated that they use the library as a place to meet friends or family – not just for borrowing books. Almost one quarter (23%) of responding Democratically Elected Representatives were also concerned about the impacts of losing a social space if libraries were to close.

I would be lost without the ability to borrow books and enjoy the cafe while I browse. I often use it as a meeting place with friends.

I feel it is vital to encourage children to still use books & engage in a social space to learn & interact. This starts at an early age. I enjoy taking my granddaughter to Rhyme time every week, she's enjoys the interaction with other children, then choosing her books for the week.

Having a small child, the library is a frequently used resource by us as well as a place to meet people and socialise whilst renting books etc. Losing access would be dreadful, it's somewhere to go even if it's raining and it's great to have a free place to visit that children still love.

My husband and I use our local library almost every day and enjoy seeing friends there while having a coffee.

(1070 comments mentioned the loss of a social space)

Almost 700 respondents (6%) highlighted concern over the potential loss of a community resource. Many felt that the library proved a valuable resource for all ages and played an important role as focal point that brought people together and supported a sense of community. Both Organisations and Democratically Elected Representatives were more concerned than the average respondent about the loss of a community resource.

Losing my local library would mean the loss of a focal point and community resource. I suspect many groups that use my library would simply cease.

We are OAPs and rely on a walk up to our library. When we order books online how are we to collect them, if we can't do so locally? We do not want to lose another village facility. The bus service is gone. So has the bank, newsagent, and most shops such as butcher, baker etc.

Chineham Library is a key community resource, helping encourage our children to get excited about reading (e.g. summer reading challenge), being a place to play and learn (e.g. we used to do rhyme time but now do Lego play and crafts), widening our children's reading range with help of the librarians. It also provides a key role to those who are retired, such as my father who also uses this library. Our school also do visits to Chineham Library. Please please please don't close it.

(688 comments mentioned the loss of a community resource)

Some respondents (2%) were concerned about the loss of groups or activities. Many found these to be an important part of their lives – helping with relaxation and socialisation, as well as skill development and learning.

If Lee on the Solent Library were to close I would obviously have further to travel to access services, furthermore the Crafty Needles sewing group that I have attended on a Friday fortnightly for the last approx. seven years would no longer exist.

I attend a knitting group held in our local library, which has a beneficial effect on the mental health of all of us who attend. It has become a social as well as a craft group enabling us to support each other. If the library hours are reduced it could have a detrimental effect on this and other such groups.

Personally a closure of my library would have a huge impact on my life, I am disabled and not elderly so the options for day time activities are limited, discovering the whole raft of clubs my library provides and the support they have given myself and a friend to start a day time book club have actually changed my life.

If the larger libraries were more restricted in opening it would affect services like rhyme time, coding club and all the children's activities.

(234 comments mentioned the loss of groups or activities)

Other community impacts cited included: a loss of part of society/ culture/ civilisation, and a perceived negative impact on local businesses.

Libraries provide learning and education by which means we become constructive members of society. They are an important investment in the future of society.

Closing the library would be detrimental for the local businesses in Emsworth so I would prefer to see the library stay open but with reduced hours if necessary.

(234 comments mentioned the other losses that could arise)

A large proportion (35%) of respondents emphasised the value they got from the Library Service but did not always specify an impact that the proposed changes could have on them.

Having access to the wonderful resources that are free at point of service and the many other benefits of having local library services are of immeasurable value to not only our family but to all in the wider community.

The library is a valuable service within our community. My local branch already try to accommodate all age ranges, with different activities set throughout the year. As a family, we are extremely grateful to have this facility available.

As an elderly subscriber, I value the on-line facilities you offer and would wish to see them increased. More and more people are becoming "tech savvy".

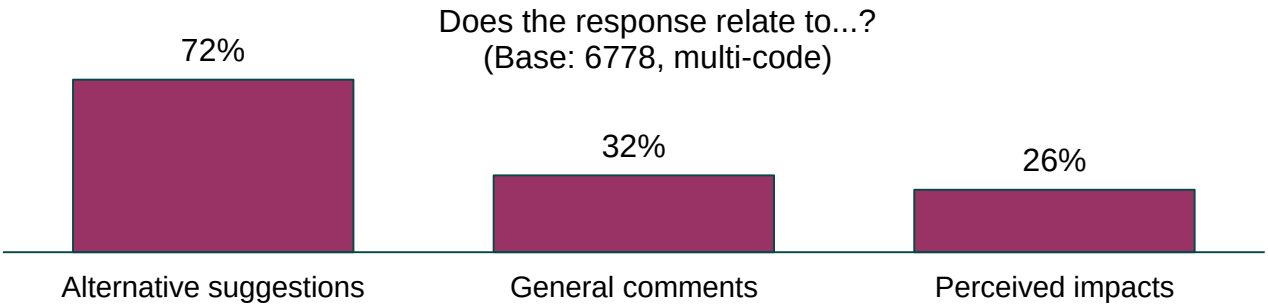
I will continue to use the library weekly, may just have to get used to new opening hours if that is what is put in place. So I don't think there will be any impact on me. I really value the library and the resources available.

(4,335 comments mentioned the library being a valued service)

Section Eight: Further comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide any further comments relating to the consultation, or suggestions as to how the Library Service could achieve its future vision whilst delivering around £1.76 million in total savings.

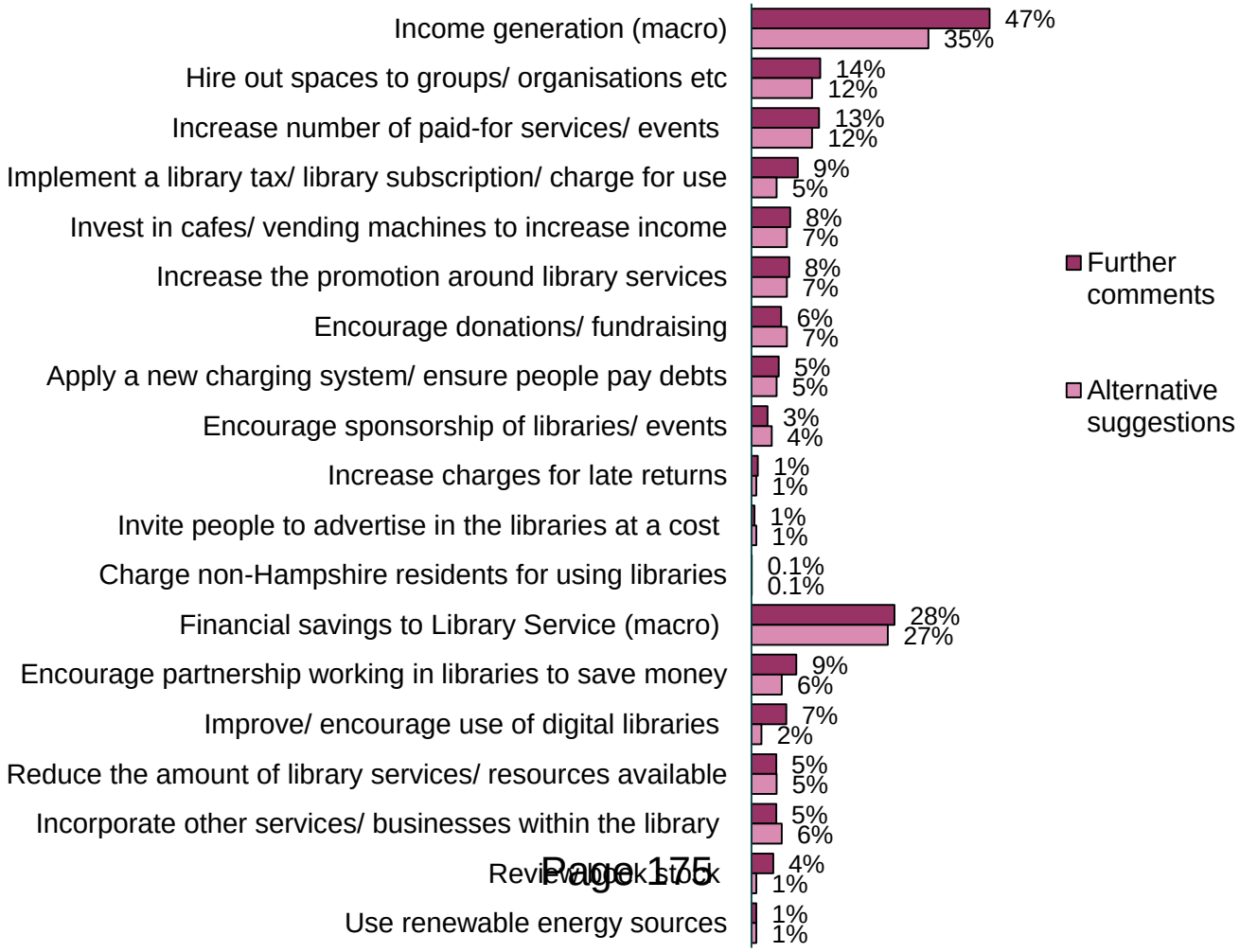
6,778 further comments were submitted by respondents. Further comments included a mixture of alternative suggestions, general comments and perceived impacts.

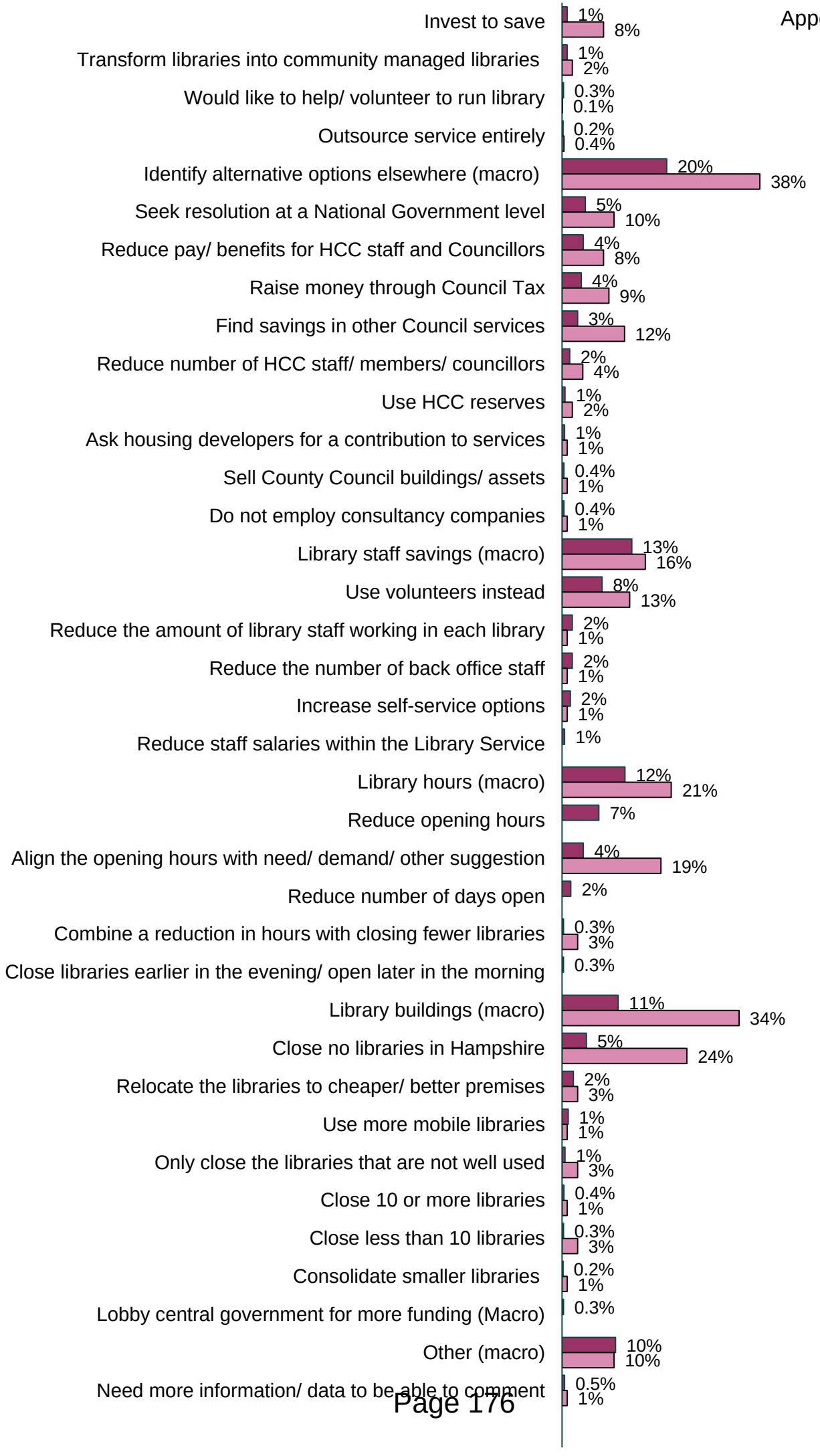


Alternative suggestions

4,907 of the further comments included alternative suggestions as to how the Library Service could save money or generate income. In many cases these suggestions mirrored those submitted by respondents who had offered an 'alternative approach' to the proposed operational savings earlier in the Response Form (Q14). However, there were some notable differences, which are outlined below.

Alternative approaches suggested by respondents submitting further comments - quantified verbatim (Base: 4907, 3662, multi-code)




Invest to save
1%
8%
Transform libraries into community managed libraries
1%
2%
Would like to help/ volunteer to run library
0.3%
0.1%
Outsource service entirely
0.2%
0.4%
Identify alternative options elsewhere (macro)
20%
38%
Seek resolution at a National Government level
5%
10%
Reduce pay/ benefits for HCC staff and Councillors
4%
8%
Raise money through Council Tax
4%
9%
Find savings in other Council services
3%
12%
Reduce number of HCC staff/ members/ councillors
2%
4%
Use HCC reserves
1%
2%
Ask housing developers for a contribution to services
1%
1%
Sell County Council buildings/ assets
0.4%
1%
Do not employ consultancy companies
0.4%
1%
Library staff savings (macro)
13%
16%
Use volunteers instead
8%
13%
Reduce the amount of library staff working in each library
2%
1%
Reduce the number of back office staff
2%
1%
Increase self-service options
2%
1%
Reduce staff salaries within the Library Service
1%
Library hours (macro)
12%
21%
Reduce opening hours
7%
Align the opening hours with need/ demand/ other suggestion
4%
19%
Reduce number of days open
2%
Combine a reduction in hours with closing fewer libraries
0.3%
3%
Close libraries earlier in the evening/ open later in the morning
0.3%
Library buildings (macro)
11%
34%
Close no libraries in Hampshire
5%
24%
Relocate the libraries to cheaper/ better premises
2%
3%
Use more mobile libraries
1%
1%
Only close the libraries that are not well used
1%
3%
Close 10 or more libraries
0.4%
1%
Close less than 10 libraries
0.3%
3%
Consolidate smaller libraries
0.2%
1%
Lobby central government for more funding (Macro)
0.3%
Other (macro)
10%
10%
Need more information/ data to be able to comment
0.5%
1%

The main difference was an increase in the number of comments that focused on income generation (47%) – particularly by implementing a library tax, chargeable subscription or charging users for using the Service. Opinion varied as to what a reasonable amount to charge for memberships or borrowing items would be – although most comments reported that charges should be means tested and not applied to the elderly or those on low incomes.

Charge a small subscription for library membership e.g. £5 per year.

Although controversial, maybe introduce a small fee (say 50p?) for the borrowing of each book and something similar for the use of other services. I'd be happy to pay such a fee.

Charging an annual membership of £5-£10 for adults, excluding children/ pensioners/ people receiving financial support, etc.

Levy a separate charge on the Council Tax to support a bigger Library Service.

How about making a small charge for each book that is borrowed, say 10p? I have no idea how much this would raise but it surely would be a big help to funding.

Charge all library users a nominal annual membership fee, e.g. £2 for Adults, £1 for Children, £1.50 for Concessions.

(2,310 comments mentioned generating income)

Another notable difference was the higher proportion of comments that suggested improving and encouraging the use of digital libraries (7%).

Advertise the availability of the eBooks service, I was not aware of this service until I read these pages it could easily replace my use of downloaded books on my kindle device - usually funded by birthday gifts and family contributions.

Increasing digital availability of popular novels would help if physical library availability/ opening hours were to be reduced under any option.

Make the Library Service predominantly online, people do not want to travel to get books. The world has moved on and Hampshire need to move on with it.

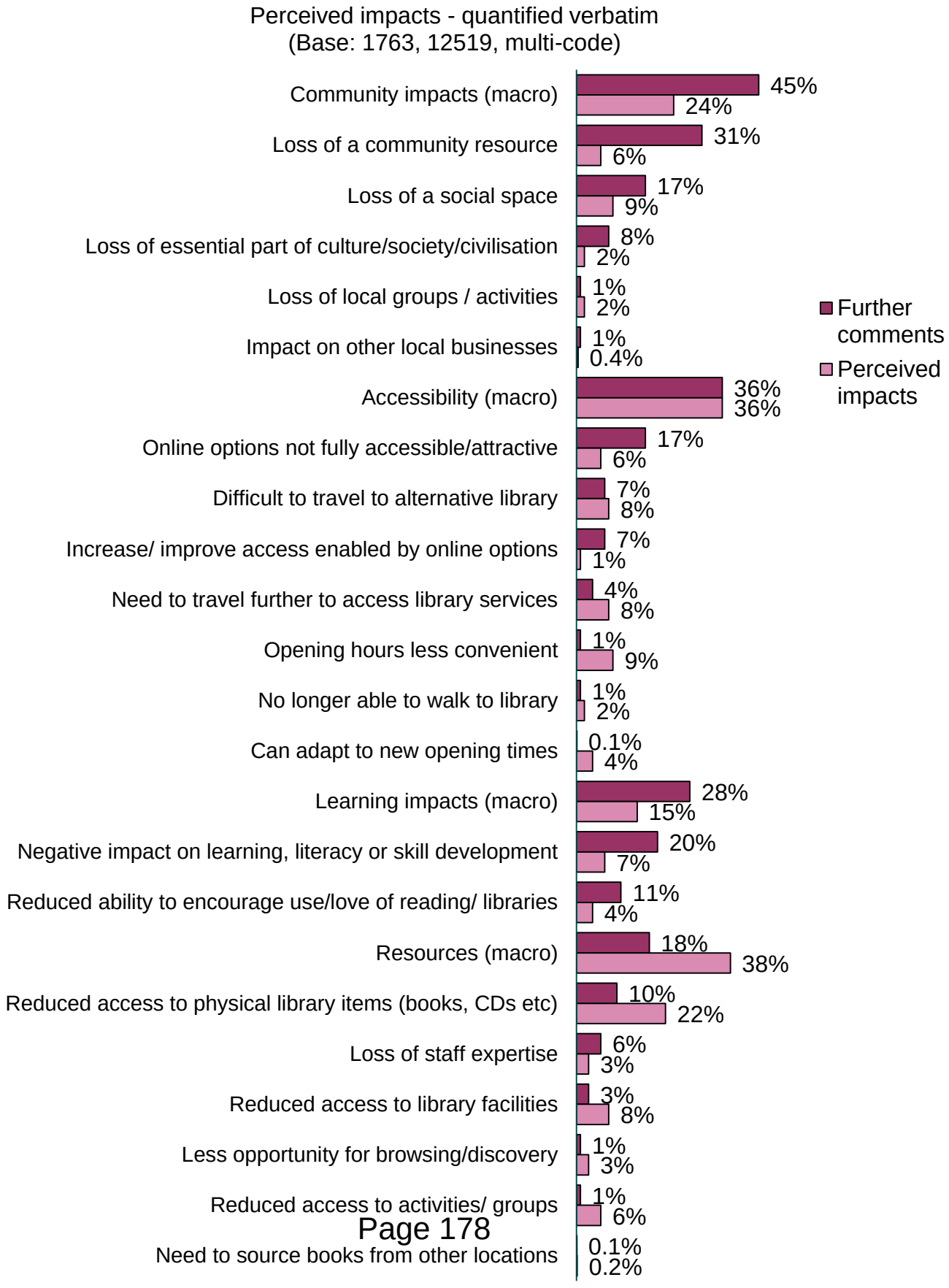
I think BorrowBox is amazing but would be good to promoted more in library.

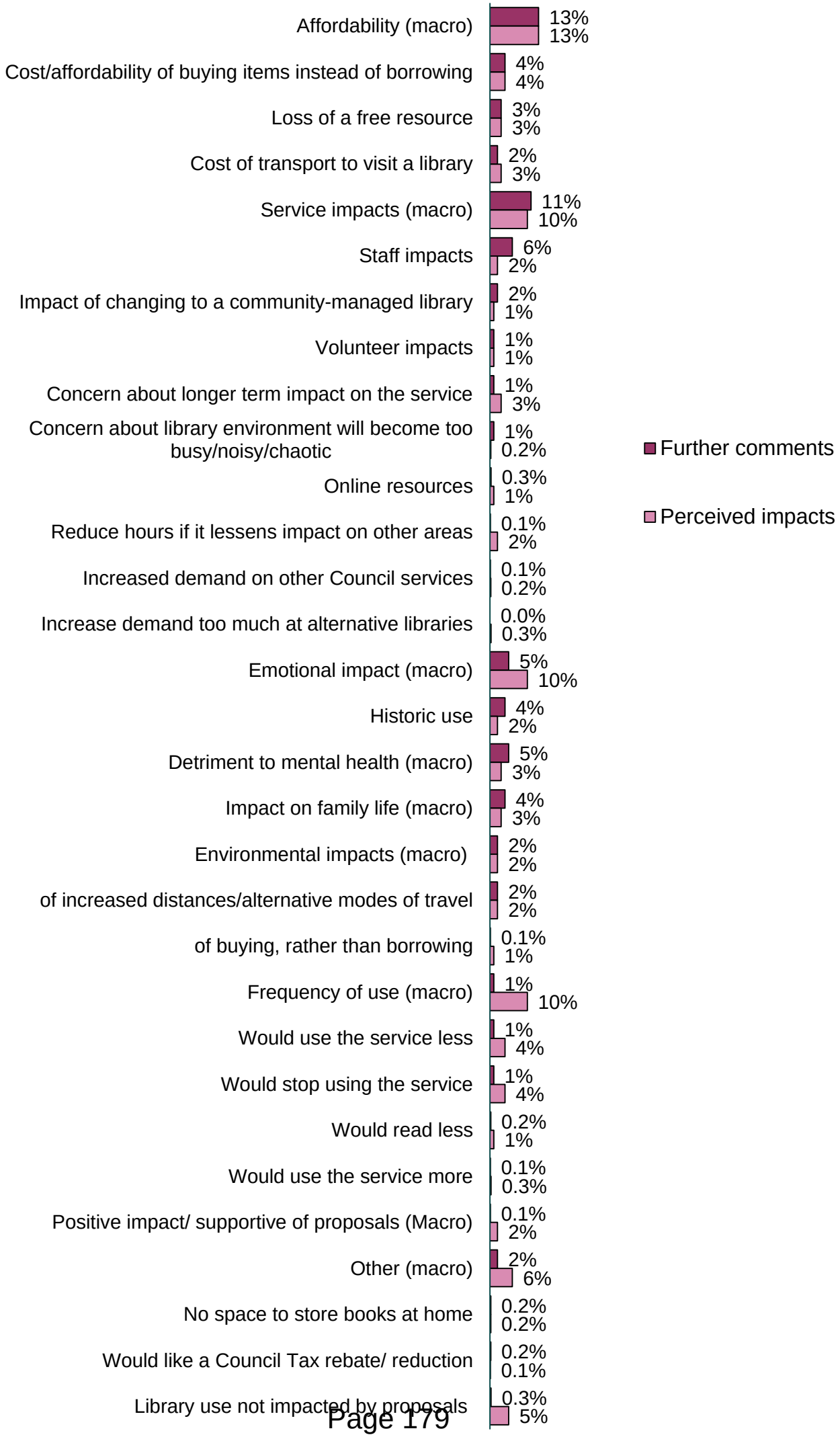
Improving online access to books so that they can be used when the library is closed, especially for young readers, i.e. infant school, and pre-school.

(339 comments mentioned improving and encouraging use of digital libraries)

Perceived impacts

1,763 further comments referenced the perceived impacts of the proposals within the consultation. In many cases, the 'further comments' impacts reflected those referenced earlier in the consultation, when respondents were given the opportunity to share the impacts the proposals could have on them or their household (Q27). However, there were some notable differences, which are outlined below.




Affordability (macro) 13% 13%
Cost/affordability of buying items instead of borrowing 4% 4%
Loss of a free resource 3% 3%
Cost of transport to visit a library 2% 3%
Service impacts (macro) 11% 10%
Staff impacts 6% 2%
Impact of changing to a community-managed library 2% 1%
Volunteer impacts 1% 1%
Concern about longer term impact on the service 1% 3%
Concern about library environment will become too busy/noisy/chaotic 1% 0.2%
Online resources 0.3% 1%
Reduce hours if it lessens impact on other areas 0.1% 2%
Increased demand on other Council services 0.1% 0.2%
Increase demand too much at alternative libraries 0.0% 0.3%
Emotional impact (macro) 5% 10%
Historic use 4% 2%
Detriment to mental health (macro) 5% 3%
Impact on family life (macro) 4% 3%
Environmental impacts (macro) 2% 2%
of increased distances/alternative modes of travel 2% 2%
of buying, rather than borrowing 0.1% 1%
Frequency of use (macro) 1% 10%
Would use the service less 1% 4%
Would stop using the service 1% 4%
Would read less 0.2% 1%
Would use the service more 0.1% 0.3%
Positive impact/ supportive of proposals (Macro) 0.1% 2%
Other (macro) 2% 6%
No space to store books at home 0.2% 0.2%
Would like a Council Tax rebate/ reduction 0.2% 0.1%
Library use not impacted by proposals 0.3% 5%
Further comments
Perceived impacts

Respondents who left 'further comments' placed particular emphasis on the impacts that the proposals may have on the community (45% of comments) – in particular, that they could result in the loss of a community resource and social space.

> *Our library is a precious resource, much valued, and once closed, will be gone for good, to the great detriment to the community today and tomorrow.*

> *I believe the closing of the Library would be a disaster for the local community particularly for the elderly who do not have access to a computer or someone to help them.*

> *Libraries should be the hub of the community not only providing resources for learning but a centre for communication and discovery at all levels.*

> *Please do not close any libraries - communities get impacted far beyond the loss of the library, which is tragic enough - both socially, culturally and economically.*

(796 comments mentioned the impact the proposals could have on the community)

Another notable difference was the increased proportion of comments that mentioned the impacts on learning and skill development – 28% focused on the negative impact that could be felt by children in particular.

> *I brought my granddaughter as a toddler to Storytime and singalong, got her used to going into the library (Hythe). Now she goes to primary school, and did the summer reading challenge, is a fluent reader age 5, and loves her books. Am certain the library resources played a large part.*

> *Some years ago, I had very little money and none to spare and no qualifications beyond O levels. I had discovered a love of history and wanted to read about topics that were relevant to the research I was doing. I was able to borrow the books I needed through the library and thus to educate myself. I went on to study for an MPhil. Without access to books, I would never have achieved that level.*

> *Libraries are essential, especially for families who lack resources to provide books for their children. The literacy standards in UK are appalling and will only get worse if library services are in any way curtailed.*

> *I think that closing libraries and reducing opening hours will have a negative impact on communities especially for poorer families and vulnerable individuals. It will have a negative impact on literacy skills for children. It will also have a negative impact on adult learning and social activities.*

(486 comments mentioned the impact the proposals could have on learning)

In addition, a higher proportion of respondents focused their 'further comments' on online library services. A mixture of comments were received, with 17% saying that the online options are not always attractive or accessible and 7% reporting that they could increase and/ or improve access.

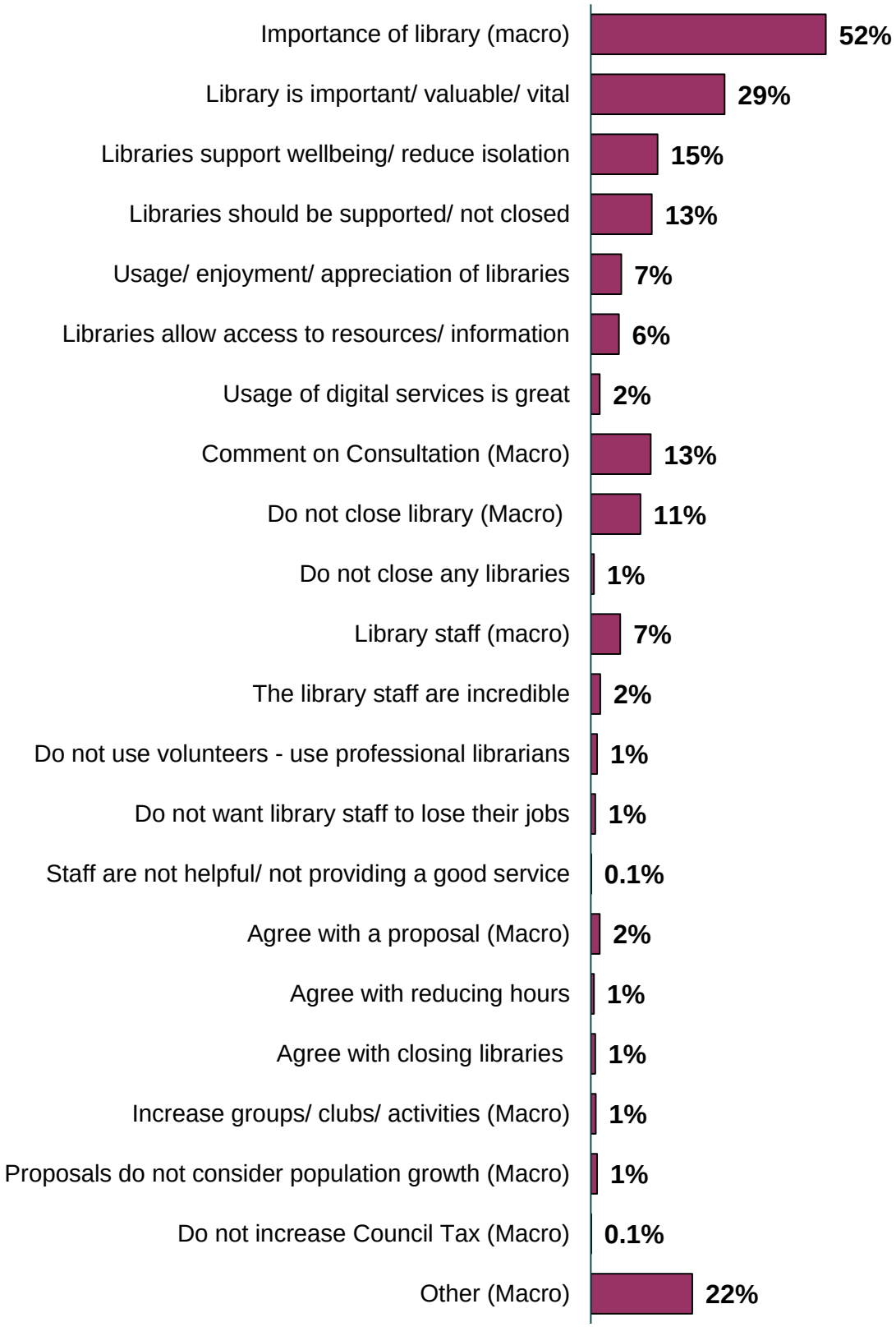
> *Please remember the elderly and disabled who cannot access online or have smart phones. Libraries are an important source of help to their daily living.*
>
> *Many people especially the elderly find online/ mobiles/ apps confusing and difficult to use. I myself am not old but much prefer the printed word to digital resources.*
>
> *Books should not solely be viewed as digital resource to the exclusion of physical copy, they both have their place and it is most important that young children grow up appreciating them. I used a Kindle for a while and then reverted to physical books again.*
>
> *I would like to use the eBook Library Service but I found it so confusing and difficult to use that I gave up on it. It would be great if you were to make this easier and I am sure more people would then use that service.*
>
> *The digital world provides the opportunity for most people to have alternatives.*

(306 comments mentioned that online library services are not always accessible or attractive and 116 comments mentioned that online options could increase/ improve access)

General comments

2,197 ‘further comments’ submitted were general remarks – primarily about the responsibilities and importance of the Library Service and its staff, although some respondents also took the opportunity to comment on the consultation itself.

General comments - quantified verbatim
(Base: 2197, multi-code)



This section provides further information about the key themes identified in the graph above.

Key theme – Importance of libraries

Over half (52%) of the general comments received focused on the importance of the Library Service, with many reporting the softer outcomes of using libraries, such as personal value, enjoyment and wellbeing.

Around one in three 'general comments' (29%) stated that libraries were a valuable and important resource that bring communities together and help to foster a sense of community or place.

> *The Library Service is, for me, one of the prime services provided by HCC. It provides intellectual and cultural input which should not be lost, in the end you will have lost the ability to educate and interest the public.*
>
> *Libraries have made a difference to the lives of poor people in the past. We need to realise the educational importance for all especially those people joining new communities. Libraries should still be all inclusive and available to all.*
>
> *I think that libraries are a vital service for all ages. They are a great environment for parents to take children and it is very important that children are encouraged to read before they get into using social media.*
>
> *Libraries are a valuable part of our heritage and provide an important service for our communities.*

(647 comments mentioned the value and importance of libraries)

Around one sixth (15%) reported that libraries support people's wellbeing and are a way to reduce social isolation.

> *In an increasingly introverted society controlled by a mobile device, a library could be the place for people to meet, chat, read, drink coffee and access other local amenities. Many older people and those with mental issues could benefit from a friendly meeting place.*
>
> *It's important to keep libraries open and develop them into community hubs. There are not enough places where people can socialise together informally. In order to preserve mental health in all ages we could use libraries as a meeting place where people to drop in and find someone to chat to.*
>
> *I have seen the elderly sitting quietly doing puzzles, reading & interacting with staff, this is vital to their mental & physical wellbeing. Children love to look at books & talk to their peers, again, what's not to love sitting with a child & reading instead of looking at a computer or phone screen.*
>
> *Routine of using local library services (within walking distances preferably) is becoming increasingly important for physical, health, social and intellectual stimulation for older people.*

(323 comments mentioned libraries supporting health and wellbeing)

A similar proportion (13%) stated that libraries should be supported and invested in rather than being closed or having funding reduced.

Libraries are essential community meeting places and support for the vulnerable in society - this aspect should be developed and not cut.

Personally, I don't believe library services should be cut. It's the easy option because it's the least emotive and controversial of all cost cutting options. I believe there should be more investment in library services…

I do not agree with these savings. Instead, the Council should be investing in libraries - particularly in expanding communities. The County Council are forcing reduced infrastructure on an expanding community. This is actually a double cut. If we have more houses, we need more to stand still. Therefore, the library hours and facilities should be increased and, instead of looking for savings, the Council should be investing in more.

Library services are essential for the development of literacy and for people with no other means of access to the same facilities. They are a public service that should be improved not reduced.

(294 comments mentioned supporting libraries/ investing more instead of reducing library services)

Comments were made about all libraries identified for potential closure within the consultation – the majority of comments were supportive of keeping specific libraries open. Over one in 10 (11%) respondents who submitted a generalised comment used the opportunity to reiterate that they did not want libraries to close.

Keep Blackfield open somehow please!

Perhaps rather than considering closing Chineham Library it could be open on fewer days or less hours.

I think it would be a massive mistake to shut this library as Fair Oak seems to be losing much of its centre and life when at a time with more houses being built it feels to me that more should be made of the things we have here to build upon the community.

Please consider keeping Emsworth Library open but reducing opening hours. If location is the problem (high rent) please consider moving it elsewhere, even to a temporary building as in previous years.

Horndean Library should remain as a community facility and the Council should invite community organisations to participate. and help support its running. The library should NOT be cut off from Council support…

I wish for Elson Library to remain open as a Library Service with the addition of other local services using the building. This needs to be the eco-friendly option, a local community service for many years to come. This service has to remain. To close this service will be one step further towards a closed community. This library is one of the only community services left in this area of Gosport and plays an important role.

If Lee Library were to close, I fear that would be end of the Library Service in Lee - once closed, never to re-open! I would be happy to pay a small amount for childrens' activities, provide tea and coffee within the library, renting the space out for evening events and activities.

Closing Lyndhurst Library would significantly reduce cohesion within the local community, as it is rare to visit the library without meeting and interacting with local people.

Please leave Odiham Library open for two sessions per week.

My hope is that South Ham is not closed. Reducing opening hours is fine although I hope Saturday mornings remain open.

(240 comments mentioned not closing libraries)

Unstructured comments submitted via email or letter

Some respondents to the consultation chose to submit, or expand on, their response via channels such as email or letter. Any such submissions to the County Council that were received during the consultation period are included in this consultation analysis.

Summary of unstructured responses[19]

196 letters, emails and telephone calls that were received during the consultation provided feedback on the consultation proposals. These included:

- 159 responses from members of the public;
- 15 responses from businesses, organisations or groups;
- 14 responses from local authorities;
- three responses from Members of Parliament; and
- one response from a team within Hampshire County Council's Children's Services Department.

Four responses did not specify a 'type'.

These unstructured responses broadly addressed:

- views on the consultation proposals;
- potential impacts of the consultation proposals;
- views and experiences of the Library Service;
- ways to deliver library services differently;
- views on the consultation process; and
- other comments which cannot be classified under the headings above.

The responses are grouped under these headings.

[19] Please note that this does not include the letters received from schoolchildren in response to the consultation, which are covered separately, later in this section

Views on the consultation proposals

165 respondents expressed a view on the consultation proposals, of whom 152 mentioned concerns, seven offered support, and six were neutral about what was being proposed.

126 responses mentioned that **libraries should not be closed**. 18 of these mentioned that no libraries should close. Where the respondent named a specific library, the total number of mentions opposing closure were:

- 36 relating to Chineham Library;
- 10 relating to Elson Library;
- nine relating to Fair Oak Library;
- nine relating to South Ham Library;
- nine relating to Lee-on-the-Solent Library;
- eight relating to Kingsclere Community Library;
- seven relating to Lyndhurst Library;
- seven relating to Blackfield Library;
- six relating to Lowford Community Library;
- five relating to Emsworth Library;
- three relating to Odiham Library;
- two relating to Horndean Library;
- one relating to North Baddesley Community Library;
- one relating to Petersfield Library; and
- one relating to Bishops Waltham Library.

41 respondents mentioned that **a reduction in library opening hours would be preferable to libraries closing**. Only a small number of responses elaborated on this comment, of which three said that the library hours should be based on local need, one that libraries should be open for fewer days, rather than fewer hours per day, and one that library hours should be reduced on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Concerns about reducing the level of support for community-managed libraries, or about relying on community groups too heavily, as they may not have the capacity to meet the demands placed on them, were raised by 13 respondents.

The **statutory duty for local authorities** to provide ‘a comprehensive and efficient Library Service for all persons’ under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 was mentioned by 11 respondents.

Nine respondents stated that they **did not agree with any of the proposals** in the consultation.

Disagreement with reducing library opening hours was mentioned by nine respondents.

Concerns about **the finality of a library’s closure** were raised by three respondents, as they were seen as unlikely to reopen.

Disagreement with the introduction or increase of any fees or charges for using libraries was mentioned by three respondents.

Two respondents mentioned that the County Council **should not sell assets**.

The impact of the savings was felt to be **disproportionate** to the savings that would be generated by two respondents who provided comments.

Two respondents noted that **IT resources in libraries should not be reduced**.

A view that **libraries should not relocate** was mentioned by one respondent.

It was mentioned that changes should not be introduced if they would **impact the less affluent**, by one respondent.

Potential impacts of the consultation proposals

Concerns about needing to travel to an alternate library if libraries were closed were mentioned by 58 respondents. Specifically, 34 raised concerns about the availability of public transport, 12 about the distance or time to travel to another library, and 11 about the environmental impacts of library users travelling further. In addition, eight mentioned longer walking distances, four mentioned parking charges, and three mentioned the costs of transport. There was also one mention of a lack of access to transport, and one mention of safety issues of travelling longer distances by foot.

Impacts of the proposed service changes on elderly, people with disabilities, or other vulnerable people, were noted by 43 respondents. In particular, 23 respondents noted that it can be hard for these groups to travel by public transport and 12 mentioned that these groups may be unable to drive to other libraries. Eight respondents felt that the changes could increase loneliness or isolation, six that alternative libraries may not be as accessible for people with disabilities, and two that older people are less likely to be able to access online services.

Possible impacts on children and young people as a result of the proposed changes were described by 17 respondents, with 13 noting that the changes could impact on the levels of literacy in children, and seven noting that schools rely on public libraries to help educate children.

The potential **loss of the library as a community asset** was referred to by 13 respondents.

A possible **reduction in the level of education** in Hampshire was mentioned by 11 respondents.

A possible **increase in demand for other public services** was mentioned by ten respondents.

Possible **impacts on villages and small communities** were described by seven respondents. Specifically, that resources in small communities have been depleted over recent years (six mentions) and that an impact assessment should be undertaken on how small communities could be affected (one mention).

Negative **impacts on people's mental health** were referred to by six respondents.

Local businesses, or other local organisations could be negatively impacted, according to six respondents, with two mentioning that there could be negative economic impacts in the areas around libraries.

Library staff could be affected through the proposed changes through the loss of their jobs, which was mentioned by six respondents.

Concerns that people (of any age) may become more **socially isolated** were noted by five respondents.

Possible **environmental impacts** resulting from library closures, which were not specifically related to travel distances, were referenced by two respondents.

Concerns that the changes could lead to a **more fragmented Library Service** in Hampshire were mentioned by one respondent.

The proposed changes could **encourage other local authorities to reduce their Library Service**, in the view of one respondent.

A concern that the changes may result in **more changes being made to the Library Service in Hampshire** was raised by one respondent.

That the **Home Library Service may not have the capacity** to pick up demand if libraries close was mentioned by one respondent.

Views and experiences of the Library Service

120 responses mentioned the **benefits that libraries bring to respondents and those around them**. Specific aspects of the Service to which respondents referred included that libraries:

are a hub for the community, or a place for people to connect (45 mentions)	help to reduce loneliness or isolation (33 mentions)
provide activities for children (32 mentions)	support older, isolated, or other vulnerable people (31 mentions)
encourage children or young people to read (28 mentions)	offer access to computers or other IT services (24 mentions)
offer good events or activities (20 mentions)	provide staff who are friendly or helpful (17 mentions)
are important to support adult learning (such as for IT) (14 mentions)	are important for users who could not otherwise afford books (13 mentions)
improve child literacy (13 mentions)	support people's wellbeing or mental health (13 mentions)
support deprived communities (ten mentions)	help with sharing community information (ten mentions)
Are cost-effective to run (eight mentions relating to specific libraries)	provide access to services or benefits (six mentions)
encourage economic activity in their areas (five mentions)	encourage reading (three mentions)
provide valuable work experience (three mentions)	improve educational outcomes (two mentions)
provide the ability to download books (two mentions)	encourage sustainable behaviour (one mention)
offer a wide range of materials for borrowing (one mention)	

15 respondents mentioned that there **is an increasing demand or need for library services**.

Two respondents mentioned that the **Library Service in Hampshire underperforms** compared with other areas, by some metrics.

Ways to deliver library services differently

39 respondents provided **suggestions for changes to libraries**, including:

- that **libraries could be relocated** (nine mentions);
- to **increase the number of libraries, or investment in the Service** (eight mentions);
- that **libraries should offer more diverse services** to encourage more people to visit (seven mentions);
- that **community or charity services should be located in libraries** (seven mentions);
- that libraries should change by **embracing new technology**, with some reference to the increasing usage of e-books (five mentions);
- that residential **developers should include libraries in their planning** (five mentions);
- that community-managed libraries should try to **increase user numbers** (four mentions);
- that **library hours should be arranged** so that library users can use another library if one is not open (three mentions);
- that **libraries should advertise or market** themselves to increase their usage (three mentions);
- that **libraries should be updated** to encourage more people to use them (three mentions);
- that the Library Service should **learn from how other local authorities are delivering library services** (two mentions); and
- one mention for each of the following:
    - there should be more **investment in transport links** to Tier One libraries;
    - libraries should also **provide healthcare services**;
    - there **should be a change in some libraries' tiers**;
    - libraries should be **transferred to charities or independent groups**;
    - library **opening hours should be more clearly displayed**;
    - **smaller libraries should close**, with resources directed to larger libraries;
    - libraries should be **given the opportunity to improve** before any closures are made;
    - there should be **fewer visits by Hampshire County Council staff to community-managed libraries**;
    - that refurbishment of libraries should include making them **more accessible** for users with disabilities; and
    - that **libraries should stop fining** for overdue book returns.

33 respondents mentioned that **libraries should raise or receive additional funds**, with examples given including:

- fundraising (eight mentions);
- prioritising library spending over other areas when setting budgets (seven mentions);
- investigating opportunities for libraries to be sponsored by local organisations (five mentions);
- introducing or increasing charges for services, fines, or activities (five mentions);
- introducing an annual subscription for service users (five mentions);
- increasing Council Tax to increase library funding (five mentions);
- receiving funding from lower-tier authorities, such as districts or parishes (five mentions);
- selling buildings or other assets (five mentions);
- use of the Infrastructure Levy to fund libraries (one mention);
- lobbying central Government for additional funds (one mention);
- use of funds raised through business rates (one mention); and
- use of the County Council's financial reserves (one mention).

12 respondents provided **suggestions for how savings could be made at libraries**. They commented that:

volunteers should be used to run libraries (six mentions)	access to the Service should be withdrawn if fines are unpaid (three mentions)
community-managed libraries should be able to do more work without local authority input or oversight (two mentions)	libraries should be located in other buildings used by public services (one mention)
libraries should be provided in partnership with neighbouring local authorities (one mention)	libraries should purchase second-hand books (one mention)
the 'buddy scheme' should be removed from community libraries (one mention)	local government should be reorganised to remove Hampshire's upper-tier authority (one mention)

11 respondents mentioned ways that libraries could **generate income**, specifically by:

allowing commercial services to use library facilities (six mentions)	hiring out rooms and library spaces for events or activities (four mentions)
opening cafés in libraries (three mentions)	fully investigating income generation opportunities before service reductions are imposed (two mentions)
selling marketing or advertising space in libraries (one mention)	

Views on the consultation process

35 respondents mentioned **the statistics provided in the consultation Information Pack**, including concerns with:

- the ranking criteria used in the business case that informed the proposed changes to libraries (23 mentions);
- a perceived lack of consideration that developments in the areas around libraries may increase footfall or visitor numbers to the libraries (18 mentions);
- cost information that is included in the Information Pack (ten mentions);
- the use of 'unique users' as a measure being misleading, irrelevant, or unhelpful (eight mentions);
- the catchment areas shown in the Information Pack (seven mentions);
- the ways that library users are classified or grouped in the Information Pack (three mentions); and
- not adequately considering the incomes of libraries (one mention).

21 respondents gave more general **feedback on the Information Pack**, including:

- concerns that there was insufficient understanding or consideration of equality issues (12 mentions);
- concerns about the estimated travel times quoted in the Information Pack (six mentions);
- that more information was needed to be able to understand the consultation proposals (four mentions);
- that there was too much information in the Information Pack (one mention);
- that the Information Pack contained information that was irrelevant to the consultation (one mention); and
- that the Easy Read Information Pack enabled the respondent to participate in the consultation (one mention).

15 respondents mentioned **views on how the consultation had been run**, specifically:

- concerns that a decision had already been made on the consultation proposals (five mentions);
- that the consultation was flawed (four mentions), specifically, that:
    - it was inconsistent with Government pledges that austerity was ended (two mentions);
    - the County Council had not adequately investigated alternatives to the closures of libraries before making proposals (one mention); and
    - respondents were able to submit multiple responses (one mention).
- each of the following was mentioned by two respondents:
    - that the consultation has been well managed;
    - concerns about the timing of the consultation;
    - that none of the proposals were reasonable;
    - concerns that the consultation was not communicated widely;
    - concerns that some groups may not have responded to the consultation;
    - views that stakeholder groups should be involved in all stages of the consultation; and
- difficulties using the consultation Response Form, as the respondent found the tickbox questions restrictive (one mention).

Other comments

Ways for the County Council to reduce costs in other services were proposed (six mentions), to reduce the need for changes to libraries. Four mentioned that staff pay, costs or expenses could be reduced, one mentioned that staff numbers could be reduced, and one mentioned that the County Council should not use consultants.

Political statements were made by four respondents, which related to negative views of the Conservative Party (three mentions) and the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union (one mention).

Interest in supporting or volunteering at their local library was expressed by four respondents.

Concerns about **further reductions to other services following the period of austerity** were raised by three respondents.

Interest in delivering or supporting library services was raised by three respondents.

Views that funds used to refurbish County Council libraries, and other assets, should be used to **reduce budget pressures** that have led to the proposed changes to the Library Service, were expressed by two respondents.

Concerns about libraries changing to a **community-managed service** were raised by two respondents.

An **interest in taking over the site** if a library closes was mentioned by one respondent.

Unstructured responses submitted via social media

The County Council promoted the Library Service consultation on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. This promotion was accompanied by visual aids explaining the purpose of the consultation and encouraging viewers to participate in the consultation via the consultation web page on the County Council's website (Hantsnet).

Whilst people were encouraged to use the Response Form to give their views, they were also able to comment through the social media platforms. 166 valid comments were posted to the County Council or to library branches on their Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts. These were coded and analysed[20].

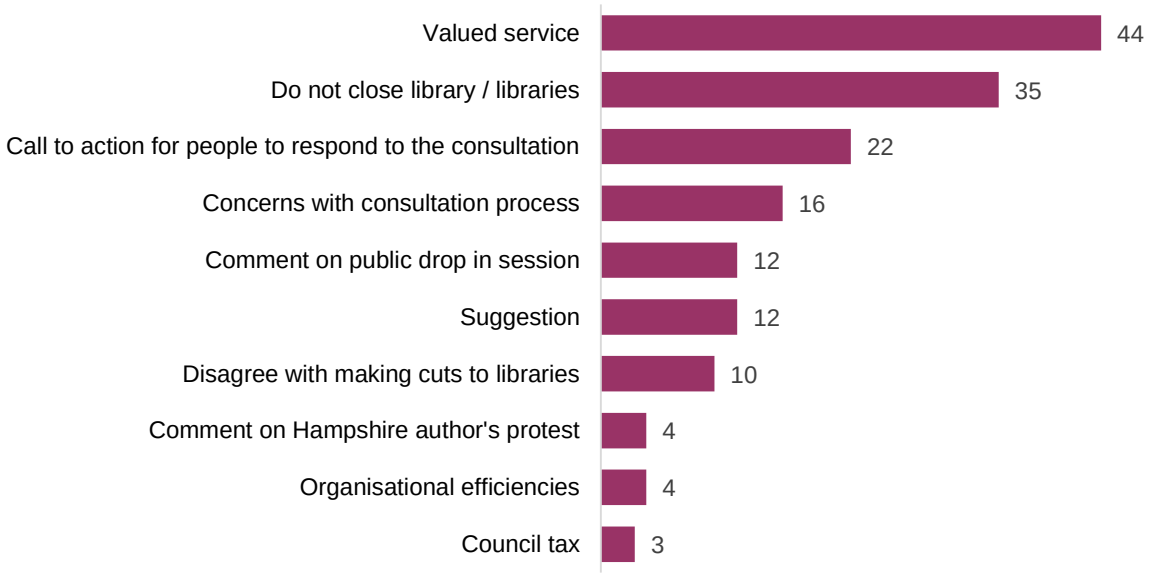
Overall, social media comments most commonly mentioned the valuable service delivered by libraries and library staff, including how important they are for children, families and the elderly, for social interaction and access to the groups, classes and facilities available such as Rhymetime, Storytime, computers and large print books.

35 social media respondents stated that they did not want libraries to close and most mentioned a specific library that they did not want to close.

Other respondents (22) were making a call to action for others to complete the consultation and show their support for their library, including drawing attention to petitions and meetings.

The 10 most common themes in the comments are shown below:

Comments made on social media relating to - quantified verbatim
(Base: 166 valid comments)



[20] 17 comments were not included because they did not relate to the consultation or were replies to conversations that did not express an opinion on the consultation.

The top 10 themes with more detail are shown in the table below:

	Count respondents
Base	**166**
Valued service	**44**
Important for children to access books	9
Provide interaction and socialisation	6
Rhymetime	5
Important for elderly to access books	4
Support schools/ education	4
Important for families	3
For borrowing/ reserving books	3
Important for society/ community	3
Storytime	2
Courses and workshops	2
Important for new parents	2
Supports lonely and vulnerable	1
Home schooling resource	1
Reading Challenge	1
Free baby classes	1
Valuable library staff	1
Important resource of large print books	1
Available to everyone	1
Free of charge	1
Fareham Library	1
Computers and printers	1
Source of tourist information	1
In light of Coronavirus	1
Love the library	1
Regular library user	1
eBooks	1
Do not close library/ libraries	**35**
Do not close Chineham Library	10
Do not close Emsworth Library	4
Do not close Lee on Solent Library	3
Do not close Hayling Island Library	2
Do not close Fair Oak Library	1
Do not close Lyndhurst Library	1
Do not close Elson Library	1
Do not close libraries in Basingstoke	1
Do not close South Ham Library	1
Do not close North Baddesley Community Library	1
Do not close Hythe Library	1
Do not close Odiham Library	1

Call to action for people to respond to the consultation	**22**
Complete consultation to stop libraries closing	20
Petition	2
Concerns with consultation process	**16**
Consultation will be ignored	5
Too long/ complicated	3
Biased/ leading survey	2
Cost of animation	2
Change of meeting date	2
Cannot find link to survey	1
Does not offer the choice to invest more in libraries	1
Availability of volunteers not considered	1
Suggestion	**12**
Mobile library	3
Promote eBooks/ audiobooks	2
Make links with schools/ colleges as a business venture	1
Socially prescribe for young and old	1
Electronic libraries	1
Internet cafes for pensioners	1
Knit and natter	1
Side rooms for families to eat their lunch	1
Widen the range of services	1
Add a café	1
Get more volunteer help	1
Merge pubs and libraries	1
Open later	1
Comment on public drop-in session	**12**
Busy session	4
No longer attending	4
Will be attending	2
Good that it's been extended	1
Disagree with making reductions to libraries	**10**
Invest more in libraries	2
Everyone should have access to books and a computer	1
Organisational efficiencies	**4**
Reduce library staff pay/ costs	2
Reduce other council staff	1
Concerned with own salary/ expenses	1
Comment on Hampshire author's protest	**4**
Support for author/ writer protest	4
Council Tax	**3**
Spend more Council Tax on libraries	2
Council Tax is increasing	1

Organisations, groups, businesses and Democratically Elected Representatives who responded to the consultation

Respondents to the consultation were asked to clarify if they were responding as an individual, or in an official capacity. Those in the latter group included organisations, groups, businesses and Democratically Elected Representatives responding on behalf of their constituency.

There were a total of 142 responses submitted via the consultation Response Form on behalf of an organisation, group or business.

Those who provided their name are listed below:

1st Hardway Rainbows	Disabled People's Voice
6th Gosport beavers	Dove House School Academy
Acts 4 Sharing	Elson Infant School
Adult Services, Farnborough Community Link	Elson Junior School
Aldershot Reading Group	Elson Library
Basingstoke & Deane Over 55s Forum	Elson Library
Basingstoke Cosplay Collective	Ems Valley U3A
Board of Governors, Great Binfields Primary School	Eversley Parish Council
BOARHUNT PARISH COUNCIL	Fair Oak Infant School
BOTLEY BOOK CIRCLE	Fair Oak Library Reading Group
Bramley Parish Council	Fair Oak Women's Institute
Branches - Mental Health Support Network	Family Church Waterside
Brockhurst Primary School	Family Group A R and S B White and Mrs N J Holden
Buryfields Infant School	Family History Walk-in group at Romsey Library
CARD DAFT CLUB	Fordingbridge Greener Living
Carisbrooke Pre-school	Fordingbridge U3A Book group 2
Catherington Village Residents Association	Geeks of Gosport
Childminder	George Street Readers
Christ Church Chineham	Good for mums
Citizens Advice East Hampshire	Gosport Fairtrade Action
Citizens Advice New Forest	Group for Polish speaking children
Code club Lymington	Hampshire County Council
Colden Common Primary School	Hampshire Futures – HCC Education & Participation
Community of Gosport	Hampshire UNISON retired members
ComputerXplorers Southampton	Happy days Preschool
Country Markets Ltd	Happy Readers
CRAFT FOR WELL-BEING	Havant Borough Council
Craft group	Havant Light Opera

Crafty needles	Hayling Island Library Club
Creative writing group	Hedge End Library Genealogy Group
Crofton Disability Group c/o Nightingales Golden Care	Hedge End village hall pre-school
Curly Wurly childcare	HI. LABOUR BRANCH
Daisy Chain Nursery	Home Front History
Day-time reading group	Home Front History
Dean Lane Reading Group	Hook Choral Society
Denmead Reading Circle	Horndean Trefoil Reading Group
Kingsclere Community Association	Sherfield Park Parish Council
Knatter & Knit	Southern Health Foundation Trust - New Forest + Romsey H.V. Team
Knit & Natter	Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust
Knit & Natter	Springwood
Knit and Natter	St. John's c of e primary school and PTA
Knit and Natter Group	St. John's Gosport Church of England (VA) Primary School
La Leche League	Stay and Play Cafe
Launchpad	Stubbington Stitch & Knitting
Lee-on-the-Solent Infant and Nursery School	Studio 41 Fitness Ltd
Lee-on-the-Solent Library family History Group	Talkbook Reading Group
Leigh Park Library	Teacher at Brockhurst Primary
Little Saints Community Pre-school	Tellon Capital
Losing My Sight UK	The Alresford Society
Lyndhurst Pre-school	The governing body of Yateley School
Milford on Sea Community Library	The Hampshire Writers' Society
Milford-on-Sea library	The M&M Academy
Morning Tide W.I. Reading Group	The Parish of Forton, Saint John the Evangelist
New Forest East Labour Party	Thursday Knit & Knatter & Crochet Group
Newcomers Reading Group	Totton 2 Reading Group
North Baddesley Community Library	Tourism South East on behalf of Petersfield Town Council
North Baddesley Infant School	U3A book group 2

North Baddesley WI Book Group	U3A creative writers group
Oakley Afternoon W.I Reading Group	U3A Reading Group
Oakley C of E Junior School - Class 4W	U3A reading group. 2 book groups for the community centre.
One Community	Visual Impaired Group
Pathway Plus	Warhammer
Petersfield Choral Society	West End Parish Council
Petersfield Town Council	Winchester City Festival Choir
Read Easy Basingstoke	Winchester Symphony Orchestra
Reading group	Winscombe Care Facility
ROMSEY KALEIDOSCOPE	Woolmer forest u3a book club 1
Rowlands Castle Women's Institute Book club	Writers' Weekend Winchester
Rushmoor Borough Council	Wyvern Book Club
Salsa y Sol Dance & Yoga	You trust Fareham
Save Blackfield Library Campaign	
Save Lee Library	

56 Democratically Elected Representatives responded to the consultation via the consultation Response Form, of which 49 named their constituency**:**

Basing Ward, Basingstoke
Basingstoke & Deane (x2)
Basingstoke Central Division
Basingstoke North
BDBC Popley East Ward
Bridgemary North
Brighton Hill North
Chandler's Ford
Chandler's Ford Parish Council
Chineham Ward Basingstoke
Christchurch Ward, Gosport
Christchurch, Gosport
Elson Ward (Gosport Borough Council)
Emsworth
Emsworth and St. Faith's Havant Division

Fair Oak and Horton Heath ward of Eastleigh Borough Council
Fordingbridge
Gosport (x3)
Gosport Borough Hardway Ward
Gosport: Lee East ward
Hambledon PC (x2)
Hardway Gosport
Hordle Parish Council
Hythe and Dibden Purlieu, Butts Ash, District and Parish
Lee Division
Lee on the Solent
Lymington Town
Lyndhurst
New Forest East
New Forest West
North Baddesley
North East Hampshire
North West Hampshire
Oakley and Deane
Owslebury Parish Council
Padworth parish
Popley East Ward BDBC
Portfolio Holder for Community Affairs NFDC
Romsey and Southampton North
Rother Ward of Petersfield in East Hampshire
Rushmoor Aldershot Park
Sandleheath Parish Council
Sherfield Park Parish Council
Silchester Parish Council
Test Valley Borough Council Romsey Tadburn
Whitchurch and the Cleres

Emails, letters and telephone calls

The County Council received 196 unstructured responses to the consultation via email, letter or telephone.

This consisted of 159 responses from members of the public, 15 from organisations, businesses or groups, 14 from Local Authorities three from Members of Parliament and one from a team within Hampshire County Council.

Organisations, businesses, groups and Local Authorities who provided unstructured responses included:

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Bursledon Parish Council
Chineham Parish Council
Eastleigh Parish Council
Emsworth Community Association
Fair Oak and Horton Heath Parish Council
Fareham Borough Council
Four Lanes Infant school year 2 librarians
Friends of Chineham Library
Hampshire Authors for Libraries
Horndean Parish Council
Kingsclere Parish Council
M&M Academy
News Alresford Town Council
North Baddesley Parish Council
Oakley Infant School
Odiham Parish Council
Odiham U3A
Old Bursledon Action Group
Owslebury Parish Council
Read Easy
Rushmoor Borough Council
Save Blackfield Library Campaign
Save Lee Library Group
Sherfield Parl Over 55s Social Club
The Odiham Society
VIVID
Westside Community Centre
Yateley Town Council

Three Members of Parliament provided unstructured responses:

Maria Miller MP
Paul Holmes MP
Alan Mak MP

Letters were also sent from students of four schools:

Fairfields Primary School
Great Binfields Primary School
Old Basing Infant School
West Downland Church of England Aided Primary School

Two letters were received after the close of the Consultation from:

Bo Priestley
Gosport Borough Council

End of consultation analysis

Thank you to everyone who responded to this consultation.

This consultation analysis and the responses provided to the consultation have been shared with the Library Service and will be used to inform decisions about the future of the Library Service by the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage in summer 2020.

Hampshire County Council

Produced by the Insight and Engagement Unit

Public Consultation Analysis

Petitions received about the Consultation:
https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/petitions/petitionresponses

Hampshire Library Service Consultation Information Pack and Response Form -
https://www.hants.gov.uk/library-consultation

Detailed opening hours changes

Libraries in Hampshire operate a range of opening hours. Whilst Tier One libraries are open for longer hours than Tier Three libraries, there is currently no standard allocation of hours within tiers. Current library opening times vary as a result of many years of historical decisions. It is proposed that the standardisation of hours within tiers is applied. The impact of this on individual libraries can be seen below.

Library / Tier		% Reduction per Tier (Average)	Current hours per week	Proposed hours per week	% Reduction per branch	Sessions (Full Day = 7.5 hrs Half Day = 4 hrs)
Andover	1	22.3%	52.0	**41.5**	20.2%	5x Full Days + 1x Half Day
Basingstoke			58.0		28.4%	
Chandler's Ford			51.0		18.6%	
Fareham			54.0		23.1%	
Farnborough			51.0		18.6%	
Fleet			50.0		17.0%	
Gosport			58.0		28.4%	
Lymington			50.0		17.0%	
Petersfield			52.0		20.2%	
Waterlooville			52.0		20.2%	
Winchester			62.0		33.1%	
Aldershot	2	24.3%	50.0	**34.0**	32.0%	4x Full Days + 1x Half Day
Alton			43.0		20.9%	
Eastleigh			44.0		22.7%	
Havant			43.0		20.9%	
Hythe			46.0		26.1%	
Lockswood			35.5		4.2%	
Romsey			41.0		17.1%	
Tadley			42.0		19.0%	
Totton			41.0		17.1%	
Bordon			34.0	**26.5**	22.1%	3x Full Days + 1x Half Day
Chineham			38.5		31.2%	
Hayling Island			35.5		25.4%	
Hedge End			43.5		39.1%	
New Milton			38.0		30.3%	
Portchester			35.5		25.4%	
Ringwood			38.0		30.3%	
Stubbington			37.5		29.3%	
Emsworth	3	12.1%	35.0		24.3%	
Fordingbridge			26.0		-1.9%	
Leigh Park			35.5		25.4%	
Yateley			33.0		19.7%	
Alresford			21.0	**16.0**	23.8%	4x Half Days
Bishop's Waltham			22.5		28.9%	
Bridgemary			20.0		20.0%	
Liphook			16.5		3.0%	
Netley			16.0		0.0%	
Overton			11.5		-39.1%	
West End			23.0		30.4%	
Whitchurch			18.0		11.1%	
Average Overall % Reduction					**20.1%**	

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Libraries proposed for closure

Blackfield Library

The consultation received a total of 117 responses directly related to Blackfield Library, four of which were from business, groups or organisations. A *Save Blackfield Library* petition signed by 721 people was also received. 60% of those who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 18% of respondents supported the closure and a further 22% would prefer an alternative approach. 99 of the 117 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Hythe Library (94%), Lymington Library (24%) and Totton Library (23%). A public drop-in session was held on 6 February 2020, which was attended by 10 members of the public.

Those who commented on Blackfield Library described it as a valued service (27%), whilst others expressed concern over the impact of specific groups within a deprived area such as Blackfield should the Library close (24%) however respondents acknowledged that footfall is very low. A lot of comments stated that the respondent did not actually use the Library even though they did not support the closure.

Blackfield Library catchment area has an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score of 6.5 (1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived) – see Appendix 1 for definition of IMD and how it is used to measure community need. It has an educational IMD score of 4.6 out of 10 (Hampshire average is 7). To mitigate this impact, the Library service would look to undertake further engagement with primary and secondary schools within the catchment area to provide access to services and support literacy. The School Library Service would further look to engage with children and young people within the catchment area to minimise impact to this specific group.

Carer Groups Library membership is available to Early Years providers, care homes, sheltered accommodation and playgroups, therefore it is believed that this scheme will support older adults living in group settings and/or organisations supporting Early Years development.

The Library Service has invested significantly in digital titles of both eBooks and eAudiobooks since the outbreak of Covid-19 and there is now a much wider selection of titles including children's titles available to all library customers with digital access.

The proportion of the population with no cars in the catchment is 9.2%, above the Hampshire average of 5.8%. 15.6% of the catchment population live in the 20% most deprived areas in the country. The time and cost of travel to an alternative Library was a concern to respondents of the public consultation. The Library Service recognises that additional costs will be incurred by people travelling to an alternative library, either by public transport or in a private vehicle. Travel times to Hythe Library (the nearest alternative Library) are around 12 minutes by car and 18 minutes by public transport. As neither Libraries are far from bus services or car parks this was not assessed as being a high impact to users. Those customers living in the rural

outskirts of Blackfield may experience some challenges due to irregular bus services.

Vulnerable and isolated residents, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, Ready Reads, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour scheme. For more information about these services please see Appendix 1. Internet and Broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure.

The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to people adversely impacted, should Blackfield Library be removed from the portfolio.

If Blackfield Library no longer forms part of Hampshire's statutory Library Service community organisations would be welcome to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

Chineham Library

The consultation received a total of 1,751 formal responses directly related to Chineham Library, 12 of which were from business, groups or organisations. 69% of those who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 6% of respondents supported the closure and a further 25% would prefer an alternative approach. 1,118 of the 1,751 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Basingstoke Discovery Centre (86%), South Ham Library (21%) and Tadley Library (17%). A public drop-in session was held on 4 February 2020, which was attended by approximately 400 members of the public.

Comments received through the consultation were of genuine surprise that Chineham Library was being considered for closure, respondents (19%) found the location of the Library very convenient and would be concerned about the difficulty it may cause people to travel to Basingstoke to visit their nearest alternative Library (Basingstoke Discovery Centre). Respondents commented on the valued service (18%), specifically the valued staff members (11%) and the activities such as Rhymetime, 14% of respondents were particularly concerned that the closure would disadvantage children. Alternative suggestions were included in the comments such as sharing the building with another service.

In addition the Friends of Chineham Library submitted a formal response to the proposed closure including concerns that the Comprehensive Review Process using a measure of unique users to Chineham Library had skewed the performance of Chineham Library. This feedback has prompted the Library Service to revise the Comprehensive Review methodology (see paragraph 97 to 101) to reduce the importance of the unique user data, by including the total number of library members that used a library within the past year. The impact of this change to the review

process and the number of active users means that Chineham is no longer being proposed for closure.

Chineham Library catchment area has an IMD score of 8.0 (1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived). It has a slightly higher than average population of 0-17 year olds over 60 (23% vs the Hampshire average of 21%).

It is therefore proposed that Chineham Library be retained on the basis that the costs can be reduced and, when taken together with the number of people adversely impacted and the position of Chineham in the revised Comprehensive Review (paragraphs 97 – 101), it means that Chineham is no longer considered to be a poorly performing library. The service will also look to reduce opening hours in line with the remaining portfolio.

Elson Library

The consultation received a total of 564 responses directly related to Elson Library, 15 of which were from businesses, groups or organisations. 72% of those who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 4% of respondents supported the closure and a further 24% would prefer an alternative approach. 414 of the 564 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Gosport Discovery Centre (90%), Fareham Library (35%) and Lee–on–Solent Library (30%). A public drop-in session was held on 11 February 2020, which was attended by approximately 150 members of the public.

Around 60% of people said this is a well-used library and a community space where other public services are provided – for example local schools especially appear to use this Library weekly. 71% of respondents access Elson Library for the full range of resources on offer. The responses discussed a very well used and loved Library that would be hugely missed whilst 41% of respondents were particularly concerned about the impact on specific groups if the Library were to close. 32% of respondents were concerned about the impact of closure on the community as a whole. Of the 130 households that only use Elson library, 17 households or 13% had children age 0-4 years and a similar number had children age 5-8 years.

The Education Attainment in the Elson catchment is 3.5 (which is lower than the Hampshire average of 7.0). The Service will be developing new ways of working in this area to ensure that the Library Service Vision and commitment to children's literacy is achieved. A targeted solution will be developed to support the community, such as the delivery of services from alternative community buildings already well used in that location. The Service will engage with local schools to encourage them to join the existing School Library Service which supports the majority of Hampshire schools with high quality stock and this may be a viable alternative for children and young people who are unable to travel to an alternative library.

Carer Groups Library membership is available to Early Years providers, care homes, sheltered accommodation and playgroups, therefore it is believed that this scheme will support older adults living in group settings and/or organisations supporting Early Years development.

The Library Service has invested significantly in digital titles of both eBooks and eAudiobooks since the outbreak of Covid-19 and there is now a much wider selection of titles including children's titles available to all library customers with digital access.

The proportion of the population with no cars in the catchment is 9.2%, above the Hampshire average of 5.8%. Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 5.2 (1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived) and 8.2% of the catchment population live in the 20% most deprived areas in the country. Whilst Elson Library is in close proximity to alternative branches respondents mentioned infrequent bus services to Gosport Discovery Centre. Travel times to Gosport Discovery Centre (the nearest alternative Library) are around 8 minutes by car and 24 minutes by public transport. The Library Service recognises that additional costs will be incurred by people travelling to an alternative library, either by public transport or in a private vehicle. Where possible services to support literacy will be delivered in a local community building, to prevent these services users needing to travel.

Vulnerable and isolated residents, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, Ready Reads, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour scheme. For more information about these services please see Appendix 1.

In addition to the new ways of working outlined in paragraph 193 - 198 above the Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to people adversely impacted, should Elson Library be removed from the portfolio.

If Elson Library no longer forms part of Hampshire's statutory Library Service community organisations would be welcome to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

Emsworth Library

The consultation received a total of 1,003 responses directly related to Emsworth Library, five of which were from businesses, groups or organisations. 73% of those who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 6% of respondents supported the closure and a further 21% would prefer an alternative approach. 479 of the 1,003 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Havant Library (78%), Waterlooville Library (23%) and Petersfield Library (20%). A public drop-in session was held on 14 February 2020, which was attended by approximately 150 members of the public.

51% of respondents said that the Library was very well valued within the community and expressed particular concern for the impact on specific groups (50%) should it close. In addition, respondents were highlighted concerns around children's resources and the ease of location for older people who do not have the ability to travel to Havant. Respondents raised concerns on the impact of travel to an

alternative library if Emsworth Library were to close (18%), particularly around the infrequent bus routes, the high cost of public transport and the environmental impact of travelling to access a service that otherwise would have been within walking distance. There were also concerns raised for those with mobility problems having to travel further whilst carrying heavy books.

Emsworth Library was one of the 10 poorer performing libraries identified in the Public Consultation for potential closure. It has a high level of community support and a higher number of unique users than any other library proposed for closure. During the consultation period, a proposal came forward from the community to relocate the library into Emsworth Community Centre at a significantly lower cost. This proposal was discussed at a public meeting in Emsworth on 10 February, attended by approximately 200 people, where it received strong support, so long as the library continued to be run by the Library Service. Since then Emsworth Community Association has submitted an Expression of Interest to host the library in their Community Centre at minimal cost, provided that it is run by the Library Service. This alternative proposal is considered a positive way forward and would change the financial viability of Emsworth Library by significantly reducing operating costs.

It is therefore recommended that Emsworth Library is retained on the basis that it can be moved to Emsworth Community Centre (see paragraph 97 to 101 for more detail of the comprehensive review summary). The Service will also look to reduce opening hours of Emsworth Library in line with the remaining portfolio to reduce operating costs.

Fair Oak Library

The consultation received a total of 519 responses directly related to Fair Oak Library, six of which were from businesses, groups or organisations. 70% of those who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 6% of respondents supported the closure and a further 24% would prefer an alternative approach. 340 of the 519 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Eastleigh Library (71%), Winchester Discovery Centre (40%) and Chandler's Ford Library (28%). A public drop-in session was held on 11 February 2020, which was attended by approximately 110 members of the public.

Respondents to the consultation were most concerned about the impact of a Library closure on specific groups leading to inequalities within the local community (54%). In addition to these, concerns were raised about the impact of having to travel to an alternative Library (23%) for older people or those with mobility issues (17%) and children and young people (17%). Respondents felt that Fair Oak Library is a vital part of the community (22%) and that the Library is currently situated in a very convenient location (18%).

Fair Oak Library catchment area has an IMD score of 9.1 (1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived). It has a slightly higher than average population over 60 (27% vs the Hampshire average of 25%). It has a slightly lower IMD score for educational attainment (6.9 out of 10) compared to the Hampshire average (7 out of 10). The

Library Service would look to mitigate the impact through work with local schools and the Schools Library Service in addition to the digital offer.

Carer Groups Library membership is available to Early Years providers, care homes, sheltered accommodation and playgroups, therefore it is believed that this scheme will support older adults living in group settings and/or organisations supporting Early Years development.

Concerns were raised by respondents about the predicted population growth for the Fair Oak area. The Service has taken predicted population growth across the County into account, including in the Fair Oak area, along with changing patterns of demand for the services it provides. Officers are satisfied that surrounding libraries (Eastleigh, Winchester Discovery Centre, Chandler's Ford, Hedge End and Bishop's Waltham) provide sufficient coverage and have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the Fair Oak community.

The time and cost of travel to an alternative Library was a concern to respondents of the public consultation. The alternative Library to Fair Oak is Eastleigh Library which is located on the first floor of the Swan Shopping Centre in Eastleigh. Travel times are around 14 minutes by car and 25 minutes by public transport.
It is some distance from the bus station in Eastleigh to the Library and people were also concerned about paying to park at the shopping centre. Library users could choose to visit Chandler's Ford, Hedge End or Bishop's Waltham Libraries which are a short journey by car and there is currently some free parking at both locations. Both of these locations are accessible by public transport, The Library Service would look to support older people and those with mobility issues through the Home Library Service and the extensive digital offer.

The Library Service has invested significantly in digital titles of both eBooks and eAudiobooks since the outbreak of Covid-19 and there is now a much wider selection of titles including children's titles available to all library customers with digital access.

Vulnerable and isolated residents, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, Ready Reads, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour scheme. For more information about these services please see Appendix 1.

The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to people adversely impacted, should Fair Oak be removed from the portfolio.

If Fair Oak Library no longer forms part of Hampshire's statutory Library Service community organisations would be welcome to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

Horndean Library

The consultation received a total of 308 responses directly related to Horndean Library, two of which were from businesses, groups or organisations. 66% of those who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 12% of respondents supported the closure and a further 22% would prefer an alternative approach. 218 of the 308 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Waterlooville Library (78%), Petersfield Library (38%) and Havant Library (31%). A public drop-in session was held on 10 February 2020, which was attended by approximately 50 members of the public.

Respondents to the public consultation expressed concern that the closure of Horndean Library will impact negatively on those who live within the catchment area bringing about potential inequalities (49%). Comments highlighted specific groups who may not have access to private transport (20%) and those who are older or have mobility issues (19%). In addition to this 23% of respondents commented on the convenient location of Horndean Library with a further 16% who felt that if the Library were to close this would lead to a reduction in the number of people who could access the Library Service.

Horndean Library catchment area has an IMD score of 8.8 (1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived). It has a higher than average population over 60 (32% vs the Hampshire average of 25%). Horndean catchment Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 8.8, however, 2.2% of the catchment population live in the 20% most deprived areas in the country.

The impact of travelling to an alternative Library was a concern for some respondents to the consultation however Horndean residents have high levels of private car ownership within the area. The alternative Library (Waterlooville) is around 12 minutes by car and 21 minutes by public transport. Neither Library is far from bus services or car parks, but the Library Service recognises that additional costs will be incurred by people travelling to Waterlooville, either by public transport or in a private vehicle. Those customers living in the rural outskirts of Horndean may experience some challenges due to infrequent bus services.

Carer Groups Library membership is available to Early Years providers, care homes, sheltered accommodation and playgroups, therefore it is believed that this scheme will support older adults living in group settings and/or organisations supporting Early Years development.

The Library Service has invested significantly in digital titles of both eBooks and eAudiobooks since the outbreak of Covid-19 and there is now a much wider selection of titles including children's titles available to all library customers with digital access. Internet and Broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure.

Vulnerable and isolated residents, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, Ready Reads, apply for the Home Library

Service or the Good Neighbour scheme. For more information about these services please see Appendix 1.

The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to people adversely impacted, should Horndean be removed from the portfolio.

If Horndean Library no longer forms part of Hampshire's statutory Library Service community organisations would be welcome to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

Lee-on-the-Solent Library

The consultation received a total of 963 responses directly related to Lee-on-the-Solent Library, 16 of which were from businesses, groups or organisations. 72% of those who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 6% of respondents supported the closure and a further 22% would prefer an alternative approach. 661 of the 963 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Gosport Discovery Centre (50%), Stubbington Library (36%) and Fareham Library (33%). Public drop-in sessions were held on 6 and 13 February 2020, which were attended by approximately 145 members of the public in total.

Respondents to the public consultation expressed concern that specific groups may be impacted if Lee-on-the-Solent Library were to close. Respondents specifically mentioned older people (24%) and those who cannot access transport easily (24%). 28% of respondents felt that a Library fulfils a public need and 18% felt that Lee-on-the-Solent Library was very convenient to use for their current lifestyle. 31% of respondents viewed Lee-on-the-Solent Library as a community hub.

Lee-on-the-Solent Library catchment area has an IMD score of 8.2 (1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived). It has a higher than average population over 60 (34% vs the Hampshire average of 25%).

Carer Groups Library membership is available to Early Years providers, care homes, sheltered accommodation and playgroups, therefore it is believed that this scheme will support older adults living in group settings and/or organisations supporting Early Years development.

The Library Service has invested significantly in digital titles of both eBooks and eAudiobooks since the outbreak of Covid-19 and there is now a much wider selection of titles including children's titles available to all library customers with digital access.

The proportion of the population with no cars in the catchment is 6.1%, above the Hampshire average of 5.8%. The time and cost of travel to an alternative Library was a concern to respondents of the public consultation. Travel times to Gosport

Discovery Centre (the nearest alternative Library) are around 13 minutes by car and 28 minutes by public transport.

Vulnerable and isolated residents, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, Ready Reads, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour scheme. For more information about these services please see Appendix 1.

The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to people adversely impacted, should Lee-on-the-Solent Library be removed from the portfolio.

If Lee-on-the-Solent Library no longer forms part of Hampshire's statutory Library Service community organisations would be welcome to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

Lyndhurst Library

The consultation received a total of 684 responses directly related to Lyndhurst Library, four of which were from businesses, groups or organisations. A save Lyndhurst Library petition signed by 684 people was also received. 60% of those who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 15% of respondents supported the closure and a further 26% would prefer an alternative approach. 227 of the 684 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Lymington Library (33%), Totton Library (26%) and Romsey Library (16%). A public drop-in session was held on 14 February 2020, which was attended by approximately 55 members of the public.

Respondents to the public consultation highlighted inequalities which may arise (54%) if Lyndhurst Library were to close. Concerns were raised that those without access to transport would be disadvantaged (22%) and in particular respondents were concerned with specific groups such as older people or those with mobility issues (17%). 22% of respondents felt it was important that everyone should have access to a local Library and that Libraries form an important public service (22%). In addition to this 17% of people felt that Lyndhurst Library is in a convenient location for their current lifestyle.

Lyndhurst Library catchment area has an IMD score of 7.4 (1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived). It has a higher than average population over 60 (38% vs the Hampshire average of 25%).

Carer Groups Library membership is available to Early Years providers, care homes, sheltered accommodation and playgroups, therefore it is believed that this scheme will support older adults living in group settings and/or organisations supporting Early Years development.

The time and cost of travel to an alternative Library was a concern to respondents of the public consultation. Travel times to Totton Library (the nearest alternative Library) are around 12 minutes by car and 18 minutes by public transport. Respondents to the consultation raised concerns about travel times and the reliability of public transport. They felt that a number of factors, including Lyndhurst being very rural and the main high street being situated on a hill may cause difficulties for older people or those with mobility issues reaching the nearest bus stop. There is also increased traffic during school holidays and summer months with heavy congestion due to the one-way system through Lyndhurst, this would increase travel times to the nearest alternative Library. Those customers living in the rural outskirts of Lyndhurst may experience some challenges due to infrequent bus services. The proportion of the population with no cars in the catchment is 4.7%, below the Hampshire average of 5.8%.

The Library Service has invested significantly in digital titles of both eBooks and eAudiobooks since the outbreak of Covid-19 and there is now a much wider selection of titles including children's titles available to all library customers with digital access. Internet and Broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure.

Vulnerable and isolated residents, including older people, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, Ready Reads, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour scheme. For more information about these services see Appendix 1.

The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to people adversely impacted, should Lyndhurst Library be removed from the portfolio.

If Lyndhurst Library no longer forms part of Hampshire's statutory Library Service community organisations would be welcome to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

Odiham Library

The consultation received a total of 325 responses directly related to Odiham Library, two of which were from businesses, groups or organisations. A save Odiham Library petition signed by 420 people was also received. 73% of those who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 8% of respondents supported the closure and a further 19% would prefer an alternative approach. 214 of the 420 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Basingstoke Discovery Centre (58%), Fleet Library (52%) and Chineham Library (34%). A public drop-in session was held on 6 February 2020, which was attended by approximately 120 members of the public.

Respondents to the consultation were concerned that those without access to a private vehicle would be significantly impacted if Odiham Library were to close as public transport within the area is limited (31%). Respondents were particularly concerned about the impact of closure on specific groups within the community such as older people (18%) and children and young people (19%). 25% of respondents felt the Library was in a particularly convenient location and that if the Library were to close it would make it more difficult to access Library services (20%).

Odiham Library catchment area has an educational attainment score of 8.0 which is above the Hampshire average of 7.0 it has an IMD score of 8.8 (1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived). Odiham does have a slightly higher than average number of younger people within the area (23% vs the average of 21% in Hampshire).

Carer Groups Library membership is available to Early Years providers, care homes, sheltered accommodation and playgroups, therefore it is believed that this scheme will support older adults living in group settings and/or organisations supporting Early Years development.

The Odiham catchment area is largely rural and there are the limited public transport options for customers living within this area. Travel times to Alton Library (the nearest alternative Library) are around 16 minutes by car and 30 minutes by public transport. The time and cost of travel to an alternative Library was a concern to respondents of the public consultation. The proportion of the population with no cars in the catchment is 2.5%, below the Hampshire average of 5.8%.

The Library Service has invested significantly in digital titles of both eBooks and eAudiobooks since the outbreak of Covid-19 and there is now a much wider selection of titles including children's titles available to all library customers with digital access. Internet and Broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure.

Vulnerable and isolated residents, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, Ready Reads, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour scheme. For more information about these services please see Appendix 1.

The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to people adversely impacted, should Odiham Library be removed from the portfolio.

If Odiham Library no longer forms part of Hampshire's statutory Library Service community organisations would be welcome to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

South Ham Library

The consultation received a total of 558 responses directly related to South Ham Library, eight of which were from businesses, groups or organisations. 68% of those

who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 7% of respondents supported the closure and a further 25% would prefer an alternative approach. 458 of the 558 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Basingstoke Discovery Centre (87%) and Chineham Library (51%). A public drop-in session was held on 7 February 2020, which was attended by approximately 50 members of the public.

Respondents to the consultation highlighted that the Library provides an important public service (24%) and that the Library in its current location is very convenient (19%). Respondents felt that if the Library were to close there would be many who would no longer be able to access the service (16%). 18% of respondents felt that the Library should be accessible to all and that children would be particularly impacted (14%).

The South Ham catchment area has an IMD score of 7.1 (1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived). There is a higher than average population of 0-17 year olds (23% vs the average of 21% in Hampshire). The Educational Attainment score in the South Ham catchment is 5.9 (which is lower than the Hampshire average of 7.0). The Service will engage with local schools to encourage them to join the existing School Library Service which supports the majority of Hampshire schools with high quality stock and this may be a viable alternative for children and young people who are unable to travel to an alternative library.

Carer Groups Library membership is available to Early Years providers, care homes, sheltered accommodation and playgroups, therefore it is believed that this scheme will support older adults living in group settings and/or organisations supporting Early Years development.

The proportion of the population with no cars in the catchment is 6.4%, above the Hampshire average of 5.8%. Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 7.1 and 3.6% of the catchment population live in the 20% most deprived areas in the country. The time and cost of travel to an alternative Library was a concern to respondents of the public consultation. The Library Service recognises that additional costs will be incurred by people travelling to Basingstoke Discovery Centre, either by public transport or in a private vehicle. Travel times to Basingstoke Discovery Centre are around 7 minutes by car and 17 minutes by public transport.

The Library Service has invested significantly in digital titles of both eBooks and eAudiobooks since the outbreak of Covid-19 and there is now a much wider selection of titles including children's titles available to all library customers with digital access.

Vulnerable and isolated residents, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, Ready Reads, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour scheme. For more information about these services please see Appendix 1.

The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to people adversely impacted, should South Ham Library be removed from the portfolio.

If South Ham Library no longer forms part of Hampshire's statutory Library Service community organisations would be welcome to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

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Transition community-managed libraries to an independent model

The Library Service network includes four Tier 4 community-managed libraries in Kingsclere, Lowford (also known as Bursledon), Milford-on-Sea and North Baddesley. These libraries are managed by community groups, run by volunteers and supported by a regular visit by a member of Library Service staff, alongside the provision of books, equipment and public Wi-Fi.

As set out in the Library Service Consultation, these libraries issue fewer items and have fewer members than other council-run libraries in Hampshire, including libraries recommended for closure elsewhere in this report. These four council supported community-managed libraries account for 0.5% of the active users and a similar number of issues of the Library Service. Although the running costs are currently shared with communities, and are therefore comparatively lower than Tier 3 libraries, Tier 4 libraries still cost the County Council approximately £49,000 per year to run in total. Further, the capacity of the Library Service to continue to support this model, particularly the weekly staff visits, buddy branch support and weekly delivery, will be negatively impacted by recommendations elsewhere in this report.

The consultation sought views on the proposal to withdraw support from these community-managed libraries and assist the community organisations to transition to an independent model, giving them greater autonomy to deliver services as they and local communities wish.

Figures 1 to 3, below, summarise the open consultation views regarding transitioning community-managed libraries to independent community libraries.

Figure 1 - Would you continue to use your local library if it was independent of the County Council and managed by the local community?

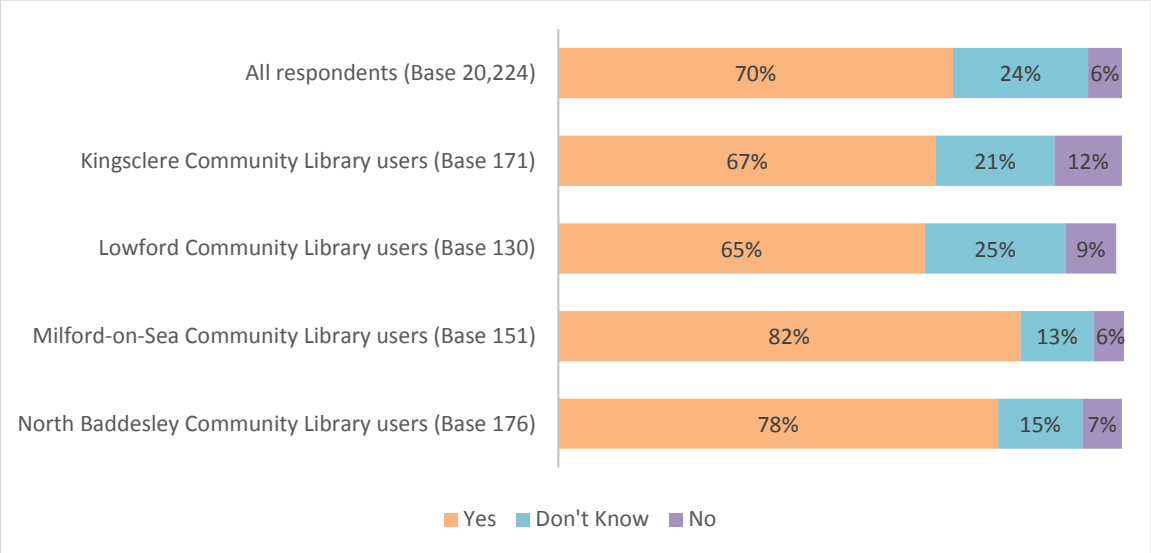

Figure 1 shows that the majority of respondents (70%), including the majority of community-managed library users, would continue to use their library if it was independent of the County Council and managed by the local community. However, the proportion of Kingsclere Community Library users who said that they would not (12%) was twice the consultation average (6%), with users of Lowford Community

Library (9%) and North Baddesley Community Library(7%) also being more likely to disagree than the consultation average.

Figure 2 - To what extent do you agree or disagree that an independent community-managed library model could meet the needs of the local community?

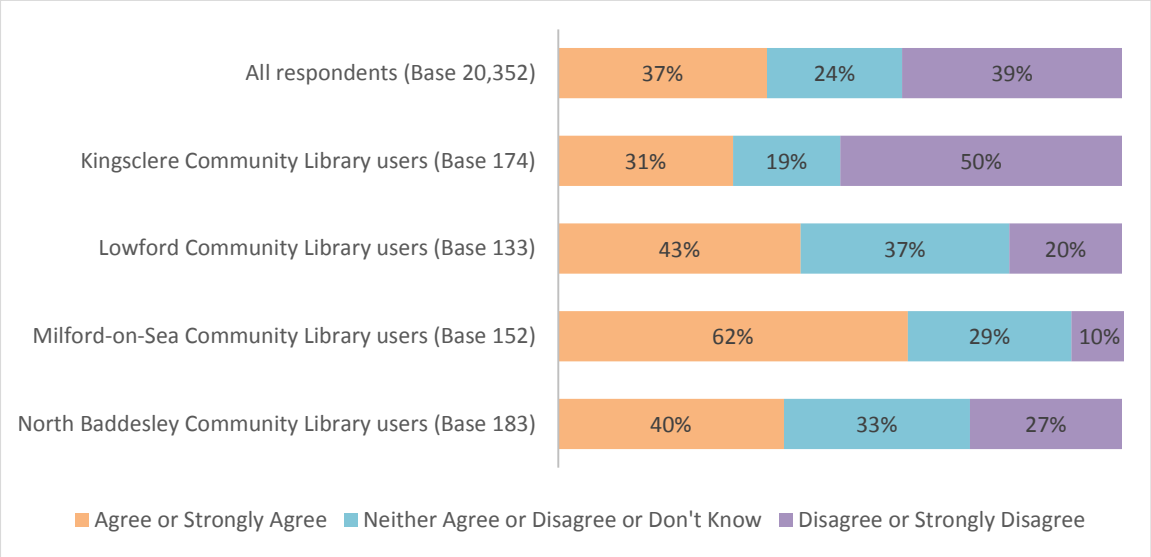

Figure 2 shows that, with the exception of Kingsclere Community Library users, users of Tier 4 community-managed libraries were more likely than the consultation average to feel that an independent community-managed library model could meet the needs of the local community.

Figure 3 - To what extent do you agree or disagree that if Tier Four libraries closed as a result of council support being withdrawn the needs of the community could be met by existing alternative library services?

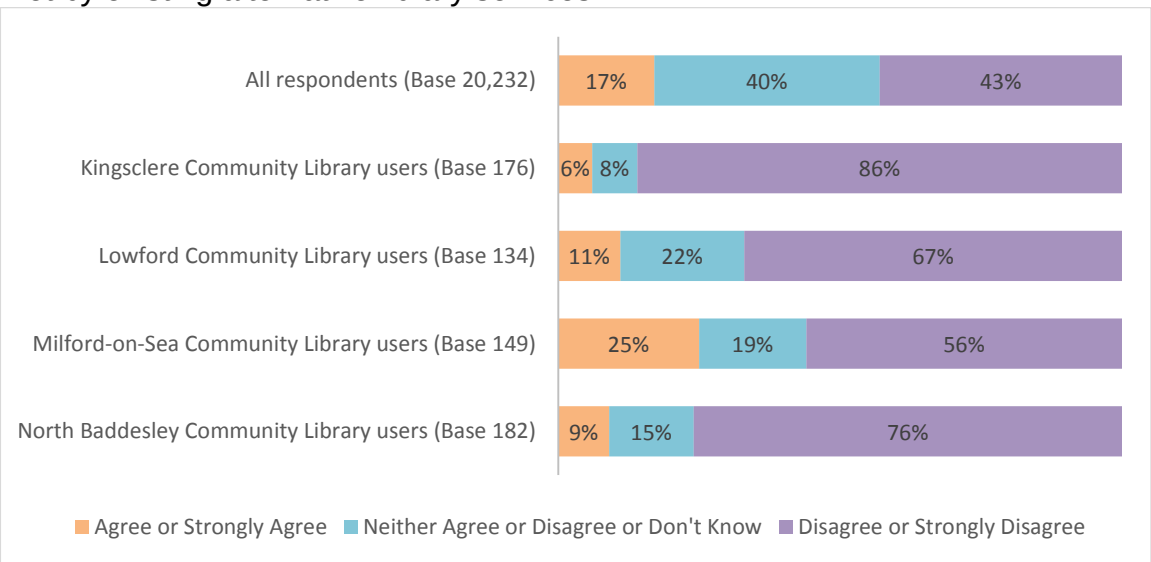

Figure 3 shows that if community-managed libraries were to close instead of transition to an independent model, the majority of respondents disagree or are

unsure that the needs of the community could be met by existing alternative library services.

The consultation also offered respondents the opportunity to comment on the impact of the proposals. These impacts are summarised in Appendix 2. The two most commonly cited impacts by community-managed library users were around the availability of resources (books, reservations and, in a few cases, Go-Online public access computers) and the accessibility of alternative library branches due to transport issues. Community-managed library users particularly valued having a library within walking distance, though it should be noted this is not the experience of the majority of Library Service users. When mentioning community impacts, community-managed library users referred to the library as being a social space, that it is a resource for the community, and that it could have a cultural impact on the area. These impacts are not dependent on being part of the Hampshire Library Network and supporting the community organisations to transition to an independent model would help secure the activities the community organisations are already carrying out to meet these community needs.

Meetings between Officers and partner organisations delivering community-managed libraries supported the view that the aspects of Hampshire's Library Service support most valued by partners and organisers are the refresh of stock and provision of a reservation service to provide a specific title for a customer. Any community group wanting to set up or transition to an independent community library, where a library or a community managed library is proposed for closure, will be invited to apply for a one off pump priming award through the existing Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

To support independent community-managed libraries, the Library Service will extend the current group membership offer to include these new organisations. This will enable them to refresh their physical stock by accessing all items within the Hampshire Library Collection in an efficient community led manner which also allows service users to reserve specific items to be collected locally. As well as support from the Library Service, partners will be sign-posted to sources of funding and advice to support any equipment and training needs.

With the mitigation proposed, it is considered that the key impacts raised by community library organisations and their customers are addressed. Whilst concerns were raised about the loss of community facilities through the closure of these libraries, given the position that community-run libraries already pay their property costs and arrange their own staffing, there should be no reason why these services should need to close if the County Council withdraws its support. It is noted, however, that the withdrawal of the County Council's support means that these libraries would no longer be part of the County Council's statutory network. The mitigation suggested, together with the coverage of other local libraries (including the extension of Overton Library's opening hours) and wide range of digital and contactless services offered, means that the removal of these four libraries from the statutory service does not affect the County Council's position that a network of 40 council-run libraries remains comprehensive and efficient.

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Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

Library Service Vision to 2025: Comprehensive and Efficient Service - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-vision-to-2025-comprehensive-and-efficient-service.pdf

Library Service Vision to 2025: Generating Income - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-vision-to-2025-generating-income.pdf

Library Service Vision to 2025: Delivering Efficiencies - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-vision-to-2025-delivering-efficiencies.pdf

Blackfield Library Closure - Service User Impact - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-blackfield-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

Elson Library Closure - Service User Impact - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-elson-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

Fair Oak Library Closure - Service User Impact - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-fair-oak-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

Horndean Library Closure - Service User Impact - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-horndean-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

Lee on the Solent Library Closure - Service User Impact - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-lee-on-the-solent-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

Lyndhurst Library Closure - Service User Impact - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-lyndhurst-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

Odiham Library Closure - Service User Impact - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-odiham-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

South Ham Library Closure - Service User Impact - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-south-ham-library-closure-service-user-impacts.pdf

Emsworth Library Relocation - Service User Impact - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-relocating-emsworth-library-service-user-impacts.pdf

Kingsclere Community Managed Library – transfer to independent model - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-kingsclere-transition-to-independent-library-or-close.pdf

Lowford Community Managed Library – transfer to independent model - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-lowford-transition-to-independent-library-or-close.pdf

Milford-on-Sea Community Managed Library – transfer to independent model - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-milford-on-sea-transition-to-independent-library-or-close.pdf

North Baddesley Community Managed Library – transfer to independent model - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-north-baddesley-transition-to-independent-library-or-close.pdf

Opening Hours Reduction - Service User Impact - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-staffed-hours-reduction-service-user-impacts.pdf

Opening Hours Reduction and Library Closures – Staff Impact - https://documents.hants.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments/library-service-consultation-closure-of-libraries-and-opening-hour-reduction-staff-impacts.pdf

Please find a link to the outline EIAs published at the start of the consultation in January 2020 - https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/equality/equality-impact-assessment/culture-communities-business

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Culture and Communities Select Committee
Date of meeting:	28 July 2020
Report Title:	Work Programme
Report From:	Director of Transformation & Governance

Contact name: Emma Cousins

Tel: 0370 779 5788 **Email:** emma.cousins@hants.gov.uk

Purpose of the Report

1. To review and agree the Work Programme for the Culture and Communities Select Committee.

Recommendation

2. That the Committee agree the Work Programme as attached and make any amendments as necessary.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document	Location
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. **Equality Duty**

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionally low.

2. **Equalities Impact Assessment:**

This is a scrutiny review document setting out the work programme of the Committee. It does not therefore make any proposals which will impact on groups with protected characteristics.

WORK PROGRAMME – CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

Topic	Issue	Reason for inclusion	28 July 2020	21 September 2020	30 November 2020	12 January 2021
Pre-scrutiny items	2021/22 Revenue Budget Report for Recreation and Heritage	Pre-scrutiny of 2021/22 budget proposals for relevant services prior to consideration by the Executive Member.				**x**
	2021/22 Revenue Budget Report for Countryside and Rural Affairs	Pre-scrutiny of 2021/22 budget proposals for relevant services prior to consideration by the Executive Member.				**x**
	Library Strategy 2020-2025	Pre-scrutiny of library proposals prior to consideration by the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage.	**x**			
Overview items (regular updates)	Update on Hampshire Cultural Trust	To receive a regular update from the Cultural Trust. *Last update – January 2019*				
	Transforming the County Council's Country Parks	To receive a regular update on the programme progress. *Last update – January 2019*		**x**		
	Energise Me	To receive a regular update from Energise Me. *Last update – April 2018*			**x**	
	General Library Service Update	To receive a regular update on the Library Service. *Last update – September 2018*				