

# Library Service Consultation

Consultation on proposed changes to Hampshire's Library Service

## Consultation analysis

May 2020



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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<sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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%<sup>2</sup>) 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<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> 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%).

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<sup>2</sup> Proportions based on percentage choosing option within their top two preferences.

<sup>3</sup> There are four library tiers in Hampshire, which group libraries with similar features - predominantly size of catchment area population.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

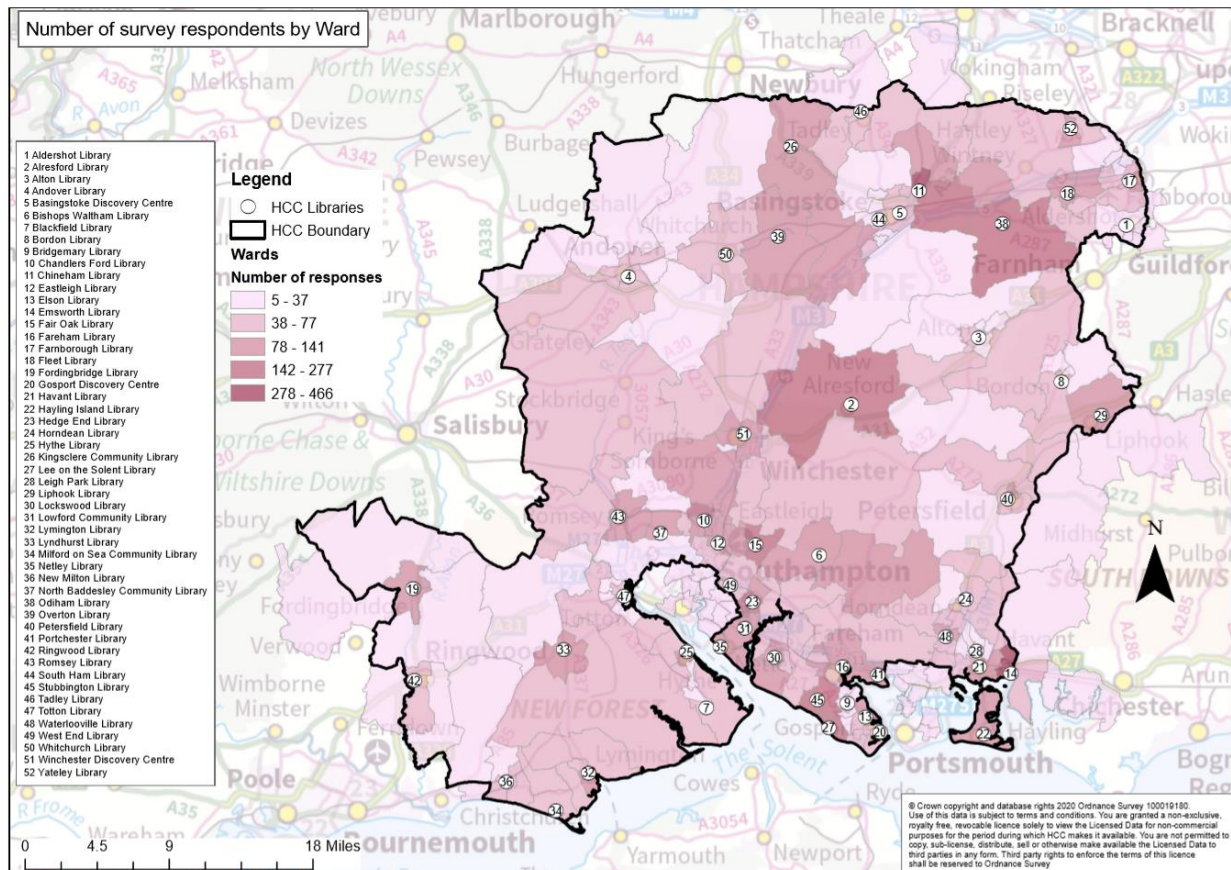
**362** separate unstructured responses were also received within the consultation period. **196** of these were submitted by email or letter and **166** through comments on social media channels. A summary of these responses is included separately within this consultation analysis.



## Location of respondents

Respondents were asked to provide their postcode. The consultation heard from respondents located across the county and beyond<sup>5</sup>.

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.

<sup>5</sup> 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<sup>6</sup>. Responses were also coded to identify potential impacts on protected characteristics<sup>7</sup>.

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.

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<sup>6</sup> 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.

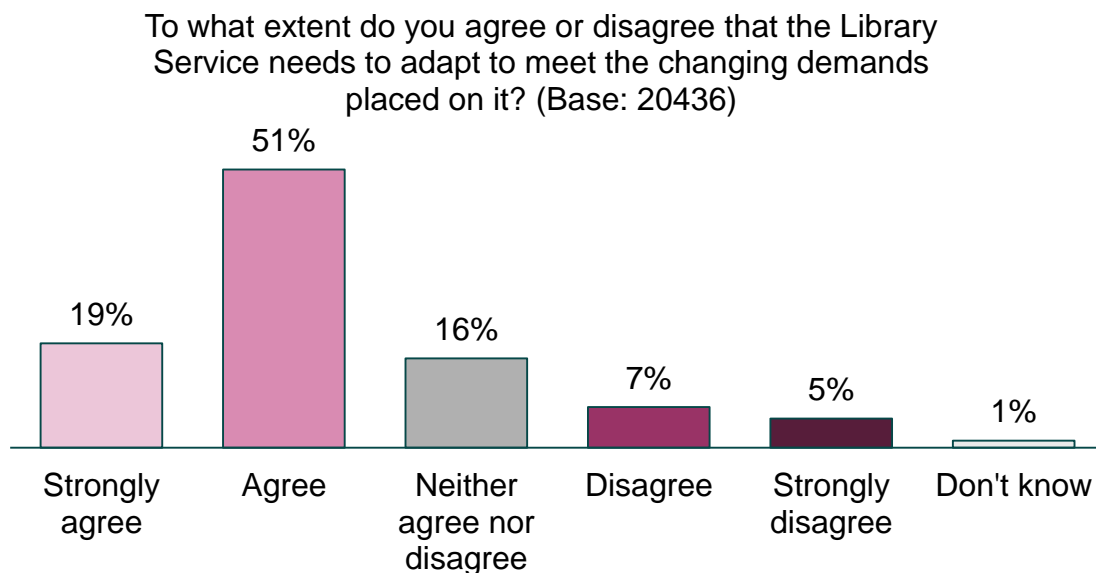
<sup>7</sup> Protected characteristics include: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation, as well as impacts on staff, the environment and digital exclusion.

## 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<sup>8</sup>. 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.

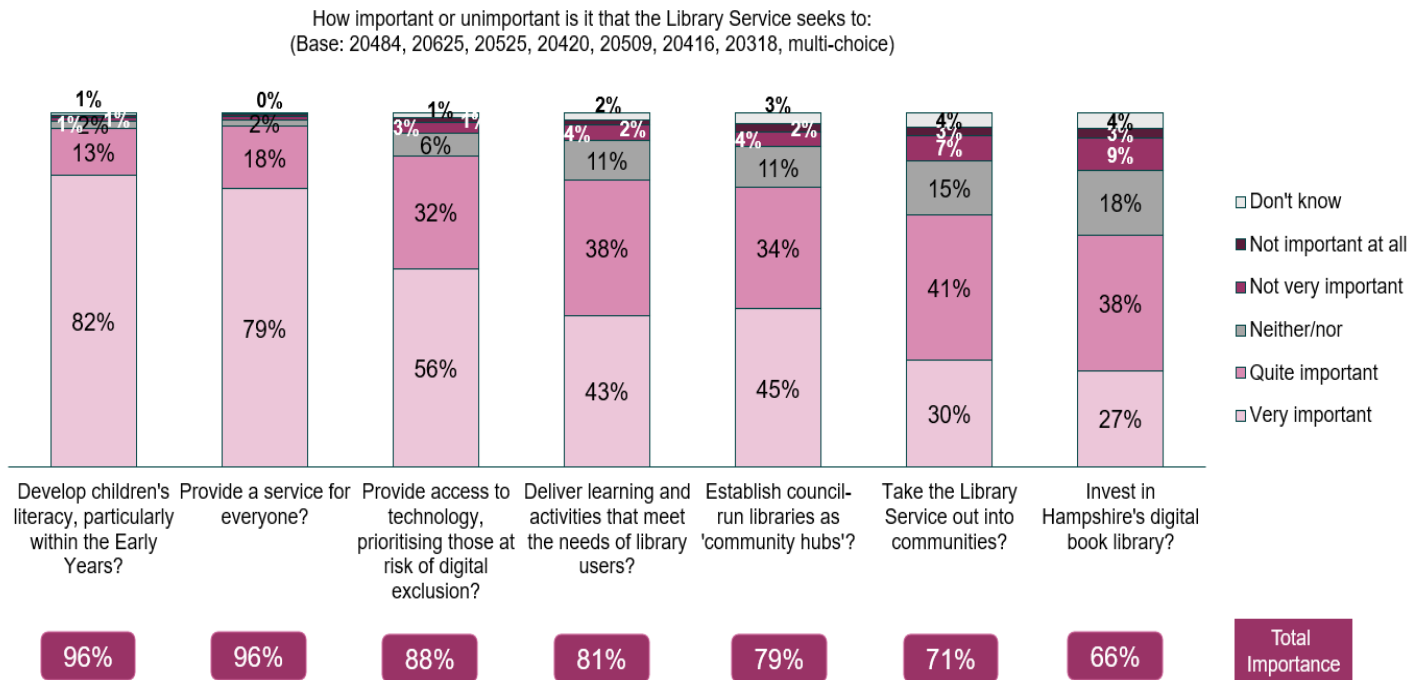
Looking across the library portfolio, users of Elson (19%) and Fair Oak (19%) libraries were those most likely to disagree that the Service needed to adapt.

<sup>8</sup> 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

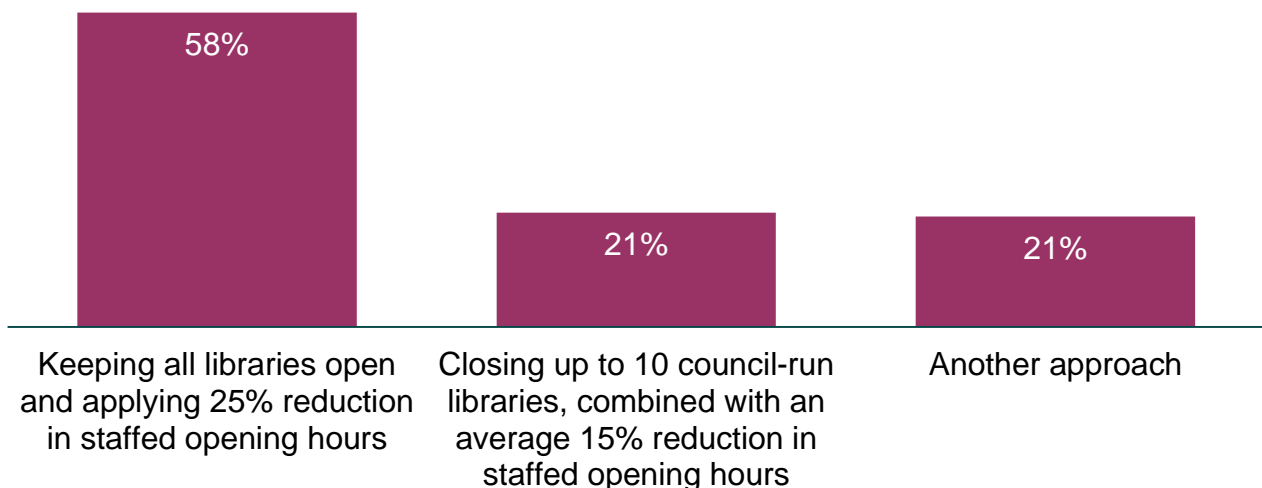
This section outlines the consultation response to proposals to reduce operational costs by £1.04 million by changing how council-run library services are delivered, including respondents' rationale for their preference.

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.

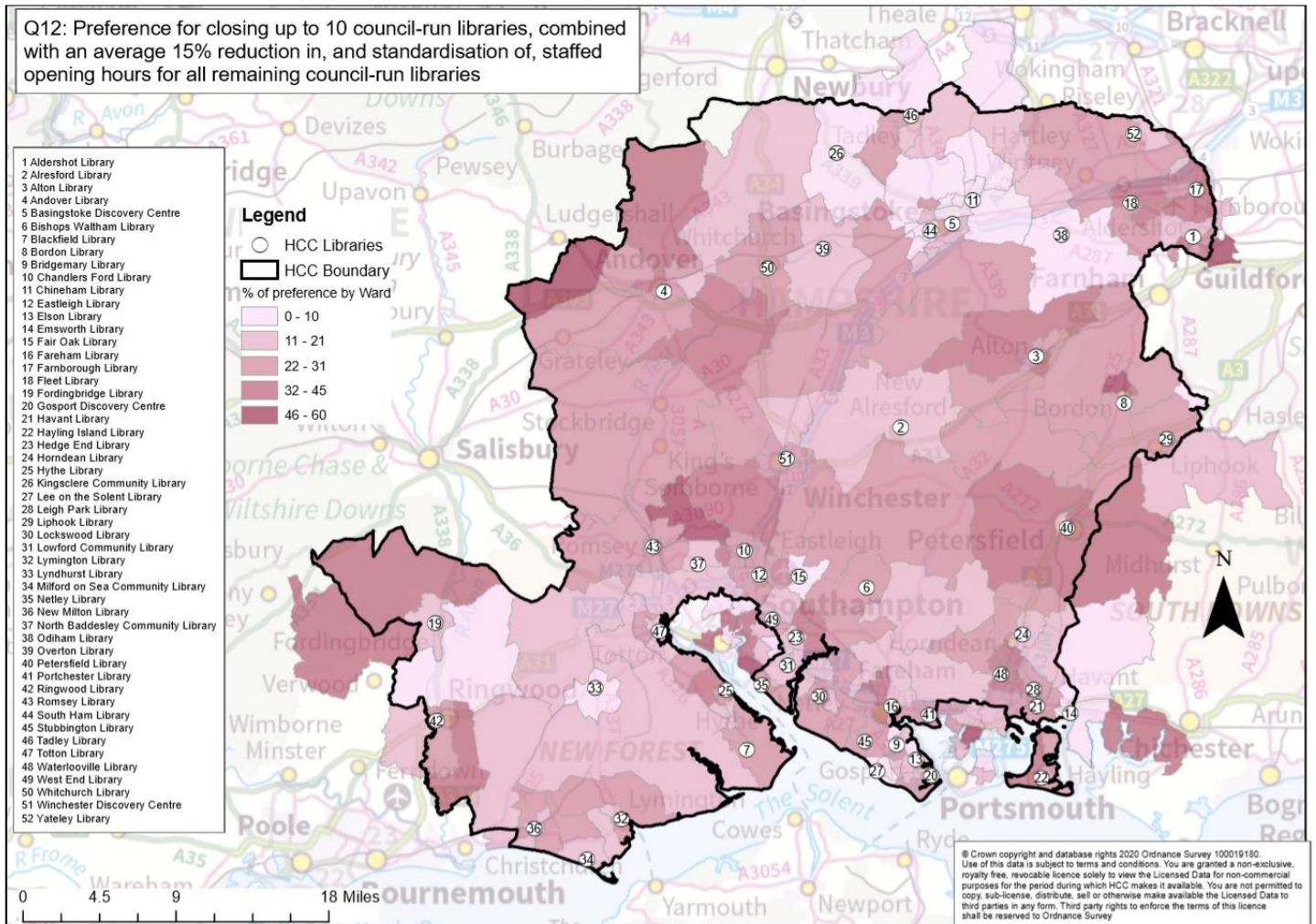
The consultation found that most respondents (58%) would prefer that all libraries remain open, and that operational savings be achieved through opening hour reductions. Around one in five supported closures (21%) and the same amount suggested another approach (21%).

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).

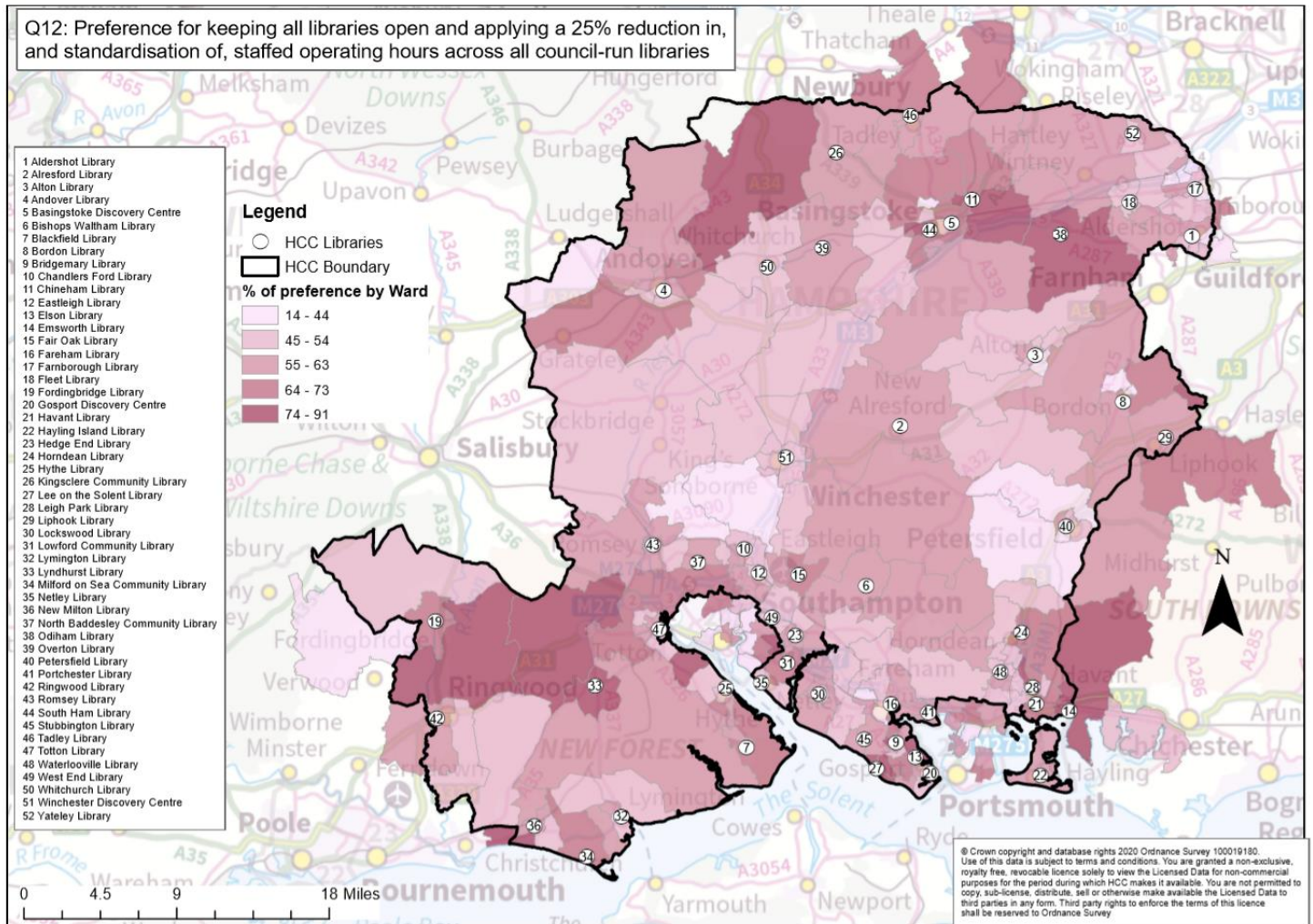
There was minority preference for closing up to 10 council-run libraries combined with an average 15% reduction in, and standardisation of, staffed opening hours across most of the county. Areas that were least supportive were mainly located around the libraries identified as potential candidates for 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.



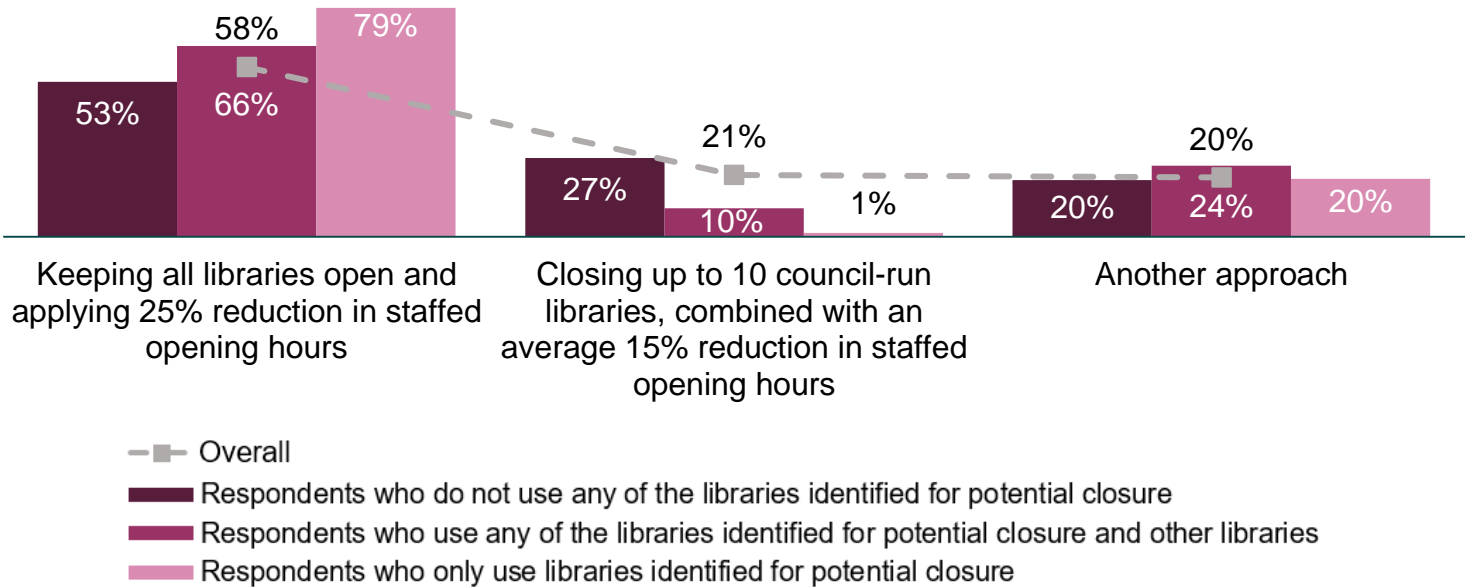
There was a majority preference for keeping all libraries open and applying a 25% reduction in, and standardisation of, staffed operating hours across all council-run libraries across much of the county. Areas with the highest levels of support were sited around Whitchurch, Odiham, Hook and Loddon and 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.

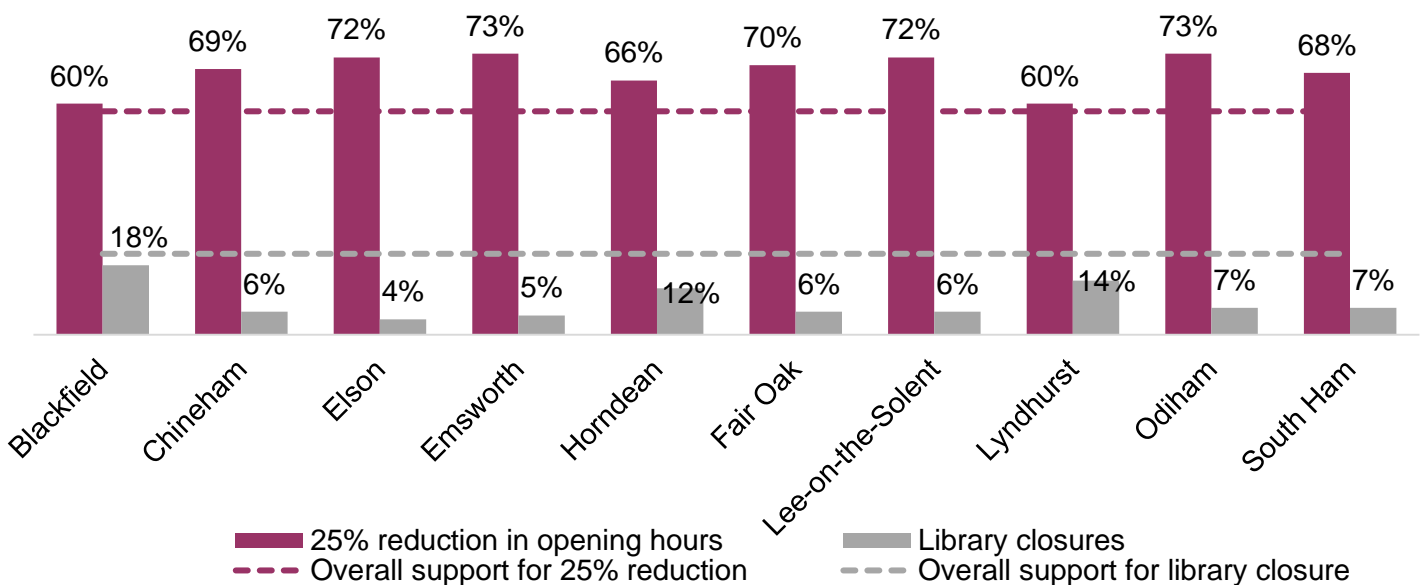
Respondents who uniquely used any of the 10 libraries identified for potential closure, were most likely to prefer that all libraries remain open<sup>9</sup>.

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)



<sup>9</sup> 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<sup>10</sup>.

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%).

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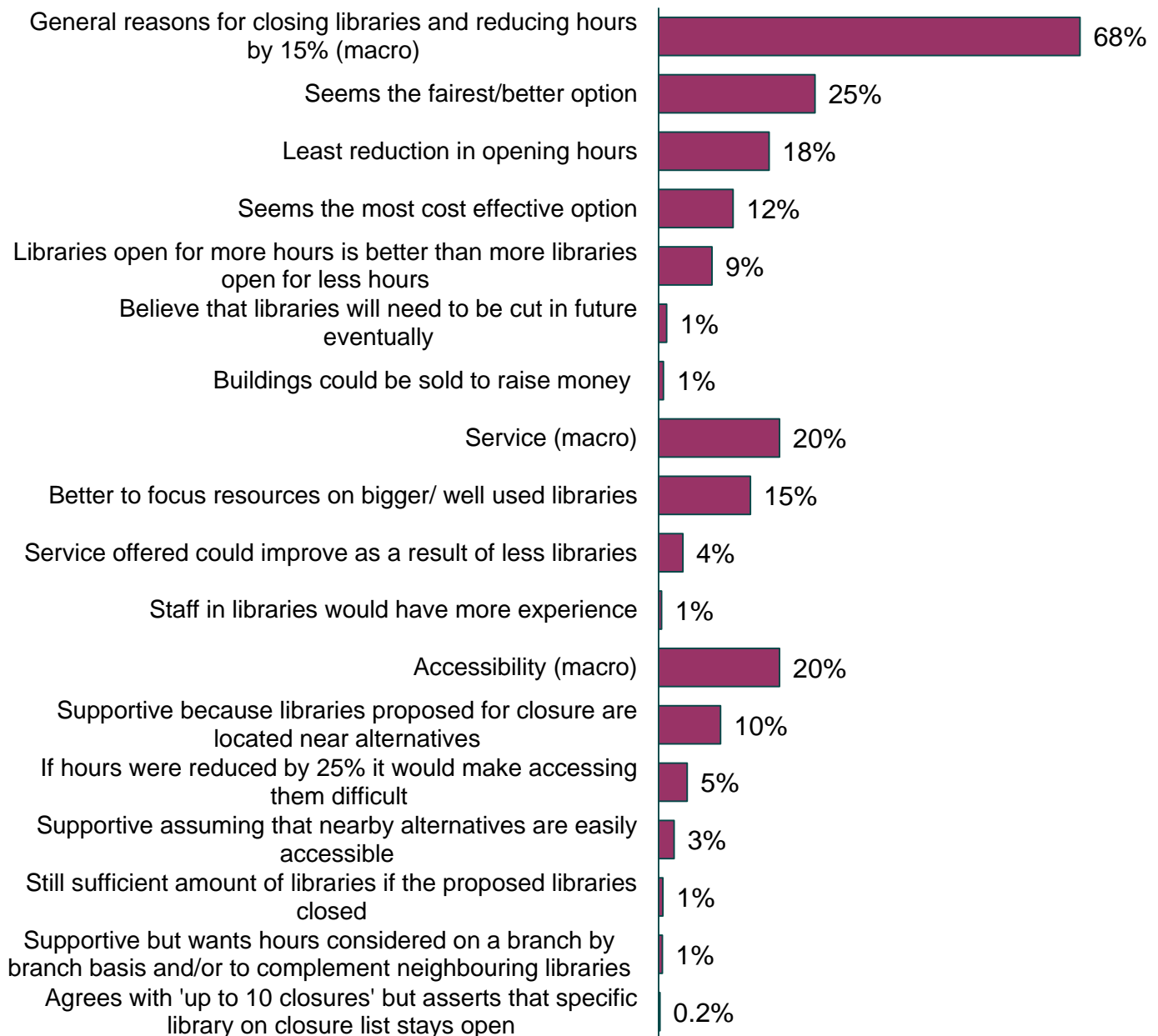
<sup>10</sup> 339 library staff responded to the consultation. Those who preferred the option of closing up to 10 libraries combined with a 15% reduction in opening hours included staff who use the libraries identified for potential closure.

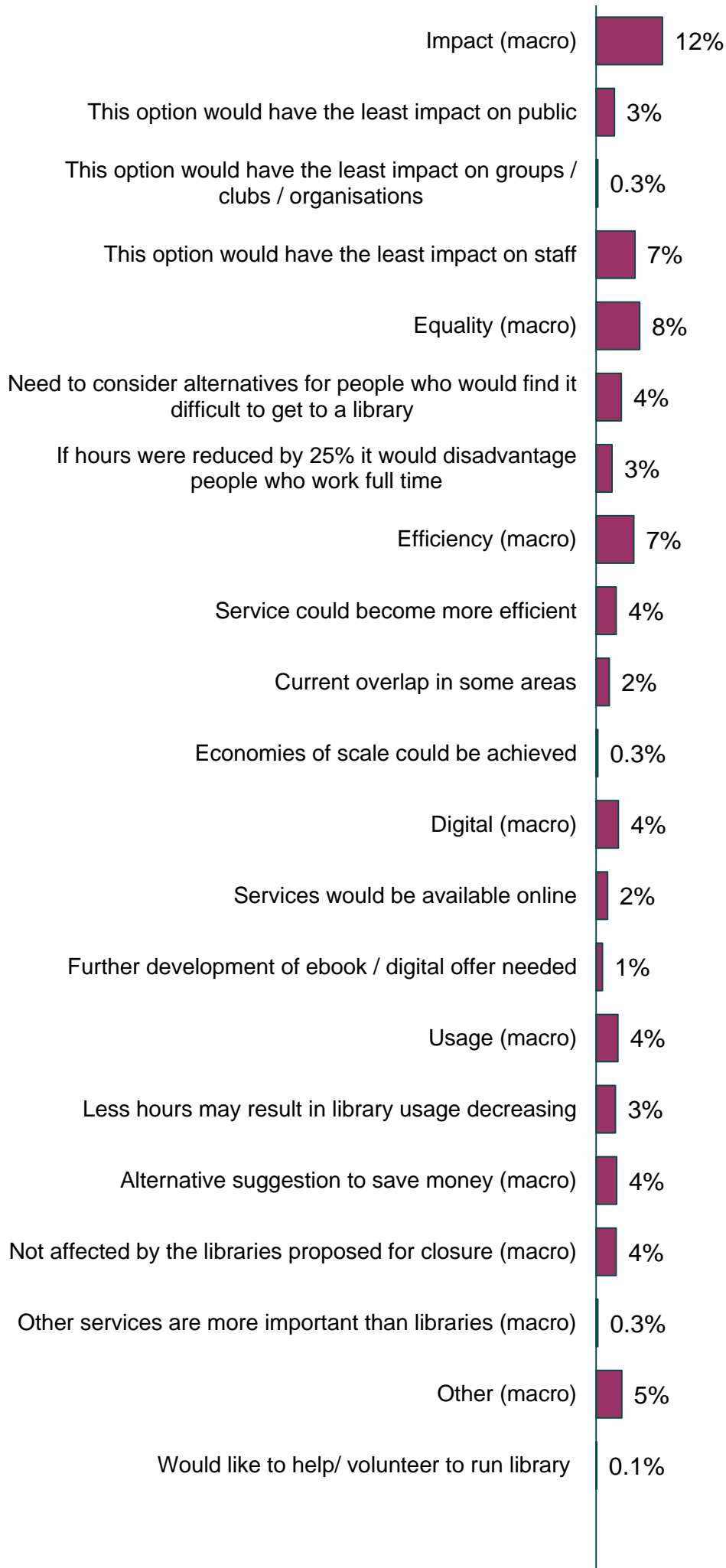
## Rationale for preferring up to 10 library closures, together with an average 15% reduction in, and standardisation of, opening hours

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)





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!*

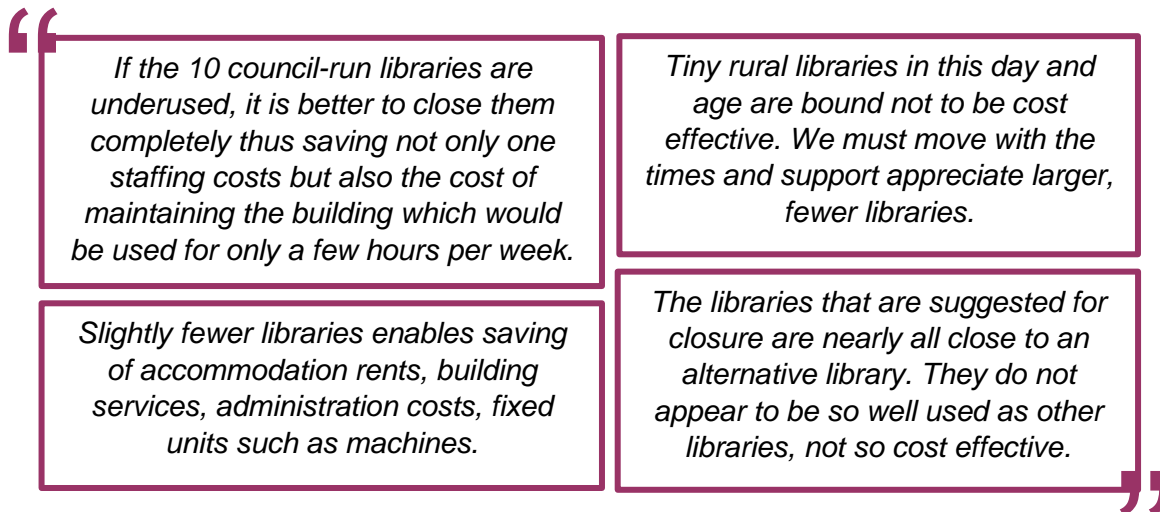
*This option keeps the remaining libraries in the County open as much as possible. This is vital as they provide a very important resource and community space.*

*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.



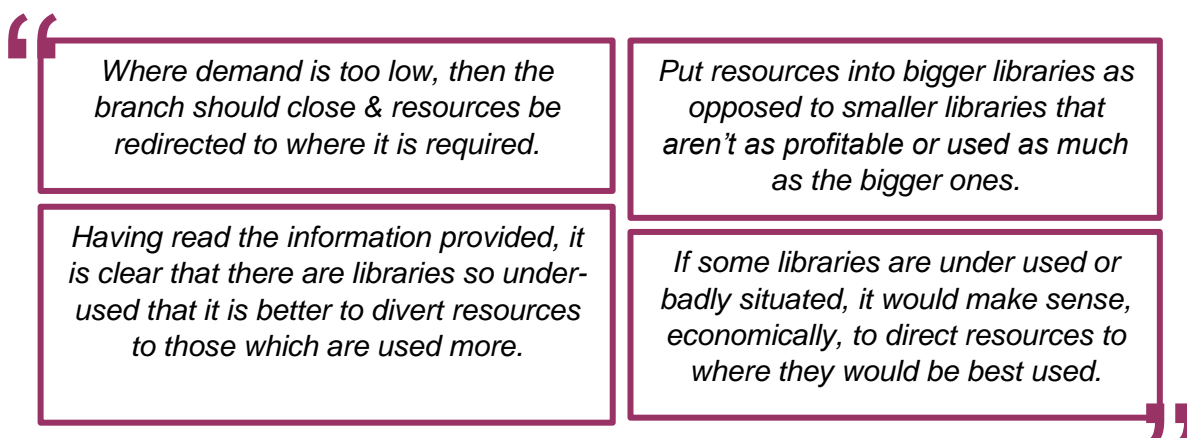
*(392 comments mentioned that this option seemed the most cost effective)*

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).*

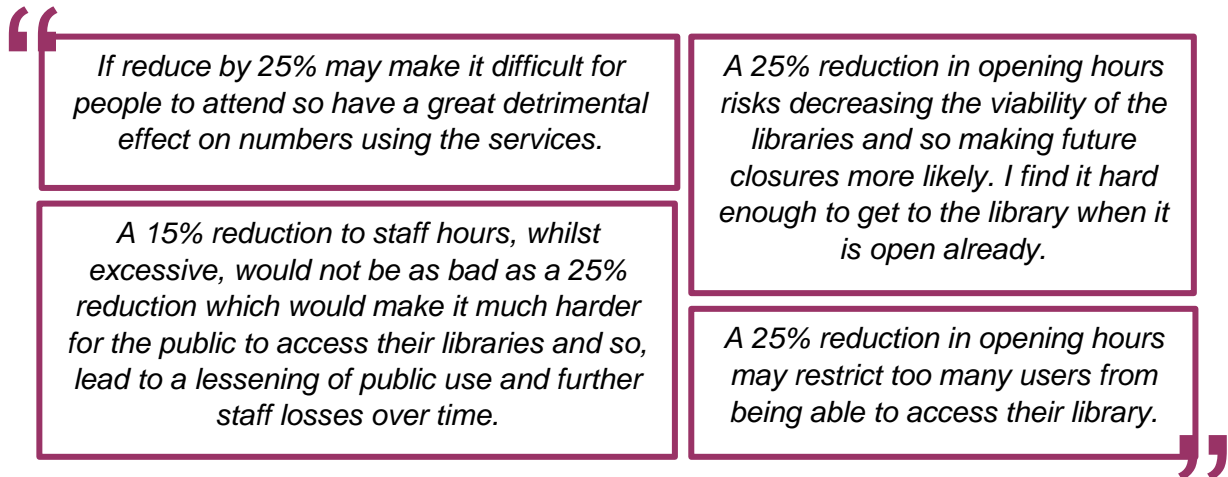
*As long as people can access another library within a short distance of a closed library, I see no reason why smaller under used libraries could not close.*

*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.



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

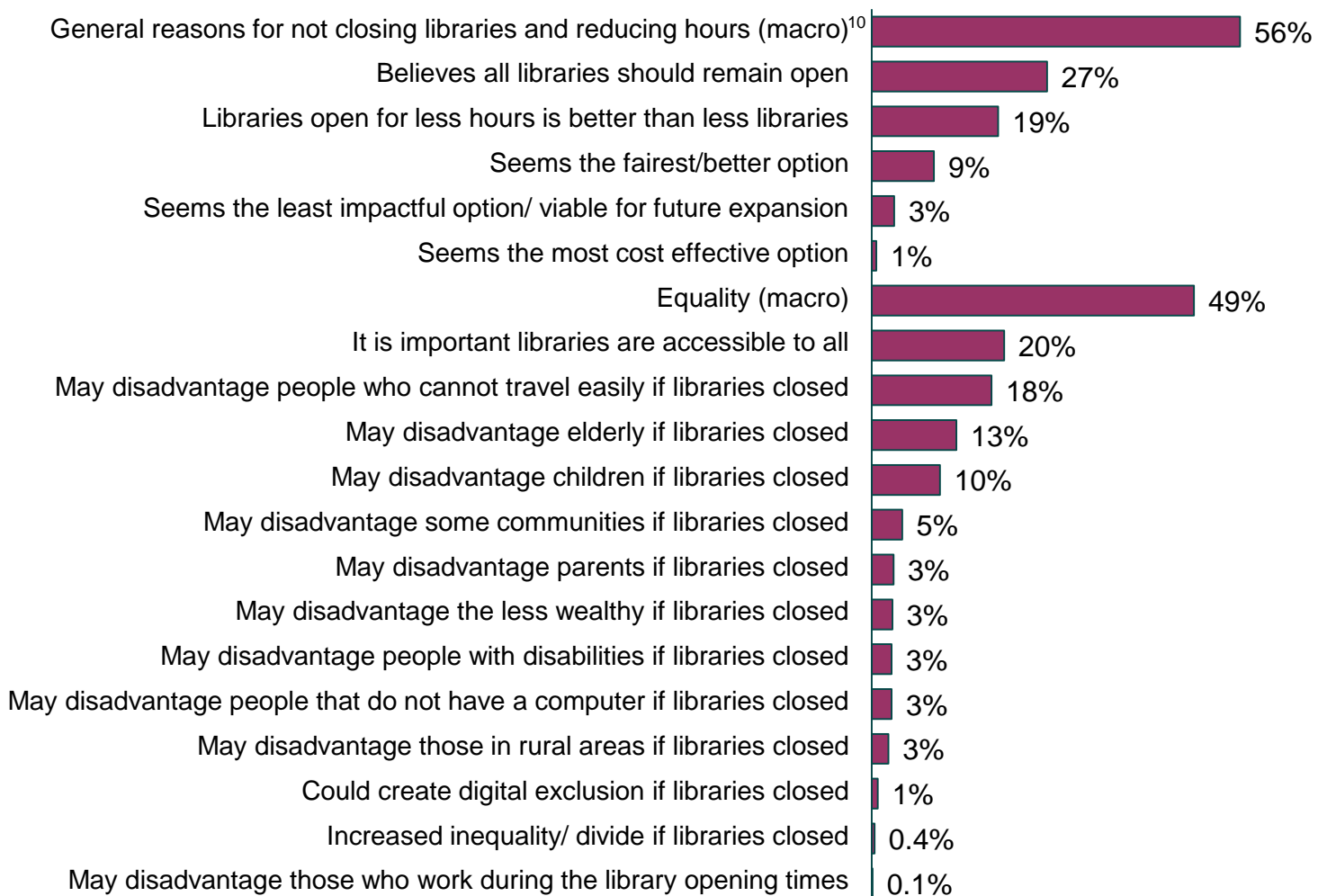
Other comments about accessibility mentioned that if the proposed libraries closed there would still be a sufficient amount of libraries available; support for the closures but that opening hours need to be considered by individual libraries or alternate with the neighbouring library; and support for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

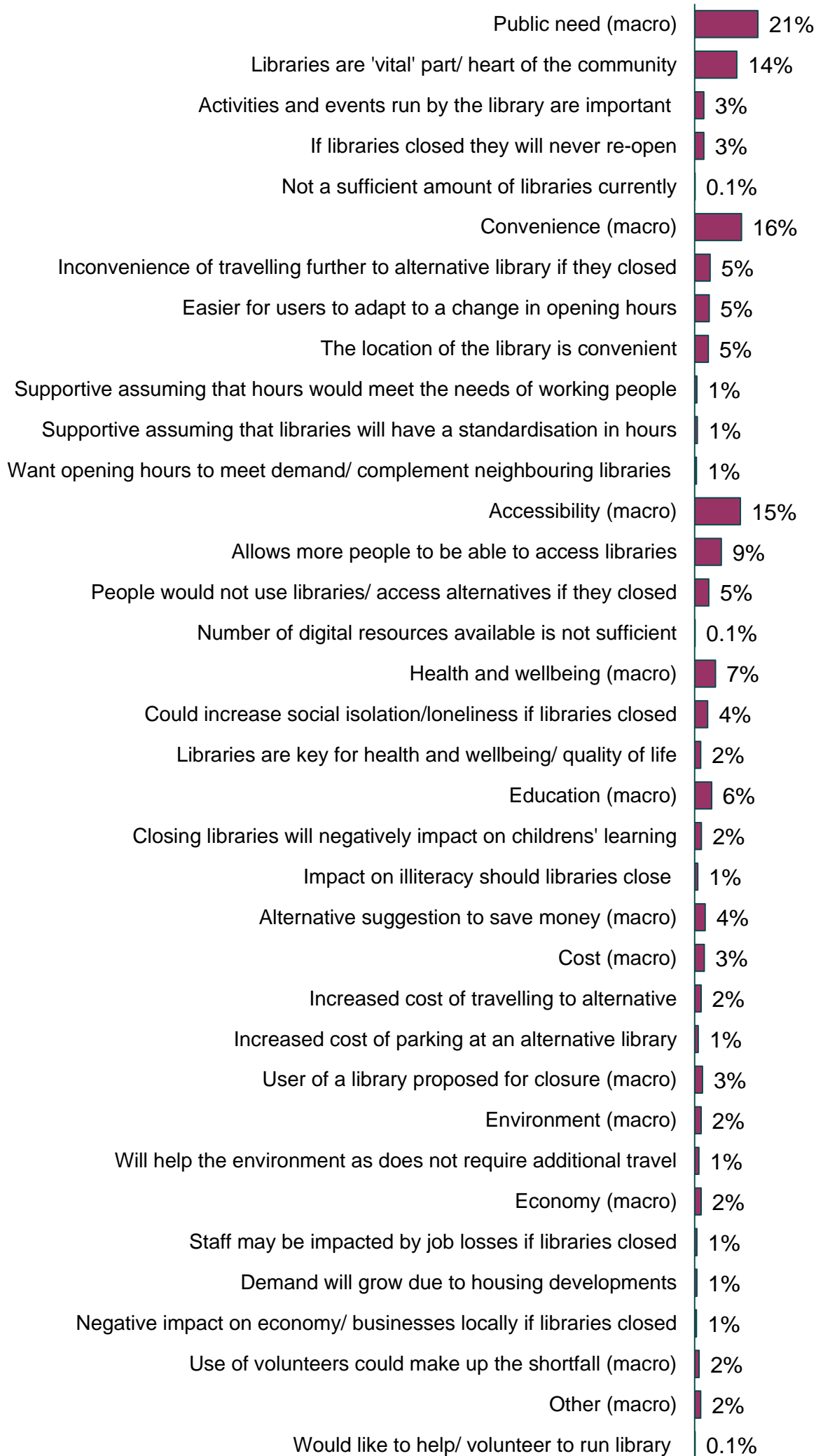
Over half of the consultation respondents (58%), including 84 businesses, groups and organisations (53%) and 23 Democratically Elected Representatives (43%), would prefer that the Library Service achieved the proposed £1.04 million operational savings without closing any libraries.

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)



<sup>10</sup> 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.



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.*

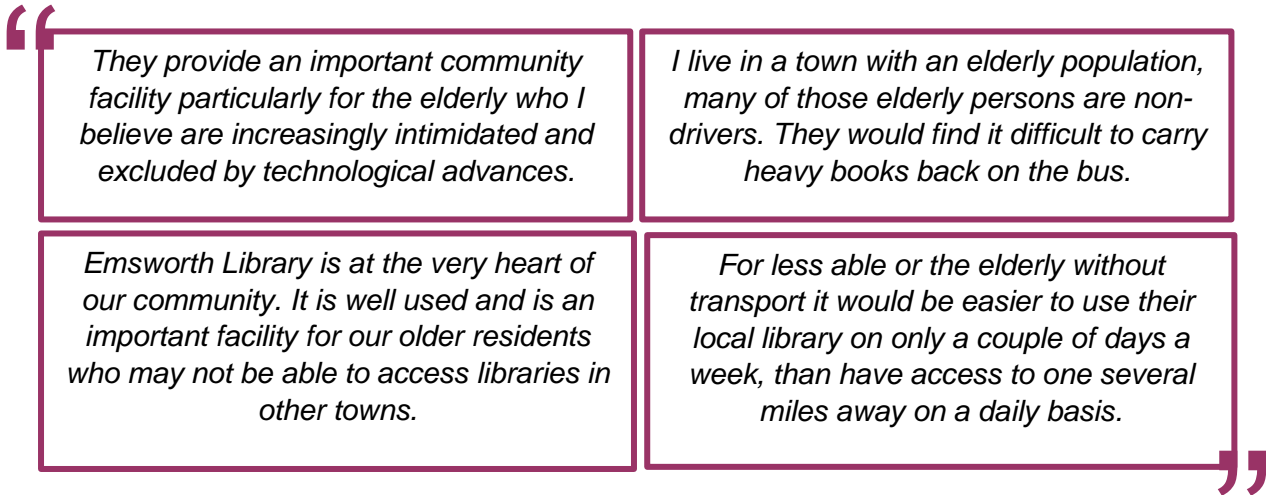
*There need to be as many libraries as possible in the community to meet the needs of people who do not have their own means of transport.*

*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.



*(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.



*(997 comments mentioned children being disadvantaged if libraries closed)*

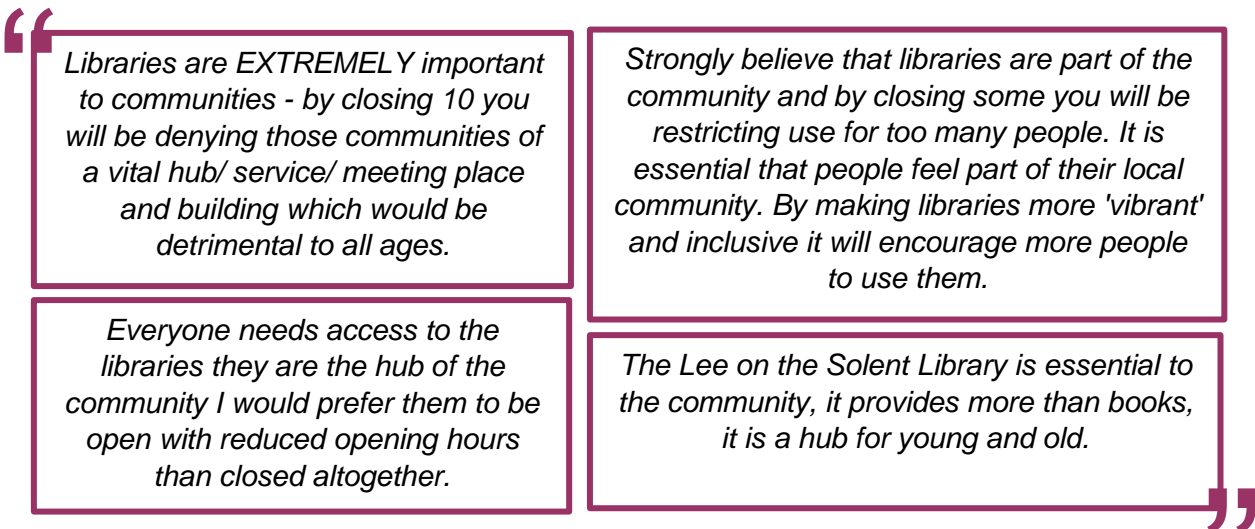
Other groups that respondents felt could be unfairly impacted by library closures included some communities, parents, those less wealthy, those less able, those without computers or internet access, those residing in rural areas and those working during library opening times. Also, concerns were raised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



*(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.



*(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.*

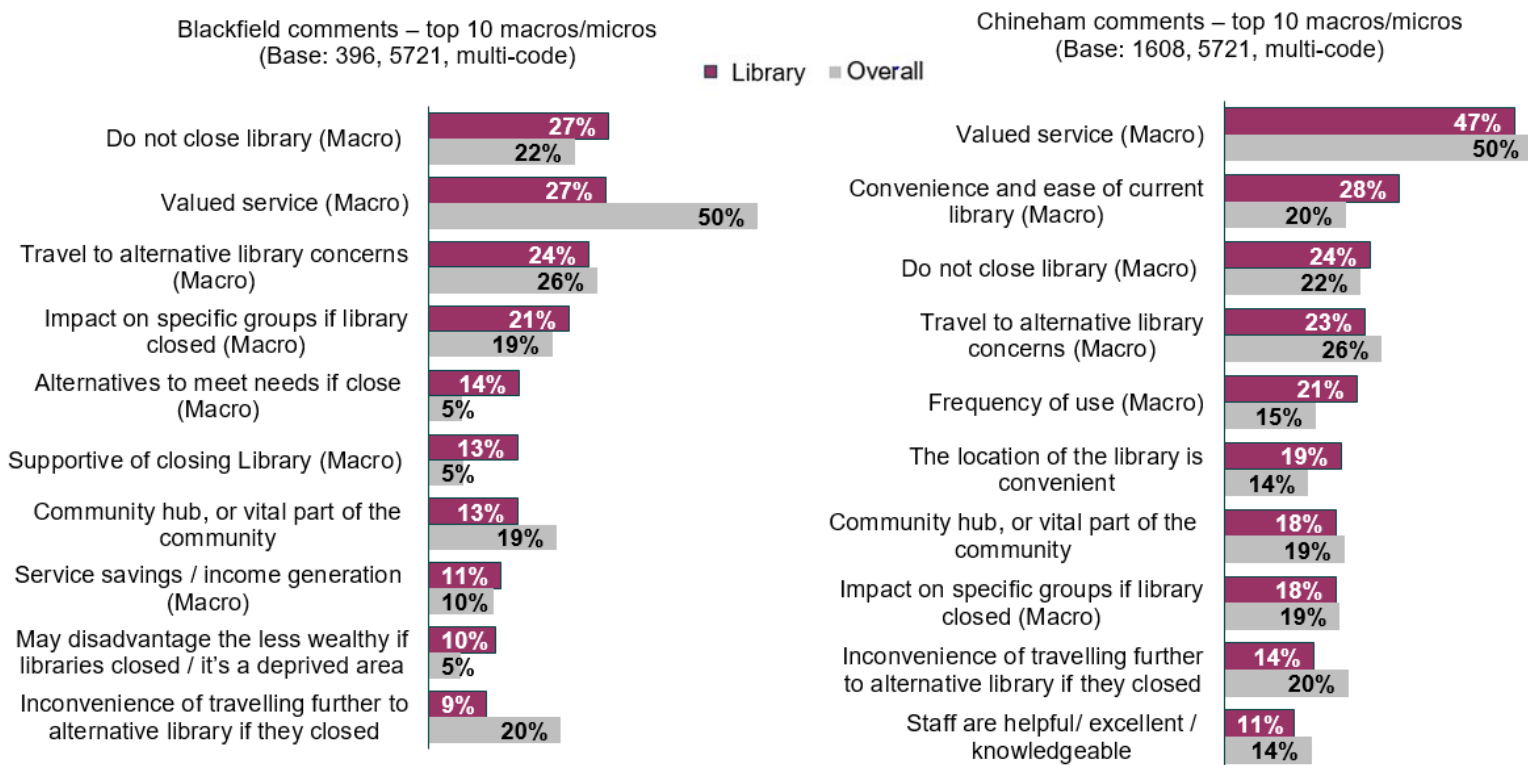
*(290 comments mentioned that if libraries closed, they would never re-open)*

## 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

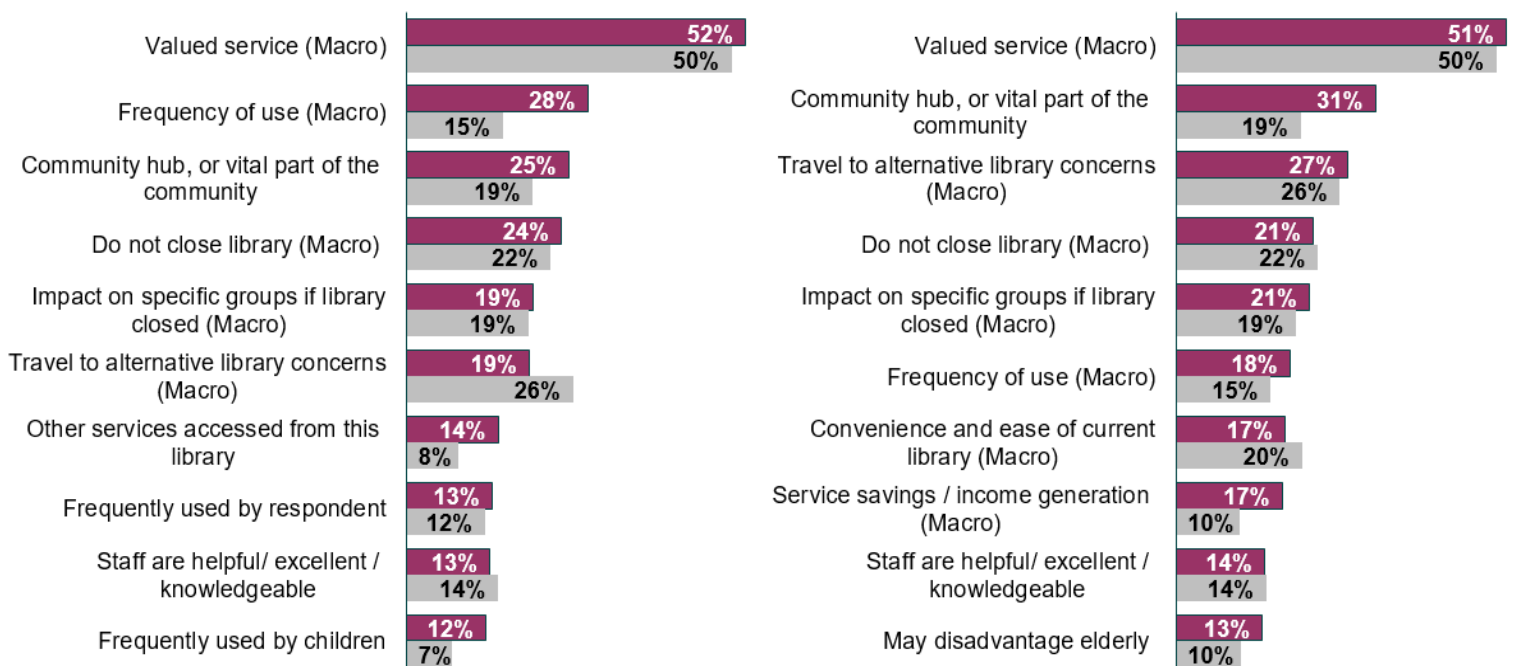
citing the handiness of the location, how people who live nearby can walk there for a visit and those who need to can easily park, leading to many people commenting on how often they visited (21% vs 15% on average).

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).

Elson comments – top 10 macros/micros  
(Base: 648, 5721, multi-code)

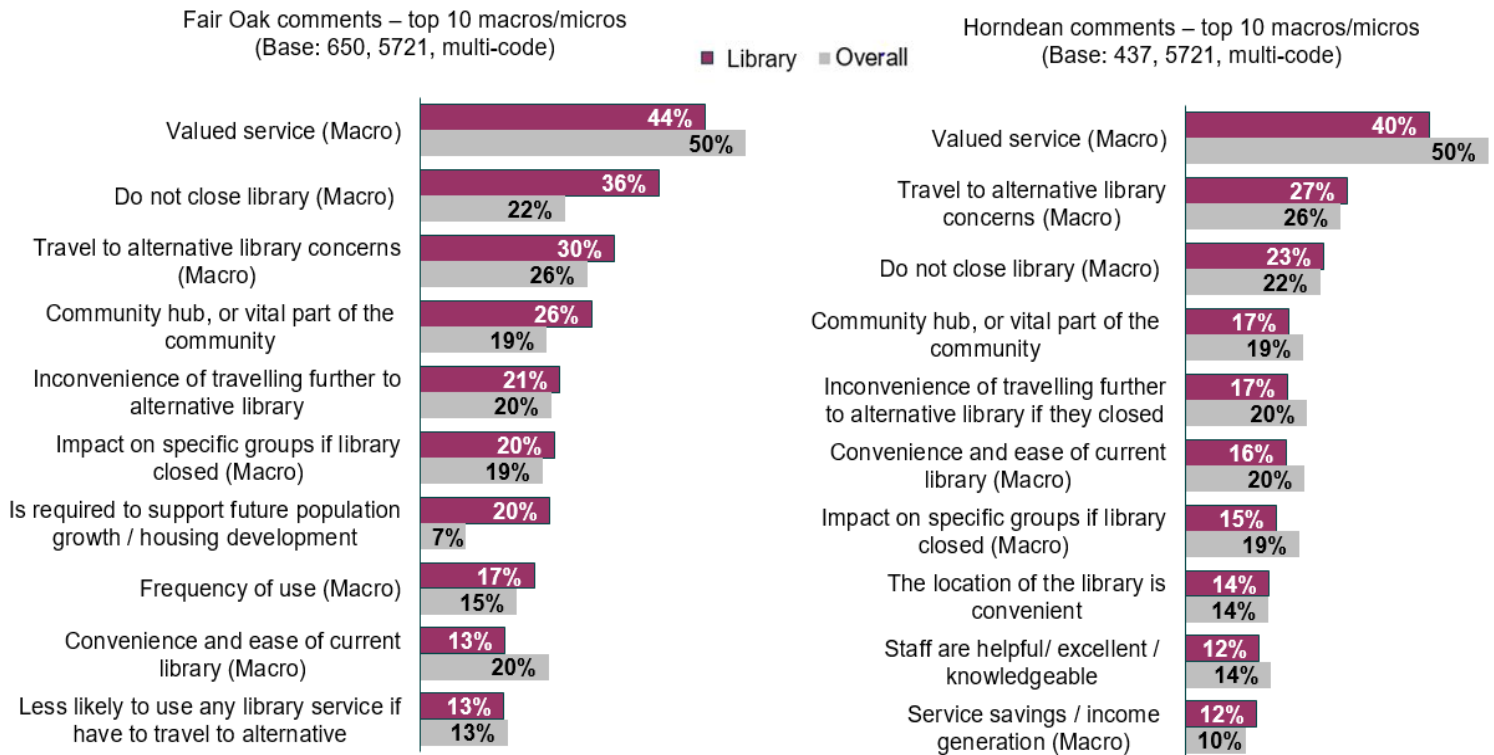
■ Library ■ Overall

Emsworth comments – top 10 macros/micros  
(Base: 987, 5721, multi-code)



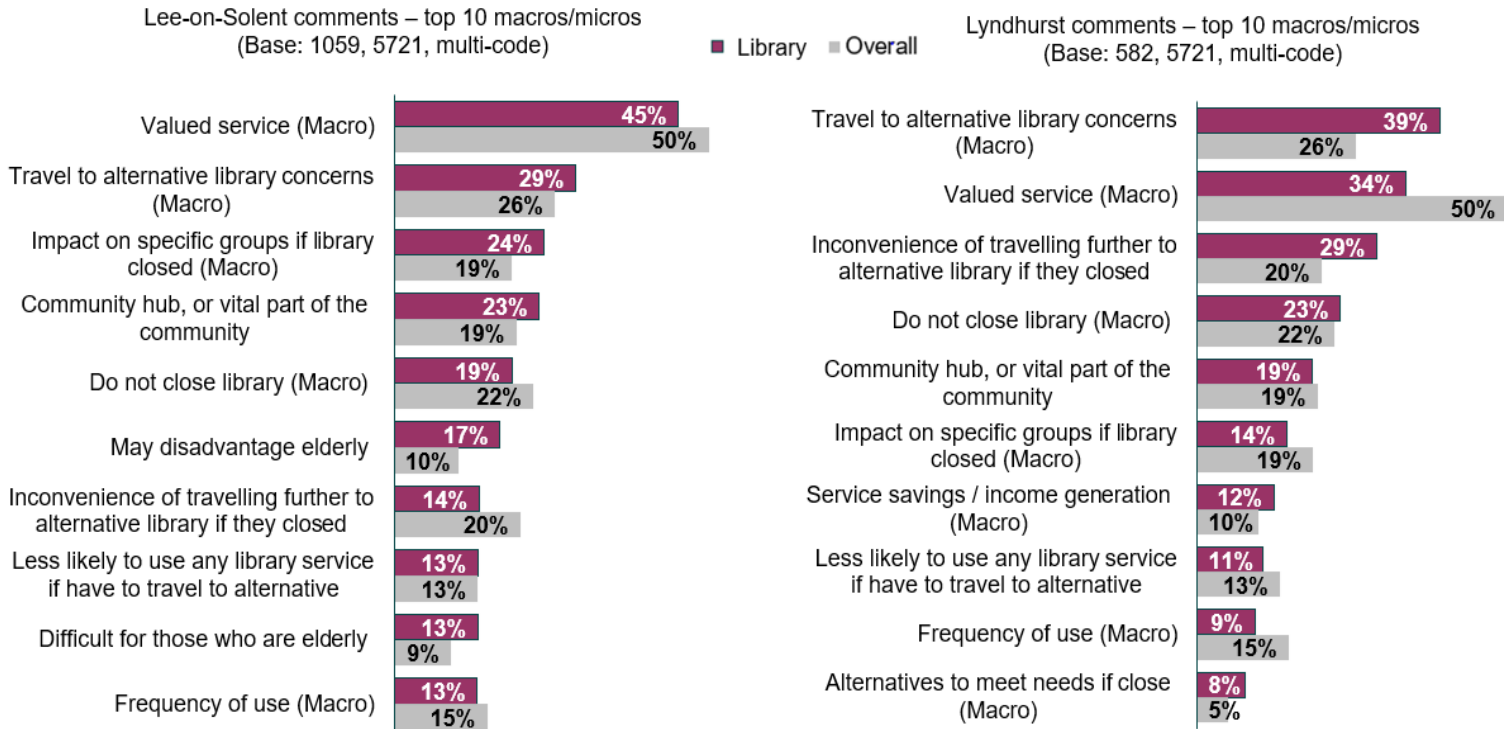
Comments relating to **Emsworth Library**, also highlighted the valued service provided, with 51% of all submitted comments reflecting this point. Respondents were particularly vocal about how the library is a vital part of the community (31% vs 19% on average) and felt that service efficiencies or income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

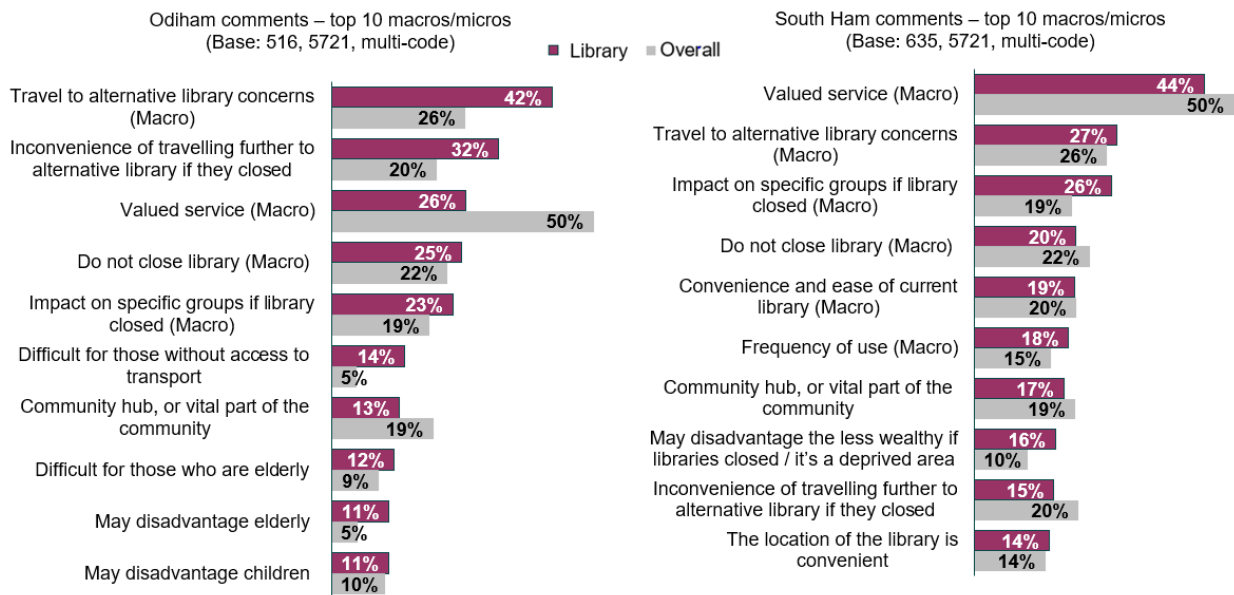


Travel concerns were also paramount for Lyndhurst and Odiham libraries.

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.



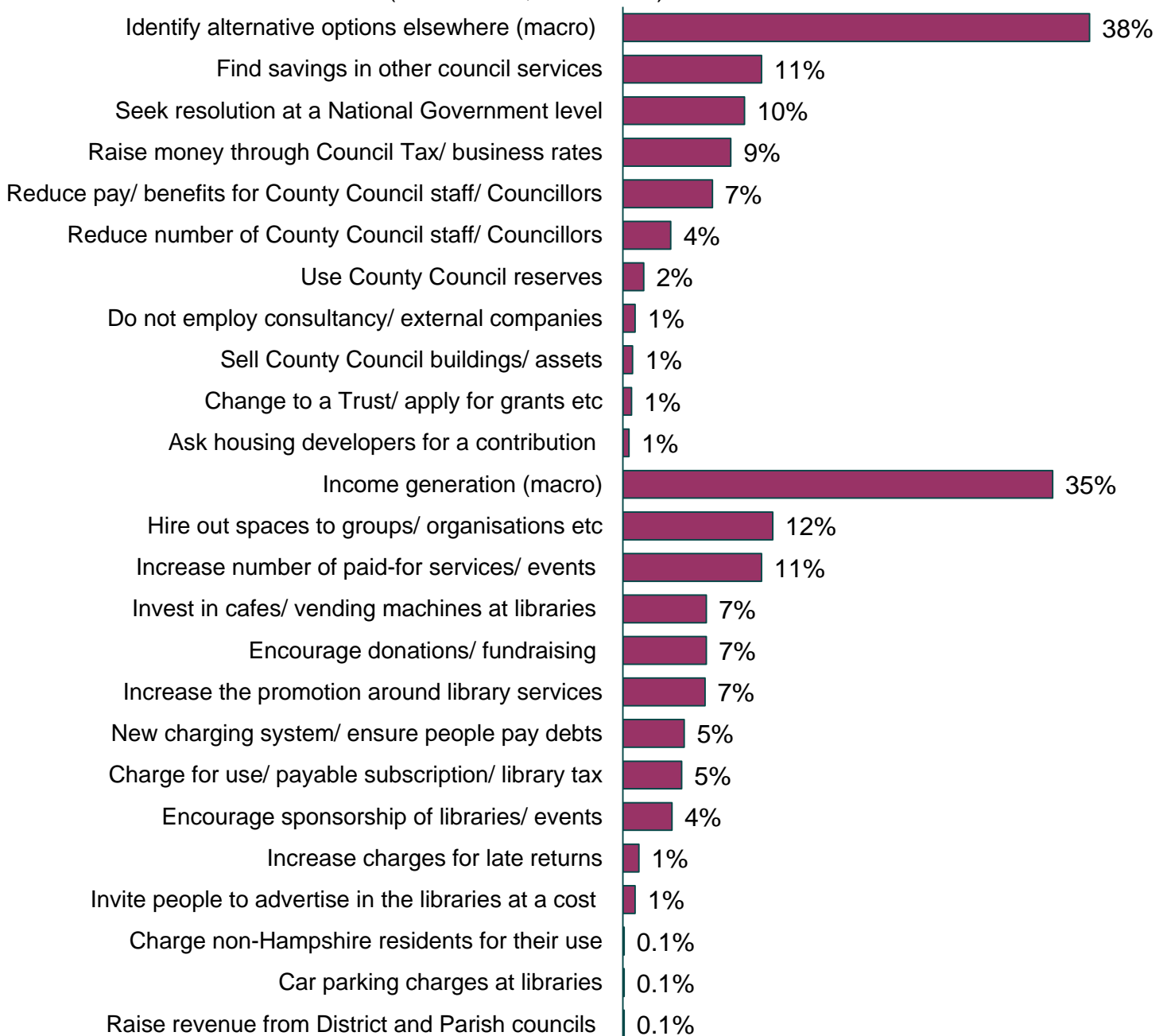
More so than any other library, comments relating to **South Ham Library** focused on the impact that closure could have on specific groups (27% vs 19% on average). Similarly to Blackfield, South Ham was highlighted as a more deprived area which needed a library to support less wealthy residents (16%, 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’

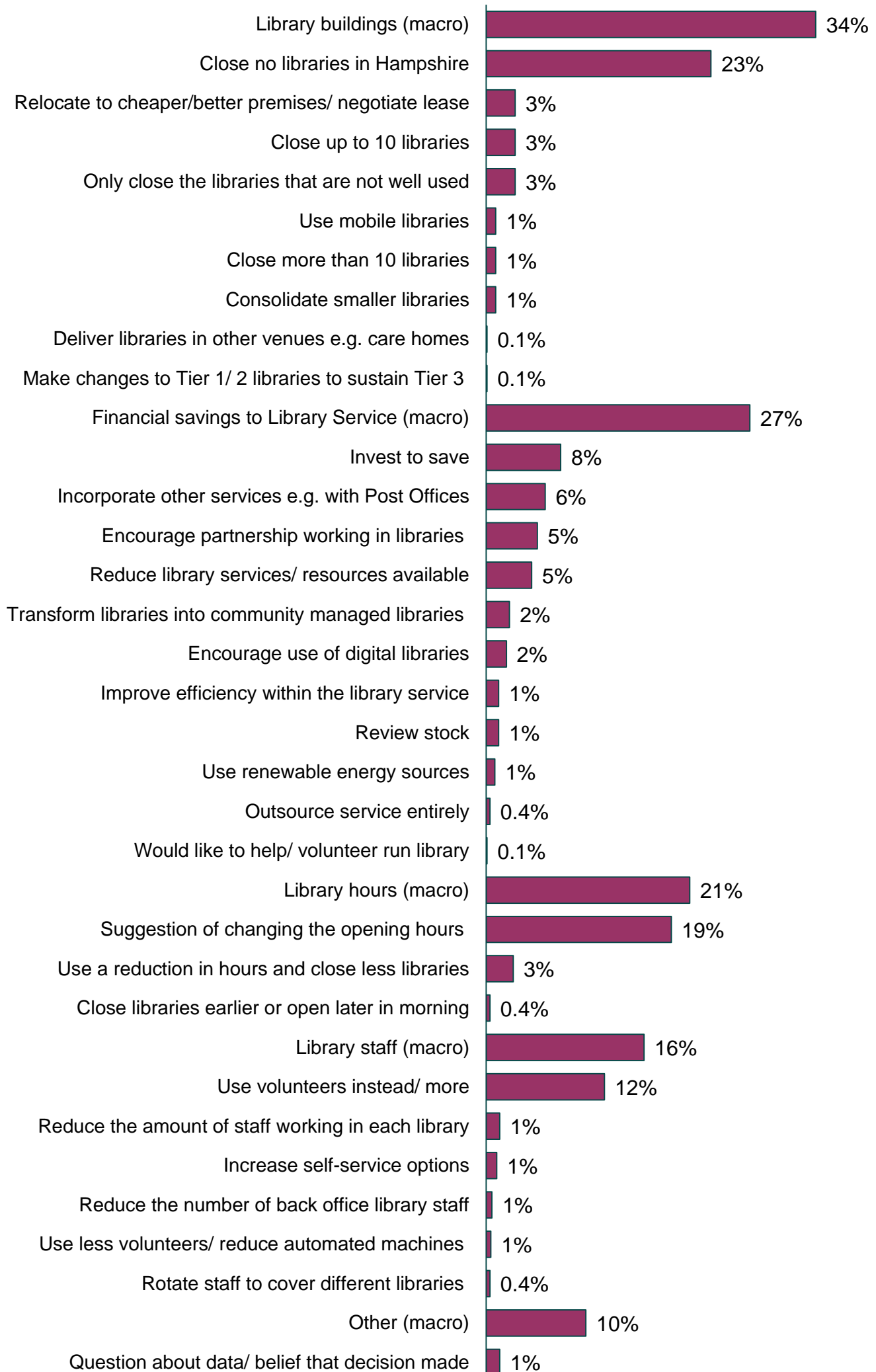
One in five respondents (20%), including 50 businesses, groups and organisations (32%) and 25 Democratically Elected Representatives (46%), dismissed the two operational savings options proposed by the Library Service in favour of another approach.

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%).

### Another approach – quantified verbatim (Base: 3662, multi-code)







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.*

*Keep them as they are and take the £1.04 million from children's services.*

*Council budget reductions should be met by making cuts to other services, in my opinion.*

*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.*

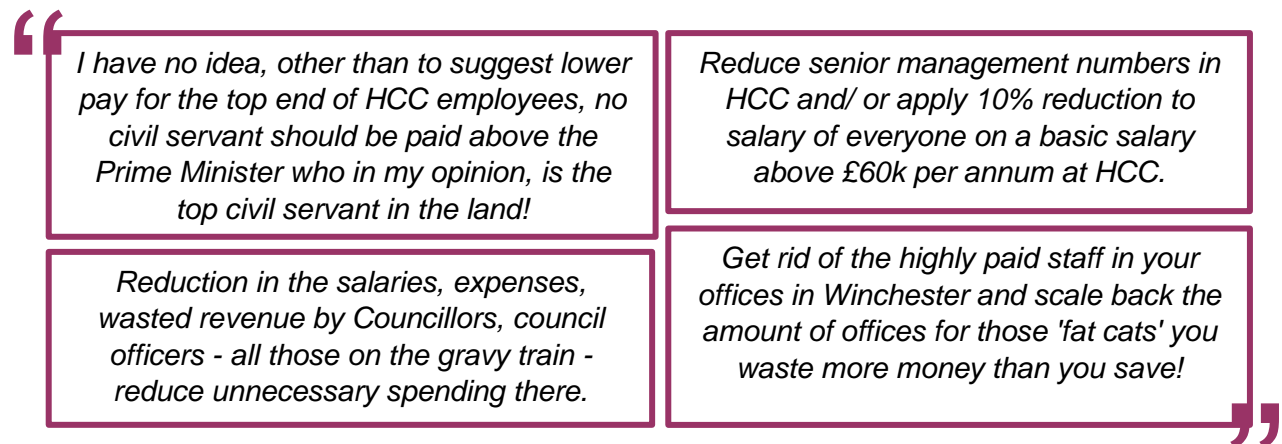
*The current government has imposed these cuts on local authorities, and our Elected Representatives should be fighting on our behalf to preserve services which enrich our society.*

*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%).



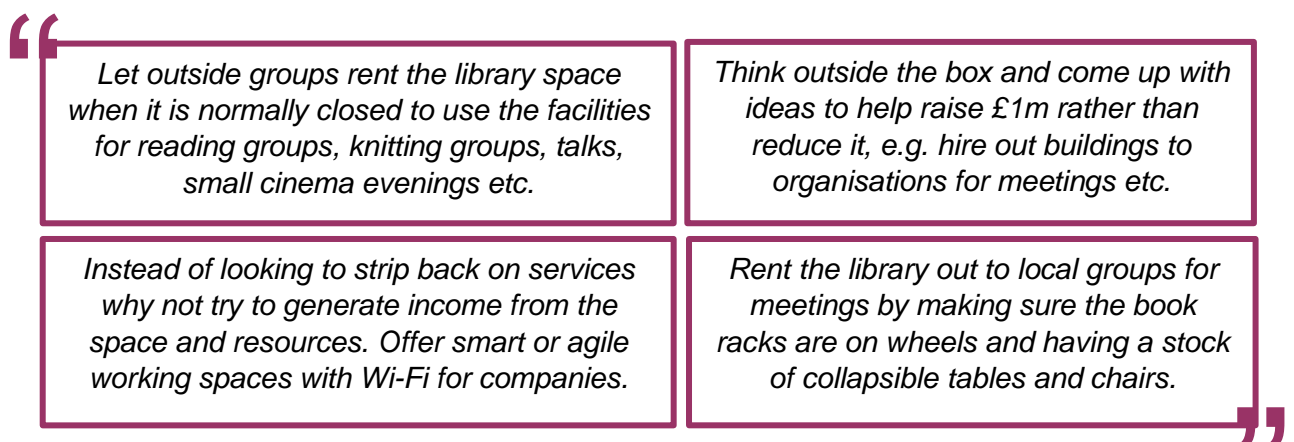
*(269 comments mentioned reducing employee/ councillor pay and 142 comments mentioned reducing the number of employees/ councillors)*

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.



*(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.

<p><i>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.</i></p>	<p><i>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...</i></p>
<p><i>Put on history and educational plays and talks in libraries for a charge, have online access for a charge.</i></p>	<p><i>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.</i></p>

*(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.

<p><i>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.</i></p>	<p><i>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.</i></p>
<p><i>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.</i></p>	<p><i>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.</i></p>

*(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.

<p><i>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.</i></p>	<p><i>DO NOT CLOSE any libraries. They are a safe haven. A place of learning - discovery &amp; tranquillity in our communities. They are essential to wellbeing.</i></p>
<p><i>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></p>	<p><i>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.</i></p>

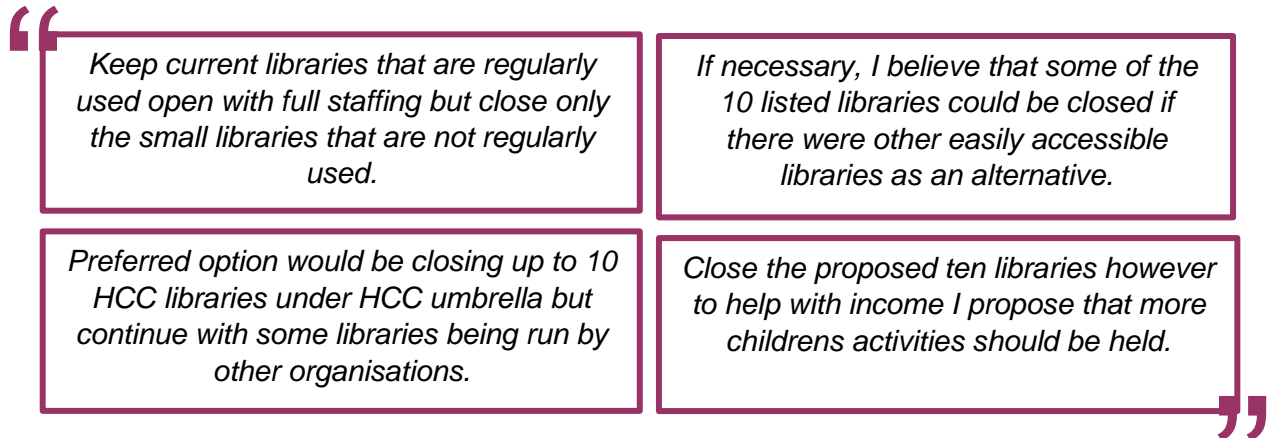
*(850 comments mentioned not closing any library buildings in Hampshire)*

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.

<p><i>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></p>	<p><i>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.</i></p>
<p><i>Move out of the expensive locations (such a Winchester City Centre) to much cheaper sites.</i></p>	<p><i>Slightly smaller cheaper buildings to run for main libraries and save smaller libraries.</i></p>

*(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.



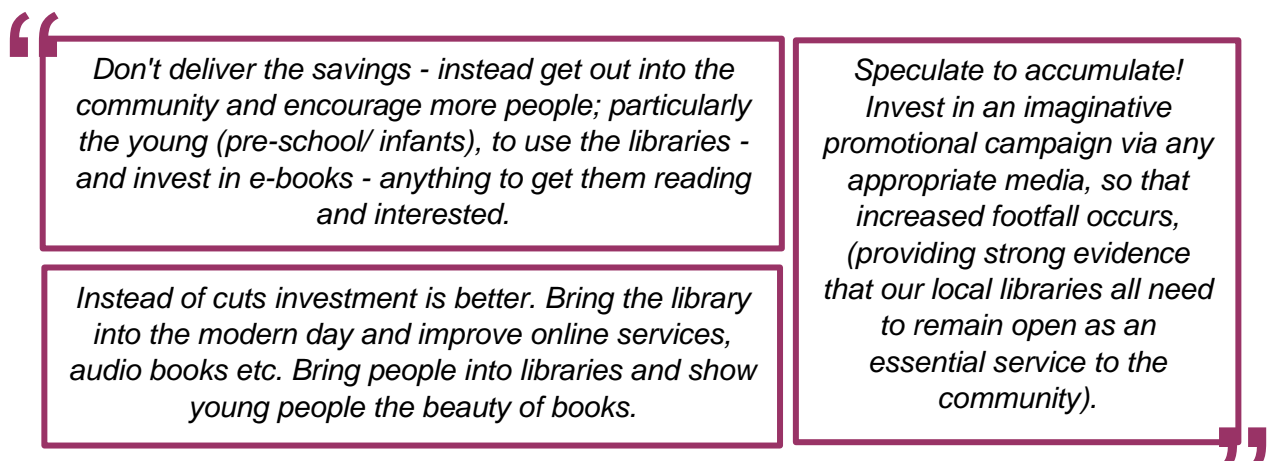
*(102 comments mentioned closing up to 10 libraries and 96 comments mentioned closing the libraries that are less used)*

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.



*(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<sup>12</sup>.

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%).



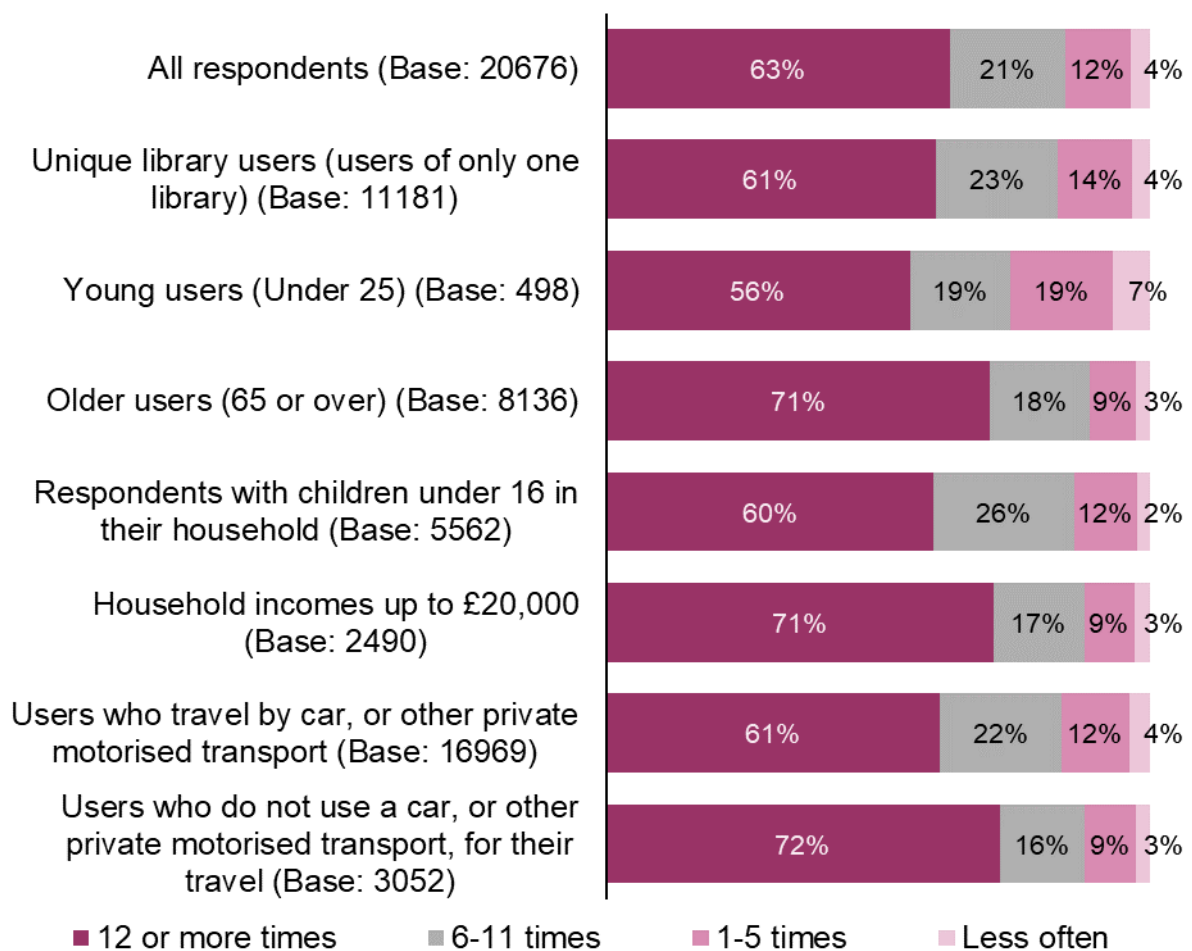
## Section Three: Staffed opening hour preferences

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.

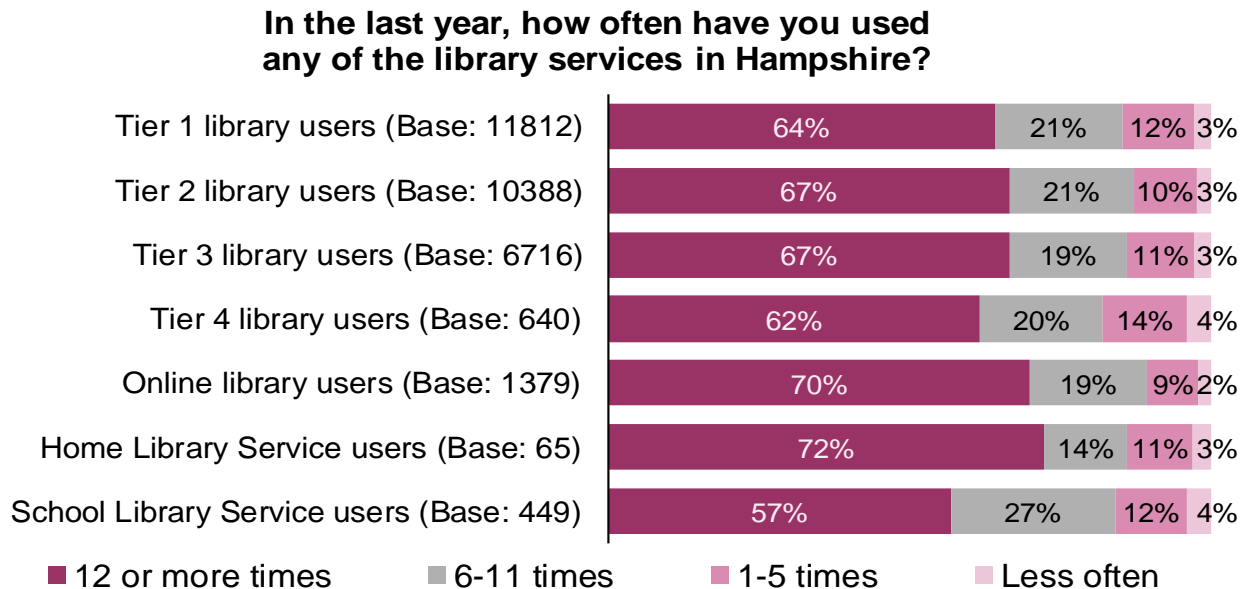
In the last year, how often have you used any of the library services in Hampshire?



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<sup>13</sup> and Tier Three<sup>14</sup> libraries (both 67%), than for Tier One<sup>15</sup> (64%).

Tier Four<sup>16</sup> 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%).

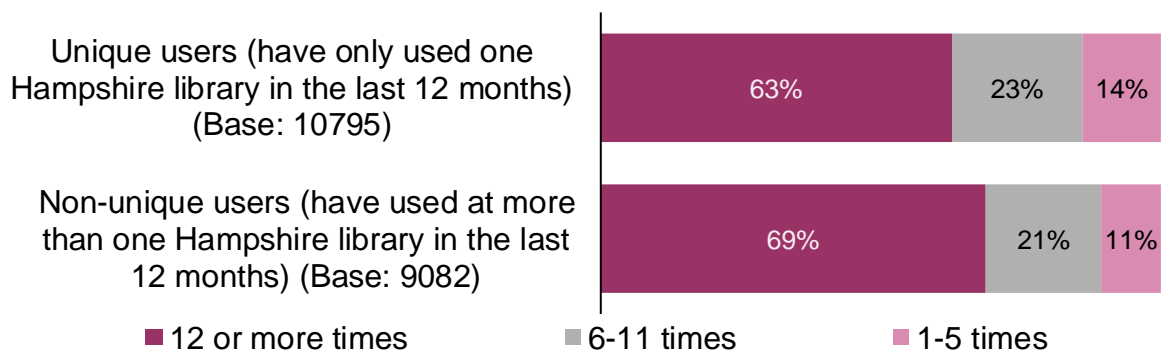
<sup>13</sup> Tier Two libraries are found in medium sized towns and are open on five days each week. They have a catchment of 30,000 to 70,000 people.

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

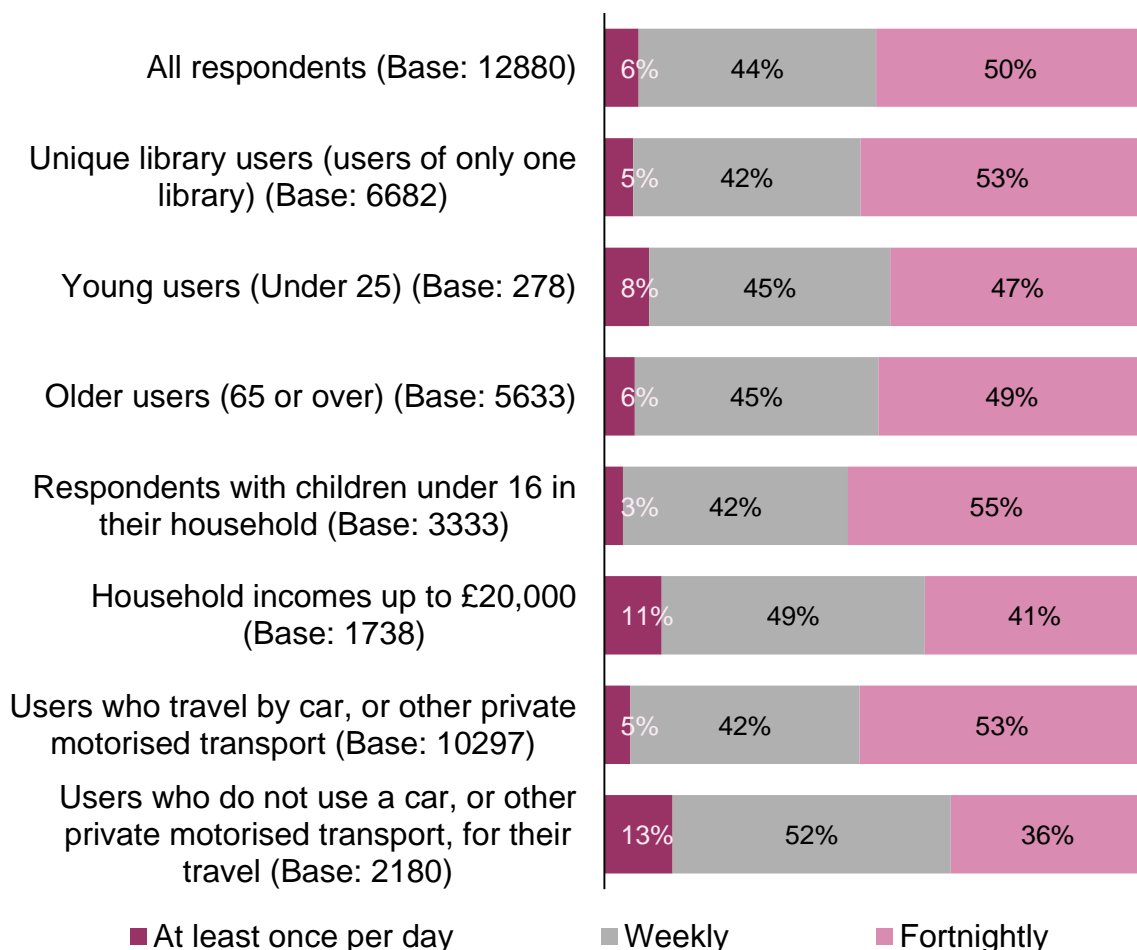
<sup>16</sup> Tier Four libraries (known as 'community-managed libraries') are managed by volunteer community organisations, with some support from the County Council.

### 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<sup>17</sup>.

	Overall	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
<b>Overall</b>		<b>63%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Morning (8am-10am)</b>	<b>28%</b>	12%	12%	11%	11%	13%	18%	4%
<b>Mid-morning (10am-12pm)</b>	<b>76%</b>	37%	39%	36%	38%	40%	49%	11%
<b>Lunch (12pm-2pm)</b>	<b>40%</b>	19%	20%	20%	20%	22%	24%	8%
<b>Afternoon (2pm-5pm)</b>	<b>62%</b>	32%	36%	32%	37%	38%	29%	10%
<b>Evening (5pm-7pm)</b>	<b>21%</b>	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<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> Data may include visits to the online library as well as physical library buildings.

<sup>18</sup> 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%).

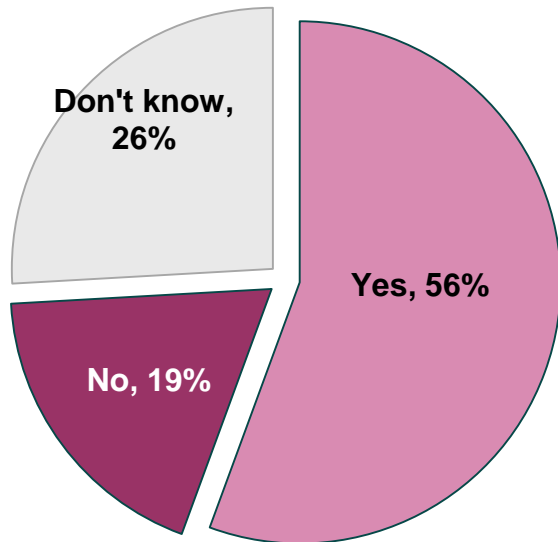
The number of libraries visited, or the mode of transport used to access them, did not have a significant impact on the times of day that respondents preferred to visit libraries.



### Views on the standardisation of library opening hours

The County Council proposed standardising library opening hours for libraries of the same tier.

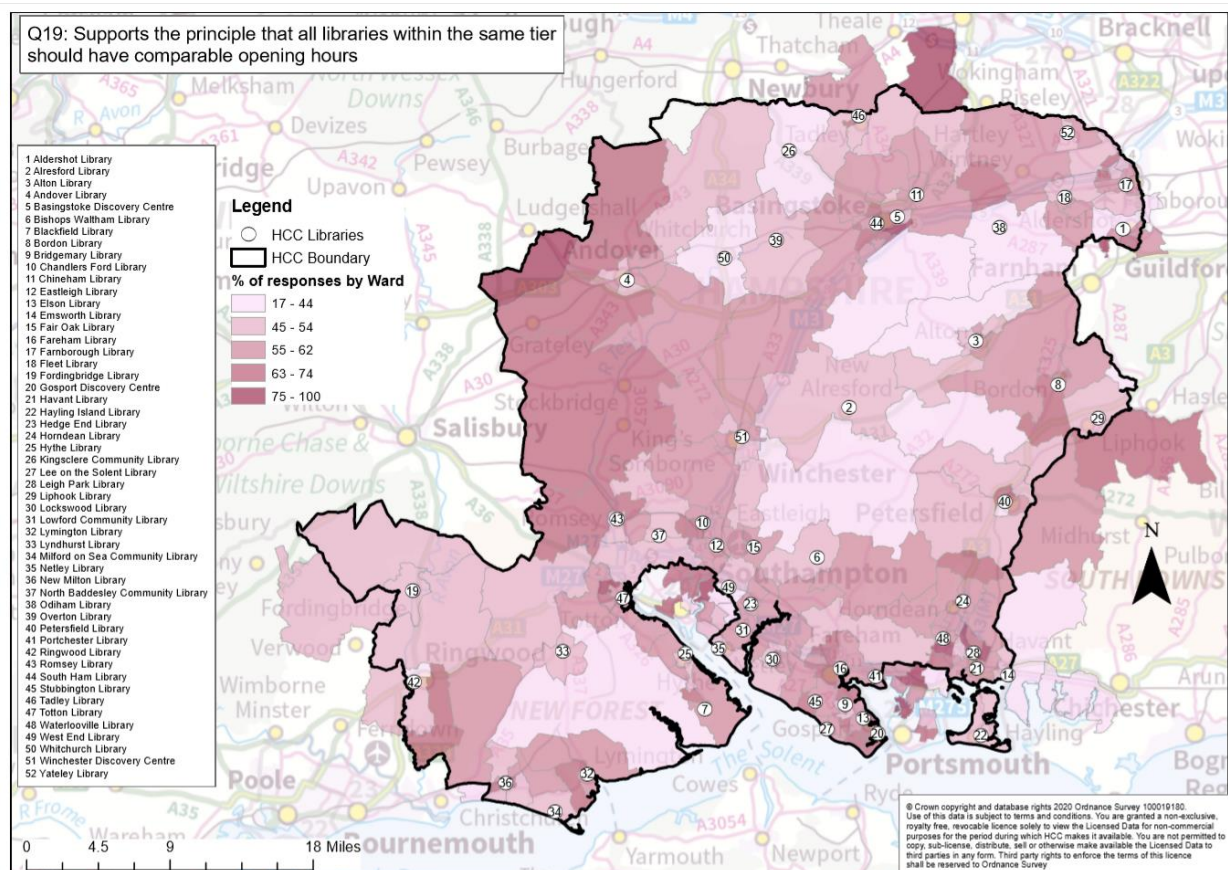
More than half of all respondents (56%) supported this proposal, with around one fifth of respondents (19%) being unsupportive.



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)

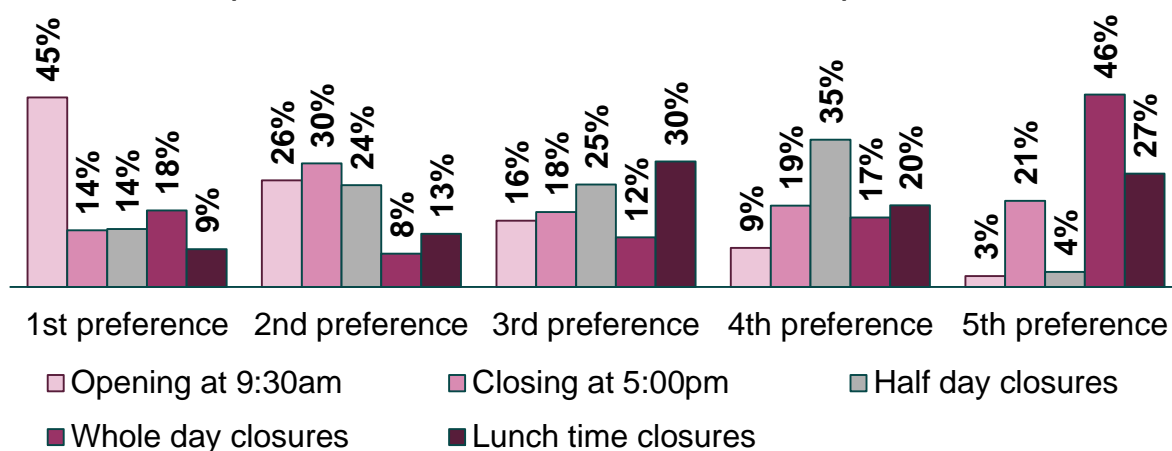
## Preferences for opening hour changes

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.

### If opening hour reductions were adopted, how would you prefer these to be applied? (Base:19857, 18662, 17788, 17017, 17109)



Looking at each respondent's two most preferred options, these are ranked as follows.

Option	1 <sup>st</sup> preference	2 <sup>nd</sup> 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.

	Base	Top two preferred options				
		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.

	Overall	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Overall	<p>Most preferred option: <b>Opening at 9:30am</b></p> <p>Second most preferred option: <b>Closing at 5:00pm</b></p>							
Morning (8am-10am)								
Mid-morning (10am-12pm)								
Lunch (12pm-2pm)								
Afternoon (2pm-5pm)								
Evening (5pm-7pm)	<p>Most preferred option: <b>Opening at 9:30am</b></p> <p>Second most preferred option: <b>Half day closures</b></p>				<p>Most preferred option: <b>Opening at 9:30am</b></p> <p>Second most preferred option: <b>Half day closures/ Lunch time closures</b> (equal popularity)</p>			

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.

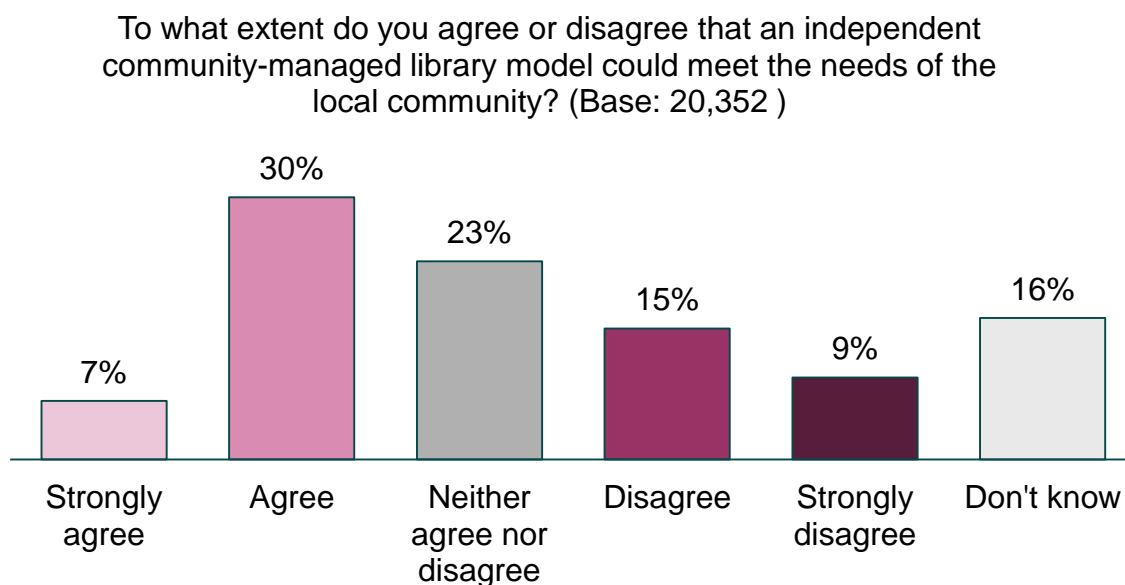
The community-managed libraries are:

- 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.

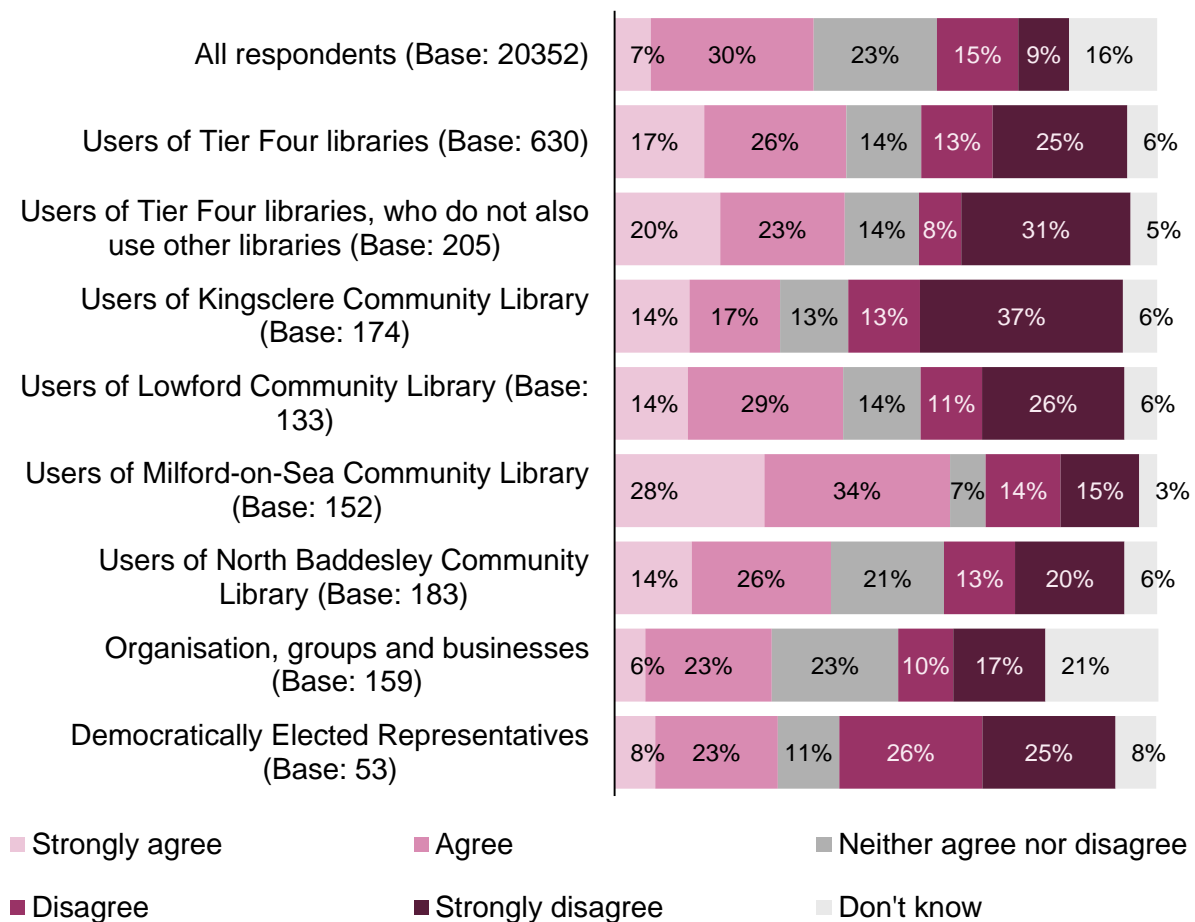
Organisations, groups and businesses were particularly uncertain as to whether the needs of a local community could be met by independent community-managed



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?



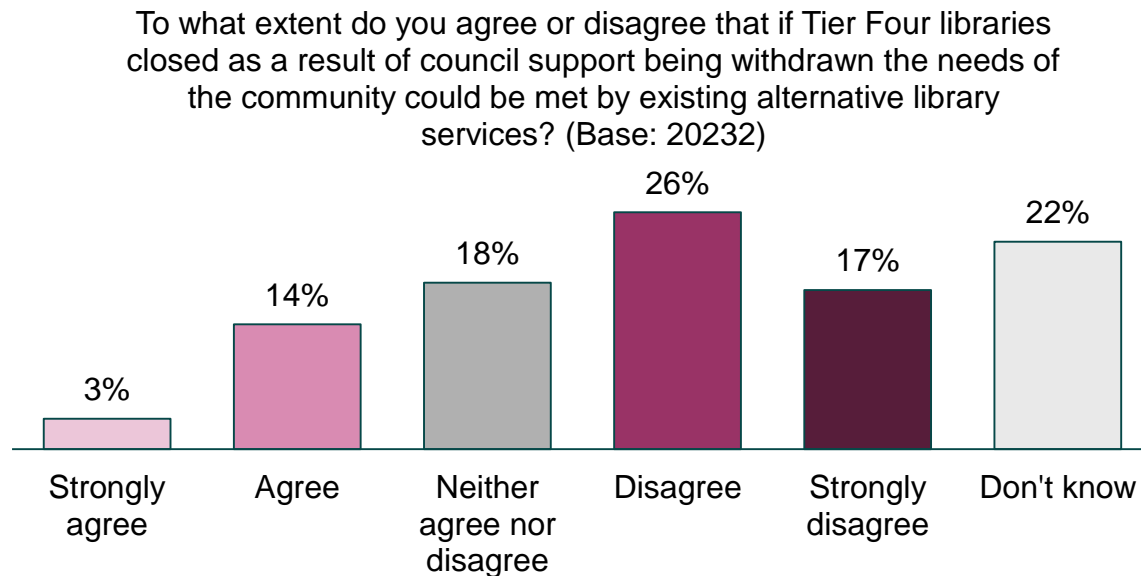
Looking across the Tier Four libraries, users of Kingsclere Community Library were most likely to be in disagreement that independent community-managed libraries could meet the needs of the local community (51%), and users of Milford-on-Sea Community Library were most likely to be in agreement that they 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.

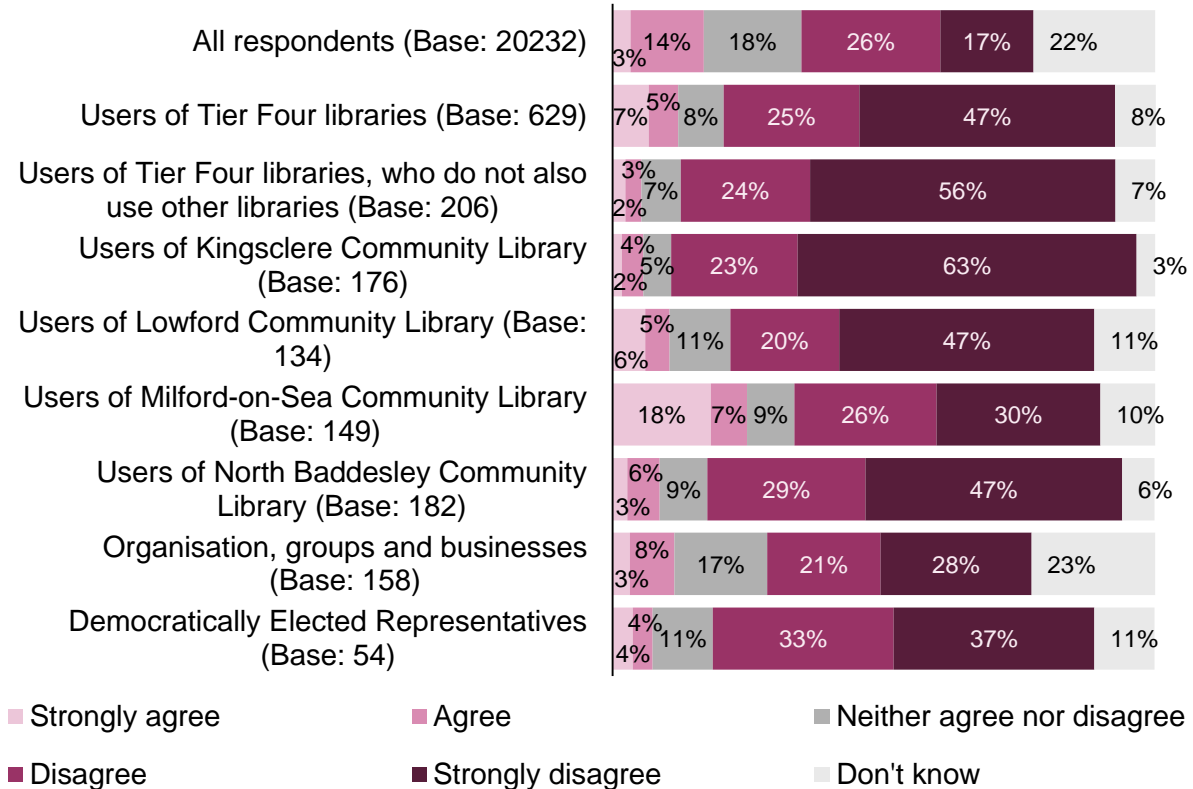
These respondents felt that supporting Tier Four libraries was important – particularly as the costs of doing so seemed small in the context of the savings required.

*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.

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?



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.

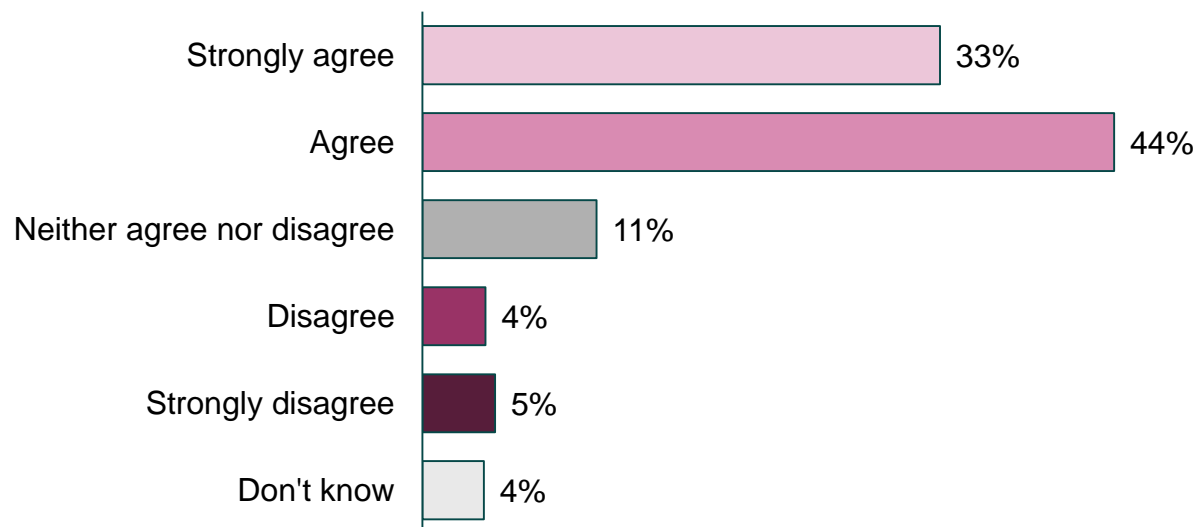
Disagreement was also higher amongst Democratically Elected Representatives (70%), than amongst organisations, groups and businesses (49%).

## 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.*

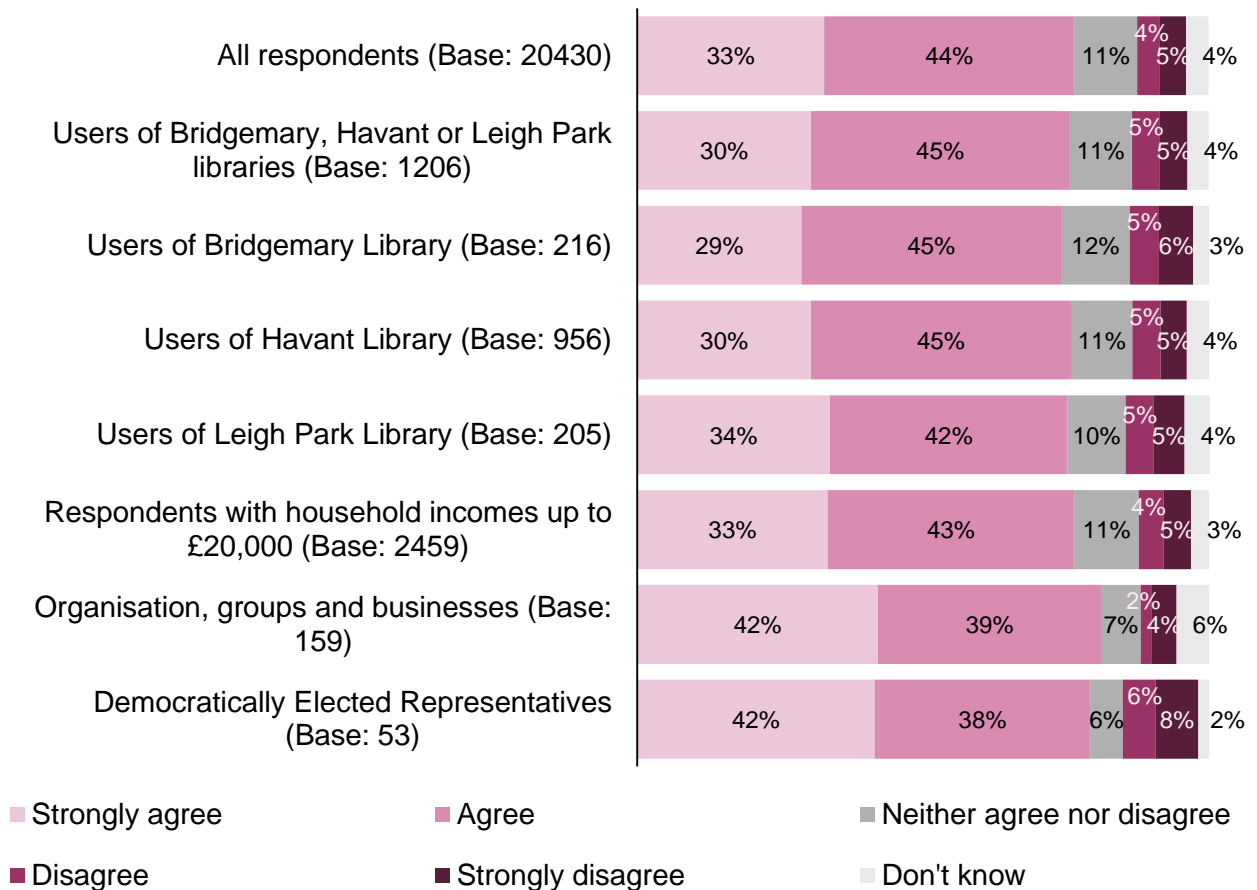
Others felt that the efforts of the Library Service could be better spent elsewhere.

*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.*

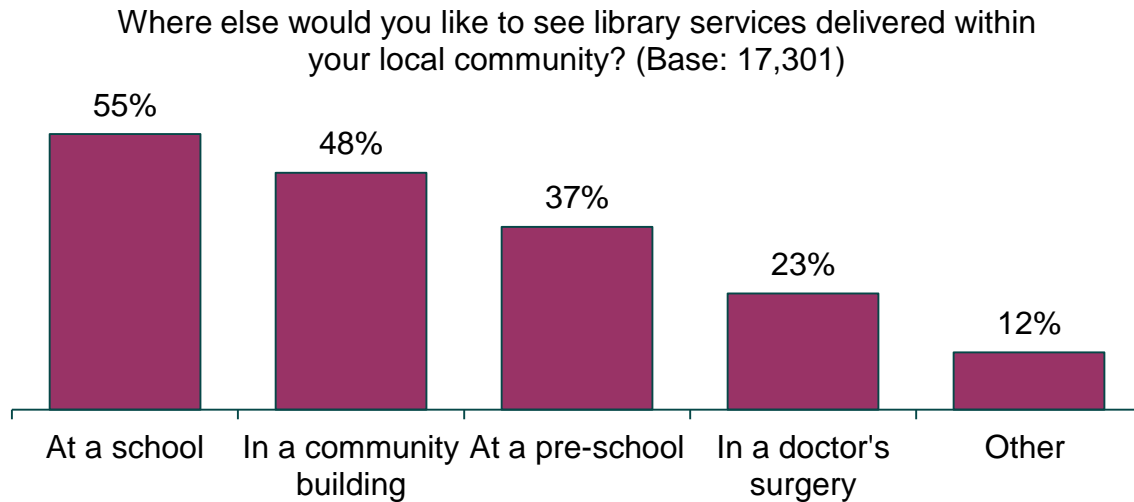
The high level of agreement from all respondents (76%) was reflected in the views groups who could most be impacted by the proposed changes - namely users of Bridgemary, Havant and Leigh Park libraries (76%), and those from households on lower incomes (76%).

To what extent do you agree or disagree that Hampshire Library Service should explore different ways to deliver library services in deprived communities?



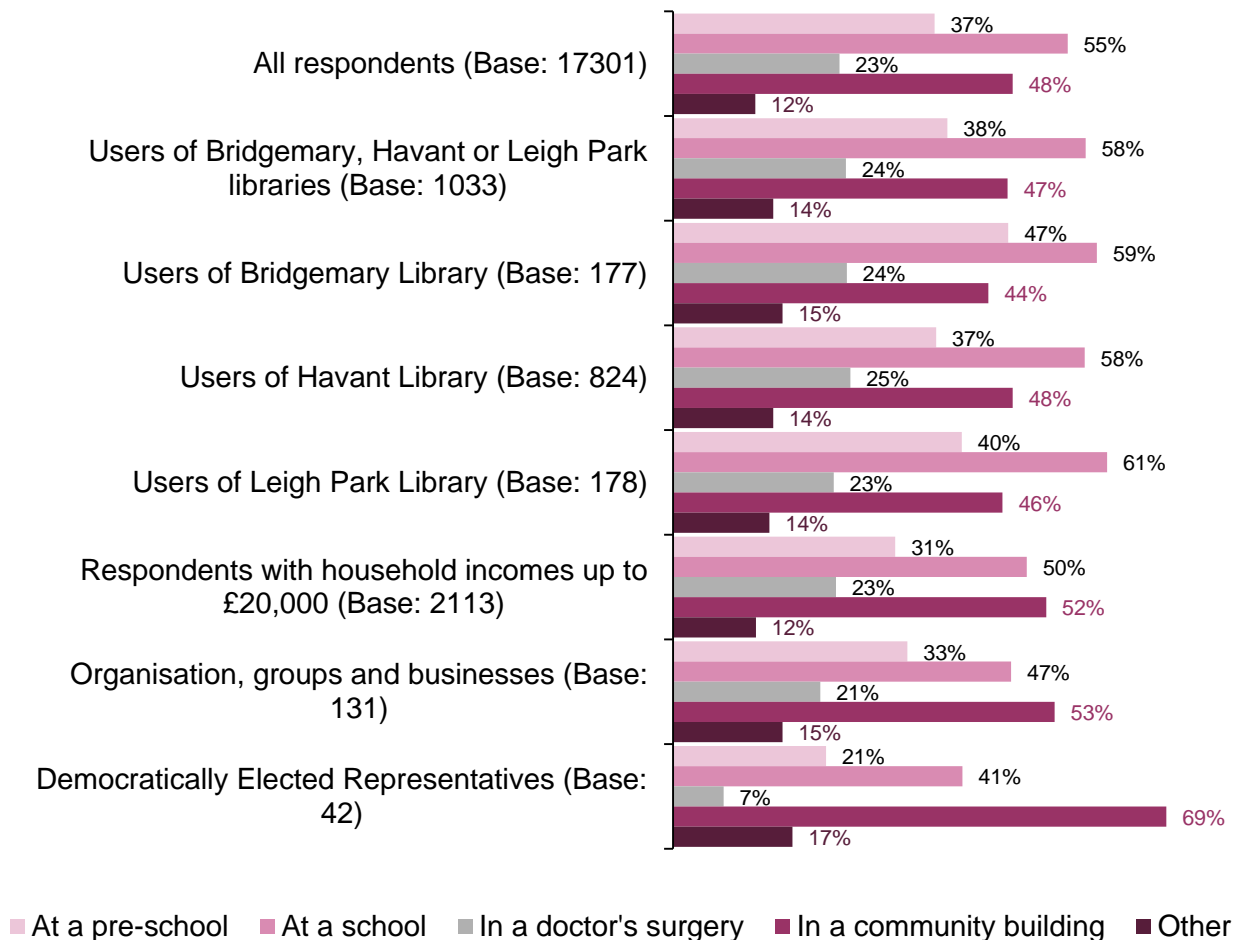
A large majority of businesses, groups and organisations (81%), and Democratically Elected Representatives (80%) also indicated agreement with the proposal.

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.

**Where else would you like to see library services delivered in your local community?**



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.

	<b>Mentions by group</b>			
	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Users of Bridgemary, Havant and Leigh Park libraries</b>	<b>Respondents with household incomes up to £20,000</b>	<b>Organisations, groups, businesses and Democratically Elected Representatives</b>
<b>Base (number of comments)</b>	<b>4,915</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>60</b>
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
<b>Base (number of comments)</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>12</b>
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.

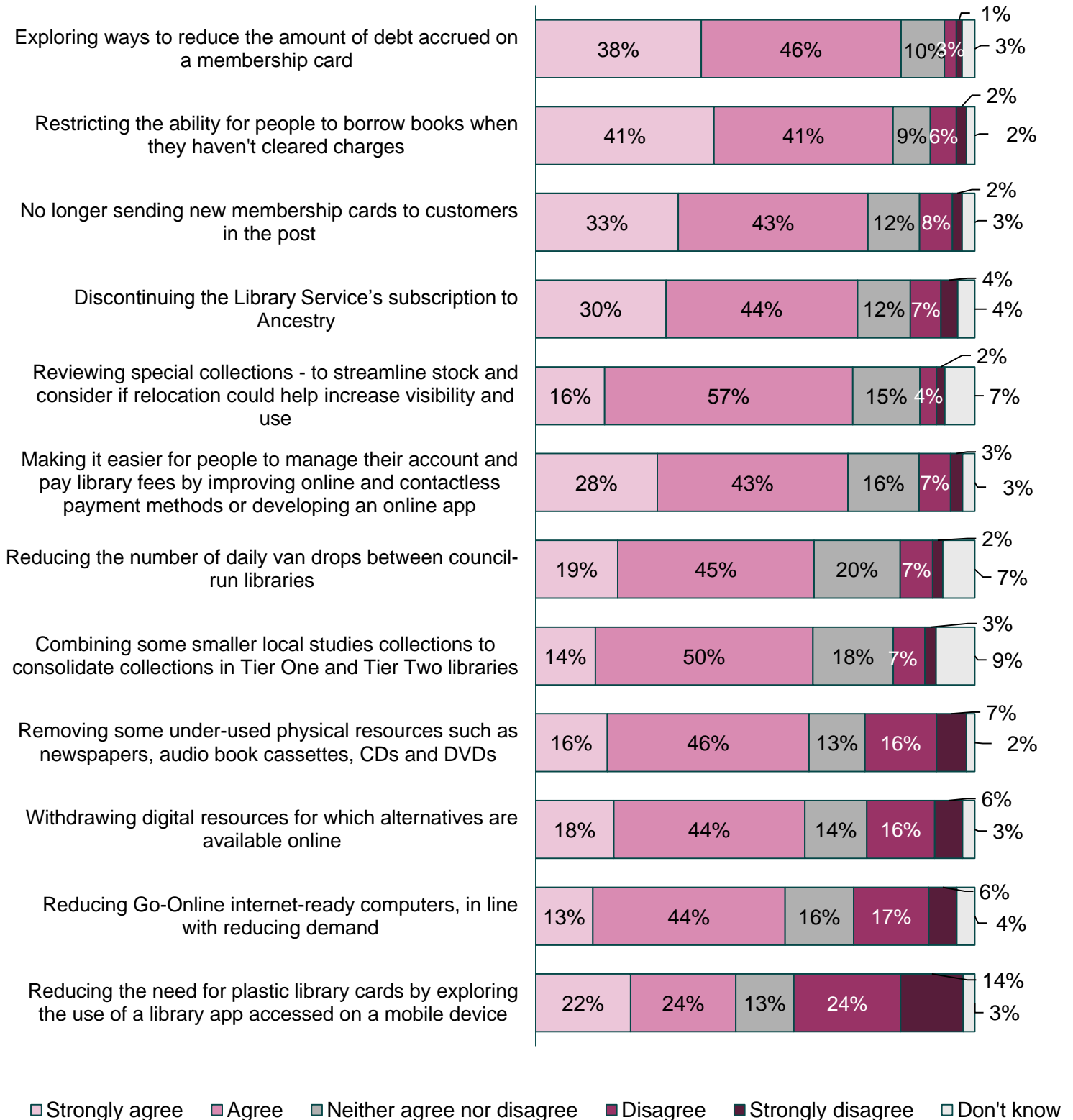
Efficiencies which related to the reduction of resources and shifting service users to online approaches showed the highest levels of disagreement, specifically:

- 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 of 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 of 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.*

*It would be impossible for Genealogy group to run without sufficient computers.*

*I need to use the computer after school as there is not one at home.*

*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.

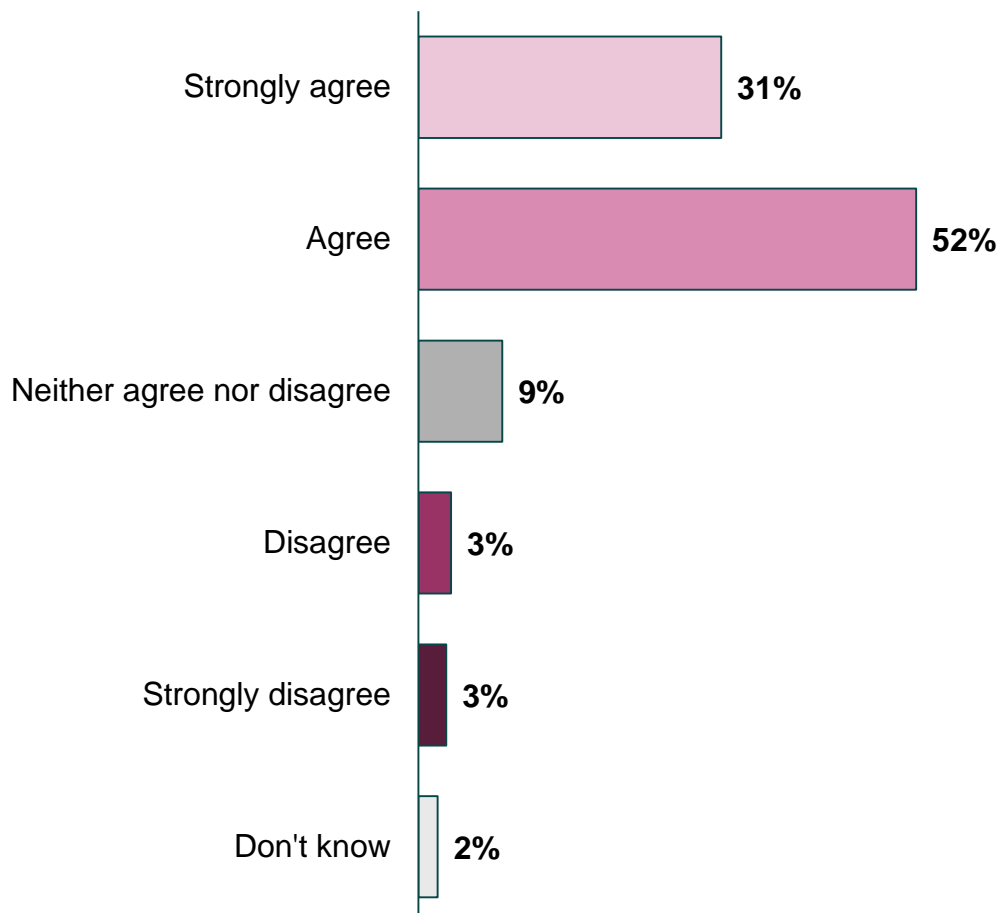
The Library Service believes that there is potential to generate an additional £355,000 per year by potentially:

- 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%).

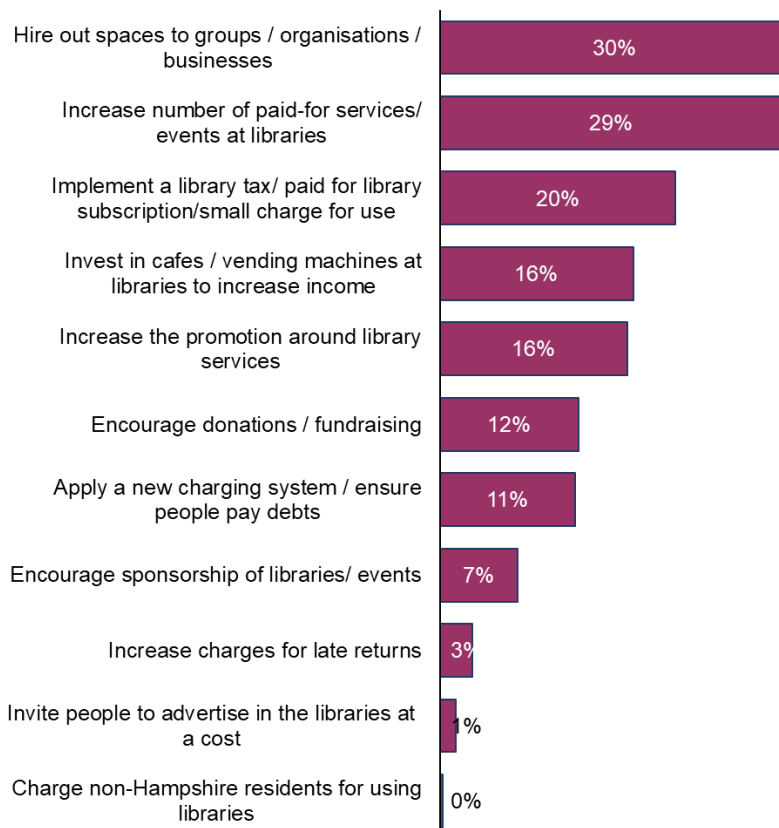
In addition, those who stated that they have a total annual household income of between £90,000 - £100,000 were also more likely to agree with the proposal to generate income than the average respondent, with 90% of this respondent type agreeing to the proposed measures.

## 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)



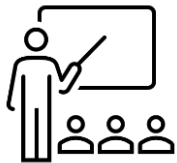
Two of the five most frequently mentioned suggestions were ones which respondents were presented with – namely hiring out spaces to organisations, groups or businesses (30% of comments) and increasing the number of paid-for services or events (29% of comments):



**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%).

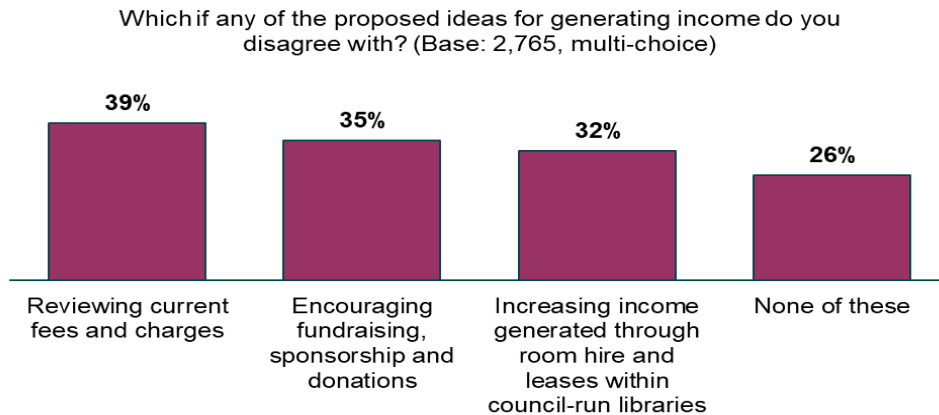
*Change the way of promoting libraries to outside the library community - much promotion is done on local library Facebook, but it is high volume groups that need to include our promos.*

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

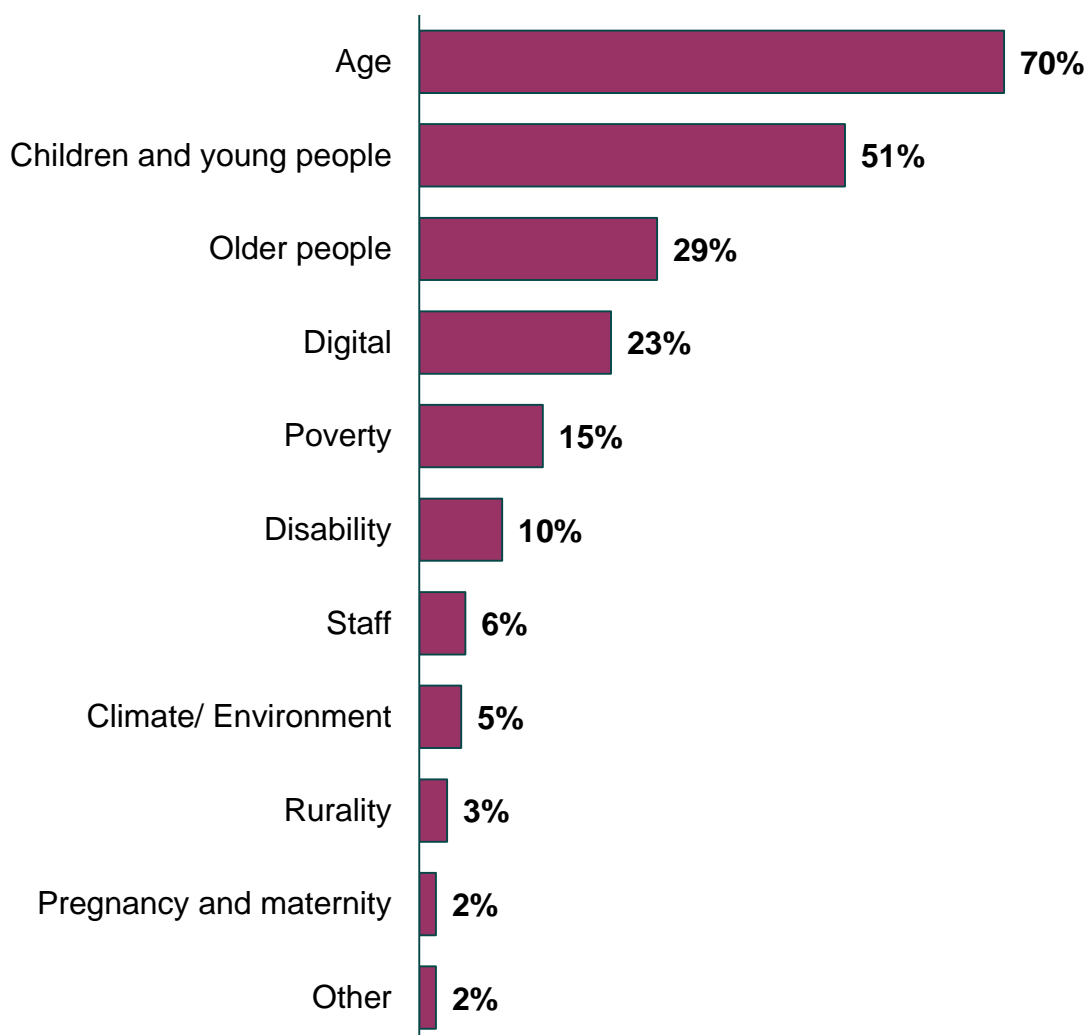
In order to help identify possible effects of the proposed changes to the Library Service, respondents to the consultation were invited to describe the potential impacts the proposals could have on themselves, or the constituency, organisation, group or businesses that they represented.

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)

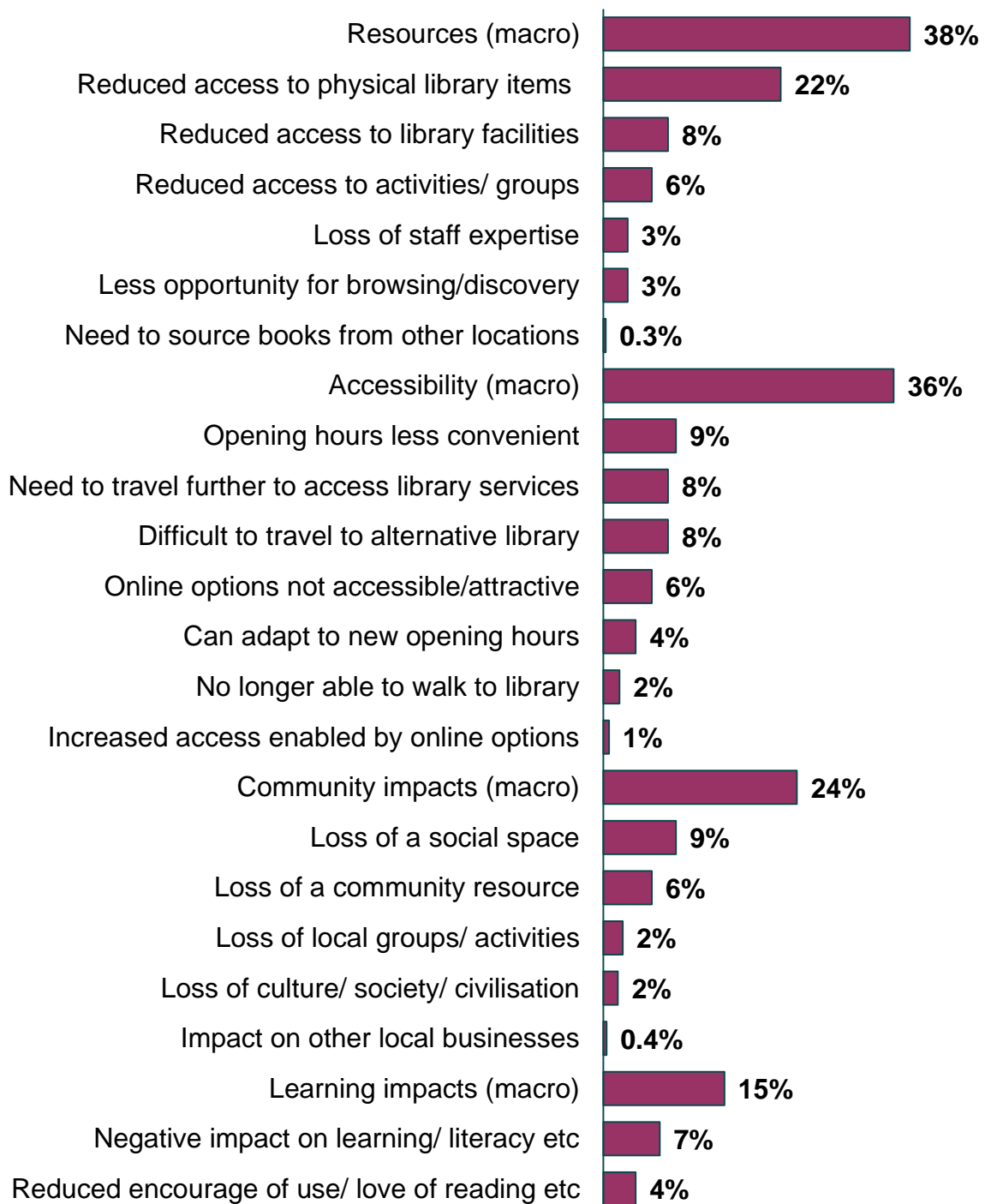


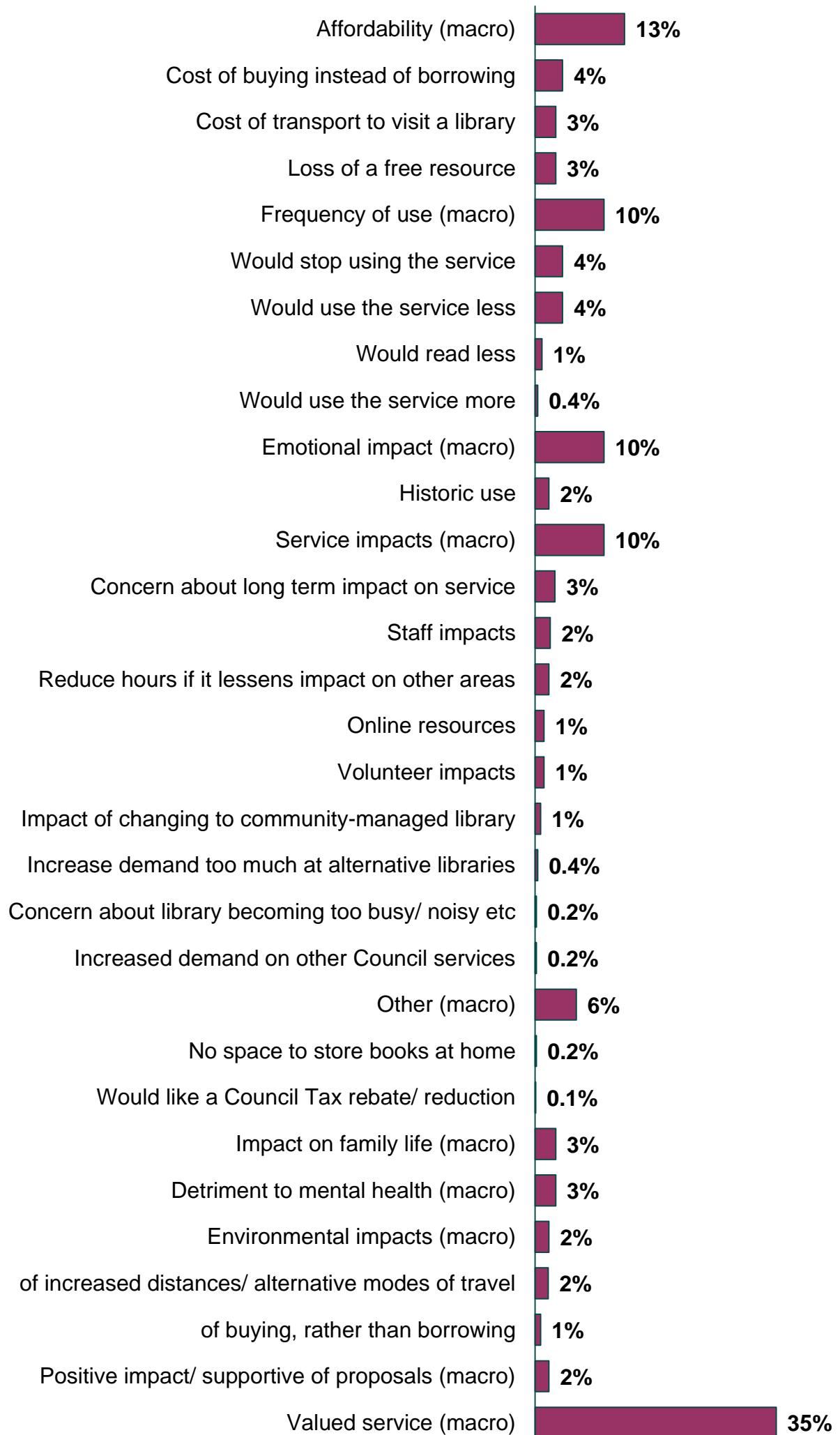
12,519 comments detailed perceived impacts.

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)





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.*

*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.*

*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.*

*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.

*The closure of Emsworth Library would be difficult for me - I would not use Leigh Park and Havant is more difficult although could be an option albeit reluctantly.*

*As already mentioned, I use Fair Oak Library and can park there for free after school. I would have to go into an overly polluted, difficult to access town centre and pay for parking to use the library. So we just wouldn't go.*

*It would be difficult to access another library in Hampshire. If I had to travel I would probably use a library in Southampton, which would be easier for me to get to.*

*I am a senior citizen. At this time, I am able to walk to and from my library thereby helping my physical well-being and reducing my carbon footprint.*

*(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.

*I would adapt to changes in opening hours as I have done in the past. Use of a library would not be affected - still borrowed 20 or so books a month.*

*Please don't make everything "online", I do not want to be completely dependent on a phone to access everything!*

*We are increasingly using eBooks so an increase in these resources would enhance our use of library services.*

*(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".*

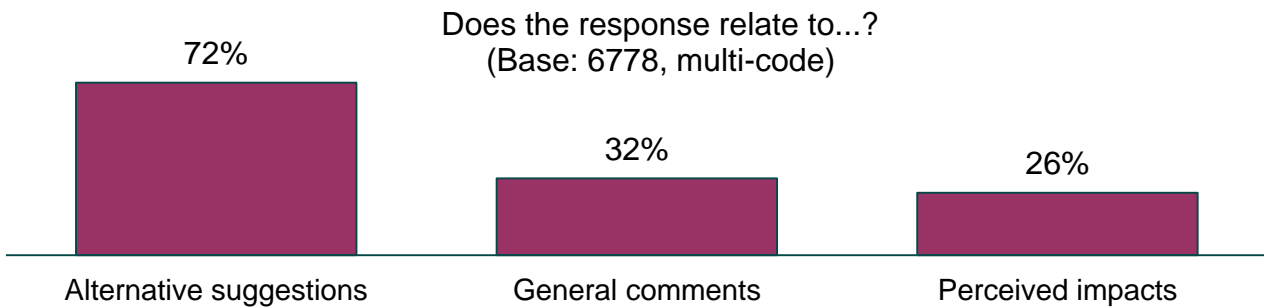
*I will continue to use the library weekly, may just have to get used to new opening hours if that is what is put in place. So I don't think there will be any impact on me. I really value the library and the resources available.*

*(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.

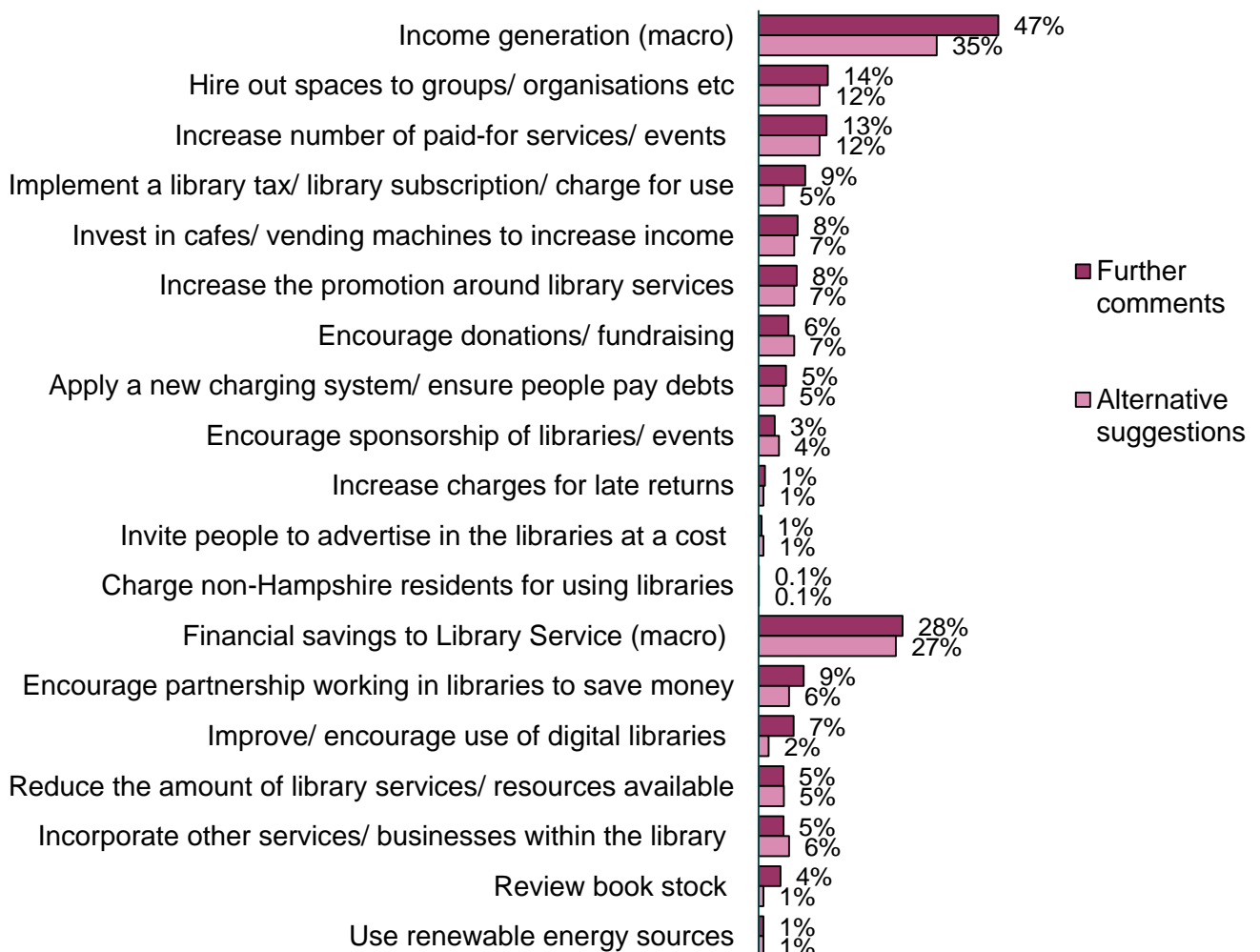
6,778 further comments were submitted by respondents. Further comments included a mixture of alternative suggestions, general comments and perceived impacts.

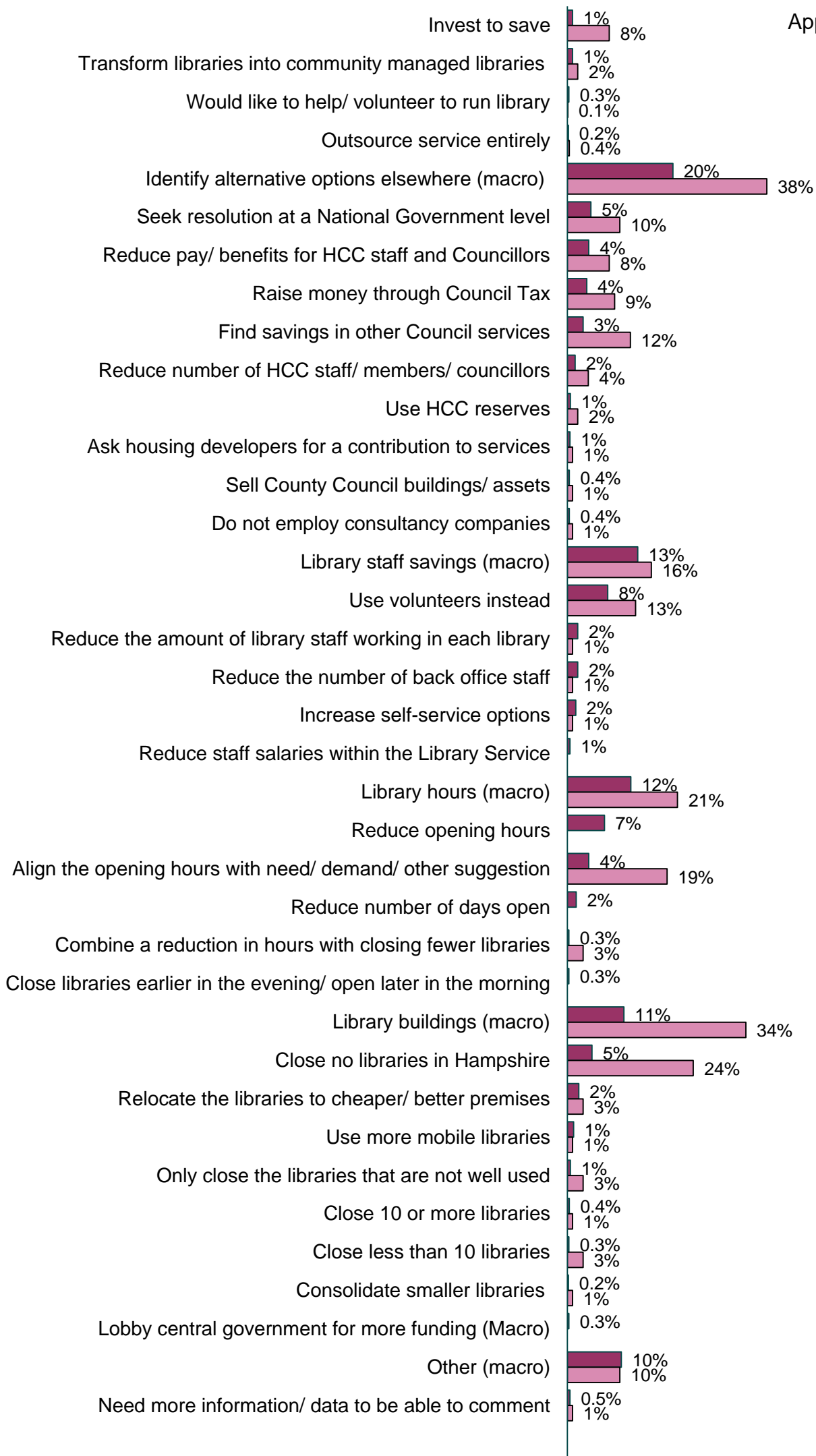


### Alternative suggestions

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)





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.*

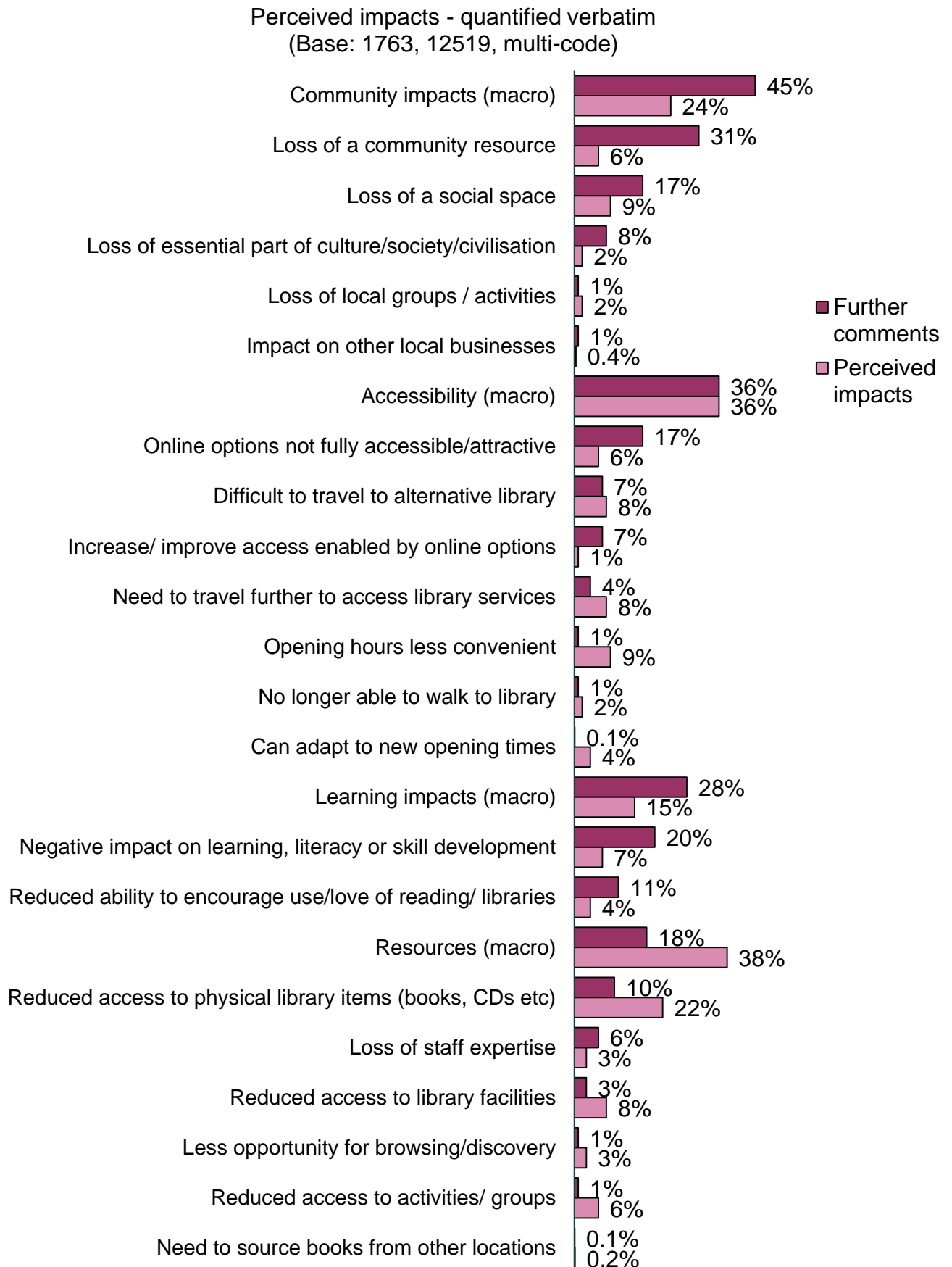
*I think BorrowBox is amazing but would be good to promoted more in library.*

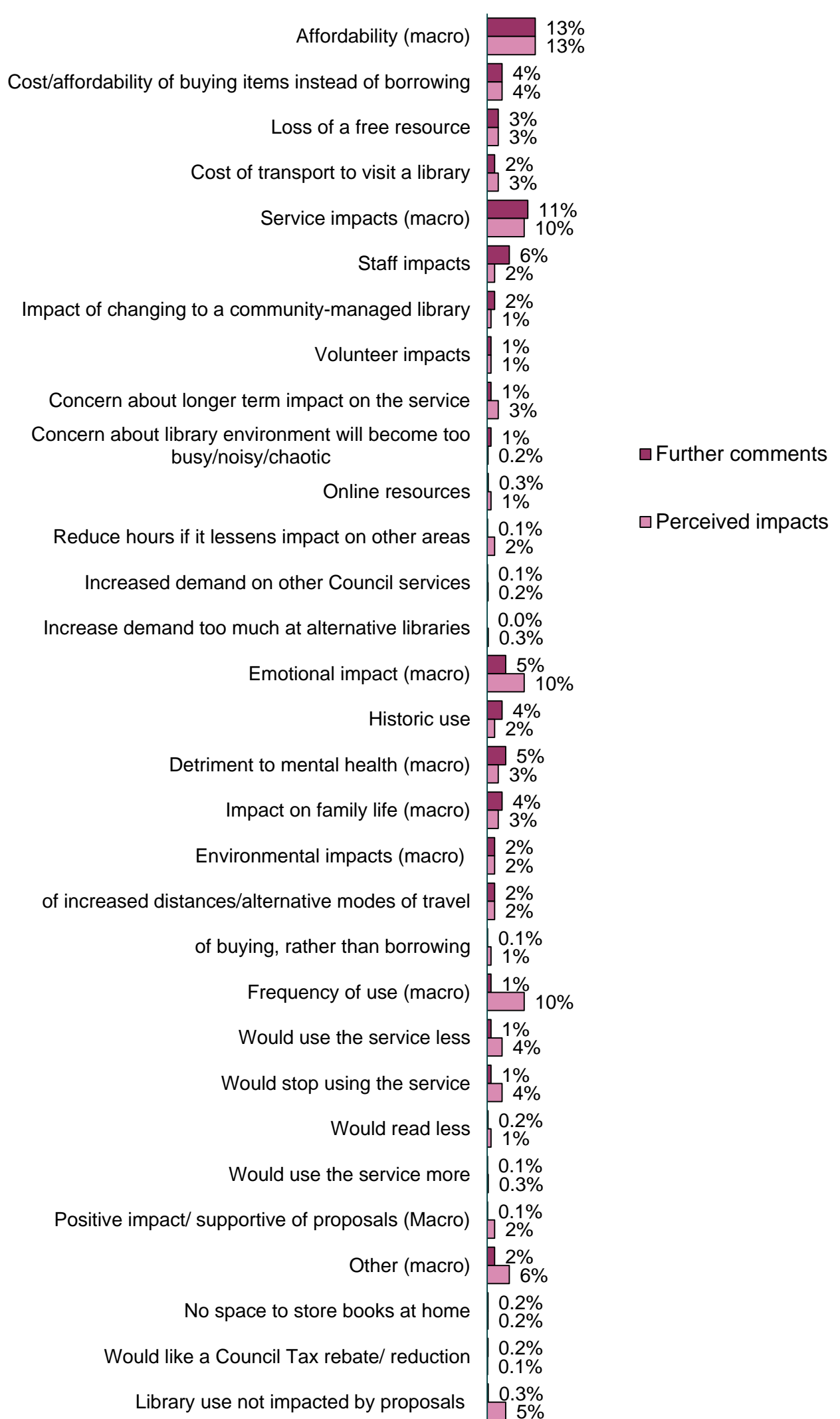
*Improving online access to books so that they can be used when the library is closed, especially for young readers, i.e. infant school, and pre-school.*

*(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.







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.*

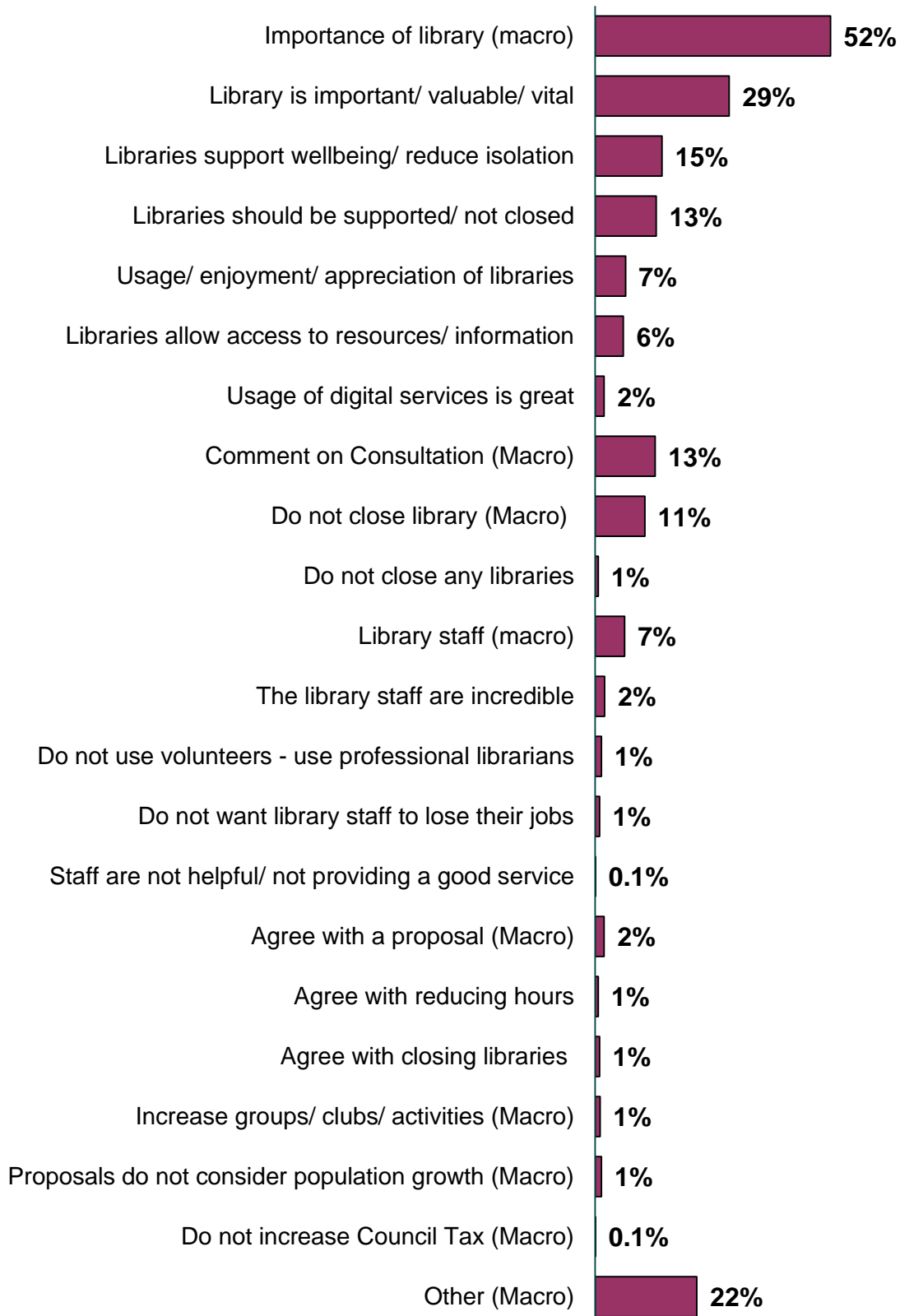
*The digital world provides the opportunity for most people to have alternatives.*

*(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<sup>19</sup>

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.

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<sup>19</sup> 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:

 <p>volunteers should be used to run libraries (six mentions)</p>	 <p>access to the Service should be withdrawn if fines are unpaid (three mentions)</p>
 <p>community-managed libraries should be able to do more work without local authority input or oversight (two mentions)</p>	 <p>libraries should be located in other buildings used by public services (one mention)</p>
 <p>libraries should be provided in partnership with neighbouring local authorities (one mention)</p>	 <p>libraries should purchase second-hand books (one mention)</p>
 <p>the 'buddy scheme' should be removed from community libraries (one mention)</p>	 <p>local government should be reorganised to remove Hampshire's upper-tier authority (one mention)</p>

11 respondents mentioned ways that libraries could **generate income**, specifically by:

	<p>allowing commercial services to use library facilities (six mentions)</p>		<p>hiring out rooms and library spaces for events or activities (four mentions)</p>
	<p>opening cafés in libraries (three mentions)</p>		<p>fully investigating income generation opportunities before service reductions are imposed (two mentions)</p>
	<p>selling marketing or advertising space in libraries (one mention)</p>		

### 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<sup>20</sup>.

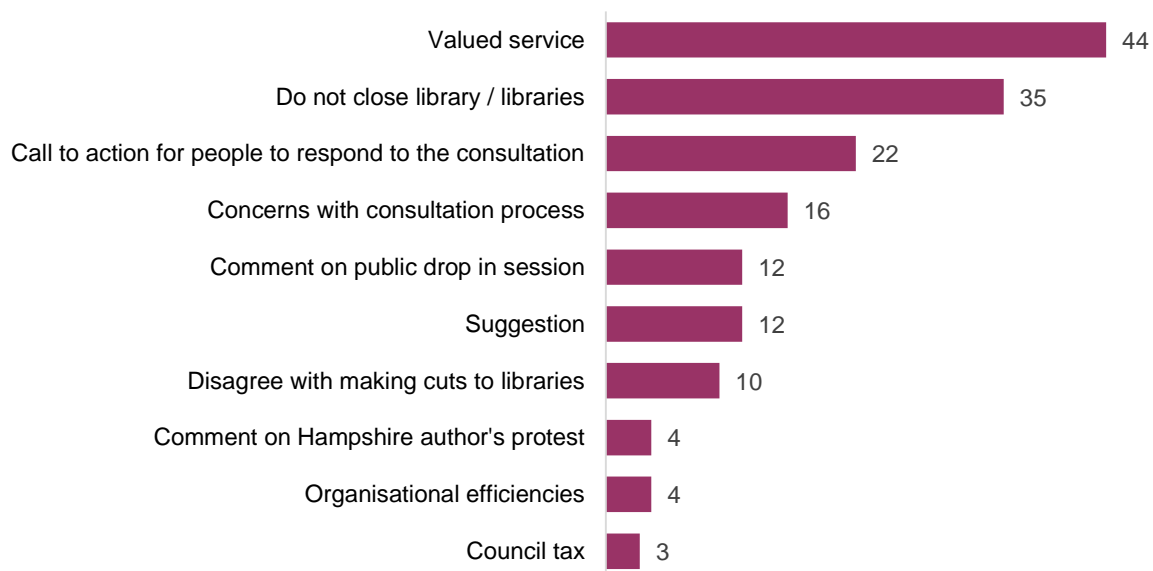
Overall, social media comments most commonly mentioned the valuable service delivered by libraries and library staff, including how important they are for children, families and the elderly, for social interaction and access to the groups, classes and facilities available such as Rhymetime, Storytime, 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)



<sup>20</sup> 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
<b>Base</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Valued service</b>	<b>44</b>
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
<b>Do not close library/ libraries</b>	<b>35</b>
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

<b>Call to action for people to respond to the consultation</b>	<b>22</b>
Complete consultation to stop libraries closing	20
Petition	2
<b>Concerns with consultation process</b>	<b>16</b>
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
<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>12</b>
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
<b>Comment on public drop-in session</b>	<b>12</b>
Busy session	4
No longer attending	4
Will be attending	2
Good that it's been extended	1
<b>Disagree with making reductions to libraries</b>	<b>10</b>
Invest more in libraries	2
Everyone should have access to books and a computer	1
<b>Organisational efficiencies</b>	<b>4</b>
Reduce library staff pay/ costs	2
Reduce other council staff	1
Concerned with own salary/ expenses	1
<b>Comment on Hampshire author's protest</b>	<b>4</b>
Support for author/ writer protest	4
<b>Council Tax</b>	<b>3</b>
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
Bridgemark 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.



## 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>