READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	POLICY COMMITTEE		
DATE:	16 JULY 2018	AGENDA ITEM:	13
TITLE:	LIBRARY SERVICE: REPORT ON PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND CONFIRMATION OF SAVINGS		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR SARAH HACKER	PORTFOLIO:	CULTURE, SPORT & CONSUMER SERVICES
SERVICE:	HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	SARAH GEE SIMON SMITH	TEL:	0118 937 2973 0118 937 5970
JOB TITLE:	HEAD OF HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS; LIBRARY SERVICES MANAGER	E-MAIL:	sarah.gee@reading.gov.uk simon.smith@reading.gov.uk

1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   Following the conclusion of the public consultation on proposals for the future of the library service which ran from 21 February to 21 March 2018, this report together with Appendix 1 sets out the feedback received.

1.2   Additionally, the report outlines Officer recommendations for a library service which meets the needs of those who live, work or study in the Borough while delivering the desired savings from all services, including the library service, taking into account the outcome of public consultation and the further exploratory work undertaken.

2.   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1   As a result of a reduction in Government funding, Reading Borough Council estimated in January 2018 that it now needed to save a further £43m over the period 2018 to 2021. The Council has therefore been making a series of budget proposals to make the savings needed, and is committed to ensuring that residents are informed and have a say.

2.2   As part of a package of proposals for the 3 year financial plan for 2018 to 2020, the library service was asked to deliver target savings totalling £217,000 for 2018/19.

2.3   In February 2018 Policy Committee approved a target level of savings, subject to staff consultation, of £145,000, and authorised public consultation on proposals to reduce the opening hours at six of Reading's seven libraries in order to deliver the remainder of the savings requirement. This report provides an analysis and summary of the responses to the consultation and makes recommendations to Policy Committee on the delivery of the desired level of savings. Recent library service reviews starting in 2015 established the matrix for future prioritisation of investment in the library service and have determined the new Library Service offer set out in the consultation document. The current options proposed by the Council draw on the principles established through these earlier library service reviews but analysis underpinning impact and need is based on up to date demographic and library use data.

2.4   A four week public consultation starting on 21 February 2018 sought views and responses from the public on specific proposals to reduce the opening hours at Reading's libraries. In addition, a further study of library usage over a four week period was also undertaken and analysed in order to inform the development of the final proposals for the future opening hours of the library services.

2.5   The detailed recommendations set out at Section 6 in this report have been informed by the results of the public consultation with reduced hours and therefore staffing across the network as detailed below. As previously reported, a service offer is being retained across all seven current service points (Battle, Caversham, Central, Palmer Park, Southcote, Tilehurst and Whitley Libraries).

2.6   It is considered that should the recommendations outlined in this report be implemented, the library service offer would continue to meet the legal requirement for the service to be 'comprehensive and efficient'. The proposed library service offer would continue to make more effective use of community buildings, reflect patterns of usage relative to local needs, respond to what our communities have told us so far about reducing opening hours while ensuring appropriate provision across communities.

2.7   Whilst the Policy Committee report of February 2018 did not set out any specific proposals for reduced opening hours, some example reduced opening hours were included in the consultation document showing potential patterns of opening at different libraries. The opening hours at Reading's libraries have been refined through drawing on feedback received, reviewing usage data/information and ensuring workable staff rotas with regard to staff safety and service resilience.

2.8   The recommendations set out in this report for the future opening hours of the library service could deliver annual savings of £72,000 with the offer being fully implemented from October 2018, subject to staff consultation on a restructure to deliver the savings, if agreed.

2.9   This report includes a number of detailed Appendices that have informed the development of these recommendations. The report does not reproduce data and analysis published to date which provides context to the review and recommendations. Links to this data are provided at paragraph 12.5 of the report.

Appendix 1   2018 Consultation Report – analysis of responses.
Appendix 2   Representations received during consultation and officer response.
Appendix 3   Equality Impact Assessment

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3.   RECOMMENDED ACTION

That Policy Committee:

3.1   Notes the outcome of the libraries consultation exercise, as set out at section 5 of this report and Appendix 1 (2018 Consultation Report – analysis of responses);

3.2   Approves the reduction in library opening hours as detailed and recommended in section 6 of this report, to deliver the savings, as explained in section 2 of this report, subject to staff consultation;

3.3   Authorises Officers to consult library staff on proposed changes to the library services and, subject to the outcome of such staff consultation, implement the recommended changes to the library service from October 2018.

4.   BACKGROUND

<u>Service Context</u>

4.1 Under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act the Council is obliged to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service for all individuals who live, work or study within the Borough. Reading Borough Council currently delivers this through a comprehensive range of services including a central library; 6 local branch libraries across the Borough; a recent and growing offer of e-books and other online resources; a mobile library and home visiting service for the elderly and housebound; and a toy library based in Southcote, due which will move to Central Library in 2018.

4.2 The library service is open to all but with a focus on targeting resources to improve outcomes for Reading's communities and meeting the Council's wider strategic priorities – including inclusion of disabled, vulnerable and older residents; meeting the diverse needs of Reading's multi-cultural community; improving literacy and attainment; and increasing access to cultural opportunities for all.

<u>Budget Context</u>

4.3 This report should be considered in the context of the Council's wider financial position.

4.4 As part of the programme to find substantive savings of £39m across the Council in 2015, Policy Committee in July 2015 agreed to a comprehensive review of the whole library service.

4.5 Following an initial consultation and survey to understand use and needs, proposals to deliver a saving of £284,000 were presented to Policy Committee (15 February 2016). Final savings of £290,000 were endorsed by Policy Committee on 18 July 2016 following a second phase consultation on the detailed model proposed.

4.6 The budget report to Council in February 2017 identified a substantial gap of £24.2m between expenditure and funding over the medium term to 2019/20. In addition the 2017/18 budget relied on the use of reserves up to £11.1m. A list of Council-wide savings proposals were brought forward to Policy Committee on 17 July 2017.

4.7 Further savings/changes to the library budget in year 2017/18 were presented to Policy Committee (17 July 2017) which were deliverable without impacting on the service offer to library users agreed by Policy Committee in July 2016:
• DENS49 – income of £18,000 from Berkshire Family History Society (BFHS) to rent space from the library service (£14,000 17/18; £4,000 18/19)
• DENS50 – additional £60,000 savings achieved through new library service offer (£35,000 17/18; £25,000 18/19).
Overall the library service is currently on track to deliver the above savings in 17/18 and 18/19, and will have delivered circa £368,000 savings since April 2016.

4.8 A further proposal to deliver additional savings to the library budget for year 2018/19 was presented to Policy Committee on 17 July 2017, as follows:
• DENS53 – £115,000: Reduce costs further in library services: to seek further reductions based on the new service model implemented in April 2017, retaining an offer in all service areas through further reductions in branch opening hours and reducing to single staffing in additional libraries through colocation and partnership models.

4.9 In February 2018 Policy Committee was asked to consider total net library service savings of £217,000, to contribute to closing the budget gap.

4.10   In the context of the overall financial challenge facing the Council, savings need to be secured across all services and this includes the library service which may also need to take some share of the further reductions required. The Council has considered other options to avoid the need to make these savings as reported previously.

4.11   Completion of a needs analysis in 2016, which incorporated data on both library use and the demographic need of the catchment population, was used to develop a priority ranking for libraries in Reading, to assist with prioritising the use of resources. Ranking was completed on the basis of the two data sets, and was subsequently combined and weighted at 40% for use and 60% for demographic need, with rankings as below. Note that despite the matrix being updated in 2018 using the latest data available, the rankings remain the same for all libraries.

Use ranking (2018)	Need ranking (2018)	Overall Ranking (2018)
1. Central	1. Whitley	1. Central
2. Caversham	2. Central	2. Battle
3. Battle	3. Battle	3. Caversham
4. Tilehurst	4. Caversham	4. Whitley
5. Palmer Park	5. Tilehurst	5. Tilehurst
6. Southcote	6. Southcote	6. Southcote
7. Whitley	7. Palmer Park	7. Palmer Park

4.12   The consultation on the Council's library services proposal took place between 21 February and 21 March 2018, a period of four weeks. Respondents were encouraged to feedback on proposals to reduce the opening hours using an online or paper survey form – visible at https://consult.reading.gov.uk/css/your-library-services-your-say/ (survey was also attached in the February Policy Committee report) . Respondents were able to suggest any means of reducing any negative impacts of proposals or alternative ways of delivering the desired savings other than that proposed. Feedback has subsequently been considered and informed the final recommendations outlined in this report.

5.   LIBRARY REVIEW – 2018 CONSULTATION SUMMARY

5.1   A total of 1,332 responses to the consultation were received including:
- 1,308 questionnaires returned online or in paper format (which represents around 5% of the total active user base of the library service)
- 22 emails
- 2 formal written responses

5.2   These were also supplemented by:
- 8 drop-in sessions with the Library Services Manager, held across all libraries in Reading, including weekday mornings and afternoons plus one evening. A total of 30 people attended these sessions.

5.3   A demographic analysis of survey respondents shows that, as with previous consultations:
- Relative to catchment population size, a significantly greater proportion of responses were received from residents living in the Caversham Library catchment area and this is reflected in library use data reported by survey respondents.
- A significantly greater proportion of women, older people and White British/ other white individuals responded to the consultation than are reflected in the resident population.

- Due to the greater representation of older people amongst respondents, there was also a higher rate of respondents wholly retired than reflected in the resident population as a whole.
- The proportion of respondents reporting that they visit libraries with or on behalf of children aged between 0-18 was notably higher than the Borough average for households with dependent children of all ages at 41% vs. 30%, whilst responses from children and young people aged 0-24 were much lower than reflected in the resident population at 1% versus. 37%.

5.4   This demographic data subsequently confirms that, as the survey was designed in order to allow everyone who wished the opportunity to contribute, consultation responses cannot be considered statistically representative of the wider community. Feedback captured should be seen in the context of 'those who responded', and is still provides useful information to understand the possible impacts of changes proposed, in order to further develop recommendations.

5.5   When considering the impact of proposals, 61% of respondents identified one or more of the proposals as having a negative impact.

5.6   Proposals A and C regarding proposed reductions in staffing and opening hours at Caversham and Central Libraries were identified by the greatest number of respondents as having a potentially negative impact on respondents and their families. This is consistent with the larger catchment areas and higher levels of use of these libraries.

5.7   Figure 1 below shows consultation responses to the question 'Do you think this proposal will impact on you and your family?' across all proposals. This analyses the response given to a specific library proposal by respondents who have identified this as their main library.
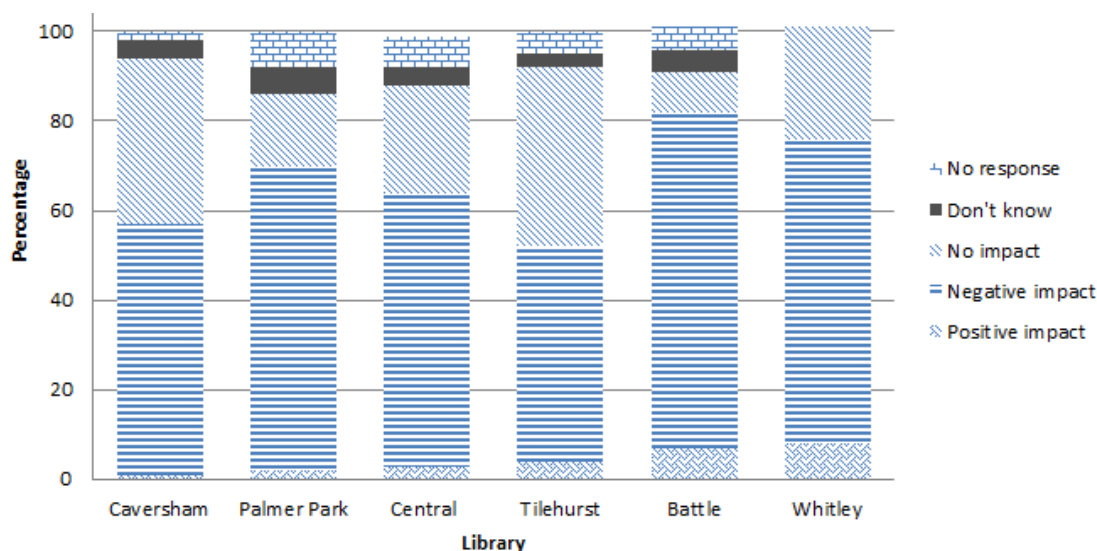

Figure 1: Impact of Proposals (based on response given to each library proposal by respondents identifying this as their main library).

5.8   When asked for further detail regarding the possible impact of proposed changes, the following responses were amongst those most frequently received:

- Concerns about the impact of changes on children, young people and those in full time work or study, and having access on particular days
- Concern that reduced hours would limit access to library services and therefore result in a reduction in use (especially amongst school aged children and working adults, based on the illustrative opening hours presented to aid consultation which

included later opening, earlier closing and additional days closed for some libraries), which it was feared would then be used as a pretext for further reductions

- Impacts on lost spontaneity of library visiting, as fewer hours means that visits have to be planned to fit in, rather than being in a locality and popping into the library
- Impact on rhymetimes and activities offered to children
- Concern over reduced hours of access to free public IT facilities and wifi
- Impact on locality (run down, loss of an amenity in area, target for crime)
- Some comments indicated that users would fit around hours and were pleased that libraries were not closing
- Some comments asked the Council and service not to carry out the changes
- Concerns over impact of reduced hours on staff
- Indications of preferences for full days or half days closing
- Suggestion that Central Library should be prioritised over branches

5.9   When asked for particular feedback on opening hours, recurring themes included:
- Feedback on particular aspects of the hours that had been illustrated in the proposal, making the case for different days, different times, highlighting concerns over particular patterns
- Asking the Council not to make the changes
- Concerns over the impact on particular user groups such as children, young people, elderly users and those in full time work/studies
- At Caversham, some illustrated options were provided in the consultation and 58 people expressed a preference for one over the other
- Indications of preference for full days over half days or vice versa
- Suggestions to prioritise Central and consider closure of some branches
- Some comments indicated that users would fit around hours and were pleased that libraries were not closing

5.10   When asked for suggestions as to how negative impacts could be reduced, recurring themes included:
- Not making changes
- A large number of people indicated 'unsure/don't know'
- Comments on particular aspects of the hours, such as changing days or evenings
- Ensuring an out of hours bookdrop service was available
- Need to communicate and highlight changes for users
- Suggestions to raise income by hiring out the library space, accepting donations
- Some respondents were in favour of closing one or more libraries or reducing staffing further
- Mitigation by using volunteers

5.11   Finally, when asked for alternative ideas as to how the council might deliver required savings, the following suggestions were most common:
- Hiring out the spaces, out of hours
- Running more events and activities and making a charge for them
- Making savings elsewhere rather than from libraries
- Providing coffee facilities for a charge
- Energy efficiency
- Moving libraries into different buildings/sharing space
- Closure of some libraries in order to keep others open longer
- Sponsorship and donations
- Using volunteers to a greater extent

5.12   A detailed Officer response to suggestions received from the public consultation exercise is included at **Appendix 2** of this report.

5.13   Further detail on consultation feedback received is included in the Consultation Report attached as **Appendix 1.** The following section sets out how the concerns and suggestions of consultation respondents have been addressed by and incorporated in the new service offer.

6.   **RECOMMENDED FUTURE SERVICE OFFER AND SAVINGS**

6.1   The Council's aim is to ensure provision of a comprehensive, modern, affordable and efficient service for Reading which reflects local needs and makes the best use of resources.

6.2   There is limited national guidance as to what a Library Service or branch should deliver and how, and libraries serve different groups within communities with different needs and interests:

        'Most library services already include a range of different kinds of public library – differing by size, range of services offered, location, etc. These are often complemented with smaller book collections and similar arrangements with a wide range of public and community venues. A modern library service is therefore the sum total of a number of different parts which work together.'

        'Community Libraries' 2013 Arts Council England and Local Government Association Report.

6.3   As outlined above, consultation feedback primarily centred on the impact of reduced opening hours and the illustrative opening hours shared during the consultation process. Respondents subsequently offered a number of suggestions around opening hours to reduce any negative impacts of changes.

6.4   A four week utilisation study was also undertaken across the library network during the consultation period, including a half term, in order to further enhance our understanding of current patterns of library use with empirical data, in order to inform future opening hours. This utilisation study included hourly monitoring of visits.

6.5   Library usage date has been considered alongside feedback received during consultation and staff scheduling considerations have also been taken into account in order to best target opening hours.

6.6   **Two options have been developed and are set out below.** Officers recommend implementing Option B as this offers greater operational resilience, more reliable service as a consequence, and more memorable opening hours for customers.

6.7   For both of the options presented below:
        • Late nights are retained at all sites with no change (except Palmer Park), including two at Central Library
        • Mondays and Thursdays see no change
        • Central Library opens for 37 rather than 36 hours for the same saving

6.8   The recommended opening hours in Option B have been scheduled in order to:

        a. Best reflect overall levels of usage of each branch and feedback given where possible;

b. Best meet the varied needs of different groups within communities, including the needs of pre-school and school age children and working adults for example, and linked to this -

c. Include an evening and some Saturday provision across 6 of the 7 sites;

d. Ensure that there are no periods of Central Library closure when branches are open (except during times of guaranteed management presence at Central Library), in order to be better able to provide staffing and incident support to branch libraries where needed (many of which will be single staffed) to maintain a reliable service to customers. The reduced (and often single cover) staffing levels in libraries mean that providing cover and ensuring resilience is critical to minimise and avoid unplanned closures or late opening due to staff sickness. Coordination and provision of cover is not possible from any branch other than Central Library. The makeup of the building at Central Library means that, if absolutely required, floors could be closed or development/management staff could be diverted to provide continuity of service.

e. Include 9 am opening at branch libraries, where possible, in order to reflect use of these branches by parents of young children visiting the library immediately after taking older children to school;

f. Be consistent and memorable, as well as adequately publicised – with closure across the network on Wednesdays (except at Palmer Park);

g. To provide a reasonable range of open days and late evening hours across the network that on most days would allow users to visit an alternate library if their preferred branch is closed;

h. Accommodate the continued delivery of popular children's and adults activities wherever possible. Where these are impacted by closure times, best endeavours to provide alternatives would be made.

6.9 Note that 38% of consultation respondents indicated that they visit Central Library as well as their preferred library. Central Library was most frequently cited by users of all branch libraries as an additional library visited (see Appendix 1 for further detail). It might seem to make sense then for Central library opening hours to complement those of the branches – providing cover when these are shut. However, data demonstrates that usage of Central Library does not necessarily increase during times when more branches are closed. Further, since Central Library is the busiest in the network by a considerable margin, opening hours need to reflect peak use and Central Library user preferences wherever possible. There is a need to balance the needs of Central Library users with provision of cover across the Borough's libraries, as well as providing a degree of resilience within the service.

6.10 For the community hub in Southcote, the 'opening hours' shown are the minimum access times when library staff will be employed and available on site. The hours shown overleaf are periods where the library will be staffed. Southcote Library may be available for use on a self-serve basis at other times subject to wider staffing on site to provide oversight of the facility.

6.11 The following tables outline the recommended opening hours for the Reading library network, including Southcote which was not part of this consultation but is included for the sake of completeness. The total hours of service opening per week would be 164 hours. This is a reduction of 35 hours (18%) against the current 199 hours. Opening hours for the network reduced by 30% in 2017. Tables show

- Table 1 : Current opening times
- Table 2 : Option A
- Table 3 : Option B – officer recommendation

Note that changes from current opening hours (table 1) are highlighted in tables 2 and 3

Table 1
Opening hours currently May 2018

Current	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Central Library* (46 hours)	10am-5pm	10am-7pm	10am-5pm	10am-7pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm
Caversham Library (35 hours)	Closed	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	1pm-7pm	9am-5pm	10am-3pm
Battle Library (27 hours)	Closed	1pm-7pm	Closed	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	10am-3pm
Tilehurst Library (27 hours)	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	Closed	1pm-7pm	Closed	10am-3pm
Palmer Park Library (21 hours)	Closed	9am-12noon 1pm-7pm	9am-12noon	9am-12noon 1pm-4pm	Closed	10am-1pm
Southcote Library (21 hours)	Closed	9am-12noon 1pm-7pm	Closed	9am-12noon 1pm-4pm	9am-12noon	10am-1pm
Whitley Library (21 hours)	Closed	9am-12noon 1pm-7pm	Closed	9am-12noon 1pm-4pm	9am-12noon	10am-1pm

Table 2

Option A Not recommended	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Central Library (37 hours)	10am-5pm	10am-7pm	10am-3pm	10am-7pm	Closed	10am-5pm
Caversham Library (27 hours)	Closed	9am-5pm	9am-1pm	1pm-7pm	1pm-5pm	10am-3pm
Battle Library (22 hours)	Closed	1pm-7pm	Closed	9am-5pm	9am-12noon	10am-3pm
Tilehurst Library (22 hours)	9am-5pm	9am-12noon	Closed	1pm-7pm	Closed	10am-3pm
Palmer Park Library (16 hours)	Closed	9am-12noon 1pm-5pm	9am-12noon	9am-12noon 1pm-4pm	Closed	Closed
Southcote Library (21 hours)	Closed	9am-12noon 1pm-7pm	Closed	9am-12noon 1pm-4pm	9am-12noon	10am-1pm
Whitley Library (18 hours)	Closed	9am-12noon 1pm-7pm	Closed	9am-12noon 1pm-4pm	Closed	10am-1pm

Table 3

Option B Recommended	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Central Library* (37 hours)	10am-5pm	10am-7pm	Closed	10am-7pm	10am-5pm	10am-3pm
Caversham Library (27 hours)	Closed	9am-5pm	Closed	1pm-7pm	9am-5pm	10am-3pm
Battle Library (22 hours)	Closed	1pm-7pm	Closed	9am-5pm	9am-12noon	10am-3pm
Tilehurst Library (22 hours)	9am-5pm	9am-12noon	Closed	1pm-7pm	Closed	10am-3pm
Palmer Park Library (16 hours)	Closed	9am-12noon 1pm-5pm	9am-12noon	9am-12noon 1pm-4pm	Closed	Closed
Southcote Library (min 21 hours)*	Closed	9am-12noon 1pm-7pm	Closed	9am-12noon 1pm-4pm	9am-12noon	10am-1pm
Whitley Library (18 hours)	Closed	9am-12noon 1pm-7pm	Closed	9am-12noon 1pm-4pm	Closed	10am-1pm

*   For Southcote the 'opening hours' shown are the minimum access times when a Library Assistant will be employed and available on site. Self service kiosks could allow access outside these times when the building is open.

6.12 As currently, opening hours will continue to be monitored and changes may be made as and when required without further consultation. Books and other items can be ordered, collected from and returned to any service point as currently. Reservations can be made online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or over the phone via their branch when open and whenever Central Library is open (calls will be diverted from a branch when closed to Central Library).

6.13 The proposed revised service offer is summarised below:

6.14 <u>**Central Library: opening hours - 37 per week**</u> The toy library, which is cost neutral, is moving to Central Library under changes agreed as part of the 2016/17 change programme – moving from the current Southcote site. A book drop facility is already available at this library so that books can be returned outside of opening hours.

6.15 <u>**Caversham: opening hours - 27 per week.**</u> A book drop facility will be installed outside the library so that books can be returned outside of opening hours.

6.16 <u>**Battle and Tilehurst: opening hours - 22 per week; colocating partners allowing single staffing**</u> Space in both of these libraries will be leased to third parties to enable a reduction to single staffing if possible, to allow a partner agency presence in the buildings during opening times, with associated risk assessment. The service will aim to secure partners which will enhance the overall service offer through delivering against wider corporate objectives.

6.17 As reported to Policy Committee in February, following an evaluation exercise in line with the Third Sector Premises Policy, it was proposed that Age UK Reading would be granted a Lease of the first floor of Tilehurst Library, contributing to running costs; providing a presence during library open hours; plus sharing use of parts of the ground floor in order to offer services to local people. Age UK Reading have since withdrawn their interest. Officers continue to seek to lease the top floor of Tilehurst library to facilitate colocation and single staffing.

6.18 The formal process of appraising submissions of interest for Battle Library has not yet begun, as extension of the library will not be completed until Spring 2019. The additional space will afford separate access to a new community space for local groups to hire.

6.19 A book drop facility will be installed outside these libraries so that books can be returned outside of opening hours.

6.20 <u>**Whitley: opening hours - 18 per week.**</u> The Library has now moved to the South Reading Community Hub providing a bright and welcoming newly refurbished local facility.

6.21 <u>**Southcote: opening hours -21 per week**</u>. No change. Southcote Library will move to the extended community centre this year to form a new 'hub' with an already agreed reduction to library staffing. The hub will have one reception and flexible staffing cover with Children's Centre and Library Service staff on site. Opening hours will not therefore be reduced in this location, but staffing arrangements are likely to be reviewed once the hub is live.

6.22 <u>**Palmer Park: opening hours- 16 hours per week.**</u> Palmer Park library will continue to be operated in partnership with Reading College - there will be one

member of library staff on duty with College staff and students on open days in term time. Outside of this, during the college holiday times, the library will remain open for the same hours, managed by 2 members of Reading libraries' staff.

6.23 The library will only open at times when the College are present, removing evening and Saturday opening.

6.24 Contextually, Palmer Park catchment area has a population of 9,052 – one of the smallest across the network and comprising 6% of Reading's population (data is per 2011 Census – the latest available at this level of granularity). There were 420 active users of the branch from the Palmer Park catchment in 2017/18, and in total 1,120 active users. There were 45 respondents to the consultation survey from the catchment (7% of all respondents). The numbers of issues are illustrated below for the last financial year:

Issues 2017/18	Adult stock	Children's stock	Other stock
Palmer Park	6,401 (29%)	15,385 (68%)	687 (3%)

6.25 Palmer Park library is 1 mile from Central Reading, a 20 minute walk from the Central Library and is within a few minutes of the 13/14/17/4/X4 bus routes. Around 60% of Palmer Park Library's users also use Central and other libraries. Palmer Park is the bottom ranked library in the prioritisation matrix referred to at paragraph 4.11 of this report. Whilst there is a cost to travel by bus if this is necessary for a customer, it might reasonably be assumed that many service users will periodically visit the town centre for other reasons and hence an additional journey may not be necessitated to visit Central Library.

6.26 There is a recognition that access to the local branch will be reduced for this location and, whilst it is considered that reasonable access is still afforded to the service overall, mitigations have been considered to seek to lessen this impact and optimise access for all across the community. These are set out below at paragraphs 6.27-6.31.

6.27 Books and other items can be reserved 24/7 online from the libraries catalogue. Books can also be ordered over the telephone or in any branch (and collected at another).

6.28 A book drop facility will be installed outside the library so that books can be returned outside of opening hours. Additionally, at the nearby Palmer Park Leisure Centre a small book collection point will be installed together with a self-service kiosk so that customers can collect items (ordered online or over the phone) and return items outside of opening hours.

6.29 There is currently a 50p charge for requests for stock out of catchment (from another branch). Consideration has been given to not applying charges for customers of Palmer Park library. Unfortunately, however, the current Library Management IT system does not enable differential charging on this basis but this is something that the service will continue to investigate.

6.30 As is noted in the EIA appended, e-books and e-magazines can be borrowed 24/7, free of charge, for 21 days from Reading's 'e-Library' – this offers a growing range

of fiction, non-fiction and children's books available to read online, on a smart-phone or tablet and some e-readers. E-borrowing is on track to be comparable with levels of borrowing at one of our smaller branches by the end of the year. Citizenship study guides and practice tests, as well as language courses can now be accessed online, 24/7 and free of charge. The service will continue to develop the online offer, including through collaboration with other library services in order to widen selection and purchase at reduced cost.

6.31   In addition, the mobile and home library service visits individuals around the Borough who are elderly or housebound. It also provides a very small number of public stops at points which are the greatest distance from library buildings, providing books in a range of formats (large print/audio) and the facility to order a book or other items. The stock for this service is adult based, with a greater proportion of audio and large print than other libraries. In the coming year the mobile library service will be reviewed and consideration can be given to including a public stop in the East Reading area. However, implementing any additional stops will necessitate ceasing public stops elsewhere. The stock available on the mobile library is also necessarily limited.

6.32   **Community Extending Opening Hours** Finally, for any branch, should an organisation came forward with proposals to utilise the building and potentially enable access to the service *outside* of core operating hours, this would be explored further as an option to optimise use of the library buildings for the community. Proposals may be subject to further approval by members and subject to compliance with the Council's legal duties.

7.   CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

7.1   This report directly contributes towards the achievement of the following Corporate Plan priorities:

        o   ensuring there are good education, leisure and cultural opportunities for people in Reading; and

        o   ensuring the Council is fit for the future.

8.   COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

8.1   As outlined in section 5 and Appendix 1, a full public consultation has been undertaken in the development of the recommendations outlined in this report.

8.2   Pending Policy Committee endorsement of the recommendations outlined in this report, further communications and engagement of stakeholders will be required in order to publicise changes to be made to the library service, including timescales for implementation.

8.3   The programme of implementation would begin immediately should the recommendations laid out in the report be endorsed by Committee and following a staff consultation. Communications regarding any changes made would include a

press release, online publicity, e-communications and publicity materials in libraries and other public buildings.

9.   EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1   Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

    a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
    b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
    c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

9.2   Relevant protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

9.3   Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—

    a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
    b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
    c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

9.4   As outlined in the Equality Impact Assessment attached at **Appendix 3**, it is considered that recommended changes to the library service are likely to result in some negative impacts upon groups with relevant protected characteristics, the conclusion of which is summarised as follows:

9.5   The proposal regarding Palmer Park library means that neither weekend or evening opening will be offered. This does mean that there is an impact on some young users and reduced availability outside of school and weekday working hours. This can be mitigated to some extent as above in sections 6.27-6.31.

9.6   All other sites, whilst having fewer hours overall, maintain levels of opening on different days, including an evening, some after school and some Saturday hours.

9.7   Mitigation measures, as listed above, have also been designed in order to avoid or reduce any differential impacts.

10.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Local Authorities have a statutory duty under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient Library Service for all persons' in the area that want to make use of it (section 7), taking into account local needs and resources. Furthermore, local councils must:

- have regard to encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the Library Service (section 7(2)(b))
- lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area (section 8(3)(b))
- keep adequate stocks for borrowing/reference 'sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children'

10.2   It is the statutory duty of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport to superintend, and promote the improvement of, the public Library Service provided by local authorities in England and secure the proper discharge by local authorities of the functions in relation to libraries conferred on them as library authorities. The Secretary of State has a statutory power to intervene when a library authority fails (or is suspected of failing) to provide the required service (section 10). He/she will only intervene after careful consideration of local authorities' compliance with the terms of the 1964 Act. This power to intervene has been utilised on only one occasion since 1964, with a public inquiry on the Wirral in 2009.

10.3   In October 2014, the Secretary of State, following receipt of a complaint in regards to Sheffield Library Service, issued a 'minded to' letter in October 2014, and in March 2015 issued a final decision letter. The decision letters cited the following observations of Ouseley J in Bailey v London Borough of Brent [2011] EWHC 2572 (Admin):

A comprehensive service cannot mean that every resident lives close to a library. This has never been the case. Comprehensive has therefore been taken to mean delivering a service that is accessible to all residents using reasonable means, including digital technologies. An efficient service must make the best use of the assets available in order to meet its core objectives and vision, recognising the constraints on council resources. Decisions about the Service must be embedded within a clear strategic framework which draws upon evidence about needs and aspirations across the diverse communities of the borough.

10.4   The letters also noted the view that:
- a wide range of approaches are open to the local authority when deciding how to provide a comprehensive and efficient Library Service
- the Secretary of State does not seek to proscribe how local authorities discharge their primary duty.

10.5   In determining whether to order an inquiry, the Secretary of State gives consideration to a number of factors, including:
- whether there is any serious doubt or uncertainty as to whether the local authority is (or may cease to be) complying with its legal obligation to provide a comprehensive and efficient Library Service
- whether the local authority appears to be acting in a careless or unreasonable way
- whether the decision is or may be outside the proper bounds of the local authority's discretion, such as a capricious decision to stop serving a particularly vulnerable group in the local community
- whether the local authority appears to have failed to consult affected individuals or to carry out significant research into the effects of its proposals
- whether the local authority has failed to explain, analyse or properly justify its proposals

- whether the local proposals are likely to lead to a breach of national library policy
- the advantages of local decision making by expert and democratically accountable local representatives
- whether there is any further good reason why a local inquiry should be ordered

10.6 The Secretary of State also noted that, as confirmed by the High Court in *R (Green) v Gloucestershire City Council [2011] EWHC 2687 (Admin)*:

The availability of resources is highly material to the question of what constitutes a comprehensive and efficient library service. The section 7 duty cannot be exempt or divorced from resource issues and cannot in law escape the reductions which have been rendered inevitable in the light of the financial crisis engulfing the country.

10.7 The principles established in *R v Brent LBC ex parte Gunning* [1985] 84 LGR 168 require: (i) consultation to take place at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage; (2) the proposer to give sufficient reasons for any proposal to enable intelligent consideration and response; (3) adequate time for consideration and response; and (4) the product of consultation to be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any proposals.

10.8 Most challenges in this area have centered around a failure to comply with the public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 detailed at paragraph 9 of this report. To reiterate, public authorities, including the Council, in exercising their functions must have due regard in relation to those having a specified 'protected characteristic' to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and so on, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those with and without protected characteristics. Section 149 requires a conscious directing of the mind to the equalities implications of the recommendations being considered in this report by decision-makers together with careful consideration of the impacts of the decision on protected groups, including any mitigation measures put forward to address adverse effects.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 In the 19 February 2018 Policy Committee report, £217,000 was identified as a desired net saving for the current library service review, in advance of and subject to the outcome of public and staff consultation. The proposed changes to opening hours account for £72,000 of this savings total. The remainder of the saving will be delivered through the following measures agreed at Policy Committee in February 2018:

- Co-location of external agencies at Battle Library and reduce to single staffing (once an extension to the building has been completed)
- Co-location of external agencies at Tilehurst Library and reduce to single staffing, using ancilliary office and storage space
- Remove 0.5 FTE Business Support post (subject to staff consultation)
- Remove 1.0 FTE Digital & Volunteer Lead post (subject to staff consultation)
- Reducing library stock fund to reflect lower levels of usage at libraries
- Other internal management changes

11.2 As outlined above, public consultation has now been completed. This saving amount is considered achievable, although the implementation of changes to opening hours with associated saving means less saved in 2018/19 and more in 2019/20.

Savings and timescales for implementation

Base (18/19 budget)	Exp. (Gross)	Income	Net.
LIBRARY SERVICE (excluding support costs)	£1.239m	£0.203m	£1.036 m

	2018/19	2019/20	Total Full year effect
TOTAL ANNUAL SAVING PROPOSED	125,000	92,000	£217,000

11.3 Note - The saving forecast is based on a budget rebuild which:

a) Is based on a proposed new staffing structure to support the recommended service offer from 1 October 2018 (subject to staff consultation).
b) Has taken into account cost changes approved at the last Policy Committee meeting such as a reduced bookfund.
c) Includes revenue savings in respect of premises where assets are released (as previously agreed by Committee).
d) Excludes variable reactive repairs costs for a branch (excluding Central Library) at average circa £4,000 per annum or estimated capital maintenance liabilities avoided. These are not funded through the Library Service budget.

11.4 Pending the approval of Policy Committee, and staff consultation, the aim of the service would be to change opening hours as per table 3 in section 6 of this report from 1 October 2018.

Staffing Impact (all changes included)

11.5 The savings linked to the reduction of opening hours assume reduced staffing levels in Battle, Caversham, Central, Palmer Park, Tilehurst and Whitley libraries. A new service model including reductions in core staffing at Central Library and reduced opening hours across the network will necessitate a staff restructure and consultation.

11.6 The Library Service currently employs a high number of part-time employees

No. of current establishment staff 1/4/18:	37
Full time establishment equivalent:	27.6

11.7 A staff restructure of the service will be required to deliver savings. The new structure will be subject to a 30-day staff consultation, which can start in July, recognising that this is the busiest time of year for the service and leave levels are higher.

11.8 The current modelling of a proposed structure is likely to mean a reduction in FTEs of c4.9. There are currently c3.2FTE vacancies in the structure. However the rotas and small number of full time staff mean that most staff will be impacted. The service, in line with the employee stability agreement, will seek to minimise the disruption caused.

11.9 The consultation period will further refine what is proposed with staff input. The reduced staffing is a function of:
   a) Reductions in opening hours at 6/7 sites
   b) Introduction of lower staffing levels at 4/7 sites due to colocation
   c) Reduction in development team and capacity
   d) Reduction in business support team.

11.10 This means that staffing costs will change as follows (excluding central growth, assuming changes made 1 October and subject to consultation):

2017/18 base (£)	2018/19	2019/20
904,600	829,100	753,600

11.11 If the service model is approved then a staff restructure, in accordance with RBC processes, would follow.

Capital Funding Implications:

11.12 Capital funding of circa £10,000 will be required to implement bookdrop facilities at 4 branch libraries and the cost of a self-service kiosk to be installed at Palmer Park leisure facility – both of these to mitigate against the impact of reduced opening hours.

Financial Impact of Proposals

11.13 Reading's 2017/18 spend compared against other services using the most recent data available (2017/18 estimates from CIPFA) indicate Reading's net spend per thousand population excluding overheads was £9,140 for the last financial year – 25th of 44 English unitary authorities (the average for an English unitary for 2017/18 was £9,869).

11.14 The proposed reductions would indicate that Reading's net spend per thousand population would be approximately £8,500 per thousand population after these changes. This would, based on 17/18 data, place Reading 33rd of 44 English unitary authorities, although further changes to other authority budgets cannot be predicted.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 Report to Policy Committee: Proposed Service Offers and Budget Proposals 2016-19 to Narrow the Budget Gap (20 July 2015)

12.2 Report to Policy Committee: Library Service Review (8 October 2015)

12.3   Report to Policy Committee: Proposed Service Offers and Budget Proposals 2016-19
        to Narrow the Budget Gap – Consultation (30 November 2015)

12.4   Report to Policy Committee: Library Service Review (15 February 2016)

12.5   Documentation as part of Library Consultation at
        https://consult.reading.gov.uk/css/your-library-services-your-say/

2018 Consultation: Results and Feedback

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of the 2018 consultation 'Your Library Service. Your Say'.

Consultation background

On 19th February 2018, Policy Committee authorised public consultation on proposals to reduce opening hours at six of the seven libraries in Reading.

Public consultation on the proposals began on 21st February 2018 and ran for a period of four weeks ending on 21st March 2018. The purpose of the consultation was to inform the public about the library service proposals including why they were being considered and to obtain views and feedback in relation to them.

The Council wanted to understand the possible impact of the proposals and, where identified, and to the extent possible, how any negative impacts could be reduced, avoided or overcome.

The public was invited suggest alternative ways in which the Council could deliver the desired level of savings.

1.1 Consultation documentation

A comprehensive consultation document was published combining a questionnaire with background information on the review and proposals. This was made available online (at www.reading.gov.uk/libraryreview2018 and in hard-copy at libraries.

The online survey and hard-copy consultation document were accompanied by a detailed information pack. This information pack included the following:

- Policy Committee Report on the Library Service Proposals (19 February 2018);
- an updated Prioritisation Matrix for the Service 2018/19, using the same methodology as the previous Prioritisation Matrix, with updated/projected information;
- a full list of proposals for the Library Service for 2018/19;Strategic Vision document for service;
- Equality Impact Assessment for the proposals; and
- documentation from the 2016 library review and associated consultation.

For those who did not wish to complete the paper or online questionnaire, email and postal addresses were provided to allow for general responses.

1.2 Promotion

Awareness of the consultation was created through a variety of means, in order to ensure that as many people as possible were able to contribute their feedback on proposals, possible means of reducing negative impacts of proposals, and alternative options for achieving savings.

The consultation was promoted in the following ways:

- distribution of posters and leaflets to all libraries in the Borough;
- distribution of consultation documents and information packs across libraries in the Borough;
- emails to around 10,500 library users who had used the library service in the last 12 months and whose email address was known to the Council;
- emails to stakeholders in the library service, including partners based in library premises, schools, colleges, umbrella organisations in the voluntary and community sector. Information was sent out drawing attention to the consultation to the groups who were engaged last time in 2016.

The list of those groups sent details is :

- o Youth Services for Youth Parliament (not currently active in Reading)
- o All primary and secondary schools in Reading
- o Reading Voluntary Action
- o Older People's Working Group
- o Talkback Reading for Mental Health Working Group
- o ACRE
- o Central library floor 3 'Elevate Hub' partners
- o Berkshire Family History Society (based on floor 2 at Central library)
- o Unison
- o Activate Learning, who operate Reading College and are partners in running Palmer Park library
- information provided to the local and regional media in the form of press releases, in order to help them cover the consultation.
- a link to the library review consultation was placed within the library website for the duration of the consultation;
- The library services Facebook and Twitter accounts were used to signpost people to the consultation information and questionnaire.

1.3 Who responded?

The consultation invited both library users and non-library users to take part in order to obtain a variety of feedback.

A total of 1333 responses were received:

- 1308 surveys
- 22 emails
- 3 formal responses

8 drop-in sessions with the Library Services Manager were held across all libraries in Reading, including weekday mornings and afternoons plus one evening. A total of 30 members of the public were engaged with at these sessions.

Population of Reading Borough (mid year estimate 2017)	162,666
Unique users of Reading Borough Libraries (2017/18)	24,182 (14.9% of population)
Number of consultation responses from individuals	1,308 (0.8% of population) (5.4% of unique users)

The main themes emerging from survey responses, emails, letters, focus groups and hubs exhibitions are summarised in this report.

1.4 Analysis of responses

The use of the online Reading Borough Council consultation portal meant that we were able to analyse the responses in-house. The Library Services Manager has reviewed every comment received in order to understand and categorise responses. This has amounted to over 5,000 comments across the consultation responses.

2. Respondents

In order to have feedback from as many people as possible, the consultation form was made available to all, rather than solely to a statistically representative group. As a result of this, the response has been higher from some groups than others.

The feedback captured therefore should be seen in the context of 'those who responded', rather than reflective of the demographic make-up of the wider community. It is for this reason that care must be taken not to generalise the figures within this report, and only use the results as a guide to aid further development of recommendations by showing how changes may affect residents, customers and stakeholders.

The information below provides an overview of the demographic make-up of respondents and, where possible, how this compares with residents in Reading.

2.1 Gender

Table 1 shows that, as with previous consultations, a higher proportion of females responded to the consultation than is reflected in the resident population data.

2018	Survey response (%)	Reading resident population (2011 census) (%)
Base (respondents)	1308	155,700
Female	51%	50%
Male	21%	50%
Prefer not to say	1%	
Not answered	26%	

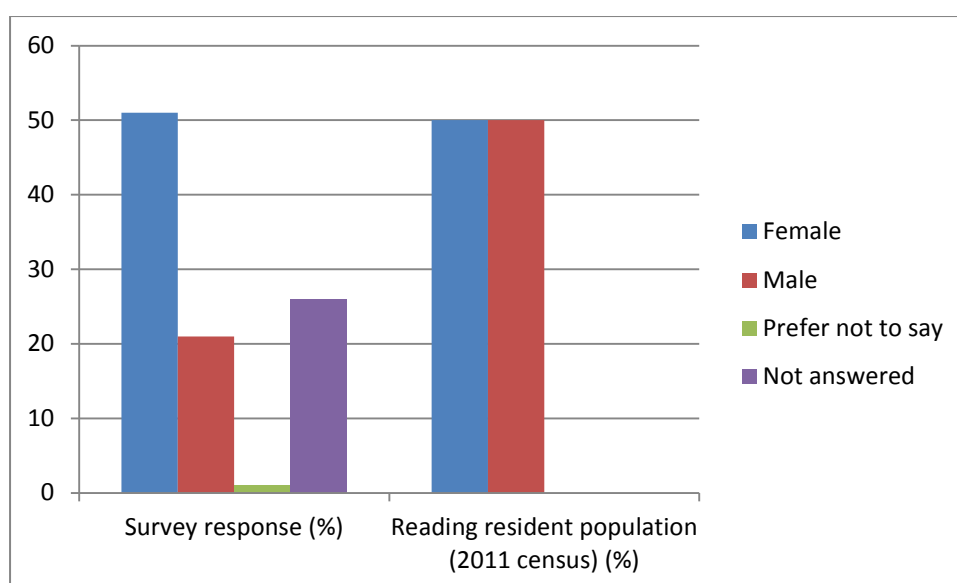Table 1: Survey respondents and Reading residents by Gender

Figure 1: Survey respondents and Reading residents by Gender

2.2 Age

The Table 2/Figure 2 show that a higher proportion of respondents aged 65 or over responded to the consultation than is reflected in the resident population data, and a much lower proportion of under 25 year olds. Consultation responses were therefore over-representative of the views of adults and older people.

2018	Survey response (%)	Reading resident population (2011 census) (%)
Base (respondents)	1308	155,700
Under 25	1	36.94%
25-64	50	53.67%
65+	22	9.39%
Not answered	27	

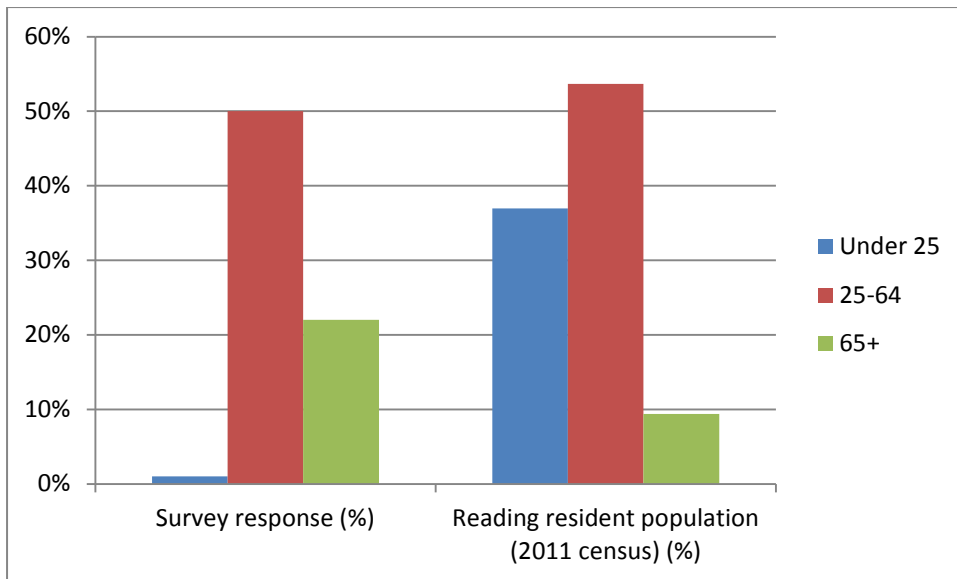Table 2: Survey respondents and Reading residents by Age Group

Figure 2: Survey respondents and Reading residents by Age Group

Amongst respondents to the survey, respondents from the age groups 65-74 and 35-44 (approx. 21% of respondents in each band) were most common. Considerably fewer responses were received from the 0-14, 15-24 and 85 and over age groups.

Figure 3 below shows the number of respondents by age and gender, removing any from unknown/not given/prefer not to say categories.

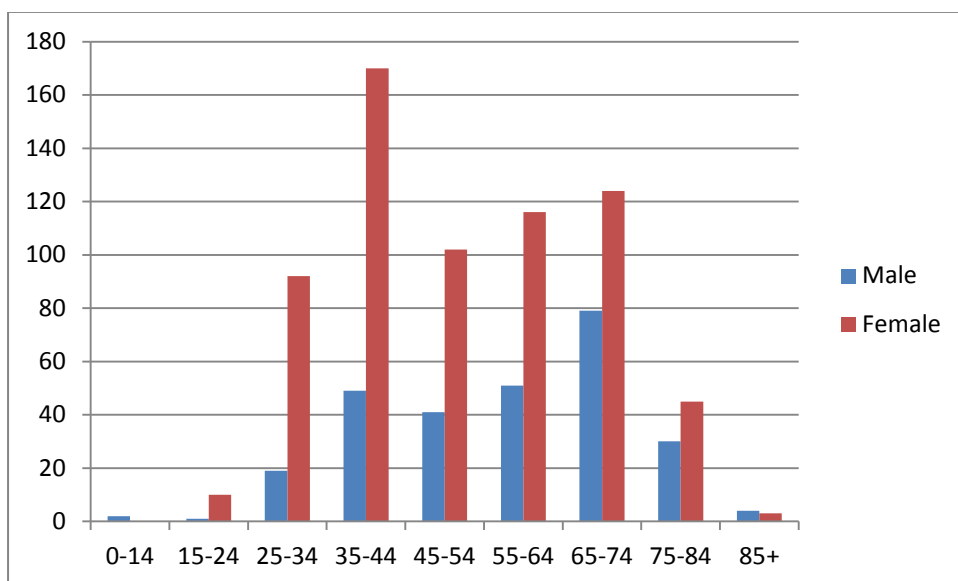| Age	Male	Female	Total
0-14	2	0	2
15-24	1	10	11
25-34	19	92	111
35-44	49	170	219
45-54	41	102	143
55-64	51	116	167
65-74	79	124	203
75-84	30	45	105
85+	4	3	7
Total	276	662	938

Figure 3: Survey respondents by Age Group and Gender

From this it is apparent that the greatest proportion of women responding to the consultation were aged 35-44, and the greatest proportion of men were aged 65-74. This is the same as 2016. The number of female respondents for each age group also exceeded the number of responses received from men, except at the top and bottom of the scale. These figures only include responses where we have an age given.

Respondents were also asked if they visit the library with, or on behalf of, any other groups. 303 respondents to the survey (41% of all respondents) indicated that they visit the library with, or on behalf of, children and young people aged 0-18. This is above the Borough average of households with dependent children of all ages (30.08%). 151 respondents (15%) also indicated that they visit the library with, or on behalf of, older people.

Table 4 below provides a breakdown of responses:

2018 Age group	% of respondents
Children aged 0-5	18%
Children aged 6-12	17%
Children aged 13-18	6%
Older persons	9%
Persons with disabilities	3%
Other*	3%
None / No response	60%

Table 4: Age Groups of individuals that Survey respondents reported visiting libraries with, or on behalf of

2.3 Ethnicity

Table 5 / Figure 4 show that there were a higher proportion of 'White British / Other White' respondents to the consultation than is reflected in the resident population data, and a notable under representation of Asian/Asian British and Black/African/Caribbean/Black British respondents. To allow a better comparison, the table below includes responses where a response was given. The figures are in line with the response received at the last consultation.

2018	Survey response (%)	Reading resident population (2011 census) (%)
Base (respondents)	876	155,700
White British / Other White	90%	74.8%
Mixed / multiple ethnic groups	2%	3.9%
Asian / Asian British	6%	13.6%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	2%	7.7%
Other ethnic group/	1%	0.9%

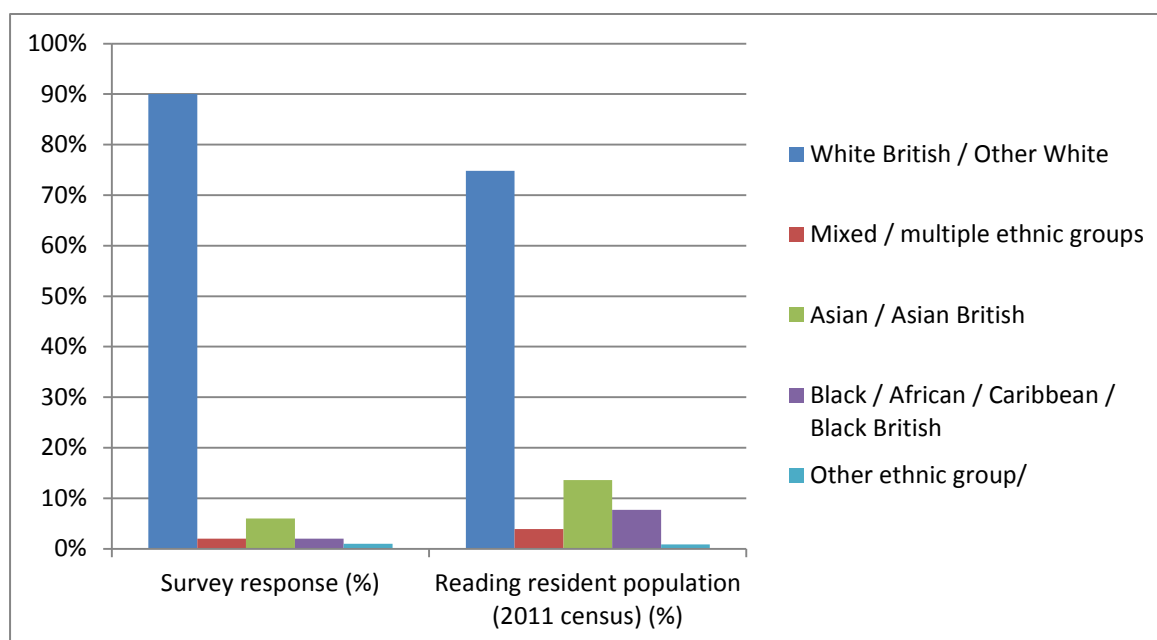Table 5: Survey respondents and Reading residents by Ethnicity

Figure 4: Survey respondents and Reading residents by Ethnicity

2.4 Disability or health problems

Although we do not have directly comparable figures for disability, Table 6 below shows the numbers of respondents reporting to have a disability, against those reporting in the 2011 census that their day to day activities are limited by a

disability. To allow a better comparison, the table below includes responses where a response was given.

2018	Survey response	Reading resident population (2011 census)
Base (respondents)	901	155,700
Disabled respondents	14%	12.9% have a Limiting Long-Term illness
No disability	86%	87.1%

Table 6: Survey respondents and Reading residents reporting a Disability

The proportion of respondents with a disability is higher than the Borough average, and this may also be linked to the over representation of older people responding to the survey.

Where respondents were asked in the survey if they visit the library with, or on behalf of, any other groups, 35 respondents (3% of all respondents) also indicated that they visit the library with, or on behalf of, disabled persons. This indicates that further indirect use of and reliance on library services by disabled persons may be masked to some extent.

Respondents were also asked for further information about the nature of their disability or illness. Figure 5 provides a breakdown of the disabilities reported by respondents to the consultation.

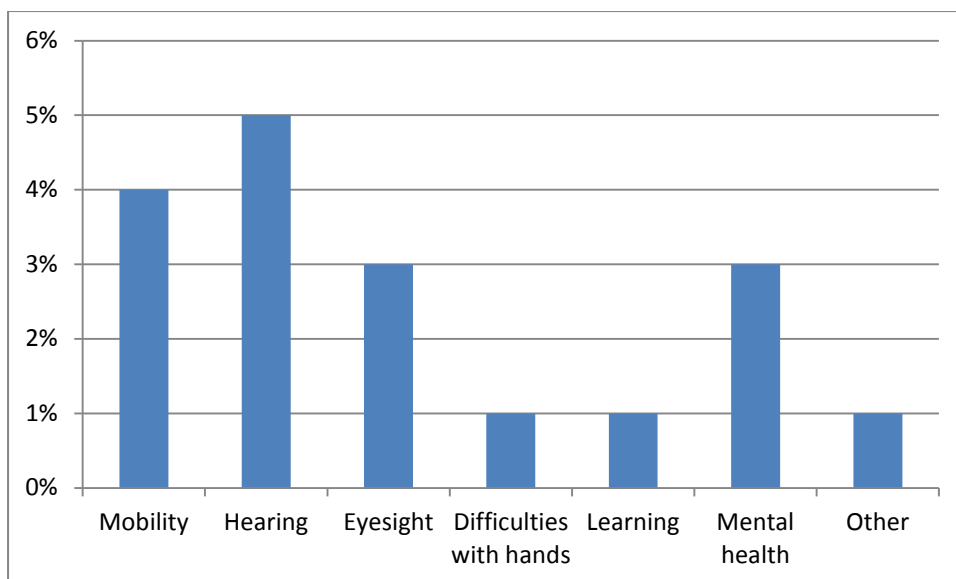| 2018	Of the 901 giving a response to this question
Mobility	4%
Hearing	5%
Eyesight	3%
Difficulties with hands	1%
Learning	1%
Mental health	3%
Other	1%

Figure 5: Survey respondents by Disability

2.5 Employment

Table 7 shows that there is a significant under-representation of residents in full-time employment amongst respondents to the consultation, and a significantly higher proportion of retired respondents than is reflected in the resident population. Residents in part-time employment and those looking after the home or family are also represented to a greater extent than in the resident population, whilst residents that are studying, unemployed or not in work due to long-term sickness or a disability are underrepresented. To allow a better comparison, the table below includes responses where a response was given.

2018	Survey response (%)	Reading resident population (2011 census) (%)
Base (respondents)	959	155,700
Employed – Full-time	30%	44.6%
Employed – Part-time	17%	11.9%
Self-employed	8%	7.9%
Full-time education	1%	5.0%
Unemployed	2%	4.6%
Retired	31%	8.6%
Looking after home or family	8%	4.6%
Long-term sick or disabled	1%	2.8%
Other*	2%	

Table 7: Survey respondents and Reading residents by Employment Status

*'Other' responses included:

- Caring responsibilities
- Semi-retired
- Parental leave
- Working and studying part time

The employment status of respondents broadly reflects the age profile shown above.

2.6 Response rate by area

906 (69%) of respondents gave their postcode.

650 of these postcodes were matched to library catchments (some postcodes were out of borough or do not show as a match to known postcodes)

Table 8 shows the distribution of responses from across the borough. This shows a significantly higher proportion of respondents from the Caversham Library catchment area than is reflected in the resident population data, or than is reflected in the proportion of library visits. The table also shows a significant under representation of respondents from the Central Library catchment areas.

Library catchment	Population of catchment area (2011 Census)	% of Reading population	Number of respondents from catchment (postcodes)	% of respondents from catchment	Difference between percentage of population and responses	% of actual library visits by branch (2017/18)
Central	46,482	30%	133	20%	-10%	54%
Battle	17,847	11%	62	10%	-1%	9%
Caversham	31,734	20%	269	41%	+21%	17%
Palmer Park	9,052	6%	45	7%	+1%	4%
Southcote	8,548	5%	20	3%	-2%	4%
Tilehurst	18,398	12%	76	12%	0%	9%
Whitley	23,637	15%	45	7%	-8%	3%

Table 8: Survey response rates by Catchment Area

2.7 Religion

Respondents were asked for information regarding their religious beliefs and sexual orientation to inform an assessment of the impact of any proposed changes to library services on groups with this protected characteristic. To allow a better comparison, the table below includes responses where a response was given.

2018	Survey response (%)	Reading resident population (2011 census) (%)
Base (respondents)	932	155,700
Buddhist	1%	1%
Christian	48%	50%
Hindu	2%	4%
Jewish	1%	0.2%
Muslim	1%	7%
Sikh	1%	1%
No religion	30%	30%
Prefer not to say	14%	7%
Other	2%	1%

3.8 Sexual orientation

Respondents were asked for information regarding their sexual orientation to inform an assessment of the impact of any proposed changes to library services on

groups with this protected characteristic. The table below includes responses where a response was given. There is no Census information to provide any comparison.

2018	Survey response (%)
Base (respondents)	912
Bisexual	1%
Gay/lesbian	1%
Heterosexual/straight	80%
Prefer not to say	16%
Other	1%

3. Library Use

As outlined earlier in this report, in order to allow everyone who wished the opportunity to contribute, feedback was not sampled. As a result of this, the response has been higher from users of some libraries than others.

The feedback captured therefore should be seen in the context of 'those who responded', rather than reflective of Reading's library users. It is for this reason that care must be taken not to generalise the figures within this report, and only use the results as a guide to aid further development of recommendations by showing how changes may affect residents, customers and stakeholders.

The information below provides an overview of the library use of respondents and, where possible, how this compares with visits data.

3.1 Use and non-use

The survey asked 'Have you used the library service in the last 12 months?'. 899 (80%) of respondents answered this question. 99% of respondents answering the question identified themselves as users of the library service, while the remaining 1% did not.

3.2 Primary library used

Respondents that use the library service were asked to state which library they use most often, and how frequently.

The Table 9 below (and Figure 6 overleaf) show the primary libraries used by respondents.

2018	Number of respondents	% of respondents	% of library visits by branch,exc Mobile (2017/18)
Base	899		515,409 visits
Central Library	208	34%	54%
Battle Library	67	7%	9%
Caversham Library	276	31%	17%
Palmer Park Library	61	7%	4%
Southcote Library	28	3%	4%
Tilehurst Library	120	13%	9%
Whitley Library	40	4%	3%
Mobile Library	1	0%	
Other*	4	0%	

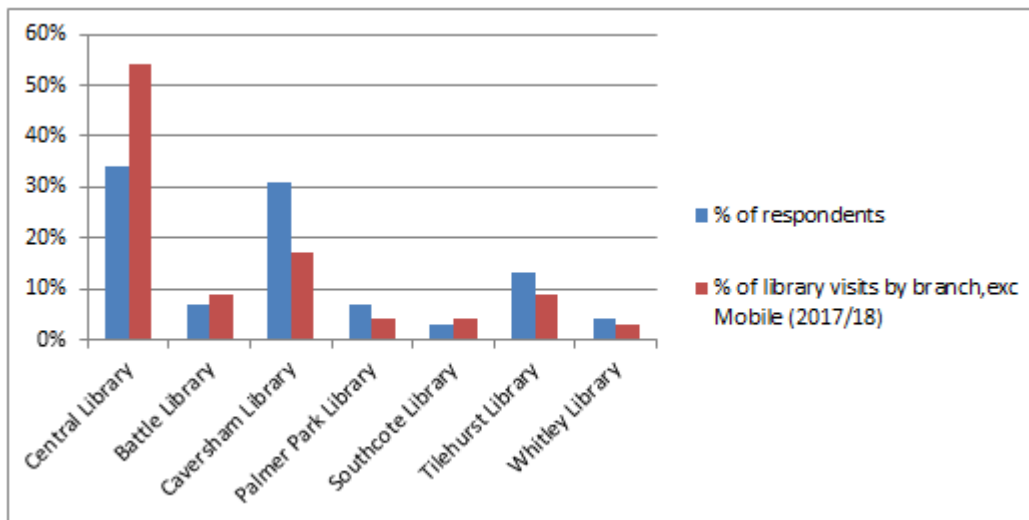Table 8: Primary libraries used by respondents and 2017/18 library visits

Figure 6: Primary libraries used by respondents and 2017/18 library visits

*Respondents selecting the field 'Other' did not always specify which libraries they used.

As shown from the above, Caversham Library was the preferred library of the majority of respondents, thereby conflicting with patterns of library use which show Central Library as the most frequently visited.

When asked how frequently they visited their preferred library 899 of the respondents answered this question, with 14% indicating that they visit more than once a week, 24% reported using the service weekly, 28% fortnightly, 23% monthly and 12% less than monthly.

The reported frequency of visits to each of the branch libraries by respondents is broken down in Figure 7 overleaf.

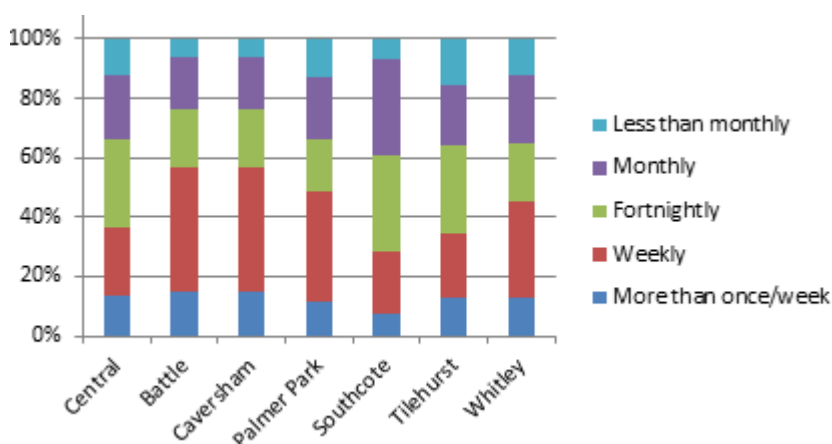| 2018 – to form table below	CEN	BAT	CAV	PAL	SOU	TIL	WHI	Tot
>1/week	42	10	41	7	2	15	5	122
Weekly	70	28	48	23	6	26	13	214
fortnightly	91	13	82	11	9	36	8	250
Monthly	65	12	71	13	9	24	9	203
<monthly	38	4	34	8	2	19	5	110
Total	306	67	276	62	28	120	40	899

Figure 7: Frequency of library use by respondents for the primary library use

3.3 Multiple library use

Respondents that use the library service were also asked to state which, if any, other libraries they also visit, and how frequently. Multiple libraries could be marked.

Table 9 below (and Figure 8 overleaf) show the other libraries also used by respondents.

2018	Number of respondents	% of respondents	% of library visits by branch,exc Mobile (2017/18)
Base	1308		515,409 visits
No response	479	37%	
No other library used / none	144	11%	
Central Library	497	38%	54%
Battle Library	143	11%	9%
Caversham Library	166	13%	17%
Palmer Park Library	84	6%	4%
Southcote Library	57	4%	4%
Tilehurst Library	112	9%	9%
Whitley Library	54	4%	3%
Mobile Library	5	0%	
Other*	28	2%	

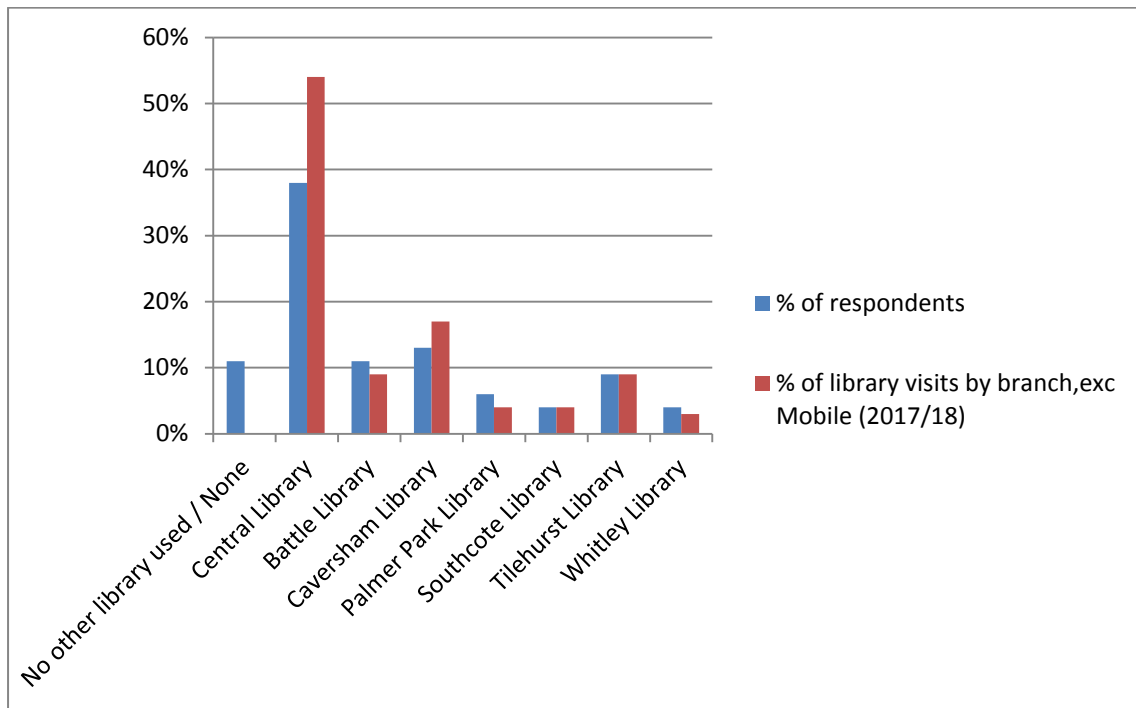Table 9: Additional libraries used by respondents and library visits

Figure 8: Additional libraries used by respondents and library visits

*Respondents selecting the field 'Other' used libraries in neighbouring authorities (Wokingham, West Berkshire, Oxfordshire) London and the University of Reading Library.

In contrast to respondents primary library use, this pattern was more closely aligned with library visits data.

Table 10 below (and Figure 9) also show additional libraries used, broken down by the primary library used by respondents.

2018		Additional Libraries Used									
		Central Library	Battle Library	Caversham Library	Palmer Park Library	Southcote Library	Tilehurst Library	Whitley Library	No other	Mobile Library	Other
Primary Library Used	Central Library		19%	25%	18%	6%	13%	9%	14%	1%	4%
	Battle Library	72%		10%	3%	10%	30%	3%	10%	0%	3%
	Caversham Library	70%	7%		2%	2%	7%	1%	17%	1%	1%
	Palmer Park Library	73%	6%	13%		2%	0%	5%	21%	0%	0%
	Southcote Library	71%	32%	14%	7%		18%	11%	0%	14%	7%
	Tilehurst Library	59%	26%	8%	2%	8%		1%	21%	1%	3%
	Whitley Library	63%	5%	10%	13%	8%	3%		18%	0%	5%

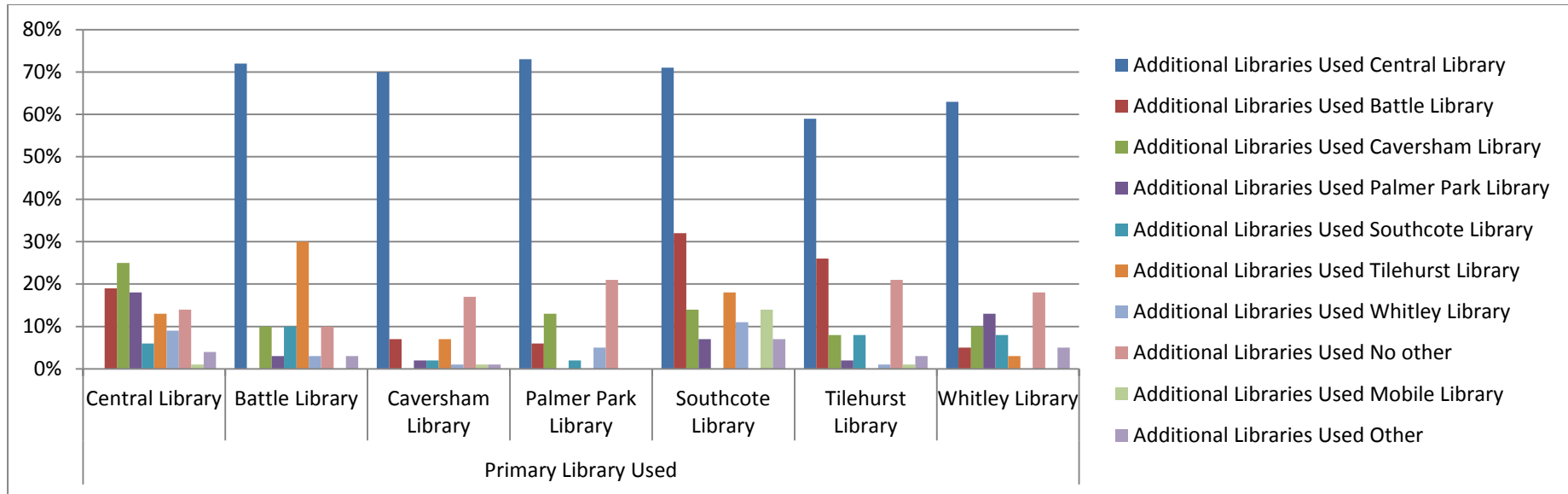Table 10: Additional Libraries used by Primary Library

Figure 9: Additional Libraries Used, by Primary Library Used

When asked how frequently they visited their all other libraries visited, 777 respondents answered this question, with 2% indicating that they visit more than once a week, 5% reported using the service weekly, 8% fortnightly, 21% monthly and 64% less than monthly.

2018 – to form table below	CEN	BAT	CAV	PAL	SOU	TIL	WHI
>1/week	12	6	5	5	4	6	3
weekly	21	10	13	6	2	6	3
fortnightly	45	17	13	6	8	15	5
Monthly	116	42	50	22	11	35	13
<monthly	283	64	79	41	30	48	30
Total	477	139	160	80	55	110	54

The reported frequency of visits to each of the branch libraries by respondents is broken down in Figure 10 below and shows much less frequent use than by respondents of their primary library used.
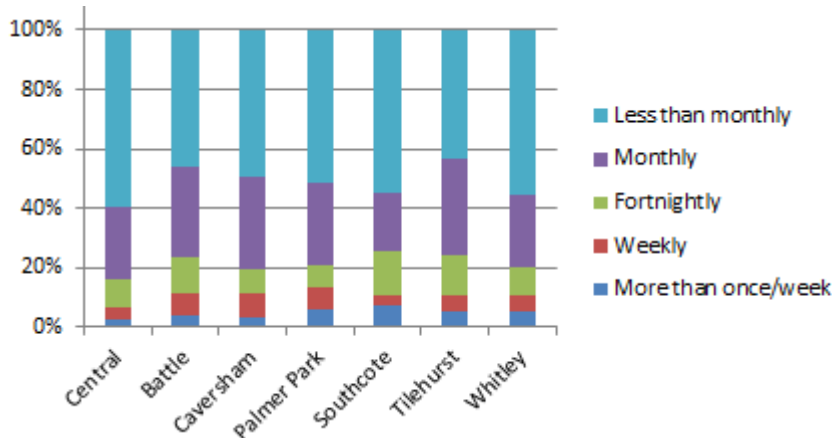

Figure 10: Frequency of library use by respondents for additional libraries used

4. Proposals

For each proposal, respondents were asked the question 'Do you think this proposal will impact on you and your family?' Answers for each of the proposals are shown in Table 11, Table 12Figure 11 and Figure 12 below.

Table 11

2018 Proposal		Positive impact		Negative impact		No impact		Don't know		No response	
A	Caversham	19	1%	286	22%	356	27%	36	3%	610	47%
B	Palmer Park	5	0%	119	9%	173	13%	23	2%	987	76%
C	Central	20	2%	369	28%	212	16%	35	3%	671	51%
D	Tilehurst	12	1%	132	10%	215	16%	25	2%	923	71%
E	Battle	10	1%	140	11%	135	10%	22	2%	1000	77%
F	Whitley	12	1%	62	5%	166	13%	16	1%	1051	80%
	Total	78	1%	1,108	14%	1,257	16%	157	2%	5,232	67%

However, there is also a need to show the impact felt by respondents in relation to proposals for the library they use the most – so looking at data collected from those identifying a library as their main library used, numbers using the library and the impact felt, the results are as follows: (Percentages are of impact as proportion of those identifying library as main one used).

Table 12:

2018 Proposal		Catchment population	Active borrowers (17/18)	Active borrowers in catchment	Number respondents identifying as main library used	Positive impact		Negative impact		No impact		Don't know		No response	
A	Caversham	31,734	4,133	3,178 (10%)	276	4	1%	154	56%	102	37%	11	4%	5	2%
B	Palmer Park	9,052	1,120	420 (4.6%)	62	1	2%	42	68%	10	16%	4	6%	5	8%
C	Central	46,482	10,304	3559 (7.7%)	308	10	3%	189	61%	74	24%	13	4%	22	7%
D	Tilehurst	18,398	2,803	1192 (6.5%)	120	5	4%	58	48%	48	40%	3	3%	6	5%
E	Battle	17,847	1,989	916 (5.1%)	67	5	7%	50	75%	6	9%	3	5%	3	5%
F	Whitley	23,637	1,172	739 (3.1%)	40	3	8%	27	68%	10	25%	0	0%	0	0%
	Total				873	28	1%	520	60%	250	29%	34	4%	41	5%

Southcote is excluded from this table as a 'main' library as no proposals directly linked.)
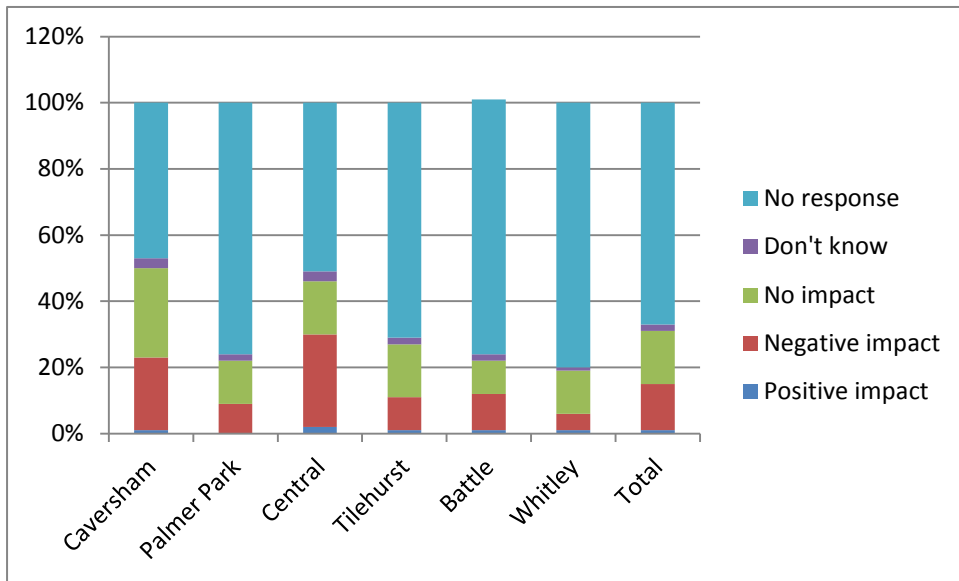
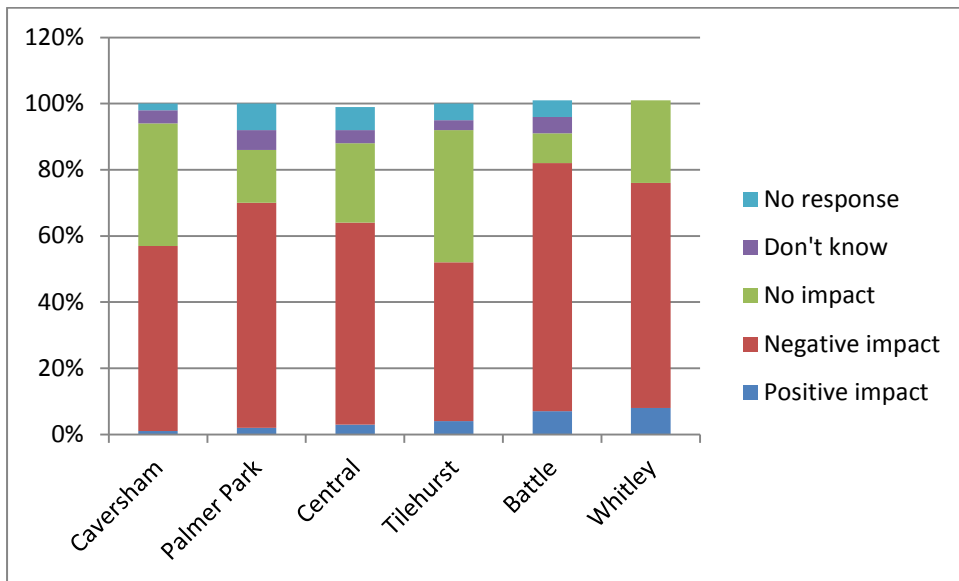**Figure 11: Impact of Proposals (based on all responses given)**

Figure 12: Impact of Proposals (based on response given to library proposal where respondent identified this as their main library).

803 (61%) respondents identified one or more of the proposals as having a potentially negative impact on them or their families.

41

When looking at responses given by those who identified a 'main' library understandably the results show a difference – with a range of 48%-75% of respondents citing a negative impact in respect of the proposals for their library. This higher number is to be expected as it only includes those who would definitely be using the library as their main library.

Where respondents had indicated that they or their family would be impacted by proposals, they were also asked to explain what impact the proposal would have on them and their family. 1,014 responses were received to this question across all proposals.

All comments were noted, if a respondent indicated more than one different area of concern, both are counted below.

The main themes emerging from responses were:

- Concerns about the impact of changes on children, young people and those in full time work or study, and having access on particular days

- Concern that reduced hours would reduce access to library services and therefore result in a reduction in use (especially amongst school aged children and working adults, based upon the illustrative opening hours presented to aid consultation which included later opening, earlier closing and additional days closed for some libraries), which it was feared would then be used as a pretext for further reductions

- Impacts on lost spontaneity of library visiting, as fewer hours means that visits have to be planned to fit in, rather than being in a locality and popping into the library

- Impact on rhymetimes and activities offered to children

- Concern over lower levels of ICT access

- Impact on locality (run down, loss of an amenity in area, target for crime)

- Some comments indicated that users would fit around hours and were pleased that libraries were not closing

- Some comments asked the Council and service not to carry out the changes

- Concerns over impact of reduced hours on staff

- Indications of preferences for full days or half days

- Feeling that Central library should be prioritised over branches

42

Table 13 below provides a full breakdown of themes emerging across all proposals.

2018	Caversham Library	Palmer Park Library	Central Library	Tilehurst Library	Battle Library	Whitley Library	Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Concern on impact on groups (children, young people, those working/studying)	45	54	65	10	30	14	218
Comments providing feedback on particular days/patterns	37	13	83	20	24	17	194
Reduced access to the library service overall	64	9	65	23	16	11	188
Reduced ability to drop in and use service, less spontaneity	35		11	25	12	6	89
Impact on rhymetimes	2	2	17	5	15		41
Impact on locality around library	17	3	4	6	5		35
Do not make these changes	10	6	9	3	2	4	34
This is part of a running down of the service to allow future cuts	5	5	11	4	4	2	31
It is ok/we will cope/please publicise	4	4	14		4		26
Concern over reduced access to ICT	3		13	1	3	2	22
Unknown response or response unclear	11	2	5		3		21
Concerned about impact on staff	5	2	5		1		13
Need to prioritise Central library over branches			13				13
At least you are not closing	8					2	10
Full days are better than half days	6						6
Half days are	2			2	1		5

better than full days							
Other (this covers areas where only 1 comment was made)	11	8	26	8	6	9	67
Total	265	108	341	107	126	67	1,014

Table 12: Impact of Proposed Change

All respondents were subsequently invited to suggest any ways in which negative impacts of proposals could be minimised. 849 comments were received to this question across all proposals and the main themes emerging included:

- Not making changes

- A large number of people indicated 'unsure/don't know'

- Comments on particular aspects of the hours, such as changing days or evenings

- Ensuring an out of hours bookdrop service was available

- Need to communicate and highlight changes for users

- Suggestions to raise income by hiring out the library space, accepting donations

- Some respondents were in favour of closing one or more libraries or reducing staffing further

- Mitigation by using volunteers

Table 14 below provides a full breakdown of themes emerging across all proposals.

2018	Caversham Library A	Palmer Park Library B	Central Library C	Tilehurst Library D	Battle Library E	Whitley Library F	Total
Unsure/no/don't know	66		28	22	17	30	163
Don't do this	36	22	36	5	14	11	124
Comments on particular aspects of the opening hours	31		47	3	22	14	117
Need a bookdrop	41	32	3	1	3	1	81
Use volunteers	25	7	11	2	4	4	53
Good communications about any changes	23	6	13	3	1	2	48
Suggested changes to the stock held in libraries and the online resources	12	20	6		2		40
Hire out the space/host events in the space	4	16	4		4	1	29
Accept donations	4	5	5			2	16
Amend loan periods to allow longer loans	6	2	2				10
Close the library	1	1	6			2	10
Half days are better than full days	2		6		1		9
Review your charges	4		5				9
Improve external signage	7	2					9
Reduce staffing	1	6					7
Change rhymetime times	3				1	1	5
Full days are better than half days	2		2	1			
Other (this covers areas where only 1 comment was made)	38	1	1	6	14	21	113
Total	306	120	208	43	83	89	849

Table 13: Ideas for Reducing Negative Impacts of Proposed Changes

Respondents were asked if they had particular comments on opening hours. 1,549 comments were received to this question across all proposals and the main themes emerging included:

- Feedback on particular aspects of the hours that had been illustrated in the proposal, making the case for different days, different times, highlighting concerns over particular patterns

- Don't make the changes

- Concerns over particular user groups such as children, young people, elderly users and those in full time work/studies

- At Caversham, some illustrated options were provided in the consultation and 58 people expressed a preference for one over the other

- Indications of preference for full days over half days or vice versa

- Suggestions to prioritise Central and consider closure of some branches

- Some comments indicated that users would fit around hours and were pleased that libraries were not closing

Table 15 below provides a full breakdown of themes emerging across all proposals.

	Caversham Library	Palmer Park Library	Central Library	Tilehurst Library	Battle Library	Whitley Library	Total
2018	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Particular aspects of the hours	106	28	93	34	49	21	331
Don't do it	83	37	62	31	30	21	264
No/no comment	48	27	39	32	33	20	199
Consider the needs of specific user groups	12	45	64	20	4	8	153
OK/is a shame	20	8	34	19	7	15	103
Half days are better than full days	42		36	9	9	1	97
Full days are better than half days	17	1	19	4			41
Comments on illustrative options given for Caversham	58						58
Better than	17	4	5	4	1	1	35

closure							
Please open longer hours	20	3	6		10	5	33
Prioritise Central over the branches	9		11	2		2	15
Close libraries		9	2				14
Have a core of hours for each day/each site	3						7
Use volunteers	7	1	1	1			5
Prioritise branches	2		3			1	4
Other (this covers areas where only 1 comment was made)	22	6	58	35	28	41	190
Total	449	169	433	191	171	136	1,549

Finally, respondents were asked if they had any other ideas of how the Council might deliver savings. 1,058 responses were received to this question across all proposals and the themes emerging were:

- Hiring out the spaces, out of hours

- Running more events and activities, and making a charge for them to raise funds

- Making savings elsewhere rather than from libraries

- Providing coffee facilities

- Energy efficiency

- Moving libraries into different buildings/sharing space

- Closure of libraries

- Sponsorship and donations

- Using volunteers

Table 16 below provides a full breakdown of themes emerging across all proposals.

2018	Caversham Library	Palmer Park Librar	Central Library	Tilehurst Library	Battle Library	Whitley Library	Total

		y					
	A	B	C	D	E	F	
None	83	37	40	38	17	24	239
Hire space out	41	8	29	17	25	5	125
Greater use of volunteers	36	14	18	19	12	7	106
Don't do this, make savings elsewhere	17	11	11	6	3	6	54
Run more activities and events	27	4	6	7	7	3	54
Move/refurbish/extend libraries	6	12	7	13	4	3	45
Coffee making/café	7	3	17	12	5		44
Accept donations of money and books	16	8	5	5	3	2	39
Increase your charges	12	3	15		4	1	37
Look at the balance of how you spend money in the stockfund	13		15		1	1	35
Close libraries	4	19		1	1	2	27
Sponsorship	10	3	5	3		1	22
Energy efficiency	2	6	9	2	1	1	22
Sell items	9		3	1	1		14
Open for longer hours	4		4	2			10
Reduce hours further	10						10
Outsource the service	2		1		1		4
Need a bookdrop	3			1			4
Community can run the library	1	1					2
Crowdfunding	2						2
Use technology to provide a self service 'open+' library	1	1					2
Other (this covers areas where only 1 comment was made)	22	23	53	28	19	16	151
Total	328	153	238	163	104	72	1058

Respondents were also asked for any other comments, about any element of the consultation and on any elements of the proposals that they had not covered so far, including any ideas on how the Council might deliver savings from the library service or elsewhere. 251 responses were received from respondents (43.9%) for this question and the themes emerging included:

- Ideas for generating additional income and making savings
- General opposition to cuts
- Emphasis on the value of libraries and library staff to local communities/library users

- Comments on the value placed in library staff
- Suggestions to make greater use of volunteers
- Comments on the consultation process, both positive and negative

Table 17 below provides a full breakdown of themes emerging.

Don't reduce stockfund – this is a cycle to run down service	42
No/no comment	23
Concern for staff	20
Make savings outside libraries	19
Understand but am worried re the service	14
Increase charges/income	10
At least you aren't closing	10
Don't reduce hours	8
Prioritise Central over branches	8
Book donation scheme	7
More digital resources	6
Concerns over loneliness/mental health	6
Need to look at Southcote too	5
Hire out the space	5
Sponsorship	3
Closures needed	3
Prioritise branches over Central	2
Need bookdrops	2
Volunteers	2
Printed resources most important	1
Focus on Whitley and Battle over other libraries	1
Other	54
Total	251

Table 17: Summary of Any Other Comments

Themes emerging from drop-ins and emails

Drop-ins across libraries:

	General	Alternative suggestions to achieve savings
All libraries	Feedback received regarding: - Opening hours - Relief that no closures planned - Don't understand why Council Tax is going up	- Make savings elsewhere. - Improve income before making savings - Become better at reducing energy usage

	• Libraries seem to be singled out, and this is unsatisfactory • Where is money from library site sales going? • Concern over vulnerable in community – where will they go? • Can you redevelop the site (at Caversham) and offer a better service • 'Never ending' nature of cuts, including children's centres • Particular feedback re opening times at certain libraries (Battle should be open on Friday, for example) • Please look to increase income rather than reduce services • Can you work to get sponsorship • Shouldn't be cutting stockfund	• Use volunteers

Appendix 2 : REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED DURING CONSULTATION WITH OFFICER RESPONSE
As part of the consultation, respondents were given the opportunity to suggest alternative ways of achieving the desired level of savings. The following provides an overview of suggestions made by respondents which they felt would either lead to an increase in income generation for the libraries or a reduction in costs.

It should be noted when reading all the suggestions below that the Council is committed to continuing to explore opportunities for innovative approaches to income generation, partnership working and service enhancement as part of a longer term programme for the future of libraries.

Where the Officers' preliminary assessment indicates that a particular Recommendation is unlikely to achieve the desired level of savings, either on its own or as part of a package of options, this is indicated in the 'Officer Response' column in this Appendix 2. Notwithstanding this, Members may ask Officers to explore any of the Representations listed below in further detail.

Representations	Officer Response
Hire library spaces out or use them for events when the library is closed	We are starting to make more use of library spaces outside of opening hours for other uses, for example for adult learning courses. We are working with colleagues in Facilities Management to make space, where suitable, available for hire – Battle library's redesigned space will allow out of hours hire and use, and currently space is hired out when the library is open. Reading Central library currently hires out space under long term leases which generate annual income of £90,000. All libraries can be used by Council services or Council partners out of hours, and some letting in this way already happens. To enable a full community hire would require some work to libraries to secure staff spaces.
Make savings from other services /do not make savings from library services	As a result of Government cuts in funding and increasing demands for services, every local council is having to make significant savings. We therefore need to prioritise our limited resources.

	Savings need to be made across all services and this includes the Library Service. The Council has considered other options to avoid the need to make these savings. However, Council Tax cannot be increased further than planned without a referendum and reserves are limited. While we might be able to plug a one-off gap using our reserves, they cannot be used to cover ongoing annual costs of running a service.
Increase Council Tax	As above, Council Tax cannot be increased further than planned without a referendum. It has been raised by the maximum 5.99% in 2018. The overall demand for services means that increasing Council Tax does not equate to increasing funding for all Council services.
Reduce staff salaries across the Council	The Council is exploring all options to address its financial challenges, including reviewing staff terms and conditions across the Council. Staff job descriptions are regularly reviewed and pay is determined in accordance with the Council's Pay and Grading Structure for Job Evaluation.
Use more volunteers	As at 2017/18, volunteer hours made up 3.6% of permanent staff hours. We have fewer volunteers than comparator authorities. Whilst some authorities have moved to a model of single staffing cover supplemented by volunteers, this has generally been implemented in smaller and often more rural libraries. This is not, therefore, recommended in Reading as a sustainable option likely to offer consistency of service. We are committed to providing a good quality experience for volunteers and making it easy to volunteer in the service. Community groups wishing to operate a library outside of determined opening hours can approach the Council.

Generate additional income	Reading is currently above average in terms of income generation per 1,000 population. Furthermore, external funding opportunities are often project based and are not generally available to support core services. It is also anticipated that as audio-visual hire continues to decrease (one of the Library Service's main traditional sources of income) and late return fines reduce as easier renewal systems are made available, that the general library income will continue to fall. This pattern is seen across different library services. The Council has evaluated and will pursue a range of opportunities to generate additional income including seeking voluntary donations and external funding for activities; sponsorship; and increasing rental income in order to compensate for this shortfall. Despite opening hours reductions of 30% in 2017, income has increased as sources have diversified.
Charge for library use, for membership or to borrow books	Under the terms of the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act, libraries cannot charge for the loan of books.
Charge for use of public access IT	Whilst some local authorities have introduced charging for the use of public access IT (chargeable after a limited free period of use), it is currently considered that this would penalise those whose only access to IT and the internet is through the library and is contrary to the Council's objective of promoting digital inclusion. There would also be a set up and ongoing cost relating to charging for public access IT.
Charge for attending events, talks and activities	Charges are made for any activities that are not run regularly such as author talks. Donations can also be made. Experience suggests that the talks which are most popular are those relating to aspects of local history. More talks could be offered but the number of these, the charge and the time taken would all mitigate against substantial increases in income.
Increase overdue charges	At 25p a day Reading's overdue book charges are currently in the top quartile. Income from

	fines and reservation charges overall is also decreasing. This is due to declining issues for adult stock plus the provision of many routes to avoid overdue fines, including renewal in person at any branch, by phone at any branch and online. The service has also introduced pre-overdue messaging to improve customer service. It is not, therefore, anticipated that this option would secure the saving required. However charges will be increased in 2018 as they have not gone up for a few years.
Introduce cafés / food and drink facilities to libraries	The provision of catering facilities in libraries often requires substantial investment. There is an opportunity to work towards a long-term return on investment for this type of initiative, however, this will not obviate the need to make savings in order to address the immediate challenges of the Council and branch libraries may not have the spatial capacity for this to be an option. Kitchen or café facilities will be available in community hubs – responding to customer feedback but not increasing library service income.
Move/refurbish/extend libraries	This is a key part of the Council's strategy to operate more efficiently and deliver the benefits of bringing services together under one roof in community 'hubs'. 2 libraries (Southcote and Whitley) are moving into shared hubs to release sites, reduce running costs and building repair liabilities, enable staffing reductions and provide a better overall offer to customers. Battle Library is being extended to facilitate both hire of community space and for another agency to co-locate in the library which will enable a reduction to single staffing as in other locations. Tilehurst library has excess ancillary 'back office' space and again will provide a base for a local charity – sharing running costs and allowing a move to single staffing. Money to extend or refurbish sites is not available unless there is a clear financial case to generate a return. The buildings and sites that some libraries occupy mean scope for this is

	limited.
Allow donations of books and money	This is already offered, however, responses suggesting introduction of these schemes seems to indicate schemes have low levels of awareness amongst library users require greater publicity.
Reduce stockfund	This has been done for 2018. The different kinds of stock that are purchased are still being purchased and stock for adults, children and in community languages, large prints and audio formats is all still being purchased.
Reduce hours further	The hours were reduced by 30% in total in 2017.The proposed changes, if implemented, would represent a further 20% reduction – equating to 44% over 2 years
Close libraries or have them run by community	The Council has at this time sought to retain a 7 branch network to preserve access at a neighbourhood level and has not tabled closure of libraries.
Obtain sponsorship	Any commercial sponsorship is acceptable if in line with the Council sponsorship policy. We seek opportunities for sponsorship, however, this is often linked to one-off events rather than funding of ongoing services. The Council has committed to exploring the development of a cultural trust, which could include libraries, and this could facilitate sponsorship and fundraising.
Energy efficiency	Sites are regularly reviewed for opportunities as part of the Council's ongoing carbon reduction programme. Solar panels have been fitted to sites including Central library, and where changes can be made to lighting or heating at reasonable cost these are made.
Selling items	Previous experience has shown that this often does not cover costs of items or staff time to manage and whilst one off items might be sold where there is a clear fit/need (such as local history items), it is not felt that this is an area that would provide a steady or sustainable income and as such is not a reliable way to fund a service.

Outsource service to a different provider	As part of looking at alternative delivery models and as noted above, the Council is exploring the option of establishing a cultural trust. Libraries could be included in this. There are currently no private companies running libraries in the UK. However, trust and mutual models are becoming more common. These models would not generate the savings required in the timescale.
Use technology to open longer	This is a relatively new technology and is becoming more common but requires initial capital investment to convert and install, as well as an ongoing management and monitoring cost. This is something that the service has looked at. However, it is felt that whilst ostensibly longer hours might be offered in some locations, the costs would need an increase to the library budget. Building suitability would also be an issue.

Formal responses with areas highlighted

Detail	Officer response
Reading below average for volunteer numbers used to support service against CIPFA comparison group	We are below average but have been working to improve the volunteer offer in recent months. The service is committed to making it easier to volunteer for the service.
Requirement to take population growth into account when planning services.	Any growth in population would be offset by reductions in usage in recent years. Library usage has reduced by around 36% in the last 8 years at a time when the population has increased by around 5.5%. The population in Reading is projected to grow by around 6% over the next 8 years. Branches can cope with increased customer numbers and visits per hour, as demonstrated by this visits/hour figure going up in 2017. The service would review these changes.
Concern over access for partners based in the building when Central Library is closed (such as BFHS)	Out of hours access can be worked through by agreement with partners - as long as some protocols are followed the library can be used when it is not open. Some library staffing functions will remain on closed days.
It is unclear how much individual	A breakdown has been provided to the respondent.

libraries cost to run.	
Concerns on whether travelling times have been assessed	Travelling times to libraries were assessed in 2016 using Mapumental. This exercise has been repeated and there is no change. There is a cost to travel if the alternative to a branch library being open is to use Central library.
Figures used for demographics in library service prioritisation matrix are outdated	The data is the most recent available and the matrix has been recast to pick up on demographic and library usage changes (with usage data based on a full year 17/18). This did not lead to a change in the matrix.
Concern over capacity of ICT at Central to cope with more demand	There may be an occasional wait for computers at peak times. We have an option to move some underused computers from library branches to Central library to alleviate this. It is considered that there is network capacity at Central Library to facilitate this. Usage will be monitored. To further note that Wifi use is increasing and fixed computer use is falling.
Reading's computing costs in CIPFA figures for the library service are very high in comparison to other authorities	Considerable work has been done to reduce costs and we would anticipate that CIPFA actuals for 2017/18 will show Reading below average. Costs of the library computer system that issues books has reduced by 60% in the last year. Reading's public IT is provided by an external provider, which means more cost shows in that cost centre for Reading whereas in other authorities this would often show elsewhere.
Support costs for service are high	These are Council overheads. We show as around average in our comparator group for support costs, and below average overall
Use open access self service technology to open longer	This is a relatively new technology and is becoming more common, but requires significant initial capital investment to convert and install, as well as an ongoing management and monitoring cost. This is something that the service has looked at however it is felt that whilst ostensibly longer hours could be offered, the costs would need an increase to the library budget. Building suitability would also be an issue.
Explore grant funding	Grant funding is for specific purposes rather than the delivery of core services. The library service has successfully received around £50,000 in grant funding in the last year, and is also one of 6 partners in a national project that has funding of £210,000.
Look at delivery model, could	As part of looking at alternative delivery models, the Council is exploring options regarding a

someone else run the library service?	cultural trust. Libraries could be included in this. There are currently no private companies running libraries in the UK, however trust and mutual models are becoming more common. These models would not generate the savings required in the timescale needed however.
Lone working risk assessments required	The first library to run in this way is Whitley in the new South Reading hub, the risk assessment is being used and refined and has been reviewed with trade union. Review will take place at each site as this is introduced.
Public consultation should have included single staffing	This is not considered to have a substantial disbenefit to the public. This will be picked up as part of staff consultation, and was also part of a previous consultation.
Need to consider increasing levels of income	Income received in 2017/18 increased despite opening hours changes, and was already higher than comparator group.
The service needs to be able to demonstrate a reasonable level of access across different libraries and different days	Across network, access still provided to include mornings, afternoons, after school, evenings and Saturdays, albeit with some reductions. The exception is Palmer Park, which does not have an evening or weekend. Mitigations are detailed in the committee report dated 16 July 2018 to give context.
Use in year savings/underspends from 17/18 on budget for 18/19.	An underspend cannot be carried over to fund a service for the following year, and corporately underspends help to offset any overspends/pressures elsewhere.
Has information been provided to Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport(DCMS) on what we are doing in Reading?	DCMS have been made aware of the proposals, consultation, process and publicity, and will receive a further update regarding the Policy Committee report of 16 July 2018.
Assessment of reduction in income from deleting the adult activities post	It is recognised that this post is involved in running and supporting many events and activities, there will be an impact as fewer events will be run, however, from a pure income perspective, this will be limited, as income per event is low.

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The service should be aligned with the national core priorities/Universal Offers which are coordinated by Society of Chief Librarians (SCL)	Nationally there are a range of ambitions for libraries but no requirement to deliver against all of these to the maximum extent. The service and indeed local branches will tailor their offer to meet local needs and reflect the granularity of need across the town always in compliance with the law.
There has been a lack of staff engagement in developing proposals	Updates have been regularly sent to staff and often highlight that ideas are welcome. Service Manager has been approached by staff at all levels about a range of issues. A staff consultation is yet to run and would be a further forum to raise alternatives.

Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Appendix 3 : Equality Impact Assessment

Provide basic details

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed
Recommendations for the future of the library service
Directorate: Directorate of Environment and Neighbourhood Services
Service: Housing and Neighbourhood Services: LIBRARY SERVICE
Name and job title of person doing the assessment
Name: Simon Smith
Job Title: Library Services Manager
Assessment date: May 2018

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service/what changes are you proposing?
Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 imposes a duty upon the Council to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons who wish to use it. The current library service offer is over and above this legal requirement.
Against the background of government cuts to grant funding necessitating identification for further savings in the Council's budget and the changing needs and aspirations of library users and the wider community in Reading, in February 2018 Policy Committee agreed to consult with the public on proposed changes to Reading libraries.
Public consultation took place from 21 February 2018 to 21 March 2018.
The consultation exercise provided a further means by which the Council could gather information about the potential impact of the proposed changes to the library service on those with protected characteristics.
The equalities impacts of the final proposals recommended by Officers and set out below have been arrived at after careful consideration of all consultation responses before and at the time the decision has been made and the proposals finalised.

The final recommendations for the future of library services are as follows,

A.   Reducing opening hours at Reading Central from 46 to 37 per week
B.   Reducing opening hours at Caversham from 35 to 27 per week

C.   Co-location of external agencies at Battle, library becoming single staffed
D.   Reducing opening hours at Battle from 27 to 22 per week
E.   Reducing opening hours at Whitley from 21 to 18 per week
F.   Co-location of external agencies at Tilehurst, library becoming single staffed
G.   Reducing opening hours at Tilehurst from 27 to 22 per week
H.   Reducing opening hours at Palmer Park from 21 to 16 per week
I.   Removing 0.5FTE admin hours
J.   Removing 1.0FTE Digital & Volunteer lead post
K.   Reducing library stock fund
L.   Internal changes

The public was consulted in relation to proposals A, B, D, E, G and H, identified in bold above. All of these proposals are subject to an EIA.

The final recommended changes have been developed on the basis of:

- The key messages deriving from consultation feedback received during both phases of the two part review of library services in 2015/16, which led to the development of a new service model and priority matrix;
- Consultation responses and feedback to the proposed changes to Reading libraries in 2018 consultation paper titled "Your Library. Your Say";
- The outcome of an assessment of need for library services; and
- Further scoping work undertaken by Officers to consider viable options for the delivery of savings consistent with the duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service for all individuals who live, work or study within the borough under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.
-The principals of ensuring that library services in Reading are affordable and sustainable, as well as being accessible to all, whilst targeting resources in areas of greatest use and need.

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?
The final recommendations outlined above will benefit those living, working and studying in Reading as the library service offer will continue to meet the minimum legal requirement for the service to be deemed 'comprehensive and efficient' and will strike an appropriate balance between delivering the savings and ensuring appropriate provision across communities. The recommended library service offer makes good use of community buildings; reflects usage and local needs; and responds to what our communities have told us so far by:

•   maintaining a reasonable level of access for people with different lifestyles and availability notwithstanding the reduction in opening hours ;
•   libraries and other services co-locating to make the best use of space and increasing access to spaces for community groups

- maintaining access to library services for those that are unable to visit Reading Libraries themselves by continuing to provide the Elderly and Housebound Service;
- Reducing staffing levels where appropriate and subject to consultation with staff, supported by self-service kiosks and shared space/co-location with other services – enabling branches to remain open at reduced cost

What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom?
The review of the library service has been designed with the aim of delivering a comprehensive and efficient library service in the context of reduced funding. The final recommended proposals outlined above support the delivery of a budget saving of c£217,000 whilst maintaining an accessible service tailored to local need.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?
The main stakeholders in the Library Service include:

- Library service users generally, and specifically:
  * Central and branch library users
  * Elderly and Housebound Service users
  * Mobile Library users
  * Toy Library users (including childcare settings and childminders)

- Staff

- Volunteers

- Partner organisations located in, and delivering activities from, library buildings and their service users/members

- Schools (including those which run class visits to their local library)

Feedback received through the recent library service consultations has shown that library services in Reading are highly valued for a number of reasons, including:

- Local provision of free access to a wide range of books (adult fiction, non-fiction, large print books, children's books, e-books and audio books).

- Library services are identified as vital local services that support the educational development of people of all ages - including the development of literacy skills, language skills and IT skills, through activities such as reading and rhymetimes, language classes and IT support or activity sessions run by external providers within library premises, and through the provision of reference materials and quiet study space.

- Library services are seen as playing a key role in fostering social interaction, especially for parents and older people, as open and welcoming services at the centre of their communities. Hosting a range of activities and events (especially targeting older people, young children and their guardians, such as Coffee Mornings and Rhymetimes), and public information about the local area/what's going on, have also been identified as fundamental to the social dimension of libraries. The Mobile Library/Elderly and Housebound service has also been

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identified as an extremely important source of social contact for those unable to visit a library building.

- Library services are seen as key to tackling digital exclusion, especially for older people and those on low incomes who may require further assistance and support in order to access the digital world or who may not be able to afford broadband or a computer of their own.

- Libraries have been identified as accessible and safe public places for vulnerable groups, including children, older people and people with disabilities (both physical and mental).

During the consultation, responses to the question of how any negative impacts of proposals might be reduced indicated that various respondents specifically want:

- Changes not to be made (including reduced hours, reduced staffing and changes in location)

- Reasonable access to libraries (specifically access after 3pm for school age children, at 9am for parents of young children visiting libraries straight from taking older children to school, and on evenings and weekends for working adults), as well as feedback covering particular times when opening/closing would/would not be desirable, all of which has been reviewed.

- Bookdrops at more libraries where possible to allow return of items if library is closed.

- The service to make greater use of volunteers

- Changes to be clearly publicised

- Changes to stock/balance of items held in libraries

- More hiring out of library space to generate income, with increased income generation and efficiencies to be pursued at the expense of making service cuts

Assess whether an EIA is Relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc.)
Yes

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, and feedback.
Yes
A number of respondents to the 2018 consultation raised concerns regarding the impact of changes to the library service on children, parents, those who are working and studying, as well as young, older and disabled people. Concerns were also raised regarding potential detrimental impacts upon low income families and for the cohesion of communities consisting of people from different cultural backgrounds and ethnicities.

If the answer is **Yes** to any of the above you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

Signed (completing Officer):	Simon Smith	Date: May 2018
Signed (Lead Officer):	Sarah Gee	Date: May 2018

Collect and Assess your Data

Using information from Census, residents survey data, service monitoring data, satisfaction or complaints, feedback, consultation responses, research, your knowledge and the knowledge of people in your team, staff groups etc. describe how the proposal could impact on each group. Include both positive and negative impacts.

Proposals	Describe how this recommendation could impact on Racial groups	Evidence	Mitigation measures
Reductions in opening hours (Battle, Caversham, Central, Palmer Park, Tilehurst, Whitley)	Note: • The number of BME residents in each catchment has been included as a demographic indicator in determining needs/priorities for libraries in the Needs Assessment that was developed during the first phase of the Library Service review. This has therefore informed the development of recommendations. • In 2011, 25.3% of Reading residents were of Black or Minority Ethnicities. 8.8% of households in Reading had no occupants where English was the main language, and 14.5% of residents aged 3 and over spoke a main language other than English. • During the public consultation, there was a higher proportion of 'White British / Other White' respondents than reflected in the resident population, and a notable under representation of Asian/Asian British and Black/African/Caribbean/Black British respondents. • When broken down by proposal, the number of responses received from respondents of different racial groups has been determined as too low to identify any statistically significant impacts on any specific racial groups. • When asked 'Do you think this proposal will impact on you and your family?' there was no significant divergence between the responses of 'White British/Other White' respondents and Black and Minority Ethnicity respondents.		

Proposals	Describe how this recommendation could impact on Racial groups	Evidence	Mitigation measures
a) Caversham Library	A reduction in staffing and opening hours may have some impact for all users, but may have a disproportionate impact on Black and Minority Ethnic groups. • Restricted opening hours may impact access to books in community languages. • Restricted opening hours may exacerbate existing barriers to engagement with libraries. The possible disproportionate impact is greatest where catchments have a greater than average number of residents from Black or Minority Ethnicities, these being all sites except Tilehurst and Caversham.	In 2011, 11.51% of residents (3651) in the Caversham Library catchment area are of Black or Minority Ethnicities (less than half the Borough average).	Opening times at libraries following changes in 2017 have been scheduled to ensure access for a range of different users, including school children and those that are working, with access on at least one evening and on Saturdays at all libraries. If the 2018 proposals are implemented, all but one branch (Palmer Park) will continue to afford Saturday and evening access. For Palmer Park, the opening times would be driven by the hours when Reading College are able to support staffing costs, so other options are not available to consult on. The users of this library would be most affected. Mitigations can be found at paragraphs 6.27-6.31of the main report Central Library is within a maximum of 20 minutes journey time on public transport for many Reading households,
b) Palmer Park Library	As above	The Palmer Park Library catchment area is the most ethnically diverse of all Reading library catchment areas. In 2011, 37.87% of residents (3428) in the Palmer Park Library catchment area	

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Proposals	Describe how this recommendation could impact on Racial groups	Evidence	Mitigation measures
		are of Black or Minority Ethnicities. This is well above the Borough average. Rhymetime activities are particularly well attended by families with English as an additional language.	including all in the Palmer Park catchment, 30 minutes for the vast majority, and 40 minutes for all remaining households. The bus fare to have a return journey into Reading is £4 per adult, or if driving a potential similar cost if parking for a couple of hours.
c) Central Library	As above	In 2011, 34.86% of residents in the catchment area of Central Library were BME. The catchment area of Central Library is the second most ethnically diverse of the 7 library catchment areas identified and includes the greatest number of BME residents (16,205). As the hub of the network, Central Library also serves the Borough as a whole, in addition to the immediate catchment area. Rhymetime activities are particularly well attended by families with English as an additional language	Citizenship study guides and practice tests, as well as language courses can now be accessed online, 24/7 and free of charge. E-books and e-magazines can be borrowed 24/7, free of charge, for 21 days from Reading's 'e-Library' – this offers a growing range of fiction, non-fiction and children's books available to read online, on a smart-phone or tablet and some e-readers. A ranged of printed material, including books in community languages would

Proposals	Describe how this recommendation could impact on Racial groups	Evidence	Mitigation measures
d) Tilehurst Library	As above	In 2011, 12.5% of residents (2300) in the Tilehurst Library catchment area are of Black or Minority Ethnicities (less than half the Borough average).	continue to be purchased. Books can be reserved online from the libraries catalogue. Books can also be ordered over the telephone or in branch. There is currently a 50p charge for requests for stock out of catchment (from another branch). Books can be renewed online and over the telephone, free of charge, as well as in branch.
e) Battle Library	As above	In 2011, 31.21% of residents (5570) in the Battle Library catchment area are of Black or Minority Ethnicities (more than the Borough average).	
f) Whitley Library	As above	In 2011, 27.19% of residents (6427) in the Whitley Library catchment area are of Black or Minority Ethnicities (more than the Borough average).	

Proposals	Describe how this proposal could impact on Gender/Transgender (inc. pregnancy and maternity, marriage)	Evidence	Mitigation measures
Reductions in opening hours (Battle, Caversham, Central, Palmer Park, Tilehurst, Whitley)	Note: • The number of lone parents in each catchment has been included as a demographic indicator in determining needs/priorities for libraries in the Needs Assessment that was developed during the first phase of the Library Service review. This has therefore informed the development of recommendations. • During the 2018 consultation, there was a higher proportion of female respondents than reflected in the resident population – 69% of those who provided an answer indicated female. • More women than men visit the libraries with other people who may be dependent on them, such as children		
a) Caversham Library	A reduction in opening hours may have some impact for all users, but may disproportionately affect women. While there is no significant disparity in gender populations in Reading, women appear to make up a greater proportion of library users and any disproportionate impact may be exacerbated by caring responsibilities. • Women are more likely to be carers of either children or adults, and tend to be responsible for accompanying children or the person that they care for to the library.	In 2011, 679 lone parents with dependent children lived within the Caversham Library catchment area. 69% of respondents to the consultation reporting that they primarily use Caversham Library were female.	As above
b) Palmer Park Library		In 2011, 176 lone parents with dependent children lived within the Palmer Park Library catchment area. 63% of respondents to the consultation reporting that they primarily use Palmer Park Library were female.	

Proposals	Describe how this proposal could impact on Gender/Transgender (inc. pregnancy and maternity, marriage)	Evidence	Mitigation measures
c) Central Library	Restricted access to libraries due to reduced opening hours could therefore conflict with other caring responsibilities and tasks. The impact of this may be further exacerbated for lone parents who are more likely to be female.	In 2011, 1,181 lone parents with dependent children lived within the catchment area of Central Library. 51% of respondents to the consultation reporting that they primarily use Central Library were female.	
d) Tilehurst library		In 2011, 565 lone parents with dependent children lived within the Tilehurst Library catchment area. 62% of respondents to the consultation reporting that they primarily use Tilehurst Library were female, whilst the remaining 33% were male.	
e) Battle library		In 2011, 793 lone parents with dependent children lived within the Battle Library catchment area. 67% of respondents to the consultation reporting that they primarily use Battle Library were female..	
f) Whitley library		In 2011, 793 lone parents with dependent children lived within the	

Proposals	Describe how this proposal could impact on Gender/Transgender (inc. pregnancy and maternity, marriage)	Evidence	Mitigation measures
		Whitley Library catchment area. 70% of respondents to the consultation reporting that they primarily use Whitley Library were female, whilst the remaining 23% were male.	

Proposals	Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability	Evidence	Mitigation measures
Reductions in opening hours (Battle, Caversham, Central, Palmer Park, Tilehurst, Whitley)	Note: • The number of residents in each catchment reporting in the 2011 Census that their daily activities are limited by a long-term illness or disability has been included as a demographic indicator in determining needs/priorities for libraries in the Needs Assessment that was developed during the first phase of the Library Service review. This has therefore informed the development of recommendations. • During the 2018 consultation, there was a higher proportion of respondents reporting a disability (17.5%) than reflected in the resident population (12.9%) • 2.7% of respondents to the 2018 consultation reported that they visit libraries with disabled persons, thereby indicating that there may be additional, indirect, use of library services by a wider group of disabled persons.		

Proposals	Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability	Evidence	Mitigation measures
a) Caversham Library	A reduction in staffing and opening hours may have some impact for all users. Individuals with caring responsibilities for disabled children or adults may also be disproportionately affected, as reduced opening hours could conflict with other caring responsibilities and tasks.	The table below shows the proportion of respondents to the consultation that reported using Caversham Library as the main library, as well as having a disability, against Census data for the catchment area. | 2018 Consultation	9.4%
2011 Census	13.2%	 As shown in the table above, around the catchment average of disabled people therefore appear to use the library.	As above In addition to note that the mobile and home library service visits individuals round the borough and provides a very small number of public stops at points the greatest distance from library buildings, providing books in a range of formats (large print/audio) and able to provide a request service to get any other book from the other libraries. The stock for this service is adult based, with a greater proportion of audio and large print than other libraries.
b) Palmer Park Library		The table below shows the proportion of respondents to the consultation that reported using Palmer Park Library as the main library, as well as having a disability, against Census data for the catchment area. | 2018 Consultation	12.9%
2011 Census	9.2%	 As shown in the table above, more than the catchment average of disabled people therefore appear to use the library.	
c) Central Library		The table below shows the proportion of respondents to the consultation that reported using Central Library as the main library, as well as having a disability,	

Proposals	Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability	Evidence	Mitigation measures
		against Census data for the catchment area. | 2018 Consultation	11.7%
2011 Census	12.6%	 As shown in the table above, marginally above the catchment average of disabled people therefore appear to use the library.	
d) Tilehurst library		The table below shows the proportion of respondents to the consultation that reported using Tilehurst Library as the main library, as well as having a disability, against Census data for the catchment area. | 2018 Consultation	7.5%
2011 Census	15.5%	 As shown in the table above, more than the catchment average of disabled people appear to use the library.	
e) Battle Library		The table below shows the proportion of respondents to the consultation that reported using Battle Library as the main library, as well as having a disability, against Census data for the catchment area.	

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Proposals	Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability	Evidence	Mitigation measures
f) Whitley Library			
			2018 Consultation	9.0%
		2011 Census	10.5%
		As shown in the table above, more than the catchment average of disabled people appear to use the library.	
		The table below shows the proportion of respondents to the consultation that reported using Whitley Library as the main library, as well as having a disability, against Census data for the catchment area.	
		2018 Consultation	5.0%
		2011 Census	15.2%

Proposals	Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)	Evidence	Mitigation measures
Reductions in opening hours (Battle, Caversham, Central, Palmer Park, Tilehurst, Whitley)	No differential impact is predicted on the grounds of sexual orientation.		The library service currently stocks, and will continue to stock, materials available to different groups. This includes literature which may hold greater appeal for LGBTQ groups. The service intends to maintain the diversity in available titles despite a reduced stock budget – reductions would be spread over stock areas.

Proposals	Describe how this proposal could impact on Age	Evidence	Mitigation measures
Reductions in opening hours (Battle, Caversham, Central, Palmer Park, Tilehurst, Whitley)	Note: • The number of residents in each catchment aged 0-17 and 65+, as recorded in the 2011 Census, has been included as a demographic indicator in determining needs/priorities for libraries in the Needs Assessment that was developed during the first phase of the Library Service review. This has therefore informed the development of recommendations. • During the 2015 consultation, there was a higher proportion of respondents aged 65+ and fewer respondents aged 0-24 than represented in the resident population. • A review of Active Borrowers dates of birth at the point of 1/4/2018, showed that Active Borrowers were more representative of the Reading population as a whole (with a greater proportion of young people amongst Active Borrowers). However, Adults aged 25-64 and 65+ continue to be over represented amongst users.		

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Proposals	Describe how this proposal could impact on Age	Evidence	Mitigation measures
	• 41% of respondents to the reported that they visit libraries with children and young people aged 0-18 and 9% of respondents reported visiting with or on behalf of older persons, thereby indicating that there is additional, indirect, use of library services by a wider sample of these age groups.		
a) Caversham Library	A reduction in opening hours may have some impact for all users, and may disproportionately affect families with children, and adults of working age. • A reduction in opening hours may see a reduction in the take-up of library services by school age children whose ability to access libraries is limited by attendance at school and college to afternoons and weekends in term time. • A reduction in opening hours may also see a reduction in the take-up of library services by working age adults whose ability to access libraries is limited by work patterns.	The highest number of 65+ year olds of any library catchment area in the borough live within the catchment area for Caversham Library (5,060). 65+ year olds make up 16% of residents in the catchment, while 23% of residents are aged 0-17 years. From the age profile of active borrowers where 13% of borrowers are aged 0-15 and 33% are 65+. This implies that young people are under-represented amongst borrowers, and older people are over-represented.	As above
b) Palmer Park Library		65+ year olds make up 7% of residents in the catchment, while 20% of residents are aged 0-17 years. From a review of the age profile of active borrowers, where 28% of borrowers are aged 0-15 and 15% are 65+, this implies that young people are over-represented and older people are under-represented.	
c) Central Library		Central Library's catchment area includes	

Proposals	Describe how this proposal could impact on Age	Evidence	Mitigation measures
		the highest number of 0-17 year olds (7,702). 0-17 year olds make up 17% of residents in the catchment, while only 7% are aged 65+. When considering active borrowers, young people are underrepresented (19% are aged 0-24) and older people are overrepresented (15% are aged 65+).	
d) Tilehurst library		65+ year olds make up 16% of residents in the catchment, while 23% of residents are aged 0-17 years. From a review of the age profile of active borrowers, where 11% of borrowers are aged 0-15 and 38% are 65+, this implies that older people are over-represented while young people are under-represented.	
e) Battle library		The joint highest proportion of 0-17 year olds of any library catchment area in the borough live within the catchment area for Battle Library. 65+ year olds make up 9% of residents in the catchment, while 25% of residents are aged 0-17 years. From a review of the age profile of active borrowers, where 19% of borrowers are aged 0-15 and 16% are 65+, this implies that the catchment and	

Proposals	Describe how this proposal could impact on Age	Evidence	Mitigation measures
		library usage are fairly balanced.	
f) Whitley library		The joint highest proportion of 0-17 year olds of any library catchment area in the borough live within the catchment area for Whitley Library. 65+ year olds make up 10% of residents in the catchment, while 25% of residents are aged 0-17 years. From a review of the age profile of active borrowers, where 61% of borrowers are aged 0-15 and 9% are 65+, this implies that young people are over-represented amongst borrowers, and older people are under-represented	

Proposals	Describe how this proposal could impact Religious Belief	Evidence	Mitigation measures
Reductions in opening hours (Battle, Caversham, Central, Palmer Park, Tilehurst, Whitley)			The library service currently stocks, and will continue to stock, materials available to different groups. This includes literature which may hold greater appeal for users of various religious beliefs.

	There are no specific impacts anticipated for this category.		

Make a Decision

If the impact is negative then you must consider whether you can legally justify it. If not you must set out how you will reduce or eliminate the impact. If you are not sure what the impact will be you MUST assume that there could be a negative impact. You may have to do further consultation or test out your proposal and monitor the impact before full implementation.

Negative impact identified or uncertain

As identified from the consultation exercise and outlined above, the proposed changes to the library service at the 6 library sites may result in some negative impacts upon certain protected groups.

The model used at Palmer Park library means that offering weekend or evening opening is not possible., If year round opening is to be provided, this does mean that there is an impact on users and reduced availability outside of school and weekday working hours.

Mitigations can be found at paragraphs 6.27-6.31of the main report.

All other sites, whilst having fewer hours overall, maintain levels of opening on different days, including an evening, some after school and some Saturday hours.

Mitigation measures, as listed above, have also been designed in order to avoid or reduce any differential impacts.

Signed (completing Officer)	Simon Smith	Date	May 2018
Signed (Lead Officer)	Sarah Gee	Date	May 2018