

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

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| TO: | POLICY COMMITTEE | | |
| DATE: | 15 FEBRUARY 2016 | AGENDA ITEM: | 9 |
| TITLE: | LIBRARY SERVICE REVIEW | | |
| LEAD COUNCILLOR: | COUNCILLOR GITTINGS | PORTFOLIO: | CULTURE, SPORT & CONSUMER SERVICES |
| SERVICE: | HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS | WARDS: | BOROUGHWIDE |
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Following the conclusion of an initial six week period of public consultation on the Library Service review which ran until 23rd November, this report sets out the feedback received and the outcomes of an assessment of need across the borough.
- 1.2 The report subsequently outlines an initial strategic vision, proposals for the future of the Library Service upon which consultation could take place and a recommended timetable of activity for consultation with the public.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 As a result of a reduction in Government funding, Reading Borough Council estimates it now needs to save £51 million over the next three years. 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 to bridge this funding gap, the Council has launched a review of the whole Library Service in Reading on the basis of objective criteria and the input of those living, working and studying in the Borough.
- 2.3 Phase one of the review has now been completed. This included a six week period of public consultation and an analysis of demographic and library use data in order to build an understanding of the needs and aspirations of the diverse communities living, working and studying in the Borough in relation to library services.
- 2.4 A proposed future service offer is presented in this report. The option recommended includes:
 - A. Retaining Central Library as the hub of the network with reduced staffing and slightly reduced opening hours (46.5 hours per week, from 52.5).
 - B. Retaining Caversham Library with reduced staffing and opening hours (35 hours per week, from 50.5). This is higher than other branches reflecting high levels of use and activity and the size of the library catchment area.

- C. Retaining Battle and Tilehurst libraries with reduced opening hours (28 hours per week, from 42 at Tilehurst and 39.5 at Battle Library) reflecting levels of use and activity, and:
- Extending the current building and developing Battle Library as a community hub, enabling access for community groups to part of the building outside opening hours.
 - Exploring options to increase community use of Tilehurst Library.
- D. Providing smaller neighbourhood libraries in Southcote and South Reading, re-locating them within community hubs to increase usage and reduce costs. Reduce opening hours (a minimum of 20 hours per week, from 33.5 at Southcote and 34.5 at Whitley Library).
- E. Providing a smaller neighbourhood library in East Reading and explore options for co-location or re-location of Palmer Park Library to increase usage and reduce costs. Reduce opening hours (a minimum of 20 hours per week, from 41.5).
- F. Exploring opportunities for an individual organisation or consortia to deliver a more accessible Toy Library Service to improve reach and take-up across the whole Borough.
- G. That all service points should benefit from new self-serve technology, offering an efficient service for service users and making the best use of staff and resources.
- H. That options are explored to enable customers to access libraries when they are unstaffed through the use of 'open access' technology.
- 2.5 The report sets out the principles and rationale for the proposals at this stage. Considerable further work would be required with staff and key stakeholders to develop detailed implementation plans for each proposal.
- 2.6 It is considered that the option proposed exceeds the legal requirement for the service to be 'comprehensive and efficient' and strikes an appropriate balance between delivering savings and ensuring appropriate provision across communities. The proposals, taken together, make effective use of community buildings; reflect usage and local needs; and respond to what our communities have told us so far by:
- Reducing opening hours but maintaining a reasonable level of access for people with different lifestyles and availability
 - Libraries and other services co-locating to make better use of buildings and increasing access to spaces for community groups
 - Making the best use of resources by using new technology and introducing self-service across all service points
 - Retaining the recently upgraded public access IT at a local level with new provision of Wi-Fi for 2016/17
 - Exploring the use of volunteers and opportunities for creative partnerships in the future.
- 2.7 This report includes a number of detailed Appendices that have informed the development of the proposed option and that expand upon proposals for the future of the Library Service. As with the first phase of the review, it is proposed that this information is shared with the public to inform the second round of consultation. This information is attached as **Appendices 1-6** and copies will be made available online at www.reading.gov.uk/libraryreview, as well as in key public buildings, including libraries.
- 2.8 Appendix 1 - Phase One Consultation: Results and Feedback
 Appendix 2 - Needs Assessment
 Appendix 3 - Draft Strategic Vision
 Appendix 4 - Equality Impact Assessment
 Appendix 5 - Phase Two Consultation Document

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 3.1 That Committee notes the outcomes of the phase one consultation activity and the Needs Assessment.
- 3.2 That Committee consults on the strategic vision and proposed service offer, as set out in sections 6 and 7.
- 3.3 That Committee endorses the approach and timetable for a 12 week Phase Two consultation to commence on 22 February 2016, as set out in section 11.
- 3.4 That Committee endorses the Phase Two Consultation Documentation attached at Appendix 5.

4. BACKGROUND

Service Context

- 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 central library; 6 local branch libraries across the Borough; a recent offer of e-books which can be downloaded online; a mobile library and Home Visiting Service for the elderly and housebound; and a toy library based in Southcote. The service offers a comprehensive range of services over and above the legal requirements specified in the 1964 Act.
- 4.2 Within the existing Library Service, emphasis is placed on services to disabled, vulnerable and older residents; meeting the diverse needs of Reading's multi-cultural community; supporting families, the under 5s and on improving literacy and attainment. The Library Service is open to all but with a focus on targeting resources to improve outcomes for different groups or communities and meet the Council's wider strategic priorities.

Budget Context

- 4.3 This report should be considered in the context of the Council's wider financial position, set out in some detail in the report on this agenda titled Building A Better Reading: Corporate Plan And Budget 2016-19.
- 4.4 Over the last five years the Government has cut the Council's income (Revenue Support Grant and equivalent predecessor funding) by £39m and there have been major changes at the Council as a result of this. By the end of this financial year, the Council will have saved almost £65m from its budget since 2011.
- 4.5 As a result of further reductions in the Government funding which Reading receives, the Council estimates that it will need to secure savings of a further £39m over the next three years. This is in addition to delivering the £12m of savings which have already been agreed by Councillors for the same period. In total, this amounts to savings of £51m over the next three years - a reduction of 31% in spending.
- 4.6 Reductions in funding received have subsequently undermined the ability of Reading Borough Council to continue to deliver library services in the way it has done in the past.

- 4.7 As part of the programme to find substantive additional savings across the Council over the next three years, Policy Committee (8 October 2015) agreed to a comprehensive review of the whole Library Service. £600,000 was identified as an aspirational saving for the Library Service review, in advance of public consultation and the completion of a comprehensive assessment of local needs.
- 4.8 As outlined later in this report, public consultation and a comprehensive needs assessment have now been completed and have informed the development of proposals for the future of the Library Service which would deliver savings of £284,000, which is £316,000 less than the target agreed (subject to consultation) by October 2015 Policy Committee.
- 4.9 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 needs to take some share of the reductions required. The Council has considered other options to avoid the need to make these savings as detailed in the wider budget report. Council Tax (including the Adult Social Care precept) cannot be increased further without a referendum. It is also imprudent to utilise reserves to cover an ongoing revenue budget commitment, although they can be used to fund a one-off budget gap. Finally, the Council is also actively pursuing options to increase income and become more entrepreneurial. Notwithstanding this, the Council would welcome feedback as part of the Phase 2 consultation on the library review on any alternative proposals for securing the required savings.
- 4.10 This challenging budgetary position is not unique to Reading Borough Council and in an effort to deliver budget savings, local authorities have been required to reconsider the services they provide, and the way these services are delivered. Library services have not been excluded from this process, and changes to the ways in which library services are run have been pursued by a number of authorities include:
- Providing services digitally
 - Making better use of self-service technologies
 - Co-locating libraries with other local services (creating community hubs in some cases)
 - Using library services to deliver other service outcomes and priorities
 - Co-delivering services with community groups and individual volunteers
 - Reducing opening hours
 - Closing branch libraries
- 4.11 At Reading Borough Council:
- Library Services have delivered £800,000 of savings since 2010, by making the library network as efficient as possible without any significant impact on the public - opening hours have been maintained at 2009 levels or have increased and no sites have been closed.
 - Staffing levels have been reduced by 37% since 2010, from 58.5 to 36.2 FTEs.
 - A 'community and learning hub' is now delivered from the Central Library, with the co-location of the Elevate Hub from the third floor, which is a place for 16-24 year olds in Reading to get help, advice and support on employment, work experience, volunteering and mentoring. This has reduced the cost of the Library Service as a result of making better use of the space available.
 - Tilehurst Library currently share their premises with the local Children's Centre.
 - In February 2015, the Library Service launched a new e-book offer.
 - The Library Service offers an online library catalogue including book jacket images and other information that allows library users to choose and reserve books from any branch for a small fee.
 - Public access IT offering free computer and internet access in every library has recently been upgraded; Wi-Fi will be available in all branches from March 2016.

- Volunteers already make-up 3.8% of hours worked within the Library Service (in the context of an average of 3.8% of hours worked nationally).
- 4.12 Reading Borough Council has therefore made considerable progress towards modernising and delivering library services efficiently.

Library Service Review Context

4.13 As noted above, in October 2015 Policy Committee agreed a thorough review and reorganisation of the whole Library Service, on the basis of objective criteria and the input of those living, working and studying in the Borough, with the aim of saving some £600,000 by 2017/18.

4.13 In line with best practice, a two-part approach was initiated:

- The first phase of the review has now been completed and included a six week period of public consultation to understand how people use libraries and wish to use them in the future, as well as an analysis of demographic and library use data. This information has been evaluated to inform proposals for the future to ensure that the Council provides a comprehensive, modern, efficient and affordable Library Service, including one reasonably accessible by all its residents.
- The second phase of the review will entail a consultation on proposals, if approved by Committee. Through this phase, possible measures to reduce the adverse impacts of any changes which may ultimately be approved, will also be shared and further developed. Consultees will be encouraged (and given the information to) enable them to suggest any alternative options which would achieve the desired savings and which the Council will then carefully consider along with all consultation responses.

5. LIBRARY REVIEW - PHASE ONE

Summary of Phase One Public Consultation

5.1 The first phase of the Library Service Review included a multi-format consultation with the public which was launched on 13th October 2015 and ran for 6 weeks until 23rd November 2015. Information from all responses was then collated and analysed through December.

5.2 A total of 1,792 responses to the consultation were received, including:

- 1,652 survey questionnaires returned
- 128 mobile library (elderly and housebound service) survey questionnaires
- 3 letters
- 9 emails

5.4 These were also supplemented by:

- 5 targeted focus group meetings with a range of groups representing individuals with characteristics protected under the 2010 Equalities Act, including older people, young people, disabled people and BME groups
- Semi-structured interviews with 63 library users, at libraries across the network
- 93 responses to the Budget Consultation - July 2015
- 3 petitions signed by a total of 2,655 individuals regarding Battle, Southcote and Tilehurst Libraries.

5.5 Where demographic data was gathered for survey respondents, this revealed that:

- The vast majority of responses were received from members of the public who live within the Reading Borough

- Relative to catchment population size, proportionately more responses were received from residents living in the catchment areas of Caversham, Tilehurst and Southcote
- 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 and reporting a disability 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 broadly in line with the borough average for households with dependent children of all ages.

5.6 Respondents were asked about their current library use:

- The vast majority of respondents were library users. The proportions of respondents using each of the Borough's libraries was broadly in line with the distribution of visits to branches (this meant that lower numbers of responses were received from users of Whitley, Palmer Park and Southcote Libraries)
- Over half of respondents reported using more than one of the Borough's libraries and over half reported visiting Central Library
- Library services in Reading are highly valued by users. Reasons given included the role that they play in:
 - Providing local and free access to a wide range of books
 - Supporting educational development - including the development of literacy, language and IT skills
 - Supporting communities and fostering social interaction - especially between young children, their guardians, as well as older people
 - Providing access to IT - tackling digital exclusion (12% of respondents reported that they are reliant on libraries for their access to the internet)
 - Providing a safe space for vulnerable groups

5.7 When considering changes to the ways libraries are provided in the future, the most recurrent suggestions for how the Library Service could deliver savings included:

- Reducing opening hours (9%)
- Charging/asking for donations (of stock or for participating in activities in particular) (9%)
- Sharing space within libraries with partner organisations (5%)
- Making greater use of volunteers (4%)
- Renting space in libraries (4%)

5% of respondents suggested that the Council should not make savings in the Library Service.

5.8 Areas for improvement identified by service users included:

- Increased provision of activities for adults and children and community space (4%)
- IT upgrades including replacement PCs, Wi-Fi in all sites, provision of e-books and self-service facilities¹ (4%)
- Improved selection of books (4%)
- The introduction of café/refreshment facilities within libraries (3%)
- Provision of toilets (1%)

5.9 Services considered by respondents to be no-longer required included:

- DVDs and CDs² (4%)

¹ An e-book offer was introduced in February 2015, all public access computers have been replaced during summer/autumn 2015 and grant funding from the Arts Council England has been secured for Wi-Fi in all branches.

- Newspapers and magazines³ (1%)
- 5.10 The vast majority of respondents reported using their preferred library due to its proximity to their home, work or children's schools and transportation/travel reasons were most frequently cited as a reason why changes to the way library services are provided might result in respondents no longer using the service / using the service less frequently.
- 5.11 Further detail on consultation feedback received is included in the Phase One consultation report attached as **Appendix 1**.

Summary of Needs Assessment

- 5.12 In order to inform the development of proposals for the future, a Library Needs Assessment has been undertaken, alongside public consultation. The Needs Assessment provides data on different aspects of the Library Service and catchment populations, helping us to understand the needs of the communities that served by Reading Libraries, and their usage and performance. The detailed Needs Assessment is attached at **Appendix 2**.
- 5.13 Key points to note regarding library use are:
- 9.35% of Reading residents are active borrowers of the Library Service. 25.29% of all active borrowers live outside of the Borough.
 - Over the past 5 years, there has been some decline in visits and issues across the network. Issues of children's books, on the other hand, have remained broadly the same and numbers of attendees at both adults and children's events have been increasing.
 - Central Library is by far the best used library in the network, with 49% of all visits to Reading Libraries, 37% of issues and 74% of all IT sessions.
 - Central, Caversham and Battle rank as the top three libraries when considering total visits (all uses).
 - Central, Caversham and Tilehurst libraries (in this order) are the most actively used for borrowing and Battle, Central and Tilehurst libraries receive the greatest numbers of attendees at adults and children's events.
 - Whitley, Palmer Park and Southcote libraries consistently make up the least well used libraries by some margin in terms of visits, issues, IT sessions and attendees at activities and events and this is reflected in a higher cost per visit.
 - Tilehurst Library issue the greatest number of large print books, after the Mobile Library (elderly and housebound) service.
- 5.14 Key points to note regarding the demographics of library catchment areas include:
- The vast majority of Reading Borough's households are within 20 minutes travel by public transport to a library and all are within 30 minutes travel.
 - Central, Caversham and Whitley Libraries (in that order) serve the largest catchment areas in terms of both area covered and population served. Southcote and Palmer Park Libraries serve significantly smaller populations, whilst the area covered by the Palmer Park Library catchment area is by far the smallest.
 - Central Library's catchment area includes the highest number of 0-17 year olds, while the catchment areas of Battle Library and Whitley Library have the highest proportions of 0-17s.

² Hire of these audio visual materials are currently chargeable and generate net income of c£23,000. Whilst demand for this stock is falling, issues data and consultation responses show that there is still demand for these services, from a range of users.

³ Whilst there is no recorded data on uptake of these stock types, consultation responses indicate that reading newspapers and magazines (alongside books) is the second most popular activity undertaken within libraries.

- The highest number of 65+ year olds live within the catchment area for Caversham Library, whilst the catchment for Southcote Library has the highest proportion of over 65s and individuals reporting that their day-to-day activities are limited by an illness or disability.
- Proportionally the catchment areas of Palmer Park and Central Libraries are the most ethnically diverse, while Central and Whitley libraries catchment areas contain the greatest number of BME residents.
- The catchment for Whitley Library is the most deprived in the Borough
 - 6 out of 10 of the lower super output areas (LSOAs) in Reading that fall into the 20% most deprived in the country (2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation) are in the Whitley area, and 2 are amongst the 10% most deprived areas.
 - The greatest number of residents with no qualifications, residents living in homes rented from the council or other registered providers and lone parents live in the Whitley area.
- Proportionally, the Southcote catchment area contains the most adults claiming Job Seekers Allowance (July 2015) and with no qualifications.

Ranking of Libraries

5.15 The assessment outlines two rankings for libraries based firstly on library usage and secondly on demographic need and concludes with an overall priority ranking based on both criteria combined. The data and priority ranking are intended to assist in enabling the Council to assess what a comprehensive and efficient Library Service for Reading should be today and to inform the future vision, strategy and Library Service offer.

5.16 The ranking of libraries based on use and need have been established as follows:

| Use ranking | Need ranking |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Central | 1. Whitley |
| 2. Caversham | 2. Central |
| 3. Battle | 3. Battle |
| 4. Tilehurst | 4. Caversham |
| 5. Palmer Park | 5. Tilehurst |
| 6. Southcote | 6. Southcote |
| 7. Whitley | 7. Palmer Park |

5.17 Overall ranking of libraries, based on a weighting of 40% use and 60% demographic need, is as follows:

1. Central
2. Battle
3. Caversham
4. Whitley
5. Tilehurst
6. Southcote
7. Palmer Park

5.18 These rankings have been used as a starting point in objectively assessing the prioritisation of resources. In developing the methodology which produced the rankings, the Council reviewed the approaches taken in a number of other authorities.

5.19 From the above it is apparent that Central Library ranks 1st in the overall prioritisation of libraries (1st for use, and 2nd for need). It is also important to note that Central Library is not a branch library and its use extends beyond the confines of its immediate catchment area, serving the Borough as a whole. Central Library is the hub of the network, based from the largest facility, with the greatest level of stock, computers and study space. Over half of the phase 1 questionnaire respondents reported visiting the Central Library.

- 5.20 Battle, Caversham and Tilehurst Libraries make up the 'middle ground' of both rankings and the overall prioritisation of libraries. This is due to higher levels of library use (especially in Caversham) and the larger catchment size of Caversham, and intermediate size of Battle and Tilehurst catchments. This is also a product of the larger proportion of younger and BME residents in Battle (25% and 31.2%) and older people in Caversham and Tilehurst (16% each) and in spite of the relative affluence of Caversham Library's catchment area.
- 5.21 Whitley Library also falls into the 'middle ground' of the overall ranking. However, unlike Battle, Caversham and Tilehurst libraries, Whitley is placed at the top and bottom extremities of the demographic and use rankings respectively. Whitley is the least well used of all Reading Borough Libraries and at the same time the 3rd largest library catchment area and the most deprived.
- 5.22 Southcote and Palmer Park rank 6th and 7th overall and fall within the bottom 3 for both use and need. Both libraries serve by far the smallest number of residents, and the smallest numbers of vulnerable individuals when considered across the network.
- 5.23 Variations in the methodology produce some differences in ranking, however Palmer Park library is consistently 7th - ranking in the bottom 3 for usage and having the lowest score overall for demographic need. Of the respondents reporting that they use Palmer Park Library, only 15% reported solely using Palmer Park library (although caution is required as there were only 64 respondents). Palmer Park has good transport links to the town centre and an equivalent proportion of catchment residents actively borrow from the Central library to those using Palmer Park Library.

6. LIBRARY REVIEW - PHASE TWO

Strategic Vision for the Library Service

- 6.1 A vision document has been developed which reflects the national agenda and Reading's strategic priorities. This provides an outline strategy - describing key strategic aims and objectives which are the blueprint for developing the Library Service in the future. In the context of diminishing resources these are challenging but the Council is committed to developing partnerships and working with our communities to have the maximum impact with the resources retained. The vision document (attached at **Appendix 3**) underpins the proposed new service offer and would also be subject to consultation.
- 6.2 Proposed key strategic aims are:
- Inspiring a culture of reading and supporting literacy - actively promoting, developing and encouraging reading for all ages and abilities.
 - Improving 'digital literacy', increasing access to the internet and online resources.
 - Supporting lifelong learning, study and skills development.
 - Contributing to the health and wellbeing of the Borough's communities.
 - Providing access to reliable and relevant information and effective signposting, making the most of new technology.
 - Providing opportunities for the Borough's communities to engage in diverse cultural activities and connect to their local heritage.
 - Making best use of resources and remain financially sustainable
- 6.3 Building on the strategic vision, a detailed strategy for the Library Service will be developed taking into consideration learning from the review and the next phase of consultation feedback.

Options for Achieving Savings

6.4 In the 8 October 2015 report to Policy Committee, the Council set out proposed key principles underpinning the future service model, subject to the completion of an assessment of needs and consultation feedback:

- To retain the Central Library as the hub of the network, whatever other changes may be made;
- To review the current Library Service branch network using objective criteria, to determine an appropriate neighbourhood offer;
- To ensure that free public access to IT is maintained in a range of community locations to support an increasingly digital society;
- To co-locate services where possible to encourage people to access a greater range of resources, help and support in welcoming and well-used public buildings;
- To preserve or enhance services which benefit the most vulnerable, those with specific needs, children and young people.

6.5 The Needs Assessment and consultation findings summarised separately above have informed the development of a proposed new service offer. This section summarises the key findings under-pinning the proposal; and details the proposed offer, including those relating to co-locating library services at a neighbourhood level.

Community Views

6.6 The Council's proposed approach reflects responses to the Phase One consultation with an emphasis on co-location to improve service take-up and costs; reducing opening hours; and seeking to enhance delivery through the use of volunteers and working in partnership.

6.7 The most common suggestions for delivering savings from Phase One consultation respondents were to reduce opening hours and to increase charging or seek donations. Reading is already 7th out of 55 Unitary Authorities in terms of income generated per 1,000 population. The total income target for libraries for 2015/16 is £230,100. Furthermore, external funding opportunities are often project based and are not generally available to support core services.

6.8 A position statement in respect of fees and charges is attached at **Appendix 6**. However, in summary, the service has been effective in optimising income and the Council does not consider that opportunities remaining will obviate the need to make significant savings. It is for this reason that a specific proposal to increase fees and charges is not recommended at this time.

6.9 Nevertheless, the Council intends to continue to explore opportunities to generate income, and in particular the consultation has highlighted that people would welcome refreshment facilities in libraries. There are also opportunities in respect of:

- Development of 'friends of the library' networks which can support fund-raising;
- Developing and proactively promoting the book donation scheme;
- Capitalising on opportunities for project funding to add value;
- Exploring commercial opportunities such as coffee shops or parcel collection points in libraries.

6.10 The review presents an ideal opportunity to capitalise on public support for libraries and the future strategy for the Library Service will include options for increasing income as well as community involvement and volunteering. The Council's proposed approach to volunteering is explored further in section 7 below.

7. RECOMMENDED FUTURE SERVICE OFFER

- 7.1 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. The pattern of library services is changing. 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:
- 7.2 *'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.
- 7.3 The Council's strategy for the future must reflect local need. The proposed future service offer deriving from the Needs Assessment and prioritisation matrix, represents a judgement as to what a comprehensive and efficient Library Service should be in Reading today, bearing in mind (among other things) the need to make savings. It is set out in further detail in the report below and is summarised overleaf.

| | PROPOSAL | SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE | SAVING P.A. |
|--------------|--|--|---|
| A | Central Library / core staffing | Retain Central Library as the hub of the network. Restructure the service, reducing service-wide staffing capacity and levels of staff cover in central library. Reduce Central Library opening hours to 46.5 hours per week (from 52.5). | 74,600 16,000 |
| B | Retain library and reduce opening hours | Retain Caversham Library and reduce opening hours to 35 per week (from 50.5) to reflect levels of use and activity. Reduce staffing levels with the introduction of self-service kiosks. | 41,900 |
| C | Retain library and extend community use | Battle - reduce opening hours to 28 per week (from 39.5) - extend current library building, developing as a community hub Tilehurst - reduce opening hours to 28 per week (from 42); reduce staffing levels with the introduction of self-service kiosks - explore options to increase community use of the library | 17,000 42,000 |
| D | Relocate library to improve service take-up and reduce running costs | Provide smaller neighbourhood libraries in the areas of Southcote and South Reading, re-locating into community hubs making more efficient use of space. Southcote - single staffing cover 20 hours per week. Whitley - single staffing cover 20 hours per week. | 36,275 13,000 Premises* 29,100 6,000 Premises* |
| E | Explore alternative delivery options and reduce opening hours | Provide a smaller neighbourhood library in East Reading and explore options for co-location or re-location of Palmer Park Library to increase service take-up and reduce running costs. Reduce opening hours to 20 per week (from 41.5). | To be determined 28,000 |
| F | Toy Library | It is proposed that opportunities are explored for an individual organisation or consortia to deliver a more accessible Toy Library Service to improve reach and take-up. | Nil |
| G & H | Invest in new technology | Investments in new technology to enable service modernisation are proposed - these will generate some savings but will also incur some additional revenue costs. Capital costs excluded here | (20,000) - annual revenue cost |
| TOTAL | | | 283,875 |

** Premises costs do not include reactive maintenance costs averaging £3-4k per annum per neighbourhood branch (excluding Central Library)*

7.4 **Opportunities for additional potential savings are highlighted below but these will require further work.** The changes proposed, including the implementation of new technology, represent a substantive change programme which will need careful phasing.

7.5 As detailed later in this report the proposed service offer would be subject to a 12 week public consultation which will:

- Consult on each proposal and, specifically
- Seek views on programming of reduced opening hours
- Where re-locations and the formations of community hubs are proposed, share and seek views on illustrative plans for building reconfigurations which would offer a wider range of services from one location, should re-locations ultimately be approved;
- In relation to Palmer Park Library, explore with the community and other stakeholders co-location options, should co-location ultimately be approved;
- Explore opportunities for voluntary and community organisations to deliver a more accessible Toy Library Service to improve reach and take-up of the service.

7.6 Risks and Impacts

- Opening times would be reduced across all libraries.
- Reduced opening hours could potentially reduce access, use and impact on income.
- All branches (apart from Central Library) would likely be closed one full day a week as well as Sunday.
- Staffing would be reduced with a risk of compulsory redundancies.

7.7 Opportunities

- Relocating two libraries and increasing community use of others (developing one library site as a community hub) would intensify use of the spaces. This would not only reduce costs, while maintaining a service, but would increase service take-up of both libraries and the services located with them.
- Re-location would increase the number of libraries with access to toilets and refreshment facilities on site, improving the service for customers.
- Access to the Toy Library for families across the town could be improved.

7.8 Mitigations

- Library services would continue to be provided in all seven catchment areas in or close to district centres, providing good access. All of Reading's population would remain within 2 miles of a library and the majority within 1 mile.
- Revised opening times across the service would be scheduled to reflect feedback received through both phases of public consultation as well as data held on patterns of use for each individual branch (which may vary by area). Opening times would be scheduled to ensure access for a range of different users, including school children and those that are working.
- On closure days for branches, customers would have access every day from Monday to Saturday to Central Library.
- E-books could still be borrowed for free 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. Over 40% of questionnaire respondents were unaware of the e-book offer and this could be further promoted.
- Books could still be reserved online from the libraries catalogue, which now provides enhanced content including book covers, synopses and reviews. Books

can also be ordered over the telephone or in branch. There is a 50p charge for requests for stock out of catchment (from another branch).

- The Home Visiting Service to the elderly and housebound would continue including stops to sheltered housing and care homes.

** In the same way that the library has to purchase books, it also has to purchase e-books hence the number of e-books that can be 'borrowed' at any time is limited in the same way as hard-copy books.*

EACH PROPOSAL CONTRIBUTING TO OR ENABLING THIS LEVEL OF SAVING IS SET OUT BELOW:

Proposal A: Central Library/core staffing

- 7.9 **Retain Central Library as the hub of the network with reduced staffing and slightly reduced opening hours.**
- 7.10 Central Library offers a place to study, research and learn with both designated quiet areas and zoned areas where group activities can take place. The library offers a wider range of services than branches, including the Local History Unit. Located in the centre of Reading with excellent transport connectivity to surrounding neighbourhoods, Central Library serves the wider Reading area which is geographically compact. In addition to traditional library services, the hub now also hosts a range of organisations providing a complementary offer of support to improve skills and employment prospects; IT and digital media skills with 'digital volunteers' on hand to help people get online and make the most of new technology; and access to a wider range of information. Central Library also serves the wider network and the small qualified Librarians team is based here.
- 7.11 The proposal is to carry out a restructure of the service, reducing core staffing levels (which provide staff cover at Central Library and support the service as a whole) including professional Librarian capacity. The introduction of self-service should reduce the number of staff required on duty at any one time in the library. Increased use of volunteers is likely to be required to run activities.
- 7.12 It is also proposed to reduce opening times by 6 hours - from 52.5 to 46.5 per week. The Central Library currently opens Mon - Fri from 9 - 5.30 and on two evenings per week to 7 p.m., and 9.30 - 5 on Saturday. A revised pattern of hours would need to be subject to consultation with other organisations based in the Library. The reductions could be achieved through opening slightly later each day and closing slightly earlier some days including Saturdays. Comparator opening hours in central libraries in similar sized authorities are provided below:

| Central Library | Total Weekly Opening Hours |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Portsmouth Central Library | 46 |
| Southampton Central Library | 48 |
| Bournemouth Library | 52 |
| Slough Central Library | 52.5 |
| Blackpool Central Library | 53 |
| Luton Central Library | 59.5 |

Proposal B: Retain library and reduce opening hours

- 7.13 Retain Caversham Library (serving the largest branch catchment population in the Borough); reduce staffing and opening hours from 50.5 to 35 per week. This reflects both the size of the population served but also the relative levels of community use and borrowing.
- 7.14 This is a relatively small library with little scope for extension and therefore limited opportunity to develop as a wider community hub. Continue to use space flexibly to offer a range of activities and strengthen connectivity with the local Adult learning and Children's Centres.

Proposal C: Retain library and extend community use

- 7.15 Retain Battle and Tilehurst Libraries, reducing staffing at Tilehurst Library and reduce opening times to 28 hours per week (from currently 42 at Tilehurst and 39.5 Battle) reflecting levels of use and activity. Consultation will include:

Battle

- 7.16 The library is a Grade 2 listed building refurbished in recent years following a successful lottery bid. Grant conditions do not allow RBC to 'sell, lease, let, sublet or otherwise dispose or change the use of any capital asset' without the prior written consent of the National Lottery and any such consent may be subject to further conditions. The total funding of £1.4m is potentially repayable if use of the building is substantively changed from its current role. The branch already operates as a community library to a considerable extent with a separate multi-function room for hire and a wide range of well-attended activities running from the building including Health clinics. The Children's Centre also runs from the building on a Wednesday when the Library Service is closed, extending use of the building and this would continue.
- 7.17 There is scope to extend the role of the library further, developing the site as a community hub and making best use of this facility in the heart of the community it serves.
- 7.18 Section 106 (Planning obligations) funding already secured could support a further sympathetic extension to the rear of this building. Initial feasibility studies have been undertaken including the development and costing of indicative designs for an extension and remodelling of the space to enable out of hours use of part of the building by the local community and to be equipped to support Adult learning delivery.

- 7.19 Consultation will include a proposal to extend the space to optimise use of this local building as a community hub.

Tilehurst

- 7.20 Tilehurst is a purpose-built larger two storey library with storage capacity, considerable ancillary or 'back office' space, and parking. The Mobile Library (Elderly and Housebound) service is based here (which requires space for the large mobile vehicle and for specialist stock). Children's Centre staff are also based in and run activities from the library - these can be run within or outside the hours when the library would usually open. The library could accommodate a wider range of community activities and the utilisation of the space could be reviewed.
- 7.21 Consultation will include exploring how community use of the library in this area might be increased.

Proposal D: Relocate library to improve service take-up and reduce running costs

7.22 Provide smaller neighbourhood libraries in the catchment areas of Southcote and Whitley Libraries, re-locating them within community hubs.

7.23 These libraries are significantly less well used than other branches and co-location should enhance service take-up and encourage customers to access a wider range of services and support. Both libraries are located in close proximity to other public buildings.

7.24 Services have evolved at a local level, incrementally over time, and so may not be configured in the best way - or make most effective use of scarce resources at a time when funding for local public services is diminishing. In both cases adaptations to other community buildings would enable library provision to be accommodated allowing:

- Designated space for library stock
- Access to shared spaces for activities
- A flexible shared model of staffing to be developed with other service providers to eliminate duplication, improve customer service and deliver a more efficient service. Currently 20 hours per week single staff cover is assumed from the Library Service in financial modelling for each site. A shared staffing model might mean that the Library Service could be accessible for more than 20 hours a week but this is yet to be determined.
- Greater opportunities for joint working, collaboration and sharing of resources
- Access for library users to toilets and café/refreshments on site - an identified priority from the phase 1 consultation
- Better used and more vibrant neighbourhood facilities
- Increased community involvement in the running of the library

The Library Service would open in the new location in both cases before releasing current buildings - so that there would be no gap in provision.

Whitley

7.25 Work has already been jointly undertaken with the Whitley Community Development Association (WCDA) in South Reading to consider options for reconfiguring the South Reading Youth and Community Centre to better meet local need. This work included a review of services delivered from other public buildings and this identified the possibility of relocating the library offer to the centre as one element of a possible wider package of improvements. The centre already accommodates a nursery, Children's Centre and a community café. The library is currently located just off a roundabout near local shops and a short walk from the community centre.

7.26 Architects were commissioned to develop options and this has included assessing the feasibility of relocating the library to the Centre, strengthening its role as a community hub at the heart of the locality.

7.27 Consultation would include a proposal to relocate Whitley Library within the South Reading Youth and Community Centre with illustrative plans for reconfiguring the centre to accommodate the Library Service.

Southcote

7.28 The library is located in Coronation Square and includes storage capacity for the Toy Library, considerable ancillary or 'back office' space and parking, and a small garden to the rear. Located nearby are a Community Centre, a nursery/Children's Centre and a Housing Advice Shop. Children's Centre activities are delivered in the Community Centre and staff also use the small reception/office in the building.

- 7.29 Ideally all services would be co-located from a single base in the area. Given recent investment in the fabric of the building and community 'ownership' of the current Community Centre, this would provide the most logical base. However, the building would need to be reconfigured and expanded to accommodate other uses. The reception area currently doesn't work well and would need remodelling if the Centre were to work as a community hub.
- 7.30 Initial feasibility studies were commissioned to illustrate how the existing Community Centre building could be adapted and expanded to include a new reception area and a library offer to create a more integrated community hub also equipped to continue to support Adult learning delivery.
- 7.31 Consultation would include a proposal to relocate Southcote Library within the Southcote Community Centre. A new model of service delivery is proposed for the Toy Library.

Proposal E: Explore alternative delivery options and reduce opening hours

- 7.32 Provide a smaller Neighbourhood Library Service in East Reading and explore options for co-location or re-location of Palmer Park Library to increase service take-up and reduce running costs.
- 7.33 Palmer Park Library is one of the least well used branches and is responsible for only 5% of borrowers across the network. The library serves the smallest catchment area and as many of its residents use Central Library as those using their local branch. The library is a stand-alone building on the edge of Palmer Park, not located near to local shops but within a short distance from the local sports centre. It has very limited 'back office' and storage space.
- 7.34 As with Southcote and South Reading Libraries, co-location could enhance service take-up and reduce running costs. In this location there is no obvious or preferred solution to achieving this, but a range of possibilities. This could include the provision of a small neighbourhood library facility on an alternative site - which need not be a local authority owned building. Alternately another service or organisation could share space in the current library building to encourage greater use of the space and reduce costs. There are many different examples of co-location of library services nationally including with job centres, leisure centres, schools, voluntary sector partners such as the CAB, health centres and retail provision.
- 7.35 A reduction in opening hours from 41.5 to 20 hours a week is also proposed reflecting use and activity at this branch and in line with the proposals for South Reading and Southcote. For the purposes of estimating savings, double staff cover has been assumed at this stage, however co-location may obviate the need for double cover if a different service model is adopted in the future.
- 7.36 Consultation would include exploring opportunities and ideas for the provision of a Library Service in East Reading in an alternate building which is accessible to the public for further consideration.
- 7.37 Furthermore, consultation would also include exploring ideas and opportunities for a group or organisation to share the current library building to increase use of the space and reduce staffing costs for future consideration.

Proposal F: Toy Library

- 7.38 It is proposed that opportunities are explored for an individual organisation or consortia to deliver a more accessible Toy Library Service to improve reach and take-up.

- 7.39 The Toy Library was set up 14 years ago with funding from an EU grant and is not part of the Council's statutory service offer. Toys can be borrowed for a small charge which enables the service to be self-funding.
- 7.40 Whilst based at Southcote Library, all the toys can be reserved via the online Toy Library catalogue and small items can be collected from any library site. In practice users are largely from the Southcote and wider West Reading area. Larger items must be collected from Southcote library and physical access is limited for those reliant on public transport based in other areas of the Borough. There were 93 Toy Library users across the 3 months September to November 2014 with the majority of these from Central, Southcote and Tilehurst catchment areas.
- 7.41 It is proposed that opportunities are explored for an individual organisation or consortia to deliver a more accessible Toy Library Service to improve reach and take-up - especially in deprived areas as this is an under-used resource. This could be either a mobile model or a dispersed model of provision, independently or in partnership with the Council. No funding would be available but the Council could provide a storage facility for the toys if required at its Darwin Close base.

Proposal G-H: Investment in Technology

Self Service

- 7.42 It is proposed that all service points should benefit from new self-serve technology, in order to offer an efficient service for customers and make the best use of staff and other resources.
- 7.43 Self-service machines would allow customers to borrow, renew and return books and to pay fines and the latest technology can enable wider transactions.
- 7.44 Managing the borrowing and return of books (including payments) through the very limited self-serve terminals, at Central Library only currently, requires each book to be opened and bar codes located/scanned. Payments for overdue books are also manual operations. Theoretically, the existing components of the bar code system can be used on a self-service basis. However, the need to accurately scan the barcode and change the magnetic state of the book makes it difficult for the public to use correctly - and so is not well utilised by customers. This is reflected in the percentage of issues and returns completed as self-service - currently circa 10%. In libraries using a more modern system of self service, RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) chip technology, 95% plus of issues, returns and payments are self-service.
- 7.45 Whilst introducing this technology in Reading would require a significant one-off investment, RFID self-service systems can support new ways of delivering library services in a customer orientated culture, greatly reducing the need for staff to perform low value transactions, freeing up time which can be spent assisting customers in other ways. A provision has been made in the Capital Programme to cover this investment.
- 7.46 Currently all branch libraries require a minimum staffing level in order to provide basic management, ensure staff safety and a satisfactory public service. Library assistants are currently used to staff branch libraries, not qualified librarians. In a community hub model, a modern self-service system enables staff to be used much more flexibly to take on a wider role front-of house - offering advice and signposting; enabling customers to complete other transactions online; providing reception cover and centre management.

- 7.47 The cost of implementing this technology in the central library and across 6 other sites is currently estimated at circa £300,000 including all installation costs and 'tagging' stock. There would additionally be an annual revenue support cost.

Library Management System

- 7.48 It is proposed to develop or re-tender the Library Management System to improve efficiency and customer service.

- 7.49 Survey respondents indicated that they would welcome improved search options and functionality when using the online catalogue. Improving the Library Service's online offer is key to inclusion, future-proofing the service and making the best use of resources. People expect to see a strong online Library Service that seamlessly joins up with the services provided in the physical library space. According to the Office for National Statistics figures:

- The number of households with access to the internet has increased ten-fold, from 9% to 84% (1998-2014)
- Only 3.6% of households cite cost as barrier to web access (2014)
- The percentage of adults who go online daily has doubled from 35% to 76% (2006-14)

- 7.50 A level of savings is anticipated from a system upgrade but in the first couple of years this would be offset by resourcing project support. Longer term an upgrade or new system would lead to savings in purchasing, invoicing and a better customer experience.

Library Access Systems

- 7.51 It is proposed that options are explored to enable customers to access libraries when they are unstaffed.

- 7.52 A small number of libraries nationally have introduced or are piloting pioneering technology packages which allow customers to access a library without any staff on site or outside of staffed opening times using their library card and a PIN number. This is not so much a new product as a solution which can automatically control and monitor building access, self-service kiosks, public access computers, lighting, alarms, public announcements and patron safety. This requires considerable upfront capital investment in door access technology; lighting; security and safety measures including CCTV and audio links. There are also annual costs for security services to monitor the libraries when open in this way. No two sites are the same and each will have different requirements. Currently these enable adults only to access sites when they are unstaffed. This option is relatively new and libraries are learning about what works. It is proposed that the Council further investigates this option.

- 7.53 IT and technology projects are resource intensive and a detailed programme plan will need to be developed to schedule, cost and resource developments. Proposed improvements need to be cost neutral, to enable or to generate savings.

SUMMARY

- 7.54 Officers consider that the future service offer recommended above would exceed the legal requirement for the service to be 'comprehensive and efficient' and would strike an appropriate balance between making savings and ensuring appropriate provision across communities. The proposals, taken together, make effective use of community buildings; reflect usage and local needs; and respond to what our communities have told us so far by:

- Reducing opening hours but maintaining a reasonable level of access for people with different lifestyles and availability
- Libraries and other services co-locating to make the best use of space and increasing access to spaces for community groups
- Exploring the use of volunteers and opportunities for creative partnerships in the future
- Retaining the recently upgraded public access IT at a local level with new provision of Wi-Fi for 2016/17
- Making the best use of resources by using new technology and introducing self-service across all service points.

8. FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Mobile Library/Elderly and Housebound Service

- 8.1 Reading's Mobile (Elderly and Housebound) Library Service is based at Tilehurst Library and comprises one large mobile library vehicle, a car, 1.2 FTE staff and a team of volunteers. Costs have been reduced over the last three years, whilst maintaining visits, through the recruitment of additional volunteers.
- 8.2 The main remit of the Mobile Library is to provide a visiting service to elderly people in sheltered and extra care housing, residential and nursing homes. The Mobile Library also provides 5 community stops in Emmer Green (on every third Friday) which are currently used by 32 active borrowers. April 2014 to May 2015 there were 383 visits to the Mobile Library made on the public route and 1,589 visits by residents of sheltered housing and care homes visited.
- 8.3 Individuals who are housebound in their own homes (248 active users) are visited every three weeks by either a library staff member using the staff car, or by a volunteer using their own transport.
- 8.4 The Mobile Library Service also takes book boxes to four wards in Prospect Park Hospital (the main in-patient facility in Berkshire for people who suffer from a mental illness) on a nine week rotation where the patients can select and return books to either the bookshelf or to the mobile box in the Activities Rooms on their ward. This could be extended to the Royal Berkshire Hospital with the assistance of volunteers.
- 8.5 Book boxes could also be deployed in the future to support adult learners on low incomes, especially those relating to literacy, numeracy, vocational and improving employability courses.

Future

- 8.6 During the first phase of consultation on the Library Service, Mobile (Elderly and Housebound) Library users were asked for their feedback on the service. This showed us the great value placed in the service by its users.
- 8.7 It is intended that the Home Visiting Service for those who are unable to visit a library should continue. Taking books to residents on a one-to-one basis can be more personal and contributes to the wellbeing of customers.
- 8.8 The public library stops in Emmer Green are within 20-30 minutes travel time by public transport from Caversham Library and the population in the Caversham catchment area has the highest levels of access to a car in the borough (85%). It is reasonable to assume that a large majority could access Caversham library within a reasonable travel time. Those unable to access a static library could also benefit from home visits as described above.

- 8.9 The mobile vehicle is now 10 years old and whilst mileage is low it will at some stage need replacing, at considerable cost for a new van. The Council will have to decide if it is the best use of resource to replace the vehicle.
- 8.10 The mobile service could either be phased out when the current vehicle is no longer cost-effective to maintain or a second-hand vehicle could potentially be purchased (as other rural areas phase out these services). This would be subject to a separate consultation with mobile library customers.
- 8.11 It is proposed that the mobile service should be reviewed at a future date as part of the longer-term development of the service. Consideration should be given to extending the loan of book boxes at that time, as detailed above, to support the Council's strategic objectives.

Volunteering

Current Position

- 8.12 All of Reading's libraries are run by the Council at present. Volunteers are used to support a diverse range of activities in Reading Libraries - Rhymetime support; the Elderly and Housebound Service; Local Studies cataloguing and digitisation; and each summer older school children are recruited to support the Summer Reading Challenge. Broadly, Reading is in line with other unitary authorities in terms of volunteer hours contributed, but the figures vary widely according to the policy adopted by the authority for the use of volunteers.
- 8.13 Last year Reading benefitted from 2,509 volunteer hours - 1,084 at Central, 488 at Battle and 426 on the Mobile/Elderly and Housebound Service. The lowest levels of volunteering were in Southcote, Tilehurst and Whitley where input was negligible.
- 8.14 Of the 1,537 people who responded to the phase one consultation survey question on volunteering, 36% expressed a willingness to volunteer, with the vast majority willing to offer 1-5 hours per week and 16% willing to help with ad hoc projects or activities.

Future Vision

- 8.15 Whilst some authorities have moved to a model of single staff cover supplemented by volunteers, generally for smaller and often more rural libraries, this is not recommended in Reading. However, increasing the use of volunteers in those libraries which the Council continues to directly manage will be a feature of our future strategy. Different kinds of involvement will be relevant for different libraries. Increasing the use of volunteers requires adequate resourcing to recruit, train, support and coordinate the use of volunteers. However, increasing the use of volunteers could:
- Continue and broaden the range of activities on offer in libraries;
 - Extend the current digital volunteer scheme in partnership with RVA providing community IT support;
 - Potentially extend opening hours.
- 8.16 The service will develop its volunteering strategy and policy with improved marketing of opportunities, clear roles and with the aim of developing an accreditation scheme.

Community Run Libraries

- 8.17 The January 2013 Arts Council England and Local Government Association report on Community Libraries is a useful guide to the broad range of community library models.

- 8.18 In recent years there has been a growing trend to involve communities in Library Service delivery in more significant ways, including in managing libraries or even taking on ownership and management of library buildings.
- 8.19 To contextualise, research conducted by Locality (on behalf of Arts Council England) in 2012 across England's 151 library authorities reported that community supported or managed libraries tend to be the smaller libraries in many areas and, in total, represented approximately five per cent of all public libraries in England. However, the number and range of community library models is growing.
- 8.20 The vast majority of community libraries (95%) have links with the library authority and indeed many remain part of the statutory Library Service - few are fully independent, or want to operate in isolation. There are advantages to all sides in working together and benefiting from being part of the same networks and systems. The library authority can contribute infrastructure, book stock, professional advice and training to the partnership and often provides at least some ongoing support - for example: advice, training and refreshing the book stock.
- 8.21 Community libraries do not necessarily need to provide exactly the same services that other public libraries in the area provide. There are a range of examples of libraries being managed by or with partner organisations, charitable trusts and community groups. These maintain a Library Service whilst sharing space and offering other services or activities.
- 8.22 **In developing the Library Strategy for the future the Council will explore potential partnerships and gauge interest in community managed library models.**

Stock Fund

- 8.23 **Further reductions in the stock fund are not recommended. Scope to reduce acquisition costs should be explored.**
- 8.24 The stock fund budget covers all purchases of books, e-books, reference materials, newspapers and other formats. Reliable comparisons are difficult as there is a time lag in the publication of CIPFA national data. Reading would seem to have a relatively large book stock - with Central Library having previously functioned as a county library. However this is dated and needs replenishing over a period of time to ensure stock is current and to replace damaged stock. A comparison with similarly sized unitary authorities below illustrates that Reading's stock fund per 1,000 population is the lowest in the group for 2015/16 following reductions in the two preceding financial years.

Stock Fund comparisons

| Authority | Fund £ - 2015/16 Estimate | Population | Fund per 1,000 population |
|------------|---------------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Reading | 148,000 | 143,096 | 1,034 |
| Portsmouth | 244,831 | 206,800 | 1,188 |
| RBWM | 263,000 | 146,000 | 1,801 |
| Slough | 269,000 | 141,838 | 1,907 |
| Bracknell | 247,990 | 114,000 | 2,175 |

- 8.25 CIPFA data indicates that costs per acquisition appear comparatively high. Options to reduce unit costs should be explored.

9. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 As set out above, as part of the Council's programme to deliver savings it was proposed that the whole Library Service was reviewed and reorganised on the basis of objective criteria and the input of those living, working and studying in the Borough, with the aim of saving in the region of £600,000 by 2017/18. It was recognised that identification of the desired level of savings may not be appropriate.

9.2 To achieve close to this level of savings would require the closure of 4 branch libraries. Closing 3 branch libraries would result in savings of circa £500,000. In both cases the opening hours of remaining libraries would need to be reduced further than proposed above. These costings also take into account additional reductions in the stock fund, management and support staff reflecting a reduction in service level of this scale.

9.3 The proposed option responds to feedback from the public consultation and proposes service reductions based on a robust analysis of use and need. Extensive closures would have an adverse impact on a significant proportion of the community. It may be noted that:

- In the Phase One consultation, respondents and petition comments highlighted the importance of libraries in supporting learning and providing quiet study space; providing free or low cost activities and fostering social interaction, especially for young children, parents and older people as open and welcoming services at the centre of their communities; and providing access to IT.
- 11.7% of respondents stated that they were reliant on their library for access to the internet; it is likely that these households may not be able to afford broadband or a computer of their own.
- In the case of extensive closures, customers only using one library branch would have to travel further to another branch with an increased number having up to a 30 minute journey door to door using public transport (a one hour return journey).
- Significantly fewer customers would be able to walk to their nearest library, and would have to make use of other means of transport.
- Those customers who only use one library would incur additional costs if reliant on public transport (and not entitled to free travel). The cost of travelling by bus is £1.90 for a single trip or £3.70 return for adults, and £1.40 single or £2.40 return for each child. This could be a considerable deterrent for those customers on low incomes.
- Staffing reductions at this level would limit scope to proactively develop partnerships or increase volunteering and could impact on service quality and sustainability.

9.5 Whilst there would be a number of possible mitigations service reductions on this scale are therefore not recommended.

10. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

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

2. Providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living
6. Remaining financially sustainable to delivery these service priorities

11. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 11.1 In addition to the consultation process undertaken as part of phase one of the review, as outlined in paragraphs 5.1-5.11 of this report, a further period of public consultation on proposals for the future of the library services is planned as part of Phase Two of the review, and set out below.
- 11.2 The next phase of the consultation would seek to ensure that all stakeholder groups understand the proposals and can have their say. As with Phase One of the review process, it is recommended that a multi-format programme of consultation is initiated with staff, volunteers, partners, other stakeholders and the public.
- 11.3 A draft consultation document is attached at **Appendix 5**. Furthermore, as with the first phase of consultation, each of the detailed appendices attached, as well as illustrative plans for potential community hubs would also be made available publicly, in order to allow consultees to provide informed responses. Therefore, while a preferred option for consultation is recommended, the Council would invite, and carefully consider, any alternative proposals put forward by consultees for achieving the desired level of savings. The consultation document explains the background to and reasons for the proposals to allow consultees to suggest alternatives. The consultation would also allow the Council to explore means of reducing the adverse impacts of the proposals, should any of them ultimately be adopted.
- 11.4 It is proposed that the consultation document and information packs of the detailed appendices will be made available on the Council's website, and in hard copy format at libraries and at the Civic Offices. Hard copies will also be made available to users of the Mobile Library (elderly and housebound) service with the offer of assistance in responding if desired. Leaflets and posters directing the public to the library review webpage (www.reading.gov.uk/libraryreview) will also be displayed in leisure, children's and community centres across the Borough.
- 11.5 It is also proposed that a number of targeted focus groups will be arranged to ensure that the Council has considered impacts on, and sought input from, groups that may be particularly affected by the proposals.
- 11.6 Regarding proposals relating to library provision in the Battle, Southcote and Whitley catchment areas, where building modifications or extensions to facilitate re-location and/or shared use of libraries would be required, the Council will exhibit illustrative plans for the duration of the consultation period. These will illustrate how the proposals might be achieved in practical physical terms if, following consultation, the Council decides to implement all or any of these proposals, in order to allow consultees to respond meaningfully to these proposals. The plans will be exhibited in the relevant libraries. Information will also be provided alongside plans to explain and contextualise them. In addition, a number of drop-in sessions will be arranged and publicised when Council staff will be in attendance to explain and discuss the plans. Plans will also be published on the Council's webpage. Feedback from the exhibitions will be captured and collated and reported back as part of the consultation.
- 11.7 The programme of communications will begin immediately when the report is publicised and will include both online publicity, e-communications, and face to face meetings with stakeholders (including staff) as appropriate. Phase 2 consultation will begin February 22nd 2016 (pending Policy Committee approval) and will last for a period of 12 weeks.

Consultation Timescale

- 11.8 There are a number of elements that have to come together in order to deliver the proposed review to timescale.

| | |
|---|---|
| 15 th Feb 2016 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Committee consider consultation feedback and the library needs assessment from Phase 1 • Committee consider proposed options for change and approach to Phase 2 public consultation |
| 22 nd Feb -16 th May 2016 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 2 public consultation on vision and options, lasting 12 weeks |
| May-June 2016 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of consultation responses • Further development of a preferred option |
| July 2016 (provisional date) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation to elected Members • Policy Committee consider and approve future Library Service model |
| Following approval | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of new library model • Staff restructure proposals and consultation |

12. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 12.1 The proposals set out in this report are only proposals, and it will be necessary to consider the equalities impact of any final recommendation once arrived at following consultation. Equality Impact Assessments of the proposals which are the subject of this report are attached as **Appendix 4**. At a high level, those assessments are supplemented in the risks and mitigations analysis for the proposals, above.

13. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 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. Further, 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 the borrowing/reference 'sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children'

- 13.2 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.

- 13.3 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.

13.4 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

13.5 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

13.6 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.

13.7 Consultation proposals must be at a formative stage and not pre-determined (already decided). Whilst this consultation is a non-statutory process, officers have sought independent legal advice regarding the approach to the review of the Library Service, in order to ensure compliance with the Council's duties under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act, the Equalities Act and any other relevant legislation. The courts have recently clarified that, once a consultation has been embarked upon for it to be fair it has to:

- a) let those with a potential interest in the subject matter know clearly what the proposal of the public authority is;
- b) explain why the proposal is under positive consideration;
- c) give the consultees sufficient information so that they can make an informed response to the proposal under consideration;
- d) allow sufficient time for those consultees to be able to submit their informed response;

- e) conscientiously consider the product of the consultation and take that into account when reaching and taking the final decision

14. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 In the 8 October 2015 Policy Committee report, £600,000 was identified as an aspirational saving for the Library Service review, in advance of public consultation and a needs assessment.
- 14.2 As outlined above, public consultation and a comprehensive needs assessment have now been completed. These have subsequently informed the development of proposals for the future of the Library Service which would deliver savings of £283,875. The recommended option would subsequently deliver a saving of £316,125 less than the £600,000 target.

Savings and timescales for implementation

| Current (15/16) Budget £'000's | Exp. (Gross) | Income | Net. |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------|--------|
| LIBRARY SERVICE | £1.65m | 230k | £1.42m |

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| TOTAL ANNUAL SAVING | £283,875 |
| Cost avoidance on premises maintenance liabilities for assets disposed (one off) | £67,000 |

14.3 Note:

- a) Revenue savings would arise in respect of premises where assets are released totalling £19,000 per annum. A small element of this budget is not held by the Library Service.
- b) Reactive repairs costs for a branch (excluding Central Library) average circa £4,000 per annum. However, these are variable costs and have not been reflected in estimated premises savings.
- c) Conversely, any extensions to buildings to facilitate the creation of hubs could increase premises costs (notably in relation to rates) which will reduce the overall likely net premises saving.
- d) Changes proposed in respect of South Reading Youth and Community Centre could result in some loss of hire income from other users of community space.

- 14.4 It has been assumed that a final service offer is approved by Committee in July 2016, following a 3 month period of consultation and further report on the outcomes of this. All savings could be implemented by between April and September 2017 subject to capacity to deliver on a raft of change simultaneously.
- 14.5 The savings linked to the reduction of opening hours also assume reduced staffing levels in Tilehurst, Caversham, Palmer Park and re-located libraries at South Reading and Southcote - predicated on the implementation of self-serve technology. 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.
- 14.6 Savings reliant on the implementation of self-service technology and relocation of libraries would require time to consult on and finalise designs; to secure planning permission; to commission and complete building works; and to transfer libraries

(including stock, library and public access IT) and de-commission former library buildings.

- 14.7 For Southcote Library the Toy Library would need to be relocated to an alternate site (at Darwin Close or elsewhere).

Staffing Impact

- 14.8 The library employs a high number of part-time employees

No. of current staff 2015/16: 72
Full time equivalent: 37.4

- 14.9 The majority of savings proposed come from staffing reductions. Further detailed work will be required but the estimated impact of the proposed option is a reduction of circa 11.5 FTE - from 37.4 FTE.

Capital Funding Implications:

- 14.10 **Community Hubs:** The creation of community hubs in existing buildings would necessitate capital investment, which will be subject to the locations agreed following consultation. Where libraries are re-located the release of assets would generate capital receipts to cross-fund enabling works in other locations. Funding of community hub works could be funded as follows:

| Library catchment area | Works proposed | Funding source |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Battle | Extension of library to facilitate wider community use | Subject to approval, S106 funding for the Battle area could be allocated to improve community infrastructure. |
| Southcote | Southcote community centre extension to accommodate library | Capital receipt anticipated for the library site would fund works and generate a net receipt. |
| Whitley | South Reading Youth and Community Centre remodelling to accommodate library | Capital receipt anticipated for the library site would partially fund works. The remainder would be covered by the remaining receipt from Southcote. |

- 14.11 No allowance has been made for the cost of borrowing for building adaptations and extensions on the basis of assumed funding above.

- 14.12 **Investment in Technology:** capital funding provision of £300,000 has been made to enable investment in self-serve technology. This is key to creating a flexible service fit for the future and requires a one-off investment, to include:

- RFID Tags inserted in all library lending stock
- Staff workstations which activate the tags
- Self-service terminals for all library branches and neighbourhood collections
- Exit security systems (if required)

- 14.13 There would additionally be a small revenue support cost to maintain terminals and associated equipment annually.

- 14.14 A review of the library management system (with a view to upgrading or re-tendering) and a cost-benefit analysis of open access technologies (enabling access to libraries when unstaffed) will also be completed.

Other Assumptions:

- 14.15 **Access to storage space:** There is an assumption that storage at Darwin Close can accommodate:
- Any stock displaced through reduced shelving in branches as a result of proposals.
 - Space for the Toy Library collection.
- 14.16 No allowance is made for any reduction in income arising from reduced opening hours. Income is difficult to predict and has reduced year on year as hire of audio-visual formats has declined, together with other factors.
- 14.17 **Costs are not included for**
- Additional rates/running costs due to extension of premises.
 - Any one off costs associated with redundancies.
 - Costs of security for any library buildings which the Council ceases to operate pending lease/disposal of the asset.

Financial Impact of Proposals

- 14.18 Reading's current spend is compared below with LAs with similar population densities and population size using the most recent CIPFA data (2015-16 estimates). Clearly this cannot anticipate reductions being made in any of these authorities.

| LA | Resident population | Area | Population density | Expenditure per 1,000 population |
|------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Luton | 211,000 | 4,335 | 48.7 | 9,356 |
| Blackpool | 140,500 | 3,485 | 40.3 | 10,067 |
| Slough | 144,600 | 3,254 | 44.4 | 10,931 |
| Reading | 160,800 | 4,040 | 39.8 | 11,787 |
| Portsmouth | 209,100 | 4,039 | 51.8 | 12,631 |
| Southampton | 245,300 | 4,990 | 49.2 | 15,131 |
| Southend-on- Sea | 177,900 | 4,176 | 42.6 | 16,017 |
| Bournemouth | 191,400 | 4,618 | 41.4 | 22,670 |

- 14.19 The table below illustrates the impact of different levels of savings for each option described above on spend per 1,000 population:

| Reading | a) spend per 1,000 | b) spend per 1,000 - adjusted overheads |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Current | £11,786 | £11,786 |
| Proposed service offer: £284k saving | £10,021 | £9,432 |

- a) Assumes the absolute cost of overheads remains the same. Central support charges could reasonably be expected to reduce reflecting a reduction in premises and staffing levels.
- b) Overheads have been adjusted (keeping central charges as a % of the budget the same).

Phase One Consultation: Results and Feedback

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of the consultation ‘Your Library Service. Your Say’; sets out what you have told us, including any key points of variation between responses for different libraries and from particular groups of respondents.

2. Consultation methodology

On 8th October 2015, Policy Committee endorsed a two-part review of the Library Service in Reading, and authorised officers to initiate consultation with the public on the first phase of the review. Consultation on the first phase of the Library Service Review was launched on 13th October 2015 and ran for 6 weeks until 23rd November 2015.

The focus of the first phase of the review was on gathering and evaluating information on the needs and aspirations of the diverse communities living, working and studying in the borough for library services. In short, the Council’s aim was to gather and evaluate information to enable it to determine what a comprehensive and efficient library service, which remains reasonably accessible by all its residents, should be.

2.1 Consultation documentation

To inform responses to the first phase of consultation, and the subsequent development of options for the future, detailed desk-based research was completed. This research included the development of an overarching profile of the library network in Reading, individual library branch profiles, community profiles of each library’s catchment area and an initial Equality Impact Assessment. This information was posted on the council’s website (www.reading.gov.uk/libraryreview) along with the background to the consultation exercise, included in a leaflet. This information was also made available in hard copy format at libraries, leisure and children’s centres, and at the Civic Offices.

A paper and online questionnaire was produced in order to capture information from the public, staff and partner organisations. This included a request for feedback on:

- how these groups currently use the library service in Reading
- any ideas they might have about how the library service could be delivered more efficiently
- how the service might be run differently in the future
- what the impact of changes might be.

A questionnaire for Mobile Library users was also distributed with the offer of assistance in completing the form if desired.

In addition to the main questionnaire, general response email and postal addresses were advertised, to allow for respondents who, for whatever reason, would not wish to complete the questionnaire.

Finally, consultation feedback was gathered through a number of semi-structured interviews and focus groups throughout the consultation process. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken following a number of popular activities at each of the borough's libraries with a range of library users. Focus groups consisted of both library users and non-users, and particularly sought to ensure that the needs of groups and individuals with characteristics protected under the 2010 Equalities Act were captured and taken into consideration in the development of proposals.

2.2 Promotion

Awareness of the consultation was sought through a number of varied means, in order to ensure that as many people as possible were able to contribute their feedback on the library service, and have their say on shaping its future.

The consultation was promoted in the following ways:

- Distribution of posters and leaflets to all libraries, leisure centres, and children's centres in the borough, as well as in the Civic Offices reception area
- Distribution of paper surveys and consultation information packs across all libraries and leisure centres, as well as children's centre hubs and the Civic Offices reception area
- Direct emails to stakeholders in the library service, including partners based in library premises, schools, colleges and the University of Reading, umbrella organisations in the voluntary and community sector, as well as respondents to the council's July 2015 budget consultation, where email addresses were gathered
- Information and support provided to the regional media, in the form of press releases, in order to help them cover the consultation. This resulted in coverage including a feature on the webpages of BBC News and Get Reading
- A link to the library review consultation was placed prominently within the council website homepage for the duration of the consultation, in order to ensure ease of access
- The council's Facebook and Twitter accounts were used to signpost people to the consultation information and questionnaire

2.3 Who did we consult with?

The consultation invited both library users and non-library users to take part in order to obtain a variety of views and opinions on the review.

A total of 1,792 responses were received:

- 1652 surveys
- 128 mobile library (elderly and housebound service) surveys
- 3 letters
- 9 emails

5 focus groups were also held during the consultation period, including representatives from 8 groups of individuals with various characteristics that are protected under the 2010 Equalities Act. This provided an opportunity to engage with people who can sometimes be hard to reach during public consultations, including young people, older people, those with physical and learning disabilities, and individuals and representatives of BME groups.

Responses have also been supplemented by semi-structured interviews with 63 library users from across the library network. These interviews allowed the opportunity to probe deeper into responses to open questions that also appeared in the questionnaire.

Finally, consideration has also been given to the 93 responses received regarding libraries as part of the Budget Consultation - July 2015, and the three petitions received with signatures from a total of 2,655 people in support for maintaining Reading Libraries, and the following libraries in particular:

- Battle (770 signatures)
- Southcote (828 signatures)
- Tilehurst (1057 signatures)

The main themes emerging from these emails, letters, focus groups, interviews, budget consultation feedback and petition comments are set out in the body of this report, where relevant. Themes emerging are also set out separately at the end of this report.

2.4 Analysis of responses

The decision was made to appoint an external contractor to assist with the analysis of a number of consultation responses, especially those including open responses. This was in recognition of the fact that any proposed changes to Library Services create significant public interest. From a review of response rates to other library surveys and consultations conducted locally and nationally, it was anticipated that this consultation could receive in excess of 2000 responses, including responses to open questions as part of the questionnaire, as well as written (email and letter)

responses, and comments included in petitions that would need to be read, categorised and analysed. It was also recognised that the small in-house resource did not have the capacity to deliver this work.

A further benefit of the use of a third party for the analysis of consultation responses is that they are impartial and completely separate from Reading Borough Council.

Note: any personal data gathered for the purposes of keeping interested individuals up to date on future library proposals, consultations and other council news was not been shared. This information has been stored on a separate database from the consultation questions and remains strictly confidential.

3. Respondent type

The consultation was designed to give everyone the opportunity to have their say. The response, however, has been higher from some groups than others and therefore is not representative of the population of the borough. Due to the absence of reliable user data, it is not clear if respondents are representative of library users. It is for this reason that care must be taken not to generalise the figures within this report to the whole borough, and only use the results as a guide to aid development of the options 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.

3.1 Respondents living, working and studying in the borough

Under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act the Council is obliged to provide library services for all individuals who live, work or study within the borough.

Of all respondents to the survey, 83.2% of respondents reported that they were residents of the borough, 21.2% reported working in the borough, 3.3% reportedly were studying in the borough, and 10.1% identified themselves as fitting within none of the categories above.

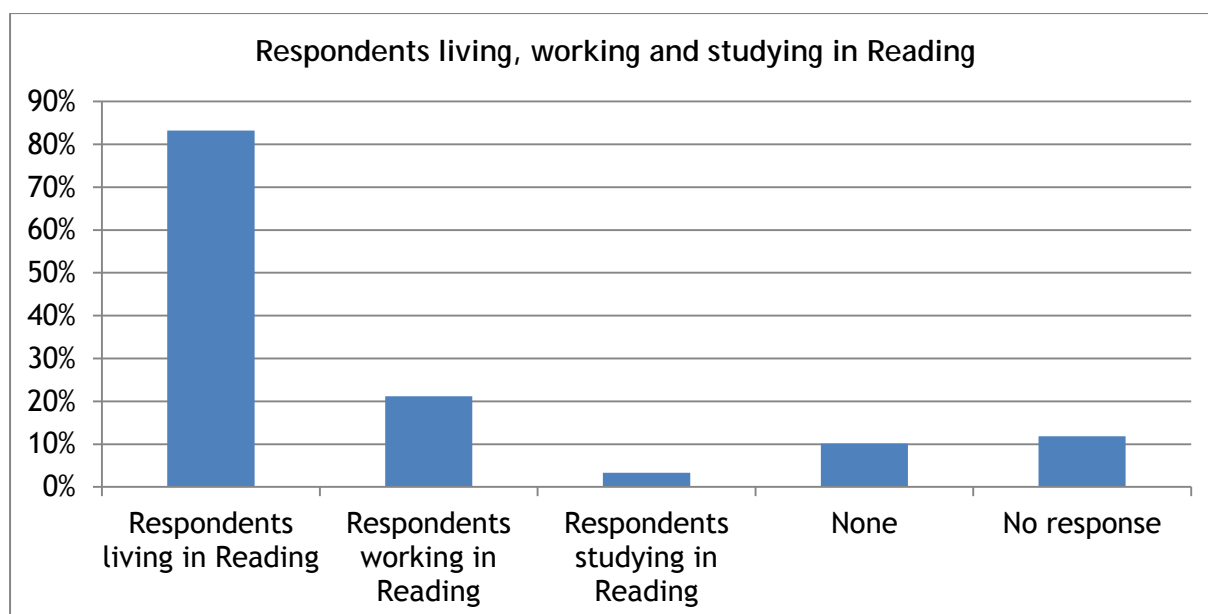


Figure 1: Survey respondents living, working and studying in Reading

Variations between branches include:

- A greater proportion of people falling in the 'None' category for users of Tilehurst (17.9%) and Southcote (15.0%) Libraries
- A greater proportion of people reporting that they work in Reading for users of Whitley (36.7%), Palmer Park (28.0%) and Battle (26.2%) Libraries
- A greater proportion of people studying in Reading amongst users of Whitley Library (7.8%), although this is skewed by the low number of respondents for this library

Respondents were also asked to indicate their interest in the library review, with a breakdown of responses shown below:

| | Survey respondents | Mobile Library survey respondents |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Base (respondents) | 1624 | 113 |
| A member of the public | 91.8% | 96.4% |
| A staff member working at a library | 1.4% | |
| Other council member of staff | 1.0% | |
| A community or voluntary group | 1.5% | |
| A partner organisation | 0.1% | 2.7% |
| A business / private organisation | 0.7% | |
| Other | 1.9% | 0.9% |

Figure 2: Survey and Mobile Survey respondents' interest in the Library Review

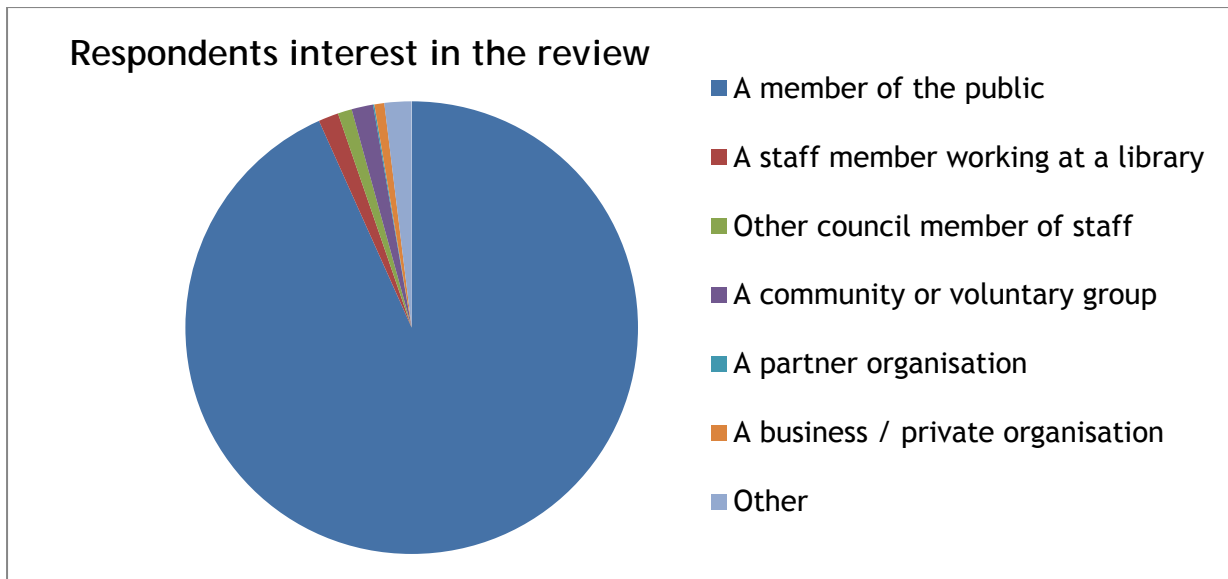


Figure 3: Survey respondents' interest in the Library Review

3.2 Gender

The table below shows that a higher proportion of females responded to the consultation than is reflected in the resident population data.

| | Survey response (%) | Mobile survey response (%) | Reading population resident (2011 census) (%) |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Base (respondents) | 1625 | 120 | 155,700 |
| Male | 30.6% | 15.8% | 50% |
| Female | 69.4% | 84.2% | 50% |

Figure 4: Survey respondents, Mobile Survey respondents and Reading residents by Gender

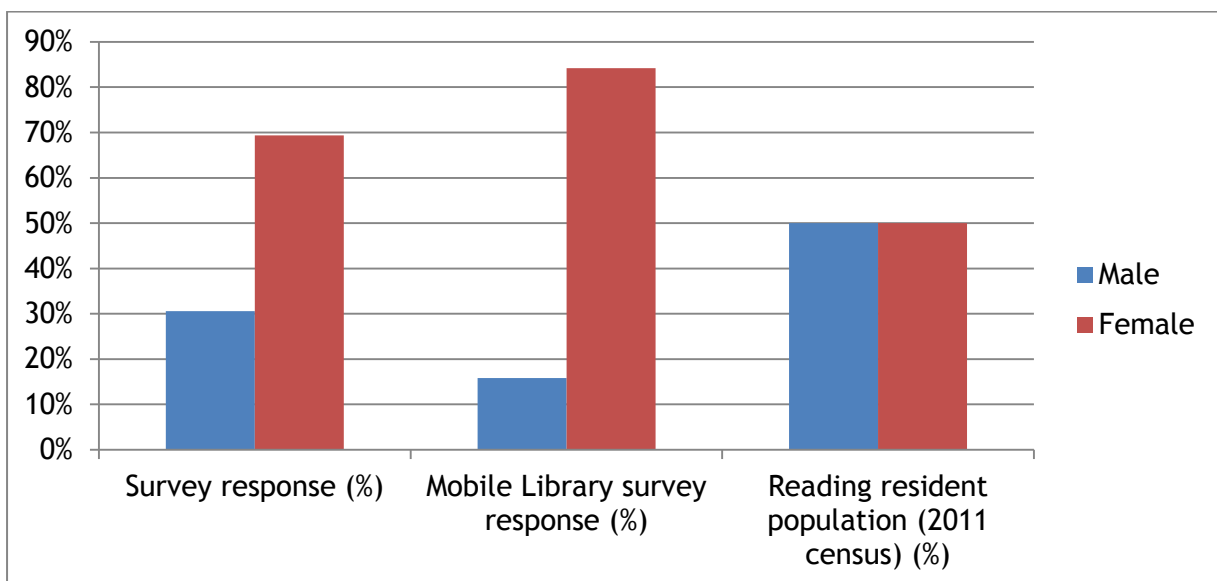


Figure 5: Survey respondents, Mobile Survey respondents and Reading residents by Gender

The high rate of responses from women for the mobile library survey is not entirely surprising or unrepresentative of the population, given the age profile of the Mobile Library, as shown below.

3.3 Age

The table below shows 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. The results will therefore be over-representative of the views of adults and older people.

| | Survey response (%) | Mobile Library survey response (%) | Reading resident population (2011 census) (%) |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Base (respondents) | 1616 | 125 | 155,700 |
| Under 25 | 2.4% | | 36.94% |
| 25-64 | 63.5% | 8.8% | 53.67% |
| 65+ | 34.1% | 91.2% | 9.39% |

Figure 6: Survey respondents, Mobile Survey respondents and Reading residents by Age Group

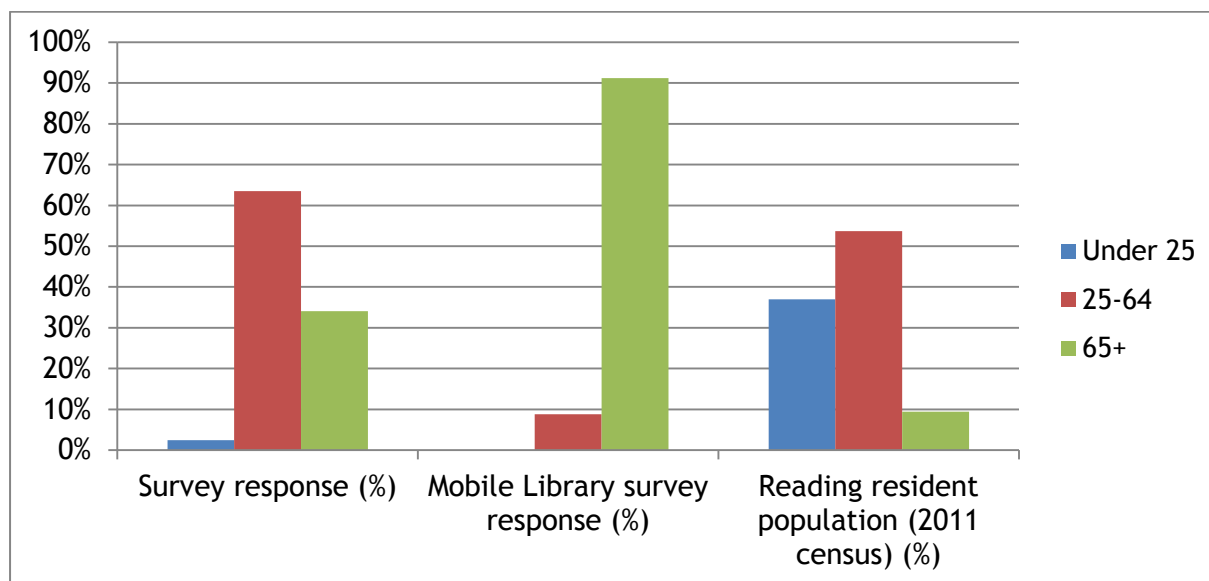


Figure 7: Survey respondents, Mobile Survey respondents and Reading residents by Age Group

Understandably, the proportion of users of the Mobile Library, which primarily focuses on visiting the elderly and housebound, also has a far greater proportion of respondents aged 65 and over. The most highly represented age group amongst respondents for the Mobile Library fall within the 85 and over (44.5%) and 75-84 (32.0%) age groups.

Amongst respondents to the main survey, respondents from the age groups 65-74 (20.6%) and 35-44 (19.9%) were most common. Fewest responses were received from the 0-14 (0.9%) and 15-24 (1.5%) age groups.

Variations across branches are shown in the graph below and included a higher proportion of responses from the 65+ age group at Tilehurst, Caversham, Central and Southcote Libraries.

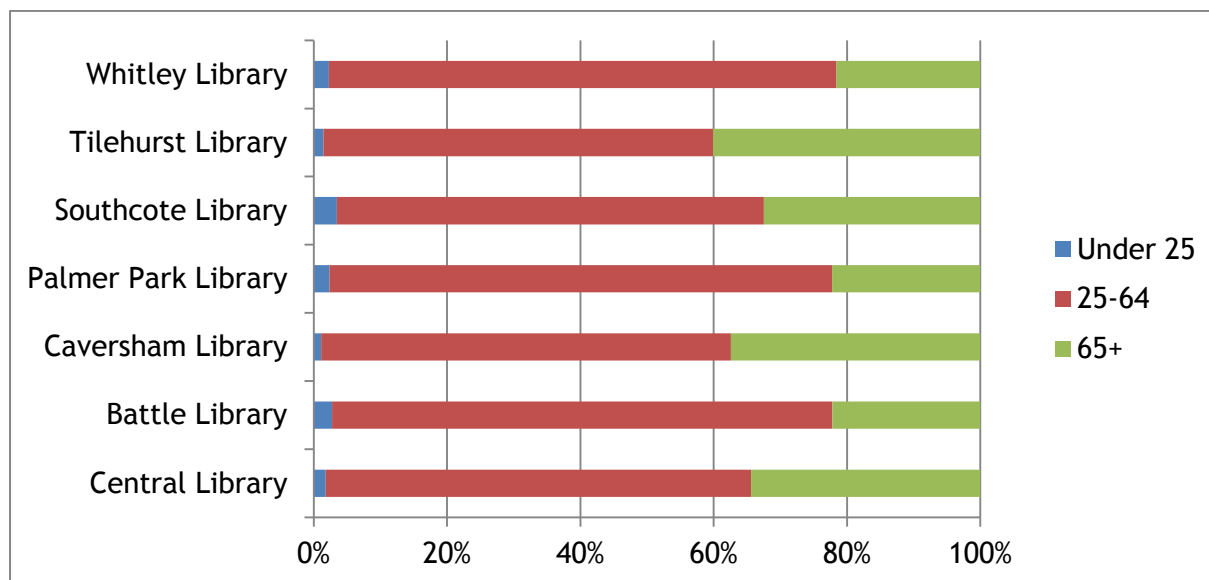


Figure 8: Survey respondents by Library Used and Age Group

At a more granular level, variations also include:

- A significantly higher proportion of respondents from the age group 35-44 at Battle Library (33.2%)
- A higher proportion of respondents from the age group 45-54 at Palmer Park Library (20.0%)

The graph below shows the number of respondents by age and gender.

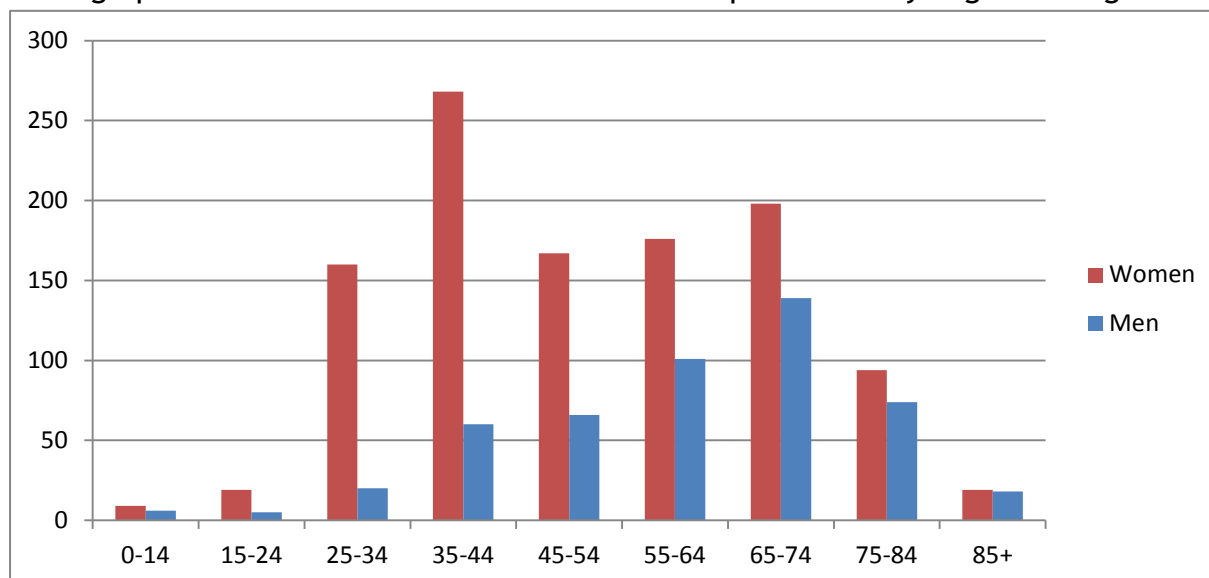


Figure 9: Survey respondents by Age Group and Gender

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. The number of female respondents for each age group also exceeded the number of responses received from men.

Later in the survey, respondents were also asked if they visit the library with, or on behalf of, any other groups. 646 respondents to the survey (39.1% 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%). 199 respondents (12.0%) also indicated that they visit the library with, or on behalf of, older persons, and 78 (4.7%) selected the option 'Other'. The table below provides a breakdown of responses:

| Age group | % of respondents |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Children aged 0-5 | 26.5% |
| Children aged 6-12 | 19.5% |
| Children aged 13-18 | 4.9% |
| Older persons | 12.0% |
| Other* | 4.7% |

Figure 6: Age Groups of individuals that Survey respondents reported that they visit libraries with, or on behalf of

'Other' groups respondents reported visiting libraries with or on behalf of included their partner or spouse, friends and family, and children without specifying their age.

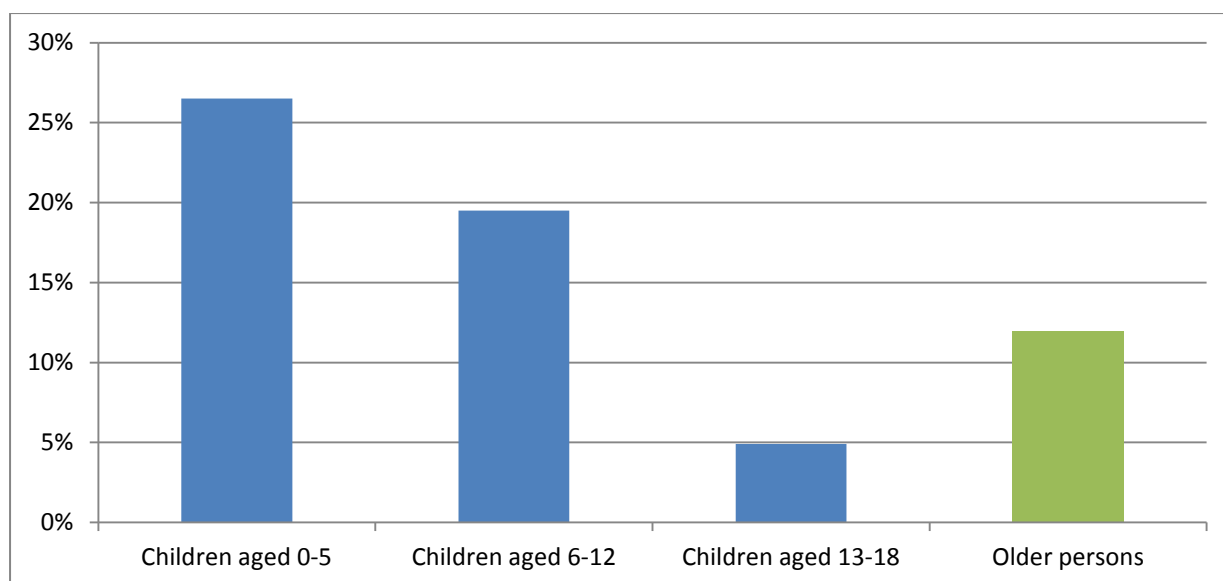


Figure 7: Age Groups of individuals that Survey respondents reported that they visit libraries with, or on behalf of

3.4 Ethnicity

The table and graphs below show that there were a higher proportion of 'White British / Other White' respondents to the consultation than is reflected in the resident population data for both surveys.

| | Survey response (%) | Mobile survey response (%) | Reading resident population (2011 census) (%) |
|---|---------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Base (respondents) | 1585 | 122 | 155,700 |
| White British / Other White | 84.9% | 99.2% | 74.8% |
| Mixed / multiple ethnic groups | 1.5% | | 3.9% |
| Asian / Asian British | 4.0% | 0.8% | 13.6% |
| Black / African / Caribbean / Black British | 1.1% | | 7.7% |
| Other ethnic group | 0.6% | | 0.9% |

Figure 8: Survey respondents, Mobile Survey respondents and Reading residents by Ethnicity

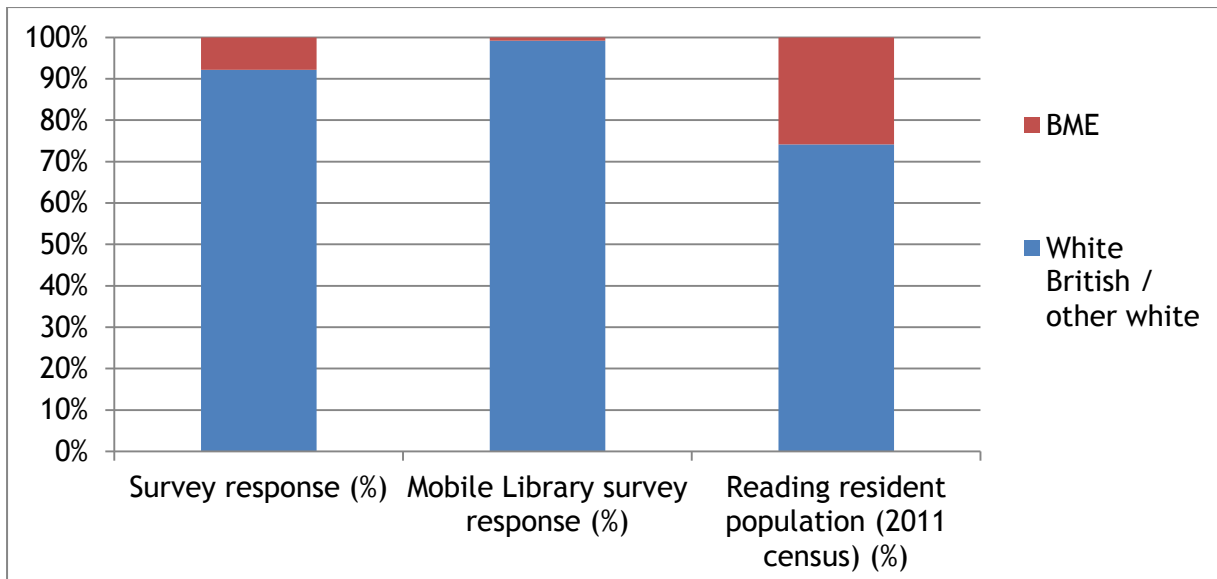


Figure 9: Survey respondents, Mobile Survey respondents and Reading residents by Ethnicity

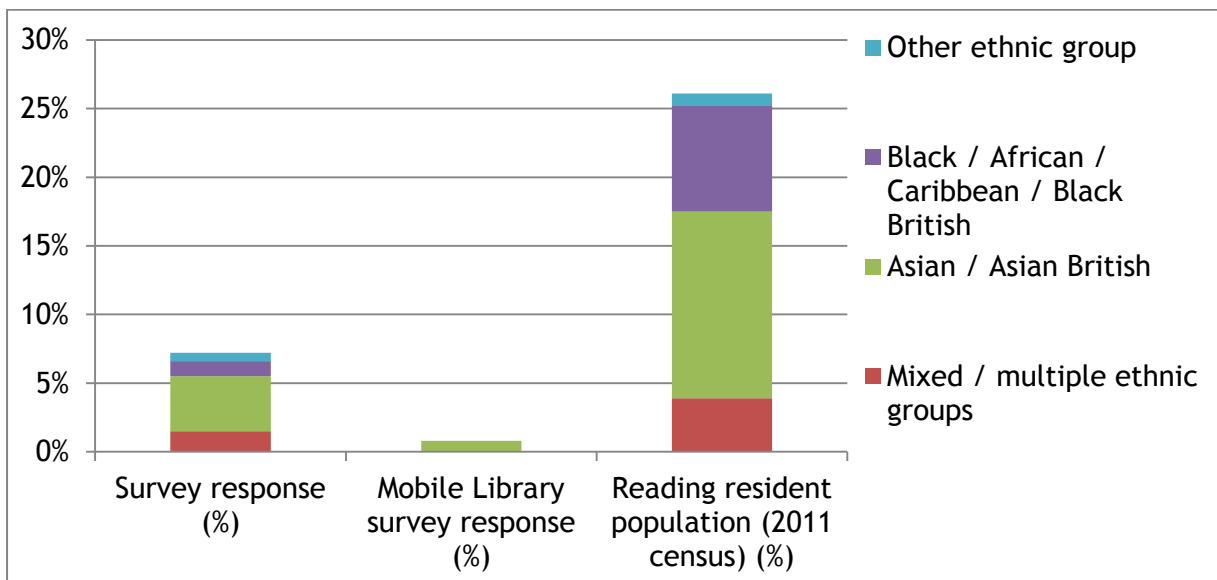


Figure 10: Survey respondents, Mobile Survey respondents and Reading residents by BME Ethnicity

When reviewing the ethnicity of respondents by branches used, the proportion of Black or Minority Ethnicity (BME) respondents varies, as shown overleaf. However, it is acknowledged that proportions may be distorted in some instances by the low numbers of respondents e.g. for Whitley Library.

| | Base (respondents) - Survey | BME respondents | BME respondents (%) | BME population (%) - 2011 census |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Central Library | 909 | 74 | 8.14% | 34.86% |
| Battle Library | 370 | 47 | 12.70% | 31.21% |
| Caversham Library | 641 | 27 | 4.21% | 11.51% |
| Palmer Park Library | 175 | 20 | 11.43% | 37.87% |
| Southcote Library | 233 | 19 | 8.15% | 20.24% |
| Tilehurst Library | 497 | 18 | 3.62% | 12.50% |
| Whitley Library | 90* | 13 | 14.44% | 27.19% |

Figure 11: Survey respondents by Library Used and Ethnicity

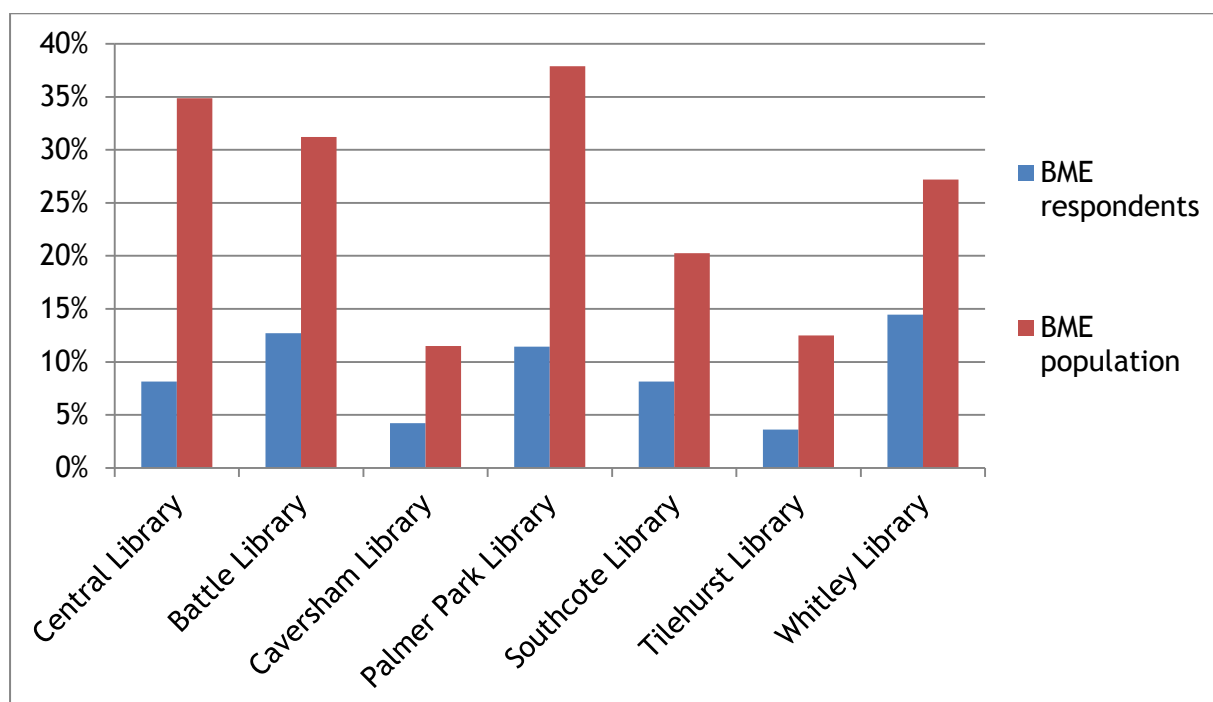


Figure 12: Survey respondents by Library Used and Ethnicity

3.5 Disability or health problems

Although we do not have directly comparable figures for disability, the table 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.

| | Survey response | Mobile Library survey response | Reading resident population (2011 census) |
|----------------------|--|--|---|
| Base (respondents) | 1488 | 117 | 155,700 |
| Disabled respondents | 17.8% of respondents have a disability | 90.6% of respondents have a disability | 12.9% have a Limiting Long-Term illness |
| No disability | 82.2% | 9.4% | 87.1% |

Figure 13: Survey respondents, Mobile Survey respondents and Reading residents reporting a Disability

Understandably, the proportion of users of the Mobile Library which primarily focuses on visiting the elderly and housebound, has a far greater proportion of users reporting to have a disability. The proportion of respondents to the main survey with a disability is also higher than the borough average, and this may also be linked to the over representation of older people responding to the survey, and using the library service.

Where respondents were asked in the survey if they visit the library with, or on behalf of, any other groups, 62 respondents (3.7% 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.

Across branches, the proportion of respondents reporting to have a disability are largely comparable, and in line with variations in the age-profile of respondents.

Respondents were also asked for further information about the nature of their disability or illness. Figure 14 and 15 provide a breakdown of the disabilities reported by respondents to the survey and mobile library users survey:

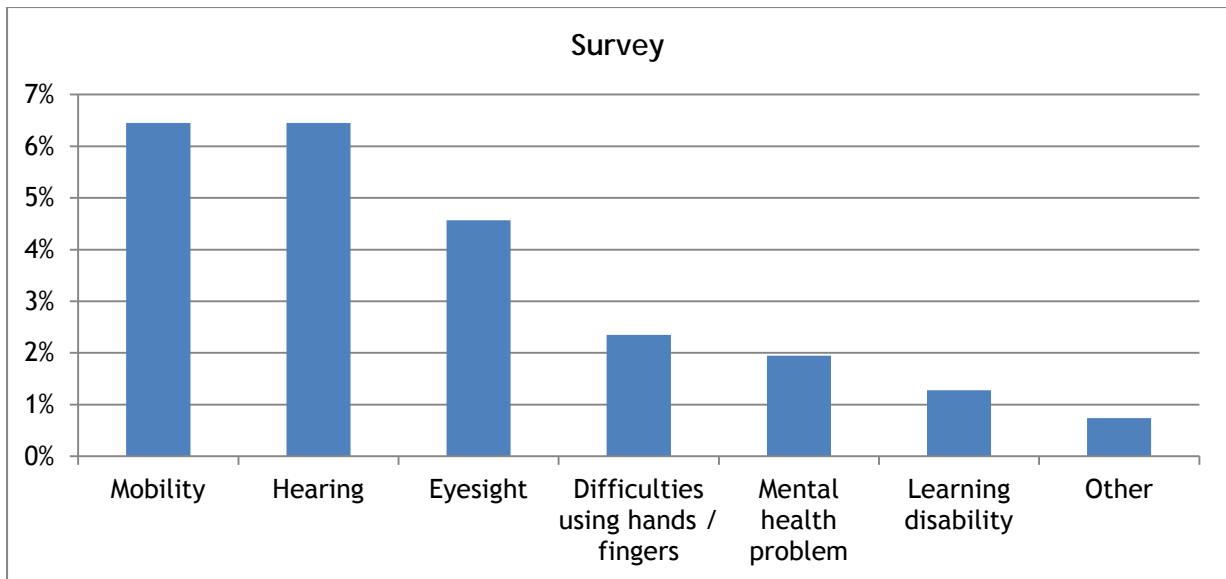


Figure 14: Survey respondents by Disability

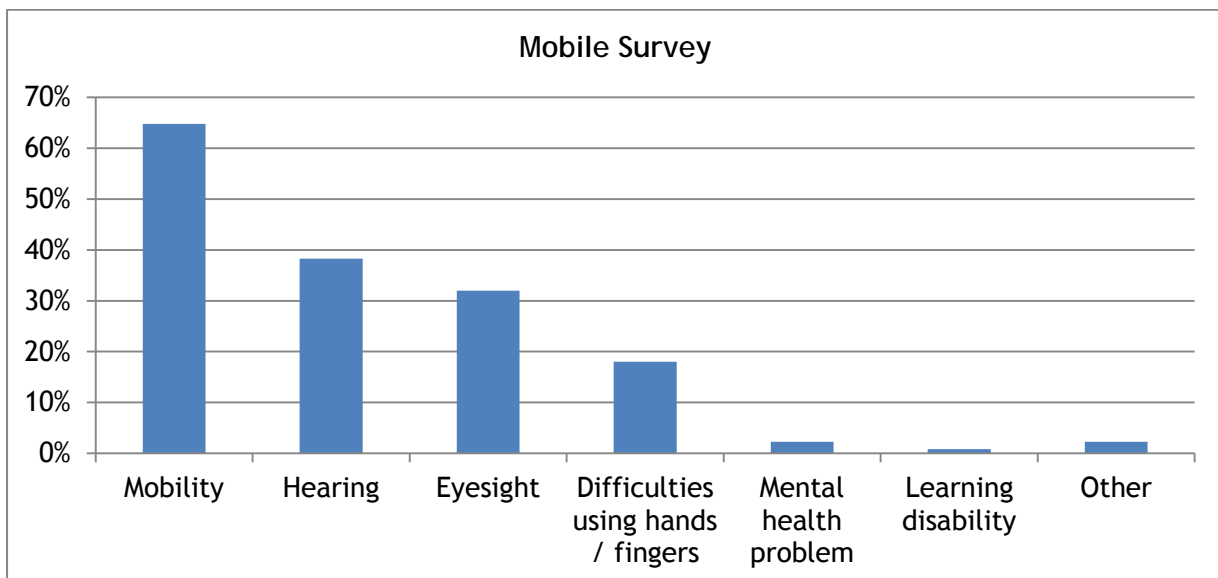


Figure 15: Mobile Survey respondents by Disability

3.6 Employment

Figure 16 and 17 overleaf show that there is an 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.

| | Survey response (%) | Mobile survey (%) | Library response | Reading population (2011 census) (%) | resident (2011 census) (%) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Base (respondents) | 1601 | 119 | | 155,700 | |
| Employed - Full-time | 25.2% | 0.8% | | 44.6% | |
| Employed - Part-time | 16.4% | 2.5% | | 11.9% | |
| Self-employed | 7.1% | | | 7.9% | |
| Full-time education | 1.3% | | | 5.0% | |
| Unemployed | 1.7% | | | 4.6% | |
| Retired | 36.8% | 89.9% | | 8.6% | |
| Looking after home or family | 8.6% | 1.7% | | 4.6% | |
| Long-term sick or disabled | 1.2% | 5% | | 2.8% | |
| Other* | 1.8% | | | | |

Figure 16: Survey respondents, Mobile Survey respondents and Reading residents by Employment Status

*'Other' responses included:

- Semi-retired
- Part-time study
- Unpaid carer
- Maternity leave
- Gap year
- Volunteering

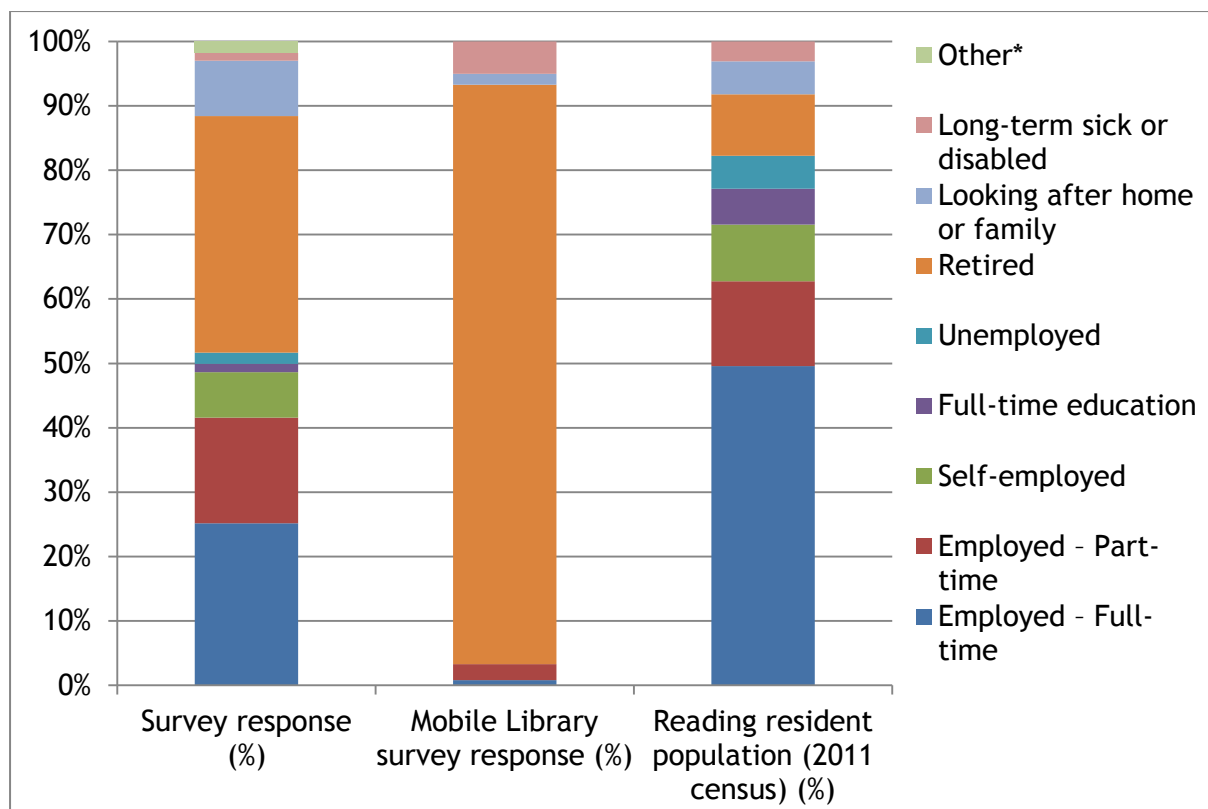


Figure 17: Survey respondents, Mobile Survey respondents and Reading residents by Employment Status

The employment status of respondents broadly reflects the age profile shown above, as do variations between branches (e.g. a higher representation of wholly retired respondents at Tilehurst, Caversham, Central and Southcote, where there were a higher proportion of older respondents, and a higher representation of respondents in full-time employment at Battle Library, where there were a greater proportion of respondents of a working age).

3.7 Response rate by area

1505 (91.1%) of respondents gave their postcode, and 15.81% of these were for out of borough addresses. A further 37 postcodes provided were unmatched.

Figure 18 shows the distribution of responses from across the borough, and a higher proportion of people from Caversham, Tilehurst and Southcote responding to the consultation than is reflected in the resident population data, or than is reflected in the proportion of library visits. The table shows a significant under representation of respondents from the Central and Whitley catchment areas, although the proportion of those responding from the Whitley area are comparable with the proportion of visits to this library.

| Library catchment | Population count | % of Reading population | Response Count | % of respondents | Difference | % of actual library visits |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------|----------------|------------------|------------|----------------------------|
| Central | 46482 | 29.85% | 199 | 15.71% | -14.14% | 49% |
| Battle | 17847 | 11.46% | 144 | 11.37% | - 0.09% | 11% |
| Caversham | 31734 | 20.38% | 497 | 39.23% | + 18.85% | 17% |
| Palmer Park | 9052 | 5.81% | 64 | 5.05% | -0.76% | 5% |
| Southcote | 8548 | 5.49% | 101 | 7.97% | + 2.48% | 5% |
| Tilehurst | 18398 | 11.82% | 220 | 17.36% | + 5.54% | 10% |
| Whitley | 23637 | 15.18% | 42 | 3.31% | -11.87% | 5% |

Figure 18: Survey response rates by Catchment Area

3.8 Religion and Sexual Orientation

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 these protected characteristics. However, the number of responses received for this question has been determined as too low to be statistically significant.

4. Library Use

4.1 Use and non-use

The survey asked 'Do you currently use the library service?'. All respondents answered this question and 98.2% of respondents identified themselves as users of the library service, while the remaining 1.8% did not.

Non-users were subsequently asked to tell us why. 27 responses were received (90% of non-users). Reasons given by non-users for not using library services in Reading are shown overleaf (Figure 19):

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Base (Respondents) = 27 | Survey response (%) |
| No need | 30% |
| Buy books / e-books / access information online | 26% |
| Feeling that libraries are not accessible (travel time / distance / availability of parking) | 22% |
| No time | 15% |
| Use other libraries (school libraries or out of borough libraries) | 4% |
| Not a member | 4% |

Figure 19: Survey respondents not using libraries by Reason

4.2 Multiple library use

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

The table below (Figure 20) shows libraries used by respondents. As respondents were encouraged to record where they use multiple libraries, this table also shows where respondents have shown that they use only one of the borough's libraries.

| | % of <i>all</i> respondents using that library | % of <i>all</i> respondents using <i>only</i> that library | % of library visits (2014/15) |
|---------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|
| Base | 1625 respondents | 1625 respondents | 663,864 visits |
| Central Library | 55.9% | 7.0% | 49% |
| Battle Library | 22.8% | 4.1% | 11% |
| Caversham Library | 39.4% | 15.1% | 17% |
| Palmer Park Library | 10.8% | 1.6% | 5% |
| Southcote Library | 14.3% | 4.5% | 5% |
| Tilehurst Library | 30.6% | 12.3% | 10% |
| Whitley Library | 5.5% | 0.9% | 3% |
| Mobile Library | 1.0% | 0.1% | 1% |
| Other* | 0.5% | 0.5% | |

Figure 20: Survey respondents by Library Used (Multiple and Single) and % of all Library Visits received

*Respondents selecting the field 'Other' used school and out of borough libraries including Burghfield Common, Sonning Common, Theale and Woodley Libraries in Oxfordshire, West Berks and Wokingham.

As further exhibited in the graph (Figure 21) below, Central, Caversham and Tilehurst Libraries are the most commonly used amongst respondents, as these libraries show the greatest proportions of single and multiple library users.

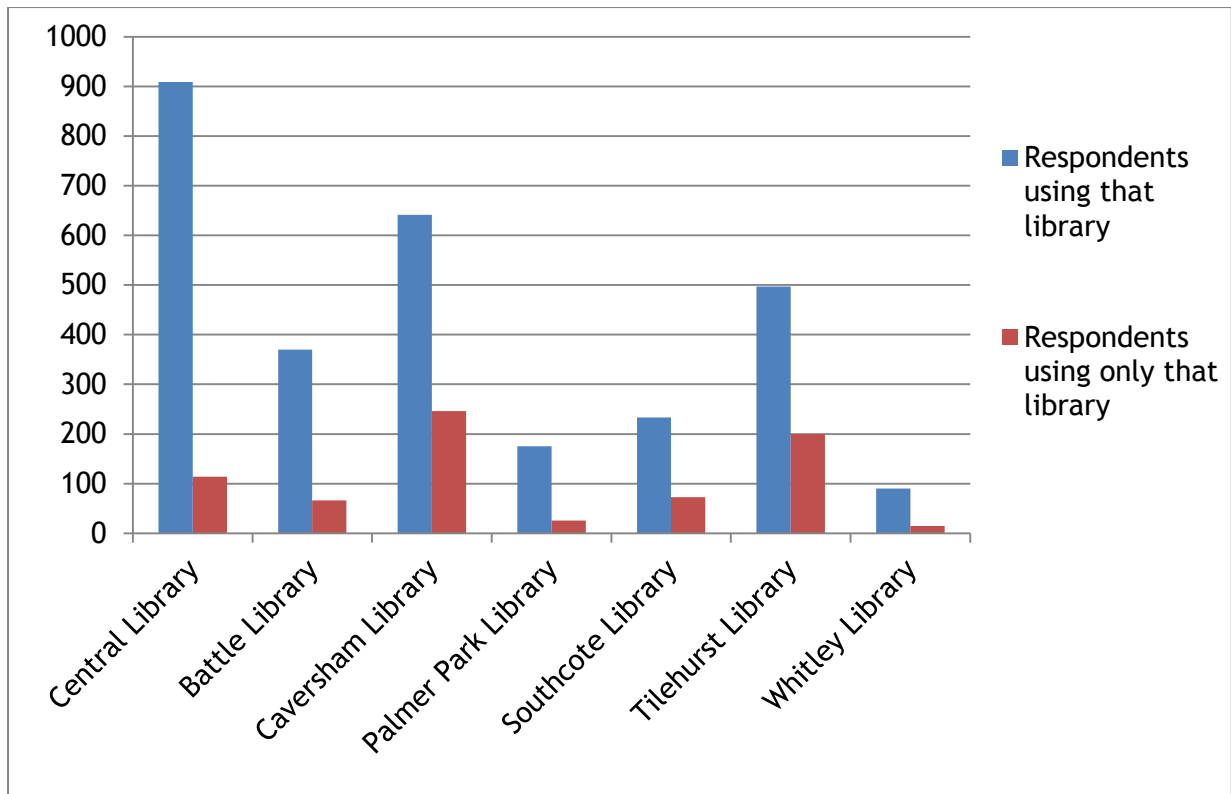


Figure 21: Survey respondents by Library Used (Multiple and Single)

As shown above, of the 1617 Reading library users responding to the consultation, 45.8% used only one library, and the remaining 54.2% used more than one of the borough's libraries.

The table overleaf (Figure 22) shows how the use of one or multiple libraries is distributed across the network.

| | Base (respondents) | % of <i>that library's</i> users using <i>only</i> that library | % of <i>that library's</i> users using <i>multiple</i> libraries |
|---------------------|--------------------|---|--|
| Central Library | 909 | 12.5% | 87.5% |
| Battle Library | 370 | 17.8% | 82.2% |
| Caversham Library | 641 | 38.4% | 61.6% |
| Palmer Park Library | 175 | 14.9% | 85.1% |
| Southcote Library | 233 | 31.3% | 68.7% |
| Tilehurst Library | 497 | 40.2% | 59.8% |
| Whitley Library | 90* | 16.7% | 83.3% |

Figure 22: Survey responses by Library Used and Users of one or more than one library

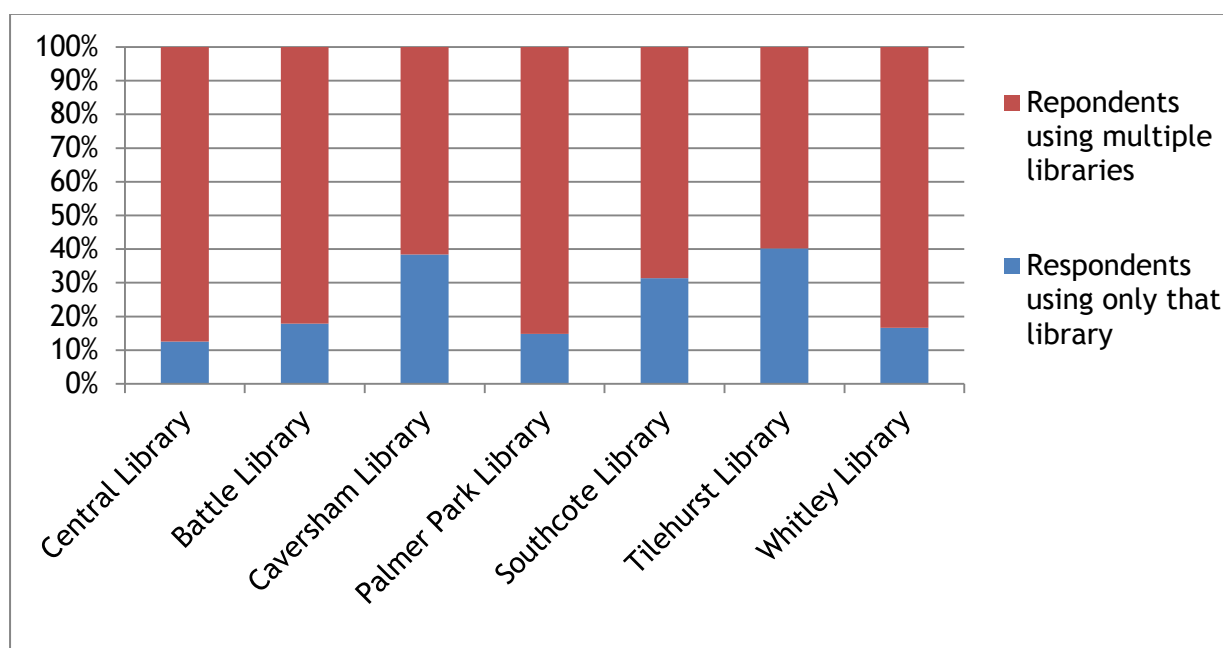


Figure 23: Survey responses by Library Used and Users of one or more than one library

From the above, it is apparent that use of multiple libraries is common across users of all branches, however users of only the branch specified are more common at Caversham and Tilehurst Libraries. In the case of Whitley Library it is worth noting that this is a proportion of a very small sample.

4.3 Frequency of library use

When asked how frequently they visited each of the libraries they reportedly visited, 23.3% of respondents to the survey indicated that they use some part of the service more than once a week, 35.9% reported using the service weekly,

32.9% fortnightly, 36.9% monthly and 33.7% less than monthly. This equates to more than 100% as respondents were asked how frequently they visited each library used.

The reported frequency of visits to each of the branch libraries by respondents is as follows:

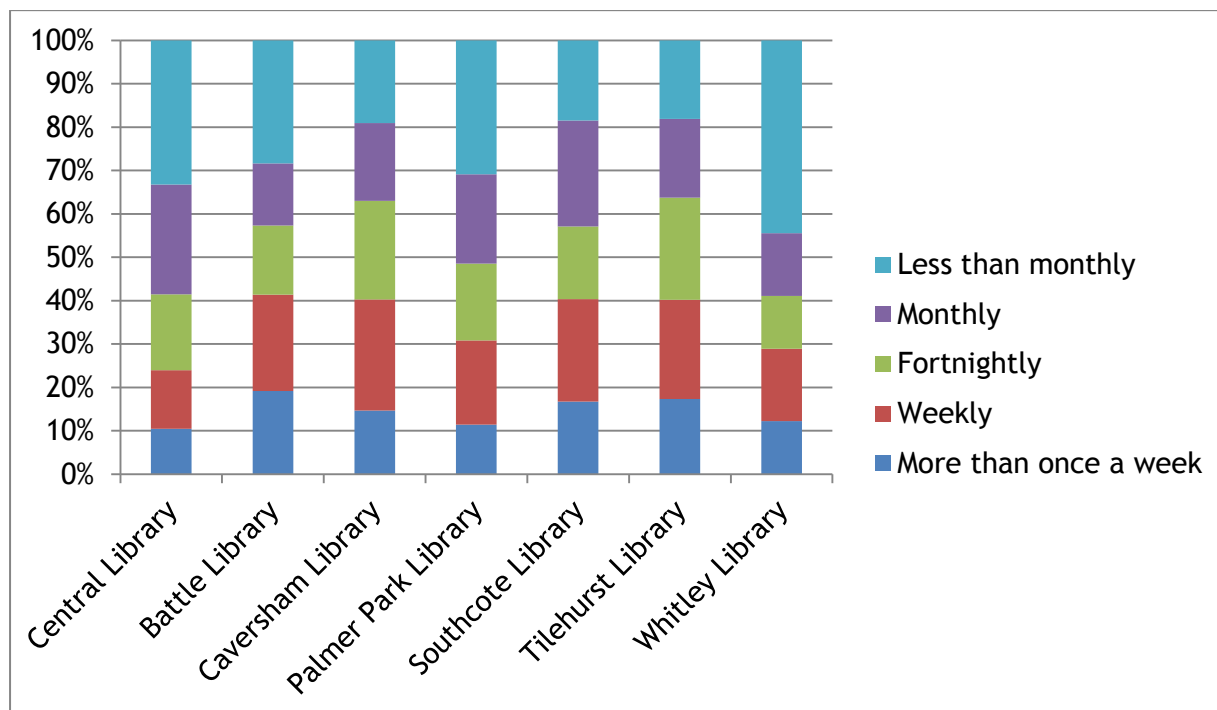


Figure 24: Survey responses by Frequency of Library Use and Library Used

This indicates that respondents visiting libraries at a variety of frequencies responded to the survey, however a greater proportion of less frequent users (less than monthly visitors) reported visiting Whitley, Central and Palmer Park Library. Greater numbers and proportions of more frequent users of Caversham and Tilehurst Libraries responded to the survey than any other libraries.

4.4 Library preference

Respondents to the library service review consultation were each asked why they visit the library specified, rather than any other. Reasons given by respondents for visiting particular libraries primarily revolved around the proximity of libraries to their home, place of work and other services used and activities undertaken. Others cited activities hosted, the helpfulness of staff, the convenience of opening hours and parking, as well as the range of stock available.

The table overleaf (Figure 25) provides a breakdown of responses.

| Reason | Number of cases | % |
|---|-----------------|-------|
| Close to home | 1432 | 71.7% |
| Close to work | 188 | 9.4% |
| Range of books | 97 | 4.9% |
| Children's activities/child friendly | 51 | 2.6% |
| Close to shops | 49 | 2.5% |
| Town centre location | 29 | 1.5% |
| On bus route | 21 | 1.1% |
| Close to various other services / activities undertaken | 17 | 0.9% |
| Close to child's school | 13 | 0.7% |
| Staff attitude/skill | 28 | 1.4% |
| Group activities (adults) | 19 | 1.0% |
| Work or volunteer in library | 12 | 0.6% |
| Opening hours | 10 | 0.5% |
| Atmosphere/community feel | 10 | 0.5% |
| Presentation of buildings | 8 | 0.4% |
| Parking | 5 | 0.3% |
| Just prefer that library | 4 | 0.2% |
| Job search | 2 | 0.1% |
| Wi-Fi | 2 | 0.1% |
| Support for people with disabilities | 1 | 0.1% |

Figure 25: Reasons given by Survey respondents for their choice of library used

Later in the survey, respondents were also asked what other tasks and activities that they usually undertake before or after visiting libraries. 264 respondents answered this question. Responses given overlapped with those provided above and are outlined below (Figure 26).

| Activities and tasks undertaken | Number of cases | % |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| Shopping | 1,204 | 57.2% |
| Work | 282 | 13.4% |
| None | 184 | 8.7% |
| Taking children to school | 183 | 8.7% |
| Personal business | 58 | 2.8% |
| Visit cafe/restaurant | 43 | 2.0% |
| Leisure | 40 | 1.9% |
| Exercise | 37 | 1.8% |
| Meet friends | 36 | 1.7% |
| Taking children to other activities | 6 | 0.3% |
| Adult learning | 6 | 0.3% |
| Other | 20 | 1.0% |

Figure 26: Activities and tasks undertaken before and after visiting libraries by Survey respondents

4.5 Opening hours

Within the survey, respondents were asked when they *currently* visit libraries, and when they would like to visit libraries *in the future*. These questions were designed to understand current patterns of use and to help us best match opening hours to users' needs in the future.

1549 respondents answered the question 'When do you usually visit the libraries specified above?' (93.7% of all respondents). 1413 respondents selected time periods when they currently visit on weekdays and 853 respondents selected time periods that they currently visit on a Saturday.

Figures 27, 28 and 29 show the responses given.

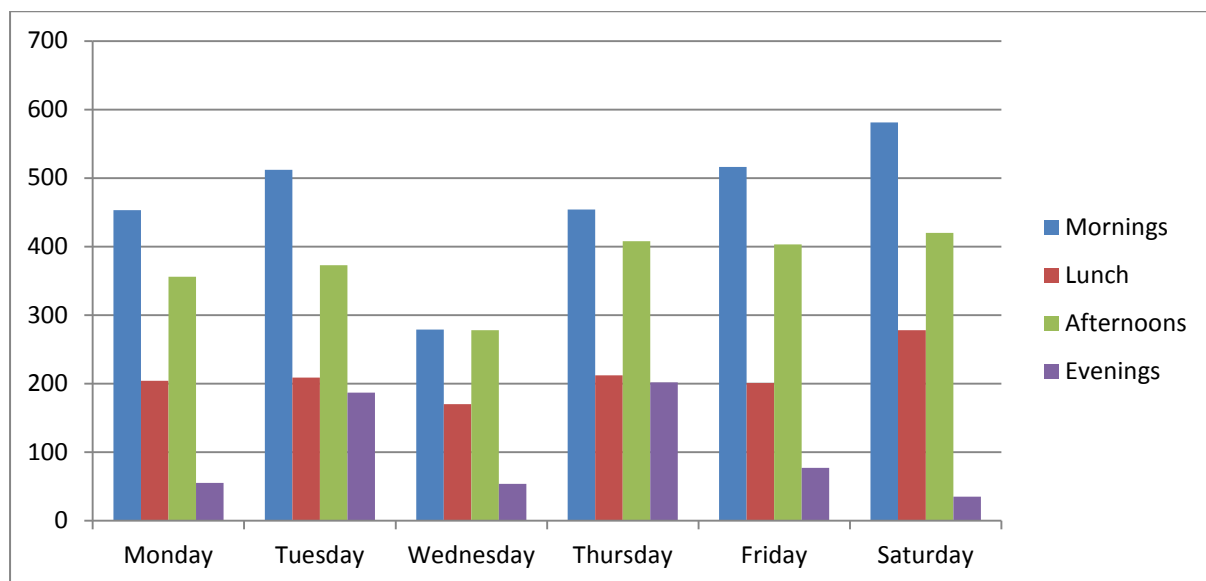


Figure 27: Survey respondents' current patterns of library use by Time and Day

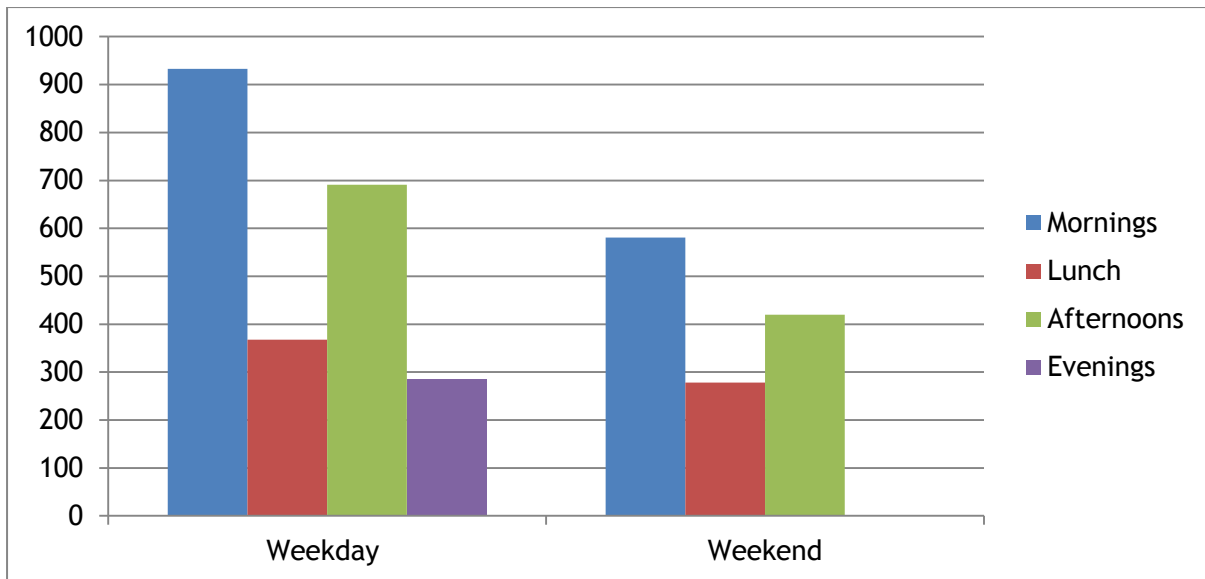


Figure 28: Survey respondents' current patterns of library use by Time and Day (Weekday and Weekend)

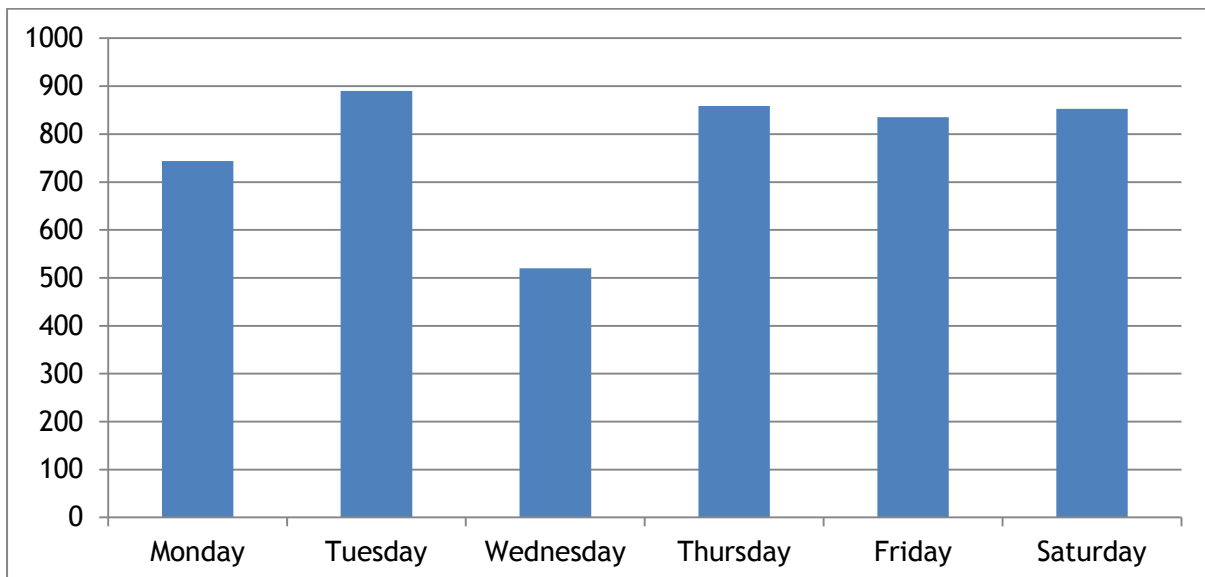


Figure 29: Survey respondents' current patterns of library use by Day

From the above, it is apparent that mornings are currently the most popular times to visit amongst respondents. When comparing visiting patterns between weekdays and weekends, it is apparent that weekday mornings are most popular, followed by weekday afternoons, Saturday mornings and then Saturday afternoons. When considering days that respondents said they visited libraries, Tuesday's were most popular. The low level of responses for Wednesdays is unsurprising as only the two most popular libraries (Central and Caversham Libraries) are open on Wednesdays.

Notable variations regarding current visiting times included:

- The greatest proportion of respondents using Tilehurst Library reported currently visiting on Friday mornings (38.6%), while the most popular time and day to visit all other branches is a Saturday morning.
- All other variations reflect current variations in opening hours, for example:
 - Thursday evenings were more popular amongst respondents using libraries offering both Tuesday and Thursday evening opening hours (Central, Caversham, Palmer Park, Tilehurst and Southcote Libraries)
 - Saturday lunchtimes were the most popular lunchtime opening hour amongst respondents, bar those using Palmer Park and Whitley libraries, where these libraries currently close between 1pm and 2pm.
- Saturday afternoons were the most popular afternoon timeslot at all libraries bar Caversham, Southcote and Tilehurst, where Friday and Thursday afternoons were preferred.
- Unlike amongst respondents in the 25-64 and 65+ age groups, afternoons were the preferred timeslot for visiting Reading libraries amongst respondents from the 0-24 age group.
- Of those respondents in full time employment, unsurprisingly Saturdays and Weekday evenings are the most popular opening hours

When considering *future use*, 1605 people (97.1% of all respondents) answered the question ‘To help us best match opening hours to your needs, please tell us when you would like to visit a library in the future’. Respondents were invited to select a single timeslot for weekdays, and another for weekends. 1543 respondents provided their preferred time to visit on weekdays and 1386 respondents provided their preferred time to visit on a weekend.

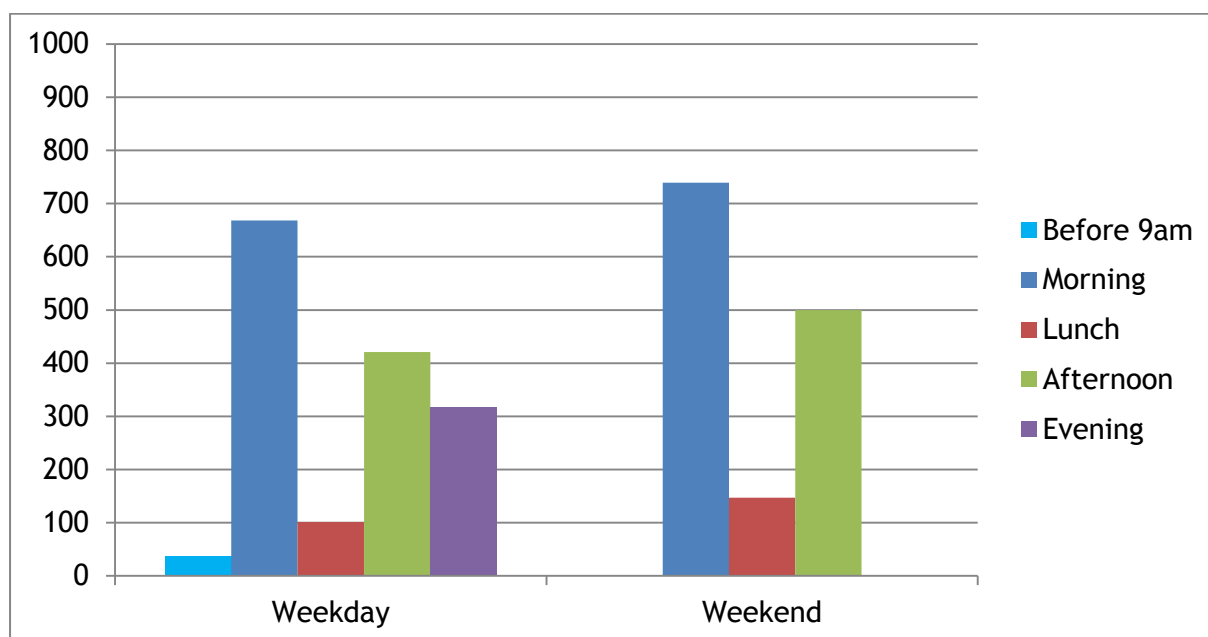


Figure 30: Survey respondents' preferred future patterns of library use by Time and Day (Weekday and Weekend)

Respondents were also asked to rank their top three out of the seven days of the week in terms of their preferred days to visit a library. 1532 respondents answered this question (92.7% of all respondents), and Saturday appeared most frequently in respondents top 3 choices.

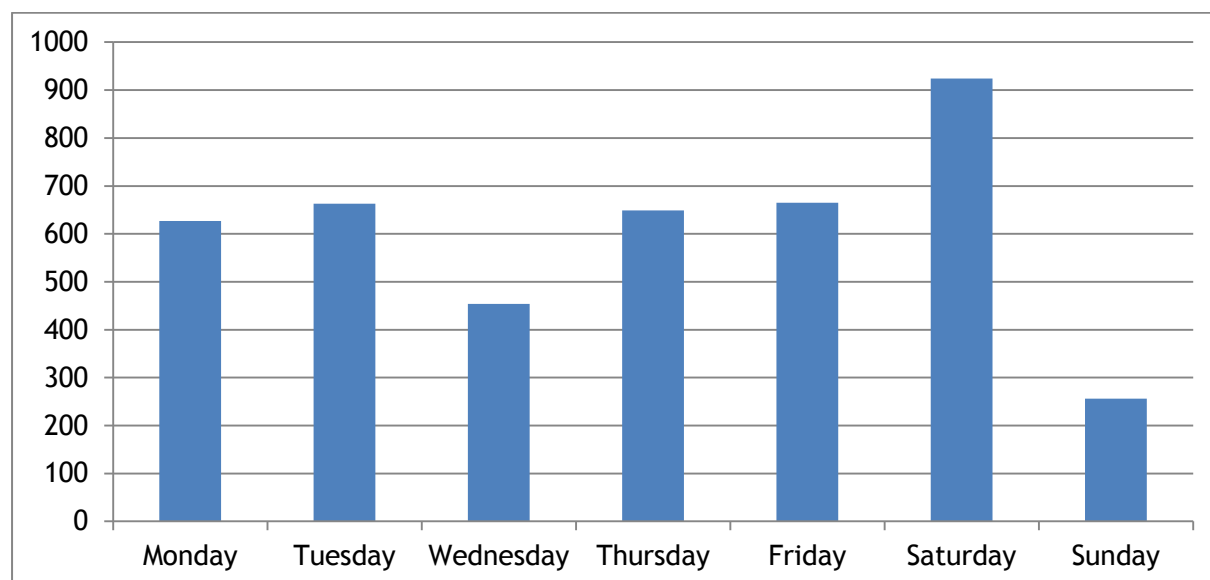


Figure 31: Survey respondents preferred future patterns of library use by Day

When considering variations between responses the following was observed:

- Mornings were the consistent favourites across branches, for both weekdays and weekends. However, weekday afternoons marginally overtook mornings for respondents reporting that the use Whitley Library (35.6% of respondents to 34.4%)
- Respondents from the 0-24 age group expressed an equal preference for weekday afternoon and evenings, in contrast to adults in both the 25-64 and 65+ age categories who showed a preference for mornings on weekdays.
- Evenings were the overwhelming favourite weekday opening hours amongst those in full-time employment, whilst there was little to differentiate between the preference of those in full-time employment for Saturday mornings or afternoons.
- There was a greater proportion of respondents in full-time employment selecting Sunday opening hours as one of their top three preferences, whilst Saturdays remained the overwhelming favourite.

4.6 Composition of library use

As library services in Reading do so much more than lending stock, hosting activities and providing public access computers (where use is recorded by the library management system), respondents were asked to provide further information on how they use libraries, including whether they do any of the following:

- Read newspapers, magazines and reference books in the library
- Ask for information and looking at notice boards
- Use the public access Wi-Fi on their own devices

The table below shows respondents reported take-up of these services.

| | More than once a week | Weekly - monthly | Less than monthly | Total |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Borrow / return books | 14% | 65% | 14% | 93% |
| Read (books / newspapers / magazines) | 9% | 25% | 11% | 46% |
| Use the computers | 4% | 10% | 22% | 36% |
| Ask for information | 3% | 14% | 16% | 34% |
| Hire / return CDs or DVDs | 2% | 12% | 17% | 31% |
| Attend children's events | 8% | 13% | 8% | 29% |
| Use printers / photocopiers / fax machines | 2% | 9% | 17% | 29% |
| Study, work or research | 3% | 13% | 11% | 27% |
| Attend events for adults | 1% | 8% | 12% | 21% |
| Meet with friends | 4% | 9% | 7% | 20% |
| Use the Wi-Fi | 2% | 5% | 6% | 14% |
| Borrowing / requesting / returning toys | 1% | 5% | 8% | 13% |
| Other | 1% | 3% | 6% | 10% |
| Attend Councillor surgeries | 0% | 1% | 6% | 7% |
| Visit the Elevate Hub (Central Library) | 0% | 1% | 5% | 6% |
| Visit the digital volunteers (Central Library) | 0% | 0% | 4% | 4% |

The table above shows that the most common use of libraries is for book borrowing, and this is the most common use by frequent library users. After book borrowing, the second most common use of libraries is for reading (of newspapers and magazines, as well as books). Along with attending children's activities, reading falls within the top three most common uses of library services by weekly visitors.

Asking for information, hiring/returning CDs/DVDs and studying/working/researching also enter into the most common activities of weekly-monthly visitors to the service, whilst the use of IT services including using computers, printers and photocopiers are more common activities undertaken monthly or less frequently.

Variations between groups of users included:

- A greater proportion of women using libraries to attend children's and adults' events and to meet with friends than men, and a greater proportion

of men using libraries to read (books, newspapers and magazines). In part, this may be a product of the age profile and caring responsibilities of female and male respondents/library users

- A greater proportion of 25-64 year old respondents using libraries to attend children's activities (42%)
- A smaller proportion of respondents from the 65+ age group using computers (23%), attend children's events (7%) and borrow Audio Visual materials (20%)

4.7 Reading language

303 survey respondents reported that they like to read in a language other than English. 116 respondents also reported a first language other than English as follows. From the Mobile Library survey, 6 respondents also reported that they like to read in a language other than English, with only 2 reporting a language other than English as their first language. The results of both surveys combined are outlined overleaf (Figure 32):

| | Survey responses | | | | Census 2010 | |
|------------|------------------|--------|----------------|-------|--|-------|
| | Reading language | | First language | | Main languages spoken in Reading amongst residents aged 3 and over | |
| Polish | 18 | 1.09% | 10 | 0.61% | 3768 | 2.54% |
| Nepalese | 1 | 0.06% | 0 | 0.00% | 2430 | 1.64% |
| Urdu | 7 | 0.42% | 3 | 0.18% | 1790 | 1.21% |
| Punjabi | 1 | 0.06% | 5 | 0.30% | 921 | 0.62% |
| Chinese | 19 | 1.15% | 3 | 0.18% | 917 | 0.62% |
| Portuguese | 7 | 0.42% | 3 | 0.18% | 655 | 0.44% |
| French | 174 | 10.53% | 13 | 0.79% | 633 | 0.43% |
| Arabic | 11 | 0.67% | 3 | 0.18% | 600 | 0.40% |
| Spanish | 61 | 3.69% | 10 | 0.61% | 585 | 0.39% |
| Hindi | 11 | 0.67% | 2 | 0.12% | 566 | 0.38% |
| Tamil | 7 | 0.42% | 8 | 0.48% | 505 | 0.34% |
| Italian | 45 | 2.72% | 5 | 0.30% | 450 | 0.30% |
| German | 70 | 4.24% | 4 | 0.24% | 406 | 0.27% |
| Bengali | 7 | 0.42% | 6 | 0.36% | 400 | 0.27% |
| Russian | 16 | 0.97% | 3 | 0.18% | 328 | 0.22% |
| Gujarati | 3 | 0.18% | 1 | 0.06% | 196 | 0.13% |
| Marathi | 1 | 0.06% | 1 | 0.06% | 128 | 0.09% |
| Other* | 50 | 3.03% | 35 | 2.12% | 6275 | 4.25% |

Figure 32: Survey and Mobile Survey respondents by Reading and First Language

*Other languages included the following, amongst others:

- Dutch
- Greek
- Japanese
- Slovakian
- Swedish
- Ancient Greek
- Bulgarian
- Catalan
- Danish
- Gaelic
- Swahili
- Yugoslav

This shows that languages respondents have reported that they like to read in and reported first languages do not reflect those main languages from the 2011 census. This also shows a higher demand for European languages taught in schools etc. such as French, German, Spanish and Italian.

4.8 Online catalogue

Kathy Settle, Chief Executive of the Leadership for Libraries Taskforce, said: “People are increasingly using digital channels to carry out day-to-day tasks and to discover and explore new information and connections. As such, they expect to see a strong online library service that seamlessly joins up with the services provided in the physical library space

Consultation respondents were therefore asked the question ‘Do you use the online library catalogue?’. 1589 people (96.2% of respondents) answered this question and 42.2% indicated that they currently use the online catalogue. 6 Mobile Library survey respondents (4.7%) also indicated that they use the online catalogue.

Respondents that currently, or have previously used the catalogue, were also asked if they had any ideas about how the service might be improved.

The table below (Figure 33) shows the most common suggestions made across both surveys.

| | Cases | Response % |
|---|------------|----------------|
| Search improvements/options for browsing | 71 | 35.32% |
| Updating appearance/functionality | 20 | 9.95% |
| Reserving books | 14 | 6.97% |
| Display images of books/covers and descriptions | 13 | 6.47% |
| Speed of system | 11 | 5.47% |
| Make more user friendly (general) | 10 | 4.98% |
| Increase awareness | 9 | 4.48% |
| Improvements to log in | 8 | 3.98% |
| Need for advice/support | 8 | 3.98% |
| Increase range of books | 8 | 3.98% |
| Wording of instructions | 7 | 3.48% |
| Reminders for overdue books | 7 | 3.48% |
| Allow library specific searches | 5 | 2.49% |
| Larger font size | 4 | 1.99% |
| Facilitate users to purchase books | 4 | 1.99% |
| Allow remote access | 4 | 1.99% |
| Improve display on mobile devices | 2 | 1.00% |
| Provide a mobile application | 2 | 1.00% |
| Other | 12 | 5.97% |
| Total | 201 | 108.96% |

Figure 33: Respondents recommended improvements to the online catalogue

This shows that on the whole, of those responding there is a general feeling that the usability of the catalogue could be improved.

4.9 e-books

1536 people (93.0% of respondents) answered the question ‘Do you read e-books?’. 25.4% indicated that they do read e-books, whilst only 2.5% said that they borrow e-books from the library service. 11 respondents to the Mobile Library survey also indicated that they read e-books, with only 1 user having borrowed an e-book from the library.

The table below (Figure 34) provides a breakdown of the most common reasons given for not using the e-library by respondents to both surveys (including where more than one reason was given by respondents).

| | Cases | Response % |
|--------------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| Unaware of service | 131 | 39.22% |
| Compatibility with e-reader (Kindle) | 49 | 14.67% |
| Get e-books elsewhere | 49 | 14.67% |
| Prefer 'real' books | 29 | 8.68% |
| Not tried it yet | 24 | 7.19% |
| Limited choice | 20 | 5.99% |
| Don't know how to | 11 | 3.29% |
| Difficulty using the system | 6 | 1.80% |
| Only use on holiday | 4 | 1.20% |
| Length of loan period | 1 | 0.30% |
| Other | 10 | 2.99% |
| Total | 334 | 110.28% |

Figure 34: Reasons given by Survey and Mobile Survey respondents for not borrowing e-books from the Library Service

4.10 Internet and computer services

According to the Office for National Statistics:

- The number of households with access to the internet has increased ten-fold, from 9% to 84%, between 1998 and 2014
- Only 3.6% of households cite cost as barrier to web access (2014)
- The percentage of adults who go online daily has doubled from 35% to 76% between 2006 and 2014

Libraries are frequently endorsed as a means of tackling digital exclusion amongst those without access to the internet or a computer of their own. Respondents were therefore asked if they rely upon libraries for their access to the internet or computers. Overall, 11.7% of respondents reported that they were reliant on

Reading libraries for their access to the internet and 10.0% for access to computers.

The graph below shows a breakdown of responses by branch.

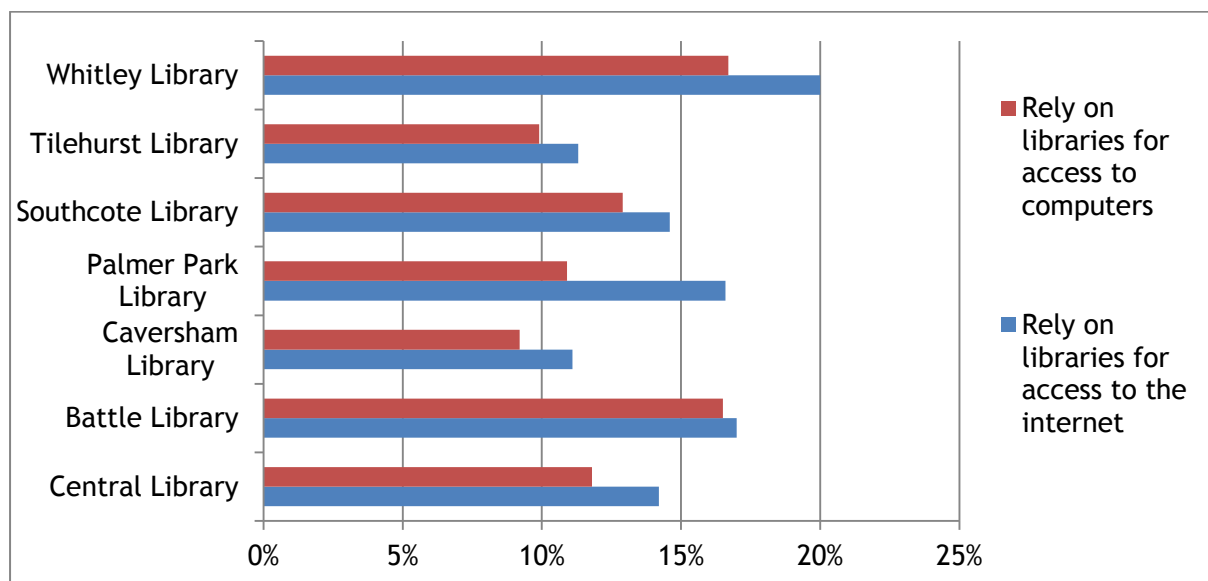


Figure 35: Survey respondents reliant on libraries for access to computers and the internet by Library

From the above it is apparent that reliance upon libraries for access to the internet and computers is proportionally highest amongst respondents using Whitley Library, however the number of respondents using Whitley are so low that they may not be representative. The proportion of male respondents relying on libraries for their access to computers and the internet was also higher than female respondents. Finally, the proportion of respondents from the 0-24 age group showed a higher level of reliance on libraries for access to computers (20.5%) and the internet (17.9%) that adults in the 25-64 and 65+ age groups. However, the size of this sample is so small that it may not be representative.

4.11 Comments on current library use

Respondents were asked if there was anything not covered within the questionnaire that they thought the council ought to be aware of, with regards to how they currently use library services. 451 respondents to the survey (27.3% of respondents), and 43 respondents to the Mobile Library survey (35.2%), took this opportunity to explain what they value about the service and what it means to them. Focus groups and interviewees were also asked this question and respondents largely used this opportunity to explain what they value about the library service.

Responses showed that Library Services in Reading are 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 and IT classes 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, as well as local notices have also been identified as a fundamental to the social dimension of libraries.
- 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 training in order to access the digital world, or may not be able to afford broadband or a computer of their own
- Libraries have been identified as accessible and safe places for vulnerable groups, including children, older people and people with disabilities (both physical and mental)

Respondents to the consultation via email and letter, those submitting responses to the July 2015 budget consultation, and comments received as part of a petition to save library services also echoed these sentiments.

Figures 36 and 37 show the frequency of themes appearing in comments.

| Survey responses | Cases | Response % |
|--|------------|---------------|
| Importance of children's activities | 84 | 20.2% |
| Information/education/research resource | 84 | 20.2% |
| Access to computers/internet | 49 | 11.8% |
| Events/opportunities for social activities | 47 | 11.3% |
| Community support/local hub | 46 | 11.1% |
| Staff | 39 | 9.4% |
| Reserving books | 24 | 5.8% |
| Safe/welcoming place to be | 19 | 4.6% |
| Importance of books/reading | 17 | 4.1% |
| Free service | 8 | 1.9% |
| Book clubs | 7 | 1.7% |
| Getting out of the house/walking | 6 | 1.4% |
| Opening hours | 4 | 1.0% |
| Use for work purposes | 3 | 0.7% |
| Other | 61 | 14.7% |
| Total | 415 | 120.0% |

Figure 36: Themes emerging from Survey responses

| Mobile Library Survey responses | Cases | Response % |
|--|-----------|---------------|
| Importance of service for people with disabilities | 24 | 55.8% |
| Importance of support from staff | 14 | 32.6% |
| Convenience of the service | 6 | 14.0% |
| Library service provides social contact | 6 | 14.0% |
| Satisfied with home visits | 3 | 7.0% |
| Helps occupy time | 3 | 7.0% |
| Don't like using screens for any length of time | 2 | 4.7% |
| Unable to read small print | 2 | 4.7% |
| Would stop using library services if the Mobile Library were no longer available | 2 | 4.7% |
| Other | 6 | 14.0% |
| Total | 43 | 158.1% |

Figure 37: Themes emerging from Mobile Survey responses

5. Future Library Use

5.1 Savings Ideas

696 people (42.1% of survey respondents) and 33 Mobile Library users (25.8% of respondents) answered the question 'Do you have any ideas of how the library service might make the required level of savings?'. The table overleaf (Figure 38) breaks down the suggestions made.

| | Cases | Response % |
|---|------------|---------------|
| *Reducing opening hours | 145 | 19.9% |
| *Charging/asking for donations | 145 | 19.9% |
| *Sharing space/collaboration with partners from the public/private/voluntary sector | 79 | 10.8% |
| *Use of volunteers | 69 | 9.5% |
| *Renting space | 58 | 8.0% |
| Attracting grants/other income | 35 | 4.8% |
| Concentrate on provision of books - reduce others e.g. magazines, CD's, etc. | 32 | 4.4% |
| Closing branches | 28 | 3.8% |
| *Raising money | 27 | 3.7% |
| *Reduce staff/pay less | 27 | 3.7% |
| Books/materials donations | 25 | 3.4% |
| Greater use of new technology | 20 | 2.7% |
| Reducing the stock fund | 18 | 2.5% |
| Review purchasing | 15 | 2.1% |
| Modernising/use of new buildings | 10 | 1.4% |
| Reduce energy use | 9 | 1.2% |
| Greater use of e-books | 5 | 0.7% |
| Sale of buildings | 5 | 0.7% |
| Other | 58 | 8.0% |
| Libraries should not make savings | 88 | 12.1% |
| Total | 729 | 123.2% |

Figure 38: Survey and Mobile Survey respondents Savings Ideas

The top 5 suggestions are shown below (Figure 39).

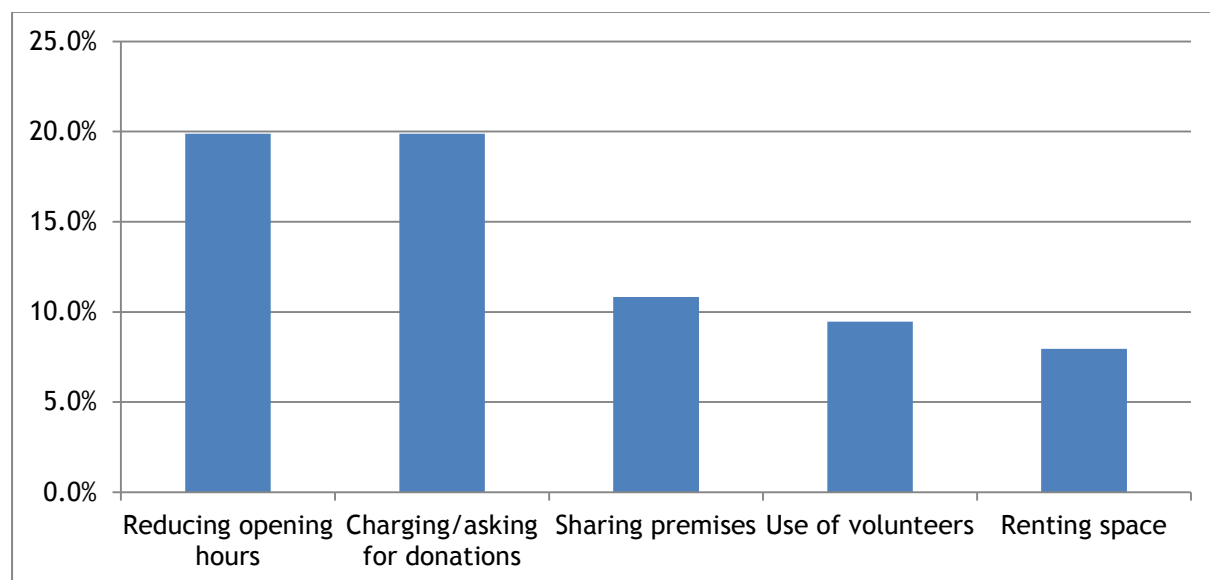


Figure 39: Survey and Mobile Survey respondents' top 5 savings ideas

Members of focus groups, interviewees and respondents to the consultation by letter and email also echoed the points marked with an asterisk (*) in Figure 38 above.

5.2 Areas for improvement

Respondents were asked the open question ‘Is there anything you think is currently missing from the library service?’. 321 people answered this question, including 16 respondents to the Mobile Library survey (4.7%) and 315 respondents to the main survey (19%). The following table (Figure 40) provides a breakdown of comments given across both surveys.

| | Cases | Response % |
|-----------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| Improved selections | 65 | 17.71% |
| *Cafe/refreshments | 53 | 14.44% |
| *Group activities/community space | 41 | 11.17% |
| *Children's activities | 31 | 8.45% |
| *Updated IT | 30 | 8.17% |
| *Toilets | 24 | 6.54% |
| *Better promotion/information | 21 | 5.72% |
| *Wi-Fi | 16 | 4.36% |
| *Opening times | 15 | 4.09% |
| *Self-service system | 13 | 3.54% |
| *E-books | 12 | 3.27% |
| Book and other ordering | 10 | 2.72% |
| Other money making suggestions | 9 | 2.45% |
| Staffing | 8 | 2.18% |
| Quiet environment | 7 | 1.91% |
| Displays/exhibitions | 5 | 1.36% |
| Investment/funding | 5 | 1.36% |
| Disabled access/support | 4 | 1.09% |
| Car parking | 3 | 0.82% |
| Use of IT systems | 3 | 0.82% |
| Comfortable seating area | 2 | 0.54% |
| Involvement of external groups | 2 | 0.54% |
| Other | 30 | 8.17% |
| Total | 367 | 111.44% |

Figure 40: Survey and Mobile Survey respondents suggested areas for improvement

Members of focus groups, interviewees and respondents to the consultation by letter and email also echoed the points marked with an asterisk (*) in Figure 40 above.

Following on from this, respondents to the main survey were asked ‘Which of the following would encourage you to use the service or use the service more?’ and were provided with a list of potential changes to the service that were derived from an appraisal of responses to the 2014 Library User Survey and reviews of

library services conducted by other authorities. All respondents answered this question and Figure 41 shows the frequency that each option appeared in respondents ranking of the 5 options most important to them.

| | No. | Response % |
|---|-----|------------|
| Introduction of / improvements to toilet facilities | 528 | 31.96% |
| Food and drinks facilities | 503 | 30.45% |
| Out of hours returns drop-off | 479 | 29.00% |
| Library Services sharing a building with other services | 361 | 21.85% |
| Events | 329 | 19.92% |
| Different opening hours | 297 | 17.98% |
| Additional seating | 290 | 17.55% |
| More varied book stock | 282 | 17.07% |
| Self-service book borrowing and returns | 275 | 16.65% |
| Public access Wi-Fi | 196 | 11.86% |
| Greater access to the Toy Library | 169 | 10.23% |
| More attractive building | 68 | 7.38% |
| Improved accessibility | 41 | 4.12% |
| Other | 122 | 2.48% |
| None | 335 | 20.28% |

Figure 41: Survey responses - options to encourage future use of Library Services

‘Library Services sharing a building with other services’ was most frequently identified as the top ranking option (14.76%), followed by ‘Out of hours returns drop-off’ (14.11%) and ‘More varied book-stock’ (11.62%).

Variations between different groups of respondents included:

- Food and drinks facilities (31.1%) most frequently appearing in the top 5 amongst respondents using Battle Library, followed by events (28.1%) and out of hours drop-off (26.8%)
- Out of hours drop-off (37.8%) featuring most frequently amongst users of Whitley Library, followed by the introduction of / improvement to toilets (35.6%), and food and drinks facilities (30%) - although it must be noted that significantly lower numbers of respondents reported using Whitley Library than any other branch
- Library services sharing a building with other services was identified as the top ranking option most frequently by users of Central, Southcote, Tilehurst and Whitley Libraries, whilst events, out of hours drop-off and different opening hours appeared most frequently for Battle, Caversham and Palmer Park Libraries respectively
- Out of hours drop-off appeared the most frequently in the top 5 amongst respondents from the 0-24 age group (although it must be noted that there were few respondents from this age group)

- A greater proportion of male respondents selecting 'None of the above'
- Out of hours returns drop-off appeared most frequently in the top 5 options for those in full-time employment, followed by food and drinks facilities and different opening hours.

Finally, respondents were asked 'If you would find it helpful to have other services located alongside the library, what would these be?' 1471 responded to this question (89%) and the most frequently selected options are shown in the graph below in Figure 42.

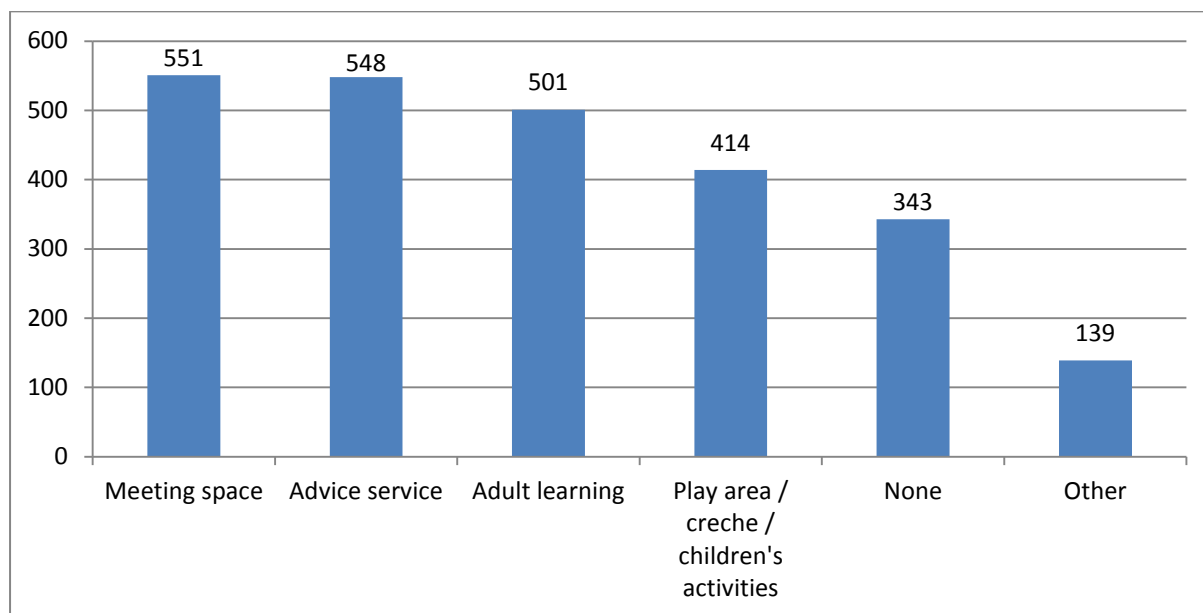


Figure 42: Survey responses - other services to share premises with libraries

Other suggestions included:

- Improved accessibility (including the provision of car parking)
- Improved security

Variations included:

- Play area / crèche / children's activities appearing most frequently from respondents using Southcote Library (32.2%), and from the 0-24 age group (38.5%) (although this sample is small)
- Advice was most frequently selected amongst respondents using Caversham (36.5%) and Whitley (40%) Libraries. Advice was also most frequently selected by users from the 65+ age group (36.8%).

5.3 Elements of the library service that are no-longer required

The survey asked 'Is there anything currently provided by the library service that you think is no longer required?'. 156 people (9.4%) answered this question. A further 5 responses were also received through the Mobile Library survey (3.9%).

The following table (Figure 43) provides a breakdown of replies received to both surveys.

| | Cases | Response % |
|---|------------|----------------|
| DVD's | 56 | 34.78% |
| CD's | 46 | 28.57% |
| Newspapers/magazines | 21 | 13.04% |
| Books - general and specific | 18 | 11.18% |
| Computers | 14 | 8.70% |
| Reduce services provided based upon take-up | 7 | 4.35% |
| Music library/sheet music | 6 | 3.73% |
| Toy library | 6 | 3.73% |
| Internet access | 5 | 3.11% |
| Games, jigsaws etc. | 4 | 2.48% |
| Photocopying | 4 | 2.48% |
| E-books | 3 | 1.86% |
| Suggestions on use of staff time | 3 | 1.86% |
| Entertainment/talks | 2 | 1.24% |
| Cassettes | 2 | 1.24% |
| Popular film | 1 | 0.62% |
| Some evening opening times | 1 | 0.62% |
| Mobile library | 1 | 0.62% |
| Other | 22 | 13.66% |
| Total | 161 | 137.89% |

Figure 43: Survey and Mobile Survey responses - elements of the library service that respondents consider to be no longer required

5.4 Alternative branches

Respondents were asked 'If you could no longer visit your preferred library which of the following branches would you be most likely to visit?'. 1622 people (98.1% of respondents) answered this question. Figure 44 overleaf shows the most frequently chosen branches.

| | Respondents | % |
|---------------------|-------------|--------|
| Central Library | 592 | 36.50% |
| Battle Library | 156 | 9.62% |
| Caversham Library | 100 | 6.17% |
| Palmer Park Library | 41 | 2.53% |
| Southcote Library | 65 | 4.01% |
| Tilehurst Library | 109 | 6.72% |
| Whitley Library | 18 | 1.11% |
| Mobile Library | 19 | 1.17% |
| None | 488 | 30.09% |
| *Other Library | 34 | 2.10% |

Figure 44: Survey respondents preferred alternative library

*‘Other’ refers to out of borough libraries identified included those in West Berkshire, Wokingham and Oxfordshire.

When considering alternative branches for respondents using only one library in the network, the following responses were received (Figure 45):

| | Base | 1 st Ranking Alternative | 2 nd Ranking Alternative | | |
|--------------------------|------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| Central Library only | 97 | None | 32.99% | Battle | 15.46% |
| Battle Library only | 61 | None | 37.70% | Central | 31.15% |
| Caversham Library only | 236 | Central | 50.85% | None | 38.98% |
| Palmer Park Library only | 25 | Central | 60.00% | None | 28.00% |
| Southcote Library only | 73 | None | 53.42% | Tilehurst | 26.03% |
| Tilehurst Library only | 198 | None | 47.98% | Battle | 19.19% |
| Whitley Library only | 14 | None | 50.00% | Central | 42.86% |

Figure 45: Survey respondents’ three most frequently selected alternative branches by Library Used

Where respondents chose the option ‘None’ they were asked why they would not use any of the other libraries, and what they would do instead. Figures 46 and 47 provide a breakdown of the emerging themes for these questions:

| | Cases | Response % |
|--|------------|---------------|
| Distance/too far away | 167 | 44.7% |
| Convenience | 62 | 16.6% |
| Transport - lack of car/cost of public transport | 59 | 15.8% |
| Access | 33 | 8.8% |
| Prefer to walk | 25 | 6.7% |
| Current library local - community library | 25 | 6.7% |
| Needs of children | 21 | 5.6% |
| Parking | 18 | 4.8% |
| Carrying heavy books | 14 | 3.7% |
| Mobility restrictions | 13 | 3.5% |
| Library visit fitted with other activities | 12 | 3.2% |
| Staff | 7 | 1.9% |
| Prefer not to use car | 6 | 1.6% |
| Lack of time | 5 | 1.3% |
| Other libraries busy | 3 | 0.8% |
| Lack of convenient opening hours | 2 | 0.5% |
| Other | 15 | 4.0% |
| Total | 374 | 130.2% |

Figure 46: Reasons given by Survey respondents' for stating that they would no longer use library services if they could no longer visit their preferred library

Issues relating to travel/transport/accessibility were most frequently cited across all branches and groups of respondents.

| | Cases | Response % |
|---------------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Buy books new | 58 | 19.7% |
| Do nothing | 39 | 13.2% |
| Be unhappy! | 36 | 12.2% |
| Buy books second hand | 34 | 11.5% |
| Read less/limited selection | 33 | 11.2% |
| Use e-books/internet | 31 | 10.5% |
| Use other LA's/organisation's library | 27 | 9.2% |
| Share books with friends | 19 | 6.4% |
| Do/find other activities | 18 | 6.1% |
| Use online library | 8 | 2.7% |
| Protest | 6 | 2.0% |
| Use mobile library | 2 | 0.7% |
| Other | 36 | 12.2% |
| Total | 295 | 117.6% |

Figure 47: Alternatives offered by Survey respondents who stated that they would no longer use Reading libraries if they could no longer visit their preferred

5.5 Travel

Respondents were asked about their access to a car. 1599 responded to this question (96.8%), 73.8% have access to a car. This is broadly in line with both the borough and national averages of 71.7% and 74.2% respectively. Respondents to the Mobile Library survey were also asked this question and 73.1% of the 119 respondents reported that they had no access to a car.

Figures 48 and 49 show this by branch and against the percentage of households in each area with access to a car or van.

| | Base (respondents) | % of respondents without access to a car | % of households without access to a car (2011 census) |
|---------------------|--------------------|--|---|
| Central Library | 877 | 31.0% | 37.61% |
| Battle Library | 354 | 34.7% | 32.90% |
| Caversham Library | 621 | 23.5% | 15.66% |
| Palmer Park Library | 167 | 32.3% | 26.80% |
| Southcote Library | 230 | 23.5% | 28.17% |
| Tilehurst Library | 479 | 20.8% | 19.71% |
| Whitley Library | 86 | 43.0% | 29.77% |

Figure 48: Survey respondents and Reading households without access to a car or van by Library Used and Catchment Area

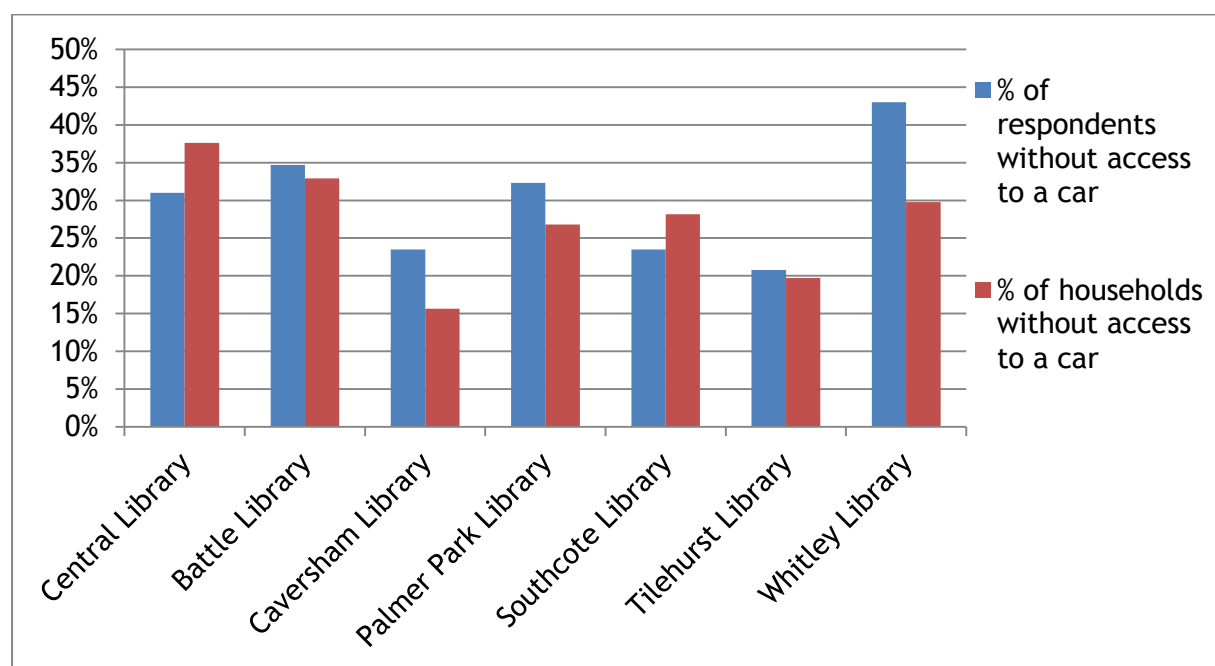


Figure 49: Survey respondents and Reading households without access to a car or van by Library Used and Catchment Area

Variations between respondents also included:

- A higher proportion of respondents without access to a car amongst the 24 and under age group (54%), and the over 65 age group (29%).

- A lower rate of access to a car amongst those out of full-time work

Respondents to both the main and Mobile Library survey were also asked how they usually travel across the borough, with the answers received shown in Figure 50 below.

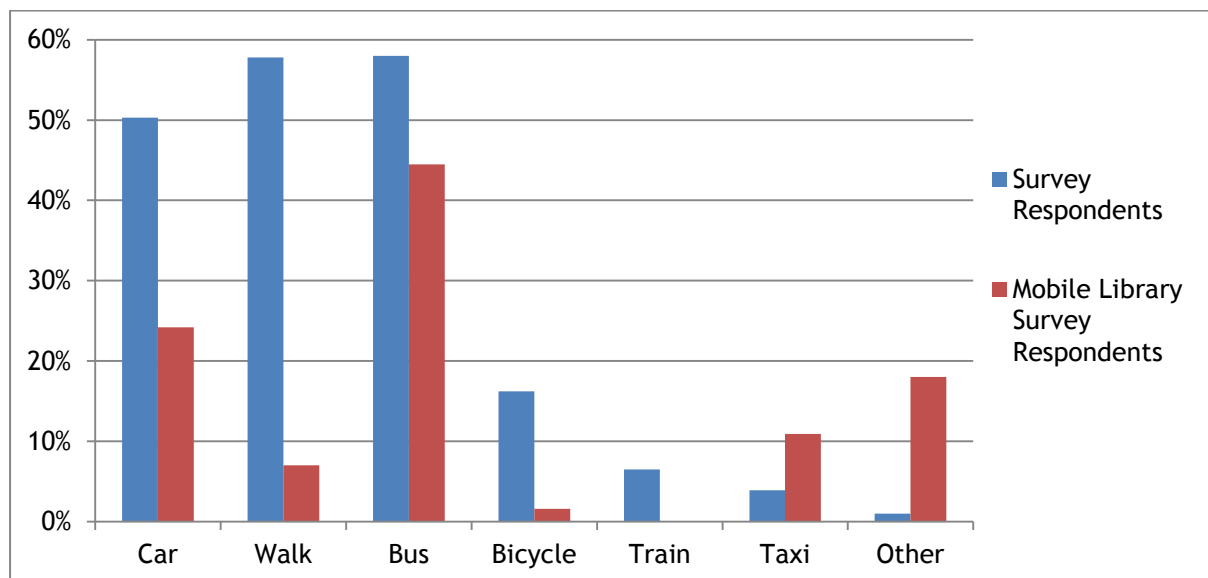


Figure 50: Survey and Mobile Survey respondents by means of travel used across the borough

Variations included:

- An overall preference for traveling across the borough by car, from users of Battle (61.6%), Caversham (60.7%) and Southcote (61.1%) Libraries. This is in contrast to the general preference for travelling by bus amongst respondents using Central (64%), Palmer Park (57.1%), Tilehurst (64%) and Whitley (61.1%) Libraries.
- A greater reliance on travel by Bus amongst the 65+ age groups (80.4%), followed by car (47.9%) and by foot (46.6%)
- A preference for walking amongst the under 25 age group (59%) and 25-64 year old respondents (64.3%), followed by car (43% and 52.7) and bus travel (41% and 47.2%).
- Mobile library users responses also demonstrated a high level of reliance upon buses (44.5%) and the Readibus (14.9%), a higher level of dependence on taxis than other respondents (11.7%), and a number of respondents that are unable to leave their homes without support from others.

5.6 Volunteers

Respondents were asked if they would be willing to volunteer in their local library. 1537 people responded to this question (93.0%) and 36.4% expressed their interest in volunteering.

As shown in Figure 51 below, 15.7% of those willing to volunteer indicated that they would be willing to volunteer for occasional events or projects, 75.0% for 0-5 hours a week, and only 7.2% reported that they would be willing to volunteer more time. This equates to as much as 2201 hours (only 308 hours fewer than were worked by volunteers in Reading Libraries in 2014/15).

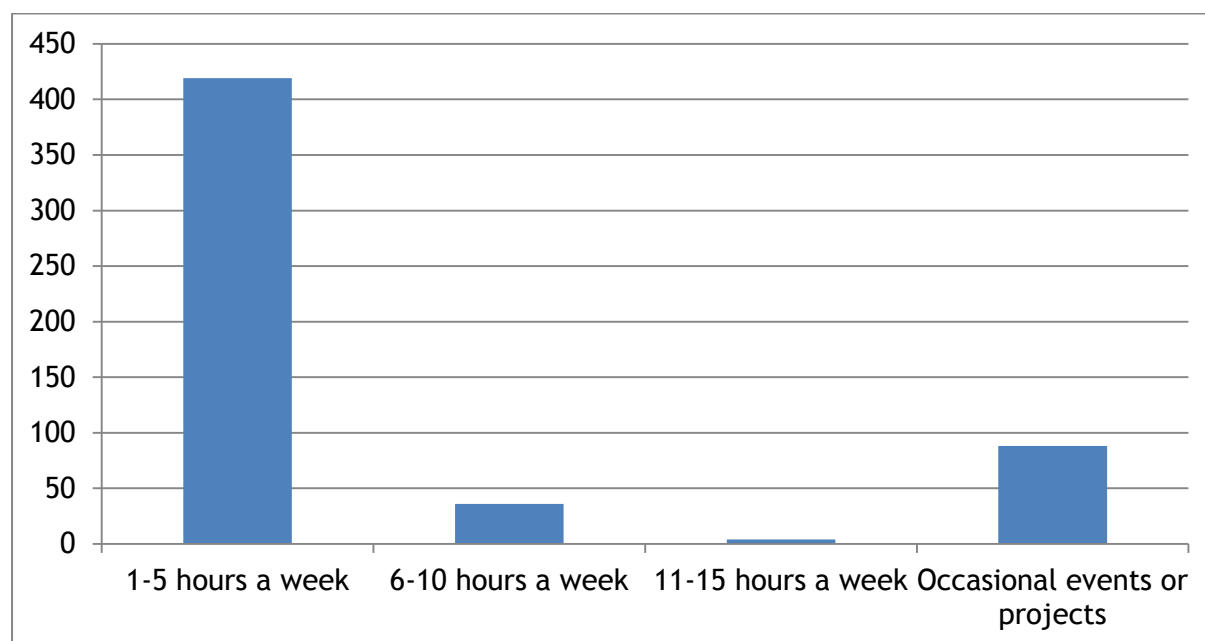


Figure 51: Survey respondents willing to volunteer in libraries by Timeframe

Of those willing to volunteer in their local library, respondents identified that they would be willing to complete the following tasks (Figure 52):

| Activities | Respondents | % |
|--|-------------|--------|
| Shelve books | 384 | 23.20% |
| Work on reception | 263 | 15.90% |
| Deliver books to the elderly and housebound | 201 | 12.20% |
| Help with activities (please specify which activities below) | 129 | 7.80% |
| Help people to get online | 125 | 7.60% |
| Run activities (please specify what type below) | 75 | 4.50% |
| Run a homework club | 73 | 4.40% |
| Other (please specify below) | 30 | 1.80% |

Figure 52: Survey respondents willing to volunteer in libraries by Activity

Other suggestions included:

- Supporting children's activities generally
- Running/supporting groups
- Running/supporting language classes
- Arts and crafts

There were no noticeable variations between branches, however the following differences between age groups were notable (Figure 53). In some cases, however, this may be skewed by the small number of respondents (e.g. from the 0-24 age category).

| | Base (respondents) | Volunteers |
|-------|--------------------|------------|
| 0-14 | 15 | 60.00% |
| 15-24 | 24 | 50.00% |
| 25-34 | 181 | 37.02% |
| 35-44 | 329 | 31.31% |
| 45-54 | 237 | 37.97% |
| 55-64 | 279 | 39.78% |
| 65-74 | 340 | 35.59% |
| 75-84 | 173 | 21.39% |
| 85+ | 38 | 7.89% |

Figure 53: Survey respondents willing to volunteer in libraries by Age Group

5.7 Impact of changes

Respondents were asked if there was anything they wanted to say about how changes to the way the library service is provided may affect you and your family. 615 people answered this question (37.2%) from the main survey, and 65 from the Mobile Library survey (50.7% of respondents). Themes emerging included the impact on:

- Opportunities to read
- Communities as a whole
- Educational attainment
- Isolation
- Convenience
- Use of library services on the whole

The following table (Figure 54) provides a breakdown of all responses given.

| | Cases | Response % |
|--|------------|---------------|
| Opportunities to read | 112 | 19.4% |
| *Libraries - an important community resource/hub | 101 | 17.5% |
| Importance of children's activities | 95 | 16.5% |
| Libraries - important for education | 83 | 14.4% |
| Comments asking not to close/reduce opening hours of libraries | 70 | 12.1% |
| Libraries help reduce isolation | 48 | 8.3% |
| Importance of qualified staff | 35 | 6.1% |
| *Changes resulting in reduction of use of libraries | 34 | 5.9% |
| Libraries improve quality of life | 30 | 5.2% |
| Current library convenient | 30 | 5.2% |
| *Libraries used and needed by all | 25 | 4.3% |
| Libraries support socialising | 21 | 3.6% |
| Comments on willingness to volunteer | 10 | 1.7% |
| Information services at the library | 10 | 1.7% |
| Health services as part of the library | 5 | 0.9% |
| Other comments | 61 | 10.6% |
| Total | 577 | 133.4% |

Figure 54: Potential impacts of changes to the way libraries are run, reported by survey respondents

Members of focus groups, interviewees and respondents to the consultation by letter and email also echoed the points marked with an asterisk (*) in Figure 54 above.

Figure 55 below shows a breakdown of responses given by Members of focus groups, interviewees and respondents to the consultation by letter and email under the following themes:

- How do you use library services?
- What do you value about the service?
- Is there anything missing / that could be improved?
- Is there anything that we can do differently to save money?
- How might changing the way we run libraries impact on different groups?

Appendix 1

| | How do you use library services? | What do you value about the service? | Is there anything missing / that could be improved? | Is there anything that we can do differently to save money? | How might changing the way we run libraries impact on different groups? |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| <p>Physical Disabilities and Sensory Needs</p> | <p>Use of multiple libraries predominantly included Central + other</p> <p>Book borrowing - primary use</p> <p>Users currently travel by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foot • Bus • Car (as a detour on the way to/from other destinations) <p>Visits to the library are otherwise the sole reason for the trip (as books borrowed are often heavy and users would not wish to carry books and shopping home by foot/on the bus.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to books • Choice of stock • Activities - children's and adults • Library services are personalised (staff are friendly and remember staff) • Meeting other people • Branches are closer to where people live in their communities • Local and national newspapers • Somewhere to go, to get out of the house, but stay in the warm. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community gardening project (Whitley Library) • Public access Wi-Fi at all sites • Charges for late returns and requests (mixed response) • Increasing lending period on less popular titles • Schools to promote further use of the library • Activities to be promoted more widely (beyond the library itself) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails and text messages re. request availability to replace letters • Sell old stock at branches beyond Central • Sell talking books • Accept donations of books (advertise this more widely if something already done) • Offer audio-books online, as well as (or to replace) CDs and cassettes. • Reference books could all be moved to Central Library, leaving additional space at branches for other books/activities. • Partner with organisations such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, Guides and Scouts as a volunteering opportunity. | <p>Library services are key to school age children, the elderly (as they provide a point of contact with others) and those on low incomes because they offer a free and accessible service within peoples communities.</p> |

Appendix 1

| | How do you use library services? | What do you value about the service? | Is there anything missing / that could be improved? | Is there anything that we can do differently to save money? | How might changing the way we run libraries impact on different groups? |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Visually Impaired Persons' reading group</p> | <p>Use of multiple libraries predominantly included Central + other (inc. out of borough)</p> <p>Large Print Books and audio books - primary use</p> <p>Reasons for visiting libraries included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending the VIP reading group • Visit when passing by, with time to spare • Closeness to bus stop | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to books • Help provided to get people online • Mobile library - visiting the housebound • Adults groups and activities (including the VIP reading group as this is inclusive) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifications of new audio books in stock • Day-time events • Additional visits from authors • Drinks machines • Discussions and debates - especially for retirees & those out of work, covering topics including current affairs, historical events (local history esp.) and the future of Reading • Clean entrance and improve lighting to make access easier for the visually impaired • Relocate Central Library nearer to the Town Centre (Central Library is now out of the way as the Centre of the Town has shifted) • A white line along the pavement from the bus stop through the library entrance would help with | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut senior managers salaries • Against the use of volunteers - staff are very knowledgeable | <p>1 bus trip from users homes to libraries is important - having to change buses would discourage use</p> |

Appendix 1

| | How do you use library services? | What do you value about the service? | Is there anything missing / that could be improved? | Is there anything that we can do differently to save money? | How might changing the way we run libraries impact on different groups? |
|---------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| | | | access for the visually impaired | | |
| Youth Cabinet | <p>Range of libraries used. Schools, university library, own home and coffee shops preference for studying (convenience and atmosphere)</p> <p>Book borrowing and studying - primary use</p> <p>Reasons for visiting libraries specified included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit when passing by, with time to spare • Closeness to home | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to books (real books, rather than e-books) • Space to revise • Atmosphere - a safe space / comfortable / relaxing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve range of teen fiction • Additional study space - especially at exam periods - advertised in schools and colleges • Self-service for books • PCs available for checking the available stock/where to look • A teen space which is separate from the children's and adult areas - this would be a good space to study • Access to text books used in schools • More PCs (especially in the branch libraries) • Lighter, brighter, more modern interior at Central Library • A coffee shop at Central Library • Book referrals on shelves • Teen reading challenge • Teen reading / creative writing | Coffee shop Sell discounted stationary (as at colleges) | Some young people are unable to study at home and rely on libraries to complete their homework and to revise etc. |

Appendix 1

| | How do you use library services? | What do you value about the service? | Is there anything missing / that could be improved? | Is there anything that we can do differently to save money? | How might changing the way we run libraries impact on different groups? |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| | | | <p>groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English controlled assessments • Support sessions for GCSEs • Books in community languages circulated to meetings of communities / advertised through these groups • Classic novels (texts that schools are looking at) • Rooms for group study (as in University Libraries) • Partner with secondary schools, as well as primary schools | | |

Appendix 1

| | How do you use library services? | What do you value about the service? | Is there anything missing / that could be improved? | Is there anything that we can do differently to save money? | How might changing the way we run libraries impact on different groups? |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|
| Older peoples, physical / learning disabilities and BME groups | Range of libraries used, primarily for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books • Internet • Reading papers • Activities • Information • Meeting friends (Esp. in the winter) • Research • Toilets • English as a second language (children / own vocab) • Hire DVDs/CDs • Studying | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of books • New newspapers and magazines • A place for older people to mix with others and meet new people. • Customer services • IT help (skill development) and access • Staff • Libraries are on good bus routes • Save money on buying books | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee shop / machine • Change location • 'discovery centre' • Change in staff attitude - customer service • Return word processors / train in use of new IT equipment • Toilets at all sites • Sunday opening • Facilities to watch/listen to TV and radio in branches • Greater access to toy library • Noise from children / other organisations • Unlimited access to internet • Sufficient IT terminals to meet demand • Improve security in Central | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't send paper letters for reserved books or late fees • Close earlier or on certain days • Greater use of volunteers, work experience..? • Sell old stock • Charge for competitions • Charge for letting of the library space • Post office services in the library • Close some branches - Palmer Park • Bring social clubs into the libraries • Hire rooms for social groups - facilitates for making tea? • Collect parcels from Amazon and Collect+ • Reduce management posts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Losing coffee mornings would impact older groups; they use this for the social aspect. • Concerned about opening hours. This may affect different groups. • Important that libraries are on bus routes • Closure impact on poor • Closing the mobile library will isolate disabled / older people |

Appendix 1

| | How do you use library services? | What do you value about the service? | Is there anything missing / that could be improved? | Is there anything that we can do differently to save money? | How might changing the way we run libraries impact on different groups? |
|----------------------------|---|---|--|--|---|
| Central Library Interviews | <p>Some use of multiple branches (Battle**, Palmer Park, Tilehurst)</p> <p>Most varied use: children's activities, book borrowing, newspapers, studying, use of IT and Wi-Fi)</p> <p>Regular use - at least once a week)</p> <p>Local</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space for varied use • Variety of books • Activities • Internet • Friendly staff • Long opening hours • Few central locations for children • Free • 20 books on loan at a time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refreshments/café* • Signage - more specific and clear • Toy library • Study areas for groups • Links with colleges • Appeal to students around revision time • | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsorship of library / improvements • Donations for activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable parents • Morning opening important for parents |
| Battle Library Interviews | <p>6/13 users also visit other libraries (Central, Tilehurst and Caversham)</p> <p>Regular users (4 times a week - every 3 weeks)</p> <p>Use for books, children's activities, ESOL classes to learn English (no further use of the library) and to teach Cranbury College students in public space</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly staff* • Easy access to books • Atmosphere* • Quiet and vibrant spaces for adults to read quietly and children to play • Community languages • Community atmosphere • Access to IT facilities* • Close to home • Fun family day out • Most comfortable - air confectioned, clean, toilets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer opening hours • Content with service as is*** • Reduce noisy activities • Crèche to support adult learning offer • E-books compatible with kindle • Parenting groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase fines • Don't reduce service offer • Close doors in winter to retain heat • Coffee shop (not machines) • Donations for events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battle Library a place for people from different cultural backgrounds and ethnicities to learn English, meet and integrate • Library close by important for those with disabilities • For people who are less mobile: promote electronic lending for e-books and improve e-book system • Facilitate borrowing across libraries • If one branch library is shut, ensure that |

Appendix 1

| | How do you use library services? | What do you value about the service? | Is there anything missing / that could be improved? | Is there anything that we can do differently to save money? | How might changing the way we run libraries impact on different groups? |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|
| | | | | | another branch library nearby is open to users and communicate opening times well |
| Caversham Library Interviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books • Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somewhere to hold groups • Community hub • Shelter • Interaction with others • Surgeries - MPs • Services for children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jigsaws • Talks/groups • IT lessons* • Tea/coffee • Doors stay shut (noisy) • Rhymetime - noisy • More children's services • Only library north of the river (easier travel links) • Entertainment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for donations • Charge for groups (small charge) | |
| Palmer Park Library Interviews | <p>Notable use of other libraries (Central**, Southcote, Woodley*, Earley)</p> <p>Use for Rhymetime and book borrowing</p> <p>Regular users</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities** • Local • Free • Friendly staff • Learning • Socialising** • Range of books | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French language for adults and children • Wi-Fi • Drop-off out of hours • Toilets • Coffee • Self-service • More Islamic books • Fine as is • Dad's activities • Language clubs • Rhymetime in other languages • Computer classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce opening hours • Combine services in single location • Greater use of volunteers • Share facilities with other services that pay rent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pakistani and Polish communities in local area |

Appendix 1

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|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|
| Southcote Library Interviews | <p>Some use of multiple branches (Central, Battle and Caversham)</p> <p>Use for books, newspapers, audio books, information board.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenience • Atmosphere • Staff (knowledgeable and helpful) • Community garden • Children's activities • Social interaction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of books • Digital volunteers • Appeal to men • Webpage - attractiveness and ease of use • Activities - films, talks, quiz night | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less wastage of resources • Coffee shop would increase footfall • Reduce hours • Charge of car parking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social interaction is important • Disability • Teenagers and adults reading |
| Tilehurst Library Interviews | <p>Some use of multiple branches (Central, Palmer Park, Southcote)</p> <p>Use for Children's Centre, book borrowing, Adults books)</p> <p>Regular users (more than once weekly - fortnightly)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's activities • Local • Social interaction • Learning • Friendly/welcoming • Variety of users • Books | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilets*** • After school children's activities • Stair gate (child safety) • Activities for teenagers • Tea and coffee • Mobile library to visit Coley | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce opening hours*** - alternate days over weeks • Voluntary donations* • Charge for use of space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility (non-drivers) • Transport for older and younger people + low income*** |
| Whitley Library Interviews | <p>Users falls into two categories</p> <p>- adults learning English as an additional language and using the library as a quiet study space - using internet and printers as well as borrowing adult fiction</p> <p>- parents of young children attending activities and borrowing children's books</p> <p>Some use of Central and Battle (polish Rhymetime)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location - local • Quiet • Staff • Children's activities • Children's area • Free | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tea, coffee and snacks* • Toilets • Play area (soft play) • Resources for studying English as an additional language • Local papers • Help using computers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine library and community centre • Voluntary donations • Regular book sales • Sell stationary • English language classes* • Sell old stock | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language barriers • Low income - barrier to travel and paying for services • Happy with services provided • Toy library too far to travel • Paid tuition using IT/help with college work |

Appendix 1

| | How do you use library services? | What do you value about the service? | Is there anything missing / that could be improved? | Is there anything that we can do differently to save money? | How might changing the way we run libraries impact on different groups? |
|--------------------|---|---|---|--|--|
| Letters and emails | <p>Regular use of Central and Tilehurst for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCs • Books • Papers <p>Use of all libraries for Cranbury College students</p> | <p>Highly valued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Social dimension for mothers, children and the elderly • Range of books • Central to the community • Activities • Local notices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and assistance in using PCs • Increase time limits for using PCs • Additional information space in central | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charge for admittance to talks • Accept donations for activities • No longer offer free coffee for 'coffee mornings' • Reduce opening hours of peripheral branches and rotate staff • Let space in library buildings • Charge for adult books | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet in libraries is vital to those on low incomes |

Figure 55: Themes emerging from responses given by members of focus groups, interviewees and respondents to the consultation by letter and email

Budget Consultation Responses

As part of the overarching Budget Consultation - July 2015, Reading residents were provided with the opportunity to see the whole picture of savings proposals developed thus far and to highlight concerns and issues about the impact of any proposed savings, so that these could be taken into consideration as proposals developed, and to identify alternative options that could be pursued.

Amongst these proposals included an overview of plans to launch a review of the library service.

93 respondents in total answered the following three questions regarding the proposal to review the library service, and themes emerging from respondents comments are outlined in Figures 56-58 below.

1. What do you think we should be aware of in terms of how this proposal might impact people?
2. If you have any suggestions or alternative options, for how this service could be provided please write below.
3. If you would like to make any other comment please write below.

| Impact | Cases | Response % |
|--|-----------|---------------|
| Educational value of libraries | 12 | 14.0% |
| Impact on the poor/disadvantaged | 14 | 16.3% |
| Value for residents/communities | 35 | 40.7% |
| Impact on children/young people | 19 | 22.1% |
| Impact on the elderly | 7 | 8.1% |
| Important that libraries are kept open | 2 | 2.3% |
| Importance of reading | 1 | 1.2% |
| In favour of reduced service/sharing of services | 2 | 2.3% |
| Impact on literacy | 2 | 2.3% |
| Economic impact | 1 | 1.2% |
| Other | 13 | 15.1% |
| None | 9 | 10.5% |
| Total | 86 | 136.0% |

Figure 56: Potential impacts of reviewing the library service, reported by respondents to the Budget Consultation - July 2015

| Suggestions and alternative options | Cases | Response % |
|---|-------|------------|
| Volunteers | 8 | 9.3% |
| Fund raising/increased Council Tax | 14 | 16.3% |
| Maintain current service/specific library | 8 | 9.3% |
| Cutting costs elsewhere | 1 | 1.2% |
| Better use of space | 10 | 11.6% |
| Importance of librarians | 5 | 5.8% |
| Reduced opening times | 7 | 8.1% |
| Reduce certain services | 3 | 3.5% |
| Other | 4 | 4.7% |
| None | 44 | 51.2% |
| Total | 86 | 120.9% |

Figure 56: Suggestions and alternative options received from respondents to the Budget Consultation - July 2015

| Other comments | Cases | Response % |
|---|-------|------------|
| Donation of books | 1 | 1.2% |
| Combining libraries with other services | 5 | 5.8% |
| Importance to community | 6 | 7.0% |
| Comment on raising Council Tax/Cuts | 3 | 3.5% |
| Changes to library service | 10 | 11.6% |
| General importance of current services | 6 | 7.0% |
| Other | 6 | 7.0% |
| No comment made | 49 | 57.0% |
| Total | 86 | 100.0% |

Figure 57: Other comments received from respondents to the Budget Consultation - July 2015

Petition comments

Three petitions received with signatures from a total of 2,655 people in support for maintaining Reading Libraries, and the following libraries in particular:

- Battle (770 signatures)
- Southcote (828 signatures)
- Tilehurst (1057 signatures)

The main themes emerging from comments attached to the petition are summarised below (Figure 59).

Appendix 1

| Response comments from petitions | Library | | | | Total | |
|---|-----------|------------|--------|------------|-------|------------|
| | Southcote | | Battle | | Cases | Response % |
| | Cases | Response % | Cases | Response % | | |
| Benefits for/used by the whole community | 34 | 20.6% | 60 | 22.6% | 94 | 21.9% |
| Beautiful/important building | 1 | 0.6% | 34 | 12.8% | 35 | 8.1% |
| Essential resource/valuable support (general) | 38 | 23.0% | 50 | 18.9% | 88 | 20.5% |
| Community hub/brings people/community together | 43 | 26.1% | 72 | 27.2% | 115 | 26.7% |
| Close to home/based in the community | 8 | 4.8% | 13 | 4.9% | 21 | 4.9% |
| Support/Activities for children | 65 | 39.4% | 82 | 30.9% | 147 | 34.2% |
| Support for the elderly | 13 | 7.9% | 4 | 1.5% | 17 | 4.0% |
| Regular user of the library/would miss visiting | 32 | 19.4% | 20 | 7.5% | 52 | 12.1% |
| Information resource | 7 | 4.2% | 3 | 1.1% | 10 | 2.3% |
| Internet access for all | 3 | 1.8% | 3 | 1.1% | 6 | 1.4% |
| Friendly welcoming place | 2 | 1.2% | 4 | 1.5% | 6 | 1.4% |
| Other libraries difficult to access | 6 | 3.6% | 2 | 0.8% | 8 | 1.9% |
| Educational/learning resource | 16 | 9.7% | 27 | 10.2% | 43 | 10.0% |
| Choice and availability of books | 17 | 10.3% | 19 | 7.2% | 36 | 8.4% |
| Promotes reading | 12 | 7.3% | 9 | 3.4% | 21 | 4.9% |
| Importance of staff input | 7 | 4.2% | 18 | 6.8% | 25 | 5.8% |
| English as a Foreign Language taught | 1 | 0.6% | 4 | 1.5% | 5 | 1.2% |
| Other | 8 | 4.8% | 15 | 5.7% | 23 | 5.3% |
| Don't close the library! | 22 | 13.3% | 48 | 18.1% | 70 | 16.3% |
| Total | 165 | 203.0% | 265 | 183.8% | 430 | 191.2% |

Figure 58: Themes emerging from comments attached to petitions received regarding Southcote and Battle Libraries

Reading Library Service Review - Needs Assessment

February 2016

1. Introduction

This Reading Library Needs Assessment provides data on different aspects of the Library Service, helping us to understand the needs of the communities that we serve, and the usage and performance of Reading Borough Libraries.

The report then outlines two rankings for libraries, based firstly on library usage and secondly demographic need, and concludes with an overall priority ranking based on both criteria combined.

The data and priority ranking are intended to assist in enabling the Council to assess what a comprehensive and efficient library service for Reading should be today, and to inform the future vision, strategy and Library Service offer.

Usage includes take-up of services and the cost of each library. The data is sourced from the library management system (number of issues, active members, IT sessions), from data recorded in branches (visits, attendees at activities), our Finance system (costs) and the Office of National Statistics (population). The catchment areas for each library were determined using the postcodes of active borrowers for each library. Unless stated otherwise, the data is for the period April 2014 to March 2015, as the last full reporting year. This data has been supplemented by, and where relevant checked against, data from the latest Library User Survey (2014) as well as data from the Phase One consultation, which also sought to establish current patterns of service use.

Demographic data has been sourced from the Department for Communities and Local Government (Indices of Deprivation), the 2011 Census, the Department for Education, the Office of National Statistics (JSA claimants), Google Maps and MySociety / Mapumental (travel times).

2. Demographic Need

2.1 Background

At the heart of Thames Valley Berkshire, Reading is a thriving and diverse town with a significant economic presence. Reading benefits from excellent transport links, a red brick university, and a wide range of arts and leisure facilities. However, not everyone in Reading can access all the opportunities that are available, and it is the ambition of Reading Borough Council to narrow the gaps in Reading to ensure that everyone can benefit from its success.

2.2 Population

Reading's population and economy continues to grow and the needs of our residents and businesses are changing, which impacts on the services we provide. The next few years will see significant changes as we plan and cater for increasing demands for some services, whilst other services will need to continue to change in order to remain financially viable despite significantly less funding for our services.

In 2011, the resident population of Reading was recorded as 155,700. This is a 9% increase on the 2001 census figure of 143,096, and 2% more than the population increase between 1991 and 2001. The population of Reading is expected to increase by a further 24% by 2050, to 193,065.

Figure 1a below shows the age structure of Reading's population in 2011.

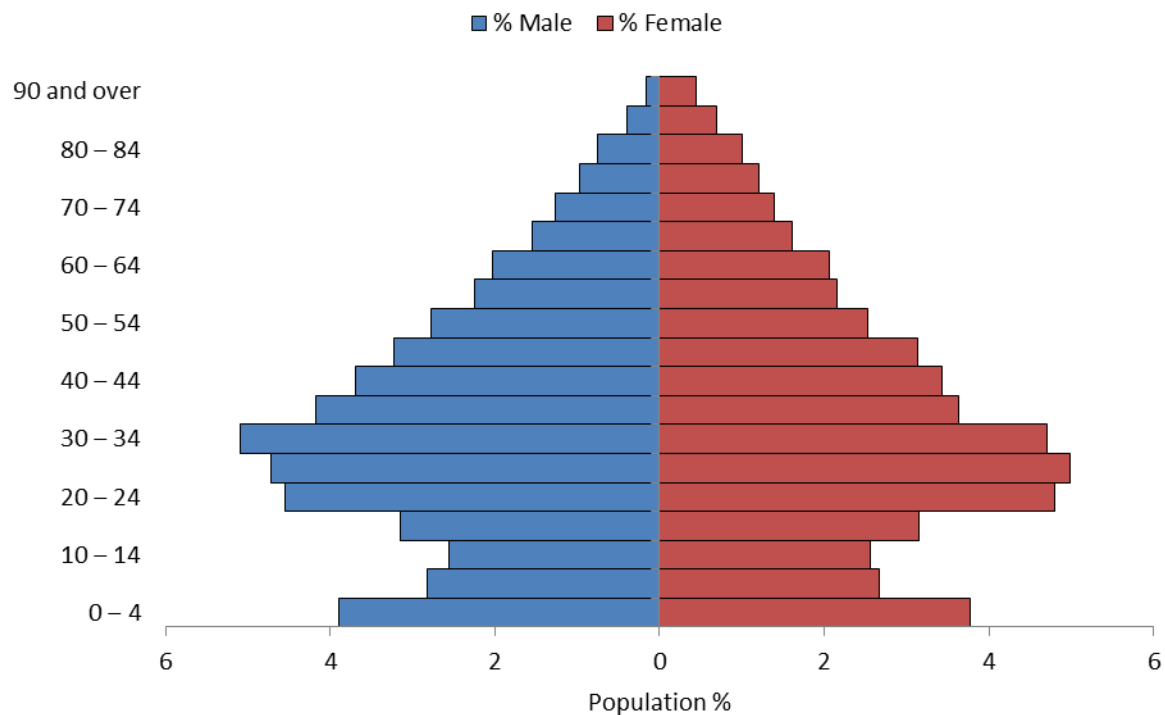


Figure 1a: Reading borough population by age and gender from 2011

The mean age of residents in Reading is 35 years. Reading has a higher percentage of the population aged 0-4 years and 20-39 years than the England average, and a lower than average population aged 10-14 years and 45+ years.

Differences in age are discernible between the catchment areas of each of the borough's libraries, as shown in Figure 1b overleaf.

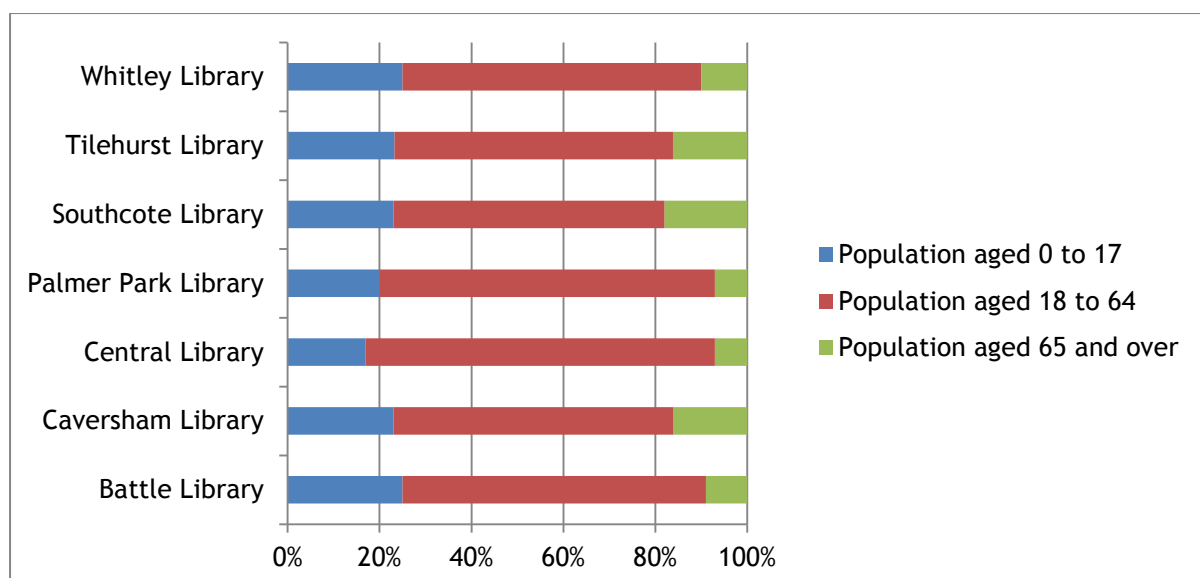


Figure 1b: Library catchment populations by age from 2011

Central Library's catchment area has the highest number of 0-17 year olds (7,702) and 18-64 year olds (35,300), whilst the catchment areas of Battle and Whitley Libraries have the highest proportions of 0-17's. The highest number of 65+ year olds live within the catchment area for Caversham Library (5,060), whilst the catchment for Southcote Library has the highest proportion of over 65's (18%) followed by Tilehurst and Caversham (16%). Apart from Central Library, Palmer Park has the lowest proportion of both 0-17's and over 65's.

The total area of Reading Borough is 4,040 hectares. Figure 1c below shows a breakdown of the size of catchment areas and the number of residents in each.

| | Area (hectares) | Number of all usual residents | Residents per hectare |
|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Battle Library | 395 | 17,847 | 45.2 |
| Caversham Library | 949 | 31,734 | 33.4 |
| Central Library | 960 | 46,482 | 48.4 |
| Palmer Park Library | 119 | 9,052 | 76.1 |
| Southcote Library | 330 | 8,548 | 25.9 |
| Tilehurst Library | 428 | 18,398 | 42.9 |
| Whitley Library | 855 | 23,637 | 27.6 |

Figure 1c: Library catchment area size and population from 2011

Reading is an extremely small library authority; it is ranked 2nd smallest out of 12 Unitary Authorities in the South East Region, and 3rd out of 56 Unitary Authorities in England, on the basis of the size of geographical area covered.

The catchment area of Central Library covers the greatest proportion of Reading (23.79% of the total area of Reading) and is followed by Caversham Library (23.49%) and Whitley Library (21.16%). Palmer Park Library's catchment area covers the smallest proportion of the borough (2.95% of the total area of Reading).

In addition to covering the greatest proportion of the borough, the catchment areas of Central, Caversham and Whitley Libraries also include the greatest proportion of residents (29.85%, 20.38% and 15.18%). Palmer Park and Southcote libraries also serve the smallest number of residents by a considerable margin. The catchment area of Southcote Library includes a smaller proportion of the borough's population than any other catchment area (5.49%) including Palmer Park Library (5.81%).

2.3 Ethnicity

Reading has the second highest proportion of non-white ethnic groups in the South East. In 2011, 25.3% of the population in Reading was 'non-white', a 12.1% increase since 2001. 'Other white' has also increased from 4.2% to 7.9%. Black African has become the largest non-white group (4.9%) by a narrow margin, followed closely by Pakistani (4.5%) and Indian (4.2%). Mixed, 'Other Asian' and 'Black Caribbean' are also all represented above the national average.

As shown in Figure 2a below, the ethnic profiles of each of the library catchment areas are different. The highest proportion of BME residents is found in the catchment area for Palmer Park Library, and the lowest in the Caversham Library area.

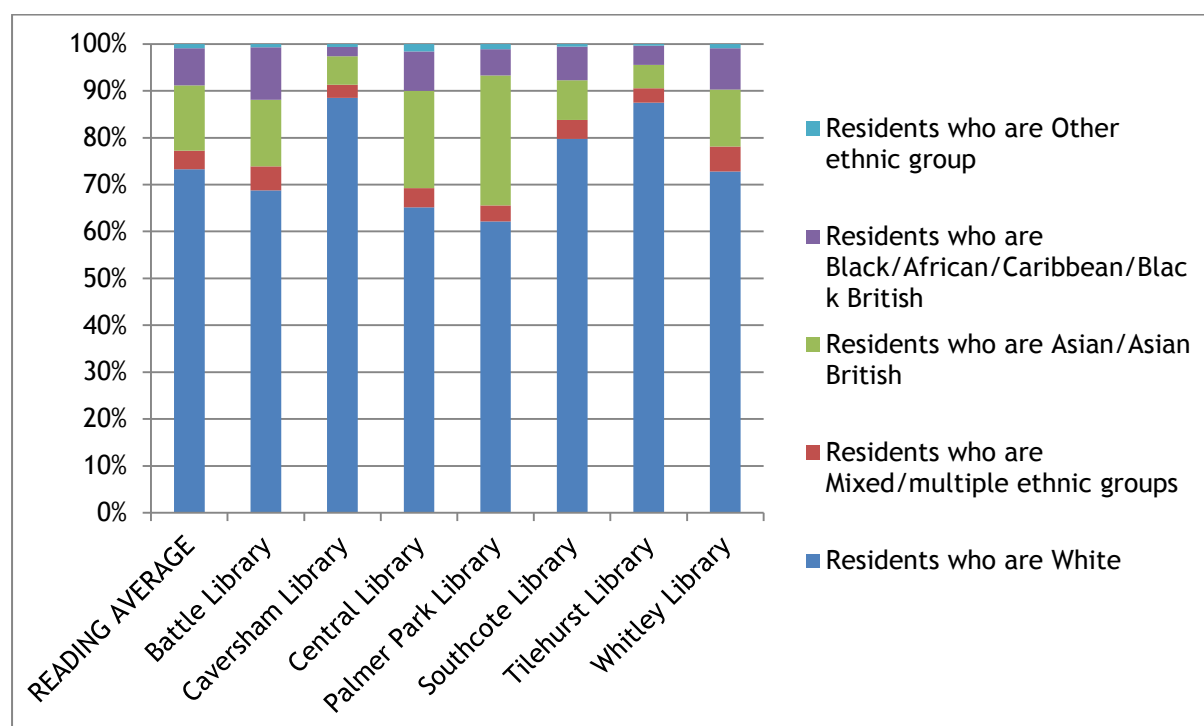


Figure 2a: Percentage of population by ethnic group from 2011 for Reading as a whole and each library catchment area

In 2011, 8.8% of households in Reading had no occupants where English was the main language. This is twice as high as the national average (4.4%).

Figure 2b below shows the top 15 main languages spoken by residents aged 3 years and over.

| Main languages spoken amongst residents aged 3 and over | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------|--------|
| 1 | English | 126,690 | 85.46% |
| 2 | Polish | 3,768 | 2.54% |
| 3 | Nepalese | 2,430 | 1.64% |
| 4 | Urdu | 1,790 | 1.21% |
| 5 | Punjabi | 921 | 0.62% |
| 6 | Portuguese | 655 | 0.44% |
| 7 | French | 633 | 0.43% |
| 8 | Arabic | 600 | 0.40% |
| 9 | Spanish | 585 | 0.39% |
| 10 | Hindi | 566 | 0.38% |
| 11 | Tamil | 505 | 0.34% |
| 12 | Italian | 450 | 0.30% |
| 13 | Swahili/Kiswahili | 409 | 0.28% |
| 14 | German | 406 | 0.27% |
| 15 | Bengali (with Sylheti and Chatgaya) | 400 | 0.27% |

Figure b: Top 15 main languages spoken in Reading, 2011

2.4 Households

As at 2011, Reading included an estimated 62,896 households. This marked an 8% increase since 2001.

On average in Reading:

- 54.8% live in homes that they own
- 26.1% live in Private Rented housing
- 16.3% live in a housing rented from the council or housing association.

Subtle differences exist across the different library catchment areas. For example:

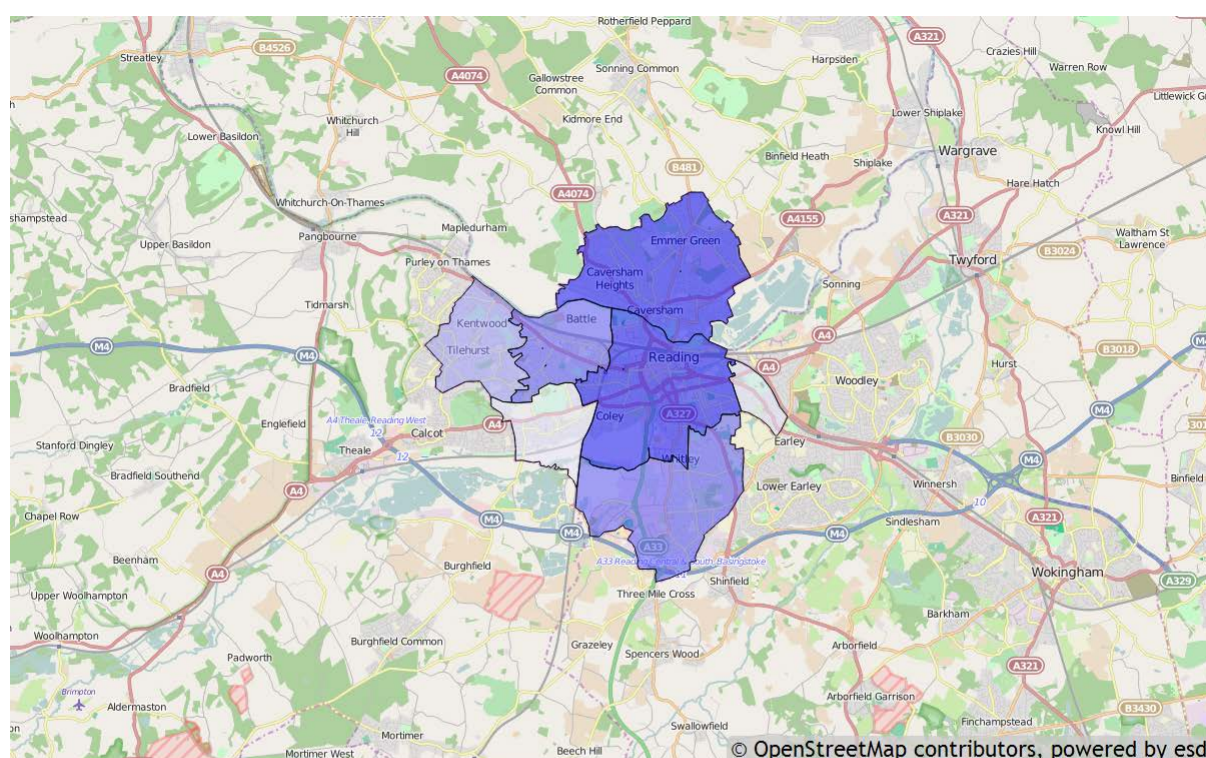
- A greater proportion of households in the Tilehurst Library catchment area live in a home owned with a Mortgage or loan, than is reflected in the borough average
- A greater proportion of households in the Central and Palmer Park areas are privately rented
- More households in the Caversham, Tilehurst and Southcote Library catchment areas are owned outright than the borough average
- The greatest proportion of households living in social rented housing are found in the Whitley Library catchment area

The Reading average number of households with dependent children of all ages is 30.08% and the average number of lone parents with dependent children is 5.9%. This is above the England average number of households with dependent children

of all ages (29.1%), but below the England average number of lone parents with dependent children (7.1%).

As shown in Figure 3a below, the greatest number of dependent children live within the catchment areas of Central Library and Caversham Library. On the other hand, the areas with the greatest proportion of households with dependent children are the catchment areas for Whitley Library and Battle Library, where households with dependent children make up 36.49% and 34.2% of all households. Households with dependent children only make up 23.23% of households in the Central Library catchment area.

As shown in Figure 3b, the greatest proportion of lone parents live in the Whitley Library area (12.1%) and the Battle Library area (10.8%) with the lowest in Palmer Park (2.9%).



Dependent children: All ages (2011)

- 3,596 - 4,704
- 2,529 - 3,596
- 1,753 - 2,529
- 982 - 1,753

Figure 3a: Numbers of households with dependent children from 2011

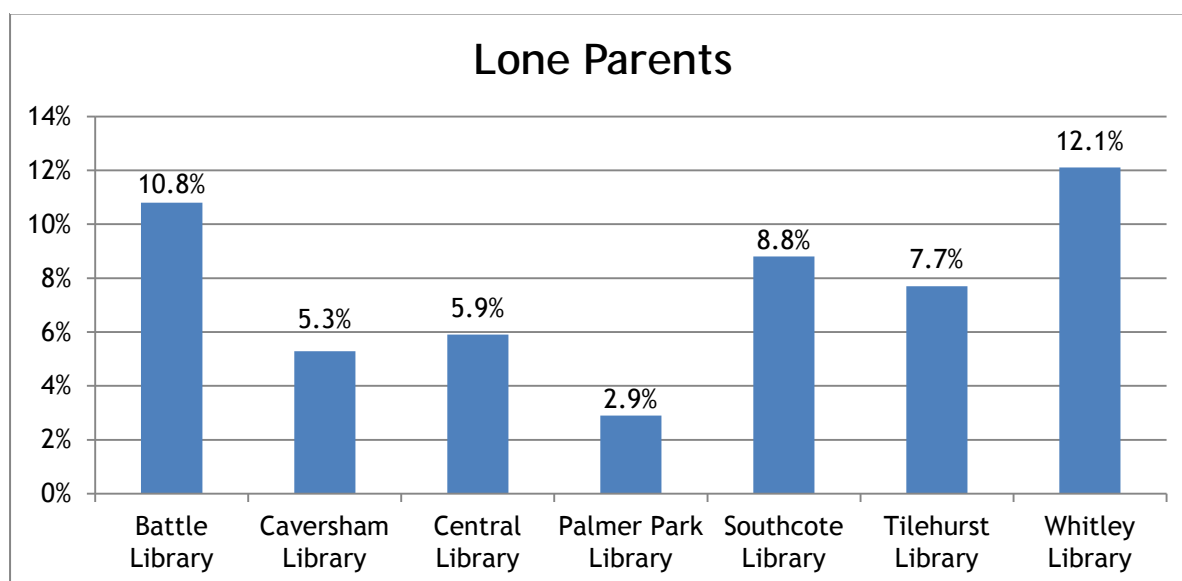


Figure 3b: Percentage of Lone Parents in Catchment, 2011

2.5 Deprivation

The most comprehensive and widely adopted overall measure of deprivation is the Department for Communities and Local Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). This was updated in 2015 (previously published in 2010 and 2007).

The overall IMD combines indicators across 7 domains, each of which is scored separately:

- income
- employment
- health
- education / skills
- barriers to housing / services
- living environment
- crime

According to the overall IMD, Reading as a whole is ranked the 146th most deprived out of 326 local authorities in the country on the basis of average score, down from 129th most deprived in 2010, and has 10 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the 20% most deprived nationally, 2 of which fall within the most deprived 10%, as shown in Figure 4a below.

| | 10% most deprived | 10-20% most deprived |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Battle Library | 0 | 1 |
| Caversham Library | 0 | 1 |
| Central Library | 0 | 0 |
| Palmer Park Library | 0 | 0 |
| Southcote Library | 0 | 1 |
| Tilehurst Library | 0 | 1 |
| Whitley Library | 2 | 4 |

In 2015, 12% of Reading's Key Stage 2 (Primary School) pupils were identified as 'low performers' in reading, and 14% in writing compared to national figures of 11% and 13%.

In 2014/15, 70% of Reading pupils received an A*-C in English (67% nationally), and 57% of pupils achieved 5 A*-C grades in their GCSEs (including English and Maths). This was above the national average of 55.7%.

In 2011, the percentage of Reading residents with no qualifications had decreased by 5.4% on 2001 (22.8% to 17.4%), in line with the national picture. However, this picture varies noticeably across library catchment areas, with the greatest proportion of residents with no qualifications living in Southcote, followed by Whitley and Tilehurst.

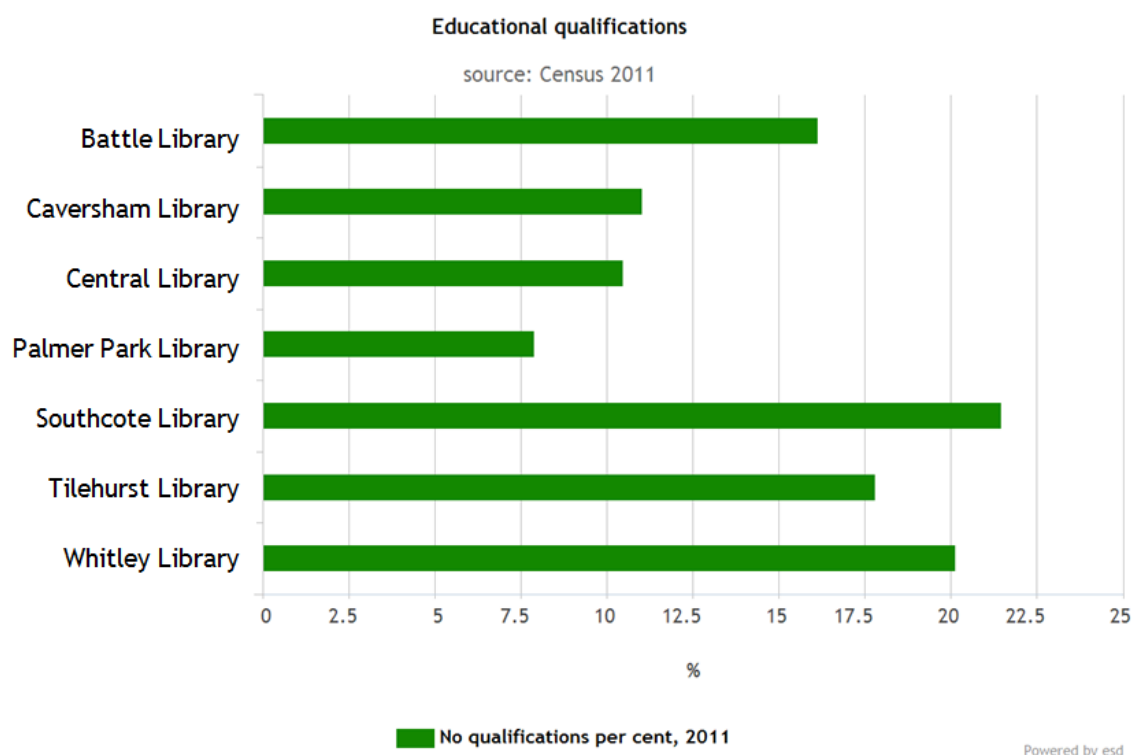


Figure 5a: Percentage of residents with no qualifications by library catchment area for 2011

The census also recorded Reading as having above the England (27.4%) and South East region (29.9%) average number of residents achieving level 4 qualifications (Degree level or equivalent) at 34.8%.

When considering the education and skills indicator from the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation, it is apparent that Reading has 9 LSOAs in the 10% most deprived in the country, and a further 9 in the 10-20% most deprived. These include:

| | 10% most deprived | 10-20% most deprived |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Battle Library | 1 | 2 |
| Caversham Library | 1 | 0 |
| Central Library | 0 | 1 |
| Palmer Park Library | 0 | 0 |
| Southcote Library | 1 | 1 |
| Tilehurst Library | 0 | 2 |
| Whitley Library | 6 | 3 |

Figure 5b: Education Deprivation Indicator by Library Catchment Area in 2015

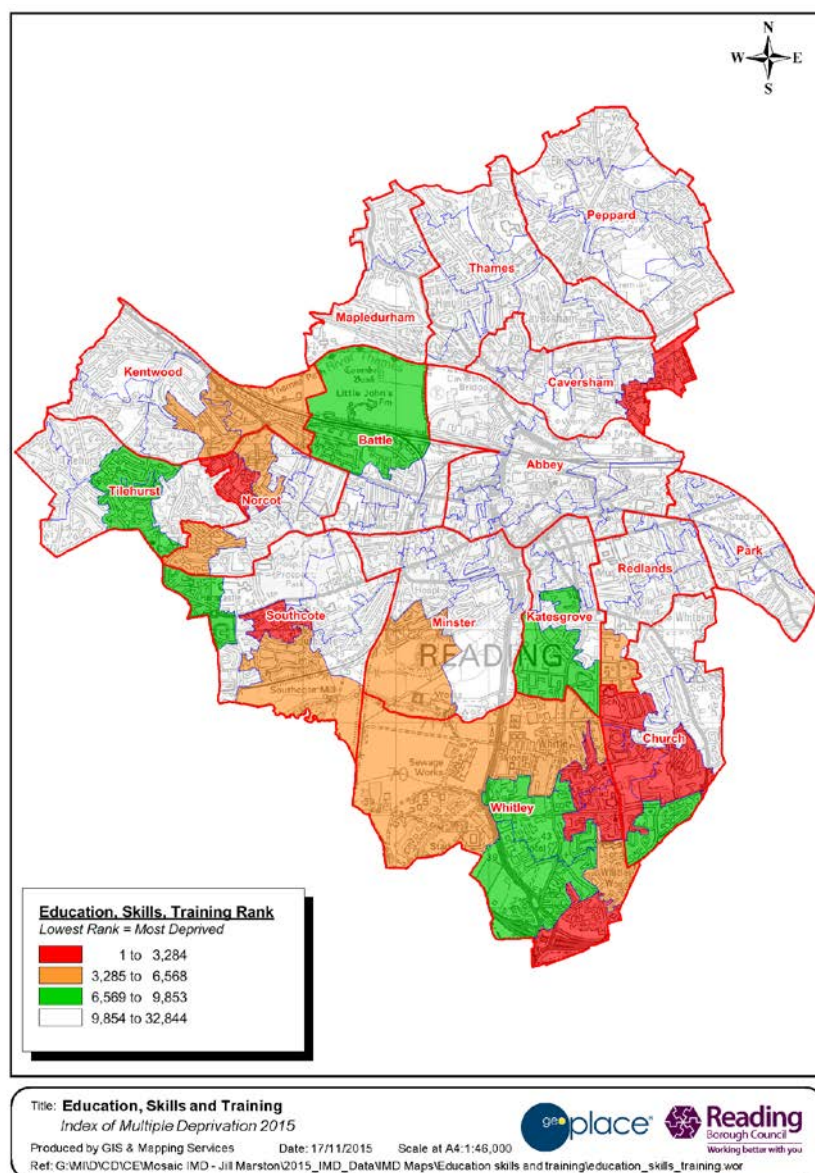


Figure 5c: 0-30% most deprived LSOAs - Education Domain (IMD 2015)

2.7 Employment

Reading is an important commercial centre in Southern England, and is often referred to as the commercial capital of the Thames Valley. The town hosts the headquarters of a number of British companies and the UK offices of foreign multinationals, as well as being a major retail centre.

Whilst located close enough to London to be sometimes regarded as part of the London commuter belt, Reading is a net inward destination for commuters. During the morning peak period, there are some 30,000 inward arrivals in the town, compared to 24,000 departures.

As shown in Figure 6a below, the proportion of people across England, the South East Region and Reading that are employed part-time or self-employed is growing, as is the percentage of people in full-time education and those that are unemployed. The percentage of people in full-time employment has therefore fallen across England, the South East and Reading. In spite of this, the percentage of those in Reading in full-time employment continues to exceed the regional and national average.

| Percentage of people aged 16 -74 economically active by area 2001 & 2011 | | | | | | |
|--|---------|------|------------|------|---------|------|
| Economically Active - Category | England | | South East | | Reading | |
| | 2001 | 2011 | 2001 | 2011 | 2001 | 2011 |
| Economically active: Employee: Part-time | 11.8 | 13.7 | 12.2 | 13.8 | 10.2 | 11.9 |
| Economically active: Employee: Full-time | 40.8 | 38.6 | 43.2 | 40.4 | 48.1 | 44.6 |
| Economically active: Self-employed | 8.3 | 9.8 | 9.6 | 11.0 | 6.9 | 7.9 |
| Economically active: Unemployed | 3.3 | 4.4 | 2.3 | 3.4 | 2.5 | 4.6 |
| Economically active: Full-time student | 2.6 | 3.4 | 2.7 | 3.3 | 4.1 | 5.0 |

Figure 6a: Percentage of economically active people

The Reading average of residents in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (1.4% - July 2015) and Employment and Support Allowance and Incapacity Benefit (4.35% - February 2015) both fall below the national average (1.7% and 6.39%). As shown in Figure 6b, the distribution of Job Seekers across Reading is not evenly spread.

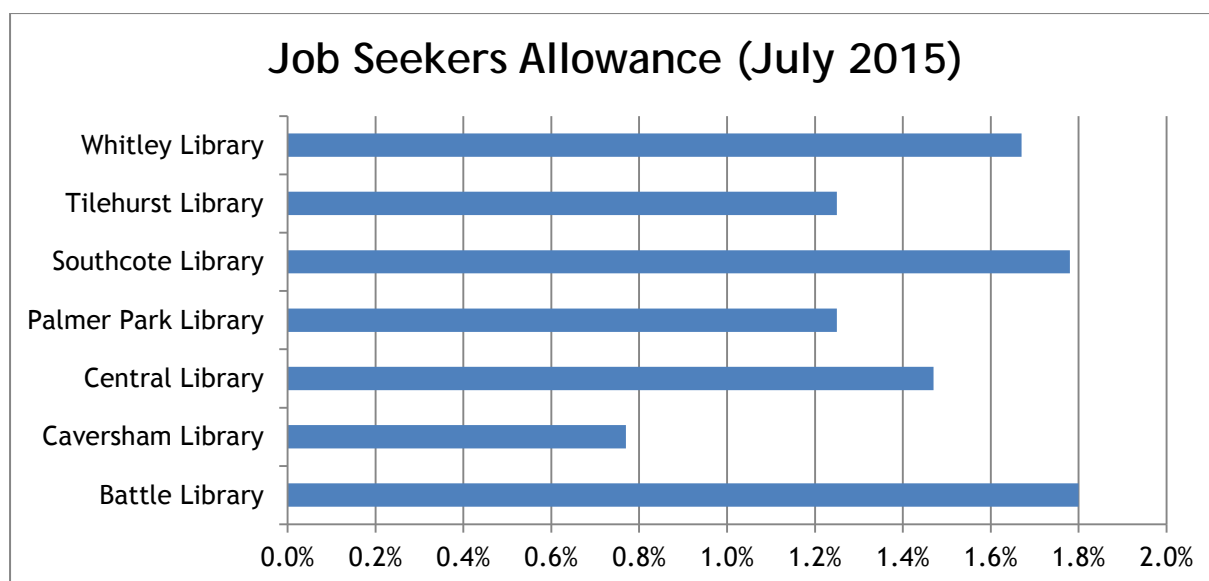


Figure 6b: % of Working Age Population in receipt of JSA (July 2015)

As reported in the 2011 census, the catchment area for Whitley Library has the highest percentage of residents in Reading who are long term unemployed or who have never worked, closely followed by the Battle Library area.

Figure 6c below shows the size of these two groups for each library catchment area in Reading against the average for Reading as a whole.

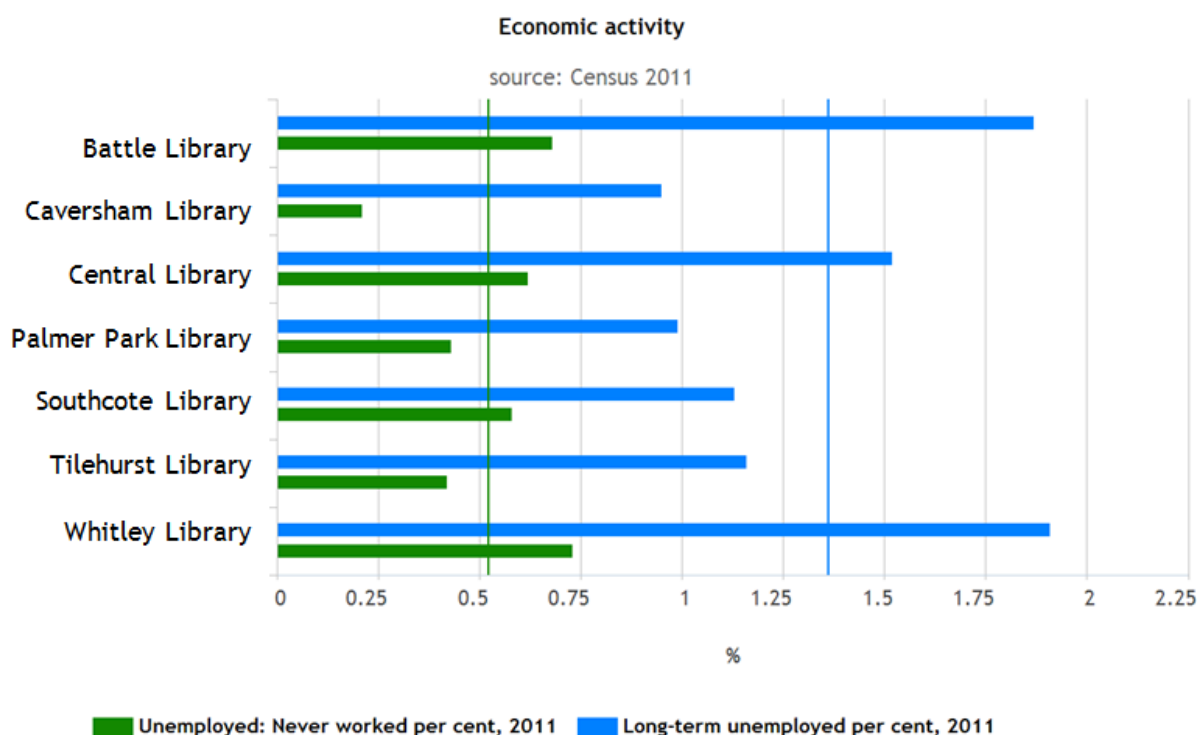


Figure 6c: Percentage of residents that have never worked or are long-term unemployed, by library catchment area, from 2011

2.8 Health

In the 2011 census, 13% of the Reading population reported a limiting long-term illness (LLTI). This is below the national average of 17.6%, and represents a minor decrease on 2001 (13.5% to 13%).

As in Figure 7a below, the proportion of the population with a long-term illness or disability differs across library catchment areas. The catchments with the highest proportion of residents with LLTIs are in Southcote, Tilehurst and Whitley. This is in line with the high proportion of older people in the Southcote and Tilehurst areas, and the higher levels of deprivation in the Whitley area.

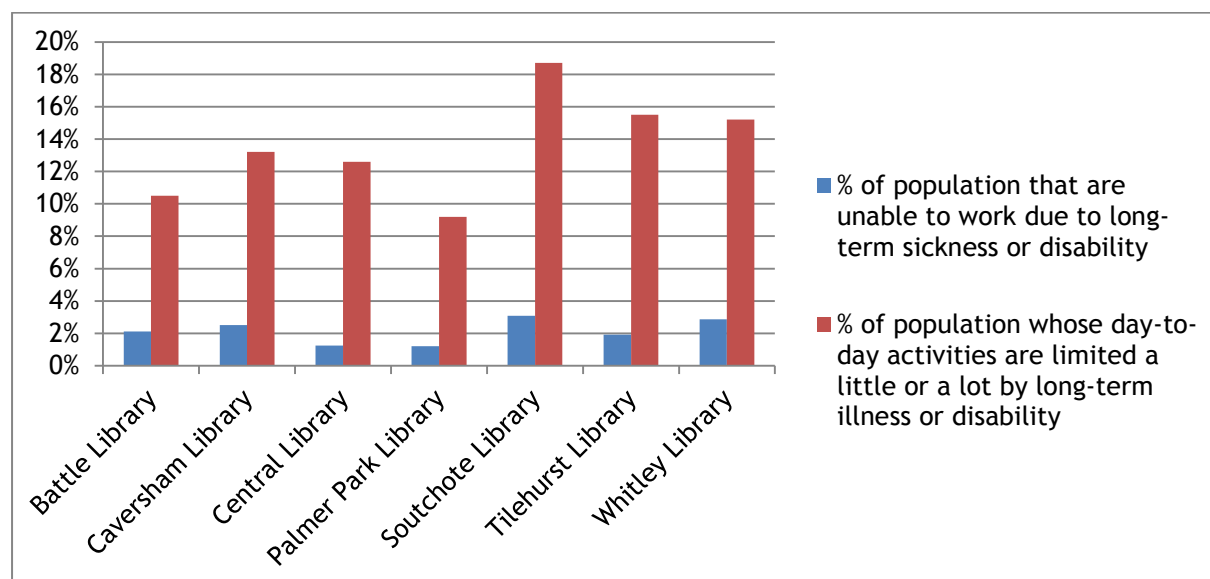


Figure 7a: Self-reported general health of residents, by library catchment area, from 2011

When considering the health and disability indicator from the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation, it is apparent that Reading has 9 LSOAs in the 10% most deprived in the country, and a further 9 in the 10-20% most deprived. These include:

| | 10-20% most deprived |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Battle Library | 0 |
| Caversham Library | 0 |
| Central Library | 0 |
| Palmer Park Library | 0 |
| Southcote Library | 1 |
| Tilehurst Library | 1 |
| Whitley Library | 1 |

Figure 7b: Health and Disability Deprivation Indicator by Library Catchment Area in 2015

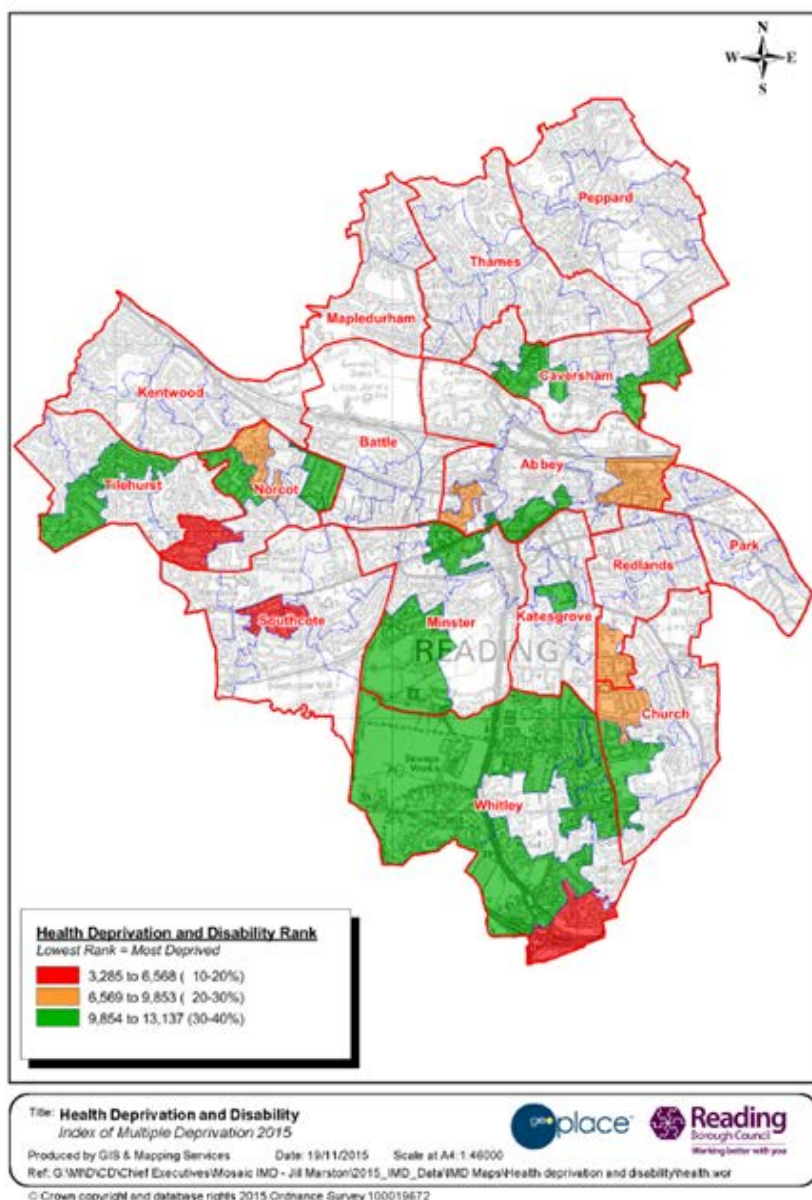


Figure 7c: Health and Disability Deprivation Indicators 2015

2.9 Transportation

As reported in the 2011 Census, 28.3% of households in Reading do not have access to a car or van compared to the national average of 25.8%. This differs by area, with nearly 38% of households in the Central Library area and 33% in the Battle area with no access to a vehicle. Figure 8a overleaf shows a breakdown by library catchment area.

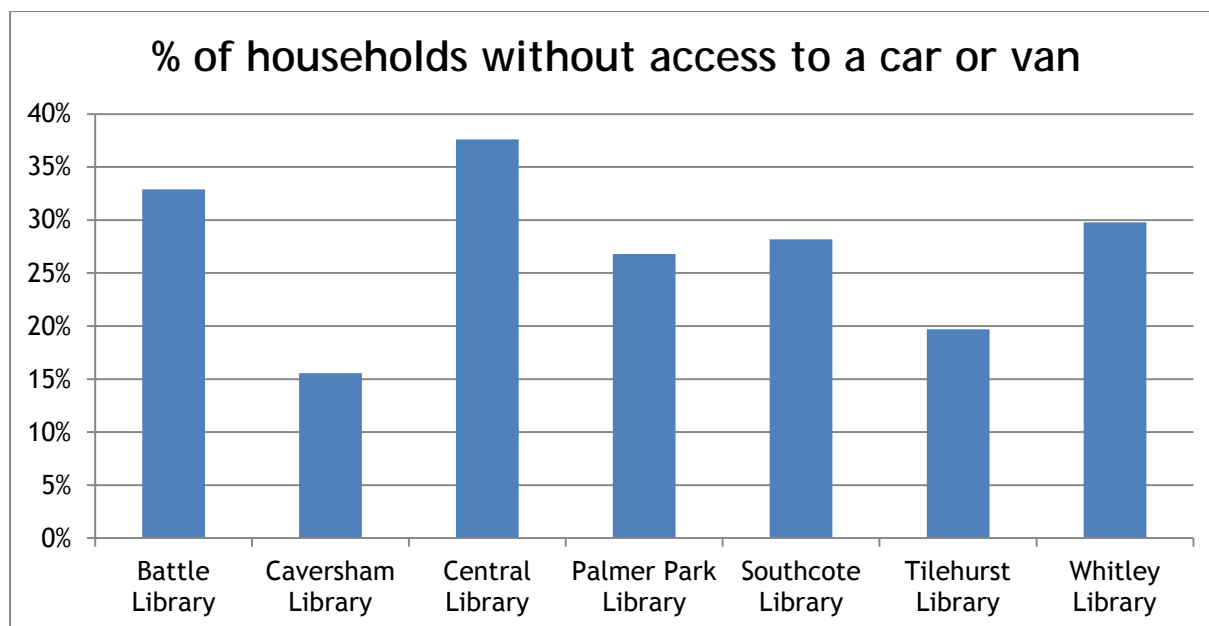


Figure 8a: Percentage of households without access to a car or van b library catchment area in 2011

As shown in Figure 8b, the vast majority of the Reading borough is within 20 minutes travel time by public transport of a library - with a number of residents in the most northern part of the borough (Emmer Green) within 30 minutes travel time by public transport.

The Reading Buses network serves the Reading borough. The cost of travelling by bus is £1.90 for a single trip or £3.70 return for adults, and £1.40 single or £2.40 return for each child.

Library users of state pension age that live within Reading borough are able to travel to Reading libraries free of charge, between the hours of 9am and 11pm by using their concessionary bus pass (users travelling from outside the borough will be restricted to travelling free of charge between 9.30am-11pm).

Eligible disabled library users travelling from within the borough are also able to travel to Reading libraries free of charge, at any time, by using their concessionary bus pass (users travelling from outside the borough will be restricted to travelling free of charge between 9.30am-11pm).

Reading Buses offer reduced rate travel to people who are out of work and actively seeking employment through their partnership with the Jobcentre Plus. This can therefore be used by job seekers travelling by bus to Reading Libraries.

The Reading Borough is also served by 3 railway stations: Reading, Reading West and Tilehurst, with frequent services from Great Western Railway, South West Trains and Cross Country.

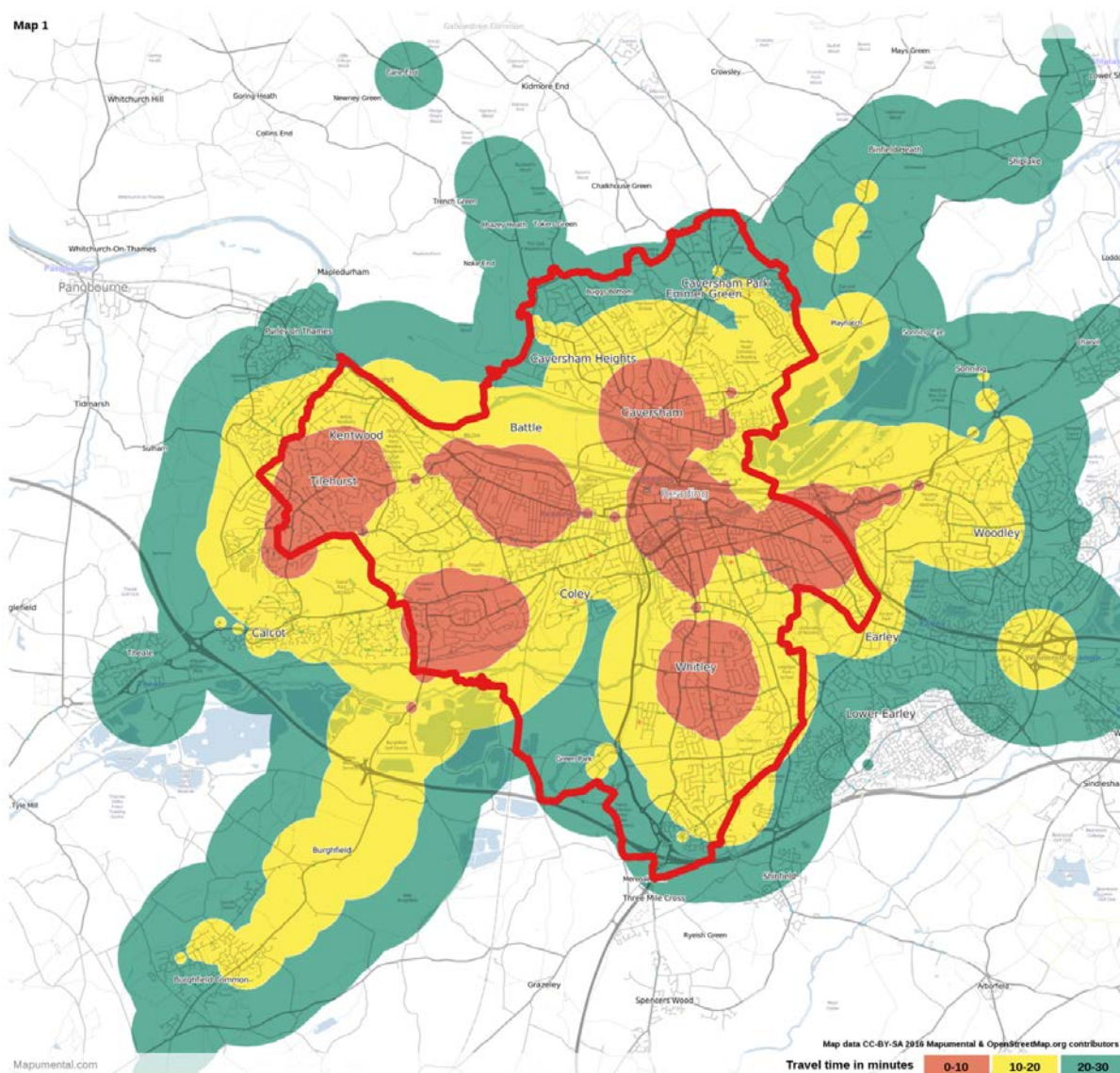


Figure 8b: Travel times to Reading Borough libraries

The travel times include an allowance for walking up to ten minutes from the home location to the nearest bus stop at 3 miles an hour, and for walking distance from the destination bus stop to the library. Destination arrival at 10.00 a.m. is assumed as mornings are the most popular times throughout the week for customers attending libraries. The frequency of bus services is likely to be higher at peak times.

2.10 Local Community Facilities

Figure 9a overleaf shows a sample of community facilities in each of the library catchment areas. From this it is apparent that the varying numbers of facilities reflect the differing size of catchment areas and populations.

| Library Catchment Area | Community Facilities |
|------------------------|---|
| Central | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coley Park Children's Centre • Coley Park Community Centre • East Reading Children's Centre • Fairview Youth and Community Centre • Katesgrove Children's Centre • Sun Street Youth and Community Centre |
| Battle | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ranikhet Children's Centre |
| Caversham | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amersham Road Community Centre • Caversham Children's Centre • Emmer Green Youth and Community Centre / North Reading Children's Centre • Milestones Children's Centre* |
| Palmer Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hamilton Road Children's Centre • Park Community Hall* |
| Southcote | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southcote Children's Centre • Southcote Youth and Community Centre |
| Tilehurst | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blagrove Nursery School and Children's Centre • Norcot Community Centre • Tilehurst Youth and Community Centre |
| Whitley | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blagdon Children's Centre • South Reading Youth and Community Centre and Children's Centre • Whitley Wood Community Centre* • Hexham Community Centre* |

Figure 9a: Community facilities by library catchment area

*These facilities are let by the Council.

2.11 Demographic Summary

Key points to note regarding the demographics of library catchment areas include:

- The vast majority of Reading borough households are within 20 minutes travel by public transport to a library, and all are within 30 minutes travel.
- Central, Caversham and Whitley Libraries (in that order) serve the largest catchment areas in terms of both area covered and population served. Southcote and Palmer Park Libraries serve significantly smaller populations, whilst the area covered by the Palmer Park Library catchment area is by far the smallest.
- Central Library's catchment area includes the highest number of 0-17 year olds, while the catchment areas of Battle Library and Whitley Library have the highest proportions of 0-17's.
- The highest number of 65+ year olds live within the catchment area for Caversham Library, whilst the catchment for Southcote Library has the highest proportion of over 65's and individuals reporting that their day-to-day activities are limited by an illness or disability.

- Proportionally, the catchment areas of Palmer Park and Central Libraries are the most ethnically diverse, while Central and Whitley libraries catchment areas contain the greatest number of BME residents.
- The catchment for Whitley Library is the most deprived in the borough
 - 6 out of 10 of the lower super output areas (LSOAs) in Reading that fall into the 20% most deprived in the country (2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation) are in the Whitley area, and 2 are amongst the 10% most deprived areas.
 - The greatest number of residents with no qualifications, residents living in homes rented from the council or other registered providers and lone parents live in the Whitley area.
- The Southcote Library catchment area contains the largest proportion of adults in in all the boroughs catchment areas claiming Job Seekers Allowance (July 2015) and with no qualifications.

3. Reading Borough Libraries

3.1 Introduction

Profiles of the library network and individual branches previously published as part of the first stage of the review provided detailed information about the service including cost, activities, opening hours, usage and performance. This section provides a summary analysis of these profiles and some additional information.

The library service in Reading currently includes:

- 7 public libraries - a central library and 6 branches,
- A mobile service for the elderly and housebound, which also visits Prospect Hospital and makes a limited number of public stops in the north of the borough,
- A toy library, located in Southcote Library, which serves the whole borough.

Reading Libraries offer customers access to a range of core services, including:

- Varied loan stock
 - Adult and children's fiction and non-fiction books
 - Books in large print, in community languages and for adult learners
 - E-books
 - Audio books
 - Individual copies and groups sets of: books, plays, music scores and vocal scores
 - Music CDs and DVDs
 - Toys
- Newspapers and magazines
- Local studies and family history resources
- Information technology resources, including public access computers (referred to nationally as 'the people's network') including free internet access, free Wi-Fi, printing, photocopying and fax facilities
- Study space
- Adults' and children's activities and events, including Rhymetimes, Coffee mornings and cultural events
- Provision of public information
- Issuing of the Your Reading Passport

While all sites contain the same basic stock, larger libraries offer some additional stock types. The size of the stock depends on the size of the library and its use. The range of stock available also reflects local need, particularly in relation to the items in community languages that are stocked.

Reading's library service is open to anyone who lives, works or studies in the borough and to occasional visitors. Local people can register at any library in Reading and can borrow and return books, and use the computers at any branch. Lending stock may be requested and renewed online at any time, and delivered to

any branch for collection. Many services and activities can also be accessed by non-members.

Libraries also host events and hire out spaces to partner agencies and community groups offering a range of services, advice and activities.

3.2 Cost

The 2015/16 library service budget can be broken down as follows:

| Libraries Revenue Budget 2015/16 | |
|--|-------------------|
| Staffing | £1,123,100 |
| Premises | £249,400 |
| Transport | £8,300 |
| Supplies and Services | £112,100 |
| Stock | £159,500 |
| Income | -£230,100 |
| Total | £1,422,300 |
| Additional premises costs funded centrally | |
| Insurance premiums | £4,187 |
| Planned and reactive premises maintenance | £54,956 |

Figure 10a: 2015/16 Library budget

There are a number of overhead costs associated with running a coordinated network of libraries, including a range of things, such as:

- Service ICT costs, including the library management system and online catalogue
- The Library Courier (vehicle and staffing)
- Purchasing stock (as well as the storage of stock, and the staff responsible for ordering and maintaining stock)
- Library management staff
- Administration staff

Discounting overhead costs, and using 2014/15 actual figures (costs and visits), the library service budget has been broken down by branch as follows:

| | Central | Battle | Caversham | Palmer Park | Southcote | Tilehurst | Whitley | Mobile |
|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Premises costs | £150,643 | £18,458 | £9,969 | £5,258 | £12,941 | £11,359 | £5,964 | |
| Staffing costs | £381,967 | £65,609 | £114,325 | £63,183 | £52,463 | £96,296 | £46,690 | £35,645 |
| Supplies and service costs | £10,134 | £5,067 | £5,067 | £5,067 | £5,067 | £5,067 | £5,067 | |
| Income | -£101,462 | -£13,729 | -£22,830 | -£5,674 | -£6,393 | -£12,665 | -£3,461 | |
| Transport | | | | | | | | £6,469 |
| Total Cost | £441,282 | £75,405 | £106,531 | £67,834 | £64,078 | £100,057 | £54,260 | £42,114 |
| Visits | 322,192 | 72,907 | 112,046 | 31,093 | 33,370 | 65,476 | 22,240 | 4,540 |
| Cost per visit | £1.37 | £1.03 | £0.95 | £2.18 | £1.92 | £1.53 | £2.44 | £9.28 |
| Issues* | 268,101 | 37,170 | 163,306 | 49,480 | 35,125 | 119,460 | 31,025 | 26,433 |
| Cost per issue | £1.65 | £2.03 | £0.65 | £1.37 | £1.82 | £0.84 | £1.75 | £1.59 |

Figure 10b: 2014/15 Library costs by branch

Note:

- The above premises costs include a business rate rebate applied during 2014/15.
- Income does not include additional income now received from the rental of Floor 3 of the Central Library to the Elevate Reading Hub partners for £40,000.
- Additional revenue costs of providing free public access Wi-Fi will also be applied in 2016/17.
- Mobile Library visits include visits made by the service to elderly and housebound users in their own homes, and the number of people boarding the Mobile Library vehicle at public stops and at extra care housing, residential and nursing homes.

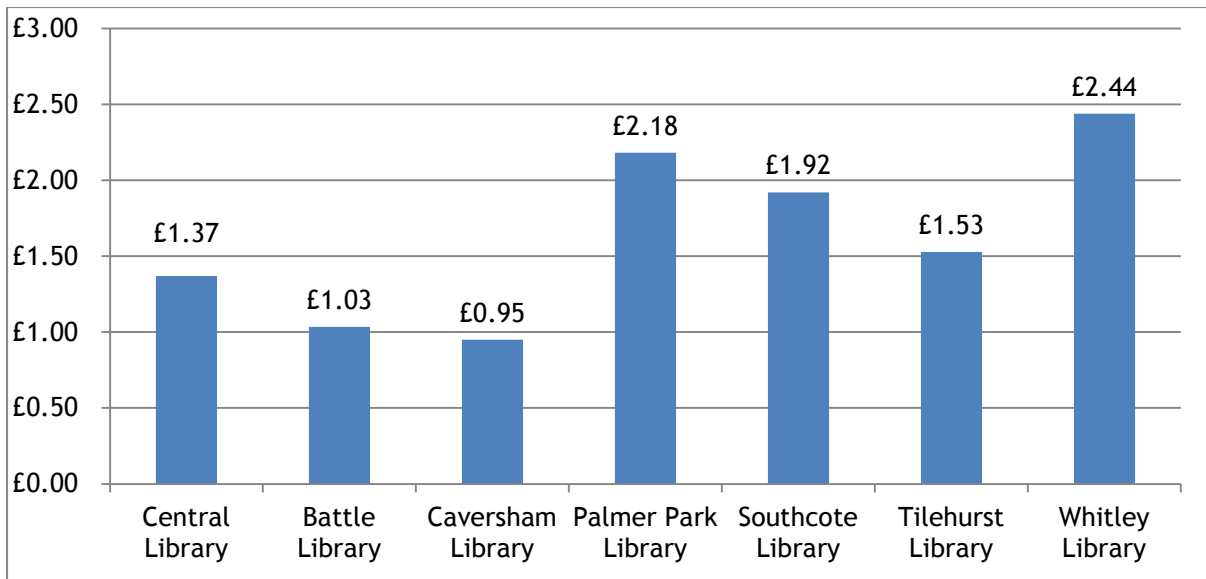


Figure 10c: Cost per visit, per branch and average

3.3 Location of Libraries

Reading has a geographical spread of libraries across the borough with all residents living within 2 miles as the crow flies of a library (see Figure 11a), and most living within a mile as the crow flies of a static library or mobile library stop (see Figures 11b and 11c).

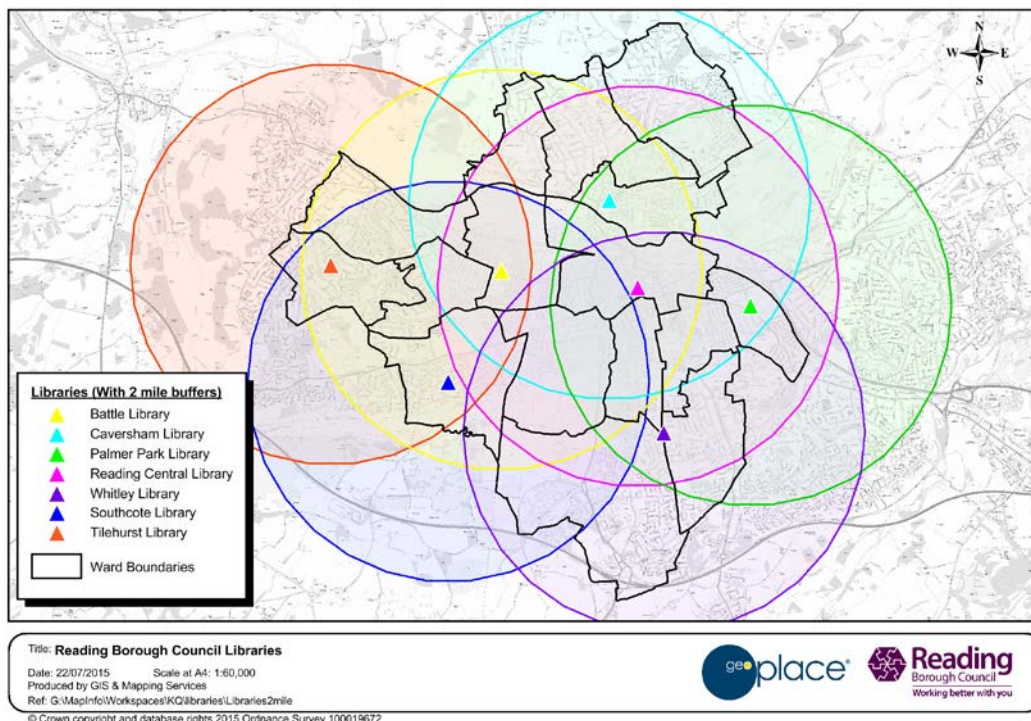


Figure 11a: Reading libraries 2 mile radius

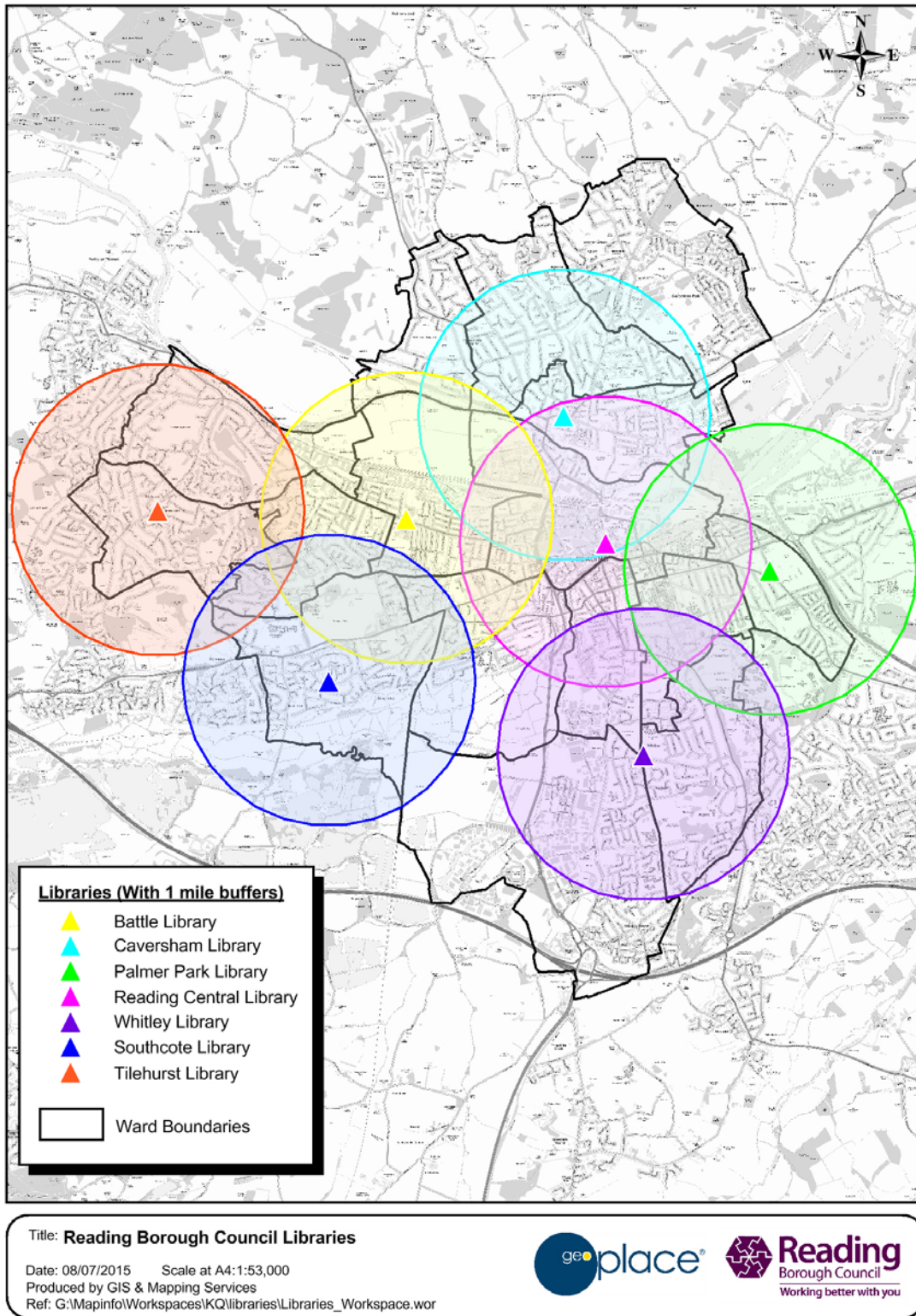


Figure 11b: Reading libraries 1 mile radius

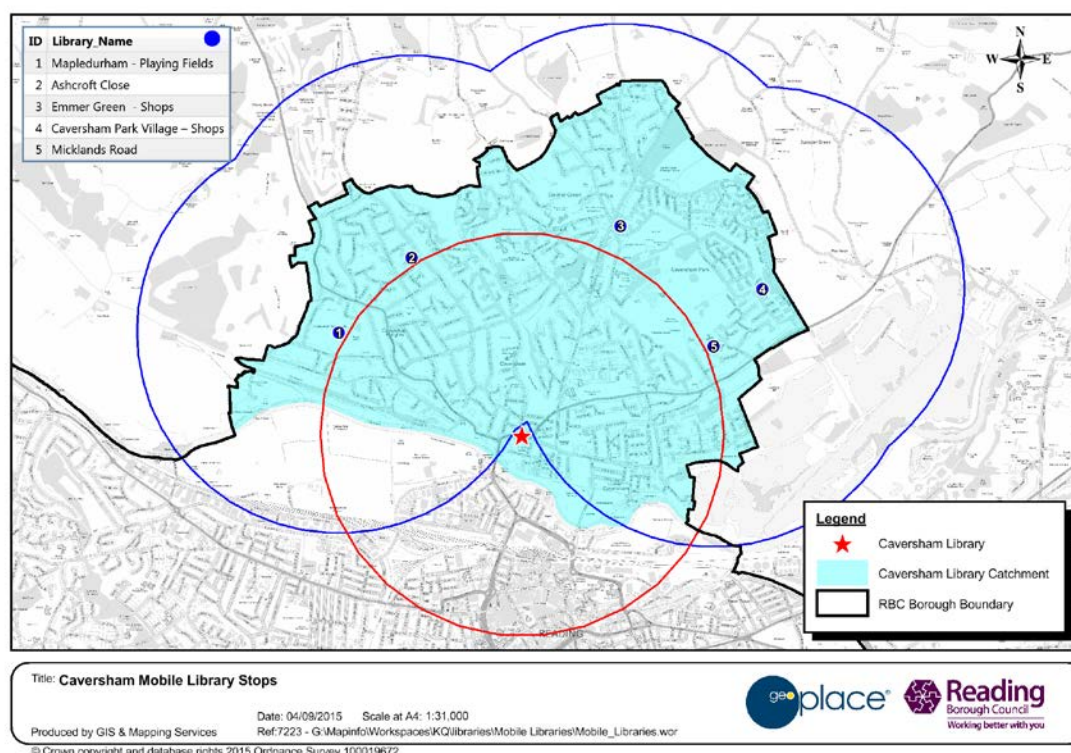


Figure 11c: Mobile library public stops 1 mile radius

All Reading Libraries are within 2 miles traveling distance of another branch, as shown below:

| Branch | Nearest alternative branches | Travel distance |
|---------------------|---|--|
| Central Library | Caversham Library Palmer Park Library Battle Library Whitley Library | 1.2 miles 1.2 miles 1.4 miles 1.6 miles |
| Battle Library | Central Library Southcote Library Caversham Library | 1.4 miles 1.5 miles 1.6 miles |
| Caversham Library | Central Library Battle Library | 1.2 miles 1.6 miles |
| Palmer Park Library | Central Library | 1.2 miles |
| Southcote Library | Battle Library | 1.5 miles |
| Tilehurst Library | Battle Library | 1.9 miles |
| Whitley Library | Central Library | 1.6 miles |

Table 11d: Travel distance to nearest alternative branch (Google Maps)

Central Library is located on the fringe of Reading's town center, and is easily accessible by train, bus and bike due to its proximity to both Reading's refurbished train station, and many bus routes.

Battle Library is located in a very visible position on Oxford Road, close to a supermarket and other local shops.

Caversham Library occupies a central and prominent position within Caversham, opposite a supermarket and other local shops.

Southcote Library is located in Coronation Square and is close to other community buildings.

Palmer Park Library is positioned within the park, close to the stadium and a parade of shops.

Tilehurst Library features in a prominent position at side of School Road, next to a school and health center.

Whitley Library is located on a roundabout on Northumberland Avenue, away from other points of community interest such as shops, schools and other council services.

3.4 Buildings

The condition, size and age of library buildings varies across the network.

- All sites are accessible to disabled library users, with ramps where necessary and automatic doors. Only the Central Library has more than one floor that is open to the public, and it has a public lift between floors.
- As of March 2016 all sites will offer free Wi-Fi - currently only available in Central Library (on all floors as of July 2015), and at Battle and Whitley Libraries.
- Central Library is located in the largest library building, and the most modern, being built in 1985. It is on four floors, with the top floor currently leased to partner organisations including Elevate Me #Reading - the place for 16-24 year olds in Reading to get help, advice and support on employment, work experience, volunteering and mentoring. Central Library is the hub of the library network and is home to the greatest number of books, specialist services which are not available in the branches.
- Battle Library is a Grade 2 listed building. The library building contains a large room which does not house library books and is used for Community activities such as a Baby Clinic. Battle library was substantially improved and refurbished with Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) grant of £1.5m. It is used by the Children's Centre on Wednesdays, when the library is otherwise closed to the public.
- Caversham Library is a Grade 2 listed building that is relatively small for the volume of use, with limited space for additional usage, while wheeled shelving offers the opportunity to use of parts of the public area for events out of hours.
- Palmer Park and Whitley Libraries are both very small, Victorian buildings (the smallest in the network, as shown in Figure 12a below).

- Southcote Library is a late 60s/early 70s building, with limited onsite car parking for library users, and is also home to the Toy Library, which is situated in a hall attached to the library. The library also has a larger proportion of ancillary or ‘back office’ space than most other branches.
- Tilehurst Library is an early 70s building with limited onsite parking for disabled users. Tilehurst Library is the base for the Elderly and Housebound service and shares premises with the Children’s Centre on Mondays and Tuesdays. Tilehurst is the largest of the branch libraries.
- As shown in Figure 12a below, the size of the plots at Southcote and Tilehurst Libraries reflect the availability of onsite parking.

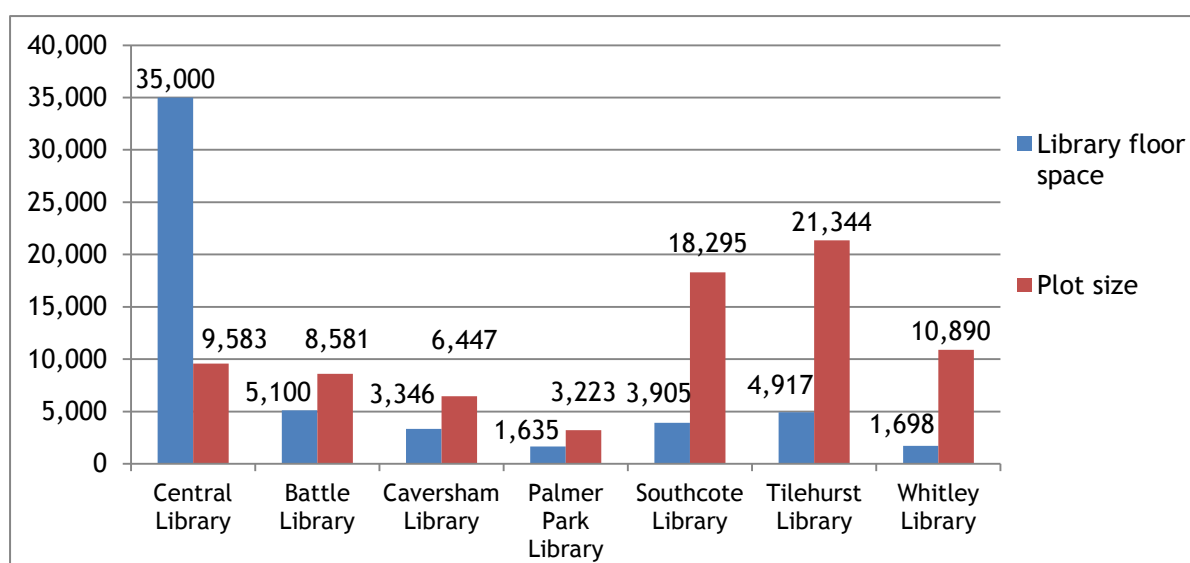


Figure 12a: Building and plot size by branch (square feet)

3.5 Library Use in Reading

| Reading Library Use: summary (all branches) | |
|---|---------|
| Registered Members | 118,520 |
| Active Borrowers (borrowed in last year) | 19,489 |
| Mobile Library users | 380 |
| Visits | 663,864 |
| Issues (books, CDs, DVDs, other) | 760,100 |
| IT Sessions | 90,519 |
| Attendees at Children’s events | 66,308 |
| Attendees at Adults’ events | 6,471 |

As of July 2015, 118,520 individuals were registered as members of the library service in Reading. Of the 118,520 registered members, 19,489 had borrowed from the service at least once in the past 12 months (16.44% of registered members). 19,489 ‘active borrowers’ are equivalent to 12.5% of the borough’s population, however only 14,560 user postcodes could be mapped to addresses in the borough, therefore only 9.35% of the population may be confirmed as active borrowers.

25.29% of active borrowers are out of borough users (19.01%) and users with unmatched postcodes (6.28%).

Figure 13a below shows the distribution of the 19,489 active borrowers across the network. From this it is apparent that the greatest proportion of active borrowers registered with the service at Central Library (over 50%).

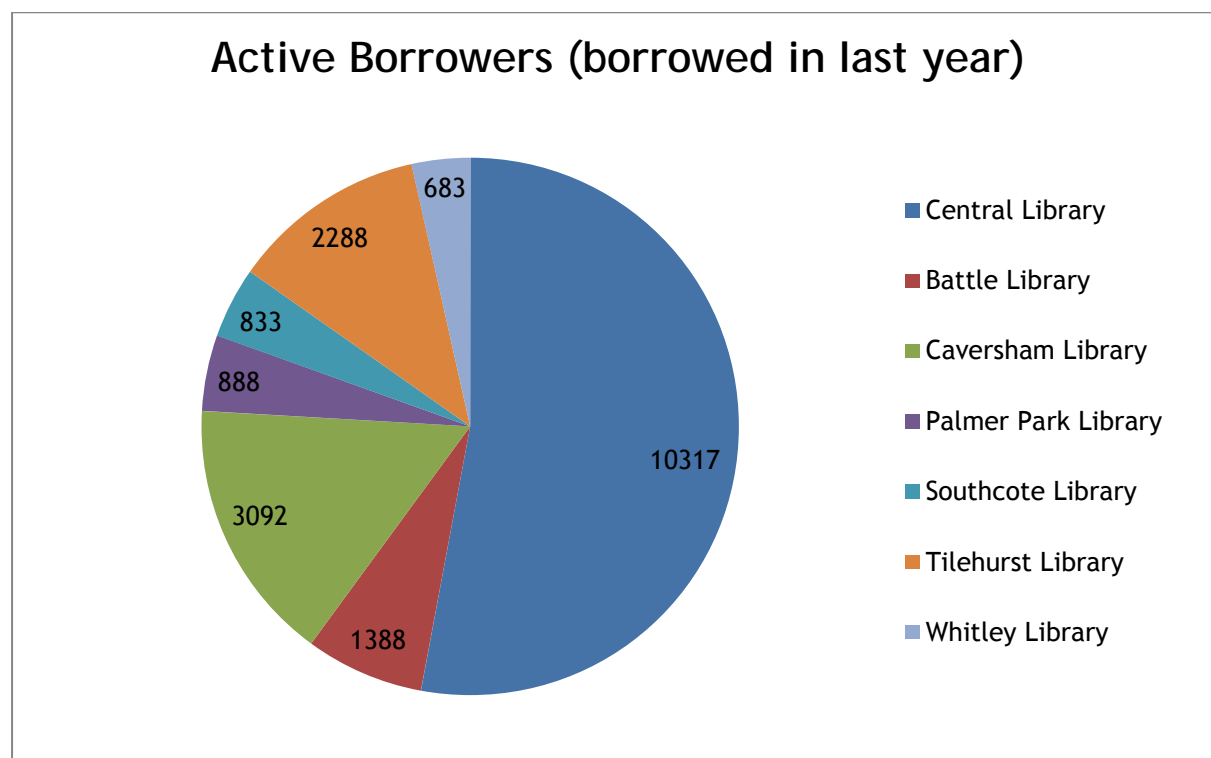


Figure 13a: Active Borrowers by branch

Through an analysis of user postcodes, the library catchment areas used in this needs assessment were identified, as shown in Figure 13b below. These broadly reflect Ward boundaries which are also shown.

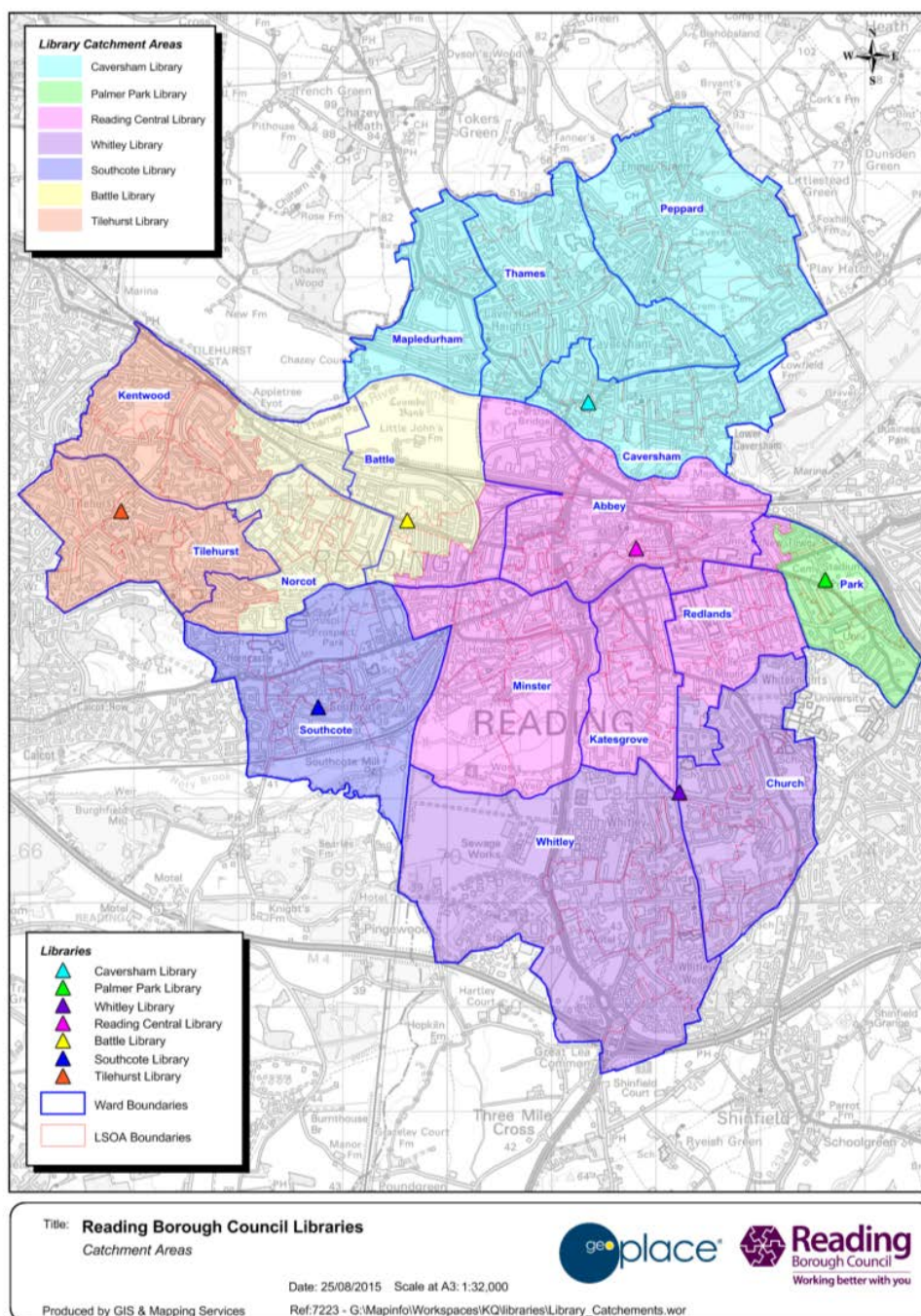


Figure 13b: Reading library network and catchment areas

Library catchment areas were determined on the basis of 5% or more of the population of each of the borough's Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) being registered at one of the borough's libraries and having borrowed from the library network at least once in the last 12 months. Where the threshold of 5% was not met in the LSOA for any library, or was met for more than one branch, LSOAs were distributed on the basis of geographical proximity and the proportion of active borrowers.

From this analysis of user postcodes, it has become apparent that of the 19.01% of active borrowers that live outside of the borough boundaries, the highest proportion of out of borough users registered with the service at Tilehurst

(38.34%), Central (21.52%), Palmer Park (19.21%) and Southcote Libraries (17.94%). These out of borough users are predominantly from West Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Wokingham. Out of borough use of Battle, Caversham and Whitley Libraries is low (below 7%).

When considering in borough library users, Figures 13c-e show the overall percentage and number of residents in each catchment area that actively borrow from the library service. This information is also broken down further to show active library use at the branch where members live within the catchment area, and use of other Reading libraries by residents of the catchment area.

| | Central Library | Battle Library | Caversham Library | Palmer Park Library | Southcote Library | Tilehurst Library | Whitley Library |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Catchment Population | 46,482 | 17,847 | 31,734 | 9,052 | 8,548 | 18,398 | 23,637 |
| Active Borrowers of Reading Libraries | 4,631 | 1,612 | 3,901 | 941 | 802 | 1,736 | 937 |
| % | 9.96% | 9.03% | 12.29% | 10.40% | 9.38% | 9.44% | 3.96% |
| Active Borrowers of catchment library | 3,724 | 775 | 2,589 | 407 | 459 | 1,103 | 420 |
| % | 8.01% | 4.34% | 8.16% | 4.50% | 5.37% | 6.00% | 1.78% |
| Active Borrowers of other branches | 907 | 837 | 1,312 | 534 | 343 | 633 | 517 |
| % | 1.95% | 4.69% | 4.13% | 5.90% | 4.01% | 3.44% | 2.19% |

Figure 13c: Active Library Use by catchment area

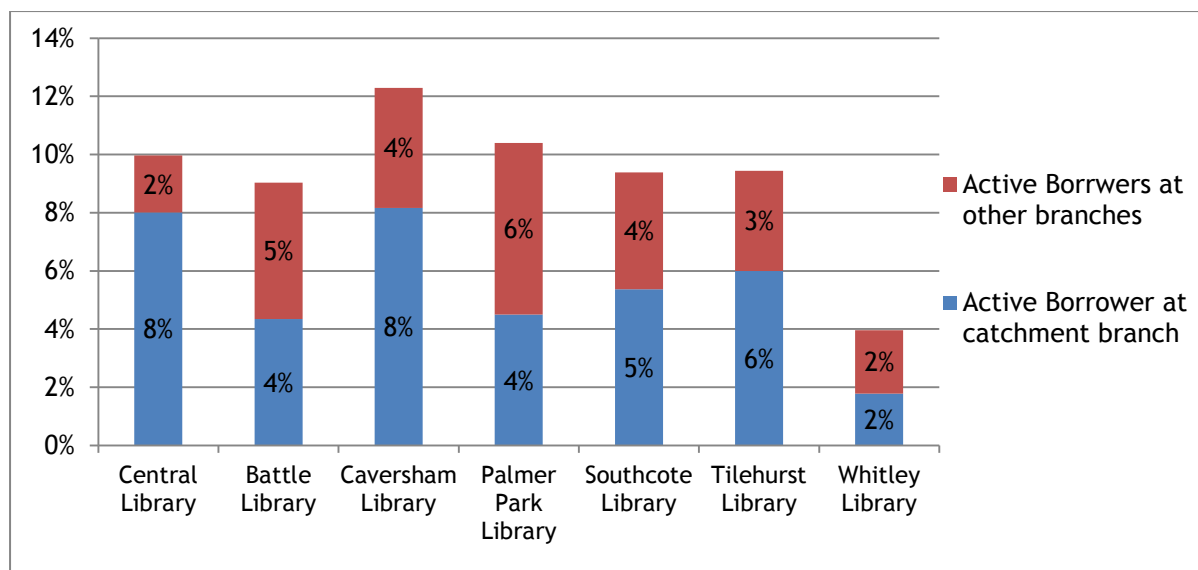


Figure 13d: Active borrowing by catchment area (% of active borrowers)

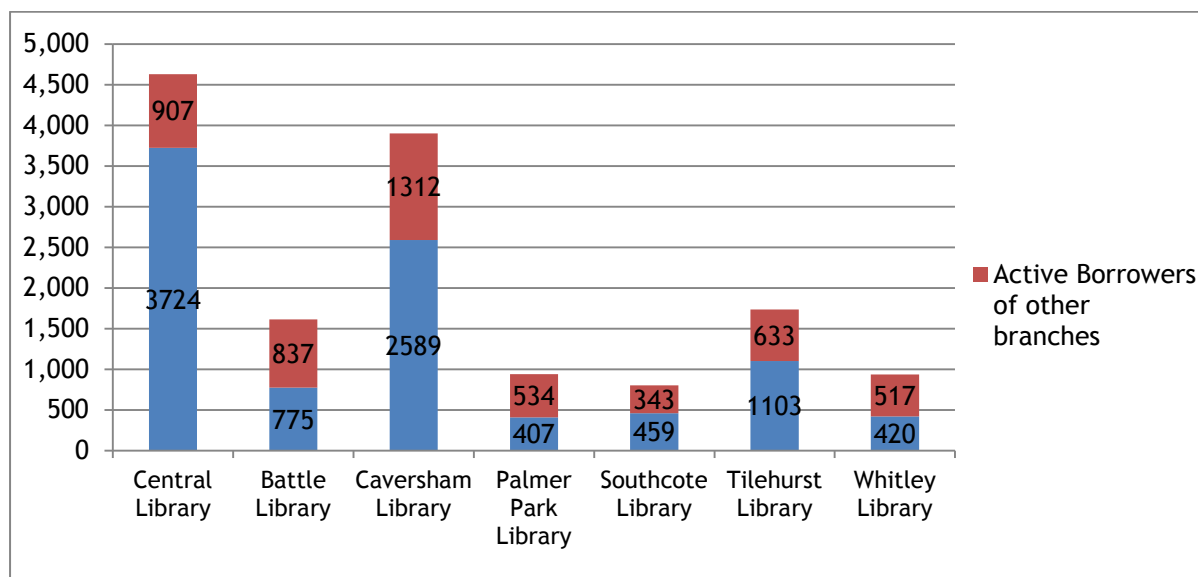


Figure 13e: Active borrowing by catchment area (number of active borrowers)

From the above it is apparent that the Caversham Library catchment area includes the highest proportion of active borrowers (10.4% of the population) and the highest proportion of the population using the branch whose catchment they live within (8.16%). Active borrowing is significantly lower in Whitley Library (3.96%). Active borrowers of branches other than the catchment branch are as common as active borrowers of the catchment branch for Battle Library (4.69% to 4.34%) and higher for Palmer Park Library (5.9% to 4.5%).

The most common 'other' branch used across the borough is the Central Library. This is shown by Figure 13f which shows the percentage of the borough as a whole actively borrowing from each branch.

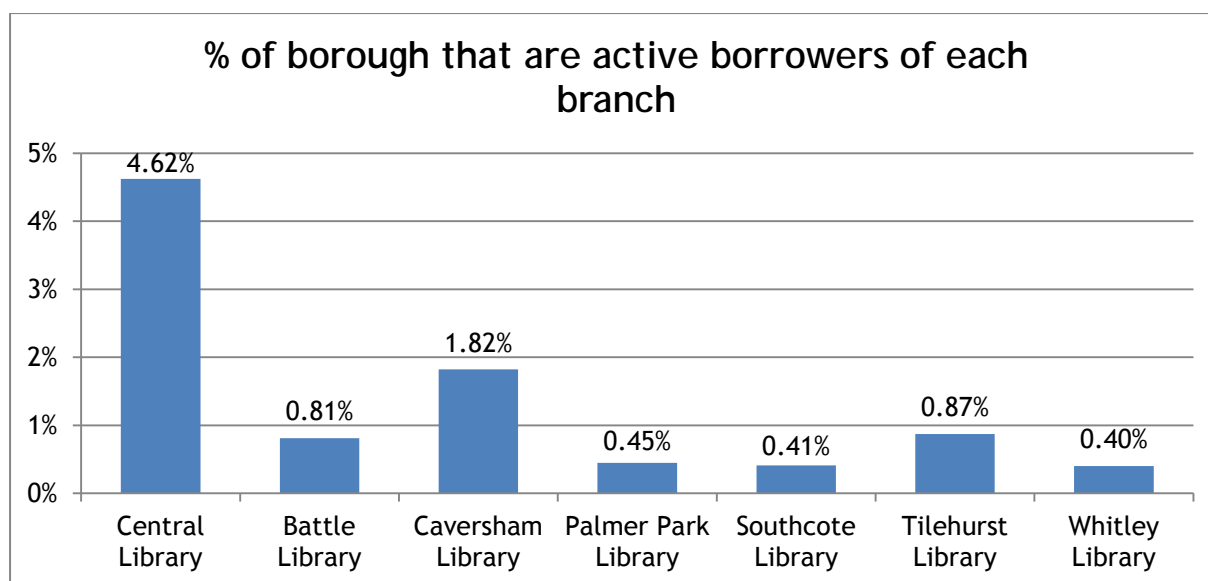


Figure 13f: Percentage of the borough that are active borrowers of each branch

As shown in the Consultation Report, 54.2% of respondents used more than one library.

3.6 Patterns of use

As previously indicated, Reading Libraries provide a range of services, beyond book borrowing (which triggers the inclusion of members within the active borrowers category). Many services and activities can also be accessed by non-members. An analysis of patterns of use is therefore also required in order to better understand library use.

Figure 14a provides an overview of the relative proportion of uses by branch.

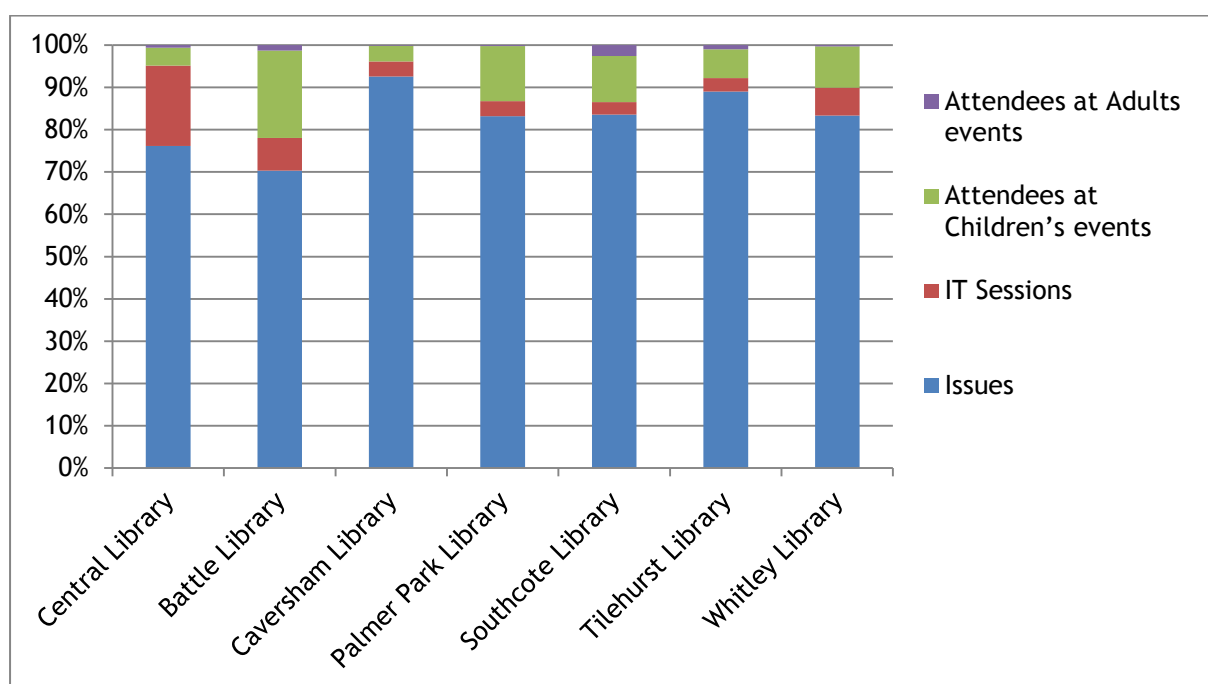


Figure 14a: Proportion of library use, by type, per branch (2014/15)

There are some notable variations in patterns of use across libraries, explored in greater detail below.

3.6.1 Visits

All Reading Borough Libraries have an electronic people counter at each entrance to count visitors. Library visitors give an indication of the busyness of each library in addition to the core activities of borrowing items, using computers and attending activities where membership details and attendee numbers are recorded. These users can be at a library for any number of reasons, including for study, to read newspapers/magazines, and meeting people. Data on these activities is not captured.

In total, Reading Libraries received 661,296 visits between April 2014 and March 2015, including 1,972 visits to Mobile Library public stops. The library service also made 2,568 visits to the elderly and housebound. Library sites therefore received 659,324 visits.

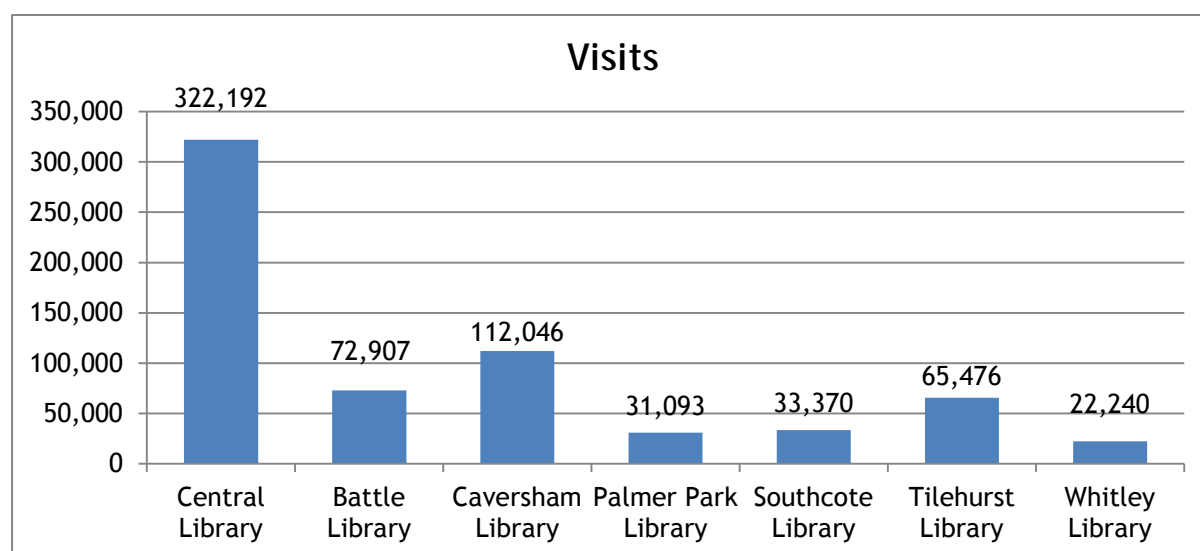


Figure 15a: Visits by branch 2014/15

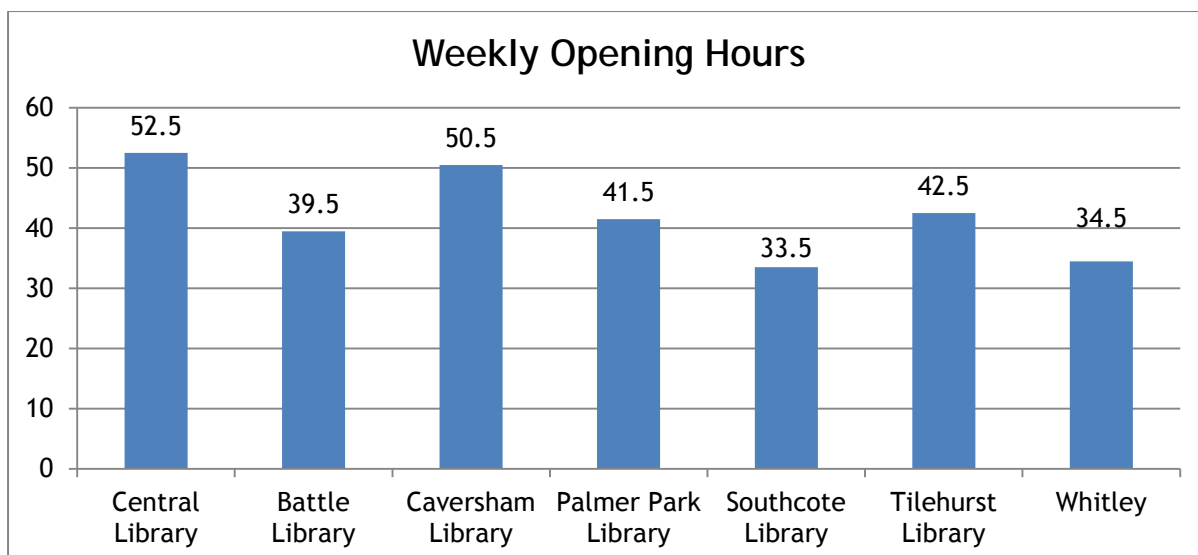


Figure 15b: Weekly Opening Hours

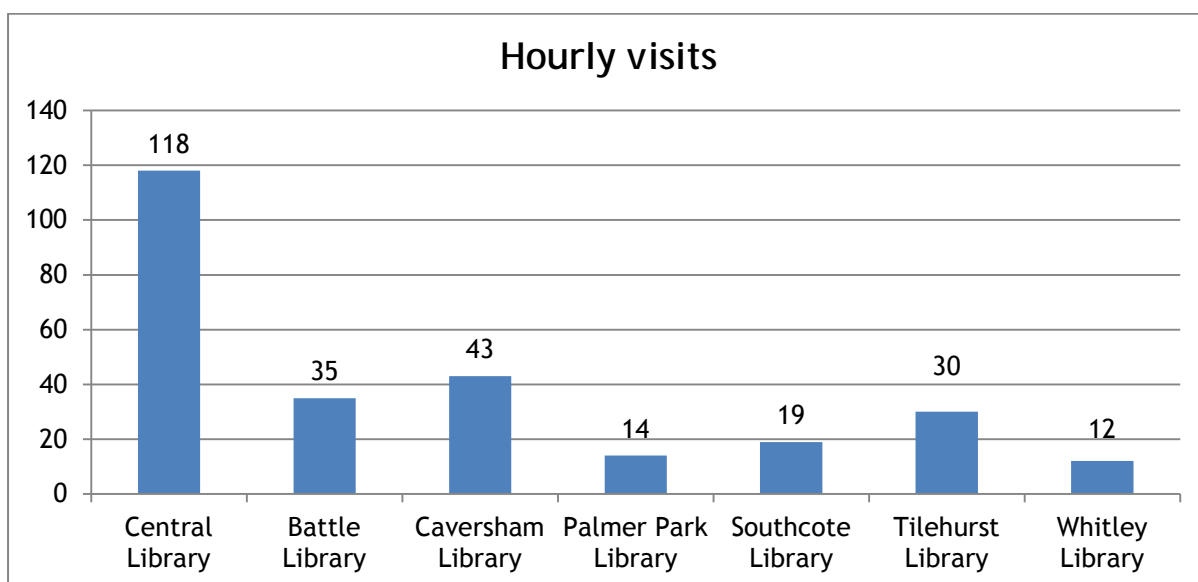


Figure 15c: Approximate hourly visits by branch 2014/15

Hourly visits are a function of both activity and opening hours.

As shown by Figure 15d, visits have been steadily falling over the last 5 years.

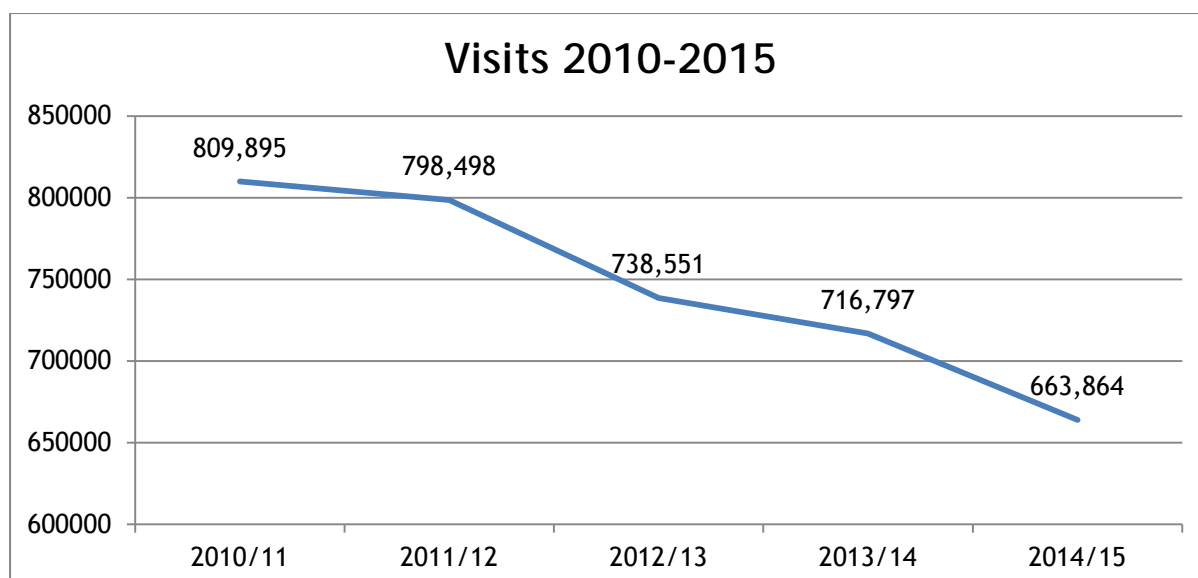


Figure 15d: Annual visits 2010-15

3.6.2 Issues

In total, Reading Libraries made 760,100 issues of: 728,305 books, 12,804 DVDs, 11,842 CDs, 5,001 cassettes and 2,148 toys between April 2014 and March 2015. This included:

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Adults' Books | |
| 171,132 | Non-Fiction books |
| 241,674 | Fiction books |
| 23,208 | Large Print books |
| 436,014 | Total adults' books |
| Children's Books | |
| 39,561 | Non-Fiction books |
| 252,730 | Fiction books |
| 292,291 | Total children's books |
| Other lending | |
| 12,804 | DVDs |
| 2,148 | Toys |
| 2,370 | Music CDs |
| 9,472 | Spoken Word CDs |
| 3,889 | Spoken Word Cassettes |
| 1,112 | Children's Cassettes |

Figure 16a: Issues 2014/15

As shown in Figures 16b and 16c, issues of adults' books, audio (talking books and music), DVDs and toys have fallen significantly over the last 5 years, whilst issues of children's books have remained relatively steady.

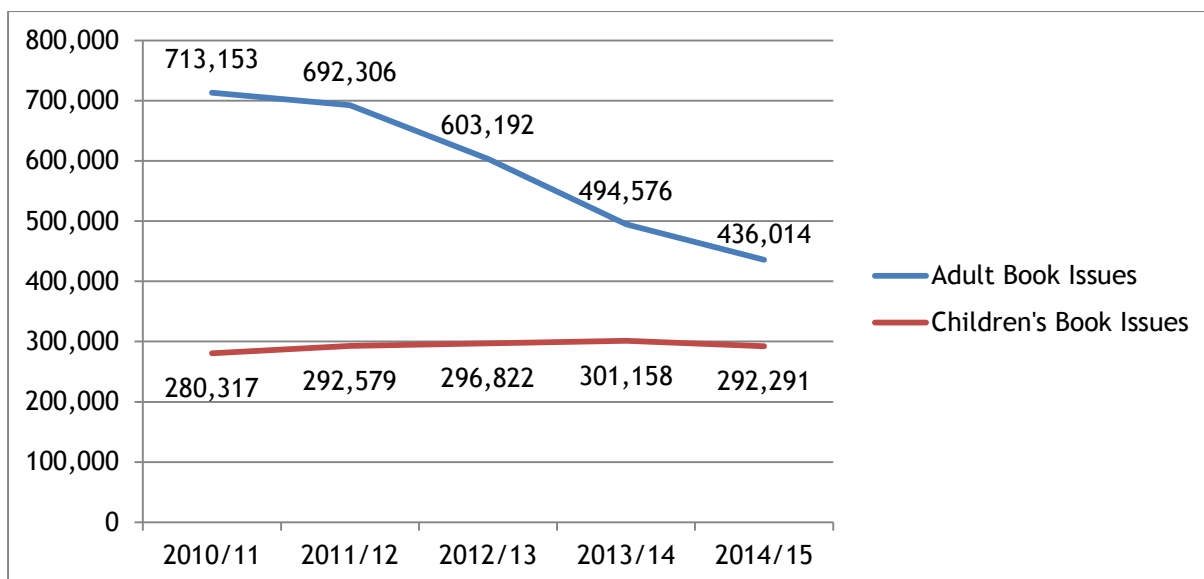


Figure 16b: Adult and Children's Book Issues 2010-2015

Overall, issues of all book varieties (Adults', Children, Fiction, Non-Fiction and Large Print) have fallen by 26% over the past 5 years (and 8.5% in the last year).

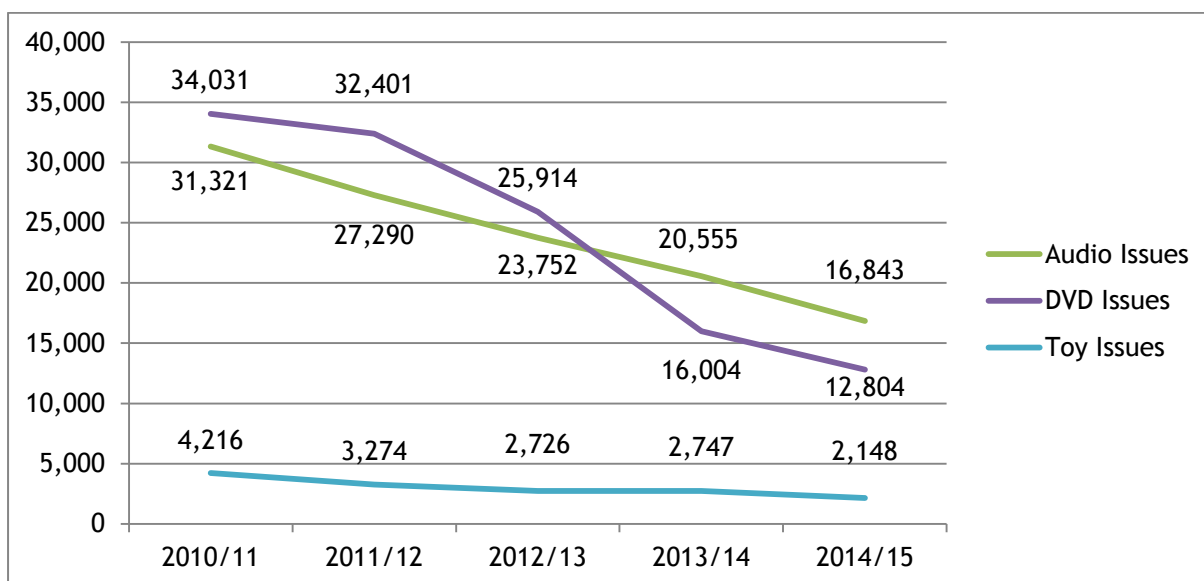


Figure 16c: Other issues 2010-15

As with visits, between April 2014 and March 2015, Central Library issued the greatest number of loan items overall (as shown in Figures 16d and 16e below), followed by Caversham and Tilehurst Libraries.

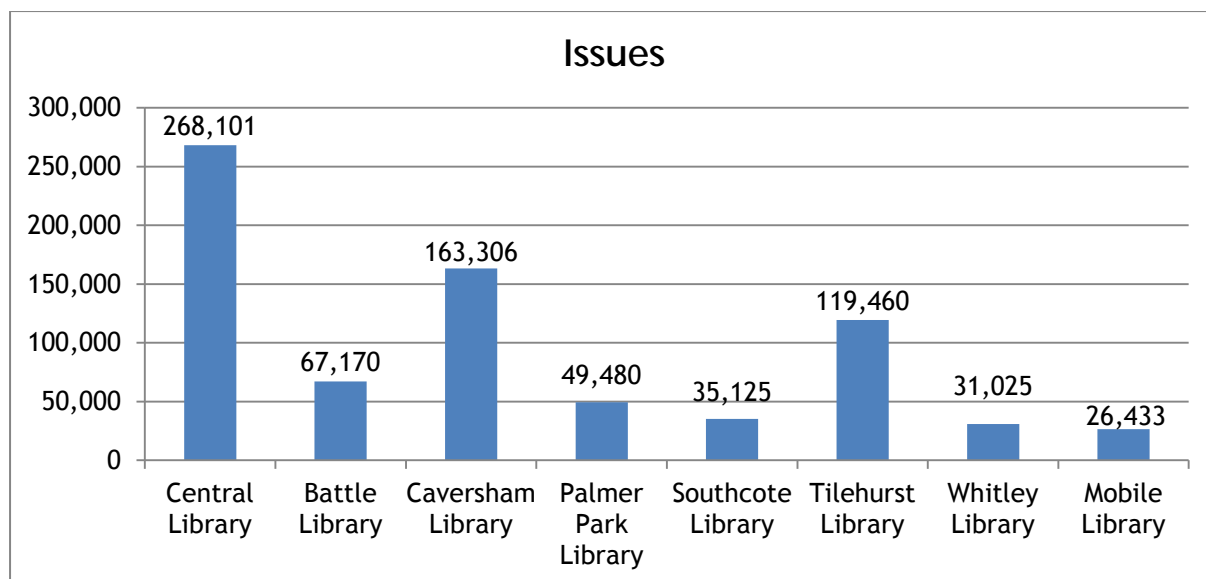


Figure 16d: Total loan items issue by branch, 2014/15

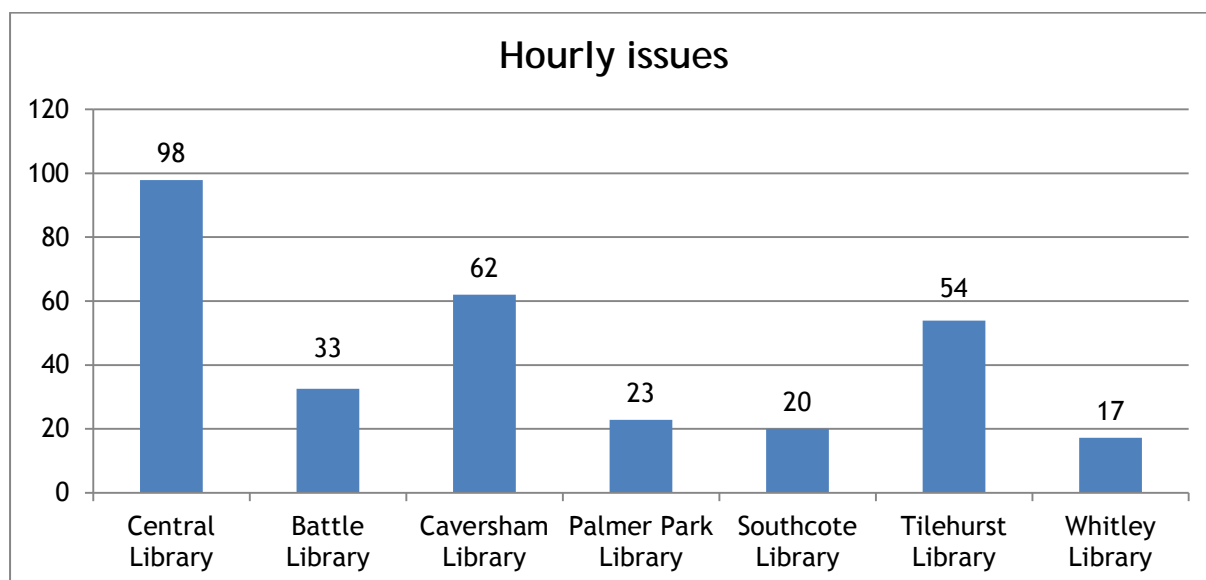


Figure 16e: Approximate hourly issues of all loan items by branch, 2014/15

Issues of Adults' and Children's Books are relatively evenly split across the network. Overall, Adults' Books makes up 60% of book issues, and Children's 40%. However, as shown in Figure 16f below:

- Issues of Children's Books outweigh issues of Adults' Books at Caversham (51%), Southcote (54%), Palmer Park (60%) and Whitley (59%).
- Issues of Adults' Books outweigh issues of Children's Books at Central (76%), Tilehurst (63%) and Battle (55%).
- Adults' Books represent 99% of books issued by the Mobile Library.

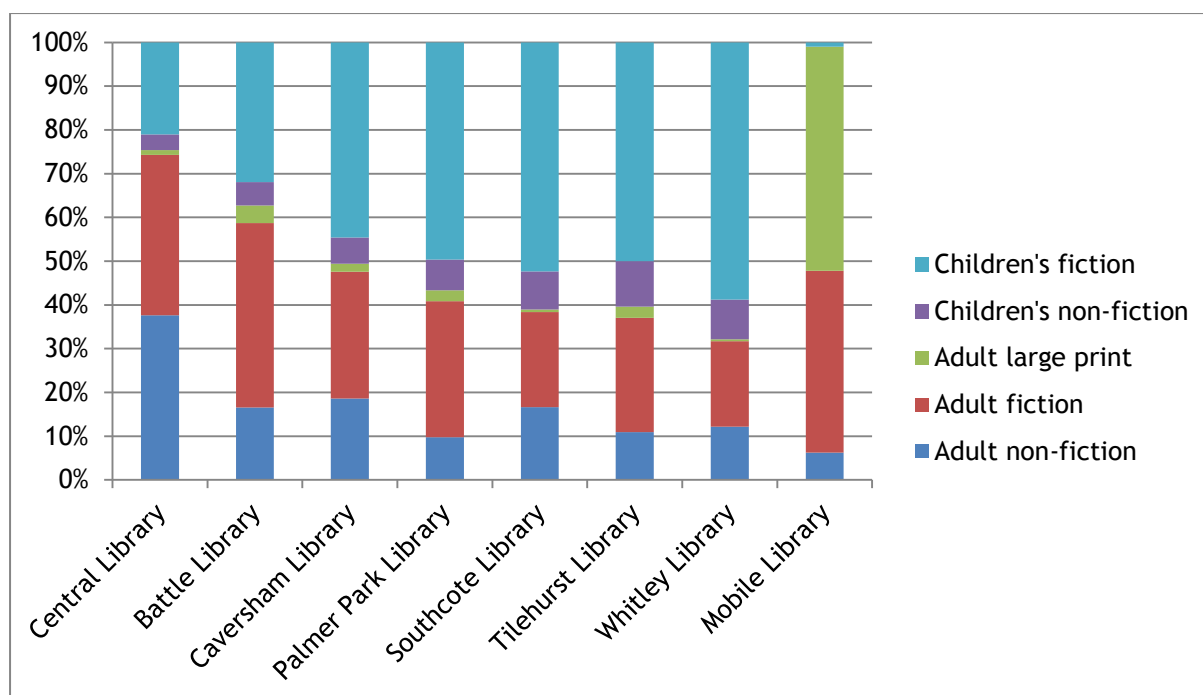


Figure 16f: Book issues by type and branch, 2014/15

Between April 2014 and March 2015, Reading Libraries issued 23,208 large print books. The majority of large print books are issued by the Mobile Library (45% of all Adult Large Print books).

Furthermore, whilst only making up between 2% and 6% of Adult Book issues at Central, Tilehurst and Caversham Libraries, issues of large print books are significantly higher at these libraries than any other branch, with issues of between 2,900 and 4,400 between April 2014 and March 2015 (in contrast to between 270 and 900 at other branches).

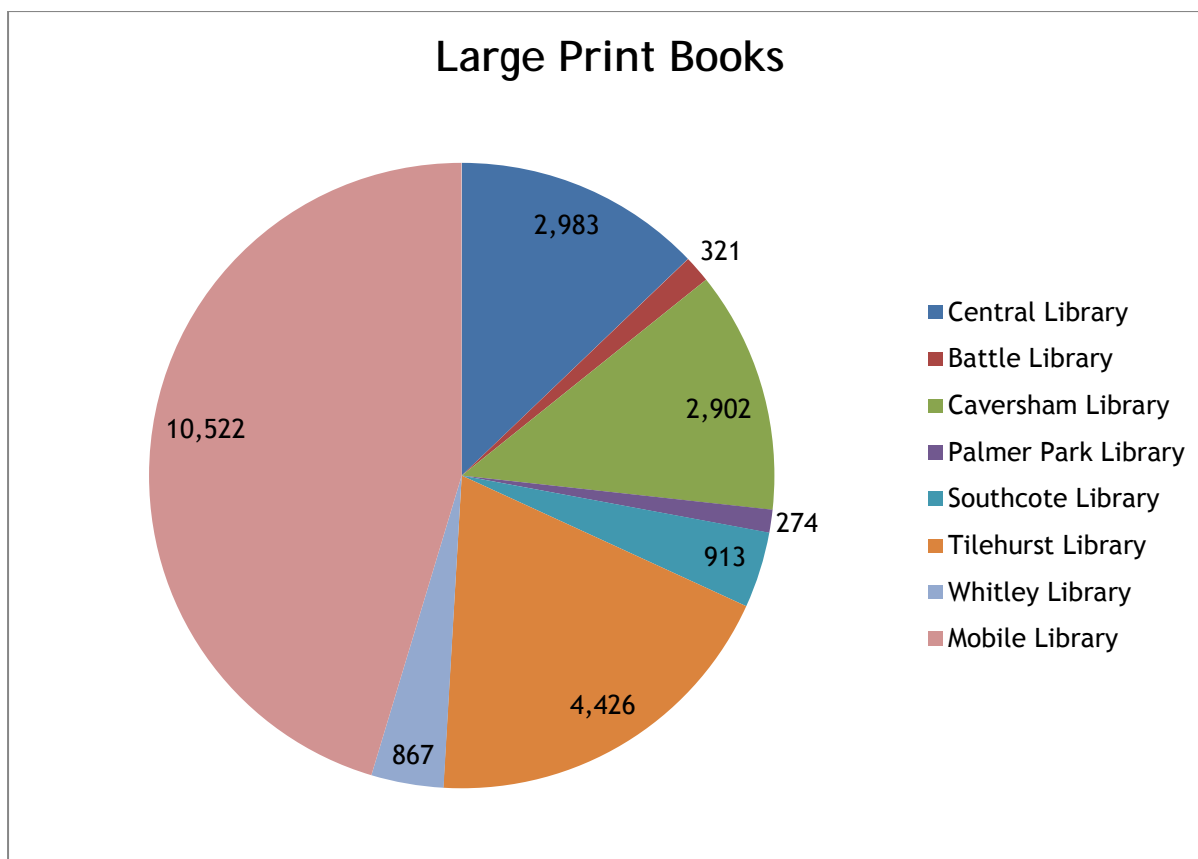


Figure 16g: Overall large print book issues by branch, 2014/15

Issuing of spoken word cassettes and spoken word CDs is also highest at Central, Tilehurst and Caversham Libraries (as shown in Figure 16h below), thereby indicating the higher levels of use of these libraries by those with visual impairments. Higher rates of issues by Central, Caversham and Tilehurst may reflect the higher numbers of older people living within the catchment areas.

Note: The Mobile Library (Elderly and Housebound Service) issues spoken word cassettes and CDs free of charge. Branches also issue spoken word cassettes and CDs free of charge to users that are registered blind or partially sighted.

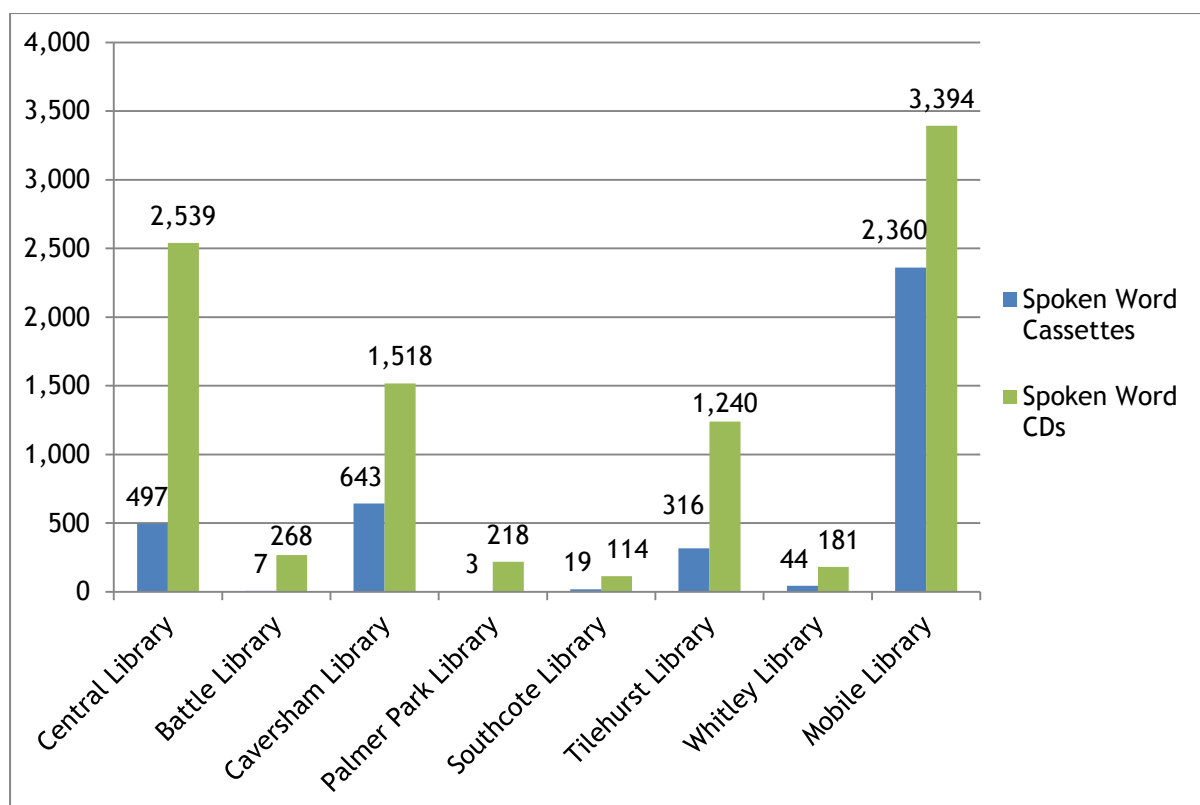


Figure 16h: Issues of spoken word cassettes and CDs by branch, 2014/15

3.6.3 Requests

Reading Libraries currently allow users to request books from any branch within the network, for delivery to another branch. This can be done in branch, or via the library catalogue for a fee of 50p per book.

Prior to 2013, this service was free of charge and resulted in a noticeable drop in demand. Demand for this service has fallen generally, and is in line with the overarching fall in issues over the past 5 years.

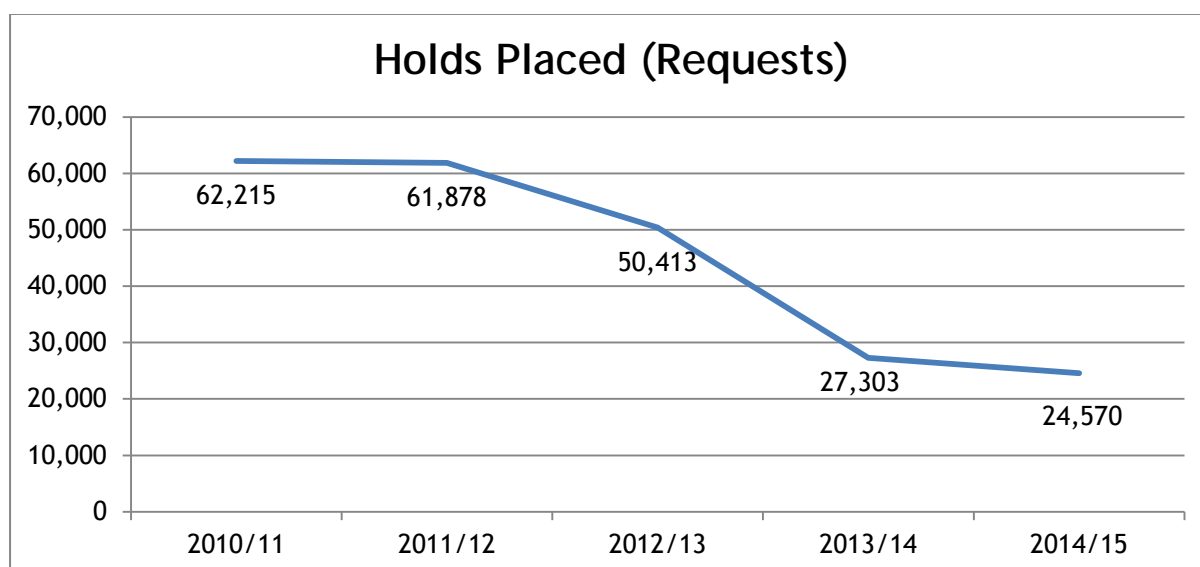


Figure 17i: Requests 2010-15

3.6.4 E-books

In December 2014, Reading Libraries introduced lending of e-books to their offer, with the full launch of the e-Library in February 2015. Since the launch of e-book lending:

- The e-book webpage has received 3841 visits from 618 unique visitors
- 1760 book issues have been made to 418 individual library users
- 619 e-books from the collection of 800 have been borrowed

Thus far, only 2.4% of Active Borrowers of Reading Libraries have borrowed an e-book, whilst 25.4% of respondents to the Library Review Consultation questionnaire indicated that they read e-books (with 2.5% indicating that they had borrowed an e-book from the library service). The most frequent reason given by respondents for not borrowing from the council's offer of e-books were as follows:

- They were unaware of the service
- They get e-books elsewhere
- The e-lending service was not compatible with their e-reader
- They prefer to read 'real' books
- They had not yet tried it
- Choice of books was limited

3.6.5 Toy Library

Over a period of 3 months, between September and November 2015, Toy Library user postcodes have been recorded. Over this period 140 user postcodes were logged. 91 were postcodes from inside the Reading Borough, 34 were for out of borough addresses, and 15 postcodes could not be matched. Of those in borough postcodes, the numbers from each of the library catchment areas are shown in Figure 17j below. This shows a significantly greater take-up of the Toy Library in the Southcote Library catchment area (note. the Toy Library is based from Southcote Library) and Tilehurst Library that are represented in the borough population, and an underrepresentation of users amongst all other areas.

| | Toy Library Users | % of Toy Library Users | % of Borough population in catchment | Difference |
|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Central | 24 | 26.37% | 29.85% | -3.48% |
| Battle | 5 | 5.49% | 11.46% | -5.97% |
| Caversham | 10 | 10.99% | 20.38% | -9.39% |
| Palmer Park | 1 | 1.10% | 5.81% | -4.71% |
| Southcote | 22 | 24.18% | 5.49% | 18.69% |
| Tilehurst | 21 | 23.08% | 11.82% | 11.26% |
| Whitley | 8 | 8.79% | 15.18% | -6.39% |

Figure 17j: Toy Library Use by catchment area

3.6.6 IT sessions

As shown in Figures 18a and 18b, the use of public access IT in Central Library far exceeds that of any other branch. Public access IT is least well used in Whitley, Palmer Park and Southcote and used more in Caversham and Battle libraries. When considering approximate hourly IT sessions, as shown by Figure 18b, Battle Library usage is double that of other branches but there is little to differentiate between use of IT in the other branches at present. However, it is worth noting that public access computer equipment has been upgraded over summer-autumn 2015 which may increase use.

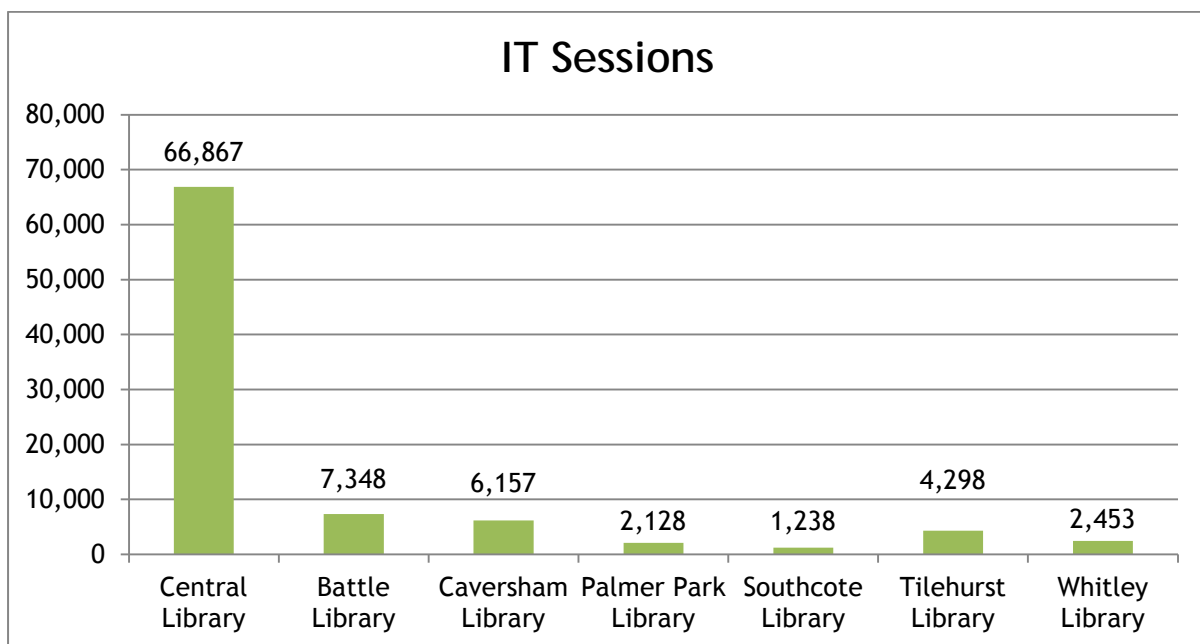


Figure 18a: Public access IT sessions per branch, 2014/15

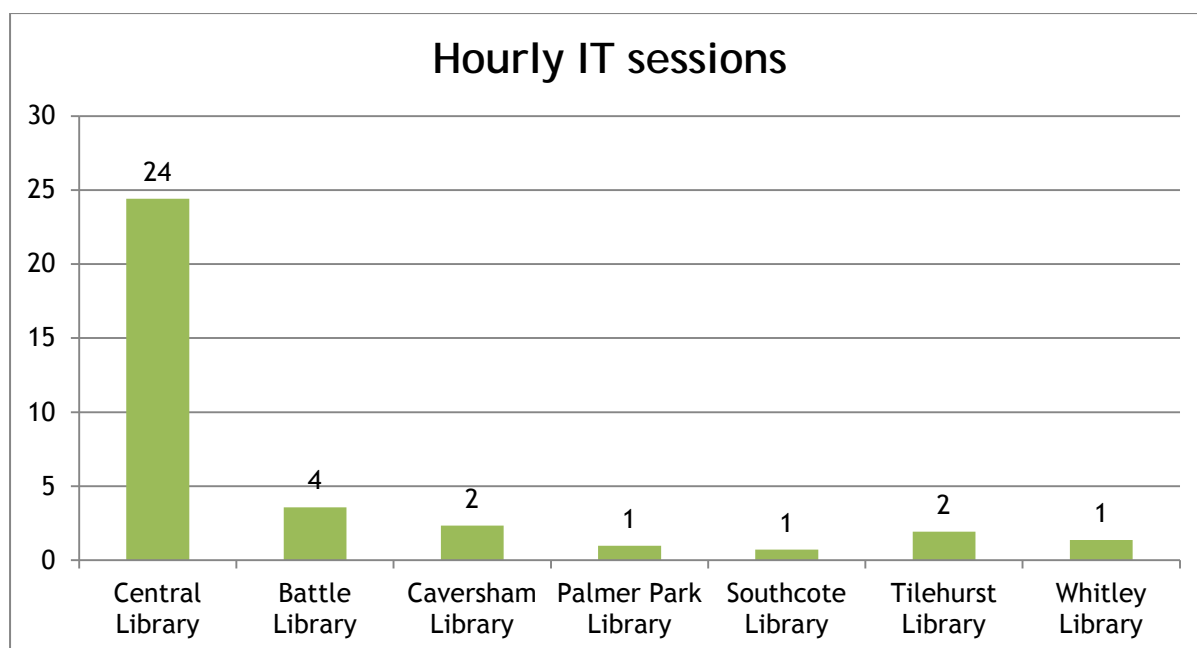


Figure 18b: Approximate hourly public access IT sessions by branch, 2014/15

3.6.7 Activities

As shown in Figures 19a, 19b and 19c, the provision and uptake of children's activities and events, including regular weekly Rhymetimes and Storytimes to support early learning, far exceeds that of adults' activities and events. The figures below show that Battle Library received the greatest number of attendees to children's events (19,708), followed by Central (14,999) and Tilehurst (9,141) Libraries. Central Library, on the other hand, received the greatest number of attendees at adults' events (2,159), followed by Tilehurst (1,337), Battle (1,266) and Southcote (1,097) Libraries.

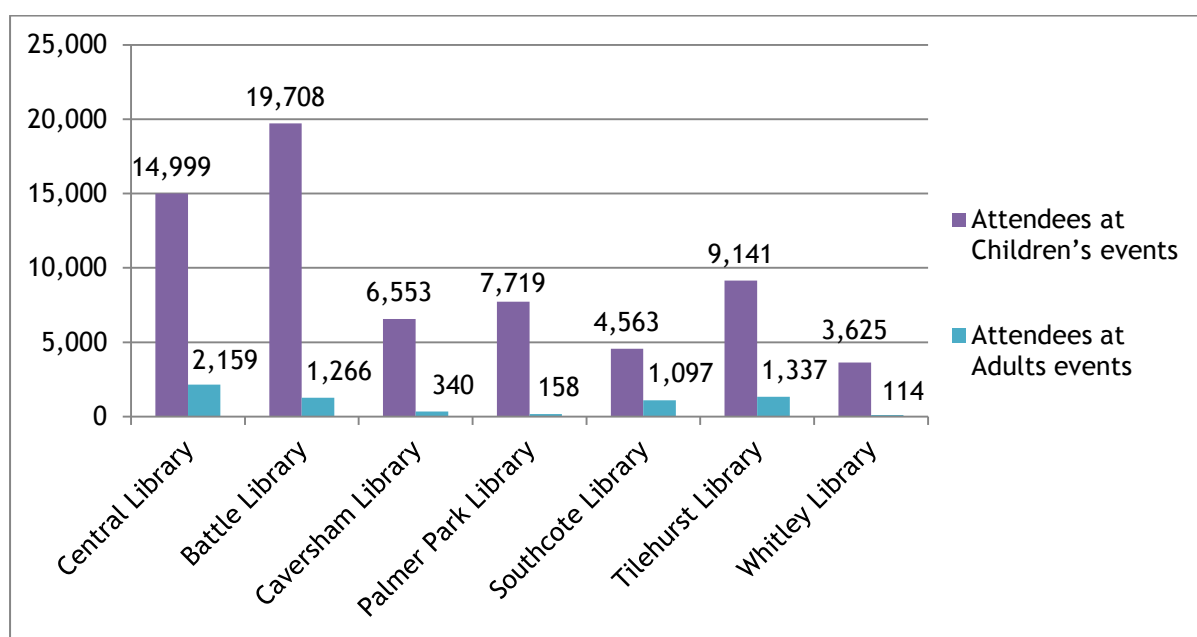


Figure 19a: Attendees at Adults' and Children's events by branch, 2014/15

Battle Library also hosted the greatest number of children's events (436), followed by Whitley Library (282) who also received the fewest attendees at children's events (3,625).

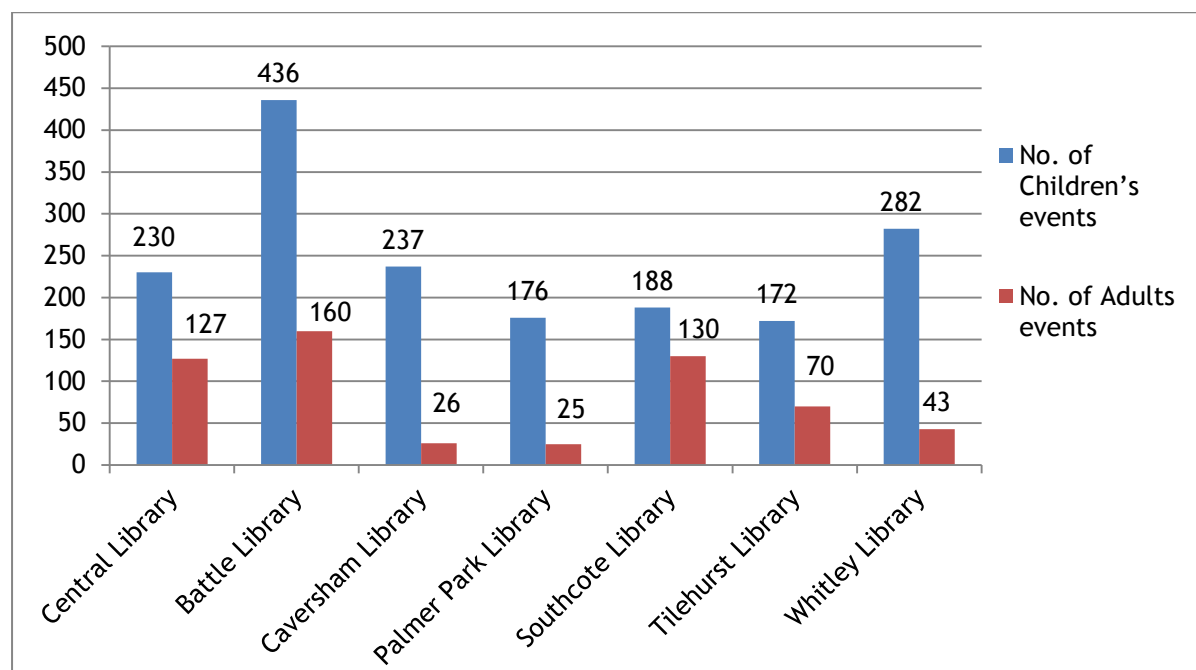


Figure 19b: Total attendees at Adults' and Children's events by branch, 2014/15

The number of attendees per children's event far exceeds that of adults' events across all libraries. This may subsequently be explained by the differing nature of adults' and children's events, such as Rhymetimes and Coffee Mornings. Children's events are by far least well attended at Whitley (as are adult events) and Southcote.

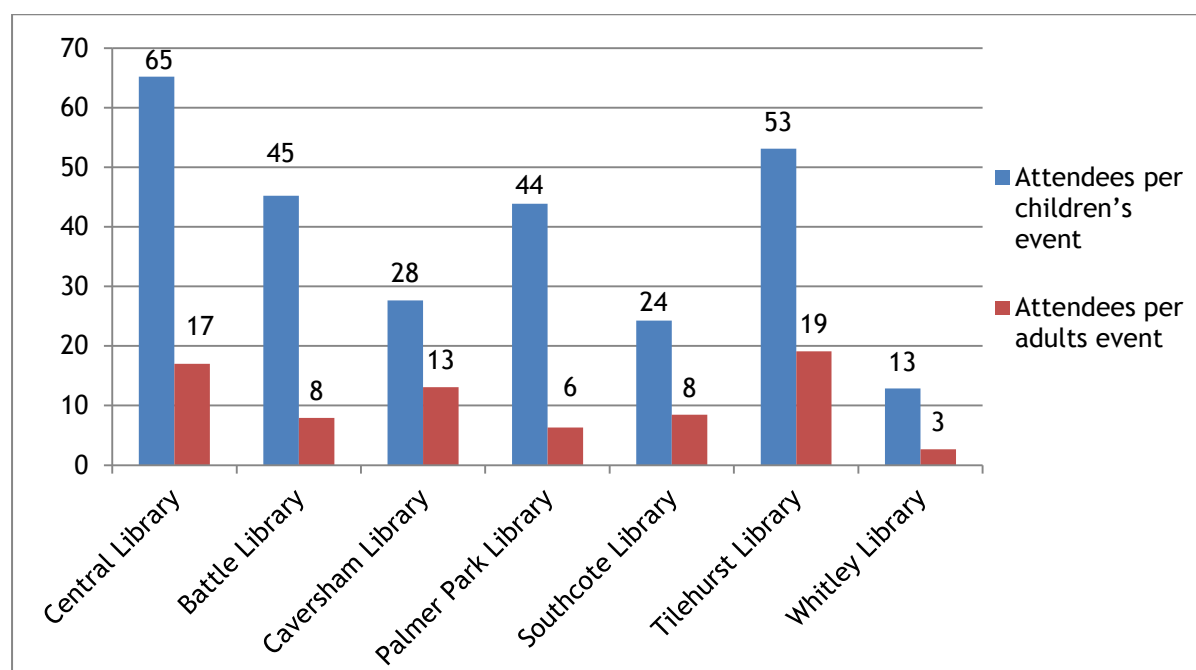


Figure 19c: Attendees per Adults' and Children's event by branch, 2014/15

As shown by Figure 19d, attendees at adults' and children's events have generally been increasing over the past 4 years generally.

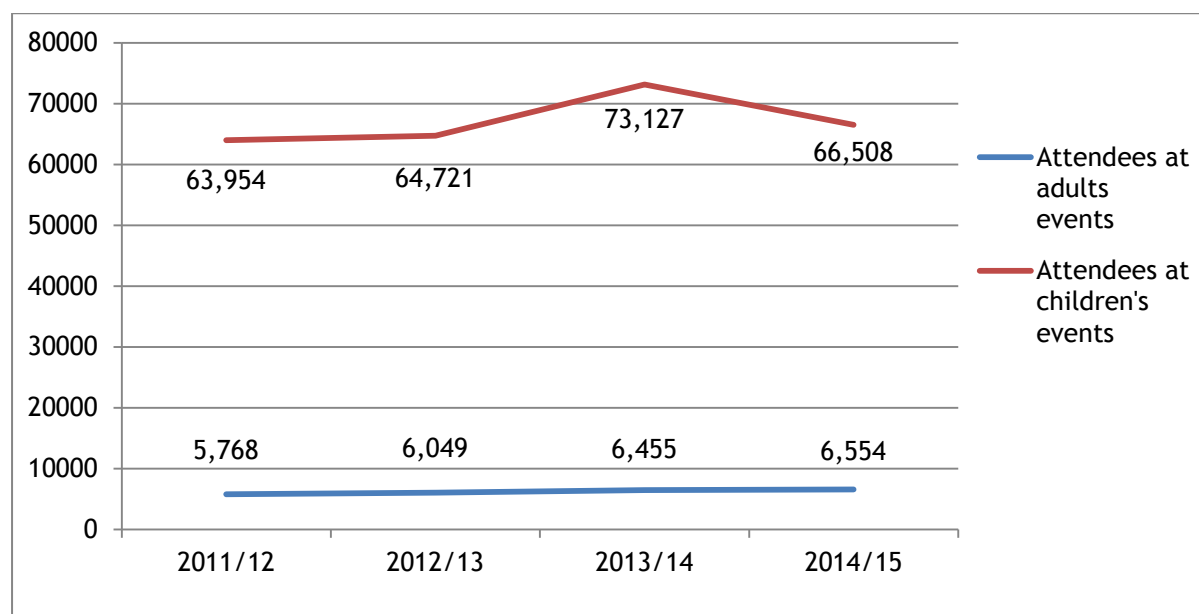


Figure 19d: Attendees at children's and adults' events 2011-15

See schedule of activities at the end of this report.

3.6.8 Volunteering

Volunteers support a diverse range of library activities in Reading Libraries. These include:

- Rhymetime support
- Delivering books for the elderly and housebound service
- Local studies cataloguing and digitisation
- Each summer, older school children are recruited to support the Summer Reading Challenge by listening to young children talking about the books they have read and by helping at craft activities

As well as working with library staff, volunteers also run activities in libraries:

- Games clubs
- Rhymetimes in community languages, including Polish, Spanish, Chinese and Romanian
- Age UK run ICT sessions for older people (Silver Surfer sessions)
- RVA run ICT sessions (Digital volunteers)

The number of volunteer hours has been increasing gradually, as shown in Figure 20a overleaf.

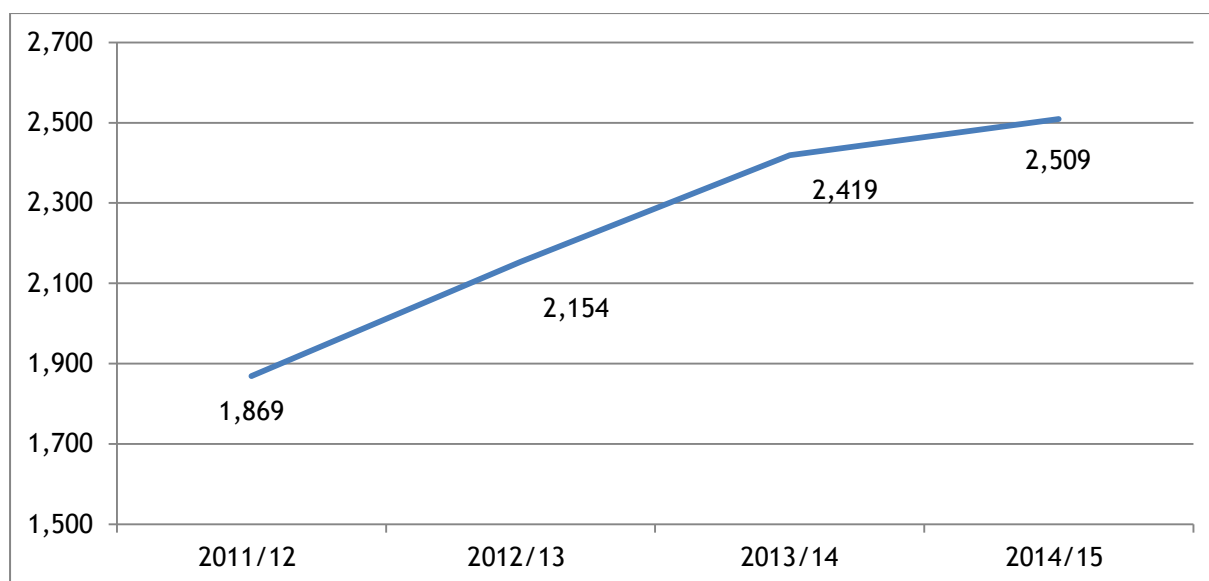


Figure 20a: Volunteer Hours 2011-15

The breakdown of volunteer hours by site for 2014/15 is set out in Figure 20b below. It demonstrates that the majority of volunteer hours are spent in Central Library, followed by Battle Library and the Mobile Library (where volunteers use their own cars to deliver books to the elderly and housebound in their own homes).

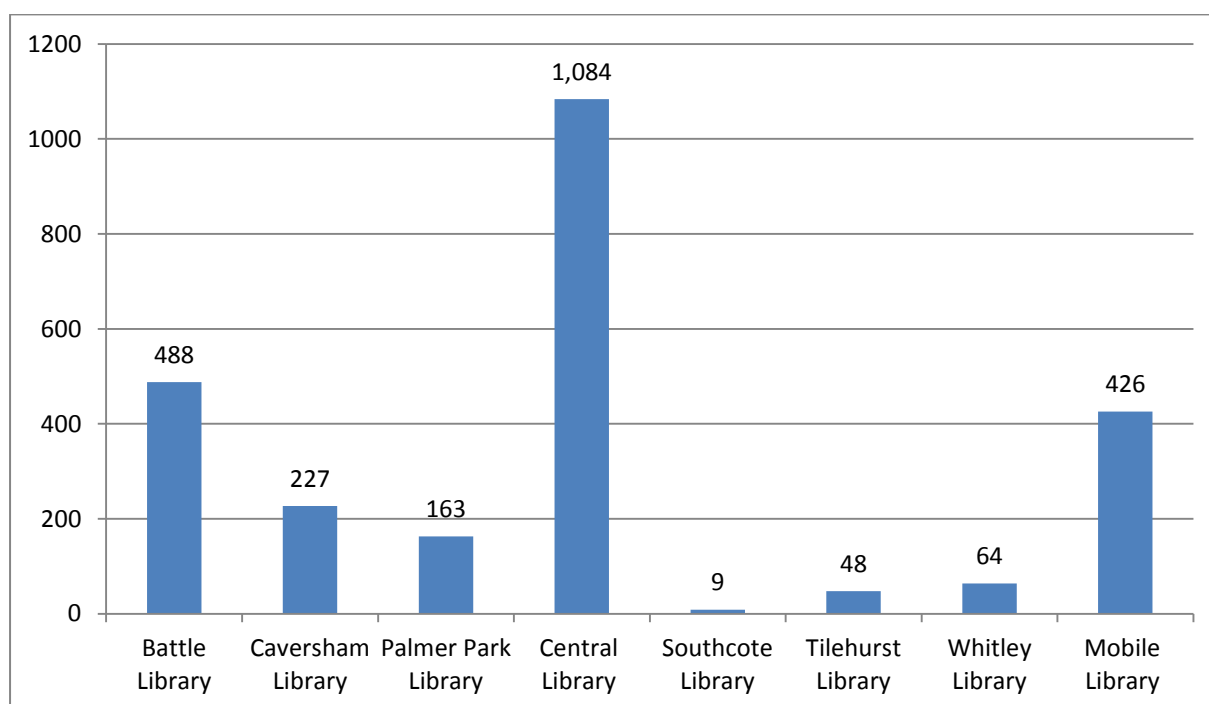


Figure 20b: Volunteer Hours by branch for 2014/15

3.7 Demographics of users

User details recorded by the Library Management System are limited. User demographics have therefore been pooled from the date of birth of active users, attached to their membership details, responses to the 2014 Library User Survey

and responses to the first phase of public consultation as part of the Library Service Review.

3.7.1 Age

| | 2014 User Survey | 2015 Library Consultation | 2011 Census |
|-------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| 0-24 | 5% | 2.4% | 36.94% |
| 25-64 | 54% (25-59) | 63.5% | 53.67% |
| 65+ | 41% (60+) | 34.1% | 9.39% |

Figure 21a: Age of User Survey, Consultation and Census respondents

From Figure 20a above, it is apparent that respondents to both the 2014 user survey and Stage 1 Library Review Consultation questionnaire were over-representative of older people, and under-representative of young people aged 0-24. A review of Active Borrowers dates of birth (using the threshold of July 1st for determining the following age groups), shows that Active Borrowers are 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. However, when reviewing Active Borrowers by the library where they registered with the service, this varies.

| | All | Central Library | Battle Library | Caversham Library | Palmer Park Library | Southcote Library | Tilehurst Library | Whitley Library |
|-------|--------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 0-24 | 25.44% | 17.69% | 29.71% | 25.51% | 47.34% | 43.25% | 33.57% | 46.72% |
| 25-64 | 61.83% | 68.73% | 65.81% | 57.84% | 48.52% | 49.13% | 49.43% | 48.85% |
| 65+ | 12.73% | 13.58% | 4.49% | 16.66% | 4.14% | 7.63% | 17.00% | 4.43% |

Figure 21b: Age of Active Members by Branch

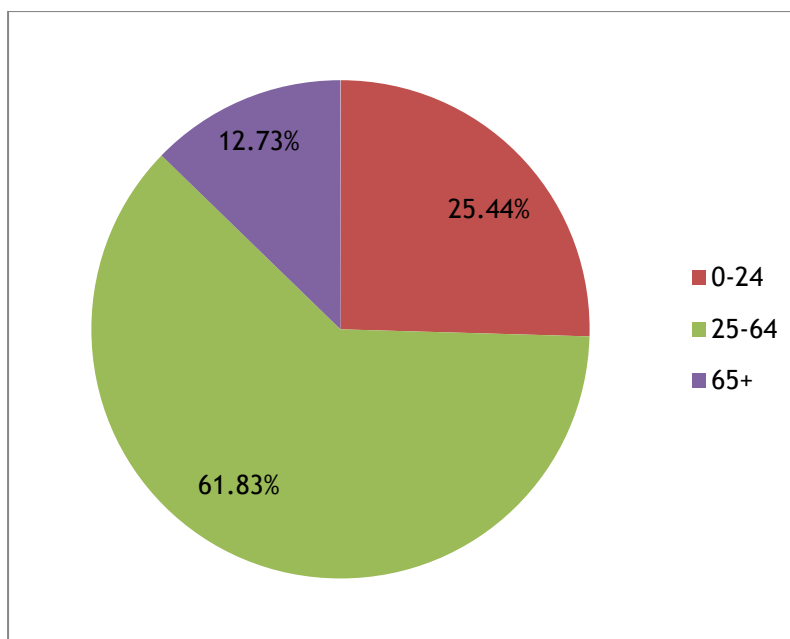


Figure 21c: Age of All Active Members

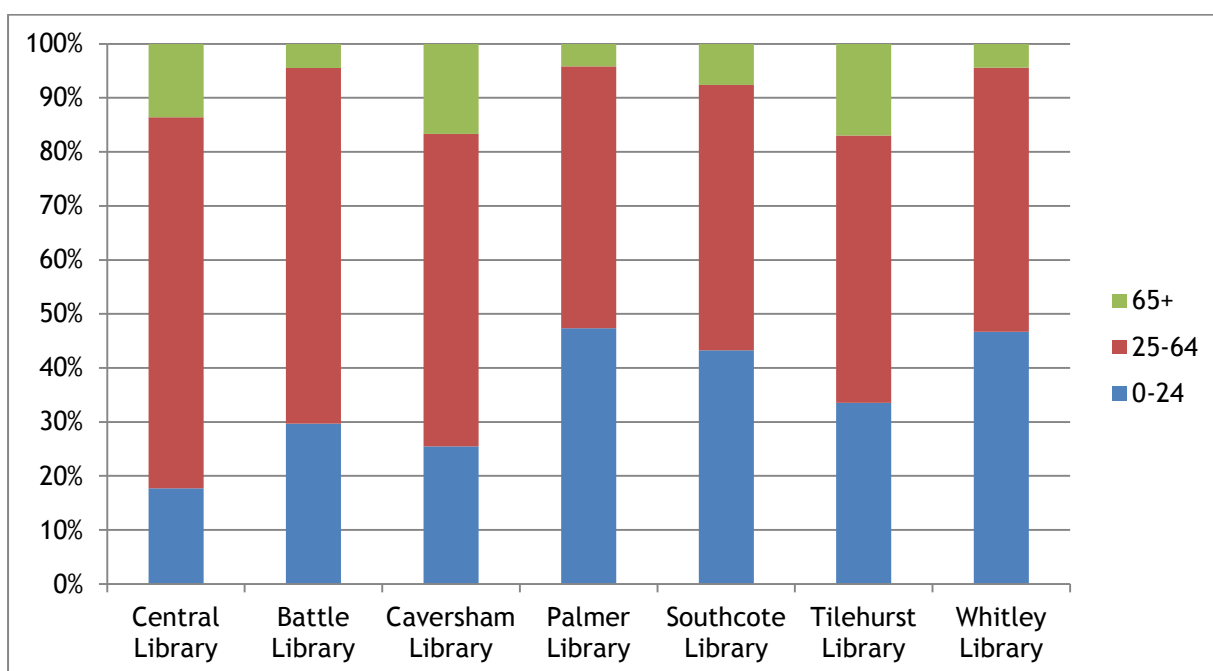


Figure 21d: Age of Active Members by Branch

3.7.2 Gender

| | 2014 User Survey | 2015 Library Consultation | 2011 Census |
|--------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Male | 36% | 30.6% | 50% |
| Female | 64% | 69.4% | 50% |

Figure 21e: User Survey, Consultation and Census respondents by Gender

From Figure 20e, it is apparent that respondents to both the 2014 user survey and Stage 1 Library Review Consultation questionnaire were over representative of women. This implies that library services are used by a greater number of women than men.

3.7.3 Ethnicity

| | 2014 User Survey | 2015 Library Consultation | 2011 Census |
|--------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| White British | 73% | 75.9% | 66.9% |
| White Other | 7% | 5.5% | 4.6% |
| Asian or Asian British | 6.8% | 3.8% | 13.6% |
| Black or Black British | 2.4% | 1% | 7.7% |
| Mixed | 1% | 1.4% | 3.9% |
| Other | 1.6% | 0.7% | 0.9% |
| Prefer not to say or not given | 8.2% | 14.7% | |

Figure 21f: User Survey, Consultation and Census Respondents by Ethnicity

Figure 20f above shows that respondents to both the 2014 user survey and Stage 1 Library Review Consultation questionnaire were over-representative of 'White British / White Other' respondents than are shown in the resident population as a whole. This therefore implies that library services may not be utilized to the same extent by Black and Minority Ethnicity groups.

3.7.4 Disability

| | 2014 User Survey | 2015 Library Consultation | 2011 Census |
|-----|------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Yes | 19% | 17.8% | 12.9% |
| No | 81% | 82.2% | 87.1% |

Figure 21g: User Survey, consultation and Census Respondents by Disability

Figure 20e above shows that respondents to both the 2014 user survey and Stage 1 Library Review Consultation questionnaire were over-representative of disabled individuals, therefore implying a greater level of service uptake by individuals with disabilities than is reflected in the resident population as a whole.

3.7.5 Employment Status

| | 2014 User Survey | 2015 Library Consultation | 2011 Census |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Employed full-time | 24% | 25.2% | 44.6% |
| Employed part-time | 14% | 16.4% | 11.9% |
| Self-employed | 9% | 7.1% | 7.9% |
| Full-time education | 3% | 1.3% | 5.0% |
| Unemployed and available for work | 5% | 1.7% | 4.6% |
| Permanently sick / disabled | 2% | 1.2% | 2.8% |
| Retired | 36% | 36.8% | 8.6% |
| Looking after the home / family | 6% | 8.6% | 4.6% |
| Other | 3% | 1.8% | |

Figure 21h: Employment Status of User Survey, Consultation and Census Respondents

From Figure 20e it appears that a greater proportion of adults in part-time employment, and adults fully retired from work or looking after the home or family use library services. A greater proportion of survey and consultation responses were received from these groups.

3.8 User and Performance Summary

- 9.35% of Reading residents are active borrowers of the library service. 25.29% of all active borrowers live outside of the borough.
- Over the past 5 years, there has been some decline in visits and issues across the network. Issues of children's books, on the other hand, have remained broadly the same, and numbers of attendees at both adults' and children's events have been increasing.
- Central Library is by far the best used library in the network, with 49% of all visits to Reading Libraries, 37% of issues and 74% of all IT sessions.
- Central, Caversham and Battle rank as the top three libraries when considering total visits (all uses).
- Central, Caversham and Tilehurst libraries (in this order) are the most actively used for borrowing and Battle, Central and Tilehurst libraries receive the greatest numbers of attendees at adults' and children's events.
- Whitley, Palmer Park and Southcote libraries consistently make up the poorest performing libraries by some margin in terms of visits, issues, IT sessions and attendees at activities and events, and this is reflected in a higher cost per visit.
- Tilehurst Library issue the greatest number of large print books, after the Mobile Library, which primarily serves the elderly and housebound.

4. Prioritisation

Careful consideration has been given to a range of indicators contained in the evidence above in the process of determining priorities for a comprehensive and efficient service.

The indicators have been grouped into two domains: library use and demographic need. Within each of the domains, the individual indicators have been attributed equal value, each indicator has been ranked and the rankings added together to give an overall domain ranking.

In the context of the vision and ambition of the Council to narrow the gaps in Reading to ensure that everyone can benefit from its success, the demographic needs of the local population have been attributed additional weighting (40% use to 60% needs).

The indicators used are listed below:

| Indicator | Further details |
|--|---|
| Library Use | |
| Active Borrowers | Registered library users that have borrowed from the library service at least once, between August 2014 and July 2015 |
| Percentage of the catchment area that are active borrowers | Active borrowers by catchment area, as a percentage of the overall catchment population |
| Visits | Total visits between April 2014 and March 2015 |
| Issues | Total issues of all loan stock between April 2014 and March 2015 |
| IT sessions | Total IT sessions using public access computers between April 2014 and March 2015 |
| Attendees at adults' and children's events | Total attendees at all adults' and children's events and activities between April 2014 and March 2015 |
| Cost per visit | Library costs (disregarding overhead costs) divided by total issues, for the period April 2014-March 2015 |
| Demographic Need | |
| Population aged 0-17 | Total number of children aged 0-17 (2011 census) |
| Population aged 65+ | Total number of adults aged 65+ (2011 census) |
| Lone parents | Total number of lone parent households (2011 census) |
| BME population | Total number of Black or Minority Ethnicity residents (census 2011) |
| Disability | Total number of residents whose daily activities are limited by a long-term illness (census 2011) |
| JSA claimants | Total number of adults claiming Job Seekers Allowance (Office National Statistics - October 2015) |
| Average IMD overall score | Average Indices of Multiple Deprivation overall score (Department for Communities and Local Government - 2015) |
| Average IMD education score | Average Indices of Multiple Deprivation education domain score (Department for Communities and Local Government - 2015) |
| Population with no qualifications | Total number of adults with no qualifications (2011 census) |
| Households without access to a car or van | Total number of households without access to one or more cars or vans (2011 census) |
| Libraries within a 10 minute drive | Number of libraries that can be reached within a 10 minute drive of the catchment library (Google maps) |
| Libraries within 15 minutes by bus | Number of libraries that can be reached within 15 minutes travel by bus from the catchment library (Google maps) |

| Library Use: Data | Central | Battle | Caversham | Palmer Park | Southcote | Tilehurst | Whitley |
|---|---------|--------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Active borrowers | 10,317 | 1,388 | 3,092 | 888 | 833 | 2,288 | 683 |
| % of catchment area that are active borrowers | 9.96% | 9.03% | 12.29% | 10.40% | 9.38% | 9.44% | 3.96% |
| Annual visits | 322,192 | 72,907 | 112,046 | 31,093 | 33,370 | 65,476 | 22,240 |
| Annual issues | 268,101 | 67,170 | 163,306 | 49,480 | 35,125 | 119,460 | 31,025 |
| Annual IT sessions | 66,867 | 7,348 | 6,157 | 2,128 | 1,238 | 4,298 | 2,453 |
| Annual attendees at adults' and children's events | 17,158 | 20,974 | 6,893 | 7,877 | 5,660 | 10,478 | 3,739 |
| Cost per visit | £1.45 | £1.20 | £0.97 | £2.25 | £2.05 | £1.57 | £2.75 |

| Demographic Need: Data | Central | Battle | Caversham | Palmer Park | Southcote | Tilehurst | Whitley |
|--|---------|--------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Total population aged 0-17 | 7702 | 4404 | 7361 | 1788 | 1927 | 4304 | 5909 |
| Total population aged 65+ | 3480 | 1673 | 5060 | 636 | 1535 | 3002 | 2446 |
| Total lone parents | 1181 | 793 | 679 | 176 | 312 | 565 | 1002 |
| Total BME population | 16205 | 5570 | 3651 | 3428 | 1730 | 2300 | 6427 |
| Total population whose daily activities are limited by a long-term illness | 4887 | 2351 | 3986 | 837 | 1601 | 2851 | 3597 |
| Total JSA claimants (October 2015) | 533 | 204 | 145 | 69 | 84 | 117 | 258 |
| Average IMD overall score | 21.19 | 24.56 | 8.96 | 14.80 | 21.48 | 17.03 | 30.55 |
| Average IMD education score | 14.31 | 25.28 | 9.49 | 7.61 | 28.01 | 23.32 | 45.33 |
| Total population with no qualifications | 4871 | 2882 | 3497 | 713 | 1834 | 3276 | 4761 |
| Total households without access to a car or van | 7617 | 2433 | 2006 | 815 | 1009 | 1445 | 2494 |
| Number of libraries within a 10 minute drive | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Number of libraries within 15 minutes by bus | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

| Library Use: Ranking | Central | Battle | Caversham | Palmer Park | Southcote | Tilehurst | Whitley |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Active borrowers | 1 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 7 |
| % of catchment area that are active borrowers | 3 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 7 |
| Annual visits | 1 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 7 |
| Annual issues | 1 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 7 |
| Annual IT sessions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 5 |
| Annual attendees at adults' and children's events | 2 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 7 |
| Cost per visit | 3 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 7 |
| Total Score | 12 | 22 | 16 | 34 | 40 | 25 | 47 |
| Use ranking | 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 7 |

| Demographic Need: Ranking | Central | Battle | Caversham | Palmer Park | Southcote | Tilehurst | Whitley |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Total population aged 0-17 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 3 |
| Total population aged 65+ | 2 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 4 |
| Total lone parents | 1 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 2 |
| Total BME population | 1 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 2 |
| Total population whose daily activities are limited by a long-term illness | 1 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 3 |
| Total JSA claimants | 1 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 2 |
| Average IMD overall score | 4 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 1 |
| Average IMD education score | 5 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Total population with no qualifications | 1 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| % of households with access to a car or van | 1 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 2 |
| Number of libraries within a 10 minute drive | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| Number of libraries within 15 minutes by bus | 7 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| Total Score | 30 | 38 | 43 | 73 | 64 | 48 | 24 |
| Demographic ranking | 2 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 1 |

Overall ranking of libraries based on a weighting of 40% use and 60% demographic need:

1. Central
2. Battle
3. Caversham
4. Whitley
5. Tilehurst
6. Southcote
7. Palmer Park

These rankings are a starting point in objectively assessing the prioritisation of resources. This will be used to inform the development of a new service offer which meets local needs within reduced funding levels.

Schedule of Activities

| Key | |
|------------|--|
| Green font | Activities run by volunteers or other groups |
| | Library closed |

BATTLE - in main library

| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------|------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| 09.00 - 10.00 | | | | | Coffee and Craft | 9.30 |
| 10.00 - 11.00 | Polish Rhymetime (fortnightly) | Credit Union | | Coffee Morning /Thursday Social | | |
| 11.00 - 12.00 | Book group (fortnightly) | | | | | Storytime |
| 12.00 - 13.00 | | | | | | |
| 13.00 - 14.00 | | | | | | |
| 14.00 - 15.00 | RVA digital volunteers | Storytime | | Storytime | | |
| 15.00 - 16.00 | | | | | | |
| 16.00 - 17.00 | | | | | | |
| 17.00 - 18.00 | | | | | | |
| 18.00 - 19.00 | | | | | | |

BATTLE - in community room

| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---------------|---|---|------------------------------|-------------------------|---|--|
| 09.00 - 10.00 | ESOL classes run by WEA | | Children's Centre Activities | ESOL classes run by WEA | | 9.30 |
| 10.00 - 11.00 | 10-11.30 Lego Club (School Holidays) - 10-11.30 | Rhymetime | | | Rhymetime | Warhammer (monthly) Cllrs surgery (monthly) |
| 11.00 - 12.00 | | TV sling meet | | Breastfeeding support | Rhymetime | |
| 12.00 - 13.00 | Multi agency meeting (every 4 -6 weeks - 11.30 -1.30) | | | | | |
| 13.00 - 14.00 | | | | | | |
| 14.00 - 15.00 | | PCT | | PCT | | 2:15-3:30 Wii Club |
| 15.00 - 16.00 | 7UP /Games Club (School Holidays) | | | | Children's Craft Activities (School Holidays)/Games Club/Bookworms Club | |
| 16.00 - 17.00 | | Study hall until 7pm | | | | |
| 17.00 -18.00 | | Children's special events (School Holidays) | | | | |
| 18.00 - 19.00 | | | | | | |

CAVERSHAM

| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 09.00 - 10.00 | | | | | | 9.30 |
| 10.00 - 11.00 | | Rhymetime | | | Adult Games Club | Cllrs surgery (every 2 months) |
| 11.00 - 12.00 | | Rhymetime | | | | |
| 12.00 - 13.00 | | | | | | |
| 13.00 - 14.00 | | | | | | |
| 14.00 - 15.00 | | | Rhymetime | Storytime or Children's Craft Acitivities (School Holidays) | | |
| 15.00 - 16.00 | | | | | | |
| 16.00 - 17.00 | Glitter club (3 weekly) | | Games Club (June) | | | |
| 17.00 - 18.00 | | | | Sit and Stitch (monthly) | | |
| 18.00 - 19.00 | | Book Club (monthly) | | | | |

CENTRAL

| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---------------|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| 09.00 - 10.00 | 9.00 - 12.00 | | | | | 9.30 |
| 10.00 - 11.00 | Graft IT support | Careers service | 10.30 - 11.00 Rhymetime | 10.30 - 11.00 Rhymetime | Careers service | 10.00-15.00 Open University (17 weekly) |
| 11.00 - 12.00 | 10.30 - 11.00 Rhymetime 11.00 - 12.00 Coffee morning (monthly) 9.00 - 2.00 Cranbury College | 10.30 - 11.30 Board games club 10.00 - 12.00 Royal British legion (monthly) | 10.00 - 12.00 Computer sessions for elderly Credit Union | 10.00 - 1.00 RVA | 10.00 - 11.15 Children's Activities (School Holidays) 11 - 11.30 Family Surgery History | 10.30 - 11.00 Rhymetime 10.30 - 12.00 Reading Writing group (monthly) Top Story Writers (fortnightly) 11.00 - 12.00 Crime reading group (6 weekly) Non-fiction Reading group (6 weekly) |
| 12.00 - 13.00 | | 12.15 - 1.15 Cranbury College | | 12.15 - 1.15 Cranbury College | | |
| 13.00 - 14.00 | | 1.00-4.00 RVA | 13.00 - 17.00 Graft IT support | 14.30 - 15.30 Partially sighted reading group (monthly) | | |
| 14.00 - 15.00 | 2.00 - 4.00 Shared Reading Group | | 15.00 - 17.00 Craft and chat (monthly) | | 14.00 - 14.30 Spanish RT | 14.00 - 17.00 Writing group |
| 15.00 - 16.00 | | | Glitter Club 4 -4.45 (3 weekly) | | | 15.00 - 16.00 Play Cantonese (fortnightly) |
| 16.00 - 17.00 | | | | | | |
| 17.00 - 18.00 | 5.30 | | | 5.00 - 7.00 | 5.30 | |
| 18.00 - 19.00 | Book club (monthly) | | | Writing group 7.00-9.00 Annual library quiz | | |

PALMER PARK

| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---------------|---|--------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| 09.00 - 10.00 | | | | | | 9.30 |
| 10.00 - 11.00 | Children's Craft Activities (School Holidays) | Rhymetime | | Coffee morning (monthly) | Rhymetime | |
| 11.00 - 12.00 | | | | | | Rhymetime (6 weekly) |
| 12.00 - 13.00 | | | | | | Under 5s craft (6 weekly) |
| 13.00 - 14.00 | | | | | | |
| 14.00 - 15.00 | Storytime | Adult craft (monthly) | | | | |
| 15.00 - 16.00 | | | | | | |
| 16.00 - 17.00 | | | | Children's book club (monthly) | | |
| 17.00 - 18.00 | | | | | | |
| 18.00 - 19.00 | | | | | | |

SOUTHCOTE

| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---------------|--------|---|-----------|--|--|------------------------|
| 09.00 - 10.00 | | 9.00 - 10.00 | | Rhymetime/Storytime | Manor school | 9.30 |
| 10.00 - 11.00 | | Manor school | | CH | Rhymetime | Toy library |
| 11.00 - 12.00 | | Coffee morning 9.30 - 12.00 Toy Library | | | Adult book club (monthly) Toddler craft session 11.15-12.00 | |
| 12.00 - 13.00 | | | | | | |
| 13.00 - 14.00 | | | | | | |
| 14.00 - 15.00 | | Gardeners Club | | Toy library | 14:00 - 15:15 Adult jigsaw club | Toy library to 3.30 |
| 15.00 - 16.00 | | | | | | |
| 16.00 - 17.00 | | 4.30 - 5.30 Children's club (monthly) | | | | |
| 17.00 - 18.00 | | | | 17:10 - 18:10 Children's board games (fortnightly) | | |
| 18.00 - 19.00 | | | | | | |

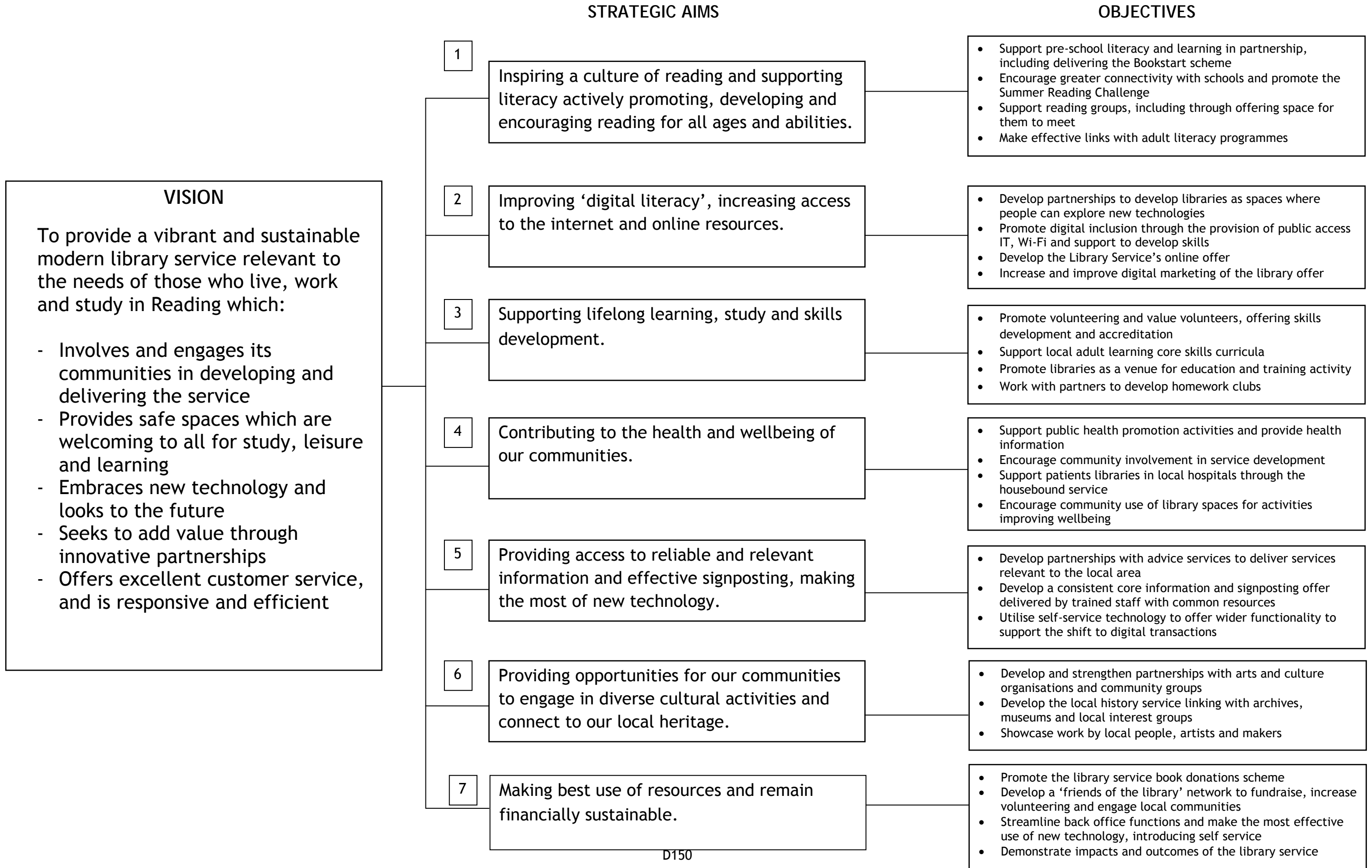
TILEHURST

| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---------------|-----------|---|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| 09.00 - 10.00 | Rhymetime | Children's Centre | | | | 9.30 |
| 10.00 - 11.00 | Rhymetime | Activities | Children's Centre Activities | Coffee morning Book group (monthly) | Rhymetime | |
| 11.00 - 12.00 | Rhymetime | | | | | |
| 12.00 - 13.00 | | | | | | |
| 13.00 - 14.00 | | | | Adult Craft | | |
| 14.00 - 15.00 | | Adult Craft | | Adult Craft / Storytime | | |
| 15.00 - 16.00 | | Adult Craft / Children's Craft Activities (School Holidays) | | | | |
| 16.00 - 17.00 | | | | | | |
| 17.00 - 18.00 | | | | | | |
| 18.00 - 19.00 | | | | | | |

WHITLEY

| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---------------|---|---|-----------|--|--|-----------|
| 09.00 - 10.00 | | Palmer Academy Nursery | | Visits from: Palmer Academy Year 2 (3 weekly) Year 5 (5 weekly) | 3 weekly visits from: Palmer Academy Reception, Year 4 and 6 | 9.30 |
| 10.00 - 11.00 | | Coffee mornings | | | Palmer Academy Reception x 3 Palmer Academy Year 3 x 3 Palmer Academy Year 6 x 3 Children's Craft Activities (School Holidays) | Rhymetime |
| 11.00 - 12.00 | | | | Rhymetime | | |
| 12.00 - 13.00 | | | | | | |
| 13.00 - 14.00 | | | | | | |
| 14.00 - 15.00 | 3 weekly visits from: Palmer Academy Year 2 and 4 | Rhymetime Palmer Academy Nursery | | 3 weekly visits from: Palmer Academy Year 1 and 3 | 3 weekly visits from: Palmer Academy Year 1 and 5 | |
| 15.00 - 16.00 | | | | | Games club | |
| 16.00 - 17.00 | | After School Crafts (fortnightly) Children's Craft Activities (School Holidays) | | | | |
| 17.00 - 18.00 | | | | | | |
| 18.00 - 19.00 | | | | | | |

FUTURE OF THE LIBRARY SERVICE



Equality Impact Assessment

Provide basic details

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed

Proposals 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: Ashley Burton

Job Title: Service Improvement Officer

Date of assessment: February 2016

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service/what changes are you proposing?

Under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act, Reading Borough Council is obliged to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service for all individuals who live, work or study within the borough. The current Reading Borough Council library service offers a comprehensive range of services over and above legal requirements. This is delivered through 7 public library service points across the borough, including a central library; a recent offer of e-books which can be downloaded online; a mobile library; and a Toy Library based in Southcote. Emphasis is placed on services to disabled, vulnerable, older residents; to meet the diverse needs of Reading's multi-cultural community; and to support families, the under 5s and improving literacy and attainment. The focus of the service is to offer both universal services for all and services and activities which help to meet the Council's wider strategic priorities.

Against the background of growing budget pressures on local government, as well as the changing needs and aspiration of Reading's local communities in this digital age, Members agreed to conduct a two-part review of what a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service means in Reading in 2015.

Phase one of the review has now been completed. This included a six week period of public consultation, and an analysis of demographic and library use data in order to build an understanding of the needs and aspirations of the diverse communities living, working and studying in the borough in relation to library services.

Phase two of the review is now underway and entails a planned period of 12 weeks public consultation on the following recommendations for the future of the library service:

- a) Retaining Central Library as the hub of the network with reduced staffing and slightly reduced opening hours (46.5 hours per week, from 52.5).
- b) Retaining Caversham Library with reduced staffing and opening hours (35 hours per week, from 50.5).
- c) Retaining Battle and Tilehurst libraries with reduced opening hours (28 hours per week, from 42 at Tilehurst and 39.5 Battle); and if so
 - Extending the current building and developing Battle Library as a community hub, enabling access for community groups to part of the building outside opening hours.
 - Exploring options to increase community use of Tilehurst library.
- d) Providing smaller neighbourhood libraries in the relatively deprived areas of Southcote and South Reading, re-locating them within community hubs to increase usage. Reduce opening hours (a minimum of 20 hours per week, from 33.5 at Southcote and 34.5 at Whitley Library).
- e) Providing a smaller neighbourhood library in East Reading and explore options for co-location or re-location of Palmer Park Library to increase usage and reduce costs. Reduce opening (a minimum of 20 hours per week, from 41.5).
- f) Exploring opportunities for an individual organisation or consortia to deliver a more accessible Toy Library service to improve reach and take-up across the whole borough.
- g) That all service points should benefit from new self-serve technology, offering an efficient service for service users and making the best use of staff and resources.
- h) That options are explored to enable customers to access libraries when they are unstaffed through the use of 'open access' technology.

The consultation proposals for the future of the library service, as set out in points a-h above seek to ensure that library services in Reading are affordable and sustainable, as well as being accessible to all, whilst targeting resources in areas of greatest need.

A vision document has been developed on the basis of the national agenda for library services, Reading's Corporate Plan and the outcomes of both the Needs Assessment and first phase of public consultation as part of the Library Service Review. This provides an outline strategy - describing key strategic aims and objectives which are the proposed blueprint for developing the Library Service in the future. In the context of diminishing resources these are challenging but the Council is committed to developing partnerships and working with our communities to have the maximum impact with the resources we retain. The vision document (attached at Appendix 3 of the report) underpins the proposed new service offer and is also subject to consultation.

Proposed key strategic aims are:

- Inspiring a culture of reading and supporting literacy actively promoting, developing and encouraging reading for all ages and abilities.
- Improving ‘digital literacy’, increasing access to the internet and online resources.
- Supporting lifelong learning, study and skills development.
- Contributing to the health and wellbeing of our communities.
- Providing access to reliable and relevant information and effective signposting, making the most of new technology.
- Providing opportunities for our communities to engage in diverse cultural activities and connect to our local heritage.
- Making best use of resources and remain financially sustainable

The consultation will provide a further means by which the Council can gather information about the potential impact of these proposals on those with protected characteristics. The equalities impacts of any final proposals to be arrived to following consideration of all consultation responses will be carefully considered before and at the time the decision is made.

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

Consultation itself will benefit all interested parties, including service users and non-users, staff, protected groups and partner organisations as comprehensive information on the review process and options would be made available publicly (online and in various public buildings, including libraries, leisure and children’s centres, as well as the Civic Offices), to ensure that all stakeholder groups understand the options and can have their say.

Taken together, the recommended proposals would benefit library users and non-users as they exceed the minimum legal requirement for the service to be deemed ‘comprehensive and efficient’ and strike an appropriate balance between delivering the savings and ensuring appropriate provision across communities. The proposals make the good of community buildings; reflect usage and local needs; and respond to what our communities have told us so far by:

- Reducing opening hours but maintaining a reasonable level of access for people with different lifestyles and availability
- Libraries and other services co-locating to make the best use of space and increasing access to spaces for community groups
- Making the best use of resources by using new technology and introducing self-service across all service points
- Retaining the recently upgraded public access IT at a local level with new provision of Wi-Fi for 2016/17

- Exploring the use of volunteers and explore opportunities for creative partnerships in the future.

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 proposals outlined above support the delivery of a £283,875 budget saving whilst maintaining an accessible service tailored to local need.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

The main stakeholders identified thus far include:

- Library service users including specifically:
 - Central and branch library users
 - Mobile Library users
 - Elderly and Housebound Service 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)

Consultation feedback received through the first phase of public consultation on the library service review 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 and IT classes 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 have also been 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 may not be able to afford broadband or a computer of their own
- Libraries have been identified as accessible and safe places for vulnerable groups, including children, older people and people with disabilities (both physical and mental)

When considering changes to the ways libraries are provided in the future, the most recurrent suggestions for how the library service could deliver savings included:

- Reducing opening hours (9%)
- Charging/asking for donations (of stock or for participating in activities in particular) (9%)
- Sharing space within libraries with partner organisations (5%)
- Making greater use of volunteers (4%)
- Renting space in libraries (4%)

5% of respondents, on the other hand, suggested that the Council should not make savings in the library service.

Furthermore, when asked about areas for improvement, respondents suggested:

- Increased provision of activities for adults and children and community space (4%)
- IT upgrades including replacement PCs, Wi-Fi in all sites, provision of e-books and self-service facilities (4%)
- Improved selection of books (4%)
- The introduction of café/refreshment facilities within libraries (3%)
- Provision of toilets (1%)

Further details on the first phase of public consultation on the library service review can be found at Appendix 1.

Assess whether an EqlA 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 Council's overall budget consultation and the first phase of public consultation on the library service review raised concerns regarding the impact of changes to the library service on children and their guardians, 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.

If No you MUST complete this statement

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because:

Signed (completing Officer): *Ashley Burton*

Date: February 2016

Signed (Lead Officer): *Sarah Gee*

Date: February 2016

Consultation

Phase One of the consultation process has been completed and reported. Phase Two of the process will commence on 22nd February (pending Policy Committee approval).

| Relevant groups/experts | How were/will the views of these groups be obtained | Date when contacted |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Library users and non-users | <p>A two-part multi-format public consultation process aimed at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a full understanding of user needs, including current patterns of use and aspirations for the service, in order to shape proposals • Providing users and non-users with an opportunity to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) comment on, raise issues with and further shape options for the future of the service (b) make suggestions on how best to mitigate the impact of proposals and (c) propose alternative options which achieve a commensurate level of savings | <p>Phase 1 - October - November 2015</p> <p>Phase 2 - February-May 2016</p> |
| Mobile Library users | <p>In addition to the above, a specific questionnaire was designed in order to gather feedback from Mobile Library users as part of the first phase of public consultation. This was complemented by the offer of assistance in completing this document.</p> <p>This approach will also be adopted for the second phase of consultation, although no specific changes are proposed for the way in which the Mobile Library service is provided, at this stage.</p> | As above. |

| | | |
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| Protected groups | <p>In addition to the above, representative groups of individuals with characteristics protected under the 2010 Equalities Act were invited to attend targeted focus groups in order to discuss any potentially disproportionate impacts of proposals. Groups represented included: older people, young people, disabled people and BME groups.</p> <p>Focus groups are also planned for this second phase of public consultation.</p> | As above. |
| Staff | <p>In addition to the above two-part public consultation that staff will be invited to contribute towards, meetings have and will be held with staff groups and union representatives. Formal consultation with employees on a staff restructure will follow the confirmation of a final option by Members.</p> | Summer/Autumn 2016 |
| Partner organisations located in, and delivering services from, library buildings | <p>As with Phase One of the review, Partner organisations will be approached directly as part of the Phase Two public consultation period to provide their feedback</p> | |
| Schools | <p>School Head teachers were contacted at the first phase of the process and will again be invited to comment on proposals at Phase Two of the process.</p> | |

Collect and Assess your Data

Using information from Census, residents survey data, service monitoring data, satisfaction or complaints, feedback, consultation, 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.

| Proposal | Describe how this proposal could impact on Racial groups | Evidence | Mitigation measures |
|--------------------|---|---|--|
| All | 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 (Appendix 2), and therefore proposals recommended. | | |
| a) Central Library | <p>A reduction in staffing and opening hours will impact on the accessibility of the service for all users, but may have a disproportionate impact on Black and Minority Ethnic groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted opening hours may impact access to books in community languages • Restricted opening hours may exacerbate existing barriers to engagement with libraries. • There is potential for wider adverse impacts of a reduction in the availability of a | <p>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.</p> <p>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</p> | <p>Opening times across the service would be scheduled to reflect feedback from the phase one consultation and to ensure access for a range of different users, including school children and those that are working, with access Monday - Saturday offered at Central Library. , Central Library is within a 20 minute journey time on public transport for most Reading households.</p> <p>The introduction of self-service technology will ensure remaining staff maintain capacity to support library users, including users where</p> |

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|--|--|
| | community space which enables diverse communities to mix. | 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 | English is a second language. E-books 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. Over 40% of questionnaire respondents were unaware of the e-book offer and this could be further promoted. |
| b) Caversham Library | As above, a reduction in opening hours will impact the accessibility of the service for all users, but may have a disproportionate impact on Black and Minority Ethnic groups. | 11.51% of residents (3651) in the Caversham Library catchment area are of Black or Minority Ethnicities (below half the borough average). | Books can be reserved online from the libraries catalogue. Books can also be ordered over the telephone or in branch. There is a 50p charge for requests for stock out of catchment (from another branch). |
| c) Battle Library | As above, a reduction in opening hours will impact the accessibility of the service for all users, but may have a disproportionate impact on Black or Minority Ethnicities in Palmer Park, Battle and Whitley library catchments. | 31.21% of residents (5570) in the Battle Library catchment area are of Black or Minority Ethnicities (more than the borough average). | Books can be renewed online and over the telephone, free of charge, as well as in branch. |
| c) Tilehurst Library | Co-location of library services, in a community hub setting, alongside wider children's services, adult learning and community meeting space may result in an increase in take-up of library services amongst potentially hard to reach groups, | 12.5% of residents (2300) in the Tilehurst Library catchment area are of Black or Minority Ethnicities (less than half the borough average). | |
| d) Southcote Library | | 20.24% of residents (1730) in the Southcote Library catchment area are of Black or Minority Ethnicities (below the borough average). | As above. |

| | | | |
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| d) Whitley Library | including Black and Minority Ethnic groups otherwise not engaged in library services, through cross-referrals. | 27.19% of residents (6427) in the Whitley Library catchment area are of Black or Minority Ethnicities (more than the borough average). | As above. |
| e) Palmer Park Library | Potential reductions in available shelving space may result in a reduction in books in community languages available in co-located libraries, and therefore may potentially have a disproportionate impact on Black and Minority Ethnic groups that may (for whatever reason) not wish to request books. | The Palmer Park Library catchment area is the most ethnically diverse of all Reading library catchment areas. 37.87% of residents (3428) in the Palmer Park Library catchment area 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. | As above. |
| f) Toy Library | Re-provision of the Toy Library service aims to increase accessibility across the borough, and may therefore have a positive impact on Black and Minority Ethnic groups. | 47.26% of Toy Library use between September and November 2015 was by users from the Southcote and Tilehurst Library catchment areas where only 10.25% of Reading's BME residents live. | Moving to the proposed model would mean improved access across the borough. |

| | | | |
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| g) Self-service | There are no specific impacts anticipated for this category. | | Library Assistants would remain available to assist customers with issues and queries. |
| h) Open access technologies | As above | | |

| Proposal | Describe how this proposal could impact on Gender/Transgender (inc. pregnancy and maternity, marriage) | Evidence | Mitigation measures |
|--------------------|---|---|--|
| All | 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 (Appendix 2), and therefore proposals recommended. | | |
| a) Central Library | <p>A reduction in opening hours will impact the accessibility of the service for all users, but may disproportionately affect women.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>This is believed to be an area requiring further consideration as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. | <p>From consultation feedback received through the first phase of public consultation on the library service review, it appears that women make up a greater proportion of library users than men, as 69.4% of respondents were female. This is also supported by responses to the 2014 User Survey where 64% of respondents were female. No discernible differences were identified between branches used.</p> <p>From consultation feedback, it also apparent that the majority of respondents visiting libraries with or on behalf of others (children, older and disabled people) are female (68.1%).</p> <p>1,181 lone parents with dependent children live within the catchment</p> | <p>Opening times across the service would be scheduled to reflect feedback from the phase one consultation and to ensure access for a range of different users, including school children and those that are working, with access Monday - Saturday offered at Central Library. Central Library is within a 20 minute journey time on public transport for most Reading households.</p> <p>The introduction of self-service technology will ensure remaining staff maintain capacity to support library users.</p> <p>E-books can be borrowed 24/7, free of charge, for 21 days from Reading's 'e-Library' - this offers a</p> |

| | | | |
|----------------------|--|--|---|
| b) Caversham Library | <p>Restricted access to libraries due to reduced opening hours could therefore conflict with other caring responsibilities and tasks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lone parents are more likely to be women, and if they are experiencing socio-economic deprivation this could reduce their ability to pay for public transport and subsequent access to alternative libraries with more suitable opening hours. • Pregnant women may find access to an alternative library with more suitable opening hours more difficult in the later stages of pregnancy. | <p>area of Central Library</p> <p>In addition to the above, 679 lone parents with dependent children live within the Caversham Library catchment area.</p> | <p>growing range of fiction, non-fiction and children's books available to read online, on a smart-phone or tablet and some e-readers. Over 40% of questionnaire respondents were unaware of the e-book offer and this could be further promoted.</p> <p>Books can be reserved online from the libraries catalogue. Books can also be ordered over the telephone or in branch. There is a 50p charge for requests for stock out of catchment (from another branch).</p> |
| c) Battle Library | <p>As above, a reduction in opening hours will impact the accessibility of the service for all users, and may disproportionately affect women.</p> | <p>In addition to the above, 793 lone parents with dependent children live within the Battle Library catchment area.</p> | <p>As above.</p> |
| c) Tilehurst Library | <p>Co-location of library services, in a community hub setting, alongside wider children's services, adult learning and community meeting</p> | <p>In addition to the above, 565 lone parents with dependent children live within the Tilehurst Library catchment area.</p> | <p>As above.</p> |

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|--|---|
| d) Southcote Library | space aims to benefit all library users, and non-users - by enhancing service take-up and encouraging customers to access a wider range of services and support through cross-referrals. | In addition to the above, 312 lone parents with dependent children live within the Southcote Library catchment area. | As above. |
| d) Whitley Library | Any benefits of co-locating services may be felt to a greater extent by women with caring responsibilities, or experiencing socio-economic disadvantage and aging. | In addition to the above, 1,002 lone parents with dependent children live within the Whitley Library catchment area. | As above. |
| e) Palmer Park Library | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colocation of services used by the same groups of individuals may require fewer trips, thereby reducing the impact of the cost and time required to travel to access services. • Co-location of linked services may encourage harder to reach groups to take-up other services and support available alongside library services. | In addition to the above, 176 lone parents with dependent children live within the Palmer Park Library catchment area. | As above. |
| f) Toy Library | As women are more likely to be responsible for childcare, any potential re-provision of the Toy Library on a more accessible basis may positively impact on women. | Between September and November 2015, Toy Library user postcodes have been recorded. Over this period 140 user postcodes were logged. 91 were postcodes from inside the Reading | Moving to the proposed model would mean improved access across the borough. |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|
| | <p>However, ceasing to provide the Toy Library from its existing Southcote base may disproportionately impact some women, where the Southcote base is currently considered convenient to them. Provision of the service from a different location may present difficulties, where additional travel is required.</p> | <p>Borough, 34 were for out of borough addresses, and 15 postcodes could not be matched. From an analysis of in borough postcodes there was significantly greater take-up of the Toy Library in the Southcote and Tilehurst Library catchment areas than are represented in the borough population, and an underrepresentation of users from all other areas.</p> | |
| g) Self-service | <p>There are no specific impacts anticipated for this category.</p> | | <p>Library Assistants would remain available to assist customers with issues and queries.</p> |
| h) Open access technologies | <p>There are no specific impacts anticipated for this category.</p> | | |

| Proposal | Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability | Evidence | Mitigation measures |
|--------------------|--|--|--|
| All | 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 (Appendix 2), and therefore proposals recommended. | | |
| a) Central Library | <p>A reduction in staffing and opening hours will impact the accessibility of the service for all users, and may disproportionately affect disabled people, including those with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical disabilities • Learning disabilities • Sensory loss • Mental health problems • Neurological conditions <p>Individuals with caring responsibilities for disabled children or adults may also be disproportionately affected.</p> | <p>From responses given the both the first phase of public consultation on the library service review, and the 2014 Library User Survey, library services in Reading appear to be used by a higher proportion of disabled people than are reflected in the Reading population as a whole.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17.8% of respondents to the 2015 Library Consultation reported a disability (for respondents reporting that they use Central Library, this figure falls to 15.7%) • 19% of respondents to the 2014 User Survey reported a disability (for respondents reporting that they use Central Library, this figure increases to 19.7%) • 12.9% of residents in the 2011 Census reported that their daily | <p>Opening times across the service would be scheduled to reflect feedback from the phase one consultation and to ensure access for a range of different users, including school children and those that are working, with access Monday - Saturday offered at Central Library. Central Library is within a 20 minute journey time on public transport for most Reading residents.</p> <p>The introduction of self-service technology will ensure remaining staff maintain capacity to support library users.</p> <p>Home visits by staff and volunteers through the Elderly and Housebound Service will</p> |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|--|--|-------|-------------------|-------|-------------|-------|--|
| | | activities are limited by a long-term illness (for the Central Library catchment area this fell to 12.6%. 1.24% of the Central Library catchment area also reported being unable to work due to long-term sickness or disability). | remain available to those who are unable to visit a library site due to a disability. Specialist stock will continue to be available and no reductions in the stock fund overall are advised. | | | | | | |
| b) Caversham Library | As above. | <p>The table below shows the proportion of respondents to the 2014 User Survey and 2015 Consultation that reported using Caversham Library, as well as having a disability, against Census data for the catchment area.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>2014 User Survey</td> <td>11.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015 Consultation</td> <td>15.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011 Census</td> <td>13.2%</td> </tr> </table> <p>As shown in the table above, around the catchment average of disabled people therefore appear to use the library.</p> | 2014 User Survey | 11.7% | 2015 Consultation | 15.4% | 2011 Census | 13.2% | <p>The Visually Impaired Persons reading group run at Central Library - would continue</p> <p>Eligible disabled library users travelling from within the borough will continue to be able to travel to Reading libraries free of charge, at any time by using their concessionary bus pass (users travelling from outside the borough will be restricted to travelling free of charge between 9.30am-11pm).</p> <p>E-books 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</p> |
| 2014 User Survey | 11.7% | | | | | | | | |
| 2015 Consultation | 15.4% | | | | | | | | |
| 2011 Census | 13.2% | | | | | | | | |
| c) Battle Library | A reduction in opening hours will impact the accessibility of the service for all users, and may disproportionately affect disabled people, including those with: | The table below shows the proportion of respondents to the 2014 User Survey and 2015 Consultation that reported using Battle Library, as well as having a disability, against Census data for the | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|-------------|-------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical disabilities Learning disabilities Sensory loss Mental health problems Neurological conditions <p>Individuals with caring responsibilities for disabled children or adults may also be disproportionately affected.</p> <p>Co-location of library services, in a community hub setting, alongside wider children’s services, adult learning and community meeting space aims to benefit all library users, and non-users - by enhancing service take-up and encouraging customers to access a wider range of services and support through cross-referrals.</p> <p>Any benefits of co-locating services may be felt to a greater extent by disabled people.</p> | <p>catchment area.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="981 245 1469 507"> <tr> <td>2014 User Survey</td> <td>11.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015 Consultation</td> <td>15.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011 Census</td> <td>10.5%</td> </tr> </table> <p>As shown in the table above, more than the catchment average of disabled people therefore appear to use the library.</p> | 2014 User Survey | 11.9% | 2015 Consultation | 15.1% | 2011 Census | 10.5% | <p>e-readers. Over 40% of questionnaire respondents were unaware of the e-book offer and this could be further promoted.</p> <p>Books can be reserved online from the libraries catalogue. Books can also be ordered over the telephone or in branch. There is a 50p charge for requests for stock out of catchment (from another branch).</p> |
| 2014 User Survey | 11.9% | | | | | | | | |
| 2015 Consultation | 15.1% | | | | | | | | |
| 2011 Census | 10.5% | | | | | | | | |
| <p>c) Tilehurst Library</p> | <p>Co-location of services used by the same groups of individuals may require fewer trips,</p> | <p>The table below shows the proportion of respondents to the 2014 User Survey and 2015 Consultation that reported using Tilehurst Library, as well as having a disability, against Census data for the catchment area.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="981 1027 1469 1289"> <tr> <td>2014 User Survey</td> <td>17.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015 Consultation</td> <td>15.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011 Census</td> <td>15.5%</td> </tr> </table> <p>As shown in the table above, more than the catchment average of disabled</p> | 2014 User Survey | 17.2% | 2015 Consultation | 15.9% | 2011 Census | 15.5% | <p>As above.</p> |
| 2014 User Survey | 17.2% | | | | | | | | |
| 2015 Consultation | 15.9% | | | | | | | | |
| 2011 Census | 15.5% | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--|--|------------------|-------|-------------------|-----|-------------|-------|-----------|
| | <p>thereby reducing the impact of the cost and time required to travel to access services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-location of linked services may encourage harder to reach groups to take-up other services and support available alongside library services. | people therefore appear to use the library. | | | | | | | |
| d) Southcote Library | As above. | <p>The table below shows the proportion of respondents to the 2014 User Survey and 2015 Consultation that reported using Southcote Library, as well as having a disability, against Census data for the catchment area.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>2014 User Survey</td> <td>14.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015 Consultation</td> <td>21%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011 Census</td> <td>18.7%</td> </tr> </table> <p>As shown in the table above, around the catchment average of disabled people therefore appear to use the library.</p> | 2014 User Survey | 14.9% | 2015 Consultation | 21% | 2011 Census | 18.7% | As above. |
| 2014 User Survey | 14.9% | | | | | | | | |
| 2015 Consultation | 21% | | | | | | | | |
| 2011 Census | 18.7% | | | | | | | | |
| d) Whitley Library | As above. | The table below shows the proportion of respondents to the 2014 User Survey and 2015 Consultation that reported using Whitley Library, as well as having a | As above. | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|---|------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|-------------|-------|------------------|
| | | <p>disability, against Census data for the catchment area.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="983 288 1469 545"> <tr> <td>2014 User Survey</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015 Consultation</td> <td>24.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011 Census</td> <td>15.2%</td> </tr> </table> <p>As shown in the table above, more than the catchment average of disabled people therefore appear to use the library.</p> | 2014 User Survey | 20% | 2015 Consultation | 24.4% | 2011 Census | 15.2% | |
| 2014 User Survey | 20% | | | | | | | | |
| 2015 Consultation | 24.4% | | | | | | | | |
| 2011 Census | 15.2% | | | | | | | | |
| <p>e) Palmer Park Library</p> | <p>As above.</p> | <p>The table below shows the proportion of respondents to the 2014 User Survey and 2015 Consultation that reported using Palmer Park Library, as well as having a disability, against Census data for the catchment area.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="983 991 1469 1248"> <tr> <td>2014 User Survey</td> <td>15.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015 Consultation</td> <td>17.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011 Census</td> <td>9.2%</td> </tr> </table> <p>As shown in the table above, more than the catchment average of disabled people therefore appear to use the</p> | 2014 User Survey | 15.1% | 2015 Consultation | 17.1% | 2011 Census | 9.2% | <p>As above.</p> |
| 2014 User Survey | 15.1% | | | | | | | | |
| 2015 Consultation | 17.1% | | | | | | | | |
| 2011 Census | 9.2% | | | | | | | | |

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|-----------------------------|---|------------|--|
| | | library. | |
| f) Toy Library | Re-provision of the Toy Library service aims to increase accessibility across the borough, and may therefore have a positive impact on the accessibility of the service for people with physical disabilities that may make travel to Southcote Library to collect larger toys more difficult. | See above. | Moving to the proposed model would mean improved access across the borough. |
| g) Self-service | There are no specific impacts anticipated for this category. | | Library Assistants would remain available to assist customers with issues and queries. |
| h) Open access technologies | The possibility of facilitating access to libraries outside of staffed hours will be a new experience for all library users, but may not provide the same opportunities to some disabled users. Some disabled users may always require the assistance of library staff and volunteers when using library services and may therefore be unable to access library services through the use of open+ technologies. | See above. | |

| Proposal | Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership) | Evidence | Mitigation measures |
|------------------------|---|--|---|
| a) Central Library | No differential impacted is predicted on the grounds of sexual orientation. | Respondents to the first phase of public consultation on the library review were asked for information regarding their sexual orientation, however the number of responses received for this question have been determined as too low to be statistically significant. | <p>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 possible changes to the way in which the service is run.</p> <p>For users of Palmer Park Library, it is recommended that the 50p fee to request books from other branches is waived.</p> |
| b) Caversham Library | | | |
| c) Battle Library | | | |
| c) Tilehurst Library | | | |
| d) Southcote Library | | | |
| d) Whitley Library | | | |
| e) Palmer Park Library | | | |
| f) Toy Library | | | |
| g) Self-service | | | |
| h) Open+ | | | |

| Proposal | Describe how this proposal could impact on Age | Evidence | Mitigation measures |
|--------------------|---|---|--|
| All | Note: The number of residents in each catchment aged 0-17 and 65+, as recorded in the 2011 Census, have been included as a demographic indicator in determining needs/priorities for libraries in the Needs Assessment (Appendix 2), and therefore proposals recommended. | | |
| a) Central Library | <p>A reduction in opening hours will impact the accessibility of the service for all users, and may disproportionately affect families with children and adults of working age.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. | <p>From an analysis of responses to the first phase of public consultation on the library review, and the 2014 Library user survey, older people (65+) appear to be over-represented amongst library users, whilst younger people appear to be under-represented (0-24).</p> <p>A review of Active Borrowers dates of birth (using the threshold of July 1st for determining the following age groups), shows that Active Borrowers are 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.</p> | <p>Opening times across the service would be scheduled to reflect feedback from the phase one consultation and to ensure access for a range of different users, including school children and those that are working, with access Monday - Saturday offered at Central Library. Central Library is within a 20 minute journey time on public transport for most Reading residents.</p> <p>The introduction of self-service technology will ensure remaining staff maintain capacity to support library users.</p> <p>Home visits by staff and volunteers through the Elderly and Housebound Service will remain available to those who are unable to visit a library site due to a disability.</p> <p>Specialist stock will continue to be</p> |

| | | 2014 User Survey* | 2015 Library Consultatio | Active Borrowers | 2011 Census | |
|----------------------|-----------|---|--------------------------|------------------|-------------|---|
| | | 5% | 2.4% | 25.4% | 36.9% | available and no reductions in the stock fund overall are advised. |
| | | 54% | 63.5% | 61.8% | 53.7% | The Visually Impaired Persons reading group run at Central Library - would continue |
| | | 41% | 34.1% | 12.7% | 9.49% | Eligible disabled library users travelling from within the borough will continue to be able to travel to Reading libraries free of charge, at any time by using their concessionary bus pass (users travelling from outside the borough will be restricted to travelling free of charge between 9.30am-11pm). |
| | | *The age ranges 0-24, 25-59 and 60+ where used in this survey. | | | | E-books 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. Over 40% of questionnaire respondents were unaware of the e-book offer and this could be further promoted. |
| | | Central Library's catchment area includes 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 (17.7% are aged 0-24) and older people are overrepresented (13.6% are aged 65+). | | | | |
| b) Caversham Library | As above. | 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). | | | | Books can be reserved online from the libraries catalogue. Books can also be ordered over the telephone |

| | | | |
|----------------------|--|--|--|
| | | 65+ year olds make up 16% of residents in the catchment, while 23% of residents are aged 0-17 years. This is broadly in line with the age profile of active borrowers were 25.5% of borrowers are aged 0-24 and 16.7% are 65+. | or in branch. There is a 50p charge for requests for stock out of catchment (from another branch). |
| c) Battle Library | <p>A reduction in opening hours will impact the accessibility of the service for all users, and may disproportionately affect families with children and adults of working age.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. | <p>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.</p> <p>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 29.7% of borrowers are aged 0-24 and 4.5% are 65+, this implies that young people are over-represented amongst borrowers, and older people are under-represented.</p> | As above. |
| c) Tilehurst Library | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A reduction in opening hours may also see a reduction in the take-up of library services by working age | 65+ year olds make up 16% of residents in the catchment, while 23% of residents are aged 0-17 years. This is broadly in line with the age profile of active borrowers were 33.6% of borrowers are aged 0-24 and 17% are 65+, while young people are | As above. |

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|--|-----------|
| d) Southcote Library | <p>adults whose ability to access libraries is limited by work patterns.</p> <p>Co-location of library services, in a community hub setting, alongside wider children's services, adult learning and community meeting space aims to benefit all library users, and non-users - by enhancing service take-up and encouraging customers to access a wider range of services and support through cross-referrals.</p> <p>Any benefits of co-locating services may be felt to a greater extent by a variety of age groups.</p> | <p>over-represented.</p> <p>The highest proportion of 65+ year olds of any library catchment area in the borough live within the catchment area for Southcote Library.</p> <p>65+ year olds make up 18% 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 43.3% of borrowers are aged 0-24 and 7.6% are 65+, this implies that young people are over-represented amongst borrowers, and older people are under-represented.</p> | As above. |
| d) Whitley Library | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colocation of services used by the same groups of individuals may require fewer trips, thereby reducing the impact of the cost and time required to travel to access services. • Co-location of linked services may encourage harder to reach groups to | <p>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.</p> <p>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 46.7% of borrowers are aged 0-24 and 4.4% are 65+, this implies that young people</p> | As above. |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|--|
| | take-up other services and support available alongside library services. | are over-represented amongst borrowers, and older people are under-represented. | |
| e) Palmer Park Library | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of activities for targeted age groups (inc. young children, older children/young people and older people) from these locations may increase the uptake of library services | 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 47.3% of borrowers are aged 0-24 and 4.1% are 65+, this implies that young people are over-represented amongst borrowers, and older people are under-represented. | As above. |
| f) Toy Library | There are no specific impacts anticipated for this category. | | A positive impact of moving to the proposed model would mean improved access across the borough. |
| g) Self-service | There are no specific impacts anticipated for this category. | | Library Assistants would remain available to assist customers with issues and queries. |
| h) Open access technologies | Pilots currently underway for this pioneering technology on a national basis only access to libraries outside of staff opening hours to adults. Unsupervised children and young people may not, therefore, benefit from this proposal to the same extent as other age groups. | | |

| Proposal | Describe how this proposal could impact Religious Belief | Evidence | Mitigation measures |
|------------------------|--|---|---------------------|
| a) Central Library | There are no specific impacts anticipated for this category. | Respondents to the first phase of public consultation on the library review were asked for information regarding their religious beliefs, however the number of responses received for this question have been determined as too low to be statistically significant. | |
| b) Caversham Library | | | |
| c) Battle Library | | | |
| c) Tilehurst Library | | | |
| d) Southcote Library | | | |
| d) Whitley Library | | | |
| e) Palmer Park Library | | | |
| f) Toy Library | There are no specific impacts anticipated for this category. | | |
| g) Self-service | | | |
| h) Open+ | | | |

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 outlined above, changes to the library service may result in negative impacts upon certain protected groups. It is therefore recommended that the second phase of public consultation as outlined above is progressed, in order to identify differential impacts, inform an appraisal of options, to consider whether such impacts could be avoided, and to design measures to mitigate such impacts.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|------|---------------|
| Signed (completing Officer) | <i>Ashley Burton</i> | Date | February 2016 |
| Signed (Lead Officer) | <i>Sarah Gee</i> | Date | February 2016 |

Your Library Services. Your Say.

Phase 2 Consultation – February 22nd – May 16th 2016

Last autumn the Council launched the first of a two-part Library Review public consultation which received 1,792 responses. Thank you for taking the time to have your say.

We are now launching Phase Two of the consultation. This includes specific proposals for future library services in Reading. Please read this booklet or go to www.reading.gov.uk/libraryreview for more information and to have your say.

Why are we consulting?

We know that for people who use library services, they remain important. We also know that the way people use libraries is changing.

People used to rely on their local libraries to access books and information. Today people have more choice, ranging from e-books to internet access. Users can even download e-books or order books from the library service without stepping foot in a library. Many of you make good use of the free IT and internet provided at the Borough libraries and as of Spring 2016 all of our libraries will have free Wi-Fi. You have told us also how much you value free events and activities, like Rhymetime for example.

At the same time, every local Council is having to make major savings as a result of Government cuts in funding and increasing demands for services. In Reading, we estimate that we need to save a further £51 million over the next three years. That is on top of the £65 million of savings already made since 2011. We therefore need to prioritise our limited resources.

We've already made savings by making the library services more efficient through making better use of technology. Another way to help find savings is to make the best possible use of our buildings. It's not unusual these days to find a number of other services provided from library buildings, alongside more traditional library services. At Central Library for example, you can now take part in adult education courses, get employment and training advice, find out about volunteering opportunities and loan out a book - all under one roof.

Reading Borough Council wants to create an affordable library service, making the best possible use of the buildings and which provides the services you want, when you want them. We need your feedback to help us achieve that.

In this document we set out proposals for consultation on saving £283,875 from library services.

Why 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 major savings. In Reading, we estimate that £51 million in savings need to be made over the next three years, on top of the £65 million of savings already made since 2011. We therefore need to prioritise our limited resources.

Savings need to be made across all services and the Library Service needs to take some share of the reductions required. 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. Finally, the Council is also actively pursuing options to increase income and become increasingly entrepreneurial. Notwithstanding this the Council would welcome feedback as part of the Phase 2 consultation on the library review on any alternate proposals for securing the required savings.

As part of the programme to find substantive additional savings across the Council, the Councils' Policy Committee agreed to a comprehensive review of the whole library service with the aim of saving £600,000, in October 2015. Phase one public consultation and a comprehensive assessment of local needs have now been completed and have informed the development of proposals for the future of the Library Service, set out in this document. If agreed, these which would deliver savings of £316,125 less than the £600,000 target.

Phase 1 of the Library Service Review

What you told us

In Phase 1 of our consultation in the autumn, we asked how you used library services in Reading, including how often and which libraries you were using. We also asked if you had any ideas about how library services could be delivered differently.

The majority of the 1,792 responses were from library users. You told us:

- You continue to value library services in Reading.
- More than half of you use more than one of the borough's libraries.
- Most of you use the library which is closest to your home, work or children's schools.
- More than half of you visit Central Library.

When considering how to find the savings needed, the most common suggestions were: reducing opening hours; reviewing charges, asking for; sharing space with other services or partner organisations.

What we did

The Council has also taken a close look at information we hold on visits to individual libraries, library catchment areas and what people are using libraries for. This is called a 'needs assessment' and helps us understand the individual needs of local communities. Some of the things we found were:

- About 10% of Reading residents currently borrow books from libraries in Reading. Many people also use libraries for other reasons.
- There has been a fall in visits and books borrowed across all Reading libraries in the past 5 years, but a rise in the number of people attending library events. 12% of you said you use libraries for access to the internet.
- Central Library is by far the best used library, with 49% of all visits to Reading Libraries, 37% of books borrowed and 74% of all IT sessions.
- Central, Caversham and Battle are the top three most visited libraries. Whitley, Palmer Park and Southcote libraries were the least visited
- Central, Caversham and Whitley Libraries serve the largest catchment areas. Southcote and Palmer Park serve the smallest populations.

Phase 2 of the Library Service Review

Proposals overview

| | | |
|------------|---|-----|
| Proposal A | Retain Central Library, reduce opening hours and service-wide staffing | p8 |
| Proposal B | Retain Caversham Library, reduce staffing and opening hours | p9 |
| Proposal C | Increase community use of library site and reduce opening hours <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Battle Library- Tilehurst Library | p10 |
| Proposal D | Relocate library in a nearby 'community hub' and reduce opening hours <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Southcote Library- Whitley Library | p12 |
| Proposal E | Provide a smaller neighbourhood library in East Reading and explore options for co-location or re-location of Palmer Park Library services and reduce opening hours | p14 |
| Proposal F | Explore opportunities for other organisations to deliver a more accessible Toy Library service to improve take-up across the borough | p15 |
| Proposal G | Introduce self-serve technology to all libraries | p16 |
| Proposal H | Explore further opportunities for technology development | p17 |

How can I have my say?

- Respond to the online questionnaire available at www.reading.gov.uk/libraryreview
- Complete and return the questions included at the end of this consultation document to any Reading Library or the Civic Offices.
- Email in to: libraryreview@reading.gov.uk
- Write in to: Library Review
Reading Borough Council
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

What would the service look like if proposals were implemented?

Under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act the Council must provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service for everyone who lives, works or studies within the borough.

No decisions as to the future of our libraries service have been taken yet. However, the Council considers that if the following proposals were implemented, then local provision would continue to exceed the requirement of a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service. The proposals are considered to strike an appropriate balance between delivering savings and ensuring the provision needed across our communities.

Taken together, we believe that the proposals make the best use of community buildings, reflect patterns of use and local needs and respond to what our communities have told us so far by:

- Reducing opening hours but maintaining reasonable access for people with different lifestyles and availability.
- Libraries and other services co-locating to make the best use of space and increasing access to spaces for community groups.
- Exploring opportunities for creative partnerships in the future.
- Retaining the recently upgraded public access IT at a local level with new provision of Wi-Fi for 2016/17.
- Making the best use of resources by using new technology and introducing self-service across all service points.

Further information

For further information on the Library Service Review visit www.reading.gov.uk/libraryreview where the following documentation is available:

- Policy Committee Report
- Phase One Consultation: Results and Feedback
- Needs Assessment
- Draft Strategic Vision
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Illustrative plans for potential 'community hubs'
- Library Service Income

This information is also available in libraries and is summarised over the page.

Further information: what will this tell me?

Policy Committee Report

This report provides an overview of the library review process undertaken so far and sets out the proposals in detail, as well as next steps moving forward.

Phase One Consultation: Results and Feedback

This document includes a detailed analysis of the consultation feedback received through the first phase of public consultation on the library service review. This particularly asked about how people use libraries now, how they would like to use the service in the future and how they thought the Council should make savings required.

Needs Assessment

The Needs Assessment provides a detailed breakdown of data on different aspects of the Library Service and the 'catchment' populations served by each library. This has helped us to understand the needs of the communities that we serve, and the usage and performance of Reading Borough Libraries.

Draft Strategic Vision

A vision document has been developed which reflects the national agenda and Reading Borough Council's strategic priorities. This provides an outline strategy and a blueprint for developing the Library Service in the future. The vision document underpins the proposed new service offer and is also subject to consultation.

Equality Impact Assessment

In line with the Council's 'Equality Duty' (under the Equality Act 2010), a detailed Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in order to explore how proposals might impact on groups differently, if they were to be adopted. At each stage of the review, as we gather further evidence and feedback, the assessment will be refined and developed.

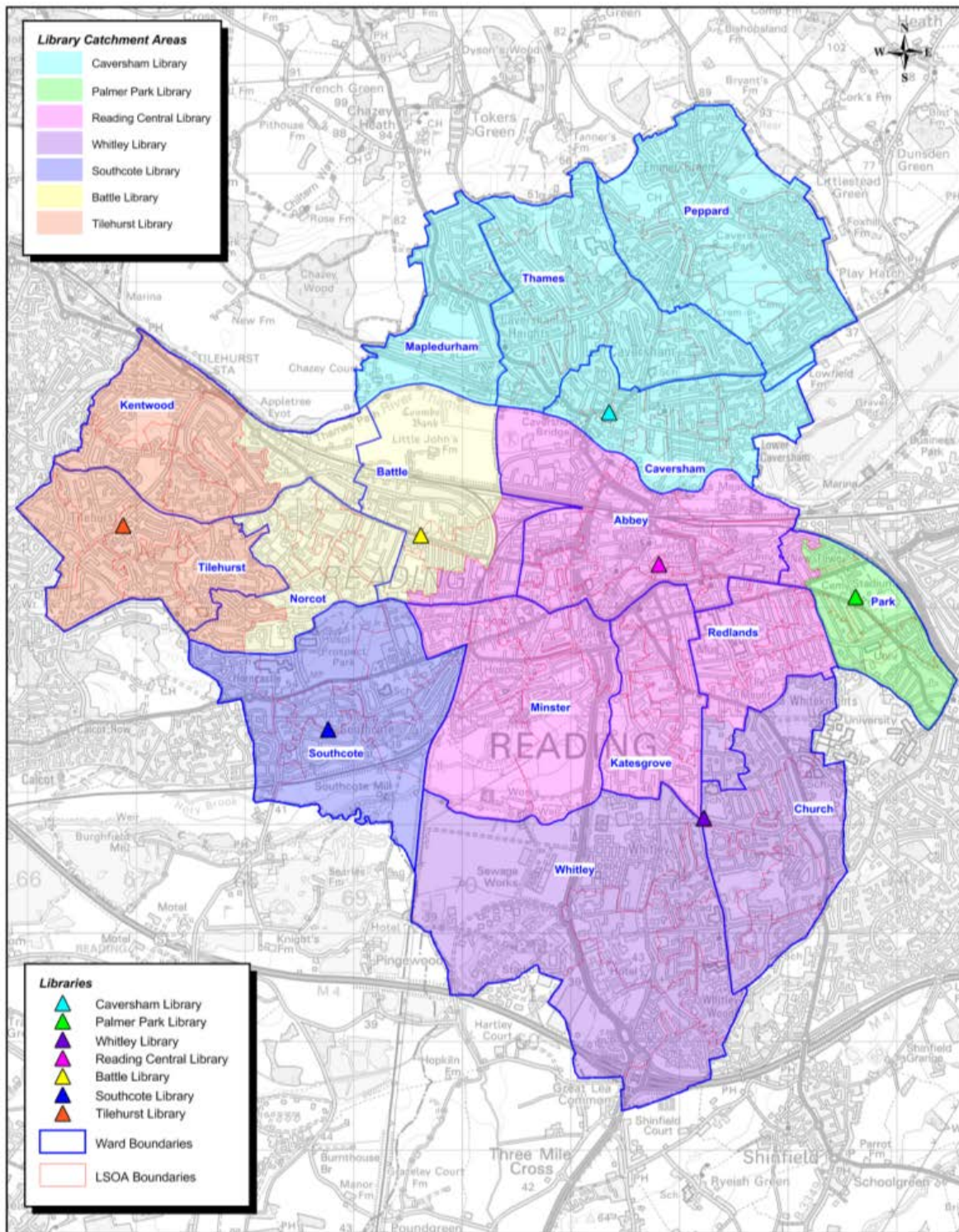
Plans for potential 'community hubs'

Proposals for the future of library provision in the catchment areas of Battle, Southcote and Whitley Libraries would involve building modifications or extensions to facilitate re-location and/or shared use of libraries. For these areas, outline plans have been made available to illustrate how the proposals might be achieved in practical physical terms if, following consultation, the Council decides to implement all or any of these proposals. The plans will also be exhibited in the relevant libraries and community centres. Information will be provided alongside plans to explain them. In addition, a number of drop-in sessions will be arranged and publicised when Council staff will be in attendance to explain the plans.

Library Service Income

A detailed position statement has been prepared in respect of fees and charges as one of the most common suggestions for meeting the funding gap was charging for services or seeking donations.

Reading Libraries and the catchment areas they serve



Title: **Reading Borough Council Libraries**
Catchment Areas



Date: 25/08/2015 Scale at A3: 1:32,000

Produced by GIS & Mapping Services

Ref:7223 - G:\Mapinfo\Workspaces\KQ\libraries\Library_Catchments.wor

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Proposals in detail

A. Retain Central Library, reduce opening hours and service-wide staffing

Central Library offers a place to study, research and learn, with both designated quiet and group study areas. Central Library serves the wider Reading population and offers a broader range of services than branches, including the Local History Unit. In addition to traditional library services, the hub also now hosts a range of organisations providing a complementary offer of support to improve skills and employment prospects; IT and digital media skills; and access to a wider range of information. Central Library also serves the wider network as the small qualified Librarian team are based here.

We are proposing to retain Central Library as the hub of the network, whilst reducing staffing and opening hours.

This would require a restructure of the service, reducing core staffing levels (which provide staff cover at Central Library and support the service as a whole) and a reduction in opening hours by 6 hours from 52.5 to 46.5 hours per week.

Why are we proposing to do this?

Central Library is the hub of Reading's library network, with excellent transport links to surrounding communities and the greatest provision of stock, computers and study space. Central Library is by far the best used library in the network, with 49% of all visits to Reading Libraries, 37% of issues and 74% of all IT sessions.

It is for this reason that we wish to maintain the levels of service provided from Central Library as much as possible. However, it is currently considered that Central Library should not be exempt from the need for the library service to run more

efficiently in order to help bridge the funding gap which is facing the Council as a whole.

Reducing opening times by 6 hours a week would deliver a saving of £16,000 a year, whilst reducing staffing could save £74,600.

How could we deliver this?

A reduction in opening hours could be achieved through a combination of later opening and earlier closing, as illustrated below. **This is just an example of how the reduced hours could be achieved. As part of this consultation we want your feedback on future opening hours.**

| Day | Current hours (52.5) | Illustration (46.5 hours) |
|-----------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Monday | 9.00 - 5.30 | 9.30 - 5.00 |
| Tuesday | 9.00 - 7.00 | 9.30 - 7.00 |
| Wednesday | 9.00 - 5.30 | 9.30 - 5.00 |
| Thursday | 9.00 - 7.00 | 9.30 - 7.00 |
| Friday | 9.00 - 5.30 | 9.30 - 5.00 |
| Saturday | 9.30 - 5.00 | 10.00 - 3.30 |

What impact would it have?

Reducing opening hours would decrease the accessibility of library services for some users, and reducing staffing would limit the capacity of remaining staff.

Increased use of volunteers would be likely to be required in order to run activities.

How would we minimise negative impacts of this proposal?

The introduction of self-service kiosks would allow fewer staff to continue to support library users.

Opening times would be scheduled to reflect feedback from both phases of

consultation and would ensure access for a range of different users, including school children and those that are working, with access Monday - Saturday.

Access to e-books and online renewals of books would still be available 24/7, free of charge, even when the branches would be closed.

B. Retain Caversham Library, reduce staffing and opening hours

Caversham Library occupies a central and prominent position within Caversham, opposite a supermarket and other local shops. The Grade 2 listed building is relatively small for the volume of use, with limited space for additional usage, whilst wheeled shelving offers the opportunity to use parts of the public area for events out of hours.

We are proposing to retain Caversham Library whilst reducing staffing levels and opening hours from 50.5 to 35 hours per week (the longest opening hours after Central Library).

Why are we proposing to do this?

After Central Library, Caversham is the most actively used library in the network, and serves the largest catchment population as well as the greatest number of residents aged 65+ of all Reading's branch libraries. Caversham Library is also relatively small and offers little opportunities for developing the site into a wider 'community hub'. However, it is recommended that the space continues to be used flexibly to offer a range of activities and connections with local adult learning and children's centres are strengthened.

What feedback do we want from you?

- What impact do you think this proposal would have?
- Do you have any comments on opening hours?
- What else could be done to minimise any negative impacts of this proposal, if adopted?
- Do you have any other ideas of how the Council might deliver savings?

Reducing opening times by 15.5 hours (and reducing staffing levels by introducing self-service technology) would deliver a saving of £41,900 a year, whilst maintaining local provision of library services in the North of the borough.

How could we deliver this?

A reduction in opening hours could be achieved through a combination of later opening and earlier closing, as illustrated below. **This is just an example of how the reduced hours could be achieved. As part of this consultation we want your feedback on future opening hours.**

| Day | Current hours (50.5) | Illustration (35 hours) |
|-----------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Monday | 9.00 - 5.00 | 10.00 - 5.00 |
| Tuesday | 9.00 - 7.00 | 10.00 - 6.00 |
| Wednesday | 9.00 - 5.00 | Closed |
| Thursday | 9.00 - 7.00 | 10.00 - 7.00 |
| Friday | 9.00 - 5.00 | 10.00 - 4.00 |
| Saturday | 9.30 - 4.00 | 10.00 - 3.00 |

What impact would it have?

Reducing opening hours would decrease the accessibility of library services for some users.

How would we minimise negative impacts of this proposal?

The introduction of self-service technologies would allow fewer staff to continue to support library users.

Opening times would be scheduled to reflect feedback from both phases of consultation and to ensure access for a range of different users, including school children and those that are working.

Access to e-books and online renewals of books would still be available 24/7, free of charge, even when the branches would be closed.

Central Library, which has excellent transport links, would continue to offer longer opening hours than local branch libraries.

What feedback do we want from you?

- What impact do you think this proposal would have?
- Do you have any comments on opening hours?
- What else could be done to minimise any negative impacts of this proposal?
- Do you have any other ideas of how the Council might deliver savings?

C. Increase community use of library site and reduce opening hours

- Battle Library
- Tilehurst Library

Battle Library is a Grade 2 listed building, located on the Oxford Road, in close proximity to local shops. The library has been refurbished in recent years following a successful lottery bid and includes a separate multi-function room which is used for a number of library and other community activities and events.

Tilehurst Library is located at the side of School Road, next to a school and health centre, not far from local shops. The library is the base of the Mobile, Elderly and Housebound Library Service.

We are proposing to retain both Battle and Tilehurst Libraries with reduced opening hours, whilst increasing the community use of both library sites.

It is proposed that library opening hours are reduced to 28 hours per week (from 39.5 for Battle and 42 for Tilehurst) and that Battle Library is extended to facilitate greater community use of the site.

Why are we proposing to do this?

An objective assessment of Reading's libraries on the basis of library use and demographic need indicates that Battle and Tilehurst Libraries are both comparatively well used (although in different ways) and have intermediate sized catchment areas. In the Battle area there is a larger proportion of young (0-17) and BME residents and in Tilehurst a higher proportion of older people (65+) than the borough average. In this context it is proposed to retain these libraries with mid-range opening hours.

Reducing opening times by 11.5 hours at Battle Library would save £17,000 a year, and a reduction of 14 hours at Tilehurst (and reducing staffing by introducing self-service technology) would save £42,000. This would create more consistent opening hours and maintain local provision of library services in the West of the borough.

How could we deliver this?

A reduction in opening hours could be achieved through a combination of later opening and earlier closing, as illustrated below. **This is just an example of how the reduced hours could be achieved. As part of this consultation we want your feedback on future opening hours.**

| Day | Current hours | | Illustration (28 hours) |
|-----------|----------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| | Battle (39.5) | Tilehurst (42) | |
| Monday | 9.00 - 5.00 | 9.00 - 5.00 | 10.00 - 2.00 |
| Tuesday | 9.00 - 7.00 | 9.00 - 7.00 | 10.00 - 7.00 |
| Wednesday | Closed | Closed | Closed |
| Thursday | 9.00 - 5.00 | 9.00 - 7.00 | 10.00 - 5.00 |
| Friday | 9.00 - 5.00 | 9.00 - 5.00 | 10.00 - 2.00 |
| Saturday | 9.30 - 1.00 2.00 - 4.00 | 9.30 - 4.00 | 10.00 - 2.00 |

In order to extend Battle Library, funding available via Section 106 (Planning contributions) could support a further sympathetic extension to the rear of this building. For the purposes of illustration, initial designs have been drawn up and costs estimated for an extension and remodelling of the space. This would allow out of hours use of part of the building by the local community and would be equipped to support adult learning classes.

What impact would it have?

Reducing opening hours would decrease the accessibility of library services for some users.

Increasing community use of libraries, on the other hand, would ensure that the best use is made of facilities, and this may

result in an increase in take-up of library services by people visiting for other reasons.

How would we minimise negative impacts of this proposal?

Opening times would be scheduled to reflect feedback from both phases of consultation and to ensure access for a range of different users, including school children and those that are working.

Access to e-books and online renewals of books would still be available 24/7, free of charge, even when the branches would be closed.

Central Library, which has excellent transport links, would continue to offer longer opening hours than local branch libraries.

What feedback do we want from you?

- Do you have any comments on opening hours, plans for creating a 'community hub' at Battle Library, or any suggestions for increasing community use of Tilehurst Library?
- What impact do you think this proposal would have?
- What else could be done to minimise any negative impacts of this proposal?
- Do you have any other ideas of how the council might deliver savings in relation to these libraries?

In order to allow more detailed feedback on the proposal to create a 'community hub' at Battle Library, the Council will exhibit outline illustrative plans at the library for the duration of the consultation period Drop-in sessions when staff will be available to explain the plans will be held on **[times and dates to be confirmed]**.

D. Relocate library in nearby 'community hub' and reduce opening hours

- Southcote Library
- Whitley Library

Southcote Library is located in Coronation Square and includes the Toy Library, considerable 'back office' space and parking, as well as a small garden to the rear. Located nearby are a community centre, a nursery/children's centre and a Housing Advice Shop. Children's Centre activities are delivered in the community centre and the staff also make use of the small reception/office in the building.

Whitley Library is currently located just off a roundabout, a short walk from local shops and the community centre.

We are proposing to relocate both Southcote and Whitley Libraries in nearby 'community hubs' to improve service take-up, make more efficient use of space, introduce shared staffing and reduce opening hours to reflect levels of use.

It is proposed that Southcote Library is relocated within an extended and reconfigured Community Centre in Coronation Square.

It is proposed that Whitley Library is relocated within the South Reading Youth and Community Centre.

Single staffing cover could be dedicated to library services for 20 hours per week in these sites (from 33.5 for Southcote and 34.5 for Whitley Library). A shared staffing model might mean that the library service could be accessible for *more* than 20 hours a week but this would be a minimum. These changes could deliver savings of £49,275 for Southcote Library and £35,100 for Whitley.

Why are we proposing to do this?

Library services in the relatively small catchment area of Southcote and the relatively deprived area of Whitley are significantly less well used than other branches and we believe co-location would enhance service take-up and encourage customers to access a wider range of services and support.

Both libraries are also located in close proximity to other public buildings and this proposal offers opportunities to make more efficient use of public buildings and to share reception staff for more than one service, supported by the introduction of self-service kiosks.

Adaptations to other community buildings would enable library provision to be accommodated allowing:

- Designated space for library stock
- Access to shared spaces for activities
- A flexible shared model of staffing to be developed to eliminate duplication, improve customer service and deliver a more efficient service.
- Greater opportunities for joint working, collaboration and sharing of resources
- Access for library users to toilets and café/refreshments on site - an identified priority from the phase 1 consultation
- Better used and more vibrant neighbourhood facilities
- Increased community involvement in the running of the library.

How could we deliver this?

A reduction in opening hours could be achieved through a combination of later opening and earlier closing, as illustrated below. **This is just an example of how the reduced hours could be achieved. As part of this consultation we want to your feedback on future opening hours.**

| Day | Current hours | | Illustration (20 hours) |
|-----------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Southcote (33.5) | Whitley (34.5) | |
| Monday | Closed | 2.00 - 5.00 | 10.00 - 2.00 |
| Tuesday | 9.00 - 7.00 | 9.00 - 7.00 | 10.00 - 2.00 |
| Wednesday | Closed | Closed | Closed |
| Thursday | 9.00 - 7.00 | 9.00 - 5.00 | 2.00 - 6.00 |
| Friday | 9.00 - 5.00 | 9.00 - 5.00 | 10.00 - 2.00 |
| Saturday | 9.30 - 1.00 2.00 - 4.00 | 9.30 - 1.00 2.00 - 4.00 | 10.00 - 2.00 |

Works to buildings in both locations would be cross-funded by the disposal of the current library sites. However, the library service would open in the new location in both cases before releasing current buildings - so that there would be no gap in provision.

What impact would it have?

Reducing opening hours would decrease the accessibility of library services for some users.

Increasing community use of libraries, on the other hand, would ensure that the best use was made of facilities and this may result in an increase in take-up of library services by people visiting for other reasons.

How would we minimise negative impacts of this proposal?

Opening times would be scheduled to reflect feedback from both phases of consultation, and to ensure access for a range of different users, including school children and those that are working.

Access to e-books and online renewals of books would still be available 24/7, free of charge, even when the branches would be closed.

Central Library, which has excellent transport links, would continue to offer longer opening hours than local branch libraries.

What feedback do we want from you?

- Do you have any comments on opening hours or plans for relocating Southcote and Whitley Libraries within 'community hubs'?
- What impact do you think this proposal would have?
- What else could be done to minimise any negative impacts of this proposal?
- Do you have any other ideas of how the Council might deliver savings?

In order to allow more detailed feedback on the proposal to create a 'community hub' that incorporate Southcote and Whitley Libraries in nearby community centres, the Council will exhibit outline plans at the library for the duration of the consultation period. Drop-in sessions when staff will be available to explain the plans will be held on **[times and dates to be confirmed]**.

E. Provide a smaller neighbourhood library in East Reading and explore options for co-location or re-location of Palmer Park Library services and reduce opening hours

Palmer Park Library, which is Reading's smallest branch, is on the edge of the park, close to the local sports stadium.

It is proposed that the Council explores alternative delivery options for library provision in the East of Reading and reduces opening hours from 41.5 to 20 hours per week. This could include, for example, the provision of a small neighbourhood library on a different site - which need not be a local authority owned building. Alternatively, another service or organisation could share space in the current library building to encourage greater use of the space and reduce costs.

Why are we proposing to do this?

On an objective assessment of Reading's libraries on the basis of library use and demographic need, Palmer Park Library ranked bottom overall.

Palmer Park serves the most geographically compact catchment population and a far smaller number of residents and vulnerable individuals than Reading's other libraries (bar Southcote which is comparatively more deprived) when considered across the network.

Palmer Park has good transport links to the town centre and an equivalent proportion of catchment residents actively borrow from Central Library to those using Palmer Park Library. Palmer Park is responsible for only 5% of the network's borrowers, 2% of IT sessions and 7% of issues.

Based on the assumption that double staff cover may still be required under a new operating model, reducing opening hours by 21.5 a week could save £28,000.

How could we deliver this?

A reduction in opening hours could be achieved through a combination of later opening and earlier closing, as illustrated below. **This is just an example of how the reduced hours could be achieved. As part of this consultation we want to your feedback on future opening hours.**

| Day | Current hours (41.5) | Illustration (20 hours) |
|-----------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Monday | 9.00 - 5.00 | 10.00 - 2.00 |
| Tuesday | 9.00 - 7.00 | 10.00 - 2.00 |
| Wednesday | Closed | Closed |
| Thursday | 9.00 - 7.00 | 2.00 - 6.00 |
| Friday | 9.00 - 5.00 | 10.00 - 2.00 |
| Saturday | 9.30 - 1.00 2.00 - 4.00 | 10.00 - 2.00 |

What impact would it have?

Reducing opening hours would decrease the accessibility of library services for some users.

On the other hand, co-locating library services with other services or activities, would ensure that the best use is made of facilities and this may result in an increase in take-up of library services by people visiting for other reasons.

How would we minimise negative impacts of this proposal?

Opening times would be scheduled to reflect feedback from both phases of consultation and to ensure access for a range of different users, including school children and those that are working.

E- Access to e-books and online renewals of books would still be available 24/7, free of

charge, even when the branches would be closed.

Central Library, which has excellent transport links, would continue to offer longer opening hours than local branch libraries.

What feedback do we want from you?

- What impact do you think this proposal would have?

- Do you have any comments on opening hours, any suggestions or ideas for moving Palmer Park Library to another building or for another group or organisation to sharing the current library building?
- What else could be done to minimise any negative impacts of this proposal?
- Do you have any other ideas of how the Council might deliver savings?

F. Explore opportunities for other organisations to deliver a more accessible Toy Library service to improve take-up across the borough

The Toy Library is currently based in Southcote Library. Toys can be borrowed for a small charge and can be reserved via the online Toy Library catalogue and collected from any library site.

It is proposed that the Council no longer provides the Toy Library service directly and explores opportunities for an individual organisation or consortia to deliver a more accessible Toy Library service to improve reach and take-up.

The Toy Library is currently self-funding, as lending fees currently cover the cost of buying new toys and premises costs are subsumed within the wider costs of Southcote Library. The Council would transfer its stock of toys and could, if necessary, provide storage capacity on another site.

Why are we proposing to do this?

The Toy Library was set up 14 years ago with funding from an EU grant and is not part of the Council's statutory service offer. Take-up and accessibility of the service is poor.

Whilst in theory the Toy Library is a borough-wide service, in practice users are largely from the Southcote and wider West Reading area.

Exploring opportunities for another organisation or consortia to take over the Toy Library service, as a mobile or dispersed service, would allow us to consider alternative ways to make the service more accessible.

Ceasing to provide the Toy Library directly would not deliver a saving.

What impact would it have?

The proposal is intended to improve access to the Toy Library across the borough.

What feedback do we want from you?

- What impact do you think this proposal would have?
- What could be done to minimise any negative impacts of this proposal?
- Do you have any other ideas of how the Council might deliver savings?

G. Introduce self-serve technology to all libraries

Central Library currently makes limited use of self-serve technologies - less than 10% of issues and returns are completed by users self-serving.

The system currently used is out-dated and many customers find this technology difficult to use correctly.

It is proposed that all libraries should benefit from new self-serve technology. This would cost an estimated £300,000 including all installation costs and 'tagging' stock, plus a small annual revenue support cost.

Why are we proposing to do this?

In libraries using a more modern system of Self Service RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) chip technology, 95% plus of issues, returns and payments are self-service.

The use of self-service technology would offer a more efficient service for customers and make the best use of staff - reducing staff levels or freeing up time which could be spent assisting customers in other ways. Self-service machines would allow customers to borrow, renew and return books and to pay fines and the latest technology would enable wider transactions.

Currently all branch libraries require a minimum staffing level in order to provide basic management, ensure staff safety and a satisfactory public service. Library

assistants are currently used to staff branch libraries, not qualified librarians. In a model involving community hubs such as we are proposing, a modern self-service system enables staff to be used much more flexibly to take on a wider role front-of-house - offering advice and signposting; enabling customers to complete other transactions online; providing reception cover and centre management. The introduction of self-serve technology would also support the proposals for new shared and flexible staffing models in hubs.

What impact would it have?

Some library users may find adjusting to the use of self-serve technologies more difficult.

How would we minimise negative impacts of this proposal?

Effective support for customers in other areas has meant that the vast majority are able to use modern self-serve kiosks which use touch screens and are very user-friendly.

Staff would remain available to assist customers with issues and queries.

What feedback do we want from you?

- What impact do you think this proposal would have?
- What could be done to minimise any negative impacts of this proposal?
- Do you have any other ideas of how the Council might deliver savings?

H. Explore further opportunities for technology development

We propose to:

- Develop or re-tender the Library Management System to improve efficiency and customer service.
- Explore options to enable customers to access libraries when they are unstaffed.

Why are we proposing to do this?

Library Management System

Survey respondents indicated that they would welcome improvements to the online catalogue. This is also key to making sure that library services are inclusive, modern and make the best use of available resources. People expect to see a strong online library service that seamlessly joins up with the services provided in the physical library space.

A level of savings is anticipated from a system upgrade but in the first few years this would be offset by resourcing project support. Longer term, an upgrade or new system would lead to savings in purchasing, invoicing and a better customer experience.

Open access

A small number of libraries nationally have introduced or are piloting pioneering technology which allows customers to access a library without any staff on site, or outside of staffed opening times, using their library card and a PIN number.

Where this technology is in use, it automatically controls and monitors building access, self-service kiosks, public access computers, lighting, alarms, public announcements and patron safety. This

option would also require significant upfront investment and ongoing costs, and currently only enables adults to access sites when they are unstaffed. This option is relatively new and libraries are learning about what works.

IT and technology projects are resource intensive and a detailed programme plan would need to be developed to schedule, cost and resource developments. Proposed improvements need to be cost neutral to enable or to generate savings.

What impact would it have?

The impact of any changes would depend on the nature of the precise changes. Generally, however, we consider that embracing further opportunities for technology development would improve customer experience and may allow the authority to extend opening hours on a limited basis.

How would we minimise negative impacts of this proposal?

Any changes to open access technologies would be carefully planned (if taken forward) to ensure arrangements were safe and easy to use.

What feedback do we want from you?

- What impact do you think this proposal would have?
- What can be done to minimise any negative impacts of this proposal?
- Do you have any other ideas of how the Council might deliver savings?

Consultation Questions

This Consultation Document includes a number of questions on the following topics:

- Proposals
- Any other comments
- Library Use
- About You

If you would like to provide feedback on only some of the proposals, questions on proposals can be found on the following pages:

| | | |
|------------|---|-----|
| Proposal A | Retain Central Library, reduce opening hours and service-wide staffing | p18 |
| Proposal B | Retain Caversham Library ,reduce staffing and opening hours | p19 |
| Proposal C | Increase community use of library site and reduce opening hours - Battle Library - Tilehurst Library | P20 |
| Proposal D | Relocate library in a 'community hub' and reduce opening hours - Southcote Library - Whitley Library | p21 |
| Proposal E | Provide a smaller neighbourhood library in East Reading and explore options for co-location or re-location of Palmer Park Library services and reduce opening hours | p22 |
| Proposal F | Explore opportunities for other organisations to deliver a more accessible Toy Library service to improve take-up across the borough | p23 |
| Proposal G | Introduce self-serve technology to all libraries | p24 |
| Proposal H | Explore further opportunities for technology development | p25 |

Proposals

Proposal A - Retain Central Library, reduce opening hours and service-wide staffing

1.

- a. Do you think this proposal will impact on you and your family?
(please tick one of the following)

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Positive impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Negative impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No impact (please skip to question 2) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know (please skip to question 2) |

- b. What impact do you think this proposal will have on you and your family?

2. What can be done to minimise any negative impacts of this proposal?

3. Do you have any other ideas of how the Council might deliver savings?

Proposal B - Retain Caversham Library, reduce staffing and opening hours

4.

a. Do you think this proposal will impact on you and your family?
(please tick one of the following)

- Positive impact
- Negative impact
- No impact (please skip to question 5)
- Don't know (please skip to question 5)

b. What impact do you think this proposal will have on you and your family?

5. What can be done to minimise any negative impacts of this proposal?

6. Do you have any other ideas of how the Council might deliver savings?

Proposal C - Increase community use of library site and reduce opening hours

- Battle Library
- Tilehurst Library

7. For which libraries do you wish to comment on this proposal?
(please tick one of the following)

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Battle Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Tilehurst Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Both libraries |

8.

a. Do you think this proposal will impact on you and your family?
(please tick one of the following)

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Positive impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Negative impact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No impact (please skip to question 9) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know (please skip to question 9) |

b. What impact do you think this proposal will have on you and your family?

9. What can be done to minimise any negative impacts of this proposal?

10. Do you have any other ideas of how the Council might deliver savings?

Proposal D - Relocate library in a Community Hub and reduce opening hours

- Southcote Library
- Whitley Library

11. For which libraries do you wish to comment on this proposal?
(please tick one of the following)

- Southcote Library
- Whitley Library
- Both libraries

12. a. Do you think this proposal will impact on you and your family?
(please tick one of the following)

- Positive impact
- Negative impact
- No impact (please skip to question 13)
- Don't know (please skip to question 13)

b. What impact do you think this proposal will have on you and your family?

13. What can be done to minimise any negative impacts of this proposal?

14. Do you have any other ideas of how the Council might deliver savings?

Proposal E - Explore options for co-location or re-location of Palmer Park Library services and reduce opening hours

15.

a. Do you think this proposal will impact on you and your family?
(please tick one of the following)

- Positive impact
- Negative impact
- No impact (please skip to question 16)
- Don't know (please skip to question 16)

b. What impact do you think this proposal will have on you and your family?

16. What can be done to minimise any negative impacts of this proposal?

17. Do you have any other ideas of how the Council might deliver savings?

Proposal F - Explore opportunities for other organisations to deliver a more accessible Toy Library service to improve take-up across the borough

18.

a. Do you think this proposal will impact on you and your family?
(please tick one of the following)

- Positive impact
- Negative impact
- No impact (please skip to question 19)
- Don't know (please skip to question 19)

b. What impact do you think this proposal will have on you and your family?

19. What can be done to minimise any negative impacts of this proposal?

20. Do you have any other ideas of how the Council might deliver savings?

Proposal G - Introduce self-serve technology to all libraries

21.

a. Do you think this proposal will impact on you and your family?
(please tick one of the following)

- Positive impact
- Negative impact
- No impact (please skip to question 22)
- Don't know (please skip to question 22)

b. What impact do you think this proposal will have on you and your family?

22. What can be done to minimise any negative impacts of this proposal?

23. Do you have any other ideas of how the Council might deliver savings?

Proposal H - Explore further opportunities for technology development to:

- a. Improve the online library catalogue
- b. Allow customers to access unstaffed libraries, outside normal opening hours

24.

- a. Do you think this proposal will impact on you and your family?
(please tick one of the following)

- Positive impact
- Negative impact
- No impact (please skip to question 25)
- Don't know (please skip to question 25)

- b. What impact do you think this proposal will have on you and your family?

25. What can be done to minimise any negative impacts of this proposal?

26. Do you have any other ideas of how the Council might deliver savings?

Any other comments

27. We welcome comments about any element of this consultation and on any elements of the proposals that you have not covered so far, including any ideas on how the Council might deliver savings from the library service or elsewhere.

Library use

28. Have you used a Reading library in the last 12 months?

- Yes
- No (please skip to question 32/page 28)

29.

a. Which library do you use most frequently? (please tick one of the following)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> Southcote Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Central Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Tilehurst Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Battle Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Whitley Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caversham Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Palmer Park Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Library (please specify below) |

b. How frequently do you visit your preferred library?
(please tick one of the following)

- More than once a week
- Weekly
- Fortnightly
- Monthly
- Less than monthly

30.

a. Please tick all other libraries used below.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | None | <input type="checkbox"/> | Southcote Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Central Library | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tilehurst Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Battle Library | <input type="checkbox"/> | Whitley Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Caversham Library | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mobile Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Palmer Park Library | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other Library (please specify below) |

b. How frequently do you visit other libraries? (please tick one of the following)

- More than once a week
- Weekly
- Fortnightly
- Monthly
- Less than monthly

31. Do you visit the library with, or on behalf of, any of the following groups?
(please tick all that apply)

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Children aged 0-5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Older persons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Children aged 6-12 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Disabled persons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Young people aged 13-18 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify) |

About you

Please be assured that your personal details will be kept strictly confidential and that no individual or organisation will be identified in the reporting of results.

The Equality Act 2010 places an 'Equality Duty' on public bodies, to understand the effect of their policies and practices on equality. This involves looking at evidence, engaging with people, staff, service users and others and considering the effect of what they do on the whole community.

Information gathered through the following questions will therefore help us to find out how proposals may impact on groups differently.

32. What is your postcode?

33. Are you...?

Male
Female

34. What age group do you belong to?

0-14
15-24
25-34
35-44
45-54

55-64
65-74
75-84
85 or over

35. Please indicate if you consider yourself to have any of the following disabilities / conditions? (tick all that apply)

None / not applicable
Mobility - getting around
Hearing
Eyesight

Difficulties using hands/fingers
Learning disability
Mental health problem
Other, please state:

36. What is your employment status? (please tick one of the following)

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Employed in a full-time job (30 hours plus per week) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Permanently sick / disabled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Employed in a part-time job (under 30 hours per week) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wholly retired from work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Self-employed full or part-time | <input type="checkbox"/> | Looking after the home / family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | In full-time education at school, college or university | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Unemployed and available for work | | |

37. What is your sexual orientation? (please tick one of the following)

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Heterosexual / Straight | <input type="checkbox"/> | Prefer not to say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Gay or lesbian | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify below) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Bisexual | | |

38. What is your religious belief? (please tick one of the following)

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Buddhist | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sikh |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Christian | <input type="checkbox"/> | No religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Hindu | <input type="checkbox"/> | Prefer not to say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Jewish | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify below) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Muslim | | |

39. What is your ethnicity? (please tick one of the following)

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>White</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Irish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any other White background</p> | <p>Asian or Asian British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any other Asian background</p> |
| <p>Mixed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> White and Black Caribbean</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> White and Black African</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> White and Asian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any other mixed / multiple background</p> | <p>Black or Black British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> African</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any other Black /African / Caribbean background</p> |
| <p>Other Ethnic Group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Arab</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any other ethnic group (please specify below)</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say</p> |

Library Service Income

The most common suggestion for delivering savings from the consultation was to increase charging. Reading is already 7th out of 55 Unitary Authorities in terms of income generated per 1,000 population.

The total income target for libraries for 2015/16 is £230,100 and includes £40,000 rental income achieved through the Central Library expanding the range of services offered in moving to a 'community and learning hub', now leasing the third floor at the Central Library.

Under the terms of the 1964 Act, libraries cannot charge for the loan of books. They can charge fines for overdue items and they can charge for the hire of audio-visual (AV) material.

Reservations and Fines

Reservations are charged at 50p per book and since introducing the fee in 2012/13 reservations have halved and the fee has also disproportionately deterred those library users who used to select their books online for collection at a branch - from 33,667 to 11,965, a reduction of 64.5%. At 25p a day Reading's overdue book charges are in the top quartile. Income from fines and reservation charges overall is decreasing, from £63,000 in 2011/12 to £55,660 in 2014/15. This is due to declining issues plus the provision of many routes to avoid overdue fines i.e. renewal in person at any branch, by phone at any branch, and on-line 24/7.

Hire Fees

Spoken word books are bought and are hired for a fee, except through the Elderly and Housebound service, which is free. Those registered blind & partially sighted but using static sites can also access the items at no cost. Many libraries have ceased to supply CDs and DVDs but in Reading AV loans still generate a net income of circa £23,000.

Toy library fees generated £3,000 last year, covering the cost of buying new toys (c £1,000k) plus a small surplus.

Room Hire and Events

Fees are charged for the hire of the multi-purpose room at Battle library for the Baby clinic. Rent is also payable for the third floor of the Central Library as above. There are limited discrete spaces in Reading's other libraries for hire.

Some events are chargeable but as these are often held out of hours, only cover additional staff costs as well as speaker fees. In total, events generate less than £1,000 p.a. gross. They are done to enhance the cultural life of the town and to increase footfall rather than as income generators. Rhymetimes and other targeted events to improve literacy or other outcomes are free.

IT and Printing

Income from public photocopiers has declined slowly over the years and the profit is now c£3,000. Printing generates £17,500 p.a. gross but deducting consumables profit is closer to £5,000.

Some local authorities have introduced charging for the use of public access IT (chargeable after a limited free period of use). However, 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.

Other Income

Sales of withdrawn books generate £4,000 p.a. and are popular with the public.

Overall

In summary the service has been effective in optimising income and opportunities remaining will not obviate the need to make significant savings.

External funding opportunities are often project based and are not generally available to support core services, however there are opportunities in respect of the development of 'friends of the library' networks which can support fund-raising; developing the book donation scheme; capitalising on opportunities for project funding to add value and recruiting volunteers.