Library Review Research 2018

For Kirklees Council

April 2018

Mill House,
North Street,
York, YO1 6JD
01904 632039

www.qaresearch.co.uk
Company registration: 3186539

Contents

1. Executive Summary....4
2. Background and Objectives....10
3. Methodology....11
3.1 Research Approach....11
3.2 Quantitative Survey....11
3.3 Qualitative Research....11
3.4 How to Read This Report....12
4. Key Findings – Quantitative Research....13
4.1 Usage of Kirklees Libraries....14
4.2 Options for running library services....16
4.2.1 Impact of potential closures....17
4.2.2 Volunteering....20
4.3 Views on alternative delivery models....22
4.4 Ideas and suggestions....24
5. Key findings – Qualitative Research....27
5.1 Library users focus groups....27
5.1.1 Library service outcomes....27
5.1.3 Views on alternative delivery models....30
5.1.4 General views on the Council exploring these options....32
6. Staff focus groups....33
6.1.1 Outcomes....34
6.1.2 Views on options for delivering library services....35
6.1.3 Volunteering....36
6.1.4 Views on alternative delivery models....37
7. Friends of Focus Groups....40
7.1 Overview of current library services....40
7.1.1 Outcomes....41
7.1.2 Different ways of delivering library services....42
7.1.3 Alternative delivery models....44
7.1.4 Final comments and suggestions....45
8. Conclusions....46
9. Appendices....50
9.1 Submissions and petitions....50
9.2 Profile of survey respondents....51
9.3 Profile of focus group participants (library users)....52
9.4 Profile of focus group participants (staff)....53
9.5 Profile of focus group participants (Friends of groups)....54
9.6 Summary of findings from consultation with children....57

RESEARCH

Table of figures

Figure 1 Summary of consultation data sources 11
Figure 2 – Responses by ward 13
Figure 3 Services required at a library 14
Figure 4 Types of help and support accessed at a library 15
Figure 5 Levels of agreement with different ways of delivering library services 16
Figure 6 Impact of potential closures 17
Figure 7 – Use of alternative libraries 18
Figure 8 – Distance respondents would be willing to travel 19
Figure 9 Levels of interest in volunteering 20
Figure 10 Type of support needed to volunteer 21
Figure 11 Levels of agreement on using volunteers to help deliver the Home Library service 22
Figure 12 Levels of support for alternative delivery models 23
Figure 13 Ideas on how library services could be run 24
Figure 14 Reasons why ideas should be considered 25
Figure 15 Alternative places that the library services could be delivered from 26
Figure 16 Submissions 50
Figure 17 Petitions 50
Figure 18 Profile of survey respondents 51
Figure 19 Profile of focus group participants (Group 1 library users) 52
Figure 20 Profile of focus group participants (Group 2 library users) 52
Figure 21 Profile of focus group participants (Group 3 library users) 52
Figure 22 Profile of focus group participants (Group 4 library users) 53
Figure 23 Profile of focus group participants (Group 5 library users) 53
Figure 24 Profile of focus group participants (Group 1 staff) 53
Figure 25 Profile of focus group participants (Group 2 staff) 54
Figure 26 Profile of focus group participants (Group 3 staff) 54
Figure 27 Profile of focus group participants (Group 4 staff) 54
Figure 28 Profile of focus group participants (Group 1 Friends of) 54
Figure 29 Profile of focus group participants (Group 2 Friends of) 55
Figure 30 Profile of focus group participants (Group 3 Friends of) 55
Figure 31 Profile of focus group participants (Group 4 Friends of) 55
Figure 32 Profile of focus group participants (Group 5 Friends of) 56
Figure 33 Demographic profile (children's consultation) 57
Figure 34 Library visits in the past year 58
Figure 35 Reasons for using libraries 59
Figure 36 Happiness with local library service 60
Figure 37 Post closure behaviour 61
Figure 38 Views on changing building 62

1. Executive Summary

Background and Methodology

- Kirklees Council has given a budget of £2.238 million to deliver a library service. Since September 2016 the Library Service has been working collaboratively with partners, volunteers and Friends groups to deliver a wide range of services, both in libraries and in other community venues. However, budgetary constraints mean that changes to the existing service are needed in order for the service to fulfil its statutory duty and continue to deliver a range of services.

- Therefore, the Council was keen to undertake a wide-scale consultation with local residents, volunteers and library service staff to evaluate how the service may be delivered going forward. The purpose of this consultation was to:

    - Explore public opinion on different models of service delivery
    - Provide an opportunity for community groups and individuals to propose other ideas
    - Provide an opportunity for staff members to propose other ideas
    - Establish the level of interest amongst individuals and groups to support or take on delivery of some or all aspects of the service in an area of Kirklees

- Key aspects of the consultation analysed in this report include;

    - Self-completion paper/online survey made available to all residents and completed by 3,057 respondents – *note that respondents to this survey were entirely self-selecting and were overwhelmingly library users and as such, the survey should be seen as representing the views of library* users
    - 5 focus groups with Library Service Users
    - 5 focus groups with Friends of groups
    - 4 focus groups with staff
    - Consultation with 86 children and young people carried out by the Council.

Summary of Key Findings

The table below summarises the response to key questions amongst respondents to the self-completion survey;

Question	Quantitative Survey
How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	
I would be in favour of moving my local library to another building e.g. a school, community centre or a privately run building	
Agree ('strongly agree or agree)	19%
Disagree ('strongly disagree' or 'disagree')	73%
The Council should reduce the running costs of libraries by sharing space, integrating services and (where appropriate) staffing with partners	
Agree ('strongly agree or agree)	51%
Disagree ('strongly disagree' or 'disagree')	34%
I would be willing to volunteer	
Agree ('strongly agree or agree)	34%
Disagree ('strongly disagree' or 'disagree')	43%
The Council is considering using volunteers to help deliver home library services.	
Agree ('strongly agree or agree)	57%
Disagree ('strongly disagree' or 'disagree')	27%
How far would you support the following ways of delivering library services in Kirklees? ***Please give your answer on 10 point scale, where 1 is do not support at all and 10 is fully support***	
Remaining as a service within the Council	
Supportive (score 7-10)	79%
Unsupportive (score 1-4)	9%
Local Authority Trading Company (LATC)	
Supportive (score 7-10)	36%
Unsupportive (score 1-4)	38%
Public Service Mutual (PSM)	
Supportive (score 7-10)	30%
Unsupportive (score 1-4)	40%
Outsource	
Supportive (score 7-10)	7%
Unsupportive (score 1-4)	79%
Joint Venture	
Supportive (score 7-10)	12%
Unsupportive (score 1-4)	63%
Base: 3,057	**All valid responses (variable)**

RESEARCH

Conclusions

Conclusion 1: Libraries are perceived to fulfil a wider societal function beyond book lending.

Although the majority (86%) of survey respondents saw borrowing books as one of the most important functions of a library, it is clear from the qualitative research that libraries are no longer seen as services purely for book lending alone.

Library users, volunteers, and staff emphasised the wider community function of the local library and subsequently expressed concern over the potential for closure. The qualitative research in particular highlighted this theme, with consistent concern expressed across all discussion groups over a core number of service users who frequently used libraries for social connection. There was agreement amongst staff and Friends of groups that these softer library outcomes were hard to evidence and as a result the library service was an 'easy target' for budget cuts and reductions in service.

Consultation findings also highlight the importance of the IT function of the library service (and the support provided to access this) with 28% of respondents highlighting this as the most important library service after book lending. The qualitative research also highlighted that this is an important service for some, e.g. people on low income or looking for work. However, concerns were raised around how this function could be sustained within the context of further budget cuts.

Conclusion 2: Views are mixed on the issue of library location/buildings.

Moving the local library to another building (or privately run building) attracted limited support, with 52% of library service users disagreeing with this idea. The qualitative research highlighted that for some areas, the library building itself was held in high regard as a historic building and focal point for the community. Opposition to this idea is more apparent when communities cannot see a viable alternative building in their locality.

However, there appears to be more support for bringing other services into the library environment instead of moving the library out. Just over half (51%) of respondents supported the idea of the Council looking to reduce the running costs of libraries by sharing space, staffing, and integrating services. Within the qualitative research, this idea i.e. the community hub concept was viewed positively by some if it meant that library services could continue to be delivered within the community. In terms of sharing staff across the library service, it was noted that this was happening already in terms of library staff however some people found it difficult to understand how other department staff could fulfil library roles. There was strong feeling that there is still a need to retain trained librarians.

However, consultees noted that this type of model might work better in some communities than others, reiterating the theme of 'one size fits all' does not apply to the delivery of library services within all Kirklees communities.

Reflecting this, and remaining consistent within the different strands of the research, the view was expressed that libraries should be 'local', reflecting the fact that users primarily visit their nearest library run by the Council. Overall, participants were not willing to travel further afield to access library services, with 37% disagreeing with this. The qualitative research identified concerns about older people and those from deprived areas who might be less likely or able to travel to access library services. A further 36% of respondents felt they would stop using library services

altogether. This was a view most prevalent amongst older residents, with younger participants being more likely to travel further afield.

Conclusion 3: Volunteers have played a pivotal role in recent years but there are concerns about sustainability.
Only 34% of survey respondents felt they were willing to volunteer, leaving the majority disagreeing that they *'would be willing to volunteer to help run a library'* (43%). This support is also evident in the number of participants who stated they would need a full-time, qualified and paid member of staff to support them in their role as volunteer.

Within the qualitative research, there was a general view that volunteers have made a very positive contribution to Kirklees Libraries and have been vital in maintaining opening hours and assisting paid staff. However, many people questioned the sustainability of any model which was reliant on further expansion of the volunteer pool. There was acknowledgement that volunteer management and retention can be challenging and training and engagement is an ongoing task. There was also concern that any further reduction of paid library staff would have a negative impact on the quality of the service. Although many volunteers are willing and able, in some cases they are many in number covering short shifts and this can mean it is difficult for skills to be developed and retained.

Discussion within the focus groups centred on the characteristics of the volunteer base, e.g. mostly older retired residents. However, the consultation reveals support for/interest in volunteering from younger people. For example, a NET majority of 56% of young people (16-24 year olds) stated they were willing to volunteer and were often more willing to travel to libraries out of their immediate locality. This suggests there could be some value in attempting to widen volunteer recruitment strategies to try and attract younger volunteers perhaps by and/or linking in with any existing volunteering schemes.

There was also discussion around the capacity of more deprived communities to respond to the call for volunteers to support library services given that people living in more deprived areas are less likely to volunteer.

However, there is clear support for using volunteers to support the delivery of the Home Library Service with over half (57%) of respondents agreeing with this proposal.

Conclusion 4: The results of the children's consultation largely reflect the findings from the qualitative and quantitative research conducted, and remain consistent in terms of how libraries are used and ideas for sustaining services for the future.
Children were full of praise for library staff and struggled to envisage an effective delivery of library services without staff. The majority (47%) of children disagreed with the statement *'do you think moving your library to another building is a good idea?'* and found it difficult to identify alternative spaces which would ensure high quality library services are maintained.

Although combining library services with schools was a frequent suggestion in other parts of the research, from the perspective of a school pupil, it should be noted libraries are often a place for children to relax away from school and home. This is also reflective of a wider theme found in this research that libraries are often more than book lending facilities, but have become alternative spaces of social care, particularly for children and older people.

Conclusion 5: There are seen to be different advantages and disadvantages to keeping library services within the Council, but generally there is a clear preference for library services to remain within the Council.

The majority of residents (79%) expressed a preference for there to be no change in how library services are currently run, and would like services to remain Council led. Less than one in ten residents did not support the idea of library services remaining within the Council (9%).

The qualitative research revealed confusion around the alternative delivery models. Many focus group participants were reluctant or felt unable to express a preference for a particular delivery model or whether they supported the Council exploring these models. Thus, this may have led some respondents to default to the status quo.

Preference for library services to stay within the Council came out strongly in the qualitative research, and many felt a significant number of Kirklees residents would suffer should libraries go outside of the Council's jurisdiction.

Conclusion 6: Support for the idea of alternative delivery models is variable.

The alternative models were met with varying levels of support, although, as mentioned previously, it should be stressed that many struggled to comprehend the delivery of services outside the Council, and therefore found it difficult to discuss the different model types.

This was particularly evident when discussing each model in the qualitative research, with findings for each model broken down as follows;

- **Local Authority Trading Company**- beyond remaining within the Council, this model was seen as most preferable amongst survey respondents (NET support of 36%). The qualitative research allowed a number of concerns to be voiced, with many centring on the mention of profits and confusion over how libraries might generate an income.

- **Public Service Mutual**- those taking part in the qualitative research could identify merits in exploring this approach, allowing communities a greater degree of autonomy in running their own local library. From the survey, 30% of all respondents supported this model.

- **Joint Venture**- The majority of qualitative participants felt this model was inapplicable to the Kirklees area. Generally, participants could see merit in exploring this option, but not in the Kirklees area. Whilst some thought it might work well in Huddersfield, it was felt smaller towns and villages might subsequently lose access to a local library, should funding go towards a Joint Venture model. This is reflected in the results of the self-completion survey, with a net majority of 63% of participants not supporting this model.

- **Outsource**- This model generally received the least amount of support across the qualitative and quantitative research. Concerns were raised over the types of external organisation which would become involved in delivering library services, and elements of trust were raised as to whether external support would deliver an effective service. Discussions in the qualitative research centred on profit-making and the feasibility of libraries generating an income, leaving residents with a question mark over the practicalities of the involvement of external companies in the running of libraries. Uncertainty and dislike of this model is also reflected in the results of the quantitative research, with a net majority of 79% of respondents not supporting Outsourcing.

From the discussions with Friends of groups, it is apparent that they vary in terms of their capacity and willingness to develop further. Some appear highly organised, with a clear structure of roles/responsibilities and have already developed business plans and received funding for projects, whereas others appear to be more content to remain as they are. This variable capacity includes the extent to which they would like/feel able to engage with discussions on alternative models of delivery; some of which are community-led to varying degrees. In terms of taking this element forward, Friends of members, staff and library users alike would like to see the Council develop a clear business case which includes some analysis of how/where alternative delivery models have worked in other areas, how they have enabled library sustainability, and how they might operate within Kirklees.

2. Background and Objectives

Kirklees Council has given a budget of £2.238 million to deliver a library service. The Library Service wants to achieve the following outcomes outlined in the Government's strategy 'Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016 to 2021'[1]

- cultural and creative enrichment
- greater prosperity
- increased reading and literacy
- stronger, more resilient communities
- healthier and happier lives
- improved digital access and literacy
- helping everyone achieve their full potential

Since September 2016 the Library Service has been working collaboratively with partners, volunteers and Friends groups to deliver a wide range of services, both in libraries and in other community venues. However, budgetary constraints mean that changes to the existing service are needed in order for the service to fulfil its statutory duty and continue to deliver a range of services. Future development of the Library Service will sit within the context of the Council's Access to Services Strategy. The strategy states that:

"The outcome the Council is seeking is for residents and communities to be able to readily access information, signposting and services in order to improve the customer experience and journey, first time, more of the time. It is important that we become less reliant on buildings."

In order to deliver this strategy the principles underpinning the service proposition are:

- Digital by design in an inclusive way that recognises that not all sections of the population will be digitally literate or have access to technology.
- Telephone and Face to Face access where appropriate.
- Hub Approach: The Councils' four (Early Intervention and Prevention) EIP Hubs will provide four bases for high quality back office functions and a range of adult and social care and communities teams. Teams will be mobile and agile and will respond to opportunities for collaboration and co-location presented at local community hub level, aiming to work as close to the frontline as possible.
- Local access points which have due regard to the wider assets within neighbourhoods, wards and communities which are well networked and supported by high quality back office.

The purpose of this consultation was to:

- Explore public opinion on different models of service delivery
- Provide an opportunity for community groups and individuals to propose other ideas
- Provide an opportunity for staff members to propose other ideas

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021

- Establish the level of interest amongst individuals and groups to support or take on delivery of some or all aspects of the service in an area of Kirklees

Findings from this consultation are outlined in this report.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

A multi-method approach to the research was undertaken, with some elements carried out by Qa Research and others undertaken directly by the Council and then analysed by Qa Research. Additionally, a number of other contributions to the consultation were received or carried out and these are summarised within the table below.

Figure 1 Summary of consultation data sources

Data Source	Details	Comments
Paper and online self-completion survey open to all residents	Hosted by Qa Research and made available via the Kirklees Council website and completed by more than 3,000 residents	Analysed in Section 4
Focus groups with library users	5 groups with library users undertaken by Qa Research	Analysed in Section 5
Focus groups with Library Service staff	4 groups with staff undertaken by Qa Research	Analysed in Section 6
Focus groups with representatives from Friends of groups	8 groups with representatives from Friends of groups	Analysed in Section 7
Children's Consultation	Feedback gathered from 86 children and young people carried out by Kirklees Council	Analysis detailed in Appendix 1
Petitions received by Kirklees Council	Various petitions received by the Council	Listed in Appendix 2
Other submissions received by Kirklees Council	Other submissions received by the Council	Listed in Appendix 2

3.2 Quantitative Survey

Self-completion Survey

A self-completion survey was made available for anyone who wished to complete it. Paper surveys were distributed throughout the district by the Council and an identical online version was hosted by Qa Research and made available via the Council website.

The survey was available to complete between 8th January 2018 and 2nd April 2018 and in total 3,057 surveys were returned, 1,048 (34%) by post and 2,009 (66%) as an online completion. No restrictions were placed on who could complete the survey.

The demographic profile of survey respondents is included in the Appendices.

3.3 Qualitative Research

Focus Groups with Library Users

Qa Research carried out five focus groups with a sample of survey respondents drawn from different areas of Kirklees and including a mix by age, gender, ethnicity and likelihood of volunteering. All respondents were recruited from the self-completion and online survey sample

and had indicated that they would be happy to take part in further research. Two groups took place at Dewsbury Town Hall and three at Huddersfield Town Hall during March 2018.

To guide the discussion during each group, a discussion guide was developed by Qa Research with input from the Council. The groups were moderated by qualitative researchers from Qa.

Focus Groups with Library Service Staff

Qa Research also carried out four focus groups with staff from the Kirklees Library Service. All respondents were recruited by the Council and consisted predominantly of front line staff. The groups took place during February 2018.

Again, a discussion guide was developed by Qa Research with input from the Council and used to guide the group discussion. The groups were moderated by qualitative researchers from Qa.

Focus Groups with representatives from Friends of Kirklees Libraries groups

Qa Research carried out five focus groups with members of Friends groups in March 2018. All respondents were recruited by the Council. Three groups took place in Dewsbury Town Hall and two at Huddersfield Town Hall.

Similarly, a discussion guide was developed by Qa Research with input from the Council. The groups were moderated by qualitative researchers from Qa.

3.4 How to Read This Report

This consultation draws on findings from a number of strands, reflecting the efforts made to ensure that all interested parties could contribute and that Library Service staff could also give their views.

The quantitative survey was available to anyone who wanted to contribute to the consultation and included a mix of closed and open questions. Qualitative research was also undertaken to add depth to our understanding of the results and the findings from the groups carried out by Qa Research and those carried out by the Council have been outlined in separate sections in this report.

Findings from the other data sources outlined in Section 3.1 are included in the Appendices.

Conclusions reached in this research draw on all primary data sources.

Finally, all fieldwork materials, questionnaires and discussion guides used in the research are available on request.

4. Key Findings – Quantitative Research

Library users were first asked to provide their postcodes. The following table shows the number of responses according to postcode/ward.

Figure 2 – Responses by ward

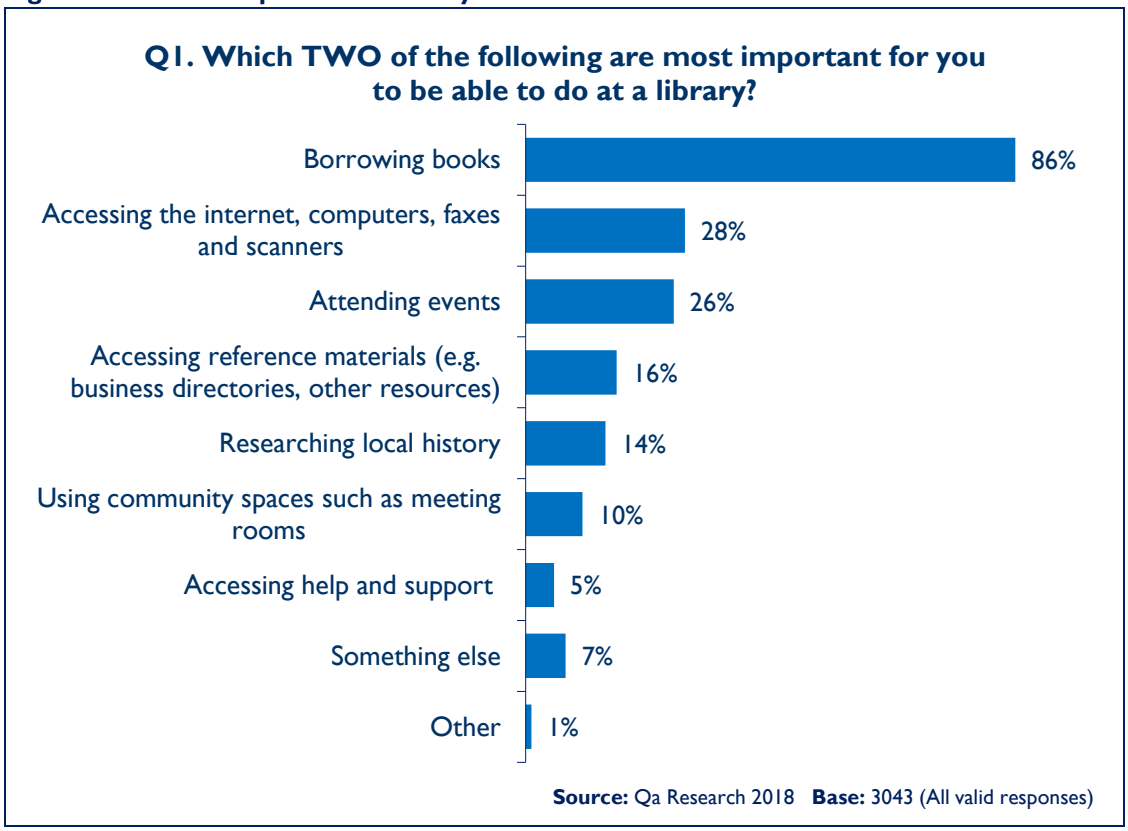
Ward	Count	Percentage
Cleckheaton	373	13%
Kirkburton	311	11%
Mirfield	223	8%
Holme Valley South	186	7%
Birstall and Birkenshaw	174	6%
Colne Valley	159	6%
Batley West	128	5%
Denby Dale	147	5%
Holme Valley North	131	5%
Liversedge and Gomersal	128	5%
Batley East	119	4%
Lindley	103	4%
Almondbury	82	3%
Greenhead	75	3%
Heckmondwike	71	3%
Dalton	69	2%
Dewsbury West	56	2%
Golcar	62	2%
Newsome	61	2%
Ashbrow	26	1%
Crosland Moor and Netherton	39	1%
Dewsbury East	30	1%
Dewsbury South	28	1%
Wyke*	18	1%
Base:	**2799 (All valid responses)**	***Bradford ward**

As the table shows, respondents came from a variety of different wards across Kirklees, with the largest proportion living in Cleckheaton (13%) or Kirkburton (11%). A minority provided postcodes for areas under the jurisdiction of Bradford Council (1%), with the ward of Wyke being on the border of Kirklees.

4.1 Usage of Kirklees Libraries

Respondents were asked to identify the two most important activities/services that they would like to be able to access at a library.

Figure 3 Services required at a library



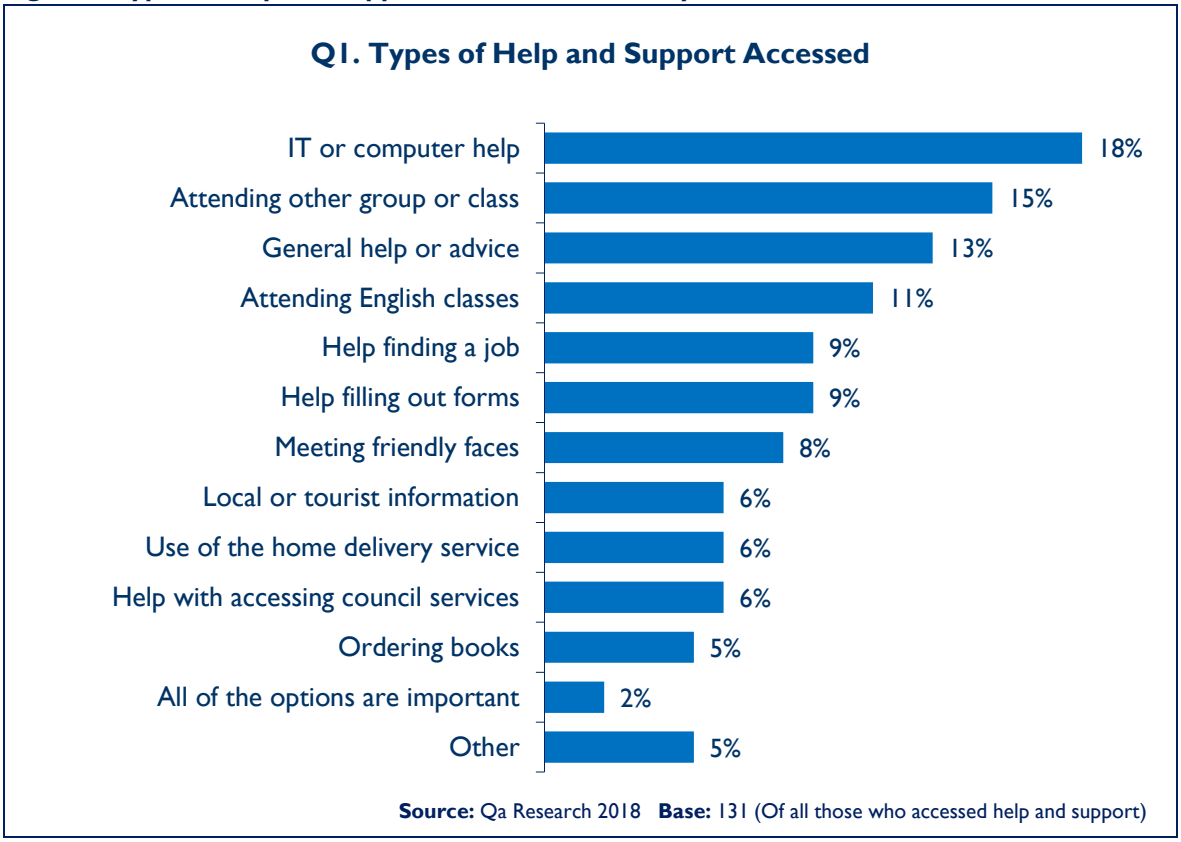
Respondents were most likely to say that they use libraries to borrow a book (86%). Utilising library resources and materials was also frequently expressed, with just over a quarter of respondents likely to use libraries to access the internet, computer, faxes and scanner (28%). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the importance of IT facilities was most prevalent amongst 16-24 year olds, with 53% commenting on their importance compared to just 23% of older users (65+).

Although attending events was only mentioned by 26% of users, this number increases significantly by age group, with 40% of 35-44 year olds stating the importance of events, as well as 39% of 25-34 year olds. This number decreases for all other age groups, with only 20% of each stating the importance of libraries for attending events.

Accessing reference materials was mentioned by 26% of participants, whilst researching local history was also referenced by 16% of respondents. Researching local history was expressed most frequently amongst older users, with 17% of those 65+ doing so compared to only 8% of 16-24 year olds.

Those who said they used libraries to access help and support (5%), were asked to provide further details of the types of support accessed, as shown on the chart below.

Figure 4 Types of help and support accessed at a library



In line with previous responses, participants said they used libraries largely for accessing resources, with the majority stating they use the library for IT purposes or accessing help with computers (18%).

Alternatively, answers focused on other types of events or groups libraries had on offer (15%) whilst a little over one in ten reported going to the library to attend English classes (11%). Others were less specific and simply reported going to libraries for *"general help or advice"* (13%), although some respondents cited the usage of libraries to access help in finding a job (9%) or filling out forms (9%).

4.2 Options for running library services

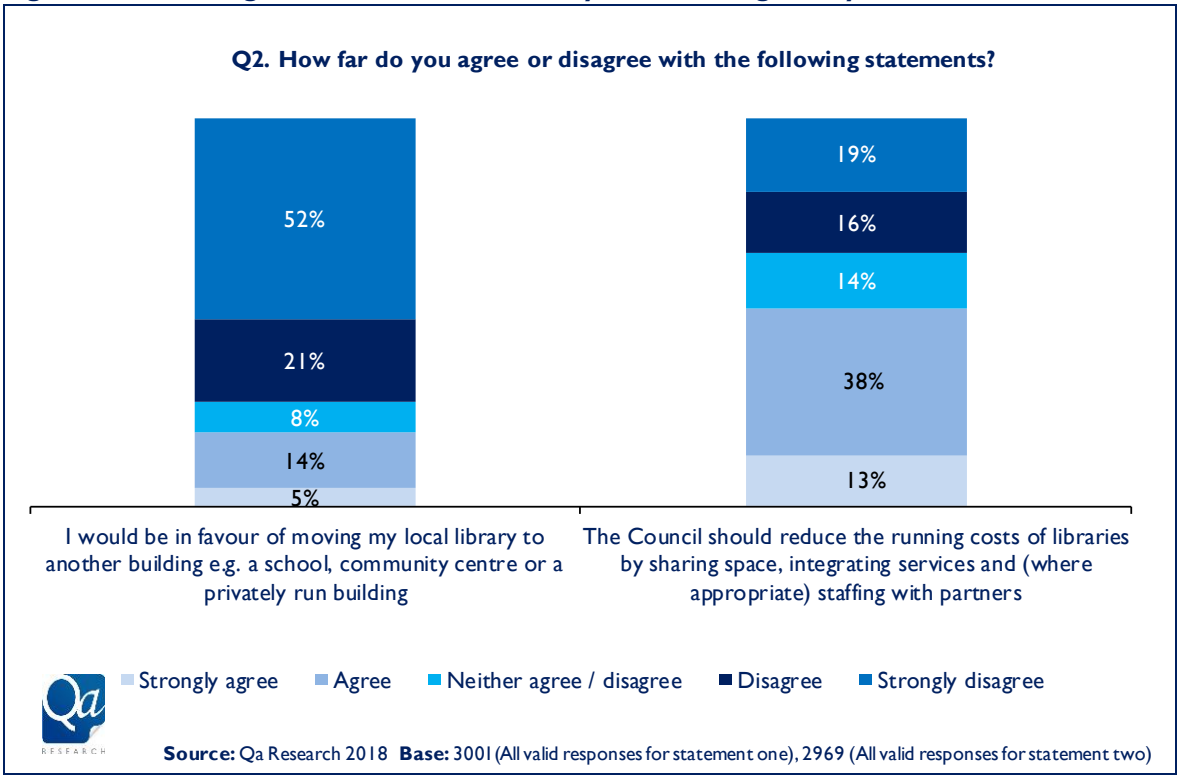
To introduce this section, respondents were provided with the following explanations of alternative ways of delivering library services:

There are some options that the council could consider to retain library services or reduce the cost and these include;

- Housing a library within another building e.g. a school, community centre or other Council building, such as a Town Hall
- Exploring the use of volunteers to deliver services with or without support from paid staff
- Sharing space and staffing with other Council services.

All respondents were then asked how far they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about the library service. The chart below outlines these responses.

Figure 5 Levels of agreement with different ways of delivering library services



As the chart shows, over half of respondents (52%) strongly disagreed with the first statement *(I would be in favour of moving my local library to another building e.g. a school, community centre or a privately run building*), with as few as 5% strongly agreeing with it.

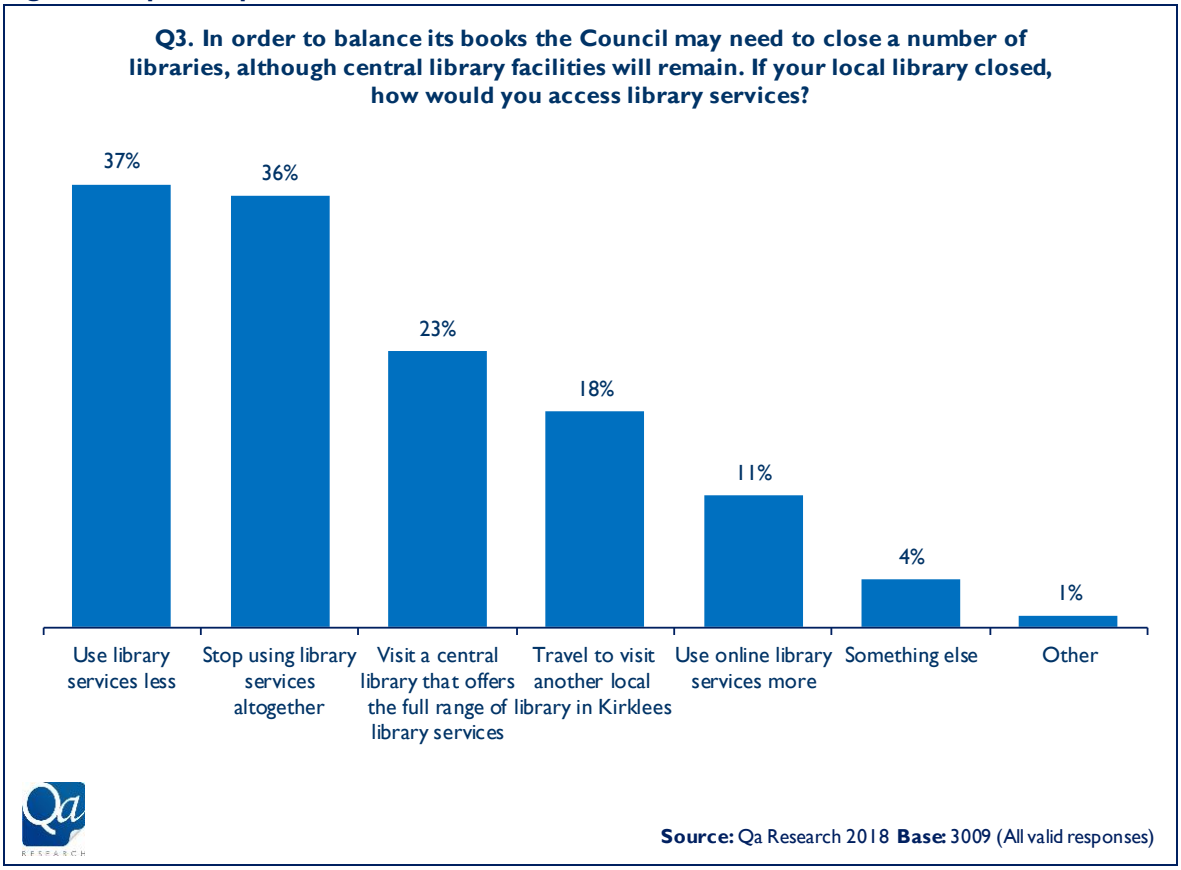
However, the second statement *(the council should reduce the running costs of libraries by sharing space, integrating services and (where appropriate) staffing with partners)* had a NET agreement of 51% (versus a NET disagreement of 35%).

This suggests that there is a degree of support for sharing space and staffing, however it is evident that respondents have strong feelings about library buildings and their location.

4.2.1 Impact of potential closures

Respondents were asked how they would access library services if their local library were to close, including how far they would be willing to travel to access library services. Participants were asked to select all that applied to them.

Figure 6 Impact of potential closures



As the chart above shows, respondents were most likely to state that they would use library services less (37%), followed closely by many saying they would stop using library services altogether (36%).

However, some respondents expressed a willingness to visit a central library which offers the full range of library services (23%) or to travel to another local library in Kirklees (18%). Interestingly, younger service users were more likely to express willingness to travel to another local library in Kirklees, with 28% of those aged 16-24 saying so, compared to just 14% of those aged 25-34 and 35-44.

A little over one in ten said they would use online library services more (11%), whilst some suggested alternatives (4%), including use of home delivery services (1%) or using libraries outside Kirklees (1%).

Of those respondents who said they would visit another local library in Kirklees, the chart below shows the range of alternative libraries respondents would visit.

Figure 7 – Use of alternative libraries

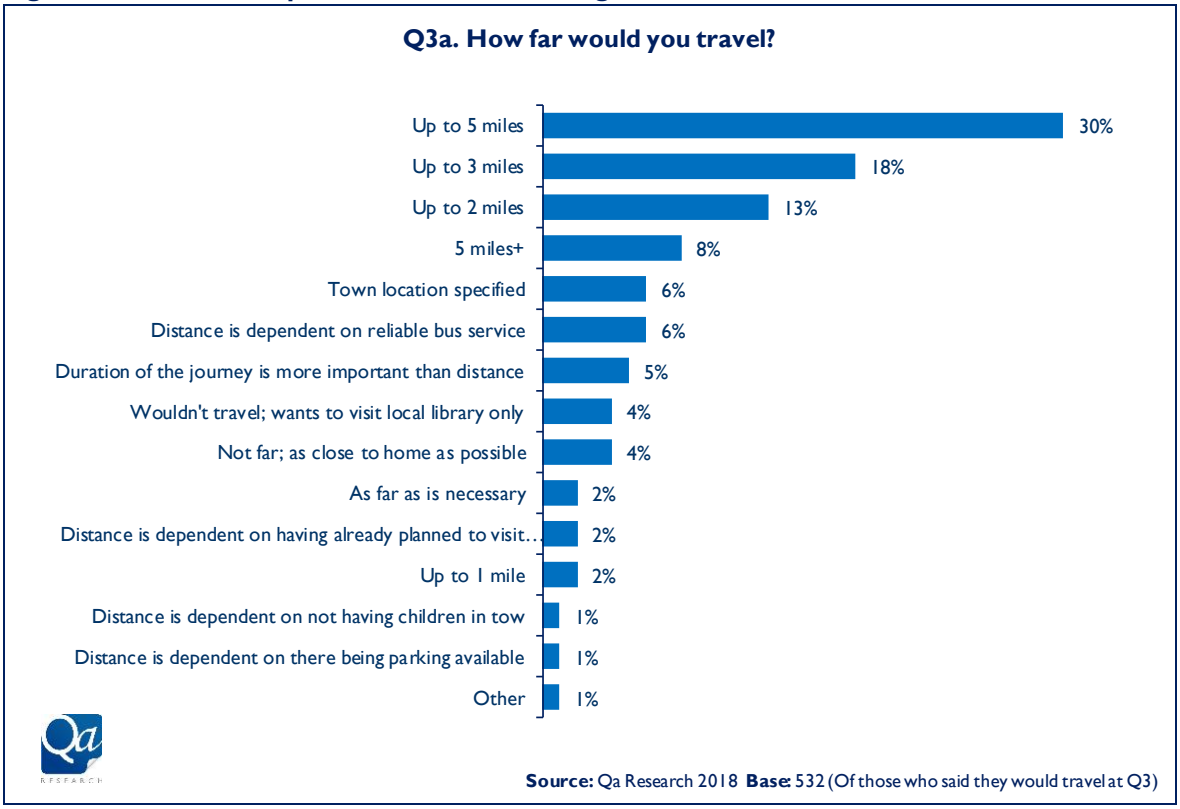
Library	Count	Percentage
Dewsbury Library	95	19%
Huddersfield Library and Art Gallery	51	10%
Batley Library	43	9%
Holmfirth Library	43	9%
Cleckheaton Library	38	8%
Kirkburton Library	39	8%
Heckmondwike Library	35	7%
Birstall Library	28	6%
Denby Dale Library	31	6%
Mirfield Library	25	5%
Skelmanthorpe Library	22	4%
Honley Library	13	3%
Lindley Library	14	3%
Marsden Library	16	3%
Slaithwaite Library	14	3%
Meltham Library	11	2%
Shepley Library	10	2%
Almondbury Library	4	1%
Birkby Fartown Library	3	1%
Golcar Library	3	1%
Kirkheaton Library	5	1%
The Chestnut Centre Deighton Library	2	0%
The Greenwood Centre	1	0%
Rawthorpe Dalton Library	2	0%
Any	5	1%
Various	9	2%
Depends on which other libraries are also closed	33	7%
Other	19	4%
Don't know	4	1%
Base:	**504 (Of those who said they would travel at Q3)**	

As illustrated, Dewsbury library was most frequently stated as being the library most would travel to (19%), followed by Huddersfield library (10%). Both Batley and Holmfirth were selected equally (9%), with smaller libraries taking less precedence.

Some respondents felt they could not suggest an alternative whilst being unsure as to which libraries would face closure (7%). However, libraries which were mentioned least frequently include The Chestnut Centre in Deighton (0%) and The Greenwood Centre (0%).

Those who said they would travel to another library in Kirklees were also asked how far they would be willing to travel. The chart below demonstrates the range of answers given.

Figure 8 – Distance respondents would be willing to travel



As the chart above shows, library users were most likely to say they would travel up to 5 miles to an alternative library (30%), while 8% said they would actually travel more than this (5 miles+) to another library in Kirklees.

Following this, respondents were most likely to say that they would travel up to 3 miles (18%) and up to 2 miles (13%).

Consistent with the previous questions, some respondents maintained that they would not travel and would only visit a library local to them (4%), with only 2% of users saying they would travel as far as necessary.

Others stipulated alternative factors which influenced their willingness to travel, and these varied from having access to a reliable bus service (6%), to the length of the journey in minutes, rather than miles (5%). Interestingly, younger respondents were more likely to state the duration of the journey being more important than the actual distance (33%), compared to just 6% of 25-34 and 35-44 year olds, with this percentage decreasing with each age group.

4.2.2 Volunteering

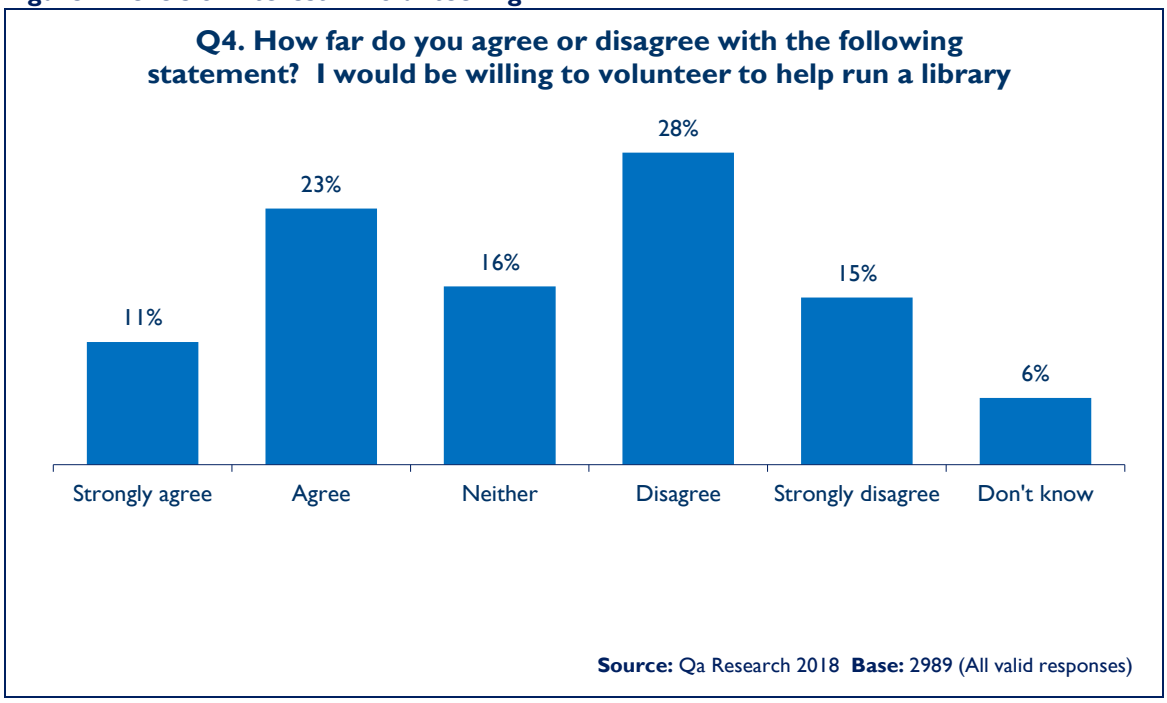
Next, respondents were provided with the following text highlighting an intended council aim, followed by information about volunteers and Friends of Groups:

The Council's Access to Services Strategy states that "We must engage with communities to deliver our services, working in partnership with community groups". Many of our services are already supported by Friends of groups and volunteers and we must continue to grow this model.

We currently offer support to communities in the form of staff time and resources from library management, librarian outreach projects e.g. code clubs, stock management and access to IT support services.

Respondents were then asked how likely they would be to volunteer to help run a library. The chart below shows the answers given.

Figure 9 Levels of interest in volunteering

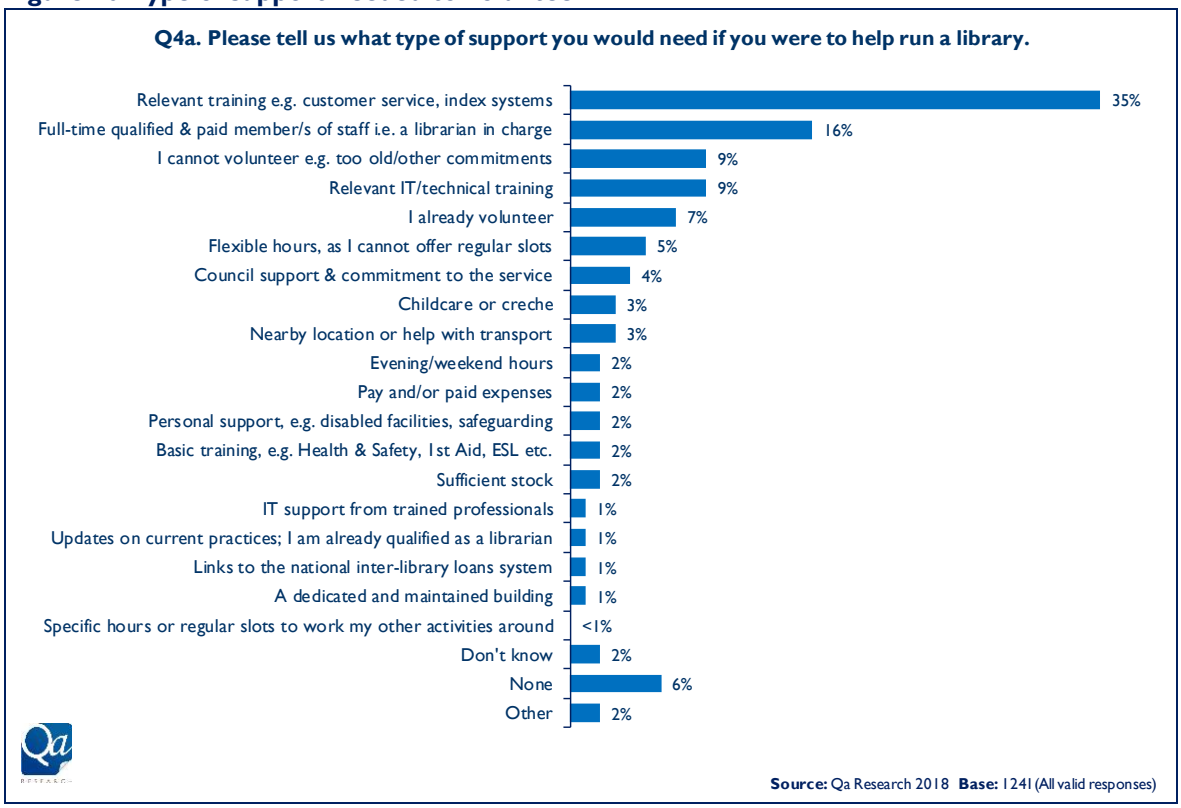


Although there was a NET agreement of 34% with the statement above, a larger proportion of respondents disagreed (NET 43%) and felt they would not be willing to volunteer to help run a library.

Whilst the majority disagreed with the statement, the youngest age group (16-24 year olds) expressed the greatest degree of willingness to volunteer, with a NET agreement of 56%. Comparatively, older age groups were less likely to volunteer, with only 34% of those aged 65 and above showing a willingness to volunteer, with this figure remaining consistently low across other age groups. Although this could in part be attributed to older people already volunteering, a recruitment of younger volunteers, therefore, could be one viable way of sustaining library services in the future.

Of those who would be willing to volunteer, respondents were then asked what type of support they would need.

Figure 10 Type of support needed to volunteer



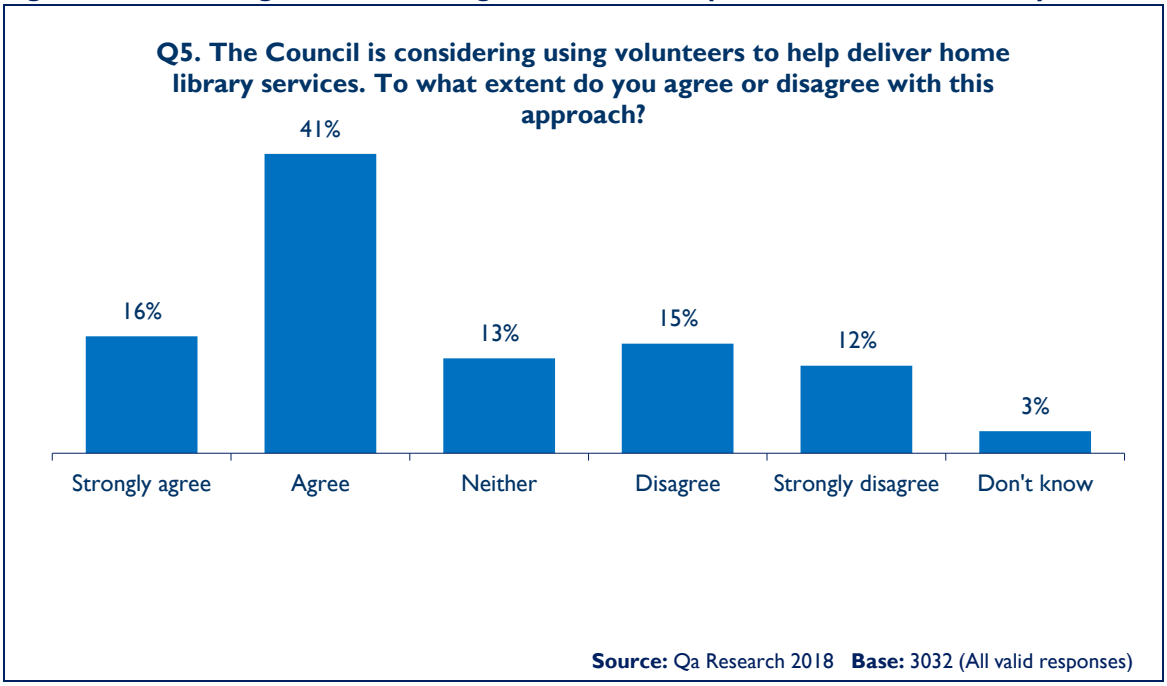
When asked for the types of support required, respondents were likely to suggest relevant training to help them in their role as volunteer, such as customer service training or index systems management (35%). This was particularly predominant amongst the 16-24 year old category, with 44% expressing a desire for relevant training.

In line with answers to the previous question, several felt a full-time, qualified and paid member of staff needed to be present to support volunteers (16%), while others reiterated they were unable to volunteer altogether, regardless of the support offered (9%).

However, some offered further detail on the different types of training they would desire, such as using IT and technical training (9%), which reflects the number of respondents who access library support predominantly for help using computers, as highlighted at question one.

Respondents were also asked for their views on proposals to use volunteers to help deliver the Home Library Service, as the chart below shows.

Figure 11 Levels of agreement on using volunteers to help deliver the Home Library service



Respondents largely agreed with the statement shown, and felt volunteers could be used to help deliver home library services (NET agreement 57% compared to a NET disagreement of 27%).

This suggests using volunteers to support the delivery of the Home Library service could be one viable way of delivering the service, although the results of question four should be taken into consideration.

4.3 Views on alternative delivery models

By way of introduction to the next section, the following models and their accompanying descriptions were provided:

One of the options the Library Service has to consider is whether to deliver the service in a different way. There are 5 different ways to deliver library services and these are summarised below:

No change
The library service would continue to operate as it does now – as part of the Council.

Local Authority Trading Company (LATC)
The library service becomes a company but remains local authority owned. The company may generate profit through delivery of activities or services above and beyond what the Library Service does.

Public Service Mutual (PSM)
The Library Service leaves the Council and becomes a Public Service Mutual, which is a form of

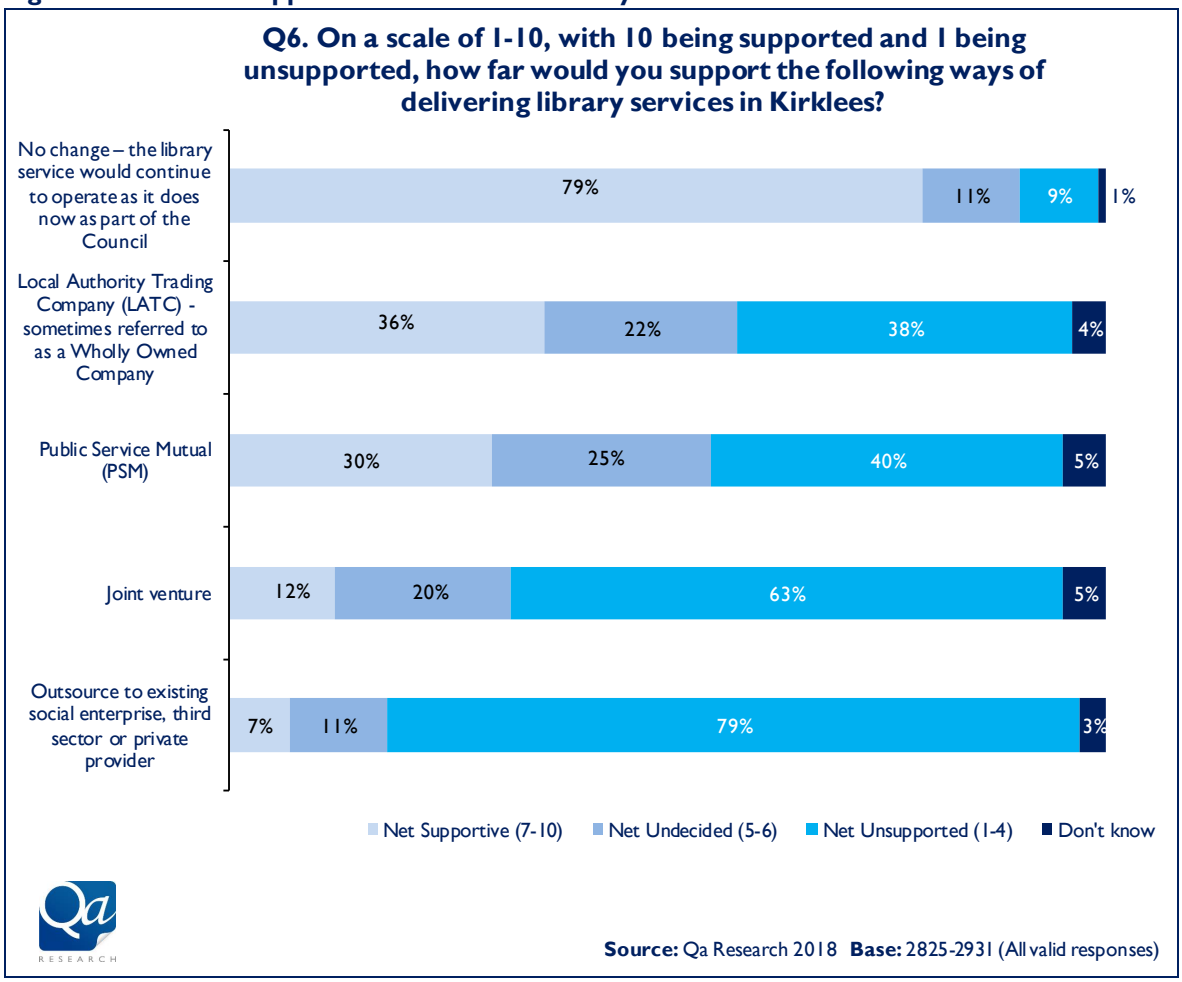
Trust. This model of delivery sometimes has an element of employee-ownership and significant community involvement.

Outsource
The Library Service is delivered by an external organisation, such as an existing not-for-profit library social enterprise, private company or charity. Using a private company may mean that profits are retained by the company itself.

Joint Venture
A Joint Venture may potentially provide access to external investment and/or expertise. This is where an external third party invests money into the new organisation, in return for a share of ownership or control.

All respondents were then asked to what extent they supported or did not support these model types, with their answers shown in the charts below.

Figure 12 Levels of support for alternative delivery models



As the chart above shows, preference was shown for library services to continue to operate as it does, as part of the Council (79%), with fewer than one in ten *not* supporting this model (9%).

Older participants were least inclined to show support for models outside remaining within the council, with younger users more likely to support alternative models. For instance, only 69% of 16-24 supported remaining within the council, with the percentage steadily increasing across the age groups accumulating in 82% of 65+ users expressing a preference for this type of service delivery.

Over a third supported libraries becoming a Local Authority Trading Company (36%), whilst 30% voiced support for Public Service Mutual models. Joint Venture and Outsourcing were least supported (Joint Venture 63% and Outsourcing 79% - not supporting). Support for these alternative models tended to come from younger users, although it should be noted that support remains consistently low, with 11% of 16-24 year olds supporting Outsourcing, for instance (compared to just 5% of those 65+).

4.4 Ideas and suggestions

The final section of the survey included an open question inviting respondents to offer their ideas on how library services could be run within the budget and legal requirements specified.

Figure 13 Ideas on how library services could be run

Ideas	Count	Percentage
I don't have any alternative ideas	1372	68%
Statement expressing the importance of libraries & disagreement of cuts	164	8%
Other	95	5%
Libraries should host more groups, events or clubs	83	4%
Libraries should merge with other services creating a community hub	86	4%
Volunteers should be used	66	3%
Volunteers should work with library staff, not replace them	41	2%
Libraries should include a cafe or gift shop	45	2%
Libraries should charge for groups, events or clubs	35	2%
Libraries should hire out rooms to groups as a source of revenue	42	2%
Financial support should be raised through fundraising, book or cash donations or sponsorship	41	2%
Libraries should charge a small fee for borrowing, membership or other services	39	2%
Libraries should focus more on digital or online services	42	2%
Criticism of the Government or Council	38	2%
Council Tax should be increased to cover the cost of libraries	11	1%
There needs to be a greater awareness of library services through advertising or marketing	24	1%
Libraries should change opening times	24	1%
Cut salaries of councillors, senior staff or bureaucrats	28	1%
Libraries should remain as they are and focus on core services	28	1%
I do not have enough information or am not qualified to make an informed decision	15	1%
Libraries should be housed within schools or universities	9	<1%
Base: 2015		

As the table above shows, the majority of respondents did not have any alternative ideas to put forward (68%). Others took this question instead as an opportunity to express the importance of libraries and express their disagreement with the latest cuts to the library service budget (8%).

Alternatively, some felt an increase of library events could be a viable way of running libraries (4%); whilst others felt libraries should merge with other community services to create a

community hub (4%), with echoes of this raised through further suggestions of cafés and gift shops to be rehoused within libraries (2%).

Relying on a volunteer led model was mentioned rarely (3%), although some did talk of increased reliance on volunteers working with library staff to deliver services (2%).

Respondents were then asked to identify why they felt that their idea was worth considering. Respondents could offer as many reasons as they liked, which subsequently means the percentages do not add up to one hundred.

Figure 14 Reasons why ideas should be considered

Idea	Count	Percentage
Library services would be more sustainable	544	63%
Libraries would offer more services to people	448	52%
There would be better value for money	362	42%
Easier access to library services	328	38%
The quality of service would improve	280	33%
Don't know	42	5%
Other	22	3%
Base: 857 (of those who suggested an alternative)		

Following on from the previous question, comparatively few respondents offered reasoning as to why their idea was worth considering (857 respondents in total). However, of those who did provide explanations, they largely felt their ideas would sustain library services for the future (63%).

A little over half felt that more services would be made available to more people (52%), whilst 42% perceived that their ideas would provide better value for money (42%). Improved access to library services was also predominant (38%), whilst some felt the quality of services might be improved (33%).

Finally, respondents were asked to identify any suggestions of local places that the library service could be delivered from.

Figure 15 Alternative places that the library services could be delivered from

Suggestions	Count	Percentage
I don't have any other suggestions	1381	69%
Comment that a specific library should not move or close	158	8%
Positive comment about a specific library	102	5%
The current setup works well as it is	103	5%
Community centre	59	3%
Town hall	61	3%
Schools or other education institutions	62	3%
Bring other community services to the library	61	3%
Chapel or church buildings	39	2%
Library services are important and should not be compromised	41	2%
Council buildings	18	1%
Supermarket	12	1%
Pubs or cafes	18	1%
Anywhere central which is accessible for all users	11	1%
Agreement with a local proposal for Mirfield	10	0%
Health centres or hospitals	10	<1%
Children's centres	9	<1%
Post office	8	<1%
Reduce staff costs within the council	3	<1%
A newer more cost-effective building	4	<1%
Mobile library	4	<1%
Other	54	3%
No answer	12	1%
Base: 2012 (All valid responses)		

Similar to previous questions, the majority of respondents did not have any suggestions to offer (69%) whilst others took this open question as a chance to express opinions that local libraries should not move or close (8%).

Of those who answered the question with a suggestion, community centres (3%), town halls (3%) and schools (3%) were all mentioned as possibilities.

5. Key findings – Qualitative Research

5.1 Library users focus groups

Qa Research facilitated five focus groups with library users during March 2018. Participants were recruited via the self-completion survey. In total, 41 people attended the groups. Tables showing the profile of attendees are available in the Appendices.

Participants attending the groups were generally regular service users, with book lending being the most frequently used service. Borrowing computers to access the internet was also frequently mentioned, either for job searching or as a source of leisure (e.g. genealogy). Libraries used include Batley, Dewsbury, Birstall, Cleckheaton, Mirfield and Huddersfield.

"I borrow books as and when I want them."- Library User

"I go to Cleckheaton library and I borrow books but I also do a lot of family history, local history." – Library User

"I use the internet, job searching, go to job club there every Thursday." – Library User

5.1.1 Library service outcomes

Participants were shown the list of seven library service outcomes outlined by the Government and were asked to comment on to what extent they felt these outcomes were being delivered by the library service in their local communities.

- cultural and creative enrichment
- greater prosperity
- increased reading and literacy
- stronger, more resilient communities
- healthier and happier lives
- improved digital access and literacy
- helping everyone achieve their full potential

Overall, outcomes were largely seen as being achieved within communities, with comments most frequently made about the value of the services available for children. Summer reading challenges, free events and story-times were all cited as increasing reading and literacy amongst younger audiences, as well as enhancing community resilience.

"A lot of the things on this list are excellent." – Library User

"As a mum myself, and I work in community with mums and young children, I don't think you can underestimate the power of reading to children and also having little groups and things that run in the library." – Library User

"Birstall is quite focused for young children and families, they have story reading session, preschool children, and Friday morning has rhyme time, Lego club on a Saturday." – Library User

However, some almost felt *too* much emphasis was placed on providing services for children to the neglect of fulfilling some of the wider outcomes shown. Instead, others felt more events and services could be provided to ensure a wider range of residents visit their local library, and in turn reduce social isolation experienced amongst other age categories.

"I do think that if you don't have children, there aren't as many events as there could be." – Library User

"It's not just people who are retired or who have children who might feel isolated. Someone might go to work and then go home and not do anything," – Library User

Many participants were surprised at the range of services that were available across Kirklees Libraries and suggested more should be done to raise the profiles of the libraries and the activities available. In raising awareness of activities, several thought this would ultimately increase the number of people visiting and potentially the sustainability of the services. Some felt improvements to library websites would help to spread event information, whilst others thought social media could be better utilised in providing information about activities.

"I wasn't aware of that [support for start-up businesses]; I don't think it is very well documented or very well advertised." – Service User

"I've found that it's advertised on their Facebook page and all they do is give you a link to where you can book a ticket but not to a page where you get the information about the event." – Library User

"It's pretty rubbish is the website, finding anything, you can't find your way around it very easily." – Library User

When asked for ideas for new services, many felt the priority should be improving current services. Longer opening hours, an emphasis on core services and helping service users get to grips with IT facilities were all cited as key areas of improvements.

"Could libraries provide more gateways to reading, courses I suppose, which would improve the literacy of the adult population and the perhaps stimulate an interest in reading?" – Library User

"They should be additional to library core function, not trying to take over it and make the library into everything from a coffee bar to I don't know what." – Library User

5.1.2 Views on different options for running library services

Library users were also asked for their opinions on delivering library services in different ways based on the following options:

Housing a library within another building e.g. a community centre or a privately run building

Generally, housing libraries within other buildings caused a degree of uncertainty amongst participants, with many concerned the 'host' building would not be an appropriate 'fit' for their community library. Using schools to host libraries raised concerns over safe guarding and public access; whilst others were worried libraries would lose their 'traditional' atmosphere. Some

participants argued that library buildings themselves were symbolic, and were concerned by the implications of the potential loss of a central public building in their local community.

"If the building is not all about library and there are all sorts of other problems being dealt with that have nothing to do with books, and things that traditionally library are for, when you go there you wouldn't necessarily feel like you're in the library." – Library User

"I think you need to be careful that when you put it in another building, particularly when you put it in a school which can be very intimidating for a lot of people, that people would stop using it." – Library User

Working with volunteers to deliver services with or without support from paid staff e.g. Friends of groups

Working with volunteers to deliver library services was similarly worrying for some participants. While volunteers were recognised as being an invaluable way to delivering current services, giving volunteers greater responsibility was seen as a risk, with questions over long-term sustainability raised.

"You're basically relying on volunteers to sort out a 40 hour week, as soon as these volunteers have something else to do or they don't want to spend 40 hours a week doing that anymore, then they are going. There's nothing keeping them there." - Library User

"It's a plaster… I would be very wary of using that as a model to extend." – Library User

Many disliked the concept of volunteers working for free to fulfil a full-time role, with others feeling uncomfortable at the prospect of making paid staff redundant. Concern was subsequently raised over volunteers taking on too much responsibility, should paid staff become redundant.

"I think they often take librarians, proper skilled librarians, for granted." – Library User

"Why should people have to volunteer, why can't people run libraries and get paid for running libraries?" – Library User

"You frankly do get volunteer burnout…people are keen when they start." – Library User

Others argued volunteer retention would be poor, with volunteers often being retired and thus able to go on extended holidays or have multiple volunteer commitments.

"That also brings a problem that then the team that's working in the library is not as together as it could have been, if its new people coming in all the time, or it's people who are only coming in for a couple of hours a week." – Library User

Although some participants were already volunteers at their local library, very few felt they had more or any hours spare to volunteer. Those who worked full-time felt they would struggle to fit in with their library's irregular opening hours, whilst those with young families would struggle to find the time.

"The trouble with asking people to volunteer… It's not going to work for the majority of people… Most people who are working, well, OK, the library closes at 17.00 every day." – Library User

Sharing space and staffing with other services

Sharing space and staffing was viewed most positively amongst the options, with some finding particular merit in the joining up of services. The idea of sharing space with a café was perhaps most popular, with some suggesting they would spend longer in their library if hot drinks were served. Issues of practicalities were raised however; with some concerned space would be a limiting factor.

"I think that would be a really good idea to be honest." – Library User

"I would stay longer in the library if I could get a cup of coffee." – Library User

"Cafes are alright but you need space, you need tables and you need people to manage it. That's going to take up some of the finance." – Library User

Creating digital networks

Creation of digital networks was identified to have both positive and negative associations, with opinions divided as to whether an emphasis on the digital would work well for all service users. Many were concerned a focus on the digital may alienate user groups who do not have access to computer facilities, such as older people and those from deprived areas. Others thought a move toward the digital would provide greater access to library resources to more people, in particular the younger generations. Although opinions were mixed, all stressed digital should not replace face-to-face interactions or the physical action of reading a book.

"It's a balance. For a lot of people actually being able to go to the library and get a book out is very, very valuable. It is the human interaction. We don't have to lose sight of that." – Library User

"There's still about 20 percent of adults who don't have online access." – Library User

"Reading a whole novel on an iPad is not comfortable." – Library User

5.1.3 Views on alternative delivery models

Generally, participants struggled to understand the different types of models put forth, and thus found it difficult to comment on each of the following proposed models:

Remaining as a service within the Council

While the majority asked for further information before they could justify any preference for one model type over another, many subsequently held a default preference for libraries remaining as a service within the council.

"*To be quite honest I haven't really got a clue what any of them mean."* – Library User

"I'm very much in favour of the library service remaining within the councils remit, being part of the council, something where there is an element of democratic control." – Library User

"I'm probably out on a limb here, but I think it should remain as a service within the council, because once it's gone, it's gone." – Library User

Although remaining within the council was a preferable choice, this was almost seen as the best out of a bad bunch. Several voiced little faith in the council being able to run libraries effectively within the revised budget, and some felt the quality and variety of the services would be reduced. The potential for fewer staff, reduced opening hours and a decrease in resources left users feeling concerned about the future of the libraries once more.

"This is my most favoured option [remaining within the council]... but if we're looking at cons to that I don't think that the council run it very well." -Library User

Local Authority Trading Company (LATC)

Participants generally had least to say about this model; however those who did comment were fairly optimistic about LATCs and thought they were a good way of compromising between external help and remaining with the council. This was a model which some could see as working in the immediate future, but maybe only as a short term solution before something more permanent needed to be implemented.

"I'm just thinking, my instinct would be 1). is the right thing, but I think it is a recipe for a slow death these days. So, 2). is close to that and seems like a good compromise; that it could raise funding in a way that it doesn't at the moment and that would help keep it afloat as a good service." – Library User

"It's a short term solution, I would say." –Library User

Public Service Mutual (PSM)

For those who were dubious about remaining within the council, several could see merit in exploring a public service mutual model (PSM). Comparisons with York Explore library were made, and some thought a similar model could work in Kirklees.

"I was so impressed with the York one… Everybody was so enthused." – Library User

"It sounds quite attractive, but how does it work?" – Library User

Outsource

Participants were immediately suspicious of this model due to mentions of 'profits', and many were dubious of where any potential money being made would go (as was true for other models which mentioned profits, e.g. LATCs). Additionally, others remained doubtful libraries would be able to make profits in the first place.

"It doesn't say there where the profit goes." – Library User

A reliance on partnerships with external companies also raised uncertainties for participants. Relying on external organisations was seen as too risky, with concerns external companies may go out of business and jeopardise library services. However, these fears might be alleviated should

more information be provided on the types of external organisations which would become invested (such as universities and HE colleges), with participants imagining partnerships with large corporations, primarily set out to make as much profit as possible.

"*There's too many risks involved: the companies could go under, they can be run poorly. There's just no control.*" – Library User

"I'm going to say this outright, I find the idea of the library service being handed to a private company repellent… private companies care about making money, the provision of service is secondary to that." – Library User

Joint Venture

Once moderators contextualised the idea of joint venture within the example of The Hive in Worcester, many liked the model but did not think it would work in Kirklees. Most were concerned a joint venture with Huddersfield University, for instance, would result in all smaller libraries closing down, leaving one central library based in Huddersfield and many without access to a local library. More information was needed for participants to make decisions on this type of model.

"If it was with a university and there are certain guarantees in place that they will keep working in other areas rather than just consolidating everything in the centre of town… I could see this would work but I would need more specific information." – Library User

"It depends on the location." – Library User

5.1.4 General views on the Council exploring these options

Overall, participants struggled to think beyond the immediate assumption that their local library would be closed. As such, many felt library closures would ultimately create a false economy and result in an increased demand on other community and care services to provide aspects of support that they feel the libraries are currently fulfilling (e.g. reducing loneliness and providing 'social prescription' services).

"I feel they have deliberately targeted the libraries because it is an easy target and they [the council] haven't looked at the bigger picture of [libraries] are there for social inclusion as well." – Library User

Others spoke more generally about their disappointment as to how the 2017/8 consultation had been conducted. Respondents felt the consultation form itself was restrictive and did not allow them to answer questions in a manner they felt appropriate.

6. Staff focus groups

Qa Research facilitated four focus groups with staff from Kirklees Council Library Service during February 2018. Participants were recruited by Kirklees Council and a total of 18 staff attended.

Groups mainly consisted of Customer Service Officers (CSOs), although some managerial staff were also present. Staff came from a variety of different libraries, with representatives from larger libraries such as Huddersfield and Dewsbury, but also from smaller libraries, such as Golcar. Some had worked at many different libraries over a considerable number of years, whereas some were still relatively new in post (less than a year or so).

6.1 Overall views of current library services

On the whole, staff felt the current delivery of library services have been working reasonably well. An increase in footfall at libraries was identified to be a reasonable indication that service delivery had indeed improved, although some did point out this might be attributed to the reduced opening hours.

"I think the libraries are now actually getting more utilised which is a good thing." - Kirklees Staff

"From our side, Huddersfield seems very busy now, we seem to be doing a lot." - Kirklees Staff

"I've seen statistics with an increase in footfall in the last 12 months… So definitely more people using the library." - Kirklees Staff

Staff felt the increase in footfall could largely be attributed to staff putting on more events and increasing users' awareness of the library services. Some felt this was a result of staff getting to grips with social media, and subsequently Facebook and Twitter are being used to drum up awareness of library services.

"I think we've increased the number of events that take place at our libraries, and we've introduced slots, in like, evenings, out of hours events which have, on occasions, proved very, very popular and that's helped improve footfall and offer something slightly different… I think that's the biggest change I've noticed." - Kirklees Staff

Several also felt strongly that volunteers have been a huge help in delivering current library services. Although staff stipulated some volunteers were often better than others, volunteers overall have allowed libraries to extend opening hours and have enabled staff to put on more events. However, some staff warned morale amongst volunteers was ebbing, with many feeling downcast about reoccurring consultations and assumptions that their local libraries were going to close anyway.

"Some of our volunteers are just unbelievably good. Somehow we need to grab hold of that and keep it." - Kirklees Staff

"You know that some of the volunteers will come in and basically run the library and they've certainly extended the hours in some of the sites I used to manage quite significantly." - Kirklees Staff

"There is this, in their [volunteers] mind, very much like the staff, well, what's the point?" Kirklees Staff

When asked about any difficulties experienced, staff were often frustrated at budget cuts and felt these restricted the quality of services delivered. Reduced staff, fewer opening hours and abridged resources were all felt to hamper the standard of services delivered, and those who had retained

jobs felt an extra pressure to deliver high quality services on a shoe-string budget. Budget cuts and reoccurring consultations were also felt to create an atmosphere of uncertainty amongst staff and volunteers alike, leaving many to worry about job retention.

"What's frustrated me is the fact, was that I think having the budget cut again when we hadn't even had it a year." - Kirklees Staff

6.1.1 Outcomes

Staff were generally very positive that much was being done within libraries to achieve the stated outcomes. Similar to the service users, most felt their strength lay in delivering services for children through rhyme times, storytelling and summer reading challenges. However, all recognised more could be done to engage teenagers and young people.

"I think we do a lot for younger children…I think it's really hard to engage teenagers." - Kirklees Staff

"It's like the teen area at a library, they aren't as interesting as the children's or the adults, they're like a bit of an after-thought." - Kirklees Staff

Most felt that to fulfil some of the wider outcomes, more support needed to come from the council. Creating stronger, more resilient communities was identified to be one outcome libraries thought they fulfilled to a degree, but posed a greater challenge for those working within larger and ethnically diverse areas. Although participants sometimes struggled to identify what form council support should take, many felt an increase in funding would help fulfil many of the outcomes shown and ensure library services were available to as many people as possible throughout Kirklees.

"We've got a lot of customers who have fallen through the cracks of society." - Kirklees Staff

"I think for us, it all comes down to that communication thing again… From our point of view, we do try to achieve that outcome but maybe it could be better for us if we had some support with it." - Kirklees Staff

Additionally, staff felt more support from the council was necessary in order to improve digital access. Many reported cases where library technology had failed either themselves or their users, with broken self-service machines and poor Wi-Fi connections often mentioned. To get around this, some felt the council needed to provide staff training on how to work with the latest technology.

"We need our IT and our technology to be up to it." - Kirklees Staff

"It [failing ICT] makes you look silly." - Kirklees Staff

Above all, almost all staff felt many of these outcomes did not always have a tangible result to quantify in numbers or figures, and therefore their success became almost 'invisible' to the council. Many told stories of the social impact libraries had on their communities, but some staff felt these were rarely recognised.

"Where is the measure, when it says improved digital access, what does that actually mean?" - Kirklees Staff

"They [council] don't measure social impact. It's all about numbers." - Kirklees Staff

"There was a lady from an Asian family who spoke through her daughter; never been out to a shop to buy anything. Comes to the library, she learns English and now she can go to the shop and read what she's looking at and actually converse with someone. That is absolutely life changing, but why aren't other people out there recognising that?" - Kirklees Staff

6.1.2 Views on options for delivering library services

Digital by design

While staff recognised a move toward digital could put jobs at risk, most felt digital by design was important for developing library services, as long as their users were taught how to use it. Coding and job clubs were putting library services on the right tracks in developing services, and some felt more could be done along these lines.

"With the digital by design is fine so long as there is sufficient support for people who come into the library to try to undertake that action." - Kirklees Staff

For the users who do not feel comfortable with digital services, staff felt the retention of face-to-face services was important, especially when considering older residents unfamiliar with computers.

"I think sometimes you can't help as much as you want to but I don't think you can or should completely replace that thing of actually being able to talk to a person." - Kirklees Staff

Library services were frequently cited as having functions beyond book lending. Alleviating loneliness, reducing isolation and creating safe environments were all cited as things which would be missed, should library services rely too much on digital.

"I feel very strongly that a library service, that one of the main aspects of a library service is to provide a safe and neutral space for people to go and just to be and maybe to socialise and to speak to people and the staff" - Kirklees Staff

Telephone and Face to Face access where appropriate.

Retention of face-to-face access was identified to be key for a core body of service users (e.g. older residents) who otherwise might stop using library services, and this was seen to be especially important, should services become predominantly digital.

"The older generation are obviously quite happy with the face to face." - Kirklees Staff

The use of telephone was found to be tricky as smaller libraries do not have access to a direct line, and visitors instead have to go through Huddersfield library or the council line to speak to someone from their local library.

Hub Approach: The Councils 4 EIP Hubs

Staff were uncertain about the idea of community hubs within the context of planning library services and felt that hubs were still in their infancy. While several struggled to comment without further information, some were positive about hubs working in their local area and were willing to give them a try.

"We won't know until we do it." - Kirklees Staff

"I can see it working… I think the Hub approach is a great idea. I think probably in some areas in Kirklees have probably had that to some extent for a long number of years." - Kirklees Staff

However, concerns were raised over the support hubs would have in terms of staffing and resources; some felt they would be spread too thinly and users would struggle to have all their needs met.

"With the Hub thing, it's a lovely idea, that if anybody needed to get out of the house they could perhaps just go to the one place and they could do any number of things, that sounds a wonderful offer, but in reality if they do have something that they definitely do need to find out about is it going to be a kind of jack of all trades and not really going to achieve what they want." - Kirklees Staff

6.1.3 Volunteering

Staff all cited volunteers to be indispensable in supporting current library services, but a consensus was reached that a volunteer-led model would be unsustainable in the long term. Concerns were twofold. Firstly, questions were raised on whether enough people would volunteer, and secondly, would libraries be able to retain volunteers, if an increase in responsibility was placed upon their shoulders.

"It's the sustainability in the long term." - Kirklees Staff

"If we push our volunteers to do more they will stop because they don't want that." - Kirklees Staff

Participants also raised concerns over the degree of training volunteers would require in order to run library services effectively, in absence of paid members of staff. Using Symphony, ensuring the library building is secure, and volunteer management were all key skillsets which would need to be covered in any volunteer training offered.

"They [CSMs] can't look after that volunteer's wellbeing, they can't look after their training." - Kirklees Staff

"For a lot of people it's a temporary thing to put on their CV... But you're constantly having to train people." - Kirklees Staff

Respondents were able to identify the types of people more likely to volunteer, in particular those of retirement age. While these types of volunteers generally had more time to give, staff had experienced retirees losing interest, having other volunteering commitments, or quite simply, going on extended vacation periods. One participant liked training young people to become volunteers, and felt both parties could gain from the experience.

"As you get older you're perhaps going to be less able or less interested or inclined to do that [volunteer]." - Kirklees Staff

"They just want to dip in and dip out." - Kirklees Staff

"My volunteers take more from me than I get from them, in that they only come in once a month sort of thing, 'how do I do that again? How do I do that', they can't remember how to do anything." - Kirklees Staff

Equally so, staff were able to identify those who were not necessarily suited to volunteering, namely those who are temporarily out of employment. Many cited volunteering at local libraries looked good on CVs, and people would move on quickly, having found a new job.

"It's for the job centre, they've got something to put down on their CV." - Kirklees Staff

Friends of Groups were cited to be difficult to get along with at times. Whilst their roles as volunteers were valued, staff were on occasion at odds with them.

"At the beginning when some of the Friends groups first came in it was almost like some of them were trying to work against us in some of the libraries." - Kirklees Staff

6.1.4 Views on alternative delivery models

On the whole, staff were supportive of the Council exploring other delivery options and most were able to comment. However, some felt more information was needed before decisions were made, and model descriptions were described as confusing and consisting of 'jargon.'

"We don't understand it, its jargon." - Kirklees Staff

"I looked up the definitions of all these online and I was still none the wiser really" - Kirklees Staff

Interestingly, respondents felt friends of groups would be more concerned about these models, with staff more open to change.

"I think Joe Public probably won't actually be too concerned about which one of these [models]… I think it's going to be Friends groups I think who are going to be the issue." - Kirklees Staff

"I think this is a political hot potato [for Friends of Groups]." - Kirklees Staff

Remaining as a service within the Council

While some expressed preference for remaining within the council, many recognised this was no longer an option. Staff were tired of consultations and budget cuts, and some were not convinced that an effective library service was possible within the budget available.

"We can't keep going the way we're going." - Kirklees Staff

"I think some people are just tired. This has been going on for such a long time now." - Kirklees Staff

On the contrary, staff felt libraries were seen as 'an easy target' for budget cuts, and therefore they felt they had a better chance of existing under the following models.

"Is that any worse than the council coming in and saying libraries are an easy target, let's get rid of them, they don't do anything.… Maybe it is better to be outsourced or a public mutual because you've got a better chance to survive." - Kirklees Staff

Local Authority Trading Company (LATC)

For those who felt they had a reasonable understanding of this model, they felt it was a good idea on paper but were suspicious of how it might run in real life. Some felt it sounded too good to be true, whilst others were concerned as to how this would affect staff pensions and holidays.

"Why isn't everybody doing it?" - Kirklees Staff

"The council don't like that idea." - Kirklees Staff

Public Service Mutual (PSM)

Becoming a PSM was generally the most popular idea, with those who had experience of the York Explore model thinking it might work, but felt they would need more information as to how a Kirklees model might look.

"I looked at the York model when we went to that first day and I thought yeah that sounds great but I also saw immediately how dedicated that woman was running it, are you going to get anybody within Kirklees [like that]?" – Kirklees Staff

Outsource

There were mixed reactions to the idea of outsourcing. Overall, staff were more open to the idea of outsourcing than user groups or Friends of groups, with some seeing working with external partners as an opportunity to improve library services.

"I'd rather work with a company than work for a council that are running the service into the ground and where if you've got something where there is going to be a chance for investment and development and better publicity to say we're still open." – Kirklees Staff

However, some remained concerned about the uncertainties of who 'the external' might be, with comparisons to Carillion frequent. Others were wary of the mention of 'profits' in the model description, and struggled to understand how a library service could run in this way.

"You only have to look at the news about Carillion to see the issues you have potentially with the outsource." – Kirklees Staff

"How are they going to make a profit?" – Kirklees Staff

Joint Venture

Staff struggled to contextualise what a joint venture might look like in Kirklees, and felt too many uncertainties prevailed. Some thought the use of colleges across Kirklees could work, and this

would also alleviate the worry of Huddersfield library being the only remaining library in Kirklees (should they partner with the local University).

"I don't think it'd work for Kirklees… It's too big an authority." – Kirklees Staff

"It sounds more possible than some of the other options." – Kirklees Staff

"I can see that it would be one organisation you'd have, i.e. the library which would mean Kirklees would lose all its libraries except one, for me, that wouldn't be an acceptable choice." – Kirklees Staff

6.1.5 Final comments

Similar to service user groups, discussions tended to orientate around the assumption libraries were being closed, and staff were concerned their jobs were at risk. Many talked about feeling that they had to constantly prove the worthiness of their role, and some struggled to stay positive for the future. Above all, the majority were simply sad at the potential for further reductions in the library service.

"It's very difficult emotionally, psychologically it's very difficult." - Kirklees Staff

"Everyone's trying to be positive and look to the future." - Kirklees Staff

"We've already started to see staff leave." - Kirklees Staff

"We're all conscious of the fact that the jobs that are likely to be for libraries is going to be horrendously stripped down over the course of the next 12 to 18 months." - Kirklees Staff

"Obviously we all have worries about the loss of our jobs but overall I'm just very sad to think that we might lose what I see as a vital service." – Kirklees Staff

7. Friends of Focus Groups

Qa Research facilitated five focus groups with representatives from Friends of Kirklees Libraries groups during March 2018. Participants were recruited by Kirklees Council. In total, 30 people attended and the following groups were represented:

- Almondbury
- Batley
- Birstall
- Cleckheaton
- Denby Dale
- Golcar
- Heckmondwike
- Holmfirth
- Honley
- Kirkburton
- Lindley
- Marsden
- Meltham
- Mirfield
- Skelmanthorpe
- Shepley

Participants fulfilled roles including trustee, volunteer, treasurer, and committee members. Whilst some had been Friends since the early days of their respective groups, others had joined more recently within the last few months. More detail on the profile of each group can be found in the Appendices.

7.1 Overview of current library services

On the whole, Friends felt the current delivery of service was working reasonably well, and many attributed this to the role played by themselves as Friends Groups and to the staff members. Many spoke of the strength of the volunteer/staff relationship allowing libraries to stay open longer, whilst also helping library staff to cope with an increased workload.

"I do think it works quite well, in the sense there's always a couple there [volunteers] and some of them are actually learning useful stuff. How to do certain tasks. It helps librarians." - Friends Group

"Despite the fact there's fewer of them [staff], they're doing more and more and more. They're responding to everything anybody is asking of them and they're doing it with a grace that I'm not sure I would given the circumstances." - Friends Group

Friends also felt their own role within current delivery of library services helped fill a gap in the provision of events and activities, something which has become difficult to deliver within recent cuts. Friends spoke of Harry Potter events they had run, and others talked of events they had put on at Christmas and art festivals organised.

"Everybody just put together and created a three day weekend arts festival. We had no money, we had no sponsors. We hit the arts festival first hit for a huge grant which founded it." - Friends Group

"Initially we started off just doing events, like the Christmas event didn't we, things like that and certain things for children. But then we started with this regular cafe and we try to do more regular things rather than just the odd event here and there." - Friends Group

When speaking of any difficulties, Friends voiced further the implications of budget cuts and the consequences this has had on the quality of services delivered. Many spoke of the increased reliance on volunteers to deliver services, with this identified to be an unreliable way to run libraries in the long term and could not provide the same consistency in delivering services as paid staff. For most, volunteering was ad hoc and volunteers often had other commitments to juggle, leaving volunteer led sessions understaffed.

As a volunteer, I always forgot stuff and have to be reminded. And if we lost our full timer, I'd be lost. All the time, I would have to ring up and say I've forgotten how to do this." - Friends Group

"It is a very supportive role [volunteers], it's nothing more than that." - Friends Group

"The people who volunteer to do the library are also the people who volunteer for many other things in the village and you can get a problem where, you know, you get split between too many places." - Friends Group

7.1.1 Outcomes

Amongst Friends, many felt the library service national outcomes and aims were being achieved. Services for children was one area Friends felt they were particularly strong at delivering, with many talking of successful Lego clubs, one-on-one tutoring and providing a safe environment for children to do homework. The alleviation of loneliness through Knit and Natter groups was also seen to be a provision of adult social care, and this was particularly relevant for older users.

"I think we're hitting those targets." - Friends Group

"We have local teachers who teach individual children for various reasons, there's plenty of room in our library for them to do that." - Friends Group

"It really is valued that we're getting the children interested in reading." - Friends Group

Similar to the staff groups, Friends felt it was difficult to measure these outcomes, and felt it was difficult to quantify in numbers or statistics the impact libraries have on their communities. Having no tangible output, it was felt, made libraries an easy target for the council to cut funds from.

"It's difficult to measure them." - Friends Group

While all felt outcomes were being achieved, the extent to which each outcome was being achieved was perceived to vary between libraries in North and South Kirklees. Some spoke of a focus on funding to Huddersfield, whilst smaller towns and villages were seen to 'lose out'.

"I think we feel hard done by North Kirklees compared to South Kirklees, not being political here… We're a bit underfunded in this area." - Friends Group

"Libraries in under privileged areas may not have the support needed… I fear for those." - Friends Group

"In some ways, we kind of feel like we're in competition for the same bit of money but we shouldn't be because every community deserves what we've got." - Friends Group

7.1.2 Different ways of delivering library services

Housing a library within another building e.g. a community centre or a privately run building

This option for delivering library services was fairly unpopular. For many, the library building itself was of great importance and there was a feeling that moving buildings would result in a loss of library atmosphere and character. Friends also argued most libraries did not have any suitable nearby buildings to rehome their library, with many not being big enough or close-by.

"We're totally opposed to it." - Friends Group

"They (library buildings) have their own character don't they. You go to group in your library because its local and you know the people there." - Friends Group

"We haven't got one [community centre]." - Friends Group

"In Heckmondwike we've nothing." - Friends Group

Others felt this model would jeopardise the library's perceived central position within the community, and regular users might become uncertain as to where to find the new library location. Several felt libraries were also the last place where councils held a presence, and to rehouse libraries would risk losing this recognition.

"You've got to be very careful though that you don't lose the central position of the library." - Friends Group

"One of their [council's] last presences they have is around the [library] buildings." – Friends Group

Working with volunteers to deliver services with or without support from paid staff

Of all the options, this caused the most concern for Friends. The majority felt paid staff would need to be retained, as volunteers do not have the required skills to single-handedly run a library, nor would many want to. Extensive training would be required, but even then, it was felt, there was no guarantee a volunteer would continue to work at their library.

"We've gone a long way along the road of supporting this service through volunteers, but to go the whole hog, I'm against it." - Friends Group

"One principle that we are all agreed on is… We don't want it to be a wholly volunteer run exercise." - Friends Group

"We're quite conscious there's quite a big training job to do." - Friends Group

Additionally, some participants resented the idea of volunteering for a role previously paid for and thought it would be difficult to both retain and recruit volunteers. Participants felt that many volunteers simply want to shelve books, being of retirement age, and would not welcome extended responsibilities to include locking up, using technology and making library buildings secure on a night. Friends therefore concluded a volunteer-led model would not be sustainable for the long term.

"They [volunteers] don't want to become skilled in the kind of thing paid staff do." - Friends Group

"I'm not volunteering to do a paid member's piece of work." - Friends Group

"Many of our volunteers don't want to work without a paid member of staff being there." - Friends Group

"It's not just a matter of stacking a book… We've got some volunteers who are fine at shelving books but they're frightened to death of the computer 'cos on the whole it is older people." - Friends Group

Sharing space and staffing with other services

Friends were more open to this suggestion, but stipulated the suitability of this model would vary extensively from community to community. Concerns were raised over the practicalities of the model, such as staffing and managing multiple services under one roof.

"If we could join ourselves with a post office or a mini-market that would be one way of going forward." - Friends Group

"They [staff] won't have time." - Friends Group

"You'd have to be very careful that you weren't treading on people's feet, business wise. You want it to be a thriving community." - Friends Group

Creating digital networks

Opinions were mixed on digital networks, but there was a resonating feeling that library services cannot entirely be digital by design and elements of face-to-face need to be retained. Friends identified older users to be less inclined to use digital library services, primarily because a lack of familiarity with technology. Provisions would need to be made to teach users how to use computers.

"There are some people who will never go near a computer." Friends Group

Access to the internet was a key benefit identified by Friends and they were keen for a community access point to remain where residents could use computers. On the other side of the coin, Friends felt they needed to be able to trust library technology to work, as many had experienced computers, self-service machines and Wi-Fi letting them down.

"If the worst came to the worst and the library closed, that means there's a whole village without any free internet." Friends Group

7.1.3 Alternative delivery models

Overall, Friends groups were reluctant to talk about the model options and the potential for the Council to explore these. Most came with a view that all were as undesirable as the other, and felt more information was needed to be available before they could allude to any firm opinions. There was recognition, however, that some of these models might work better than others, and Friends could offer opinions along those lines instead.

Remaining as a service within the Council

The majority of Friends felt the library services should remain within the council, as fears were raised over involvement of external companies charging people for using the service or neglecting to run the service altogether. A council run library, it was felt, was the face of the council in many communities and provided a symbolic building for residents to come together.

"I definitely think it should remain part of the council 'cos otherwise they're gonna end up charging people for entering the libraries and that, which goes against the spirit." - Friends Group

"The library is the face of the council." - Friends Group

Local Authority Trading Company (LATC)

Friends were dubious at the mention of 'profits', and most felt it inappropriate to 'turn a library into a company'. Whilst morally questionable, others raised practical issues such as the feasibility of making money out of library services in the first place.

"The library, by its nature, cannot be a money making organisation." Friends Group

Public Service Mutual (PSM)

Friends talked more positively about this model option, some could begin to see how this might look in their local community. For many, this was seen as a better option and had the possibility of giving each library a greater degree of autonomy in running their services.

"There are some positives about it, because in particular, frankly, you get away from some of the rules of bureaucracy that come with a very large council and ways of doing things so you have more freedom to do things in a way you want to do." - Friends Group

Outsource

Similar to LATCs, Friends were suspicious of any model which held a profit making element and the responsibility of private companies to their shareholders and stakeholders.

"Using a private company may mean that profits are retained by the company itself. It's responsible to its shareholders." - Friends Group

"I'm against profits… Outsourcing it is a way of massaging the books. It's nothing to do with the actual service. It's about money." - Friends Group

For some, the only way for outsourcing to become a viable model was for a public organisation or charity to take over, such as a museum or heritage centre. Friends felt more comfortable with these types of organisations becoming involved, rather than private companies who were perceived to be profit driven and a threat to the delivery of effective library services.

Joint Venture

Friends felt this option was largely not applicable to Kirklees. While Friends recognised this might work well in some areas (e.g. Worcester), there was an assumption that a partnership would be made with the University of Huddersfield, resulting in the closure of smaller Kirklees libraries. For some, this fed back into feelings of 'Huddersfield-centric' funding, where money is perceived to be invested primarily into south Kirklees, rather than in the north. However, others did begin to wonder if other partnerships outside higher education could be formed, and some thought a partnership with the NHS or similar public organisations might be worth exploring.

"Suggesting that since Huddersfield is a university town, why don't Huddersfield look after Huddersfield library and the money could be saved for the rest of us." – Friends Group

"Not for north Kirklees." - Friends Group

"The joint venture, it depends on what that means. If it was a joint venture with the NHS or a joint venture with some other public organisation, you might feel very differently than if it was a joint venture with a business." - Friends Group

7.1.4 Final comments and suggestions

All groups raised concern over the consultation and the library review in general. There were concerns around the consultation questionnaire being too restrictive and other complained about the limited number of paper surveys available to each library.

Survey and focus group content was also raised as an area of improvement for any future consultations, should another take place. Most took issue with the model descriptions, and struggled to understand what each model actually meant and how it would work in Kirklees. To get around this, some Friends felt council representatives needed to conduct small discussion groups or presentations with Friends, staff and service users to explain model structure, before asking people to give their input.

"People can come in, with small discussions - it's not a presentation. You get a chance to have quite a long discussion with a couple of people looking at stuff. That way, you can explore it a bit more." - Friends Group

"Some information for the local authorities to say this is our experience of this particular model." - Friends Group

Uncertainties were also raised over the next stage of the consultation, and what decisions would be made about the future of the libraries. Difficulties were recalled in finding out the results of the 2016 consultation, and Friends wanted to have open, easy access to the results of this current consultation.

8. Conclusions

Conclusion 1: Libraries are perceived to fulfil a wider societal function beyond book lending.
Although the majority (86%) of survey respondents saw borrowing books as one of the most important functions of a library, it is clear from the qualitative research that libraries are no longer seen as services purely for book lending alone.

Library users, volunteers, and staff emphasised the wider community function of the local library and subsequently expressed concern over the potential for closure. The qualitative research in particular highlighted this theme, with consistent concern expressed across all discussion groups over a core number of service users who frequently used libraries for social connection. There was agreement amongst staff and Friends of groups that these softer library outcomes were hard to evidence and as a result the library service was an 'easy target' for budget cuts and reductions in service.

Consultation findings also highlight the importance of the IT function of the library service (and the support provided to access this) with 28% of respondents highlighting this as the most important library service after book lending. The qualitative research also highlighted that this is an important service for some, e.g. people on low income or looking for work. However, concerns were raised around how this function could be sustained within the context of further budget cuts.

Conclusion 2: Views are mixed on the issue of library location/buildings.
Moving the local library to another building (or privately run building) attracted limited support, with 52% of library service users disagreeing with this idea. The qualitative research highlighted that for some areas, the library building itself was held in high regard as a historic building and focal point for the community. Opposition to this idea is more apparent when communities cannot see a viable alternative building in their locality.

However, there appears to be more support for bringing other services into the library environment instead of moving the library out. Just over half (51%) of respondents supported the idea of the Council looking to reduce the running costs of libraries by sharing space, staffing, and integrating services. Within the qualitative research, this idea i.e. the community hub concept was viewed positively by some if it meant that library services could continue to be delivered within the community. In terms of sharing staff across the library service, it was noted that this was happening already in terms of library staff however some people found it difficult to understand how other department staff could fulfil library roles. There was strong feeling that there is still a need to retain trained librarians.

However, consultees noted that this type of model might work better in some communities than others, reiterating the theme of 'one size fits all' does not apply to the delivery of library services within all Kirklees communities.

Reflecting this, and remaining consistent within the different strands of the research, the view was expressed that libraries should be 'local', reflecting the fact that users primarily visit their nearest library run by the Council. Overall, participants were not willing to travel further afield to access library services, with 37% disagreeing with this. The qualitative research identified concerns about older people and those from deprived areas who might be less likely or able to travel to access

library services. A further 36% of respondents felt they would stop using library services altogether. This was a view most prevalent amongst older residents, with younger participants being more likely to travel further afield.

Conclusion 3: Volunteers have played a pivotal role in recent years but there are concerns about sustainability.
Only 34% of survey respondents felt they were willing to volunteer, leaving the majority disagreeing that they *'would be willing to volunteer to help run a library'* (43%). This support is also evident in the number of participants who stated they would need a full-time, qualified and paid member of staff to support them in their role as volunteer.

Within the qualitative research, there was a general view that volunteers have made a very positive contribution to Kirklees Libraries and have been vital in maintaining opening hours and assisting paid staff. However, many people questioned the sustainability of any model which was reliant on further expansion of the volunteer pool. There was acknowledgement that volunteer management and retention can be challenging and training and engagement is an ongoing task. There was also concern that any further reduction of paid library staff would have a negative impact on the quality of the service. Although many volunteers are willing and able, in some cases they are many in number covering short shifts and this can mean it is difficult for skills to be developed and retained.

Discussion within the focus groups centred on the characteristics of the volunteer base, e.g. mostly older retired residents. However, the consultation reveals support for/interest in volunteering from younger people. For example, a NET majority of 56% of young people (16-24 year olds) stated they were willing to volunteer and were often more willing to travel to libraries out of their immediate locality. This suggests there could be some value in attempting to widen volunteer recruitment strategies to try and attract younger volunteers perhaps by and/or linking in with any existing volunteering schemes.

There was also discussion around the capacity of more deprived communities to respond to the call for volunteers to support library services given that people living in more deprived areas are less likely to volunteer.

However, there is clear support for using volunteers to support the delivery of the Home Library Service with over half (57%) of respondents agreeing with this proposal.

Conclusion 4: The results of the children's consultation largely reflect the findings from the qualitative and quantitative research conducted, and remain consistent in terms of how libraries are used and ideas for sustaining services for the future.
Children were full of praise for library staff and struggled to envisage an effective delivery of library services sans staff. The majority (47%) of children disagreed with the statement *'do you think moving your library to another building is a good idea?'* and found it difficult to identify alternative spaces which would ensure high quality library services are maintained.

Although combining library services with schools was a frequent suggestion in other parts of the research, from the perspective of a school pupil, it should be noted libraries are often a place for children to relax away from school and home. This is also reflective of a wider theme found in this research that libraries are often more than book lending facilities, but have become alternative spaces of social care, particularly for children and older people.

Conclusion 5: There are seen to be different advantages and disadvantages to keeping library services within the Council, but generally there is a clear preference for library services to remain within the Council.

The majority of residents (79%) expressed a preference for there to be no change in how library services are currently run, and would like services to remain Council led. Less than one in ten residents did not support the idea of library services remaining within the Council (9%).

The qualitative research revealed confusion around the alternative delivery models. Many focus group participants were reluctant or felt unable to express a preference for a particular delivery model or whether they supported the Council exploring these models. Thus, this may have led some respondents to default to the status quo.

Preference for library services to stay within the Council came out strongly in the qualitative research, and many felt a significant number of Kirklees residents would suffer should libraries go outside of the Council's jurisdiction.

Conclusion 6: Support for the idea of alternative delivery models is variable.

The alternative models were met with varying levels of support, although, as mentioned previously, it should be stressed that many struggled to comprehend the delivery of services outside the Council, and therefore found it difficult to discuss the different model types.

This was particularly evident when discussing each model in the qualitative research, with findings for each model broken down as follows;

- **Local Authority Trading Company**- beyond remaining within the Council, this model was seen as most preferable amongst survey respondents (NET support of 36%). The qualitative research allowed a number of concerns to be voiced, with many centring on the mention of profits and confusion over how libraries might generate an income.

- **Public Service Mutual**- those taking part in the qualitative research could identify merits in exploring this approach, allowing communities a greater degree of autonomy in running their own local library. From the survey, 30% of all respondents supported this model.

- **Joint Venture**- The majority of qualitative participants felt this model was inapplicable to the Kirklees area. Generally, participants could see merit in exploring this option, but not in the Kirklees area. Whilst some thought it might work well in Huddersfield, it was felt smaller towns and villages might subsequently lose access to a local library, should funding go towards a Joint Venture model. This is reflected in the results of the self-completion survey, with a net majority of 63% of participants not supporting this model.

- **Outsource**- This model generally received the least amount of support across the qualitative and quantitative research. Concerns were raised over the types of external organisation which would become involved in delivering library services, and elements of trust were raised as to whether external support would deliver an effective service. Discussions in the qualitative research centred on profit-making and the feasibility of libraries generating an income, leaving residents with a question mark over the practicalities of the involvement of external companies in the running of libraries. Uncertainty and dislike of this model is also reflected in the results of the quantitative research, with a net majority of 79% of respondents not supporting Outsourcing.

From the discussions with Friends of groups, it is apparent that they vary in terms of their capacity and willingness to develop further. Some appear highly organised, with a clear structure of roles/responsibilities and have already developed business plans and received funding for projects, whereas others appear to be more content to remain as they are. This variable capacity includes the extent to which they would like/feel able to engage with discussions on alternative models of delivery; some of which are community-led to varying degrees. In terms of taking this element forward, Friends of members, staff and library users alike would like to see the Council develop a clear business case which includes some analysis of how/where alternative delivery models have worked in other areas, how they have enabled library sustainability, and how they might operate within Kirklees.

9. Appendices

9.1 Submissions and petitions

The table below shows the number of submissions and petitions received by Kirklees Council.

Figure 16 Submissions

Library Location	Quantity Received
Batley	15
Birstall	3
Cleckheaton	15
Denby Dale	1
Golcar	1
Holmfirth	2
Honley	1
Kirkburton	1
Kirkheaton	3
Lindley	1
Marsden	1
Mirfield	1
Shepley	1
Skelmanthorpe	2
Home Service	1
General	1
	50

Figure 17 Petitions

Title	Respondents
Protect Batley Library	121
Keep Birstall Library Open	975

9.2 Profile of survey respondents

Figure 18 Profile of survey respondents

	2011 Census (Aged 16+)		2018 Participants
Gender			
Male	165,059	49%	33%
Female	171,25	51%	64%
Prefer Not To Say	-	-	3%
Age			
Under 16	n/a	n/a	n/a
16-24	50,759	15%	2%
25-34	54,429	16%	8%
35-44	59,939	18%	17%
45-54	57,186	17%	16%
55-64	49,846	15%	18%
65+	64,150	19%	36%
Prefer Not To Say	-	-	3%
Ethnicity			
Net: White	276,716	82%	85%
Net: Asian / Asian British	45,944	14%	4%
Net Other Ethnicities	13,649	4%	1%
Prefer Not to Say	-	-	8%
Base:	**336,309**		**3,057**

9.3 Profile of focus group participants (library users)

The following tables provide further detail on the profile of the focus group participants.

Figure 19 Profile of focus group participants (Group 1 library users)

Group 1- Dewsbury Town Hall			
Gender	Age	Ethnic Group	Volunteer
Male	65+	White	Y
Male	65+	White	N
Male	45-54	White	Y
Female	65+	White	N/A
Female	65+	White	N/A
Female	35-44	White	N/A
Female	25-34	White	N

Figure 20 Profile of focus group participants (Group 2 library users)

Group 2- Dewsbury Town Hall			
Gender	Age	Ethnic Group	Volunteer
Male	45-54	White	Y
Male	45-54	White	Y
Male	25-34	White	N
Female	55-64	White	Y
Female	55-64	White	N
Female	55-64	Other Ethnicity	N
Female	25-34	White	Y
Female	25-34	White	N

Respondents in the Dewsbury group came from the wards of Mirfield, Batley, Birstall, Dewsbury, Kirklees, Cleckheaton, Heckmondwike

Figure 21 Profile of focus group participants (Group 3 library users)

Group 3- Huddersfield Town Hall			
Gender	Age	Ethnic Group	Volunteer
Male	65+	White	N/A
Male	65+	White	N
Male	55-64	White	N
Male	45-54	White	Y
Female	55-64	White	N/A
Female	55-64	White	Y
Female	55-64	White	N
Female	25-34	White	Y

Figure 22 Profile of focus group participants (Group 4 library users)

Group 4- Huddersfield Town Hall			
Gender	Age	Ethnic Group	Volunteer
Male	65+	White	N/A
Male	65+	White	N
Male	65+	White	N/A
Male	45-54	White	N
Male	35-44	White	N/A
Female	55-64	White	Y
Female	45-54	White	N/A
Female	45-54	White	Y
Female	35-44	White	N/A

Figure 23 Profile of focus group participants (Group 5 library users)

Group 5- Huddersfield Town Hall			
Gender	Age	Ethnic Group	Volunteer
Male	65+	White	Y
Male	65+	White	Y
Male	65+	White	N
Male	55-64	White	N/A
Female	55-64	White	Y
Female	45-54	White	Y
Female	35-44	White	Y
Female	35-44	White	N/A
Female	25-34	White	N/A

Respondents in the Huddersfield group came from the wards of Cleckheaton, Marsden, Holmfirth and Almondbury.

9.4 Profile of focus group participants (staff)

Figure 24 Profile of focus group participants (Group 1 staff)

Group 1- Dewsbury Town Hall- Staff
Role
Librarian
Librarian
Customer Service Officer
Customer Service Officer

Figure 25 Profile of focus group participants (Group 2 staff)

Group 2- Huddersfield Town Hall- Staff Role
Manager
Librarian
Manager

Figure 26 Profile of focus group participants (Group 3 staff)

Group 3- Huddersfield Town Hall- Staff Role
Librarian
Customer Service Officer
Customer Service Officer
Customer Service Manager

Figure 27 Profile of focus group participants (Group 4 staff)

Group 4- Huddersfield Town Hall- Staff Role
Braillist
Customer Service Officer
Customer Service Officer
Customer Service Manager
Customer Service Manager
Customer Service Officer
Customer Service Officer

9.5Profile of focus group participants (Friends of groups)

Figure 28 Profile of focus group participants (Group 1 Friends of)

Group 1- Dewsbury Town Hall Friends of Group
Honley
Skelmanthorpe
Shepley
Meltham
Shepley
Golcar

Figure 29 Profile of focus group participants (Group 2 Friends of)

Group 2- Dewsbury Town Hall Friends of Group
Mirfield
Cleckheaton
Cleckheaton

Figure 30 Profile of focus group participants (Group 3 Friends of)

Group 3- Huddersfield Town Hall Friends of Group
Kirkburton
Denby Dale
Marsden
Marsden
Golcar
N/A
Lindley
Lindley

Figure 31 Profile of focus group participants (Group 4 Friends of)

Group 4- Dewsbury Town Hall Friends of Group
Batley
Batley
Birstall
Mirfield
Mirfield
Birstall
Heckmondwike

Figure 32 Profile of focus group participants (Group 5 Friends of)

Group 5- Huddersfield Town Hall Friends of Group
Honley
Almondbury
Almondbury
Skelmanthorpe
Holmfirth
Holmfirth

9.6 Summary of findings from consultation with children

Kirklees Council undertook some consultation with children / young people to understand their views on possible changes to the delivery of the library service. The consultation also aimed to understand the extent to which young people use the service and their needs from their local library. Kirklees Council engaged with young people by contacting primary schools, colleges and youth groups and asking them to carry out facilitated group discussions utilising a pack of questions on the subject of libraries to prompt conversations.

Key findings

Sample Profile

In total, 86 young people took part in the children's consultation in 8 separate groups. The groups included participants from primary and secondary schools and were made up from the following;

- Kirkheaton Primary
- Fieldhead Primary Academy
- Eastborough Junior Infant & Nursery School
- Ravensthorpe Junior School
- Scissett Middle School
- Moor End Academy
- Spen Valley High School
- Holmfirth High School

These groups ensured there was a wide range of ages represented from year 4 of primary schools to the late stages of secondary school.

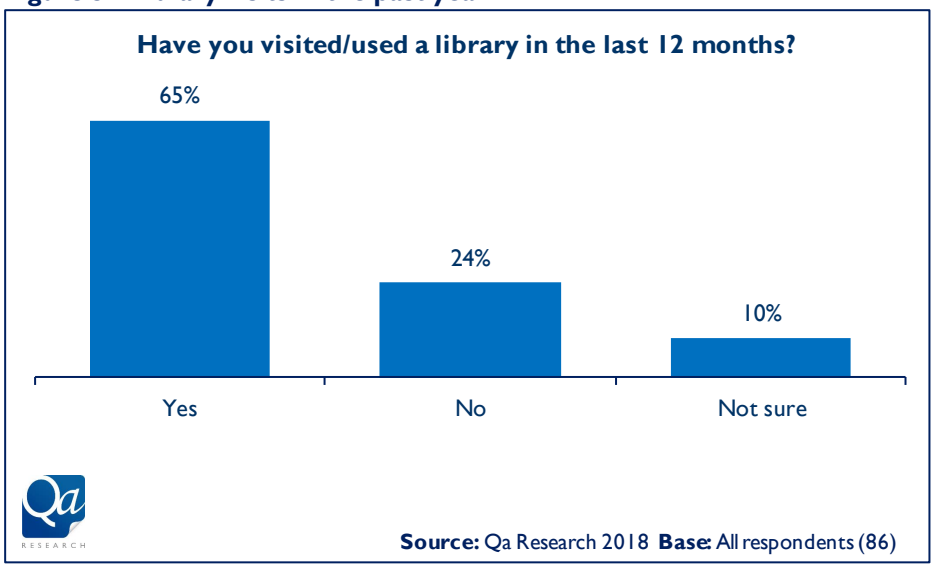
Figure 33 Demographic profile (children's consultation)

Demographic Table	Count	%
Gender		
Male	32	37%
Female	54	63%
	Base: 86 (All respondents)	
Ethnicity		
White	48	63%
Black/Black British	2	3%
Mixed/multiple ethnicities	0	0
Asian/Asian British	26	34%
Other ethnic group	1	1%
		Base: 76

Library Usage

In order to understand the extent to which young people use the library service, all participants were asked if they had used a library in the last 12 months.

Figure 34 Library visits in the past year



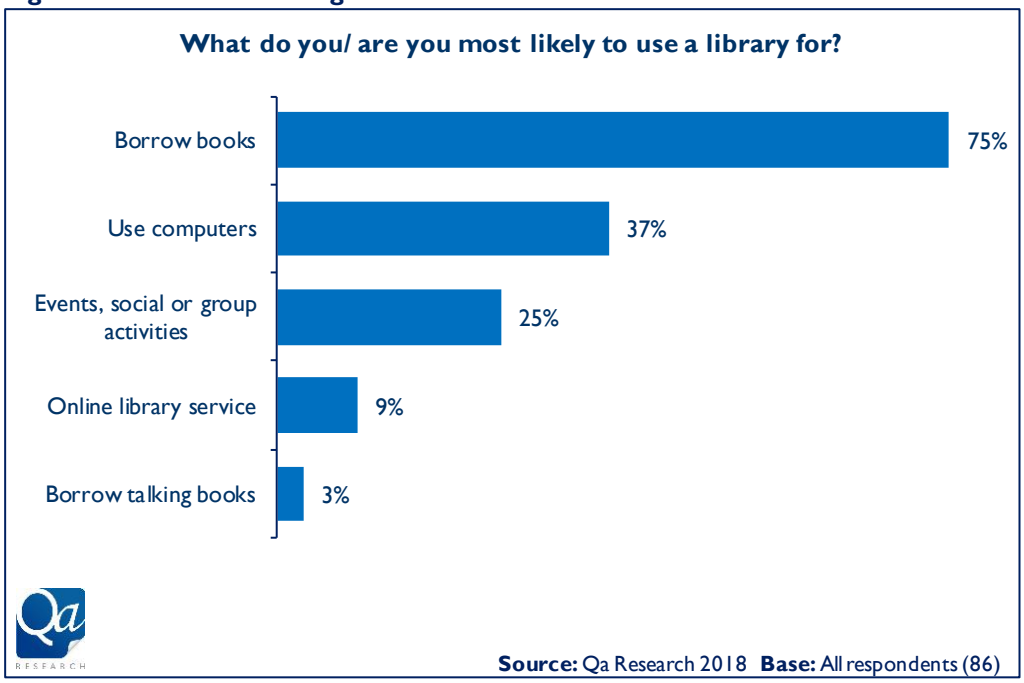
The above chart shows library usages to be high amongst children/young people; with almost 7 in 10 (65%) saying they have visited a library in the past year.

Participants were also asked to say which library they visit the most often to gauge which libraries they had in mind when voicing their views. It should be noted however that due to multiple libraries being mentioned in each group it is impossible to link comments to individual libraries with any certainty. It is, however, possible to gain a rough idea of the libraries to which groups may have been referring to:

- **Kirkheaton Primary** – Libraries used are **Kirkheaton, Huddersfield, Mirfield** and **Rawthorpe Dalton**.
- **Fieldhead Primary Academy** – **Batley, Heckmondwike** and **Birstall** are all used.
- **Eastborough J, I & N School** – **Dewsbury and Batley libraries** were both used**.**
- **Ravensthorpe Junior School** – The main library used is **Ravensthorpe**, with eight children frequently visiting it. **Batley library** was used the second most frequently, with two children saying they visit it regularly.
- **Scissett Middle School** – **Denby Dale, Shepley, Huddersfield** and **Skelmanthorpe** were all listed as libraries used.
- **Moor End Academy** – **Huddersfield, Lindley** and the **Chestnut Centre, Deighton** were all mentioned equally.
- **Spen Valley High School** – Libraries used in equal measure are **Heckmondwike, Cleckheaton, Batley, Birstall** and **Dewsbury.**
- **Holmfirth High School** – **Holmfirth, Honley, Meltham** and **Huddersfield** are all frequently used.

Participants were then asked what they are most likely to use the library for;

Figure 35 Reasons for using libraries



As the chart shows, participants largely used libraries to borrow books from (75%) and almost 4 in 10 (37%) said they used the computers.

Although responses were largely consistent across groups, it is notable that, while attendance at events, social or group activities was normally low, it was particularly high amongst Eastborough J, I & N School participants; with almost all saying they used this service (87.5%).

Some secondary schools used the 'other' section within the questionnaire to highlight the reasons for using such services, with several of their reasons focusing on help with homework or change of scenery;

"Research either for homework or personal interest and escape from home." (Spen Valley High School)

"Holiday revision sessions." (Holmfirth High School)

"Somewhere to study- somewhere quiet." (Moor End Academy)

Primary schools were more likely to use the 'other' section of the survey to talk of use of library facilities and interaction with staff;

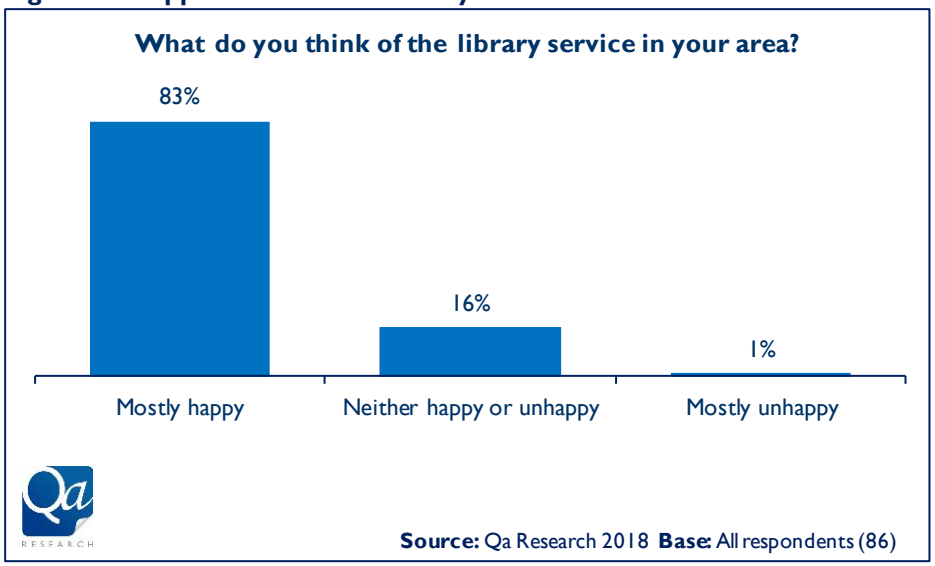
"Play on whiteboard. Read books in the library. Borrow children's DVDs. Do homework." (Eastborough J, I & N School)

"Sit and read, return books, ask a question." (Kirkheaton Primary)

"Homework/hot chocolate/ colouring." (Ravensthorpe Junior School)

Participants were then asked about what they thought of the library service in their area;

Figure 36 Happiness with local library service



Overall, participants were mostly happy with their local library, with only 1% saying they were unhappy. The number of respondents viewing their libraries in a positive light has increased by almost 10% since the previous consultation in 2015, with 75% of respondents previously saying they were mostly happy with services.

The reasoning behind satisfaction with library services remains consistent amongst the groups, and no difference can be discerned between age groups. All talk of friendly staff and the benefits of having free, accessible resources at their fingertips.

"The staff are very nice. There is lots of equipment e.g. books, printer, computers etc. I am happy with the library because of the kind, friendly staff." (Ravensthorpe Junior School)

"Helpful happy staff [and a] good range of books. Good events, all free." (Holmfirth High School)

"It's nice and neat. Clean and tidy and has computers. We pop in to see Mum's friend. We have family time - I share books with Mum. Staff are always very welcoming." (Fieldhead Primary Academy)

For those who felt unhappy with library services, the reasons varied from group to group. However, all comments made tended to focus on library resources, with some desiring interior refurbishments, wider availability of shorter stories and more computers spaces.

"I would like to see more interesting and exciting shorter stories. The books are too long." (Fieldhead Primary Academy)

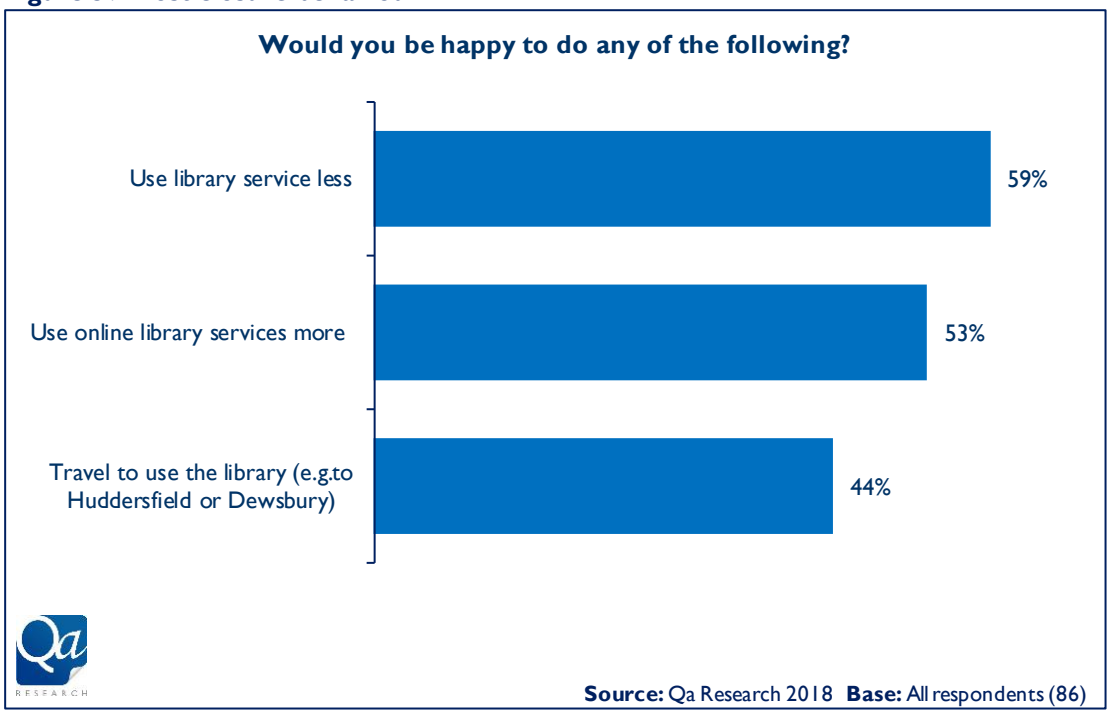
"Not happy that there's no library near here (Crosland Moor). Have to travel into town. More staff members are needed (in Huddersfield Library). Sometimes all IT is booked up (sometimes have to wait an hour and/or leave)." (Moor End Academy)

"One respondent felt there was a need for refurbishment." (Spen Valley High Moderator)

A need to change

The participants were also asked if they would do any of the following if their local library were to close.

Figure 37 Post closure behaviour



Over half of respondents felt they would use the library less (59%), whilst 4 in 10 saying they would travel further to larger libraries, such as Dewsbury or Huddersfield (44%). Although many were willing to travel further afield, participants were reluctant and felt they would ultimately use library services less and less;

"I would be upset and sad, I would be sad but would go to another library, it's not good for the environment to travel, I would travel but I wouldn't use the library as much." (Kirkheaton Primary)

"Having to travel to DE wouldn't work, would have to use services less and use online more." (Moor End Academy)

Some participants felt strongly that they would not do any of the options stated, and some came up with their own suggestions;

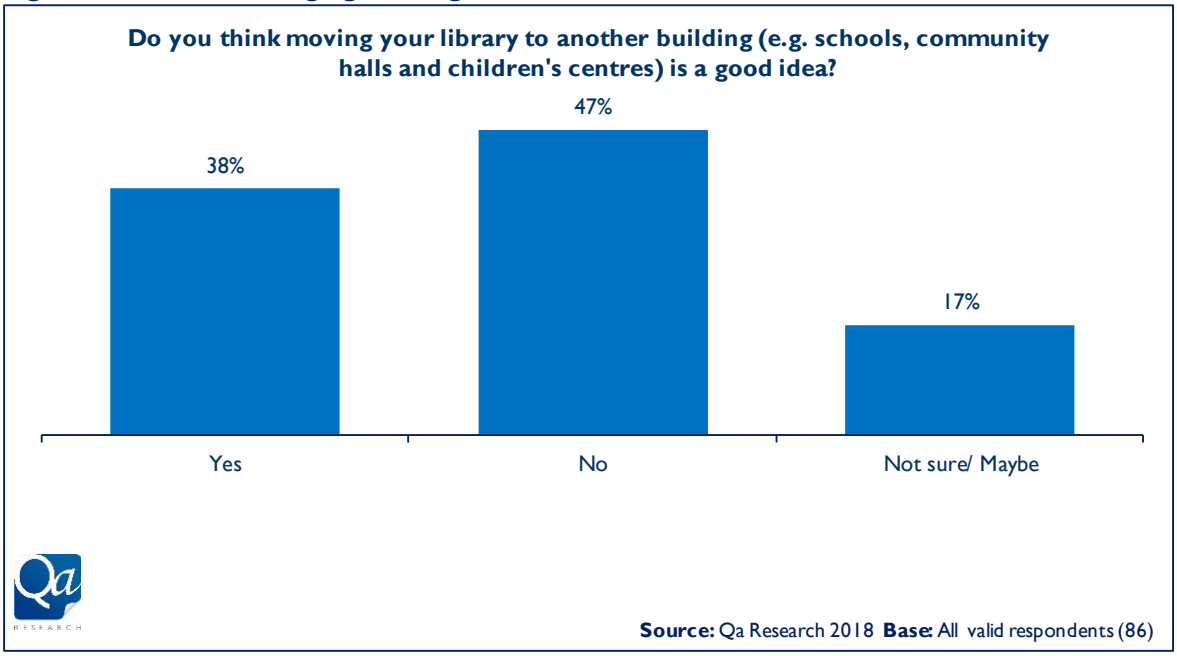
"I wouldn't do any of the options because I would raise money to keep the library open!" (Fieldhead Primary Academy)

"Combine with a profit based element to provide funds." (Holmfirth High School)

"Would buy books instead. Try looking for books second hand - e.g. in charity shops." (Eastborough J, I & N School)

The participants were also asked whether they thought moving the library to another building, such as a school, was a good idea;

Figure 38 Views on changing building



The majority of participants did not think it would be a good idea to rehouse the library (47%), with only 1 in 4 saying they thought it was a good idea (38%).

Similar to the adult consultation, participants felt there was a degree of uncertainty in remodelling library services to fit in with schools, children's centres and community halls. While the majority could see merit in rehousing libraries, concerns were raised as to how far away their local library might move, and the types of building which would and would not be suitable.

"They might move the library even further away. Wouldn't be happy going into another school for library- not familiar with the building. Needs disabled access." (Moor End Academy)

"It's inconvenient. The opening times will be bad because when we finish school the community centre closes. We can't go too far. If it's miles and miles away and going in the car infects the fresh air. I don't want the library to move because it is a good library and is close to school." (Ravensthorpe Junior School)

"People might not use a library in a school; we don't have much room anyway in our school." (Kirkheaton Primary)

"In another building it might be noisy and distracting. I like it where it is - I can do other things like shopping when I'm in town too. I just want the library to stay as it is." (Fieldhead Primary Academy)

For those who were keen for rehousing the library, reasoning stemmed from a strong desire to keep libraries open. Format and delivery took less precedence, as long as money was saved and a library services continued to exist. These views were predominant amongst younger participants.

"So we can still use it." (Scissett Middle School)

"It will save money if it was in a different library." (Kirkheaton Primary)

"Would be good to carry on using the library service. It depends how far away it moves to!" (Eastborough J, I & N School)

Some spoke more positively about the potential change and preferred to see it as an opportunity to target more people and increase the overall number using library services.

"Could try having books in places where people have to wait around, for example stations (train/bus). To have libraries in schools isn't a good idea because it wouldn't work having members of the public coming into school." (Spen Valley High School)

"It's a good idea if it means we can keep the library. So library workers don't lose their jobs. If it's in a community building different people might use it." (Fieldhead Primary Academy)

"In a church, a library would be nice. In a hospital [a library would be nice] to help the poorly people, share with a popular shop and people will visit the library and get a book when they are shopping." (Kirkheaton Primary)

Doing things differently

The groups were then asked to think about how the service could be delivered in the future by focusing on different aspects of the library service.

<u>What to use Library for</u>

The first aspect of the future service discussed was what people would most want to use the library for. Answers differed across age groups, but the majority felt they would continue to use the space to complete homework.

"Do reading outside of school and educate myself." (Fieldhead Primary Academy)

"Computers, & books . Homework." (Holmfirth high School)

Similarly, there was a large demand for library space to be used to host more frequent events. Some offered more detail, and stipulated they'd like more events for older children. Film marathons, coffee mornings and teenage book groups were all suggested as events which could be put on for older children.

"More events and activities - all the time! More crafts e.g. a permanent craft station. Movie days/nights. Reading for improvement. Meet the book character events." (Eastborough J, I & N School)

"Teenage book groups. Coffee mornings for younger ages too. Movie downloads to go with books. Plasma screens with book previews on them. More events for older children. Book swaps and anonymous books. Sharing resources." (Scissett Middle School)

Others talked more generally of improving library resources, so students could enjoy café facilities or peruse a wider selection of books. Older students showed inclinations of creating a

social area for young adults, where they could chat with friends and relax out of school, particularly in school-holidays.

"Toilet, snacking-café, talking loudly and live music." (Spen Valley High School)

"Teen social area as there is nowhere for us to go." (Holmfirth High School)

"More books people want- more popular choices e.g. Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Horrid Henry. Don't spend money on unpopular books. More IT facilities." (Moor End Academy)

Building

The groups were then asked to suggest different types of buildings a library could be housed in. Suggestions varied extensively with numerous different ideas put forth, with Scissett Middle School in particular providing numerous ideas;

- Village Hall
- Working Men's Clubs
- Scout Huts
- Post Offices
- Local Schools
- Telephone Box
- A Book Drop Somewhere

While answers different from group to group, all desired the library to be in a central location within the local community. Emphasis was often placed on the community aspect, with some identifying a change in location as an opportunity to improve current library access and make it accessible to more people. Community Centres were popular suggestions, as well as shopping areas.

"Community centres." (Spen Valley High School)

"Church, shop." (Kirkheaton Primary)

"Café. Art Gallery. SureStart Centre. Shopping Centre." (Fieldhead Primary Academy)

One reoccurring idea was for library services to be placed within a school, or higher education college, with three of the eight groups suggesting it to be a viable facility. However, Kirkheaton Primary School stipulated it would only be a good idea if the chosen school had space to house a library. Others were less keen on the idea of rehousing libraries in a school, as reflected in the previous chart, and felt libraries should not be rehomed in schools.

"Schools." (Holmfirth High School)

"Kirklees college." (Moor End Academy)

"School if they had space." (Kirkheaton Primary)

"Hospitals, stations, museums, coffee shops and community centres. Not in schools." (Spen Valley High School)

Rather, some schools felt the library should maintain their own buildings, and struggled to think in terms of sharing space with other services.

"Old, disused buildings in town centre." (Moor End Academy)

"A building like, or near to, the Town Hall. Dewsbury Market. Above the Wilko's. Amongst the shops and more centralised. Nearer residential areas. Build an even bigger new library with funding from public!" (Eastborough J, I & N School)

Participants also offered comments on how they would imagine library interior and atmosphere to look and feel in the future. Welcoming and modern were reoccurring elements mentioned, as well as providing a comfortable and relaxing setting for reading and learning. The emphasis on an relaxing environment might be one reason as to why several groups preferred libraries to remain independent of schools, and combining the two would perhaps blur the distinction between 'fun' and 'learning'.

"Spacious venues. colourful décor. Welcoming." (Eastborough J, I & N School)

"Somewhere welcoming and comfortable. A modern setting. Colourful with lots of interesting displays. Tidy. Comfortable sofas and beanbags. Relaxed but not too quiet. A display of suggested reads." (Scissett Middle School)

"They have freedom to pick any book which makes it different to school." (Kirkheaton Primary School Moderator)

"Next door to school. Across the road to my house. Next to a park so people can play." (Ravensthorpe Junior School)

<u>Who could help</u>

The final part of the future that participants were asked about was the types of people they thought could help run the library.

Teachers and 'old people' were all frequently mentioned as being ideal to help staff libraries. Some volunteered their own grandparents or tutors, whilst others spoke more generally about those with 'spare time on their hands', with the insinuation being pensioners would take the bulk of the work.

"People with spare time on their hands, pensioners." (Moor End Academy)

"Retired people." (Holmfirth High School)

"Parents, grandparents... Teachers and ex-teachers. Ex-librarians." (Scissett Middle School)

Participants also spoke of the types of people who they perceived would benefit the most from volunteering. University students or Duke of Edinburgh pupils were identified to be ideal candidates for volunteering, with the assumption being they would gain work experience and it would be something to add to the CV.

"DofE, students doing work experience." (Scissett Middle School)

"Uni students." (Kirkheaton Primary)

"People on benefits (to help them get work experience)." (Spen Valley High School)

The children also outlined certain qualities they felt volunteers needed to have, such as a love of reading, patience, energy and a helpful disposition. Some felt volunteers would have to have a degree of expertise to provide the educational aspect pupils value in the current delivery of library service.

"People that love reading." (Fieldhead Primary Academy)

"Active, energetic people of all ages. Helpful people… Someone with a cool head. Those with expertise in other field- they could then talk to others about their careers." (Eastborough J, I & N School)

Final Comments

A few groups did give some additional comments, mainly reiterating certain points they had previously made. However, some used this as an opportunity to express opinions about the sustainability and suitability of using volunteers to staff libraries. Some felt the position of volunteer would draw the same types of people, and libraries would be run to some extent by cliques.

"Worried that volunteers might have their own agenda and be unfriendly to others. Libraries should be open to all and not a private members club." (Spen Valley High School)

Others felt it to unreliable to rely on volunteers alone, as volunteers had other commitments outside the library and had no responsibility to stay at the library for the long term. One suggestion centred on using year 11 students to staff libraries during summer months as a form of work experience.

"Unreliable to use volunteers- people can leave at any time. Should advertise to yr 11 pupils when leaving school for them to volunteer during the holidays and volunteering as school and college placements." (Moor End Primary School)

Comments otherwise centred on improving library resources, in particular stocking books people would like to read, with comments of these nature more prominent amongst primary school groups.

"Have a cull on less popular books. Crack down on people not returning books." (Scissett Middle School)

"Sell all the boring books and just have interesting books." (Eastborough J, I, & N School)

"More books people want- more popular choices e.g. Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Horrid Henry." (Moor End Academy)

Project number:	STAKE04-7791
Title:	Kirklees Library Consultation
Location:	S:\ProjectFiles\K\Kirklees_Council\STAKE04-7791_Kirklees_Library_Consultation_2017\Reports\Kirklees_Final_Report_V7F.doc
Date:	7 August 2018
Report status:	Final
Approved by:	Michael Fountain
Authors:	Michael Fountain, Kay Silversides and Hannah Reeve
Comments:	Michael.fountain@qaresearch.co.uk

This research has been carried out in compliance with the International standard ISO 20252, (the International Standard for Market and Social research), the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct and UK Data Protection law

RESEARCH