

# SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL



**SOMERSET**  
Libraries

## REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

October 2018



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## Executive Summary

The consultation on the proposals for the future delivery of library services in Somerset ran from 29<sup>th</sup> January to 13 June 2018.

There were 6,410 consultation questionnaires completed plus a further 604 responses to the consultation in other formats.

Respondents to the consultation were asked to comment on the proposals for their most used library and were requested to supply their views on:

- the impact that the proposals would have on themselves;
- the impact on their families and
- the impact on their community if implemented.
- Any further comments on the proposals and
- any suggestions or ideas for alternative proposals.

The level of response was not consistent across all libraries. Proposals for no changes to service provision undoubtedly had a negative effect on the level of response for those respective libraries.

A clear, overriding message was apparent from the feedback received from the consultation exercise:

- A large majority of respondents were strongly opposed to changes to library provision, particularly the potential closure of library buildings.
- Where respondents were asked to express their preference for either Community Library Partnership or mobile/outreach options, there was an almost universal preference for the partnership option, mainly to ensure that a library building and the services delivered from there was retained.

A number of other consistent key themes became apparent across each library and each library area.

- Many responses spoke of how the local library provided a heart to the community and helped to alleviate social issues such as loneliness and social isolation. Others responded regarding the health and educational benefits of the Libraries Service, especially to the vulnerable, elderly and those in full-time education.
- One recurring theme was that the IT facilities and infrastructure that the library provides are invaluable to those without these services at home. Respondents thought that the closure of library buildings or a move to a mobile only provision would impact most heavily on those on low income and the elderly.
- The lack of reliable public transport in Somerset was generally felt to be a substantial barrier to the ability of many users to access alternative library buildings should their local library building close. Many users expressed the importance of being able to walk to their local library.

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- Although some understanding and empathy was expressed regarding the current financial situation of Somerset County Council, many respondents were categorically against closures of library buildings as a point of principle and believed that savings should be found in other ways. A number of suggestions were forthcoming from respondents regarding the potential for future income generation opportunities to make the service more sustainable. Many suggested the introduction of membership and book borrowing fees as well as commenting on the potential to raise income through sharing library buildings and implementing café concessions.
- Mixed views were expressed on the use of volunteers with some areas supporting their use to supplement professional staff while others were against it as they thought service quality would be adversely affected. Some communities responded that the use of volunteers would not be sustainable due to the fact that they already deliver a number of services locally and the supply of volunteers is limited.
- Library users and respondents in general do not think of the library as purely a book lending service and see the value of the wider services provided by the Libraries Service.
- The increasing future need for library services was also a recurring theme due to the level of planned housing development within communities. Feedback suggested that the requirement for a library would increase in communities due to the increasing populations and not diminish.

In addition to the feedback from individual respondents to the survey, we received a large number of submissions from stakeholder groups, and longer written submissions from individuals. These are set out in full in the main body of this Appendix. Friends of Somerset Libraries (FoSL) have been working with the Library Service for a number of years and made a number of submissions during the course of the consultation. As an important, long standing stakeholder group for the library service, we have included a summary of their feedback in this executive summary for decision makers:

- FoSL accept that the County Council are under financial pressure, but feel that the library service has already made significant savings in recent years, and urge the county council to find alternative means of achieving overall budget savings without further cuts to library budgets.
- FoSL strongly believe there should be no consequential threat of closure if Community Library Partnerships cannot be established. They are firmly opposed to any library closures in Somerset, and believe that there is no case for closing libraries.
- If cost reductions must be found from the libraries service, FoSL have suggested that:
  - the County Council give consideration to a 'Community Support' model as an alternative to Community Library Partnerships, where the County Council remain responsible for library buildings, but communities offer to support libraries financially, or by taking on certain responsibilities, but with no consequential threat of closure.
  - an alternative approach to risking library closures would be to reduce opening hours; FoSL have requested that SCC consider making some cost savings contribution from reduced opening hours at larger libraries.

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- FoSL feel that there should be a more equitable distribution of funding to support all Community Library Partnerships, and that the contributions proposed in the consultation should be increased. FoSL have made a further suggestion that county council contributions to Community Library Partnerships could be used to 'leverage' investment in staffing, perhaps through a match funding arrangement.
- FoSL believe that volunteers should only be used to support professional staff and to complement and extend the library service, not to act as a replacement.
- FoSL have suggested that the County Council should consider broadening the funding base for libraries, through community engagement, fund-raising, donations and other forms of community support.
- FoSL have raised a number of concerns about the County Council's cost accounting. The Library Service Re-design project team have provided various sets of financial information to FoSL and FoSL representatives, and FoSL have scrutinised this information. FoSL remain concerned that Community Library Partnerships, and the Library Service more generally, may end up bearing an unreasonable level of cost overheads.
- In the event SCC decide to close a library because a Community Library Partnership cannot be established, and substitute outreach and/or mobile services, FoSL do not accept that these would necessarily provide an ongoing 'comprehensive and efficient statutory service' as required under relevant act, and may be legally challengeable.

## PART 1 – Consultation Approach and Methodology

### 1.1 Introduction and background to the Consultation

- 1.1.1 In November 2017 Somerset County Council Cabinet Member Cllr David Hall took the formal Decision to endorse the proposed vision, outcomes framework and future strategy for Somerset Libraries Service.
- 1.1.2 The vision and outcomes framework set out a high level of ambition for the Libraries Service, particularly given the identified challenges – including the likely need to reduce the cost of the service to make savings. The report stated that to deliver value commensurate with significant ongoing revenue expenditure funding, and to remain relevant, Somerset Libraries should remain a dynamic service directly supporting wider County Council and partner objectives.
- 1.1.3 In order to continue to deliver a thriving Libraries Service and a broad range of outcomes within a reducing affordability envelope, a long term, strategic approach to service re-design is required. The approach also proposed to maintain the current, modernising direction of travel, whilst addressing the most critical investment needs. The strategy was to focus resources where they are needed most; using innovative approaches to reduce inequalities.
- 1.1.4 The Libraries Service Redesign programme is embedded in a clear strategic framework, set through a formal County Council decision in November 2017, and the link to this document can be found in the Background Papers and Useful Links section at the end of this report.

### 1.2 Development of Proposals for Consultation

- 1.2.1 The set of proposals were developed following the consideration of a wide range of information. Information and views gathered through a series of informal engagement meetings with library Friends groups, library staff, parish and town councils, local county councillors and other stakeholder groups has been taken into account. In addition to this ‘soft’ information, the project team has considered a wide range of ‘hard’ data and information from a variety of sources to support assessments of need, access, value for money and equalities impacts for different areas in Somerset. This evidence-based approach ensures that the council addresses legal requirements to carry out:

- A robust assessment of need;
- an assessment of access considerations;
- a comprehensive equality impact assessment; and
- an assessment of value.

- 1.2.2 Decisions on the selection of relevant datasets and the approach to



analysing and applying data have had a significant bearing on the development of proposals. For this reason, a separate paper set out the methodology employed in the various assessments as well as the datasets used in some detail. The technical information was made available for comment and feedback during the consultation exercise, both in paper form and on the consultation website.

1.2.3 In summary:

1.2.3.1 An assessment of need in different areas of the county was carried out by mapping various statistical measures of need across the county, using standard statistical geographies as well as existing library catchments to analyse differences in relative need. The need measures have been selected to address statutory considerations as well as the outcomes framework set for the Libraries Service, and the different levels of population in different parts of the county. The need for different types of library services in different areas has been taken into account using relative levels of current usage – based on the underlying logic that libraries that are well used are likely to address needs more effectively.

1.2.3.2 Access issues have been analysed by considering levels of car ownership in different geographical areas, as well as public and community transport links and driving distances and times.

1.2.3.3 Equalities data from library user records as well as national census datasets were used, where possible, to build an understanding of the relative numbers of library customers / Somerset residents with different protected characteristics for different libraries / library catchments. Statistical tests were used to identify catchments and libraries where groups of people with certain protected characteristics are statistically significantly over-represented or conversely under represented.

1.2.3.4 The relative economic and social value of current libraries was analysed through a range of usage measures, as well as the development of unit costs for current libraries.

1.2.4 A large range of statistical data has been used to support the assessment, and various technical and methodological approaches have been employed in the analysis. Summaries of the statistical data, and details of the technical approaches employed are set out in a range of documents and datasets that have been developed and produced by the library service re-design project team. Links to this information can be found in the Background Papers and Useful Links section at the end of the report.

### 1.3 Proposed service delivery models



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- 1.3.1 The proposals described how we propose to deliver library services in the future. We currently deliver library services through library buildings (including one library in Porlock supported through a community library partnership), online library services, the mobile library service and a home delivery service for housebound customers. The consultation did not propose any changes to the online library services, or the home delivery service.
- 1.3.2 We aim to keep as many library buildings as possible open. However, the consultation proposed that, for a number of libraries, we may require support to do this, through partnerships with local communities. The consultation proposals for some communities set out an 'either / or' approach to delivering the statutory duty in the future – either (wherever possible) by maintaining library buildings through community library partnerships, or (where we are unable to achieve this) through alternative mobile and / or outreach services. In other communities, no changes to existing library buildings were proposed. The statutory duty therefore would continue to be delivered by maintaining a library building in that community into the future.
- 1.3.3 We used the term 'Community Library Partnership' to describe the proposals to maintain library buildings through partnerships with local communities. We approached the consultation with a completely open mind as to how a community could support its library – every situation will be unique, as every community is unique. A community library partnership could mean a community taking on buildings and staff, volunteers working in the library, or financial support - for example through a parish precept – towards the cost of the library. Support would be provided for any community wanting to take on their library with training and ongoing technical support, the provision of book stock (including a regular supply of new books) and ICT equipment. Over and above this, it was proposed that funding of £5,000 per annum would be available to support community library partnerships in some communities – those that have more difficulty accessing alternative library buildings, or where local needs are higher. Communities could commission the County Council to continue to manage and run a library building in their area rather than take on full responsibility for managing it, and the funding and support described above would be equally applicable in this potential scenario. Many other potential models, which could involve sharing various responsibilities could be considered. The County Council aimed to be as flexible as possible.
- 1.3.4 Putting the Libraries Service onto a sustainable financial footing means that all community library partnerships would need to reduce the Council's costs and be viable within the resources available to the library service in the future.
- 1.3.5 Some of the proposals were likely to present difficult choices for some communities. Where communities felt unable to provide sufficient

support to keep a building open, alternative library services would be provided - such as library outreach services, online library services or mobile library services.

## 1.4 Consultation process

- 1.4.1 The public consultation was initially proposed to run for 12 weeks to the 22nd April 2018. Following feedback from the public and stakeholder groups who were requesting further information and more time to consider their response, the consultation was subsequently extended until 13th June 2018.
- 1.4.2 The proposals and background information were made available publicly online; in paper form in each of Somerset's 34 libraries; and, upon application, in other formats e.g. braille and different languages. Details of the consultation and the dates of consultation events were sent to a wide range of individuals and groups, including local press. The events were promoted extensively on social media, to Parish and Town Councils, library customers, small business associations, and particular equalities groups through Compass Disability and the Somerset Equalities Officer Group.
- 1.4.3 An article including advance information about the public consultation was delivered to each household in Somerset in the 'Your Somerset' newsletter in December 2017. People and organisations were encouraged to respond via an online or paper questionnaire. The questionnaire allowed for the collection and analysis of empirical data, as well as gathering feedback on the proposals and alternative ideas through 'free text' responses. An email address was also available to enable people to give more detailed or specific responses.
- 1.4.4 Nineteen drop-in events in, or nearby to, each community that could be significantly affected by the proposals were organised. These events provided an opportunity for interested parties to ask questions about the proposals or hold discussions with members of the Libraries Service management team, prior to individuals giving their views through the questionnaire or email address provided.
- 1.4.5 Feedback from Libraries Service staff is also very important in shaping any final decisions on the future delivery of library services, and this has been facilitated through a separate staff consultation exercise. This ran in parallel to the public consultation. The consultation gathered feedback on the same proposals, and staff were able to access the same background information and detail of the proposals through the microsite, or through information in libraries. Staff were asked to give their views on the proposals, the underlying rationale, and to suggest any alternative options. A series of face-to-face staff meetings were held which provided an opportunity for staff to ask questions and discuss the proposals with members of the libraries management team.

## 1.5 Approach to the consultation

- 1.5.1 Initially, respondents were asked to review and comment upon comprehensive area-wide proposals on how library services were to be delivered in the future, the impact that proposed changes would have on themselves, their families and the community, basing their answers on the library which they visit most often.
- 1.5.2 The rationale behind each proposal and the data regarding the evidence gathered for demand, need (deprivation) and access to alternative libraries was provided online and in each library. Further background including a need and access mapping tool were also available online on the purpose-built microsite – <http://somerse libraries.co.uk/redesign/>
- 1.5.3 To provide people with more time to consider the proposals and respond to the consultation, it was announced on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018 that the consultation would be extended until 13th June 2018.
- 1.5.4 At this time, further information was also provided on Community Library Partnerships to allow respondents to fully assess the impacts and the feasibility of the proposals.
- 1.5.5 As well as the provision of further information, upon the announcement of the time extension for the consultation the consultation questionnaire was also reformatted so that consultees were asked to respond and comment about the proposals for their specific library as opposed to the area-wide proposal.
- 1.5.6 Some feedback had also been received from respondents that on some proposals e.g. where there were proposals for the delivery of services either via a Community Library partnership or through additional mobile stops that consultees were not able to express their preference in the either/or option. To enable respondents to indicate their preference for each possible option, the proposals and questionnaire were reformatted so that these options were distinct.
- 1.5.7 Given that the questions to which consultees were responding were changed i.e. from area-wide to proposals for specific libraries and a request for a more detailed response to the either/or options, for analysis purposes, the two questionnaires have been treated as two distinct phases; *phase 1* (the area-wide proposals) and *phase 2* (the library specific proposals).

## 1.6. Promoting the consultation

- 1.6.1 To ensure the maximum possible exposure of the consultation and to encourage the largest possible response, a proactive multi-faceted

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approach was taken to the promotion of the exercise across a number of different channels and media.

- 1.6.2 Promotional posters, the proposals, consultation background material and questionnaires were made available in all libraries and distributed wider within communities.
- 1.6.3 The consultation was promoted to customers and library users through online and physical newsletters.
- 1.6.4 There was extensive national, regional and local media coverage including over 60 articles in local media and promotion in Your Somerset, Somerset County Council's newspaper which is delivered to all households in the county.
- 1.6.5 There was also use of social media to advertise the consultation and questionnaire with 174 posts on the Somerset County Council Twitter feed which garnered 199,208 impressions and 1,700 engagements. The various SCC Facebook pages were also heavily utilised with 127 posts regarding the consultation, which reached 115,682 users and generated 1,686 post clicks and 432 reactions, comments and/or shares.
- 1.6.6 The proposals were heavily promoted by campaign and library Friends groups throughout their communities.
- 1.6.7 The consultation was promoted to specific groups within communities including various stakeholder groups, businesses, schools, District, Town and Parish Councils.
- 1.6.8 In an attempt to ensure that the views of traditionally under-represented areas of the community were captured and considered, specific programmes of activity were developed as part of the consultation process.
  - 1.6.8.1 The views of children and young people were sought through the promotion of the consultation in schools and colleges. In addition, a specific children's questionnaire and a number of focus groups were run in primary school settings.
  - 1.6.8.2 The consultation was promoted to people with disabilities and carers through the Compass Disability Network and in addition two specific focus group events were held with people with disabilities.
  - 1.6.8.3 In order to engage with people of different races and from different ethnic groups, the consultation was promoted through specific groups such as the Mendip Migrant Workers forum and Bridgwater Community English service. The consultation

was also promoted to a range of other groups through direct contacts in these groups.

1.6.8.4 The consultation was also promoted through the Somerset Equality Officers Newsletter to around 130 different Equality organisations.

## 1.7 Analysis of results – approach and methodology

### 1.7.1 Quantitative Analysis

The responses to each phase of the consultation were analysed to quantify the number and type of responses and the expressed level of impact on the individual respondents, their families and their communities. Where applicable the preferred options which were expressed were also measured.

1.7.2 A link to the full breakdown of the quantitative results can be found in the Background Papers and Useful Links section at the end of the report.

### 1.7.3 Equalities Duty

As part of the consultation questionnaire, respondents were requested to provide some information about themselves:

- Whether respondents considered themselves to be from a minority ethnic background;
- whether they had a disability;
- age;
- whether they provided care for anyone disabled or with a long-term illness;
- gender;
- whether their gender identity matched the gender on their Birth Certificate;
- sexual orientation.

1.7.4 The information was used to allow the analysis of responses of specific representative groups and to inform the Equalities Impact Assessment for each library. As noted in 'Promoting the Consultation' section, above, an attempt was made to ensure that those groups within society with protected characteristics engaged with the consultation process.

1.7.5 When analysing the responses to the consultation, it was seen that the 35-64 and 65+ age ranges were over-represented compared to Somerset population and the 18-34 age range under represented compared to Somerset population.

1.7.6 In order to engage directly with the 0-17 year olds, specific questionnaires and focus groups were undertaken. A summary of the views expressed by the young people who responded to the



consultation can be found in the Young People's Consultation section of this report.

- 1.7.7 There was a good level of response received from people stating that they had a disability, and from a range of different sexual identities.
- 1.7.8 Every effort was made to effectively engage with people from a minority ethnic background. This resulted in a higher response rate than for most SCC public consultations.
- 1.7.9 A great deal of information was received on the potential impacts and issues arising from the proposals from people with low incomes, and people who live in rural areas
- 1.7.10 Further information regarding the views expressed concerning the potential impact of the proposals to those with protected characteristics can be found in Equalities Impact Assessments which forms Appendix 4 of the main report, a link to which can be found in the Background Papers and Useful Links section at the end of the report.
- 1.7.11 **Qualitative Analysis**  
As well as a quantitative analysis of the responses, over 13,000 free text comments, comprising nearly half a million words, were analysed to identify the key themes that people were talking about when they responded to the area-wide and library specific proposals.
- 1.7.12 Responses were requested regarding people's views for each proposal; the impact that the proposal would have if implemented; and any alternative suggestions they had. When completing the online consultation questionnaires, respondents were limited to using 400 characters within each free text response box. However, consultees were also afforded the opportunity to submit fuller, more in-depth representations via email and in writing.
- 1.7.13 The qualitative analysis was completed using a framework which analysed each comment according to:
- 1.7.13.1 Context (does the comment refer to own, another library or to the library service in general);
  - 1.7.13.2 sentiment (is the comment supportive / neutral / negative in tone);
  - 1.7.13.3 theme – based on an early review of comments, a number of key themes emerged:
    - Service Delivery;
    - Funding/Financial;
    - Access (Transport, Physical access to the building & On-line access);

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- Disadvantage/Discrimination (sub-themes identified from initial Equalities Impact Assessments).

1.7.14 The analysis was completed by a team of reviewers who allocated a numeric response against all the relevant contexts, sentiment and themes.

1.7.15 In addition, a key word search was completed against the main themes to highlight the subject areas of most concern to each library (in a ratio of total comments made to avoid skewed results). The key word results were used to identify views, impacts, suggestions for each library and library area.

1.7.16 The same approach was used to analyse the emailed and letter responses from individuals and organisations and the feedback garnered at drop-in events.

1.7.17 The information gleaned from the above analysis (the views, impacts and suggestions from individual respondents and organisations), has been used to inform the final proposals and assess the impacts of their implementation. The key themes emerging from the responses for each library can be found in the section below.

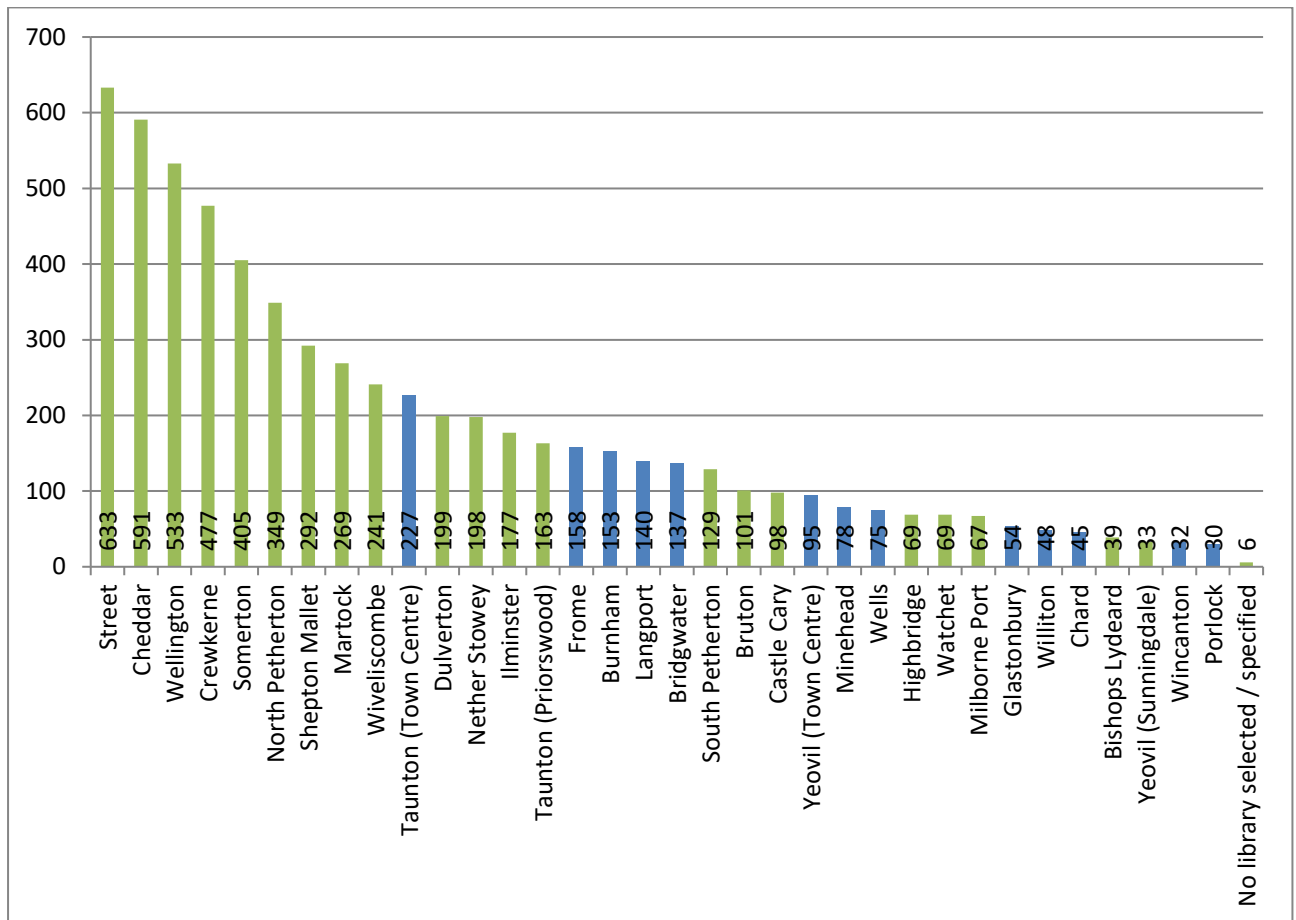


## PART 2 – Results of analysis of responses

### 2.1 Numbers of valid responses

During the consultation period, 6,410 valid online and paper-based questionnaires were completed. As part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate which library they used most often. If they were not current library users, they were asked to indicate which library was closest to them.

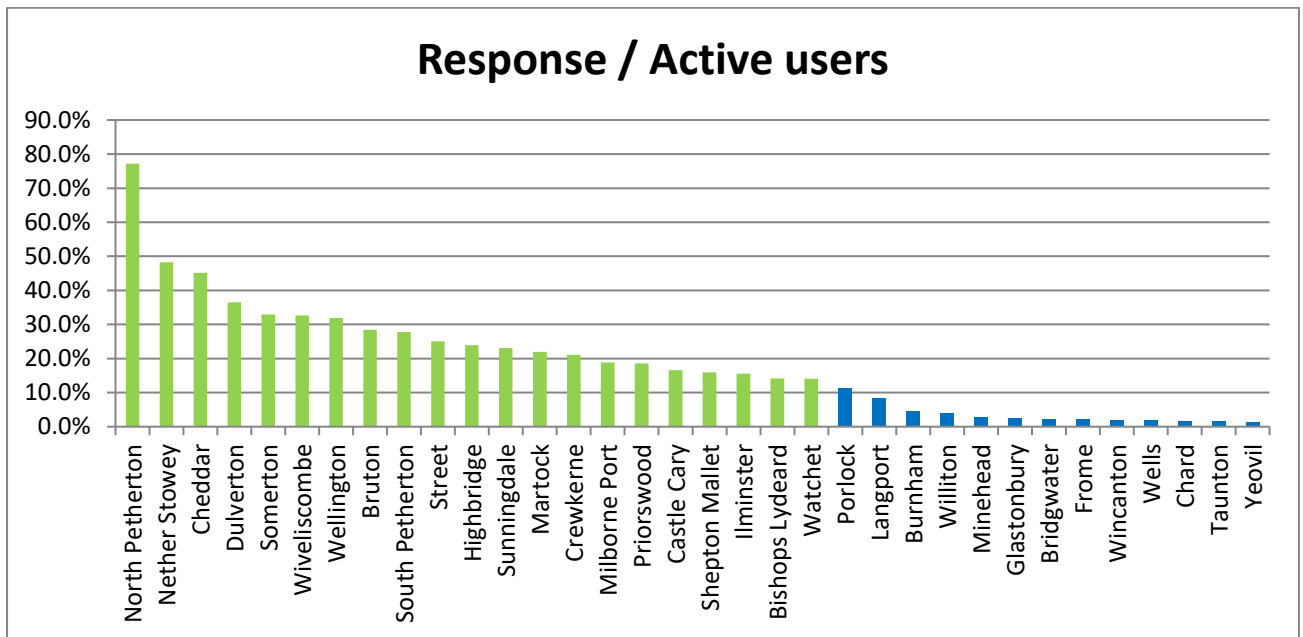
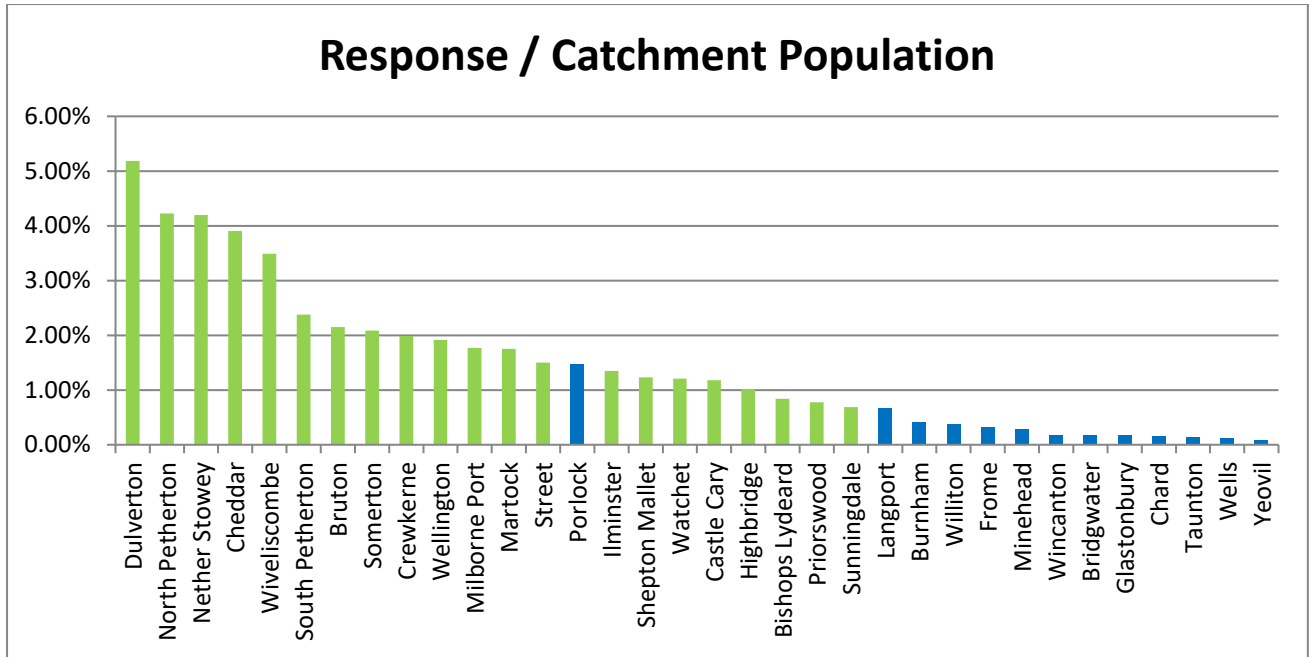
The number of responses, by library, are shown below:



The libraries in blue indicate where no change to service delivery was proposed. No change also includes the addition of outreach services to supplement delivery.

As can be seen by the graph, above, despite a great deal of promotion via a number of different media and through various stakeholder groups, levels of response to the consultation were not uniformly consistent across libraries.

The graphs below indicate that proposals of no change to the services provided by a library had an effect on the number of consultation responses received. The graphs below show that for the 13 libraries where no changes were proposed, the number of responses received was correspondingly much lower.



## 2.2 Different types of response (staff, petitions, drop in events, etc.)

As detailed above, the consultation was extensively promoted, and all library users and wider members of the community were encouraged to complete the questionnaire either online or in paper form. The views of members of the public and representative groups were also received in a number of different ways and formats.

2.2.1 The number and type of responses can be seen below:

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- 2.2.2 6,410 online and paper questionnaires were completed by members of the public and representative groups.
- 2.2.3 198 individual responses were received, predominantly via letter or email.
- 2.2.4 There were 117 responses from individual organisations, including Friends Groups, Town and District Councils.
- 2.2.5 Seven petitions were received from various communities in support of their local library with a total of 3,867 signatures.
- 2.2.6 Nineteen drop-in events were held in potentially affected communities which were attended by an estimated 1,470 attendees. In these facilitated events, people were not only encouraged to complete consultation questionnaires, but group discussions were held, and attendees' views and opinions were sought and obtained to inform the consultation process.
- 2.2.7 A further 11 public meetings were held in a number of communities which were attended by an estimated 600 - 700 attendees.
- 2.2.8 A total of 45 meetings were held with key stakeholders, including town and parish councils and Friends groups which were attended by c. 40 different stakeholder groups.
- 2.2.9 185 young people's questionnaires were received, with a further 104 written responses submitted by children.
- 2.2.10 A separate staff consultation was undertaken in parallel with the public process. 70 responses were received from staff and a further 18 staff meetings and workshops were held to discuss the proposals and to obtain the views of the staff on the proposals.

### 2.3 Awareness of different services

As an introduction to the questionnaire, respondents to the questionnaire were asked to indicate to what extent did they know about services offered by the Libraries Service other than book lending, namely;

#### 2.3.1 Reading

- EBooks/EAudio
- EMagazines
- Author Events

#### 2.3.2 Digital

- Free computer use
- Digital Skills – UKOnline sessions/Code Clubs
- Free access to the Internet & Wifi
- Access to new technology e.g. 3D printing

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### 2.3.3 Children and Young People

- Activities for school aged children e.g. Lego Clubs/Reading Challenges
- Activities for parents and under-fives e.g. BookStart/Baby Boogie sessions
- Services for teenagers and young adults e.g. Pioneers group; gaming events

### 2.3.4 Stronger Communities

- Opportunities to join a Library Friends group
- Social and cultural events e.g. knit & natter groups; Library Theatre events
- Conversation Café
- Volunteering in libraries

### 2.3.5 Health and Wellbeing

- Books On Prescription
- Wellbeing Zones
- Home library service

### 2.3.6 Economic Growth

- Online Business information resources e.g. Cobra; MINT
- Google Garage online learning sessions

2.4 In total, 6,185 respondents answered this question, the breakdown of their responses, by library can be seen below:

Library	Did you know about the library services								
	I only knew about book lending		I knew about some		I knew about most		I knew about all		Number
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	
<b>Bishops Lydeard</b>	1	2.6%	15	38.5%	19	48.7%	4	10.3%	39
<b>Bridgwater</b>	1	0.8%	47	35.3%	65	48.9%	20	15.0%	133
<b>Bruton</b>	2	2.0%	40	40.4%	51	51.5%	6	6.1%	99
<b>Burnham</b>	6	4.1%	39	26.4%	86	58.1%	17	11.5%	148
<b>Castle Cary</b>	6	6.4%	29	30.9%	49	52.1%	10	10.6%	94
<b>Chard</b>	1	2.4%	15	36.6%	21	51.2%	4	9.8%	41
<b>Cheddar</b>	14	2.4%	148	25.8%	328	57.1%	84	14.6%	574
<b>Crewkerne</b>	6	1.3%	146	31.7%	249	54.1%	59	12.8%	460
<b>Dulverton</b>	2	1.0%	46	23.8%	120	62.2%	25	13.0%	193
<b>Frome</b>	3	1.9%	40	25.8%	90	58.1%	22	14.2%	155
<b>Glastonbury</b>	1	2.0%	14	28.6%	28	57.1%	6	12.2%	49
<b>Highbridge</b>	2	3.0%	29	43.3%	25	37.3%	11	16.4%	67
<b>Ilminster</b>	5	3.0%	55	32.5%	95	56.2%	14	8.3%	169
<b>Langport</b>	3	2.2%	39	28.7%	81	59.6%	13	9.6%	136
<b>Martock</b>	2	0.8%	89	34.4%	140	54.1%	28	10.8%	259
<b>Milborne Port</b>	2	3.1%	13	20.0%	42	64.6%	8	12.3%	65
<b>Minehead</b>	3	3.8%	25	32.1%	36	46.2%	14	17.9%	78
<b>Nether Stowey</b>	7	3.6%	59	30.4%	96	49.5%	32	16.5%	194
<b>North Petherton</b>	39	11.3%	151	43.6%	129	37.3%	27	7.8%	346
<b>Porlock</b>	0	0.0%	6	20.7%	14	48.3%	9	31.0%	29
<b>Shepton Mallet</b>	6	2.2%	82	29.8%	151	54.9%	36	13.1%	275
<b>Somerton</b>	9	2.3%	114	29.3%	209	53.7%	57	14.7%	389
<b>South Petherton</b>	2	1.6%	63	50.0%	56	44.4%	5	4.0%	126
<b>Street</b>	17	2.8%	161	26.1%	326	52.9%	112	18.2%	616

APPENDIX 3: REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Library	Did you know about the library services								
	I only knew about book lending		I knew about some		I knew about most		I knew about all		Number
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	
Taunton (Priorswood)	8	5.1%	48	30.4%	82	51.9%	20	12.7%	158
Taunton (Town Centre)	8	3.6%	70	31.7%	108	48.9%	35	15.8%	221
Watchet	3	4.4%	18	26.5%	40	58.8%	7	10.3%	68
Wellington	5	1.0%	134	26.2%	297	58.1%	75	14.7%	511
Wells	2	2.7%	22	30.1%	40	54.8%	9	12.3%	73
Williton	0	0.0%	8	17.4%	25	54.3%	13	28.3%	46
Wincanton	0	0.0%	3	10.0%	19	63.3%	8	26.7%	30
Wiveliscombe	4	1.8%	53	24.0%	133	60.2%	31	14.0%	221
Yeovil (Sunningdale)	5	16.1%	10	32.3%	12	38.7%	4	12.9%	31
Yeovil (Town Centre)	3	3.3%	41	44.6%	40	43.5%	8	8.7%	92
<b>Total</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>1872</b>	<b>30.3%</b>	<b>3302</b>	<b>53.4%</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>13.5%</b>	<b>6,185</b>

- 2.4.1 As can be seen by the table, above, the most popular response was that users ‘Knew about most’ services provided by the library (53.4% of responses). The libraries where the most respondents ‘knew about all’ of the services were Porlock (31.0%, n.9), Williton (28.3%, n.13) and Wincanton (26.2%, n.8).
- 2.4.2 The libraries where the most respondents ‘only knew about book lending’ were Yeovil Sunningdale (16.1%, n.5), North Petherton (11.3%, n.39) and Castle Cary (6.4%, n.6).
- 2.4.3 This feedback will be used to identify areas where the full range of library services need to be promoted more extensively and to develop future service delivery.

## 2.5 Views on the proposals

2.5.1 As noted, above, respondents to the consultation were asked to comment on each proposal. In phase 1 on the area-wide proposals and in phase 2 of the consultation, on the proposals for each respondent's chosen library.

Views were requested for each respective proposal;

- the impact that the proposals would have on individuals;
- the impact on their families and
- the impact on their community if implemented.
- Any further comments on the proposals and
- any suggestions or ideas for alternative proposals.

2.5.2 The level of response was not consistent across all libraries. Proposals for no changes to service provision undoubtedly had a negative effect on the level of response for those respective libraries.

2.5.3 A number of consistent key themes became apparent across each library and each library area.

2.5.4 Overwhelmingly, respondents were against changes to the library provision for their libraries and for their library area. Many expressed support for potentially affected libraries other than their own most used or nearest library. Respondents generally did not agree with the rationale for the consultation proposals and did not generally consider that there was a rational case for library closures.

2.5.5 Where respondents were asked to express their preference for Community Library Partnership or mobile options, there was an overwhelming preference for the partnership option.

2.5.6 Library users and respondents in general do not think of the library as purely a book lending service and see the value of the wider services provided by the Library Service.

2.5.8 Many consultees spoke of how the local library provided a heart to the community and helped to alleviate social issues such as loneliness and social isolation. Many responded regarding the health and educational benefits of the Library Service, especially to the vulnerable, elderly and those in full-time education.

2.5.9 One recurring theme was that the IT facilities and infrastructure that the library provides are invaluable to those without these services at home. Respondents thought that the closure of library buildings or a move to a mobile only provision would impact most heavily on those on low income and the elderly.

2.5.10 The paucity of reliable public transport in Somerset was generally felt to be a substantial barrier to the ability of many users to access alternative



library buildings should their local library building close. Many users expressed the importance of being able to walk to their local library.

- 2.5.11 Although some understanding and empathy was expressed regarding the current financial situation of Somerset County Council, many respondents were categorically against closures of library buildings as a point of principle and believed that savings should be found in other ways. A number of suggestions were forthcoming from respondents regarding the potential for future income generation opportunities to make the service more sustainable. Many consultees suggested the introduction of membership and book borrowing fees as well as commenting on the potential to raise income through sharing library buildings and implementing café concessions.
- 2.5.12 Mixed views were expressed on the use of volunteers with some areas supporting their use to supplement paid staff while others were against it as they thought that service quality would be adversely affected. Some communities responded that the use of volunteers would not be sustainable as they already deliver a number of services locally and the supply of volunteers is limited.
- 2.5.13 The increasing future need for library services was also a recurring theme due to the level of planned housing development within communities. Feedback suggested that the requirement for a library would increase in communities due to the increasing populations and not diminish.
- 2.5.14 The main themes of the views expressed regarding the proposals, the impacts and suggestions for alternative proposals for each library on the respective proposals are shown below.

## 2.6 Area 1: Western Somerset

### 2.7 Proposals for Dulverton

#### Phase 1

##### Option a

- Provide library services through either a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Dulverton (supported by some funding from the County Council), or an additional mobile library stop.

##### Option b

- No change to existing library services.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Dulverton	Option a	63.3% 76	21.7% 26	3.3% 4	5.0% 6	6.7% 8	100.0% 120
	Option b	2.4% 3		0.8% 1	7.3% 9	89.4% 110	100.0% 123

#### Phase 2

##### Option 3a

- No change to existing library services.

##### Option 3b

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Dulverton (supported by some funding from the County Council).

##### Option 3c

- Provide library services through an additional mobile library stop in Dulverton (at least once a month). This would mean the closure of the current library building.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal

Library	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
Dulverton	Q3a	1.4% 1			1.4% 1	97.1% 68	100.0% 70
	Q3b	28.4% 19	23.9% 16	23.9% 16	13.4% 9	10.4% 7	100.0% 67
	Q3c	89.9% 62	2.9% 2	4.3% 3	1.4% 1	1.4% 1	100.0% 69

- 2.7.1 There were 128 Respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Dulverton was their most used or nearest library and a further 71 Respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Dulverton library.
- 2.7.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions**
- 2.7.3 Respondents indicated that poor transport links would limit library users' ability to access alternative provision.
- 2.7.4 Those who provided their view said that it is well used and there should be no change to the provision of service. The library is seen as a 'hub' of the community and an integral part of community life. Many groups benefit from the services offered - young and old alike and provides a meeting place for general socialising.

*"Dulverton library and the many services it offers are a life line for members of this community. It provides many opportunities which enhance and enrich our lives."*

- 2.7.5 There was general opposition to a mobile proposal. There was a concern that not all services currently delivered by the Libraries Service would be able to be delivered by a mobile library and older, less able-bodied users would struggle with access to mobile provision. The loss of the Wi-Fi and public access computers would affect many users due to poor local broadband connections.
- 2.7.6 The view on Community Library Partnerships was that it was better than no library at all, although it would be difficult to sustain due to the amount and number of services that are already provided by volunteers locally.
- 2.7.7 A number of suggestions were forthcoming from the community in an attempt to generate more income and make the library more sustainable, including charging for workshops and events and renting out parts of the library building.

## 2.8 Proposals for Minehead

### Phase 1

#### Option a

- No Change to existing library services

#### Option b

- No Change to existing library services\* Difference being the proposals for Dulverton Library

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Minehead	Option a	21.4% 3	35.7% 5	14.3% 2	21.4% 3	7.1% 1	100.0% 14
	Option b	15.4% 2	7.7% 1	7.7% 1	38.5% 5	30.8% 4	100.0% 13

### Phase 2

#### Option 3a

- No change to existing library services.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal

Library	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
Minehead	Q3a	1.6% 1			3.2% 2	95.2% 60	100.0% 63

2.8.1 There were 14 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Minehead was their most used or nearest library and a further 64 Respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Minehead library.

### 2.8.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions

Due to there being proposals for no change to the provision at Minehead library, most of the responses were regarding the proposals for other libraries in the area.

2.8.3 There was concern for users of Dulverton and Watchet libraries suggesting that changes would have a high impact on these already socially deprived areas.

*“Yet another nail in West Somerset's coffin at a time of increasing demand for services - libraries cost relatively little but can save on social care and provide a hub for information including from the council and its officers.”*

- 2.8.4 There was concern regarding the poor transport connectivity from potentially affected areas and due to their rurality, it was stated that Dulverton should have a fully staffed, funded library as users in that community would struggle to access alternative provision.
- 2.8.5 Generally, it was held that libraries are a vital part of the fabric of communities and offer a very valuable service to those who enjoy reading.
- 2.8.6 Users value the library in Minehead and the services that it currently provides regarding them as essential.

## 2.9 Proposals for Porlock

### Phase 1

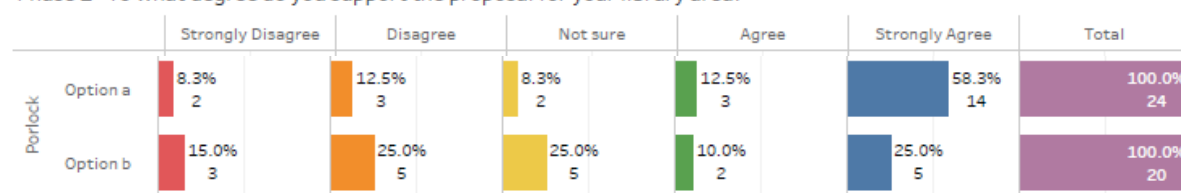
#### Option a

- No Change to existing library services

#### Option b

- No Change to existing library services\* Difference being the proposals for Dulverton Library

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



### Phase 2

#### Option 3a

- No change to existing library services.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



- 2.9.1 There were 25 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Porlock was their most used or nearest library and a further 5 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Porlock library.
- 2.9.2 **Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions**  
This represented the lowest response by library and was indicative of the no change proposal for the local library service provision.

- 2.9.3 The stated view was that it is currently very successfully run by volunteers and should be allowed to continue in its current form.

*“It would be a great shame to close this community- run Library, which has struggled - and succeeded - in becoming a community hub, providing so much more than Library services to this elderly and isolated community.”*

- 2.9.4 The library services provide a hub to the community and that mobile provision would not meet the needs of the community.

- 2.9.5 There was only one comment regarding other libraries within the area-wide proposal which expressed support for Dulverton library.

## 2.10 Proposals for Watchet

### Phase 1

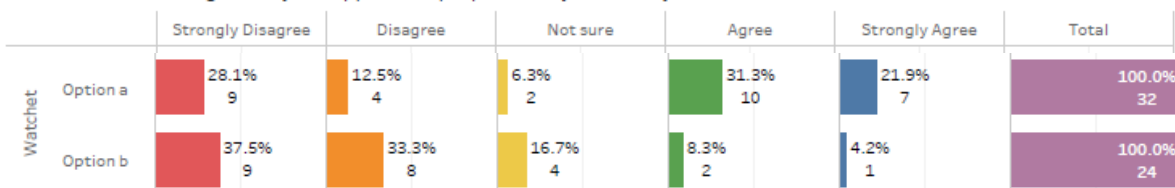
#### Option a

- Provide library services through either: a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Watchet (supported by some funding from the County Council), or by delivering outreach library services (such as events, activities, small book collections and/or public computer terminals via alternative venues), and providing an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

#### Option b\* Difference being the proposals for Dulverton Library

- Provide library services through either: a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Watchet (supported by some funding from the County Council), or by delivering outreach library services (such as events, activities, small book collections and/or public computer terminals via alternative venues), and providing an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



### Phase 2

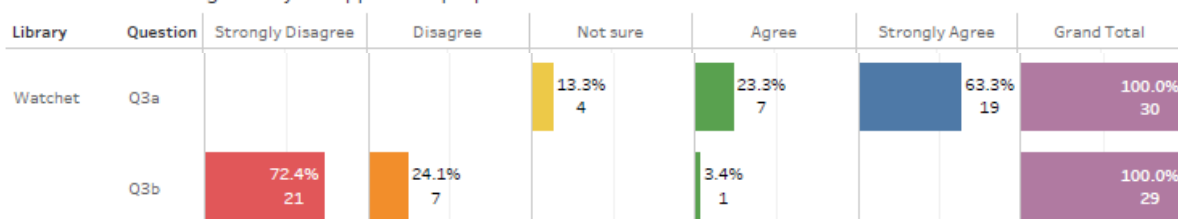
#### Option 3a

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Watchet (supported by some funding from the County Council).

#### Option 3b

- Provide library services by delivering Library Outreach Services (events and activities for young children and health, wellbeing and reading activities for adults) and an additional mobile library stop in Watchet (at least once a month). This would mean the closure of the current library.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal





2.10.1 There were 38 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Watchet was their most used or nearest library and a further 31 Respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Watchet library.

**2.10.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions**

Of those that responded, there was a strong feeling that the library in Watchet should be kept as-is. It was felt that Watchet was already an area of high deprivation and closure of the library would only add to that and further diminish the life chances of the younger population.

*“Watchet needs its library. We are an area of low social mobility residents, children families need to have access to information, reading material, Internet access, it is a centre of local information, a welcoming environment for people Please do not take it away.”*

2.10.3 The view was expressed that Watchet is a growing town with a number of large housing developments in the pipeline, therefore the need for a library in the town would increase and not diminish in the future.

2.10.4 There was no support for a mobile library solution to serve the town. The view was that if it was not possible for the current library provision to continue as it is now then the Community Library was the only possible alternative.

2.10.5 There was good feedback received for the staff of the library.

2.10.6 There were a number of suggestions to jointly/match fund the library between the community and Somerset County Council.

## 2.11 Proposals for Williton

### Phase 1

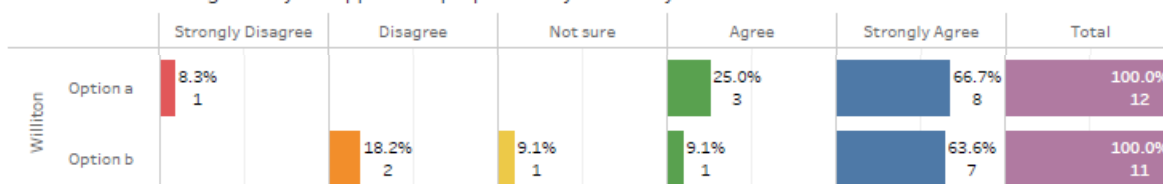
#### Option a

- No change to existing library services.

#### Option b\* Difference being the proposals for Dulverton Library

- No change to existing library services.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



### Phase 2

#### Option 3a

- No change to existing library services

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal

Library	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
Williton	Q3a				11.4% 4	88.6% 31	100.0% 35

2.11.1 There were 12 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Williton was their most used or nearest library and a further 36 Respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Williton library.

### 2.11.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions

The relatively low number of responses is reflective of the no change proposal for Williton library.

2.11.3 Overall, the respondents were pleased that there were no changes proposed for Williton. The responses reflected the view that the Library has a vital role to play within the community.

2.11.4 Respondents felt that the library is a hub for the village and community of all ages who benefit from a wide variety of services. There was concern for the future of other library services in the area-wide proposal – it was felt that a two mile walk from Watchet to Williton may not be possible for many in the community.

“This library connects to the whole village community from the elderly and infirm in the Care Home to both schools to the babies and young children to the ordinary villager all of whom enjoy a wide variety of activities as well as books.”

## 2.12 Area 1 Summary

### Dulverton

- Poor transport links limit ability to access alternative libraries
- The library is the ‘Hub’ of the community and should be retained
- A mobile-only solution would not deliver all required services

### Minehead

- Concern for potentially affected libraries
- Users welcome the ‘no change’ proposal for Minehead

### Porlock

- The library is currently successfully run by the community
- Library acts as a community ‘Hub’

### Watchet

- In an area of high deprivation where there is a need for library services, the library should be retained
- Watchet is a growing town and the need for a library will increase in the future
- The staff at the library are extremely well valued
- There was some support expressed for a Community Library Partnership

### Williton

- Library is seen as a centre of the community
- Concern about the ability of some users of Watchet library to access Williton library

## 2.13 Area 2: Taunton, Wellington and Surrounding Area

### 2.14 Proposals for Bishops Lydeard

#### Phase 1

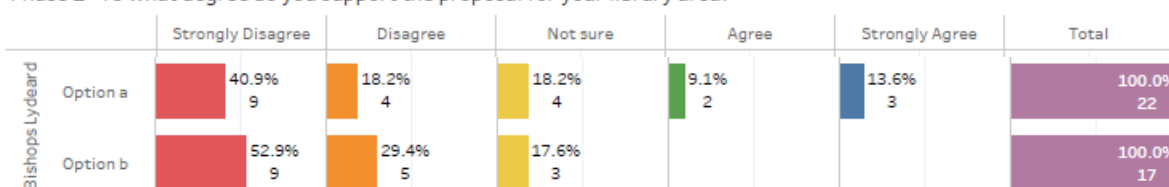
##### Option a

- Provide library services through either a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Bishops Lydeard, or an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building,

##### Option b\* Difference being the proposals for Dulverton Library

- Provide library services through either a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Bishops Lydeard, or an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



#### Phase 2

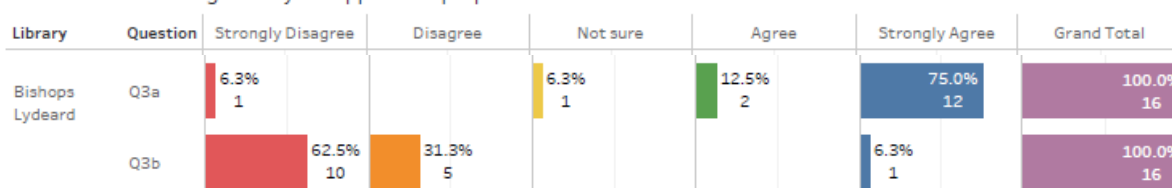
##### Option 3a

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Bishops Lydeard.

##### Option 3b

- Provide library services through an additional mobile library stop in Bishops Lydeard (at least once a month). This would mean the closure of the current library building.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.14.1 There were 23 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Bishops Lydeard was their most used or nearest library and a further 16 respondents in Phase 2 to the proposals for Bishops Lydeard library.

**2.14.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions**

There was a minimal response to the consultation from users of Bishops Lydeard library and those who responded that Bishops Lydeard was their nearest library.

2.14.3 There was a general acceptance of the County Council's financial position and that changes needed to be made to all services delivered, including the Libraries Service.

2.14.4 Although a minimal response, the consensus view was that there was a preference for a Community Library Partnership over a mobile solution.

2.14.5 There was a feeling that mobile only provision would have an adverse impact on those who currently use the library in Bishops Lydeard in that some may struggle to travel to Taunton for access to library services other than the book lending facilities available from the mobile service.

2.14.6 People responded that the internet and broadband services are poor locally and the loss of the public access computers and free broadband would impact on those without private provision.

2.14.7 It was said that the library is currently used by young people and their families who may not be able to access mobile services at the allotted time which would limit the experience of browsing the library and choosing books.

2.14.8 There was a feeling that due to the amount of house building in the pipeline locally that library services should be increased and not diminished.

## 2.15 Proposals for Taunton

### Phase 1

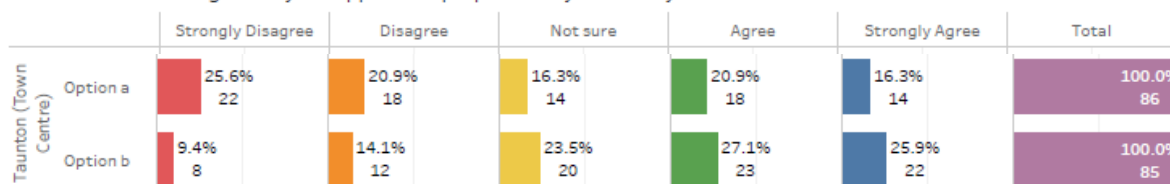
#### Option a

- No Change, additional outreach services

#### Option b\* Difference being the proposals for Wellington Library

- No Change, additional outreach services

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



### Phase 2

#### Option 3a

- No Change, additional outreach services

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal

Library	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
Taunton (Town Centre)	Q3a	2.2% 3		0.7% 1	10.2% 14	86.9% 119	100.0% 137

2.15.1 There were 89 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Taunton was their most used or nearest library and a further 138 Respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Taunton library.

### 2.15.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions

There was general pleasure expressed that there is no change proposed for Taunton library, although there was a view that the area's services will be adversely affected by the proposals.

2.15.3 There were worries expressed about the proposals for Priorswood, Wiveliscombe and Wellington Libraries.

2.15.4 It was said that the Priorswood area has high levels of deprivation and should be serviced by a library building.

2.15.5 There was a strong view that the Wellington library should be retained. The town is expanding, and a building should be retained within the town.

2.15.6 There was a view that Wiveliscombe library should be retained as it has the highest usage per head of catchment and a town the size of Wiveliscombe would not be serviced adequately by mobile provision.

2.15.7 Some support for outreach services instead of smaller libraries was expressed, although there was also a view that libraries should be properly funded.





## 2.16 Proposals for Priorswood

### Phase 1

#### Option a

- Provide library services through either a partnership with the local community to maintain the current library in Priorswood, or by delivering outreach library services (such as events, activities, small book collections and/or public computer terminals via alternative venues). We will work with our Family Support service, and other partners, to do this. This could include maintaining some library resources (such as book collections or public computer terminals) at the current library site, or it may mean the closure of the current library, with library services being provided in other ways.

#### Option b\* Difference being the proposals for Wellington Library

- Provide library services through either a partnership with the local community to maintain the current library in Priorswood, or by delivering outreach library services (such as events, activities, small book collections and/or public computer terminals via alternative venues). We will work with our Family Support service, and other partners, to do this. This could include maintaining some library resources (such as book collections or public computer terminals) at the current library site, or it may mean the closure of the current library, with library services being provided in other ways.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Taunton (Priorswood) Option a	36.1% 22	19.7% 12	14.8% 9	11.5% 7	18.0% 11	100.0% 61
Taunton (Priorswood) Option b	47.3% 26	20.0% 11	16.4% 9	5.5% 3	10.9% 6	100.0% 55

### Phase 2

#### Option 3a

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Priorswood.

#### Option 3b

- Provide library services by delivering Library Outreach Services (events and activities for children and technology activities for adults). We will work with our Family Support service, and other partners, to do this. This could include maintaining some library resources (such as small book collections or public computer terminals) at the current library site, or it may mean the closure of the current library.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal

Library	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
Taunton (Priorswood)	Q3a	11.2% 11	1.0% 1	10.2% 10	19.4% 19	58.2% 57	100.0% 98
	Q3b	46.9% 46	27.6% 27	17.3% 17	5.1% 5	3.1% 3	100.0% 98

2.16.1 There were 64 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Priorswood was their most used or nearest library and a further 99 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Priorswood library.

**2.16.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions**

Of those that responded to the consultation there was a strong feeling that the library should continue as it is.

2.16.3 It was felt that the library acts as a hub for the community. Respondents feel that the library is much more than a building with books; it helps engenders pride in the community and pulls people together.

*“Every time I go into the library there are always other uses either borrowing books or using the facilities. Priorswood is a small self sufficient community and a library acts as one of its hubs.”*

2.16.4 Respondents indicated that the area has a high elderly and disabled population who would have issues in accessing services in the Taunton main library. As well as the physical access issues that any changes to local library services may bring, it was stated that public transport is expensive and Priorswood is a low-income area, therefore many members of the community would be disadvantaged.

2.16.5 The respondents highlighted Priorswood as an area of low employment and that services are required for those looking for work and applying for Universal Credit online. It was felt that lower levels of income and employment would mean that access to computer and internet services is required more than in more affluent areas.

2.16.6 There was strong support for the use of volunteers to safeguard local library services.

2.16.7 There was opposition to the provision of library services through a mobile service. There was a view that mobile provision would limit children’s access to books.

## 2.17 Proposals for Wellington

### Phase 1

#### Option a

- Provide library services through either: a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Wellington (supported by some funding from the County Council), or by delivering outreach library services (such as events, activities, small book collections and/or public computer terminals via alternative venues), and providing one or more additional mobile library stops. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

#### Option b

- No Change to existing library services

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Wellington	Option a	72.1% 173	17.1% 41	5.4% 13	2.9% 7	2.5% 6	100.0% 240
	Option b	4.5% 11	2.5% 6	3.7% 9	7.8% 19	81.6% 199	100.0% 244

### Phase 2

#### Option 3a

- No change to existing library services. Under this option, the library in Wellington could relocate to a different suitable building in the town centre, but it could also remain in the current building.

#### Option 3b

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Wellington (supported by some funding from the County Council).

#### Option 3c

- Provide library services by delivering Library Outreach Services (events and activities for children and adults, and public internet access) and providing an additional mobile library stop in Wellington (at least twice a month). This would mean the closure of the current library building.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal

Library	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
Wellington	Q3a	0.4% 1	0.4% 1		4.7% 13	94.6% 263	100.0% 278
	Q3b	23.2% 59	20.5% 52	28.7% 73	15.7% 40	11.8% 30	100.0% 254
	Q3c	72.3% 185	16.0% 41	6.3% 16	1.6% 4	3.9% 10	100.0% 256

2.17.1 There were 253 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Wellington was their most used or nearest library and a further 280 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Wellington library.

2.17.2 This represents the third largest response by library.

### **2.17.3 Views**

There was a good understanding and appreciation of the council's financial position and an acceptance of the need to make savings.

2.17.4 There was strongest support for the no change option; the library is well used and well loved. The group activities delivered at the library building address many issues for younger and older people.

2.17.5 People responded that the free access to books and internet are a lifeline for many in society and particularly vital for those on a low income who are unable to otherwise access these resources.

2.17.6 The general view was that if changes had to be made to library service provision in Wellington, then there was little, or no support expressed for the mobile solution with outreach services. There was some cautious support for a Community Library Partnership if there was no other viable alternative.

2.17.7 Responses highlighted how it was essential that all are encouraged to use library services and that services to the most vulnerable in society must be prioritised.

### **2.17.8 Impacts**

The overwhelming view was that the town would be a much poorer place as a result of any change, especially with the loss of the library building. The town centre has already been affected by closure of banks and a number of shops and the loss of the library would be of further detriment to the town centre.

2.17.9 Many views were expressed that Wellington is a growing town and a great deal of new housing development is being planned. The effect of this would be that library services would be needed in the future more than ever.

2.17.10 There was a view that closure of the library would affect the most vulnerable in society. It was said that the library building is a hub for the town and surrounding areas and prevents social isolation which is felt to be a significant health risk.

2.17.11 If the closure of the library were to happen, many respondents spoke about the impact that would have on their ability to access alternative provision. The requirement to pay £6.60 return to Taunton on the bus could be cost prohibitive for those on low income or who are unemployed. For those who are less mobile carrying heavy books to and from and on

the bus may impact on their ability to use the library and many said that they wouldn't use Taunton library as an alternative.

2.17.12 Views were expressed that one impact of Wellington library users travelling to Taunton would be that more congestion and pollution would be created.

**2.17.13 Suggestions**

Many alternative suggestions to the proposed options were received.

2.17.14 Several responses suggested that a move to an alternative building that is cheaper to run would make the service more sustainable, especially if space was shared with partners.

*"I think Wellington Library could be more of a community hub with children's area, community cafe and meeting rooms for courses and communities. Look at Cullompton and Exeter for example. Use one of the bigger redundant buildings in Wellington."*

2.17.15 It was said that the use of different opening hours may make the use of library services more appealing to users and may make the library more sustainable.

2.17.16 There was a view that the services provided by libraries should be promoted more to generate more interest. SCC should consider more joint working with other groups to share space to receive income. Some suggested potential partners including Health services, schools and Somerset Skills and Learning.

2.17.17 There was a view that libraries should be funded adequately, but to generate some income, charging for some services should be considered.

2.17.18 It was felt that corporately, Somerset County Council should be doing more to reduce wastage and inefficiency.

## 2.18 Proposals for Wiveliscombe

### Phase 1

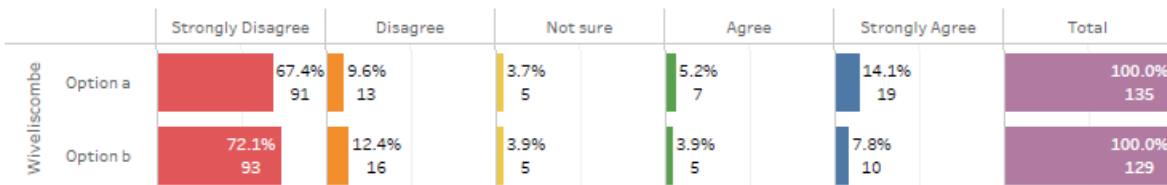
#### Option a

- Provide library services through either: a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Wiveliscombe (supported by some funding from the County Council), or an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

#### Option b\* Difference being the proposals for Wellington Library

- Provide library services through either: a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Wiveliscombe (supported by some funding from the County Council), or an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



### Phase 2

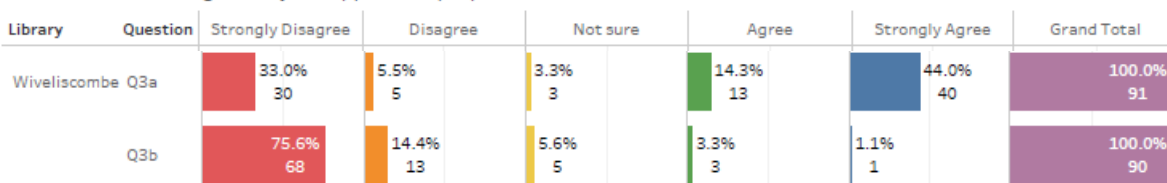
#### Option 3a

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Wiveliscombe (supported by some funding from the County Council).

#### Option 3b

- Provide library services through an additional mobile library stop in Wiveliscombe (at least once a month). This would mean the closure of the current library building.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.18.1 There were 145 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Wiveliscombe was their most used or nearest library and a further 96 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Wiveliscombe library.



### 2.18.2 Views

Strong views were expressed that the library in Wiveliscombe should be retained and fully funded by the county council. There was limited engagement with the stated options from the proposals.

2.18.3 Views were expressed that there is an extremely poor bus service to alternative library buildings, including no service between Wiveliscombe and Wellington.

2.18.4 A mobile library was thought to be too restrictive to users and would in no way serve the needs of a community the size of Wiveliscombe. There is a social aspect of the library building with many in the community using it which would be lost if it went to a mobile-only solution.

2.18.5 There was some very good feedback for the library staff and views were expressed that they could not be replaced by well-meaning volunteers. Furthermore, it was stated that volunteer resources are limited in the area due to other volunteer run services, so there were serious doubts over the viability and sustainability of a community run solution.

*“The Wiveliscombe community already help with different things eg Wivey Link, toilets, Recreation ground etc and this option would put more pressure on the people of Wiveliscombe.*

2.18.6 Given the number of cuts to services over the last number of years in the area, there is a feeling that the community in Wiveliscombe are getting a ‘poor deal’ for the council tax that they pay.

### 2.18.7 Impact

It was thought that the removal of a professional library service would have severe impacts on the community and would diminish the quality of life within the town. Consultees responded that the loss of the building would impact on those without IT facilities at home, or with poor IT literacy skills. The People’s Network computers use, Wi-Fi and support of trained library staff is thought to be invaluable

2.18.8 Views were expressed that the loss of a library building would have an adverse impact on social isolation and loneliness locally. It is felt that there are already serious issues with child literacy levels in the town which a change to service provision would exacerbate.

2.18.9 A number of letters were received from local school children asking for the library to be kept open and expressing the impacts that closure would have on them.



**2.18.10 Suggestions**

Suggestions were made in an attempt to secure the longer-term future for the library. There were suggestions that SCC should do something about the high rent that has to be paid for the library building. There was a view that SCC should try to negotiate better terms with the landlord and/or look for alternative premises.

2.18.11 There was some support for the use of volunteer staff to supplement paid staff.

2.18.12 In order to make services more sustainable, it was felt that the County Council should consider raising council taxes and cut unnecessary council expenditure and should consider starting charging for some services provided by the Libraries Service.

## 2.19 Area 2 Summary

### Bishops Lydeard

- Respondents generally disagreed with proposals that meant the library would close
- Users may struggle to access alternative provision
- Mobile services may not be accessible to young people and their families
- Planned housing development will affect demand in the future

### Taunton

- Expressions of support for Priorswood, Wiveliscombe and Wellington libraries
- Some support for Outreach services in Taunton

### Priorswood

- More respondents disagreed with proposals that meant the library would close than agreed with these proposals
- High elderly and disabled population who may have difficulty in accessing alternative provision
- Area of high deprivation and unemployment, IT services are required to access Universal Credit
- Opposition to outreach solution as it would not carry the full range of services

### Wellington

- Strong support expressed for 'no change' option
- The town has already suffered from a number of closures on the High Street
- Public transport is expensive and may not be conducive to some for carrying heavy books
- Suggestions for alternative premises and sharing space in the library

### Wiveliscombe

- Strong disagreement with proposals that meant the library would close.
- Poor public transport locally, inability to access alternative libraries
- Closure would have an adverse impact on social isolation and child literacy
- Strong representation from school children to retain a library building

## 2.20 Area 3: Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea and Surrounding Area

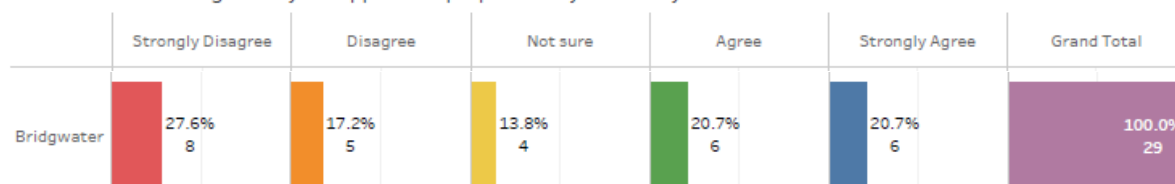
### 2.21 Proposals for Bridgwater

#### Phase 1

##### Option a

- Existing library services will continue to be provided at Bridgwater Library. We will continue to explore the potential to share space with other organisations and/or partners, in order to save money. We propose to provide additional outreach library services (such as events, activities, small book collections and/or public computer terminals) in other parts of Bridgwater,

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?

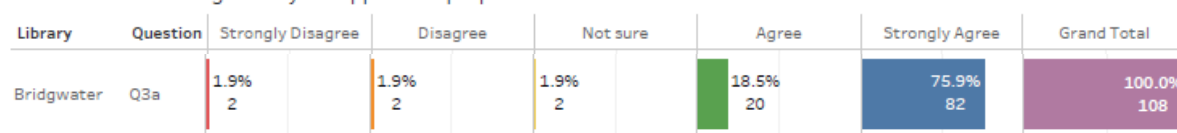


#### Phase 2

##### Option 3a

- Library services broadly comparable to the existing service will continue to be provided at Bridgwater Library. We will continue to explore the potential to share space with other organisations and/or partners, in order to save money, and this could result in a reduction in space available for library services. We propose to provide additional Library Outreach Services (events and activities for children, and technology activities for adults) in the Sydenham and Hamp areas of Bridgwater, where these are needed most. We will work with other partners, including our Family Support service, to do this.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.21.1 There were 29 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Bridgwater was their most used or nearest library and a further 108 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Bridgwater library.

#### 2.21.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions

## APPENDIX 3: REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

There were mixed views expressed on the proposal for sharing space with partners – some believe that it would be a good idea to increase the number of services available, whilst others believed that a reduction in available space would be a bad thing for the Libraries Service. The existing space and number of books should be retained where possible.

2.21.3 Some support for outreach services in Sydenham and Hamp areas was expressed. There was a view that more should be done to promote the library services offered.

2.21.4 Those responding felt that it was essential that libraries were retained and invested in. Some concern was expressed about the potential loss of libraries in more rural areas as it was felt that they are much needed community resources.

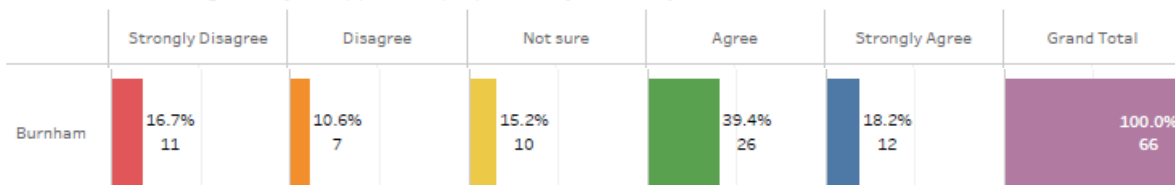
### 2.22 Proposals for Burnham on Sea

#### Phase 1

##### Option a

- Existing library services will continue to be provided at Burnham-on-Sea Library. We will continue to explore the potential to share space with other organisations and/or partners, in order to save money.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



#### Phase 2

##### Option 3a

- Library services broadly comparable to the existing service will continue to be provided at Burnham-on-Sea Library. We will continue to explore the potential to share space with other organisations and/or partners, in order to save money, and this could result in a reduction in space available for library services.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.22.1 There were 68 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Burnham-on-Sea was their most used or nearest library and a further 85 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Burnham-on-Sea library.

**2.22.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions**

There was strong support for keeping the library open in Burnham-on-Sea and a great deal of positive feedback for the current library staff. Although not at risk, there is a great depth of feeling that library services should continue in Burnham

2.22.3 There was support for the sharing of resources in order to make the service more sustainable.

*"I think it might be a good idea to bring more services for the community into the library by sharing the space."*

2.22.4 Some views were expressed regarding the worry about the proposals for Highbridge library. However, there was some acceptance that its low usage and short opening hours could affect its viability.

2.22.5 Concern was expressed about the less affluent and less mobile users of Highbridge library's ability to access Burnham-on-Sea library via public transport.

2.22.6 There was a view that there were significant levels of deprivation in Highbridge and the loss of a library would impact on those who needed it most. Views were expressed that there should be better promotion of libraries and their services, especially in areas of high social deprivation.

2.22.7 Concerns were also expressed about the impact that the potential closure of Highbridge library would have on demand for services at Burnham library.

2.22.8 Suggestions were received to establish a coffee shop or café at Burnham library which would generate income and bring more users into the library.

2.22.9 There were also suggestions received to amalgamate libraries that are at risk.

## 2.23 Proposals for Highbridge

### Phase 1

#### Option a

- Provide library services through either a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Highbridge, or by delivering outreach library services (such as events, activities, small book collections and/or public computer terminals via alternative venues). We will work with our Family Support service, and other partners, to do this. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



### Phase 2

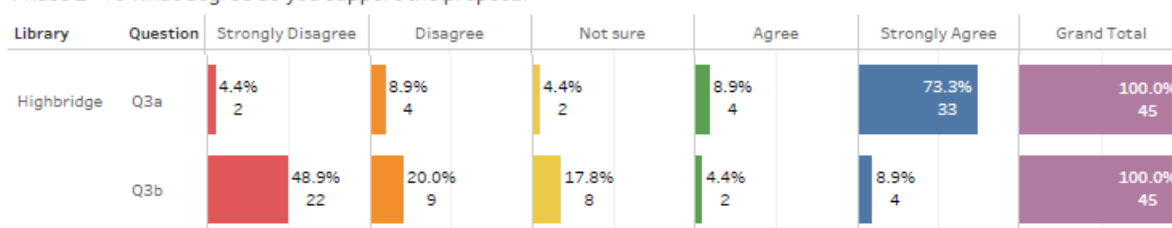
#### Option 3a

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Highbridge.

#### Option 3b

- Provide library services by delivering Library Outreach Services (events and activities for children and technology activities for adults). We will work with our Family Support service, and other partners, to do this. This would mean the closure of the current library building.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.23.1 There were 24 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Highbridge was their most used or nearest library and a further 45 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Highbridge library.

### 2.23.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions

There was a relatively low level of response to the consultation.

### APPENDIX 3: REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

- 2.23.3 There was a view that poor opening hours and lack of publicising and sign-posting affects the footfall and subsequent usage of Highbridge library.
- 2.23.4 Consultees expressed the view that there are high levels of deprivation in the Highbridge area and it should be considered a priority area for service delivery. The library is needed for the unemployed, elderly and young. The internet services are used by those who cannot afford their own.

*“Education is important. Reading is important. To deprive low-income families the chance to learn, to interact with books and other services is wrong.”*

- 2.23.5 It was felt that not everyone in Highbridge would be able to get to Burnham library as alternative library provision; many residents who are unemployed or are on low incomes may not be able to access Burnham library due to the high cost of public transport.
- 2.23.6 It was said that high levels of house building planned for the Highbridge area were likely to increase the future need and demand for library services.
- 2.23.7 There were a number of suggestions that to make it a more sustainable service the Post Office should be incorporated into the library building.



## 2.24 Proposals for Nether Stowey

### Phase 1

#### Option a

- Provide library services through either: a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Nether Stowey (supported by some funding from the County Council), or an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



### Phase 2

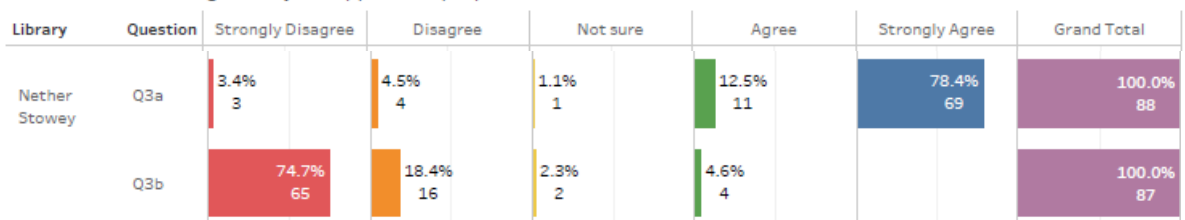
#### Option 3a

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Nether Stowey (supported by some funding from the County Council).

#### Option 3b

- Provide library services through an additional mobile library stop in Nether Stowey (at least once a month). This would mean the closure of the current library building.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.24.1 There were 110 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Nether Stowey was their most used or nearest library and a further 88 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Nether Stowey library.

#### 2.24.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions

There was a great deal of support to keep the library open in Nether Stowey as there is very poor public transport to alternative library provision.

2.24.3 It is felt that the library is well used and serves groups for all ages in the community. It provides a space for the community that addresses social needs that a mobile solution would not be able to provide for.

2.24.4 Many responded that the loss of computer and internet access would impact on those who do not have alternative provision.

2.24.5 There were suggestions received for generating income or sharing use of the building to make it more sustainable. These included:

- Share the building with Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty office
- Ask for voluntary contributions from library users
- Work with community to develop alternative proposals
- Share the cost of the building with others

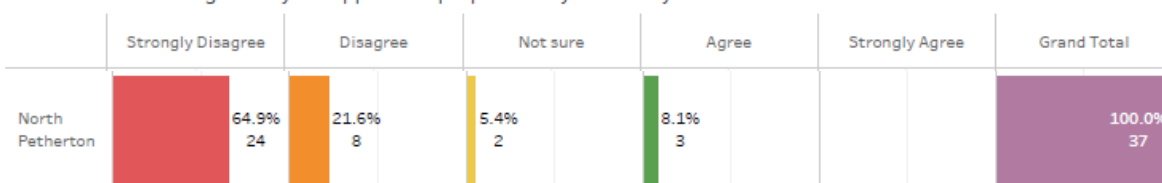
## 2.25 Proposals for North Petherton

### Phase 1

#### Option a

- Provide library services through either: a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in North Petherton, or an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



### Phase 2

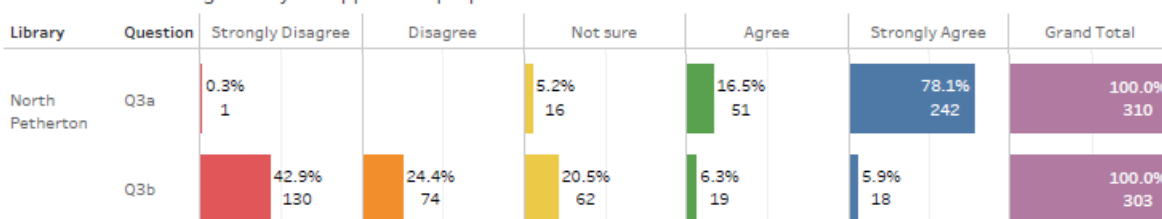
#### Option 3a

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in North Petherton.

#### Option 3b

- Provide library services through an additional mobile library stop in North Petherton (at least once a month). This would mean the closure of the current library building.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.25.1 There were 37 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that North Petherton was their most used or nearest library and a further 312 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for North Petherton library.

2.25.2 This represents the highest response rate in comparison to active users of the library

### **2.25.3 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions**

#### **2.25.4 Views**

2.25.5 Responses indicated that library services are an invaluable resource for both the elderly and young families alike.

*“Closure of North Petherton library will mean the loss of an extremely important community resource. In a rural area the library provides excellent opportunities for all ages, from parents with young children through to older people for whom the library is a vital link to the community and beyond.”*

2.25.6 The library building is thought of as a community hub and somewhere that is regularly used for social interaction and educational purposes.

2.25.7 It was felt that a mobile solution would mean the loss of many of these services and a visit just once a month would be completely inadequate - the irregular visits from the mobile library would impact on children’s ability to use services due to school commitments.

#### **2.25.8 Impact**

There was a view that the proposals would have an increased impact on older users. Due to the cost of transport and distance to other libraries, it may be difficult for some less affluent and mobile users to get to alternative provision in Bridgwater or Taunton.

2.25.9 It was said that the IT and printing services provided at the library building are required by many users, which could not be serviced by a mobile solution.

2.25.10 Views were expressed that a mobile only solution would reduce the opportunity for children to access books and foster a love of reading.

#### **2.25.11 Suggestions**

There was some support expressed for a volunteer led solution but no support for the mobile library option.

## 2.26 Area 3 Summary

### Bridgwater

- Mixed views on proposals to share library space
- Essential to retain libraries as they are a much-needed community resource

### Burnham-on-Sea

- Some support for sharing resources and generating income to make the library more sustainable
- Concern regarding the proposals for Highbridge library in an area of high deprivation. Closure could have an impact on Burnham library usage

### Highbridge

- Most respondents disagreed with options that meant the library would close
- Opening hours and lack of adequate signposting affect current usage
- Area of high deprivation and need library services locally
- Access to Burnham library may be an issue for those on low income and the less mobile

### Nether Stowey

- Most respondents disagreed with options that meant the library would close
- Poor public transport to alternative provision
- Library serves local needs that a mobile could not provide for
- Loss of IT services would impact many
- Many suggestions for the shared use of the library building

### North Petherton

- Strong disagreement with proposals that meant the library would close
- Proposals would have a greater impact on older and less affluent users
- The library is a community 'Hub' and used by many
- Mobile only provision would not provide IT services which are required by many in the community.

## 2.27 Area 4: Central Somerset

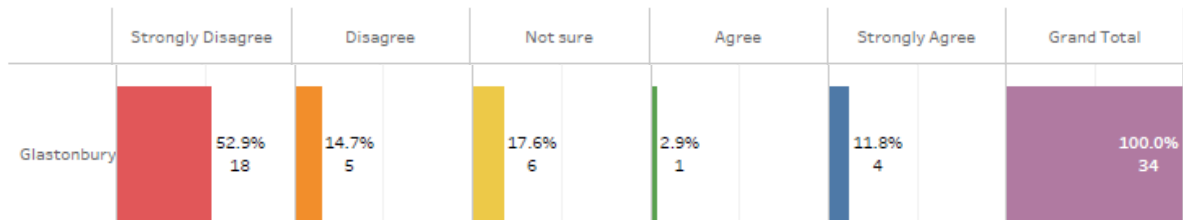
### 2.28 Proposals for Glastonbury

#### Phase 1

##### Option a

- No change to existing library services.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?

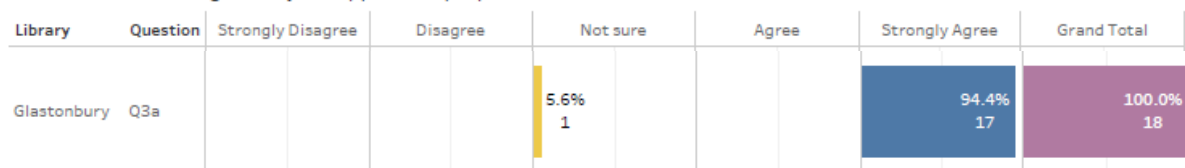


#### Phase 2

##### Option 3a

- No change to existing library services.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.28.1 There were 36 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Glastonbury was their most used or nearest library and a further 18 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Glastonbury library.

#### 2.28.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions

There was a low level of response to the consultation from the users of Glastonbury library; this is reflective of the no change proposal in the consultation.

2.28.3 Of those who did respond, there was strong opposition to the proposals for Street library. Responses indicated that the proposals would impact on the disadvantaged, the young and the elderly.

2.28.4 It was felt that the bus fares from Street to Glastonbury may not be affordable for many and some with mobility issues may be less able to use public transport.

*“You are assuming that a low-income family could afford the exorbitant bus fares to visit a library in a neighbouring town. You are making Library services inaccessible to the lowest income families in the areas you are closing Libraries, the very families who are least likely to be able to afford broadband and computers for their children to study.”*

- 2.28.5 There were views expressed that Street library should become a community hub and provide other services like Glastonbury library.
- 2.28.6 There were also concerns stated that if Street library were to close Glastonbury library, which is already busy, would become overcrowded.
- 2.28.7 Views were also given that no libraries should be closed as a point of principle.

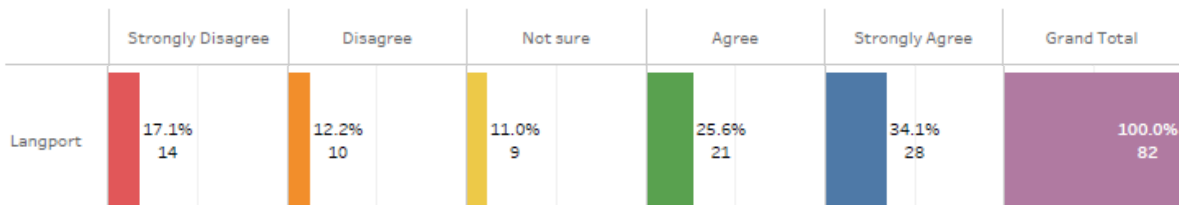
## 2.29 Proposals for Langport

### Phase 1

#### Option a

- No change to existing library services.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



### Phase 2

#### Option 3a

- No change to existing library services.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal

Library	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
Langport	Q3a					100.0% 57	100.0% 57

2.29.1 There were 83 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Langport was their most used or nearest library and a further 57 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Langport library.

**2.29.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions**

There was a relatively low response to the consultation from users of Langport library. This is reflective of the no change option in the consultation. There were, however, a number of comments regarding the proposals for other libraries in the proposal area.

2.29.3 It was felt that the potential closure of Somerton library would have a serious impact on the area. It was said that the people of Somerton may struggle to access alternative provision, especially by public transport due to lower levels of income in the area.

*“Reading and associated activities need to be encouraged and the provision of library services is a proven way to do this. The benefits of library use for the young, the elderly, the isolated, the poorer and the less healthy members of the population are well known. Rural populations are increasingly subject to cuts in services such as public transport and local libraries are a vital local asset.”*

2.29.4 Views were stated that Somerton is a growing town and future service provision should take this into account.

2.29.5 There was opposition to library closures in general, as they are valuable community resources and should be protected. Libraries provide invaluable services to the young, old and generally disadvantaged.

2.29.6 It was stated that those who use potentially affected libraries will be adversely impacted by the loss of internet, broadband and IT facilities.

2.29.7 It was felt that volunteers would not be able to provide the same level of service as paid library professionals in Somerton library.

2.29.8 Consultees responded that Langport library should be supported to extend the services delivered and potentially involve partners.

2.29.9 Staff at Langport library are extremely well thought of and well valued, but some thought should be given to the use of volunteers that could be used to supplement the paid staff.



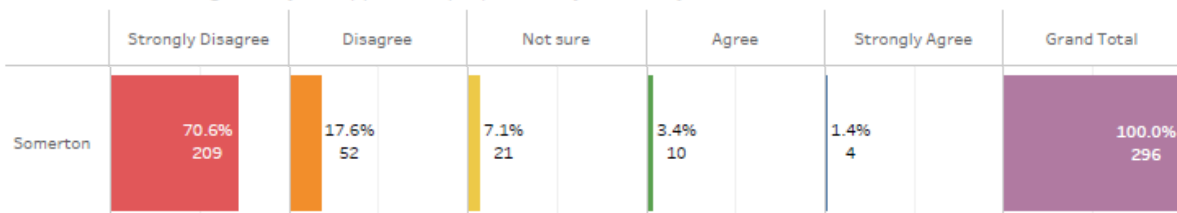
## 2.30 Proposals for Somerton

### Phase 1

#### Option a

- Provide library services through either a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Somerton (supported by some funding from the County Council), or an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



### Phase 2

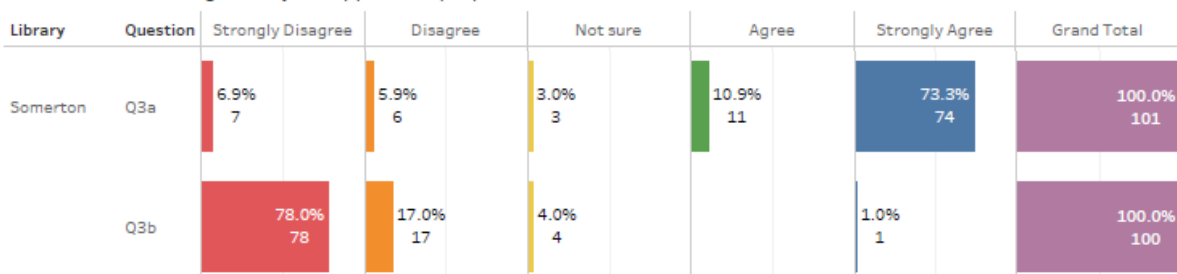
#### Option 3a

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Somerton (supported by some funding from the County Council).

#### Option 3b

- Provide library services through an additional mobile library stop in Somerton (at least once a month). This would mean the closure of the current library building.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.30.1 There were 302 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Somerton was their most used or nearest library and a further 103 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Somerton library. This was the fifth highest response of all libraries throughout the consultation

### 2.30.2 Views

There was the widely held view that a mobile service would not address community needs. Somerton is a rapidly growing town and requires more library services, not less.

*“Somerton is a growing town and the Library is a valued and important service which all age groups use and enjoy.”*

2.30.3 It was felt that volunteers would not be able to provide the expertise required to run a modern library service and they should be used only to support and not replace library professionals

2.30.4 Respondents expressed the view that the much-reduced bus service from Somerton to Langport would impact on library users' ability to access alternative library provision. The use of public transport may be prohibitive for those who are less mobile, especially when having to carry books on buses etc.

2.30.5 There was no support expressed for the mobile library option.

### 2.30.6 Impacts

There was a thought that many of the library services would be reduced if there was a move to an alternative model. Any reduction in services would affect the younger users, especially if there was a move to a mobile solution as children were likely to be in school when a mobile library visited.

2.30.7 Respondents expressed a view that the loss of a library building would severely impact on older people who rely on the library for a social space, group activities and book lending.

2.30.8 It was thought that the loss of internet and People's Network access would impact on those without alternative provision as well as those who are less competent with IT and who rely on support from library staff.

### 2.30.9 Suggestions

A number of proactive suggestions were received from users of Somerton library in an attempt to secure a sustainable future for the library building.

2.30.10 Respondents suggested sharing staff with Langport library to ensure that both libraries stayed open but with reduced hours.

2.30.11 Suggestions were received to let parts of the library to bring in additional income or to charge for sessions run by the library, including introducing retail outlets, the provision of ICT lessons and renting space to theatre groups.

2.30.12 A number of suggestions were made to generate income through fundraising or sponsorship or to introduce annual membership fees for library services and to charge for book borrowing and use of other services.

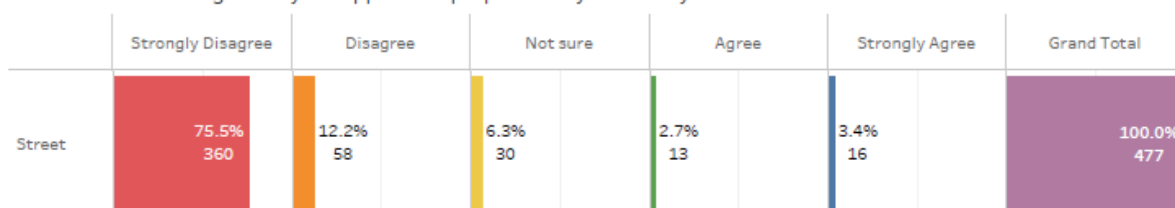
## 2.31 Proposals for Street

### Phase 1

#### Option a

- Provide library services through either: a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Street (supported by some funding from the County Council), or by delivering outreach library services (such as events, activities, small book collections and/or public computer terminals via alternative venues), and providing one or more additional mobile library stops. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



### Phase 2

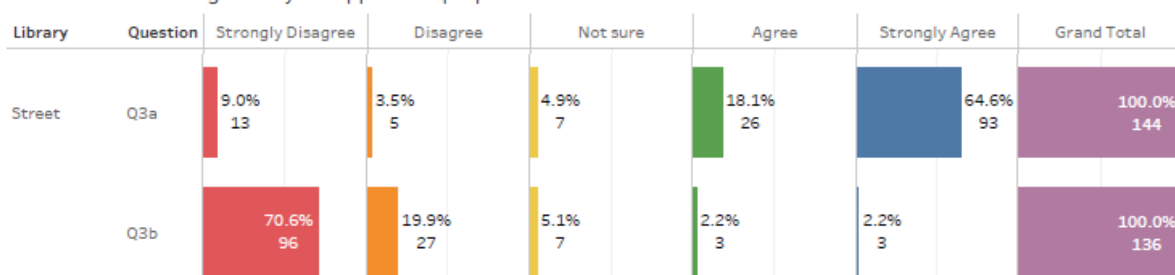
#### Option 3a

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Street (supported by some funding from the County Council).

#### Option 3b

- Provide library services by delivering Library Outreach Services (events and activities for young children; health, wellbeing and reading activities for adults; and public computer access) and an additional mobile library stop in Street (at least twice a month). This would mean the closure of the current library.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.31.1 There were 487 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Street was their most used or nearest library and a further 146 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Street library. This was the highest response of all libraries throughout the consultation.

#### **2.31.2 Views**

Users responded that Street is too well used and serves too big a community to have its service affected. The library building in Street is conveniently situated, on a bus route and is within walking distance to many.

2.31.3 Users stated that it provides services to address child literacy and provides strong educational benefits to the community as a whole. Many members of the community require access to information and the other community resources that the library provides.

2.31.4 Although not favoured, it was seen that a Community Library Partnership was preferable to outreach services and an additional mobile library stop. It was felt that with the loss of a dedicated library building many of the services delivered by the library would be lost. It was said that the library serves as a social hub, provides for many clubs and provides many with access to computer and IT services. Very important links to the school would be lost if the library building closed.

#### **2.31.5 Impacts**

It was said that Street has already been impacted by the closure of a number of amenities, including the local branch of Tesco and the closure of the library building would be another serious impact to the village.

2.31.6 Views were stated that people with mobility issues would struggle to get to Glastonbury, as an alternative library building. The old and disabled would be less able to use public transport.

2.31.7 It was said that the necessity to travel to Glastonbury to access an alternative library building would impact on those unable to afford public transport, hitting those with low incomes or currently unemployed.

2.31.8 For those who would be able to travel to Glastonbury using their own transport, the accessibility of the library was thought to be an issue due to the lack of available car parking.

2.31.9 A number of respondents stated the paid library staff are an invaluable resource and one that could not be filled by volunteers. As a result, service delivery would be put at risk.

#### **2.31.10 Suggestions**

2.31.11 A number of suggestions were received to make the library more sustainable. Suggestions were received to further develop partnerships

## APPENDIX 3: REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

with other bodies to share resources such as the Crispin Centre, local schools and the tourist office.

*“...Schools should work in partnership with the library service in Street. The building/ service is not dynamic enough. More soft seating, coffee areas.”*

2.31.12 Suggestions were received to let areas of the library building to other organisations to raise funds. This included the introduction of a café/coffee shop to encourage people into the building and to generate revenue.

2.31.13 A number of suggestions were received to request financial assistance from the Clark's foundation / organisation.

#### Area 4 Summary

##### Glastonbury

- Opposition to the potential closure of Street library as it would impact on the disadvantaged, young and elderly
- Closure of Street may have an impact on the usage of Glastonbury library
- Bus fares to Glastonbury from Street may be unaffordable for some

##### Langport

- Closure of Somerton Library would have an adverse impact on the area
- Poor public transport would limit ability to access alternative libraries
- Volunteers would not be able to deliver the same level of service as paid professional staff

##### Somerton

- Strong disagreement with proposals that meant the library would close.
- Somerton is a growing town and needs library services
- There is a much-reduced bus service to Langport and some may struggle to carry books on public transport
- Many library services would be reduced with models of delivery from a funded library building
- The public access computers and Wi-Fi services are needed by many in the community

##### Street

- Highest number of responses by library
- Strong disagreement with proposals that meant the library would close.
- Street is too well used and serves too large a community not to have a library building
- Although not in itself favoured, there is a preference for a Community Library Partnership over a mobile solution
- Public transport to alternative libraries may be cost prohibitive for some
- Suggestions to develop partnerships to make library more sustainable

## 2.33 Area 5: Chard, Ilminster, Crewkerne and Surrounding Area

### 2.34 Proposals for Chard

#### Phase 1

##### Option a

- No change to existing library services.

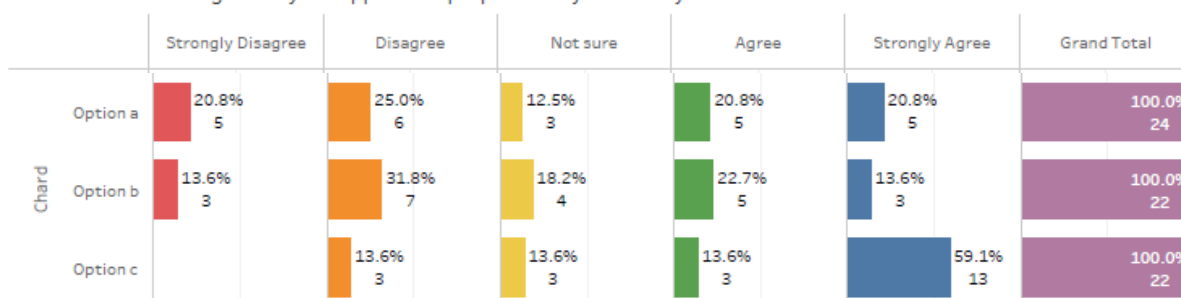
##### Option b\* Difference to Option a is the proposal for Crewkerne Library

- No change to existing library services.

##### Option c\* Difference to Option b is the proposal for Ilminster Library

- No change to existing library services.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



#### Phase 2

##### Option 3a

- No change to existing library services.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal

Library	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
Chard	Q3a					100.0% 20	100.0% 20

2.34.1 There were 25 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Chard was their most used or nearest library and a further 20 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Chard library.

#### 2.34.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions

There was a relatively low level of response to the consultation, which is reflective of the no change options proposed for Chard library.

2.34.3 There was support for no changes to the services provided by other libraries in the area. Any proposed changes would be detrimental to those communities affected.

2.34.4 Respondents stated that they thought that library services should not be delivered by volunteers, but by paid professional staff.



*“The use of community volunteers deprives the library of professionally trained library staff, and a library without a librarian is merely a room with books and computers.”*

- 2.34.5 In an attempt to increase usage and to make the other potentially affected libraries in the area more sustainable, it was suggested that library spaces could be shared to provide additional services, such as social care.

## 2.35 Proposals for Crewkerne

### Phase 1

#### Option A

- Provide library services through either: a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Crewkerne (supported by some funding from the County Council), or by delivering outreach library services (such as events, activities, small book collections and/or public computer terminals via alternative venues), and providing one or more additional mobile library stops. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

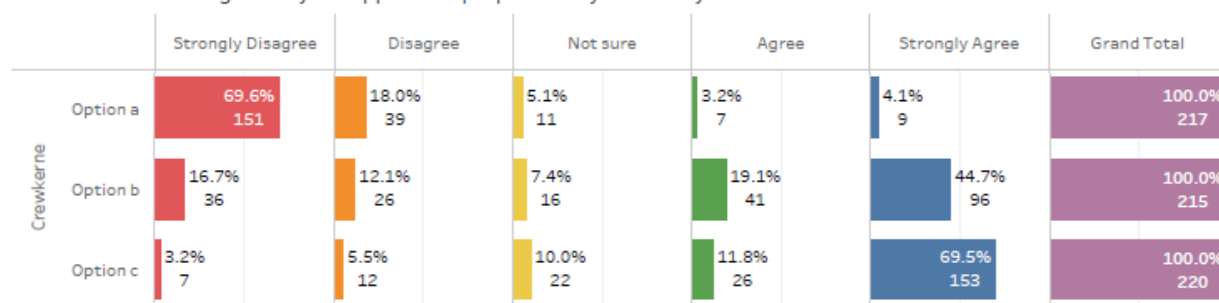
#### Option B

- No change to existing library services.

#### Option C\* Difference to Option b is the proposal for Ilminster Library

- No change to existing library services.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



### Phase 2

#### Option 3a

- No change to existing library services.

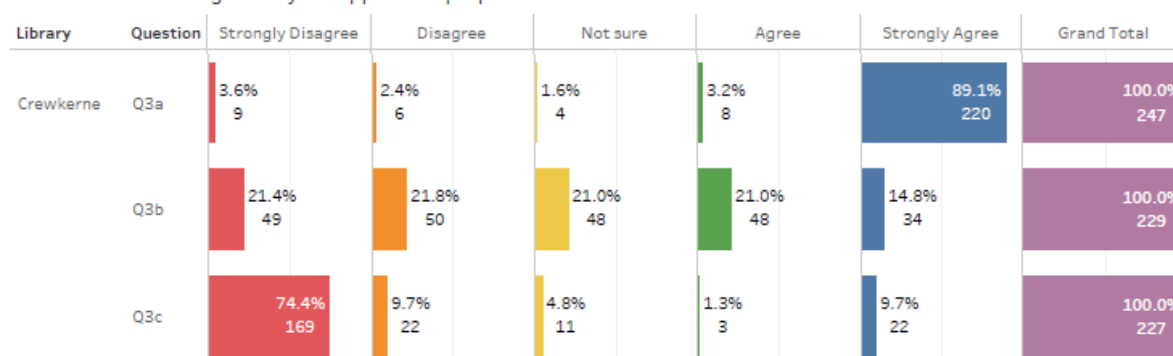
#### Option 3b

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Crewkerne (supported by some funding from the County Council).

#### Option 3c

- Provide library services by delivering outreach library services (events and activities for children and adults, and public internet access) and providing an additional mobile library stop in Crewkerne (at least twice a month). This would mean the closure of the current library building

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.35.1 There were 229 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Crewkerne was their most used or nearest library and a further 248 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Crewkerne library. This was the fourth highest response of all libraries throughout this consultation

#### **2.35.2 Views**

Strong views were expressed that the library in Crewkerne should stay open and continue to be funded by the County Council. Vital services would be lost if the library was delivered via a mobile library and furthermore the choice and availability of books would be diminished.

2.35.3 It was thought that children and working people would be disadvantaged by a mobile service due to a lack of ability and opportunity to access the service.

2.35.4 There were mixed views expressed about the potential for a Community Library Partnership. The option would only be acceptable if no change to the service was not an option.

2.35.5 There were a number of doubts expressed about the use of volunteers. Lots of praise was expressed about the current staff in the library and it was thought that the use of unpaid staff would undoubtedly impact on the quality of service delivery. Doubts were also expressed about the ongoing availability of volunteers. Several organisations within the town already rely upon the use of volunteers and the supply is limited. These organisations include the Henhayes Centre, the Aqua Centre and a number of charity shops within the town.

#### **2.35.6 Impacts**

There was the view that the proposals were going to affect the whole community, including the vulnerable, those without transport, young people and those who cannot afford to buy books.

2.35.7 It was said that the loss of a library would impact on the vibrancy and prosperity of the town.

2.35.8 It was thought that public transport in the area is very poor meaning those without independent transport would struggle to access alternative provision if the library building were to close.

#### **2.35.9 Suggestions**

A number of suggestions were received in an attempt to increase the usage of the library and to make it more sustainable.

2.35.10 It was suggested that SCC should look to share the building, either through a permanent arrangement or by hiring out space for events to encourage use and generate income.

*“...using the premises more creatively and generate some income... getting other non profit making groups to run perhaps the IT and computer literacy ... using premises for day courses... eg First Aid... charge for hosting and per person...”*

- 2.35.11 Views were expressed that consideration should be given to moving the library to alternative accommodation within the town – potentially the town hall or other council-owned buildings.
- 2.35.12 It was thought that the further use of volunteers should be explored to help reduce costs and supplement service delivery.
- 2.35.13 Suggestions were received that SCC should consider income generation ideas including subscriptions for membership, donations for activities or sponsorship
- 2.35.14 It was suggested that SCC should revisit the opening hours of Crewkerne library to make them more favourable for use e.g. opening in the evening. SCC should consider sharing costs or reducing opening hours for all potentially affected libraries in an attempt to keep them all open.

## 2.36 Proposals for Ilminster

### Phase 1

#### Option a

- Provide library services through either: a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Ilminster (supported by some funding from the County Council), or by delivering outreach library services (such as events, activities, small book collections and/or public computer terminals via alternative venues), and providing an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

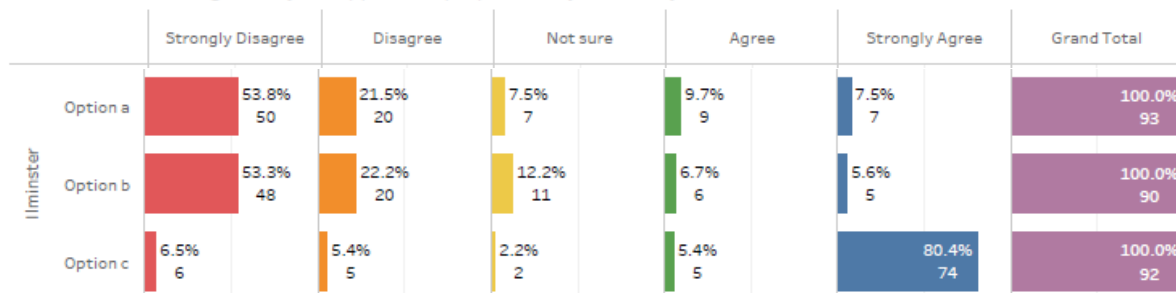
#### Option b\* Difference is the change to Crewkerne library

- Provide library services through either: a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Ilminster (supported by some funding from the County Council), or by delivering outreach library services (such as events, activities, small book collections and/or public computer terminals via alternative venues), and providing an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

#### Option c

- No change to existing library services.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



Cont...

**Cont... Proposals for Ilminster**

**Phase 2**

Option 3a

- No change to existing library services.

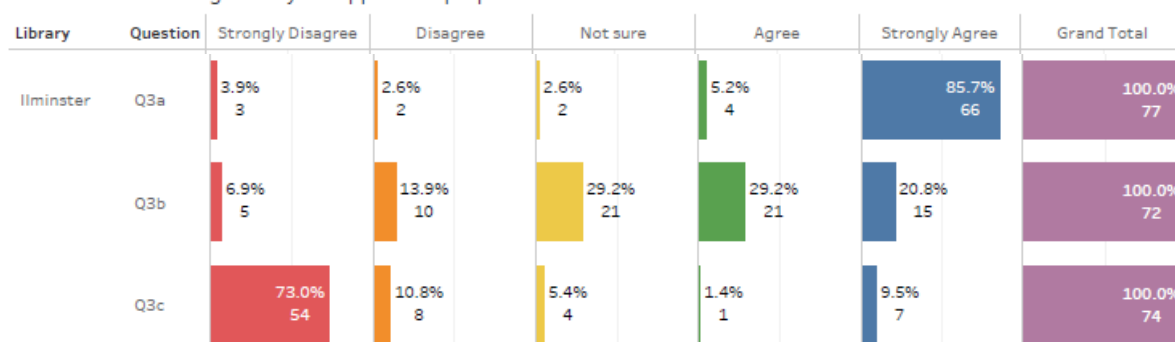
Option 3b

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Ilminster (supported by some funding from the County Council).

Option 3c

- Provide library services by delivering outreach library services (events and activities for young children, and health, wellbeing and reading activities for adults) and providing an additional mobile library stop in Ilminster (at least once a month). This would mean the closure of the current library building.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.36.1 There were 96 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Ilminster was their most used or nearest library and a further 81 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Ilminster library.

**2.36.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions**

There was an overwhelming preference for the no change option and a lack of support for a mobile library solution.

2.36.3 There was some support for a Community Library Partnership option if changes were required, but there were doubts whether sufficient levels of volunteers could be secured and sustained to make this option viable.

2.36.4 It was felt that the library building in Ilminster is a hub for the community; young and old alike. It was said that many rely on the library for its computer and internet services, which would be lost if the building closed.

*“Ilminster library provides a vital service to the community, not only book lending but it enables many residents without personal computers to access information and services which they would be denied if the library closes. It has a social function and most importantly introduces children to the joy of reading, leading to education for life. The poorest children will be most adversely affected.”*

- 2.36.5 Many people said that the Ilminster library building was gifted to the town as a ‘Reading Room’ and should be retained as such.
- 2.36.6 It was stated that the building is well used by baby and toddler groups and any change in provision would impact on young families.
- 2.36.7 It was said that there are proposals for significant amounts of house building planned in the area which should be taken into account when making long term decisions.



## Area 5 Summary

### Chard

- Support or 'no change' in Chard but concern for other possibly affected libraries
- Libraries should be delivered by paid professionals and not volunteer staff
- Suggestions that spaces within the library should be shared with partners

### Crewkerne

- Strong support for no change options, respondents overwhelmingly disagreed with options that meant the library could close.
- The library should remain open and funded by SCC. Children and working people would be disadvantaged by a mobile service
- Many services in Crewkerne are already run by volunteers and a volunteer led library may not be sustainable
- Poor public transport locally to alternative libraries
- Suggestions to move to alternative premises or to share premises with partners

### Iminster

- Overwhelming support for 'no change' option
- Library is a 'hub' of the community and many rely on the IT and internet provision
- Significant amount of housing development in the pipeline

## 2.38 Area 6: Yeovil and Surrounding Area

### 2.39 Proposals for Martock

#### Phase 1

##### Option a

- Provide library services through either: a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Martock (supported by some funding from the County Council), or by delivering outreach library services (such as events, activities, small book collections and/or public computer terminals via alternative venues), and providing an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

##### Option b

- No change to existing library services.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Martock	Option a	65.1% 125	20.3% 39	3.1% 6	1.6% 3	9.9% 19	100.0% 192
	Option b	7.2% 14	3.6% 7	1.0% 2	9.7% 19	78.5% 153	100.0% 195

#### Phase 2

##### Option 3a

- No change to existing library services.

##### Option 3b

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Martock (supported by some funding from the County Council).

##### Option 3c

- Provide library services by delivering Library Outreach Services (events and activities for children and adults) and providing an additional mobile library stop in Martock (at least once a month). This would mean the closure of the current library building.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal

Library	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
Martock	Q3a	10.3% 7	1.5% 1	2.9% 2	2.9% 2	82.4% 56	100.0% 68
	Q3b	13.6% 8	23.7% 14	10.2% 6	32.2% 19	20.3% 12	100.0% 59
	Q3c	69.2% 36	15.4% 8	7.7% 4		7.7% 4	100.0% 52

2.39.1 There were 201 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Martock was their most used or nearest library and a further 68 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Martock library.

#### **2.39.2 Views**

It was stated that the library building in Martock is very accessible to children, the elderly and disabled; there is sufficient car parking and is within walking distance to many in the community

2.39.3 Consultees responded that Martock is a growing village and already has significant levels of deprivation in the area and that this should mean that the requirement for a library should increase, not decrease.

2.39.4 Some doubts were expressed regarding the feasibility to generate sufficient numbers of volunteers to staff a community run solution. Very few comments were received on the wider area proposals.

#### **2.39.5 Impacts**

It was felt that the loss of the library building would have a significant negative impact on the community. It was felt that the closure of the library would have an impact on isolation and deprivation of the community, of which, there are already high levels of both.

2.39.6 It was stated that public transport has been diminishing over a number of years and is now at a point where it is infrequent, unreliable, under threat and expensive, making it difficult to access alternative library provision.

“Martock is a popular library with a large footfall. We are a deprived area; public transport is poor and expensive. Jobseekers need to show proof of extensive online job search to claim benefits and may only have online access in the library. Bus fare to Yeovil several times a week is unaffordable....”

2.39.7 Concerns were stated regarding the proposals for a mobile library where it would only be available at certain times and may not be available for those who work, for students, or those with mobility issues.

2.39.8 It was felt that a mobile-only provision would not be able to deliver the same choice of reading material or provide the same range of services to the community.

#### **2.39.9 Suggestions**

### *APPENDIX 3: REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE*

Suggestions were received to try and secure the sustainability of library services in Martock.

2.39.10 It was suggested that SCC could potentially ask for donations or charge for some of the services delivered to generate income for the library.

2.39.11 It was stated that the Libraries Service should consider the greater use of volunteers to support service delivery and to reduce costs. It was suggested that the opening hours should also be revisited to reduce costs.

2.39.12 It was suggested that greater usage of the library could be generated by the expansion of the use of the building to host other services and meetings for groups and encouraging links with schools and that better promotion and better advertising of the services delivered would be beneficial and create interest and increase footfall.



## 2.40 Proposals for Milborne Port

### Phase 1

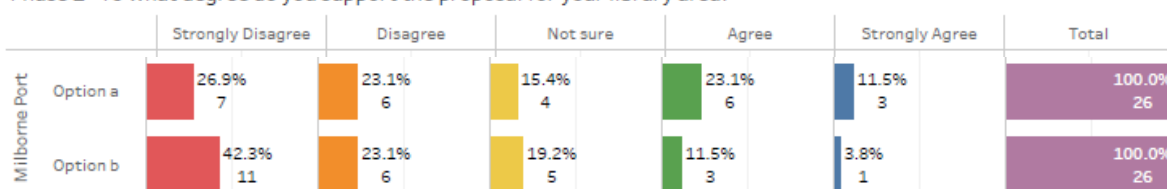
#### Option a

- Provide library services through either a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Milborne Port, or an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

#### Option b\* Difference is the proposal for Martock

- Provide library services through either a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Milborne Port, or an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



### Phase 2

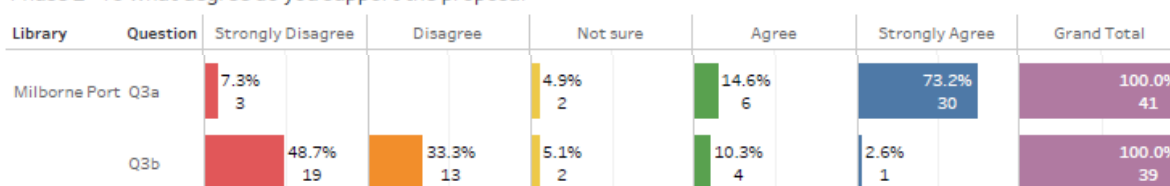
#### Option 3a

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Milborne Port.

#### Option 3b

- Provide library services through an additional mobile library stop in Milborne Port (at least once a month). This would mean the closure of the current library building.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.40.1 There were 26 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Milborne Port was their most used or nearest library and a further 41 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Milborne Port library.

**2.40.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions**

There was a relatively low level of response. Of those who did respond, it was felt that the access to the computers and IT services were vital for some in the community.

*“Difficult for children whose families do not have the internet at home and need to do research for homework.*

2.40.3 There was some support for the Community Library Partnership and the use of volunteers, but doubts remain as to how sustainable it would be.

2.40.4 Respondents thought that mobile services would not be able to deliver the full range of services and that once a month would not be adequate to service the needs of the community.

2.40.5 Respondents said that SCC should explore opportunities for sharing the building with other groups to share the costs and make the library building more sustainable.

## 2.41 Proposals for Sunningdale

### Phase 1

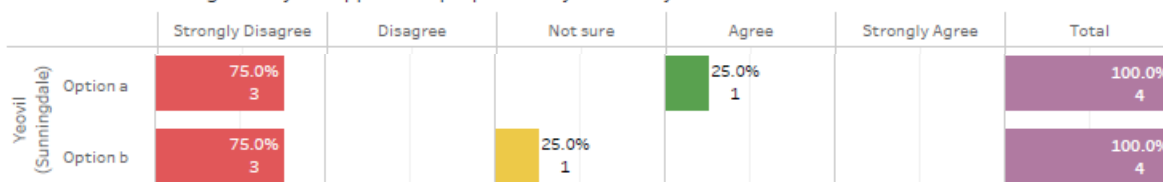
#### Option a

- Provide library services through either a partnership with the local community to maintain the current library in Sunningdale, or by delivering outreach library services (such as events, activities, small book collections and/or public

#### Option b\* Difference is the proposal for Martock

- Provide library services through either a partnership with the local community to maintain the current library in Sunningdale, or by delivering outreach library services (such as events, activities, small book collections and/or public

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



### Phase 2

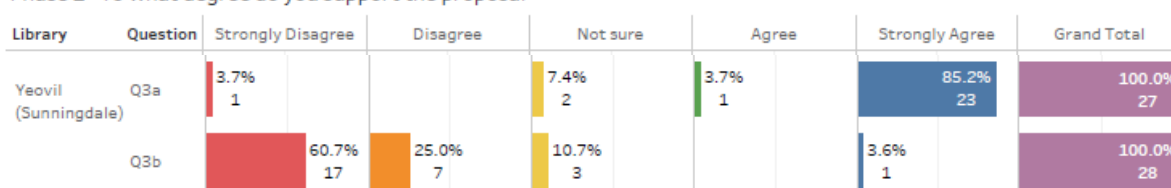
#### Option 3a

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Sunningdale.

#### Option 3b

- Provide library services by delivering Library Outreach Services (events and activities for children and technology activities for adults). We will work with our Family Support service, and other partners, to do this. This would mean the closure of the current library building.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.41.1 There were 4 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Sunningdale was their most used or nearest library and a further 29 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Sunningdale library.

2.41.2 This represents the lowest response for a library where changes to the current provision of services were proposed.



**2.41.3 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions**

Of those that did respond, there was a view that closure of the library building would result in a big loss to the community and to community cohesion. It was said that the library provides a valuable service to young readers.

2.41.4 Consultees responded that the library service provides for many disadvantaged families in the community and it would not be possible for many to walk to the alternative provision in Yeovil town centre.

2.41.5 It was felt that services provided at the library should be promoted better.

*“The many activities at the library need to be promoted more, especially in the new housing developments.”*

## 2.42 Proposals for South Petherton

### Phase 1

#### Option a

- Provide library services through either a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in South Petherton, or an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

#### Option b\* Difference is the proposal for Martock

- Provide library services through either a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in South Petherton, or an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
South Petherton Option a					100.0% 2	100.0% 2
South Petherton Option b		50.0% 1			50.0% 1	100.0% 2

\*Paper based responses only – see below

### Phase 2

#### Option 3a

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in South Petherton.

#### Option 3b

- Provide library services through an additional mobile library stop in South Petherton (at least once a month). This would mean the closure of the current library building.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal

Library	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
South Petherton	Q3a	5.6% 4	1.4% 1	1.4% 1	12.5% 9	79.2% 57	100.0% 72
	Q3b	62.9% 44	31.4% 22	1.4% 1		4.3% 3	100.0% 70

2.42.1 There was an error which affected the phase 1 online responses for respondents who used South Petherton library. Respondents who expressed South Petherton as their most frequently used/preferred library were not given the option to comment on two separate options in questions 3a and 3b, but only a single option in a single question 3.

While the two options were the same for South Petherton library itself, they differed in that one option proposed changes to nearby Martock library, and the other option proposed no change for Martock library.

2.42.2 Although regrettable, we are content that the issue that has been identified did not impact on respondents' ability to comment on the proposals for South Petherton library or on the area-wide proposals.

2.42.3 There were 57 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that South Petherton was their most used or nearest library and were affected by the issue, above, and a further 72 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for South Petherton library.

**2.42.4 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions**

Respondents stated that the South Petherton library provided a heart to the village, particularly since the loss of other amenities including banks, post office and a number of shops.

*"The removal of the library would be another nail in the community spirit of the village which has been hit by the closure of the bank and the move of the medical centre out of the heart of the village. If the intention is to grow the rural communities, then facilities must be retained."*

2.42.5 It was felt that changes to the library provision would have a detrimental effect on older and younger users. It was said that the library provides very important services for children's education and helps the elderly and vulnerable combat isolation and loneliness.

2.42.6 Views were stated that a mobile library would mean that many would miss out on services due to lack of opportunity to use the service if the mobile unit only attended once a month.

2.42.7 There was support for the use of volunteers to staff the library to reduce costs and sustain the library building.

2.42.8 Suggestions were received to use an alternative building or to share the use of the current premises.

2.42.9 There was concern that public transport is poor locally, with only a limited service available to Yeovil. It was felt that the costs to use the bus may be prohibitive to some on low incomes. It was said that the same point was equally valid for other libraries potentially under threat of closure.

## 2.43 Proposals for Yeovil

### Phase 1

#### Option a

- Existing library services will continue to be provided at Yeovil Library. We will continue to explore the potential to share space, in order to save money. We propose to provide additional outreach library services (such as events, activities, small book collections and/or public computer terminals) in other parts of Yeovil, where these are needed most. We will work with other partners, including our Family Support service, to do this.

#### Option b\* Difference is the proposal for Martock

- Existing library services will continue to be provided at Yeovil Library. We will continue to explore the potential to share space, in order to save money. We propose to provide additional outreach library services (such as events, activities, small book collections and/or public computer terminals) in other parts of Yeovil, where these are needed most. We will work with other partners, including our Family Support service, to do this.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Yeovil (Town Centre)	Option a	18.5% 5	14.8% 4	18.5% 5	44.4% 12	3.7% 1	100.0% 27
	Option b	7.4% 2	11.1% 3	14.8% 4	44.4% 12	22.2% 6	100.0% 27

### Phase 2

#### Option 3a

- Library services broadly comparable to the existing service will continue to be provided in the town centre at Yeovil Library. We will continue to explore the potential to share space with other organisations and/or partners, in order to save money, and this could result in a reduction in space available for library services. We propose to provide additional Library Outreach Services (events and activities for children, and technology activities for adults) in the Westfield area of Yeovil, where these are needed most. We will work with other partners, including our Family Support service, to do this. As noted above, under Option B for Sunningdale Library, we would provide Library Outreach Services (events and activities for children, and technology activities for adults) in this part of Yeovil too.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal

Library	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
Yeovil (Town Centre)	Q3a			4.5% 3	11.9% 8	83.6% 56	100.0% 67

2.43.1 There were 28 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Yeovil was their most used or nearest library and a further 67 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Yeovil library.

**2.43.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions**

There was general support for maintaining library services in Yeovil, but there was minimal mention of the proposed outreach services in the area.

2.43.3 There was support for sharing space and resources in Yeovil library, but only with appropriate partners.

2.43.4 Some concern was expressed regarding the proposals for other libraries in the area. There was some support for maintaining the other libraries in the area as it was thought that many residents would struggle to access the main library in Yeovil. It was said that those who do not live close could struggle as a result of poor public transport links.

2.43.5 There was a general view that not only should library services be maintained in more rural areas, but all libraries should be adequately funded and supported.

*“Although I welcome the proposal to maintain existing library services in Yeovil (central), I am concerned about a reliance on community partnerships to run libraries in areas with lower populations.*”

## Area 6 Summary

### Martock

- Strong disagreement with proposals that could mean the library would close.
- A growing town and needs a library building
- Closure of the building would have an impact on a community which suffers with deprivation and isolation
- Local public transport is infrequent, unreliable and expensive to alternative provision
- Mobile services would be limited and infrequent
- Suggestion for greater use of volunteers and sharing of resources

### Milborne Port

- Most respondents disagreed with proposals that meant the library may close
- Access to IT services are vital to the community
- Doubts over sustainability of a Community Library Partnership
- A mobile library would not deliver the full range of library services

### Sunningdale

- Low number of responses to the consultation. Most respondents disagreed with proposals that meant the library may close.
- Closure would impact the community and community cohesion
- Need better promotion of library services

### South Petherton

- Strong disagreement with proposals that could mean the library would close.
- Library is the heart of the village especially following the recent loss of a number of local amenities
- Closure would be detrimental to older and younger users
- Support for use of volunteers in the library
- Poor local public transport
- Suggestions to use alternative building or share premises with partners

### Yeovil

- Support for 'no change' proposal and sharing space with appropriate partners
- Concern for proposals for changes to other libraries in area

## 2.45 Area 7: South East Somerset

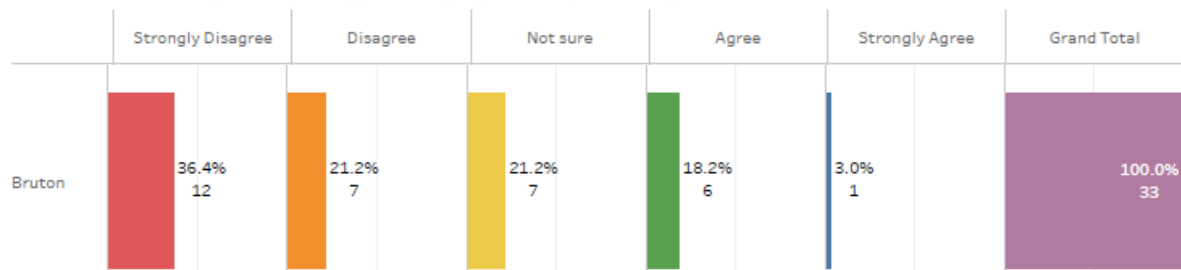
### 2.46 Proposals for Bruton

#### Phase 1

##### Option A

- Provide library services through either a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Bruton, or an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



#### Phase 2

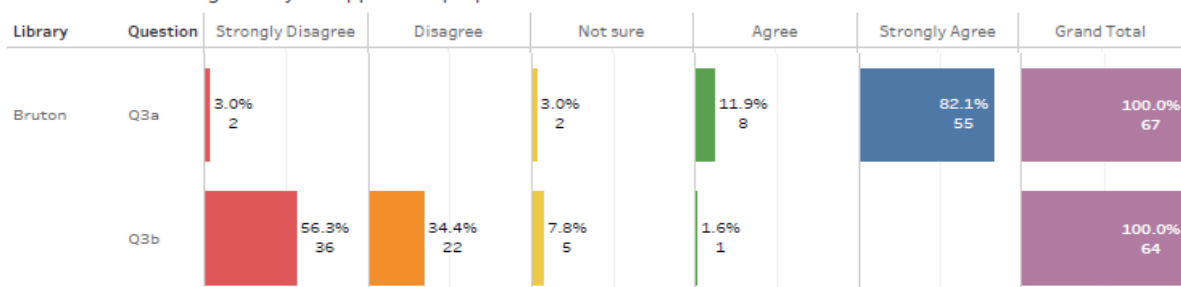
##### Option 3a

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Bruton.

##### Option 3b

- Provide library services through an additional mobile library stop in Bruton (at least once a month). This would mean the closure of the current library building.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.46.1 There were 34 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Bruton was their most used or nearest library and a further 67 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Bruton library.



**2.46.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions**

It was stated that the Ward Building was gifted to the town and should continue as a library. It was felt that services provided by the library are key to the educational development of children and the library building offers a meeting point for the community.

*“My main reason for disagreeing is the fact that the Ward Library building was given to the town a hundred years ago for use as a library, by a Bruton benefactor. This means, as I understand it, that the rent paid by the County, is peppercorn.”*

- 2.46.3 Doubts were expressed about how well volunteers could deliver a quality service.
- 2.46.4 Suggestions were made to diversify the use of the building to make it more sustainable.
- 2.46.5 It was thought that access to alternative provision would be problematic for some in the community if the library were to close due to poor public transport links locally.
- 2.46.6 There was minimal support expressed for a mobile library solution.

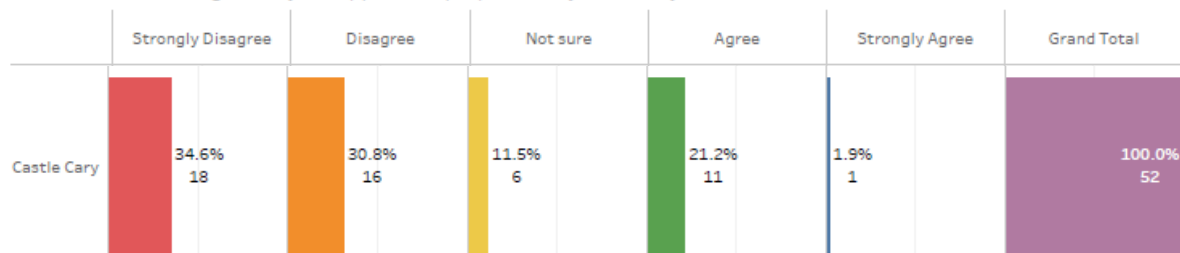
## 2.47 Proposals for Castle Cary

### Phase 1

#### Option A

- Provide library services through either a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Castle Cary (supported by some funding from the County Council), or an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



### Phase 2

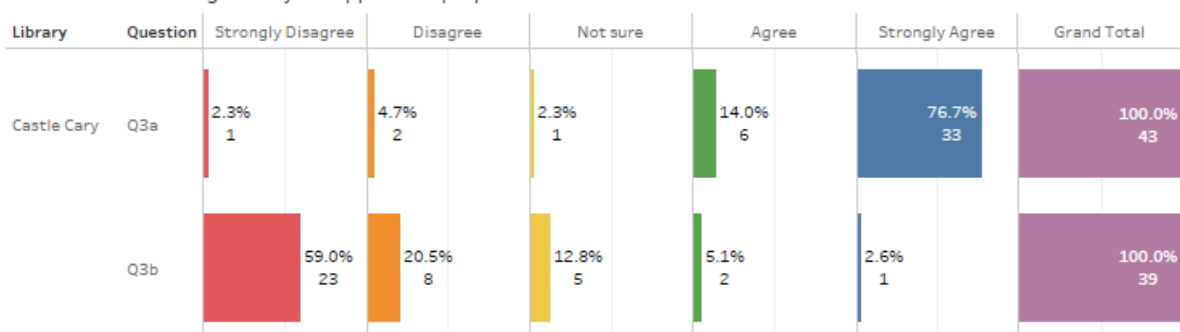
#### Option 3a

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Castle Cary (supported by some funding from the County Council).

#### Option 3b

- Provide library services through an additional mobile library stop in Castle Cary (at least once a month). This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.47.1 There were 54 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Castle Cary was their most used or nearest library and a further 44 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Castle Cary library.

**2.47.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions**

There was acknowledgement from a number of respondents that the library is not sustainable in its current form and savings need to be made, especially given the context of the Council's financial position.

2.47.3 However, it was noted that Castle Cary had been severely impacted in recent years by the closure of banks and shops and any changes to the library service provision would exacerbate the situation.

2.47.4 It was stated that Castle Cary is an area of deprivation and suffers due to lack of services because of its rurality. It was said that the information services provided by the library are essential for many in the community.

2.47.5 It was thought that the library is an important community resource and the loss of the library would have a negative impact on children's reading ability. Respondents said that there are a number of housing developments in the pipeline and need and demand for the services provided by the library would inevitably increase in the future.

2.47.6 Some support was expressed for a Community Library Partnership solution, but doubts were expressed as to the sustainability of such an option and the ability to attract sufficient numbers of volunteers to staff it.

2.47.7 There was strong disagreement with the mobile library option. It was felt that a mobile solution would deny users of many services including IT facilities and would only be available to those who do not work or are not in full time education.

2.47.8 It was said that if the current library building is not sustainable, then alternative facilities should be sought.

2.47.9 It was felt that the services of the library should be publicised to increase the profile and encourage greater usage.

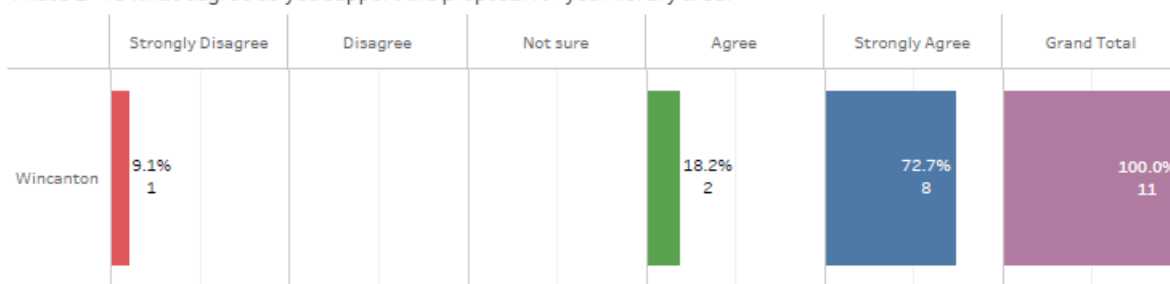
## 2.48 Proposals for Wincanton

### Phase 1

#### Option A

- No change to existing library service.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?

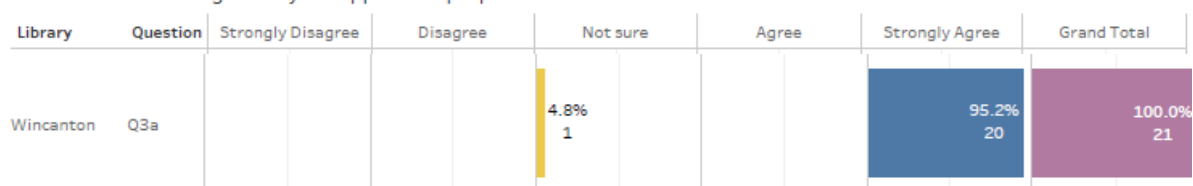


### Phase 2

#### Option 3a

- No change to existing library services.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.48.1 There were 11 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Wincanton was their most used or nearest library and a further 21 respondents in Phase 2 and commented on the proposals for Wincanton library.

2.48.2 This represents the second lowest response by library to the consultation.

### 2.48.3 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions

The no change to service provision from the library in Wincanton was welcomed. It was felt that communities need libraries as they promote health and literacy and they should be retained.

2.48.4 On the area-wide proposals, it was felt that the removal of library services would be detrimental to the respective communities.

*“Libraries have been and continue to be hugely important for a healthy, literate community. Whilst obviously needing to adapt to changing technologies, and to social and economic change, the core service must be retained, at least at its present level. It is not good enough to claim that other financial responsibilities take priority - the library service is essential to a healthy society.”*

## Area 7 Summary

### Bruton

- Most respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with proposals that meant the library could close
- Library building gifted to the town and should continue as a funded library
- Doubts over the standard of service that would be delivered by volunteers
- Poor public transport locally to alternative library buildings

### Castle Cary

- Strong disagreement with proposals that meant the library could close
- Town has been severely impacted by banks and shops over recent years, loss of the library would only add to that
- Area of rurality and deprivation, information services are required by many in community
- A great deal of housing development in the pipeline will impact on future demand
- Some support for Community Library Partnership although doubts over sustainability
- If the building is not sustainable, find an alternative facility

### Wincanton

- Very low response to consultation
- Welcome ‘no change’ proposal as libraries promote health and literacy
- Concern for the area-wide proposals as removal of library services would be detrimental to respective communities

## 2.50 Area 8: Frome and Surrounding Area

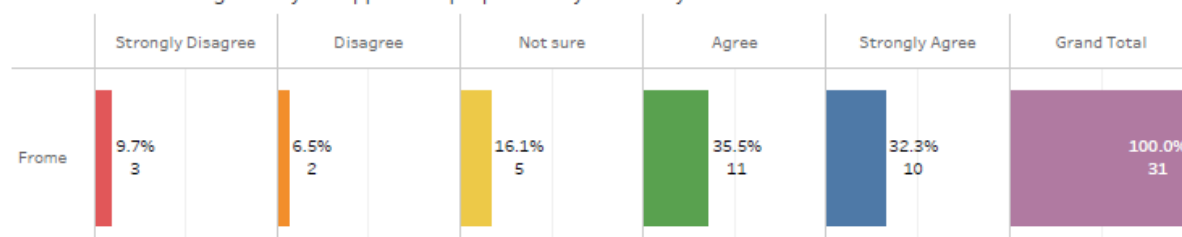
### 2.51 Proposals for Frome

#### Phase 1

##### Option A

- No change to existing library services provided at Frome Library. We propose to provide additional outreach library services (such as events, activities, small book collections and/or public computer terminals) in other parts of Frome, where these are needed most. We will work with other partners, including our Family Support service, to do this.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?

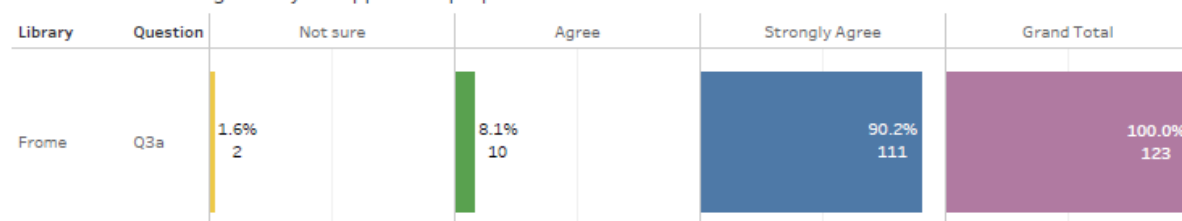


#### Phase 2

##### Option 3a

- No change to existing library services provided in Frome town centre. We propose to provide additional Library Outreach Services (events and activities for children, and technology activities for adults) in the Trinity and The Mount areas of Frome, where these are needed most. We will work with other partners, including our Family support service, to do this.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.51.1 There were 34 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Frome was their most used or nearest library and a further 124 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Frome library.

#### 2.51.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions

There was positive feedback for the proposals to retain the current services in Frome and to provide additional outreach services. It was said that the Library provided a range of invaluable community services which

could be supported by additional outreach services in the Mount and Trinity areas.

*"I am all for extending the outreach service as long as it doesn't adversely impact on the main library's opening hours and staffing levels."*

- 2.51.3 It was stated that the library is a very important community facility that promotes social cohesion and combats isolation. It was also felt that educational and recreational services are also invaluable to the community.
- 2.51.4 The staff at Frome library received excellent feedback for the services that they deliver to the community.
- 2.51.5 There was a mixed response regarding the future use of volunteers. It was felt that library services should be appropriately funded, and local authorities should receive fair funding from central government.



## 2.52 Area 9: Wells, Shepton and Mendip Hills Area

### 2.53 Proposals for Cheddar

#### Phase 1

##### Option a

- Provide library services through either: a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Cheddar (supported by some funding from the County Council), or an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

##### Option b\* Difference is the proposal for Shepton Mallet

- Provide library services through either: a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Cheddar (supported by some funding from the County Council), or an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

##### Option c

- No change to existing library services.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
Option a	63.2% 254	16.9% 68	10.0% 40	3.7% 15	6.2% 25	100.0% 402
Option b	66.6% 259	19.3% 75	8.5% 33	3.1% 12	2.6% 10	100.0% 389
Option c	2.4% 10	1.2% 5	3.4% 14	4.9% 20	88.0% 361	100.0% 410

Cont...

## 2.53 Proposals for Cheddar cont:

### Phase 2

#### Option 3a

- No change to existing library services.

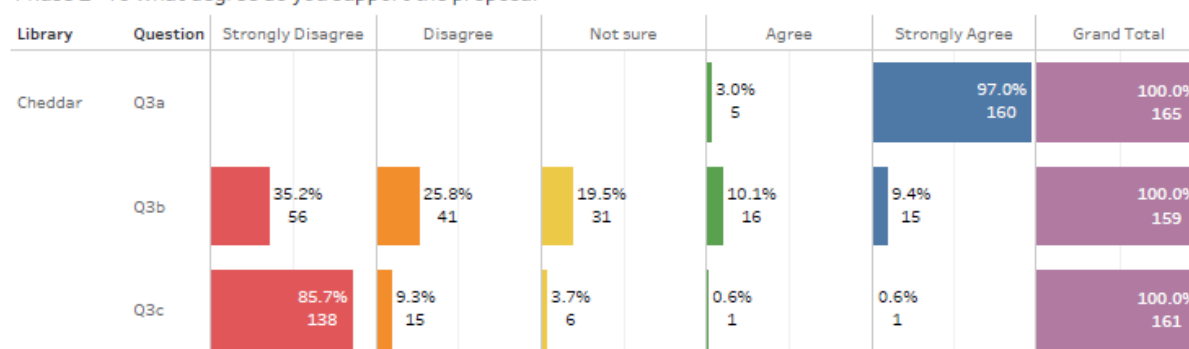
#### Option 3b

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Cheddar (supported by some funding from the County Council).

#### Option 3c

- Provide library services through an additional mobile library stop in Cheddar (at least once a month). This would mean the closure of the current library building.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.53.1 There were 426 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Cheddar was their most used or nearest library and a further 165 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Cheddar library. This represents the second largest response by library.

### 2.53.2 Views

There was concern at the proposed changes to Cheddar library. The library and its services were identified as valuable and vital to the community and a lifeline for many.

2.53.3 There was emphasis that the library provides the heart of the community, distinct from the other towns and villages nearby.

*"A growing community needs a heart. The library is central."*

- 2.53.4 Views were expressed that rural areas need libraries due to a lack of alternative information services locally. It was stated that Cheddar also suffers from poor transport links to alternative libraries, which would be cost prohibitive to some.
- 2.53.5 There was concern that a mobile library would not meet the needs of the community. It was said that Cheddar is a growing town and demand for services will increase in the future.
- 2.53.6 It was stated that although Cheddar is seen as a relatively affluent area some members of the community do not have alternative access to computers and require the IT services available at the library.

**2.53.7 Impacts**

It was felt that the proposed changes to the library service provision would impact on children's learning and opportunities. It was stated that young people would struggle to access alternative libraries due to the lack of available public transport.

- 2.53.8 Views were expressed that Cheddar has suffered from reductions to services and closures in recent years including the police station, banks and the children's centre and the closure of the library would have a further detrimental impact on the high street.
- 2.53.9 Many commented on the social aspect of the library and the effect closure would have on social isolation in the area, especially for the elderly and less well off in the community.
- 2.53.10 Concern was expressed that volunteers would not be available or be able to keep to the standards of a professional librarian.

**2.53.11 Suggestions**

Suggestions were received from respondents to make Cheddar library more sustainable.

- 2.53.12 It was said that more use should be made of the library building to raise funds and that areas of the building should be made available to community groups to hire.
- 2.53.13 It was felt that greater use should be made of volunteers and technology to supplement the paid staff and enable them to undertake more value-added activities and that this could also enable an increase to the current opening hours.
- 2.53.14 Suggestions were made to reduce the opening hours to reduce the costs of the library.
- 2.53.15 It was felt that better use should be made of marketing opportunities to promote events and services at the library.

## 2.54 Proposals for Shepton Mallet

### Phase 1

#### Option a

- Existing library services would continue to be provided, although we are looking to relocate the library to a suitable alternative building. This is likely to be the Shape Mendip hub.

#### Option b

- Provide library services through either: a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Shepton Mallet (supported by some funding from the County Council), or by delivering outreach library services (such as events, activities, small book collections and/or public computer terminals via alternative venues), and providing an additional mobile library stop. This would mean the closure of the current library building, with library services being provided in other ways.

#### Option c\* Difference being the proposal for Cheddar library

- Existing library services would continue to be provided, although we are looking to relocate the library to a suitable alternative building. This is likely to be the Shape Mendip hub.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
Option a	30.8% 41	21.1% 28	10.5% 14	20.3% 27	17.3% 23	100.0% 133
Option b	49.6% 63	24.4% 31	7.1% 9	12.6% 16	6.3% 8	100.0% 127
Option c	31.2% 39	21.6% 27	11.2% 14	20.8% 26	15.2% 19	100.0% 125

Cont...

## 2.54 Proposals for Shepton Mallet cont.

### Phase 2

#### Option 3a

- Library services broadly comparable to the existing service would continue to be provided in a library building, although we are looking to relocate the library to suitable alternative premises. This is likely to be the Shape Mendip hub.

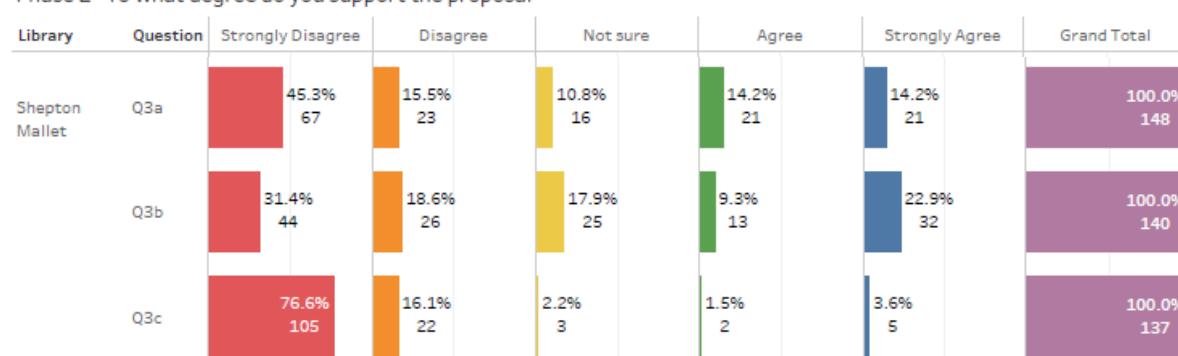
#### Option 3b

- Provide library services through a partnership with the local community to maintain a library building in Shepton Mallet (supported by some funding from the County Council).

#### Option 3c

- Provide library services by delivering outreach library services (events and activities for children and adults, and public internet access), and providing an additional mobile library stop in Shepton Mallet (at least twice a month). This would mean the closure of the current library building (and no replacement building).

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal



2.54.1 There were 140 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Shepton Mallet was their most used or nearest library and a further 152 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Shepton Mallet library.

### 2.54.2 Views

The overwhelming feedback from the consultation from the users and people of Shepton Mallet was that the library building should not move from its position in the centre of the town on the High Street.

2.54.3 It was stated that the library in the High Street was a key to the regeneration plans for the centre of Shepton Mallet.

2.54.4 Views were expressed that the Shape Mendip Hub building is not as accessible as the current library building; users would have to cross busy roads and the site offers limited parking.

2.54.5 There were mixed views about the Community Library Partnership option. Many stated that they required more information to make an informed opinion.

2.54.6 It was felt that if the Community Library Partnership option meant that the library could stay in the centre of town then it would garner more support, although views were expressed that libraries should be professionally staffed and only supplemented by volunteers.

2.54.7 There was minimal support expressed for mobile and outreach services. Comments received stated that Shepton Mallet is too large for this type of provision and that the library provides vital community services which would be lost if the building closed.

2.54.8 There were questions as to why these proposals were being put forward for changes to service provision in Shepton Mallet and not in Wells.

#### **2.54.9 Impact**

The proposals for closure would have an impact on the most vulnerable in society.

2.54.10 There was a widely expressed view that there would be a large economic impact on the High Street if the library moved to Shape Mendip. It was felt that there would also be an impact on children's learning and opportunities if the library's location changed. It was stated that schools close to the current library building would lose access if the library moved.

*"Moving the library from our town centre will lose a HUGE amount of footfall away from shops which are just starting to emerge from recession. The upturn in economic activity in the town will be given a huge blow by a move to Shape..."*

#### **2.54.11 Suggestions**

The main suggestions received from the people of Shepton Mallet were that SCC should consider other alternative premises within the town centre or should renegotiate the rent with the landlord of the current premises. Suggested alternative premises included the Amulet building and the vacant HSBC building.

2.54.12 It was felt that SCC should also consider sharing space in the library with other services to generate income and make the service more sustainable.

## 2.55 Proposals for Wells

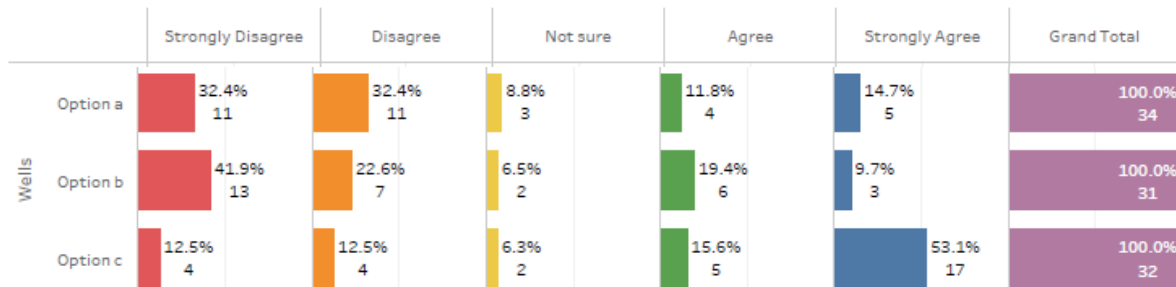
### Phase 1

#### Option a

- No change to existing library services.
- Option b\* Difference is the proposal for Shepton Mallet

- No change to existing library services.
- Option c\* Difference being the proposal for Cheddar library
- No change to existing library services.

Phase 1 - To what degree do you support the proposal for your library area?



### Phase 2

#### Option 3a

- No change to existing library services.

Phase 2 - To what degree do you support the proposal

Library	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
Wells	Q3a				4.9% 2	95.1% 39	100.0% 41

2.55.1 There were 34 respondents in Phase 1 who indicated that Wells was their most used or nearest library and a further 41 respondents in Phase 2 responded to the proposals for Wells library.

### 2.55.2 Views on the proposals, impacts and other suggestions

There was general support expressed for the retention of library services in all areas, and that all potential alternatives to closure should be explored.

2.55.3 Particular support was given for the retention of Cheddar library and for the library in Shepton Mallet to remain on the High Street.



- 2.55.4 It was suggested that saving money on library services would create costs in other areas in the long term such as social care, the health service and education.
- 2.55.5 To make Wells library more sustainable it was suggested that SCC should consider the sharing of the library building with carefully chosen services and should consider revenue generating ideas e.g. a café and requesting donations from service users.

### Area 9 Summary

#### Cheddar

- High level of response to consultation. Strong disagreement with proposals that could involve the closure of Cheddar library.
- The library is vital and the heart of the community
- A mobile library would not meet the needs of the community
- Closure would impact on young people and their learning opportunities
- Proposals would have an adverse impact on social isolation
- Suggestions for greater use of technology and volunteers to enable staff to deliver more value adding activities

#### Shepton Mallet

- Most respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with all options proposed.
- Overwhelming feedback to retain the library in the High Street
- If a Community Library Partnership meant that the library could remain in the High Street then it would garner more support
- Moving the library from the High Street would have a severe impact on the local economy and on children from local schools

#### Wells

- Support for retention of Cheddar library and to retain Shepton Mallet library on the High Street
- Saving money on libraries will create expense in other areas e.g. health and social care
- Suggestions to consider sharing the library building with partners

## 2.56 Young People’s Consultation

2.56.1 There was significant under-representation in responses to the survey by young people under 18 years in the catchments of libraries with proposed changes except for North Petherton. However, this is not unusual as responses to most public consultations have a very low ratio of children and young people.

To address this potential issue, the views of children and young people were therefore sought through promotion of the consultation to schools. Children and young people sent letters via their school. These were sent particularly from:

- Wiveliscombe (53)
- Nether Stowey (49)
- Shepton Mallet (19)
- Langport (5)
- Street (2)

2.56.2 Focus groups were also offered to children in primary school settings in urban areas potentially affected by the proposals for changes to library service provision. A specific children’s questionnaire was developed for these focus group sessions.

2.56.3 There was a total of 185 responses received as a result, from the following catchments:

- Crewkerne (52)
- Priorswood (27)
- Street (75)
- Wiveliscombe (31)

2.56.4 The results of the young people’s questionnaire can be seen below:

Children and young people focus group responses Jan – June 2018	Responses		
	‘Very Important’ or ‘Important’	Neutral	‘Not important’ or ‘Not very important’
1. How important is it that you can walk to the library?	96	30	7
	72.2%	22.6%	5.3%
2. How important is it that you can use a computer in the library?	87	31	15
	65.4%	23.3%	11.3%

### APPENDIX 3: REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

3. How important is it that you read books in the library?	116	9	6
	88.6%	6.8%	4.6%
4. How important is it that you can take part in after school clubs at the library?	84	31	18
	63.1%	23.3%	13.5%
5. How important is it that you can take part in the Summer Reading Challenge in the library?	94	24	15
	70.7%	18%	11.3%
6. How important is it that you and your family can come to the library and take part in activities together?	97	26	10
	72.9%	19.5%	7.5%
7. How important is it that you can use WIFI to access your computer/device in the library?	13	8	1
	59.1%	36.4%	4.5%

2.56.5 As well as responding to the questions above, the children and young people who responded were also afforded the opportunity to comment on the proposals.

2.56.6 The most common theme of the comments in response to the survey, focus group survey, letters and emails sent during the consultation were:

- that children would not have any or enough books to read if the library were to close and
- they would not be able to access an alternative library.

2.56.7 Specific comments received included:

#### 2.56.8 Reading skills and education

- *“It would affect me because libraries make you relax and it’s a quiet place to come and think”.*
- *“Lots of people love the library because all the books take them to other worlds. It feels really magical.”*
- *“The library is a place where you can be creative and imaginative - you can be more social.”*

• Crewkerne	• 52
• Wivvy	• 31
• Priorswood	• 27

• Street	• 75
•	• 185

- *“if the library shuts down it would affect my family as they are homeschooled and use the library quite often and use it for books and their topics.”*

#### **2.56.9 Computer use**

- *‘It would affect me because you can go on the computer for homework or if you need to print something out you could always go there.’*
- *“It would affect me and my brother because my older brother uses the library for a lunch revision and I want that opportunity too and because it is quiet and had good resources.”*

#### **2.56.10 Travel / independence**

Concern was expressed that if the library closes travel to an alternative library will not be an option on their own due to either cost or the distance was too far to be allowed to travel independently.

- *“My children are both book worms and regularly use the library to get books out on their way home from school, they would be devastated if it were to close”*
- *“A standard round trip to Taunton now takes 4 hours rather than the previous 3. There is no chance of any schoolchild being able to use the library after school because they would not be able to get home that night.”*

#### **2.56.11 Expense of accessing alternative library**

*“People who cannot afford brand new books can borrow from the library now”*

*“Younger children would be dependent on a parent to take them, along with any other dependents in the family, and the cost would be prohibitive”*

#### **2.56.12 Mobile Library alternative**

*“A mobile option is no real alternative. Fails children and people at work.”*

*“If a mobile library did come every two weeks then there would be less books and it wouldn’t be as much time to get books.”*

## **2.57 Submissions from other Stakeholders**

- 2.57.1 As well as the consultation questionnaire responses, written responses were received from a wide range of individuals and representative organisations including from The Friends of Somerset Libraries, library Friends Groups, District and Parish Councils, Councillors and other interested parties.

The section below gives an indication of what each of these responses contained. They are not an exhaustive list and are a high level summary of what, in some cases, were lengthy reports. Many further responses were received from individuals and representatives of groups and have been taken account of within the analysis above.

### **2.57.2 Bishops Lydeard**

#### **2.57.2.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

2.57.2.1 The group accepted that the use of the library in its current form is low in Bishops Lydeard; there are people that use the library and the group would like to enable these users to adapt to using a mobile library service and would welcome a conversation about the provision of mobile library service stops – frequency and location.

### **2.57.3 Bruton**

#### **2.57.3.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

It was stated that a mobile is a large vehicle and not suited to the town centre.

The Ward Library Trust has a duty to provide library services. Many other communities will be exploring similar trust models – suggested forming a county-wide library trust that would deliver substantial savings on business rates and would allow existing staff expertise to be retained. As Unitary discussions evolve, it may be sensible for all parties to consider the provision of library services as part of these discussions.

### **2.57.4 Castle Cary**

#### **2.57.4.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

The Group feel that the population do not have sufficient knowledge of the range of services which the library delivers but local groups and individuals can support the promotion of services through social media, local magazines etc.

Greater liaison between the library and local community should have a positive impact on usage.

There was strong disagreement with the proposal for mobile services as the decrease in services and lack of availability would have a huge impact on the community. Public transport to Wincanton is infrequent and expensive.

The Group have put forward some imaginative ideas to increase usage and create better use of the library space including exhibitions, visits from schools, liaison with the local museum and maximising space for Children's story telling.

## **2,57.5 Cheddar**

### **2.57.5.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

The group expressed preference for a County Council run library in Cheddar. The library provides high usage at a low cost and is a well-used community asset. It encourages literacy and reduces social isolation. There is a high level of need in the community and the transport links to alternative provision is poor.

### **2.57.5.2 Local Stakeholder Group**

The group strongly support the no change option. If changes had to be made retaining a building would be far preferable to a mobile service. It is well used and serves a large catchment on not easily accessible bus routes.

Closure would have a heavy impact on local retailers and the library provides literacy skills and access to much needed information for members of the community.

### **2.57.5.3 Local Stakeholder Group**

The library is well used and serves a broad catchment. Closure of the facility would hit the most vulnerable in society including the young and elderly. Closure should not be judged in financial savings but in the longer term impact on health and wellbeing and the additional pressures on other services.

### **2.57.5.4 Local Stakeholder Group**

The library is an essential community asset and closure would remove an element of community and social cohesion. The consequence of closure would be a high detrimental effect on community health and wellbeing.

### **2.57.5.5 Local Stakeholder Group**

The group state that closure of the library would put a considerable strain on their ability to continue to offer the same level of support to local people and would impact on the group's future opportunities.

### **2.57.5.6 Local Stakeholder Group**

There is considerable research on the health benefits of reading aloud and being read to. Many in the group have suffered from serious health issues and experience a great deal of benefits in attending the group at the library.

The group use the library extensively. Many of the group are elderly and would experience severe issues with travelling to the library in Wells should Cheddar library close. The funding for the group only extends to photocopying and not venue hire and as a result, closure of the library would almost inevitably result in closure of the group too.

### **2.57.5.7 Local Stakeholder Group**

Public bodies should stop thinking within departmental silos and consider the wider implications of their actions. Closing libraries will impact directly and negatively upon mental health and physical wellbeing of elderly people.

### **2.57.6 Dulverton**

#### **2.57.6.1 A Local Councillor**

Libraries are a necessary universal service that should particularly address deprivation, lack of opportunity, aspiration and isolation. Libraries should not be considered as 'nice to haves'. If a library is under-used, then it is not engaging with the community adequately.

West Somerset has very low social mobility and a very low median income. It has very low levels of qualifications within people of working age. Young people have a lack of opportunities within the area and it suffers from poor transport links.

Dulverton has a high level of importance compared to its size as it is the only centre for services of any kind within southern Exmoor.

Dulverton has a high level of young person usage in comparison to the demography of the area and provides an extremely important role as an employment hub.

#### **2.57.6.2 Dulverton Resident**

Dulverton is exceptionally well used and provides a key location for events and activities for all ages. Many rely on the IT facilities and would find it difficult to access alternative provision.

Dulverton is remote geographically and has large numbers of older people, people with disabilities, low car ownership and significant rural deprivation. It also suffers from very poor transport links.

Running a community library would present many difficulties and would provide only minor savings to the SCC budget.



SCC should recognise the poor levels of public services in the area and should be able to make sufficient savings in other areas to fund a library in Dulverton for the foreseeable future.

### **2.57.6.3 Local Stakeholder Group**

Support for retaining the library is as strong as ever. Being geographically isolated the need for a professional library service is essential. The community value the library enormously and will continue to support its retention enthusiastically.

### **2.57.7 Highbridge**

#### **2.57.7.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

The group set out in some detail why the library should be retained in Highbridge for four main reasons:

- The need to enhance literacy and lifelong learning to improve life chances and social mobility in the town.
- The levels of deprivation in the surrounding community.
- The significant increase in population which is planned over the next decade – 1,291 houses, not the 163 indicated in the consultation document.
- The need to support the educational, cultural and planning policies of Government and the planning policies of the District and Town Councils with regard to the Market St area and Isleport Business Park phase 2.

#### **2.57.7.2 Local Stakeholder Group**

The expense of bus travel to Burnham will be cost prohibitive for some. Little consideration has been given to those with special needs who prefer a quieter environment. The IT facilities are used by those who require them to claim benefit and search for employment. There is significant deprivation within Highbridge and the local library is a vital part of the town's economic survival.

SCC should consider sharing the facility with other operations including the Post Office and the Great Western Railway.

If there is a strong need for a Children's Centre in the town then the same logic must apply to libraries.

The library plays a key role in the education of the community. The population is due to increase dramatically over the next number of years; this does not seem to have been taken into account in the consultation.

The signage and opening hours of the library are poor and will undoubtedly impact usage of the library.

Events such as the ones held at Burnham should be held at Highbridge.

The Group strongly believed that the library should be run by professionals and that it would be difficult to provide sufficient numbers of volunteers to staff a fully functioning library.

The Group thought the library should be used to support economic development in the area.

## **2.57.8 Ilminster**

### **2.57.8.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

Issues raised included:

- the impact of the loss of the library on those who require access to the internet;
- the impact on low income households who require access to online services to claim benefits;
- an impact on care workers;
- the view that public transport to alternative libraries is poor;
- the amount of money that SCC have proposed to support a community library is insufficient.

The library is a focal point of the town and is used by groups for all ages. The town is growing which seems to have been disregarded in the consultation.

## **2.57.9 Langport**

### **2.57.9.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

The group very much welcomed the proposal for no changes to the library services in Langport Library. The response demonstrated the value that Langport library provides to the community, and made proposals to increase footfall, borrowers and wider community use including increased usage 'out of hours'. The group also proposed increasing the use of volunteers and recommended ways of overcoming barriers, including the construction of a mezzanine floor to increase the size of the library.

### **2.57.9.2 Long Sutton resident**

If the library system does not reinvent itself and innovate it will become a 'dumbed-down' reading service. Reform purely driven by cost cutting sets the stage for a terminal collapse of the library system in Somerset.

Libraries that close under current proposals will never re-open and the library infrastructure will be fatally weakened. Mobile libraries can only partially replicate

a limited book lending service which reflects what libraries used to be and not what they need to become.

Maintaining a minimum level of professional staff at Community libraries should be part of the Core Offer of services from SCC. The proposal to fund some library partnerships with £5,000 p/a needs to be more nuanced and should include an element of matched funding.

There should be a separate and competitive capital budget to fund innovation and modernisation to create more flexible use of library spaces.

The proposal for no changes to Library provision in Langport is very much welcomed and much of the success of the library can be attributed to the professional staff.

The proposals will mean a more prominent role for Langport library in the future which creates a very strong argument for retaining professional staff in the future even if that resource is used to support neighbouring libraries.

There is potential for a highly cost-effective modification to the layout of Langport library.

#### **2.57.9.3 Local Stakeholder Group**

The proposal for no changes to the provision of services from Langport library was welcomed. There is some deprivation in the area due to rural isolation and low incomes. The library is well used, and the group would like to see the library's role as a community hub grow. They suggested moving the local information centre to the library.

The group would not support any decrease in services provided including the use of unpaid volunteers and the reduction in opening hours.

#### **2.57.10 Martock**

##### **2.57.10.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

The group is of the opinion that the only acceptable option is the maintenance of current library services in Martock. Changes to provision may cause issues with the terms of the lease to the library and they have concerns about the sustainability of a partnership service.

The library is well used and serves an area with relatively high levels of deprivation. Outreach and mobile services would mean a much poorer and reduced level of service.

The recruitment of sufficient levels of volunteers would be difficult and no volunteer could match the competence and subject knowledge of the paid professional staff.

### **2.57.10.2 A Local Councillor**

Martock is the 3<sup>rd</sup> most deprived parish in South Somerset with 40% deprivation. There are a great number of volunteer services in Martock and there is little scope or capacity for a volunteer run library.

The library is far more than a book lending service and travel to alternative libraries is difficult.

### **2.57.11 Nether Stowey**

#### **2.57.11.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

The library provides a vital community service for a wide rural area which is already poorly serviced by the County Council. There is a high proportion of low income, and elderly people who need local services. Public transport is poor meaning that alternative libraries would be inaccessible to those without independent transport.

If the library were to close, the County Council would still be liable for the costs of the premises. The proposals make little economic sense.

#### **2.57.11.2 Local Stakeholder Group**

The library is well used in relation to the size of the catchment and shows that Nether Stowey library is the most cost-effective library in the network when assessing the cost per event attendee. The cost per borrower is less than for most of the towns in the county.

Early Years educational attainment is poor locally and underlines the importance of the weekly visits to the library by local school children.

The group have initiated countless events and activities for all ages since its inception, including the revenue generating 'evening talks'.

The library is well used by all ages and access to alternative libraries is difficult due to poor public transport links.

Mobile library provision would mean the loss of many services and additional activities from the library.

The group urges the County Council to maintain the current library provision.

### **2.57.12 North Petherton**

#### **2.57.12.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

North Petherton suffers from major traffic congestion, has a growing population and will have an influx of workers from the HPC site, all of which highlight the need for increased library services within the town.

The library has good links to schools and is located within the heart of the town close to other local amenities.

It suffers from being small and from having limited opening hours and the full potential of the library is currently not being achieved. It is hoped that the recent formation of a Friends Group at the library will help address some of the issues of usage and promotion.

Serious traffic congestion impacts on the travel times to, and accessibility of, potential alternative provision.

There are high levels of elderly and disabled people within the community with mobility issues who would have difficulty in accessing alternative provision. The library is also very accessible for children and people with young families.

The IT services at the library are invaluable for those needing to claim Universal Credit and for those with inadequate broadband coverage. The infrequent visits of a mobile service would mean that it was totally inadequate.

#### **2.57.12.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

The group feel that the loss of the building would be detrimental to the community. They feel that a mobile solution would not meet the needs of the community as it would have infrequent visits.

The library is a central part of the community and is used by the old and young alike. Access to alternative libraries is difficult and the library is very convenient for the people of the town.

The group felt the consultation questionnaire was misleading and difficult to follow.

#### **2.57.13 Porlock**

##### **2.57.13.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

The Porlock Community Library has proved very successful since its inception and has provided substantial savings to Somerset County Council and it would be very damaging to change it in any way.

#### **2.57.14 Priorswood**

##### **2.57.14.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

### APPENDIX 3: REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The wards of Lyngford and Pyrland/Rowbarton areas, which the library was initially set up to serve, suffers from significant levels of deprivation. Car and van ownership in Lyngford is significantly lower than the rest of the catchment and bus fares to the main library in Taunton may be unaffordable for some.

There are significant levels of house building planned in the area which will undoubtedly increase demand for community services.

There are high levels of digital exclusion in the catchment which are well serviced by the Libraries Service.

There are significant levels of mental health issues in the Priorswood area and services provided by the Libraries Service help to address these.

Taunton has no town or parish council to support its less prosperous areas, which results in a shortfall of social capital. The library is a valued hub which helps build social capital in the community and supports health and wellbeing. The library in Priorswood fulfils a range of functions to help achieve the stated Outcomes of Somerset Libraries Service.

The opportunity to raise funds through precepting to provide financial support is not an option for the local residents. The ability to recruit and maintain sufficient volunteers is diminished as social needs currently outstrip the human resources to meet them.

The group feel that Outreach and Mobile services would fail to replicate the community hub role of the library.

#### **2.57.14.2 A Local Councillor**

The proposals fail to meet any of its objectives apart from the ability to save money and contribute to the sustainability of Somerset County Council.

The redesign process is flawed in that the plans for the network of premises and the redesign of the workforce should not have been disaggregated.

The analysis upon which the consultation and resultant proposals are based is flawed as the options are not viable. Local needs and value for money criteria have only been partially applied and the risks of unintended consequences have been inadequately considered.

#### **2.57.14.2 Local Stakeholder Group**

North Taunton is an area of high deprivation and high social isolation. Priorswood library provides local residents with the opportunity to loan books, socialise, take part in activities in a friendly atmosphere bringing about community cohesion.



Residents may have limited access to the internet, which is a vital resource provided by the local library.

The group fully support the library in Priorswood.

#### **2.57.14.3 Local Stakeholder Group**

Going to the library gives many a reason to leave their houses. Many struggle with mobility and it gives them a place that they can get to. It's about giving them some control in their own lives and an element of independence.

The older generation value the benefit of real books.

Many in the community rely on the computer services to keep in touch with family and friends.

A library is about keeping the spirit of people alive.

#### **2.57.14.4 Local Stakeholder Group**

Being able to access Priorswood library has huge benefits for local schools and their pupils. It supports the teaching of phonics and reading and allows pupils of a local special school to access the community and put into practice the skills such as stranger danger.

The library provides the special school sixth formers with opportunities for work experience, helping develop skills for future employment.

#### **2.57.15 Shepton Mallet –**

##### **2.57.15.1 Report by a consultant to Shepton Mallet Town Council**

A report was submitted to the Town Council and subsequently shared with Somerset County Council highlighting perceived flaws in the consultation process and alleged inaccuracies in the information supplied as part of the proposals.

##### **2.57.15.2 Local Stakeholder Group**

A Local Stakeholder Group undertook its own consultation exercise on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2018 where a total of 154 consultation questionnaires were completed.

The consultation responses showed that the library is valued by the community and there was an overwhelming response that the library should be retained on the High Street as the suggested alternative location is not as accessible. Moving the library would have a detrimental effect on the High Street and the prosperity of the town.



### **2.57.15.3 Local Stakeholder Group**

The group regard the consultation as flawed as it does not offer an option to retain a library on the High Street as the preferred option for the majority of the community.

The group contend that the majority of Shepton residents do not believe that the SHAPE option is a sustainable one. This option would increase opening hours but would not increase the hours of paid staff. Parking at the facility is very limited. The proposed space is much less than in the current facility and the amount of stock available would be severely reduced. The shared space would not be as welcoming as the current library - other users of the SHAPE facility would potentially present a range of confrontational issues and problems.

The group strongly support the desire to keep the library as near as possible to the Market Place. The removal of 44,000 annual visits to the library would be catastrophic for the town. They support an alternative option of retaining the library in a facility in the town centre.

### **2.57.15.4 Local Stakeholder Group**

Public Library services are an important part of a civilised society offering vital access to information, culture and learning. The IT services, sessions for young people, homework support and job seeking services are invaluable to many.

The proposed move to SHAPE Mendip amounts to little short of closure. Access is limited and the new space would be limited. Self-service terminals and mobile services are not an appropriate replacement for professionally staffed library branches.

### **2.57.15.5 Local Stakeholder Group**

The group expressed deep concerns about the future of the library services in Shepton. None of the proposals listed are suitable due to the increased demand with future housing developments. A loss of service will lead to increased social isolation, poor health and extra demands on the NHS. There are high levels of deprivation locally, and the space is needed by local children. There are no bookshops in Shepton Mallet.

The option to move to the SHAPE facility will hasten the decline of the High Street.

### **2.57.15.6 Local Stakeholder Group**

The library is a real community hub and a space for networking and events. There is potential for it to be the centre of all activities in Shepton Mallet. Space for events in the town is very limited. The group are keen to support any on-going work to turn the library into a community hub.

## **2.57.16 Somerton**

### **2.57.16.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

A mobile service for Somerton would be completely inappropriate as children would be severely affected. The mobile library schedule would not be able to serve the majority of users adequately and would lead to a significant drop in library service users.

Public transport links to other libraries is poor and may not be easily accessible to those with mobility issues. The library is a great centre for children with regular events being held. The library also does lots to address many issues locally including social isolation, mental health and dementia.

Proposals were made to create a partnership with Langport library to share the professional staff; shortening opening hours at both libraries and reducing costs.

### **2.57.16.2 Local Stakeholder Group**

A detailed response including an options appraisal of possible solutions for the future for the library was submitted.

The library is a well-used facility, the closure of which would deprive the growing community of a useful source of information, education and enjoyment.

## **2.57.17 South Petherton**

### **2.57.17.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

The Group recognise the financial situation at the County Council and the need to reduce expenditure but feel that a mobile service would be inadequate for South Petherton and encourage SCC to seek a partnership to ensure a library building is retained within the village.

The suggestion for more computer-based services would exclude many older residents who are not computer literate.

### **2.57.17.2 Local Stakeholder Group**

The group registered concern at the proposed changes for the library. They feel that footfall has been affected by the reduction in opening hours.

The provision of a once a month mobile library would mean a huge decrease in available library services which may not be accessible to those who rely on public transport to travel between towns and villages.

The computers in the library are well used and a vital resource for many in the community.

## **2.57.18 Street**

### **2.57.18.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

Street is the largest, busiest library affected by the library service redesign programme. It is valued by the community which it serves and provides good value for money.

Outreach and Mobile services would be inadequate for the community. The use of Glastonbury library as an alternative is not viable given its location, lack of parking and cost of public transport.

The library in Street was purpose built and should be retained for the people of the town and surrounding areas for whose benefit it was created in 1924.

### **2.57.18.2 Local Stakeholder Group**

Access to Glastonbury library is difficult by bicycle and the cost of public transport would be high for single parent families and the unemployed. The library provides services to assist users with mental health issues and loneliness.

The costs of running Street library are low and it provides good value for money. There are five schools in Street (compared to four in Glastonbury) and there are high levels of deprivation in the area.

### **2.57.18.3 Local Stakeholder Group**

The group gave support to the save the library campaign. The library plays a big part in the community for people of all ages. It is easily accessible for all and is a good place for educational and leisure purposes.

The group feel that more funds should be allocated towards the library to modernise equipment and encourage a wider range of community activities.

### **2.57.18.4 Local Stakeholder Group**

The group supports the retention of Street Library and is dismayed at the proposals for the future of Street Library.

The library was designed as one of several civic buildings in Leigh Road for the benefit of the people of Street. The Library is not about books, it is about people and involving the whole community to own their library; a place which will welcome them without discrimination.

The library has been a regular recipient of grants and SCC has benefitted from not having to entirely fund activities. These are some of the reasons why the group believes that the proposals lack integrity. The group would support opportunities to move the library service forward by seeking the help of local charitable funds to find ways of improving the existing building.

#### **2.57.18.4 Local Councillor**

The councillor feels that it is very important that Street retains a library building. A possible model for Street library was suggested. Wider comments about the library service were made in a separate submission.

#### **2.57.19 Watchet**

##### **2.57.19.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

The group supports the continuation of library services in Watchet and does not wish to see the local library close. The group believe that the statutory service should continue to be provided and funded by SCC at the existing library building. Budgetary savings should be found elsewhere.

##### **2.57.19.2 Local Stakeholder Group**

The group is completely opposed to the downgraded provision of outreach or mobile services and doubt that they would fulfil the legal obligations of the 1964 act.

The group believe that SCC must provide sufficient funding for operating the ongoing library service from within the existing library building to allow a successful and realistic Community Partnership to succeed if that is the preferred option.

#### **2.57.20 Wellington**

##### **2.57.20.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

The town is growing (another 1,300 homes expected to be built in the next few years) and is a hub for many of the surrounding villages. The library building is accessible being on the High Street and many library users walk or cycle to the library. Access to the stated alternative, Taunton, is expensive and takes longer than stated in the consultation paper. Those who cannot access Taunton library would simply stop using library services.

Many users from the west of Taunton prefer to use Wellington library instead of Taunton due to its easy accessibility.

Wellington library is well used by a wide range of individuals and groups, some of whom are looking for a non-threatening public environment.

There are areas of high deprivation in the community and the library services cater for many of these needs including IT provision, helping to combat social isolation and promote good Health and Wellbeing.

The possibility of finding any group ready to take on the running of the library is low.

A number of suggestions were made to share the space with partners and increase income to the library. A suggestion was also made that Wellington could be made a pilot for an out of hours, no staff, self-service model of library.

#### **2.57.20.2 Local Stakeholder Group**

The group strongly supports keeping the Wellington library open. It is one of the most important buildings on the High Street where people meet, listen to stories, access information and have some social interaction. It is free and one of the few genuinely democratic and open spaces.

Without a library we will all be poorer, more isolated and less connected particularly the people most in need.

#### **2.57.20.3 Local Stakeholder Group**

The group is strongly opposed to any future downgrading of the library provision in town. If Wellington is to remain a town that people want to live and work in, then major public services such as the town library must remain strong and viable.

Solutions such as a mobile library or a facility staffed by volunteers are inappropriate for a town the size of Wellington.

#### **2.57.21 Wiveliscombe**

##### **2.57.21.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

A very detailed response was received from the group which had been endorsed and supported by a number of other community groups.

Several testimonies were provided by library users regarding 'What Wiveliscombe Library means to me' to illustrate the response.

Descriptions of some of the activities going on in and around the town were shared.

It was stated that the library has good facilities and hosts many activities. The library is an important and well used community resource.

The group went into detail on the usage of the library and showed that it was well used by many with protected characteristics and that users would be prevented from travelling to alternative libraries due to the high cost of public transport.

The rationale for the proposed changes to Wiveliscombe library were disputed and the group stated that community partnerships or mobile services were not an acceptable alternative to the status quo, which should be maintained.

### **2.57.21.2 Local Stakeholder Group**

The proposals show a contempt for the residents of the town, particularly its children. The library is a valuable resource to children, especially those who do not have access to books at home.

Those who live in more rural areas seem to be paying disproportionately for austerity.

### **2.57.21.3 Local Stakeholder Group**

The library contributes to the town's role as an important rural centre. The group believe that the County Council should continue to run the library as it is now. It is not reasonable to expect already over committed volunteers to run another service in the town.

It is also not reasonable to expect people from Wiveliscombe and surrounding areas to travel to other libraries in Wellington and Taunton due to bus cuts and unaffordable fares.

The group urge SCC not to proceed with the options as proposed, but to retain the library as it is now.

### **2.57.21.4 A Local Councillor**

Deep concern was expressed at the proposals to cease funding for Wiveliscombe library. The library is at the heart of the community and offers many services. It is an asset and a visible symbol of the Council's investment in the town which has already seen a disproportionate loss of services.

Public transport to alternative libraries is in short supply and not everyone has access to their own transport. The Councillor strongly urged SCC to retain a library service in Wiveliscombe.

### **2.57.22 Yeovil**

#### **2.57.22.1 Local Stakeholder Group**

The group was pleased to note that the planned Outreach services from Yeovil library are within their catchment area.

A number of proposals for the type of Outreach Services that could be potentially delivered were proffered and some feedback on what works well in other areas. The group also suggested that some advice was sought on what services should be made free of charge and what should be chargeable.



## 2.58 Additional Submissions

**2.58.1** Other submissions have also been received that refer to the proposals for more than one library, the consultation process and the library service as a whole:

### 2.58.2 Local Stakeholder Group

A response was received in respect of proposals for Street and Shepton Mallet libraries.

**Shepton Mallet** is a growing town and significant housing development in the next few years is planned. Therefore, the proposals for mobile and outreach are unacceptable.

There is reducing public transport provision in the area making it difficult to access potential alternative libraries.

The group want assurances on the sustainability of provision going forward, with clear signage. Any building used should be able to provide a 21<sup>st</sup> century library provision.

Due to the strong footfall in **Street** it is vital to maintain a permanent library in the parish.

### 2.58.3 A Local Councillor

When defining a new network of libraries, the traditional routes of travel by the people of Somerset must be borne in mind – what looks fine on a map may not work in practice.

Libraries and their services still have a relevant role in modern society around education and information, culture, improving lives, equality of opportunity and a strong and united community.

### 2.58.4 Local Stakeholder Group

The group welcomes the opportunity to form closer links with the SCC Library services and looks forward to exploring ways of sharing resources to fully meet the needs of communities.

### 2.58.5 Friends of Somerset Libraries

Friends of Somerset Libraries (FoSL) have submitted a number of detailed submissions which provided some key feedback throughout the consultation process. They have put forward suggestions and proposed changes of approach to Somerset County Council in an attempt to ensure that all libraries remain open. SCC have welcomed this input and are grateful for their interest, enthusiasm and constructive feedback.



- FoSL accept that the County Council are under financial pressure, but feel that the library service has made significant savings in recent years, and urge the county council to find alternative means of achieving overall budget savings without further cuts to library budgets.
- FoSL strongly believe there should be no consequential threat of closure if Community Library Partnerships cannot be established. They are firmly opposed to any library closures in Somerset, and believe that there is no rational case for closing libraries.
- If cost reductions must be found from the libraries service, FoSL have suggested that:
  - the County Council give consideration to a 'Community Support' model as an alternative to Community Library Partnerships, where the County Council remain responsible for library buildings, but communities offer to support libraries financially, or by taking on certain responsibilities, but with no consequential threat of closure.
  - an alternative approach to risking library closures would be to reduce opening hours; FoSL have requested that SCC consider making some cost savings contribution from reduced opening hours at larger libraries.
- FoSL feel that there should be a more equitable distribution of funding to support all Community Library Partnerships, and that the contributions proposed in the consultation should be increased. FoSL have made a further suggestion that county council contributions to Community Library Partnerships could be used to 'leverage' investment in staffing, perhaps through a match funding arrangement.
- FoSL believe that volunteers should only be used to support professional staff and to complement and extend the library service, not to act as a replacement.
- FoSL have suggested that the County Council should consider broadening the funding base for libraries, through community engagement, fund-raising, donations and other forms of community support.
- FoSL have raised a number of concerns about the County Council's cost accounting. The Library Service Re-design project team have provided various sets of financial information to FoSL and FoSL representatives, and FoSL have scrutinised this information. FoSL remain concerned that Community Library Partnerships, and the Library Service more generally, may end up bearing an unreasonable level of cost overheads.
- In the event SCC decide to close a library because a Community Library Partnership cannot be established, and substitute outreach and/or mobile services, FoSL do not accept that these would necessarily provide an ongoing 'comprehensive and efficient statutory service' as required under relevant act, and may be legally challengeable.

#### **2.58.6 A Shepton Mallet resident**

- Withdrawing funding from the library service is wrong.

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- Somerset County Council spends about £8.71 per Somerset resident on libraries. The Singapore National Library Board spent nearly three times as much.
- Taking a decision to withdraw funding will add to a downward spiral of under-investment in people.
- The library service has already sustained a 33% cut in revenue since 2010/11.
- A library service is one which provides libraries. Fewer libraries will mean fewer library users.
- The way forward is to set up:
  - A libraries cost team, to look at optimising accounting practice, premises costs, revenue enhancement and cost saving opportunities.
  - A Communities Engagement Team to broaden the funding base available to libraries, through community partnerships, fund raising and other forms of community support.
- There is no analysis of the financial impact of closing libraries in the 2018 consultation.
- There is no consideration of how closure will affect library use or of how this measures up against the outcomes framework adopted.
- The likely outcome of closing libraries is the worst of both worlds - an adverse impact on library usage, and revenue savings that are inconsequential in relation to the library service budget and the council's overall revenue budget.

#### 2.58.6 Unite and Unison joint response.

- Withdrawing further funding from Somerset libraries and potentially closing libraries will significantly impair the quality library service that staff provide and the people of Somerset expect.
- Volunteer-led libraries can never be an adequate substitute for a professional library service.
- Consultations and engagements over recent years have resulted in job losses for our members, constant change and reductions in our library offer to Somerset residents
- Staff have struggled to engage with this current review which feels like it has been on a continuous loop for years.
- The consultation is creating a prolonged period of uncertainty for staff.
- Union members are very unhappy about volunteers being used in two new roles. The non-key decision taken on 23<sup>rd</sup> May should not have been taken.
- Library staff remain on low pay scales and work above their job description.
- Staff are uneasy about how far they may be expected to travel in a new structure. Equalities considerations should be taken into account.
- Being asked if you are going to lose your job for 6 months has been a huge strain on frontline library staff.

### *APPENDIX 3: REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE*

- Encouraging customers to fill in consultation responses online has been difficult, especially because of problems with the people's network.
- Unite and Unison express concerns about the reliability of the mobile library vehicle.
- Staff shouldn't be required to attend interviews as part of the workforce restructure.
- The library service is important and much loved. We want the library service to celebrate another fabulous 100 years.



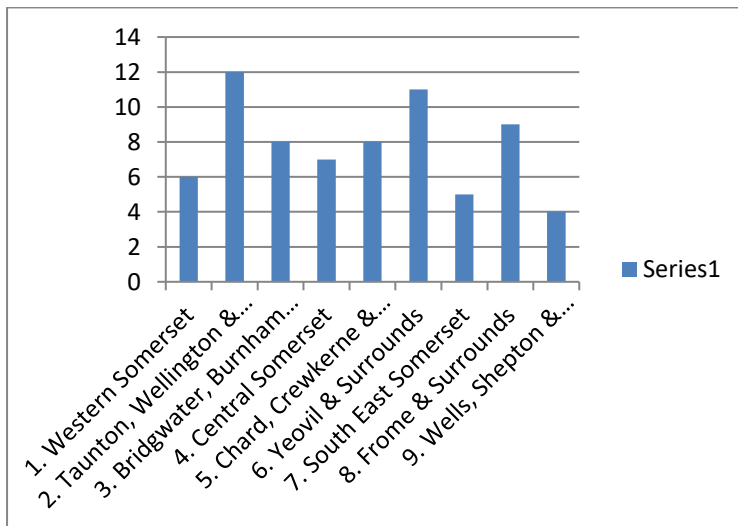
## PART 3 – Libraries Staff Consultation

**3.1** A staff questionnaire was created, to invite specific feedback about individual libraries adding to the evidence used to analyse the existing network of 34 libraries.

A questionnaire was sent to every Somerset Library and to members of the Libraries Senior Management team, reaching 159 members of staff. In total 70 responses were received (44%). Many Libraries staff responded to the public consultation questionnaire separately.

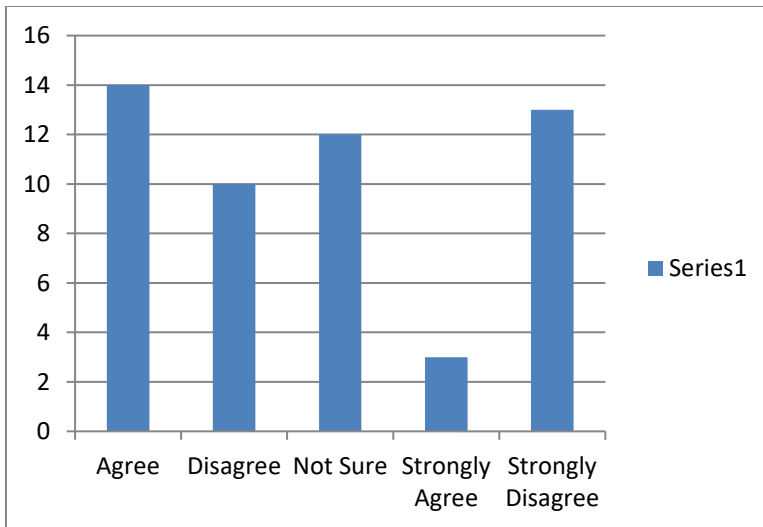
### 3.2. A summary of responses

#### 1. Which area do you currently work in?

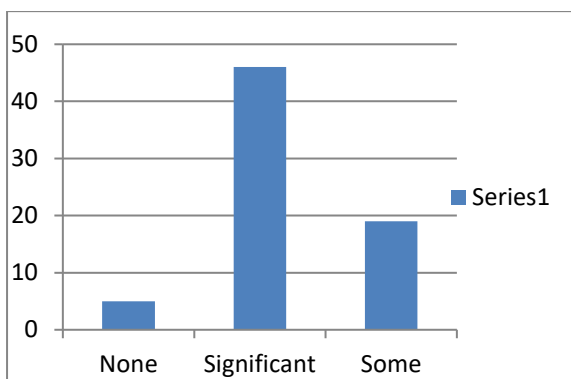


#### 2. Having reviewed the proposal for your library area, to what degree do you support the proposals?

## APPENDIX 3: REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE



### 3. Please tell us about the impact you feel these proposals will have on the local community:



### 3.3 Staff Consultation: Impacts/Rationale and Methodology

#### 3.3.1 Individual Library Feedback

Staff were asked to consider the impact of the proposals on local communities and comment on the rationale and methodology used to assess the current network of library buildings.

50 responses referenced specific libraries. A summary of these are presented in the following table:

Library	Summary of Comments received.
Bruton	Positive about potential for a community solution. Concern about service quality.
Cheddar	Cheddar is a growing village. Increase in number of young families and growth in the number of children using the library.
Crewkerne	Wide range of activities being delivered. Consider option for sustaining these. Highlighted the challenges of accessing an alternative library.

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Library	Summary of Comments received.
Dulverton	Dulverton is very remote and serves many tiny rural villages, many of them without even a village shop. A shared enterprise with Exmoor National Park should be possible.
Frome	Concerned that the library is not currently reaching those with a higher level of need. Volunteer support may not be sufficiently available.
Ilminster	Need to retain long standing children's provision. Many new homes being planned. A combined staff and volunteer supported library could be an option.
Martock	Strong core of traditional book borrowers.
Milborne Port	Explore potential for a difference space within Milborne Port.
Nether Stowey	The library is at the heart of this vibrant busy village and considered to be a good location for a library/tourist information centre/café, with local books & maps for sale. No easy public transport options available to reach alternative libraries.
North Petherton	Library is used by students with no home internet access.
Priorswood	Large housing developments being built within the catchment area. Young families and older people use Priorswood in preference to the main Taunton Library. Current location is often overlooked by local residents.
Somerton	Public transport options to access an alternative library isn't a viable option for families and those on low incomes.
South Petherton	Make use of a different space within South Petherton. Community transport for those who need to access a larger library.
Street	A well-used community resource.
Sunningdale	Consider pop up libraries in the area delivered from Yeovil Library.
Watchet	Considerable number of elderly people who may no longer be able to drive. Poor transport links across the area. Watchet is a vibrant town.
Wellington	Potential to co-locate with other services.

#### 3.3.2 Non-Library Specific Feedback

76 responses were received that did not reference a specific library. The themes were wide ranging and identified the following potential impacts:

- Changes to a library would impact the most vulnerable.
- Younger children would have reduced access to books and reading activities.
- Impact on people's health and isolation/ loss of community cohesion and social interaction.
- Loss of customers across the county unable or unwilling to visit an alternative library.
- Loss of a space where there are no pressures to purchase any goods or services

- Impact on those with poor mental health.
- Few public spaces offer free supported internet/wifi access for those who don't have their own broadband or have good IT skills.
- Loss of a valued community facility exacerbated by poor transport links.
- Mobile library services do not represent a viable alternative to a library building.

#### **3.4. Additional Comments/ideas or suggestions for alternative proposals**

- Concerns were expressed about the ability of Community Library Partnerships to provide an effective service.
- Others commented on the challenge of recruiting sufficient volunteers and having the capacity to ensure volunteers are well trained and adequately supported.
- Using a combination of paid staff and volunteers was considered a potential solution if it helped to keep a library building open.
- Reduced opening hours was also presented as a possible alternative to library closure.
- Some staff felt a greater focus on income generation and external funding opportunities could make a difference to providing a sustainable solution.
- Other comments expressed concern that alternative outreach services would detract from a library's core service.



## **Background papers, useful links and links to supporting evidence**

- The Vision, Strategic Direction and Outcomes Framework decision  
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=566>
  
- The Libraries Service Redesign Cabinet Decision report and appendices can be viewed in the Redesign Decision section at:  
<http://somersetlibraries.co.uk/redesign/>
  - Cabinet Decision Report,
  - Appendix 1 Library Service Delivery Plan
  - Appendix 2 Needs Assessment
  - Appendix 3 Consultation Report
  - Appendix 4 Equalities Impact Assessment
  - Appendix 5 Support to Community Library Partnerships
  
- Decision to carry out Library Redesign Consultation  
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=632>
  
- Decision to Extend the Library Redesign Consultation decision  
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=682>
  
- Catchment Mapping tool  
<https://catchments2018.azurewebsites.net/>
  
- The following documents can be viewed in the Evidence and Data section of  
<http://somersetlibraries.co.uk/redesign/>
  - Needs Assessment Data Sheet
  - Methodology and Data Sources
  - Housing and Population growth – Methodology and Data Sources
  - Quantitative Consultation Results
  
- The following documents can be viewed in the Consultation 2018 section of:  
<http://somersetlibraries.co.uk/redesign/>
  - Consultation Area Proposal Summary
  - Response to the Consultation