

Future Library Provision and Delivery to 2030 Assessment Report



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Nottingham City Council

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1. Summary of Recommendations

Summary of final proposals being put forward for Approval by Executive Board 21st January 2025

1.1 Recommendation for Nottingham Library Service Provision and Delivery until 2030

The recommendations outlined below attempt to achieve a modern, sustainable, relevant, universal library service that addresses Nottingham City Council's financial pressures by coordinating with other neighbourhood services and forging stronger partnerships. This will move away from a 'one size fits all' model to tailor services to community need and enhancing digital access while optimising staff, volunteers, and resources. This approach aligns with broader council transformation efforts to embed community focused delivery.

1.2 Emerging Principles

Responding to the findings, concerns and issues raised from the consultation, the key principles that have shaped the final recommendations have included:

- Exploring community/ voluntary sector management to prevent closures.
- Tailoring opening hours to community needs, ensuring Saturday opening at all libraries and later closures on an area basis.
- Expanding volunteer involvement to support service delivery.
- Strengthening partnerships with organisations, community groups and educational institutions for innovative delivery models.
- Leveraging technology and digital tools to adapt to the evolving demands of the service.
- Maximising funding opportunities and income streams to enhance sustainability.

A revised vision for a modern library service is required that delivers the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings while meeting statutory obligations and supporting the Council's Improvement Plan. Alongside the consultation data the following steps are recommended:

1.3 Retain 12 Libraries

A statutory library network of twelve sites including the re-opening of Sherwood and the retention of Radford-Lenton will give 77% of Nottingham households access to a library within a 20 min walk, providing a good geographical spread and strong public transport links to alternative provision. The remaining library network demonstrates the Council's continued commitment to quality, sustainable library services. Core hours, totalling 375 hours, will be professionally staffed with the use of volunteers to extend and support where available. Funding will continue to be sought to further modernise and improve these facilities to ensure they remain vibrant, accessible community hubs.

1.4 Three Library Sites with Community Delivery Potential

To ensure financial sustainability while maintaining service reach, three library sites will no longer be part of the core library network (Aspley, Basford and Bilborough). The potential for community-led delivery will be explored as an alternative to closure of these buildings, encouraging local partnerships to offer tailored services and programmes. This approach supports community empowerment while reducing operational costs.

1.5 Repurposing a Library Site as a Stock Hub

One library site (Radford-Lenton) will be repurposed into a centralised stock hub. This move will:

- Enable the release of the Woodfield Industries site, generating a capital receipt through its sale.
- Maintain a scaled-down library service at the repurposed site to ensure continuity of access for the local community.
- Enable Nottingham Performing Arts Library Service (NPALS) to remain operational in its existing location.

This change optimises resource utilisation while maintaining core library functions.

1.6 Adjustments to Opening Hours

Library opening hours across the remaining network will be reduced by 206 hours weekly. The changes made have been informed by usage data and consultation feedback. This targeted approach ensures alignment with user needs while optimising staffing and energy costs.

1.7 Reduction in Staffing and Operating Costs

A revised staffing model will be implemented, reflecting the changes in service delivery and opening hours. Additionally, IT systems and operating expenses will be streamlined to support efficient service management.

1.8 Reduction in the Book Fund

The budget for new library materials will be reduced. However, the focus will remain on protecting book collections for children and young people while also addressing the growing demand for eBooks from those accessing the services digitally.

1.9 Key Benefits and Outcomes

- **Financial Sustainability:** Achieves the necessary MTFP savings of £1.542 million for 2024/25–2025/26.
- **Equity and Accessibility:** Preserves access to library services for the largest geographical spread of households and through community-driven models.
- **Modernised Service Delivery:** Supports digital transformation and enhances the sustainability of remaining libraries.
- **Alignment with Statutory Duties:** Compliance with the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

This strategy enables Nottingham's library service to meet current challenges while evolving to address future community needs effectively.

2. Introduction, Background and Strategic Context

2.1 Objective

To achieve a revised vision for a modern library service in Nottingham that aligns with financial sustainability, statutory compliance, and equitable access, while supporting the aims of the Council's Improvement Plan.

2.2 Context and Challenges

Faced with reducing financial resources and evolving user habits, library services are having to redesign services and find innovative ways to reduce costs while maintaining a quality service that meets the needs of citizens.

2.3 Strategic Framework

- **Vision and Purpose:** Position libraries as essential community hubs for education, digital inclusion, cultural enrichment, and social cohesion.
- **Alignment with MTFP Savings:** Achieve the required savings of £1.542 million for 2024/25–2025/26 by implementing innovative cost-saving measures and revenue generation strategies.
- **Partnership Working:** Working alongside voluntary organisations and other public sector bodies to maximise resources available and ensure community focused service delivery in neighbourhoods.

2.4 Data-Driven and Inclusive Service Delivery

- **Needs Analysis and Service Data:** Use demographic analysis, library usage patterns, and consultation findings to identify priority areas, focusing resources where they are needed.
- **Equity and Accessibility:** Address barriers to library use for underrepresented and vulnerable groups, ensuring services meet diverse community needs.

2.5 Sustainable Measures of Change

- **Service Redesign:** Streamline library sites by consolidating the network and investing in multifunctional, accessible spaces. Co-locate services with other council functions or community organisations to maximise efficiency where possible and applicable.
- **Digital Expansion:** Expand online services and adopt Technology Enabled Opening where appropriate to reach wider audiences and reduce operational costs.
- **Volunteer Engagement:** Develop volunteer programmes to supplement staff capacity and support community ownership of library services.
- **Commercial Opportunities:** Generate additional income through commercial opportunities utilising library spaces.

2.6 Risk Mitigation

- **Judicial Review Compliance:** Ensure decisions are informed by robust public consultation, equality impact assessment and a transparent evaluation framework. Clearly communicate how the revised service will continue to meet statutory duties under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.
- **Partnership Building:** Collaborate with schools, community organisations, and public and private sector partners to diversify funding and enhance service offerings.

2.7 Contribution to the Nottingham City Council's Improvement Plan

- **Improving Outcomes:** Support educational attainment, employability, and digital literacy through targeted library programs.
- **Community Engagement:** Foster stronger relationships with local communities by tailoring services to their needs and co-designing initiatives.
- **Governance and Accountability:** Establish a governance framework to monitor progress, financial performance, and community satisfaction, ensuring alignment with the Council's broader objectives.

2.8 Financial Sustainability and Legal Compliance

This approach ensures Nottingham's library service remains financially sustainable, legally compliant, and responsive to the needs of its diverse communities, while contributing meaningfully to the Council's Improvement Plan.

2.9 Budget Savings Targets

The Library Service must save £1.524m over two years as part of the 2024-2027 Medium Term Financial Plan (MFTP):

- 2024/2025: £0.634m
- 2025/2026: £0.890m

2.10 Statutory Duty Under Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964

Despite budget reductions, the service must continue to fulfil its legal duty. Under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 local councils have a statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service for all those who live work or study in the area. This must be a universal service and include lending books and other printed materials free of charge. While the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) oversees library services nationally, councils have flexibility in how they meet local needs based on evidence, consultation and available resources.

2.11 Mitigating Risks and Ensuring Compliance

Where any significant changes are to be made, and to mitigate against community challenge and judicial review, the Library Service needs to demonstrate to the community, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and other stakeholders that these changes continue to deliver its statutory duty.

2.12 Nottingham City Council: Current Position

2.12.1 Financial Challenges and Section 114 Notice

On November 29th, 2023, Nottingham City Council's Chief Financial Officer issued a section 114 notice, citing the inability to deliver a balanced budget for 2023/2024 due to rising costs, increased demand for social care, and inflation alongside legacy financial governance issues. This imposed strict spending controls until March 2025, with only essential expenditures approved by the section 151 officer.

2.12.2 Improvement Plan Objectives

The Council's Improvement Plan focuses on becoming a financially sustainable, resilient and well-run organisation, delivering essential services while addressing budget challenges. This includes:

- a. Clear Purpose:** Ensuring the council delivers effectively for Nottingham with a clear vision and transformation programme.

b. Financial Sustainability: Achieving a balanced budget, improving financial management and reviewing assets and council-owned companies.

c. Operational Excellence: Enhancing governance, strengthening internal controls and creating an empowered workforce supported by better processes and systems.

The Council recognises it must adapt, to become a leaner organisation which is focused and responsive to Nottingham's evolving needs. Collaboration with residents and partners will guide priorities to ensure realistic and shared ambitions for the future.

2.12.3 Strategic Vision for Libraries

The Council is committed to delivering a modern, sustainable library service aligned with statutory duties, financial constraints and equitable access through to 2030.

Strategic Council Plan 2024-2027 (refresh)

- Maintain a comprehensive, efficient and high-quality library service across the city and ensure Nottingham Central Library is a quality place for all to access with an excellent children's library.
- Deliver positive outcomes across leisure, library and other community assets including exploring the possibility of shared spaces and use of technology.

2.13 Library Needs Assessment 2021 and Vision to 2030

In March 2021, Nottingham's library service undertook a comprehensive review to better understand community needs and shape its future. This work culminated in *The Next Chapter* Library Needs Assessment (LNA), which combined community consultation with analysis of demographic, socio-economic data, library performance metrics, national trends and sector best practices. The resulting report, approved in January 2023, outlined key principles for a sustainable library service. These are detailed in Table 1.

The strategic vision for future library provision to 2030 has developed from these 4 key principles in the original library needs assessment, updated to reflect the current financial position and strategic focus for the council.

Table 1 – Key Principles and Details

Principle	Details
Modernising the Library Network: Focus on consolidating low-use, high-cost sites and investing in modern, purpose-built facilities that meet future demands.	Continued development of Central Library as heart of the library network and re-opening of Sherwood library. Modern library buildings, well placed in the neighbourhoods which can be used for multiple purposes by the communities they serve.
Building Partnerships and Collaboration: Adopt a community-focused model that leverages shared spaces and cross-sector collaboration, guided by council-wide strategic assessment.	Exploration for alternative, multi-use, shared sites and community use. Working with other Council services and external community groups to provide alternative delivery models for the libraries proposed for closure.

Flexible Service Delivery: Optimise resources to align with usage patterns, expand volunteer involvement and strengthen marketing, advocacy and partnerships.	Review of staffing hours and structure to accommodate revised opening hours including some evening provision across the network. Development of volunteer network to support service delivery and opportunity for library provision outside of the core opening times.
Making the Most of Technology: Introduce Technology Enabled Opening to extend off-peak access and support partner use. Enhance the digital presence through website improvements and expanded online services.	Introduction of Open+/ Technology Enabled Opening at some of the community libraries. Continued development of digital and online offer to support and encourage digital access.

2.14 National Library Context

National data on library usage is challenging to source, as patterns have been significantly disrupted by the pandemic. Pre-2000 data is outdated, and figures from the Covid years don't reflect typical use.

Libraries Connected reported in February 2022¹ that physical book borrowing had recovered to around 84% of pre-Covid levels by December 2021. This mirrors trends in high street footfall, indicating people returned to libraries in much the same way as they did to shops. Between July and December 2021 library event attendance shifted back from digital to in-person, with an estimated 1.7m people attending events nationwide.

Digital and audiobook lending remains over twice as high as pre-pandemic levels, now accounting for 10% of total borrowing, up from 3-5%. However, this growth represents an expansion of borrowing channels rather than a shift away from physical borrowing. The addition of digital lending comes with higher costs, straining library budgets already stretched to maintain physical collections.

DCMS published a report on barriers to library use in Oct 2024². The research highlighted several barriers to library engagement shaped by individual perceptions, past experiences and personal circumstances. Key challenges include low awareness and knowledge of what libraries offer, practical barriers relating to accessibility and confidence in using library offers, especially online services and the perceived relevance of libraries in the digital age.

¹ <https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/news/why-cipfa-libraries-data-no-longer-fit-purpose>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/barriers-to-library-use-qualitative-research-report>

2.15 Local Context

2.15.1 Assets

Nottingham City Council currently delivers its statutory duty from 15 dedicated library buildings including 3 joint service centres and via a home library service which provides books for residents unable to visit a library building as well as specialist service provision to inmates at HMP Nottingham.

These library sites are:

<p>Nottingham Central 1 Carrington Street, NG1 7FH</p>	<p>The Central Library is a brand-new, purpose-built site. The library opened in November 2023. It is well placed for bus, tram and train links from across the city and conurbation.</p> <p>In addition to the standard library offer the new Central Library has a large children’s library and multi-sensory, interactive immersive room, café, baby change and disabled toilets, library lounge, local history services and collection, exhibition space, and Business and IP Centre.</p> <p>The library is currently open 53 hours per week</p>
<p>Aspley Nuthall Road, NG8 5DD</p>	<p>Aspley is currently closed due to on-going health and safety issues relating to the maintenance of the building. It was previously open 40 hours a week.</p>
<p>Basford Vernon Road, Basford, Nottingham, NG6 0AR</p>	<p>Basford Library is adjacent to Vernon Park and close to the David Lane Tram Stop. It is currently open 21 hours per week.</p>
<p>Bilborough Bracebridge Drive, NG8 4PN</p>	<p>Located close to a busy high street, Bilborough Library also houses a community centre which is managed by the library service. The library is currently open 35 hours per week</p>
<p>Bulwell Riverside Main Street, NG6 8QJ</p>	<p>Bulwell Riverside is one of 3 joint service centres in the network. These are NHS/ Nottingham City Council hubs. The centre offers alongside the library, youth and play services, a full-sized sports hall, café, 2 GP practices, community nursing services, meeting and conference facilities and an on-site pharmacy. It is close to both a bus station and a tram stop. The library is currently open 49 hours per week.</p>
<p>Clifton Southchurch Drive NG11 8AB</p>	<p>The library is well located on a main high street and close to a bus and tram stop. The library building includes a separate annex area, currently being used by another council team. The library service is in discussions with an organisation about alternative use for this space for community outreach activities. This would create an additional income for the library service. The library is currently open 39 hours per week.</p>
<p>The Dales 206 Sneinton Dale Nottingham NG2 4HJ</p>	<p>The Dales Centre shares the building with Nottinghamshire Police (though there are separate entrances and no shared spaces) and the Police pay a peppercorn rent to Nottingham City Council for the use</p>

	of building. It was opened in 2017 as purpose-built library which replaced the old Bakersfield and Sneinton libraries. The library is currently open 35 hours per week.
Hyson Green The Mary Potter Centre, 76 Gregory Boulevard NG7 5HY	Hyson Green is one of 3 joint service centres in the network. These are NHS/ Nottingham City Council hubs. Located within The Mary Potter Centre on Gregory Boulevard the Library is close to bus and tram links. The centre offers alongside the library, GP practices, clinics, a pharmacy and Nottingham City Housing services. The library is currently open 49 hours per week.
The Meadows Wilford Grove, NG2 2DR	The Meadows has an active Friends of Meadows Library (FOML) group that do a lot to support the building and the service in the neighbourhood. The library is currently open 35 hours per week.
Radford-Lenton Lenton Boulevard, NG7 2BY	A large library, it houses the Nottingham Performing Arts Library Service (NPALs). Located in a predominantly student and densely populated area of the city. There are also large family housing developments in the vicinity. The library is currently open 21 hours per week.
Sherwood Spondon Street, NG5 4AB	Sherwood Library has been closed since 2020. Since demolition, the site has undergone extensive redevelopment and is currently in the final stages of completion. Opening is planned for 2025. The opening hours pre-closure were 40 hours per week.
Southglade Park Southglade Road, Bestwood, NG5 5GU	Southglade Park is a small modern library on the same site as the Southglade Leisure centre. It replaced the former Bestwood library and Top Valley libraries. The library is currently open 35 hours per week.
St Ann's Valley 2 Livingstone Road, NG3 3GG	St Ann's Valley is one of 3 joint service centres in the network. These are NHS/ Nottingham City Council hubs. The centre offers alongside the library, GP practices, clinics, children's and youth services and Nottingham City Housing services. The library is currently open 49 hours per week.
Strelley Road Strelley Road, NG8 3BJ	Strelley Road Library is a modern, purpose-built library with independent living accommodation above the library. It has good bus links. The library is currently open 35 hours per week.
Wollaton Bramcote Lane, NG8 2NA	Wollaton is one of the busiest community libraries. It is currently open 45 hours per week.

Nottingham City Libraries provide a wide range of services and host diverse events to meet the needs of their communities. These libraries are hubs for learning, leisure and community interaction, offering tailored events and services to cater to diverse demographics.

2.15.2 Core Services

- **Library Resources:** Books (including in languages other than English) eNewspapers, eMagazines and local history collections.
- **Digital Access:** Computers with internet, free Wi-Fi, printing, scanning, photocopying and click and collect services.
- **Accessibility:** Ground-level entrances or ramps, accessible doors and additional features like desktop magnifiers for visually impaired users
- **Specialised Features:** All libraries have dedicated children's areas, and some have outdoor seating, meeting rooms or unique collections like the Nottingham Performing Arts Library Service.
- **Multi-Use Hubs:** Joint service centres combine facilities with GP practices, NHS services, community nursing, housing services and leisure facilities.

2.15.3 Regular Events

- **Children and Families:** Totsttime, Lego Club, Afterschool Club, Storytimes, messy play and children's science clubs.
- **Community and Social Groups:** Knit & Natter, coffee mornings, and book clubs.
- **Youth and Adults:** Games groups, craft clubs and hobby groups
- **Learning and Support:** IT support sessions, conversation groups, work clubs and ESL women's groups.
- **Cultural and Creative Events:** Author and poetry readings, live music, talks, exhibitions and family history sessions.
- **Civic Engagement:** Many libraries host councillor surgeries and serve as polling stations during elections.

2.16 Recent Investments in Nottingham Libraries

Significant investments have enhanced Nottingham's library network in the last 3 years:

- **Nottingham Central Library:** The Angel Row site has been replaced with a new, state-of-the-art facility in the Broadmarsh development. This flagship library features a café, conference rooms and an immersive cinema room.
- **Sherwood Library:** As part of the Spondon Street redevelopment, the old library has been closed. A modern, purpose-built Sherwood Library is under construction and is expected to open in 2025, offering upgraded facilities for the local community.
- **Improvements Across the Network:** Further upgrades have been made to libraries in Hyson Green, Clifton, Bilborough, St Ann's Valley, Bulwell Riverside, Southglade Park, Strelley Road and The Meadows, ensuring broader access to modernised and community focused library spaces. (Additional details are outlined in section 5.2 Funding for Nottingham Libraries)

2.17 UNESCO City of Literature

Nottingham became a UNESCO City of Literature in 2015, recognised for its rich literary heritage, dynamic contemporary writing culture and commitment to fostering creativity. The initiative, based at Nottingham Central Library, supports young talent and promotes the city's literary scene globally. The project aims to inspire and connect residents and writers while positioning Nottingham as a leading literary destination. Key activities include:

- Encouraging young people to engage with literature.
- Showcasing and mentoring writers, from emerging voices to established authors.
- Promoting reading, writing and storytelling in the community
- Organising literary events and attracting literary tourism

- Collaborating with organisations to use literature as a tool for social transformation.

2.18 Current Library Service Performance and Benchmarking

In 2023/24, Nottingham libraries recorded over 750,000 visits to libraries and nearly 500,000 borrowed books. There was over 79,000 hours of public computer use and users borrowed 68,000 eBooks and eAudiobooks.

Prior to the pandemic there was a declining overall trend of library use which was reflected nationally. Post pandemic recovery of in-person use of libraries has been mixed across network. Overall visits are down 10% compared to 2019/20 but showing an improving trend in 2024/25. This is despite a reduction in opening hours across the network in the intervening time.

2.18.1 Radford-Lenton library has shown the most positive recovery. There has been a 39% increase in visits on 2019/20, while visits to Aspley, Basford and Southglade library sites are all down by over 40%.

Table 2: Network - Visit Comparisons 2019/20 and 2023/24

Library	2019/20		2023/24*		% change for 2023/24 to 2019/20	
	Visits	Hours Open	Visits	Hours Open	Visits	Hours Open
Nottingham Central*	280,797	59.5	299,749	53.0	7%	-11%
Aspley*	38,820	44.0	19,978	40.0	-49%	-9%
Basford	22,680	21.0	12,279	21.0	-46%	0%
Bilborough	20,988	35.0	19,611	35.0	-7%	0%
Bulwell Riverside	143,186	54.0	100,547	49.0	-30%	-9%
Clifton	38,436	44.0	36,486	39.0	-5%	-11%
The Dales	37,500	36.0	28,797	35.0	-23%	-3%
Hyson Green	51,396	54.0	44,732	49.0	-13%	-9%
Meadows	32,688	43.0	32,384	35.0	-1%	-19%
Radford-Lenton	7,920	21.0	11,023	21.0	39%	0%
Sherwood*	40,224	43.0	0	0.0	0%	-100%
Southglade Park	28,968	35.0	17,477	35.0	-40%	0%
St Ann's Valley	53,988	54.0	48,030	49.0	-11%	-9%
Strelley Road	32,400	35.0	32,466	35.0	0%	0%
Wollaton*	49,788	46.0	53,279	45.0	7%	-2%
TOTAL	879,779	624.5	756,838	541.0	-14%	-13%
TOTAL (excl Sherwood)	839,555	581.5	756,838	541.0	-10%	-7%

*Aspley Library temporarily closed due to building maintenance issues in Nov 2023. Full Year Estimate (FYE) for 2023/24.

*Central Library opened 28 November 2023. Full Year actuals used - taken Nov 2023 – Nov 24.

*Wollaton Library temporary closure Feb 2024 due to building works. Full Year Estimate for 2023/24

*% take up of PC hours used - actual data used not FYE for Aspley, Central and Wollaton Libraries

*Sherwood usage based on 2019/20

2.18.2 Issues overall are back to pre-pandemic levels, with some notable increases at Southglade, St Ann's Valley, and Basford up by 32%, 24% and 17% respectively.

Table 3: Network – Issues Comparisons 2019/20 and 2023/24

Library	2019/20		2023/24*		% change for 2023/24 to 2019/20	
	Issues (incl renewals)	Hours Open	Issues (incl renewals)	Hours Open	Issues (incl renewals)	Hours Open
Nottingham Central*	147,131	59.5	148,102	53.0	1%	-11%
Aspley*	30,214	44.0	24,989	40.0	-17%	-9%
Basford	12,720	21.0	14,904	21.0	17%	0%
Bilborough	17,962	35.0	13,856	35.0	-23%	0%
Bulwell Riverside	35,747	54.0	33,803	49.0	-5%	-9%
Clifton	31,584	44.0	29,942	39.0	-5%	-11%
The Dales	27,706	36.0	24,582	35.0	-11%	-3%
Hyson Green	26,210	54.0	31,438	49.0	20%	-9%
Meadows	19,644	43.0	16,417	35.0	-16%	-19%
Radford-Lenton	10,136	21.0	10,174	21.0	0%	0%
Sherwood*	56,695	43.0	0	40.0	N/A	-7%
Southglade Park	14,606	35.0	19,314	35.0	32%	0%
St Ann's Valley	16,188	54.0	20,070	49.0	24%	-9%
Strelley Road	25,464	35.0	27,834	35.0	9%	0%
Wollaton*	72,715	46.0	73,692	45.0	1%	-2%
TOTAL	544,722	624.5	489,117	581	-10%	-7%
TOTAL (excl Sherwood)	488,027	581.5	489,117	541	0%	-7%

Aspley Library temporarily closed due to building maintenance issues in Nov 2023. Full Year Estimate (FYE) for 2023/24.

*Central Library opened 28 November 2023. Full Year actuals used - taken Nov 2023 – Nov 24.

*Wollaton Library temporary closure Feb 2024 due to building works. Full Year Estimate for 2023/24

*% take up of PC hours used - actual data used not FYE for Aspley, Central and Wollaton Libraries

**Sherwood usage based on 2019/20

2.18.3 Public computer use seems to have been the worst hit in terms of recovery with PC hours used down 45% overall on pre-pandemic levels.

Table 4: Network – PC Hours Comparisons 2019/20 and 2023/24

Library	2019/20		2023/24*		% change for 2023/24 to 2019/20	
	PC Hours Used	Hours Open	PC Hours Used	Hours Open	PC Hours Used	Hours Open
Nottingham Central*	96,806	59.5	47,428	53.0	-51%	-11%
Aspley*	6,119	44.0	3,499	40.0	-43%	-9%
Basford	1,494	21.0	1,723	21.0	15%	0%
Bilborough	3,988	35.0	2,650	35.0	-34%	0%
Bulwell Riverside	15,913	54.0	12,511	49.0	-21%	-9%

Clifton	5,726	44.0	5,147	39.0	-10%	-11%
The Dales	5,968	36.0	4,003	35.0	-33%	-3%
Hyson Green	17,498	54.0	10,868	49.0	-38%	-9%
Meadows	7,575	43.0	6,331	35.0	-16%	-19%
Radford-Lenton	2,855	21.0	1,036	21.0	-64%	0%
Sherwood*	7,256	43.0	0	0.0	0%	-100%
Southglade Park	4,389	35.0	2,168	35.0	-51%	0%
St Ann's Valley	17,139	54.0	11,447	49.0	-33%	-9%
Strelley Road	7,911	35.0	4,587	35.0	-42%	0%
Wollaton*	2,707	46.0	1,868	45.0	-31%	-2%
TOTAL	203,344	624.5	115,266	541	-43%	-13%
TOTAL (excl Sherwood)	196,088	581.5	115,266	541	-41%	-7%

Aspley Library temporarily closed due to building maintenance issues in Nov 2023. Full Year Estimate (FYE) for 2023/24.

*Central Library opened 28 November 2023. Full Year actuals used - taken Nov 2023 – Nov 24.

*Wollaton Library temporary closure Feb 2024 due to building works. Full Year Estimate for 2023/24

*% take up of PC hours used - actual data used not FYE for Aspley, Central and Wollaton Libraries

**Sherwood usage based on 2019/20

2.18.4 Nottingham Central Library, which opened in November 2023, saw 299,749 visits in its first full year. This was a 7% increase over the former Angel Row Central Library in 2019/20, despite reduced opening hours. Book issues also rose by 1%, with 148,102 items borrowed.

Table 5: Central Library Performance Comparison

Central Library Performance Comparison 2019/20 to 2023/24			
Central Library	28 Nov 2023-Nov 2024	2019/20	% difference
Visits	299,749	280,797	7%
Issues	148,102	147,131	1%
PC Use Take Up	46.8%	63.8%	-27%

Issues calculated for November 2023-30 October 2024 due to new Library Management system implemented at beginning of Nov 2024 and data not available at time of writing.

2.18.5 eResources: The growing trend of use of digital library resources, which was already emerging pre-pandemic has accelerated post-pandemic. 2023/24 eBook and eAudio issues combined are up by 256% on 2019/20 levels.

Table 6: Network – eResources Comparisons 2019/20 and 2023/24

eResource Issues	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	% diff 2019/20 to 2023/24
eBooks	12,437	30,503	25,935	23,879	26,737	115%
eAudio	6,709	17,879	24,627	33,424	41,402	517%
Total	19,146	48,382	50,562	57,303	68,139	256%

2.18.6 Benchmarking

LG Futures (a financial management, funding and accounting advice group) have provided financial benchmarking to the Council. The unit costs are calculated using budgeted expenditure from the Revenue Account (RA) return for 2024/25 and divided by the projected resident population in 2024 based on the ONS population projections, adjusted for the ratio of in-commuters from the 2021 Census (based on ONS and LG Futures calculations).

The latest benchmarking review shows the following position for Nottingham City Council Library Services.

Table 7: LG Futures Financial Benchmarking of Nottingham City Library Services

Service Area	Budget 2024/25 (£m)	Unit cost		Difference from nearest neighbour average		Rank (1=high)
		Nottm City Council (£ per unit)	Neighbour Average (£ per unit)	(%)	Band	
Library Service	4.529	13.26	11.63	14%	●	5th /16

The 2024/25 budgets submitted in the RA return, included the 2024/25 phased saving of £1.143m (see details in paragraph 6.1). There will be further savings of £0.531m to be applied as part of the 2025/26 refreshed Medium Term Financial Plan. This will reduce the library service net budget to £3.998m, and the net cost of service to a comparable level to Nottingham City Council's nearest neighbour average.

Table 7a: LG Futures Financial Benchmarking of Nottingham City Library Services

Details	£m	Notes
2024/25 budget in RA return	4.529	
2025/26 savings to be applied	<u>-0.531</u>	1
2025/26 net budget	<u>3.998</u>	2
Nottingham City Council - Unit Cost per resident	£11.71	
Notes		
1. Background provided in paragraph 6.1		
2. Based on 2024/25 MTFP		
3. Nearest Neighbour Comparable local authority group consists of: Coventry, Gateshead, Kingston upon Hull, Leicester, Liverpool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle upon Tyne, Nottingham, Salford, Sandwell, Sheffield, Southampton, Stoke on Trent, Sunderland, Walsall, Wolverhampton		

2.18.7 Current Core City Library Network comparison

Current provision comparison data for the 11 Core Cities (as of November 2024) received through Nottingham's local and national library networks shows Newcastle having the most extensive library coverage with the lowest population per library provision of 12,449 and Birmingham ranking lowest with a population per library provision at 28,571. Currently, Nottingham is ranked 7th with its 15 libraries and with a population per library provision of 21,571. Under the proposed changes, Nottingham would drop to 9th.

Table 8: Core City comparison of libraries per average population

Core City	Population	Library Buildings	Libraries per average population
Newcastle	174,294	14	12,449
Belfast	345,000	20	17,250
Bristol	479,200	27	17,748
Cardiff	362,400	20	18,120
Sheffield	554,401	29 (16 via community delivery)	19,117
Glasgow	644,274	33	19,523
Nottingham	323,632	15 (current)	21,575
Leeds	822,483	37	22,229
Manchester	552,000	22	25,090
Nottingham	323,632	12 (proposed)	26,969
Liverpool	486,100	18	27,005
Birmingham	1,000,000	35	28,571

3. Development of Proposals for Consultation

Due to the size of the saving to be achieved, the proposals that were developed for consultation required an assessment of every aspect of the current and future delivery and across the full network of Libraries.

The proposals put forward for consultation were as follows:

- Reducing the number of libraries from 15 to 11 with the proposed closure of 4 libraries – Aspley, Basford, Bilborough, and Radford-Lenton.
- Reduction in opening hours across the network by 240.5 hrs per week. Full details of proposed changes are set out in Table 27 section 4.5
- Staff reductions
- Reducing the budget for books, IT and operating costs.

The measures proposed were projected to save £1.524m, allowing the Council to deliver a sustainable library service.

3.1 Public Consultation Process

Following the Council's full budget consultation held in December 2023 – January 2024, a more detailed presentation of library proposals was developed for further public consultation. The proposals considered a range of factors and criteria, to ensure that the library service can deliver a sustainable, comprehensive offer within reduced resources, including:

- **Usage and performance of libraries:** Visits, book issues, PC use
- **Building costs and maintenance issues:** Condition, adaptability and flexibility
- **Financial performance:** Cost of service, cost per user and value for money
- **Needs of Neighbourhoods:** Demographics and deprivation
- **Accessibility and nearness to other facilities:** Other community facilities, public transport, parking
- **Opening Hours:** A detailed review of opening hours looking at peak and off-peak demand was undertaken.

3.2 Equalities

Throughout the consultation we have been mindful of the equalities considerations that need to shape and inform any future delivery model.

It's vital the future of the service:

- Offers support and enhances digital inclusion for our communities.
- Offers modern, warm, safe spaces for study and as gateways to support services.
- Provides library services to areas of deprivation and socio-economic need.
- Focuses on who is NOT using the library and what can be done to encourage wider use.
- Supports and provides access to a wide range of services within.

3.3 Usage and Performance of Libraries

Tables 9, 10 and 11 detail usage metrics in 2023/24 for the 15 libraries in the network with performance against each metric ranked (1 being the best performing Library and 15 the worst performing)

3.3.1 Visits & Book Issues

Data summarised in Table 9 indicates that the most visited libraries are Nottingham Central, Bulwell Riverside and Wollaton. Radford-Lenton, Basford, Southglade and Bilborough are the least visited.

Taking the comparable metric of visits per hour open, Radford-Lenton, Basford, Bilborough and Aspley are ranked in the bottom 5, with Southglade being the other library in this group.

With book issues; Central Library and Wollaton perform the strongest, with St Ann's Valley, Bilborough, Radford Lenton Meadows and Southglade ranked in the bottom 5.

Table 9: Key Performance Metrics: Visits and Issues

Library	Visits	Visits per Hour Open	Rank	Issues (inc renewals)	Issues per Hour Open	Rank
Central*	298,479	113	1	153,503	58	1
Aspley*	19,978	10	= 13	24,989	12	10
Basford	12,279	12	11	14,904	14	= 6
Bilborough	19,611	11	12	13,856	8	14
Bulwell Riverside	100,547	41	2	33,803	14	= 6
Clifton	36,486	19	= 5	29,942	15	5
The Dales	28,797	16	10	24,582	14	= 6
Hyson Green	44,732	18	9	31,438	13	9
The Meadows	32,384	19	= 5	16,417	9	13
Radford-Lenton	11,023	10	= 13	10,174	10	12
Sherwood**	40,224	19	= 5	56,695	27	3
Southglade Park	17,477	10	= 13	19,314	11	11
St Ann's Valley	48,030	20	4	20,070	8	= 14
Strelley Road	32,466	19	= 5	27,834	16	4
Wollaton*	53,279	24	3	73,692	33	2
Total	795,792	361		551,213	262	

*Central library is based on Dec - March average for financial year equivalent, Aspley library is based on April- Oct average for financial year equivalent, Sherwood library based on 2019/20, Wollaton library was closed during Feb, so average was used for financial year equivalent.

3.3.2 PC Hours Used

Data summarised in Table 10 indicates that the highest PC use is at Central Library, Bulwell Riverside, St Ann's Valley and Hyson Green, with Radford-Lenton, Bilborough, Southglade and Aspley remaining in the bottom 5 for PC hours used and take up of available hours. Basford ranks 2nd for take up of PC available hours.

3.3.3 Active Users

Data summarised in Table 11 shows a similar pattern to the other metrics with Aspley, Bilborough, Basford, Radford Lenton and Southglade ranked lowest for the number of Active Users.

Table 10: Key Performance Metrics: PC Hours Used

Library	PC Hours Used	Take up of PC Available Hours (%)	Rank
Central*	39,774	41.00%	3
Aspley*	3,499	21.70%	11
Basford	1,723	42.30%	2
Bilborough	2,650	20.20%	14
Bulwell Riverside	12,511	39.60%	5
Clifton	5,147	28.80%	9
Dales	4,003	29.90%	8
Hyson Green	10,868	32.10%	6
Meadows	6,331	32.00%	7
Radford-Lenton	1,036	20.50%	13
Sherwood*	7,256	46.30%	1
Southglade Park	2,168	21.40%	12
St Ann's Valley	11,447	40.10%	4
Strelley Road	4,587	22.80%	10
Wollaton*	1,868	16.90%	15
Total	114,868		

Table 11: Key Performance Metrics: Active Users

Library	Active Users	Rank
Central*	12,209	1
Aspley*	1,371	11
Basford	939	14
Bilborough	1,026	13
Bulwell Riverside	3,466	2
Clifton	2,320	6
Dales	2,004	8
Hyson Green	3,092	3
Meadows	1,514	10
Radford-Lenton	767	15
Sherwood*	2,574	5
Southglade Park	1,319	12
St Ann's Valley	2,161	7
Strelley Road	1,902	9
Wollaton*	2,901	4
Total	39,565	

*Central library is based on Dec - March average for financial year equivalent, *Aspley library is based on April- Oct average for financial year equivalent, *Sherwood library based on 2019/20, *Wollaton library was closed during Feb, so average was used for financial year equivalent.

3.4 Building costs and Maintenance issues

Maintaining Nottingham's library buildings requires significant and ongoing investment. Beyond routine costs like utilities and day-to-day maintenance, the Council's Property Services team has identified from conditions surveys a backlog of approximately £704,855 needed to bring library facilities up to modern standards.

3.4.1 Older Buildings Face Greater Costs:

- Aspley library alone has an estimated £135,149 in backlog maintenance liabilities.
- Bilborough, Basford and Radford-Lenton libraries also have relatively high identified maintenance costs, reflecting the disproportionate maintenance demands of aging infrastructure.

3.4.2 Radford-Lenton Library:

Radford-Lenton has a large open plan space at the rear of the building. This extra space supports the Nottingham Performing Arts Library Service (NPALS), which holds over 100,000 copies of music and drama sets, showcasing its role as a key resource hub.

Table 12: Libraries Maintenance Backlog (Excludes Central, Sherwood & Joint Service Centre Libraries)

Library	Net Internal Area (SqM)	Total site area (incl. external space) SqM	2023 Condition Surveys Maintenance Backlog plus 30%*	Estimated 2024/2025 Maintenance Backlog adjusted for inflation
Aspley Library	559	1400	£129,646	£135,149
Clifton Library	521	1520	£98,236	£102,405
Basford Library	316	650	£87,380	£91,088
Radford-Lenton Library	506	927	£84,436	£88,019
Bilborough Library	508	1800	£63,424	£66,116
Wollaton Library	358	560	£62,928	£65,598
The Meadows Library	427	810	£48,000	£50,037
Southglade Park Library	237	1700	£41,565	£43,328
The Dales Library	470	1280	£31,477	£32,813
Strelley Road Library	519		**£30,000	£31,300

Net Internal Area – the useable floor space excluding areas like structural walls, stairwells and communal spaces

*Plus 30% uplift allows for Project Management, preliminary & contingency but excludes any inflationary adjustment

**Estimate based on size and new build from 2019

3.5 Financial Performance & Best Value

Outlined in table 13 is the financial performance of each library in relation to best value metrics. Overall, across the metrics Wollaton has the best financial performance whilst Aspley, Radford-Lenton, Basford, Hyson Green, and Southglade perform less well against these financial metrics. Radford-Lenton along with Basford do have the lowest total costs for running the buildings, due to low premises costs (rates and insurance) and the lowest number of hours open.

Table 13: Financial performance (cost of service, cost per visit , value for money)

Library	Total Costs	Cost Per Visit	Cost Per Hour	Cost Per Issue (including renewals)
Nottingham Central Based on Dec-Mar average for FY equivalent	£964,624.00	£3.23	£364.01	£6.29
Aspley Based on Apr-Oct average for FY equivalent	£91,850.00	£4.60	£45.93	£3.68
Basford	£50,126.00	£4.08	£47.74	£3.36
Bilborough	£67,457.00	£3.44	£38.55	£4.87
Bulwell Riverside	£122,671.00	£1.22	£50.07	£3.63
Clifton	£91,401.00	£2.51	£46.87	£3.05
The Dales	£101,976.00	£3.54	£58.27	£4.15
Hyson Green	£214,991.00	£4.81	£87.75	£6.84
Meadows	£88,286.00	£2.73	£50.45	£5.38

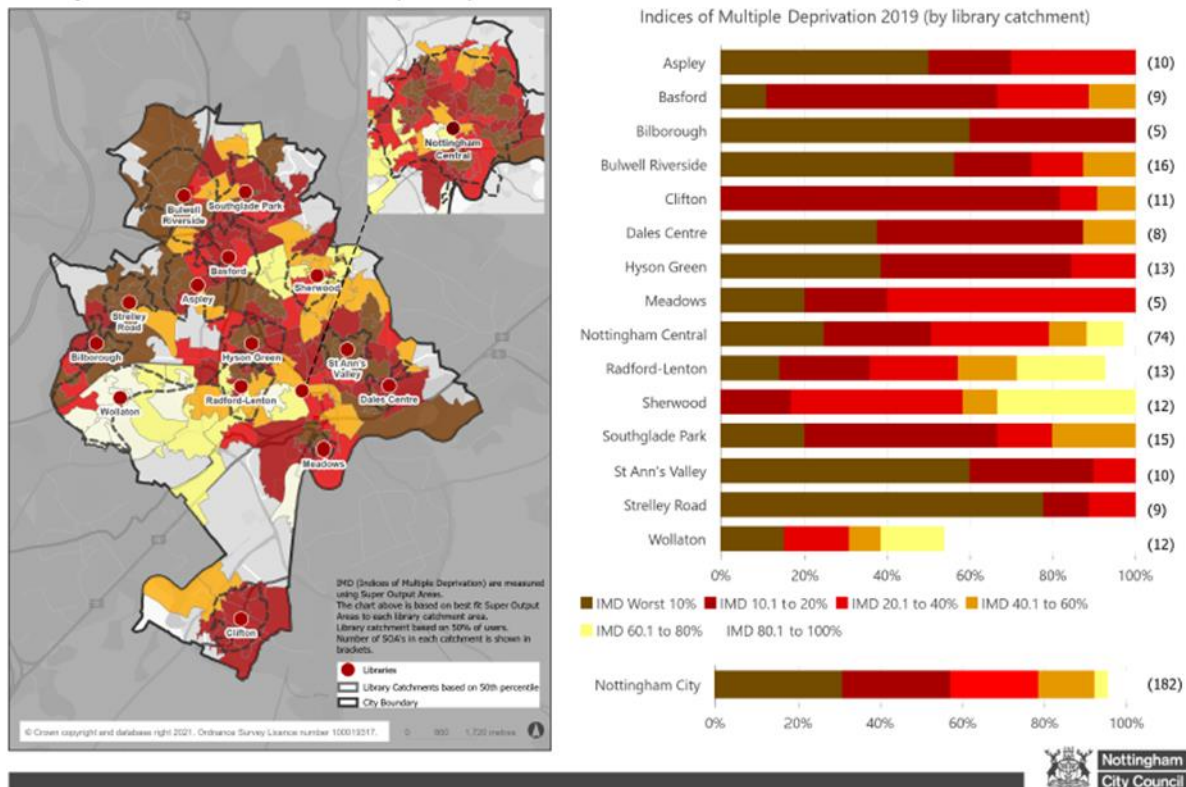
Radford-Lenton	£50,150.00	£4.55	£47.76	£4.93
Sherwood Full year closed so no visitor usage data available	£81,277.00	n/a	n/a	n/a
Southglade Park	£72,218.00	£4.13	£41.27	£3.74
St Ann's Valley	£99,356.00	£2.07	£40.55	£4.95
Strelley Road	£76,676.00	£2.36	£43.81	£2.75
Wollaton Closed Feb average used for FY equivalent	£87,612.00	£1.64	£38.94	£1.19

3.6 Needs of Neighbourhoods

The level of deprivation within each library's catchment population is an indicator of the local need to access services. Based on Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) shown on map below (Figure 1), Bulwell Riverside Library is located within the most deprived catchment with 9 out of its 16 Super Output Areas (SOA) in the worst 10% nationally, this is followed by Strelley Road Library and St Ann's Valley Library being the next most deprived catchments.

Figure 1: Library Catchments – Indices of Multiple Deprivation

Library catchments - Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019



SOAs are the smallest geographical level at which census estimates are provided.

Library catchment areas have been defined based on the registered site of active library users, (those users who have returned or borrowed books or used a public computer within the last 12 months) using data captured from Nottingham City's Library Management System.

More detailed analysis of the available deprivation index data, (set out in Table 14) focusing on the largest specific cohort groups currently using libraries, namely Children and Older people, a slightly different pattern emerges. In the case of Deprivation affecting Children,

Bilborough Library catchment ranks top for having the largest % of SOA in worst 10%, whilst for older people this becomes Hyson Green. Radford-Lenton, while a relatively low score and ranking for the overall IMD index, for older people the catchment is ranked 4th highest with 46% of SOA in the worst 10%.

Table 14: Deprivation levels by specific groups (Children and Older People)

Deprivation Affecting Children		Deprivation affecting old people			
Ranked	Library Catchment	% of SOA in worst 10%	Ranked	Library Catchment	% of SOA in worst 10%
1	Bilborough	80%	1	Hyson Green	77%
2	St Ann's Valley	80%	2	St Ann's Valley	70%
3	Bulwell Riverside	69%	3	The Dales	50%
4	Strelley Road	67%	4	Radford-Lenton	46%
5	Southglade Park	60%	5	Bilborough	40%
6	Basford	56%	6	Meadows	40%
7	Aspley	50%	7	Strelley Road	33%
8	Meadows	40%	8	Bulwell Riverside	25%
9	Radford-Lenton	38%	9	Basford	22%
10	The Dales	38%	10	Wollaton	17%
11	Hyson Green	23%	11	Southglade Park	7%
12	Wollaton	17%	12	Aspley	0%
13	Sherwood	8%	13	Clifton	0%
14	Clifton	0%	14	Sherwood	0%

3.7 Access

There are 148,705 residential properties in the city (as of April 2024). Table 15 outlines the % coverage for residential properties within walking distances of the nearest library. Current provision shows that 83% of the city's residential households are within a 1-mile (approx. 20 min) walking catchment of a library. With the proposal put forward for consultation, resulting in the closure of 4 libraries, this would see a reduction in access to 73% of households within a 20-minute walk of a library.

Table 15: Households within library walking catchments

Households within Walk Catchments (147,748)		
Current Library Provision	Households	% of City
City households within a 20-minute walk:	124,024	83.9
City households within a 15-minute walk:	94,931	64.3
City households within a 10-minute walk:	49,416	33.4
<i>Households <u>not</u> within a 20-minute walk:</i>	<i>23,724</i>	<i>16.1</i>

Proposed Library Provision (as presented for consultation)	Households	% of City
City households within a 20-minute walk:	108,299	73.3
City households within a 15-minute walk:	74,999	50.8
City households within a 10-minute walk:	37,178	25.2
<i>Households <u>not</u> within a 20-minute walk:</i>	<i>39,449</i>	<i>26.7</i>
<i>Households <u>previously</u> within a 20-minute walk, who wouldn't be within a 20-minute walk with the proposed provision:</i>	<i>15,667</i>	<i>10.6</i>

The comprehensive public transport network (see Figure 2) that exists in Nottingham does enable virtually all households within the city to be within a 40-minute bus or tram journey to Nottingham Central Library. In the case of Basford, Aspley and Radford-Lenton library catchments, residents are also within 20 minutes of an alternative library using public transport.

Figure 2: Map showing public transport routes in relation to city library locations

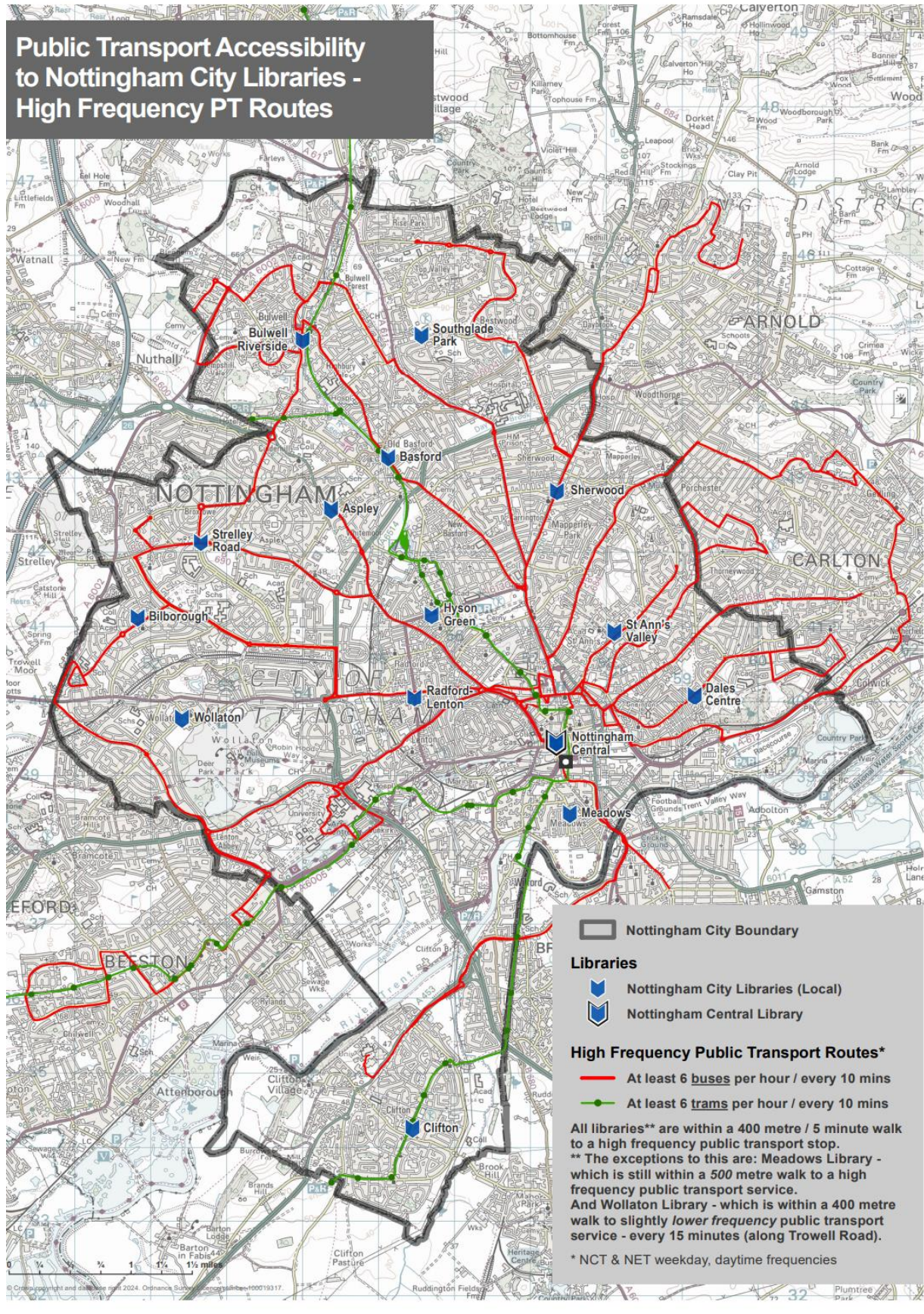


Table 16: Households within Public Transport Catchments

Nottingham Central Library (by bus / tram / train)	Households	% of City
City households within a 40-minute bus / tram / train journey:	142,547	96.5
City households within a 30-minute bus / tram / train journey:	102,746	69.5
City households within a 20-minute bus / tram / train journey:	41,020	27.8
Households <u>not</u> within a 40-minute bus / tram / train journey:	5,201	3.5

Table 17: Borrowing patterns from registered users

Checkout Library	Registered User Library														
	Aspley	Basford	Bilborough	Bulwell	Riverside	Clifton	Dales	Hyson Green	Meadows	Central	Radford Lenton	Sherwood	Southglade Park	St Anns	Strelley Road
ASPLEY	451	32	9	29	4	8	35	4	52	8	15	5	15	36	16
BASFORD	49	414	3	65	2	3	32	76	5	47	17	4	7	7	
BILBOROUGH	24	2	400	18	4	4	16	4	36	6	6	3	12	50	56
BULWELL	71	81	16	1,304	12	5	30	5	157	9	27	43	18	46	17
CLIFTON	11	4	2	12	1,175	9	18	24	113	6	10	4	23	9	12
DALES	4	7	1	9	3	848	15	11	101	5	15	6	33	2	4
HYSON-GREEN	50	27	15	34	14	23	1,108	11	210	51	65	5	24	26	27
MEADOWS	2	6	4	4	12	14	14	604	91	8	5	3	6	6	7
CENTRAL	66	49	36	108	79	141	140	179	2,777	89	149	22	90	55	211
RADFORD-LENTON	3	9	2	4	6	5	38	11	81	245	2	1	8	3	21
SHERWOOD											1				
SOUTHGLADE	5	33	2	90	5	8	22	4	46	5	39	610	10	6	5
ST-ANNS	10	10	3	20	10	66	27	14	149	13	30	11	770	9	10
STRELLEY RD	175	7	68	59	4	18	66	14	93	11	9	10	14	853	52
WOLLATON	27	8	32	12	8	8	26	10	192	26	22	5	7	15	1,689
Checkout at a County Library	85	68	62	222	171	196	115	140	1704	50	389	112	93	60	419
Total Number of Users	1,033	757	655	1,985	1,509	1,356	1,702	1,035	5,878	537	831	857	1,127	1,183	2,553
% of users borrowing from the library they are registered at.	43.7%	54.7%	61.1%	65.7%	77.9%	62.5%	65.1%	58.4%	47.2%	45.6%	0.1%	71.2%	68.3%	72.1%	66.2%
% of users borrowing from Central Library	6.4%	6.5%	5.5%	5.2%	5.2%	10.4%	8.2%	17.3%	47.2%	16.6%	17.9%	2.6%	8.0%	4.6%	8.3%

3.8 Patterns of Library Usage by Registered Users

The proportion of active users who exclusively use their registered library reflects the relative need of that library to its local population. This varies across sites and is influenced by factors such as geographical isolation, transport accessibility and the quality of local library services.

3.8.1 Isolated Libraries:

Libraries like **Clifton**, where the nearest alternative falls outside a 20-minute walking radius, see a higher proportion of exclusive use. At Clifton, **77.9%** of users visit only their registered library, indicating strong local reliance. (See Table 17)

3.8.2 Libraries in Overlapping Catchments:

Areas closely located libraries show more distributed usage: For example, **Aspley Library** **43.7%** of its users remain exclusive, but with alternative libraries of Strelley Road and Hyson Green also being used along with Central Library.

3.8.3 Central Library and External Libraries

Nottingham's Central Library is a frequent alternative choice for city residents. Additionally county libraries just outside city boundaries attract City users.

3.9 Summary findings from review of opening hours used to support initial consultation proposals

A detailed analysis of opening hours across the network was undertaken which covered the following:

- Peaks and troughs of usage and demand at each library and on an hour-by-hour basis
- Activity analysis of when and where key activities took place that might be impacted by changes to opening hours.
- Operational management constraints/considerations – aligning user needs whilst optimising staffing and building/energy costs.

A summary of the opening hours review is outlined in Table 18.

Table 18: Summary findings from review of opening hours used to support initial consultation proposals	
(Excludes Aspley, Bilborough, Basford and Radford Lenton as proposed for closure. Sherwood analysis also not undertaken as data not available)	
Central Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning of the day (09.00) - lowest volume of visits, lowest volume of issues and 2nd lowest PC use • End of the day (17.00) - least visits, lowest PC reservation • An average of 216 issues recorded during the last hour of opening times. • Majority of community/ children's activities take place during the day
Bulwell Riverside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits, issues and PC reservations are lowest at the beginning and end of the day. • Only 1 activity would be affected should reduced hours at the end of the day be approved
Clifton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning of the day is the second busiest time for visits when compared across the day. • Beginning of the day is marginally the busiest time for PC reservation. • No community events would be impacted by proposed changes
The Dales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits are proportioned throughout the day with peaks at 10.00 and 15.00. • End of the day is the second busiest time for issues compared across the rest of the day. • Minimal impact on community events by proposition • After school club is every Monday 15.30 – 17.30
The Meadows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning of the day has the least visits, issues and PC reservations when compared across the day. • End of the day has the most issues but has the least PC reservations. • End of the day is amongst the highest for visits, but considerably less than early in the afternoon. • Several community events/activities take place at the beginning and end of the day
Southglade Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busiest time for visits, issues and PC reservations is in the morning. • End of the day amongst the busiest for visits and issues, but lowest for PC reservations • Several community events and activities impacted by proposition. • Friday – lowest for issues and quietest for visits
St Ann's Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning of the day quietest for visits and 2nd quietest for issues, but busiest for PC reservations • End of the day - quietest time for visits and PC reservations, but fairly busy for issues • After school/educational activities takes place on Mondays and Fridays (term time) from 15.30 • Saturday - Least visits and issues compared to the rest of the week
Strelley Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning of the day amongst the busiest for visits and PC reservations but 2nd lowest for issues • End of the day – 3rd busiest time for visits, but 3rd lowest for issues and PC reservations • Some activities impacted which take place at the beginning and end of the day. • Saturday first thing – least visits and PC reservations and quietest time for issues
Wollaton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits, Issues and PC reservations are proportioned throughout the day. • Wednesday is the lowest day for visits, and issues, but PC reservation are similar to all other days. • Reading Group which meets on a Wednesday would be impacted in library closed on a Wednesday

3.9.1 After reviewing patterns of use, operational considerations and resources available the following changes in opening hours were put forward as part of the consultation. These were:

- **Library Usage Patterns:** Data shows that library use is highest between 10am and 5pm, with lower footfall between 9am and 10am and a peak around lunchtime. Proposed opening hours were therefore set at 10am to 5pm to align with peak usage times.
- **Consistency in Opening Hours:** Previous feedback from customers emphasized the importance of consistent opening hours, as irregular schedules are difficult to remember. The proposed hours aim to ensure greater uniformity across each library.
- **Evening Usage:** Evening visits to libraries are relatively low. As a cost-saving measure, it was proposed to discontinue evening opening hours.
- **Saturday Use in Joint Service Centre (JSC) Libraries:** JSC libraries experience lower footfall on Saturdays compared to weekdays and to non-JSC libraries, likely due to limited weekend operations of other services in JSCs. Consequently, it was proposed to close JSC libraries on Saturdays.
- **Half-Day Closures:** Many libraries currently operate for only half a day. It was proposed to convert these half days into full closure days for efficiency.
- **Central Library:** Given Central Library's higher footfall and its importance in serving the wider city, its opening hours were largely preserved, with minor reductions proposed.

In ensuring efficient use of library resources for the delivery of the service, the proposals developed for consultation would see alignment of core operating hours and opening hours rationalised to better respond to peak and off-peak use and changing user habits enabling effective operational delivery.

3.10 Alternative Delivery Options Explored

In developing the proposals, a number of other options including alternative delivery models were considered. These were evaluated against budget targets, statutory requirements, community needs and operations risks and considerations.

3.10.1 Retain all libraries but have a significant reduction in opening hours only.

The experience of local authorities who adopted this model reported it created confusion and uncertainty over when a library is open, leading people to assume libraries were closed. Usage of the service then drops, which can amount to library closure by default. Additionally, reducing opening hours alone would not achieve the required budget savings, and risks failing the statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient service.

3.10.2 Outsourcing libraries

The City Council already has partnership contracts with Inspire (who deliver Library Services on behalf of the Nottinghamshire County Council) and other East Midlands Library authorities including a joint Library Management System, a consortium book supply contract a consortium e-lending supply contract and stock distribution (Inspire Only). Informal discussions have taken place for a regional library partner being able to deliver the city's library service but would require a financial appraisal followed by a contract procurement process. This option would not deliver savings within the required timeframe but may be explored in the future.

3.10.3 Volunteer Run Library Service

A **solely** volunteer staffed model risks losing specialist skills and reliable support. While volunteer involvement will continue to complement paid library staff, creating an efficient, effective and reliable volunteer network is a longer-term piece of work. National experiences of community managed library services are mixed. Some authorities continue to provide some funding to support these, others have not. This can lead to financial problems as the community organisation struggles to find the money to operate the service *and* maintain the building.

3.10.4 Close more than four Libraries

This model would keep a hub Central Library and then a much smaller community network in the south, east, west and north of the city. Reducing to a minimal network would significantly lower access, with fewer than 70% of households within a 20-minute walk of a library (1 mile radius). Benchmarking shows Nottingham would rank lowest among the Core Cities in provision per population and risks a breach in statutory duty of providing a comprehensive service.

3.10.5 Combining Community Spaces: Leisure Library Project

In 2023, a project was launched to integrate sport & leisure and library services into a unified model focusing on learning, literacy, health, wellbeing and digital access. This redesign aimed to maximise value by co-locating services, optimising assets and fostering community involvement. However, the project was halted due to changing strategic priorities for both service areas. While it does not meet the immediate budget savings required, it may be revisited in the medium to long term.

3.10.6 Technology Enabled Opening (TEO):

While TEO could extend hours and contribute to the modernisation of the service, challenges include high initial costs, ongoing maintenance, an absence of skilled staff on hand to help, and accessibility and safety concerns, particularly for women, individuals with disabilities and under 16s. In the medium to long term there is the opportunity to look at adopting Open+ or Technology Enabled Opening in certain suitable libraries. However, the capital cost associated with this, and time frame to implement ruled this out as an option to achieve the saving in the immediate term.

In summary, none of these options met the required savings or statutory obligations within the needed timeframe.

4. Consultation on Proposal and Findings

The consultation on proposed library changes ran from 28th May to 19th August 2024, emphasising that no decisions had been made and inviting input to shape future services. Efforts focused on engaging a broad audience across Nottingham and encouraging innovative solutions for a sustainable library model within the budget constraints.

4.1 Engagement Activities

4.1.1 Surveys: During that period Nottingham City Council invited responses to the consultation via an online survey³, use of a tablet in the library or paper copy of the survey available at all libraries or on request.

5,378 people responded to the survey. 4,360 people/ organisations responded to the main online survey, 624 people completed the main paper survey. 394 children and young people completed the young people version⁴ of the survey either online or on paper. Forty-two organisations responded and 149 of the responses were from Nottingham City Council staff.

4.1.2 Public Events Five events were held (two in person public meetings, one online public meeting) and 2 drop-in sessions with over 100 attendees in total.

4.1.3 Online Platforms: A dedicated webpage (<https://www.nottinghamcitylibraries.co.uk/shape-the-vision/>) received over 7000 visits; there were 50 social media posts across Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) and messaging via Engage Nottingham Hub amplified outreach.

4.1.4 Direct Outreach: Emails were sent to 19,162 library newsletter subscribers. In addition, there was engagement with 160 schools and nurseries encouraging participation in the consultation and completion of the young people's survey. All Nottingham City Council staff networks and 132 stakeholders including Arts Council England and UNESCO City of Literature⁵ were also contacted.

4.1.5 Workshops: Two staff engagement sessions and a stakeholder workshop were delivered.

4.1.6 Community Feedback: 517 comments sheets from the Friends of Meadows Library were submitted in support of the building and service.

4.1.7 Equalities: The online survey was available in 84 different languages due to the functionality of the software used. Efforts were made to reach as diverse a range of the community as possible through staff networks and writing to organisations representing a range of groups in the city including, women, ethnic minorities, refugees, LGBTQ+ and disability forums. The two public meetings were signed by BSL signers.

4.2 Headline analysis (survey, staff, stakeholders and public meetings)

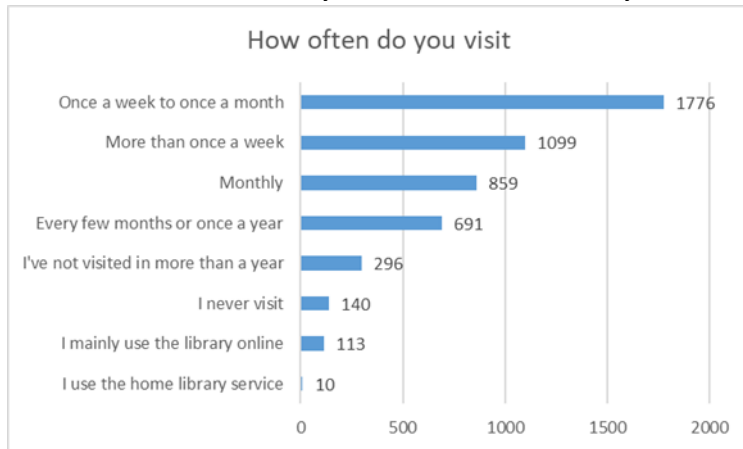
³ See appendix 1 for survey questions.

⁴ See appendix 2 for young people survey questions.

⁵ See appendix 3 for a full list of the stakeholders written to

85% of those who responded to the main survey were Nottingham City Library members and 36% visited a library in Nottingham at least once a week to once a month.

Table 19: Consultation Survey Question – How often do you visit a Nottingham City Library?



4.2.1 Children's and Young People's Survey

Library Visits

30.5% of children surveyed visit the library **more than once a week**.

4.2.2 What Would Encourage More Visits

Children and young people expressed an interest in:

- **More events and activities:** Workshops, clubs and engaging programmes
- **Improved Facilities:** Comfortable seating areas and better spaces for socialising
- **Flexible Opening Hours:** Extended hours, especially after school
- **Better book selections:** A wider and more appealing range of titles
- **Community-focused spaces:** Clubs and activities that foster a stronger sense of belonging.

Main Survey

4.2.3. Most used services

Respondents reported frequent use of:

- **Borrowing books** 22%
- **Printing or photocopying** 9%.
- **A place to study** 8%.
- **Adult events or activities** 8%

4.2.4 Niche Interests and Resources

The survey responses showed us libraries are valued for specific services including:

- Local history sessions, genealogy resources and specialised reference collections
- Creative writing groups
- Technology tutorials

4.2.5 Social and Community Value

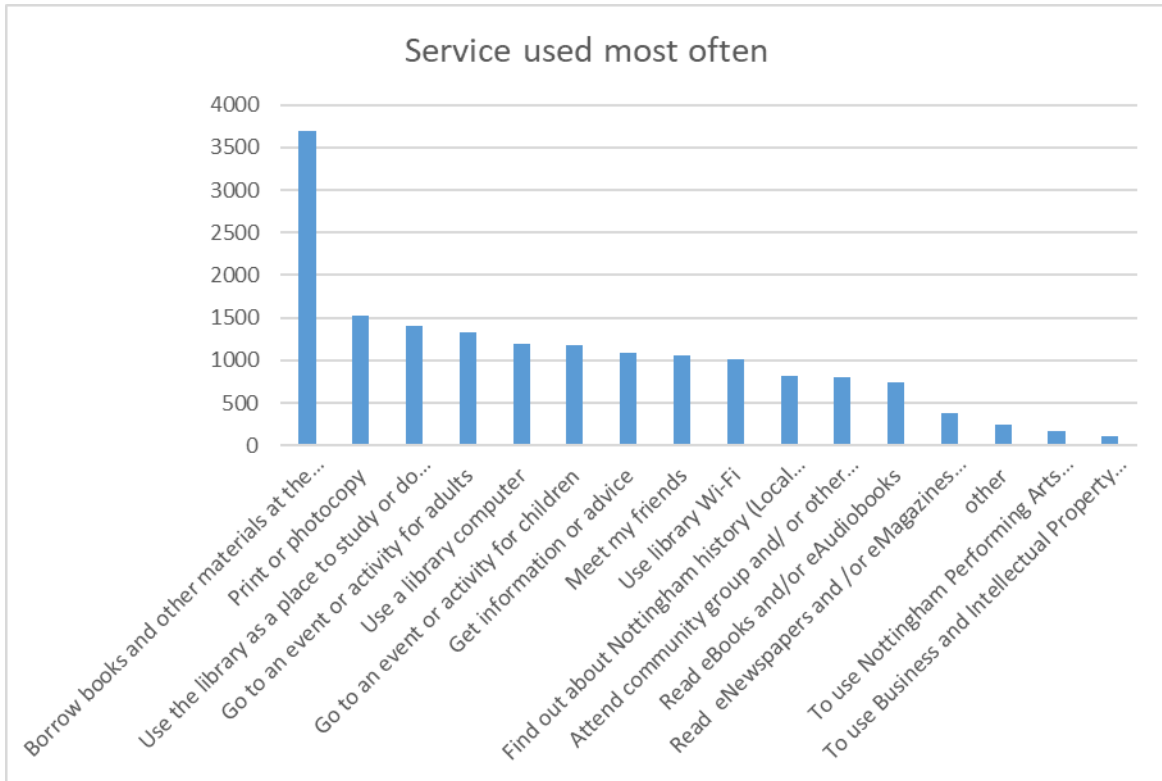
The library is valued as a:

- **Social hub:** A place to meet friends and engage in community activities.
- **Quiet, safe environment:** A refuge for relaxation or focused work

4.2.6 Work and Study Space

Additionally, some individuals pointed out that they visit the library mainly to use it as a workspace, especially for group studies or meetings, taking advantage of the library's infrastructure like meeting rooms and free Wi-Fi.

Table 20: Consultation Survey Question: Which library service do you use most often?

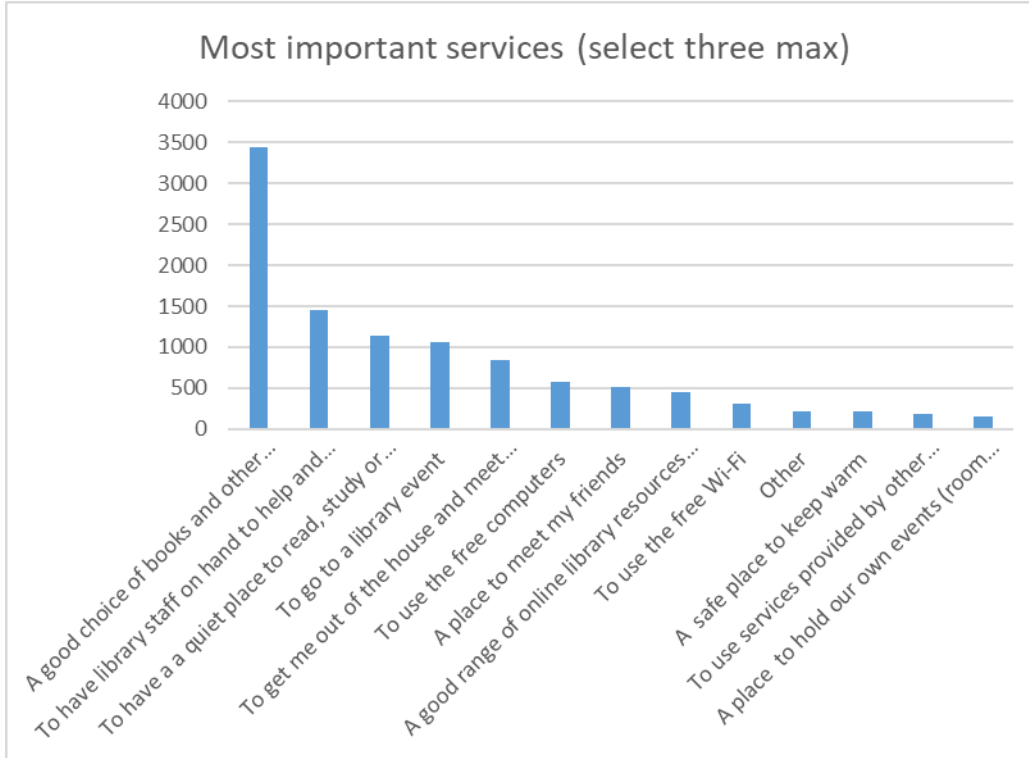


4.2.7 The most important reason for visiting was:

- **A good choice of books** 33%
- **Library staff on hand for help or advice** 14%
- **A quiet place to study/ read** 11%.
- **To go to a library event** 10%.

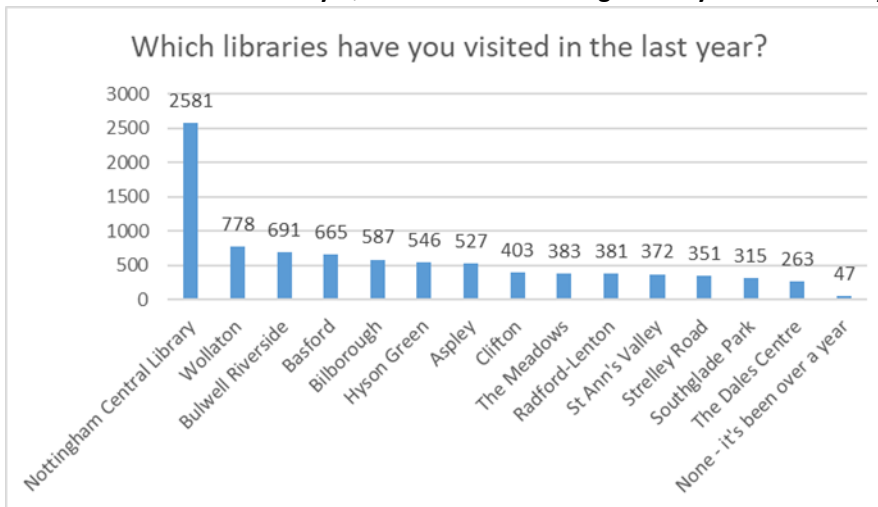
A lot of the 'other' comments were reiterating their selection(s) or stating, "all of them."

Table 21: Consultation Survey Question: What do you consider to be the most important library services?



4.2.8 On the main survey we asked respondents to identify which libraries they visited in the last year and could select up to three sites. The most visited by far was Nottingham Central Library with 29% of respondents (2,581). (NOTE: Nottingham Central Library opened on Nov 28th, 2023, and had not been open a full year at the point of the consultation). The next most visited by survey respondents was Wollaton, Bulwell and Basford. (NOTE: This is not in line with usage patterns – Basford according to physical visit statistics in 2023-2024 is the 13th most visited library out of the 14 open libraries.)

Table 22: Consultation Survey Question: Which Nottingham City Libraries have you visited in the last year?



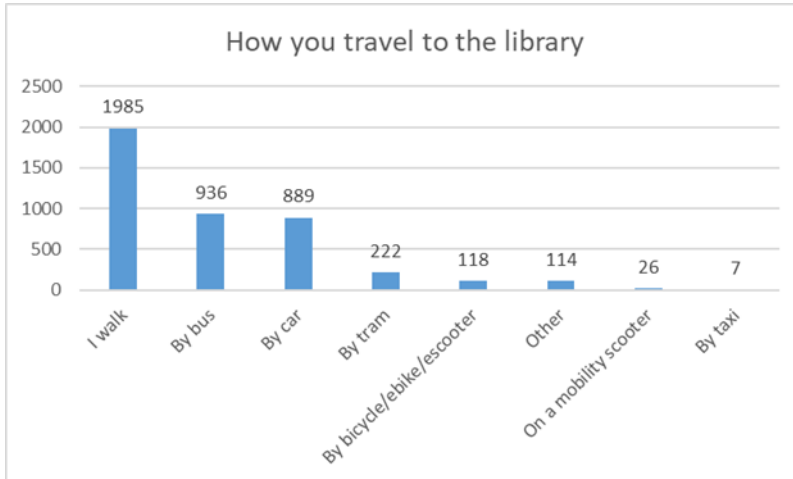
4.2.9 On the children’s and young people’s survey there was a slight difference to the most visited libraries with Central library coming out top (45.5%) followed by Radford-Lenton (27%) and Bilborough (16%). Again, this doesn’t reflect 2023-2024 usage patterns.

4.2.10 We asked on the young people’s survey who did they usually go to the library with? Most responded with:

- **My parent/s/guardian/s** (50%)
- **My family (brother/ sister/ cousin/ grandparent)** 37%
- **My friends** 32%.

4.2.11 We also asked how people travel to library – most walk (46%) followed by bus 22% and car 21%.

Table 23: Consultation Survey Question How do you travel to the library?



4.3 Barriers to Library Use

We asked respondents who hadn’t visited a library in over a year, never visited, or primarily used libraries online (11% of respondents) why they didn’t visit. The main reasons were:

- **Other** 20%,
- **I can find what I need online** 19%.
- **I buy the books I want to read** 17%.

4.3.1 Key Themes from ‘Other’ Responses

- **Personal Circumstances:** Time constraints due to work or family commitments
- **Lack of Awareness:** Limited knowledge about available services, events or new materials
- **Library Environment:** Issues with outdated facilities, uncomfortable seating, or poor lighting.
- **Alternative Preferences:** Preference for online courses, streaming services or other digital resources
- **Health or Mobility:** Physical challenges preventing library visits.

These responses reflect a mix of personal, logistical, and perception-based barriers to library use.

4.3.2 We asked low/ non-library users if their reasons for not visiting was because they preferred to read eBooks or if opening times were a barrier to use. Neither seemed to be the reason for not using they physical library offer.

Table 24: Consultation Survey Question: I prefer to read eBooks rather than printed books.

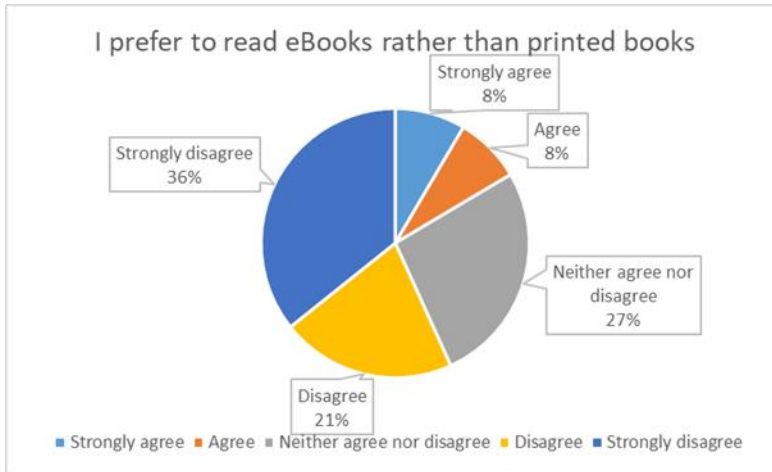
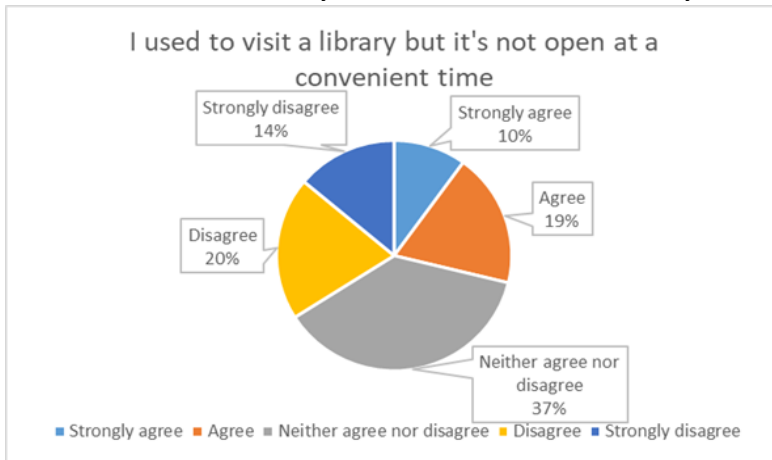


Table 25: Consultation Survey Question: I used to visit a library but it's not open at a convenient time.



4.3.3 We then asked if there was another reason why they did not visit a Nottingham City library. The responses highlighted a mix of convenience, personal preference, and situational factors influencing their decision not to visit the library.

4.3.4 We then asked all respondents what the impact of the proposal would have on their ability to do the following:

Table 26: Consultation Survey Question: Library visit options

	It will make it much easier	It will make it a little easier	It won't make much difference	It will make it a little harder	It will make it much harder	Not sure
Visit a library close to where you live, work or study	11.4%	1.3%	30.6%	15.9%	36.4%	4.4%
Visit a library at a convenient time for you	11.1%	2.0%	20.5%	20.4%	41.8%	4.2%
Access other council services or community activities at the library	9.3%	2.4%	26.7%	15.8%	36.2%	9.7%

We then asked three open ended/ free text questions.

4.4 Proposed Library Closures

What comments do you have about the impact of the proposed closing of Aspley, Basford, Bilborough and Radford-Lenton libraries? The responses revealed widespread concern and disappointment, highlighting several key themes.

4.4.1 Key Concerns

The potential closures were seen as a significant loss, not only in terms of resources but also for the sense of community and support these libraries provide. Respondents urged the council to reconsider the decision, highlighting the long-term negative effects such closures could have on social equity, education, and community cohesion.

4.4.2 Deprivation: The most frequent objections were due to the levels of deprivation and disadvantage already existing in those communities that library closure may exacerbate.

Vital Services: Many respondents emphasized the vital role these libraries play in providing access to educational resources, books, the internet and safe spaces, particularly for children, the elderly, those with disabilities and low-income families.

Community Hubs: The libraries were also described as essential for fostering community cohesion, supporting social and mental wellbeing, and offering warm, safe spaces for all, particularly in areas with limited public amenities.

Accessibility: Concerns about the difficulty and cost of travelling to other libraries

Pressure on Remaining Libraries: Fears closures would strain the remaining library network and services.

Local Opposition: Respondents with personal connections to the affected libraries strongly opposed the closures, emphasising their deep emotional and practical significance describing them as vital parts of their daily lives and integral to their communities.

4.4.3 Divergent Views

Support for Closures: A minority, 2.5%, were in favour of closures or recognised it would be worth closing less used libraries to protect the wider library network and a small number suggested the closure of other libraries instead – particularly those in what are perceived as more affluent areas of the city.

A number of comments suggested the closing of libraries not part of Nottingham City's network – highlighting the need for greater clarity on what is the responsibility of the City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and privately owned libraries.

4.4.4 Suggestions

Respondents made a number of suggestions which were also reflected in the responses to the next two questions. These included:

- Seeking additional funding/ resources
- Reduce opening hours instead of closing buildings.
- Use volunteers to support operations.
- Promote greater library use.
- Provide free or discounted travel to other libraries and/or a mobile library.
- Maximise income opportunities including working with partners,
- Relocate libraries to shared community spaces.

A number of these suggestions will be explored in greater detail in section 5 of this report.

4.5 Impact of Proposed Reduced Library Opening Hours

The next question was **What comments do you have about the impact of the proposed reduced opening hours across the libraries?**

Table 27: Consultation: Current and Proposed Opening Hours

LIBRARY OPENING HOURS WITH 4 CLOSURES: ASPLEY, BASFORD, BILBOROUGH and RADFORD LENTON								
LIBRARY	COMMENTS		MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Nottingham Central Library	10-5.30 Mon-Fri, 10-4 Sat	Current Hours	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	9.00-7.00	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	9.00-4.00
		Proposed hours	10.00-5.30	10.00-5.30	10.00-5.30	10.00-5.30	10.00-5.30	10.00-4.00
Aspley Library	Closed to public but retain building to become a hub for NPALS, Local Studies overflow, Hamper delivery service, stores.	Current Hours	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	Closed	9.00-6.00	9.00-1.00
		Proposed hours	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Basford Library	Closed	Current Hours	9.00-1.00	2.00-6.00	Closed	9.00-6.00	Closed	9.00-1.00
		Proposed hours	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Bilborough Library	Closed	Current Hours	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	Closed	9.00-6.00	9.00-1.00	9.00-1.00
		Proposed hours	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Bulwell Riverside Library	Reduce full days to 10am-5pm, instead of 9am-6pm. Closure on Saturdays.	Current Hours	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	9.00 - 1.00
		Proposed hours	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	Closed
Clifton Library	Reduce full days to 10am-5pm, instead of 9.30am-5.30pm. Closure on current half day (Wednesday).	Current Hours	9.30-5.30	9.30-5.30	9.30-1.00	9.30-5.30	9.30-5.30	9.30-1.00
		Proposed hours	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	Closed	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	10.00-1.00
The Dales Centre	Reduce full days to 10am-5pm, instead of 9am-5.30pm. Full day opening on current half day (Tuesday).	Current Hours	9.00-5.30	9.00-1.00	9.00-7.00	Closed	9.00-5.30	9.00-1.00
		Proposed hours	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	Closed	10.00-5.00	10.00-1.00
Hyson Green	Reduce full days to 10am-5pm, instead of 9am-6pm. Closure on Saturdays.	Current Hours	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	9.00 - 1.00
		Proposed hours	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	Closed
Meadows Library	Reduce full days to 10am-5pm, instead of 9am-6pm, half day opening on Fridays and 1pm closure on Saturdays.	Current Hours	9.00-6.00	Closed	9.00-6.00	2.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	10.00-2.00
		Proposed hours	10.00-5.00	Closed	10.00-5.00	1.00-5.00	1.00-5.00	10.00-1.00
Radford - Lenton Library + NPALS	Closure. NPALS relocated to an alternative library that will remain open	Current Hours	9.00 -1.00	Closed	9.00-6.00	Closed	9.00-1.00	9.00-1.00
		Proposed hours	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Sherwood Library	Reduce full days to 10am-5pm, instead of 9am-6pm.	Current Hours	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	Closed	9.00-6.00	9.00-1.00
		Proposed hours	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	Closed	10.00-5.00	10.00-1.00
Southglade Park Library	Change full days to half days, close on Fridays and open 10-1pm on Saturdays.	Current Hours	9.00-6.00	Closed	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	9.00-1.00	9.00-1.00
		Proposed hours	2.00-5.00	Closed	10.00-1.00	2.00-5.00	Closed	10.00-1.00
St Ann's Valley Library	Reduce full days to 10am-5pm, instead of 9am-6pm. Closure on Saturdays.	Current Hours	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	9.00 - 1.00
		Proposed hours	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	Closed
Strelley Road Library	Reduce full days to 10am-5pm, instead of 9am-5.30pm. Full day opening on current half day (Tuesday).	Current Hours	9.00-6.00	9.00 - 1.00	9.00-6.00	Closed	9.00-6.00	9.00 - 1.00
		Proposed hours	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	Closed	10.00-5.00	10.00-1.00
Wollaton Library	Reduce full days to 10am-5pm, instead of 9am-6pm. Closure on current half day (Wednesday).	Current Hours	9.00-6.00	9.00-6.00	9.00-1.00	9.00-7.00	9.00-6.00	9.00-1.00
		Proposed hours	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	Closed	10.00-5.00	10.00-5.00	10.00-1.00

4.5.1 Many respondents expressed concerns that reduced hours would significantly limit access to library services, particularly for those relying on libraries for studying, working or accessing digital resources outside typical working hours.

Concerns included:

- Disproportionate effects on vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, low-income families and those without internet access for whom libraries are a crucial resource.
- Reduced library use, potentially leading to further cuts and closures.
- Negative impacts on social and mental wellbeing and increased risk of loneliness.
- A loss of opportunity for reading for pleasure and fostering a learning/reading culture and how reduced accessibility of libraries will impact communities and the future aspirations of children.
- Barriers to travel to alternative libraries.

4.5.2 Overall, the sentiment was that reducing library hours would erode the accessibility and effectiveness of these essential community hubs. Some respondents (110) supported the proposal and 481 preferred reduced hours over library closures.

4.5.3 Suggestions for Alternative Hours

630 people suggested alternative opening hours to the proposal. These included:

- Late-night openings (1-2 nights a week)
- Earlier or seasonal opening hours (evenings in summer, daytime in winter)
- Increase evening/ weekend with reduced morning openings.
- Staggered or community specific hours.
- Longer hours for school holidays.
- Extend opening hours through technology enabled opening (TEO) or use of volunteers.
- Nottingham Central library to retain/ increase opening hours.

A number of these suggestions will be explored in greater detail in section 5 of this report.

4.6 Alternative Ideas and Suggestions

The final question asked **'What other suggestions do you have to improve library services without additional cost to the Council?'** (This question received the lowest number of responses of the 3 (2,740 provided comments compared to 4,984 who answered the first question about the proposed closure of 4 libraries). The responses revealed a strong community interest in preserving and enhancing library services through creative and collaborative means.

4.6.1. Key suggestions included:

- **Volunteer Involvement:** Engaging community members or groups to assist in running libraries, organising events, and maintaining operations.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborating with local businesses, schools and charities to share resources and host joint programmes or sponsored activities
- **Revenue Generation:** Hosting community fundraisers, charging small fees for special events, opening cafes or pop-up shops and encouraging donations.
- **Optimised Spaces:** Using and optimising existing library spaces for multiple community uses such as community meetings, workshops or exhibitions to maximise utility.
- **Skilled Staff Advocacy:** In contrast with the first bullet point, many emphasised the need for professional library staff rather than reliance on volunteers for libraries to run effectively.

4.6.2 Organisational Input

Responses from organisations were varied and often reflected their specific missions, with suggestions such as:

- Leveraging their existing resources or networks to support library services. (For example, educational institutions offered to collaborate on joint educational programs, while community-focused organisations emphasized their ability to mobilise volunteers to help run library activities or maintain facilities.)
- Partnerships to host events and workshops to increase community engagement.
- Focus on digital resources suggested ways to integrate more online services, potentially reducing physical costs.

These ideas showcase a broad willingness to collaborate and innovate for the continued success of library services in their respective communities.

A number of these suggestions will be explored in greater detail in section 5 of this report.

4.7 Personal data

The survey saw higher female participation (66%) than male and the most represented age group was 35-44 (21%). Ethnic minorities were slightly underrepresented compared to Nottingham 2021 Census data with 8.4% of main survey respondents identifying as being Asian/Asian British (Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian, Kashmiri, Pakistani or Other), 4.7% identified as Black/ Black British (African, Caribbean, Other). 3.7% Identified as Mixed (White & Asian, White & Black African, White & Black Caribbean, Other). There was good representation of those who identified as disabled (16%).

Decisions

4.8. Full analysis of the responses and feedback to the consultation has been undertaken and the views and concerns raised by individuals and organisations were carefully considered in the final recommendations being put forward.

4.8.1. The decision needs to enable a sustainable library service that remains relevant and responds to the financial position of the local authority. The key themes that emerged from the consultation that are being taken forward for further development/ investigation include:

- Opportunity for Community / voluntary sector management of library buildings as an alternative to closures
- Improved co-ordination with other services delivered at the neighbourhood level with potential shared use of community spaces and stronger partnership working.
- Taking a more considered and tailored approach to respond to the needs of the community and to reflect the resource required for that delivery, particularly in relation to opening hours.
- The development and more effective use of technology and digital access realigning buildings, staff, and resources to respond to evolving need and demand.
- Secure funding for future developments whilst maximising existing and new income streams.

5. Detail of options explored, and changes made to proposals

5.1 Consultation Suggestions

Based on the feedback from the consultation process the following suggestions were considered in greater detail and RAG (red, amber, green) rated to show whether they will be implemented as soon as possible (green), considered in the medium to longer term (amber) or are not possible at this time (red).

Table 28: Suggestions and outcomes from the consultation

Suggestion	Outcome	RAG Rating
Reduce opening hours instead of closing buildings	The scale of the saving the service is required to make prevents this option being viable. Hours would have to be reduced so significantly as to make the service unworkable.	Red
Volunteers to support delivery	Volunteers are currently utilised across the service. A new volunteer policy will be implemented including a drive to recruit more volunteers across the network. See section 5.3 for more details.	Green
Promote greater library use	Library use is promoted by engaging citizens through online channels including social media, leaflets, websites, outreach events, on-site materials and offering free and low-cost events and free Wi-Fi. The existing marketing strategy is regularly reviewed, and new targeted programmes are introduced to encourage use and attendance.	Green
Provide free or discounted travel to other libraries	The financial situation of the Council means this suggestion is currently undeliverable from both cost and logistics point of view. Nottingham's public transport system is highly regarded nationally and most libraries in the network are easily accessible by bus and/or tram – please see figure 2 section 3.8	Red
Mobile library	Nottingham library service doesn't offer a mobile library service; however, a free home library service is available to customers unable to get to their nearest library due to disability, limited mobility, illness or caring responsibilities. More details https://www.nottinghamcitylibraries.co.uk/library/home-library-service/ All library members can access free eBooks, eAudio, eNewspapers and eMagazines from home on their own devices.	Red
Sponsorship	A business sponsorship programme will be developed to link Nottingham's commercial sector with opportunities for learning and engagement at libraries. See section 5.6 below for greater detail.	Green
Accept book donations	Book donations will be considered as part of the forthcoming stock policy review. The library service hasn't previously accepted book donations due to the costs associated with adding stock, cataloguing and servicing as well as the inconsistent quality of donations received. However, recently adopted software will make it easier to import catalogue records.	Amber

Relocate libraries into shared community spaces	This is now being developed as part of the Council's improvement plan, reviewing effective and sustainable rationalisation of community assets to support services in neighbourhoods.	
Late night openings	The proposed opening hours have been revised to include an early evening opening one day per week at ten of the libraries in the network including Nottingham Central.	
Earlier openings	Based on consultation feedback the 9am openings will be retained at Nottingham Central. (Monday – Friday)	
Weekend openings	The proposal has been amended and the recommendation is now all the community libraries will be open on Saturdays 10am- 1pm and Nottingham Central will be open 10am – 4pm.	
Community specific hours	Opening hours will change from being standardised across the service to tailored to each individual site	
Longer hours for school holidays	Opening hours will remain under constant review and changes made as appropriate. There is the option to pilot different hours to test how they are received, and longer hours during school holidays is being considered for the future.	
Nottingham Central library to retain/ increase opening hours	The consultation proposal had Nottingham Central's opening hours reducing from 53 hours per week to 43. The revised recommendation is that Nottingham Central will be open 52 hours per week including one evening and Saturdays.	
Partnerships	Approaches have been made to our voluntary, public and private sector partners to develop closer working relationships in our library buildings across the city to deliver a wider range of social outcomes. This is an ongoing process that will continue to develop and grow as part of our vision for the libraries until 2030.	
Seek additional funding/ resources	Detailed considerations set out below. See section 5.2	
Maximise income opportunities	Detailed considerations set out below. See section 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7	
Extend opening hours through TEO	Detailed considerations set out below. See section 5.8	
Community management to prevent building closures	Detailed considerations set out below. See section 5.9	

5.2 Funding for Nottingham Libraries

5.2.1 National Opportunities

Nottingham Library Service actively seeks funding from a variety of funding providers. The available funding tends to support buildings, IT, furnishings or training. However, typically these funds are not able to be used for daily operations or statutory obligations.

5.2.2 Recent Capital Funding Highlights

Arts Council England

- 2023 (Bilborough, Clifton, St Ann's Valley, Bulwell Riverside & Southglade Park):

- £0.124m for staff counter upgrades, new flooring and furnishings
- Assets protected for 10 years (until April 2033)
- **2022 (Hyson Green – Mary Potter Centre):**
 - £0.114m for garden redevelopment, library refurbishment and improved signage
 - Assets protected for 10 years (until 2032).
- **2022 (St Ann’s Valley and Strelley Road)**
 - £0.185m for bespoke cine-digital systems, IT infrastructure and events programming
 - Assets protected for 5 years (until 2027).

Big Lottery Fund

- **2008 (the Meadows Library)**
 - £1.3m for refit and reconfiguration and development of community engagement
 - Assets subject to 20-year clawback provision (until 2028)

Recent Revenue Funding

- **Arts Council England National Lottery Project Grant** to produce Ruby’s Worry, a theatrical production for children at multiple libraries, **with partners MishMash Productions and library authorities Inspire and Leicestershire Libraries**
- **GreenSpace Green Grant** for Hyson Green Library Garden, to enable community participation in garden/ outdoor activity.
- **Heritage Lottery Fund** grant project Chai Experience, reminiscence and social history project to collect and conserve memories of arrivals from Southeast Asia to Nottingham from the 1950s, creating a series of films and resources for adults and children.

Support

Nottingham City Libraries also support and partner with external organisations on grant funded initiatives to extend the library offer such as:

- Creative Sparks, a **science and technology based after-school group** at three libraries, delivered by Ignite! with funding from National Lottery Awards for All and Catalent Pharma Solutions
- Fifth Word Playwrights, a **free playwriting group for adults at Nottingham Central Library**, delivered by Fifth Word Theatre in partnership with Derby Theatre and Nottingham Playhouse, with support from Writing East Midlands and In Good Company
- HOME: Zero, an **interactive art installation for families**, created by Makers of Imaginary Worlds, coming to Central Library in summer 2025

5.2.3 Asset Restrictions

All Arts Council capital funding agreements require written consent for the sale, leasing or disposal of project funded assets during the protection period. For the Big Lottery, funding would have to be returned in entirety. These grants enable significant library enhancements while ensuring long term asset stewardship.

5.3 Volunteers in Nottingham Libraries

5.3.1 Current Volunteer Contributions

- **Specific Services:** Volunteers currently support programmes like after-school clubs and the home library service.

- **Summer Reading Challenge (2024):** Engaged **33 volunteers** contributing **46 hours** across all libraries.
- **Central Library:** **21** volunteers provide an average of **21 hours per week**.
- **Network-Wide:** **208 community volunteers** contribute **41 hours per week** on average.
- **Recruitment:** **100** new volunteers have been recruited to **35** roles in 2024

5.3.2 Proposed Volunteer Roles

- Some community libraries may be **partially or fully managed by volunteers** at specific times and days.
- Successful examples in other local authorities highlight the importance of **investment in community capacity** and building a sustainable volunteer base over 3-4 years.

5.3.3 Benefit of Volunteers

- **Civic Engagement:** Encourages residents to actively support local services.
- **Cost Reduction:** Reduced reliance on paid staff

5.3.4 Challenges to Address

- **Public Perception:** Many believe libraries should be run by the authority with paid professionals.
- **Volunteer Costs:** Training, management, safety checks, support and expenses are essential and not free.
- **Ethical Concerns:** Potential volunteers may hesitate, fearing they are replacing paid staff.
- **Reliability Issues:** A substantial pool of volunteers is required to provide a consistent service. Volunteers often work limited hours and can often be unpredictable, risking short notice closures of library buildings within the network.
- **Recruitment Gaps:** Areas like Clifton and St Ann's face ongoing volunteer shortages

Effective volunteer-led models require long term investment, careful planning and community buy in to ensure sustainable and reliable services.

5.4 Income Generation, Sponsorship and Commercialisation

5.4.1 Room Hire

Multiple suggestions were made that the library service should generate income by hiring out space. A full review of meeting rooms for hire in Nottingham City Libraries was undertaken in July 2024.

- 14 out of 15 Nottingham City Libraries have meetings rooms available for hire.
- 4 libraries have multiple meeting rooms.
- 7 meeting rooms in Nottingham Central library
- 18 meeting rooms in total
- Condition and sizes vary considerably.
- Limited facilities and IT equipment, except in Central Library.

All library meeting rooms are chargeable unless the room use is for:

- Library led activities e.g. reading groups, children's activities, Knit & Natter events.
- Library partnership events connecting communities e.g. work clubs, literacy programmes.

- Events and meetings open to the public that aim to support communities e.g. health initiatives, food banks.

There is both a commercial rate and a non-profit/ community group rate applied at Nottingham Central Library and a flat rate for community libraries. There is also charge for internal Council departments using this space.

5.4.2 Income

Total income received from room hire in 2023/24 was **£9,452** of which **£5,130** was from Central Library and **£4,322** from community libraries. The 2023/24 income from the libraries proposed to close (in the consultation) was **£1,915**. With the new Central Library now fully established it is forecast that income from room hire for 2024/25 will exceed **£30,000** and is likely to increase further during 2025/26

To further develop and increase income through the hiring of meeting rooms, the following will need to be considered/addressed:

- The current demand/market is for high quality facilities and a city centre location. The Central Library is well positioned to respond to this demand.
- The joint service centres also have reasonable facilities and good access/locations in a shared building.
- The need to create and implement a marketing strategy to promote rooms and maximise usage.
- Community libraries in the main have low paid use utilisation, due to poorer quality facilities and limited technology infrastructure.
- Investment would be required to modernise community library meeting rooms (technology & facilities) if wanting to charge commercial rates.
- The charging policy needs to reflect community need and use as well as attracting larger corporate clients.
- Investment is required to introduce an online booking system to improve booking experience.

5.5 Nottingham Performing Arts Library Service (NPALS)

Nottingham Performing Arts Library Service is a commercial income generating service which supplies music scores and drama scripts to over 474 community music and drama groups across the East Midlands and nationally. It is operated through a self-service online system developed in-house and housed at Radford-Lenton library.

This provision generates circa **£15,000** income for the library service. In addition, the Council has two contracts with Surrey Performing Arts Library Service and Hertfordshire County Council for the management, maintenance and use of the IT system. This is generating a further **£55,000** over 3 years for Nottingham City Council.

5.6 Corporate Sponsorship

Corporate sponsorship in UK libraries involves private organisations providing financial or material support in exchange for recognition, branding opportunities or other benefits. This practice has gained attention as public libraries face budget cuts and seek alternative funding to maintain or enhance services. Sponsorship is typically used to support specific events or activities rather than as a revenue stream for the service as a whole and generally a commercial approach to libraries both locally and nationally is still in its infancy.

5.6.1 Common forms of corporate sponsorship

Funding of programmes or events: Companies sponsor library programmes such as literacy initiatives, technology workshops or reading events.

Naming rights: Corporate sponsors may be acknowledged through plaques or naming rights for specific rooms, facilities or programmes.

In-Kind Donations: Companies provide resources like books, computers or furniture.

Brand Integration: Sponsors may receive advertising space within libraries such as posters, digital screens or mentions in promotional materials.

5.6.2 Examples of Sponsorship in UK libraries

Google digital garage at Manchester Central Library: This initiative provided digital skills training and support for small businesses, showcasing how private corporates can integrate with library services to address community needs.

Halifax Bank's Volunteering Programmes: Halifax contributed to public libraries by providing IT volunteer hours, addressing skills gaps without significant costs. These collaborations emphasised digital literacy support while bringing trained professionals to community services.

5.6.3 Ethical Considerations

Corporate sponsorship in libraries raises several ethical questions:

Commercial Influence: Corporate partnerships may compromise the neutrality of library spaces.

Equity of Access: Libraries are free and open to all; sponsorship could lead to preferential treatment for certain demographics.

Advertising policies: Concerns about creeping commercialisation.

5.6.4 Opportunities

Corporate sponsorship offers opportunities for libraries to:

- Expand services and reach underserved communities.
- Modernise facilities and technology.
- Create innovative programmes aligned with community needs.

5.7 Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding can be an effective way for libraries to raise funds for specific projects or to supplement their budgets. Some notable examples of how UK libraries have used crowdfunding include:

- **York Explore Library:** In 2018 York's Explore Library trust successfully crowdfunded £11k to support its summer reading challenge.
- **Spacehive Platform:** Spacehive is a UK-based crowdfunding platform specialising in local community projects including libraries. Libraries have used this platform to fund renovations, equipment purchases and new community programmes.

5.7.1 Legal Compliance and Accountability

Local authorities in the UK can use crowdfunding to support their services, but they must comply with certain legal and governance frameworks.

- Crowdfunding initiatives must align with statutory responsibilities.
- Authorities are obliged to be transparent about how funds are raised and used.
- The purpose of crowd funding must be clearly communicated and ensure proper accounting and reporting.
- Crowdfunding cannot be used as a substitute for public funding, it should supplement, not replace, core funding to prevent the perception that taxpayers are being asked to contribute twice.

Crowdfunding is most appropriate for discrete projects rather than ongoing operational costs.

Alongside the development of a strategy for greater volunteer use we are committed to developing a commercial fundraising/ income generating strategy looking at best practice from other authorities and how this model has been used successfully in other cultural spaces such as theatres, galleries and museums.

5.8 Technology in Libraries

5.8.1. Exploring Technology-Enabled Opening (TEO)

Nottingham City Council plans to explore Technology-Enabled Opening (TEO) or Open+ systems in select community libraries over the medium to long term. While there are upfront capital and ongoing maintenance costs, TEO offers extended access beyond staffed opening hours.

5.8.2 International Adoption and Impact

TEO is widely used in Scandinavia, Australia, Canada, Germany, Singapore, The USA and Ireland.

- **Ireland Pilot (2016):** Visitor numbers increased by 75-185% in 12 months.
- **UK (June 2024):** At least 182 libraries operate TEO partially or fully⁶

5.8.3 Benefits of TEO

- **Extended access:** Longer opening hours attract new users.
- **Cost effective:** Cheaper per hour than staffed models.
- **Community building:** Encourages trust, social interaction and a sense of place.
- **Security:** CCTV and remote monitoring provide safety
- **Preservation:** Could save libraries otherwise facing closure

5.8.4 Challenges of TEO

- **Lack of staff:** No skilled personnel for assistance
- **Accessibility concerns:** Women may feel less safe in unstaffed spaces, fire safety rules can restrict access for people with disabilities, typically excludes under 16s.
- **Cost barriers:** High installation costs despite long-term savings
- **Exclusivity:** Only accessible to library card holders
- **Equity issues:** Risks damaging libraries' inclusive ethos.

⁶ List of staffless libraries in the United Kingdom and beyond <https://www.publiclibrariesnews.com/about-public-libraries-news/unstaffed-libraries>

TEO presents an opportunity for modernising library services, but careful consideration is needed to balance benefits with potential challenges.

5.9 Community Delivery

5.9.1 Spaces for Community Management

Nottingham City Council is in discussions with community, charitable and not-for-profit groups for the potential management of designated spaces. This initiative offers a collaborative approach to preserving community spaces while fostering local engagement.

Invitations to submit an expression of interest were sent to interested parties on 22nd November 2024. As of the deadline date of December 16th, 2024, we have received completed applications from 3 different organisations, and these are now being reviewed.

The library service is also in discussions with an organisation about alternative use for an annex at Clifton library (currently closed to the public and used by another council team). The space would be used to deliver a range of community outreach activities supporting and enhancing existing services. This could create an additional income for the library service.

5.9.2 Library Service Integration

For groups who wish to continue to offer some form of community library provision Nottingham City Council can facilitate this through:

- Installation and maintenance of a self-service machine
- Use of existing shelves and book stock.
- Access to wider Nottingham library network's new book stock
- A library management system terminal with basic volunteer training
- Transport for book reservations and stock.
- Ongoing volunteer training and support

6. Conclusion and Final Detailed Recommendations

Proposals for Nottingham City Libraries

6.1 Community Focus

Consultation feedback highlights the deep connection residents feel toward libraries as both vital services and community landmarks. Libraries play a crucial role in addressing issues like deprivation, reading and literacy gaps, and health inequalities. The Council aims to adapt library services to continue to meet these needs while managing financial constraints.

6.2 Addressing Inequalities in Service Delivery

While library usage has started to recover post-pandemic, it is also clear that the current service is not effective at targeting areas of highest need. It is therefore necessary to alter the model to better respond to changes within the city and work in different ways and with partners to target disadvantaged and deprived communities.

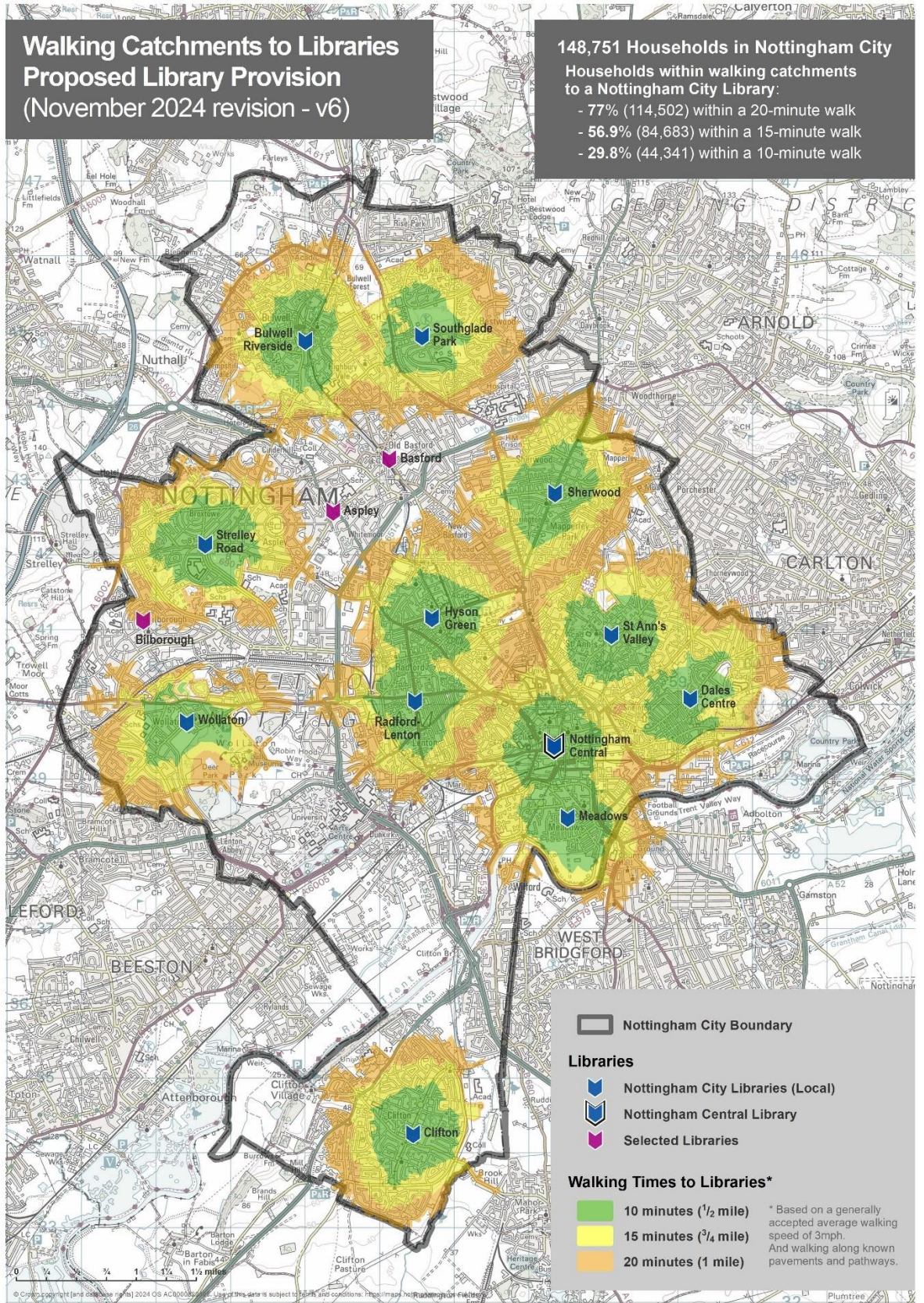
6.3 Financial Context

The council faces significant financial pressures, with increasing demands on core services including adult social care and homelessness prevention. Libraries must contribute £1.524m in savings over 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 to support a balanced budget and longer term ensure value for money through modern, efficient and flexible buildings and shared use of resources and technology where possible.

6.4 Geographical Spread and Access

Ensure the maximum number of households possible have access to a library within a 20-minute walk or on main public transport route and providing a broad geographical spread of library provision across the city, with easy access to alternatives.

Figure 3 Map showing walking catchments of revised library network.



6.5 Recommendations: Libraries at the Heart of Communities

The recommendations focus on the library service, not just library buildings, use the existing needs analysis, service data and consultation findings to help shape future delivery and set out clear, guiding outcomes for community and library provision.

6.5.1 Reshaping the Library Network

- **Core Network:** Nottingham Central Library and 11 community libraries, including re-opening Sherwood Library.
- **Library Building Closures:** Closure of Aspley, Basford and Bilborough libraries, with efforts to explore alternative community management of these spaces.
- **Logistic Retention:** Radford-Lenton library will remain open, with reduced hours and space repurposed to accommodate a stock hub and for continued delivery of Nottingham Performing Arts Library Service (NPALS).

6.5.2 Changes to Opening Hours

- **All Libraries:** Core hours reduced from 581 to 375. hours per week. Any additional hours will be delivered by volunteers. The original consultation proposal was for a reduction in opening hours to 340.5 hours per week.
- **Central Library:** Open from 9am every day. Open until 7pm one evening per week and Saturdays 10am-4pm
- **Evening Hours:** ten libraries will open beyond 5pm at least one evening per week
- **Weekend Access:** All libraries open Saturdays 10am – 1pm with Nottingham Central Library 10am – 4pm

6.5.3 Volunteer Driven Support

Expand volunteer involvement to support operations and extend access outside of core hours. It is planned that all library sites will encourage the increase the use of volunteers to support and extend the service

6.5.4 Staff and Budget Adjustments

- **Staff Reductions:** Current staff FTE and hours will decrease delivering operational cost savings. The current staffing posts is 96 FTE. This will reduce by 36 FTE, subject to final staff consultation and this will be mitigated by vacancies held.
- **Budget Cuts:** Reductions in books, IT and events funding to align with revised priorities.

6.5.5 Medium to Long Term Investments

- Implement technology enabled opening at selected libraries to increase access where feasible.

6.5.6 Projected Savings

- **2024/2025:** £0.634m through staff vacancies, book fund cuts and operational savings
- **2025/2026:** £0.890m through further staff cuts, library building closures and reduced operational expenses

6.6 Breakdown of changes by Library

All libraries have set recommended core hours. The development of a robust volunteer network will support our aim to extend beyond the statutory core hours. Alongside this is a

medium to long term aspiration to adopt technology enabled opening at suitable libraries to further increase access. Comments received as part of the consultation has resulted in changes being made, and additional hours being put back across the library network to better accommodate access for people to the service. The recommendation is now for 375 core hours per week, an increase of 34.5 hours per week from what was proposed in the consultation.

6.6.1 Nottingham Central

The library has proved popular since it opened, and efforts have been made to minimise the impact of the funding cuts on the Central library.

Table 29: Nottingham Central Library Current and Proposed Opening Hours

Current Opening Hours		Proposed Core (Staffed) Opening Hours	
Mon	9am – 6pm	Mon	9am – 6pm
Tues	9am – 6pm	Tues	9am – 6pm
Wed	9am – 7pm	Wed	9am – 7pm
Thurs	9am – 6pm	Thurs	9am – 6pm
Fri	9am – 6pm	Fri	9am – 6pm
Sat	9am – 4pm	Sat	10am – 4pm
Total	53	Total	52

The library opening hours will be 52 hours a week, which is a reduction of 1 hour from current opening hours.

6.6.2 Bulwell Riverside

Table 30: Bulwell Riverside Library Current and Proposed Opening Hours

Current Opening Hours		Proposed Core (Staffed) Opening Hours	
Mon	9am – 6pm	Mon	9am – 5pm
Tues	9am – 6pm	Tues	10am – 6pm
Wed	9am – 6pm	Wed	10am – 5pm
Thurs	9am – 6pm	Thurs	10am – 5pm
Fri	9am – 6pm	Fri	10am – 5pm
Sat	9am – 1pm	Sat	10am – 1pm
Total	49	Total	40

6.6.3 Clifton

Table 31: Clifton Library Current and Proposed Opening Hours

Current Opening Hours		Proposed Core (Staffed) Opening Hours	
Mon	9.30am – 5.30pm	Mon	9.30am – 1pm
Tues	9.30am – 5.30pm	Tues	9.30am – 5.30pm
Wed	9.30am – 1pm	Wed	Closed
Thurs	9.30am – 5.30pm	Thurs	9.30am – 5.30pm
Fri	9.30am – 5.30pm	Fri	9.30am – 5pm

Sat	9am – 1pm	Sat	10am – 1pm
Total	39	Total	30

6.6.4 The Dales Centre

Table 32: The Dales Centre Library Current and Proposed Opening Hours

Current Opening Hours		Proposed Core (Staffed) Opening Hours	
Mon	9am – 5.30pm	Mon	10am – 5.30pm
Tues	9am – 1pm	Tues	10am – 1pm
Wed	9am – 7pm	Wed	10am – 6pm
Thurs	Closed	Thurs	Closed
Fri	9am – 5.30pm	Fri	10am – 5.30pm
Sat	9am – 1pm	Sat	10am – 1pm
Total	35	Total	29

6.6.6 Hyson Green

Table 33: Hyson Green Library Current and Proposed Opening Hours

Current Opening Hours		Proposed Core (Staffed) Opening Hours	
Mon	9am – 6pm	Mon	9am – 6pm
Tues	9am – 6pm	Tues	10am – 5pm
Wed	9am – 6pm	Wed	10am – 5pm
Thurs	9am – 6pm	Thurs	10am – 5pm
Fri	9am – 6pm	Fri	10am – 5pm
Sat	9am – 1pm	Sat	10am – 1pm
Total	49	Total	40

6.6.7 The Meadows

Table 34: The Meadows Library Current and Proposed Opening Hours

Current Opening Hours		Proposed Core (Staffed) Opening Hours	
Mon	9am – 6pm	Mon	10am – 6pm
Tues	Closed	Tues	Closed
Wed	9am – 6pm	Wed	10am – 5pm
Thurs	2pm – 6pm	Thurs	Closed
Fri	9am – 6pm	Fri	10am – 5pm
Sat	10am – 2pm	Sat	10am – 1pm
Total	35	Total	25

6.6.8 Radford-Lenton

Radford-Lenton was one of the libraries proposed for closure in the consultation. Following the consultation the proposal is for Radford-Lenton to remain part of the network rather than close but include a repurposing of the library site as a stock hub.

Key considerations in reaching this recommendation have included:

- Enables the release of the Woodfield Industries site, generating a capital receipt through its sale.
- The layout of the building with a large open plan space at the rear provides the opportunity to repurpose the internal and external space to support its wider focus as the library stock repository and continue to enable Nottingham Performing Arts Library Service (NPALS), an income generating service, to remain operational in its existing location.
- Retaining the library addresses the community concern of a further loss of a key community asset and service in the neighbourhood.
- The inclusion of Radford-Lenton Library as part of the Core Library network ensures 77% of City households are within 20 minutes' walk of a library.
- A library has been retained in an area of deprivation, particularly in relation to older people
- Radford has low overall running costs
- Despite overall lowest performance across all the library metrics, it is showing the most positive recovery post pandemic in terms of visits.

Table 35: Radford-Lenton Library Current and Proposed Opening Hours

Current Opening Hours		Proposed Core (Staffed) Opening Hours	
Mon	2pm – 6pm	Mon	Closed
Tues	Closed	Tues	Closed
Wed	9am – 6pm	Wed	10am-1pm 1:30pm-5pm
Thurs	Closed	Thurs	Closed
Fri	9am – 1pm	Fri	10am-1pm 1.30pm – 5pm
Sat	9am – 1pm	Sat	10am-1pm
Total	21	Total	16

6.6.9 Sherwood

Table 36: Sherwood Library Current and Proposed Opening Hours

Previous opening hours (prior to closure)		Proposed Core (Staffed) Opening Hours	
Mon	9am – 6pm	Mon	10am – 5pm
Tues	9am – 6pm	Tues	1pm – 5pm
Wed	9am – 6pm	Wed	10am – 6pm
Thurs	Closed	Thurs	Closed
Fri	9am – 6pm	Fri	10am – 5pm

Sat	9am – 1pm		Sat	10am – 1pm
Total	40		Total	29

6.6.10 Southglade Park

Table 37: Southglade Park Library Current and Proposed Opening Hours

Current Opening Hours		Proposed Core (Staffed) Opening Hours	
Mon	9am – 6pm	Mon	2pm – 5pm
Tues	Closed	Tues	Closed
Wed	9am – 6pm	Wed	10am – 1pm 1.30pm – 5.30pm
Thurs	9am – 6pm	Thurs	2pm – 5pm
Fri	9am – 1pm	Fri	Closed
Sat	9am – 1pm	Sat	10am – 1pm
Total	35	Total	16

6.6.11 St Ann's Valley

Table 38: St Ann's Valley Library Current and Proposed Opening Hours

Current Opening Hours		Proposed Core (Staffed) Opening Hours	
Mon	9am – 6pm	Mon	9am – 5pm
Tues	9am – 6pm	Tues	10am – 5pm
Wed	9am – 6pm	Wed	9am – 5pm
Thurs	9am – 6pm	Thurs	10am – 5pm
Fri	9am – 6pm	Fri	10am – 5pm
Sat	9am – 1pm	Sat	10am – 1pm
Total	49	Total	40

6.6.12 Strelley Road

Table 39: Strelley Road Library Current and Proposed Opening Hours

Current Opening Hours		Proposed Core (Staffed) Opening Hours	
Mon	9am – 6pm	Mon	10am – 5pm
Tues	9am – 1pm	Tues	10am – 1pm
Wed	9am – 6pm	Wed	9.30am – 5.30pm
Thurs	Closed	Thurs	Closed
Fri	9am – 6pm	Fri	9.30am – 5.30pm
Sat	9am – 1pm	Sat	10am – 1pm
Total	35	Total	29

6.6.13 Wollaton

Table 40: Wollaton Library Current and Proposed Opening Hours

Current Opening Hours		Proposed Core (Staffed) Opening Hours	
Mon	9am – 6pm	Mon	2pm – 5pm
Tues	9am – 6pm	Tues	9.30am – 5pm
Wed	9am – 1pm	Wed	Closed
Thurs	9am – 7pm	Thurs	10am – 6:30pm
Fri	9am – 6pm	Fri	10am – 5pm
Sat	9am – 1pm	Sat	10am – 1pm
Total	45	Total	29

6.6.14 Aspley

Aspley, as per the consultation proposal, will no longer be included as part of the core library network and close as a library. The opportunity for alternative community management and use of the building is being explored.

Key considerations in reaching this recommendation have included:

- Aspley is currently closed following maintenance issues that needed to be addressed.
- Aspley has the highest maintenance backlog cost of all community libraries. The cost of the backlog maintenance is calculated at £135,149
- Comes in the bottom 5 of most library performance and financial metrics (see section 3 for greater detail).

6.6.15 Basford

Basford, as per the consultation proposal, will no longer be included as part of the core library network and close as a library. The opportunity for alternative, community management and use of the building is being explored.

Key considerations in reaching this recommendation have included:

- Basford has high maintenance backlog costs
- The location of the library is not within a high footfall area or shopping destination, which is a key determining factor for how likely people are to use/visit a library
- The neighbourhood is served by good bus and tram routes enabling access to an alternative library (Bulwell), within 15-20 minutes, or to access Central Library.
- The library comes in the bottom 5 of most performance and financial metrics (see section 3 for greater detail).

6.6.16 Bilborough

Bilborough, as per the consultation proposal, will no longer be included as part of the core library network and close as a library. The opportunity for alternative, community management and use of the building is being explored.

Key considerations in reaching this recommendation have included:

- It has an overlapping 20-minute walking library catchment with Strelley Road as an alternative library.
- The library comes in the bottom 5 of most performance and financial metrics (see section 3 for greater detail).

6.7 Budget Savings

Table 41: Development and operational budgets – breakdown of savings from recommendations

Recommendation	How Saving is Made	Saving Amount
Opening Hours Reductions		
Reduce opening hours (including 3 libraries closing)	Reduction of staff hours	£801,983
Staffing		
Staff costs reduction (development, management and business functions)	Reduction of staff hours	£366,946
Building Closures		
Savings from Aspley, Basford and Bilborough building closures plus cleaning cost reductions due to reduced opening hours	No business rates, waste collection, telephones, repairs and maintenance, cleaning or premises insurance and reduced cleaning costs for library network.	£77,495
Bookfund		
Reduce bookfund		£135,000
Operations		
Library events, reprographics, staff travel, equipment, repairs and maintenance, etc	Reduce budgets to reflect reduced network	£142,576
Total		£1,524,000

6.8 Risks and Issues

Changes to library services carry inherent risks. Library services are a particularly emotive subject and always attract significant media attention and community interest. Below are key risks and proposed mitigations.

Risk Details	Proposed Mitigation
Impact of Community Centre Changes: Reductions in community centre services could displace activities.	The library service is monitoring community centre developments to minimise disruptions and explored shared solutions
Volunteer Recruitment Challenges: Increase volunteer support is needed for extended library hours	A recruitment campaign will begin shortly, adopting the best practices used by the museums and galleries service.
Future Use of Closed Libraries: Ensuring sustainable community use of closed library buildings.	Active discussions with potential tenants or operators to preserve community functionality and explored scaled-down library services.

Cost of Unused Buildings: Exited buildings may incur ongoing costs including security and maintenance.	Collaboration with Corporate Landlord team to prioritise community asset transfer or property sales.
Staffing Uncertainty: Service redesign may impact staff morale and retention.	Open communication with staff to maintain morale and provide clarity, with HR support for swift recruitment if needed.
Judicial Review Risk: Citizens could challenge changes via the DCMS.	Maintain transparency and ongoing dialogue with DCMS to ensure compliance with statutory requirements
Clear Communication of Changes: Adjustments to hours, closures and events must be clearly communicated.	Coordinate with communications teams to ensure accurate, widespread messaging
Resource Strain on Project Management: Closures and redesigns required skilled project management and resources.	Work with other council departments to secure resources and timely approvals
Learning from Other Authorities: Risks from adopting volunteer models or reduced hours as seen in Croydon.	Ongoing dialogue with peers in other authorities to incorporate learned lessons and avoid pitfalls.
Consultation Feedback and Deprivation Impact: Closures could disproportionately affect deprived communities, discouraging library use.	Retain Radford-Lenton library, monitor use across the network and address barriers to access while expanding hours over time if possible.
Activities and Events: Closures of buildings and changes to opening hours may displace a number of key community activities and events	As far as possible these activities will be moved to other timeslots available at the existing libraries or reallocated to the nearest alternative. Equalities Impact Assessment also completed
Broader Social Costs: Reduced literacy levels increased antisocial behaviour, loss of safe spaces and diminished digital access for vulnerable groups.	Collaborate with council departments to address these broader impacts through complementary interventions.

Effective risk management and mitigation strategies will be critical to ensuring changes are implemented responsibly, with minimal negative impact on communities.

7. Appendices

- Appendix 1 Consultation Survey
- Appendix 2 Consultation Young People's Survey
- Appendix 3 List of stakeholders contacted.



Appendix 1:

Shape The Vision: Have Your Say on the Future of Nottingham City Library Services

Nottingham City Council faces a difficult situation and must make significant financial savings across its services. Nottingham City Libraries need to save £1.5 million over the next 2 years. This amounts to just over 38% of the library services' existing budget. It's a huge challenge, one that demands a change to how library services are delivered to the residents of Nottingham.

The first Council budget consultation was held December 2023 – January 2024 and included a proposed 'Review of Library Services'. This has informed the development of the proposal to transform Nottingham City Libraries and make the significant financial savings required to make the service more cost-effective whilst still maintaining the Council's legal duty (Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964) to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons who live, work or study in the area.

These proposals will be open to public consultation for 12 weeks from Tuesday 28 May 2024.

Before you start the survey, please read more about the library proposals and find the answers to FAQs at: <https://www.nottinghamcitylibraries.co.uk/shape-the-vision>

Your voice matters:

- No decisions have been made. Responses to this consultation will be considered before any decisions that Nottingham City Council will take about the future of Nottingham City Libraries.
- Our 12-week consultation will involve working with organisations and networks across the city to ensure everyone has the opportunity to engage both digitally and in person.
- The Council invites residents, organisations and partners to propose alternative suggestions to help us meet our budget savings.

If you have any questions, would like any more information or would like this survey in an alternative format, you can contact us at engage@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Please do not disclose personally identifiable information in your response.

How do you use the Nottingham City Council Library service?

I am completing this survey as...

- A member of the public
- A Nottingham City Council employee
- The official response of an organisation

If you selected "The official response of an organisation". Please tell us which Organisation are you responding on behalf of?

Are you a Nottingham City Library member?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

How often do you visit a library in Nottingham?

- More than once a week (**Go to Q5**)
- Once a week to once a month (**Go to Q5**)
- Monthly (**Go to Q5**)
- Every few months or once a year (**Go to Q5**)
- I've not visited in more than a year (**Go to Q7**)
- I never visit (**Go to Q7**)
- I use the Home Library Service (**Go to Q12**)
- I mainly use the library online (**Go to Q7**)

If you answered: "More than once a week", "Once a week to once a month", "Monthly", "Every few months or once a year" please go to **question 5**.

If you answered: "I've not visited in more than a year" or "I never visit" or "I mainly use the library online" please go to **question 7**.

If you answered: "I use the home library service" please go to **question 12**.

If you visit the library, which library services do you use most often? (Tick all that apply)

Borrow books and other materials at the library

Read eBooks and/or eAudiobooks

Read eNewspapers and /or eMagazines online

Meet my friends

Use the library as a place to study or do homework

Go to an event or activity for adults

Go to an event or activity for children

Use a library computer

Use library Wi-Fi

Print or photocopy

Get information or advice

Find out about Nottingham history (Local Studies)

To use Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) services

To use Nottingham Performing Arts Library (NPALs) services

Attend community group and/ or other meetings in the library meeting rooms

Other (Please Specify)

What is the most important reason for you using the library service?

Please select at most 3 options.

A good choice of books and other materials to borrow from the library

A place to meet my friends

To go to a library event

To have library staff on hand to help and give advice

To get me out of the house and meet people

To have a quiet place to read, study or do homework

To use the free computers

To use the free Wi-Fi

A good range of online library resources such as eBooks, eNewspapers, eAudiobooks etc

To use services provided by other organisations

A place to hold our own events (room hire/ exhibitions)

A safe place to keep warm

Other (Please specify)

Only answer Questions 7, 8 and 9 if you answered, 'I've not visited the library in more than a year', 'I never visit the library' or 'I mainly use the library online' to Question 4.

What are the main reasons you do not visit a library in Nottingham? (Tick all that apply)

I can find what I want on the Nottingham City Libraries website

I can find what I need online

I buy the books I want to read

The opening hours aren't convenient for me

I don't see any events that I would want to attend at libraries

They don't have the range of books/ materials that interest me

I've not felt welcome when I've visited

It is difficult for me to get to a library

Libraries don't have the services I want

Other (Please Specify)

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

How strongly do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I prefer to read eBooks rather than printed books	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I used to visit a library but it's not open at a convenient time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Is there another reason you don't visit a Nottingham City Library? If so, please tell us below:

If you visit the library which library, have you visited in the last year? (Tick all that apply)

Aspley

Basford

Bilborough

Bulwell Riverside

Clifton

The Dales Centre

Hyson Green

The Meadows

Nottingham Central Library

Radford-Lenton

Southglade Park

St Ann's Valley

Strelley Road

Wollaton

None – it's been over a year since I visited a library

How do you usually travel to your preferred library?

- I walk
- By car
- By bus
- By tram
- By bicycle/ebike/escooter
- By taxi
- On a mobility scooter
- Other

How will the proposal affect you?

Under this proposal, the number of libraries would reduce from 15 to 11. This potentially would mean the closure of four libraries – Aspley, Basford, Bilborough, and Radford-Lenton.

In addition, the proposal includes reducing opening hours across the remaining 11 libraries, reducing staff numbers and lowering how much we spend on books, IT and operating costs. We expect these proposed measures to save £1.5 million, allowing the Council to keep a library service that benefits the greatest number of people.

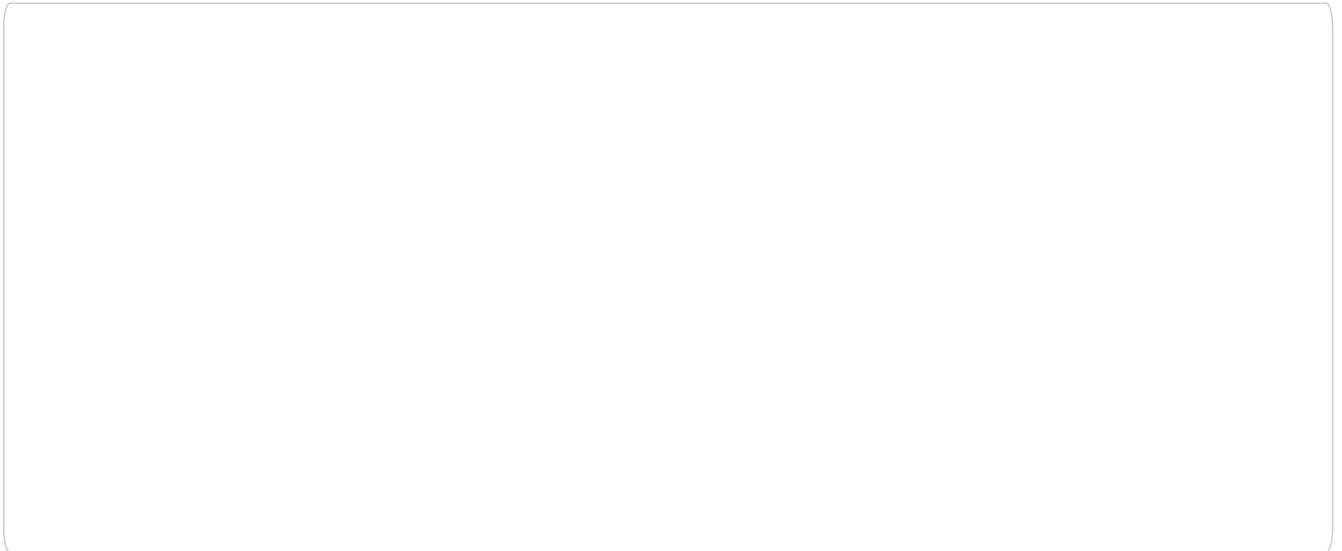
Please see details of new proposed opening hours:

<https://www.nottinghamcitylibraries.co.uk/shape-the-vision-opening-hours-proposal>

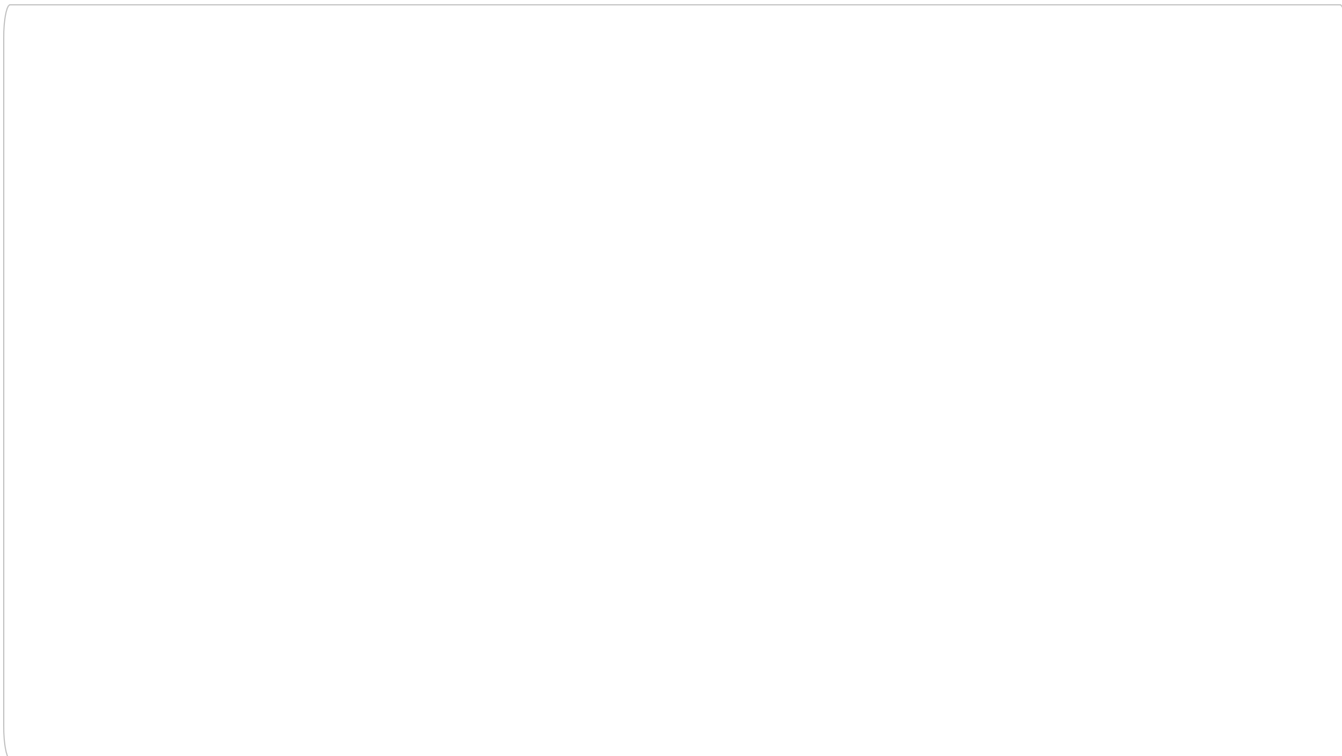
What impact would the proposal have on your ability to do the following:

	It will make it much easier	It will make it a little easier	It won't make much difference	It will make it a little harder	It will make it much harder	Not sure
Visit a library close to where you live, work or study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visit a library at a convenient time for you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access other council services or community activities at the library	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What comments do you have about the impact of the proposed closing of Aspley, Basford, Bilborough and Radford-Lenton libraries?



What comments do you have about the impact of the proposed reduced opening hours across the libraries?



Seeking Innovative Solutions

We know that the best ideas often come from our communities. Therefore the Council invites you to propose alternative suggestions to help us meet our budget savings.

What other suggestions do you have to improve library services without additional cost to the council? *(For example are you part of a community group who might be interested in taking on the running of a library?)*

Equalities monitoring

Equalities monitoring enables the Council to check that everyone in the city is accessing the services to which they are entitled and that no-one is being unlawfully discriminated against. Information provided will be treated confidentially and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and only used to ensure that everyone is treated fairly.

All questions are voluntary and whether you choose to respond to some, none or all will not make any difference to the service you receive. However, answering as many questions as possible will help us to ensure that our services are fair and accessible to all.

Which of the following best describes you?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to answer

Is this the same as your gender at birth?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Which of the following best describes you?

- Under 16
- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75+
- Prefer not to say

Which of the following best describes you?

- I consider myself to be disabled
- I consider myself to **not** be disabled
- Prefer not to say

Which of the following options best describes you?

- Arab
- Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British - Chinese
- Asian or Asian British - Indian
- Asian or Asian British - Kashmiri
- Asian or Asian British - Other
- Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
- Black or Black British - African
- Black or Black British - Caribbean
- Black or Black British - Other
- Mixed - White & Asian
- Mixed - White & Black African
- Mixed - White & Black Caribbean
- Mixed - Other
- White - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British
- White - Gypsy Traveller
- White - Irish
- White - Other
- Prefer not to say
- Other (Please Specify)

Which of the following best describes you?

- Bisexual
- Gay Man
- Gay Woman/Lesbian
- Heterosexual / Straight
- Prefer not to say
- Other

Which of the following best describes you?

- Agnostic
- Atheist
- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- None
- Pagan
- Sikh
- Prefer not to say
- Other



Appendix 2:

Young People - Shape The Vision: Have Your Say on the Future of Nottingham Library Services

Nottingham City Council is in a difficult financial situation and Libraries need to save £1.5 million over the next 2 years. This amounts to just over 38% of the money that the Library usually spends. It's a huge challenge which means changes will have to be made to Nottingham's libraries.

From Tuesday 28 May 2024 we would like you to tell us what you think about the library and the proposed changes.

Your voice matters:

- Nothing has been decided
- Your ideas will help us make the final decisions about your libraries
- The survey will be open for 12 weeks giving as many people as possible a chance to have their say

Please **don't** tell us your name, address, telephone or email

Filling in the survey:

- The survey should take less than 10 minutes to answer
- You don't have to answer every question
- If you need help please ask a member of staff, teacher, or your family or friends to help you

More information is available <https://www.nottinghamcitylibraries.co.uk/shape-the-vision/>

How do you use the Nottingham City Council Library service?

How often do you visit a library in Nottingham?

- More than once a week
- Once a week to once a month
- Monthly
- Every few months or once a year
- I've not visited in more than a year
- I never visit

What would make you visit the library more often?

What do you do at the library? (Tick all that apply)

Borrow books



Read eBooks and/or eAudiobooks



Read eNewspapers and/or eMagazines online



Meet my friends



Study or do my homework



Go to an event or activity at the



library

Play at the library



Use a library computer



Use the library Wi-Fi



Print or photocopy



Get information or advice



Find out about Nottingham



history

Other

What are the most important things a library needs to offer?

Please select at most 3 options.

A good choice of books to borrow

A place to meet my friends

Events happening at a library for me, my family or friends

To have library staff to help and give advice

To have a quiet place to read, study or do homework

A safe place to keep warm

To use a free computer

To use the free Wi-Fi

A good range of online library resources like eBooks, eNewspapers, eAudiobooks etc

Other

Which libraries have you used in the last year? (Tick all that apply)

Aspley

Basford

Bilborough

Bulwell Riverside

Clifton

The Dales Centre

Hyson Green

The Meadows

Nottingham Central Library

Radford-Lenton

Southglade Park

St Ann's Valley

Strelley Road

Wollaton

None – I haven't visited a library in over a year

Who do you usually go to the library with? (Tick all that apply)

I go on my own

My parent/parents/guardian

My family (brother/sister/cousin/grandparent) etc

My friends

My carer

My teacher, tutor or childminder

Other

How do you go the library?

I walk

By car

By bus

By tram

By bicycle/ebike/escooter

Other



How will the proposal affect you?

The library service needs to save £1.5 million. To do this we are proposing:

- To close 4 libraries: Aspley, Basford, Bilborough and Radford-Lenton
- To reduce opening hours across the rest of the libraries
- Spend less money on books, computers and IT
- Reduce the number of staff
- Reduce the amount of money it costs to keep the library buildings open (for example cleaning and electricity)

Please see details of new proposed opening hours:

<https://www.nottinghamcitylibraries.co.uk/shape-the-vision-opening-hours-proposal>

What impact would the proposal have on your ability to do the following:

	It will make it much easier	It will make it a little easier	It won't make much difference	It will make it a little harder	It will make it much harder	Not Sure
Visit a library close to where you live or go to school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visit a library at a time that suits you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Solutions

We know that the best ideas often come from you. Therefore the Council invites you to offer your own ideas for delivering great library services with the current amount of money we have.

Do you have any other ideas or comments about the proposals or how the Council can save money and still offer a good library service for everyone in Nottingham?

Equalities monitoring

Equalities monitoring enables the Council to check that everyone in the city is accessing the services to which they are entitled and that no-one is being unlawfully discriminated against. Information provided will be treated confidentially and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and only used to ensure that everyone is treated fairly.

The question is voluntary and whether you choose to respond to this, will not make any difference to the service you receive. However, answering this will help us to ensure that our services are fair and accessible to all.

Which of the following best describes you?

- 4 years and under
- 5-8 years old
- 9-11 years old
- 12-15 years old

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return to a member of library staff.

Appendix 3: List of all Stakeholders contacted about the Library Consultation

Organisation Name:

Bridges Community Trust
Age Friendly Nottingham
Age UK
ALL Volunteers (Assemble)
Alzheimer's Society
Ask LiON
BACHS PCN
Base 51
Belong
Bestwood Advice Centre
Bestwood and Sherwood PCN
Bestwood Partnership
BIPC mailing list
Bookstart
Boots Archive
British Library
Bromley House Library
Bulwell and Top Valley PCN
CAMHS
Carers Hub
Castle Cavendish
ChalleNGe Nottingham
Champagne Webs
City Arts
Clifton Advice Centre
Clifton and Meadows PCN
Community Champions
Community Connectors
Crazy Little Sing
Da Windrush Yard
Digital Notts
Diversify CIC
DWP
East Midlands Oral History Association
Educational Psychology
Empleo
Employment and Skills (NCC)
Evolve
Fabric Dance
Faulkner Browns Architects
FifthWord Theatre Company
First Story Charity
Five Leaves bookshop

Forestry England
Futures
Gigantic
Go On Get Active
Gobs collective
Green Hustle/Left Lion
Greenspace
Greenway Centre
Groundwork Five Counties
Healthwatch
Heritage Digital (Picture Nottingham)
HPALS
HSBC
Hubb Nottingham (formerly Muslim Community Organisation Nottingham (MCON))
IGNITE
Impact
Indian Community Centre Association ICCA
Institute of Biodiscovery University of Nottingham
IPO
Jam Cafe
John Lewis
Lakeside Arts
Landmarks Trust
Left Lion
Legacy Makers
Lenton Centre
Macmillan Cancer Information Centre (NUH)
Makers of Imaginary Worlds
Marketing NG
Meadows Advice Group
Medilink Midlands
Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing Trust
MHAW
MishMash
Multiply
National Justice Museum
Natwest
NCC Housing Employability
NCVS
New Perspectives Theatre
NewEnglish Design
NewSPALS
NLT
Nonsuch Studios
Nonsuch Theatre

Nottingham BID
Nottingham City East PCN
Nottingham City of Sanctuary
Nottingham Civic Society
Nottingham College
Nottingham College in the Community
Nottingham College Library
Nottingham Confucius Institute
Nottingham Contemporary
Nottingham Deaf Society
Nottingham Financial Resilience Partnership
Nottingham Inter Faith Council
Nottingham Law Centre
Nottingham Law School
Nottingham Muslim Women's Network
Nottingham Playhouse
Nottingham Poetry Festival
Nottingham Street Aid
Nottingham Wildlife Trust
Nottingham Women's Centre
Nottingham Women's History Group
Nottinghamshire Archives
Nottinghamshire Carers Association
Nottinghamshire Chinese Welfare Association
Nottinghamshire Deaf Society
Nottinghamshire Disabled People Movement/DIG
Nottinghamshire Local History Association
Notts Healthcare Libraries
Notts Police (PSCO)
Notts Refugee Forum
NottsTV
NPALS groups
NTM university- engagement officer
NTU
NTU - Volunteering
NTU Boots Library
NUH Library
NUH Patient Participation Group
Oxygen Arts
Pakistan Centre
PCN 4
PCN 7
Polish Language and Cultural Centre
Potter Clarkson
Prince's Trust
Public Health

Pythian Club CIC
Read Easy
Red Cross
Refugee Forum
Refugee Roots
Renewal Trust
Resettlement Officer
Resident Development
Sancho Panza
Self Help UK
SFIC Foundation
Smorgasbord
Sofar Sounds
Sold to Schools Team
SSBC
St Ann's Advice Centre
STEMCity partners
Sumac Centre
Sunflower College
Switch Up
TeamsNet (GP bulletin)
The Nottingham Games
The Vine Community Centre
Thoroton Society
Thriving Nottingham
Tracey Whitefoot
Travel Well
Trent Dementia
Tuntum Housing
Twilight Story Time
Ukrainian Cultural Centre
UNESCO City of Literature
Unity PCN
University of Nottingham Faculty of Arts
UoN Castle Meadow Campus
Vanclaron Chats
Welfare Rights
Wilmot Dixon
Writing East Midlands
Young Carers Notts