

**Library review consultation undertaken in addition to the questionnaires**

This annex contains summaries of all the consultation undertaken in addition to the formal questionnaires. Brief summaries are contained in the main report. Information from this annex and the information from the questionnaires have all been analysed to provide information for Elected Members to consider as part of the library review.

**1 Letter and e-mails**

All library review correspondence received from 4<sup>th</sup> October 2012 to 25<sup>th</sup> January 2013 has been recorded. A total of 180 submissions were received during the period, 17 from groups or their representatives, 163 from individuals.

**1.1 Correspondence from groups:**

Correspondence was received from the following groups and/or their respondents :-

Age Concern Liverpool & Sefton

Ainsdale Community Care

Ainsdale Civic Society

Friends of Ainsdale Library

Aintree Ratepayers Association

Aintree & Old Roan Townswomen's Guild

Birkdale Library Action Group

Farnborough Road Junior School

Formby Parish Council

Stephen Gent Parish Councillor Aintree Village

Lydiate Parish Council

John McClaren Parish Councillor Aintree Village

Revd. of a church (unnamed), Ainsdale

St Johns Primary School Ainsdale

Sefton Area Partnership of Parish Councils

Sefton Partnership for Older Citizens

Southport Group Liverpool and South West Lancs Local History Society

## 1.2 Key issues from groups relating to specific libraries

Library / Libraries discussed	No. of responses from groups	Specific comments included	Alternative suggestions
All Libraries	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern for older people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the range of services offered in libraries</li> <li>• Relocate libraries to cost effective venues</li> <li>• Ringfence savings to support socially isolated</li> </ul>
Ainsdale	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel time and cost to reach nearest alternative library</li> <li>• Concern over mitigating actions</li> <li>• Loss of a community facility</li> </ul>	

Aintree	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library important venue for organised group activities</li> <li>• The only council community facility in Aintree</li> </ul>	
Birkdale	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of help-desk service for Local History</li> <li>• Condition survey costs – consider that not as much is needed – could be done for less money</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce opening hours</li> <li>• Costed proposal to increase use of volunteers, reduce hours and reduce staff</li> </ul>
Formby	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to invest in IT standards</li> <li>• Improve building conditions</li> <li>• Use of data in consultation process</li> </ul>	

### 1.3 Key issues from individuals relating to specific libraries

Library / Libraries discussed	No. of responses from individual	Specific comments included	Alternative suggestions
All Libraries	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of IT provision</li> <li>• Impact on local communities</li> <li>• Concern for children &amp; elderly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce opening hours</li> <li>• Find savings from other council areas</li> </ul>
Southport area	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of car parking in town centre</li> <li>• Southport population disproportionately affected by recommended Option</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce opening hours</li> <li>• Find savings from other council areas</li> <li>• Volunteer support</li> <li>• More services into libraries</li> </ul>
Ainsdale	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe access for children</li> <li>• Importance of IT provision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce opening hours</li> <li>• Close a town hall</li> </ul>
Aintree	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited public transport to next</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce opening hours</li> </ul>

		<p>nearest libraries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Library only remaining community facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close a different library</li> </ul>
Birkdale	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value of car parking</li> <li>Impact on school children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income generation proposals</li> </ul>
Churchtown	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local proximity a key value</li> <li>Impact on school children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find savings from other council areas</li> <li>Volunteer support</li> </ul>
Churchtown	47 letters from Larkfield Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact on school children</li> <li>Liked staff and library</li> <li>Enjoyed reading</li> </ul>	
Crosby area	2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find savings from other council areas</li> </ul>
Crosby	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of Reference and Local History Services</li> <li>Reading groups popular</li> </ul>	

College Road	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage of Carnegie building</li> <li>• Users travel from variety of Sefton areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More services into the library</li> <li>• Provide mobile library service</li> </ul>
Formby	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact on local community</li> <li>• Good venue for organised group activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce opening hours</li> </ul>
Not specific to a library	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comment on e-books</li> </ul>	

#### 1.4 All key issues raised via letter or e-mail

The 180 e-mails and letters raised a total of 422 comments. The majority of these comments related to the following key issues :-

<p><b>Children &amp; Young People</b> – 97 comments were made relating to libraries’ role in providing children’s activities, as well as supporting reading for education and recreation. The potential impact of library closures on children and young people was the largest single subject raised in the correspondence.</p>
<p><b>Older People</b> – 41 comments expressed concern for older people. Specific comments related to the importance of access to a local service, and the potential risk of social isolation for the elderly.</p>
<p><b>Services delivered at libraries</b> – of the 68 comments relating to library services 33 highlighted the importance of access to computers provided via the People’s Network. 9 comments highlighted the value of the libraries as spaces to host group activities, and 8 concerned the potential impact of library closures on the Homevisits service.</p>
<p><b>Access &amp; Transport</b> – 71 comments raised issues relating to reaching an alternative library. Logistics of public transport was an issue for 34 correspondents. The importance of car parking facilities was raised 24 times (at Birkdale in particular). The general importance of local proximity was mentioned on a further 13 occasions.</p>
<p><b>Alternative suggestions</b> [to make budget savings] – 15 alternative proposals were raised in the correspondence leading to 50 comments in total. Of these 13 preferred the option for reducing library opening hours, 9 supported the use of volunteers</p>

and 8 recommended savings in other areas of the Council.

**Community Impact** - 59 comments related to the impact that library closures would have on local communities. The lack of other services and venues in the Aintree area was an expressed concern from 19 correspondents.

**Other comments** – 36 other comments were made, of which 15 praised the customer service from library staff. 10 comments related to the consultation process itself.



## 2 Meetings

2.1 Members of the library review team and/or project board attended a number of meetings as part of the consultation process. A standard script was used so that the same message was received by all groups. It was adapted slightly to suit the circumstances of the audience e.g. certain Area Committee meetings where Officers outlined the response to date from the consultation in that area and equality groups to reflect who the group represented and any particular concerns e.g. older people. Officers outlined the background and process to date, summarised the options considered and stressed that the recommended option (B) was for consultation and no decisions had been made. There were then opportunities for attendees to question the process and for discussion.

2.2 Meetings attended were:

10/01/13	Area Committee – Crosby
8/11/12	Area Committee - Formby
12/11/12	Area Committee - Linacre & Derby
7/11/12	Area Committee – Litherland & Ford
06/12/12	Area Committees – Sefton East Parishes
21/11/12	Area Committee - Southport
17/01/13	Area Committees - St Oswalds & Netherton & Orrell
10/12/12	10 Parish Councils – SAPLC
03/12/12	Equalities Standing Group (including Bootle Older Peoples forum)
13/12/12	Sefton Partnership for Older Citizens (SPOC)
11/12/12	Ability Network
10/12/12	Schools Forum
17/12/12	Friends of Ainsdale Library executive
6/12/12 7/12/12	Home Visits Volunteers (2 meetings)
19/12/12	Storytime/rhymetime volunteers

2.3 The constitution of area committees allows for questions to be submitted prior to up to 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. It also allows for items on the agenda to be discussed by the members of the committee and for members of the public, at the discretion of the Chair of the Area Committee. The summary below includes the comments made at Area Committee whatever the method.

2.4 Most of the comments, discussions and questions at these meetings were about libraries in general or related to the libraries/areas identified for possible

closure within option B. The key points made at the Area Committee, 10 Parish Councils, and Friends of Ainsdale Library (FOAL) were:

### **Specific libraries/areas**

- The number of residents in the Ainsdale area outside a three mile radius of a library if option B is implemented
- Lack of car parking at Southport library
- Current library buildings – whether there are any restrictions on use of building (particularly College Road library)
- Future of Crosby Civic Hall
- Usage of libraries in the Southport area compared to those in the Bootle area

### **Libraries in general**

- The potential impact on children and young people and the libraries' role in supporting reading for education and recreation
- The need for professional staff
- Transport links and car parking
- The importance of computers in libraries, particularly for benefit claims needing to be completed on-line
- Usage of libraries in some of those proposed to close compared to those some of those proposed to remain open
- Concern over some aspects of the review/consultation and use of data – only consulting on option B
- The effect of any library closure on the community and lack of a community facility for some communities
- The detrimental impact on health, particularly mental health and well being if a person can no longer get to a library
- Whether the volunteers were consulted about the Home Visits Service

## **3 Consultation with Children and Young People**

- 3.1 An easy-read questionnaire was developed that was used by children and young people. Based on the experience of other library reviews, the response rate from any questionnaire is generally low from children and young people,

when compared with the rest of the population. (There were 37 responses from those under 16 years – the same response rate as Tameside). The questionnaire was therefore supplemented with a number of meetings/focus groups with children and young people. Publicity and information was also sent to a number of organisations dealing with children and young people e.g. schools and children's centres.

### 3.2 The meetings/focus groups attended were:

#### **Chatterbooks (children's reading) groups at:**

- Ainsdale
- Crosby
- Formby
- Meadows
- Netherton

#### **Teenage reading groups at:**

- Birkdale
- Meadows
- Southport

A total number of approximately 80 children plus 2 teachers attended the reading group meetings

#### **Special meeting of Young Advisors across Sefton**

This was a special meeting that took place on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2013 at Crosby library. 6 young advisors plus the Young People's Engagement & Participation Lead from Sefton CVS.

3.3 The content of the meetings followed a different format to other meetings attended and outlined in this report. At some meetings the children and young people were provided with copies of the questionnaire to complete afterwards, and at other meetings the children and young people were taken through the questionnaire where they reached majority decisions or the discussions were more open ended.

3.4 Key points from the children and young people at meetings where they were taken through the questionnaire or held discussions were:

- They prefer to visit libraries at weekends and evenings (outside of school hours)
- There was majority agreement with the criteria for a sustainable library service (question 4) and what the library service should do for a comprehensive and efficient library service (question 8).

Although there was a majority decision the points where there were differences of opinions were:

Q 4 The ability to share services within one building and opportunities for future sharing. (approximately 70% said yes, 30% said no)

Q4 Community profile e.g. levels of deprivation, age profile within a community (approximately 70% said yes, 30% said no)

Q8 Be efficient, of good quality and accessible through co-location with other services or agencies where this brings benefits to communities (approximately 70% agreed, 30% disagreed)

Q8 Exploit new technologies to deliver cost effective quality and inclusive library services for the future (70% agreed, 30% disagreed)

- There was a mix of interest in their willingness to volunteer to support the library with some groups showing considerable support for this. One of the areas that they were particularly interested in was to help people to learn basic skills of IT
- There was a difference of opinion between the groups about whether they preferred choices of option B or option C. Approximately 5% preferred option A. In general this related to where they lived/went to school and whether the library they used was affected. The majority stated that they would still be able to use another library.

### 3.5 Other key points discussed were:

- They would like to see charges for use of computers abolished. College students (aged 16-18) are put off using them for course work because they only get 30 minutes free
- Interest in how to attract more young people to use libraries e.g. youth nights, “games rooms” and gaming tournaments
- They showed concern over groups of people other than themselves e.g. their grandparents
- Concern over loss of staff with a wealth of knowledge
- Queries about the future of Crosby library and the Civic Hall

### 3.6 Other responses relating to children and young people

All schools, colleges, children’s centres in Sefton were contacted with details of the library review and consultation process and/or details of the links to the on-line questionnaire (s). This resulted in responses from individual schools via letters and e-mails and within the over 16s questionnaire.

There were also 47 letters from individual students at Larkfield School, a petition in the form of Christmas cards from children/students in the Birkdale area which were subsequently followed with approximately 394 Christmas tags and cards displayed on a Christmas tree. These letters and cards were about

how much the children enjoyed reading, their local library and that they did not want their local library to close.

The questionnaires were handed out to parents attending storytime/rhymetimes to complete on behalf of their younger children and there was a meeting with the volunteers who support storytime.

## **4 Consultation with equality groups**

4.1 The Equalities Standing Group is a voluntary sector network that brings together communities of interest that can experience discrimination and barriers to accessing services. The networks comprise of EMBRACE, the network for gay, lesbian and bisexual people, ABILITY, the network for people with disabilities, the faith network, the Sefton Partnership for Older Citizens, Sefton Access Forum, Young Advisors, In Trust, the network for transgender people, the Sefton Fawcett Society and Equal Voice, the network for Black and minority ethnic communities including migrant workers. The Equalities Standing Group works alongside the Council to assess budget options, policies and procedures to ensure that any new proposals will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any group or group. The networks were consulted as part of the library review process and the key points were:

- Concern over the social isolation/loneliness for older people if their local library closed
- Queries about whether the Home Visits Service would continue
- Queries about the library at the Atkinson (Southport), looking forward to it opening
- The questionnaire takes a long time to complete
- There were some positive opportunities to enhance library facilities
- The potential to use libraries more for community development
- Positive feedback on how visually impaired people had been supported to complete the questionnaire via the telephone

4.2 In addition to the formal meetings held, organisations and individuals dealing with a range of people with specialist needs were contacted via e-mail, articles in newsletters and informal discussions. The detailed analysis of any equality issues raised within the questionnaires and from people with “protected characteristics” is contained within the overall analysis of the questionnaire responses. The meetings with the Home Visits volunteers (at paragraph 5) also details the response in relation to the people who use the service.

## **5 Consultation with Library volunteers**

Two meetings were held with the Home Visits Service volunteers and one meeting with the storytime/rhymetime volunteers. The key points of discussion were:

- Concerns and positive statements about the ability for volunteers to continue delivering the Home Visits Service if libraries closed. There was a mix of those who thought it would be a problem and those who did not
- The parking difficulties faced at Southport library
- The importance of adult education and summer activities for children in libraries
- Ideas about potential sponsorship opportunities
- Suggestions about future storage of Home Visits material and one central telephone number of the service
- Interest in Sunday opening and coffee shops in libraries
- Ideas about the use of volunteers in general