

Libraries and Cultural Services Transformation Strategy Consultation

Consultation Analysis – January 2019

1 Introduction

Surrey County Council has developed a new draft strategy for libraries and cultural services which consists of the following five strategic principles that could shape the future of libraries and cultural services in Surrey.

1. Libraries and cultural services provide and enable opportunities for everyone to learn, access information, acquire new skills, improve literacy and be involved in their communities.
2. There is a focus on the wellbeing and strengthening of communities, particularly the most vulnerable, to enable them to be resilient.
3. Libraries and cultural services are most effective and efficient when they work in partnership with the public, voluntary, community and private sectors, including through the creation of shared spaces.
4. New technologies, including digital, enable libraries and cultural services to reach new audiences, and existing audiences in new ways, and offer 24/7 access.
5. Volunteers are crucial community advocates and assets in libraries and cultural services, who also gain valuable skills and relationships through the work they do.

These principles have been subject to a public consultation carried out between 30 October 2018 and 4 January 2019. This report summarises the methods and findings of the quantitative and qualitative (written) responses to the consultation. 7,901 survey responses have been received providing quantitative responses, including 432 which used an Easy Read version. Of the 7,901 responses, slightly over 50% provided qualitative written comments.

2 Summary

Feedback from Residents

7,901 people responded to the consultation. Asked about each of the five strategic principles, of those who expressed a view the proportion who either strongly agreed or agreed with each principle was 65% or more. This ranged from 97% strongly agreeing or agreeing with the first principle (opportunities to learn), to 75% strongly agreeing or agreeing with the fifth principle (role of volunteers), to 66% strongly agreeing or agreeing with the second principle (wellbeing and strengthening of communities).

This is highly encouraging and shows that the proposed principles put forward that could shape the future of libraries and cultural services in Surrey are very well supported by people who took the trouble to respond to the survey.

There was also a level of disagreement to all of the principles. For three of the principles, the number of respondents either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the principle fell between 8 and 13%. Less than 2% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the first principle (opportunities to learn), but more significantly, 16% of respondents disagreed

or strongly disagreed with the second principle (targeting the wellbeing and strengthening of communities, particularly the most vulnerable). This corresponds with some of the qualitative feedback presented by respondents who felt that libraries and cultural services should target particular communities but should still continue to be a universal service for all.

However the overwhelming majority of respondents were supporting of all the principles which provides a strong blueprint for developing detailed proposals for the second public consultation.

Just over 50% of respondents to the consultation provided qualitative feedback which has provided the council with a huge amount of information and ideas for taking libraries and cultural services forward into the future. To help analyse the data and to also cross reference with the other consultations which have been undertaken, the information collected has been grouped under the following themes. Each theme was then broken down further as shown below which allowed a thorough analysis of all the responses to be covered and all views taken into account:

Strengthening communities:

- **Shared spaces** - comments relating to libraries and cultural services being located and integrated with other services in the same building.
- **Community involvement** - suggestions around libraries and cultural services working with local groups or individuals.
- **Access for all** - comments relating to the universality of library and cultural services.
- **Vulnerable people** - comments relating to user who are vulnerable or who struggle to use services.
- **Wellbeing** – comments relating to libraries and cultural services supporting people’s wellbeing.
- **Learning** – comments relating to the learning opportunities provided by libraries and cultural services.
- **Children** - comments specifically relating to children & families’ use of services.
- **Cultural Services** – comments relating specifically to the value of cultural services, rather than libraries

Resource constraints:

- **Consolidation** – comments relating to closing libraries in the context of concentrating resources to provide a better service for residents
- **No changes to existing services** – comments relating to a desire for existing library and cultural services to be unchanged and remain as they are
- **Staff** – comments relating to the role of paid SCC libraries staff
- **Book stock** – comments relating to the book stock in Surrey libraries
- **Libraries are redundant** – comments relating to the idea that libraries no longer needed in today’s society

Working together

- **Volunteering** – comments relating to the use of volunteers in the service
- **Partnerships** – suggestions around working with external partners – e.g. health, charities, district and borough councils businesses and shops etc.

Perceptions of the organisation

- **Surrey County Council** – Comments about Surrey Country Council generally.
- **The consultation process** – comments on the consultation process.

Innovation

- **Digital** – lots of comments on the use of new technology as a positive but also some concerns for people who did not have access to new technologies.
- **Improvements** – general comments relating to improvements that could be made to services.
- **Marketing** – comments relating to promotion of services, or making residents/ service users more aware.

The story in summary of the qualitative responses picked up on the following key themes:

- People were hugely positive about the relevance and role of libraries and cultural services in the community.
- People like shared spaces – Frequently mentioned ideas were cafes, children’s centres, information hubs, general support for co-located services and partners. People evidently understood the concept of hubs and sharing spaces.
- People felt that that libraries and cultural services should target particular communities but tempering this were comments made that libraries and cultural services should continue to be a universal service for all.
- There was a general support for the idea of libraries supporting the well-being of residents, particularly that of children, the elderly and other vulnerable people including the unemployed, socially isolated, new mothers and those residents who have little or no contact with other council services.
- People like supporting and using volunteers within libraries and cultural services but there were concerns that volunteers should not replace paid staff and there was support given to the expertise provided by staff.
- On digital services there was lots of support and comments supporting new technologies and the use of it, but also concerns raised that doing everything digitally was not the only answer. Particularly libraries should still be about books and library and cultural spaces should be about meeting people, combatting isolation, studying, accessing cultural activities and strengthening communities generally.
- There were a considerable amount of comments that this consultation would eventually lead to a consolidation of resources and a future network with fewer libraries, with localised comments expressed around the closing of particular libraries, thus increasing isolation and access to services.

One of the questions in the consultation asked respondents to indicate which library or cultural building they use, if any. For this question, the number of responses relating to each building have been compared to usage data to assess whether respondent figures are generally proportionate. Responses do appear to be broadly proportionate, with one exception. Responses from users of Dittons library in Thames Ditton were comparable in number to libraries of similar size until mid-December. At this point, the number of responses from users of this library increased to a number which could be expected from a

large library in a main town, such as Woking or Guildford. This is believed to be in response to a local leaflet campaign to 'Save Dittons Library', in the belief that the library is under threat, despite this consultation being purely around strategic principles with no specific proposals for this or any other library. The tone of the qualitative comments from users of this library change around this time from generic comments to very specific comments about Dittons library, with a plea not to close it. The percentage of Dittons respondents who left qualitative comments was just over 50% of responses (the same as the all consultation responses) and the quantitative responses from this area do not appear to be impacted by the local campaign.

Feedback from Partners

The consultation has been open to the general public. The council has also directly contacted a number of partner organisations to raise awareness of consultation with a link to the online questionnaire. These include, but are not limited to:

- Surrey District and Borough local authorities
- Local Committees
- All SCC schools
- Action for Carers
- Age Concern
- Age UK
- Alzheimer's Society
- Children's Centres
- Disability Access Networks
- Further Education colleges
- Hospitals
- National Autistic Society
- NHS
- Surrey Community Action
- Surrey Youth Parliament
- University of Surrey
- Other Voluntary Groups and Charities

In addition, 13 drop-in sessions have been held in each of the borough/ district council areas across the county. These have allowed local people to ask questions regarding the strategy and the questionnaire.

There have been several written responses from partner organisations to the County Council regarding consultations held between 30 October 2018 and 04 January 2019. Please see Annex 2 for a summary of comments relating to the libraries and cultural services consultation.

3 Methods

'Surrey Says', an online consultation tool, has been used to host the consultation survey, allowing residents to complete the survey online and also allowing the analysis tools of Surrey Says to be used to analyse responses including an easy to read version. Hard copies of the consultation have been available in libraries and through the council's contact centre with freepost envelopes. Completed hard copies have then been entered onto Surrey Says by staff in the service.

Through the consultation, residents and users of the services have been asked whether they agree/ disagree on the principles and whether they feel, with each principle, there will be a positive or negative impact on themselves. These responses were provided by selecting the applicable option in the feedback form. They have also been asked for their ideas and comments by written response on the survey form. This qualitative information has been read and analysed by staff in the service using the 'tagging' tools on Surrey Says.

To ensure there has been a systematic approach to the analytical work of the qualitative information, a shared thematic framework has been co-designed by a research expert in the analytics team in the Children, Schools and Families Directorate with officers working on different transformation projects across the Council. Specifically, there has been a shared agreement in how to analyse specific data within an agreed set of themes that emerged from the responses received.

3.1 Demographics

An overview of the equalities monitoring information captured in the consultation responses is summarised below. **For full datasets, please see Annex 1.**

Age

- 40% of respondents are 45 – 64 year olds
- 23% of respondents are 25 – 44 year olds
- 22% of respondents are 65 – 74 year olds
- 9% of respondents are 75 and over
- 1% of respondents are 18 - 24 year olds
- 0.43% of respondents are under 18

Gender

- 63% of respondents are female
- 31% of respondents are male
- The remainder prefer not to say or have not answered

Employments Status

- 30% of respondents are retired
- 29% of respondents are in full-time employment (30 hours or more per week)
- 16% of respondents are in part-time employment (less than 30 hours per week)

Ethnicity

- 81% of respondents are White British
- 7% of respondents preferred not to say
- 6% of respondents are White any other background
- 3% of respondents are BME

Health and disability

- 83% of respondents say their day-to-day activities **are not** limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months
- 9% of respondents say their day-to-day activities **are limited a little** because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months

Caring for Others

- 70% of respondents say they **do not** look after, or give help or support to family members, friends, neighbours, or others because of either: long-term physical or mental ill health/disability and/or problems related to old age
- 19% of respondents say they **do look after**, or give help or support to family members, friends, neighbours, or others because of either: long-term physical or mental ill health/disability and/or problems related to old age **for 1 – 19 hours a week**

Religion

- 50% of respondents are Christian
- 29% have stated they have no religion
- 15% have stated they prefer not to say

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is being maintained as a live working document throughout the development of the libraries and cultural services transformation programme to assess the impact on protected characteristics.

4 Quantitative analysis

In a quantitative exercise, residents and users of the services have been asked the following with regards to the five proposed strategic principles shown in section 1 above:

- Do they agree or disagree with each principle, using the following scale:

| | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|---------------------------|----------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | I have no opinion |
|----------------|-------|---------------------------|----------|-------------------|-------------------|

- What impact would each principle have on them, using the following scale:

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------------|----------|
| Highly positive | Positive | No impact | Negative | Highly negative | Not sure |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------------|----------|

There have been 7,901 quantitative survey responses on Surrey Says.

In summary:

Asked about each of the five strategic principles, of those who expressed a view the proportion who either strongly agreed or agreed with each principle was 65% or more.

Between 8% and 13% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree with three of the principles.

Only less than 2% either disagree or strongly disagree with the first principle (opportunities to learn) and 16% either disagree or strongly disagree with the second principle (targeting the wellbeing and strengthening of communities, particularly the most vulnerable).

Full quantitative responses to 'support for' and 'impact of' each of the five strategic principles in the consultation is summarised below. The highest and second highest number of responses are highlighted:

Question 1.1 & 1.2

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following principle:

Libraries and cultural services provide and enable opportunities for everyone to learn, access information, acquire new skills, improve literacy and be involved in their communities.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Strongly agree | 6,616 | 83.74 |
| Agree | 1,054 | 13.34 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 89 | 1.13 |
| Disagree | 53 | 1.13 |
| Strongly disagree | 30 | 0.38 |
| No opinion | 7 | 0.09 |
| Not Answered | 52 | 0.66 |

What impact would this principle have on you?

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Highly positive | 4,359 | 55.17 |
| Positive | 2,804 | 35.49 |
| No impact | 448 | 5.67 |
| Negative | 53 | 0.67 |
| Highly negative | 46 | 0.58 |
| Not sure | 117 | 1.48 |
| Not Answered | 74 | 0.94 |

Question 1.3 & 1.4

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the principle that:

Given restricted funding, libraries and other cultural resources should be targeted to the wellbeing and strengthening of communities, particularly the most vulnerable, to enable them to be resilient.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Strongly agree | 2,713 | 34.34 |
| Agree | 2,529 | 32.01 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 1,190 | 15.06 |
| Disagree | 838 | 10.61 |
| Strongly disagree | 429 | 5.43 |
| No opinion | 113 | 1.43 |
| Not Answered | 89 | 1.13 |

What impact would this principle have on you?

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Highly positive | 1,663 | 21.05 |
| Positive | 2,246 | 28.43 |
| No impact | 1,848 | 23.39 |
| Negative | 986 | 12.48 |
| Highly negative | 372 | 4.71 |
| Not sure | 665 | 8.42 |
| Not Answered | 121 | 1.53 |

Question 1.5 & 1.6

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following principle:

Libraries and cultural services are most effective and efficient when they work in partnership with the public, voluntary and community and private sectors, including through the creation of shared spaces.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Strongly agree | 2,320 | 29.36 |
| Agree | 2,837 | 35.91 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 1,507 | 19.07 |
| Disagree | 717 | 9.07 |
| Strongly disagree | 296 | 3.75 |
| No opinion | 130 | 1.65 |
| Not Answered | 94 | 1.19 |

What impact would this principle have on you?

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Highly positive | 1,427 | 18.06 |
| Positive | 2,655 | 33.60 |
| No impact | 1,836 | 23.24 |
| Negative | 729 | 9.23 |
| Highly negative | 246 | 3.11 |
| Not sure | 889 | 11.25 |
| Not Answered | 119 | 1.51 |

Question 1.7 & 1.8

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following principle:

New technologies, including digital, enable libraries and cultural services to reach new audiences, and existing audiences in new ways, and offer 24/7 access.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Strongly agree | 2,954 | 37.39 |
| Agree | 3,388 | 42.88 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 763 | 9.66 |
| Disagree | 461 | 5.83 |
| Strongly disagree | 172 | 2.18 |
| No opinion | 78 | 0.99 |
| Not Answered | 85 | 1.08 |

What impact would this principle have on you?

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Highly positive | 1,669 | 21.12 |
| Positive | 3,310 | 41.89 |
| No impact | 1,696 | 21.47 |
| Negative | 472 | 5.97 |
| Highly negative | 169 | 2.14 |
| Not sure | 476 | 6.02 |
| Not Answered | 109 | 1.38 |

Question 1.9 & 1.10

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following principle:

Volunteers are crucial community advocates and assets in libraries and cultural services, who also gain valuable skills and relationships through the work they do.

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Strongly agree | 2,650 | 33.54 |
| Agree | 3,266 | 41.34 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 1,096 | 13.87 |
| Disagree | 472 | 5.97 |
| Strongly disagree | 248 | 3.14 |
| No opinion | 93 | 1.18 |
| Not Answered | 76 | 0.96 |

What impact would this principle have on you?

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Highly positive | 1,390 | 17.59 |
| Positive | 2,443 | 30.92 |
| No impact | 2,736 | 34.63 |
| Negative | 444 | 5.62 |
| Highly negative | 190 | 2.40 |
| Not sure | 585 | 7.40 |
| Not Answered | 113 | 1.43 |

Question 1.11 & 1.12

To what extent do you agree or disagree with:

The county council extending the use of volunteers to help in delivering and collecting books to our most vulnerable residents who wish to access library services?

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Strongly agree | 2,376 | 30.07 |
| Agree | 3,507 | 44.39 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 1,017 | 12.87 |
| Disagree | 551 | 6.97 |
| Strongly disagree | 291 | 3.68 |
| No opinion | 77 | 0.97 |
| Not Answered | 82 | 1.04 |

What impact would this principle have on you?

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Highly positive | 840 | 10.63 |
| Positive | 1,411 | 17.86 |
| No impact | 4,713 | 59.65 |
| Negative | 279 | 3.53 |
| Highly negative | 153 | 1.94 |
| Not sure | 399 | 5.05 |
| Not Answered | 106 | 1.34 |

Question 4.1

To what extent do you agree or disagree that this is an appropriate area for the county council to make savings?

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Agree | 1,103 | 13.96 |
| Disagree | 5,904 | 74.72 |
| Don't know | 807 | 10.21 |
| Not Answered | 87 | 1.10 |

Question Q4.2

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the savings should be made from other county council services?

| Option | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Agree | 4,085 | 51.70 |
| Disagree | 1,575 | 19.93 |
| Don't know | 2,123 | 26.87 |
| Not Answered | 118 | 1.49 |

5 Qualitative analysis

Respondents were asked for their specific ideas on how these principles could be achieved and just over 50% of respondents have provided such feedback.

A shared thematic framework has been developed for all the recently completed council consultations around analysing the qualitative data. The themes included:

- Strengthening communities
- Resource constraints
- Working together
- Perceptions of the organisation
- Innovation

Comments for each of these themes are now presented in sub themes. All comments received have been tagged in relation to these sub themes, allowing ideas and opinions to be analysed in a consistent way.

Most respondents have covered a range of themes in their commentary (i.e. individual comments have not just been about one thing) and within each sub theme presented, percentages are provided to show the percentage of comments which included comments on that sub theme.

5.1 Strengthening communities

This theme is to do with how libraries and cultural services help to make stronger and more resilient communities. Written responses from survey respondents have been read and tagged with responses falling under the following sub-themes:

- **Shared spaces** - comments relating to libraries and cultural services being located with other services. Please also see the related 'partnerships' sub-theme in the '**Working Together**' theme.
- **Community involvement** - suggestions around working with libraries and cultural services connecting to local groups or individuals. Please also see the related '**partnerships**' sub-theme in the '**Working Together**' theme..
- **Access for all** - comments relating to the universality of library and cultural services.
- **Vulnerable people** - comments relating to users who are vulnerable or who struggle to use or access libraries and cultural services.
- **Wellbeing** – comments relating to libraries and cultural services supporting people's wellbeing.
- **Learning** – comments relating to the learning opportunities provided by libraries and cultural services.
- **Children** - comments specifically relating to children & families' use of libraries and cultural services.
- **Cultural Services** – comments relating specifically to the value of cultural services, rather than libraries.

These sub-themes are summarised below, with key findings and example 'quotes' from respondents. To provide clarity, the comments have been set in a table format under the headings of 'Enablers' or 'Barriers'. This is the same for all the sub themes throughout this document

| Shared Spaces (Approximately 11% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme) | |
|---|---|
| Enablers | Barriers |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of a ‘shared space’ did mean different things to different people. For some it was as simple as a meeting room for community groups to meet, or an area for people to be social in, or hold community events. For others it was more about the location of the building being in a shared space, for example in an out of town shopping centre. • The vast majority of respondents were positive about the concept of libraries and cultural services being in ‘shared spaces’ or ‘community hubs’. • When people talked about ‘community hubs’ there did seem to be a bit more consistency in the type of space they were talking about. The most popular suggestion was that the building also contained a café or refreshments of some sort. Respondents felt that this would encourage people to stay longer in the library, and would enable community activities to take place there. • The next most popular suggestion was the libraries and or cultural services should be housed with children’s centre, in that they are often reaching the same people. • Closely followed by this were the responses that suggested that libraries and or cultural services should be housed with GPs or other health services. • Other suggestions were that libraries should be grouped in with other services, such as ‘adult education centres’, ‘council help desks’ (both county & and borough councils were suggested), ‘Post Offices’, ‘community centres’, ‘supermarkets’ and ‘commercial partners’. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only a handful of respondents were negative about the concept of ‘shared spaces’ and those that were either were concerned about the closure of small local libraries, or the suitability of the shared space for all purposes. Those concerned that this would mean the closure of smaller local libraries, to create larger town ‘community hubs’ generally felt that closing smaller libraries would make access to the library more difficult for individuals who find travelling more of a challenge. • Some respondents, whilst generally positive about the concept of sharing spaces did express some concerns, often around how linked user groups would be within a shared facility, and also how suitable the spaces might be. • Those who were concerned about the suitability of the space, often felt that the space would not be physically suitable, for example noisier than libraries currently are, or that the facilities might not be suitable for all. • Some respondents were also concerned about the integrity of the library been compromised if it was shared with other services <p><i>Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>‘The idea of sharing spaces is a good one, but only if the shared space is beneficial. Yes, moving another service into a library building would cut back on the need to pay for two buildings, but I think the services need to complement each other in order to show it as a success.’</i></p> |

Shared Spaces (Approximately 11% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme)

Enablers

- Some respondents talked about sharing spaces, for the benefit of the council, rather than for the benefit of users, for example having desk space for staff from different departments in libraries.
- One common suggestion, often in the context of if the local library was permanently closed, was that other spaces could be shared, to provide pick up points for books, or kiosks where books ordered.

Sample of comments made

'Libraries should be a hub for the community. They should be warm, welcoming, and provide well equipped spaces to work, with power points, good light and Wi-Fi access, also some computers and printing and copying facilities. There should be toilets and refreshment options, ideally a cafe serving good wholesome food. Meeting rooms for hire would be a useful addition.'

'Shared spaces could be more appealing to people who feel unable or willing to visit library only premises. Having access to cafes and other services may encourage more vulnerable to use the service and use the space more effectively.'

'Maybe you could look at approaching local large or small retailers like supermarkets to give you a small library hub area where people can pick up their ordered books or return them, it may increase footfall to shops and be a more inclusive space for people to meet chat ,have a coffee and

Barriers

'The down side, is that if you in turn close smaller local libraries then those who are unable to travel or find it inconvenient will be left without access to these wonderful and often lifesaving services.'

'I feel concerned that your focus on 'community' will lead to you turning library spaces into more of a badly-behaved children's playground than they already are or making the space so 'social' that it becomes too noisy and distracting to read or concentrate on serious study.'

'I believe it's important that libraries remain as libraries, not become part of some sort of mixed service'

| Shared Spaces (Approximately 11% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme) | |
|--|-----------------|
| Enablers | Barriers |
| <p><i>get books . You would save on the premise overheads and the retailers mat get increase footfall and profits on the coffee/ shops and people will go there, for the library hub and shoe in that store if they are there already ! Bit blue sky thinking but why not try it?’</i></p> | |

| Community Involvement (Approximately 13% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme) | |
|--|---|
| Enablers | Barriers |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many comments linked very closely with those responses tagged with 'shared spaces'. Respondents talked about libraries being a community venue, which could be used for a range of functions and activities – meeting spaces for community groups, talks & events, MP/Councillor surgeries, and local businesses using the space, • Often these suggestions were around using library spaces outside of opening hours. • Some respondents felt that local communities should be more actively involved in their local library, often suggesting that 'Friends groups' could support the running and promotion of the library within the local community. • Another common 'community involvement' theme was around the feeling that libraries were integral parts of their local communities. Also linked with this is the feeling that volunteering is a good way of involving the library in the local community, and also vice versa, in involving the local community in supporting the library. Libraries are seen as social spaces for the community to feel involved, with other users or with the staff & volunteers in the library <p><i>Sample comments made</i></p> <p><i>'I think that evening use of the facilities for things such as volunteer led coding clubs, language classes, etc. would be really valuable.'</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were limited responses rejecting the idea of 'community involvement, and these either related to the use of volunteers, available services or the opening hours of the library: <p><i>Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>'Libraries that are too often closed are of little use to a community.'</i></p> |

Community Involvement (Approximately 13% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme)

Enablers

'Link up community groups with the library services - churches, current meals at home provision, so that two roles could be fulfilled.'

'I know you would have to pay for heating, lighting, etc. but I am sure Knaphill library could be used for groups who want to meet in the evenings, weekends etc. I used to live in London and attended a slimming group in a library during library opening hours. A keep fit class was held there after our group finished each week and this continued after the library had closed.'

'By asking the local communities what they want from their library & what would make them visit more often. Also by linking libraries & other local community groups & organisations'

'Is there an option to have a 'Friends of' type membership that would help support libraries specifically?'

'Community use of libraries - more use should be made of libraries with organised events 'meet ups' for elderly residents to meet. Lot of social problems caused by loneliness.'

Barriers

Access for All (Approximately 8% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme)

Enablers

- There were very positive comments about libraries and cultural services being open to all members of the community. The age range was stressed, along with ethnicity, educational level and health, showing how these services are applicable to all at different points in their lives.
- Further comments endorsed the same message, but explicitly stating that libraries were not just for the vulnerable or disadvantaged and they felt that it was a mistake to differentiate between groups of people.

Sample of comments made

'Library are essential to community cohesiveness and social inclusion, so should be open access and welcoming to all.'

'The library is of benefit to every grouping in society - all groups should have targeted provision, and no sector should be excluded. As soon as we target one sector over another we give the message that self-motivated education and literacy are only for particular people, and the community is poorer as a result.'

Barriers

- There were a very small number of comments which referred to libraries now being redundant, due to changing times and information technology.

Sample of comments made

'I think with the digital age there is less demand for libraries. There is much more knowledge available online and no need to access libraries for this. Move with the times.'

Vulnerable People (Approximately 11% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme)

| Enablers | Barriers |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of comments referring to vulnerable people were very positive. They saw libraries as a unique location for vulnerable people to visit and to find a place for themselves in the community. • There were different perceptions of what a vulnerable person was – these included the elderly, children, housebound people, the unemployed, the homeless, isolated individuals, refugees, people with poor health and disabilities. • Digital technology was seen by some as positive in terms of keeping the vulnerable involved with services and opportunities to use the library. • Using volunteers to take books to the housebound was received favourably and others suggested various forms of mobile library service to people who couldn't reach a static library. • Using the library as a safe space, a meeting place and a place to feel part of the community were common themes <p><i>Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>'Libraries play a part in addressing loneliness. They provide a safe place that can be visited alone, they provide intellectual stimulation and a distraction to loneliness, economic or other emotional hardship. They can change people's lives, they can be the only person (sic) contact individuals of all ages have.'</i></p> <p><i>'If you cut libraries, it's incredibly short-sighted. It will only cost much, much more in future to help educate, enlighten and uplift the most vulnerable in society. Pay a penny to the library now, or a pound to prison, etc. later.'</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A smaller number of comments took a different slant and felt that although it was right that vulnerable people were supported, it wasn't right for the service to focus on them as services should be for everyone and universal. • There was also the negative side of digital technology that many vulnerable people weren't able, through skills or finances, to use the technology so would feel cut off and isolated further. • A very small number of people commented negatively on the use of libraries by homeless people. • There were comments on the travel aspect of a reduction of libraries, which would mean more travel for those who couldn't afford it or are too vulnerable to use public transport to a town. <p><i>Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>'I do agree that the vulnerable should be supported, but also feel that the library service is a great place for the whole community, not just the most vulnerable.'</i></p> <p><i>'If it is seen too much as focused on the vulnerable and a place for all the homeless/jobless/mentally ill/ disabled to go to - then it will be less likely to be seen as meaningful to the whole community. It needs to help the vulnerable while being an active, vibrant place for the majority. This is an important part of libraries being able to support vulnerable populations - by including them in all aspects of community life, not by sidelining them.'</i></p> |

| Children (Approximately 14% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme) | |
|--|--|
| Enablers | Barriers |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all comments relating to children were positive about the need for libraries and cultural services to provide for children. Often these comments were in the context of libraries and cultural services providing services of relevance to residents 'young and old'. Many respondents also often talked about the positive benefits library and cultural services had on both themselves and their children. • Some comments explicitly talked about the benefit that Surrey Arts had on their children's development, enabling them to access music lessons. • Some comments mentioned that libraries should build or improve links with other services and groups, such as children's centres, school and playgroups to promote existing services and better reach children & families. <p><i>Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>'I had a baby 17months ago and rhyme Time at the library was quite literally a life saver for me and many other mum friends that I have met there during my maternity leave. I still take my daughter to rhyme time on a Saturday morning and she gets to choose some books after as I feel this is hugely beneficial to her development'</i></p> <p><i>'Surrey Arts provide really important music provision that is not available in ordinary school curriculum.'</i></p> <p><i>'Storytelling sessions for young children, already used in Surrey libraries, could be more actively promoted to the more</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst no respondents specifically said that cultural services should not be provided for children, a few felt that the balance of services was too skewed towards children, or that facilities could be altered so that children's' use of a library didn't impact on other users. <p><i>Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>'I think the sole community emphasis has been about children and singing songs/reading circles - but this should be quieter, there are many alternatives for children's groups already, but disabled adults feel overlooked.'</i></p> <p><i>'Put doors on the children's section. It is far too noisy, some of us like to read! (I have children and say this). Rhyme-time - it is impossible to concentrate.'</i></p> |

| Children (Approximately 14% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme) | |
|---|-----------------|
| Enablers | Barriers |
| <i>vulnerable families and thence used as way in to other forms of support'</i> | |

Wellbeing (Approximately 7% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme)

Enablers

- Many comments relating to ‘wellbeing’ link with those mentioned above under ‘vulnerable people’, ‘children’ and ‘access for all’. Users generally commented on the universality of library and cultural spaces, being for everyone, and also providing a safe, neutral space which had positive benefits on a resident’s wellbeing
- Another common theme was that if libraries & cultural services were not available to support resident’s wellbeing, then this would have a knock on effect on other council services, and increase demand there.
- Some comments, felt that libraries could do even more to support wellbeing.

Sample of comments made

‘The benefit of libraries to the community should not be underestimated. They provide contact with others to those people that may not see or speak to anyone else all day, they are a safe environment, and good for general wellbeing.’

‘A lot of people head for the library as a safe haven, whoever they are - it is a social service but not a recognised one!’

‘My library is a life line. Pleasant surroundings and staff. I live on a very low income and use the library at least four times a week, using all the facilities offered. I also love seeing the children groups in there, it makes me feel part of society’

‘Participation in cultural services like the arts and within libraries is known to improve wellbeing. By cutting these

Barriers

- There were no comments that directly suggested that libraries & cultural services do not support residents’ wellbeing.
- There were some comments that have already been covered under access for all, where respondents talked about the libraries and cultural spaces being for everyone, not just specific groups of users.

| Wellbeing (Approximately 7% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme) | |
|---|-----------------|
| Enablers | Barriers |
| <p><i>services it simply creates other problems and pressures on other so called essential services - thus helping no one.'</i></p> <p><i>'instead of viewing libraries as a stand-alone budget, try viewing them as part of a whole, recognising their contribution to education, adult and social welfare, children's wellbeing etc., then realise you need to be a bit more joined up in your thinking and funding.'</i></p> <p><i>'I think loneliness is one of the largest things which affect health and wellbeing. Libraries have always been a retreat to help with that. When on maternity leave I don't think I would have survived without library activities, such as rhyme-time. There also aren't enough activities in libraries on a weekend now.'</i></p> <p><i>'Libraries could become 'wellbeing hubs', if GP's are not interested - have district nurse working out of them, chiropodists etc. merge them with the local Centres for the Community / Day Centres.'</i></p> | |

Learning (Approximately 11% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme)

Enablers

- A good number of respondents commented on the role of libraries and cultural spaces as places of learning and self-development. Some highlighted that libraries and cultural services played an important role in literacy development and some mentioned the importance of libraries in educating children.
- There were suggestions that there should be supporting the education sector by developing closer links with schools and children’s centres.
- There were comments that the provision of computer classes and IT skills support was an important role in libraries and some also mentioned the importance of online learning services/courses.
- Some respondents said they valued learning and development opportunities through groups, talks, workshops and not just books and also that libraries are valued for their quiet study spaces.
- There were suggestions that libraries should be combined with other education services such as Adult Education Centres and colleges. Some suggested that libraries should hold resources to support existing Adult Education courses.

Sample of comments made

“Libraries are there to enable everyone access to reading materials - they should not be focused on only vulnerable people and they are not there as a tool of social engineering. They are places where everyone can go, they create a

Barriers

- There were no responses that specifically said libraries and cultural services should not have a learning role, or expressed an opinion that this role was not an important part of library and cultural services.

| Learning (Approximately 11% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme) | |
|--|-----------------|
| Enablers | Barriers |
| <p><i>community heart and they encourage literacy across the board.”</i></p> <p><i>“I grew up in a family who did not have the money to buy books and I read huge numbers of books from my local library as a child and teenager. I believe this had a real impact on me and inspired a love of books and learning. I spent every Saturday studying in my local library during my A levels - the library was a hugely impressive building which I loved. I was the first person in my family to go to University and am now a teacher. I would like others to be given the same opportunity, whatever their financial situation.”</i></p> <p><i>“The use of these services is usually embedded from a young age so I would like to see schools partnering with libraries and cultural services to provide spaces and resources to broaden the education on offer to children, and to enable them to have a better understanding of their local community.”</i></p> | |

Cultural Services (Approximately 8% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme)

Enablers

- From the respondents who commented on cultural services other than the libraries service, almost a third valued the music lesson service provided to children by Surrey Arts.
- Some respondents felt that there was a benefit for different Cultural Services to work together, including being based in the same building.
- The well-being and social impact of Cultural Services was highlighted and the social value of adult education and learning services was raised. Some responses commented on the importance of services provided by the Surrey History Centre, “heritage services” and of having an archive service.

Sample of comments made

“Participation in cultural services like the arts and within libraries is known to improve wellbeing. By cutting these services it simply creates other problems and pressures on other so called essential services - thus helping no one.”

“I do not think the arts and libraries should be targeted only to vulnerable groups, but should be considered an asset for all that is worth investing in. The cultural economy is huge and Surrey CC should be focussing investment in the arts in Surrey, which in term will generate income/ economic value. It is very short term to look at cutting funding and targeting.”

“I strongly believe that taking away the opportunity for children of all economic means and ability to learn music through Surrey Arts would be to the detriment of our children’s’ education and our community as a whole.”

Barriers

- A very small number of respondents commenting on cultural services felt that communities should fund their own cultural centres and that compared to other services (such as fire and social care) Cultural Services weren’t as important or that the adult education offer needed to be improved.

Sample of comments made

“There are plenty of community buildings that can be used as cultural centres. Let communities provide and fund their own.”

“Culture is a luxury that cannot be afforded now, those who want it should fund it themselves”

5.2 Resources

This theme concerns respondents who have written about the different kinds of resources and constraints in providing and/or receiving a service. Written responses from survey respondents have been read and tagged with responses falling under the following sub-themes:

- **Consolidation** – comments relating to closing libraries or cultural services in the context of concentrating resources to provide a better service for residents
- **No changes to existing services** – comments relating to a desire for existing library and cultural services to be unchanged and remain as they are
- **Funding and income** – comments relating to funding and income for libraries and cultural services
- **Staff** – comments relating to the role of paid SCC libraries staff
- **Bookstock** – comments relating to the book stock in Surrey libraries
- **Libraries are redundant** – comments relating to the idea that libraries are no longer needed in today's society

| Consolidation (Approximately 3% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme) | |
|--|--|
| Enablers | Barriers |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst the number of comments mentioning specifically the concept of consolidation was quite low, respondent who mention this generally felt that underused libraries should be closed, and resources concentrated on the remaining libraries. Along with this, quite a few comments related to the feeling that in certain areas there were often a number of libraries in a small geographic area. • A handful of respondents took the approach of consolidating resources rather than consolidating the number of libraries or cultural buildings, of consolidating resources, for example through reducing opening hours or days in underused branches: <p><i>Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>'Looking at information provided consolidation of numbers of libraries should happen.'</i></p> <p><i>'Close some of the less well performing libraries to concentrate resources/staff in those places that have the highest usage figures'</i></p> <p><i>'Some small libraries could be amalgamated or moved into community spaces and savings made on book stock, but digital access is essential for job-seekers, travel cards and universal credit applicants.'</i></p> <p><i>'Rather than closing branches, restricting opening days would be better'</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even those respondents who agreed with the concept of 'consolidation' often felt that additional resources might need to be used to ensure that users were not disadvantaged by the closure of a local library. • Key things they talked about were ensuring there was adequate public transport provision into the nearest large town, or that services could be delivered in alternative ways, for example through a mobile library service, community drop off points or use of volunteers. • Some of the respondents wholly disagreed with the idea of consolidating resources, wanted libraries to be kept local. <p><i>Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>'In order to make the savings, I think the council should concentrate on the 'key' libraries. For example, I live in Ash Vale, and Ash and Frimley Green are my nearest Surrey libraries. But they are both too small and lack the facilities I would like. So, perhaps the opening hours of the smaller libraries should be reduced, as long as there is sufficient public transport for members of the public to easily access larger libraries.'</i></p> <p><i>'Close CPLs, close class c libraries and offer a better service in fewer locations. bring back mobile libraries to cover areas affected by closures'</i></p> <p><i>'There is a fine balance between closing libraries which are underused and restricting access to libraries for children who need that access'</i></p> <p><i>'Far better to have a lot of small/medium sized libraries that people can get to, rather than a few large ones.'</i></p> |

No change to Existing Services (Approximately 16% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme)

Enablers

- Many of the respondents, whilst they didn't wish libraries to move or close, did agree with the other principles as a way to address funding issues:

Sample of comments made

'By not closing any libraries these principles will have a solid base to be delivered from and show the libraries to maintain their important community role.'

- Many of comments tagged with no change talked about specific libraries, which users felt were already well situated, and able to provide for resident's needs
- Some respondents felt very strongly that there should be no changes to libraries
- Further comments talked more generally about the network of libraries across the county already been well spread across the county
- Some comments were specific to other areas in Cultural Services:

Sample of comments made

'Egham library is easy to access for local residents and offers additional use of the space particularly in regard to children's activities'

'DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT CLOSING THE LIBRARIES.'

'maintain current provision as the services are located where they are required'

'Cultural services, such as the Surrey History Centre, are vital. You cannot understand the present or future without some knowledge of the past. My voluntary organisations' archives are stored there, as are many other organisations - what will happen to these?'

| Funding and Income (Approximately 25% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme) | |
|---|---|
| Enablers | Barriers |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People were very vocal about funding and how money is being spent in Surrey. The general feeling was that libraries and cultural services are underfunded and more money should be invested in them, not cut. There were various ideas of what can be done to improve funding and income. <p>Savings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold books in offsite storage sites and make them available via reservations. The buildings can then be sold or utilised for something else. • Concentrate on the core service of books and save money on the other 'unnecessary' things which are done • Close the under-used libraries and use the money to boost the remaining libraries • Sell off any SCC owned land which is not being used and disused buildings • Cut waste collections at weekends and on bank holidays • Use local businesses for tenders • Concentrate on spending which affects the many and not the few • Streamline the council and its services • Look to use more consortia arrangements with other local authorities • Petition central government for more funding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents were very passionate about funding and multiple comments talked about not cutting funding to libraries, keeping things as they are, increasing the funding and so on. A common theme was that cutting funds would store up trouble for later, as libraries play an important learning, social and cultural need in the community. • There was some anger expressed by respondents in that they pay their council tax which is increasing, but services are being cut. Elected members and senior managers were criticised for their high salaries, their expenses and their 'perks' and many people suggested these should be reduced. • There was a general feeling that libraries and cultural services were important and reducing funding was seen as a very negative, short-sighted thing to do. It was also felt that more transparency was needed so that people could see where how much was being spent across the county so could be more informed. <p><i>Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>'There is a lot of money wasted through ill thought through projects, bad project management and ineffective budgeting and frivolous expenses spending.'</i></p> <p><i>'£1m on libraries makes a far greater cultural impact than a new mini roundabout. Give people real comparisons when large long</i></p> |

| Funding and Income (Approximately 25% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme) | |
|---|---|
| Enablers | Barriers |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make savings on Surrey County Council's PR and Communication publications • Reduce the use of external consultants • Means test concessionary travel and free school meals <p>Income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent out space when libraries are closed or to hire space within libraries to community groups, partners or private businesses. • Work with partners to raise funds, particularly through funding applications where partners can access grant funding not available to libraries on their own. • Introduce an annual membership fee, either for all, or for higher membership levels depending on services • Seek sponsorship for libraries • Increase reservation charges, but advertise this service more • Ask for financial donations to the library service and also second-hand books for the book sales • Charge for using computers in libraries • Charge for events that are run • Increase council tax, as long as the money is used for library services • Introduce a voluntary council tax top-up, or voluntary contributions • Offer a second hand book scheme in libraries, run by a bookseller • Charge SCC staff to park at work • Rent out or sell County Hall | <p><i>term decisions that have the potential to negatively impact their community.'</i></p> |

| Funding and Income (Approximately 25% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme) | |
|--|-----------------|
| Enablers | Barriers |
| <p><i>Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>'They [libraries] need to be properly funded to ensure the most vulnerable have access to the internet and resources. Sell council assets or raise council tax rather than cut proper paid staff.'</i></p> <p><i>'Got to "suck it in" and allow sponsorship of libraries, or indeed anything that will secure funding for the library service whilst minimising the impact on the public purse.'</i></p> | |

Staff (Approximately 10% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme)

Enablers

- Most of these comments were extremely positive about staff, whether library or other cultural services such as music tutors and archaeologists, and strongly advocated the retention of ‘trained’, ‘professional’ and ‘skilled’ staff to run services. They felt that knowledgeable, experienced staff were essential and that services suffered without them. Additionally, they mentioned their ‘softer’ skills, such as making the library a welcoming place, providing support in the community and assisting all levels of society, mentioning especially the support needed for Universal Credit.
- Other comments supported the use of paid staff over volunteers, citing consistency, knowledge and commitment to the role as benefits, along with being the face of Surrey County Council.

Sample of comments made

‘Professional librarians and experienced, professionally supported library staff are integral to the success of community library services. In order for specific services, programmes and events to be created and delivered to vulnerable community groups, you must have professional staff in place.’

‘I do know that Libraries are about the only place where you can actually have contact with a member of SCC staff.’

Barriers

A few comments were more negative about staff, saying that digital libraries would need less staffing; there were too many chiefs and not enough Indians; and that some libraries seemed overstaffed.

Sample of comments made

‘I would think that the basics of borrowing/return/shelving could easily be done by 1 person (especially as, these days, borrowing is self-serviced).’

| Book Stock (Approximately 7% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme) | |
|---|---|
| Enablers | Barriers |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the comments mentioning book stock emphasised the importance of access to books for children. • Some people felt that physical books (as opposed to e-books) were still important. A few specifically asked for physical book stock not to be reduced. However, some specifically mentioned that books should be part of the core library service. • There was recognition of the importance of access to library books for those who don't have books at home. • Some indicated that the stock purchasing and management of library book stock could be improved, including age, variety and breadth of stock. However, others thought the current range and quality of book stock was good, including quality, variety, currency, and access to large print stock. Some people highlighted that they felt non-fiction book stock was important, and should not be neglected at the expense of fiction. • Some people did not feel digital/e-books met the needs of the users – in terms of accessibility, quality and range of stock. On the other hand, a few were positive about the use of e-books. • There was a recognition of the value of library service stock supporting learning, including supporting schools resources, independent study and adult learning. • There was an appreciation of the ability to reserve book stock via the online catalogue. • A few respondents highlighted the value of free access to library book stock. • A few highlighted the value of books for enjoyment whilst others emphasised that they appreciated the ability to browse physical | <p>A few people felt that the book fund could be reduced. Some who responded in this way stated that physical books are less relevant now, and therefore having less physical books is a good thing.</p> <p>Others suggested that to reduce costs book stock could be held in closed storage or offsite (discovered via an online catalogue instead) and delivered to individuals.</p> <p><i>Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>'If estates costs are too high because of the size of collections, buildings could be partly repurposed to benefit the community building aspects (or indeed in support of the children's services consultation) and book holdings moved to offsite storage. This would need to be accompanied by a reduction or elimination of reservation fees for items held in storage. This mirrors university-style models of book recall and reservation. It would also need to be accompanied by better information about books themselves (e.g. integration with amazon's catalogue) to replace the ability to browse shelves. To be clear, I am not in favour of this (serendipitous browsing has been the source of many happy intellectual accidents for me over the years) but if cuts have to be made, this might be a way.'</i></p> |

books and the serendipity of finding something that interests them.

- Some people valued the opportunity to join book clubs, reading groups and book discovery as a social aspect.
- There was recognition of the value of book delivery to local points, including as part of the Library Direct service and some people would welcome the re-introduction of mobile services for book delivery
- There were a few comments which highlighted the important of access to books for literacy development and some highlighted the value of books for well-being and self-help.
- A few felt there was opportunity to provide further access to books in non-library locations.
- Other comments about book stock included people's "right to read", reservation fees and donations for books supporting funding/budgets, the importance of the inter-library loan service, and people being diverted to reading online rather than physical books.

Sample of comments made

'Books provide a very important escape from the pressures of modern living, especially in high-density areas like Woking. In the same way, libraries are one of the very few public spaces that don't require payment to enter or utilise services. I'm very grateful for having such a nice library so close to where I live. I was unemployed for over a year, and I felt very cut-off from the world because it felt like everything required money. Not only was I able to read recently-released books thanks to the library (books that eventually helped me gain full-time

employment), the library gave me a place outside of my home that I could exist in, which helped my mental health.'

'The books available for children in my local library follow popularity trends - e.g. lots of Rainbow Fairies, lots of David Walliams, lots of Diary of a Wimpy Kid - but if you are going to extend culture to those most vulnerable in society, you need to make sure that they can access children's classics and books that are recommended by schools - well written and interesting and exciting, not just the ones that the kids think they want to read. We always have to order books in from other libraries because you never have the ones my children want to read. You need to challenge yourselves to make available books that will challenge and excite children.'

'PLEASE do not cut back our local library service. Our six year old adopted daughter has developed a real love of reading. She borrows 20 books at a time and reads them all within a couple of weeks. Without a local library, how would we ever provide such books for her? There's no online substitute, and we can't travel long distances to other libraries.'

Libraries are Redundant (Approximately 0.5% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme)

- There were some comments mentioning specifically the concept that 'libraries are redundant', they were generally all along the same lines. The comments generally felt that libraries were unnecessary due to the availability of digital information and resources – the internet was often cited as a preferable source of information. Many of these comments appeared to come from non-library users, who didn't feel that libraries as a concept had a place in today's society.

Sample of comments made

'I think Libraries are becoming redundant. The internet has taken over as there is a far less need to provide this service in times of heavy cutbacks. I would proposing closing a very large number and selling the sites for development.'

5.3 Working together

This theme is to do with respondents commenting on how Surrey County Council works and communicates with our partners, agencies, users and others (e.g. volunteers). Written responses from survey respondents have been read and tagged with responses falling under the following sub-themes:

- **Volunteering** – comment relating to the use of volunteers in the service
- **Partnerships** – suggestions around working with external partners – e.g. health charities, MPs or businesses. Many of the ‘Partnerships’ comments link to those comments tagged under ‘Shared Spaces’ and ‘Community Involvement’

| Volunteering (Approximately 23% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme) | |
|---|--|
| Enablers | Barriers |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were a lot of positive comments about volunteers, saying that the council should encourage them and they were an asset to libraries and cultural services, particularly in specific roles such as digital support. • They also felt the volunteering opportunities should be advertised more as people weren't aware that they could do this. • It was also seen as a benefit for younger people to increase their skills • The idea of volunteers taking books to housebound people was seen as a positive use of their time (though most were unaware that this was already done). Some people were volunteers themselves and said what a positive experience it had been. <p><i>Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>'Ask for more volunteers both to work in the libraries and also to help support those in the community who are unable to access the services themselves.'</i></p> <p><i>I am a volunteer in Bramley library and agree that an increase in volunteer opportunity is a very positive community activity</i></p> <p><i>'Possible links with staff from local companies to encourage companies to allow people to offer hours of voluntary help as part of corporate social responsibility schemes'.</i></p> <p><i>'Use the libraries for literacy classes, volunteers to take books to housebound residents'</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant number of comments were not so supportive about using volunteers to support libraries and cultural services, saying that they should not be used to replace paid staff and that they had limited use due to their lack of knowledge and expertise. • Comments included the fact that it was difficult to recruit volunteers due to increased demand and also that volunteers generally came from the retired bracket. • The general negativity around using volunteers was that the council should provide paid staff and not rely on volunteers to deliver a service, particularly as volunteers could be unreliable and did not have to turn up for work if they chose not to. • The benefits of using volunteers in the Community Partnered Libraries was acknowledged and that these libraries may not be there without volunteers. Some people felt that volunteers could be used, but only if closing the library was the alternative. <p><i>Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>'the assumption that volunteers would do as good a job or better than the existing staff is just wrong and there are not enough volunteers.'</i></p> <p><i>'Volunteers cannot take the place of a trained librarian. Information management and provision is a professional skill, requiring specific training and experience. volunteers should only be used for those activities not requiring such skills e.g. delivering and collecting books, but not advising the public, unless they are trained'</i></p> |

| Partnerships (Approximately 8% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme) | |
|---|---|
| Enablers | Barriers |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents generally felt that much could be gained from partnerships with outside organisations, particularly those who are trying to reach similar target audiences, or achieve mutual aims. These partnerships could benefit from increased promotion of services, sharing of resources and increased footfall from shared visitors. • Other comments relating to ‘Partnerships’ focussed on the raising of additional funding and income, through sponsorship or sharing spaces and resources. • Some of the comments relate to using partnerships to find and recruit volunteers to support library services. <p><i>Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>‘Opening libraries to be havens for community should happen and especially working in partnership with charities trying to support vulnerable and others locally.’</i></p> <p><i>‘I suspect in some locations partnering with private business (e.g. having a library installed at a supermarket or with a coffee shop) would increase footfall for both businesses.’</i></p> <p><i>‘Got to “suck it in” and allow sponsorship of libraries, or indeed anything that will secure funding for the library service whilst minimising the impact on the public purse’.</i></p> <p><i>‘Link in with private companies who have a wealth of knowledge and skills in there staff and look at collaboration/ donating time from staff if you are going to expand on the pool of volunteers.’</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large number of respondents had quite strong views about types of partnerships which should be avoided, with a particularly common theme being that libraries should not work with the private sector. <p><i>Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>‘We need to be careful about the types of partnerships we form both formally and informally (I would not agree with partnering with organisation such as banks),’</i></p> <p><i>‘The private sector doesn’t have anything to do with public service EVER.’</i></p> |

5.4 Perceptions of the organisation

The theme of perceptions was highlighted as there have been a number of respondents who have shared specific feedback on their thoughts about Surrey County Council as a whole (or the local authority), the consultations themselves and also of the cabinet. This theme includes both positive and negative comments.

- **Surrey County Council** – comments about Surrey Country Council generally
- **The consultation process** – comments on the consultation process

Surrey County Council (Approximately 8% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme)

Enablers

- There were practically no positive comments about Surrey County Council or the wider political context, except in relation to the staff themselves.

Sample of comments made

'I have worked with councils and know how hard the executive staff work.'

'I doubt that there is much slack in any part of the councils work to make savings after the Governments cuts.'

Barriers

The overwhelming majority of comments spoke negatively about Surrey County Council. These negative comments covered the following areas:

- Salaries - People strongly objected to the high salary levels of senior managers, particularly that of the Chief Executive, and felt that these should be cut to save money
- Reduce the number of higher level managers - There was a strong feeling that the organisation was top heavy with senior managers and too many tiers of management, which needed to be streamlined.
- Reduce elected members expenses - Members' expenses featured prominently, with comments about how much was being claimed, the 'perks' that they had and so on. Mis-management of finances - There was much criticism of how money had been managed in the past and why money was still being spent on irrelevant or inappropriate things, when residents' council tax was being increased. Many people questioned the procurement and contracts process, feeling that that was being badly managed.
- Unitary/single tier authority - There were suggestions that creating a unitary authority and simplifying the way that Surrey is divided between County Council and Boroughs would be a positive move.
- Council tax bandings - People queried the inequality behind this, feeling that property prices were no longer in line with the bandings and thus people were paying disproportionate amounts.

| Surrey County Council (Approximately 8% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme) | |
|--|--|
| Enablers | Barriers |
| | <p>There were also negative comments about the wider political landscape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government funding - People felt that the government was to blame for not providing appropriate levels of funding and that Surrey County Council and its residents should lobby them for more money • Criticism of the current party - Many people commented negatively about the present Conservative government and its MPs, specifically naming several of them, stating that it was the government's responsibility to provide the solutions to the problems it had created. <p><i>Sample of the comments made</i></p> <p><i>'Surrey County Council has shown time and time again over the years its utter contempt for the cultural services, including music, arts and libraries, of the County'</i></p> <p><i>Almost always, I'd look at possible savings to be made from IT infrastructure, councillors' expenses, council meetings (e.g. hire and maintenance) and the wages paid to senior managers or executives.'</i></p> <p><i>'Surrey's Conservatives should be vociferous in their protests to central government about funding. Though I suppose that'll never happen whilst they continue to put party unity before the needs of the county and its residents.'</i></p> |

Consultation Process (Approximately 7% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme)

Enablers

- There were practically no positive comments about the consultation process itself, unless we accept the fact that people completing the survey indicates that they are happy with the process.

Sample of the comments made

'I think it would be a good idea to consult groups of people, i.e. young people, children, parents, elderly, disabled to find out what they would like libraries to offer, and based upon the responses consider if changes can be implemented.'

'I would welcome a wider debate about funding priorities. Why do you not hold open consultations (face to face)?'

Barriers

- Almost all of the comments about the consultation itself were negative comments. They felt that it was poorly worded and not in plain English and it was not clear what was being asked. They also felt that it was worded to skew results in the way of a particular outcome and it would have been more helpful to give specific ideas as to what changes were being proposed. Some people were quite angry at the perceived bias in the writing and the vagueness of what they were being asked to comment on. Commonly used words were 'disgraceful', 'poorly worded', 'vague', 'unclear', 'leading', 'poorly designed'.

Sample of the comments used

'This questionnaire is a disgrace, completely vague so you can twist answers to whatever outcome you desire. No straight forward questions like 'should we close libraries - yes or no.'

'The strategy is full of jargon. Plain English please. What is a resilient community?'

'Your principles are incredibly vague. How can anyone evaluate them unless we know more about what specific impacts each one would have? This consultation is very tricky and no doubt will only be used to support whatever strategy you decide you want to do anyway. It does not inspire trust or confidence.'

5.5 Innovations

This theme is to do with respondents commenting on suggestions and ways to improve and enhance Surrey County Council's approach to delivery of services. In particular, respondents were asked for their specific ideas that could help achieve the five principles presented. Written responses from survey respondents have been read and tagged with responses falling under the following sub-themes:

- **Improvements** – general comments relating to improvements that could be made to the service
- **Marketing** – comments relating to promotion of services, or making residents/ service users more aware
- **Digital** – Comments relating to the use of new technology

These sub-themes summarised below, with key findings and example commentary from respondents. These have been split into enablers and barriers.

| Improvements (Approximately 14% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme) | |
|---|--|
| Enablers | Barriers |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People had a wide variety of positive ideas about how libraries and cultural services could be improved, many of which were around the 5 shared principles. Shared spaces was seen as a positive move, whether this was encouraging other groups/partners/business to share library space, or for libraries to work with the community and create multi-activity hubs. • People felt that increased opening hours would be beneficial, though they needed to reflect the public's preferences of when they would use the library or cultural service. • Sunday opening was specifically mentioned, as being a day when work people could use the library for their leisure time. • Others wanted to see the library and cultural services provide more events, to give libraries greater buzz socially and culturally and more of a learning feel. This could be a mixture of library-run events such as author talks, but also to involve external groups who would use the library to run events or classes. This could either be when the library was open, or on a closed day or during the evenings. • People also were very positive about the venues for Surrey Arts for music lessons. Others wanted to see better use of partnerships with businesses or other organisations. <p><i>A Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>'Surrey Libraries should be more inspiring cultural hubs - they should engage with communities through cultural activities, they should learn from other libraries e.g. Jubilee Library in Brighton.'</i></p> <p><i>'The more community focused we can be the better. Communities help shape our lives'.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People's ideas were mainly positive rather than negative, but they did recognise the need for changes. Some suggested reducing opening hours, which would at least keep the libraries open, or closing during the day in order to open in the evening. A couple of comments suggested closing the Community Partnered Libraries to save money. Other comments were very positive about expanding digitally, but wanted to reduce the bookstock to compensate for this. <p><i>A sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>'Maker spaces, spaces for community groups, support for start-ups would be positive activities as "shared spaces". Having libraries run by volunteers or by private companies I would see as a supremely negative development. Libraries having to perform activities such as hosting shops or filing tax returns or other council services would also be a negative development.'</i></p> <p><i>'The library should be a local hub, a place of learning, relaxation and information, instead they are becoming robotic ghost ships.'</i></p> |

| Marketing (Approximately 4% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme) | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Enablers | Barriers |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People felt that outreach with local community groups and organisations such as schools, local care homes, children’s centres, GP surgeries and U3A would help make more people aware of what libraries have on offer. • There were suggestions that advertising for volunteers should be improved. • Some people saw the benefit of using leaflets and posters for promotion of services in non-library buildings with a few comments suggesting improving town signage pointing to libraries. • There were suggestions that libraries needed to emphasise their uniqueness in their marketing and some also mentioned the promotion of the benefits of libraries was important. • There were comments that libraries should make better use of social media for marketing and promotion. • Some felt that it is only members of the library service who are aware of what’s on offer in libraries, and that more should be done to make non-members aware. • There were also comments suggesting that encouraging local groups, organisations and businesses to host events in libraries would encourage use and some also suggested using corporate organisations as sponsors. • Some said that libraries’ online resources, services and apps needed better promotion. <p><i>Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>“Part of bringing these services to the communities that need them requires some targeted promotion to community</i></p> | <p>There were no barriers raised</p> |

centers, GP surgeries and borough councils immediately following this consultation. It is essential to make residents aware that these services exist. **We fail to deliver value for money if we can't spend some money on informing residents of the library service they pay for.** There is a public perception that libraries are dying and they certainly will if people think they already have”

“Raise awareness of library services by actively taking the info out to those who don't already know about their local library services. Text-based ads don't reach non-readers, who often still have the image of a library as a stern, learned, sshhh-filled alien space. Live face-to-face message delivery to these communities could be more effective.”

“Advertise on line services, especially the normally chargeable services that are provided free through the libraries”

Digital (Approximately 14% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme)

| Enablers | Barriers |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of responses relating to digital mentioned specifically that access to the internet in libraries was important for those who don't have access elsewhere, including those from low income families and the elderly. There were comments more generally that the provision of "access to computers" in libraries and cultural buildings was also important. Some also specifically mentioned that being able to access w-fi was important to them. • Many recognised the benefit of giving library users the opportunity to develop their IT skills via computer classes, training and IT help at the library. Some highlighted the value of computer buddies and volunteers specifically in achieving this and also the value of being able to access other learning courses online. • Many respondents recognised the value of digital services, but felt the digital offer should be increased and improved, including access to online subscriptions, current IT kit (PCs, self-service), apps, library catalogue, and website. • Some people appreciated the fact that they could use the online catalogue to search for, reserve and renew books. • Some felt online marketing should be better used (including social media) to market the broader library offer, and a few felt the same was needed for online and digital services. • Some respondents highlighted the value of being able to access digital library services widely and flexibly e.g. 24 hours a day and away from the library buildings and others more generally indicated that they recognised the value of online and digital services being provided by libraries. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people mentioned that digital services impact on social face-to-face interactions, which is not good for individual well-being (especially for the vulnerable) or strengthening communities. • Some comments emphasised that the introduction of these services should not be at the expense of library buildings, books, staff and face to face interactions with a few specifically mentioning that digital and physical library services should co-exist. • There were suggestions that the current digital book offering needs to be expanded or improved. • Some people felt that too much screen time was bad for people, and that physical books were better, with some said they preferred physical books as opposed to e-books. • There were a few concerns raised about over-reliance on digital services and some highlighted that digital services were not of value to people without computer skills, and that digital services aren't accessible to all. <p><i>Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>'Unsure, however I do have some concerns that an over-reliance on digital media will actually leave behind the most vulnerable people in the community that some of the strategies are aimed at, and that the county council should be cautious about how it uses digital media. I work for Surrey Adult Learning, and I see first-hand how much hands-on practical learning is needed to equip some of our learners to access the digital world - the elderly, job seekers, speakers of other languages, people with learning difficulties and disabilities. For many of these</i></p> |

Digital (Approximately 14% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme)

| Enablers | Barriers |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were suggestions that providing computers for online access to library services in non-library locations, such as schools, day centres, cafes and stations. Offering an online book ordering and delivery service to library members was also suggested and some felt the internet had made physical libraries obsolete. • Some respondents specifically wanted to see improvements to library Wi-Fi. A small number of other suggestions included partnering with other library services to reduce the cost of digital services, developing makerspaces, code clubs and other coding initiatives in libraries. <p><i>Sample of comments made</i></p> <p><i>‘Invest in bigger libraries and expand digital services. Start doing computer courses again! If you want people to access digital services you need to teach them how to do that.’</i></p> <p><i>‘Libraries, as gateways to information, should engage with information in all its forms. Libraries should be providing access to e-books, e-magazines and digital audio books but should also use data and analytics to inform their purchase priorities. Surrey libraries should expand provision of coding clubs and educate everyone on online safety.’</i></p> <p><i>‘Libraries are an essential for so many families. While technology is becoming so big in schools and parents cannot afford computers they provide children the chance to read all the new books their friends are, have free computer access- for new skills, homework and even games. Computer buddies help people return to work with new IT skills. They are essential to communities. What’s on offer in libraries needs to be effectively marketed county-wide to gain new</i></p> | <p><i>learners, access to a computer in the first place is often limited. Even with computer or internet access, many need quite extensive initial tuition to coach them and equip them with the confidence to use modern technology to access further services and feel connected with the wider community.’</i></p> <p><i>‘I do not read books in a digital format as I do not find this a pleasurable or helpful way to access (sic) books (fact and fiction). I use a small local library. If the services were to be closed and moved to a main centre I would have no way to access (sic) service other than online, so will probably end up not using the library service.’</i></p> <p><i>‘In the age of internet, my grandchildren think of going to the library as a treat even though it’s routine. They handle books with care, they choose books, they listen to stories - they have amazing positive experiences with libraries and their pile of books are by the bedside. The internet does not do this for them in the same way.’</i></p> |

| Digital (Approximately 14% of respondents included comments relating to this sub-theme) | |
|---|-----------------|
| Enablers | Barriers |
| <i>members. Without stepping foot in a library you would not have known of the online resources and the club's and events.'</i> | |

ANNEX 1 – MONITORING INFORMATION

Full responses to monitoring information are shown in the tables below. The highest and second highest numbers of respondents are highlighted:

| Age | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|-------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Under 18 | 34 | 0.43 |
| 18-24 | 78 | 0.99 |
| 25-44 | 1871 | 23.68 |
| 45-64 | 3177 | 40.21 |
| 65-74 | 1705 | 21.58 |
| 75 and over | 722 | 9.14 |
| Prefer not to say | 233 | 2.95 |
| Not Answered | 81 | 0.10 |

| Gender | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|-------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Male | 2456 | 31.08 |
| Female | 4996 | 63.23 |
| Prefer not to say | 341 | 4.32 |
| Not Answered | 53 | 1.10 |

| Employment Status | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Full-time employment (30 hours or more per week) | 2318 | 29.15 |
| Part-time employment (less than 30 hours per week) | 1287 | 16.18 |
| Self-employed (full-time or part-time) | 739 | 9.29 |
| Voluntary employment | 263 | 3.31 |
| Not employed | 160 | 2.01 |
| In full-time education (school college or university) | 87 | 1.09 |
| In part-time education (school college or university) | 22 | 0.28 |
| Homemaker | 387 | 4.87 |
| Not required to work due to a disability or illness | 55 | 0.69 |
| Retired | 2423 | 30.47 |
| Not Answered | 212 | 2.67 |

| Ethnicity | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| White British | 6391 | 80.89 |
| White any other background | 490 | 6.20 |
| Black or Black British | 16 | 0.20 |
| Asian or Asian British | 121 | 1.53 |
| Mixed race | 79 | 1.00 |
| Gypsy Roma Traveller | 6 | 0.08 |
| Prefer not to say | 575 | 7.28 |
| Other please specify | 82 | 1.04 |
| Not Answered | 141 | 1.78 |

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months?

| | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Yes - limited a lot | 203 | 2.57 |
| Yes - limited a little | 710 | 8.99 |
| No | 6601 | 83.55 |
| Prefer not to say | 273 | 3.46 |
| Not Answered | 114 | 1.44 |

Do you look after, or give help or support to family members, friends, neighbours, or others because of either: long-term physical or mental ill health/disability and/or problems related to old age?

| | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| No | 5498 | 69.59 |
| Yes 1-19 hours a week | 1473 | 18.64 |
| Yes 20-49 hours a week | 150 | 1.90 |
| Yes 50 or more hours a week | 220 | 2.78 |
| Prefer not to say | 434 | 5.49 |
| Not Answered | 126 | 1.59 |

| Religion | Number of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Buddhist | 27 | 0.34 |
| Hindu | 44 | 0.56 |
| Christian (including all Christian denominations) | 3917 | 49.58 |
| Sikh | 11 | 0.14 |
| Jewish | 35 | 0.44 |
| Muslim | 26 | 0.33 |
| No religion | 2327 | 29.45 |
| Prefer not to say | 1176 | 14.88 |
| Other please specify | 158 | 2.00 |
| Not Answered | 180 | 2.28 |

ANNEX 2 – FEEDBACK FROM PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Feedback from Partner Organisations

The following organisations have provided written feedback in response to the consultation:

Citizen's Advice Bureau – Reigate and Banstead

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Cranleigh Parish Council

Elmbridge Museum

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Friends of Woking Palace

Haslemere Town Council

Kingswood Residents Association

Mole Valley District Council

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council

Send and Ripley History Society

South East Museum Development Programme

Spelthorne Health and Wellbeing Group

Surrey Heath Borough Council

Surrey Museum Partnership

Tandridge District Council

Tandridge Voluntary Service Council

Tattenhams Community Library

The Farnham Society

The Lightbox

Waverley Borough Council

Windlesham Parish Council

Woking Borough Council

Comments Received from Partner Organisations

Comments received from partner organisations were wide ranging, including views and ideas based around the five strategic principles, perceived threat to local their local libraries, concern at possible loss of culture and heritage and the wider operational management of the county council. Below are a sample of comments:

- Enhancing the role of Libraries and Cultural centres to make them more diverse places to support the wider health and well-being of residents is welcomed and recognises that this approach will inevitably lead to fewer larger directly operated centres with centres either closing or providing access channels through other partner locations. For the Borough it is considered that the easily accessible town centre provision should be maintained as a location albeit it could be diversified to meet a wider range of service need.
- Closing the research room at Surrey History Centre (SCH) will damage historical research/ family history for a huge number of people.
- SHC hosts and supports many and varied events aimed at audiences both young and old. They also take Heritage events around the county and were most supportive of our 'Research your House' day.
- The Learning on my Doorstep programme (LOMD) at SHC allows independent Heritage organisations to develop their own resources to carry out their own local outreach work with local communities. The LOMD has been recognised and supported by the Arts Council but could not be delivered without the skill and expertise of SHC staff.
- Mentioning grants and support to independent Heritage organisations helps them sustain themselves in in many cases helps them achieve accreditation status as a museum
- Conservation and monitoring museum conditions. Independent Heritage organisations in Surrey currently have access to expertise from SHC and have attended training sessions at SHC. The enormous amount of work that goes on behind the scenes conserving the huge number of artefacts in their care and making them readily available to researchers is bound to be compromised if any cuts go forward
- Concerns raised that if libraries were closed alongside children's centres this could hit communities hard. Could they be combined etc.? To what extent has the impact on the voluntary sector been taken into account on the potential changes to libraries, children's centres and SEND? The lack of joined up thinking is a real worry.
- Access to information and knowledge is very important for local residents across Surrey, as is learning new skills but there is a recognition that in the future the reliance on stand-alone buildings be a lot less. Surrey County Council (SCC) should look at co-locating other services within libraries , rather than losing them entirely
- The libraries in Caterham Hill and Caterham Valley are currently being reviewed as part of the Caterham Masterplan and the One Public Estate programme. The library in Caterham on the Hill is a stand-alone building protected by a covenant in the green belt, so has no other useable purpose. SCC to speak with local Parish Councils to understand how local libraries are utilised.

- Library usage data appears to put Haslemere out of the top ranked Surrey libraries by use, however it is a mistake to compare the statistics with larger towns across the County and we would hope that data on visitor numbers etc. would be considered in context of population numbers.
- The geography of Surrey means that a library can serve both a town and a large rural hinterland. For example Haslemere library is a community amenity that many rely on for services, over and above the borrowing of books. For example many use the free Wi-Fi and computers for things such as universal credit and job centre applications which are accessible via online forms. If you are on a very low income, or lack the skills to access a computer- the library is essential. Other services include help with applying for free bus passes for seniors and disabled people.
- Surrey Museum Partnership (SMP) helps museums financially, to run more efficiently, improve professional standards, keep services relevant to Surrey communities, and to promote museum contribution to the local economy and tourism. It would be very detrimental to Museums across Surrey if SCC support to the museums partnership was removed
- The success of SMP stems from its development of strong partnerships between the museums as a network, as well as their stakeholders, and with a range of providers locally, regionally and nationally across culture, education, tourism, community groups and local authority organisations.
- SMP also leverages in additional financial support from national and regional grant programmes for the benefit of the museums sector across Surrey.
- The consultation explains that usage of libraries which is true. However caution over placing too much weight on this and the information presented in the decline charts, particularly as opening hours have reduced over a number of years in an effort to minimise running costs and it is unclear whether any allowances for change in hours has been made in the figures.
- The new Community/Cultural hubs should be located in the same area as current libraries in order to avoid residents having to travel long distances to access facilities. Access to modern IT facilities and super-fast Wi-Fi and support users with job hunting, preparing CVs applying for universal credit
- The new Hubs must have facilities to encourage children to read books.
- Community/Cultural hubs should also provide help to users to enable them to access historical records and improve the cultural information on offer to local communities, particularly for those on low incomes.
- Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead (CARBS) complements and enhances the work of SCC and Reigate & Banstead Borough Council (RBBC) in every principle set out in the strategy.
- We know that engaging communities with their local heritage and archaeology is a positive way to develop local identities, and create healthier, happier, and more resilient communities and as such demonstrates a clear relevance to the Council's 5 principles guiding this review.

- Over the years what was once a strong legacy of cultural services handed to us from Victorian times - museums, art centres, music services, theatres and community learning - has been steadily undermined
- The Performing Arts library is one of only a handful in the country and massively important as an archive and hub for drama, dance and music, with teachers and students from across the county and beyond benefitting from its presence. It also contains a permanent display of the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams. So it is a hugely important part of Surrey's musical and artistic heritage.
- The crucial aspect is for it to be kept together in the face of public spending cuts. There must be a way to ensure that these services are maintained whilst investigating partnership arrangements with charities and volunteer groups that will help to secure their future.
- The support provided by SMP, and more specifically the Learning on my doorstep (LOMD) countywide project, to have been invaluable. LOMD has developed, supported and maintained relationships between Surrey Schools and the rich and diverse range of museums and cultural organisations across the county
- We feel that libraries offer a valuable resource in our borough in supporting residents and the access is much wider than books. Libraries are an integral to our communities and create cultural and creative enrichment. It is well accepted that they:
 - Increase reading and literacy skills
 - improve digital access and literacy
 - help everyone achieve their full potential
 - healthier and happier lives
 - greater prosperity
 - stronger, more resilient communities
- With the proposed loss of two children's centres in the borough the libraries may provide some of the support and activities that they offered. The main library is in the centre of Epsom and this provides economic benefits and is also central to both students at the Laines Theatre Arts and the University of the Creative Arts. The relocation of the performing arts library to our Bourne Hall Library is a welcome addition given our performing arts and cultural offering and we feel strongly that this should be retained within the Borough. We support the introduction of a more digital services and believe Libraries have a strong role in supporting this agenda.
- Volunteers like us have a lot to offer to their local communities but projects like ours are only viable with assistance, guidance and leadership from the professionals. We therefore sincerely hope that at the end of the on-line consultations currently being carried out by SCC into The Libraries and Cultural Services you will find a way to keep the existing budget level because the proposed reduction of more than 50% will mean projects like ours will not be possible in the future and all the advantages that can be gained by so many children and adults across the county will be lost.
- Libraries located at Tattenham Corner and Banstead. We understand that both libraries are subject to possible closure following your current review. We believe that such closures would be to the detriment of the residents of Kingswood, Banstead, Tattenhams and Preston, Nork and Tadworth and Walton. These areas have an increasingly ageing

population more reliant on library and associated community services. Both libraries are located in busy shopping areas.

- Your review also asks for more general views on how costs may be reduced. As stated the cost of staff, (salaries, pensions, any catering or vending, car schemes etc), within a building such as County Hall will be at the top of the list of costs with the cost of occupation, (rent, rates, power maintenance, IT, insurance etc) second. Cultural Services budget shows a cost for libraries at £8.7 million for 2018/19 reducing to £7.9 million in 2020/21. The sum allocated to Libraries is very small compared with an overall SCC budget of £1.7 billion. We suggest that the savings that need to be made could best be achieved through a review of County Hall internal costs, including staffing levels, organisation and how services are provided.
- There are already some great examples in the borough that we can build on, for example, Library at Tattenhams which was turned over to community management some six years ago which is now thriving with capable and enthusiastic team of more than 70 volunteers.
- We strongly agree with the strategic principles you set out. Libraries do provide the opportunities for everyone to learn, access information, acquire new skills, improve literacy and be involved in their communities.
- Whilst we understand there is limited funding and can support targeting the wellbeing and strengthening of communities, including the most vulnerable, we draw your attention to the fact that many of our users are the vulnerable. It is parents and their children and also our older residents who find the library service of particular value. Whilst new technologies are important, physical books and reference materials rather than electronic books are of benefit to these age groups. Many of the older residents particularly enjoy the social inclusion of the library and are amongst our volunteers.
- Whilst we acknowledge that “shared spaces” could be of value, we already work with schools and others. It is important that the library is located in the right place. In Tattenhams we are next to the health centre, opposite the co-op and other shops, and the post office and chemist. We are by the bus stop and the railway station. This is where people come. This is more important than spending money by moving the library elsewhere to share space.
- From our perspective of working with different types of museum provision and support across the South East – we can see very clearly the considerable impact that Surrey Museums Partnership has, and its effectiveness as a vehicle to encourage partnership and collaboration (with the leverage this brings to access funding, and the cost/benefit of its relatively modest funding from local authority with regards to its widespread impact). SMPs work is even more impressive given the relatively low levels of funding involved. We therefore urge any review of Cultural Services to recognise that SMP is an extremely cost effective vehicle for supporting Surrey museums and their wide range of users: together they achieve far more than they ever could on their own
- There is concern that if these services do not continue to be delivered by Surrey County Council directly it could lead to inconsistency in terms of quality and accessibility. It is also important to be mindful that in the pursuit of delivering principles 3, 4 and 5 it is not to the detriment of principles 1 & 2. In favour of the development of multi-agency co-located cultural and public sector hubs (or a “one-stop-shop”) which we believe would improve

accessibility and support ongoing sustainability of these important services. Technology should be used where ever possible to ensure that this is a service that is fit for modern living and a service that is truly valued. However it is unclear what these 5 principles translate into for each area and what library services will look like as a consequence.

- We acknowledge that Surrey County Council has declared an intention to reduce its expenditure on libraries to a level closer to the national average spend of £9.89 per person from Surrey's current average spend of £14 per person. No intention to close any libraries is given, but to reduce costs by up to 30% some closures or major restructuring must be under consideration.
- In view of the fact that the consultation document talks so positively about libraries as an integral part of community life for so many Farnham residents we feel strongly that all services at the library should be retained.
- The Council largely agrees with the principles put forward to ensure library and cultural services remain sustainable. It is particularly keen that Bagshot Library continues to be maintained, as the volunteers here have dedicated a huge amount of time and effort to provide a very valuable service to local residents. There has recently been a drive to recruit new volunteers and the library has invested in new technology to ensure it can run effectively.
- Library buildings are an important community hub in our towns and villages visited by the elderly and families with young children. Whilst we appreciate that their use has been falling we feel this is an opportunity to use these important buildings in a more community based way bringing in other services that could be delivered more effectively and efficiently at a local level.
- In Waverly, the parish and town councils could be well-placed to run a new type of community hub including a library service. The review of these services creates opportunities for local organisations embedded within their areas thereby creating greater synergy, levels of service, efficiency and savings than the current model of operation. Removing more of these hubs from our communities potentially increases isolation and adds pressure to public services.
- Agree with the principles of the strategy but feel that there is insufficient detail on how these principles will work in practice.
- Given the aim is to cut spend per head of population by about 30%, some libraries must be under threat and we would ask that there be greater transparency about this. We would expect that there would be further consultation once the libraries identified for closure are known.
- One of the aims of the Government is for libraries to be hubs for social prescribing and it is difficult to understand how this can be achieved if libraries are under threat of closure.
- As a small museum who can showcase the amazing history the area has, we would lose a vital resource as well as the amazing staff who know so much. Their invaluable talents and knowledge should not be ignored, as unfortunately with cuts the people left behind are sometimes not the most knowledgeable and if they are the ones left to fulfil a whole service on their own, their morale and wellbeing takes such a battering that they are unable to do the job that they most love.