

Conversation about the Future of Library Service of Crown Street: Consultation Analysis

262 responses were received to the Conversation about the Future of Library Service of Crown Street consultation which ran from February to March 2019. In addition, two focus groups were held with groups of children and young people to ascertain attendees' views about the library service.

Respondents were asked what they would like to see and not like to see in the library service, and answers received to these questions related to a wide range of issues. The analysis outlined below has attempted to categorise feedback by issue, and outline the range of views received, including – in many cases – opposing opinions. Categories are listed alphabetically, with miscellaneous responses detailed at the end of each section.

Equality information, showing how the demographics of respondents – where this was reported – relates to the borough population, is outlined at the end of the report.

1. Responses to question: “What would you like to see provided as part of the library service in the central library and elsewhere in the borough?”

258 out of 262 respondents gave an answer to this question, in addition to responses received during two consultative forums held with groups of children and young people. Given the open-ended question, most answers related to multiple areas/issues therefore the numbers outlined below do not always sum to total:

Activities

- 84 respondents (32%) made requests relating to activities the library service should provide for adults, including:
 - Adult education classes, both during the day and evenings, including:
 - Local history
 - English
 - Writing
 - IT
 - Photography
 - Presenting
 - Languages
 - Presentations / talks / debates on topics, including Art and Darlington heritage
 - Performances
 - Exhibitions, including monthly outreach shows and more frequent exhibitions of local history
 - After hours events, including:
 - Quiz nights
 - Music
 - Tastings
 - Comedy events
 - Themed book evenings
 - Films
 - Friends of the library
 - drinks
 - Wine and book nights
 - Author events / book readings / book festivals, including Crossing the Tees / book clubs
 - Themed workshops and fairs, including crafts, family history and meditation and mindfulness
 - Regular tours
 - Social clubs / games clubs / poetry groups / knitting groups
 - Local enterprise events
 - Projects with positive social impact
 - Support groups, including:
 - AA meetings
 - Groups to address loneliness
 - Courses for parents
 - Employability support including free courses

- Free lunch club
- Outreach services e.g. social services / health visitors
- Literacy support
- Peripatetic services
- Support for blind or hard of hearing
- For people in poverty with learning difficulties
- Heritage trail and map, beginning at the library
- Events linked to other venues e.g. Head of Steam and Hippodrome
- Letting library staff decide events

Art

- 41 respondents (16%) made requests relating to art being displayed at the central library, including:
 - 18 requests for the current dedicated art space/gallery to be retained
 - 9 requests related to artworks, including:
 - 6 requests for the borough art collection be displayed/retained and 2 requests for local art to be displayed
 - 2 requests for local art to be displayed
 - 2 requests for artworks to be available to lend/rent
 - 1 request for art for sale be displayed in a new café
 - 8 requests for regular, quality art exhibitions
 - 5 requests for the current dedicated art space/gallery be expanded/improved, including by:
 - Using the area as a versatile space, such as a hosting and reception facility
 - Better lighting, such as a lighting track and spotlights
 - Wallboards and secure display cases for 3d objects
 - Adjustable tables and chairs
 - Temporary coverings for workshops
 - An audio-visual area
 - 1 request for the art gallery be renamed the 'Myles Meehan Gallery'
 - 1 request for the art gallery to be monitored, potentially by volunteers

Children's Provision

Children's Library

- 56 respondents (21%) made requests relating to the children's library, including:
 - 19 requests related to the children's library stock, including:
 - Educational materials linked to the curriculum, including KS1/2/3
 - A good range / lots of books for all age ranges
 - Foreign language books
 - Toys
 - More audiobooks that are easy to find
 - Being able to take lots of books home at once
 - Getting rid of fines
 - Manga and gaming books
 - DVDs of books for children with reading difficulties
 - Asking children what stock they would like
 - 10 requests for specific areas, including:
 - A reading area
 - A play area / a den
 - A separate areas for teens
 - A sensory room
 - An education area

- An interactive area to learn about Darlington e.g. ingenious theme / science exhibits
- A playpen for under 3s
- A bright display area
- A carpeted area
- Some big open spaces
- 5 requests for computers to be available in the children's library, including free access for homework clubs and 1 request for more sockets
- 5 requests for new furniture, including:
 - 3 requests for new multiuse furniture, including novelty shelves and furniture allowing room for activities
 - 2 requests for child-friendly furniture
- 3 requests for 3D and/or bright murals
- 3 requests for the children's library be separate to the rest of the library
- 3 requests for doors
- 1 reminder that children like magic (and old, quirky buildings)
- 1 request for more recognition treats be given to children to award attendance
- 1 request for a storyteller's chair or cloak and 1 request for story sacks

Children's Activities

- 79 respondents (30%) made requests relating to children and young people activities, including:
 - A wide range of clubs, including reading / coding / chess / Lego / homework / films / crafts / knitting / drama / music / IT / games / singing,
 - Book events, including guest authors and writing workshops and Bookstart Rhymetime
 - Cake sales
 - Events for specific groups, including:
 - home-schooled children,
 - SEND children,
 - children who have English as a second language,
 - all different age ranges
 - Activities in partnership with schools, including competitions, visits and revision classes
 - Soft play
 - Theme events, including:
 - Easter egg hunts,
 - Harry Potter events
 - Animals
 - Magicians
 - Science shows like Cool Science / Centre for Alternative Technology activities / slime workshops
 - Sleepovers
 - Stop animation workshops
 - Family activities, including some which are free
- 1 request for a separate time and facility to be made available for children's activities
- 1 request for a secure space for children's activities

Cockerton Library

- 12 respondents (5%) made requests relating to Cockerton library, including:
 - 4 requests for current events to be retained and/or expanded
 - 1 request for full opening hours be reinstated
 - 1 request for more books
 - 1 request for repairs/improvements be made

- 1 request for more exhibition space
- 1 request for the staff be left to run it

General Refurbishment

- 86 respondents (33%) made requests relating to the general refurbishment of the library, including:
 - Ensuring it is accessible for people with disabilities and buggies, including a disabled parking bay
 - Fixing the roof and guttering
 - Updating the heating system
 - Replacing the glass panels
 - Improving the outside appearance, including colourful lighting, repairing the wall and adding authors' names to the steps
 - Making all areas of the library feel welcoming
 - Ensuring all available space is used, including the basement
 - Doing it quickly
 - Installing more and comfortable seating, including sofas, in all areas
 - Making it more modern
 - Including a dedicated area for genealogy
 - Retaining the ambience e.g. by
 - conserving/enhancing period features and furniture,
 - ensuring any new additions are in keeping with the traditional style
 - using a Victorian paint palette
 - like for like repairs or replacements
 - keeping it homely
 - Installing a mezzanine floor(s)
 - Improved staff facilities
 - Developing open space that is stimulating and calming
 - Having it designed by creative people, including local students who can get involved in decorating
 - Linking the library and art gallery
 - Maximising light (but not required in shelving)
 - Ensuring it is environmentally friendly e.g. solar panels
 - Installing a revolving door
 - Installing more debit card machines
 - Installing murals/pictures of Darlington past and present
 - No changes
 - Restoring the panels from the children's library
 - Opening up the archives
 - Ensuring regular ongoing maintenance
 - Including book benches
 - Installing/updating tiles around the main door and floor tiles
 - Relocating:
 - the CLS to the art gallery
 - the art gallery to the computer room or Indoor Market
 - the reference library to the CLS
 - the children's library to the Dolphin Centre
 - Installing a modern, three storey, circular extension, 'The Wheel', on the back of the existing building with different areas to focus on aspects of Darlington's heritage
 - Looking at other refurbished buildings for inspiration, including the Salt Mill in York and Old Manor Park Library in London
 - Including a specific area for teenagers
 - Installing an additional mini gallery for children in the foyer

- Regularly changing sculptures
- Moving stock storage elsewhere
- Opening the ladies' reading room
- Improving the layout of the main entrance
- Giving it a deep cleanse
- Get rid of closed doors to public areas
- Installing easy clean, e.g. leather/ette, and ergonomic furniture
- Using specialist experts e.g. from installation of electrical/plumbing/heating to full architectural survey and condition report and conservation management plan
- Ensuring an even temperature
- Dividing up bigger spaces with glass dividers
- Uncovering the mill race underneath the northern entrance lobby and installing a glass floor
- Reinstating the original entrance

Heritage Area(s)

- 16 respondents (6%) requested a dedicated heritage space(s) be installed, including:
 - 6 requests for a museum area, with specific requests to:
 - exhibit items/information relating to local history
 - condense Darlington History with video links of Head of Steam
 - 6 requests for existing historic displays to be retained
 - 4 requests for a rail heritage area to be included

I.T. Facilities

- 49 respondents (19%) made requests in relation to the I.T. facilities at central library, including:
 - 18 requests related to the provision of internet at central library, including:
 - 7 requests for longer free internet access
 - 6 requests for WiFi, of which 5 were for this to be free
 - 1 request for good computers with fast broadband and able to output onto drives / printers
 - 14 requests for computers to be available, including for research and reference projects
 - 14 requests for printing (including wireless and 3d) / photocopying and/or scanning (including A3) facilities
 - 2 requests for virtual reality provision to be made available
 - 2 requests for a teaching area / training provision be made available
 - 1 request for tablets for children
 - 1 request for Microsoft software on library computers
 - 1 request for the library to become a trendsetter in digital use including digital library cards, augmented reality, artificial intelligence, blockchain technology, robots, drones, mobile apps and Library Planet
 - 3 requests for staff be available to help I.T. users, including with job searches and I.T. skills etc.
 - 2 requests for charging points
 - 1 request for the current level of privacy in the I.T. suite be retained
 - 1 request for the computer suite be downsized

Lending Library

- 63 respondents (24%) made requests relating to the adult lending library service, including:
 - 38 requests for more stock, including:
 - More / full / better / good range of stock
 - CDs and DVDs, including foreign language
 - New and old books, including hardcopies, self-help books, eBooks, large print and braille books, and books better reflecting local needs

- Video game rentals
 - Audiobooks
- 2 requests for services for book clubs, including:
 - lists of books with several copies
 - allowing groups to review books for other clubs
 - expanded choices for book clubs
- 2 requests relating to access to books, including:
 - digital access
 - easy access
- 1 request for a book borrowing catalogue
- 1 request for a 24 hour drop off box
- 1 request for the borrowbox app to be adopted
- 1 request for lists be provided for books of similar authors
- 1 request for a section for new books
- 1 request for music books be removed
- 1 request for more space be dedicated to the lending library, with modern shelves and a smaller counter
- 1 request for that large letters be put on the top of book shelves i.e. A to C
- 1 request for the electronic check in/out machines be retained
- 1 request for the provision of CDs be reviewed
- 1 request for movable shelves to be installed (no higher than 1.5m), and some low level tables and chairs
- 1 request for the lending library to be downsized
- 1 request for an interactive device to locate books

Lift

- 7 respondents (3%) made requests relating to lift provision at central library, including:
 - 3 requests for the lift to be improved e.g. faster and bigger
 - 2 felt provision of a lift was important
 - 1 request for the lift be relocated closer to the main entrance
 - 1 request for the original 1930s lift be restored
 - 1 request for a staff lift to the basement be installed
 - 1 request for a barrier to be constructed at the street entrance
 - 1 request for the lift to be accessible for people with disabilities
 - 1 request for the lift to be regularly serviced

Local Studies

- 37 respondents (14%) made requests relating to the Centre for Local Studies, including:
 - 14 requests for the CLS be expanded / improved, including:
 - Bigger collection
 - More trade journals
 - New microfilm printing machines
 - Responsibility for the historic archive materials of the borough
 - Being made the library focal point and signposting to all aspects of Darlington's heritage
 - Items made available to request, including books
 - Historic murals
 - Better and/or dedicated space for displays
 - More power sockets
 - More daylight
 - 6 related to access, including:

- More information on how to access the CLS
- Easier access to archives with guidance regarding what's available
- Online digital resources
- 5 requests for adequate staffing
- 2 requests for historic content to be saved and digitised
- 2 requests for the current online subscriptions in the CLS be retained
- 2 requests for items to have safe and secure storage
- 1 request related to furniture, including:
 - wide, sturdy tables
 - comfortable chairs, including wheeled and stackable
 - glazed cupboards retained
 - bench tables for IT
 - display cases and screens
 - robust shelving

Marketing

- 24 respondents (9%) made requests relating to marketing of the library service, including:
 - advertising on school notice boards, the library website, social media, One Darlington magazine, posters in council buildings, brochures, local newspapers, the housebound van, the Cornmill etc.
 - targeting non-users
 - decent branding and promotion
 - working with schools/colleges for ideas
 - an events programme
 - posters about new books
 - making relevant staff aware of events and encourage sharing
 - raising awareness of online offer
 - spending more money on marketing
 - printing the same number of posters as for other community services and use these venues to advertise
 - better advertising children's events

Online Services

- 10 respondents (4%) made requests relating to the library service's online provision, including:
 - 3 requests for improved online options including digital portals to search for books and digital book access
 - 2 requests for online booking facilities for events
 - 1 request for Skype and online book clubs for people who can't visit the library in person
 - 1 request for a digital strategy for the library website
 - 1 request for the library website to be easier to find on council website and have a more straightforward web address
 - 1 request for event information on the website to be directly linked to the Facebook page

Opening Hours

- 17 respondents (6%) made requests relating to opening hours, including:
 - 14 requests for longer opening hours, including later on weekdays and Saturdays, and on Sundays
 - 3 requests for the current opening hours to be retained

Mobile Library

- 9 respondents (3%) requested the mobile library service be reinstated

Partnerships

- 10 respondents (4%) suggested the library services should work more closely with partner agencies, including:
 - Educational institutions including schools and universities
 - The Department for Work and Pensions
 - Local attractions and groups including the Head of Steam museum
 - The local voluntary and community sector
 - Local archives

Reference Library

- 44 respondents (17%) made requests relating to the reference library, including:
 - 18 requests for the reference library to be expanded/improved, including:
 - Computers installed with power points
 - More large tables
 - Sufficient space for studying
 - Private, sectioned desks
 - Better lighting
 - Online reference materials
 - More books, newspapers and magazines, including the Sunday Telegraph, local maps and guides, periodicals etc.
 - Updated layout
 - Modular tables and sturdy chairs
 - Local information and events
 - Protect with an air curtain to address cold
 - Replacing desks and computers with good quality study space
 - 11 requests for a dedicated reference library / study space be retained
 - 5 requests for the reference library be downsized, including by removing the helpdesk
 - 1 request for the reference library be removed
 - 1 request for the reference library to be located away from children's areas
 - 1 request for the reference library to be an enforced quiet area, including no phones
 - 1 request for the reference library to be well signed
 - 1 request for this area to be advertised to teenagers to study
 - 1 request for the area be supervised

Refreshments

- 90 respondents (34%) requested a café be established in central library, including:
 - 7 requests relating to how a café would be run, including:
 - 5 requests for it to be provided by a private company, of which 2 specified a start-up and 1 an independent business
 - 1 request for it be provided by the Dolphin Centre service
 - 1 request for it to be staffed by volunteers
 - 7 requests for it to be located in the art gallery space and 1 in the basement
 - 7 requests relating to the size of a café, including:
 - 6 requests for it to be small
 - 1 request for it to be large
 - 1 request for it to include a reading area
 - 3 requests related to seating:
 - 2 requests for a cafe to have comfortable seating

- 1 request for a cafe to have sufficient seating
- 1 request for it to be available for evening activities
- 1 request for a café to be installed only if:
 - it doesn't take space from the main library functions,
 - it is connected to toilet facilities, and
 - users aren't allowed to drink/eat outside of the cafe
- 1 request for it to be affordable
- 1 request for it to serve vegan, vegetarian, and gluten free lunches and high teas
- 1 request for it to include a barista service
- 3 requests for it to be family-friendly
- 5 respondents requested refreshments be made available but not a full café, including:
 - Water machine
 - Coffee/drinks machines
 - Vending machines

Resources

- 16 respondents (6%) made requests or suggestions relating to the resourcing of the library service, including:
 - Delivering new profit-making services such as:
 - Paypoint
 - Deliveries/collections/returns
 - Creche
 - Selling gifts relating to Darlington's heritage
 - A cafe
 - Charging a fee for existing services, including:
 - Children's activities
 - Evening classes
 - Community spaces
 - Non-core activities
 - Accepting donations, including by wealthy corporate donors and crowdfunding
 - Keeping refurbishment costs as low as possible
 - Ensuring updates are environmentally-friendly
 - Ensuring a sufficient ongoing annual budget from the council
 - Getting book sponsorship by authors and library users
 - Researching external funding opportunities, including heritage/arts/culture funds
 - Applying to be a Designated Listed Building
 - Using Community Infrastructure Levy and S106 Agreements funding

Retail

- 7 respondents (3%) requested some form of retail space, including:
 - A shop selling book-related items / second hand books / stationery / local art
 - Pop up stalls, including crafts
 - A mini market in the gallery foyer

Security

- 3 respondents (11%) made requests relating to security, including:
 - 1 request for the security presence be retained
 - 1 request for the security presence be removed
 - 1 request for the library to feel like a safe place to be for vulnerable groups

Space for Community Use

- 31 respondents (12%) made requests for space to be made available in the central library for use by:
 - community groups
 - arts or educational courses
 - business meetings
 - local enterprises
 - performers
 - event hosts
 - artists
- 2 requests for hire costs to be affordable
- 1 suggestion for this space to be made in the gallery or cellar

Staff

- 33 respondents (13%) made requests relating to library staffing, including:
 - 16 requests for the current staff be retained
 - 5 requests for more staff, including:
 - A full-time equivalent to manage a new tourist information centre and rail heritage section
 - An events coordinator for children and young people
 - Weekend staff
 - 10 respondents made requests for staff with certain characteristics, including:
 - well-trained
 - available to assist
 - experienced
 - knowledgeable
 - friendly
 - 2 suggestions that volunteers could be used to supplement paid staff, specifically for routine work and late evenings
 - 1 request for staff to be given more credit and empowered to do their job

Toilets

- 27 respondents (10%) made requests relating to toilet facilities at central library, including:
 - 15 requests for the toilet facilities be improved
 - 8 statements that toilet facilities are important, including for children and people with disabilities
 - 3 requests for toilet facilities to be expanded, including a baby change
 - 2 requests for toilet facilities be open to the public
 - 2 requests for the original toilets be retained, but made accessible
 - 1 request for keys to be made available for people with disabilities

Tourist Information Service

- 18 respondents (7%) requested a tourist information centre be established in the central library, of which:
 - 1 suggested that funding could come from charging local accommodation providers for advertising
 - 1 suggested it be supplemented with the LoveDarlo campaign and a revived BID

VCS Services

- 7 respondents (3%) requested VCS services be delivered in the central library, including:
 - 6 requests for legal/CAB services
 - 1 request for a food/clothes bank

Miscellaneous Requests

- 4 requests for the library be a central place to get information, including about churches, the council, bus times, litter picks, local events, public health
- 3 requests for laminating and binding facilities
- 1 request for a new Trustee/Library committee to be established
- 1 request for the council sign an agreement with the Friends of the Library for the library to be joint-owned by both parties
- 1 request for a new vision for the library service to be developed based on need
- 1 request for the Northern Echo archive to be relocated to central library
- 1 request for the central library be renamed the 'Edward Pease Lending Library'
- 1 request for a map of the library layout to be available with good signage
- 1 request for old historical/environmental/art assets to be placed in a self-sustaining trust, with charitable Friends as Trustees and no items moved/disposed of without expert evaluation and public agreement
- 1 request for a proper system of preserving archives and documents, specifically the Accredited Archive System, with a disaster plan put in place
- 1 request for more emphasis on languages and sharing of cultures
- 1 request for the library to be made the Centre of Quaker Heritage
- 1 request for fewer rules to be required to access services e.g. having to show ID or have a library card
- 1 request to ensure future generations have career paths to working in the library
- 1 request to fund research into non-users
- 1 request to warn people about the dangers of too much eBook use
- 1 request for the library deed be displayed if found
- 1 request for an accessible defibrillator
- 1 request for quiet areas to be made available in all areas
- 1 request for staff to be consulted on all proposed changes

2. Responses to question: “Is there anything you wouldn’t want to see provided as part of the library service in the central library and elsewhere in the borough?”

138 out of 262 respondents answered this question, a significant number of which included further requests as to what they would like to see in the library, which have been incorporated into the above section.

Of the remaining responses, again many covered multiple issues/areas as outlined below:

Activities

- 5 requests for no events to be held that do not directly link to the aims of a library, such as live music
- 3 requests for no sports activities to be introduced
- 1 request for no DWP or benefits services to be introduced
- 1 request for no other council services to be delivered in the library
- 1 request for not too many children’s events to be held
- 1 request for no participatory events be held in the library’s open spaces

Cockerton Library

- 2 requests for Cockerton Library to be closed
- 1 request for any refurbishment to Cockerton Library to not cause it to lose its atmosphere

Children’s Library

- 1 request to keep things where they are now
- 1 request to not change the castle
- 1 request to not have any boring space
- 1 request not to remove children’s space

General Refurbishment

- 37 respondents made requests relating to the refurbishment of Crown Street Library, including:
 - 28 requests to not overly modernise the interior, including:
 - Getting rid of, damaging or selling original furniture and fittings (except lighting)
 - Installing plastic / glass / black / white / brightly coloured / lightweight / new furniture and fittings
 - Fundamentally changing the library’s look, feel or purpose, including becoming too commercialised
 - 9 requests to not change the building or its layout
 - 3 requests not to move the library, or any of its areas, to the Dolphin Centre
 - 2 requests for office staff to be moved out of the library to maximise space
 - 2 requests for there to be no closed doors to public areas
 - 1 request not to expand the IT facilities into the Reference Library
 - 1 request not to install any false ceilings

Lending Library

- 3 requests not to reduce lending stock
- 1 request for no long books

Local Studies

- 2 requests for no changes to the CLS
- 1 request for no reduction in CLS stock

- 1 request for no 'opening up' of the CLS

Opening Hours

- 3 requests not to reduce or change the current opening hours

Reference Library / Study Areas

- 15 respondents made requests relating to the Reference Library and quiet/study areas, including:
 - No background or loud music
 - No loud activities or events in earshot of other areas
 - No phones allowed

Refreshments

- 19 requests for a café not be introduced at the central library
- 5 requests for no food or drink at all to be allowed in the library
- 2 requests for any new café to not be delivered by a chain
- 2 requests for no unhealthy food or drinks to be sold, including alcohol

Resources

- 1 request for no new charges to be implemented
- 1 request for no money to be lost on expensive contracts
- 1 request for no further cuts be made to the library service

Staff

- 11 requests not to cut or replace staff, i.e. with further automation such as new check out machines
- 3 requests not to rely on volunteers for staffing
- 1 request for librarians not be silent
- 1 request for a new manager for the library

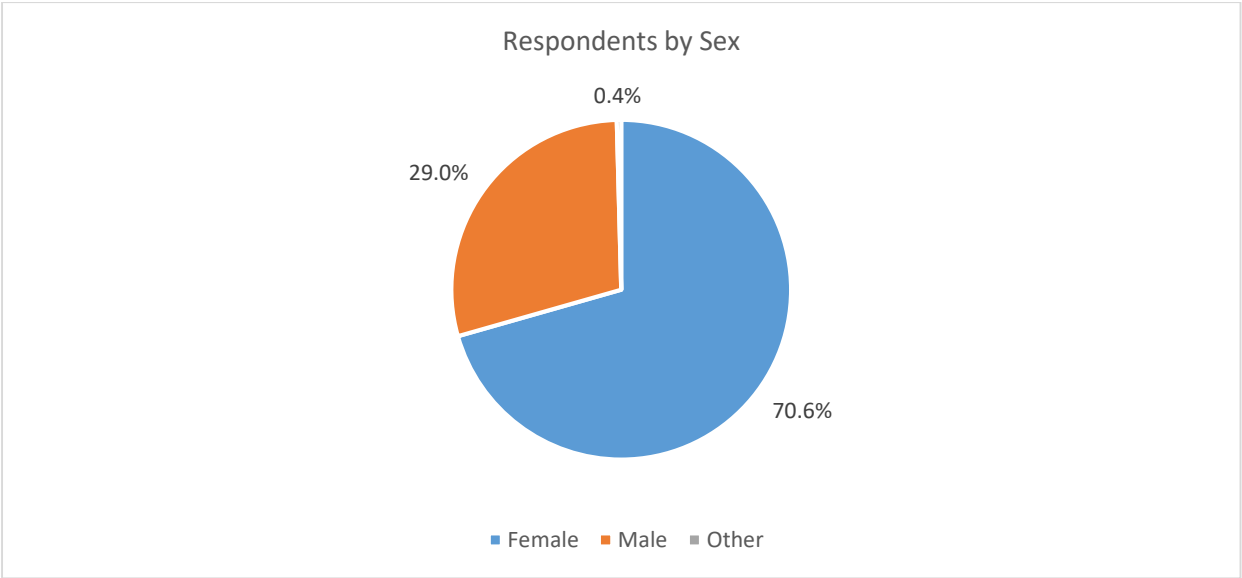
Miscellaneous

- 1 request for there not to be 'too much' technology
- 1 request for library membership not be discarded
- 1 request for no bins without pedals be installed
- 1 request for the library service to not stay in the 20th century
- 1 request to stop using doors as noticeboards
- 1 request for marketing of non-library events/services etc. to not be allowed in the library
- 1 request for no heritage area to be installed

Equalities info - responses by Protected Characteristic where reported by respondents:

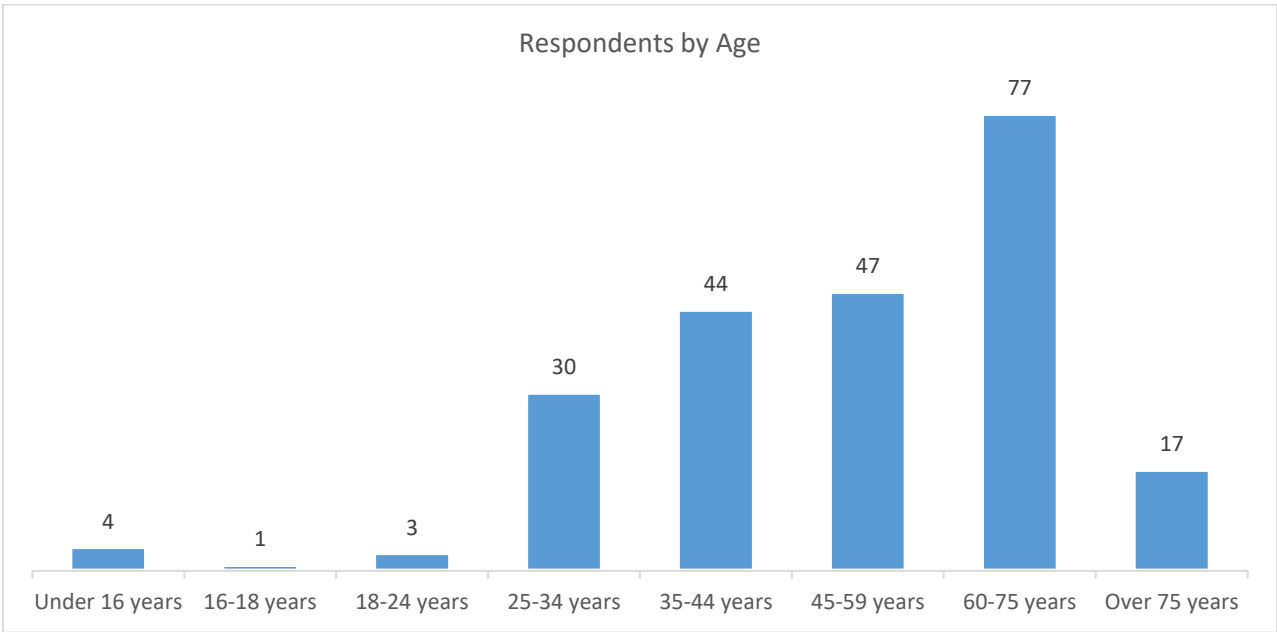
Sex

- Of those respondents who reported their gender, more than two thirds were female
- This is significantly higher than the proportion the borough population who are female (51%)



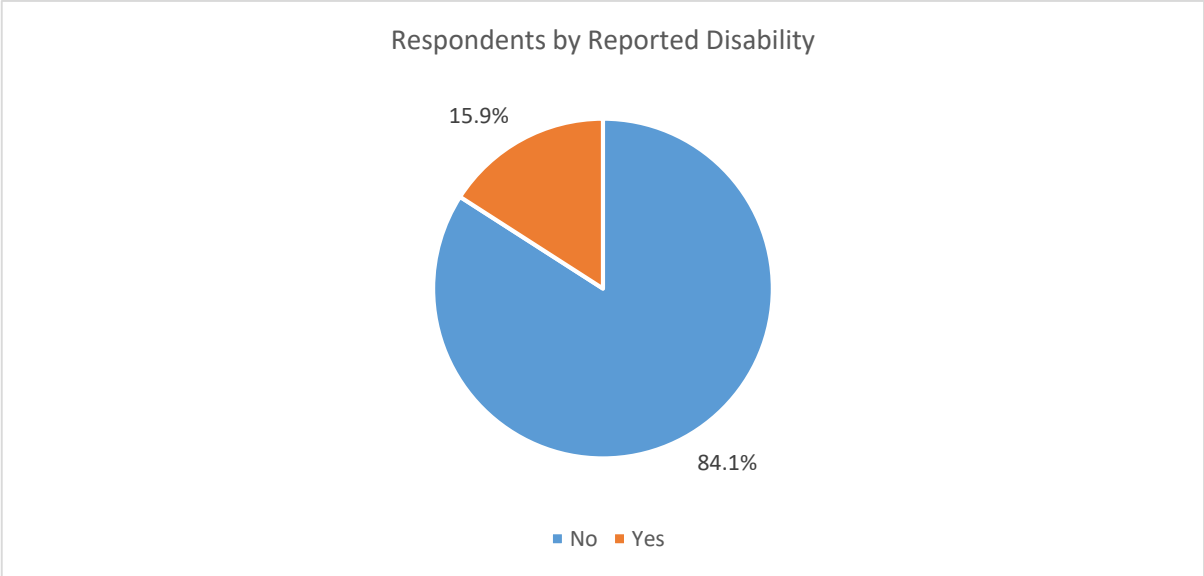
Age

- Of those respondents who reported their age, nearly two-thirds (63%) were aged over 45,
- This is significantly more than the proportion of the borough population aged over 45 (48%).



Disability

- Just over a sixth of respondents who answered this question reported having a disability
- This is slightly below the estimated proportion of the borough population with a disability (18%)



Ethnicity

- Of those respondents who reported their ethnicity, over 99% identified themselves as White,
- This is slightly higher than the proportion of the borough population who are White (96%).

