

# Transforming Neighbourhood Services

## North East Area Engagement

Findings of the focus groups and public consultation  
As at 18<sup>th</sup> July 2016

*Prepared by:*

- *City Development & Neighbourhoods*
- *with the support of Transformation & Service Improvement Team*



*This report provides a summary of the findings of the focus groups and public consultation.*

*It includes information about:*

- The issues and options under consideration;*
- The consultation method;*
- The public response and views expressed;*
- The proposals made in light of what was learnt.*

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report summarises the outcomes of the focus groups and public consultation on draft proposals for the reorganisation and consolidation of building stock in the North East area of the city, being managed as part of the Transforming Neighbourhood Services (TNS) Programme.

A copy of the consultation form used for the exercise is included at the end of this document.

This period of consultation is part of a longer period of such activity as follows:

- An initial engagement exercise was carried out between April and July 2013 to raise awareness and gain an overview of the general views and attitudes of residents towards neighbourhood services
- Focussed engagement with residents and service users in the North East area of the city between June and July 2016 to help develop draft proposals for the transformation of the area **(subject of this report)**.
- Draft proposals are being developed based on the evidence received along with factual information collected from the relevant services and information around future usage from service providers and funders.
- A further period of consultation following completion of draft proposals will be held prior to any decisions being made

The consultation period ran from 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016 until 17<sup>th</sup> July 2016 and was carried out in two main parts:

- A series of meetings, by arrangement and request, with various drop-in sessions and focus groups, resident groups, community groups and voluntary organisations who use the facilities being investigated by the review
- A form available in various locations across the area and online for people to provide individual responses and comments

In addition some groups made separate submissions which were not part of the questionnaire.

In general responses and comments received were all supportive of the buildings that each individual used, however, a general agreement is apparent that the services provided are more important to people than the buildings from which they are currently provided.

A total of 9 focus groups were set up, one for working age and elderly people in each geographical area, one for young people at each youth centre and also for area representatives from the Young Person's Council. A total of 91 people attended the focus group meetings. The main messages drawn from the meetings held with groups are that:

- There was significant support for the activities in community centres which are important are important for local areas and also for libraries and the functions they perform
- There was good support for youth sessions from youth centre users. The key building consideration was the provision of a safe space which the young people felt was theirs.
- There was a general agreement with all of the groups that the services provided were more important than particular buildings
- There was general agreement with all groups that savings can be achieved by reorganising services to make better use of buildings
- There is some support for transferring of assets through the Community Asset Transfer procedure for less well used buildings, and also some concerns about potential transfer to community groups.

Between 6 June and 17 July a questionnaire containing details of the proposals and a 'tear-off' response

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form was also used to gather opinions on the proposals. These were widely distributed in the area, and a total of 5,000 leaflets were circulated. At the closure of the consultation on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2016, a total of 1,191 completed form responses were received. People were asked to identify which services and centres they used and the main reasons why. The main reasons for using services were:

- Facilities/services (half of all responses)
- Range of services available (quarter of all responses)
- Ease of access
- Friendliness of staff

Residents and service users were also asked for their suggestions for reorganising services in the area to make savings. The main suggestions drawn from the responses were:

- Bring services together in fewer buildings
- Deliver extra services in existing buildings to increase use, for example Adult Learning sessions
- Make changes to run buildings more efficiently, for example install energy saving lighting, review heating and room allocation
- Better promotion to increase the use of existing buildings

In addition many service users responded to highlight the value of local services to their communities to suggest certain buildings be retained under council control.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Transforming Neighbourhood Services – North East Area**

The TNS programme aims to identify different ways of organising how services are delivered within the neighbourhoods of the city of Leicester, with a view to reducing the costs of delivery by around 30% while maintaining the quality of our services.

The programme has identified an approach through which the city is divided into 6 geographical areas and these are explored in turn to identify ways to transform services through opportunities to co-locate services and make better use of the assets available.

The scope of the programme covers public facing service areas. The services scoped into the North East area are:

- Neighbourhood Services - Community Services and Libraries
- Adult Skills & Learning
- Youth Centres

The buildings within the scope of the North East are:

- Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre
- Belgrave Library
- Armadale Centre
- Hamilton Library & Learning Centre
- Netherhall Community Centre
- Northfields Neighbourhood Centre
- Rushey Mead Library
- Rushey Mead Recreation Centre
- Ocean Road Community Centre
- Thurnby Lodge Youth & Community Centre

## **CONSULTATION METHOD**

### **Objectives and techniques**

The public engagement period for the North East area ran from 6 June – 17 July 2016. The aims of the engagement were to promote awareness of the TNS programme in the local area, to identify and engage stakeholders, to gather information on how neighbourhood services and buildings are currently used in the area and to collect any suggestions for change.

This consultation builds upon previous development and engagement work undertaken for the TNS programme as a whole with the goal to develop a model for the North East area of the city. Overall, the following activities have taken place:

- Data collection exercise to identify the buildings in scope, costs associated, services provided (both internally and commissioned through voluntary sector organisations), usage statistics, historical information
- An initial city-wide engagement exercise was carried out between April and July 2013 to raise awareness and gain an overview of the general views and attitudes of residents towards neighbourhood services
- A more in-depth and focussed engagement process was carried out between 6<sup>th</sup> June and 17<sup>th</sup> July 2016 to collect suggestions and comments from service users and residents (**Subject of this report**)

The next steps are:

- Analysis of the data collected and the responses received through the engagement exercises to construct a draft model, which will be presented to the City Mayor and Executive.
- Consultation on the draft model following this, prior to a finalised set of proposals being submitted for approval

Details of the previous city-wide engagement between April – July 2013 have been previously reported. The main outcomes of this previous exercise were:

- Good support for the principle of prioritising services over buildings
- Strong support for the co-location of services, providing busy places from which multiple services can be accessed

This period of consultation has been carried out in two main parts as follows:

- A series of meetings with residents, service users and stakeholder. Initial drop in sessions were held at buildings in each geographical area to promote the engagement exercise and provide information about the process. Initial comments were collected at these sessions. Focus groups were held to discuss thoughts, ideas and suggestions about the services and buildings in question.
- A form available in various locations across the area and online for people to provide individual responses and comments

In addition some groups made separate submissions which were not part of the questionnaire.

The details of the meetings held are as follows:

#### **Drop in sessions**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
Rushey Mead Library	Rushey Mead	14 June 2016, Tues	4:30 – 6:00pm

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Northfields Neighbourhood Centre	Troon / North Evington	14 June 2016, Tues	6:30 – 8:00pm
Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	Belgrave	16 June, Thurs	4:00 – 7:00pm
Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre	Humberstone & Hamilton	20 June, Mon	1:30 – 3:30pm
Thurnby Lodge	Thurncourt	22 June, Weds	3:30 – 6:30

**Focus groups**

Location	Ward	Aimed at	Date	Time
Rushey Mead Library	Rushey Mead	Adult stakeholders	4 <sup>th</sup> July, Mon	6-7pm
Thurnby Lodge Community Centre	Thurncourt	Adult stakeholders	5 July, Tues	6-7pm
Armada Youth Centre	Humberstone & Hamilton	Young people under 18yrs	6 July, Weds	7-8pm
Northfields Youth Centre	Troon/North Evington	Young people under 18yrs	6 July, Weds	8-9pm
Thurnby Lodge Youth Centre	Thurncourt	Young people under 18yrs	7 July, Thurs	7-8pm
Armada Centre	Humberstone & Hamilton	Adult stakeholders	11 <sup>th</sup> July, Mon	6-7pm
Young Peoples Council	All	Young people under 18yrs	12 July, Tues	6-7pm
Northfields Neighbourhood Centre	Troon/North Evington	Adult stakeholders	12 <sup>th</sup> July, Tues	6-7pm
Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	Belgrave	Adult stakeholders	14 July, Thurs	4:30-5:30pm
Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	Belgrave	Adult stakeholders	14 July, Thurs	6-7pm

Alongside this a number of informal meetings have taken place with individual stakeholders and groups to discuss the area. Adult Learners attending English speaking classes in Abbey Primary School and Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre were also engaged by the session leader and notes of the sessions are included here.

A leaflet containing details of the engagement and a ‘tear-off’ response form was used to gather opinions on the proposals. A total of 5,000 leaflets were widely distributed in the area. The form was made available on the Council’s open consultation website. Translations of the text were made available in Gujarati, Punjabi and Urdu.

The form was also available at all public facing Council buildings in the North East area and online from 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016 to the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

## **PUBLIC RESPONSE AND VIEWS EXPRESSED**

### **Drop-in sessions and Focus Groups**

A series of drop in sessions and focus group meetings were held attended by residents, service users, community organisations and stakeholders in the North East area of the city.

Following lessons learned in previous areas of the city focus groups were identified based on where people live and how old they are. Two separate age ranges were identified as follows:

- Young people (under 18yrs)
- Adults (working age and senior citizens)

Following a lesson learned from previous engagement exercises, the children and young People were engaged through support of representatives of the Young Person's Council, and through focus groups taking place at all three youth centres.

The North East area of the city can be subdivided into five smaller geographic areas, relating to the wards they support. The map below shows these, which have been labelled as Belgrave, Rushey Mead, Troon, Humberstone & Hamilton and Thurncourt:





A total of nine focus groups were set up, one for working age and older people in each geographical area. The drop-in sessions were used to generate interest in volunteering for the focus groups.

Meetings were held, in a workshop format, for each of the focus groups in order to get opinions, based on responses to the following questions:

- Which centres do you use and why? Which centres do you not use and why?
- Would you use another centre if yours closed and why?
- What are your key concerns for the services in your area?

A total of 91 people attended the focus group meetings.

#### **General Queries and Views arising from meetings**

- There was a general agreement with all of the groups that the services provided were more important than particular buildings

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- People attending the groups were protective of the sites that they currently use, but there was a general acceptance that locality based services are more important than particular buildings
- Concerns were raised about costs of using buildings increasing, particularly if they are transferred to other organisations.
- Enquiries and discussions were held around the potential for asset transfer of buildings.

### **Drop-In Sessions**

#### **Rushey Mead Library, Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June, 4:30 – 6:00pm**

##### Comments:

- A library service should remain in the Rushey Mead area
- The library is a local community hub and important for local people to stay connected to information & community
- Some users may not be able to access Belgrave Library and not on a daily basis
- The Library and Recreation Centre are very close together and there is potential to amalgamate services into one building
- The recreation centre is busy and is the bigger building
- The library has the better location for car parking
- Could library book shelves be made more flexible (put on wheels) to create community space when needed?
- Need to consider how to keep the Lunch club at Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre sustainable for the future
- The library was not so busy at lunchtimes as school children are no longer allowed to leave the school and the school libraries have had investment
- Cost of extending the library was felt to be prohibitive.

#### **Northfields Neighbourhood Centre, Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June, 6:30 – 8:00pm**

##### Comments:

- The groups using the centre place high value on it
- Overall activity has been low but evening use is good, especially due to one large regular user group
- The centre was busier in the past, but is not staffed and is often closed during the daytime.
- Better external signage is required with clear contact details for people to make bookings.
- There is now a lot happening within centre and it is important to the community to keep this going
- There was interest in potential Community Asset Transfer
- There was concern that a non-local group could take on the building and displace existing users.
- There were questions regarding the status Community groups should have to take on a building.
- Some people were not keen on seeing the building asset transferred as it is a valuable local resource. However, if community groups could open up and staff the building during the day this would be welcomed.
- Room hire rates should be reduced as it is too expensive for community groups to hire the large hall regularly.
- Could other council services share the building – for example the Housing Office

#### **Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June, 3:30 – 6:30pm**

##### Comments:

##### (Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre)

- BNC is a very busy centre and surely pays for itself – could we see the balance sheet

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- BNC should not be included in scope as it is propping up other centres
- Ideally nothing should change – it is important that the community doesn't suffer as a result of any changes.
- There was a general consensus the Centre should not be offered for Community Asset Transfer because it would fail if it went to any one community group.
- Some people attending had been using the centre for 40 years.
- It is important to recognise the social function of the centre in people's lives – they attend a wide range of activities from lunch club to exercise to social groups.
- WCs are too narrow - if there is investment they should be redesigned.
- There is concern about the future of the membership scheme which has operated at the centre for a number of years.
- The lunch club has a long history, is very popular and combats social isolation – it is important to keep it running.
- Access to Customer Services needed at BNC, but with assistance for non-English speakers. Non-English speakers struggle to complete application forms.
- Recommendation that next consultation stage of TNS is promoted through local radio
- Recommendation that promotional materials are taken to local temples.

### (Belgrave Library)

- The library is an important community hub and is crucial for people who have just moved into the area
- Many people use the library every day to read the foreign newspapers
- The library is very busy and is used by all age ranges with especially high use by children and young people and by older people.

### (Rushey Mead Recreation Centre)

- Rushey Mead Rec is too small could some groups use BNC instead?

### Summary

- The key message was that Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre and Library services should be kept under council control and that there are opportunities to move in additional services to make the buildings more efficient.

### **Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre, Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June 1:30 – 3:30**

#### Comments:

- Groups discussed the possibility of relocating services into one of the two buildings (Armada/Netherhall)
- The concern was whether all timetabled activities could be accommodated in one building at the same time.
- The main concern is the impact on local children – the nursery and dance group have 100 – 200 children on their books between them
- There was a discussion around which was the better building to retain
- There is potential interest in Community Asset Transfer of Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre.
- Group leaders will arrange a visit to the Armada Centre to assess the suitability of the building for their activities

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- Some groups use several buildings for their activities so are more flexible.

### **Thurnby Lodge Youth and Community Centre, Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 3:30 – 6:30pm**

Comments from Ocean Road Users:

- The users considered the use of TL and OR and were concerned it would not be possible to relocate Ocean Road activities to TL give the current timetables
- Ocean Road is located in a quiet residential area with many older people. Alternative use of the centre would have to take this setting into account.
- There was some interest in Community Asset Transfer – building running costs for Ocean Road were requested
- It was felt that Thurncourt has had low investment in recent years
- Ocean Road users are aware that Thurnby Lodge has very good community use and it should be noted that the Centre is on the periphery of the city and serves an important social function.

Comments from Thurnby Lodge Community Centre Users

- Thurnby Lodge Community Centre is very well used by a wide range of local community groups
- There have been tensions in the local area over the past few years and it is crucial this background is taken into account when developing proposals
- The Thurnby Lodge CC ball court is a very well used facility
- Car parking facility is well used and can be full at times
- The Community Association play an important role in the success of the centre.

### **Focus Group Meetings**

#### **Rushey Mead Library, 4th July, Mon 6-7pm**

Lead: Adrian Wills, Head of Neighbourhood Services

Attending: 28 members of public, users of Rushey Mead Library, Rushey Mead Recreation Centre and Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre

#### **Comments**

- The library and community centre are the hub of this community. We would be sad to see either building go, but appreciate the council must withdraw from some buildings
- There was general agreement that services are more important than buildings.
- Rushey Mead Library service is crucial to the community. Belgrave Library is too busy but we can read the newspapers and study at Rushey.
- Rushey Mead Recreation Centre serves an important function especially for older people to combat social isolation.
- The council was asked to consider the wider social benefit of continuing to provide community meeting spaces for older people keeping them fit and active, and potentially avoiding other costs incurred by loneliness and inactivity.
- It was noted that the recreation centre and the library get good use in Rushey Mead.
- A wide range of ages make use of these buildings – from weekly Toddler Time sessions in the library to daily older people's groups in the Recreation Centre.

All agreed that service provision should be retained at Rushey Mead. The group considered whether it is possible to combine the library and community space functions in one building?

- This would be a good solution in theory and it would be beneficial to deliver services under one roof

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- However the problem is that both buildings are quite small – it is difficult to see how the services could fit together
- Is it possible to extend one of the buildings to accommodate both services?
- The library is well located in the small shopping precinct and with good parking available.
- An alternative solution would be to extend or reconfigure the recreation centre

The group considered an alternative idea to retain one building and asset transfer the other to a community group. In theory this would potentially retain the use of both buildings for the community whilst reducing council building running costs.

- There were concerns that this may cause conflict between groups and lead to potential exclusion.
- There were general concerns that groups would be displaced and have nowhere to go.
- Groups were reassured that managers would work with them to find alternative solutions if changes were necessary.
- There was interest in seeing the building running costs for both buildings. These are available on the consultation website and a copy will be left at the library for information.

The group commented that there were few alternative community buildings in the area – there is one church and one temple in close proximity.

Some attendees also use Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre on a daily basis. Some are elderly users and have been using centre attending Belgrave NC for over 18 years.

### **Thurnby Lodge Community Centre, 5 July, Tues 6-7pm**

Lead: Adrian Wills, Head of Neighbourhood Services

Attending: 12.

Buildings used: Ocean Road and Thurnby Lodge Community Centres

#### **Comments**

##### Thurnby Lodge Youth & Community Centre

- Thurnby Lodge is the most well used centre in the area.
- Some groups numbers are reducing but group leaders are looking for promote these sessions and are confident there will be interest
- The centre is vital in the local area for social use, health and wellbeing, for example through the provision of activities such as Tea Dances and Silver Threads
- Lots to do, helps to overcoming isolation and keeps people active
- However the centre is in need of some internal refurbishment

##### Ocean Road Community Centre

- There is no car dedicated parking and the centre is not felt to be less accessible
- Used a lot by younger groups for dance classes
- Children attending dance are local, mainly walking to the centre. However the sessions are getting more popular with some attendees from across the city
- Senior groups using Ocean Road may not be able to walk to Thurnby Lodge Centre if groups are relocated - this would leave them completely isolated
- However Ocean Road is in need of investment
- The centre has potential but also some limitations.
- A new pop up café has been really busy
- Used to have a lot of private party hire
- There maybe some interest locally in taking on Ocean Road.
- It was suggested a kitchen facility was need to make the building ready for a CAT transfer

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### In General

- There is a perception that other areas of the city have better provision
- The centres could be better promoted. For example it would be useful if “what’s on” information was released at least once per year
- There is a perception that the number of older people who feel isolated is higher in Thurncourt than in other areas of the city
- Many groups already use the 55th Scout Hut as well with day time use increasing.

### **Armadale Youth Centre, 6 July, Weds, 7-8pm (Young people)**

Lead: David Thrussell, Head of Youth Services

Attending: 6 youth centre members

#### **Comments**

Q: Which community buildings do you use?

- Armadale and Thurnby Lodge Youth Centre. Many use both buildings depending on when sessions are available.

Q: What do you like about the Armadale Centre?

- Keeps kids off the streets and reduces crime
- We can make new friends
- Good location as we can walk to the centre
- Support of youth workers is valuable
- Would like more sessions – 7-9 every week day evening
- We just stay at home when we don’t come here

Q: What does a youth centre need to provide?

- Help & advice
- Games equipment such as a ping pong and pool table
- Kitchen
- A big space to chill

Q: What improvements could we make?

- Wi-Fi service

Q: What do you think about the idea of sharing your space with other groups?

- Other groups can use the centre during the day.
- If we relocated to a shared, would the setting be age appropriate?
- Young people need space to themselves when it’s their session times

Q: Could you move to another Centre?

- One member wanted to stay at Armadale as Netherhall Community Centre is “just a hall”. We have just decorated this and took ownership. This is home.
- Young people commented that we are wasting money as nether hall community centre and Armadale youth centre are so close together.
- Either way the ball court is important and is always in use regardless of whether youth sessions are running

### **Northfields Youth Centre, 6 July, Weds, 8-9pm (Young people)**

Lead: David Thrussell, Head of Youth Services

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Attending: 6 youth centre members

### Comments

Q: Which community buildings do you use?

- Mostly just Northfields Centre
- One member also uses Belgrave but has to get dropped by car
- Some members have been coming since they were 7yrs old. There are only 2 sessions a week now.
- This is the only thing here. There is a Play Barn but it only goes up to 15yrs

Q: What do you like about the Northfields Centre?

- We use it for CV's, job searches
- Staff a big part of why we come here
- Building good location for the area. Young people from all areas come around.

Q: What does a youth centre need to provide?

- Break-out space, big space, a kitchen and money for cooking

Q: What improvements could we make?

- Wi-Fi service
- Indoor TV aerial as they keep getting pulled down.
- An earlier session at 4-6pm

Q: What do you think about the idea of sharing your space with other groups?

- Young people need their own space - they want their own time.
- Libraries wouldn't offer big enough spaces

Q: Why is this centre in particular important to you?

- Keep our Youth Centre open.
- We don't use any other buildings in the area

### **Thurnby Lodge Youth Centre, 7 July, Thurs, 7-8pm (Young people)**

Lead: David Thrussell, Head of Youth Services

Attending: 13 youth centre members

### Comments

Q: Why do you use this centre?

- There's nowhere else to go
- 4 attendees also use Armadale Youth Centre
- Young people would like the centre open every evening and are happy to attend other nearby centres on evenings when Thurnby Lodge is not open.
- It is easy enough for some young people to get to both Armadale and Thurnby youth centres. Most travel on foot or by bike, one by bus.
- Those who use both centres say they prefer Thurnby Lodge because the smaller space is somehow more relaxed.
- Ball court is well used during youth centre hours
- Good age range makes the centre more accessible and friendly.
- Youth workers are highly valued – this is a key part of the service

Q: What could be improved about the Centre?

- Open more evenings
- WiFi

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- Some investment in equipment – repair pool table and table football
- TV and games machines upgrade/made available
- Better choice of snacks from kitchen

Q: What other community buildings do you and your family use?

- No other buildings used by attendees.
- Library not used – but not local
- Not aware of Ocean Road Community Centre
- Members come from a range of schools

### **Armadale Centre, 11th July, Mon, 6-7pm (working age and senior citizens)**

Lead: Adrian Wills, Head of Neighbourhood Services

Attending: 8 people

Centres used: Netherhall NC; Hamilton Library;

#### **Comments**

##### Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre

- There is potential to move services into one building - either the Armadale Centre or Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre
- In the past groups have temporarily relocated to the Armadale Centre after a fire at the Neighbourhood Centre
- There is potential to transfer the vacated building to a community group under the Community Asset Transfer policy.
- There were questions about how this would work in practice:
- Who would run the building, and would they be a local group?
- Could groups make a joint bid? (answer: yes, so long as they had a legal identity)
- Concerns the room hire rates may be increased if the building is taken on by a community group
- It was noted that groups would have to consider the full costs – for example building rates, energy bills and buildings insurance
- Some people saw an opportunity for local people to get together to take on a community building
- It was noted that some groups relied on staff help to set up the room for their activities.
- Many groups meet in the evening which may clash with youth sessions if sharing the Armadale Centre. Is it possible to reschedule some sessions to make better use of the building during the daytime?
- Car parking and access for less mobile customer are important considerations if groups move to another building.

##### Hamilton Library:

- Feel that the Hamilton estate is lacking in facilities
- Concern that section 106 development money has is coming back to Hamilton
- There is an opportunity to expand community access to Hamilton library, especially with regard to the large hall
- Library needs to be more user friendly for booking community events
- Need to review ease of access to community spaces – the hall and the community garden
- It was noted that there is a growing population in the Hamilton area therefore existing community facilities need to be developed

### **City Hall, Young Peoples Council, 12 July, Tues, 6–7pm (Young people)**



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Lead: David Thrussell

Attending: 5

### Comments

- The priorities for youth provision are having a safe place to go and engaging with peers and youth workers
- Youth centres should offer help & advice, ping pong table, pool table & a kitchen and to be safe. I think you should look at schools as an alternative location for youth centres as these are age appropriate and have lots of facilities
- Buildings should offer a big space for activities
- Can we put youth provision in Troon ward where do the young people go? This would be good as this is central to the other wards.
- Merge Netherhall neighbourhood centre with Hamilton Library this would mean better use of facilities and more savings.
- Armadale & Thurnby Lodge Centres have a different atmosphere I think that young people go to TL for support and advice and to Armadale for fun.
- We don't think the youth centres should have wifi as this will result in friends becoming disengaged them from each other and the sessions if they are constantly on their phones
- The idea of sharing space would be good as long as this was age appropriate

### Questions asked:

- Why have the Children Young People & Family centres been rebranded (answer – these building may provide opportunities for young people in future)
- How many buildings will be closed or merged over the city? (answer: no decisions have been made the council needs to make a 30% reductions to make the savings over the whole project)

### Northfields Neighbourhood Centre, 12th July, Tues, 6-7pm

Lead: Adrian Wills, Head of Neighbourhood Services

There were no attendees on the evening. However one group requested another session.

- The centre is used by a few core groups – the bowling group have been attending for many years
- The building was very poorly used a few years ago, but use and income have increased significantly in the last two years, mainly due to wide use by a large new group
- The group deliver a wide programme of community activities open to all including Maths & English study classes for children and a badminton club.
- The centre is ideally placed for group members living in Northfields, Hastings Road and Gypsy Road areas as well as the surrounding wards.
- The open grass land behind the centre is used during some sessions, and is enjoyed by children
- Concerned to ensure that all communities can continue to access the building
- There is interest in a potential Community Asset Transfer

### Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, 14 July, Thurs, 4:30-5:30pm

Lead: Adrian Wills, Head of Neighbourhood Services

Attending: 4

### Comments:

- There was general consensus that both the library and the neighbourhood centre are very busy buildings and it is not possible to merge these services.
- Belgrave ward is a densely packed area – there is a perception that it is lacking facilities given the number of people living here, and the diverse nature of the communities

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- There was a feeling that the Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre (BNC) must continue as a council run service given its importance to the community.
- The need to save money by reorganising services was understood, but surely the centre pays for itself? (answer: There is a large deficit between the building running costs and the income from room hire. However we are looking for the best fit model as a whole for the area).
- There was concern about the future of the local membership scheme at BNC. It was confirmed there are around 500 members which generated about £2,500 last year. There was a discussion around the link between the membership scheme, use of space and income generated for the building.
- There was concern about the prices of membership as people in the community may not be able to afford new/higher rates.
- Concerned that a lot of people use the Centre, if there is no Centre people will have nothing to do
  - o Crime rates within young kids may rise
  - o Older people use the centre to socialise and stay active. There are hidden costs if people are unable to access these services.
- There was concern about the lunch club as kitchen equipment is ageing and work has had to be undertaken to guard against rodent infestation. It was agreed that the lunch club is a valuable community resource, much loved especially by older people in the community.

### **Suggestions for developing the BNC**

- There is still a high percentage of people in the area who do not speak or read English. It was noted that new communities often arrive with very little English and there is a high demand for English classes and assistance with council and government forms. There are opportunities to bring in learning and customer services as part of the development of the BNC.
- Need more Adult Learning provision at the BNC
- How could the centre be improved? - Have changing facilities for the rest rooms
- Need to promote the Centre to ensure all communities are aware of what is on offer
- Can the Housing office move into the Centre?
- Could Citizens Advice Bureau sessions be delivered here?
- Wi-Fi is needed to assist with adult learning programmes
- More classes on IT basic skills required to support the council's channel shift agenda
- Have certain facilities at this Centre such as help with Visa like they do at the Peepul Centre

### **Suggestions for developing the Library**

- The Library is a community hub offering shared space for social groups. The community can help develop the library working with library staff.
  - o For example the volunteer led Knitting Group started attracts a wide range of people from surrounding areas.

**Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, 14 July, Thurs 6-7pm**

Lead: Adrian Wills, Head of Neighbourhood Services

Attending: 7

### **Comments:**

- Feel like the Council has already made a decision – reassurance was given that proposals will only be developed after talking with local people
- Feel both Belgrave Library and Neighbourhood Centre are used to the maximum, and are the busiest buildings in the North East area.

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- Concerned about moving any more services and people into the Centre.
- Feel strongly that it is not feasible to accommodate the library within the BNC.
- It is vital to keep the services running in the BNC and the Library.
- There was a passionate speech in defense of the library service at Rushey Mead and Belgrave. Access to quality information and books free of charge is vital especially for children and young people, and for older people in this community.
- This is a deprived area and people are not in a position to pay large amounts for services. This must be taken into account when reviewing buildings and services.
- There were strong concerns about the membership scheme. There were worries that if older people were asked to pay more they not be able to afford to access the service.

### **Suggestions for developing Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre**

- Need to review the basis on which the Police use an office in the BNC
- Adrian Wills suggested it may be possible to reorganise room use to make more space available for groups to increase income from room hire. Attendees felt it would be difficult to change anything as there was a feeling that use of the building was already optimised.
- Attendees asked is it possible to review staffing? (answer: a staff review has already taken place. Staff are now able to work flexibly between buildings, for example between the library and the neighbourhood centre).
- Could Adult Learning deliver more sessions at the Centre?
- Access to Wi-Fi is needed
- Car Parking is an issue. Non-centre users are regularly using BNC spaces

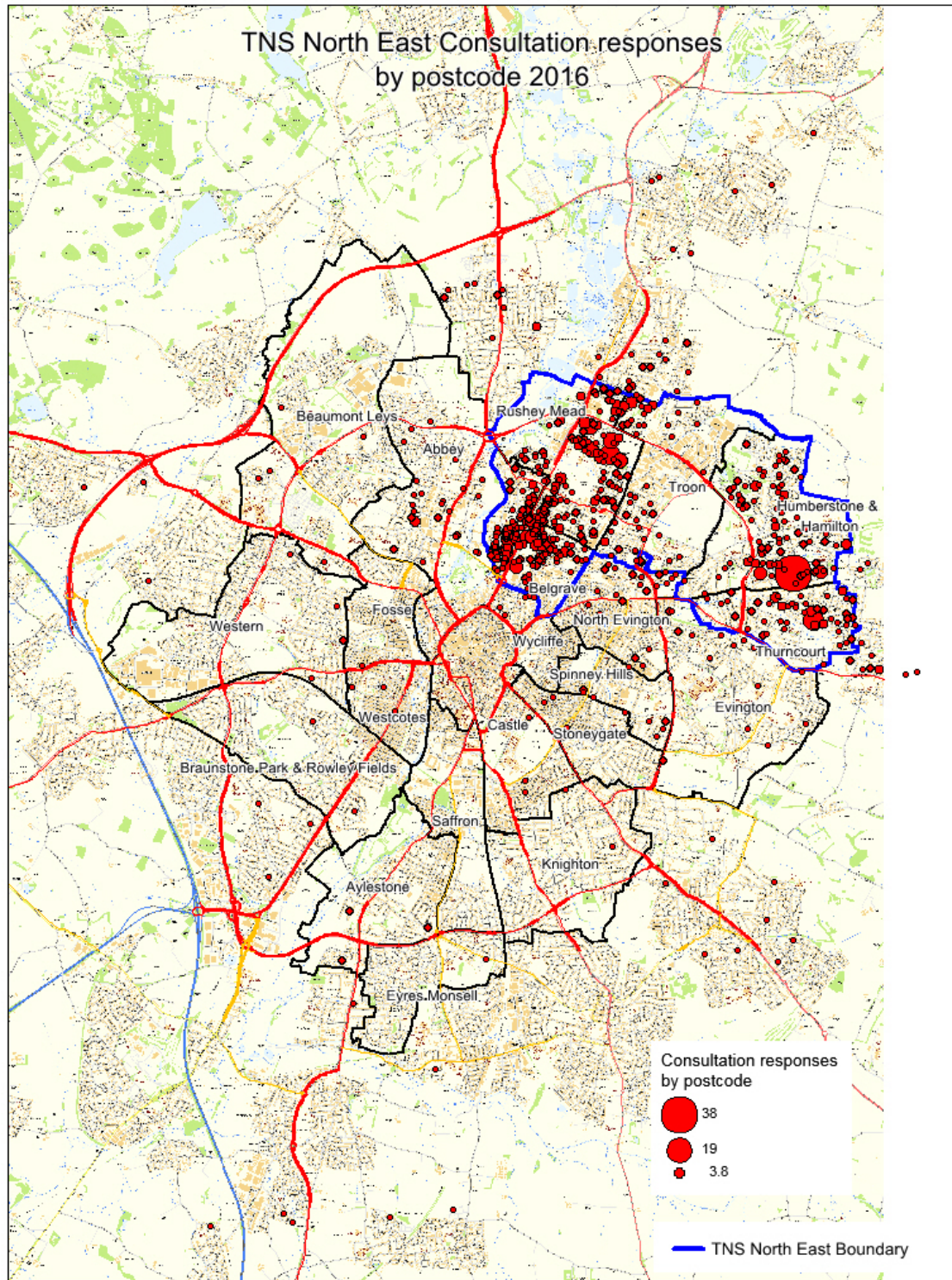
### **Suggestions for Rushey Mead:**

- There was a perception the Recreation Centre is not well used.
- Is there a way to deliver library and community services from on building? This may mean that library opening hours could be increased.

It was suggested that the Rec would be the best building to locate services in, although thought would need to be given parking.

### Written and Online Comments and Responses

In total 1,191 responses were received up until the closing date of the consultation. The following map shows the locations of respondents where a useable postcode was provided (89% of total responses):



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2016 Ordnance Survey 100019264

Map by: Russell Taylor Housing Transformation Team 2016

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The following table shows the breakdown of responses by their resident wards:

<b>WARD</b>	<b>COUNT</b>	<b>%</b>
Belgrave	276	28.2
Rushey Mead	247	25.2
Humberstone & Hamilton	171	17.4
Thurncourt	87	8.9
Troon	64	6.5
Abbey	34	3.5
North Evington	31	3.2
Evington	18	1.8
Spinney Hills	11	1.1
Aylestone	7	0.7
Beaumont Leys	6	0.6
Western	5	0.5
Wycliffe	5	0.5
Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields	4	0.4
Stoneygate	4	0.4
Westcotes	3	0.3
Castle	3	0.3
Knighton	2	0.2
Eyres Monsell	1	0.1
Fosse	1	0.1
<b>All valid postcodes within the City</b>	<b>980</b>	

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93% of total responses received (where a valid postcode was supplied) were from households within the North East TNS Area

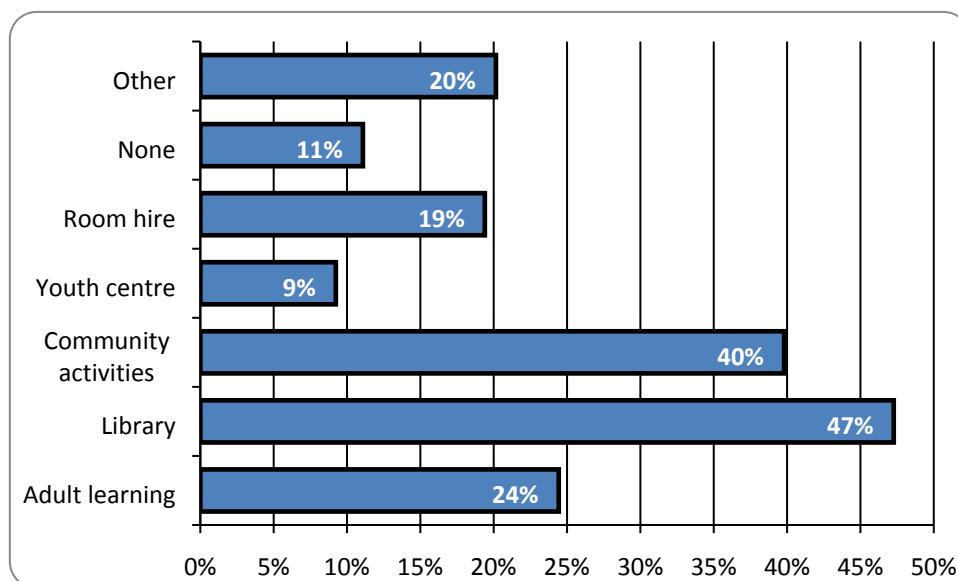
<b>DISTRICT</b>	<b>COUNT</b>
Leicester	980
Charnwood	43
Harborough	15
Blaby	13
Oadby & Wigston	9
Hinckley and Bosworth	1

## Views and comments

This section contains details of how people responded to the consultation questions. A copy of the questionnaire used has been included as Appendix A to this document. Responses to the questions asked are as follows:

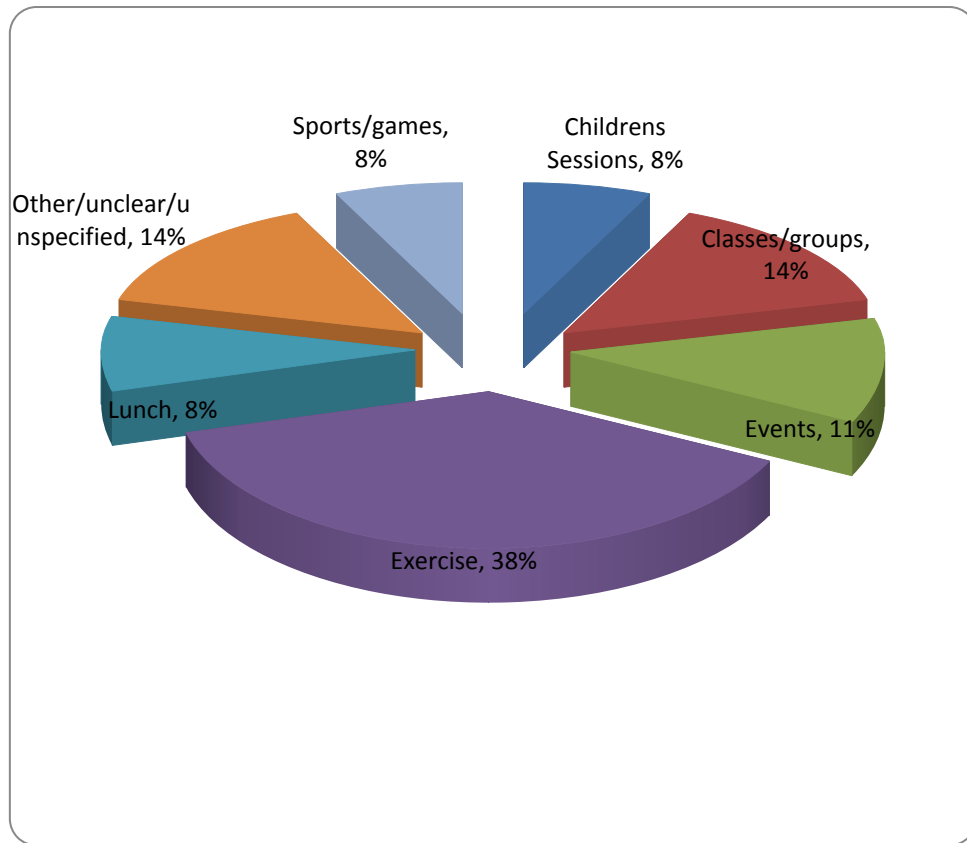
### Q.1. Which neighbourhood services do you use?

A total of 1,191 respondents provided an answer to this question (100% of a total of 1,191 respondents), however, it should be noted that an option was to indicate that no services were used, which 132 (11%) of respondents selected. Respondents were allowed to make multiple choices for this question and the following chart shows the percentage that selected each option:



- The service with the highest use of respondents across the North East area was the library, with 47% of all respondents selecting this option.
- 40% of all respondents used “Community Activities” across the range of centre.
- The third highest use was “Adult Learning” with 24% of respondents accessing this service in the North East area.

Respondents were given the opportunity to describe any other use they make of Neighbourhood Services in the area. A breakdown of the uses described by the 20% of responses relating to the ‘other’ category is shown in the graph below:

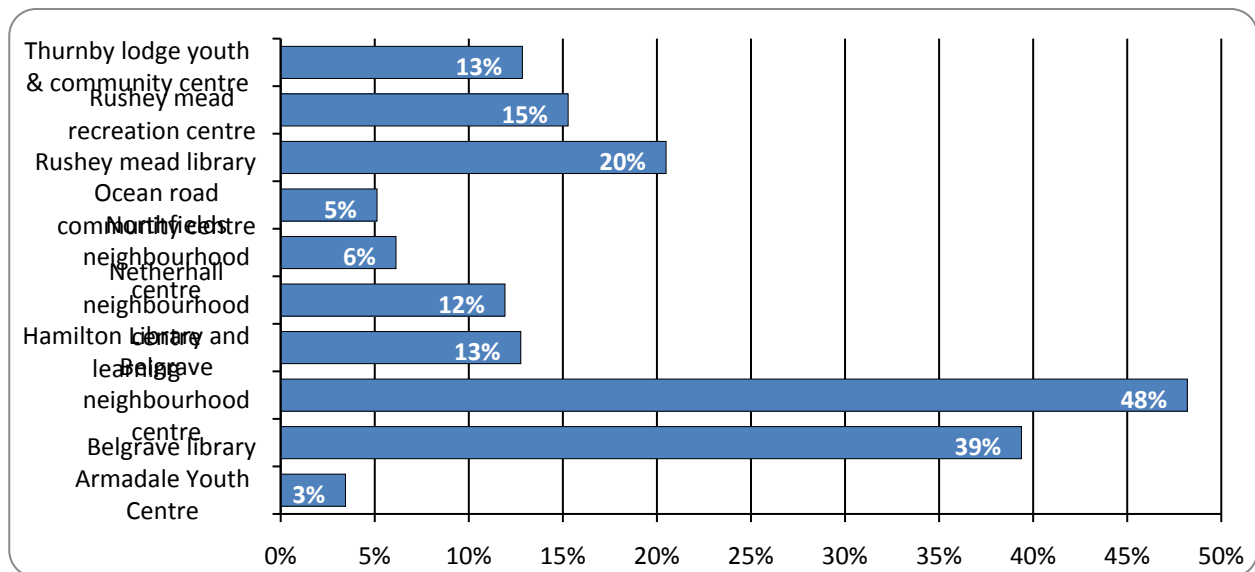


- Within “other” types of use the most popular category was exercise with 38% of those selecting “other” describing an exercise type of activity
- The next most popular category was informal classes or groups with 14% of all those selecting “other” describing this type of use.
- Of those selecting “other” 11% said they used Neighbourhood Services for “Events” such as large cultural events at Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre.
- Other types of use described were lunch clubs, children’s sessions and games.

**Q.2. Which centres do you use?**

A total of 1,144 (96%) of respondents provided an answer to this question and 47 respondents (4%) did not provide an answer to this question. Respondents were allowed to make multiple choices for this question and the following chart shows the percentage that selected each option.





- The highest number of respondents to the engagement questionnaire said they used Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre (48% of all respondents)
- The second highest number of respondents to the engagement questionnaire said they Belgrave Library (39% of all respondents)
- Facilities in Rushey Mead ward were also well represented with 20% of all respondents using Rushey Mead Library and 15% of all respondents using the Recreation Centre.
- Users responding to the engagement were free to select multiple sites. Many respondents said they use multiple buildings, especially where buildings are located close to each other.

**Q.3. Please give reasons why you use these centres (for example: ease of access, friendliness of staff, etc) - Why these centres**

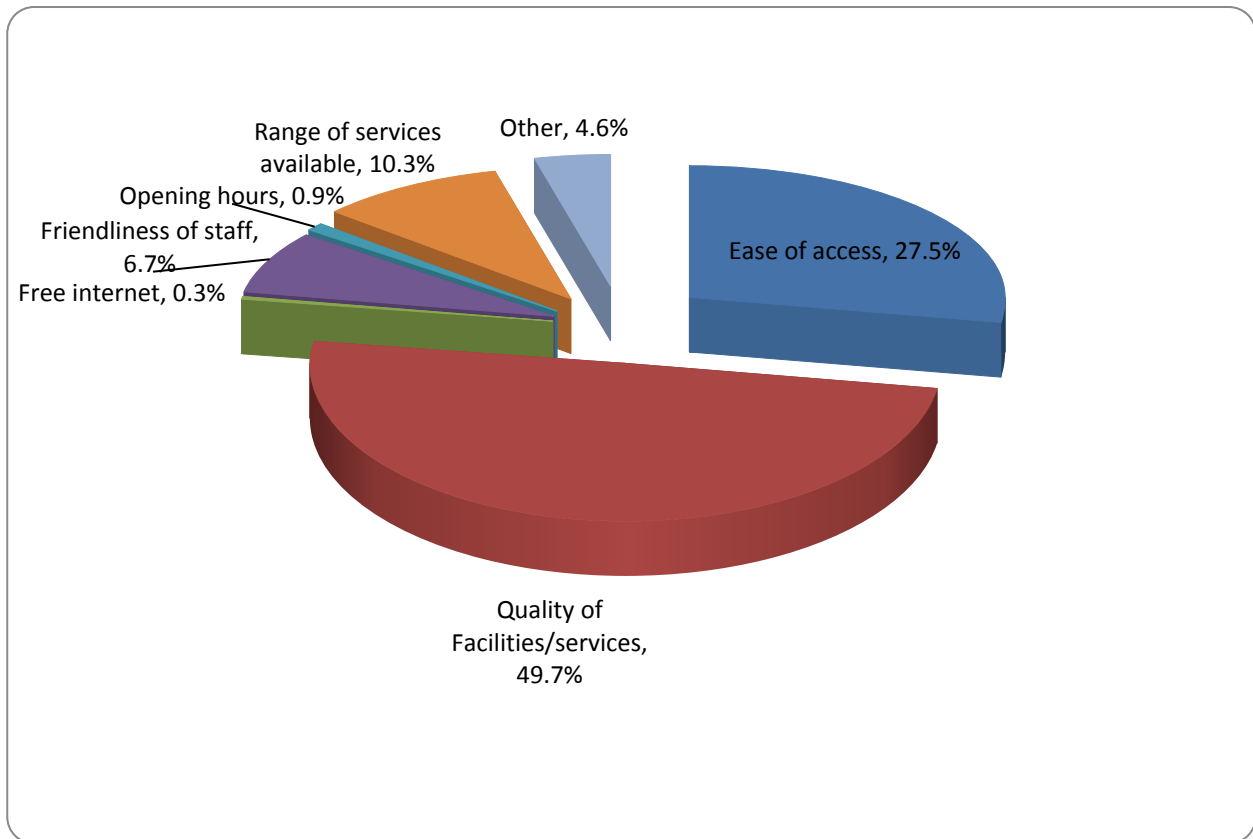
This was a free text response allowing respondents to state the reasons why centres were used. A total of 1,129 (95%) of respondents provided an answer to this question. It has been possible to broadly categorise the majority of these responses in order of importance as follows:

- Facilities/services
- Range of services available
- Ease of access
- Friendliness of staff

Also of importance were:

- Opening hours
- Access to the internet

The following chart shows the percentage of respondents commenting on each of these categories:



- Nearly 50% of respondents said they used Neighbourhood Services buildings because they place high a value on the services delivered in them.
- The second most important category for using the specified buildings which could identified was ease of access for respondents – 27.5% of all respondents.
- The range of services available in the building was the third most important reason for using the specified buildings to respondents – 10.3% of all reasons given, followed by the friendliness of the staff (6.7%)

**Q.4. Do you have any ideas or suggestions about how we could reorganise neighbourhood services to save money? - Your ideas**

A total of 566 (48%) of respondents answered this question. This was an open question and did not put any restrictions on the respondent as to how to answer. A wide range of points were made by respondents including strong support for specific local services and buildings.

Responses to this question can be generally categorised as follows:

Response category	Number of respondents
Suggestions for savings	314
Support for local services / no change	110
Other	88
No comments	679

Suggestions for making savings can be broadly categorised as follows. Many respondents made several different suggestions:

Suggestion category	Number of respondents
Bring services together in fewer buildings	45
Deliver extra services eg adult learning	45
Use buildings more efficiently	43
Increase hire charges and other fees	43
Increase use to generate more income	36
More use of volunteers	34
Invest in buildings to increase use	19
Better promotion of services	16
Reduce staffing	14
Reduce opening hours	12
Transfer buildings to the community	5
Install self-service kiosks	2

A selection of the responses made to question 4 is provided below:

One central hub could be created but only if measures are put in place for the elderly to get there.

Look at timing of use.

Increase funding. Keep service the same

Keep the most used activities, motivate more people to use all available services--hence monies from each head count means economies of scale and ultimately very cost effective/cheaper to run.

I think there is a great needs of expansion to the neighbourhood facility an area in belgrave is heavily populated and services and not large enough to cater and becomes at time over-crowded. Provide more large facility of additional services to cope with demand.

Put all services under 1 roof including CAB citizens advice bureau. BNC

Open for a few hours less each day, turn off electric and lights when not in use. Set things on set days, replan areas to coincide with others so each day still maintains the communities needs. (Northfields Youth Centre)

Free Wifi (BNC)

Safe and larger car park with CCTV  
 Bright funky paint to make a lively environment  
 Professional staff with good quality helper  
 Early opening time 8am. (BNC)

You could put up charges a bit higher. I am sure everybody can afford to use the service.

Reduce the library opening hours, this could help save the money

"Just keep them open.

Advertise services and information (Whats on/ how to get there) in different languages and usage will increase no need to change services."

Introduce charge for each event that takes place. I.e rooms taken up by community for playing card. So cannot be booked for fee paying customers at BNC. Rooms are left open even when not in use so anyone can walk in without paying. (BNC)

Keeping this open will reduce mental & physical problems as without them I will become isolated. (BNC)

This centre and it's activities prevent other long term drain on neighbourhood services such as NHS, mental health, Police service. Use of centre prevents long term costly illnesses such as depression, mental health as well as good physical health and well being. This centre needs to be maintained as it is, with the same level of charges as present.

We can get volunteers to do the admin & clerical work. Libraries can be kept open with the help of community volunteers.

Maybe close down smaller libraries in and around the Belgrave area - for eg. Rushey Mead library and bring everything under the Belgrave Cossington Library which is a big one.

There are many rooms in the neighbourhood centre, if all the rooms are rented out, the income from this would help to run the centre. Even after that, if you still think it is necessary, you can increase the rent. If the centre is accessible, it will help all the users and everybody will be happy. (BNC)

There is a centre at Rushey mead. That should be combined with Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre.

Turn off the heating in summer (Northfields)

Lower the age group for people to come in and stay out of trouble. (Northfields youth Centre)

Intergrate same events etc with schools encourage schools to have their facilities open to communities. (i.e Room/Halls) (Rushey Mead)

One suggestion could be to widen the age group of people who can attend this centre. (Northfields)

Look at usage by room of the BNC to see if this really well used and key facility could be used slightly better. Example if there is a group of twenty using a room which could take fifty, just swap around so that the larger room could be used/freed up to accommodate another group. Both the

Library and BNC are important to our community.

Merge Netherhall Neighbourhood with Hamilton Library  
Keep Armadale / Remain Thurnby Lodge Centre  
Ocean Road merge with Thurnby lodge centre

merging 2 centres that are close - used for same purpose... Example Belgrave Library and Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre

Put in LED lighting (BNC)

Our centre is the core of the estate, very busy centre, in use every day through various activities that are available here. To lose this would be devastating to the community. A possible merger with another centre might help depending on the table of activities. (Thurnby Lodge)

Have longer opening hours for centralised centres  
Introducing volunteering

Cutting down on number of buildings in use. All the users of above mentioned centres can easily be accommodated by half of the buildings

use of one building for the ward but must make it easy to travel too (Hamilton)

join neighbourhood centres with libraries Belgrave/Rushey Mead/Netherhall  
Ocean Rd & Thurnby Lodge? although further apart

From my experience, it is very hard to access to the centre. I mean, public are not sure, who to call, or contact to use the centre. (Northfields)

From the map I can see it makes sense to have just one centre, especially as facilities are close together. There only needs to be one in each ward. But I wouldn't want to see less library provision. Could you use the nearby schools - both are more modern. (Rushey Mead)

Open longer hours and close on other days  
Charge small fee to use the computers (Hamilton)

More activities for the young adult/teenagers. More access for the elderly. Variety of groups. Hire out space for events etc.

### **Submissions**

Some groups made submissions during the course of the engagement period through a range of channels.

These included:

- A written request to retain the Rushey Mead Recreation Centre under Council control for community use. The request was signed by 71 centre users from the Mens and Ladies Milap Groups. The key points raised are:

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- The centre has good use by local residents
  - The centre benefits from a good level of income derived from the regular groups – 9 of which are listed.
  - Many centre users have been coming since 1980 when the Men’s Milap group started up.
  - Centre users value the social activities as they help with mental and physical wellbeing
  - Centre users are not aware of any other buildings in the area where they would be able to gather for activities
  - The signatories request that the centre remain open and under council control.
- 
- A proposal from a local organisation to develop Belgrave Library for alternative community use by creating a health and well- being community hub

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This engagement is to be used to help construct draft proposals for the transformation of services in the North East area of the city.

The method of engagement of holding drop-in sessions to promote awareness of TNS and focus groups to generate ideas has been well received by both members of the community. This has proved a successful method of seeking points of view and suggestions for change to be taken into account. The promotion of paper and online questionnaires has proved particularly successful, generating the highest response rate in the TNS process to date. The key messages to be taken forward from this engagement period are:

### **Factors to consider for buildings used:**

- Good facilities and / or good accessible book stock
- Ease of access, including longer opening hours
- Range of activities available under one roof
- Friendliness of staff
- Convenience of location, bus routes and local proximity
- For young people especially, a safe place where young people feel they belong

### **Suggestions for saving money:**

- Bring services together in fewer buildings
- Run buildings more efficiently, for example by reviewing heating and lighting, and by reviewing allocation of rooms for hire to increase income
- Increase hire charges and other fees to increase overall income
- Increase usage through investment and promotion to generate more income
- More use of volunteers

### **Suggestions for future use:**

- The majority of people were supportive of the buildings they currently use and there is overall strong support for libraries, community and youth centres
- Consider amalgamating services in areas where buildings are in close proximity.
- Bring more services into buildings retained under Council Control

### **Lessons Learned**

- The focus groups have been very positive and have proven to be a good method of engagement with members of the public
- There has been a good response rate to the engagement process with 1,191 completed forms and good attendance at the focus group meetings
- The overall approach of involving stakeholders and members of the public early has proven beneficial as not only does it help to ensure that all concerns are heard, it also provides sufficient time to respond to these concerns on an evidenced basis

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- The process undertaken has enjoyed good co-operation between stakeholder individuals and groups, as well as other services
- A similar model of engagement will be used for the other areas of the city



4. Do you have any ideas or suggestions about how we could reorganise neighbourhood services to save money?

5. What is your post code? .....

Please hand this form in to any Leicester City Council library, community, youth or leisure centre, or post to:  
Transforming Neighbourhood Services, Room 2.23 Town Hall, Town Hall Square, Leicester LE1 9BG

The closing date is 17 July 2016.

[leicester.gov.uk/tns](http://leicester.gov.uk/tns)



## Neighbourhood buildings: North east area



1. Rushey Mead Library
2. Rushey Mead Recreation Centre
3. Belgrave Library
4. Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre
5. Northfields Neighbourhood Centre (including Youth Centre)
6. Hamilton Library & Learning Centre
7. Armadale Youth Centre
8. Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre
9. Ocean Road Community Centre
10. Thumby Lodge Youth and Community Centre

This map shows approximate locations for illustrative purposes

Produced by Leicester City Council, communications and marketing team, 06.16

## Changing neighbourhood services in your area

North east area:  
Belgrave, Humberstone & Hamilton, Rushey Mead, Thurncourt and Troon



Your local services are going to change.

[leicester.gov.uk/tns](http://leicester.gov.uk/tns)



### Why are services changing?

- Significant cuts in government funding mean we cannot continue to run services as we do now.
- We want to work with communities to make changes now, before it becomes critical.
- We are reviewing how neighbourhood services are run to make sure that they are affordable and can respond to local people's needs.
- Leicester City Council is committed to providing high quality neighbourhood services.

### How do we make changes?

We will be working with local people and community organisations to look at the best way to deliver services in future.

### Options

- Reducing the number of buildings we operate from
- Merging services into shared buildings: this has led to investment in modern facilities, better access and longer opening hours
- Involving local people and groups in running some services
- Self-service facilities

See the back of this leaflet for a map showing the area and buildings we are talking about.

### How you can get involved

We are inviting the local community to find out more about this programme and make suggestions for the north east area by 17 July 2016.

1. Give your views online: [leicester.gov.uk/tns](http://leicester.gov.uk/tns)  
or
2. Fill out the form in this leaflet.
3. Come to a drop in session or join a focus group. Ask staff in your local centre for details.

### What happens next?

We will consider all the ideas that people put forward and then hold a public meeting to feed back with proposals for change in the area. This will form part of a full public consultation in 2016.

If you have any questions please email [tns@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:tns@leicester.gov.uk)



### Your views

1. Which neighbourhood services do you use? (please tick)

- Adult learning    Library    Room hire    None  
 Community activities (such as cooking, crafts, dance)  
 Youth centre    Other (please specify) .....

2. Which centres do you use? (please tick)

- Rushey Mead Recreation Centre    Rushey Mead Library  
 Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre    Belgrave Library  
 Northfields Neighbourhood Centre (inc. Youth Centre)  
 Hamilton Library and Learning Centre  
 Armadale Youth Centre    Ocean Road Community Centre  
 Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre  
 Thurnby Lodge Youth and Community Centre

3. Why do you use these centres? (for example: ease of access, friendliness of staff and so on)

Please turn over

