

Community Services & Library Needs Assessment Engagement Reports

February 2025

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Leicester
City Council

Community Services & Library Needs Assessment: Purpose

- The Community Services & Library Needs Assessment is a transformational programme for Neighbourhood Services scoping in the whole service at all settings.
- The programme will carry out an in-depth assessment of need across all communities and the whole of the city to assess present and future needs.
- The programme aims to provide our communities with the right type of service offering for the future, based on robust evidence gathering.
- The programme follows the recommended strategic planning approach laid out on the Government/DCMS website



Community Services & Library Needs Assessment: Context

- The local authority has a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museum Act 1964 “to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons” who want to make use of it.
- Due to the Council’s financial position the transformed service will need to be delivered within a significantly reduced budget.



Needs Assessment Timeline

- Public engagement (Primary research) July – September 2023
- Service information (Secondary research) January – May 2024
- Transformation proposals developed Summer 2024
- Publication of Engagement reports October 2024
- Consultation on transformation proposals first half of 2025



1. Public Engagement Report

- Independent research consultant, Activist, procured to undertake public engagement
- Purpose of engagement activity to find out:
 1. Where needs are greatest across the city and how these map against current service provision
 2. How people are currently using community services and libraries across the city
 3. What people in Leicester think about future Neighbourhood Services needs
 4. What models and good practice exist for change



Public Engagement - Activity

Public engagement 3 July – 25 September 2023 (12 weeks)

- Users and non-users targeted
- Surveys available online and on paper, community languages available
- 2,340 Surveys completed

Childrens Survey 26 Sept to 17 October 2023

- 511 childrens surveys completed

Stakeholder interviews July – August 2023

Focus Groups July – August 2023

- 12 in-person focus groups held around city
- 200 attendees
- Youngs people's focus group

Staff Workshops July – August 2023



Public Engagement – representation

User survey – 2,340 responses

Ethnicity

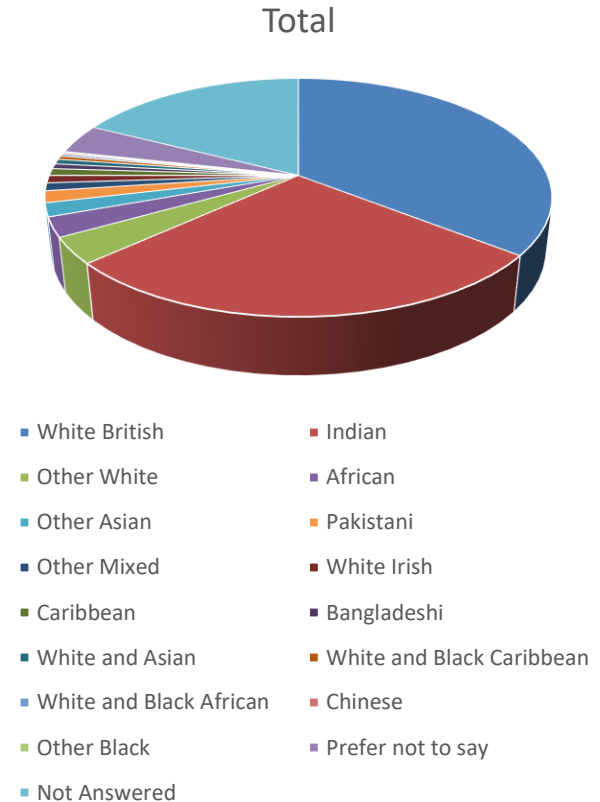
- White British (35.6%)
- Indian 27.7%
- (Not answered 22%)

Gender

- Women (55.25) over-represented
- Men (27%)
- (Not answered 19%)

Age

- Over 65s (27%) over-represented



Public Engagement – representation

Under 16yrs Survey – 511 responses

- Majority aged 11 – 16yrs
- 54% girls, 45% boys
- Languages spoken *at home*:
 - English 92%
 - Gujarati 60%
 - Hindi 18%
 - Punjabi 9%
 - Urdu 3%
 - Polish 1%
 - Other 12%



Public Engagement: Findings

(a) Where needs are greatest across the city and how these map against current service provision

“What are the greatest concerns in your life at the moment?”

Option	Percent
Cost of living	57%
My physical health	42%
My mental health	34%
Finding help when I need it	21%
My job or career	20%
Loneliness	15%
Completing a qualification or learning a new skill	13%
Being able to get online when I want to	9%

Public Engagement: Findings

(a) Where needs are greatest across the city and how these map against current service provision

“What are you hoping to change about your life in the future?”

Option	Percent
Be more physically active	53%
Meet more people in my local community	34%
Experience more arts, heritage, history and culture	33%
Explore more of what is happening in Leicester	30%
Learn a new skill or complete a course/qualification	23%
Volunteer somewhere	13%
Change my job or career	12%
Try more things online	9%
Start a new business	7%

Public Engagement: Findings

(a) Where needs are greatest across the city and how these map against current service provision. Key findings:

- Leicester is a vibrant and diverse city – service needs to responds to ongoing changes
- There are pockets of significant inequality across Leicester, where residents need increasing amounts of help to respond to their complex needs.
- The post-Covid impact on people’s physical and mental health is becoming increasingly apparent. Libraries and community centres support resident health and wellbeing, community inclusion, and literacy and skills development.
- There is an opportunity for the libraries and community centres to expand their cultural offer
- Libraries and community centres play a role in helping children in poverty, young people and their families with early years challenges.
- The Council’s own libraries and community centre network should complement the VCSE

Phase 1 Public Engagement: Findings

(b) How people are currently using library and community services across the city

What are the most important things on offer for you at your community library?

Option	Percent
Books and reading materials	55%
Computers, wifi and IT support	23%
A social space to meet people	22%
Information and advice, including community information	21%
Children's and family activities such as Toddler Time	19%
A quiet study space	14%
Health and wellbeing sessions and activities	13%
Cultural activities and events	13%
Warm spaces in cold weather	12%

Phase 1 Public Engagement: Findings

(b) How people are currently using library and community services across the city

“What are the most important things on offer for you at your Community Centre?”

Option	Percent
To attend a community group or activity	54%
Space to meet people	48%
Cultural events and activities	29%
A safe space which is welcoming to all	21%
Exercise or health related activities	20%
Community meetings such as ward meetings	17%
Leicester Adult Learning classes	16%
Space to hire for a community group	16%
Space to hire for a party, family or personal event	15%
A warm space in cold weather	13%
Lunch club or community kitchen	12%

Phase 1 Public Engagement: Findings

(b) How people are currently using library and community services across the city

- Leicester's libraries and community centres support the needs of residents: reading materials; creative activities and events; supporting community cohesion; study and learning spaces, and in-person support and advice.
- More face-to-face support for residents would be welcomed by existing service users.
- Leicester residents ...value access to services, and buildings, located in near proximity to their homes
- People are proud of Leicester's diversity want to see their own communities 'reflected back' at them in the Neighbourhood Services' offer
- The physical fabric of the existing library and community centre network has been well-used for many years and would benefit from investment.
- Many library users and non-users appear to be put off using the Central Library by a number of factors including visibility and infrequent visits to the city centre

Phase 1 Public Engagement: Findings

(c) What people think they will need from their libraries and community centres in the future

“To help us support the changing needs of people in Leicester, what local library services would you prioritise?”

Option	Percent
Books and reading material	51%
Health and wellbeing support	37%
Information and advice	36%
Cultural events and activities	32%
Activities for children and families	31%
Learning and skills activities	28%
Activities for young people	22%
Providing warm spaces in cold weather	21%
Support for finding a job	12%
Providing self-access opening	10%
Changing the opening hours	9%

Phase 1 Public Engagement: Findings

(c) 'What people think they will need from their libraries and community centres in the future'?

To help us support the changing needs of people in Leicester, which community centre services would you prioritise?

Option	Percent
Support for health and wellbeing	44%
Cultural events and activities	33%
Learning and skills activities for adults	36%
Children and family activities	31%
Lunch clubs and community kitchens	29%
Learning activities for young people	24%
Affordable spaces to hire for community events	22%
Warm space in cold weather	19%
Support to access council services	18%

Phase 1 Public Engagement: Findings

(c) 'What people think they will need from their libraries and community centres in the future'?

Key findings:

- Leicester residents see libraries and community centres **as something broader than a place to just access books**. They value the core Universal Offers being provided by the services,
- **As even more new and diverse communities move into Leicester, an already diverse city, there is a growing need for support and advice to be provided and, for more ESOL support**
- **Free and cheap access to activities** and services provide relief to people and are highly valued.
- Children, young people and those studying require **study spaces, particularly outside of classroom hours**.
- Residents **often see 'public services' as a single entity** and welcome **co-location of Council and other partner services**.
- There are opportunities to **explore and align** how Council and the VCS sector support offer can **complement each other**

Phase 1 Public Engagement: Findings

(d) 'What models and good practice exist'?

Many councils are changing how they operate community centres and library services in order to better meet the needs of residents. Please tick up to three ideas that you think we could look at?

Option	Percent
Have more multi-service centres to bring community centres, libraries and local services together	59%
Involving community organisations more in running services	36%
Reviewing opening hours to match peak demand	35%
Making more use of volunteers	22%
Making more use of customer self-service in public libraries	22%
Providing more services online	17%
None of the above	12%



Phase 1 Public Engagement: Findings

(d) 'What models and good practice exist'?

Summary of key findings

- Public service, and partner, **co-location** is a direction many services have moved in recent years, **responding to the complex needs of residents** where multi-agency partnership working is required. As public sector budgets face more pressure, service delivery does not necessarily need to mean just 'from a physical building' and opportunities exist to **explore the potential for greater outreach and co-delivery working alongside community partners**
- The co-location of services also offers the potential to streamline the Council's physical building footprint and to reduce overheads. Conflicting views were exhibited on the subject of self-service access, reflecting the typical range of positive and negative perspectives seen elsewhere.



Secondary Research:

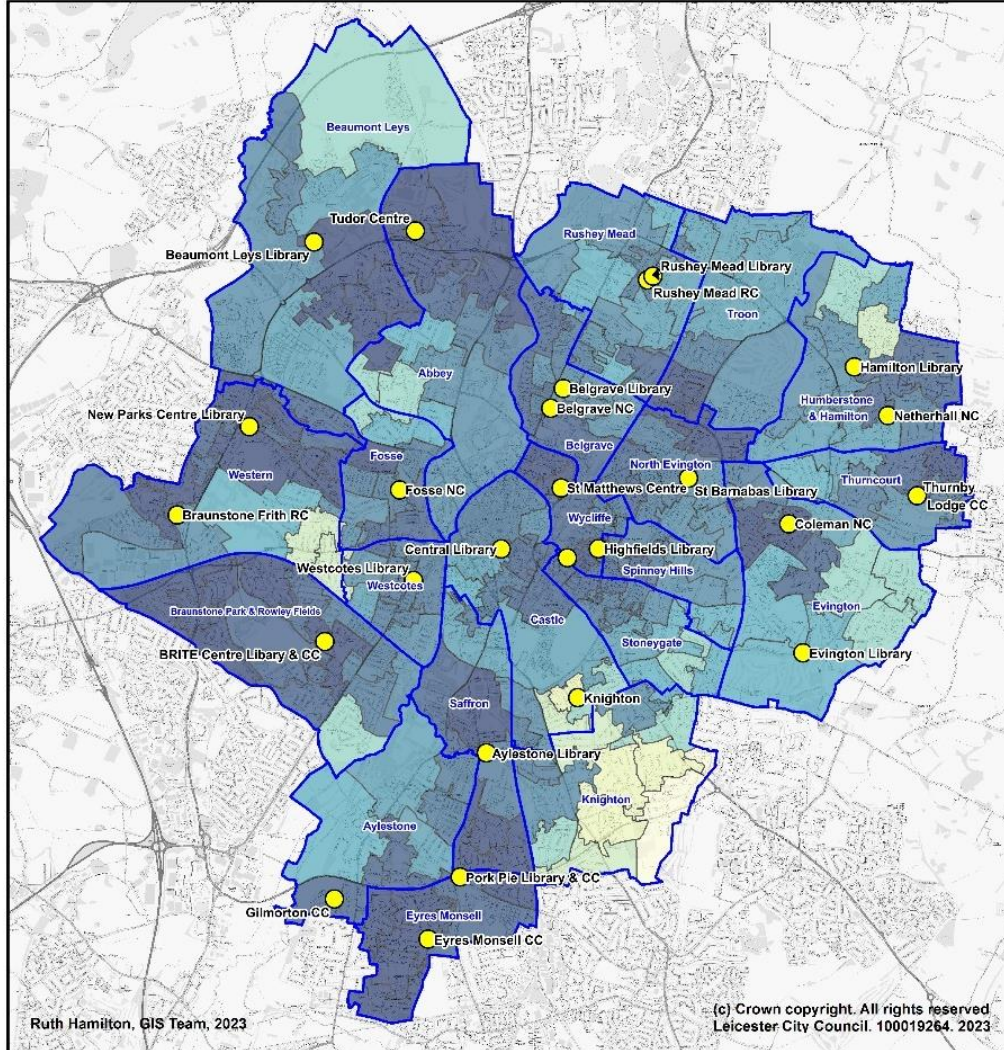
Service Information
& Performance Data



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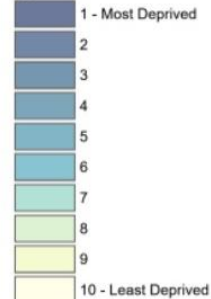
Neighbourhood Service Centres Mapped against Index of Deprivation 2019

Index of Multiple Deprivation



Index of Multiple Deprivation

Index of Deprivation 2019 By National Decile



Neighbourhood Services Facilities

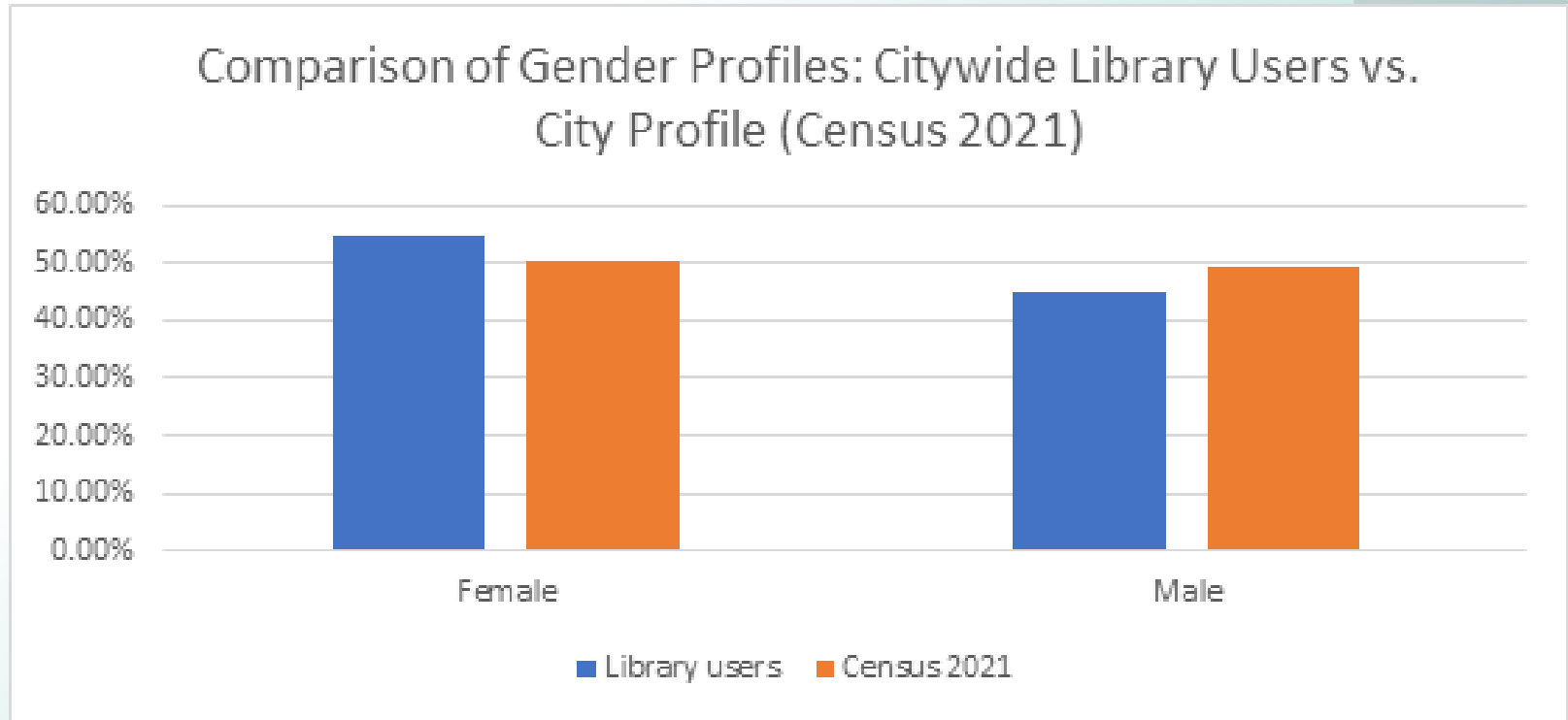


The four “Universal Offers”

Neighbourhood Services are committed to the four Universal Offers developed by the national “Libraries Connected” organisation

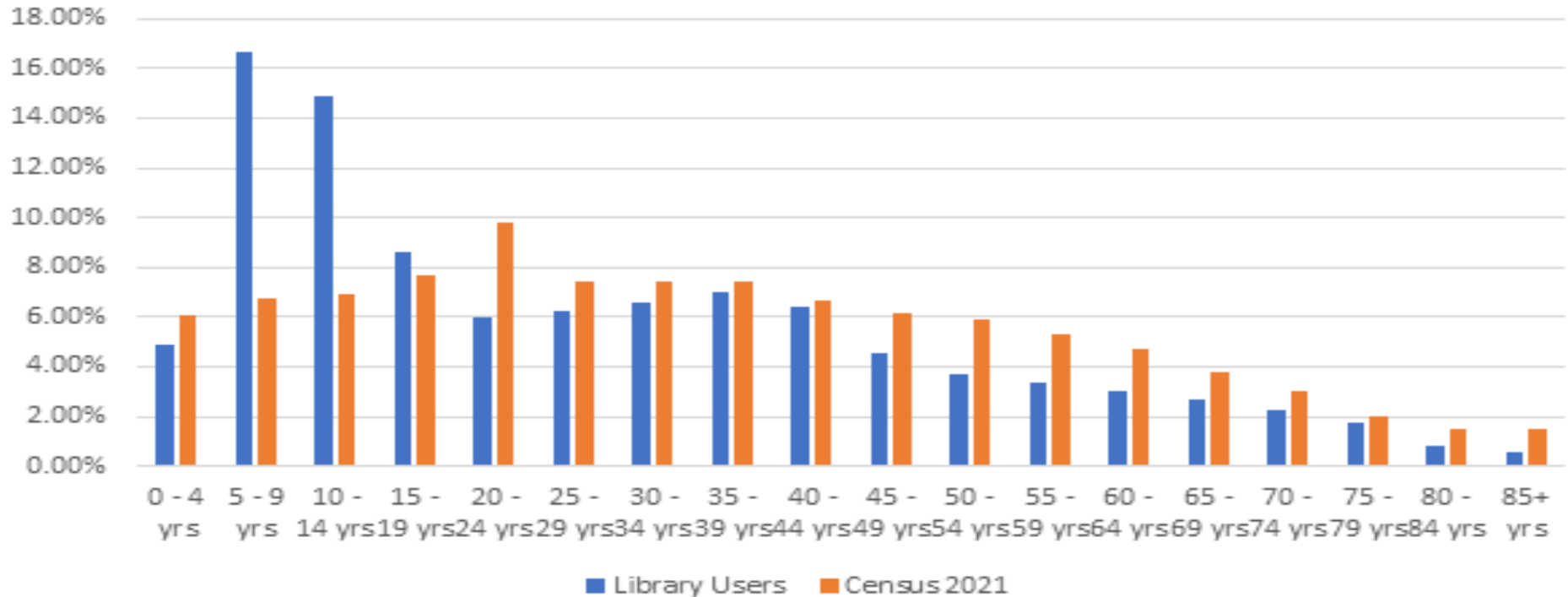
Universal offer and key principles	Summary
Reading • <i>Engage, Imagine, Discover</i>	To build a literate and confident society by developing, delivering and promoting creative reading activities in libraries.
Information and Digital • <i>Inform, Inspire, Innovate</i>	To ensure local communities have access to quality information and digital services, to learn new skills and to feel safe online.
Culture and creativity • <i>Explore, Create, Participate</i>	To enable local communities to access and participate in a variety of quality and diverse arts and cultural experiences through local libraries.
Health and wellbeing • <i>Healthier, Happier, Connected</i>	To support the health and wellbeing of local people and communities through services that inform, engage and connect.

Citywide user profile: Library users

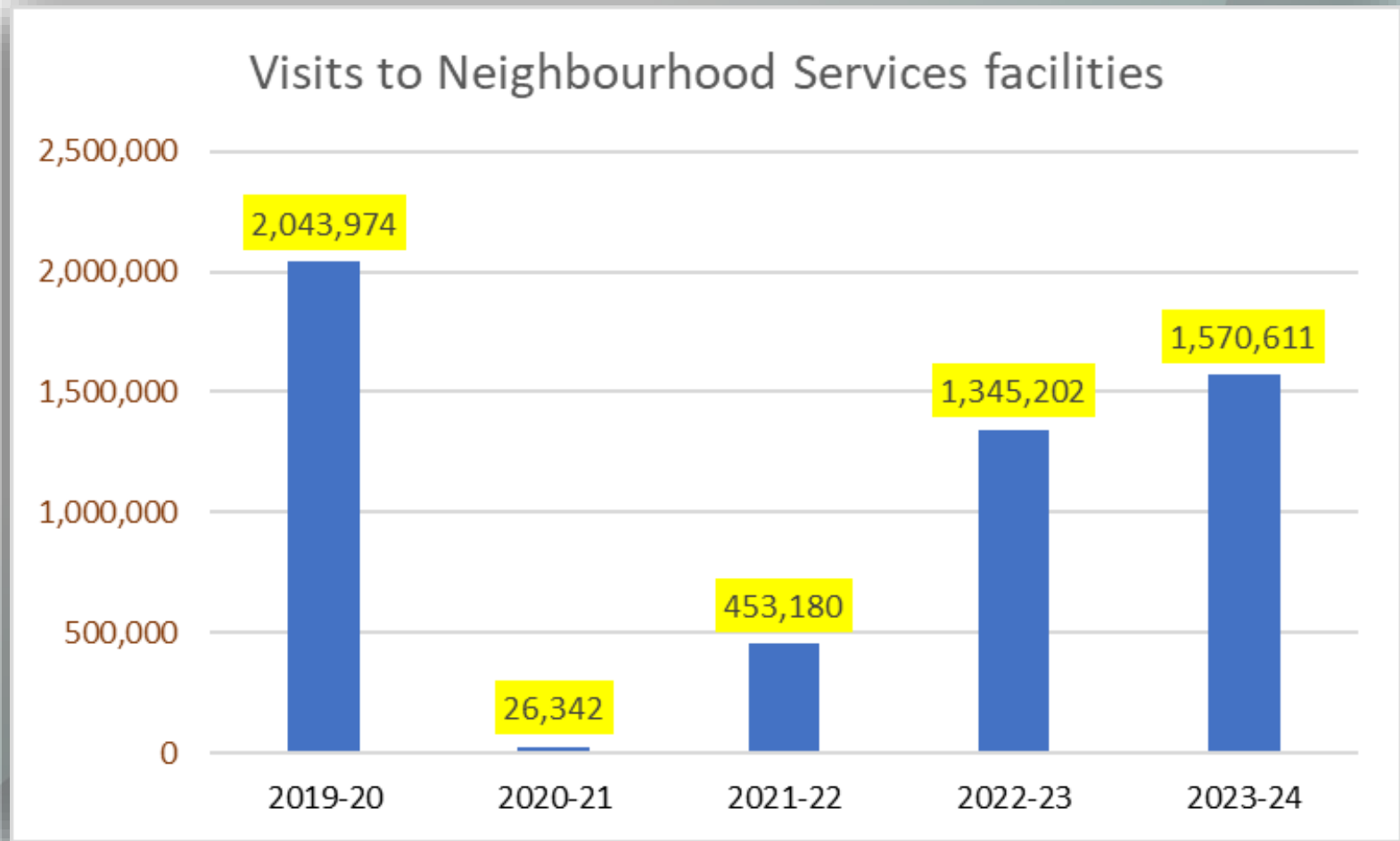


Citywide user profile: Library users

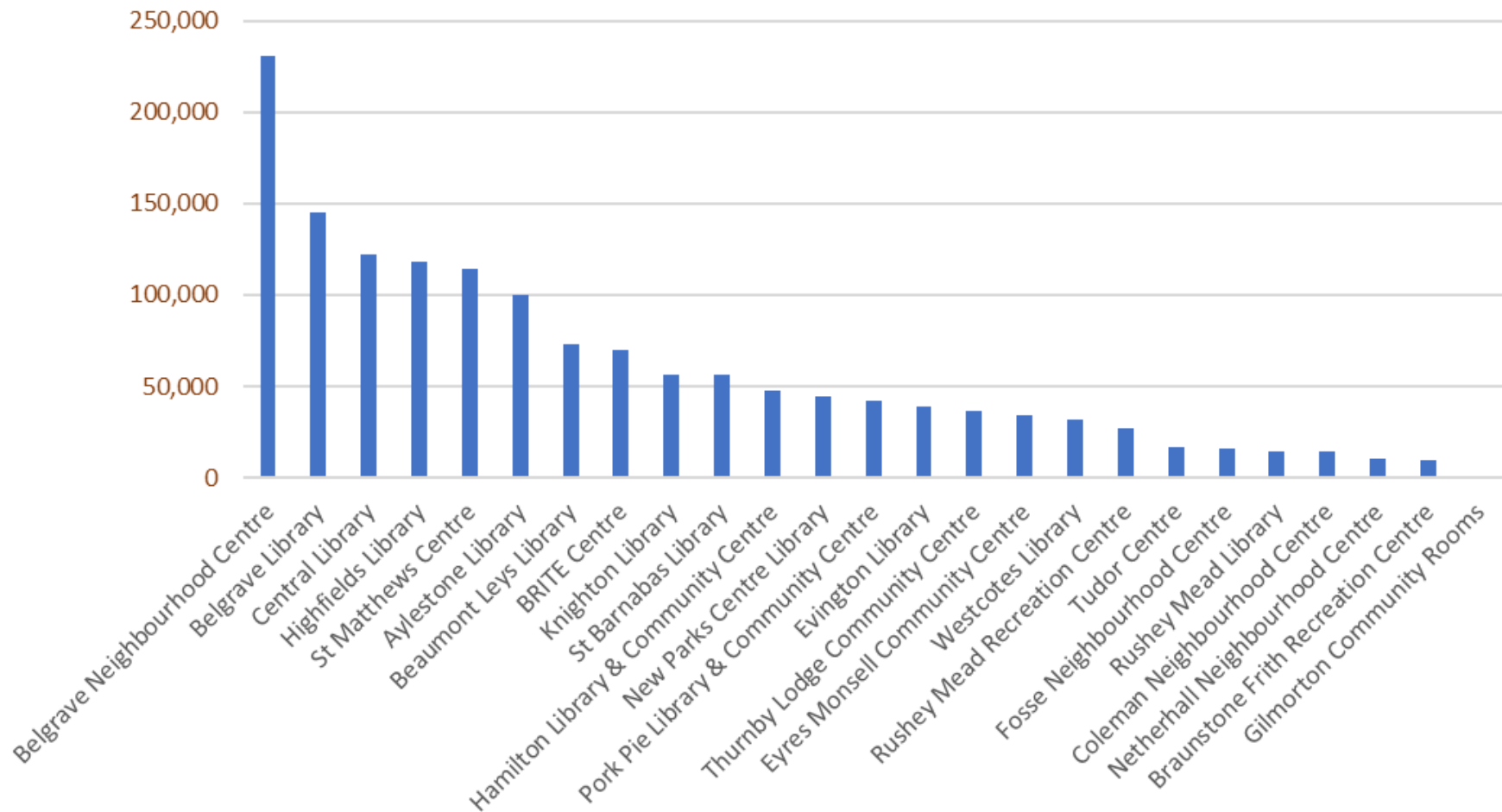
Comparison of Age Profiles: Citywide Library Users vs. City Profile (Census 2021)



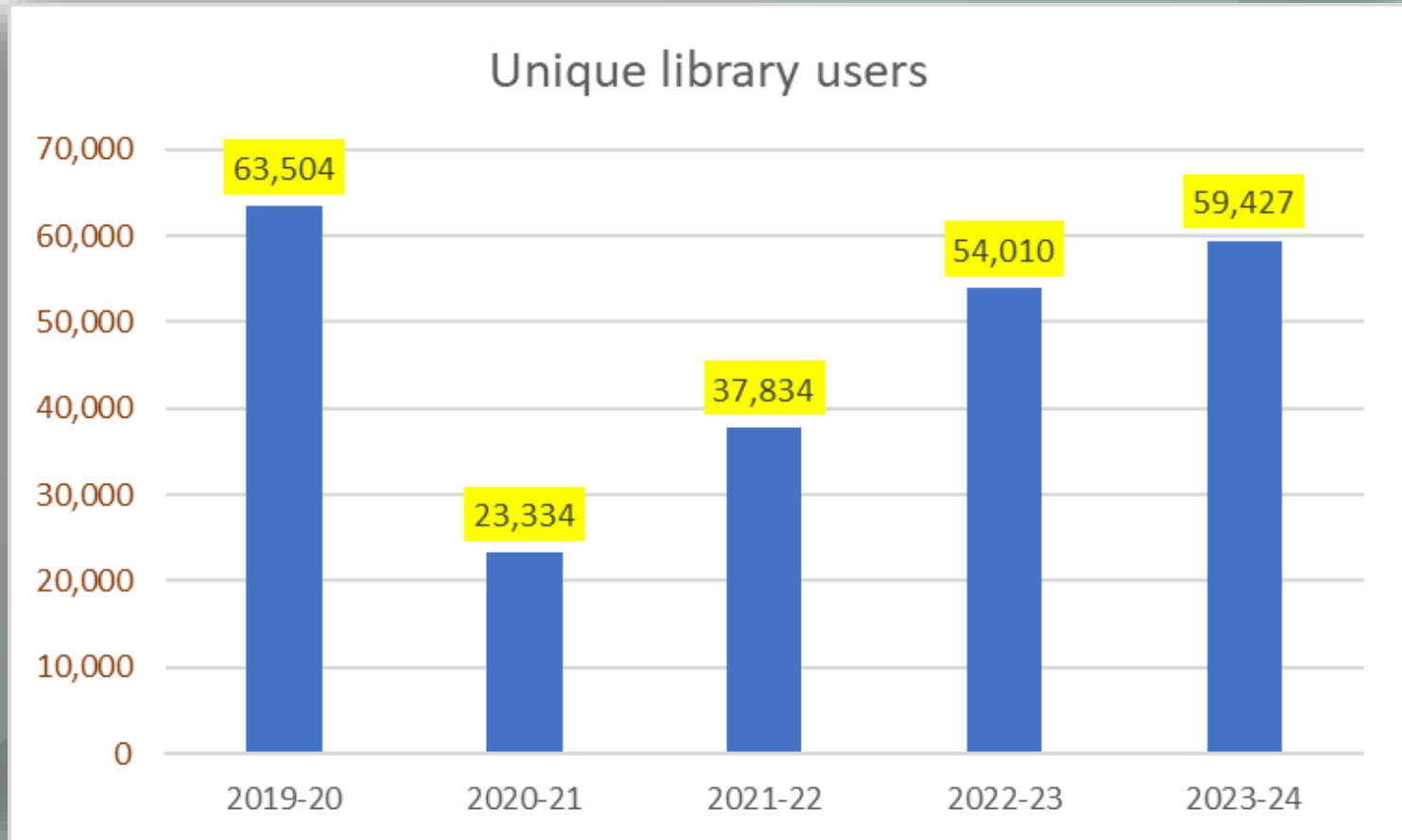
Visits to Neighbourhood Services facilities (annual)



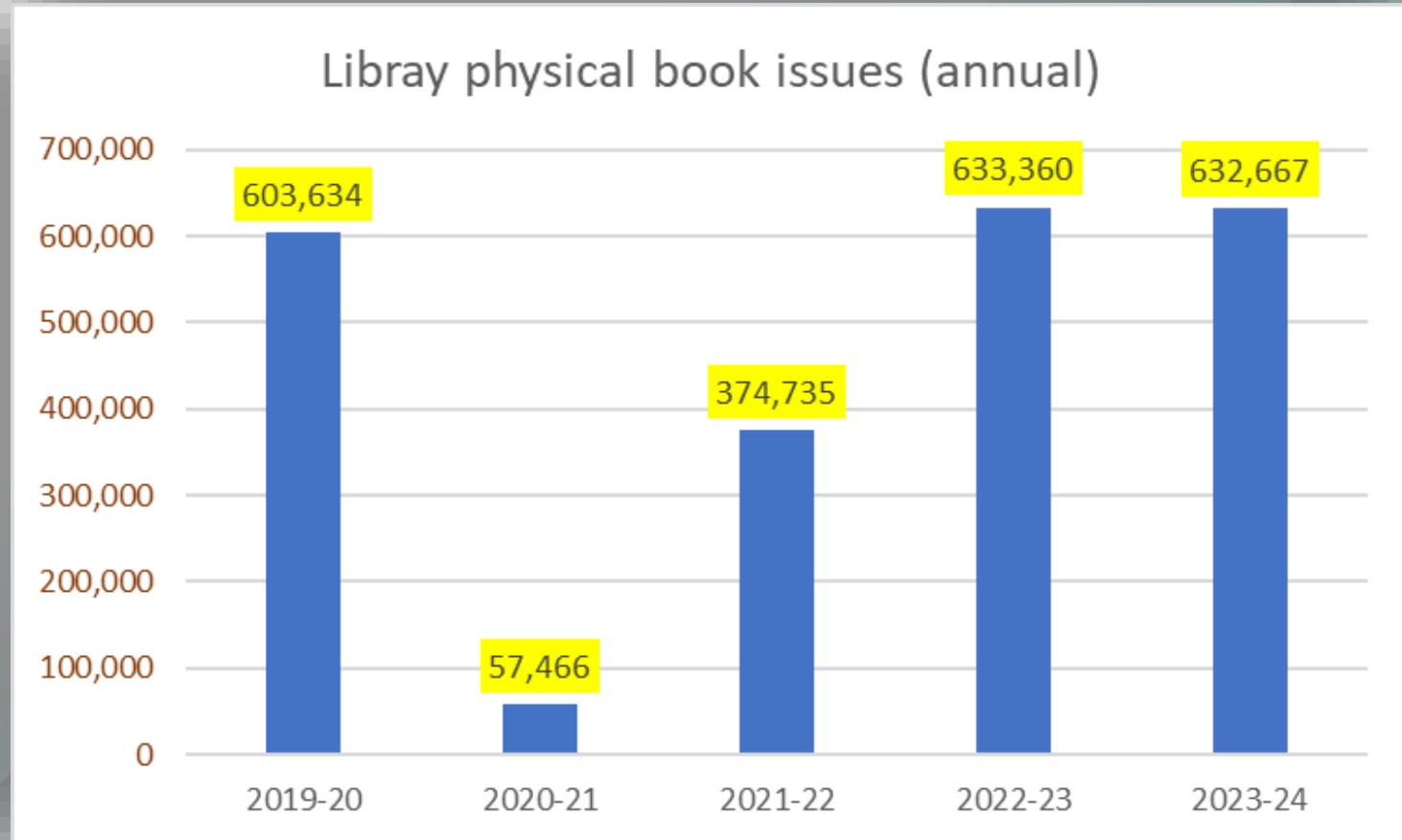
Visits: annual footfall by facility 2023-24



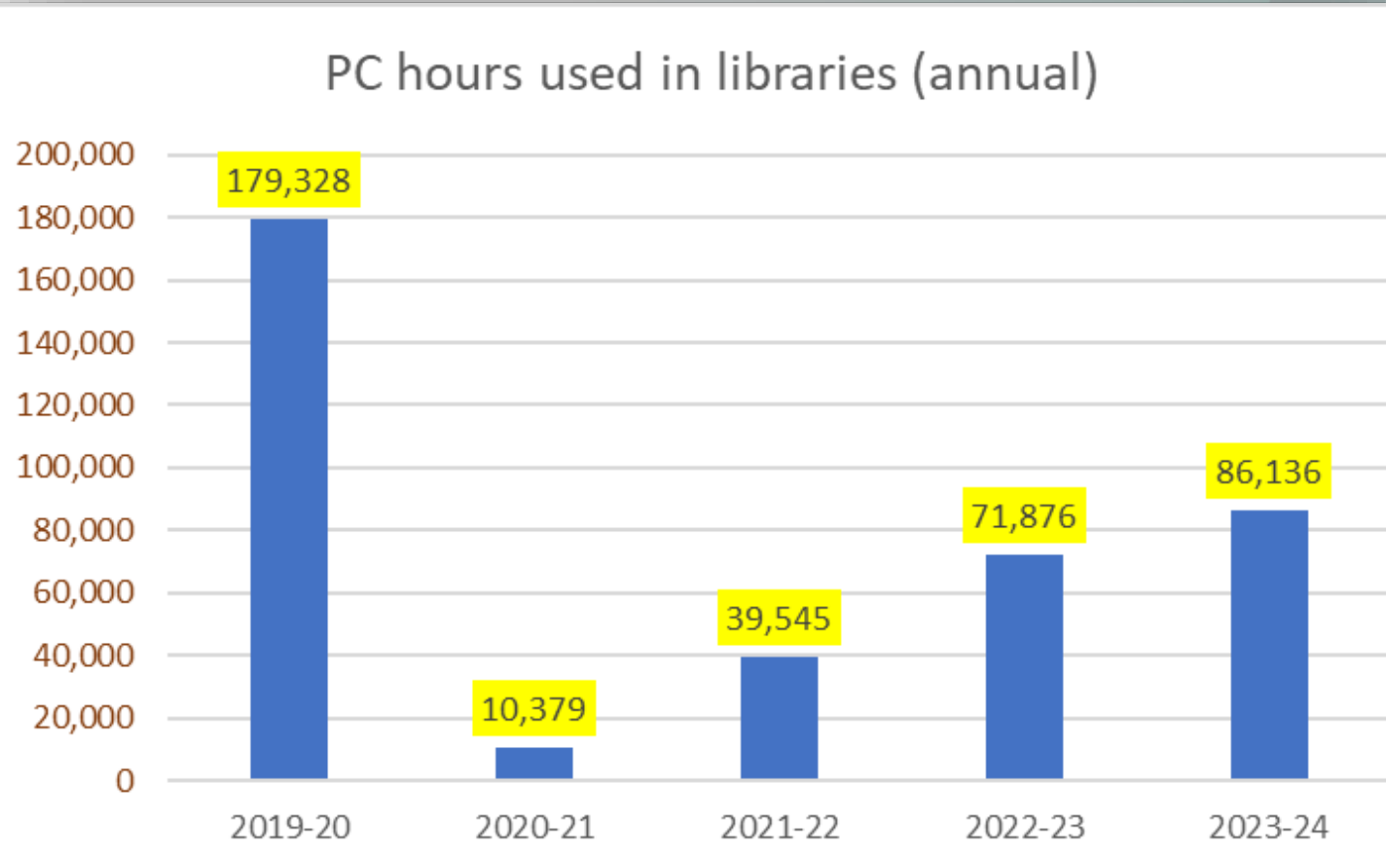
Unique active library users



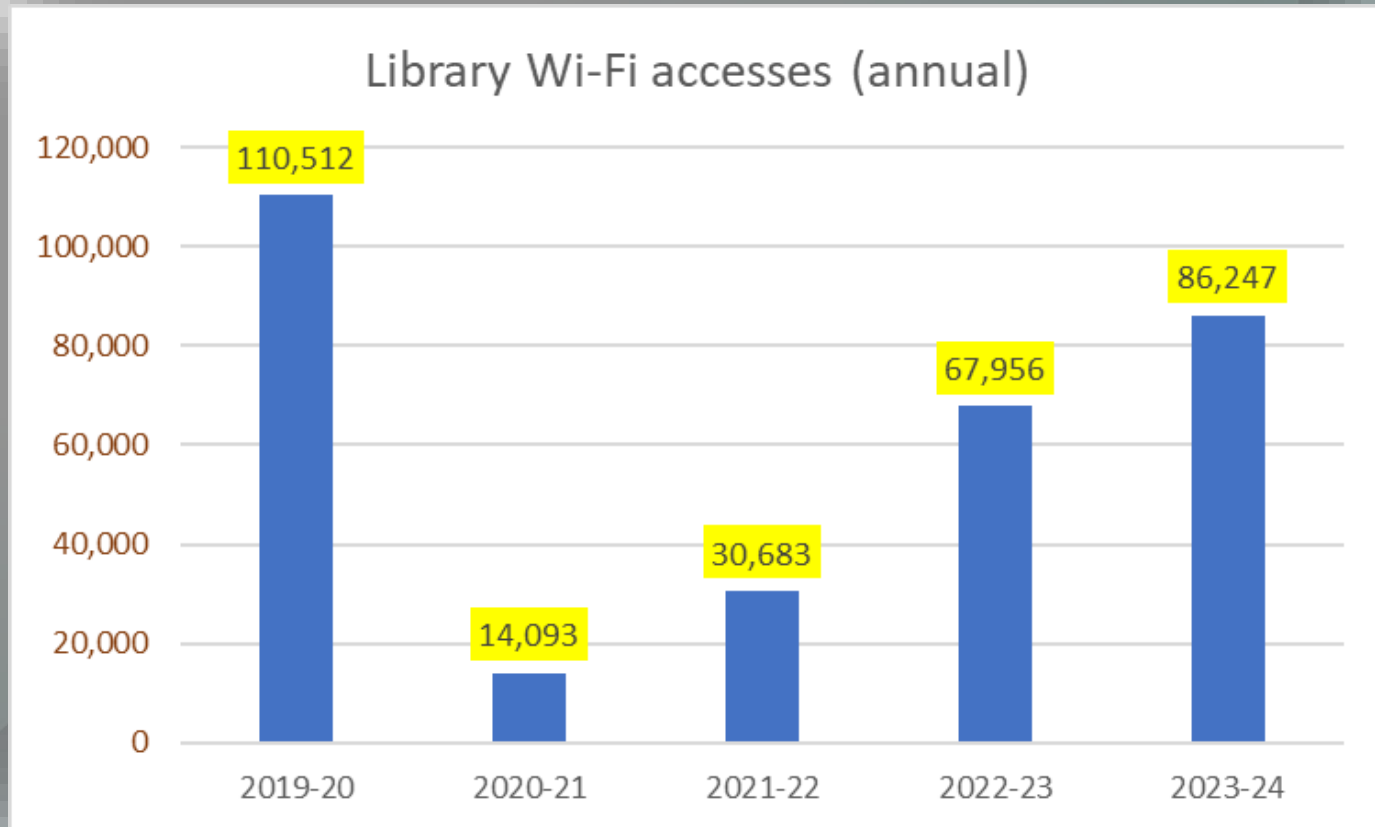
Physical library books issued



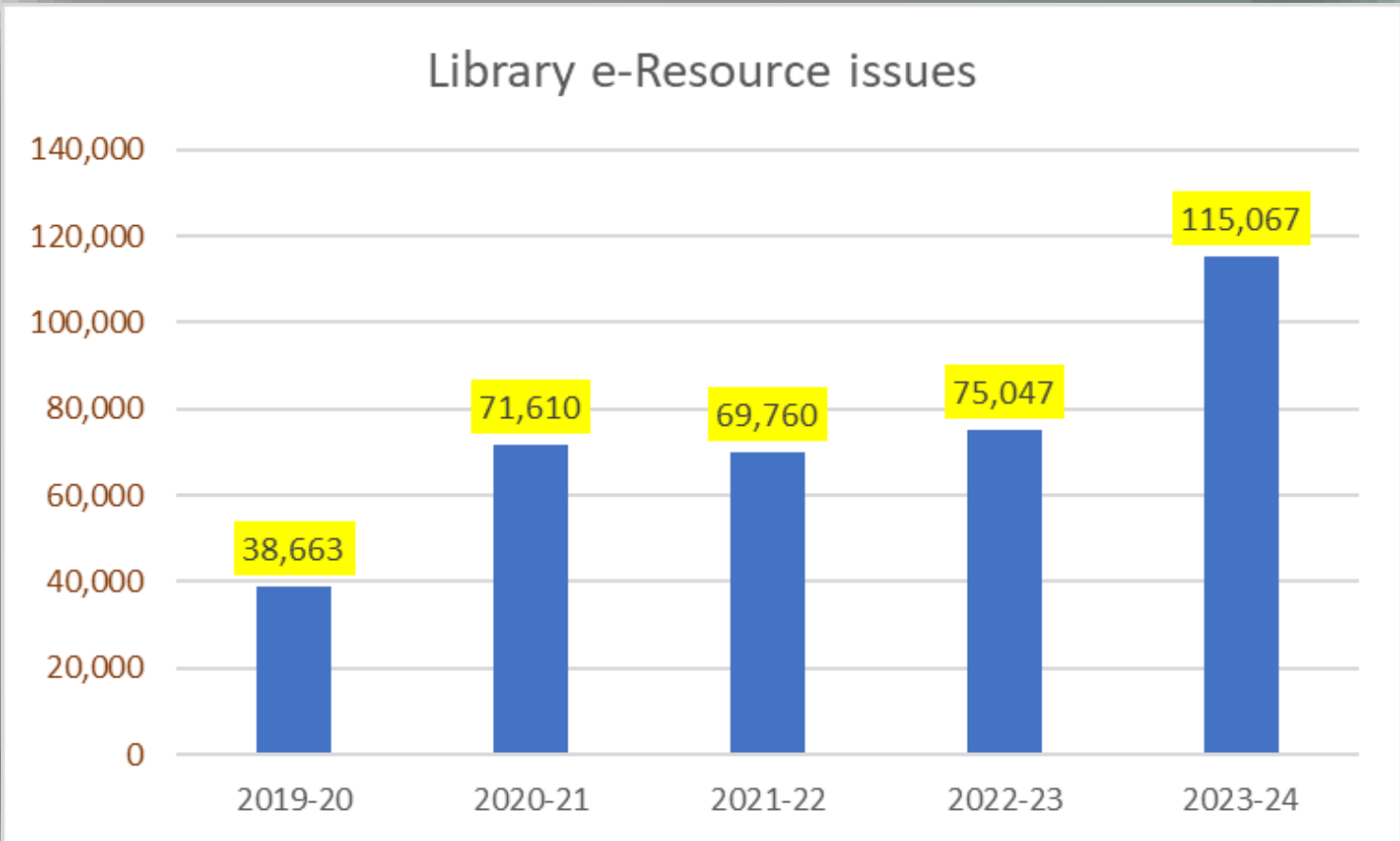
Public computer access



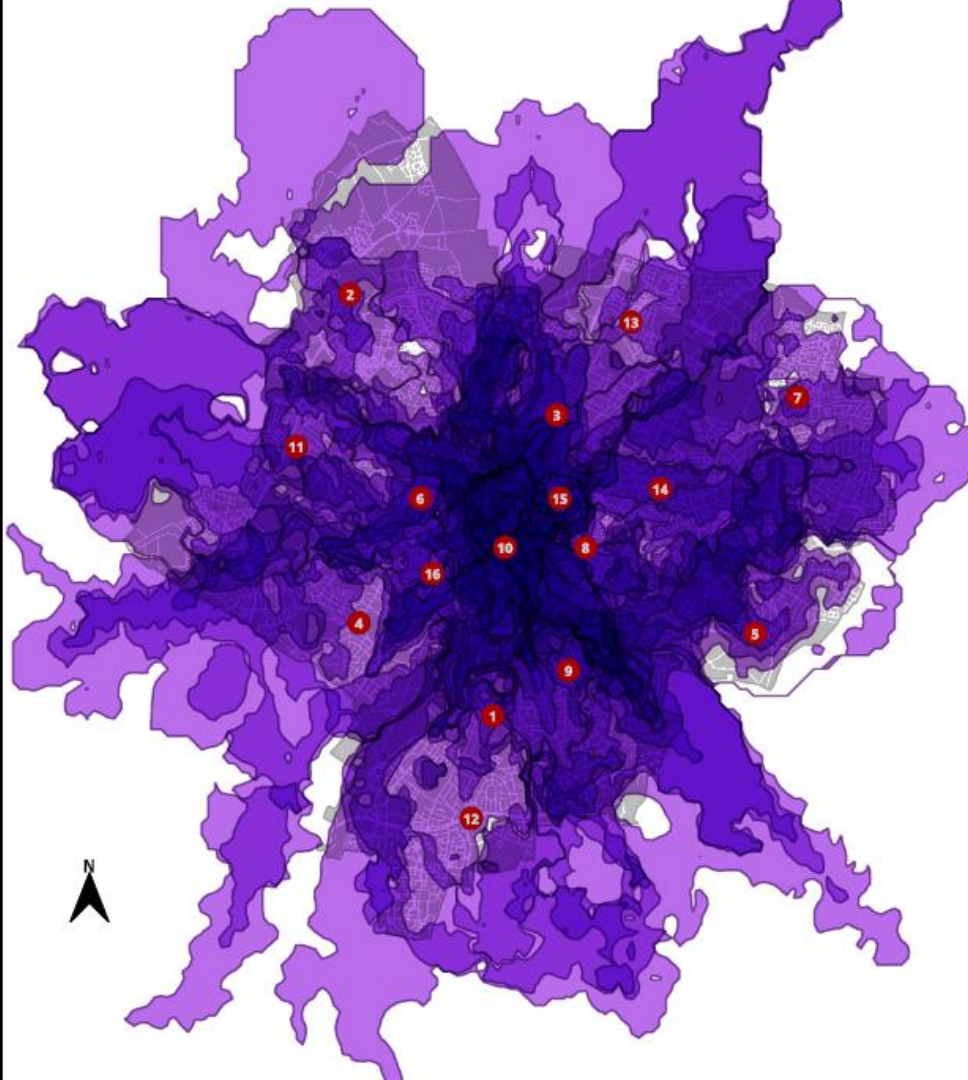
Library Wi-Fi accesses (annual)



Library e-Resources issued (annual)

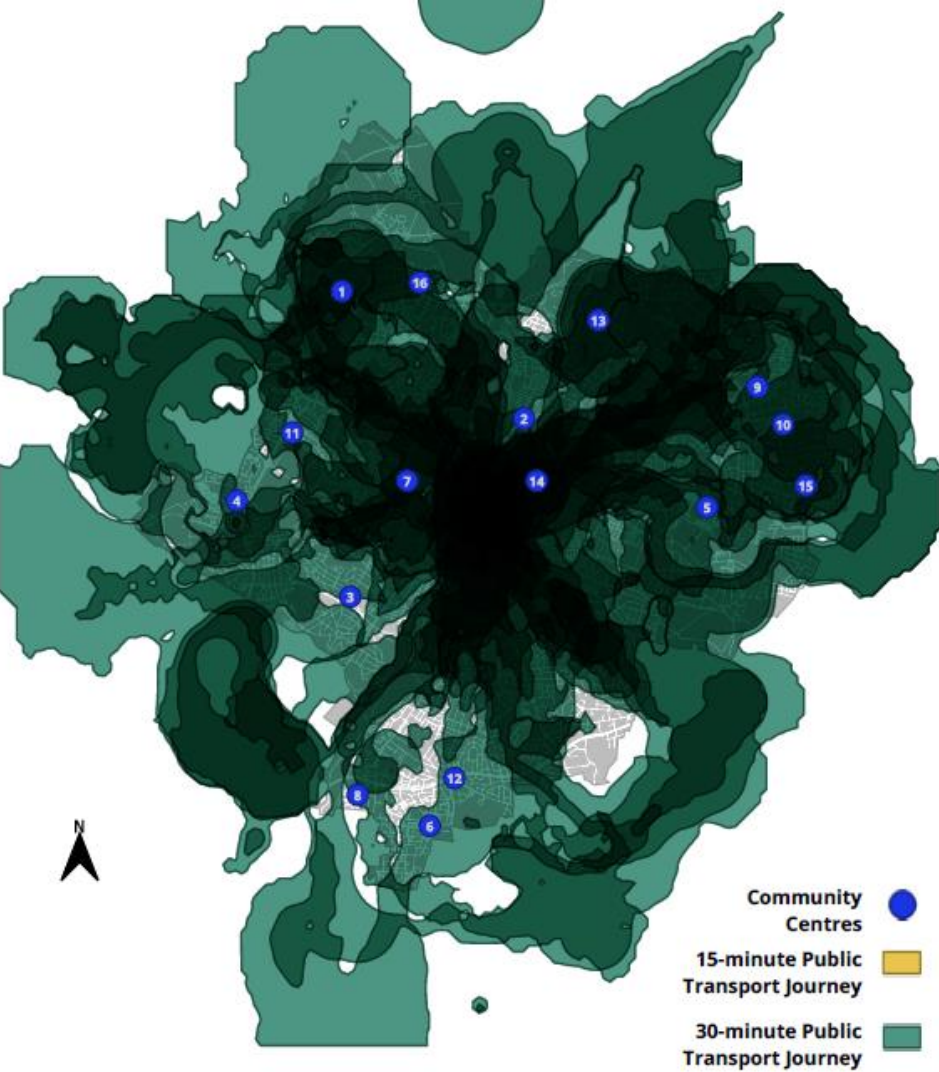


Library access by bus: 15 & 30 minute journeys (includes walking)



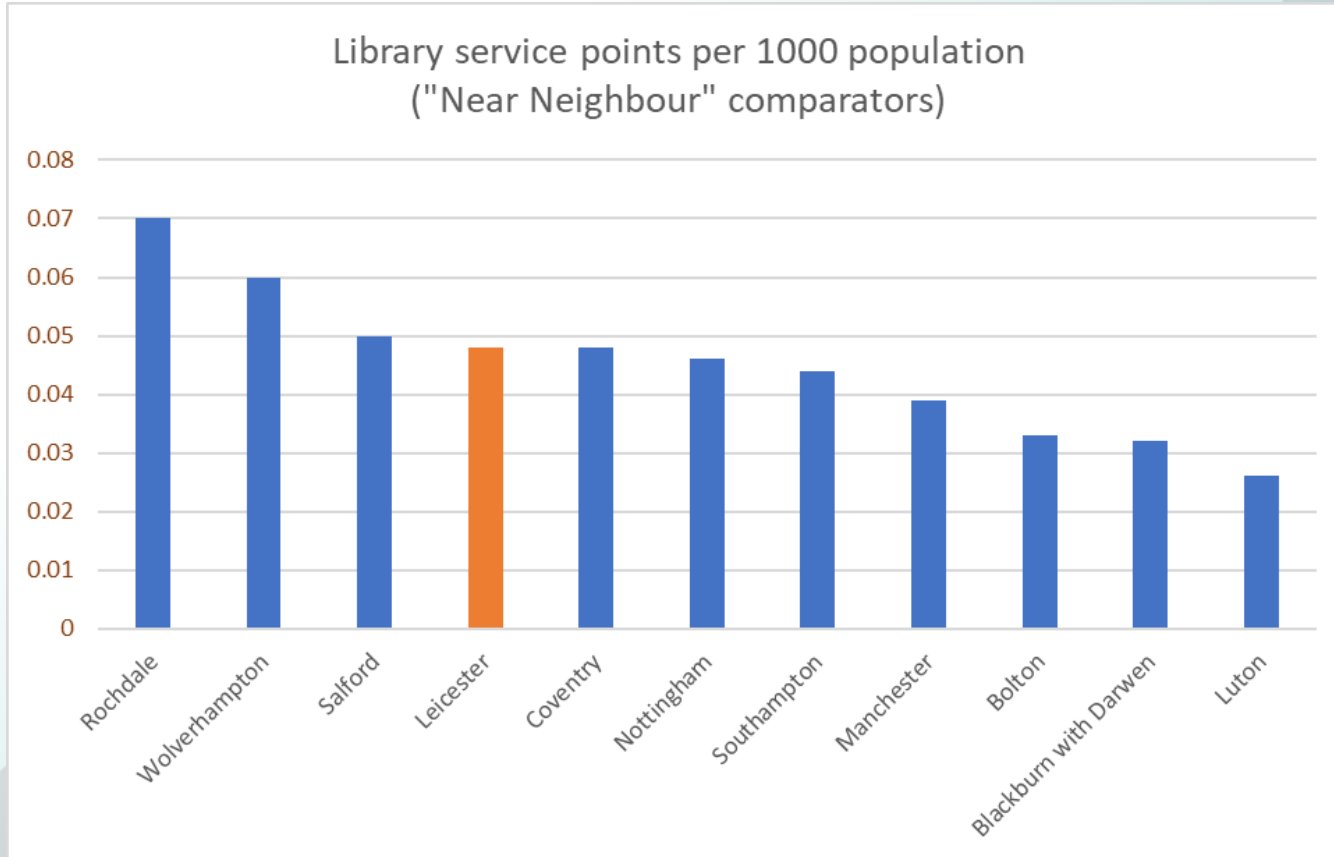
Id	Centre	Id	Centre
1	Aylestone	9	Knighton
2	Beaumont Leys	10	Leicester Central
3	Belgrave	11	New Parks
4	Braunstone	12	Pork Pie
5	Evington	13	Rushey Mead
6	Fosse	14	St Barnabas
7	Hamilton	15	St Matthew's
8	Highfields	16	Westcotes

Community Centres access by bus: 15 & 30 minute journeys



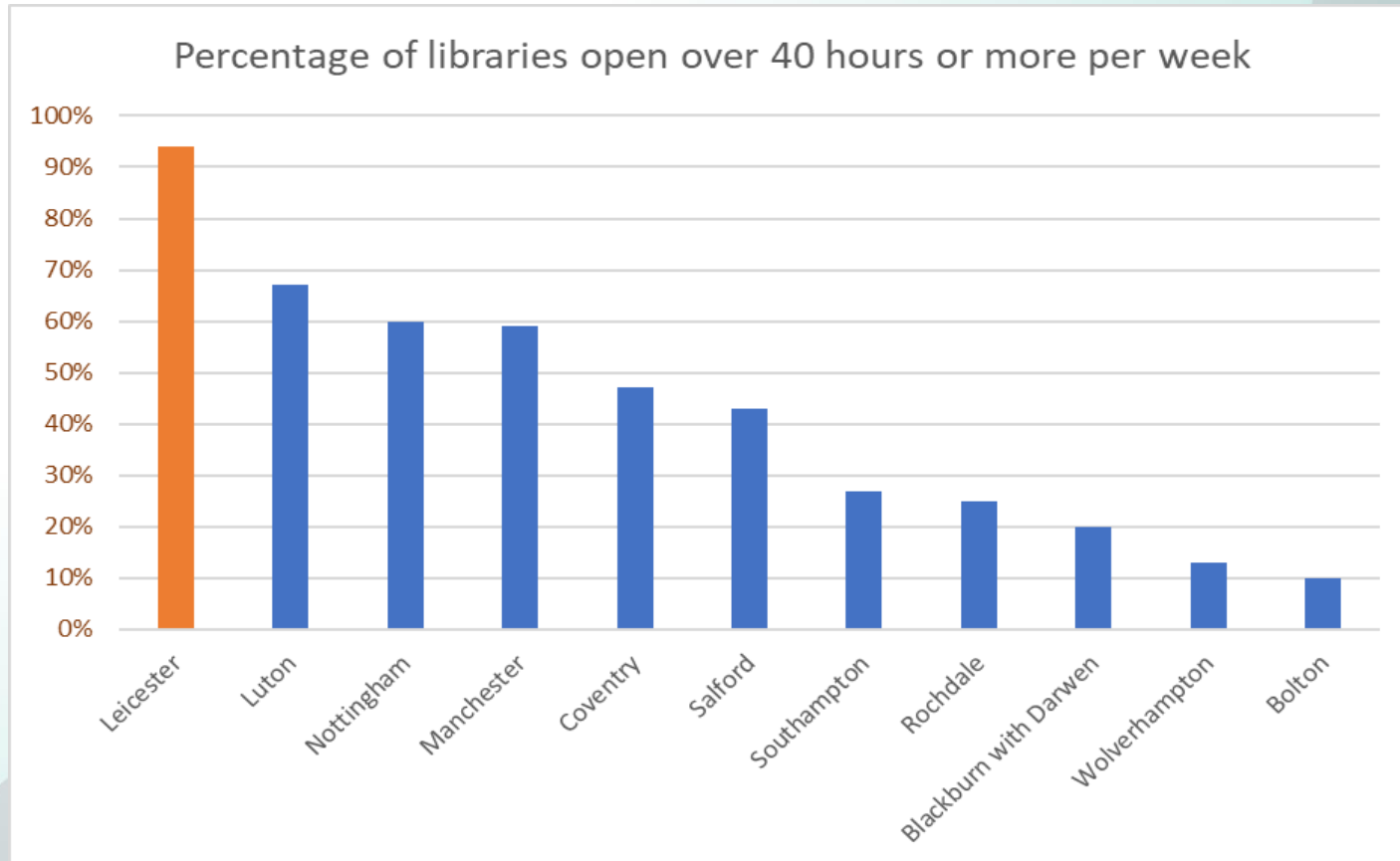
Id	Centre	Id	Centre	Id	Centre
1	Beaumont Leys	6	Eyres Monsell Community Centre	11	New Parks
2	Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	7	Fosse	12	Pork Pie
3	Braunstone	8	Gilmorton Community Rooms	13	Rushey Mead Recreation Centre
4	Braunstone Frith Recreation Centre	9	Hamilton	14	St Matthew's
5	Coleman Neighbourhood Centre	10	Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre	15	Thurnby Lodge Community Centre
				16	Tudor Centre

Benchmarking: Library service points



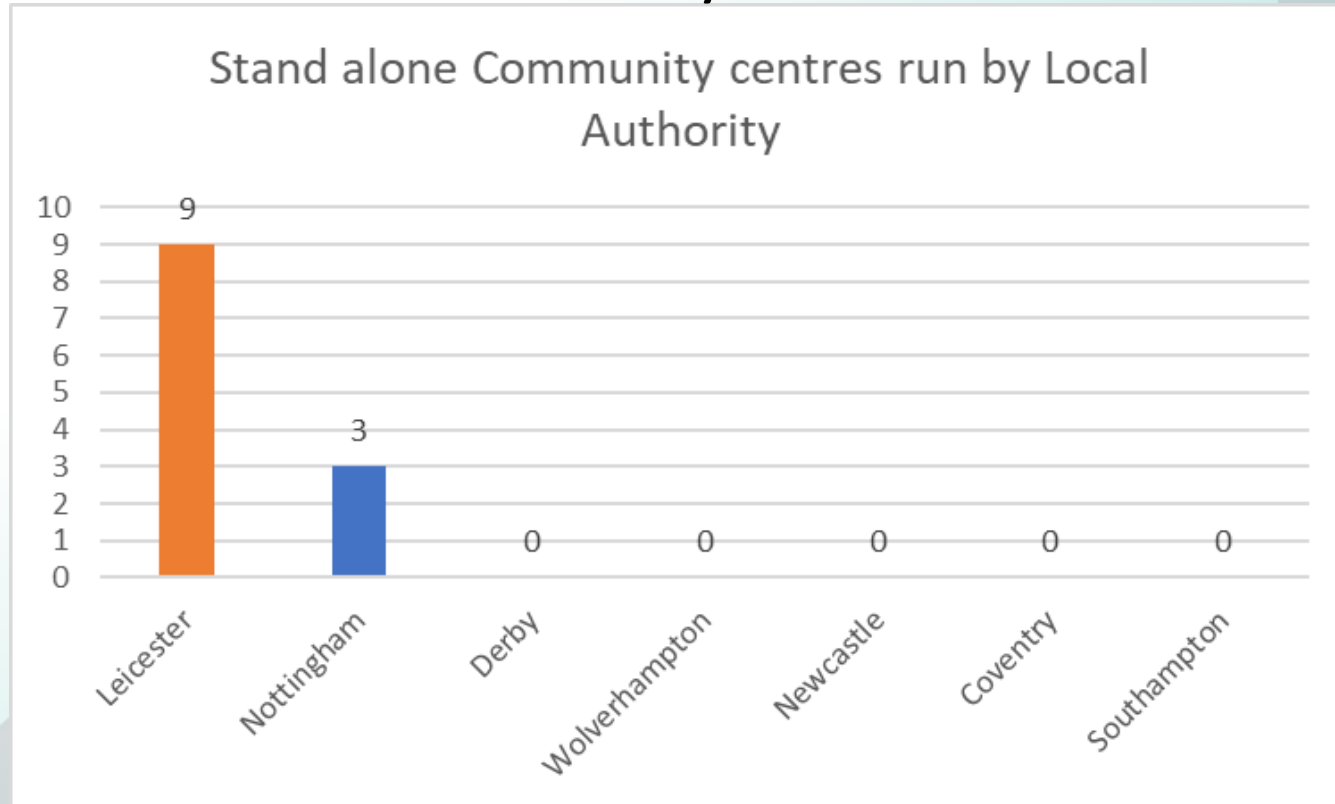
Reference: CIPFA annual library returns, 2023

Benchmarking: Library opening hours

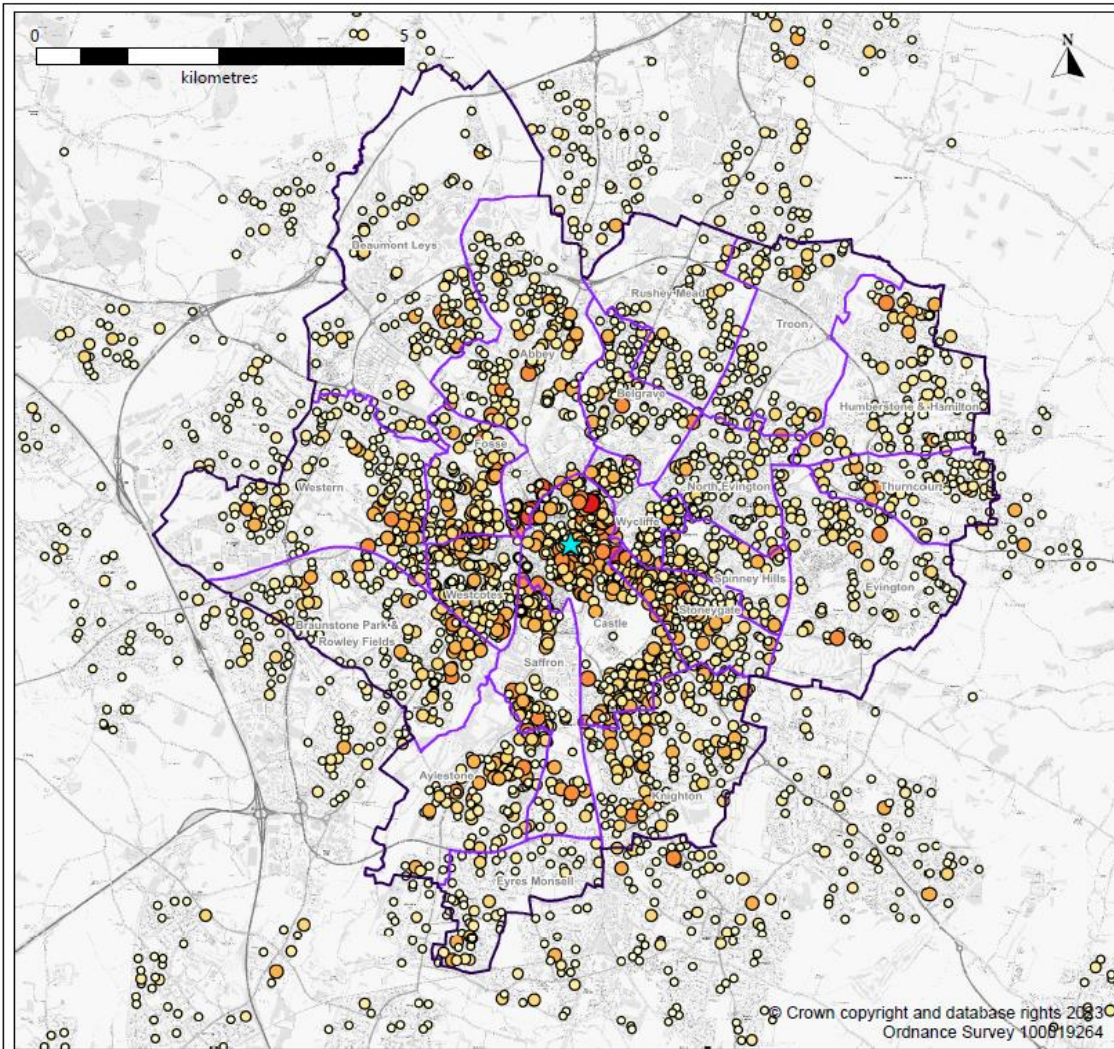


Reference: CIPFA annual library returns, 2023

Benchmarking: Number of Local Authority run community centres



Reference: Leicester City Council project research team



Distribution of users of Leicester Central Library

Users have visited the library one or more times
April 2022 – March 2023
- User count by Postcode -

1	(2,301)
2	(693)
3	(290)
4 to 5	(247)
6 to 10	(93)
11 to 20	(7)
29	(1)

-  Leicester City Boundary
-  Leicester Wards
-  Leicester Central Library



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Geographical Information & Plans
Processing Team, June 2023



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