# **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Tool:**

Title of proposal	Proposals for Libraries & Community Centres
Name of division/service	Neighbourhood & Environmental Services
Name of lead officer completing this assessment	Lee Warner and Michael Clarke
Date EIA assessment commenced	1 <sup>st</sup> July 2023 (ongoing from the commencement of the Community Services & Library Needs Assessment)
Date EIA assessment completed (prior to decision being taken as the EIA may still be reviewed following a decision to monitor any changes)	11/11/2025
Decision maker	Cllr Vi Dempster – Assistant City Mayor
Date decision taken	

EIA sign off on completion:	Signature	Date
Lead officer	Lee Warner	11/11/2025
Equalities officer (has been consulted)	Sukhi Biring/Surinder Singh	13/11/2025
Divisional director	Sean Atterbury	17/11/2025

# Please ensure the following:

- a) That the document is **understandable to a reader who has not read any other documents** and explains (on its own) how the Public Sector Equality Duty is met. This does not need to be lengthy but must be complete and based in evidence.
- b) That available support information and data is identified and where it can be found. Also be clear about highlighting gaps in existing data or evidence that you hold, and how you have sought to address these knowledge gaps.
- c) That the equality impacts are capable of aggregation with those of other EIAs to identify the cumulative impact of all service changes made by the council on different groups of people.
- d) That the equality impact assessment is started at an early stage in the decision-making process, so that it can be used to inform the consultation, engagement and the decision. It should not be a tick-box exercise. Equality impact assessment is an iterative process that should be revisited throughout the decision-making process. It can be used to assess several different options.
- e) Decision makers must be aware of their duty to pay 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (see below) and 'due regard' must be paid before and at the time a decision is taken. Please see the Brown Principles on the equality intranet pages, for information on how to undertake a lawful decision-making process, from an equalities perspective. Please append the draft EIA and the final EIA to papers for decision makers (including leadership team meetings, lead member briefings, scrutiny meetings and executive meetings) and draw out the key points for their consideration. The Equalities Team provide equalities comments on reports.

# 1. Setting the context

Describe the proposal, the reasons it is being made, and the intended change or outcome. Will the needs of those who are currently using the service continue to be met?

In early 2023 Leicester City Council launched the Community Services & Library Needs Assessment (CSLNA) which is a transformational programme for our Neighbourhood Services scoping in all our facilities. It will conduct an in-depth assessment of need across all communities and the whole of the city to assess present and future needs.

The CSLNA programme was launched because, we know, the cities demographics are changing, we know new communities are arriving in the city and that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed what people need from our services. The programme aims to ensure our communities have the right type of service offering for the future, based on robust evidence gathering.

Like many local authorities Leicester City Council are facing a challenging financial situation so it is vital that we ensure the service we provide meets the needs of our users. We will need to ensure resources are used efficiently whilst protecting a service which is highly valued and widely used across the city.

Leicester City Council manages 25 community facilities across the city including 9 multi service centres and the Central Library. Within these facilities the Council runs 16 statutory libraries and 13 community centres, with many services co-located. At these sites people can access books and reading, use the internet and find information, attend a group, take part in an event and much more. Neighbourhood Services facilities are located in the heart of local communities.

The primary research for this programme has been conducted by Activist, an independent, sector specialist research and engagement agency.

As part of the primary research Leicester City Council ran a public engagement from 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023 to 24<sup>th</sup> September 2023 to identify which services people use now, what their priorities are for the future, and their thoughts on alternative models. Members of the public, stakeholders and staff members were asked for their views. A detailed questionnaire was available to complete online and on paper over a three month period from June – August 2023. A survey aimed at children and young people was also made available online in September 2023. In total 2851 responses were received. To gain further insight and depth 12 public focus groups were held in neighbourhood locations around the city. Interviews were held with key internal & external stakeholders and two staff workshops were undertaken. Leicester City Council's Neighbourhood Services management and project team has produced a secondary research report which summarises service data, benchmarking information and ward profiles to provide details of local communities and their needs. Separate reports for both the primary and secondary research findings are available and were used as the evidence basis for the initial proposals and the first iteration of this EIA.

Proposals for service transformation were developed to deliver services in areas where need is great and within the reduced budgetary envelope available for the future. The Neighbourhood & Environmental Services division will see a significantly reduced budget over the next 3 financial years. The proposals aim to develop widely accessible multi-service hubs whilst reducing the overall number of facilities we operate and focusing service provision in areas of greatest need.

#### Proposed model for consultation (2 April and 29 June 2025)

The proposed Neighbourhood Services model developed for consultation put forward community based multi-service centres with a focus on neighbourhood hubs for wellbeing. The multi-service centres are located in areas of need and in buildings which are fit for the future with good accessibility and surrounding transport networks to cover broad catchment areas. The Central Library service will provide city-wide coverage with added breadth and depth serving residents living in all areas. Under the proposals there would be a renewed focus on core

areas of need aligned with the remit of Neighbourhood services: four nationally recognised "Universal Offers" and the "Children's Promise" developed by Libraries Connected. The proposals provide interventions, resources and activities around reading, digital and information, culture, creativity and health, and wellbeing themes. Online services including extensive e-libraries would be further developed to provide e-books, e-newspapers and e-magazines to library members from anywhere in the city, at any time. The Children's BookBus will provide regular services in the most disadvantaged areas of the city and a volunteer supported Home Library Service will deliver books to housebound residents. Under the proposals community organisations would be supported to develop plans to take on the running of facilities no longer run by the service to deliver additional community benefits.

The following multi-service centres would be developed under the proposals, to provide neighbourhood services located in accessible areas of need across the city, supported by the city-wide in-depth provision at the Central Library:

- Leicester Central Library 45 staffed hours per week
- Aylestone Library (located in Aylestone Leisure Centre) 30 staffed hours per week & self-access hours during leisure centre opening times
- Beaumont Leys Library Hub 40 staffed hours per week
- Belgrave Library Hub 40 staffed hours per week & Install library self-access to increase overall opening hours
- The BRITE Centre Hub 40 staffed hours per week & Install library self-access to increase overall opening hours
- Hamilton Library & Community Centre Hub 30 staffed hours per week & Install library self-access to increase overall opening hours
- Highfields Library Hub 40 staffed hours per week
- New Parks Centre Hub 30 staffed hours per week & Install library self-access to increase overall opening hours
- Pork Pie Library & Community Centre Hub 30 staffed hours per week & Install library self-access to increase overall opening hours
- St Barnabas Library Hub 40 staffed hours per week & Install library self-access to increase overall opening hours
- St Matthews Library (relocated within the St Matthews Estate)
- Thurnby Lodge Community Centre 30 staffed hours per week
- Westcotes Library 30 staffed hours per week

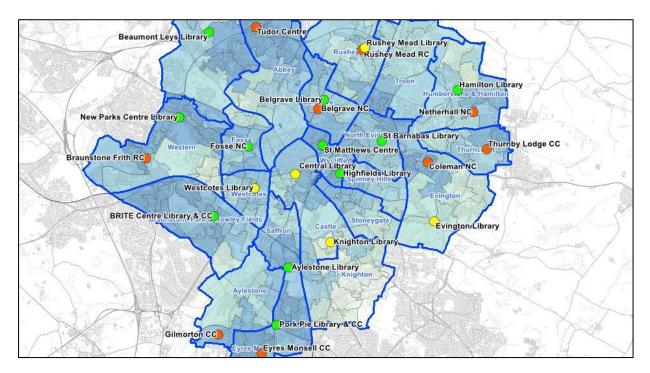
Under the consultation proposals the following facilities would be released and where appropriate opportunities provided for community organisations to take on the running of services:

- Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre
- Braunstone Frith Recreation Centre

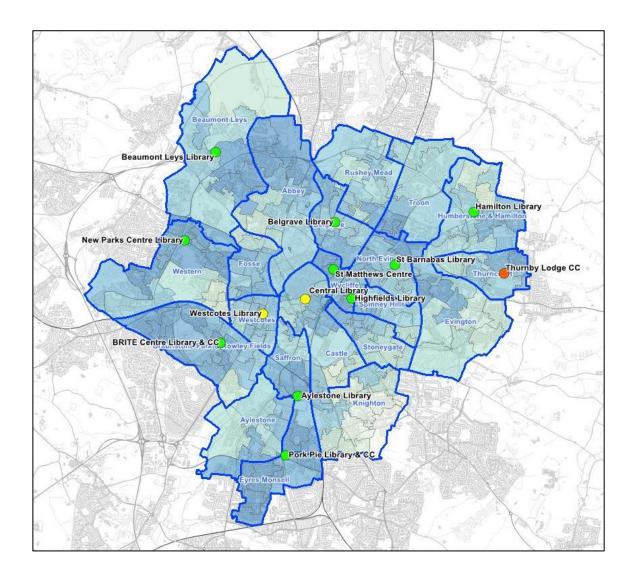
- Coleman Neighbourhood Centre
- Eyres Monsell Community Centre
- Evington Library
- Gilmorton Community Rooms
- Knighton Library
- Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre
- Rushey Mead Library
- Rushey Mead Recreation Centre
- Tudor Centre

The St Matthews Centre would be closed and the library would be re-located within the estate. Fosse Neighbourhood Centre would not be put forward for Community Asset Transfer due to the condition of the building and other disposal options would be explored.

<u>Current Dispersed Neighbourhood Services Model</u>



Multi-Service Centre Model proposed for consultation



The consultation proposals would support a multi-service centre model with additional investment, transformed services and technical enhancements to deliver additional benefits as follows:

- Self-Access after core staffed hours at suitable sites to extend opening hours and availability.
- Capital investment to further develop retained buildings as multi-service centres with a focus on wellbeing. The centres would act as one stop shops for multi-services including libraries, community rooms and adult learning facilities
- Review of the areas visited by the new Children's BookBus to focus on covering areas of greatest need.
- Provision of enhanced activity programmes providing activities and resources around our "universal offers" wellbeing centres. Our Needs Assessment work has identified a clear priority for providing activities to support health and wellbeing, support information and signposting needs, and more cultural and creative activities to bring people together.
- Extend our range and provision of online services and resources including our e-library
- Closer working with partners including the university libraries to provide additional access to study spaces and book stock for members of the public.
- Support community groups to take on the running of more services
- Development of volunteer opportunities to enhance the services we offer and to provide benefits to participants
- Relaunch our satellite libraries at identified children's centres to provide additional access to books for children and young families.
- Expanded Home Library Service linked to our volunteer offer to support housebound residents with door-to-door book deliveries wherever they live in the city

#### **Consultation response overview**

As part of the consultation Leicester City Council ran a public consultation from 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2025 to 29<sup>th</sup> June 2025 to identify their views on the proposals outlined above. Members of the public, stakeholders and staff members were asked for their views. A detailed questionnaire was available to complete online and on paper over a three month period from April – June 2025. A survey aimed at children and young people was also made available online in April 2025.

The period of consultation had several key parts

- Open public meetings 12 open meetings were held across the city (details can be seen in the Findings Report) with 1,053 attendees. The meetings were chaired by the Assistant Mayor for Health, Culture, Libraries and Community Centres and senior officers with a remit for the services in question. An interpreter was present at 2 of the meetings to assist attendees.
- Officer led drop in sessions 15 officer lead drop in sessions were held across the city (details can be seen in the Findings Report) with approximately 120 attendees.

- Main public survey The survey ran from Wednesday 2nd April 2025 to Sunday 29th June 2025. We received 4989 survey returns comprising of:
  - o 2591 online surveys
  - o 2,065 paper surveys
  - o 333 community language surveys (the survey was available in English, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali and Somali)
- **Children and young people's survey** The survey ran from Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025 until Sunday 29th June 2025. We received 1,366 survey returns.
- Ward Councillor Engagement Meetings Engagement meetings were held for all Ward Councillors in small ward groups.
- Stakeholder Meetings Stakeholders and community groups could request a meeting with officers and 41 were held.
- Young People's Council —a session was held at City Hall with members of the Young Peoples Council.
- **Group submissions & individual comments** 33 submissions/comments were received into the consultation email address outside of the survey.
- **Petitions** 6 petitions were received and details of these can be found in the Findings Report.

Leicester City Council's Neighbourhood Services management and project team has produced a consultation findings report which summarises the responses of the above mentioned activities and is available on the consultation website.

#### **Recommendations for Libraries and Community Centres**

The feedback from the consultation has been considered together with the latest service data to develop final recommendations for the libraries and community centres. As a result there are significant changes to the original proposals. The recommendations are as follows:

Twelve library multi-service centres would operate as hubs to support wellbeing by integrating a range of services provided by the council and its partners. The centres would provide library and community services to a wide catchment area with accessible transport routes. St Matthews Library and services would be relocated to St Matthews Children's, Young People and Family Centre as one of the twelve multi-service centres. Options would be explored for the future use of St Matthews Centre building once the services have relocated.

**Leicester Central Library** service would continue to deliver a broader offer, serving residents living in all areas of the city. A wide range of reading and cultural programmes will be developed to support the promotion of reading for pleasure, to bring communities together and to support informal learning and improve life chances.

Three further stand-alone libraries, previously proposed for community management, would be retained. Following feedback from the recent consultation exercise the council would continue to run Evington, Knighton and Rushey Mead Libraries. The staffed opening hours would be reduced. Knighton and Evington Libraries would continue to offer extended customer self-access hours outside of staffed times.

Two stand-alone community centres previously proposed for community management, Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre and Rushey Mead Recreation Centre would continue to be run by council. The council would work with the local community to improve the usage and financial sustainability of the centres.

A reduction in staffed opening hours in line with previous proposals at retained sites would enable the widest network of facilities to be sustained. The Central Library would be staffed for 45 hours per week. The five busiest multi-service centres would be staffed for 40 hours per week, with the seven less busy multi-service centres staffed for 30 hours per week. Standalone libraries would be staffed for 25 hours per week (Knighton and Evington Libraries) and 20 hours per week (Rushey Mead Library). The proposed pattern of opening hours has been amended to reflect the consultation feedback for each building. The total library opening hours currently and as recommended are as follows:

Opening hours	Current	Recommended
Staffed opening hours	754	525
Total opening hours (with self-access)	825	778

Following consultation the recommendations are:

- 15 statutory library service points will be open and staffed for at least one evening per week until 6pm or later to ensure people working a standard 9-5 week have access to the service.
- All statutory library service points will be open and staffed on Saturdays to ensure families are able to visit at the weekend outside of school and traditional working days
- All statutory library service points will be open on a range of mornings, afternoons and early evenings during weekdays to optimise access for the wider community

- The needs of groups who use the buildings have been considered wherever possible. Where groups do not have self-access or require staffed support their requirements have been considered within the context of the wider community
- Core activities such as children's toddler time sessions, homework help sessions and DWP job shop sessions have been accommodated within the recommended hours. These sessions support residents with protected characteristics including children in disadvantage and people living with disability

**Customer self-access systems** would be implemented at six additional library multi-service centres in line with previous proposals. Weekday 8am to 8pm opening would be supported by the introduction of library self-access systems to over and above the staffed opening hours. The investment would extend the current hours at six sites.

Six community centres would be made available for lease under the council's Community Asset Transfer policy. As per the previous proposals Braunstone Frith Recreation Centre, Coleman Neighbourhood Centre, Eyres Monsell Community Centre, Gilmorton Community Rooms, and Tudor Centre would no longer be run by the council. A sixth CAT opportunity would be offered at either Netherhall or Armadale Centre following feedback from community members that the vacant Armadale Centre would be better suited. A formal opportunity would be published with support for community organisations to develop a business case to take on the running of the six centres. Community groups would be supported to take on the running of more services.

**Fosse Neighbourhood Centre and Library** would close as per the previous proposal due to the condition of the building. Alice Hawkins Community Projects operating from the annex of the building would be supported to relocate elsewhere within Fosse ward.

**Staffing and operating costs** would be reduced with a revised staffing model reflecting the changes in service delivery and opening hours.

The Book Fund budget would be reduced by £30,000 from £415,000 to £385,000. This is a change to the previous proposals noting the retention of three standalone libraries.

**Community room hire charges** would be increased by 20 per cent over two years to support the operation of and financial viability of the remaining council run community centres.

**Capital investment** would be made to further develop and adapt retained buildings as multi-service centres including libraries, community rooms and adult learning facilities.

**Enhanced activity programmes** would be provided around our "Universal Offers" in multi-service centres, focused on health and wellbeing, information and signposting needs, and more cultural and creative activities to bring people together. The libraries reading programme and children's engagement activities would be prioritised to encourage reading for pleasure and to improve life chances from early years onwards.

**Online services and resources including the e-library** would continue to receive investment recognising the growth in this area and the convenience of 24/7 digital services for city residents.

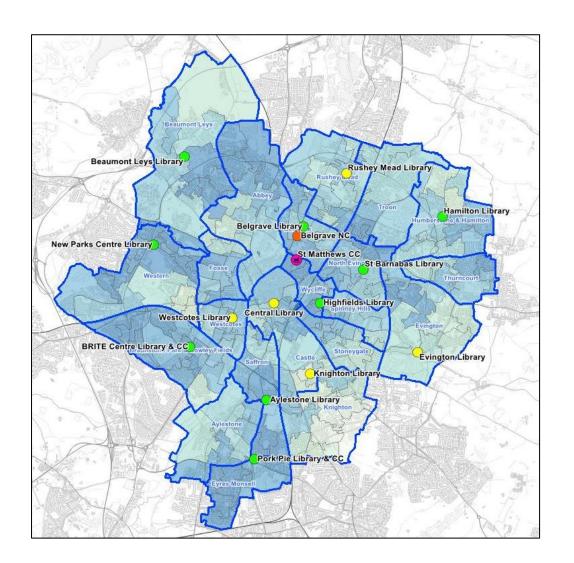
**Volunteer opportunities** would be developed to enhance and add value to the services we offer and to provide a range of benefits to participants.

**Small libraries** at identified children's centres would continue to be provided for additional access to books for children, and parents and carers with young families.

**The Home Library Service** linked to our volunteer offer would be expanded to support housebound residents with door-to-door book deliveries wherever residents are unable to leave their homes to access reading.

**The Children's BookBus** routes would be reviewed following a decision to enhance provision for children in areas of need, and in particular in Fosse ward following withdrawal from the Fosse Neighbourhood Centre

Recommended model of council run multi-service centres, libraries and community centres



# 2. Equality implications/obligations

Which aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) are likely be relevant to the proposal? In this question, consider both the current service and the proposed changes.

## a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- How does the proposal/service aim to remove barriers or disproportionate impacts for anyone with a particular protected characteristics compared with someone who does not share the same protected characteristics?
- Is this a relevant consideration? What issues could arise?

Libraries and Community Centres provide welcoming, neutral spaces for the widest possible range of people to come together. The recommendations include:

- Cultural and creative programmes to be delivered in multi-service centres with broad catchment areas, to celebrate the diversity of our local communities.
- Resources and support to overcome digital exclusion including lack of access to devices and internet service providers, and support to get online and access services for those who may be digitally excluded. Multi-service centres will review the provision of public access computers, study desk with Bring Your Own Device charging points and access to Wi-Fi, scanning and printing.
- Health and wellbeing activities including volunteering activities to bring people together and overcome loneliness and isolation
- A focus on children's reading programmes bringing children together from all communities and backgrounds
- Access to reading and information online through e-libraries and e-resources to provide access to residents 24/7 from any location.

The proposed model will reduce the number of community centre facilities we offer but will invest in the retained multi-service centres with a focus on wellbeing hubs. The retained buildings are fully accessible and are located on good bus routes in the centre of communities. The buildings are accessible for the majority of the city with 15 minutes of bus travel (including walking time) and available to all with 30 minutes of bus travel (including walking time).

The introduction of Self-Access after core staffed hours at six library sites will enable residents to access welcoming community facilities for longer and at more convenient times for some to meet, study and select books together.

## b. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups

- Does the proposal/service advance equality of opportunity for people?
- Identify inequalities faced by those with specific protected characteristic(s).
- Is this a relevant consideration? What issues could arise?

The recommendations affect all residents and service users across the city.

Current usage of our libraries by ethnicity demonstrates a close correlation with the ethnic make-up of the city as a whole. This is also replicated at local library level, see appendix 5.

Using the indices of multiple deprivation the city has pockets of high deprivation (see appendix 1). The proposals aim to ensure the most deprived areas of the city have good access to facilities.

Age is a consideration for inequalities faced by two groups (older people and children). There is disproportionately high usage of libraries by children and young people under 16yrs. Children may be less able to travel to use a local library. Many of the children responding to the under 16yrs survey said they used an after-school homework club, indicating they are visiting the library on their way home from school. Homework Clubs will be developed under the proposal to respond to broader needs around health and wellbeing and especially recognising the role the clubs play in providing a neutral, safe and welcoming space outside of school and home and have a role to play in boosting mental health. Whilst a homework club would no longer be available following the withdrawal from Fosse Neighbourhood Centre, homework clubs would be available at Westcotes Library (0.5 miles away) and New Parks Library (1.2 miles away).

The Community Services and Library Needs Assessment found that: "A sizeable proportion of Leicester children are understood to grow up in poverty, with related impacts on school readiness and future life outcomes. Libraries and community centres, alongside other public services, can play a role in helping children, young people and their families with these early year challenges." Under the recommendations the early years Book Start programme is retained through funding from the Family Hubs Programme with a focus on children aged 0-5yrs living in the most disadvantaged areas of the city.

Children living in deprived areas are affected by child poverty. Under the recommendations multi-service centres including library provision would be located in areas of need. A range of children's reading programmes will continue to be developed to include outreach programmes delivered through primary and secondary schools. The children's BookBus routes will be reviewed to focus on children in the most

disadvantaged areas considering any changes in local service provision and in particular the withdrawal from Fosse Library. Satellite libraries at local children's centres will be expanded to reach more children and young families in these areas. Outreach programmes will be prioritised under the transformed service to provide opportunities for all children to engage with reading for pleasure. Schemes such as Our Best Book, Our Best Picture Book and the Reading Rampage will continue to be delivered to children at participating primary and secondary schools.

Older people were over-represented in our primary research Needs Assessment survey with 27% of all respondents over the age of 65yrs. This was reflected in comments from older people living in deprived areas who said they visit community run groups at local facilities to improve physical health and overcome social isolation. Under the recommendations a programme will be set up to support community organisations to take on the running of community facilities where appropriate to develop wider community benefits. The Council will work with groups meeting to socialise at Community Centres to support their continued usage where possible and to support them to explore alternative arrangements where necessary. This may include signposting to alternative council and non-council run community facilities.

Some Community Centres and Libraries have disproportionately high use by people from specific ethnic backgrounds. For example Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre and Rushey Mead Recreation Centre have very high use by people describing themselves as Asian/British Asian many of whom are Gujarati speakers and over 65yrs. The consultation findings show that the protected characteristics of both age and ethnicity are strong considerations at these two sites and that as a result both centres are extremely well used. The recommendations are to retain both community centres recognising that there would be insufficient capacity at this time for a community organisation to take on the running by introducing an additional offer which would risk displacing existing users.

## c. Foster good relations between different groups

- Does the service contribute to good relations or to broader community cohesion objectives?
- How does it achieve this aim?
- Is this a relevant consideration? What issues could arise?

Our libraries and multi service centres provide an opportunity for local residents to come into contact with and potentially engage with other residents from different backgrounds and with different protected characteristics to themselves. This opportunity to engage with diverse members of the local community raises awareness of distinct groups who share similar interests and concerns to them and helps to foster good relations between them and enhance community cohesion. Under the recommendations all retained facilities will offer shared community space and the majority with community rooms for hire at a significant concessionary rate for community groups.

The recommendations provide support for community groups to take on the running of 6 sites to provide additional community benefit. There is evidence from our 11 existing Community Asset Transfer buildings to show that usage of local facilities can be increased and with a wider range of local organisations accessing services due to improved community networks and a greater sense of ownership.

In the event of a community asset transfer bids would be assessed to ensure community impact criteria are met with provision made to accommodate existing and new groups through the lease.

Under the recommendations the service will prioritise a "Culture and Creativity" offer to provide events and activities involving arts And crafts and cultural celebrations to provide more opportunities for people to come together. This will be supported through work with a wide range of partners to provide added value activities in shared community spaces, and through an expanded volunteering network to provide an opportunities for people from different background to work together on community and library programmes.

The service will continue to provide a Ward and Community Engagement Team, to support ward councillors in the running of a ward funding scheme in all 21 city wards, providing small grants to fund community benefit projects led by local groups and residents. Ward officers promote opportunities for cross community projects at the multi-service centres and at other local venues.

### 3. Who is affected?

Outline who could be affected, and how they could be affected by the proposal/service change. Include people who currently use the service and those who could benefit from, but do not currently access the service. Where possible include data to support this.

The population of the city is diverse and differs across the city – particularly in regard to ethnicity (along with use of English as their main language), religion or belief, and to a lesser degree, age (some differences in % of over 65 year olds). The chart below presents an overview profile of relevant statistics for the 2021 census:

Total Population	368,581	%
Age		
Age 0-14	72,729	19.7%
Age 15-64	252,347	68.5%
Age 65+	43,505	11.8%
Place of birth		
Born in UK	217,079	58.9%
Born in Middle East and Asia	79,373	21.5%
Born in Europe	34,828	9.4%
Born in Africa	33,549	9.1%
Born in The Americas and the Caribbean	3,244	0.9%
Born in Antarctica and Oceana	497	0.1%
Other	1	0.0%
English Language		
Main language English	248,771	67.5%
Main language is not English: Can speak English very well	36,216	9.8%

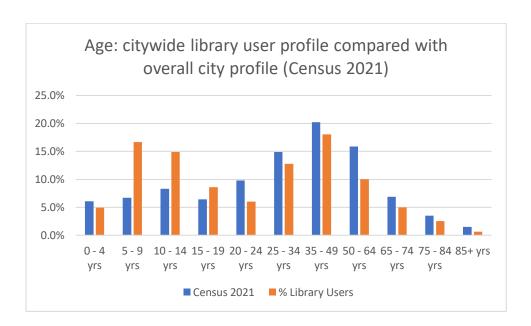
Main language is not English: Can speak English well	38,545	10.5%
Main language is not English: Cannot speak English well	24,541	6.7%
Main language is not English: Cannot speak English	7,499	2.0%
Ethnicity		
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	159,977	43.4%
White	150,657	40.9%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	28,766	7.8%
Other Ethnic Group	15,272	4.1%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	13,899	3.8%
Religion		
Christian	91,161	24.7%
Muslim	86,443	23.5%
No Religion	84,607	23.0%
Hindu	65,821	17.9%

Religion not stated	20,509	5.6%
Sikh	16,451	4.5%
Other religion	2,072	0.6%
Buddhist	1,181	0.3%
Jewish	326	0.1%
Disability		
Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to- day activities limited a lot	25,692	6.97%
Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to- day activities limited a little	31,456	8.53%
Not disabled under the Equality Act: Has long term physical or mental health condition but day-to-day activities are not limited	17,029	4.62%
Not disabled under the Equality Act: No long term physical or mental health conditions	294,394	79.87%

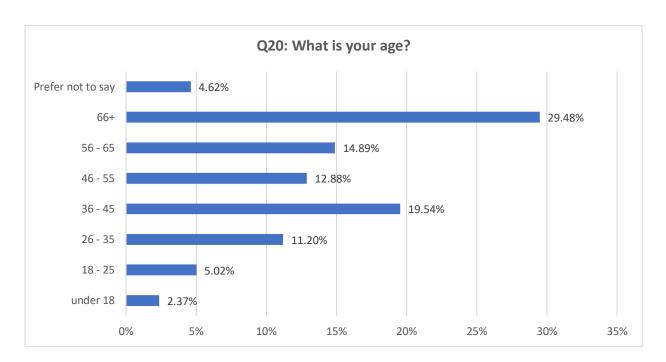
Our library membership records show there are currently 55,000 active users of the library service, although this does not include customers without a library card, or who have not engaged with our systems recently but may have attended events and activities.

Our records show there is disproportionately high use of the service by children and young people aged 0 - 19yrs, and particularly between the ages of 5 - 16yrs, compared to the Census data for the city as a whole.

Age category	Leicester (Census 2021)	Active Library Users
0 - 4 yrs	6.1%	4.9%
5 - 9 yrs	6.7%	16.7%
10 - 14 yrs	8.3%	14.9%
15 - 19 yrs	6.4%	8.6%
20 - 24 yrs	9.8%	6.0%
25 - 34 yrs	14.9%	12.8%
35 - 49 yrs	20.2%	18.0%
50 - 64 yrs	15.9%	10.0%
65 - 74 yrs	6.9%	5.0%
75 - 84 yrs	3.5%	2.5%
85+ yrs	1.5%	0.6%



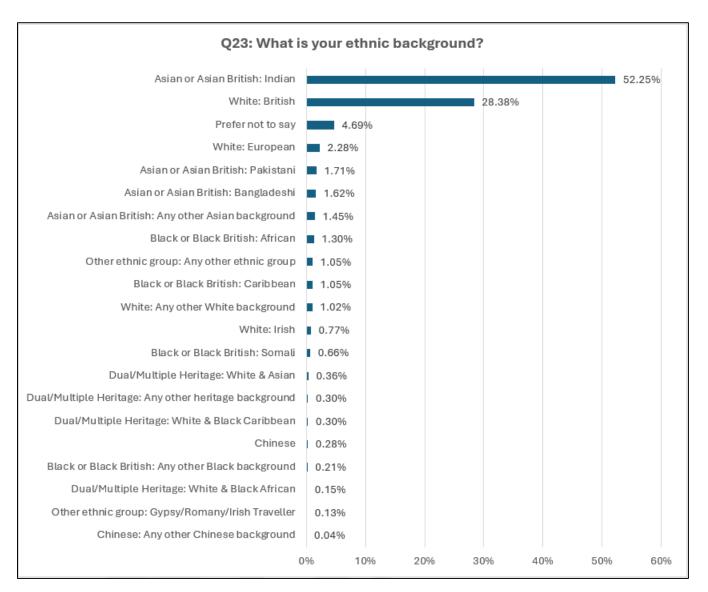
Respondents to the public consultation were asked to indicate their age by selecting from set age bands. The largest proportion were aged 66 and over (29%):



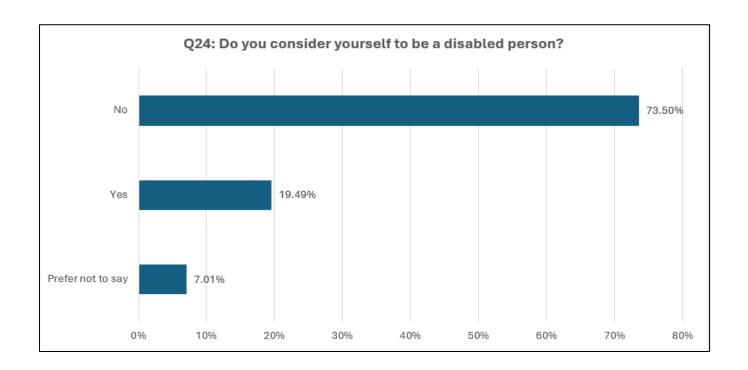
Our records show that there are disproportionately more female library users than male users:

	% of library	
Gender	users	
Not stated	0.2%	
Female	54.6%	
Male	45.1%	
Transgender	0.1%	

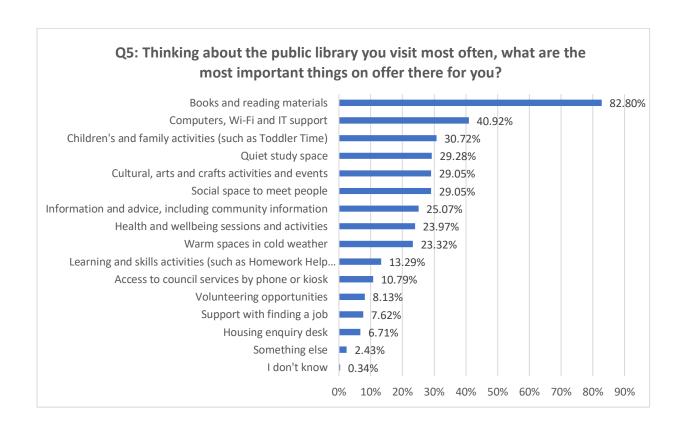
Respondents to the public consultation were asked to indicate their ethnic background. The largest proportion were Asian or Asian British: Indian (52.25%) followed by White: British (28.38%):



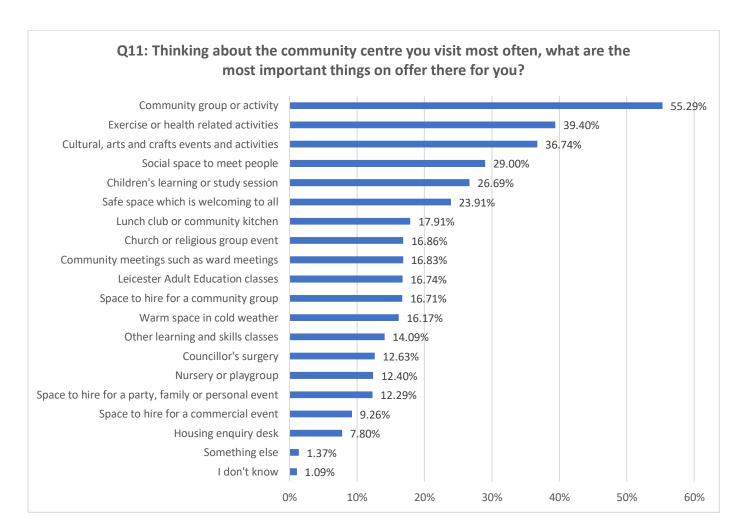
Respondents to the public consultation were asked if they considered themselves to be a disabled person:



Library users who responded to the consultation survey questionnaire identified the following services as most important to them. Under the recommendations all libraries would remain, with reduced staffed opening hours, with the exception of Fosse Neighbourhood Centre which is also nearby to New Parks and Westcotes library. The service will ensure that toddler time sessions and study support continue but may have times changed.



Those who responded to the survey said the most important reasons for using community centres were as followed.



Residents, partners, stakeholders and community groups could be affected by the recommendations in the following ways:

• Groups and individuals meeting and participating in community activities at Community Centres. Some users may need to relocate to another building if the building is proposed for alternative use – travel distance may be an issue. Some users may need to use buildings which are run by non-Council organisations with a change to terms and conditions of use, including higher charges for hire of community space.

- People using local libraries which are planned for a reduction in hours. Those most affected may include older people who are less mobile, and children and young people under 16 years who are disproportionately higher users of libraries. These users may need to make more use of online services and visit at different at times potentially utilising Self-Service for those over 16.
- Local residents who do not currently use the above services but who may wish to so in the future

# 4. Information used to inform the equality impact assessment

- What data, research, or trend analysis have you used?
- Describe how you have your information and what it tells you
- Are there any gaps or limitations in the information you currently hold, and how you have sought to address this? E.g. proxy data, national trends, equality monitoring etc.

The Needs Assessment was undertaken by an independent consultant, Activist, between July – September 2023 with a full findings report completed in January 2024. The primary research consisted of public, stakeholder and staff engagement including:

- Engagement questionnaire available online and on paper for 12 weeks. The questionnaire was available in 5 community languages and in additional languages upon request.
- Focus groups held in 12 locations across the city and focusing on 5 themes. This included a young persons' focus group.
- Stakeholder interviews with internal and external stakeholders.
- A young persons survey undertaken online and across the city for one month.
- Two Neighbourhood Services staff workshops.

A Secondary research report was produced to gather information about service usage, city and ward profiles, and benchmarking data with near neighbour local authorities.

- Demographic information for the area taken from the most recent Census data (2021) was used to understand the profile of the city's population.
- The Index of Multiple Deprivation map produced by the Public Health Division of Leicester City Council was used to identify levels of deprivation at ward and super output area level.
- Service usage data was used to ascertain the levels of use for each service. The data includes:
- Total use (annual visits) for each building

- Full timetable of activities delivered at each building and in each room, and any protected characteristics relating to user groups
- · Numbers attending each type of activity
- Service level data relating to ethnic background, disability, age and gender.
- Bus routes, walking distances and catchment area mapping to assess the accessibility of sites.
- Analysis of age, gender, BME group and disability information supplied by respondents to the public engagement exercise
- Visitors survey looking at how many customers are in the building during certain times
- Post code survey at Community centres
- PC Usage and Stock Issues at libraries

Both the Public Engagement Report and Secondary Research Report are available here:

public-engagement-report.pdf

Secondary Research Report

A full public consultation on draft proposals was undertaken between April – June 2025 with a full findings report completed in September 2025. The methodology and response rates is outlined below.

## 5. Consultation

Have you undertaken consultation about the proposal with people who use the service or people affected, people who may potentially use the service and other stakeholders? What did they say about:

- What is important to them regarding the current service?
- How does (or could) the service meet their needs? How will they be affected by the proposal? What potential impacts did they identify because of their protected characteristic(s)?
- Did they identify any potential barriers they may face in accessing services/other opportunities that meet their needs?

#### Public Engagement (July – September 2023)

An extensive public engagement exercise has been undertaken across the city. An online and paper survey exercise was made available from 3rd July 2023 to 24th September 2023 for which we received 2851 responses to the survey (from a main and young people's survey)). We have also undertaken:

- 12 citywide public focus groups (including a young people's group)
- Key internal & external stakeholder interviews
- Staff workshops

The key findings of the main engagement exercise were as follows:

- Over half of respondents (56.75%) cited cost of living as their greatest concern in life
- Over half of respondents (52.82%) want to be more physically active
- 41.84% of respondents visit a library at least weekly
- With regard to library services, over half of respondents (54.87%) cited books and reading materials as the most important thing on offer. Followed by Computers, Wi-Fi and IT support (23.46%) then a social space to meet people (22.39%)
- 10.34% of respondents use a public computer at least weekly, 6.62% of respondents use a printer and 3.97% use a scanner
- Better promotion of what is on offer is the main thing which would encourage people to visit a local library more often
- 54.32% of respondents have either never or rarely visited a community centre in the last 5 years
- With regard to Community Centres 44.91% of respondents cited either a space to meet people or to attend a community group/activity as the most important things on offer
- A wider range of activities and events is the main thing which would encourage people to visit a community centre more often

The key findings of the young people's engagement exercise were as follows:

- Majority of responders between 11-16 years old
- 92.37% spoke English at home and 60.27% spoke Gujarati
- Watching videos, TV or films, spending time with family and reading books were the most common ways of how free time is spent
- 83.76% were happy with where they live
- 29.55% would like more parks and play areas
- 34.25% (By September) had visited a local library since the end of the summer holidays
- Only 6.07% had never been to a local library
- 74.17% said their local library is a friendly place and 70.84% said there are lots of books to choose from
- 81.02% borrowed books to take home from their local library and 66.14% stayed to read books at the library
- 36.99% said they would go to the library more if it had better books and 31.31% said they would go more if it was closer to home or school

Respondents to the survey were asked to consider approaches taken by other local authorities for transforming libraries and community centres. The responses were as follows:

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	Total	Percent
Have more multi-service centres to bring community centres, libraries and local services together	1014	58.78%
Involving community organisations more in running services	621	36.00%
Reviewing opening hours to match peak demand	596	34.55%

Making more use of customer self-service in public libraries	375	21.74%
Providing more services online	294	17.04%
Making more use of volunteers	377	21.86%
None of the above	211	12.23%
Other	91	5.28%

A full primary research report containing the findings of the engagement exercises is available here <u>public-engagement-report.pdf</u>

The public engagement exercise and primary and secondary research reports informed the development of draft proposals for consultation. A full public consultation exercise was undertaken on proposals and is used to update this Equality Impact Assessment.

#### Public Consultation (2nd April 2025 to 29th June 2025)

An extensive public consultation exercise has been undertaken across the city. An online and paper survey exercise was made available from 2nd April 2025 to Sunday 29th June 2025.

- Main public survey The survey ran from Wednesday 2nd April 2025 to Sunday 29th June 2025. We received 4989 survey returns comprising of:
  - o 2591 online surveys
  - o 2,065 paper surveys
  - o 333 community language surveys (the survey was available in English, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali and Somali)
- **Children and young people's survey** The survey ran from Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025 until Sunday 29th June 2025. We received 1,366 survey returns.

- **Open public meetings** 12 open meetings were held across the city (details can be seen in the Findings Report) with 1,053 attendees. The meetings were chaired by the Assistant Mayor for Health, Culture, Libraries and Community Centres and senior officers with a remit for the services in question. An interpreter was present at 2 of the meetings to assist attendees.
- Ward Councillor Engagement Meetings Engagement meetings were held for all Ward Councillors in small ward groups.
- Officer led drop in sessions 15 officer lead drop in sessions were held across the city (details can be seen in the Findings Report) with approximately 120 attendees.
- Stakeholder Meetings Stakeholders and community groups could request a meeting with officers and 41 were held.
- Young people drop in sessions Were held at Belgrave and Knighton Libraries along with a session at City Hall for the Young Peoples Council.
- **Group submissions & individual comments** 33 submissions/comments were received into the consultation email address outside of the survey.
- **Petitions** 6 petitions were received and details of these can be found in the Findings Report.

Headline findings from the consultation were as follows and a full findings report is available on our webpages.

#### **Main Survey**

Q2: 44.90% of respondents visit a library every week

Q3: Belgrave Library was the most visited library (32.25% of respondents) followed by Knighton Library (17.08%)

**Q4:** The Central Library was the highest selected alternative use library (26.52% of respondents)

**Q5:** Most important things on offer at a library:

- Books and reading material 82.80%
- Computers, Wi-Fi and IT support 40.92%
- Childrens and family activities 30.72%

**Q6:** 66.65% of respondents walked to a library.

Q7: Of respondents who don't use a library 38.71% said it was because they can access what they need online such as eBooks.

**Q8:** 30.67% of respondents visit a community centre every week followed by 22.75% who never visit one.

**Q9:** 50.79% of respondents visited Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre most often followed by 15.29% who visited Rushey Mead Recreation Centre.

Q10: Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre was also the highest selected alternative use community centre (36.19% of respondents)

**Q11:** Most important things on offer at a community centre:

- Community group or activity 55.29%
- Exercise or health related activities 39.40%
- Cultural, arts and crafts events 36.74%

Q12: 39.35% of respondents walked to a community centre.

Q13: A total of 1,101 respondents out of 4,989 answered this question. The most cited reason respondents didn't use a community centre was "I don't need to use one" (38.7%).

Q14a: 61.20% of respondents said the proposed changes would make it much harder to visit a library.

**Q14b**: 47.12% of respondents said the proposed changes would make it much harder to visit a community centre.

Q14c: 44.10% of respondents said the proposed changes would make it much harder to access council services.

Q15: 39.21% of respondents said the proposed opening hours would be less convenient.

**Q16** and **Q17** were open questions and encouraged respondents to tell us about any positive/negative benefits of the proposals as well as asking for any new solutions that should be considered. Full analysis of these questions can be found in the Findings Report.

Q18: 267 respondents said they were part of a community group might be interested in taking on the running of a library or community centre

**Q19:** 4225 valid home post codes were provided by respondents and a breakdown and map of which wards these came from is available in the Findings Report.

**Q20:** The largest proportion of respondents were aged 66 and over (32.8%), followed by 36–45 (18.9%) and 46–55 (15.7%).

**Q21:** 63.5% of respondents selected their sex as Female.

**Q22:** In response to the question 'Is your gender identity the same as your sex registered at birth?' 63.1% of respondents selected 'Yes' and 34.9% of respondents choosing not to answer.

**Q23:** 52.25% of respondents who answered selected 'Asian or Asian British: Indian' as their ethnic background followed by 28.38% who selected 'White British'.

Q24: 73.50% of respondents who answered considered themselves not to be disabled.19.49% considered themselves disabled.

#### Young People's Survey

Q1: Respondents were asked to indicate their gender, and of the 1,364 (99.85%) responses, 49.34% identified as girls, 46.71% as boys.

**Q2:** The highest range of age of respondents was '14 or older' at 28.07% followed by '8 or younger' at 20.21%.

Q3: 39.97% of respondents visit a library in Leicester more than once a week 39.97% followed by 18.30% who visit once a month.

**Q4:** The most visited library was Belgrave Library by 55.77% of respondents followed by Knighton Library by 12.61% and Rushey Mead Library by 10.45%.

**Q5:** The most common thing done at a library was 'borrowing books to take home' by 78.76% of respondents followed by 'Reading books while I was there' by 65.95%.

**Q6:** 64.28% of respondents walked to the library.

**Q7:** Respondents were asked who they usually go to the library with. The most common answer was "with family" (33.60%), followed by "with an adult" (32.43%), "with friends" (29.65%), "by myself" (22.04%) and "with school" (18.23%).

**Q8:** Out of 231 respondents who said they don't visit a library 29.44% said the reason they don't go to a library is 'they can get what they need at home or school' and 25.97% said 'there's nothing at the library for me anymore'.

**Q9:** 45.28% of respondents don't go to community centres. Of the ones that do, 41.35% visit Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre.

Q10: 'Education classes or tutoring' and 'Sports or martial arts' were the main reason young people visited a community centre.

**Q11:** Of the young people who visit a community centre 71.43% walk.

Q12: 64.37% of young people don't visit a community centre because 'I don't know what there is to do'.

Q13: 35.44% of respondents said our ideas would make visiting a library 'much harder' and 22.33% said it would be 'much easier'.

Q14: 30.70% of respondents said our ideas would make visiting a community centre 'much harder' and 29.59% said 'it wouldn't make much difference'.

Q15: 28.14% of respondents said the new opening hours would mean 'I wouldn't be able to go there anymore' and 24.34% said 'it would be the same'.

**Q16:** Asked for the thoughts and ideas about the proposals and if the respondents have any other ideas about the future of our libraries and community centres. The question was an open question and a full analysis of these questions can be found in the Findings Report.

# 6. Potential Equality Impact

Based on your understanding of the service area, any specific evidence you may have on people who use the service and those who could potentially use the service and the findings of any consultation you have undertaken, use the table below to explain which individuals or community groups are likely to be affected by the proposal because of their protected characteristic(s). Describe what the impact is likely to be, how significant that impact is for individual or group well-being, and what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove negative impacts. This could include indirect impacts, as well as direct impacts.

Looking at potential impacts from a different perspective, this section also asks you to consider whether any other particular groups, especially vulnerable groups, are likely to be affected by the proposal. List the relevant groups that may be affected, along with the impact, potential risks and mitigating actions that would reduce or remove any negative impacts. These groups do not have to be defined by their protected characteristic(s).

## **Protected characteristics**

## Impact of proposal:

Describe the impact of the proposal on people because of their protected characteristic and how they may be affected. Why is this protected characteristic relevant to the proposal? How does the protected characteristic determine/shape the potential impact of the proposal? This may also include **positive impacts** which support the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

## Risk of disproportionate negative impact:

How likely is it that people with this protected characteristic will be disproportionately negatively affected? How great will that impact be on their well-being? What will determine who will be negatively affected?

#### Mitigating actions:

For disproportionate negative impacts on protected characteristic/s, what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove the impact? You may also wish to include actions which support the positive aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations. All actions identified here should also be included in the action plan at the end of this EIA.

## a) Age

Indicate which age group/s is/ are most affected, either specify general age group (children, young people, working aged people or older people) or specific age bands.

## What is the impact of the proposal on age?

A building by building breakdown of potential equality impact is attached as appendix 2. This section will focus on cross cutting service impacts.

Older people and children may be impacted by the distance they need to travel to alternative community facilities; the nearest sites have been listed in appendix 2.

A reduction in staffed opening hours could lead to times of Toddler Time and Study Support sessions being moved.

A reduction in staffed opening hours could lead to older people being unable to access library services at a time which suits them.

Younger people could also be impacted by withdrawal from sites with ball courts (Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre, Eyres Monsell Community centre, Coleman Neighbourhood Centre)

#### What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on age?

Overall the risk is assessed as low due to a range of mitigations which will be put in place under the proposals. Key areas for consideration are:

**Older People**: The proposals may lead to issues of social isolation for people unable or unwilling to travel to access services elsewhere. A higher proportion of community centre users in particular are older people.

**Young children:** Young children aged 0 - 4 years may be impacted as families with young children have to travel to different sites to access services due to changes to opening hours. This may result in some young children having reducing engagement with books and reading and in particular with book sharing with their parents and carers. Some mothers and toddlers may be unable to attend a Toddler Time (under 5's) session at a local library.

Some community centres are currently hired by Pre-schools. These include Coleman Neighbourhood Centre, St Matthews Centre, Netherhall Community Centre and Tudor Centre. These pre-schools may need to relocate impacting local families.

**Children**: Children may be unable to visit a local library so frequently and/or may be unable to attend a homework club. This may have an impact on children's learning, especially with regard to reading for pleasure which is associated with improved life chances, and for studying and socialising. Children aged 5 – 16 years are disproportionately high users of community libraries in the city.

## What are the mitigating actions?

A reduction in facilities will enable reallocation of the budget to improve the service at better used and better located sites and make the Neighbourhood Services offer more sustainable in the long term for all age groups in Leicester.

Self-Access will be introduced at 6 further libraries which will allow 8am – 8pm access for inducted members who are over 16.

Online services will be expanded to provide access to e-books, e-audiobooks, magazines and newspapers in digital format, at any time and from anywhere.

Council officers will collaborate with all affected community groups to help them find alternative space for community activities where needed

The BookBus offer will be reviewed to ensure children living in areas of high disadvantage continue to receive a library service.

**Older People**: We will work with existing community groups to support their continued operation in the future. A programme will be put in place to support community organisations to take on the running of community centres where suitable. Existing community groups and room hire charges will be protected under the terms of any asset transfers. Alternative community venues have been mapped so that community groups can be signposted to these providers should their centre become unavailable. The proposals have been changed following consultation feedback to retain the two busiest community centres recognising the very limited capacity for community organisations to deliver additional income generating services at these sites.

Older people may be impacted by the recommendation to increase community room hire rates by 20%. This has been considered and will be phased over two years to provide time for community groups to review their subscriptions and funding models.

**Young children:** At Fosse Centre Library We will signpost parents to alternative under 5's groups in nearby libraries, or to other provision in the local area. The children's BookBus will visit local nurseries and pre-school settings to deliver book sharing and storytelling sessions. We will work with partners including LCC Early Years to provide alternative book collections for young children in some Children, Young People and Family Centres.

Children: Multi-service centres including library provision will be located in areas of need. A range of children's reading programmes will continue to be developed to include outreach programmes delivered through primary and secondary schools. The children's BookBus routes will be reviewed to focus on children in the most disadvantaged areas considering any changes in local service provision. Satellite libraries at local children's centres will be expanded to reach more children and young families in these areas. Outreach programmes will be prioritised under the transformed service to provide opportunities for all children to engage with reading for pleasure. Schemes such as Our Best Book, Our Best Picture Book and the Reading Rampage will continue to be delivered to children at participating primary and secondary schools.

We will signpost parents and carers at Fosse Library to alternative under 5's groups in nearby libraries, or to other provision in the local area. The children's BookBus will visit local nurseries and pre-school settings to deliver book sharing and storytelling sessions. BookBus route will be reviewed for access by young families in Fosse ward. We will work with partners including LCC Early Years to provide alternative book collections for young children in some Children, Young People and Family Centres.

## b) Disability

A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to conduct normal day-to-day activities. If specific impairments are affected by the proposal, specify which these are. Our standard categories are on our equality monitoring form – physical impairment, sensory impairment, mental health condition, learning disability, long standing illness, or health condition.

#### What is the impact of the proposal on disability?

A building by building breakdown of potential equality impact is attached as appendix 2. This section will focus on cross cutting service impacts.

Some disabled people may be impacted by the distance they need to travel to alternative provision because of mobility issues. Access to buildings and building features will also need to be considered and other barriers that prevent disabled people accessing services

Some special interest disability groups meet regularly at community centres and libraries and may be affected by withdrawal of services from some buildings.

## What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on disability?

Closure of Neighbourhood Services buildings or relocation of services could have a disproportionate negative impact on users with a disability, especially those who take part in regular activities at a specific site near their home.

## What are the mitigating actions?

All retained Multi-Service Centres are fully accessible for a wide range of disabilities including wheelchair users. IT users are able to use accessibility tools which can be demonstrated by staff. Services aim to ensure inclusive access to all protected characteristics and staff will continue to receive training to be ensure awareness of the widest range of needs and the tools available to support these.

Investment in the retained centres will include any additional accessibility requirements above and beyond the current full compliance of the centres with reference to the wider catchment and incoming communities

We will work with any affected community groups to signpost and support them to relocate to appropriate alternative settings where necessary. Alternative community room hire providers have been mapped for all facilities.

We will signpost users of Fosse Library to alternative nearby libraries, or to other provision in the local area.

## c) Gender reassignment

Indicate whether the proposal has potential impact on trans men or trans women, and if so, which group is affected. a trans person is someone who proposes to, starts, or has completed a process to change his or her gender. A person does not need to be under medical supervision to be protected.

## What is the impact of the proposal on gender reassignment?

A building by building breakdown of potential equality impact is attached as appendix 2. This section will focus on cross cutting service impacts.

At this stage none known

## What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on gender reassignment?

Currently there is no evidence to support that this protected characteristic is likely to be negatively impacted.

## What are the mitigating actions?

Services aim to ensure inclusive access to all protected characteristics and staff will be trained to be aware of not stereotyping or discriminating against anyone based on their protected characteristics

## d) Marriage and civil partnership

Please note that the under the Public Sector Equality Duty this protected characteristic applies to the first general duty of the Act, eliminating unlawful discrimination, only. The focus within this is eliminating discrimination against people that are married or in a civil partnership with regard specifically to employment.

## What is the impact of the proposal on marriage and civil partnership?

A building by building breakdown of potential equality impact is attached as appendix 2. This section will focus on cross cutting service impacts.

At this stage none known

## What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on marriage and civil partnership?

Currently there is no evidence to support that this protected characteristic is likely to be negatively impacted.

## What are the mitigating actions?

Services aim to ensure inclusive access to all protected characteristics and staff will be trained to be aware of not stereotyping or discriminating against anyone based on their protected characteristics

## e) Pregnancy and maternity

Does the proposal treat someone unfairly because they are pregnant, breastfeeding or because they have recently given birth.

## What is the impact of the proposal on pregnancy and maternity?

There is no known impact on pregnancy.

There may be an impact on maternity with regard to the availability of local library under 5's groups where libraries are proposed for a reduction in hours.

There may be an impact on maternity with regard to the availability of local pre-school settings where these are hosted in community centres which are proposed for withdrawal.

## What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on pregnancy and maternity?

The risk is considered low due to the availability of alternative providers and services.

## What are the mitigating actions?

The retained facilities have adequate access for pushchairs and prams and there are baby changing facilities available. Most Under 5s sessions will continue at the same times.

We will signpost parents and carers at Fosse Library to alternative under 5's groups in nearby libraries, or to other provision in the local area. The children's BookBus will visit local nurseries and pre-school settings to deliver book sharing and storytelling sessions. BookBus route will be reviewed for access by young families in Fosse ward. We will work with partners including LCC Early Years to provide alternative book collections for young children in some Children, Young People and Family Centres.

## f) Race

Race refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. A racial group can be made up of two or more distinct racial groups, for example Black Britons, British Asians, British Sikhs, British Jews, Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

#### What is the impact of the proposal on race?

A building by building breakdown of potential equality impact is attached as appendix 2. This section will focus on cross cutting service impacts.

By offering buildings to be run by community groups this will encourage the mixing of people of different race and enhance community cohesion.

Customers whose first language is not English may have difficulty understanding new online information

## What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on race?

Some facilities have a disproportionately higher use by individuals and by communities from specific backgrounds.

For people unable to speak English they may have an issue accessing the enhanced online offer.

## What are the mitigating actions?

All Neighbourhood Services facilities, in particular the multi-service centres, libraries and community centres retained under the proposals, are welcoming and accessible to people from all backgrounds and communities.

We will signpost and support community groups who may be impacted by the withdrawal from specific centres to access alternative spaces, either in convenient LCC multi-service centres, or in spaces run by other providers. We have mapped alternative community spaces around each facility to support this process.

We also work with existing and local community organisations to develop capacity for the community organisations to take on the running of local facilities which are no longer required by the Council, with a focus on retention of local groups.

Services will ensure access to translators is accessible where possible.

Services aim to ensure inclusive access to all protected characteristics and staff will be trained to be aware of not stereotyping or discriminating against anyone based on their protected characteristics.

## g) Religion or belief

Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition. This must be a belief and not just an opinion or viewpoint based on the present state of information available and;

- be about a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour
- attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion, and importance, and
- be worthy of respect in a democratic society, not incompatible with human dignity and not in conflict with fundamental rights of others. For example, Holocaust denial, or the belief in racial superiority are not protected.

Are your services sensitive to different religious requirements e.g., times a customer may want to access a service, religious days and festivals and dietary requirements

#### What is the impact of the proposal on religion or belief?

A building by building breakdown of potential equality impact is attached as appendix 2. This section will focus on cross cutting service impacts.

By offering buildings to be run by community groups this will encourage the mixing of people of different religion or belief and enhance community cohesion.

Faith based groups who use community spaces in any of the community centres which will cease to be operated by the council may be displaced.

#### What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on religion or belief?

Religious groups may be displaced from their current meeting spaces in community centres.

## What are the mitigating actions?

The risk of negative impact on religion or belief is considered low, as the recommendations only impact on the availability of meeting space in some locations. We will signpost and support community groups who may be impacted by the withdrawal from specific centres to access

alternative spaces, either in convenient LCC multi-service centres, or in spaces run by other providers. We have mapped alternative community spaces around each facility to support this process.

We also work with existing and local community organisations to develop capacity for the community organisations to take on the running of local facilities which are no longer required by the Council, with a focus on retention of local groups.

## h) Sex

Indicate whether this has potential impact on either males or females.

## What is the impact of the proposal on sex?

A building by building breakdown of potential equality impact is attached as appendix 2. This section will focus on cross cutting service impacts.

Popular light exercise classes at some community centres are gender specific. There is high demand on space from both groups.

Overall there is higher use of libraries by females (55%) than by males (45%). This is generally the case for library activity groups (crafting, knit and natter etc) and also for book borrowing for those aged over 16 years. However use of public access computers is higher for males than for females.

## What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on sex?

Currently there is no evidence to support that this protected characteristic is likely to be disproportionately negatively impacted.

## What are the mitigating actions?

N/A

## i) Sexual orientation

Indicate if there is a potential impact on people based on their sexual orientation. The Act protects heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual people.

## What is the impact of the proposal on sexual orientation?

A building by building breakdown of potential equality impact is attached as appendix 2. This section will focus on cross cutting service impacts.

At this stage none known

#### What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on sexual orientation?

Currently there is no evidence to support that this protected characteristic is likely to be negatively impacted.

## What are the mitigating actions?

Services aim to ensure inclusive access to all protected characteristics and staff will be trained to be aware of not stereotyping or discriminating against anyone based on their protected characteristics.

# 7. Summary of protected characteristics

## a. Summarise why the protected characteristics you have commented on, are relevant to the proposal?

Age is important due to the disproportionately high number of people under 16 years who use the library service. Any reduction in opening hours at local libraries should consider the impact on children's access to reading for pleasure, the role of books and reading in improving life chances and the positive impact of library homework clubs and social spaces on children's mental health. A range of mitigations are proposed to reduce any negative impact from the recommendations on children, including a review of the Book Bus routes and stops and closer working with Children, Young People and Family Centres. Feedback on opening hours has informed change to the recommended hours, to ensure wherever possible that Toddler Time and Study Support sessions can take place at the same times. Where self-access is implemented children under the age of 16 years may use the library only when accompanied by an inducted adult library member. There is a potential impact on year 11 children studying for their GCSE exams and requiring access to the library to support their study. To ensure equality of opportunity all year 11 children aged 15 or 16 years will be able to be inducted into the self-access programme. Staffed opening hours patterns have been configured at all sites to ensure weekly after school and Saturday availability.

**Disability** is important when considering access and travel to community centres and libraries for groups and individuals who identify one or more disabilities. We have mapped public transport routes and times, and our research shows that other sites are available to most of the city via bus or walking.

Investment in retained multi-service centres will need to focus on flexible and accessible design for all groups. Understanding special requirements to accommodate the wider range of physical and mental disabilities will be crucial.

Race, Religion or belief and sex are important due to the potential impact of recommendations on community groups hiring space, for example for prayer groups or gender specific exercise groups. Mitigation will include signposting to other council or external providers and also the possibility of transfer of facilities to the local community. The consultation will help to understand specific issues which may arise from the proposals.

b. Summarise why the protected characteristics you have not commented on, are not relevant to the proposal? Click or tap here to enter text.

There is no evidence to support that the following protected characteristics will be impacted by the recommendations; Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity and sexual orientation. All of our services aim to ensure inclusive access to all protected characteristics and staff will be trained to be aware of not stereotyping or discriminating against anyone based on their protected characteristics.

# 8. Armed Forces Covenant Duty

The Covenant Duty is a legal obligation on certain public bodies to 'have due regard' to the principles of the Covenant and requires decisions about the development and delivery of certain services to be made with conscious consideration of the needs of the Armed Forces community.

When Leicester City Council exercises a relevant function, within the fields of healthcare, education, and housing services it must have due regard to the aims set out below:

- a. The unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces
  - These include danger; geographical mobility; separation; Service law and rights; unfamiliarity with civilian life; hours of work; and stress.
- b. The principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces

A disadvantage is when the level of access a member of the Armed Forces Community has to goods and services, or the support they receive, is comparatively lower than that of someone in a similar position who is not a member of the Armed Forces Community, and this difference arises from one (or more) of the unique obligations and sacrifices of Service life.

# c. The principle that special provision for Service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces

Special provision is the taking of actions that go beyond the support provided to reduce or remove disadvantage. Special provision may be justified by the effects of the unique obligations and sacrifices of Service life, especially for those that have sacrificed the most, such as the bereaved and the injured (whether that injury is physical or mental).

Does the service/issue under consideration fall within the scope of a function covered by the Duty (healthcare, education, housing)? Which aims of the Duty are likely be relevant to the proposal? In this question, consider both the current service and the proposed changes. Are members of the Armed Forces specifically disadvantaged or further disadvantaged by the proposal/service? Identify any mitigations including where appropriate possible special provision.

Some ex forces members may be affected by travel issues if a facility is no longer operated by LCC. Good bus routes across the city do allow for access to other local sites. In addition enhanced online services are available to users.

Cadets meeting and ex-military groups meeting at centres.

# 9. Other groups

## Other groups

## Impact of proposal:

Describe the likely impact of the proposal on children in poverty or any other people who we may consider to be vulnerable, for example people who misuse substances, care leavers, people living in poverty, care experienced young people, carers, those who are digitally excluded. List any vulnerable groups likely to be affected. Will their needs continue to be met? What issues will affect their take up of services/other opportunities that meet their needs/address inequalities they face?

## Risk of disproportionate negative impact:

How likely is it that this group of people will be negatively affected? How great will that impact be on their well-being? What will determine who will be negatively affected?

## Mitigating actions:

For negative impacts, what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove this impact for this vulnerable group of people? These should be included in the action plan at the end of this EIA. You may also wish to use this section to identify opportunities for positive impacts.

## a. Care Experienced People

This is someone who was looked after by children's services for a period of 13 weeks after the age of 14', but without any limit on age, recognising older people may still be impacted from care experience into later life.

#### What is the impact of the proposal on Care Experienced People?

Care experienced people are able to access books and reading programmes, homework help, computers, wi-fi and printing in a safe and warm space with trusted staff on hand. Our community centres host a number of groups who run classes/sessions aimed at targeting social isolation and digital exclusion e.g. homework help and DWP job shop sessions.

## What is the risk of negative impact on Care Experienced People?

Careful consideration has been given to the proposals with regard to care experienced people. Whilst there is potential for this group to be negatively impacted through loss of informal social networks, access to safe spaces and IT resources, the proposals retain provision in areas of need and propose effective mitigations across the city.

#### What are the mitigating actions?

Services will continue to be delivered in areas of need across the city. The centres recommended to remain are easily accessible with wider catchment areas, 99% of residents are less than 1.25 miles from a centre. Homework help, study support and job shop sessions will be retained. Any groups displaced from a building will be assisted to find an alternate venue.

## b. Children in poverty

## What is the impact of the proposal on children in poverty?

A disproportionately high number of children use library services. Children are able to access books and reading programmes, homework help, computers, wi-fi and printing in a safe and warm space with trusted adults on hand. Usage of libraries by children in areas of high diversity and high-density housing including the Belgrave, Fosse, Highfields and Uppingham Road areas of the city. Children's activities are well attended in the outer estates, including Saffron, New Parks and Braunstone.

## What is the risk of negative impact on children in poverty?

Careful consideration has been given to the proposals with regard to children in poverty. Whilst there is potential for this group to be negatively impacted through loss of informal education opportunities, study space and access to safe spaces at community centres, the recommendations retain library provision in areas of high child poverty. Staffed opening hours have been amended for all libraries to ensure availability of after-school and Saturday access.

#### What are the mitigating actions?

Libraries will continue to be delivered in areas of need across the city, with reduced staff opening times. Centres proposed to remain are easily accessible with wider catchment areas. The Children's BookBus routes will be reviewed to ensure coverage of areas of greatest need where child poverty is highest. Satellite book collections will be expanded in some children, young people and family centres to provide additional access to books and reading for children. Outreach reading programmes will continue to be provided to local children through schemes run in partnership with primary and secondary schools. Staffed opening hours have been amended for all libraries to ensure availability of afterschool and Saturday access.

## c. Other (describe)

What is the impact of the proposal on any other groups? Click or tap here to enter text.

What is the risk of negative impact on any other groups?

Click or tap here to enter text.

What are the mitigating actions?

Click or tap here to enter text.

## 10. Other sources of potential negative impacts

Are there any other potential negative impacts external to the service that could further disadvantage service users over the next three years that should be considered? For example, these could include:

- other proposed changes to council services that would affect the same group of service users;
- Government policies or proposed changes to current provision by public agencies (such as new benefit arrangements) that would negatively affect residents;
- external economic impacts such as an economic downturn.

Neighbourhood Services is working closely with other Council Services to understand and effectively coordinate changes in these services to minimis the global impact from an equalities perspective. Service currently proposing changes include:

- Sports Services
- Early Years / Children, Young People and Family Centres
- Early Years / Youth Services
- Early Years / Family Hubs
- Customer Service Centre

# 11. Human rights implications

Are there any human rights implications which need to be considered and addressed (please see the list at the end of the template), if so, please outline the implications and how they will be addressed below:

None identified

# 12. Monitoring impact

You will need to ensure that monitoring systems are established to check for impact on the protected characteristics and human rights after the decision has been implemented. Describe the systems which are set up to:

- monitor impact (positive and negative, intended and unintended) for different groups
- monitor barriers for different groups
- enable open feedback and suggestions from different communities
- ensure that the EIA action plan (below) is delivered.

If you want to undertake equality monitoring, please refer to our equality monitoring guidance and templates

- 1. Primary research public engagement exercise (July September 2023)
- 2. Consultation exercise (July September 2025)
- 3. Annual Neighbourhood Services user survey
- 4. Ward community meetings
- 5. Monitoring of active library users and recorded characteristics (where provided)
  - Monthly reporting

# 13. EIA action plan

Please list all the equality objectives, actions and targets that result from this assessment (continue on separate sheets as necessary). These now need to be included in the relevant service plan for mainstreaming and performance management purposes.

Equality Outcome	Action	Officer Responsible	Completion date
Equality of access to library and community services amongst all groups	Monitor access to services for people with protected characteristics through our systems and ongoing survey work	Lee Warner	Ongoing
Equality of access to library and community services amongst all groups	Invest in study spaces to support children, young people and adults from diverse backgrounds to access the resources and space they need for schoolwork and career development to improve life chances	Lee Warner	Complete
Provide framework for community groups to take on the running of identified local facilities to retain provision and enhance community cohesion.	Update policy and guidelines for Community Asset Transfer to support the best outcomes for local people and ensure robust mechanisms to deliver equality of access.	Kathryn Ellis	Complete
Provide framework for community groups to take on the running of identified local	Commission support for community organisations apply for Community Asset Transfer opportunities.	Lee Warner	Spring 2026

Equality Outcome	Action	Officer Responsible	Completion date
facilities to retain provision and enhance community cohesion.			
Equality of access to library and community services amongst all groups	Support community groups through the transformation of services to adapt to changes or to explore alternative options where required	Lee Warner	Spring 2027
Protected Characteristic: Age Supporting Children to access neighbourhood services	Review BookBus routes to provide convenient access for children living in Fosse ward	Lee Warner	Autumn 2026
Supporting Children in Poverty: improve life chances through access to books and reading from a young age	Seek alternative funding to retain the BookStart programme, to deliver book sharing experiences for young families in priority school areas	Lee Warner	Complete
Equality of opportunity (non-users)	Invest in promotion and representation/signing of retained facilities to engage non-users who may have need of the services	Lee Warner	Autumn 2026
Extend access to libraries for people over 16yrs to optimise availability for adults from all backgrounds	Install library self-access systems at 6 library locations	Lee Warner	Winter 2026

Equality Outcome	Action	Officer Responsible	Completion date
Provide improved access to services for people from all backgrounds.	Develop multi-service centres with a focus on wellbeing at 12 centres, to increase access to a range of council and partner services	Lee Warner	Spring 2027
Widespread public understanding of the changes.	Develop and implement an accessible comprehensive, multi-format Communication Plan	Lee Warner	Spring 2027

# **Human rights articles:**

Part 1: The convention rights and freedoms

Article 2: Right to Life

**Article 3:** Right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way

Article 4: Right not to be subjected to slavery/forced labour

**Article 5:** Right to liberty and security

Article 6: Right to a fair trial

**Article 7:** No punishment without law

Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life

**Article 9:** Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion

Article 10: Right to freedom of expression

Article 11: Right to freedom of assembly and association

Article 12: Right to marry

**Article 14:** Right not to be discriminated against

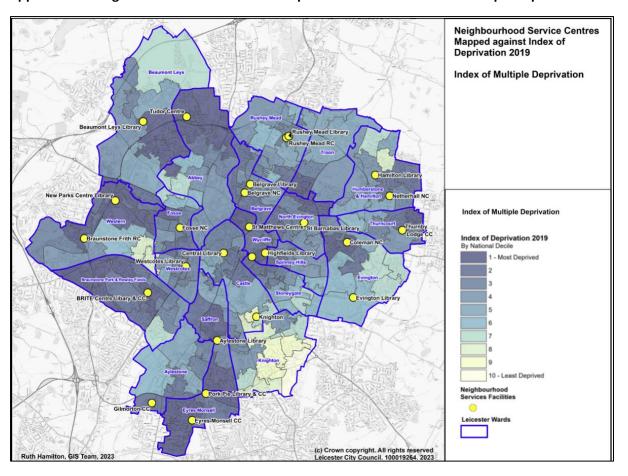
# Part 2: First protocol

**Article 1:** Protection of property/peaceful enjoyment

Article 2: Right to education

Article 3: Right to free elections

Appendix 1 – Neighbourhood Services facilities plotted over the indices of multiple deprivation.

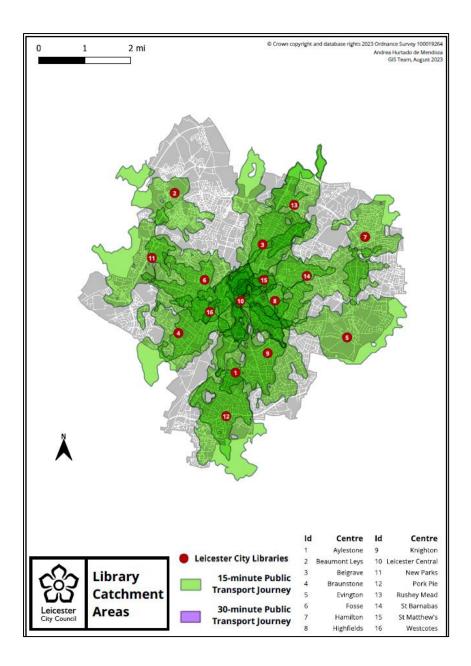


# Appendix 2 – Proposed building withdrawals - breakdown of potential impacts on protected characteristics

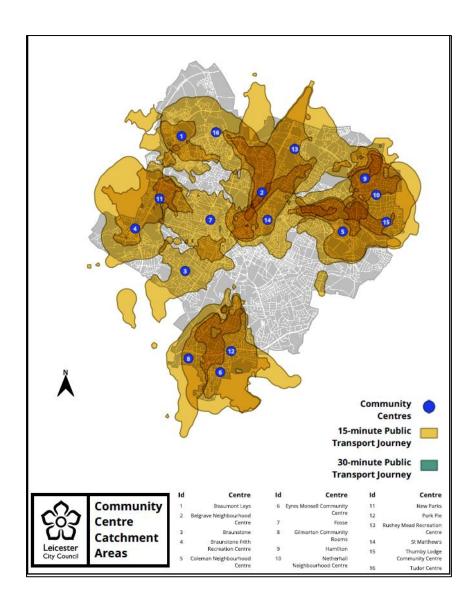
Building	Impact of proposal	Mitigating actions
		Make available for Community Asset Transfer – successful groups will be
		asked to retain established groups
		Signpost to alternative providers where required:
		Signpost to afternative providers where required.
		Less than 2km away from Allexton Youth & Community, New Parks
		Library, Kirby Muxloe Library and Glenfield Library.
Braunstone Frith Recreation	Age - Food bank - Children in poverty	An open public meeting was held to allow groups to engage with us and
Centre	Fortnightly coffee morning - older users hyper local	request a follow up 1-1 meeting.
	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	Make available for Community Asset Transfer – successful groups will be
		asked to retain established groups
	A December 1	
	Age – Pre school	Some local capacity Coleman lodge community centre nearby for
	Bowls club – predominantly elderly people	community room hire
	<b>Disability</b> - Some customers have Mental and physical disability	Less than 2km away from St Barnabas Library, Hamilton Library & Nearby
		madrassah at Coleman Lodge
	Race – Primary usage by Asian/British Asian as below	
Coleman Neighbourhood		An open public meeting was held to allow groups to engage with us and
Centre	Religion or belief – Madrassah and prayer group	request a follow up 1-1 meeting.
	Age – Classes focused on younger and older people – dance class	Opportunity for community running – successful groups will be asked to
	and theatre group	retain established groups
	Disability – Older users with disabilities	Less than 2km away from Pork Pie Library, South Wigston Library, Glen
Eyres Monsell Community	2.500 does does with disabilities	Hills Library
Centre	Religion or belief – Madrassah group	<b>'</b>

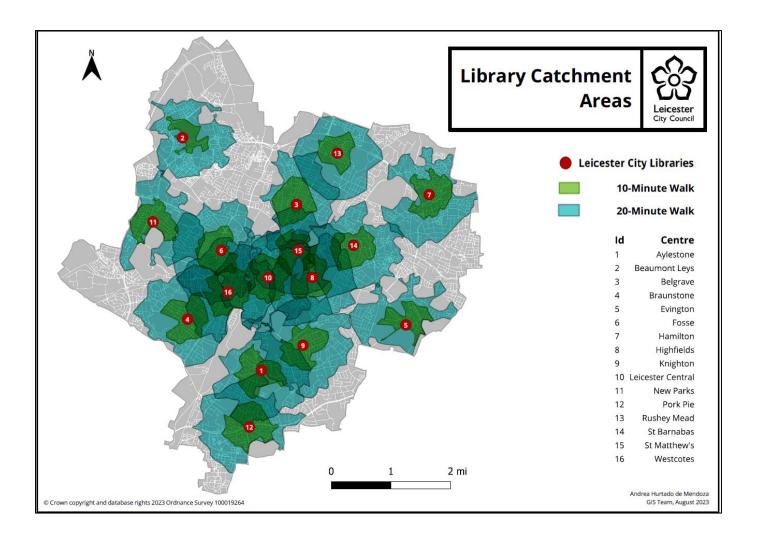
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		The library and services (Housing and Adult Education) will be re-located
		to St Matthews Childrens Centre. Options for further community space
		will also be explored with each community group.
		Less than 2km away from Highfields Library, African Caribbean Centre,
		Belgrave Library, The Big Local, The Peepul Centre, The What Cabin
	Age – Pre School	
		Potential for the BookBus to visit more often
	Disability – Disabled groups	
		An open public meeting was held to allow groups to engage with us and
	Pregnancy and Maternity – Toddler Time	request a follow up 1-1 meeting.
	Race – Higher impact on African origin users	A commitment has been made to work with Community Groups to find
St Matthews Centre	Religion or Belief – Church groups	them an alternate venue.
	Age - Play Group - parent & toddler	Opportunity for community running – successful groups will be asked to
	Pre School	retain established groups
	Adult Learning classes	
		Less than 2km away from Beaumont Leys Library, Beaumont Leys &
	Disability - Mosaic Disability Group	Stocking Farm Children Young People and Family Centres, Bewcastle
		Children Young People and Family Centres, Beaumont Leys Leisure
	Pregnancy and maternity - Play Group - parent & toddler	Centre
	Religion or belief - Islamic prayer group	An open public meeting was held to allow groups to engage with us and
Tudor Centre	Sunday school	request a follow up 1-1 meeting.

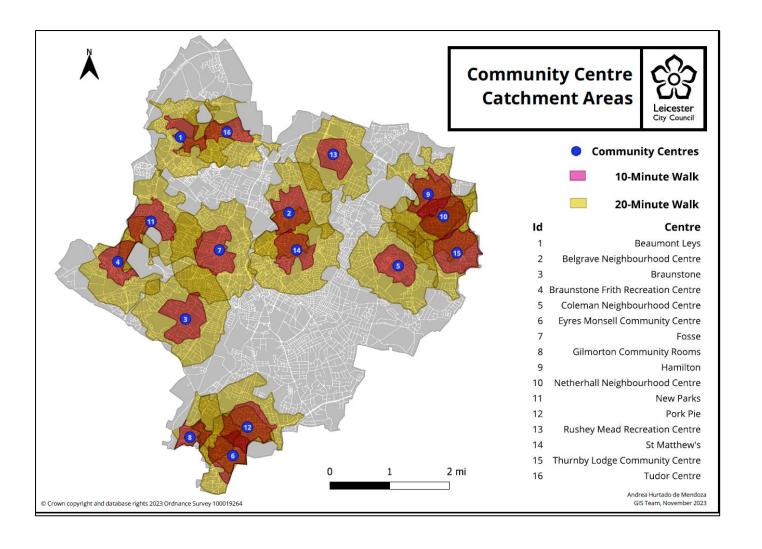


Appendix 3 – Public transport maps showing a 15 minute bus journey from each facility



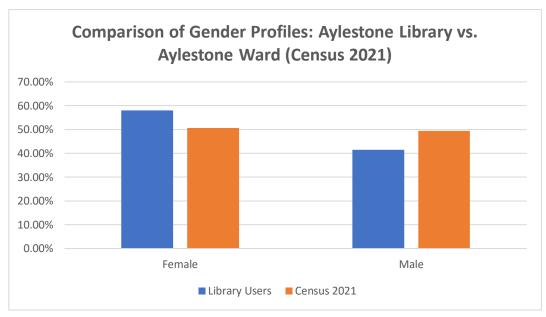


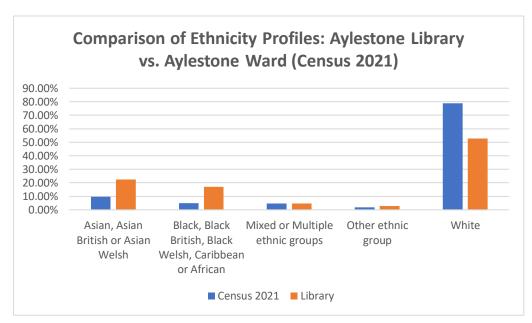
Appendix 4 – Walking maps showing 10 and 20 minute walks from each facility

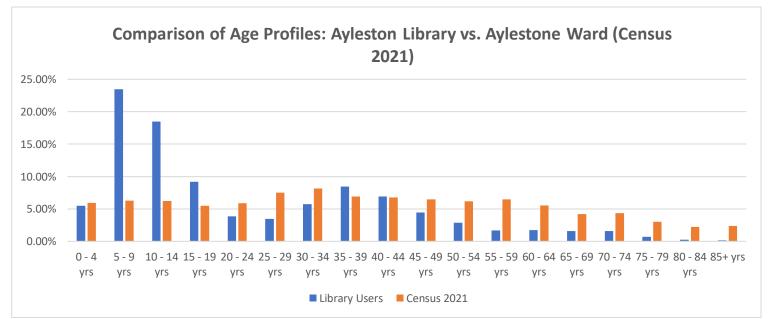


Appendix 5 – Library gender, ethnicity and age ward comparison graphs

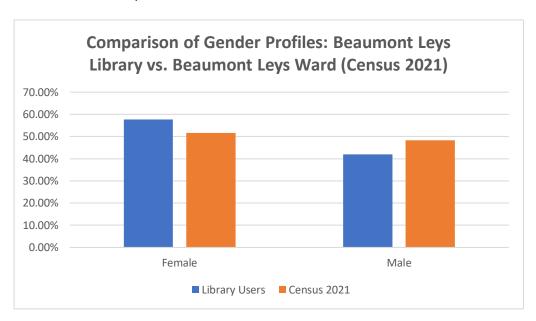
**Aylestone Library** 

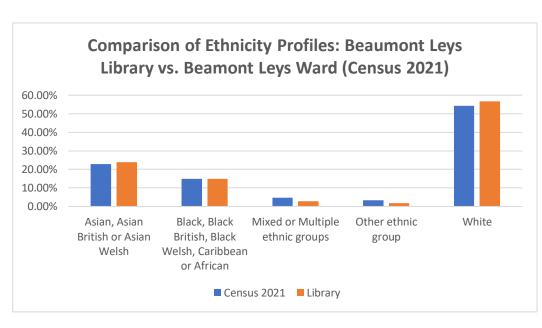


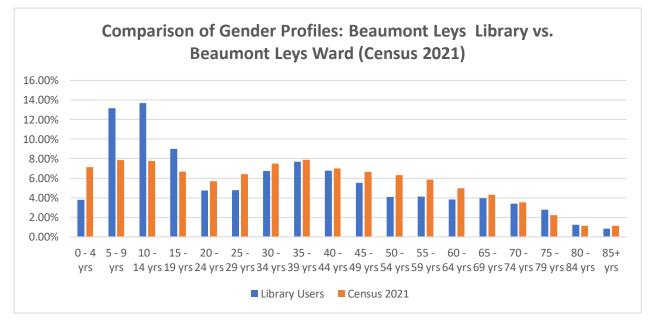




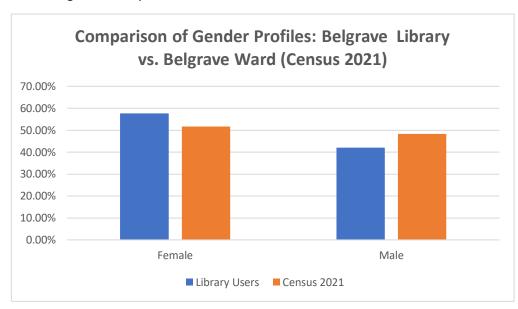
#### **Beaumont Leys**

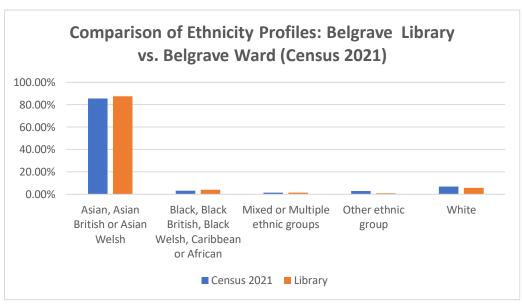


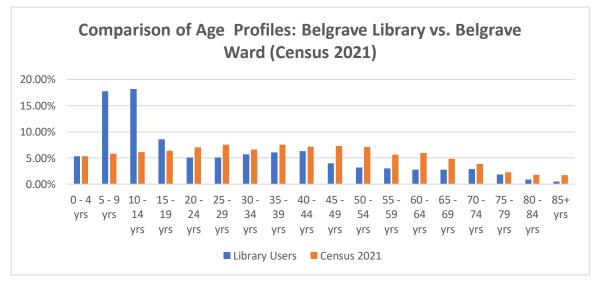




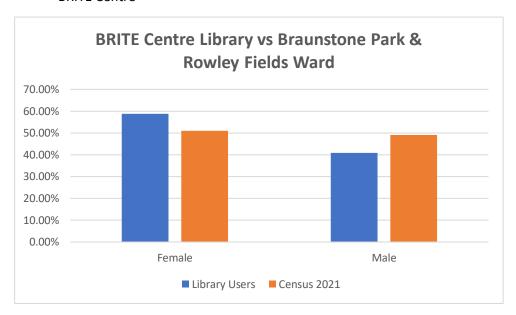
## Belgrave Library

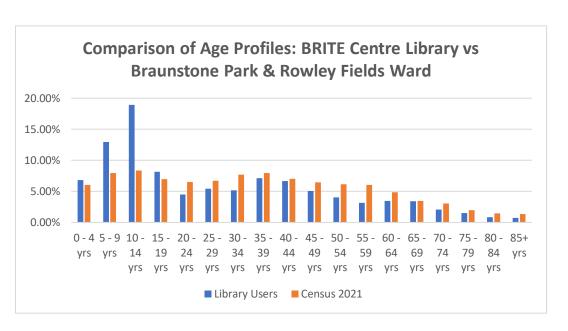


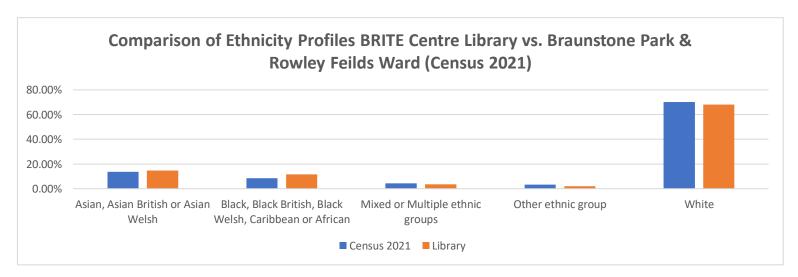




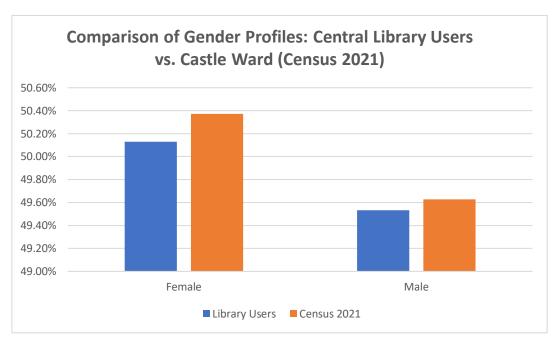
#### **BRITE Centre**

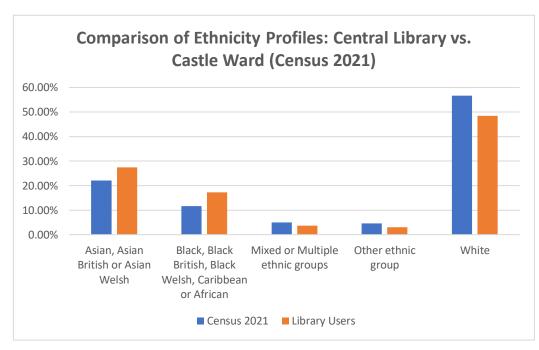


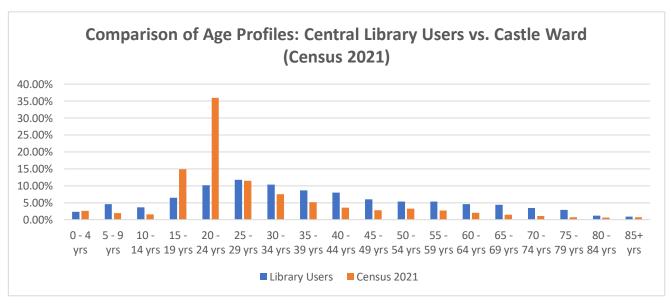




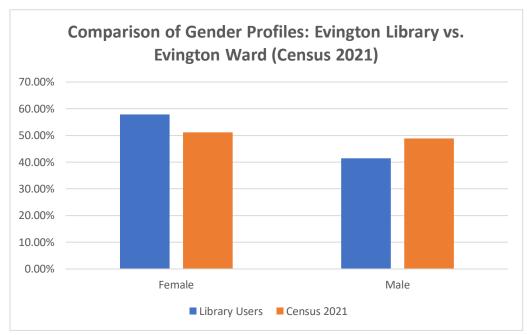
### Leicester Central Library

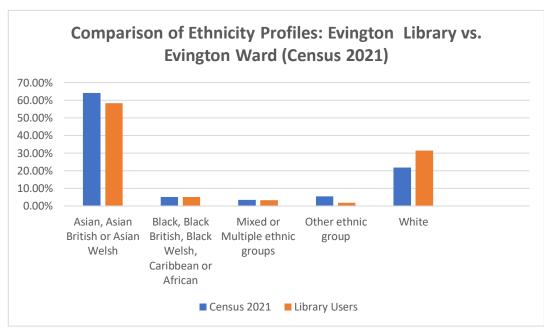


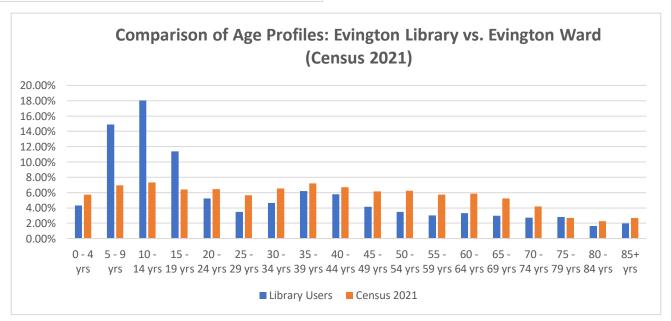




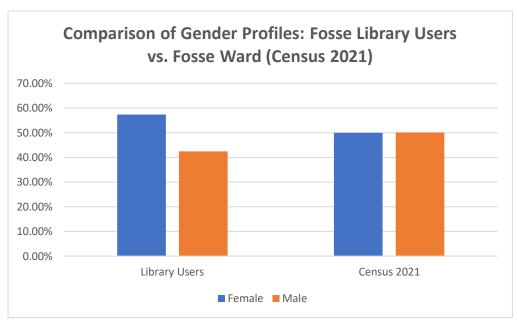
# **Evington Library**

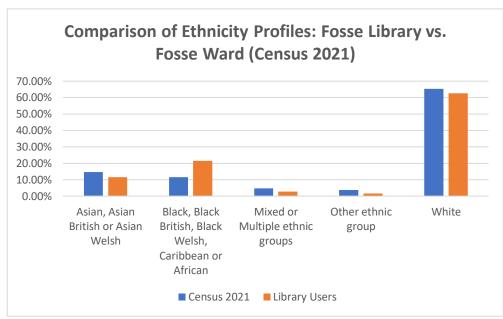


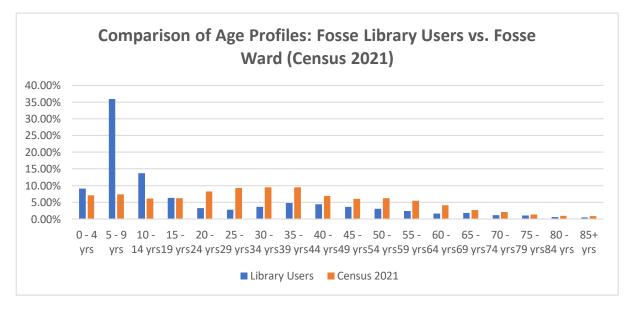




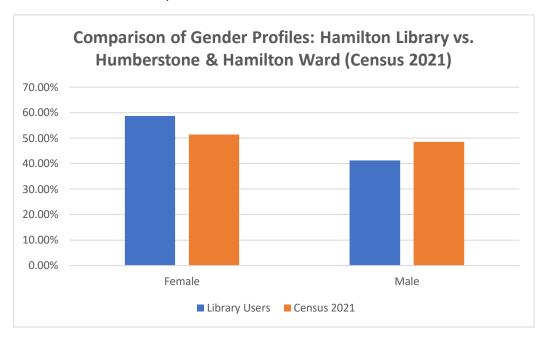
#### Fosse Library

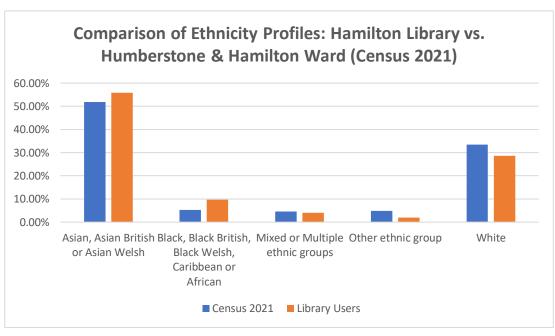


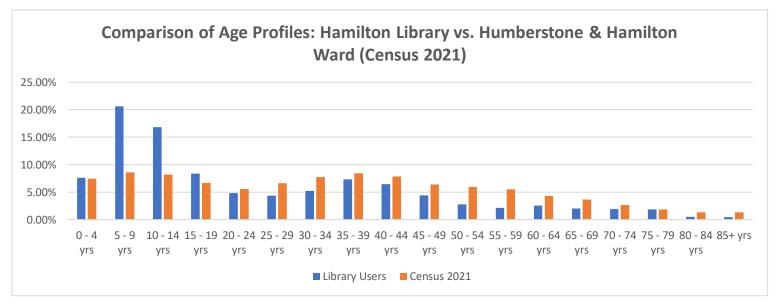




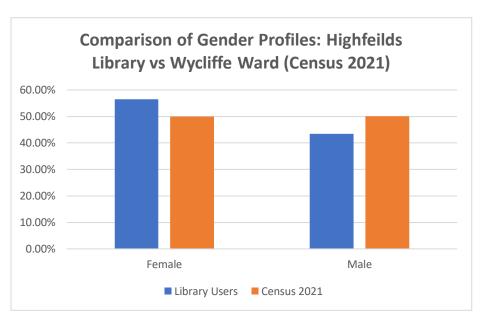
### **Hamilton Library**

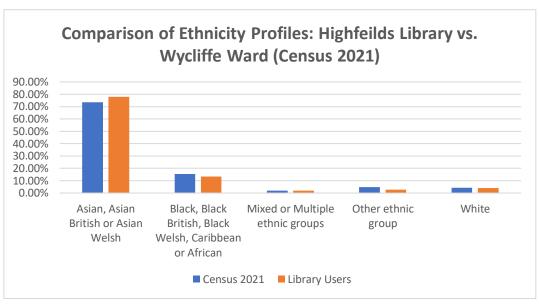


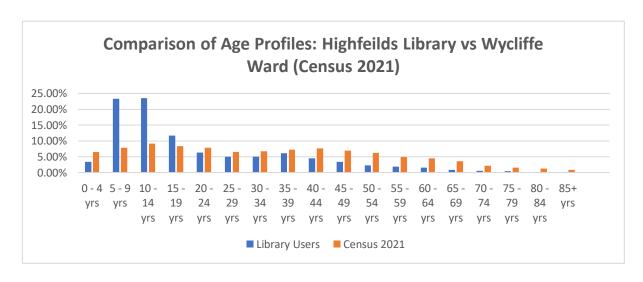




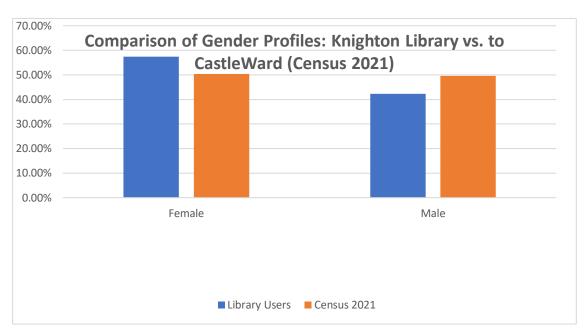
# Highfields Library

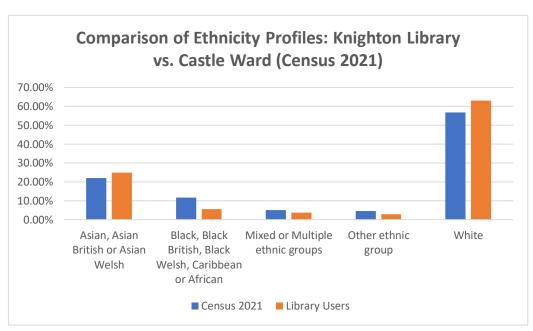


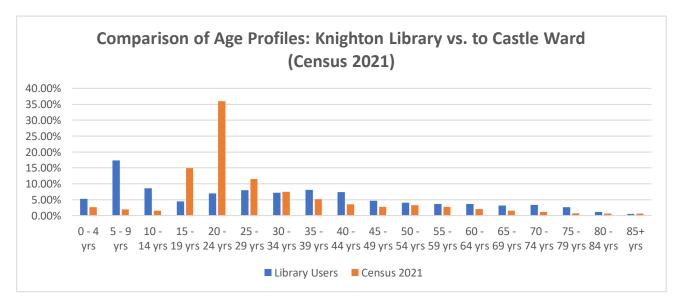




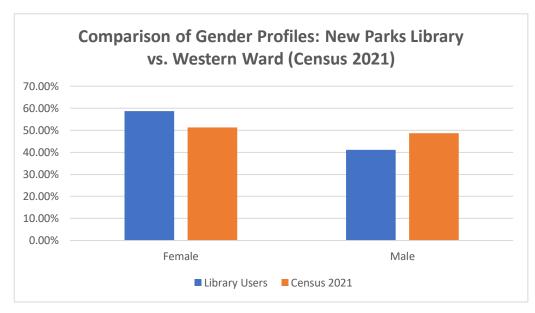
# **Knighton Library**

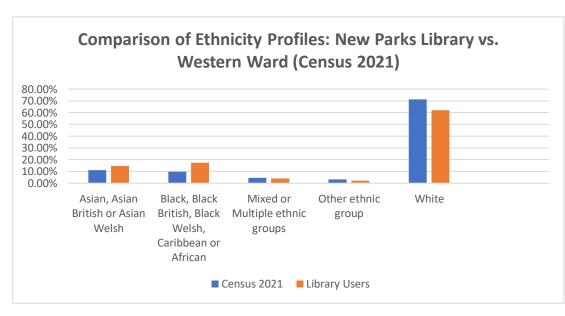


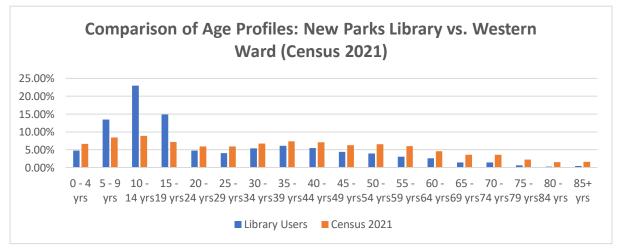




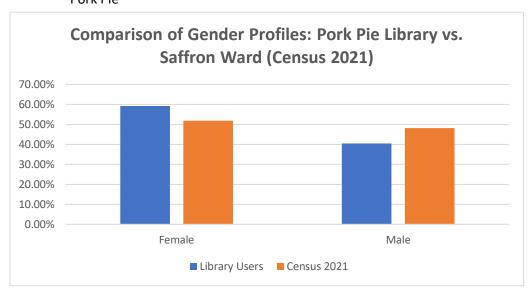
#### **New Parks**

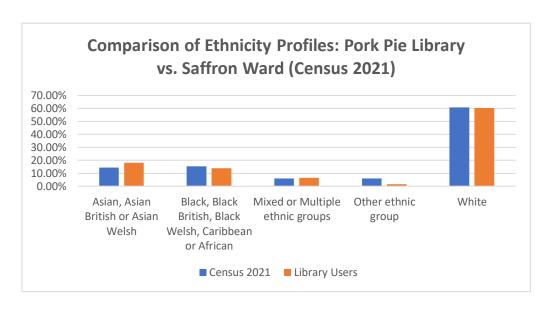


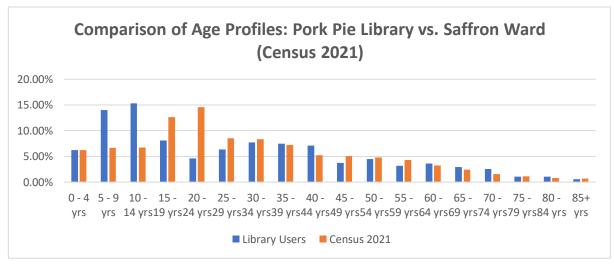




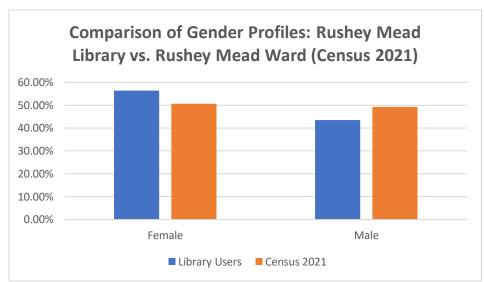
Pork Pie

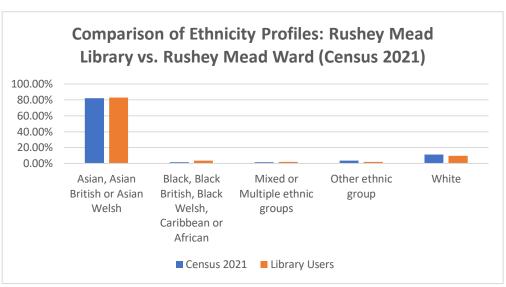


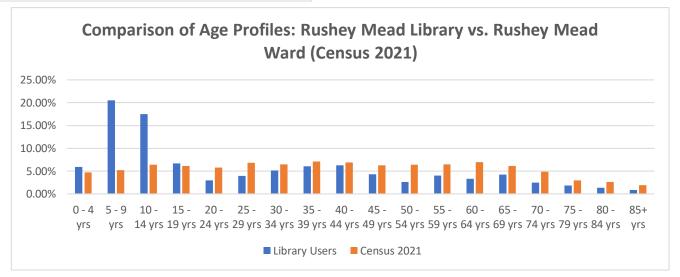




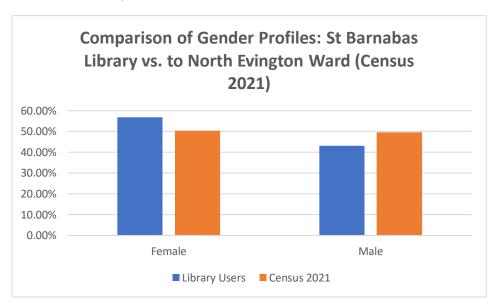
### Rushey Mead Library

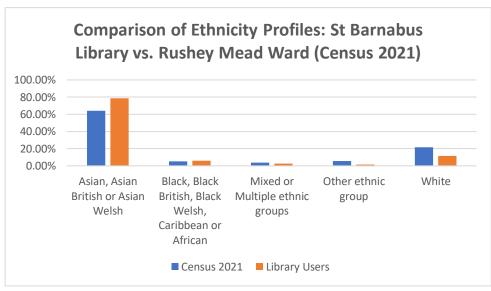


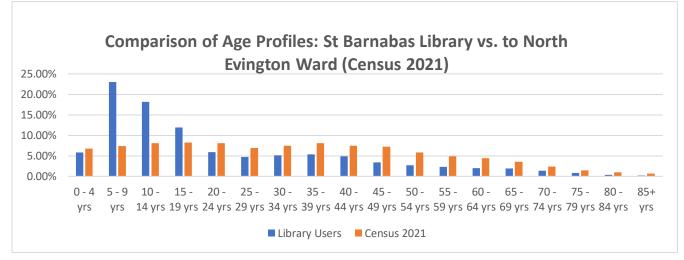




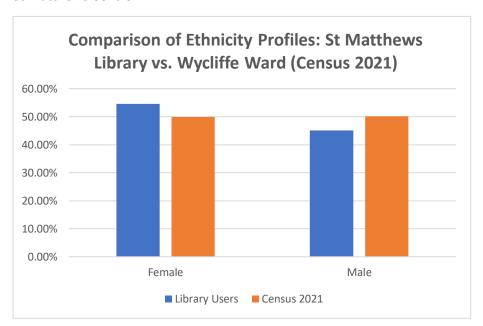
#### St Barnabas Library

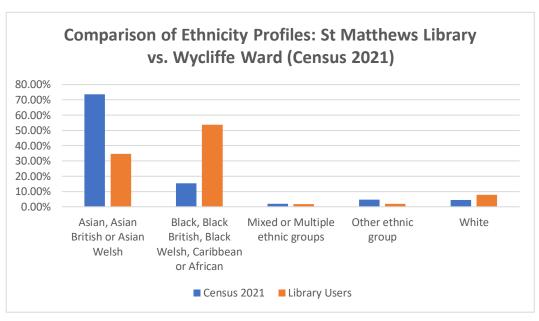


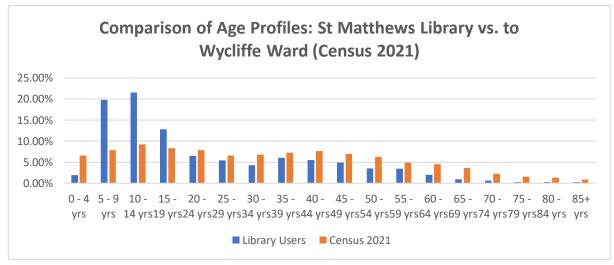




#### St Matthews Centre







#### Westcotes Library

