

Appendix 3

Future Library and Community Centre Provision and Delivery



Assessment &
Recommendation
s Report

Version Control

Version	Author	Description
1.0	Michael Clarke	Draft
2.0	Michael Clarke	Updated Draft
3.0	Michael Clarke	Final for Scrutiny Committee
4.0	Michael Clarke	Home Library service description update
5.0	Michael Clarke	Executive decision appendix

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1. Summary of recommendations

1.1 Leicester City Council undertook an extensive consultation process on proposals for libraries and community centres between 2 April and 29 June 2025 as part of a wider service transformation process.

1.2 The proposals consulted on were developed as part of a needs assessment of council run libraries and community centres in Leicester City. The purpose of the needs assessment is to inform the transformation of the council’s Neighbourhood Services facilities to deliver a modern, efficient service which recognises the changed patterns of use and the needs of local residents now and in the future.

1.3 The local authority has a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 “to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons” who want to make use of it.

1.4 The programme is delivered within the context of the Council’s financial position. The Revenue Budget 2025/26 report states that “the medium-term financial outlook is the most severe we have ever known”. As part of the strategy to balance the budget for the next three years the Council plans to make ongoing savings to the revenue budget of over £23m per year.

1.5 The proposals consulted on would deliver a revenue saving from the Neighbourhood Services budget of be **up to** £2.1 million. This would contribute towards a divisional savings target for Neighbourhood & Environmental Services of £7.2 million.

1.6 Following consultation, the proposals have been revised to take into consideration the feedback received. The revised proposals recommended in this report would retain more services under council management and deliver a savings figure of £1.57 million.

1.7 The development of the proposals for consultation is outlined in section 3 of this report. In overview the proposals consulted on were:

- To retain and develop the Central Library and 12 multiservice centres including library, community room hire and other internal and external services.
- St Matthews library would relocate from St Matthews Centre due to the poor condition of the building. The Centre would be released.
- A small library would be installed at Thurnby Lodge Community Centre
- Library Self-Access would be installed at 6 of the multi-service centres
- It was proposed that opening hours be standardised with reduced staffed hours as follows:

Type	Proposed Staffed Hours Per Week
Central Library	45
5 multi-service centres	40
4 multi-service centres	30

- The council would withdraw from 3 stand-alone libraries and to support the community to take on the running of these
- The council would withdraw from 8 community centres and to support community groups to take on the running of these
- The council would withdraw from Fosse Neighbourhood Centre and Library

1.8 There was a high level of participation in the consultation. A separate findings report is published with details of the feedback received during the twelve-week period. 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 substantial changes to the original proposals. The recommendations are for the council to retain 18 facilities as follows:

1.9 **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 would be further developed to support the promotion of reading for pleasure, to bring communities together and to support informal learning and improve life chances. The city centre offer is supplemented by a recent partnership with the two city universities and Loughborough University providing access to study space, Wi-Fi and specialist book stock for members of the public with extensive opening hours. There would be a small reduction in the opening hours for the Central Library.

1.10 **Twelve multi-service centres** would operate as hubs to support wellbeing by integrating a range of services provided by the council and its partners. Multi-service centres would provide a range of services under one roof to improve access to council and partner services for local residents. Services could include Customer Service and Housing pop up offices, Leicester Adult Learning and DWP Work Coach sessions and Family Hubs signposting and services. The centres would provide library and community services to a wide catchment area with accessible transport routes. The multi-service centres would include Thurnby Lodge Community Centre with a small non-statutory library provision installed, and St Matthews Library which would be relocated as below.

1.11 **St Matthews Library** and some services would be relocated to St Matthews Children's, Young People and Family Centre as one of the twelve multi-service centres. The recommended relocation reflects consultation feedback that the library should remain on the estate. St Matthews Centre is not sustainable in the medium to longer term future due to the poor condition of the building including the large sports hall area which is closed for safety reasons due to the presence of RAAC concrete in the roof. Options would be explored for the future of the St Matthews Centre site once the services have relocated. This work does not form part of the Neighbourhood Services programme and will instead be led by the Housing and Estates and Building Services divisions. Neighbourhood Services would work in partnership with community groups to explore options for them to relocate.

1.12 **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 (full details of opening hours can be see below in section 5.2). Knighton and Evington Libraries already have extended customer self-access hours outside of staffed times – this will continue. It would not be cost effective to install self-access at Rushey Mead Library due to the very low usage of the building.

- 1.13 **Two stand-alone community centres**, Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre and Rushey Mead Recreation Centre, previously proposed for community running, 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.
- 1.14 **Staffed opening hours would be standardised** across the estate informed by local need and national benchmarking. A reduction in staffed opening hours 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 open and staffed for 40 hours per week, with the seven less busy multi-service centres open and 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). Additional unstaffed opening hours would be available at suitable sites. The proposed opening hours have been amended to reflect the consultation feedback for each building. Full details of recommended opening hours can be seen below in section 5.
- 1.15 **Customer self-access systems** are already in place at Knighton and Evington Libraries. On the basis that these installations have been well received and operated successfully for two years the system would be implemented at a further 6 library centres to extend the overall opening hours. The technology will provide self-access for inducted customers via their library card with live CCTV monitoring in place. 8am to 8pm weekday opening would be supported by the introduction of library self-access systems extending availability for customers over 16yrs and accompanied children beyond the staffed opening hours.
- 1.16 **Four community centres would be made available** for lease under the council's Community Asset Transfer policy. The council would no longer run Braunstone Frith Recreation Centre, Coleman Neighbourhood Centre, Gilmorton Community Rooms and Tudor Centre. There has been positive engagement at all five centres and early interest is evident for each of these. A formal opportunity would be published with support for community organisations to develop a business case to take on the running of the four centres. It is anticipated that the Community Asset Transfer process will take between 12 to 18 months to complete. Third party support will be provided for community organisations to develop their business plans. The council will continue to run the centres until they are handed over.
- 1.17 **Eyres Monsell Community Centre** is located in an MSOA that is a beneficiary of the Pride in Place programme. It is therefore first intended to engage the local neighbourhood board once it is formed to inform the local approach before offering for Community Asset Transfer alongside those stated in 1.16.

1.18 **Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre** will close and be demolished. The **Armadale Centre** is the preferred community building following consultation, which is situated on the opposite side of the same road. The Armadale Centre is located in the vicinity of an MSOA that is a beneficiary of the Pride in Place programme. It is therefore first intended to engage the local neighbourhood board once it is formed to inform the local approach before offering for Community Asset Transfer alongside those stated in 1.16.

1.19 It should be noted that **Thurnby Lodge Community Centre** is also located in the Thurnby Lodge MSOA and therefore could also benefit from investment should the local neighbourhood board determine to do so.

1.20 **Fosse Neighbourhood Centre and Library** will close due to the low usage of the facility and the poor condition of the building. There are several libraries nearby which are considered accessible for local residents with 100% of residences falling within a 1.25 mile radius of alternative library provision:

- Westcotes library is 0.8 miles (19 minutes' walk as plotted on Google Maps) from the Fosse Neighbourhood centre.
- New Parks Library is 1.4 miles from Fosse Neighbourhood Centre directly accessible by the number 14 bus.
- The BRITE centre is 1.5 miles from Fosse Neighbourhood Centre.
- The Central library is 1.2 miles away from Fosse Neighbourhood Centre with regular buses to the city centre.

There are two regular permanent community activities based at the centre, a weekly bowling group and Alice Hawkins Community Projects. It is recommended to work in partnership with Alice Hawkins Community Projects which operates from the annex of the building and would be supported to relocate elsewhere within Fosse ward recognising the significant benefits delivered to local people.

It is recommended the council makes best endeavours to secure suitable alternative accommodation for the bowling group.

The council will support customers to use alternative library provision as above and also explore locations for a book drop-off and pick up point in the local area.

The council's estates and buildings team has undertaken a review of building options for the Fosse Neighbourhood Centre. In view of the condition of the building it cannot be offered for CAT. Therefore the estates and buildings team will commence a marketing process following a decision. The Council will continue to maintain the Neighbourhood Centre up to the point of disposal.

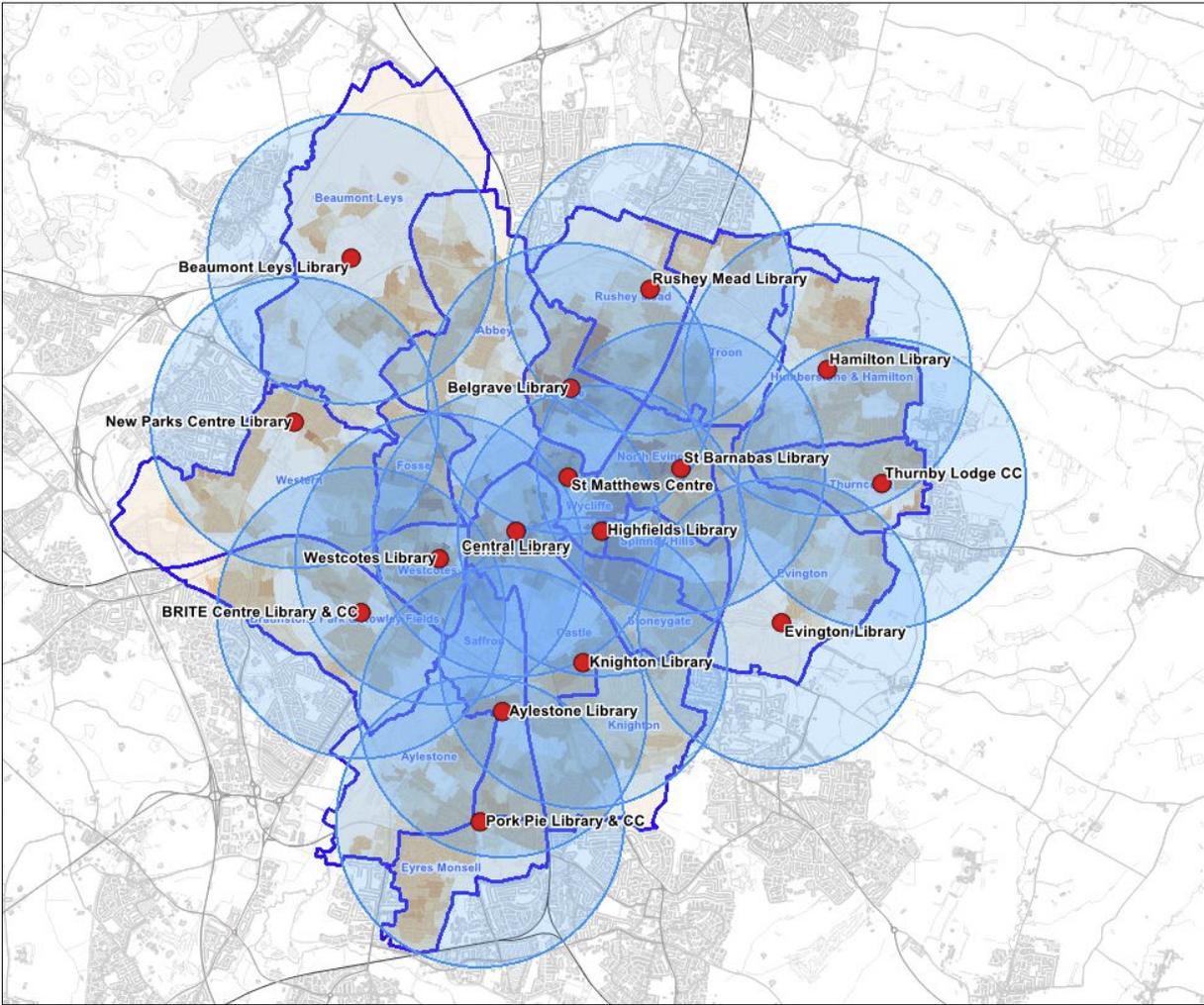
- 1.21 **Staffing and operating costs** would be reduced with a revised staffing model reflecting the changes in service delivery and opening hours. Core skills would be retained within the service to ensure quality services continue to be developed in the transformed service.
- 1.22 **The Book Fund budget would be reduced** by £30,000 from £415,000 to £385,000 recognising the reduction of the library network and changes in book borrowing patterns. This is a revised figure to reflect the retention of 3 standalone libraries.
- 1.23 **Community room hire charges** would be increased by 20 per cent, phased over 2 years, to support the operation and financial viability of the remaining council run community centres. This is a new recommendation reflecting a large variety of suggestions during the consultation relating to improved income generation.
- 1.24 **Capital investment** of £2 million will be made to adapt and further develop retained buildings as multi-service centres. The multi-service centre model is already in operation and feedback indicates further development of this model is well supported to ensure buildings are used to their full potential, well-presented and signed, and in good condition to serve communities. Investment will further enable services to be delivered together from local neighbourhood facilities, to include future library and community services, adult learning facilities, customer services and early years provision as appropriate. Separate capital investment of £473,000 is approved in the capital programme for the implementation of library self-access systems at 6 sites.
- 1.25 **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.
- 1.26 **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 for their reading and information needs.
- 1.27 **Volunteer opportunities** would be developed to enhance and add value to the services we offer and to provide a range of benefits to participants. This proposal is supported by consultation feedback and submissions from library and community centre users to work with the council to enhance the offer at retained sites.
- 1.28 **Small libraries** at identified Children, Young People and Family Centres would continue to be provided for additional access to books for children, and parents and carers with young families.
- 1.29 **The Home Library Service** The service is delivered in partnership with Ride Leicester to support housebound residents with door-to-door book deliveries wherever they live in the city.

Linked to our volunteer offer it would be expanded to support housebound residents with door-to-door book deliveries wherever residents are unable to leave their homes to access reading.

1.30 **The Children's BookBus** service would be reviewed following the implementation of changes outlined above to support children and young families living in disadvantaged communities and to provide access to books and reading programmes in these areas.

1.31 The recommended library provision would be at 15 statutory sites with a small non-statutory offer at Thurnby lodge Community Centre. This would increase the current coverage to 99.5% of all residential properties within Leicester City to be within 1.25 miles of a library.

Figure 1: Recommended library provision with 1.25-mile catchment areas. The map shows 99.5% of all residential properties in Leicester city are within 1.25 miles of a council run library.



1.32 A summary table of the sites which will be retained by Leicester City Council can be seen below:

Table 1: Leicester City Council retained sites

Centre	Staffed Hours Per Week	Self-Access Hours
Central Library	45	
Aylestone Library (Leisure Centre MSC)	30	Yes
Beaumont Leys Library MSC	40	
Belgrave Library MSC	40	Yes
BRITE Centre MSC	40	Yes
Hamilton Library MSC	30	Yes
Highfields Library MSC	40	
New Parks Centre MSC	30	Yes
Pork Pie Library MSC	30	Yes

St Barnabas Library MSC	40	Yes
St Matthews Library (relocated to CYPF MSC)	30	
Thurnby Lodge Centre MSC (with small library)	30	Yes
Westcotes Library MSC	30	
Evington Library	25	Yes
Knighton Library	25	Yes
Rushey Mead Library	20	
Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	As required	
Rushey Mead Recreation Centre	Self-access	Yes

2. Introduction, background and strategic context

Purpose

2.1 The Community Services & Library Needs Assessment programme was launched in 2023 to assess the needs of Leicester residents, to develop options for services which will be fit for the future and to implement decisions flowing from this work. The purpose of the programme is to transform library and community services to ensure our communities have the right type of service offering for the future, based on robust evidence gathering and delivered within the constraints of a significantly reduced divisional budget.

2.2 Leicester's multi-service centres, community centres, and libraries play an important role in our local neighbourhoods. However, the public engagement and secondary research reports demonstrate that the way people use these services is changing. The 2021 census shows the demographics of the city have changed significantly with new communities moving into the city. National and local usage patterns for libraries, community centres and neighbourhood-based council services have changed. The shift to 24/7 online services has provided challenges and opportunities for residents which library and other services must respond to. The reports show that the priorities of local residents have changed following the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, and that library and community centre services need to transform to respond to these changes. The reports also highlight that many people do not currently visit any of the multi-service centres, community centres, and libraries or are unaware of the services that they offer. The programme aims to transform library and community centre services to ensure they are modern, efficient and fit for purpose for future years.

2.3 The programme is delivered within the context of the Council's financial position. The Revenue Budget 2025/26 report states that "the medium-term financial outlook is the most severe we have ever known". As part of the strategy to balance the budget for the next three years the Council plans to make ongoing savings to the revenue budget of over £23m per year. The full Revenue Budget Report can be seen here <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/city-mayor-peter-soulsby/budget/>

Statutory Duty

2.4 The local authority has a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museum Act 1964 "to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons" who want to make use of it. Although the Council is not legally obligated to provide neighbourhood and community centres the consultation responses demonstrate the important contribution these services make towards health and wellbeing and community cohesion within the city.

2.5 Every council in England is required to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service under the Act. It must do so in a way which meets the needs of people living, studying or working in the area, taking into account the resources available. The public library service is not a national service, but a local service. What a comprehensive and efficient service means will differ between councils and will depend on the needs of each area. It is therefore the role of councillors and officials at a local level to determine how much they spend on libraries and how they manage and deliver their service.

2.6 The current statutory library service in Leicester City includes the Central Library Service and 15 community libraries, as well as the Children's BookBus and the Home Library Service.

Financial context

2.7 The Neighbourhood Services net budget for scoped services (excluding the ward and community engagement function) for 2025 / 26 is £6,179,000.

2.8 The full proposals outlined in the public consultation which ran from April to June 2025 would have delivered a revenue saving from the Neighbourhood Services budget of up to £2.1 million to contribute towards a divisional savings target for Neighbourhood & Environmental Services of £7.2 million.

2.9 Following analysis and evaluation of the feedback received from the consultation, the proposals have been significantly revised. The recommended proposals outlined in this report have been updated to respond to feedback received and would deliver a revenue saving from the Neighbourhood Services budget of £1.57 million.

Service context

2.10 Neighbourhood Services promote health and wellbeing, bring communities together and provide places for people to meet. They help residents with books and reading and with study and learning. They support people to access information and digital services and provide cultural events and creative activities for children and adults. Neighbourhood Services support community groups and activities, Adult Skills and Learning, food banks, room hire, conferences, events and functions. Neighbourhood Services actively promotes and develops volunteering in our centres.

2.11 All 25 Neighbourhood Services facilities are included in the scope of the Community Services & Library Needs Assessment programme. Current facilities include nine multi-service centres offering library and community centre services together with other locally appropriate services. Including multi-service centre settings, Neighbourhood Services currently run sixteen library service points and thirteen community centres.

2.12 In addition, Neighbourhood Services also delivers the following in scope services (The Ward and Community Engagement Team is not within the scope of the CSLNA programme.):

- Book Start programme in partnership with Booktrust, sharing reading resources with babies and young children under 5 years old.
- Home Library Service providing book deliveries to housebound individuals
- Children's Bookbus providing regular library services to children and young families in disadvantaged areas of the city
- Online library including e-books, e-audio, e-magazines and e-newspapers for loan
- Reader development programmes for children, young people and adults

Needs Assessment

2.13 A twelve-week public engagement exercise was undertaken between July and October 2023 to inform the Needs Assessment. The engagement activity was independently run by Activist Group commissioned by Neighbourhood Services. The written report identified the key areas of need:

- **Reading:** People have told the Council that one of the most important library services offered to them is access to reading and literacy materials
- **Health and wellbeing:** People have told the Council that libraries and community centres offer respite and relief from life's challenges, supporting their wellbeing and helping to address isolation.
- Residents, and partners, trust Leicester's library and community centre staff.
- There is a significant growing need for more mental health support in Leicester, as well as support with improving people's physical health post-Covid.
- Libraries and community centres offer highly valued free, or low cost, communal and socialization spaces for Leicester residents
- **Information and digital:** People have told the Council that libraries and community centres help people with access to free IT, Wi-Fi, information, face to face advice and support signposting needs.
- Leicester residents continue to have core information, advice and IT access support needs. Libraries and community centres can, and should, play a role in supporting these needs across all age groups and demographics.
- People have told the Council that one of the most important services offered by libraries and community centres is space to safely and quietly study and learn. There is a significant need for safe out of classroom hours study space for children, young people and adult learners. Residents would like the existing offer to be expanded further, and existing facilities and availability of workspaces improved
- **Culture and creativity:** People would like to see more creative and cultural activities and events being offered, tailored to each unique locality and reflecting the blend of communities and cultures that live in the immediate surrounding areas.
- There is an opportunity to align any refreshed library and community centre offer with a broader refresh of the cultural offer and marketing of Leicester as a city destination, particularly through programming in the Central Library
- **Children's promise:** A significant 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 can play a role in helping children, young people and their families with these early year challenges, in part through the provision of pre-school literacy and reading support.
- There is a significant need for safe out of classroom hours study space for children and young people.

2.14 Following the phase one Needs Assessment public engagement and secondary research exercise, it is recommended that Neighbourhood Services continues to expand and develop

the four “Universal Offers” and the “Children’s Promise” developed by Libraries Connected. The offers adopted by Neighbourhood Services are:

- Health and Wellbeing Offer
- Reading Offer
- Culture and Creativity Offer
- Digital and Information Offer
- Children’s Promise

Key Principles

2.15 The following principles have been applied in developing the model for a transformed neighbourhood services offer to meet the needs of city communities.

2.15.1 The local authority has a statutory obligation to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. Within Neighbourhood Services delivery of the statutory service should be prioritised.

2.15.2 The transformation of neighbourhood services should prioritise need within the city, whilst recognising the core remit of the service, the different types of need, the availability of other services and providers to respond to this and the different ways in which the service can be delivered.

2.15.3 Wherever possible building-based services should be co-located in neighbourhood based multi-service centres to ensure best use of facilities and to deliver joined up, efficient and convenient services in one place and to serve the widest possible catchment area.

2.15.4 Communities should have the opportunity to take on the running of services where this is possible. Community organisations can often provide added value services and may have a deeper reach into local communities through their networks. Support can be provided for community organisations to develop business plans to take on the running of services where this can bring benefits to local people.

2.15.5 Buildings retained within the council delivered service should be viable for the future. Whilst building condition should not drive service planning, buildings should be efficient and sustainable to optimise the services able to be delivered from a reduced estate in the future. Investment in technologies such as library self-access systems should be explored to make the best use of retained buildings.

Outcomes

2.16 The success of the Neighbourhood Services transformation will be assessed by the following outcomes

Table 2: Outcomes assessment criteria

Primary Outcome	Supporting Outcomes
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1. Neighbourhood Service meets the needs of the whole community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are reaching more people • People know what we are offering • We reach the people who need us most in Leicester • People have access to more of the services they need
2. Our service is more efficient to deliver best value within the resources available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our services are delivered from fewer but better facilities • Our facilities are used more efficiently to optimise the services available for local people • Services are delivered through a wide range of systems to improve access for local people
3. Local people are more involved in the running of library and community services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support is available for community organisations to be able to take on the running of services. • More of our services are run by local organisations • More local people volunteer for our services
4. Our service is sustainable for the next 10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes are delivered on time in line with the Council's budgetary strategy • Our services are affordable within the available budget • Our facilities are welcoming and fit for the future • More partners and services share our facilities

Local context

2.17 The Community Services and Library Needs Assessment programme includes all of the physical building assets within service as follows:

Table 3: Neighbourhood Services Facilities

Facility	Description
Leicester Central Library Bishop Street, LE1 6AA	The Central Library provides a breadth and depth of library services accessible to all residents within the city. As a result the library has the highest number of book issues (123,000) and computer usage (28,000 hours) in the city. The two storey Library is located off Town Hall Square and includes a specialist family/local history collection and a learning facility. The library is currently open 52.5 hours per week.
Aylestone Library (Aylestone Leisure Centre) 2 Knighton Lane East, LE2 6LU	The service is co-located within Aylestone Leisure Centre multi-service centre and benefits from very high footfall due to cross-service usage.

	<p>The library is currently open 65 hours per week, and staffed for 32 hours</p>
<p>Beaumont Leys Library Beaumont Way, LE4 1DS</p>	<p>Beaumont Leys Library is a multi-service centre offering community rooms and housing appointments. It is co-located with services such as adult social care and hosts a regular DWP Job Shop. It is positioned next to Leicester Leys leisure centre at the rear of the Beaumont Leys shopping centre.</p> <p>The library is currently open 49.5 hours per week.</p>
<p>Belgrave Library 39 Cossington Street, LE4 6JD</p>	<p>The library is ideally located alongside multiple council services including a refurbished gym, refurbished swimming pool, children's centre and Cossington Park. The library has the highest footfall of all city libraries and offers multi-services including DWP work coach sessions.</p> <p>The library is currently open 55 hours per week.</p>
<p>Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre Rothley Street, Leicester, LE4 6LF</p>	<p>The neighbourhood centre currently houses a busy police beat office, a pre-school, a daily lunch club, Gujarati Language classes through an external provider and Adult Learning classes. There are a number of other council services located in close proximity, including a library, children's centre, park, swimming pool and gym. The centre has the highest footfall of all council run community centres.</p> <p>The neighbourhood centre is currently open 79 hours per week.</p>
<p>Braunstone Frith Recreation Centre 29a Sharmon Crescent, Leicester, LE3 6NW</p>	<p>This is a single hall community centre overlooking the green. A local foodbank operates from the building.</p> <p>The recreation centre is available unstaffed 60 hours per week</p>
<p>BRITE Centre & Library 130 Braunstone Avenue, Leicester, LE3 1LE</p>	<p>The BRITE Centre is a multi-service centre housing a library, community centre, adult learning classrooms and community café, and training kitchen. The centre built in 2005 has excellent facilities and is located on Braunstone Avenue near Braunstone Park and Imperial Infants School and Fullhurst College.</p> <p>The centre is currently open for 56.5 hours per week.</p>
<p>Coleman Neighbourhood Centre Balderstone Close, Leicester, LE5 4ES</p>	<p>The community centre houses a pre-school and some limited community use. It also includes a ball court.</p> <p>The centre is currently open (staffed) for 16 hours per week.</p>
<p>Evington Library 200 Evington Lane, LE5 6DH</p>	<p>The library is small and well located for residents in the centre of Evington village. The library has a self-access system to extend availability outside of core staffed hours.</p> <p>Evington Library is currently open (staffed) for 47 hours per week.</p>
<p>Eyres Monsell Community Centre</p>	<p>Although Eyres Monsell Community Centre has relatively low usage due to its' small catchment area (20,000 visits per year) the building is well located within the estate and has good</p>

Hillsborough Road, LE2 9PQ	<p>engagement from local residents. The centre has a community garden and recently refurbished MUGA.</p> <p>Eyres Monsell Community Centre is currently open 40 hours per week.</p>
Fosse Neighbourhood Centre and Library Mantle Road LE3 5HG	<p>Fosse Neighbourhood Centre and Library is a Grade II listed school building. Although community use is low, there is a very active food bank operating from the annex.</p> <p>Fosse Neighbourhood Centre is currently open 50 hours per week.</p>
Gilmorton Community Rooms 7-9 Hopyard Close LE2 9GY	<p>Gilmorton Community Rooms is a small hall located next to a retail unit. The centre has modest usage with a food bank which operates from the facility on a weekly basis.</p> <p>Gilmorton Community Rooms is available for hire unstaffed.</p>
Hamilton Library & Community Centre 20 Maidenwell Avenue LE5 1BL	<p>The Library Centre is an existing multi-service centre housing a library and community centre. Hamilton Centre was built in 2006 next to a health centre and Tesco superstore.</p> <p>Hamilton Library is currently open 40 hours per week, with the community hall available outside of staffed hours.</p>
Highfields Library 8 Melbourne Road LE2 0DS	<p>The library multi-service centre is well located within the Highfields estate, next to local retail units and in an area of high density terraced housing and social housing tower blocks. The library was refurbished in 2020.</p> <p>Highfields Library is currently open 51 hours per week.</p>
Knighton Library 167-9 Clarendon Park Road LE2 3AJ	<p>The stand-alone library is located on the busy Clarendon Park Road and was recently refurbished in 2021. The library has a self-access system to extend availability outside of core staffed hours.</p> <p>Knighton Library is currently open (staffed) for 47 hours per week.</p>
Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre Armadale Drive, Leicester LE5 1HF	<p>The unstaffed centre is poorly located in an open space within the Netherhall estate. The centre hosts a pre-school a ball court which is planned to receive investment.</p> <p>The community centre is available to hire unstaffed.</p>
New Parks Centre Library 321 Aikman Avenue LE3 9PW	<p>The multi-service centre houses a library, community centre, adult learning classrooms and access to housing appointments. New Parks Centre. Library was built in 2010 and is ideally located within the local retail parade and overlooking New College secondary school.</p> <p>The library is currently open 40 hours per week.</p>
Pork Pie Library and Community Centre LE2 6QS	<p>The multi-service centre houses a library, community centre, adult learning classrooms and a weekly DWP Job Shop. The Pork Pie Library was refurbished in 2015,</p> <p>The library is currently open 45 hours per week.</p>

<p>Rushey Mead Recreation Centre 215 Gleneagles Avenue, Leicester LE4 7YJ</p>	<p>Although the unstaffed hall building is small it enjoys good usage by local people with 27,000 visits in 2023-24.</p> <p>The hall is available to hire unstaffed.</p>
<p>Rushey Mead Library Lockerbie Walk LE4 7YJ</p>	<p>The small library located in a small shopping precinct. Although it has low use, it is well situated for local residents of Rushey Mead.</p> <p>The library is currently open 29 hours per week.</p>
<p>St Barnabas Library 2 French Road, LE5 4AH</p>	<p>The multi-service centre offers a digital and performance suite, adult learning classes, housing enquiries, and a weekly DWP Job Shop. The library has received Arts Council Funding for investment in one wing to create a space for performance, cultural and community activities.</p> <p>The library is currently open 49.5 hours per week.</p>
<p>St Matthews Centre and Library 10 Malabar Road, Leicester LE1 2PD</p>	<p>The multi-service centre has good use however the building located alongside retail in the St Matthews estate is in very poor condition. The centre houses a preschool, housing reception, library and community rooms.</p> <p>The community centre is currently open 74 hours per week.</p>
<p>Thurnby Lodge Community Centre Thurncourt Road, Leicester LE5 2NG</p>	<p>The centre is well located next to a parade of retail units and well served by public transport. The centre is well used and shares a car park with the neighbouring Peace Centre.</p> <p>The community centre is currently open (staffed) 36.5 hours per week.</p>
<p>Tudor Centre Bewcastle Grove, Leicester LE4 2JU</p>	<p>The Tudor Centre is located in the Mowmacre estate next to the local retail units and has good engagement from local residents.</p> <p>The centre is currently open 35 hours per week and is available for hire outside of staffed hours.</p>
<p>Westcotes Library 38-40 Narborough Road, LE3 0BQ</p>	<p>The library is located on the busy Narborough Road. It serves an area of high density terraced housing with extensive retail on the main Narborough road The library received investment in 2015 to create a flexible community space and to expand the IT provision.</p> <p>The library is currently open 54 hours per week.</p>

2.18 Neighbourhood Services provide a wide range services for people who live, work and study in Leicester. Libraries and community centres serve as local hubs, with services and activities tailored at local level to respond to the needs of residents. Neighbourhood Services work with a range of internal and external partners to deliver services and activities. Citywide services include:

- **Library Resources:** A wide range of adult and children’s books available in formats including large print, audio, eBooks and eNewspapers. A large stock of community language titles is available to appropriate local communities in Leicester.
- **Reading programmes:** Quality reading and informal learning programmes would continue to be delivered by a small team of specialist staff in partnership with local and national agencies. Programmes include the children’s Summer Reading Challenge, the primary school’s Our Best Book awards, half term activity programmes and the CILIP national “Green Libraries Week.”
- **Book Start Programme:** The Book Start programme is run in partnership with the Book Trust charity who provide book gifting resources for all newborn babies. The local programme supports the development of language and literacy skills in 0 – 5 year olds to prepare for school readiness and provide early exposure to books and reading, through book sharing sessions with targeted families.
- **Book Bus:** The Children’s Bookbus service operates regular routes and stops with a focus on covering areas of disadvantage to ensure city children have access to book borrowing. The service also visits early years settings, schools and festivals to promote reading to children.
- **Home Library Service:** The service is delivered in partnership with Ride Leicester to support more housebound residents with door-to-door book deliveries wherever they live in the city.
- **Digital resources:** Access to printing, office software and online services through 170 public access computers and free Wi-Fi at all library service points, and support and signposting from staff members.
- **Homework Help:** After school homework help and support for primary and secondary school aged children at 12 libraries
- **Toddler Time:** Weekly sessions for young children aged 0-5yrs and parents and carers at local libraries
- **DWP Job Shops:** Weekly work coach sessions delivered in partnership with the DWP at 8 libraries.

National Context

2.19 The national library data collected by CIPFA for 2024/25 indicates that library usage post covid is continuing to increase, with both in-person and online visits rising. Physical visits increased by 13.5%, from 2,114 per 1,000 people in 2022/23 to 2,400 per 1,000 people in 2023/24. Web visits saw an even more significant jump of 36.9%. Book issues rose by 0.5%.

2.20 However, a report by National Literacy Trust published in June 2025 found that the percentage of children and young people responding to the survey who said they enjoyed reading was its lowest in 20 years. The report noted that the drop in reading enjoyment over the last year has been especially steep among primary-aged children and boys, particularly boys aged 11 to 16.

2.21 A DCMS report published in October 2024 was commissioned to identify barriers to library use. The key barriers which were identified in the report were lack of awareness of non-users of the full range of services on offer, inconvenient opening hours emerged as a significant barrier, especially for parents and full-time workers and the ability to access similar resources elsewhere (e.g., online or in bookshops).

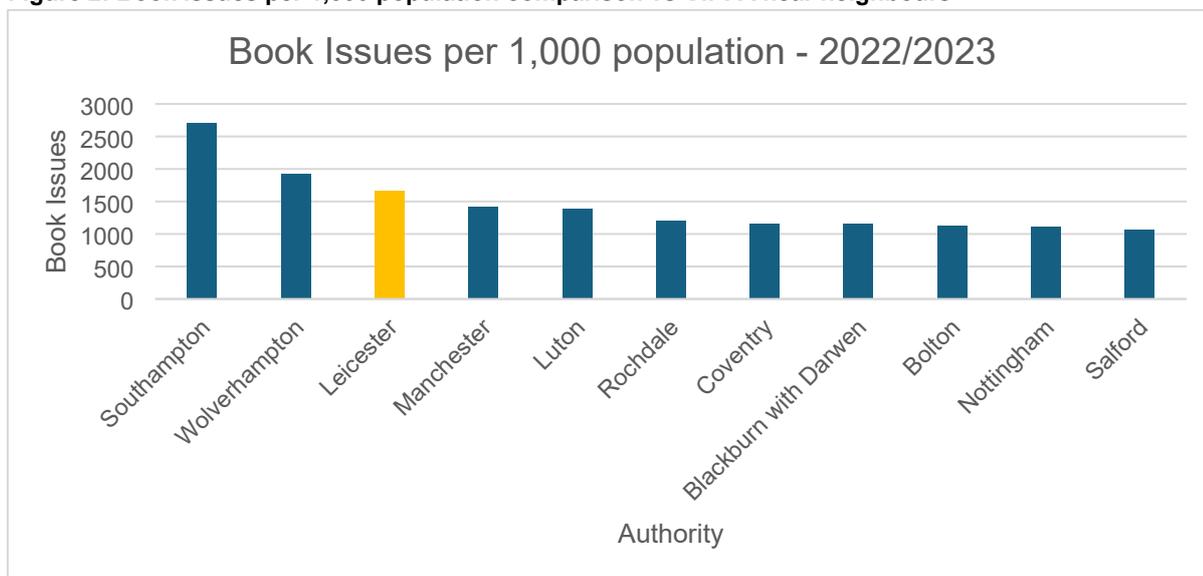
2.22 In September 2025, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government published its Pride in Place Strategy. The strategy outlines the government’s plan “to create safer, healthier neighbourhoods where communities can thrive.” Pride in Place funding has been allocated to an additional 169 places in England and Wales, each of which will receive £20 million over 10 years. In Leicester City the places identified by national government for funding are Braunstone West, Eyres Monsell and Thurnby Lodge. It is anticipated that the funding would enhance the proposals around the local facilities in these areas.

Benchmarking

2.23 The CIPFA Public Library Users Survey is a tool for understanding user attitudes to libraries across the UK. Leicester City submits figures annually against a number of indicators to help benchmark the service against other authorities, view trends over time and obtain evidence to guide the future development of libraries. The charts and tables below compare usage and performance of Leicester Libraries to similar sized library authorities known as “near neighbours” for 2022/2023 (our latest available dataset).

2.24 Book Issues (Leicester vs CIPFA defined near neighbours 2022 – 23): Leicester performs well in comparison with its ‘near neighbour’ authorities and has recovered to the same levels of issues as before the pandemic and better than most ‘near neighbour’ authorities (1,661 book issues per 1000 population in 22/23).

Figure 2: Book issues per 1,000 population comparison vs CIPFA near neighbours



2.25 **Library Opening hours** (Leicester v CIPFA near neighbours 2022 - 23): The table below shows Leicester City has the longest library opening hours within its comparator group of 'near neighbours' with all but one Leicester library currently open for 40 hours per week or more.

Table 4: CIPFA near neighbour opening hours comparison

	10 to 14	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 29	30 to 34	35 to 39	40 to 44	45 to 49	50 to 54	55 to 59	60 +	% 40+
Blackburn with Darwen	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	20%
Bolton	0	2	0	2	1	4	0	0	0	1	0	10%
Coventry	1	1	2	3	2	0	3	4	0	0	1	47%
Leicester	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	3	4	1	4	94%
Luton	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	67%
Manchester	0	4	0	0	3	2	2	3	1	0	7	59%
Nottingham	0	0	2	0	0	4	4	1	3	1	0	60%
Rochdale	0	5	0	0	2	5	1	3	0	0	0	25%
Salford	1	1	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	1	5	43%
Southampton	2	0	1	1	1	3	1	2	0	0	0	27%
Wolverhampton	0	6	3	0	2	3	0	1	0	1	0	13%

2.26 **Library service points per 1000 population** (Leicester v CIPFA near neighbours, 2022-23): The table below shows Leicester City has the 4th highest service points per 1000 population within its comparator group of 'near neighbours'

Table 5: Service points per 1000 population CIPFA near neighbour comparison

	Population	Service points per 1000 population
Rochdale	229,756	0.070
Wolverhampton	272,425	0.060
Salford	284,106	0.050
Leicester	379,780	0.048
Coventry	360,702	0.048
Nottingham	329,276	0.046
Southampton	256,110	0.044
Manchester	579,917	0.039
Bolton	302,383	0.033
Blackburn with Darwen	157,503	0.032
Luton	231,028	0.026

2.27 **Community Centres maintained by the local authority (2023)**: There is no national arrangement for collecting community centre statistics. For the purposes of benchmarking, the

CIPFA defined near neighbour local authorities have been contacted to share local authority run provision. The following table shows the number of community centres run by local authorities compared to Leicester City, where a response was given:

Table 6: Community centre benchmarking against CIPFA near neighbours

Local Authority	Community centres run by LA
Leicester	12
Derby	0
Wolverhampton	0
Nottingham	3
Newcastle	0
Coventry	0
Southampton	0

3. Development of proposals for consultation

2.28 Under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, local authorities have a legal obligation to provide “a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons” who wish to use it. However, following a decade and a half of reduced funding from central government, we are no longer able to sustain current levels of support for libraries and community centres. Findings from the public engagement exercise and secondary research undertaken in 2023/24 were used to develop a set of proposals for public consultation. The full proposals consulted upon would have delivered a revenue saving from the Neighbourhood Services budget of up to £2.1 million (up to 35% of the 2024/25 net budget), to contribute towards a divisional savings target for Neighbourhood & Environmental Services of £7.2 million.

Proposals put forward for consultation

2.29 The proposals that were put forward for consultation were as follows:

2.29.1 Consultation proposal: 12 Multi-service centres would function as hubs, bringing together different services from the council and its partners to support people's wellbeing. The Central Library service would continue to deliver a broader offer, serving residents living in all areas.

- Aylestone Library (located in Aylestone Leisure Centre)
- Beaumont Leys Library Hub
- Belgrave Library Hub
- BRITE Centre Hub
- Central Library
- Hamilton Library Hub
- Highfields Library Hub
- New Parks Centre Hub
- Pork Pie Library Hub
- St Barnabas Library Hub
- St Matthews Library (relocated nearby)
- Thurnby Lodge Centre Hub (with new self-service library)
- Westcotes Library Hub

2.29.2 Consultation proposal: A reduction in opening hours across the 12 remaining multi- service centres and the Central Library. Full details of the proposed changes to opening hours can be seen below:

Table 7: Proposed changes to opening hours, consulted upon April – June 2025

Centre		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Staffed Hours
Aylestone Library**^	Current Staffed Hours	1pm-6pm	10am-6pm	2pm-6pm	10am-6pm	2pm-6pm	10am-1pm	N/A	32
	Proposed Staffed Hours	1pm-5pm	10am-5pm	2pm-6pm	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	10am-2pm	N/A	30
Beaumont Leys Library^	Current Staffed Hours	9am-6.30pm	9am-6.30pm	9am-6.30pm	9am-6.30pm	9am-5pm	9.30am-1pm	Closed	49.5
	Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-2pm	Closed	40
Belgrave Library*^	Current Staffed Hours	10am-7pm	10am-7pm	10am-7pm	10am-7pm	10am-7pm	10am-4pm	12 noon-4pm	55
	Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	10am-6pm	2pm-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	10am-4pm	Closed	40
BRITE Centre*^	Current Staffed Hours	9am-8.30pm	9am-7.30pm	9am-8pm	9am-7.45pm	9am-5pm	10am-4pm	Closed	57.75
	Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	10am-2pm	Closed	40
Central Library	Current Staffed Hours	9.30am-7pm	9.30am-7pm	9.30am-7pm	9.30am-7pm	9.30am-5pm	9am-4pm	Closed	52.5
	Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	10am-4pm	Closed	45
Hamilton Library*^	Current Staffed Hours	10am-2pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	2pm-7pm	10am-5pm	10am-4pm	12 noon-4pm	40
	Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-6pm	Closed	10am-2pm	Closed	30
Highfields Library	Current Staffed Hours	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	10am-4pm	Closed	51
	Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	1pm-5pm	10am-2pm	Closed	40
New Parks Library*^	Current Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-7pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-1pm	Closed	40
	Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	Closed	10am-2pm	Closed	30
Pork Pie Library*^	Current Staffed Hours	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	9am-7pm	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	10am-1pm	Closed	45
	Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	10am-6pm	Closed	10am-5pm	10am-2pm	Closed	30
St Barnabas Library*	Current Staffed Hours	9.30am-5pm	9.30am-7pm	9.30am-7pm	9.30am-7pm	9.30am-5pm	10am-4pm	Closed	49.5
	Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	2pm-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	10am-4pm	Closed	40

St Matthews Centre (Centre would be closed and the library relocated nearby)	Current Staffed Hours	9am-9pm	9am-9pm	9am-9pm	9am-9pm	9am-9pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	74
	Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	10am-6pm	Closed	10am-5pm	10am-2pm	Closed	30
Thurnby Lodge Community Centre^ (Proposed new library service)	Current Staffed Hours	1pm-10pm	9.30am-10pm	1pm-10pm	12.30pm-7pm	3.30pm-10pm	Closed	Closed	43.5
	Proposed Staffed Hours	1pm-5pm	10am-5pm	Closed	10am-5pm	10am-6pm	10am-2pm	Closed	30
Westcotes Library	Current Staffed Hours	10am-7pm	10am-7pm	10am-7pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-4pm	12 noon-4pm	51
	Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-6pm	1pm-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	Closed	10am-2pm	Closed	30
Total Current Staffed Hours									640.75
Total Proposed Staffed Hours									455

^Inducted community groups would still have access at their current times

*Self-access introduced for library members (8am-8pm)

**Self-access is currently in use during Aylestone Leisure Centre opening hours

2.29.3 Consultation proposal: The following facilities would no longer be run by the council.

Community organisations would be supported to develop a business case to take on the running of the following community libraries and community centres where appropriate:

- 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

2.29.4 Consultation proposal: The council would no longer run the following facilities. Due to the poor condition of the buildings they would not be offered for community organisations to run:

- Fosse Neighbourhood Centre would not be put forward for Community Asset Transfer as the council policy requires buildings to be of a minimum standard. Condition surveys indicate that the building requires £2.6million in investment to maintain over the next 10 years.
- St Matthews Centre would be closed, and the library would be re-located nearby. The building forms part of the Housing divisional estate and has undergone

numerous surveys which show the building is not sustainable for the future. All services would therefore move out of the community centre.

2.29.5 Consultation proposal: Additional investment would support a range of proposals to ensure the service could continue to meet the needs of individuals and communities across the city including:

- Extending Self-Access after core staffed hours at suitable sites. The self-access system would enable registered customers aged 16 years and over, and accompanied children, to access the library outside of staffed opening times using their library card and PIN. Self-access libraries would be monitored by CCTV and customers would be given an induction in order to use the service. Self-access customers would have access to book loans, study space, computers and Wi-Fi through existing self-service facilities.
- Investment to further develop retained buildings as multi-service centres including libraries, community rooms and adult learning facilities.
- Reviewing the areas visited by the Children’s BookBus to focus on covering areas of disadvantage.
- Providing enhanced activity programmes 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.
- Continuing to invest in our online services and resources including our e-library.
- Supporting community groups to take on the running of more services.
- Developing volunteer opportunities to enhance the services we offer and to provide benefits to participants.
- Providing small libraries at identified children’s centres for 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.

Development of proposals for consultation

2.30 A wide range of information, research and engagement findings was used to develop the above proposals for consultation. The following sections outline the considerations underpinning the development of the proposals.

2.31 The consultation builds on the **public engagement** work conducted in 2023 as part of the Community Services and Library Needs Assessment programme, with the aim of shaping a future model for Neighbourhood Services across the city. The Council commissioned Activist Group, as specialists in engagement, research and advice on library and council services, to undertake the engagement and produce a public engagement report. The 2023 public engagement report is available on the consultation website at [public-engagement-report.pdf](#). The key findings of the engagement report are outlined in 2.13 and underpin the proposals to provide enhanced activity programmes 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 as the key areas of need.

2.32 The public engagement survey asked what ideas people thought the Council should investigate which are being tried elsewhere to better meet the needs of residents. 'more multi-service centres,' 'reviewing opening hours to match peak demand' and 'involving community organisations in running services' were the most popular ideas to consider. This feedback was used to inform the proposals which were developed for consultation.

Table 8: Responses to public engagement survey September 2023, "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 volunteers	377	21.86%
Making more use of customer self-service in public libraries	375	21.74%
Providing more services online	294	17.04%
None of the above	211	12.23%
Other	91	5.28%

2.33 The Neighbourhood Services project team undertook an extensive **secondary research** exercise in 2024 to support the needs assessment. The report is available on the consultation website at [Secondary Research Report](#). Research included:

- Leicester city population analysis, health and employment data
- Service overview including performance data
- Usage and service cost information
- Benchmarking information
- Service delivery (analysed through the national Universal Offers developed by Libraries Connected)
- Building profiles (for each Neighbourhood Services facility)

Key Principles

2.34 The following 5 principles have been applied in developing the model for a transformed neighbourhood services offer to meet the needs of city communities:

1. The local authority has a statutory obligation to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. Within Neighbourhood Services delivery of the statutory service should be prioritised.
2. The transformation of neighbourhood services should prioritise need within the city, whilst recognising the core remit of the service, the different types of need, the

availability of other services and providers to respond to this and the different ways in which the service can be delivered.

3. Wherever possible building-based services should be co-located in neighbourhood based multi-service centres to ensure best use of facilities and to deliver joined up, efficient and convenient services in one place and to serve the widest possible catchment area.
4. Communities should have the opportunity to take on the running of services where this is possible. Community organisations can often provide added value services and may have a deeper reach into local communities through their networks. Support can be provided for community organisations to develop business plans to take on the running of services where this can bring benefits to local people.
5. Buildings retained within the council delivered service should be viable for the future. Whilst building condition should not drive service planning, buildings should be efficient and sustainable to optimise the services able to be delivered from a reduced estate in the future. Investment in technologies such as library self-access systems should be explored to make the best use of retained buildings

Service Performance Information

2.35 The following service performance information from the secondary research report was used to inform proposals with regard to local services. The information has been updated to include the latest financial year 2024/25 and is used to inform the recommendations following consultation.

2.36 The following 3 tables show the number of visits, book issues and PC hours for each of our sites during the 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 financial years. The tables show the usage trends of each multi-service centre, library and community centre over three years, following the pandemic. The tables show the current usage for a range of indicators for the latest full year, 2024 – 25. The data shows:

- Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre is the busiest community centre with visits continuing to increase year on year. Belgrave Library is the busiest community library, with visits continuing to increase.
- The centres with the least visits in 2024/25 are Gilmorton Community Rooms, Braunstone Frith Recreation Centre, Coleman Neighbourhood Centre, Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre, Rushey Mead Library and Fosse Neighbourhood Centre (including the library).

Table 9: Key performance metric – Visitors

Site	Number of visitors		
	22/23	23/24	24/25
Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	110,253	231,016	263,548
Belgrave Library	115,917	145,109	166,523
Central Library	107,303	122,358	136,450
St Matthews	110,089	113,822	110,823
Highfields	109,562	117,900	108,396

Aylestone	148,681	99,833	104,796
BRITE Centre	55,025	70,039	67,351
Beaumont Leys	67,691	73,330	60,516
Pork Pie	28,743	41,937	59,623
Knighton	49,283	56,440	55,632
St Barnabas	49,937	56,285	52,420
Hamilton	39,996	47,254	52,131
Evington	29,671	38,607	48,747
Thurnby Lodge Community Centre	34,334	36,574	48,556
New Parks	36,883	44,555	42,624
Eyres Monsell Community Centre	20,978	34,389	33,959
Rushey Mead Recreation Centre	23,472	27,054	33,373
Westcotes	25,037	32,014	30,427
Tudor Centre	15,822	16,326	20,923
Bookbus	9,799	6,365	17,594
Fosse	7,915	16,130	17,128
Rushey Mead Library	11,588	14,457	15,649
Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre	10,919	10,121	9,881
Coleman Neighbourhood Centre	14,446	14,119	8,337
Braunstone Frith	8,742	9,372	6,126
Gilmorton	909	1,106	1,512
Total	1,242,995	1,476,512	1,573,045

- The libraries with the highest book loans in 2024/25 are the Central Library, Belgrave Library and Knighton Library.
- The libraries with the lowest number of book loans in 2024/25 are St Matthews Library and Fosse Library.

Table 10: Key performance metric – Book Issues

Site	Number of Book Issues		
	22/23	23/24	24/25
Central	53,613	72,693	83,065
Belgrave	51,273	54,681	60,698
Knighton	49,449	55,230	58,707
Beaumont Leys	55,122	58,958	53,493
Highfields	54,452	45,901	52,323
Hamilton	44,545	45,069	48,642
Evington	38,053	40,015	43,399
St Barnabas	42,745	46,209	43,069
Westcotes	23,056	26,210	28,342
Brite	21,682	20,817	22,563
Aylestone	20,830	20,893	22,224
Pork Pie	15,271	18,153	21,067
New Parks	16,514	18,007	15,991
Rushey Mead	12,259	12,382	14,724

Fosse	7,904	10,056	12,651
St Matthews	8,607	9,556	10,633
Bookbus	8,037	4,894	6,874
Total	523,412	559,724	598,465

- The libraries with the highest number of PC hours used in 2024/25 are the Central Library, Westcotes Library, Highfields Library and St Barnabas Library
- The libraries with the lowest number of PC hours used in 2024/25 are Rushey Mead Library and Fosse Library.

Table 11: Key performance metric – Public PC Hours

No. of hours	Number of PC hours		
	22/23	23/24	24/25
Central	26,115	27,754	31,034
Westcotes	6,623	8,313	8,534
Highfields	5,335	6,339	8,012
St Barnabas	4,569	6,434	7,287
Belgrave	6,647	6,700	6,479
Knighton	3,694	4,153	4,279
Hamilton	3,633	4,128	4,160
Beaumont Leys	4,736	4,874	3,969
St Matthews	3,310	3,463	3,604
Brite	3,073	2,984	2,565
New Parks	2,620	2,732	2,427
Aylestone	1,131	1,053	1,814
Evington	1,464	1,660	1,748
Pork Pie	1,899	1,915	1,515
Fosse	566	1,448	1,368
Rushey Mead	426	572	493
Total	75,841	84,522	89,288

Service & Building Costing Information

2.37 Running and maintaining Leicester’s libraries and community centres requires significant and ongoing investment. The Council’s Estates and Buildings Division commissioned conditions surveys to be conducted on all of our libraries and community centres (excluding Aylestone Library as this sits within the leisure centre and has been subject to separate condition surveys as par tod the recent redevelopment of the centre).

Details can be seen in table 11 below which shows the condition rated A-D. The ratings are applied as follows:

A = Good Condition: As new, or with no defects.

B = Fair condition: Wear and tear or minor defects evident requiring minor repair and maintenance.

C = Poor Condition: Prevalent or serious defects evident, requiring extensive or invasive remedial work as soon as practicable in order to prevent consequential deterioration.

D = Failed: The element described has failed and has reached the end of its functioning life

Table 12: Building condition overview

Site	Overall Building Condition
Beaumont Leys Library	B
Belgrave Library	B
Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	B
Braunstone Frith Recreation Centre	B
Brite Centre	B
Central Library	B
Coleman Neighbourhood Centre	B
Evington Library	B
Eyres Monsell Community Centre	B
Fosse Neighbourhood Centre	C
Gilmorton Neighbourhood Centre	B
Hamilton Library	B
Highfields library	B
Knighton Library	B
Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre	B
New Parks Library	B
Pork Pie Library	B
Rushey Mead Library	B
Rushey Mead Recreation Centre	B
St Barnabas Library	B
Thurnby Lodge Community Centre	B
Tudor Centre	B
Westcotes Library	B

- All buildings (excluding St Matthews Centre) are rated as B – Fair condition, except for Fosse Neighbourhood Centre which is rated as C – poor condition, with prevalent or serious defects evident requiring extensive work. The cost of backlog work and maintenance work required over the next 10 years is in excess of £2.6 million due to the age and condition of the building.
- More extensive survey work was undertaken separately for St Matthews Centre which is a Housing owned building. The report prepared by the estates team confirms extensive

maintenance costs over the next 10 years of over £4 million and widespread deterioration of fabric and services. Mechanical and electrical systems are nearing the end of their life. The report concludes that significant liabilities exist with any form of retention. The Sports Hall has been closed since 2022 due to the presence of RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete) which would need to be wholly replaced.

2.38 Table 12 below presents the financial performance of each centre based on best value indicators. Sites such as Fosse Neighbourhood Centre, Coleman Neighbourhood Centre and Gilmorton Community Rooms perform less well against these metrics. Aylestone Library is within the Leisure Centre and therefore has limited running costs whilst Rushey Mead Recreation Centre is unstaffed and therefore costs less to run.

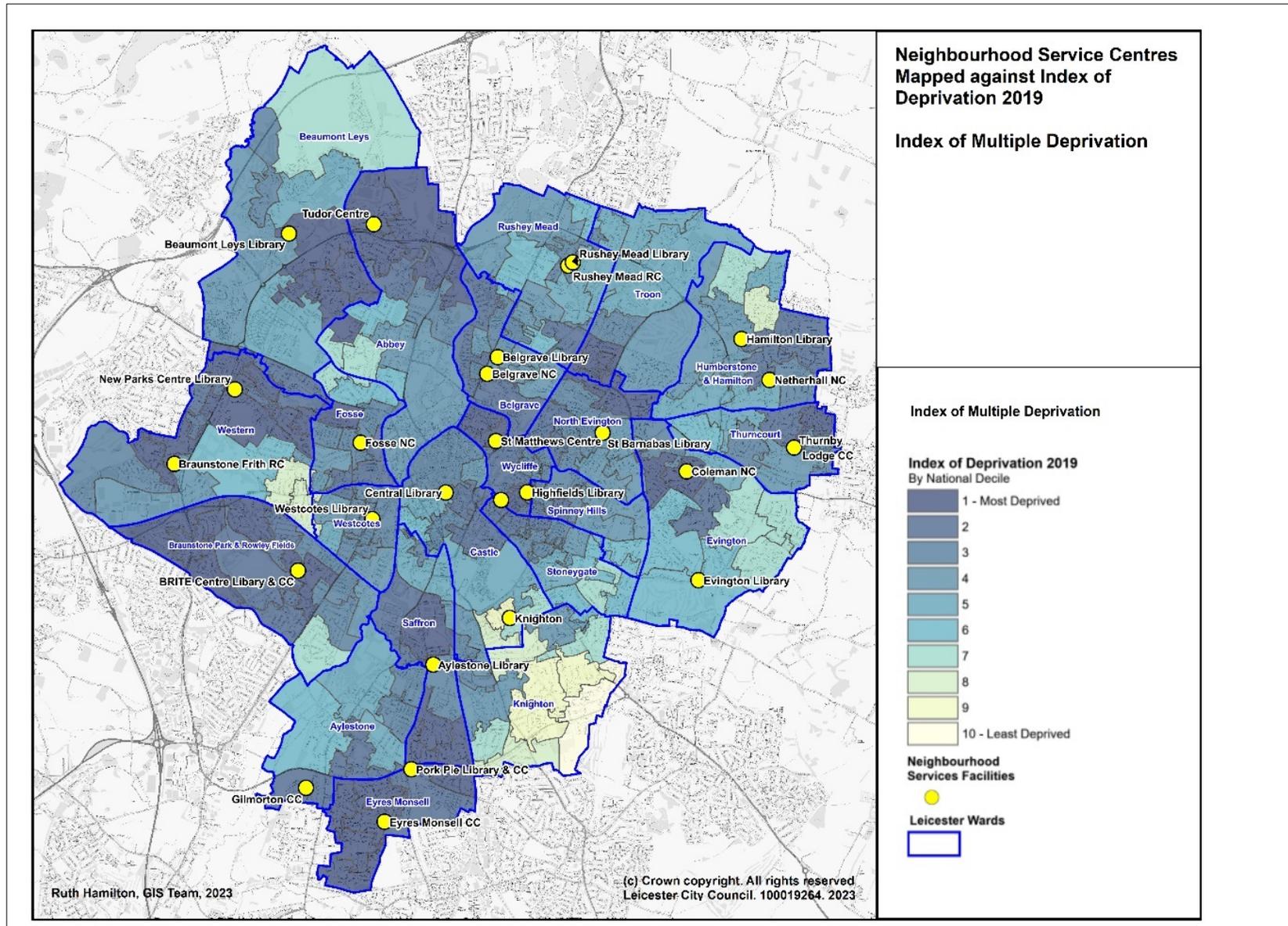
Table 13: Financial performance – Running costs and cost per visit

Site	Total Running Costs (includes staffing)	Spend Per Visit
Aylestone Library	£55,518	£0.53
Beaumont Leys MSC	£280,721	£4.64
Belgrave Library	£262,283	£1.58
Belgrave NC MSC	£275,490	£1.05
Braunstone Frith RC	£5,314	£0.87
BRITE Centre MSC	£239,081	£3.55
Central Library	£633,514	£4.64
Coleman NC	£84,545	£10.14
Evington Library	£188,196	£3.86
Eyres Monsell CC	£154,845	£4.56
Fosse Centre	£292,950	£17.10
Gilmorton CC	£16,566	£10.96
Hamilton MSC	£192,378	£3.69
Highfields MSC	£268,422	£2.48
Knighton Library	£216,566	£3.89
Netherhall NC	£35,836	£3.63
New Parks MSC	£202,721	£4.76
Pork Pie MSC	£193,627	£3.25
Rushey Mead RC	£15,286	£0.46
Rushey Mead Library	£107,186	£6.84
St Barnabas MSC	£290,284	£5.54
St Matthews MSC	£342,511	£3.09
Thurnby Lodge CC	£130,190	£2.68
Tudor Centre	£144,817	£6.92
Westcotes Library	£196,905	£6.47

Needs & Access

2.39 The following map shows the location of Neighbourhood Services facilities plotted on a map showing the Indices of Multiple Deprivation by Super Output Area. The Indices included are Income, Employment, Education, Health, Crime, Barriers to Housing and Services, Living Environment.

Figure 3: Neighbourhood Services facilities mapped against index of multiple deprivation



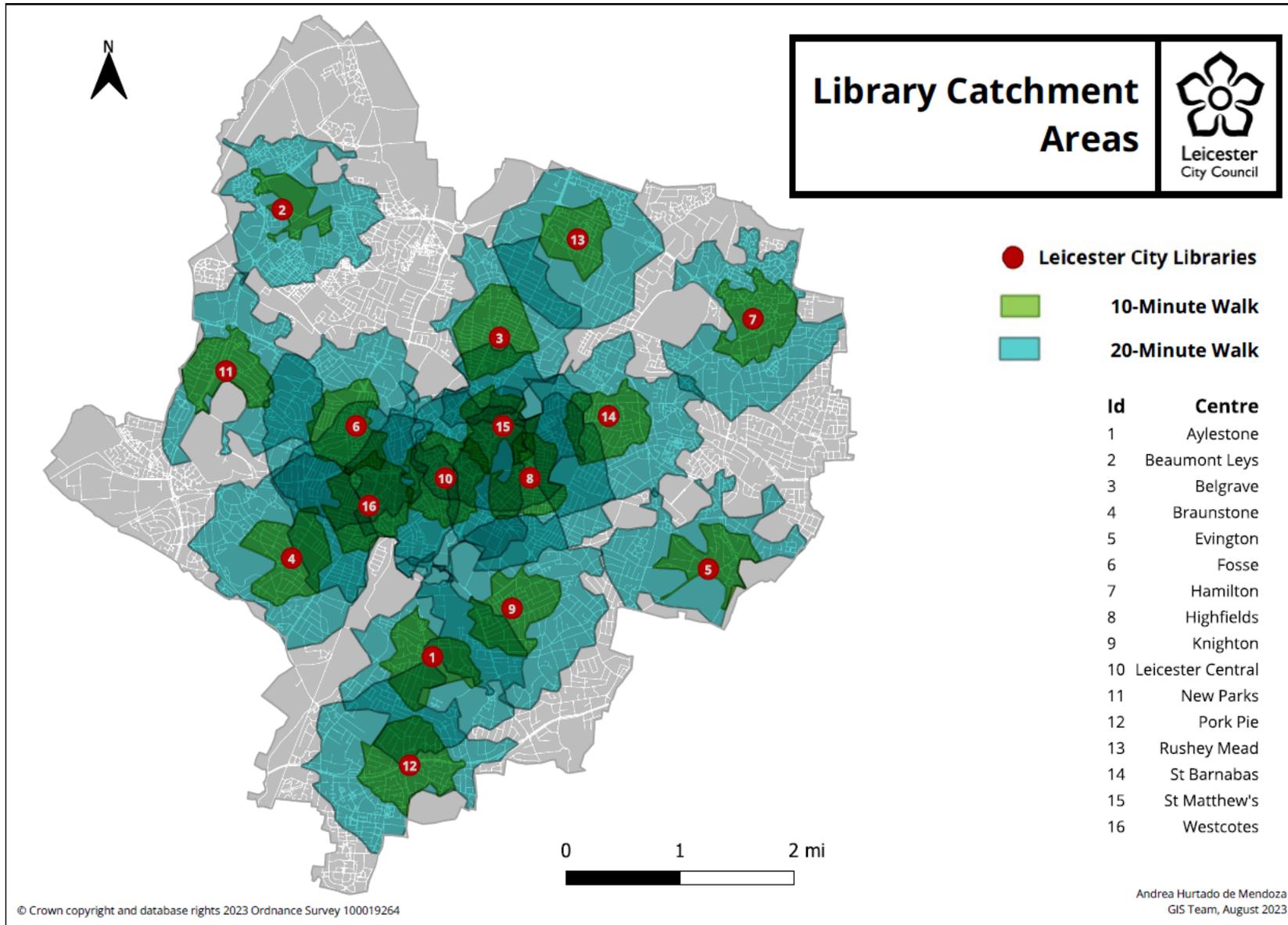
2.40 The table below ranks Neighbourhood Services facilities by the ward they are located in, ordered from the ward with the highest Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score to the lowest, based on 2019 data:

Table 14: Ranked Neighbourhood Services facilities by IMD

Site	IMD Value
Eyres Monsell Community Centre	48.8
BRITE Centre	45.3
Pork Pie Library & Community Centre	45.2
New Parks Library Braunstone Frith Recreation Centre	40.7
St Matthews Centre Highfields Library	38.3
Tudor Centre	36.5
Fosse Neighbourhood Centre	34.9
Beaumont Leys Library	34.1
St Barnabas Library	31.5
Belgrave Library Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	29.8
Thurnby Lodge Community Centre	29.2
Aylestone Library Gilmorton Community Rooms	26.6
Westcotes Library	26.3
Evington Library Coleman Neighbourhood Centre	25.3
Rushey Mead Library Rushey Mead Recreation Centre	24.3
Central Library Knighton Library	22.4
Hamilton Library Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre	22.2

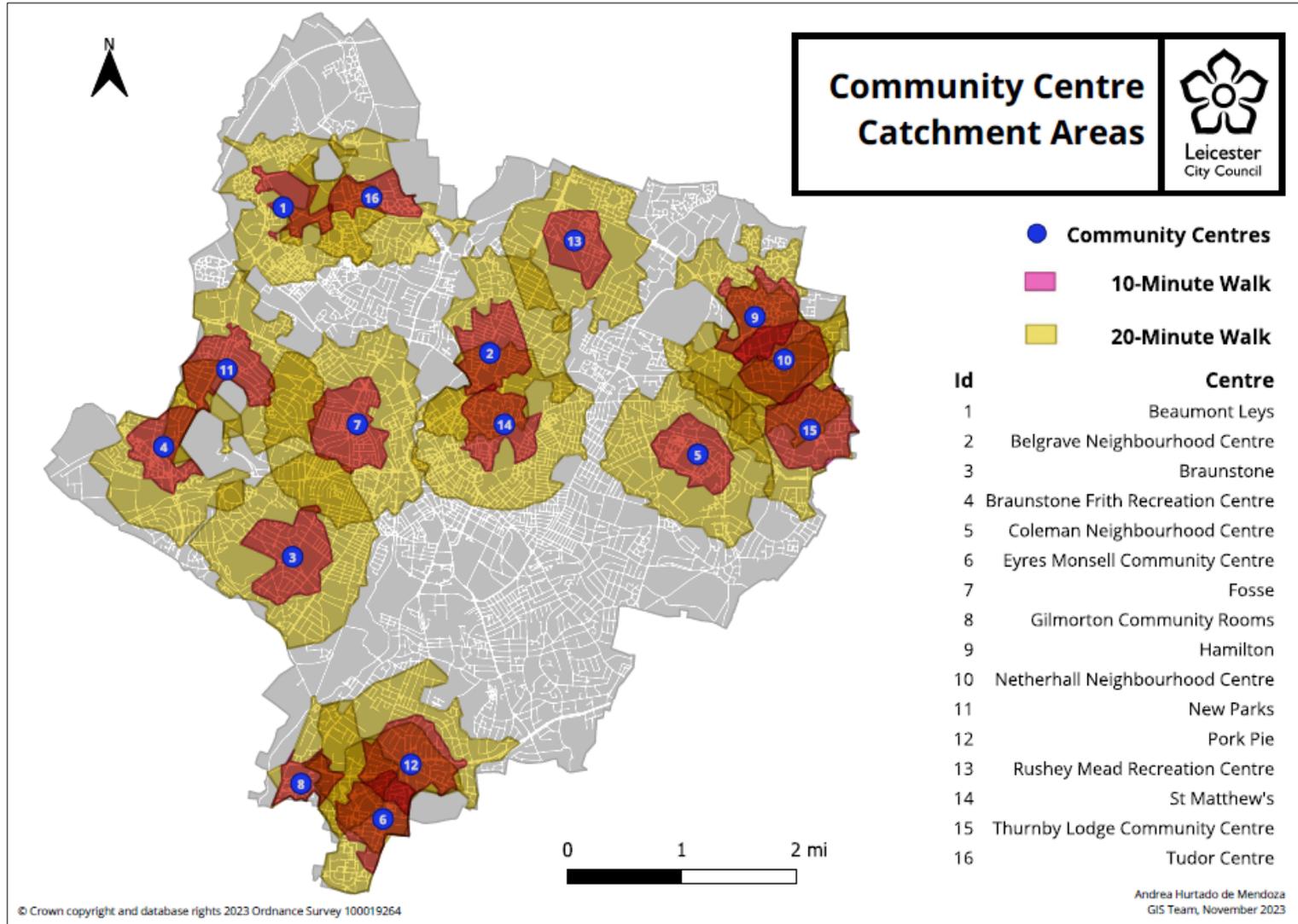
2.41 The map below shows the residential properties within a 10 and 20-minute walking catchment from each library.

Figure 4: Residential properties within a 10 and 20 minute walk of each library



2.42 The map below shows the residential properties within a 10 and 20-minute walking catchment from each community centre or room hire facility.

Figure 5: Residential properties within a 10 and 20 minute walk of each community centre or room hire facility



2.43 The maps below show the residential properties within a 30-minute bus catchment from each current library and community centre. The distance combines the time taken to walk to the bus stop with time taken to travel on the bus. The maps show excellent access to the existing library buildings for residents travelling by bus. The darker areas indicate greater overlap of 30-minute bus route coverage areas for each centre. All areas of the city have access to one or more libraries within a 30-minute bus journey. Most areas of the city also have access to a community centre within a 30-minute bus journey.

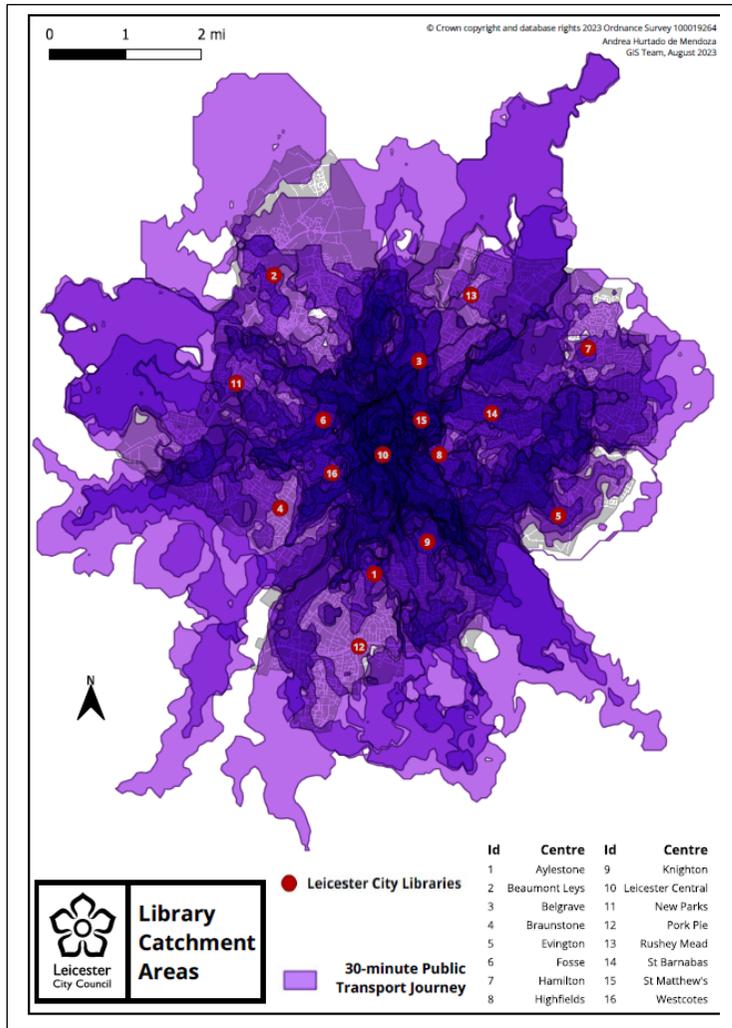


Figure 6: residential properties within a 30-minute public transport catchment from each library

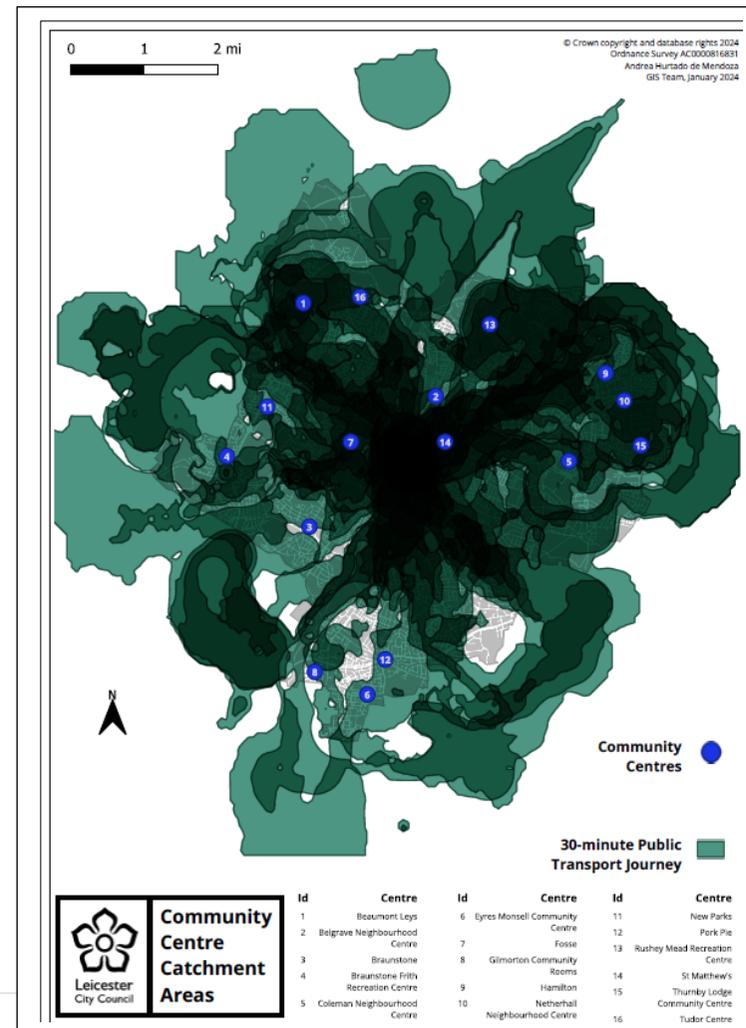
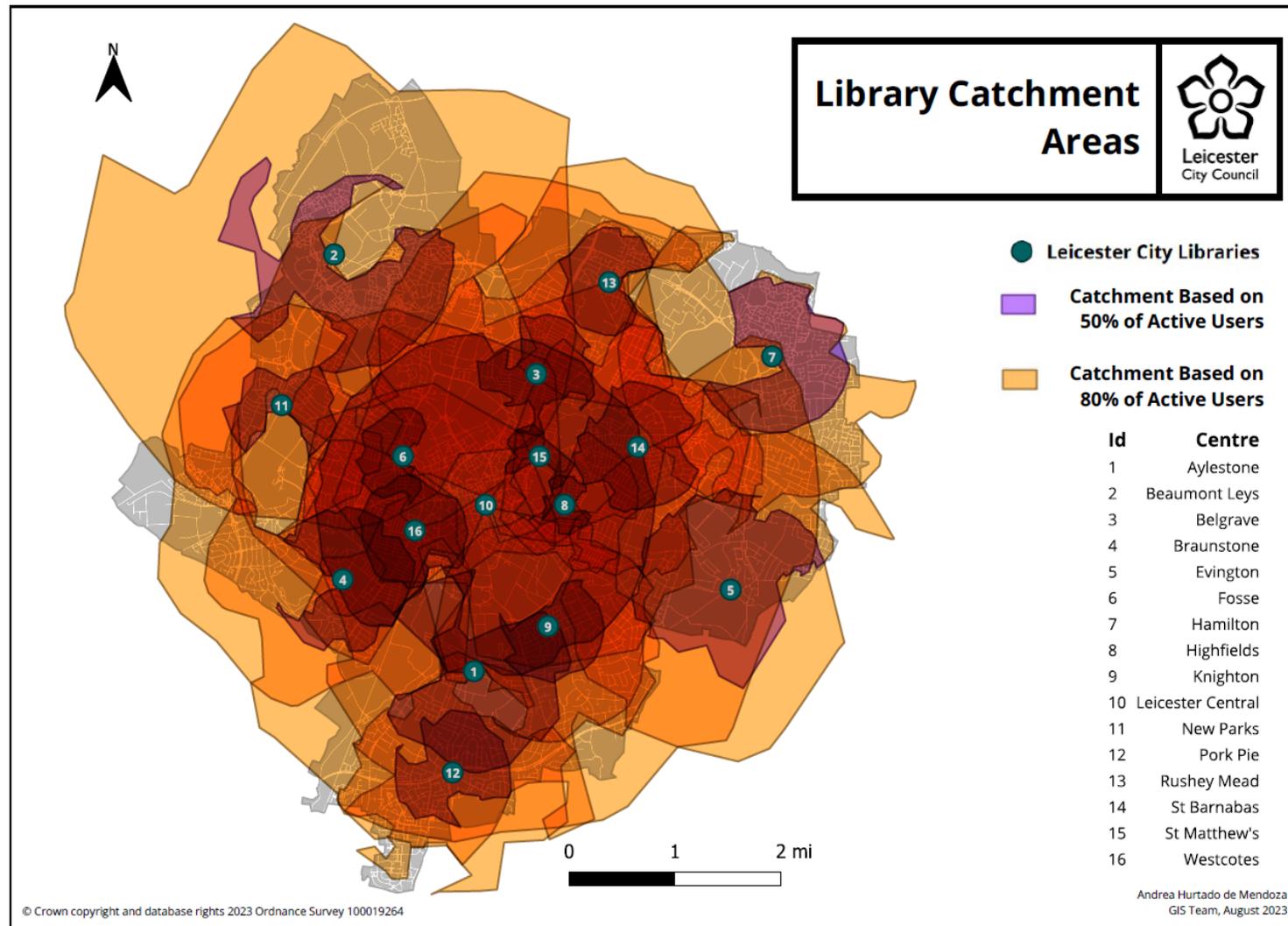


Figure 7: residential properties within a 30-minute public transport catchment from each community centre

2.44 Additional access information for libraries is available through the library system database, which includes registered members' postcode details. The map below illustrates the actual catchment areas of library users from April 2022 to March 2023, highlighting the locations of the closest 50% and 80% of users. This data is based on one or more in-person transactions made during that period.

Figure 8: Catchment areas of library users from April 2022 to March 2023



2.45 The table below displays the percentage of library users who visit multiple libraries, highlighting where customers have access to other library locations and illustrating potential overlaps in service provision:

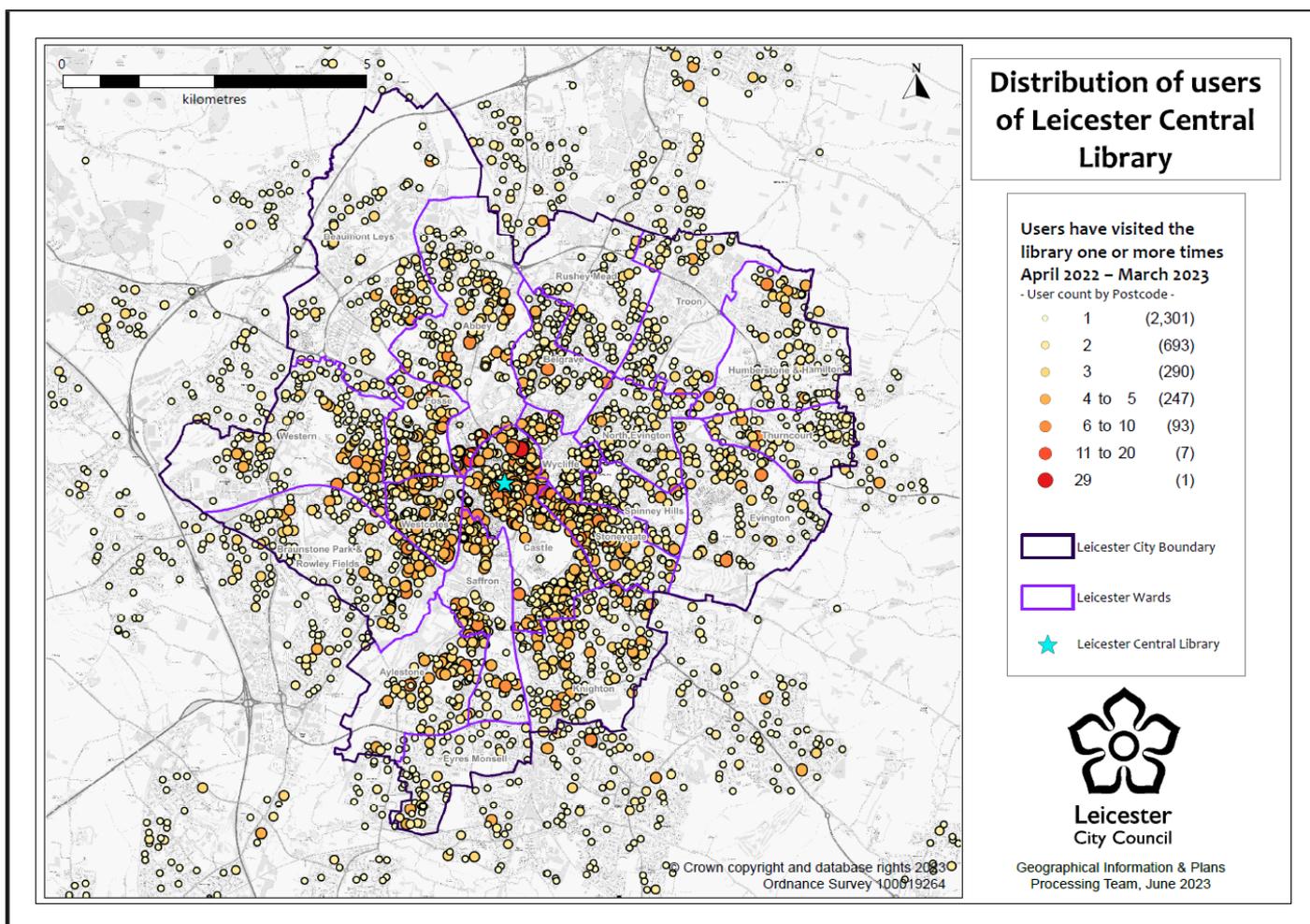
Table 15: Percentage of users who visit multiple libraries

% of Contacts Visting Both Centres	Aylestone	Beaumont	Belgrave	BRITE	Central	Evington	Fosse	Hamilton	Highfields	Knighton	New Parks	Pork Pie	Rushey Mead	St Barnabus	St Matthews	Westcotes
Active Users - in last 12 months	1218	4668	5312	2176	7986	2712	1328	3884	5596	3505	2221	1683	1097	4323	1486	3031
Aylestone		0.69%	0.26%	0.78%	2.68%	1.25%	0.83%	0.39%	0.50%	7.42%	0.81%	7.78%	0.36%	0.32%	0.27%	1.75%
Beaumont	2.63%		2.48%	2.76%	4.16%	1.47%	3.69%	2.29%	0.84%	1.57%	4.73%	1.54%	2.64%	1.02%	2.83%	1.95%
Belgrave	1.15%	2.83%		0.74%	2.03%	1.62%	0.98%	4.33%	1.45%	0.57%	0.86%	0.42%	21.06%	2.98%	3.30%	1.06%
BRITE	1.40%	1.29%	0.30%		1.85%	0.15%	3.01%	0.10%	0.07%	0.51%	1.35%	0.71%	0.18%	0.23%	0.13%	4.85%
Central	17.57%	7.11%	3.05%	6.80%		5.57%	7.30%	4.17%	4.07%	13.67%	5.09%	8.32%	4.74%	4.72%	8.34%	13.66%
Evington	2.79%	0.86%	0.83%	0.18%	1.89%		0.30%	4.61%	4.56%	3.22%	0.45%	0.83%	0.91%	5.18%	4.10%	0.23%
Fosse	0.90%	1.05%	0.24%	1.84%	1.21%	0.15%		0.05%	0.18%	0.31%	2.16%	0.30%	0.18%	0.23%	0.20%	2.67%
Hamilton	1.23%	1.91%	3.16%	0.18%	2.03%	6.60%	0.15%		2.06%	0.40%	0.36%	0.59%	3.10%	1.57%	1.14%	0.40%
Highfeilds	2.30%	1.01%	1.52%	0.18%	2.85%	9.40%	0.75%	2.96%		2.23%	0.68%	1.01%	1.37%	6.85%	6.19%	0.73%
Knighton	21.35%	1.18%	0.38%	0.83%	6.00%	4.17%	0.83%	0.36%	1.39%		0.59%	3.80%	0.73%	1.09%	1.08%	1.91%
New Parks	1.48%	2.25%	0.36%	1.38%	1.41%	0.37%	3.61%	0.21%	0.27%	0.37%		0.59%	1.28%	0.37%	0.40%	1.45%
Pork Pie	10.76%	0.56%	0.13%	0.55%	1.75%	0.52%	0.38%	0.26%	0.30%	1.83%	0.45%		0.18%	1.36%	0.81%	0.66%
Rushey Mead	0.33%	0.62%	4.35%	0.09%	0.65%	0.37%	0.15%	0.88%	0.27%	0.23%	0.63%	0.12%		0.72%	0.67%	0.30%
St Barnabus	1.15%	0.94%	2.43%	0.46%	2.55%	8.26%	0.75%	1.75%	5.29%	1.34%	0.72%	3.51%	2.83%		3.36%	0.40%
St Matthews	0.33%	0.90%	0.92%	0.09%	1.55%	2.25%	0.23%	0.44%	1.64%	0.46%	0.27%	0.71%	0.91%	1.16%		0.40%
Westcotes	4.35%	1.26%	0.60%	6.76%	5.18%	0.26%	6.10%	0.31%	0.39%	1.65%	1.98%	1.19%	0.82%	0.28%	0.81%	

Central Library Catchment Area

2.46 The following map shows that Leicester's Central Library has a citywide pull due to its extensive cultural and reading programmes and unique depth and breadth of reading and information resources serving all areas of the city. Table 14 above also shows that it is a popular alternative choice for city residents and residents in the county, providing a wider range of resources beyond those of the community libraries. Use of the Central Library is increasing sharply year on year (Table 8) due to the broader activities and services on offer to all city residents. An extensive programme of reading and cultural events and activities is under development following the public engagement work in 2023. The Central Library is in a unique position to offer local and national author events, cultural programmes and activities from Black History Month to Green Libraries Week, partnership events with the city's universities and creative and reading activities for children and young families visiting or living in the city centre. The library offers unique collections such as the family and local history sections and hosts a wide range of study and IT resources as well as specialist online and print reference materials. The city centre offer is supplemented by a recent partnership with the two city universities and Loughborough University providing access to study space, Wi-Fi and specialist book stock for members of the public with extensive opening hours.

Figure 9: Distribution of users of Leicester Central Library



Alternative options considered for consultation proposals

2.47 A range of alternative options were considered in developing the consultation proposals for the delivery of neighbourhood services in Leicester. The following table lists the full range of alternative service delivery model options considered:

Table 16: Sourcing options considered for Leicester’s neighbourhood services

Options	Options excluded	Recommended longlist	Response
Make	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arm’s length company: provides little additional benefit over in-house provision and few prospects for training. 	a. In-house management: existing track record of transformation and maintains continuity and control in period of change.	Option recommended.
Buy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outsourcing to the private sector: there are no specialised operators. Private sector joint venture: complex to establish and no suitable operators in the market. 	b. Outsourcing to voluntary and charitable sector (VCS): brings some financial benefits.	Outsourcing to the VCS is not considered viable at this time. There is not a competitive market for library provision and one plausible provider. Even a truncated procurement exercise and contract process would require significant resources and delay the introduction of transformational change by several years.
Share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared service: no immediate candidates for full-service sharing. Takes time to develop. 	<p>c. Sharing with local partners: more formal collaborations with other bodies could widen offer.</p> <p>d. Consortium working: some efficiencies made possible through collaboration.</p>	<p>There is no shared service currently in development and there are limited economies of scale from sharing library services.</p> <p>Consortium working is already in place for procurement of stock and e-libraries to achieve significant discounts through regional bulk buying</p>

<p>Divest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sale: the service could not be sold as a going concern as it requires public subsidy. • Closure: part of the service (libraries) is a statutory service and cannot be closed. 	<p>e. Spin-out to charitable body: can bring cost savings and other benefits.</p> <p>f. Transfer to community management: can reduce operating costs.</p> <p>g. Volunteering: can enhance service and/or provide savings.</p>	<p>The financial benefits for a charitable spin-out have been reducing and the set-up process would delay the wider transformation required.</p> <p>Option recommended.</p> <p>Option recommended.</p>
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2.48 In addition, alternative options for in-house service delivery have been considered. One option considered for consultation was for the Council to directly operate fewer buildings than proposed under the new model, but for longer opening hours. This option was not preferred due to the associated reduction in geographical coverage.

Rationale for consultation proposals

2.49 The proposals outlined above and taken to public consultation in April 2025 were developed using the public engagement and secondary research data and findings outlined in the report and the information detail in this section. The consultation proposals would continue to provide a geographically distributed citywide network of library and community services which prioritises the statutory (library) service. Whilst it has never been possible to provide a physical building in every local neighbourhood, the proposed model would have continued to offer citywide coverage with the vast majority (over 96%) of city residents living within 1.25 miles of a council run library and community building.

2.50 A number of factors have been considered with regard to retention and release of buildings. The evidence gathered through the public engagement exercise and the data collected in the secondary research report have been used to inform the proposal for the city. Beyond prioritisation of the statutory (library) service and geographical spread of service points across the city, considerations include need (demonstrated through the multiple-indices of deprivation), suitability for multi-services, alternative/nearby provision (both council and external), current levels of busy-ness, building condition and running costs.

2.51 The release of buildings with opportunities for community organisations to take on the running of these facilities would have the potential to add value for local communities. Feedback from the needs assessment public engagement survey showed 36% of respondents thought the Council should explore “involving community organisations more in running services”. Ten Neighbourhood Services buildings have already been transferred to date under the Council’s Community Asset Policy demonstrating the capacity of local groups to take on the running of services and the range of community benefits they can deliver. Our secondary research demonstrates that all but one comparator Local Authorities who responded to our survey no longer run community centres.

- 2.52 Data from the annual CIFPA library survey returns show that Leicester has by far the highest library opening hours within its comparator group. 95% of Leicester’s libraries are currently open for 40 hours or more each week. Feedback from the needs assessment public engagement survey showed that 35% of respondents thought the Council should explore “reviewing opening hours to match peak demand”. As the current weekly opening hours are highly inconsistent between library sites, it is proposed to offer consistent weekly staffed opening hours of 40 hours and 30 hours per week based on busy-ness of the facility.
- 2.53 A spread of opening hours was proposed to ensure access for all groups and at times when staff support is required for particular sessions, for example for under 5s sessions, after school access for under 16 years and some evening and weekend access for those working during the day. The Central Library would be open Monday to Saturday to provide service for all city residents.
- 2.54 The way in which people are using our libraries is changing. There is an increase in the use of online services, particularly in terms on book borrowing and loans of other online resources including newspapers, magazines and audio books. Our research shows that loans of e-resources have trebled since 2019-20 rising from 38,663 to 115,067 loans in 2023-24. Whilst physical book loans have remained strong, it is clear that 24/7 online access to reading materials is becoming increasing convenient for some customers.

4. Consultation on proposals and findings

- 2.55 The public consultation on the proposed changes to libraries and community centres took place from Wednesday 2 April to Sunday 29 June 2025. It was emphasised throughout that

no decisions had been made and we wanted to engage as many people as possible, either through the surveys or one of the many meetings that was held for residents.

Consultation Activities

2.56 A summary of consultation activities is below:

- Main public survey – 4,989 survey returns comprising of:
 - 2,591 online surveys
 - 2,065 paper surveys
 - 333 community language surveys (the survey was available in English, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali and Somali)
- Children and young people’s survey – 1,366 online survey returns
- Open public meetings – 12 open meetings held across the city 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 led-drop in sessions were held across the city 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.
- Online Platform – A dedicated webpage was created (Proposals for libraries and community centres) and received 395 visits during the consultation period. Corporate and service social media channels were also used to promote the consultation

2.57 A findings report is available detailing the responses and feedback to all consultation activities including the open meetings, the drop-in sessions and the main and young people’s surveys. The following summarises the feedback received.

Headline Analysis

2.58 There was a very high-level of participation in the consultation on proposals for libraries and community centres with 4,989 responses to the main survey, and 1,366 responses to the

children and young people's survey. 1,053 people attended the 12 open meetings and 120 people attended the drop-in sessions.

- 2.59 The profile of respondents demonstrates good participation from communities across the city. The demographic profile of respondents to the main survey generally reflected the makeup of the city although with over representation of some communities, with 49% describing themselves as Asian or Asian British and 27% as White British. Responses were received from all areas of the city, although there were significantly higher returns from Belgrave, Rushey Mead, Knighton and Stoneygate wards. More respondents to the main survey identified their sex as female (64%) than male (32%) or other (0.5%) with the remainder preferring not to say. The junior survey was equally split between boys and girls. 27% of the (adults) responding to the main survey said they were over 66 years old, with next most significant group being those aged 36 – 45 years (18%). In addition to the 4,989 adults responding to the main survey, a further 1,366 young people under the age of 16 years responded to the junior survey (28% 14yrs or over and 20% 8yrs or under). 21% of all respondents to the main survey identified as having a disability.
- 2.60 The high level of participation indicates the consultation was well promoted and that members of the public were well engaged with proposals; however some responses indicate that incorrect information was circulating before and during the consultation. Misinformation was routinely corrected during the public meetings and drop-in sessions.
- 2.61 There was particularly high engagement in three areas of the city: Belgrave ward, Rushey Mead ward and Castle/Knighton wards. This was evidenced by the high percentage of survey responses and the numbers attending open meetings in these wards.
- 2.62 A high number of respondents use library services regularly, with 69% of all respondents to the main survey visiting a library at least once a week, rising to 90% visiting at least once a month.
- 2.63 The library services people said were most important to them are books and reading (83% of all respondents to the main survey); access and support for digital services (41%), children's and family activity programmes (31%), cultural and creativities (29%) and social and meeting spaces (29%). This supports the proposed prioritisation of the four universal offers and the children's promise defined by Libraries Connected.
- 2.64 Around half of all respondents to the main survey (51%) said they visited a community centre at least once a week. Of these, 51% said their primary community centre was Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, and 15% said their primary community centre was Rushey Mead Recreation centre.
- 2.65 The community centre services people said were most important to them are community groups or activities (55%), exercise or health related activities (39%), cultural and arts and crafts activities (37%) and a social space to meet people (29%). Whilst fewer people said they regularly used community centres the responses indicate that those who do use them

value the centres for social connection, health and wellbeing and the role they play in community cohesion.

- 2.66 Response to the main survey shows there is significant cross usage of libraries by customers, demonstrating some flexibility in use of community libraries. The most commonly used library, other than the primary library of use, is the Central Library. This supports feedback that the Central Library is used to provide a broad range and depth of resources which are available to all city residents, beyond the standard community library offer.
- 2.67 The feedback shows there is also a high level of cross usage between local community libraries. For example 63% of respondents who identify Fosse Library as their primary library, also visit other community libraries, 88% of those who identify Aylestone Library as their primary library also visit other libraries.
- 2.68 There is a high number of community centre users who visit more than one centre, although this is slightly less common than for library users. For example, 56% of users of Rushey Mead Recreation Centre also use another centre, the majority also using Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre.
- 2.69 Two thirds (67%) of library users who responded to the question said they usually walk to the library with 19% travelling by car. A higher percentage travel by car and by bus to the Central Library.
- 2.70 Whilst walking remains the most common method of getting to a community centre, a significantly higher percentage travel by car and by bus.
- 2.71 61% of those who responded to the question in the main survey said the proposals would make it “much harder” for them to visit a library, with a further 18% saying it would be “harder” for them. However the percentage of respondents who said the proposals would make it “much harder” varied significantly depending on the main library used.
- 2.72 There was a significantly higher percentage of respondents to both the main and the junior surveys who said that the proposals would make it “much harder” for them to use a library, particularly those who use the libraries proposed for community management (Evington, Knighton and Rushey Mead libraries). Feedback received during the open meetings and drop-in sessions indicated that key concerns were around the feasibility of community groups taking on the libraries, worries about the quality of a community run service, and the reliability of volunteer delivered opening hours. There were widespread concerns that there was limited capacity and insufficient expertise within the local community for a local group to take on the running of the libraries. There was also concern about the longer-term sustainability of a community run library with many people expressing concern that the library could close if a community management group failed in the future.
- 2.73 Feedback from respondents whose primary libraries were proposed to be run by the council with reduced staff hours was more nuanced. Although fewer people said the proposed hours

would make it “much harder” to visit a library this remained a significant concern for many particularly at Belgrave Library. However there were a range of comments and suggestions on the best spread of the staffed opening hours proposed, including concerns about accessing the library in the evenings, early mornings, and at the weekend. 23% of the 664 comments on the proposed opening hours made suggested changes. The feedback has been used to update the proposed opening hours for each library to optimise access to the service.

- 2.74 A significant percentage (70%) of the users of Belgrave Library responded to both the main and the junior survey stating the library would be “much harder” to visit. However a large number of comments received incorrectly reference the closure of the library, a rumour which had circulated immediately prior to the consultation and which may be reflected in the survey feedback. There were a large number of comments in the surveys, and a consensus at the drop-in session that the library should remain open later on weekday evenings to accommodate the very well attended Homework Help sessions.
- 2.75 A high percentage (47%) of respondents who use community centres thought the proposals would make it “much harder” for them to visit, although the percentage is lower overall than the same question for libraries. The percentage who said it would be “much harder” to use a community centre varied depending on the stated primary centre.
- 2.76 The highest percentage of respondents who thought the proposals would make it “much harder” to visit a community centre were users of Rushey Mead Recreation Centre (80%) and Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre (72%). These two centres attracted significantly more responses than users of other community centres. Responses to the main survey, and feedback from the open meetings at these two centres, demonstrated widespread concerns that Community Asset Transfer could lead to some community groups being marginalised, and the centres being less accessible. There were concerns that, as both centres are already very well used, a successful CAT organisation would need to displace current activities in order to support their own direct provision as there was not sufficient capacity to accommodate new service offers. Many respondents indicated they would prefer the council to explore ideas for income generation in order to support continued Council management of the centres.
- 2.77 There was a broader range of responses to proposals for the Community Asset Transfer of the six other community centres. Early interest was received for all of the centres and discussed at the open meetings. The key considerations were around continued availability of preferred times and rooms, limiting any increase in room hire charges, sustainability of the community offer and ongoing accountability to the council as landlord to ensure the delivery of contracted outcomes. Reassurance was also sought around the formal process through which community organisations would be assessed and recommendations made.
- 2.78 The proposal for Fosse Neighbourhood Centre was to withdraw from the building due to the ongoing maintenance and running costs and noting the availability of alternative libraries nearby. 59% of those who said Fosse was their main community centre and 60% of those

who said it was their main library said the proposals would make it “much harder” to visit. A key concern raised during the open meeting, and through the survey, was a location for the food bank which is currently based in the neighbourhood centre annex. Other concerns raised through the survey included the travel distance to the next nearest library for children and young people, and the loss of the hall used by the community choir, however the choir has since relocated.

- 2.79 The proposal for St Matthews Centre was to relocate the library and services such as Adult Learning and the Housing reception nearby. 54% of respondents to the main survey who used the community centre were concerned the proposals would make it “much harder” to visit. There was good engagement from local user groups at the open meeting, and a key consideration was a reassurance that the relocated services would remain on the St Matthews estate. There was a concern that larger community groups might not be able to be accommodated in an alternative location.
- 2.80 Amongst the alternative or new solutions suggested the highest number of responses were around income generation ideas to enable the Council to continue to run more centres.
- 2.81 The findings of the 12-week consultation on proposals for libraries and community centres have been used to update the Equality Impact Assessment and to inform the recommendations which are made in the following section.

5. Details of options explored and changes made to proposals

2.2A large number of suggestions were made in response to the consultation. The following table summarises the types of suggestion made in the main survey and the consideration given to each category of suggestion. It is noted that similar suggestions were also made during the Open Meetings and more detailed suggestions were made during the drop-in sessions.

The table shows the percentage of responses for each category and the proposed outcome. Each response category is also RAG rated; Green= Some suggestions to be implemented, Amber= some suggestions to be partially implemented and Red = Not to be implemented.

Table 17: Response categories and outcomes

Response Categories	% of responses	Outcome	RAG Rating (Red, Amber & Green)
Change activities/support provided at centres	6%	It is proposed to change and develop the activities and support delivered at centres through development of the multi-service centre model working with additional external and internal partners, for example Family Hubs, Customer Services, Adult Learning, Housing services and the DWP. It is proposed to develop in-house services to focus on wellbeing activities, digital and information support, reading programmes, cultural and creative programmes and children's activities. This is in line with the consultation proposals and supported by the suggestions received.	Green
Change what council budgets are spent on	10%	There were a range of suggestions for reallocating council budgets from other services to enable the council to retain more direct provision of libraries and community centres. Whilst other council services are out of the scope of this consultation, it is recommended to retain additional Neighbourhood Services facilities in response to the feedback received with the budgets adjusted accordingly.	Amber
Co-location of services	3%	It is recommended to explore further co-location of services as part of the multi-service service centre model. This is in line with	Green

		the consultation proposals and supported by the suggestions received.	
Community Asset Transfer	6%	It is recommended to explore Community Asset Transfer of 6 community centres following the consultation period. Alternative proposals are recommended for a further 2 centres following consideration of the feedback received.	
Greater partnership working	1%	The council will continue to work with a range of partners to deliver added value services as part of the multi-service centre offer. The council will explore opportunities to increase income and achieve efficiencies through internal and external partnership working. A Service Level Agreement will be agreed with the Public Health division. Proposals from local community groups to support library and community centres will be explored to promote community engagement and to support cost effective delivery of services.	
Improve promotion of services and buildings	2%	There were a range of suggestions to increase footfall and income through better promotion and signposting of services, particularly community room hire. It is recommended to invest in retained facilities to improve signage and presentation, and to develop a marketing plan for the promotion of services with a focus on income generation.	
Improvement of current services	4%	It is recommended to target development of Neighbourhood Services delivering the areas of need identified through the Needs Assessment during the 2023 public engagement, and through the consultation. The broad service offers identified are health and wellbeing, reading, digital and information provision, cultural and creative activities and children's reading programmes.	

Income generation ideas	26%	<p>Around a quarter of those who suggested a solution proposed income generation ideas. The recommendations will include an increase of 20%, over 2 years, in the standard community room hire rate and associated concessionary rates. A large number of the responses focused on Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre and Rushey Mead Recreation as an alternative suggestion to retain these buildings under council management. The income targets for both buildings would be increased by 100% to contribute towards greater financial sustainability to enable the council to continue to run these buildings.</p>	
Technology and Innovation: Increase or implement Self-Access hours	4%	<p>It is recommended to implement library self-access systems at 6 additional library centres. It is also recommended to retain Knighton and Evington libraries under council management and to retain the self-access systems whilst reducing staffed opening hours at these sites.</p>	
Increase volunteering opportunities	11%	<p>It is recommended to further develop the framework for volunteering with Neighbourhood Services to provide value added services and to co-create services and support priority programmes.</p>	
Reconfigure proposed opening hours	24%	<p>Suggestions were made for the reconfiguration of proposed opening hours at local level. Suggestions included evening opening, weekend opening and considerations of specific groups and activities. It is recommended to open all multi-service centre libraries at least one evening per week until 6pm, and with Saturday opening at all libraries. Changes to opening hours patterns at most libraries are recommended as a result of the feedback and are further itemised in this section.</p>	

Reduce staff at centres	2%	Suggestions were made to reduce the number of staff working at centres. It is recommended to reduce staffing budgets in line with withdrawal from some centres and reductions in opening hours, however a range of considerations are involved in the robust operation of our services.	
Review Book Bus routes	<1%	There were a handful of suggestions to review the Book Bus routes and stops following changes to the services. It is recommended to undertake a review of Book Bus routes and stops as suggested and in particular to introduce a BookBus route in Fosse ward as part of the mitigation for the closure of the library.	

2.3 Opening hours and access

24% of all responses to the main survey suggested changes to the proposed opening hours. Further discussions were had with members of the public at drop-in sessions, and with members of staff. The feedback has been incorporated into the Equality Impact Assessment and changes have been made to the recommended opening hours at 11 facilities. As a result the recommendations include the following considerations around access and inclusion:

- All 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 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.

2.4 Technology and Innovation

4% of Respondents suggested that Technology Enabled Opening should be further explored to optimise access to libraries and to ensure the most efficient use of library buildings. Library self-access systems would enable registered customers aged 16 years and over, and

accompanied children, to access the library outside of staffed opening times using their library card and PIN. Self-access libraries would be monitored by CCTV and customers would be given an induction in order to use the service. Self-access customers would have access to book loans, study space, computers and Wi-Fi through existing self-service facilities. Whilst there was support for this solution from some respondents others were concerned that some groups and activities required a staff presence. There were also concerns about safety. It is recommended to install library self-access systems at 6 libraries and to retain the system at 2 existing sites to optimise and extend access with the following considerations arising from consultation:

- Library-self access has been trialled at two Leicester City libraries for over three years. The service has been well received and feedback from customers has enabled the systems to be refined.
- Whilst self-access provides a significant increase in service availability for many customers it is not suitable for all. Therefore, staffed opening hours are designed with the needs of all members of the community in mind. Regular staffed hours will be offered to ensure availability on some mornings, afternoons, early evenings and at the weekend on Saturdays.
- Customers must be aged 16 years or over and must be inducted in order to use library self-access. Children and young people aged under 16yrs can also use library self-access if accompanied by an inducted adult.
- Year 11 children may need to access the library to support their exam study. To ensure consistency year 11 children may be inducted to use library self-access before their 16th birthday.
- A range of security measures would be put in place as standard. Full fire and risk assessments would be undertaken as part of the installation process. Self-access libraries would be monitored through 100% CCTV coverage. A help number is in place in case of any issue. A roving team member will be available to attend site if needed.

2.5 Community Asset Transfer

There was significant interest in opportunities for community organisations to take on the running of some facilities under the Council's Community Asset Transfer policy. Early interest was shown in all 8 community centres proposed for transfer, however there was significant opposition to the proposals for Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre and Rushey Mead Recreation Centre due to lack of capacity for new service offers and the risk of displacing existing groups at these busy buildings. Following the open meetings the council has explored a number of considerations which were raised:

- An updated Community Asset Transfer policy has been developed to include guidelines to support interested groups. This has been approved under the Council's constitution.
- Third party support will be commissioned to help community organisations respond to CAT opportunities and to develop a business plan.
- Legal agreements will include the community benefits to be delivered by the group, including undertakings with regard to room hire and for existing and new users.
- CAT leases will be monitored annually to ensure community benefits are delivered, with provision to end the lease if required.

2.6 Income Generation

26% of respondents to the main survey, and residents attending many of the open sessions suggested that the council should look at ways of generating additional income to support more council run facilities within a reduced budget. A wide range of suggestions for generating income were made. The council has explored the following income generation options to support service delivery within a reduced budget:

- External grant funding: Neighbourhood Services have consistently made successful applications to organisations such as Arts Council England for programmes including the Libraries Improvement Fund rounds 1, 2 and 3, and successive project grants to deliver interventions including three rounds of the “Small Wonders” projects to benefit young children and families in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. However grants such as these are intended to provide added value service interventions and one-off capital investment such as the Study Zones installed in all libraries in response to the 2023 Needs Assessment work. These grant programmes are not able to supplement annual revenue funding for core services.
- The council has successfully explored opportunities to fund the “Bookstart” programme through the Government funded Family Hubs programme. The programme supports book gifting for all newborn babies in partnership with the Book Trust organisation, and a programme of book sharing interventions with toddlers and pre-school aged children. This represents a saving of £70,000 to the core revenue budget enabling the BookStart programme to continue to run over coming years.
- Public Health funding: the service has successfully explored opportunities to fund a range of services through Public Health funding. These include the Warm Welcome programme and the Homework Help sessions at libraries.
- Capital funding: Neighbourhood Services have successfully applied for corporate capital funding to invest in its buildings. Under the Transforming Neighbourhoods programme £2.5million capital funding was invested in building refurbishments to reduce ongoing maintenance costs and to modernise services. The following buildings were refurbished:
 - Pork Pie Library and Community Centre (2015)
 - Beaumont Leys Library (2017)
 - Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre (2018)
 - Rushey Mead Library (2019)
 - Rushey Mead Recreation Centre (2019)
 - Highfields Library (2020)
 - Knighton Library (2021)

It is recommended to make further capital investment into the retained Neighbourhood Services buildings to improve facilities and reduce annual maintenance costs from the core revenue budget.

- Increasing room hire charges: the council has explored the option of increasing community room hire charges. It is not considered feasible to remove the concessionary rates which enables community groups and instructors to meet at an affordable rate, as many groups would be unable to afford the standard rate. It is therefore recommended to apply a phased increase of 20% to all community room hire

rates, over 2 years. The increase would be phased over two years to ensure community groups have time to plan for the increase.

2.7 Co-location of services

Neighbourhood Services currently operate 9 multi-service centres. The proposal to expand the multi-service centre model was well received during the consultation, with many residents welcoming the more efficient delivery of a range of different services under one roof for greater convenience to reduce costs. During the consultation Neighbourhood Services have explored options with a range of internal and external partners to continue and expand the multi-service centre model. Feedback from the consultation indicates that there is no one size fits all. Services would be delivered from the most appropriate locations and dependent on the suitability of the building. Investment would be made to reconfigure and sign multi-service centres. Following consultation services to be delivered from neighbourhood buildings would include:

- Libraries
- Community centre room hire
- Adult Learning classes – using custom classrooms
- Family Hubs programme – signposting and activities. St Matthews Library will be co-located with St Matthews Children’s Centre.

The following services would deliver regular weekly sessions either by appointment or as a drop-in service:

- Pop up housing offices – delivered in city council housing areas
- DWP Job Shops – appointment-based sessions for wide ranging support with job-seeking
- Customer Services – In person access to a council Customer Services officer. This offer was developed to respond to our needs assessment for more in-person support in libraries.

2.8 Volunteer opportunities

11% of respondents to the main survey suggested increasing volunteer opportunities to deliver additional services and to further support the service through friends of groups and fundraising.

- Neighbourhood Services have a very active volunteer programme supporting a wide range of added value activities including the Summer Reading Challenge programme, activity groups and community growing spaces.
- The service has explored an expanded volunteer programme through a temporary part time volunteer coordinator role funded through Public Health administered government funding.
- It is recommended to increase volunteer opportunities to add further value to the service, to extend community participation and to bring benefits to local people:
 - “Friends of” groups to support with promotions and fundraising
 - Home Library Service volunteers to support with an expanded delivery service

- An expansion of regular cultural and creative events
- To work with local people when reconfiguring services

2.9 Partnership Working

Neighbourhood Services consulted with a wide range of partners and received suggestions for service improvements linked with partnership working. Partnership working is considered a particular strength of the organisation, and whilst it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of partners the service will be working with, close work is anticipated with the following:

- Leicester and Leicestershire Universities Partnership
- DWP Job Centre Plus
- Leicester Arts and Museums
- Spark Arts
- Public Health

2.10 Changes to proposals considered and recommendations by site

Suggestions made during the consultation and options explored are outlined below on a building-by-building basis. For each building the consultation proposal is outlined, an assessment of the facility, feedback and suggestions received and any changes to the proposals which are recommended.

2.10.1 Leicester Central Library

Consultation proposal: to retain Leicester Central as a core component of the statutory library service delivered by the Council, with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 52.5hrs to 45hrs per week.

Assessment: The Central Library provides a breadth and depth of library services accessible to and serving the needs of all residents within the city. As a result, the library has the highest number of annual book issues (123,000) and computer usage (28,000 hours per year) in the city. The library is located off Town Hall Square but does require investment to improve visibility and wayfinding

Consultation feedback: following analysis of the consultation and further conversations with stakeholders it was suggested there should be at least one late evening per week to support evening events and to support access for people working later on weekdays. A later start on Saturday morning was suggested due to low footfall before 11am. The table below summarises the current staffed hours, the hours proposed for consultation and the recommended staffed hours following feedback from the consultation.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Hours
Current Staffed Hours	9.30am-7pm	9.30am-7pm	9.30am-7pm	9.30am-7pm	9.30am-5pm	9am-4pm	Close	52.5

Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	10am-4pm	Close d	45
Recommended Staffed Hours	10am-6pm	10am-7pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	11am-4pm	Close d	45

It is recommended to retain Leicester Central Library as part of the statutory library service delivered by the Council, with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 52.5hrs to 45hrs per week.

2.10.2 Aylestone Library (multi-service centre: Aylestone Leisure Centre)

Consultation proposal: retain Aylestone Library as part the Aylestone Leisure Centre multi-service centre delivered by the council with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 32hrs to 30hrs per week. Retain self-service access during leisure centre opening hours with no overall reduction in opening hours.

Assessment: The service is co-located within Aylestone Leisure Centre and benefits from very high footfall due to cross-service usage. The cost of the service is low due to shared running costs and high footfall achieved through the shared building. The library benefits from additional self-access hours in line with the leisure centre opening times. The leisure centre is in good condition having recently been refurbished. Investment in the library is recommended to improve visibility and presentation of the service. Location is excellent as the building is on a key arterial route into the city and has extremely good public transport access. Need is assessed as high - the library and leisure centre sit on the boundary between Aylestone and Saffron wards, serving an area of significant deprivation in the north of Saffron with usage of services very high.

Following analysis of the consultation and further conversations with stakeholders no significant changes to the proposed timetable were suggested. The table below summarises the current staffed hours, the hours proposed for consultation and the recommended staffed hours following feedback from the consultation.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Hours
Current Staffed Hours	1pm-6pm	10am-6pm	2pm-6pm	10am-6pm	2pm-6pm	10am-1pm	N/A	32
Proposed Staffed Hours	1pm-5pm	10am-5pm	2pm-6pm	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	10am-2pm	N/A	30
Recommended Staffed Hours	1pm-5pm	10am-5pm	2pm-6pm	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	10am-2pm	N/A	30

It is recommended to retain Aylestone Library as part of the statutory library service delivered by the Council, with no reduction in overall opening hours, and to standardise the staffed opening hours at 30 hours per week as per the recommended timetable.

2.10.3 Beaumont Leys Library (multi-service centre)

Consultation Proposal: retain Beaumont Leys Library as a multi-service centre as part of the statutory library service delivered by the council with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 49.5hrs to 40hrs per week.

Assessment: The service is co-located with other council services and hosts a regular DWP Job Shop. It is positioned next to Leicester Leys leisure centre at the rear of the Beaumont Leys shopping centre. These facilities serve a broad catchment area in the north-west of the city. There is continued development of the Ashton Green area with the local plan identifying this as one of three strategic growth areas for the city for new homes. The library serves an area of high deprivation in Beaumont Leys and Abbey wards and will cater for the expansion of new homes in the north of the Beaumont Leys ward. Running costs are fair despite the size of the building and long opening hours due to co-location of services and high usage. Access by public transport is very good with frequent bus services running to the shopping centre, however there is a short walk through the shopping centre to reach the public services located to the rear. The usage of the library is high (over 73,000 visits) and need is assessed as high with Beaumont Leys ward 8th most deprived in the city and limited alternative providers nearby.

Feedback from the consultation and further conversations with stakeholders identified a need for the library to be open earlier than 10am particularly on Saturday to enable parents to take children to the library before swim lessons at the leisure centre or shopping at the centre. The table below summarises the current staffed hours, the hours proposed for consultation and the recommended staffed hours following feedback from the consultation.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Hours
Current Staffed Hours	9am-6.30pm	9am-6.30pm	9am-6.30pm	9am-6.30pm	9am-5pm	9.30am-1pm	Close	49.5
Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-2pm	Close	40
Recommended Staffed Hours	9.30am-5pm	9.30am-6pm	9.30am-5pm	9.30am-5pm	9.30am-3pm	9.30am-1pm	Close	40

It is recommended to retain Beaumont Leys Library as a multi-service centre as part of the statutory library service delivered by the Council, with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 49.5hrs to 40hrs per week and with the recommended opening hours above.

2.10.4 Belgrave Library (multi-service centre)

Consultation Proposal: retain Belgrave Library as a multi-service centre as part of the statutory library service delivered by the council with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 55hrs to 40hrs per week. Library self-access to be implemented to increase overall opening hours.

Assessment: The library is ideally located alongside multiple council services including a refurbished gym, refurbished swimming pool, children’s centre and Cossington Park. The library serves an area of high density (private) housing and has high ethnic diversity. The library has a wide catchment with 21% of Rushey Mead Library users also visiting Belgrave Library during 2023-24. The building is well maintained and has low running costs. Overall the need for the statutory service is assessed as very high, with over 145,000 visits in 2023-24 – the busiest community library during this year. The ward is ranked 10 out of 21 wards in the indices of multiple deprivation.

Feedback from the consultation and further conversations with stakeholders identified a need for the library to be open later in the evening to accommodate the very busy homework help sessions from Monday – Thursday. There was significant opposition to any reduction in the current staffed opening hours. Self-access is recommended to help address this concern. The table below summarises the current staffed hours, the hours proposed for consultation and the recommended staffed hours following feedback from the consultation.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Hours
Current Opening Hours (Staffed)	10am-7pm	10am-7pm	10am-7pm	10am-7pm	10am-7pm	10am-4pm	12 noon-4pm	55
Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	10am-6pm	2pm-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	10am-4pm	Closed	40
Recommended Staffed Hours	10am-6.30pm	10am-6.30pm	2pm-6.30pm	10am-6.30pm	10am-5pm	10am-1pm	Closed	40

Recommended opening hours including Self-Access	8am – 8pm	10am-1pm	Closed	63				
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It is recommended to retain Belgrave Library as a multi-service centre as part of the statutory library service delivered by the Council, with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 55hrs to 40hrs per week and with the recommended opening hours above. It is recommended to increase overall opening hours by installing library self-access.

2.10.5 Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre

Consultation proposal: to withdraw from Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre and to offer community organisations the opportunity to take on the running of the facility

Assessment: The community centre has the highest usage of any NS building and a good income base of £50,000 a year from community room hire. The building currently houses multi-services including LCC Adult Learning classes, a busy police beat office, a pre-school, a daily lunch club and Gujarati Language classes through an external provider. There are a number of other council services located in close proximity, including a library, children’s centre, park, swimming pool and gym meaning the local community is very well served. The building is well located and has excellent public transport provision. In 2023 – 24 there were 2,275 room hires. Overall the need for the service is assessed as high, with over 250,000 visits in 2023-24 (the busiest facility in the city). The ward is ranked 10 out of 21 wards in the indices of multiple deprivation.

Feedback from the consultation and further conversations with stakeholders identified a high level of opposition to the proposal to transfer the centre to the community. 80% of respondents who use the centre thought the proposals would make it “much harder” to visit. There were concerns that, as the centre is already very well used, a successful CAT organisation would need to displace current activities in order to support their own direct provision. There were widespread concerns that Community Asset Transfer could lead to some community groups being marginalised, and the centre being less accessible. Many respondents indicated they would prefer the council to consider ideas for income generation, to support continued Council management of the centre. The centre has recently been refurbished making it a viable building for the council to retain.

It is recommended to retain Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre as a part of the local multi-service offer and recognising the high level of need in the area. It is recommended to increase the income target for the centre by 100% to improve the financial sustainability of the centre.

2.10.6 Braunstone Frith Recreation Centre

Consultation proposal: to withdraw from Braunstone Frith Recreation Centre and to offer community organisations the opportunity to take on the running of the facility as the facility does not form part of the statutory library service.

Assessment: The building is not suitable to be retained as a multi-service centre due to its small size and location. The nearest multi-service centre and library is New Parks Centre Library. There is a community run community centre, Allextion Youth & Community Centre 0.4km away. The building is considered suitable for lease under the Council’s Community Asset Transfer policy due it’s low running costs, small size and opportunity to provide a good local offer to the residents of Braunstone Frith.

Feedback from the consultation indicated there was local interest in the opportunity for the community to take on the running of the centre.

It is recommended to withdraw from Braunstone Frith Recreation Centre and to offer community organisations the opportunity to take on the running of the facility

2.10.7 The BRITE Centre (multi-service centre)

Consultation Proposal: retain the BRITE Centre as a multi-service centre as part of the statutory library service delivered by the council with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 57.75hrs to 40hrs per week. Library self-access to be implemented to increase overall opening hours.

Assessment: The BRITE Centre is an existing multi-service centre housing a library, community centre, adult learning classrooms and community café, and is ideal for further co-location of services. The BRITE Centre was built in 2005, is in good condition with low running costs and is ideally configured to serve the needs of Braunstone residents and the surrounding areas. Need in the local area is assessed as high with Braunstone & Rowley Fields ranked as 3rd most deprived out of 21 wards in Leicester. Access to the centre is good with local bus services running past the facility.

Feedback from the consultation identified earlier opening on some days to facilitate class visits from nearby schools and adult learning classes. The table below summarises the current staffed hours, the hours proposed for consultation and the recommended staffed hours following feedback from the consultation.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Hours
Current Opening Hours (Staffed)	9am-8.30pm	9am-7.30pm	9am-8pm	9am-7.45pm	9am-5pm	10am-4pm	Closed	57.75

Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	10am-2pm	Closed	40
Recommended Staffed Hours	9.30am-5pm	10am-5pm	9.30am-5pm	10am-6pm	9am-4pm	10am-1pm	Closed	40
Recommended opening hours including Self-Access	8am – 8pm	8am – 8pm	8am – 8pm	8am – 8pm	8am – 8pm	10pm-1pm	Closed	63

It is recommended to retain BRITE Centre as a multi-service centre as part of the statutory library service delivered by the Council, with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 57.75hrs to 40hrs per week and with the recommended opening hours above. It is recommended to maximise overall opening hours by installing library self-access.

2.10.8 Coleman Neighbourhood Centre

Consultation proposal: to withdraw from Coleman Neighbourhood Centre and to offer community organisations the opportunity to take on the running as the facility does not form part of the statutory library service.

Assessment: The building is not suitable to be retained as a multi-service centre due to its poor location and low usage. The nearest multi-service centre is St Barnabas Library. The building is considered suitable for lease under the Council's Community Asset Transfer policy due to its low running costs, small size and opportunity to provide a good local offer for local residents. Existing centre users include a pre-school and local madrasah would be supported to explore options to collaborate with interested community organisations or to find alternative premises.

Feedback from the consultation indicated there was local interest in the opportunity for the community to take on the running of the centre.

It is recommended to withdraw from Coleman Neighbourhood Centre and to offer community organisations the opportunity to take on the running as the facility.

2.10.9 Evington Library

Consultation proposal: to withdraw from Evington Library and to offer community organisations the opportunity to take on the running of the facility.

Assessment: The library is small and well located for residents of Evington village, however it is not suitable for a wider catchment area or for the co-location of services. The library is not assessed as serving an area of high deprivation within the city with the ward ranked 17th of 21 most deprived. The building running costs are low and the building is in good condition.

Feedback from the consultation: 63% of respondents to the main survey and 47% of respondents to the young people’s survey said the proposals would make it “much harder” for them to visit the library. There were strong concerns that there were no local community groups who could take on the running of the library and that the proposals would lead to very low opening hours, loss of knowledgeable staff support and the possibility of closure. There were numerous suggestions that the Council should continue to run the library with reduced staffed opening hours and with support from volunteers. This solution was put forward with good support at the Open Meeting on 10th June.

It is recommended to retain Evington Library as part of the statutory library service delivered by the Council, with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 47hrs to 25hrs per week and with the recommended opening hours below. It is recommended to maintain overall opening hours for inducted library members aged 16yrs+ through the existing library self-access system.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Hours
Current Staffed Hours	10am-6.30pm	10am-6.30pm	10am-6.30pm	10am-6.30pm	10am-5pm	10am-4pm	Close d	47
Recommended Staffed Hours	10am-2pm	10am-6pm	2pm-5pm	10am-5pm	Close d	1pm-4pm	Close d	25
Recommended opening hours including Self-Access	8am – 8pm	8am – 8pm	8am – 8pm	8am – 8pm	8am – 8pm	1pm-4pm	Close d	63

2.10.10 Eyres Monsell Community Centre

Consultation proposal: to withdraw from Eyres Monsell Community Centre and to offer community organisations the opportunity to take on the running as the facility does not form part of the statutory library service

Assessment: Although Eyres Monsell Community Centre has relatively low usage due to its’ small catchment area (20,000 visits per year) the building is well located within the estate and has good engagement from local residents. The facility is considered suitable for lease under the Council’s Community Asset Transfer policy due to its low running costs, high need and opportunity to provide a good offer for local residents.

Feedback from the consultation indicated that residents were concerned about the future of the community centre and did not want to see it close. However both the main survey and the open meeting demonstrated there was local interest in the opportunity for the community to take on the running of the centre, and some support for this idea from residents and service users so long as local groups could continue to meet there.

It is recommended to withdraw from Eyres Monsell Community Centre. As it is located in an MSOA that is a beneficiary of the Pride in Place programme. It is therefore first intended to engage the local neighbourhood board once it is formed to inform the local approach before offering for Community Asset Transfer.

2.10.11 Fosse Neighbourhood Centre and Library

Consultation Proposal: It is proposed to withdraw from Fosse Neighbourhood Centre and Library due to the low usage and poor suitability of the facility and to explore a range of disposal options for the building

Assessment: Fosse Neighbourhood Centre and Library is one of the lowest use centres with just over 17,000 visits in 2024 - 25. Due to the size and age of the building running costs are very high. A recent building condition survey estimates work totalling £2.6 million is required over the next ten years to maintain the building. Due to the high running costs and complexity of the building it is not considered viable for a community organisation to take on the running. Fosse ward has areas of higher deprivation and is ranked as 7th most deprived of 21 wards. However there are three alternative libraries within the catchment area, Westcotes Library (0.5 miles), New Parks Centre Library (1.3 miles) and the BRITE Centre library and community rooms (1.5 miles). The Central Library (1.2 miles) is also well used by Fosse Library customers. There is A food bank operates from the rear annex of Fosse Centre and it is proposed to explore alternative location options for the organisation. Community room hire is low, however there are some regular groups meeting at the Neighbourhood Centre.

Consultation feedback: 135 people (2.7%) responding to the main survey identified Fosse Neighbourhood Centre as their primary centre. Of these, 115 used the community centre, and 65 used the library. 31% of the Neighbourhood Centre users and 33% of the library users said the proposal would make it “much harder” to use council services. Comments from the open meeting and from the surveys highlight the need for an alternative venue for Alice Hawkins Community Projects currently located in the annex. General comments were made about the importance of the library for children and young people to study and read. The survey responses indicate that overall nearly two thirds (63%) of Fosse Library users already use at least one other library, with one quarter (25%) of Fosse Library users also using Westcotes library, and one third (33%) also using Leicester Central Library. All residents would have access to an alternative library within a maximum 1.25 miles from their home.

It is recommended to withdraw from Fosse Neighbourhood Centre and Library and to work with existing community groups to find alternative venues for their activities. It is also recommended to support library users to access alternative provision including nearby libraries and to introduce a new children’s Book Bus route in the Fosse area and promote the Home Library Service to less mobile residents who are unable to leave their homes.

Following an options assessment for the building it is recommended that Fosse Neighbourhood centre be offered for commercial lease or sale to ensure best use of the facility.

2.10.12 **Gilmorton Community Rooms**

Consultation proposal: to withdraw from Gilmorton Community Rooms and to offer community organisations the opportunity to take on the running as the facility does not form part of the statutory library service.

Assessment: Gilmorton Community Rooms is a small unit with the lowest usage of all 25 sites in 2024-25. The running costs are modest at £16,500 per year and the hall has low usage of 1,500 visits per year. A food bank operates from the facility on a weekly basis. Due to its small size, peripheral location and very local catchment area the centre is not considered suitable for use as a multi-service centre. The facility is considered suitable for lease under the Council's Community Asset Transfer policy due to its low running costs and opportunity to provide a good offer for local residents.

Consultation feedback: 11 people (0.2%) responding to the main survey identified Gilmorton Community Rooms as their primary centre. Of these, 8 said the proposal would make it "much harder" to use council services. Comments from the open meeting and from the surveys highlight that those using centre want to see it remain open. There was support for the community to take on the running of the centre.

It is recommended to withdraw from Gilmorton Community Rooms and to offer community organisations the opportunity to take on the running as the facility.

2.10.13 **Hamilton Library & Community Centre (multi-service centre)**

Consultation proposal: retain the Hamilton Library & Community Centre as a multi-service centre as part of the statutory library service delivered by the council with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 40hrs to 30hrs per week. Library self-access to be implemented to increase overall opening hours.

Assessment: The Library Centre is an existing multi-service centre housing a library and community centre and is ideal for further co-location of services. Hamilton Centre was built in 2006, is in very good condition with low running costs and is ideally configured to serve the needs of Hamilton, Netherhall and Humberstone residents and the surrounding areas. The library is well located on the Tesco retail site next to a health centre. The centre serves a broad catchment in the northeast of the city with areas of high need in the local area including the Netherhall estate. Access to the centre is good with local bus services running to the busy shopping facility on the outer ring road.

Consultation feedback: Feedback from stakeholders and residents suggested a change to the proposed opening hours to facilitate community group visits on Fridays. The table below summarises the current staffed hours, the hours proposed for consultation and the

recommended staffed hours following feedback from the consultation. All other community groups would be able to utilise the self-access facilities to continue to meet.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Hours
Current Opening Hours (Staffed)	10am-2pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	2pm-7pm	10am-5pm	10am-4pm	12 noon-4pm	40
Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-6pm	Closed	10am-2pm	Closed	30
Recommended Staffed Hours	10am-2pm	Closed	10am-5pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	10am-2pm	Closed	30
Recommended opening hours including Self-Access	8am – 8pm	10am-2pm	Closed	64				

It is recommended to retain Hamilton Library & Community Centre as a multi-service centre as part of the statutory library service delivered by the Council, with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 40hrs to 30hrs per week and with the recommended opening hours above. It is recommended to maximise overall opening hours by installing library self-access.

2.10.14 Highfields Library (multi-service centre)

Consultation proposal: retain the Highfields Library as a multi-service centre as part of the statutory library service delivered by the council with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 51hrs to 40hrs per week

Assessment: The library is ideally located within the Highfields Estate, next to local retail units in the heart of the highly diverse local community and high density terraced housing and social housing tower blocks. The library has been recently refurbished in 2020 and serves a wide catchment area. The building is well maintained and has low running costs. Overall need for the statutory service is assessed as very high, with over 108,000 visits in 2024-25 – the second busiest community library during this year. The ward is ranked 5th most deprived out of 21 wards in the multiple indices of deprivation

Consultation feedback: Feedback from stakeholders and residents suggested a change to the proposed opening hours to facilitate the high number of class visits on weekday mornings. The table below summarises the current staffed hours, the hours proposed for consultation and the recommended staffed hours following feedback from the consultation

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Hours
Current Staffed Hours	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	10am-4pm	Closed	51
Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	1pm-5pm	10am-2pm	Closed	40
Recommended Staffed Hours	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	9am-1pm	9am-6pm	12 noon-5pm	10am-2pm	Closed	40

It is recommended to retain Highfields Library as a multi-service centre as part of the statutory library service delivered by the Council, with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 51hrs to 40hrs per week and with the recommended opening hours above.

2.10.15 Knighton Library

Consultation Proposal: to withdraw from Knighton Library and to offer community organisations the opportunity to take on the running of the facility.

Assessment: The library is not suitable for use as a multi-service centre due to its small size and local catchment but is very well located for residents of Knighton and the surrounding area located alongside existing retail. The library is not assessed as serving an area of high deprivation within the city with the ward ranked lowest of all city wards in the indices of multiple deprivation. The usage of the library is very good especially with regard to book borrowing, with over 58,000 book issues in 2024-25. This combined with lower building running costs (excluding staffing) and the recent refurbishment in 2021 means the facility provides excellent value for money.

Feedback: There was a very high response to the consultation from Knighton Library users with the majority expressing opposition to the proposals. 852 people (17%) of respondents to the main survey and 140 (10%) of respondents to the young people’s survey said their primary library was Knighton. Of these, 81% of respondents to the main survey and 71% of respondents to the young people’s survey said the proposals would make it “much harder” for them to visit the library. Feedback received during the open meetings and drop-in sessions indicated that key concerns were around the feasibility of community groups taking on the libraries, worries about the quality of a community run service, and the reliability of volunteer delivered opening hours. There were widespread concerns that there was limited capacity and insufficient expertise within the local community for a local group to take on the running of the libraries. There was also concern about the longer-term sustainability of a community run library with many people expressing concern that the library could close if a community management group failed in the future. Suggestions offered favoured a council run service with reduced opening hours and supported through greater volunteer and community involvement.

It is recommended to retain Knighton Library as part of the statutory library service delivered by the Council, with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 47hrs to 25hrs per week and with the recommended opening hours below. It is recommended to maintain overall opening hours for inducted library members aged 16yrs+ through the existing library self-access system.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Hours
Current Staffed Hours	10am-6.30pm	10am-6.30pm	10am-6.30pm	10am-6.30pm	10am-5pm	10am-4pm	Closed	47
Recommended Staffed Hours	1pm-5pm	10am-6pm	10am-3pm	Closed	1pm-5pm	12pm-4pm	Closed	25
Recommended opening hours including Self-Access	8am – 8pm	8am – 8pm	8am – 8pm	8am – 8pm	8am – 8pm	12pm-4pm	Closed	64

2.10.16 **Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre**

Consultation proposal: to withdraw from Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre and to offer community organisations the opportunity to take on the running as the facility does not form part of the statutory library service.

Assessment: The centre is poorly located in an open space within the Netherhall estate making it vulnerable to anti-social behaviour. The facility has low use with 9,900 visits in 2024-25, mainly from a daily pre-school, and a dance and prayer club. Although the facility is not well located to serve a wide catchment, there is need in the immediate local area. Nearby alternatives for community space are provided by the Hamilton Library and Community Centre and by Thurnby Lodge Community Centre. The facility is too small to accommodate additional services.

Consultation feedback: 63 people (1.3%) responding to the main survey identified Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre as their primary centre. Of these, 31 (49%) said the proposal would make it “much harder” to use the centre. Comments from the open meeting and from the surveys highlight that those using centre want to see it remain open. There was support for the community to take on the running of the centre. A number of comments including from the Chair of Netherhall Neighbourhood Association put forward an alternative suggestion to make the Armadale Youth Centre (currently vacant) available for Community Asset Transfer instead.

It is recommended that Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre will close and be demolished.

The Armadale Centre is located in the vicinity of an MSOA that is a beneficiary of the Pride in Place programme. It is therefore first intended to engage the local

neighbourhood board once it is formed to inform the local approach before offering for Community Asset Transfer.

2.10.17 **New Parks Library (multi-service centre)**

Consultation Proposal: retain the New Parks Library Centre as a multi-service centre as part of the statutory library service delivered by the council with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 40hrs to 30hrs per week. Library self-access to be implemented to increase overall opening hours.

Assessment: The Library Centre is an existing multi-service centre housing a library, community centre, adult learning classrooms and access to housing appointments, and is ideal for further co-location of services. New Parks Centre Library was built in 2010 and is ideally located within the local retail parade and overlooking New College secondary school. The building is in excellent condition with low running costs and is ideally configured to serve the needs of New Parks residents and the surrounding areas. Need in the local area is assessed as high with Western ward ranked as 4th most deprived out of 21 wards in Leicester. The library received 43,000 visitors in 2024 – 25 and hosts a range of community groups and activities in its purpose built community rooms and learning suites. Access to the centre is good with local bus services stopping directly outside the facility and cycle and walking paths extending across the ward. It is proposed to implement a library self-access system to provide early morning and late evening access to library services outside of regular staffed hours.

Consultation feedback: Feedback from stakeholders and residents suggested a change to the proposed opening hours to facilitate community networks and groups on Tuesdays. The table below summarises the current staffed hours, the hours proposed for consultation and the recommended staffed hours following feedback from the consultation. All other community groups would be able to utilise the self-access facilities to continue to meet.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Hours
Current Opening Hours (Staffed)	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-7pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-1pm	Closed	40
Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	Closed	10am-2pm	Closed	30
Recommended Staffed Hours	10am-3pm	10am-5pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	Closed	10am-1pm	Closed	30
Recommended opening hours including Self-Access	8am – 8pm	10pm-1pm	Closed	63				

It is recommended to retain New Parks Library Centre as a multi-service centre as part of the statutory library service delivered by the Council, with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 40hrs to 30hrs per week and with the recommended opening hours above. It is recommended to maximise overall opening hours by installing library self-access.

2.10.18 **Pork Pie Library and Community Centre (multi-service centre)**

Consultation Proposal: retain the Pork Pie Library Centre as a multi-service centre as part of the statutory library service delivered by the council with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 40hrs to 30hrs per week. Library self-access to be implemented to increase overall opening hours.

Assessment: The Library Centre is an existing multi-service centre housing a library, community centre, adult learning classrooms and a weekly DWP Job Shop, and is ideal for further co-location of services. The Pork Pie Library was refurbished in 2015, is ideally configured for co-location of services as one of the first multi-service centres to be developed in the city. Whilst the building is well presented with average running costs, its ongoing maintenance costs tend to be higher due to the age and listed status of the building. The iconic building is highly visible on the busy Pork Pie roundabout and outer ring road and is well located to serve both Saffron and Eyres Monsell wards. Public transport links are good. Need in the local area is considered high as Eyres Monsell ward and Saffron wards are the 2 most deprived wards as assessed by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

Consultation feedback: Feedback from stakeholders and residents suggested a change to the proposed opening hours to accommodate popular community groups who are unable to operate self-access, on Wednesday evening and on Thursdays. The table below summarises the current staffed hours, the hours proposed for consultation and the recommended staffed hours following feedback from the consultation. All other community groups would be able to utilise the self-access facilities to continue to meet.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Staffed Hours
Current Opening Hours (Staffed)	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	9am-7pm	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	10am-1pm	Closed	45
Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	10am-6pm	Closed	10am-5pm	10am-2pm	Closed	30
Recommended Staffed Hours	9.30am-5pm	10am-1pm	9.30am-7pm	10am-5pm	Closed	10am-1pm	Closed	30
Recommended opening	8am – 8pm	8am – 8pm	8am – 8pm	8am – 8pm	8am – 8pm	10pm-1pm	Closed	63

hours including Self-Access									
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It is recommended to retain Pork Pie Library and Community Centre as a multi-service centre as part of the statutory library service delivered by the Council, with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 45hrs to 30hrs per week and with the recommended opening hours above. It is recommended to maximise overall opening hours by installing library self-access.

2.10.19 Rushey Mead Library

Consultation proposal: to withdraw from Rushey Mead Library and to offer community organisations the opportunity to take on the running of the facility.

Assessment: The library is small and well located for local residents of Rushey Mead, however it is not suitable for a wider catchment area or for the co-location of services. The library is not assessed as serving an area of high deprivation within the city with the ward ranked 18th of 21 most deprived. The area falls within the catchment of Belgrave Library with 21% of Rushey Mead Library users also visiting Belgrave Library at least once during the same year. The overall usage of Rushey Mead Library is very low at under 16,000 visits per year. The building running costs (excluding staffing costs) are low and the centre received investment in 2019.

Consultation feedback: There was a very high response to the consultation from Rushey Mead Library users with the majority expressing opposition to the proposals. 585 people (12%) of respondents to the main survey and 116 (8.5%) of respondents to the young people’s survey said their primary library was Rushey Mead. Of these, 72% of respondents to the main survey and 29% of respondents to the young people’s survey said the proposals would make it “much harder” for them to visit the library. Feedback received during the open meetings and drop-in sessions indicated that key concerns were around the availability and capacity of local residents to take on the running the library, worries about the quality of a community run service, and the reliability of volunteer delivered opening hours. There was also concern about the longer-term sustainability of a community run library with many people expressing concern that the library could close if a community management group failed in the future. Suggestions offered favoured a council run service with reduced opening hours and supported through greater volunteer and community involvement. 50% of Rushey Mead Library users responding to the survey said they use one or more other libraries, with 41% using nearby Belgrave Library.

It is recommended to retain Rushey Mead Library as part of the statutory library service delivered by the Council, with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 29hrs to 20hrs per week and with the recommended opening hours below.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Hours
Current Staffed Hours	10am-6pm	1pm-6.30pm	Closed	1pm-6.30pm	10am-5pm	10am-1pm	Closed	29
Recommended Staffed Hours	10am-3pm	Closed	1pm-6pm	Closed	10am-5pm	10am-1pm	Closed	20

2.10.20 **Rushey Mead Recreation Centre**

Consultation proposal: to withdraw from Rushey Mead Recreation Centre and to offer community organisations the opportunity to take on the running as the facility does not form part of the statutory library service

Assessment: Although the building is small and not suitable for use as a multi-service centre, the hall enjoys good usage by local people with over 33,000 visits in 2024-25. The building has relatively low running costs and has received some investment in 2019. The facility has low running costs, high usage and provides a good offer for local residents.

Consultation feedback: Feedback from the consultation and further conversations with stakeholders identified a high level of opposition to the proposal to transfer the centre to the community. 550 of the respondents to the main survey said Rushey Mead was their primary centre, and over 200 people attended the open meeting at nearby Soar Valley College. 71% of respondents who use the centre thought the proposals would make it “much harder” to visit. There were concerns that, as the centre is already very well used, a successful CAT organisation would need to displace current activities in order to support their own direct provision. There were widespread concerns that Community Asset Transfer could lead to some community groups being marginalised, and the centre being less accessible. Evaluation of the current room hire timetable shows there is extremely limited capacity for additional activity should a community group take on the running of the centre. Many respondents indicated they would prefer the council to explore ideas for income generation, to support continued Council management of the centre. A submission was received from a local user group keen to work with the Council to improve the financial viability of the centre under council control. The centre has recently been refurbished making it a viable building for the council to retain.

It is recommended to retain Rushey Mead Recreation Centre recognising the high demand for the space and the limited options for a community organisation to take on the centre. It is recommended to work with local groups and to increase the income target for the centre by 100% to improve the financial sustainability of the centre which would become self-sustaining under this model.

2.10.21 **St Barnabas Library (multi-service centre)**

Consultation proposal: retain St Matthews Centre as a multi-service centre as part of the statutory library service delivered by the council with a reduction in staffed opening hours

from 49.5hrs to 40hrs per week. Library self-access to be implemented to increase overall opening hours.

Assessment: The library is a busy multi-service centre offering a digital and performance suite, adult learning classes, housing enquiries, and a weekly DWP Job Shop. The building is well located off the main Uppingham Road with excellent public transport links and serving a broad catchment area. The library has received Arts Council Funding for investment in one wing to create a space for performance, cultural and community activities. The building is well used with 52,000 visits per year. Running costs are in line with the age of building, and investment is required to ensure the building remains fit for delivery if services in the future. Overall need for the statutory service is assessed as high, with the service covering a wide catchment in a more disadvantaged area of the city including the North Evington ward. North Evington is ranked 9th most deprived out of 21 wards in the multiple indices of deprivation

Consultation feedback: Feedback from stakeholders and residents suggested no changes to the proposed opening hours and some positive comments were received with regard to extended availability through library self-access systems. The table below summarises the current staffed hours, the hours proposed for consultation and the recommended staffed hours following feedback from the consultation.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Staffed Hours
Current Opening Hours (Staffed)	9.30am-5pm	9.30am-7pm	9.30am-7pm	9.30am-7pm	9.30am-5pm	10am-4pm	Closed	49.5
Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	2pm-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	10am-4pm	Closed	40
Recommended Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	2pm-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	10am-4pm	Closed	40
Recommended opening hours including Self-Access	8am – 8pm	10pm-1pm	Closed	63				

It is recommended to retain St Barnabas Library as a multi-service centre as part of the statutory library service delivered by the Council, with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 49.5hrs to 40hrs per week and with the recommended opening hours above. It is recommended to maximise overall opening hours by installing library self-access.

2.10.22 **St Matthews Centre and Library (multi-service centre – St Matthews Children’s Centre)**

Consultation proposal: to relocate the library elsewhere on the estate as part of the statutory service and to withdraw from St Matthews Centre which does not form part of the statutory service.

Assessment: Due to the size, condition and cost of running the centre the building is not considered viable for community management. The centre has good usage with 110,000 visits in 2024 – 25. Due to the size and condition and long opening hours of the building the budgeted net running cost is the highest in the service for a neighbourhood facility, at £315,000 in 2023 - 24. Due the poor condition and ongoing running and maintenance costs of the building it is not considered suitable for future service delivery. The area served is assessed as high need with Wycliffe ward the 5th most deprived in the city, and the St Matthews estate experiencing particularly high levels of disadvantage. The ward community is one of the most diverse in the city. St Matthews Centre currently offers a range of services including a well-used housing enquiry desk, library, adult learning classrooms and community rooms. The large sports hall has been closed due to the presence of RAAC in the roof which would be costly to replace. There is also a private pre-school located in the centre.

Consultation feedback: Whilst formal responses to the consultation survey were low, there was excellent engagement from community organisations who use the centre and serve St Matthews community. A key concern at the open meeting was that the library should be relocated on the estate itself. There was also concern that other services currently delivered from building, including Leicester Adult Learning and Housing enquiries should be relocated as part of the library offer. There are a number of community groups meeting regularly in the centre, some with large numbers of attendees. There was a concern that the council should continue to accommodate the groups and where this was not possible to support them to find alternative venues. There were also questions about the future of the community centre which is part of the Housing estate. Following consultation a change was made to the recommended opening hours to deliver the existing Homework Help sessions:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Staffed Hours
Current Staffed Hours	9am-9pm	9am-9pm	9am-9pm	9am-9pm	9am-9pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	74
Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	10am-6pm	Closed	10am-5pm	10am-2pm	Closed	30
Recommended Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	Closed	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	10am-2pm	Closed	30

It is recommended to relocate St Matthews Library and some services to St Matthews Children, Young People and Family Centre as part of the statutory library service

delivered by the Council. The recommended staffed opening hours are 30/week as per the timetable above. It is recommended to invest in St Matthews Children’s Centre to accommodate multi-services. It is recommended to work with community groups to explore alternative locations for them to meet.

2.10.23 **Thurnby Lodge Community Centre (multi-service centre)**

Consultation proposal: to retain Thurnby Lodge Community Centre as a multi-service centre with a non-statutory library provision delivered by the council.

Assessment: The community centre is ideally placed for co-location of library and community services to serve a wide catchment across Thurncourt ward and surrounding areas. The centre is well located next to a parade of retail units and well served by public transport. The centre is well used and has a low net running cost of £120,000 per year. The centre shares a car park with the neighbouring Peace Centre madrasah and food bank, making this an ideal location for the introduction of the library. Need within the area is considered high, Thurncourt ward is the 11th most deprived of 21 wards in the city. The building is very well used and consequently in need of investment.

Consultation feedback: Local user groups were keen to engage with the consultation, highlighting the busy-ness of the centre and the need within the local area. A small library provision was welcomed noting this would provide coverage on the periphery of the east of the city. A number of changes were suggested to the staffed opening hours by local groups as some were unable to support self-access to the centre. The recommended changes to the staffed opening hours are as follows:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Staffed Hours
Current Staffed Hours	1pm-10pm	9.30am-10pm	1pm-10pm	12.30pm-7pm	3.30pm-10pm	Closed	Closed	43.5
Proposed Staffed Hours	1pm-5pm	10am-5pm	Closed	10am-5pm	10am-6pm	10am-2pm	Closed	30
Recommended Staffed Hours	Closed	11am-9.30pm	3pm-7pm	9am-7pm	11.30am-5pm	Closed	Closed	30

It is recommended to retain Thurnby Lodge Community Centre as a multi-service centre and to implement a small library service point delivered by the Council. It is recommended to reduce staffed opening hours from 43.5hrs to 30hrs per week and with the recommended opening hours above. It is recommended to maximise overall opening hours with community centre self-access. It should be noted that Thurnby Lodge Community Centre is also located in the Thurnby Lodge MSOA and therefore

could also benefit from investment should the local neighbourhood board determine to do so.

2.10.24 **Tudor Centre**

Consultation proposal: Consultation proposal: to withdraw from the Tudor Centre and to offer community organisations the opportunity to take on the running as the facility does not form part of the statutory library service.

Assessment: Although the Tudor Centre has relatively low usage due to its' small catchment area (21,000 visits in 2024 – 25) the building is well located within the local estate with retail units and has good engagement from local residents. The facility is considered suitable for lease under the Council's Community Asset Transfer policy due it's low running costs, high need and opportunity to provide a good offer for local residents. The nearest multi-service centre is Beaumont Leys Library which serves the northwest of the city, Beaumont Leys and Abbey wards.

Consultation feedback: Feedback from the consultation indicated that residents were concerned about the future of the community centre and the main concern was that they did not want to see it close. 61 people (1% of all responses) responding to the main survey said the Tudor Centre was their main community centre. Of these 25 people (41%) said the proposals would make it "much harder" to visit. However, both the main survey and the open meeting demonstrated there was local interest in the opportunity for the community to take on the running of the centre. At the open meeting there was particular interest in the policy and processes around Community Asset Transfer to ensure that a community organisation would continue to make the centre available to existing users.

It is recommended to withdraw from Tudor Centre and to offer community organisations the opportunity to take on the running as the facility.

2.10.25 **Westcotes Library (multi-service centre)**

Consultation proposal: retain Westcotes Library as a multi-service centre as part of the statutory library service delivered by the council with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 51hrs to 30hrs per week.

Assessment: The Library is very well located in an area of high density terraced housing with extensive retail on the main Narborough road, once described as "the most diverse road in Britain." The library received investment in 2015 to create a flexible community space and to expand the IT provision which is especially well used. Westcotes Library is highly accessible with excellent public transport links on one of the main transport routes into the city. The library is well used for services such as computers, Wi-Fi and the printing, with over 8,000 hours of public computer use in the last year. The running costs are low

and the library is ideally configured to serve the needs of Westcotes residents and the surrounding areas including Fosse ward. Need in the local area is assessed as higher with Westcotes ward ranked as 13th most deprived out of 21 wards in Leicester.

Consultation feedback: Consultation responses highlighted the higher use of IT facilities at Westcotes Library and the higher weekend footfall at the library. No changes are recommended to the proposed staffed opening hours noting the schedule provides evening and weekend availability.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Staffed Hours
Current Staffed Hours	10am-7pm	10am-7pm	10am-7pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-4pm	12 noon-4pm	51
Proposed Staffed Hours	10am-6pm	1pm-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	Closed	10am-2pm	Closed	30
Recommended Staffed Hours	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	Closed	10am-2pm	Closed	30

It is recommended to retain Westcotes Library as a multi-service centre as part of the statutory library service delivered by the Council, with a reduction in staffed opening hours from 51hrs to 30hrs per week and with the recommended opening hours above.

2.10.26 The maps below show the residential properties within a 30-minute bus catchment from the recommended library and community centre provision, for the recommended proposals. The distance combines the time taken to walk to the bus stop with time taken to travel on the bus. The maps show a citywide saturation of bus route access. The darker areas indicate greater overlap of 30 minute bus route coverage areas for each centre. All areas of the city have access to one or more libraries within a 30 minute bus journey. Most areas of the city also have access to a community centre within a 30 minute bus journey.

Figure 10: residential properties within a 15 and 30-minute public transport catchment from the recommended library

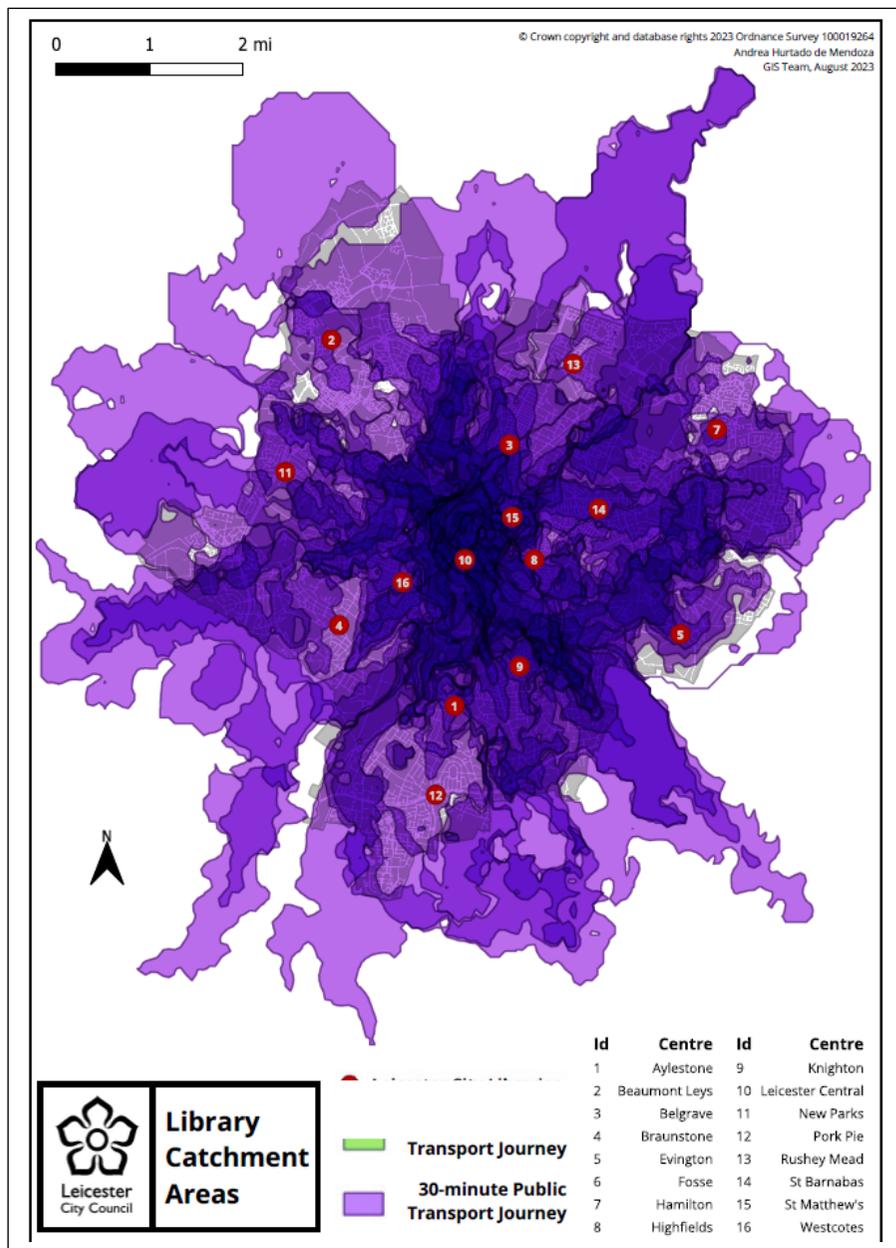
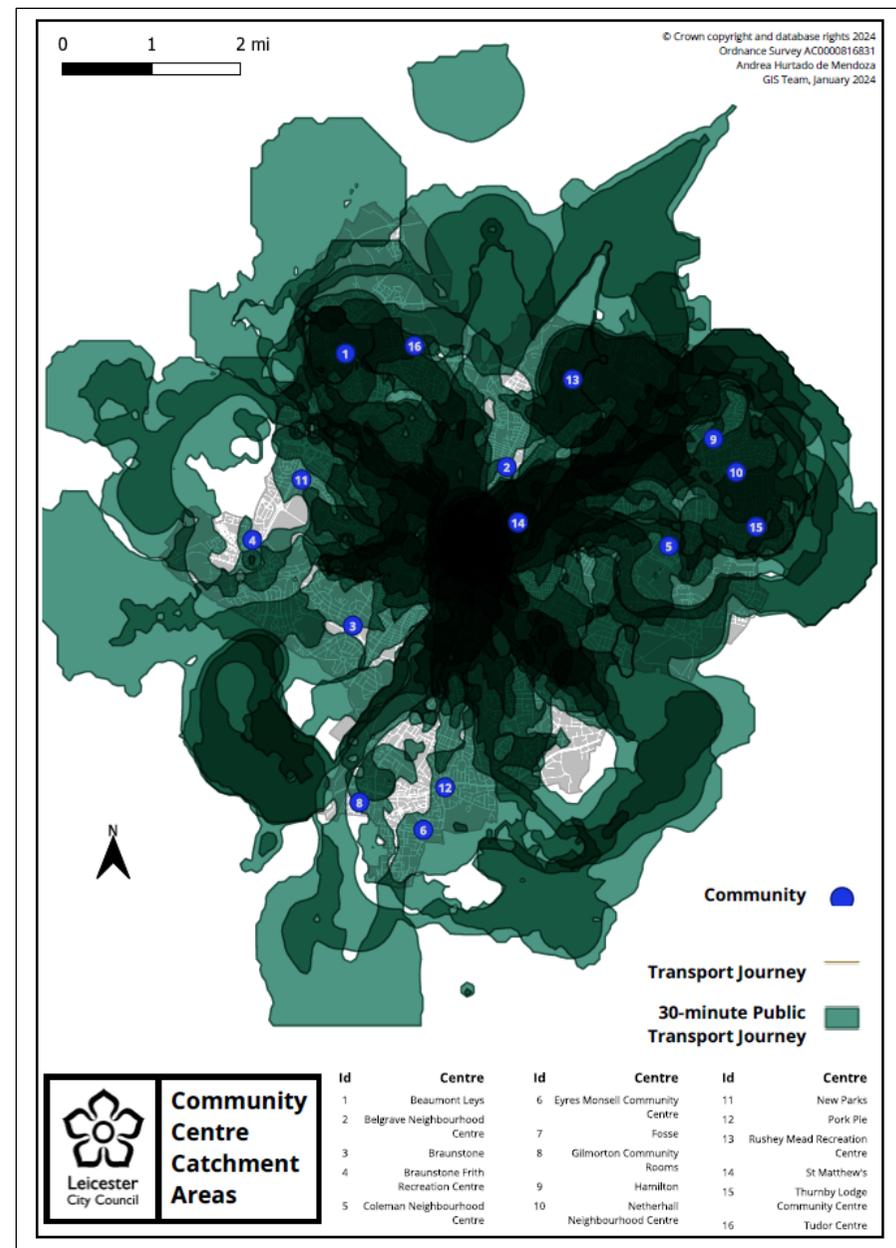


Figure 11: residential properties within a 15 and 30-minute public transport catchment from the recommended community centre



Non building specific proposals and recommendations

2.11 Below is a table of the non-building specific proposals and details of any changes made following the consultation.

Table 18: Non-building specific proposals and recommendations

Proposal Consulted On	Recommendation
Investment of £1,000,000 to further develop retained buildings as multi-service centres	Investment of £2,000,000 would be made to further develop and adapt retained buildings as multi-service centres including libraries, community rooms and adult learning facilities. An additional £473k would be made in library self-access systems at 6 sites.
Reviewing the areas visited by the Children’s BookBus	It is recommended to undertake a review of the Book Bus routes and stops following the implementation of the building based changes. In particular it is recommended to explore regular (weekly) provision in the Fosse area.
Providing enhanced activity programmes around our “Universal Offers”	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.
Continuing to invest in our online services and resources including our e-library	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.
Supporting community groups to take on the running of more services	As part of the recommendations six community centres would be made available for lease under the council’s Community Asset Transfer policy. The council would no longer run Braunstone Frith Recreation Centre, Coleman Neighbourhood Centre, Eyres Monsell Community Centre, Gilmorton Community Rooms, Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre and Tudor Centre. The council is committed to supporting community groups take on these sites and services.
Developing volunteer opportunities	Volunteer opportunities would be developed to enhance and add value to the services we offer and to provide a range of benefits to participants.
Providing small libraries at identified children’s centres	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.
Expanded Home Library Service linked to our volunteer offer	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.
Increase community room hire charges	This is a new recommendation arising from the consultation feedback, particularly around the feedback from some users of Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre and Rushey Mead Recreation Centre. Community room hire

	charges would be increased by 20 per cent, over 2 years, to support the operation of and financial viability of the retained council run community centres.
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6. Conclusions and detailed recommendations

- 2.12 An extensive public engagement exercise on the provision of libraries and community centres was undertaken in 2023 to inform research on a needs assessment for these services in Leicester City. The resulting public engagement report and secondary research report were used to develop proposals for consultation between April – June 2025. There was a very high level of participation in the public consultation. The responses and feedback received have been analysed and a findings report produced. This feedback has been considered to shape final recommendations as follows.
- 2.13 The programme is delivered within the context of the Council’s financial position as outlined in the report for the current year Budget 2025/26. The recommendations would retain more services under Council management and would deliver a reduced annual revenue saving of £1.57 million to contribute towards a required divisional saving of £7.2 million.

Areas of need: community and wellbeing focus

- 2.14 The consultation findings reaffirm the areas of service delivery to be prioritised. The feedback received demonstrates the need for community hubs with a focus on services and activities supporting wellbeing, bringing people together and overcoming loneliness and social isolation. Within the scope our libraries and community centres the following “Universal Offers” defined by Libraries Connected would be developed and prioritised:
- Health and wellbeing – collaborating with partner services to provide community hubs, overcome loneliness and isolation, and provide access to health and wellbeing information and initiatives
 - Culture and creativity – events and activities reflecting Leicester’s diverse communities to bring people together
 - Reading – providing programmes to promote reading for pleasure in a wide range of formats for residents of all ages to support leisure and learning and to help improve life chances
 - Digital and Information – providing access to resources and support to help residents access services online and in person
 - Children’s Promise – providing reading and activity programmes for young families and children of all ages, noting the young age profile of Leicester city.

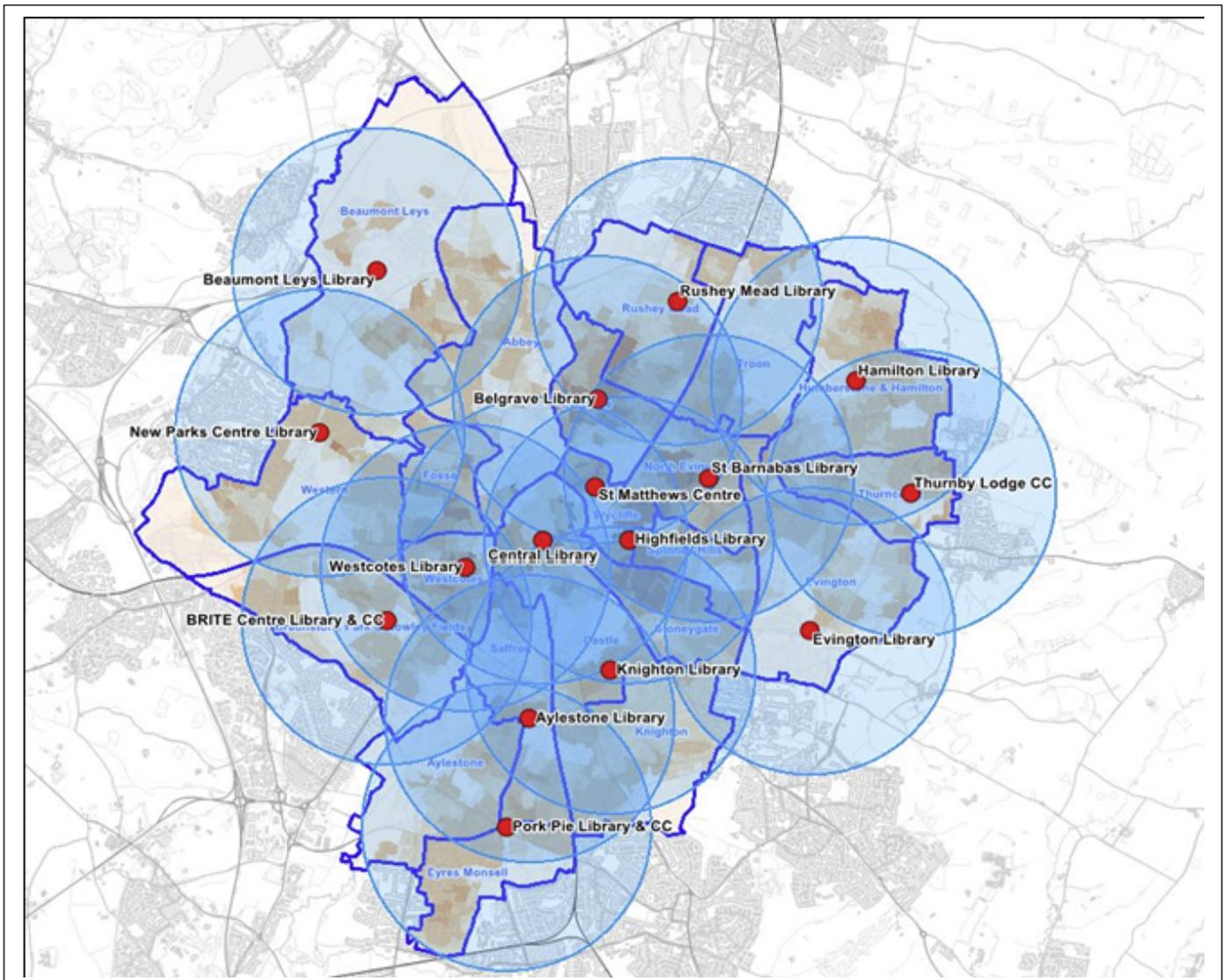
Recommended model

- 2.15 There was a high level of participation in the consultation. A separate findings report is published with details of the feedback received during the twelve-week period. 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 substantial changes to the original proposals. The recommendations are for the council to retain 18 facilities as follows:

Library provision

2.16 The recommended library provision would be at 15 statutory sites with a small non-statutory offer at Thurnby Lodge Community Centre. This would give 99.5% coverage to residential properties within 1.25 miles of a library. A map of provision is below:

Figure 12: Recommended library provision within Leicester City



Multi-Service Centres

2.17 It is recommended that 12 multi-service centres would offer library, community centre and internal and external partner services. Multi-service centres would have good access within a broad catchment area bringing a range of services together under one roof to provide joined up services in local neighbourhoods and improve access to council and partner services for local residents. Services offered focus on wider wellbeing and would be appropriate to the local setting. Partner services would include Customer Service and Housing pop up offices, Leicester Adult Learning and DWP Work Coaches and Family Hubs signposting and services. The centres would provide library and community services to a wide catchment area with accessible transport routes.

Central Library

2.18 The Central Library would continue to deliver a broader offer, serving residents living in all areas of the city. A wide range of reading and cultural programmes would be developed to

support the promotion of reading for pleasure, to bring communities together and to support informal learning and improve life chances. The city centre offer is supplemented by a recent partnership with the two city universities providing access to study space, Wi-Fi and specialist book stock for members of the public with extended opening hours. There would be a small reduction in the opening hours for the Central Library.

Three stand-alone libraries

- 2.19 Three stand-alone libraries 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. It would not be cost effective to install self-access at Rushey Mead Library due to the very low usage of the building.

Two stand-alone community centres

- 2.20 Two stand-alone community centres, Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre and Rushey Mead Recreation Centre would continue to be run by the council in addition to multi-service centre community facilities. The council would work with the local community to improve the usage and financial sustainability of the centres.

Standardised staffed opening hours

- 2.21 Staffed opening hours would be standardised across the estate informed by local need and national benchmarking. A reduction in staffed opening hours 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 opening hours have been amended to reflect the consultation feedback for each building.
- Core (staffed) library opening hours (including the closure of Fosse Library) would be reduced by 208 hours per week
 - Overall library opening hours including self-access at 8 libraries would be reduced by 64.25 hours per week
 - Weekend opening: all libraries will open on Saturday
 - Evening opening: all libraries will open for one evening or more until 6pm or later

Library self-access technology

- 2.22 Customer self-access systems would be implemented at eight (six additional) library centres to extend the overall opening hours. The technology provides self-access for inducted customers via their library card with live CCTV monitoring in place. 8am to 8pm opening would be supported by the introduction of library self-access systems extending availability for customers over 16yrs and accompanied children beyond the staffed opening hours.

Community run services

2.23 Four community centres would be made available for lease under the council's Community Asset Transfer policy. The council would no longer run Braunstone Frith Recreation Centre, Coleman Neighbourhood Centre, Gilmorton Community Rooms and Tudor Centre. There has been positive engagement at all four centres and early interest is evident for each of these. A formal opportunity would be published with support for community organisations to develop a business case to take on the running of the four centres. It is anticipated that the Community Asset Transfer process will take between 12 to 18 months to complete. Third party support will be provided for community organisations to develop their business plans. The council will continue to run the centres until they are handed over.

2.24 **Eyres Monsell Community Centre** is located in an MSOA that is a beneficiary of the Pride in Place programme. It is therefore first intended to engage the local neighbourhood board once it is formed to inform the local approach before offering for Community Asset Transfer alongside those stated in 6.12.

2.25 **Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre** will close and be demolished. The **Armada Centre** is the preferred community building following consultation, which is situated on the opposite side of the same road. The Armada Centre is located in the vicinity of an MSOA that is a beneficiary of the Pride in Place programme. It is therefore first intended to engage the local neighbourhood board once it is formed to inform the local approach before offering for Community Asset Transfer alongside those stated in 6.12.

2.26 It should be noted that **Thurnby Lodge Community Centre** is also located in the Thurnby Lodge MSOA and therefore could also benefit from investment should the local neighbourhood board determine to do so.

Released buildings

2.27 **Fosse Neighbourhood Centre and Library** Fosse Neighbourhood Centre and Library will close due to the low usage of the facility and the poor condition of the building. There are several libraries nearby which are considered accessible for local residents with 100% of residences falling within a 1.25 mile radius of alternative library provision:

- Westcotes library is 0.8 miles (19 minutes' walk as plotted on Google Maps) from the Fosse Neighbourhood centre.
- New Parks Library is 1.4 miles from Fosse Neighbourhood Centre directly accessible by the number 14 bus.
- The BRITE centre is 1.5 miles from Fosse Neighbourhood Centre.
- The Central library is 1.2 miles away from Fosse Neighbourhood Centre with regular buses to the city centre.

There are two regular permanent community activities based at the centre, a weekly bowling group and Alice Hawkins Community Projects. It is recommended to work in partnership with Alice Hawkins Community Projects which operates from the annex of the building and would

be supported to relocate elsewhere within Fosse ward recognising the significant benefits delivered to local people.

It is recommended the council makes best endeavours to secure suitable alternative accommodation for the bowling group.

The council will support customers to use alternative library provision as above and also explore locations for a book drop-off and pick up point in the local area.

The council's estates and buildings team has undertaken a review of building options for the Fosse Neighbourhood Centre. In view of the condition of the building it cannot be offered for CAT. Therefore the estates and buildings team will commence a marketing process following a decision. The Council will continue to maintain the Neighbourhood Centre up to the point of disposal.

- 2.28 **St Matthews Library** would be relocated to St Matthews Children, Young People and Family Centre on St Matthews Estate, which would also accommodate Adult Learning and other services as a multi-service centre. St Matthews Centre is not sustainable in the medium to longer term future due to the poor condition of the building including the large sports hall area which is closed for safety reasons due to the presence of RAAC concrete in the roof. Options would be explored for the future of the St Matthews Centre site once the services have relocated. This work does not form part of the Neighbourhood Services programme and will instead be led by the Housing and Estates and Building Services divisions.

Staff and budget adjustments

- 2.29 Staffing and operating costs would be reduced with a revised staffing model reflecting the changes in service delivery and opening hours. Core skills would be retained within the service to ensure quality services continue to be developed in the transformed service.
- 2.30 The Book Fund budget would be reduced by £30,000 from £415,000 to £385,000 in line with the recommendations.
- 2.31 Community room hire charges would be increased by 20%, over a two-year period, to support the operation and financial viability of the remaining council run community centres.

Investment

- 2.32 Investment would be made to further develop and adapt retained buildings as multi-service centres including libraries, community rooms and adult learning facilities. Some retained buildings would benefit from a refurbishment programme to modernise facilities to reflect the needs of local people, and to ensure our multi-service centres are fit for the future.

2.33 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 support

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

Extended library access

2.35 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, in addition to the statutory library service.

2.36 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.

2.37 The routes and Children’s BookBus service would be reviewed following the implementation of changes outlined above to support children and young families living in disadvantaged communities and to provide access to books and reading programmes in these areas.

2.38 The opening hours for libraries are recommended as follows:

Table 19: Recommended staffed and self-access opening hours

Centre		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Staffed Hours
Aylestone Library	Recommended Staffed Hours	1pm-5pm	10am-5pm	2pm-6pm	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	10am-2pm	N/A	30
	Self-Access Hours	8am-7pm	8am-7pm	8am-7pm	8am-7pm	8am-7pm	8am-1pm	8am-1pm	
Beaumont Leys Library	Recommended Staffed Hours	9.30am-5pm	9.30am-6pm	9.30am-5pm	9.30am-5pm	9.30am-3pm	9.30am-1pm	Closed	40
Belgrave Library	Recommended Staffed Hours	10am-6.30pm	10am-6.30pm	2pm-6.30pm	10am-6.30pm	10am-5pm	10am-1pm	Closed	40
	Self-Access Hours	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	N/A	Closed	
BRITE Centre	Recommended Staffed Hours	9.30am-5pm	10am-5pm	9.30am-5pm	10am-6pm	9am-4pm	10am-1pm	Closed	40
	Self-Access Hours	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	N/A	Closed	
Central Library	Recommended Staffed Hours	10am-6pm	10am-7pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	11am-4pm	Closed	45
Evington Library	Recommended Staffed Hours	10am-2pm	10am-6pm	2pm-5pm	10pm-5pm	Closed	1pm-4pm	Closed	25

	Self-Access Hours	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	N/A	Closed	
Hamilton Library	Recommended Staffed Hours	10am-2pm	Closed	10am-5pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	10am-2pm	Closed	30
	Self-Access Hours	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	N/A	Closed	
Highfields Library	Recommended Staffed Hours	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	9am-1pm	9am-6pm	12 noon-5pm	10am-2pm	Closed	40
Knighton Library	Recommended Staffed Hours	1pm-5pm	10am-6pm	10am-3pm	Closed	1pm-5pm	12pm-4pm	Closed	25
	Self-Access Hours	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	N/A	Closed	
New Parks Library	Recommended Staffed Hours	10am-3pm	10am-5pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	Closed	10am-1pm	Closed	30
	Self-Access Hours	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	N/A	Closed	
Pork Pie Library	Recommended Staffed Hours	9.30am-5pm	10am-1pm	9.30am-7pm	10am-5pm	Closed	10am-1pm	Closed	30
	Self-Access Hours	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	N/A	Closed	
Rushey Mead Library	Recommended Staffed Hours	10am-3pm	Closed	1pm-6pm	Closed	10am-5pm	10am-1pm	Closed	20
St Barnabas Library	Recommended Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	2pm-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	10am-4pm	Closed	40
	Self-Access Hours	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	8am-8pm	N/A	Closed	
St Matthews Library (within the Childrens Centre)	Recommended Staffed Hours	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	Closed	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	10am-2pm	Closed	30
Thurnby Lodge Community Centre	Recommended Staffed Hours	Closed	11am-9.30pm	3pm-7pm	9am-7pm	11.30am-5pm	Closed	Closed	30
Westcotes Library	Recommended Staffed Hours	10am-6pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	1pm-5pm	Closed	10am-2pm	Closed	30

2.39 The table below shows the current and recommended staffed hours and the current grand total of hours compared to the recommended grand total of hours. The grand total of hours includes Self-Access hours.

Table 20: Recommended staffed and total hours v current staffed and total hours

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

Equalities Impact

2.40 A full Equality Impact Assessment was carried out following the public engagement undertaken and secondary research work carried out in 2023 to support the proposals developed for consultation. The EIA has been updated to reflect the findings of the

consultation and recommendations put forward in this report. The assessment is summarised as follows.

2.41 The engagement work and subsequent consultation has placed equalities considerations for Leicester residents at the forefront of the recommended future delivery model. Key equalities deliverables for Leicester's libraries and community centres for the future of the service include:

- Supporting digital inclusion for our communities
- Offering modern, warm, safe spaces for study and hosting/signposting to support services.
- Providing library and community services to areas of deprivation and socio-economic need
- Focusing on those who are NOT using libraries and community centres but may have need and what can be done to encourage wider use. It is clear from the consultation that libraries and community centres should be better promoted and signed to ensure those who need them are aware of the help and support on offer.
- Supporting and providing access to a wide range of services within our facilities.

2.42 Current usage of our libraries and community centres by ethnicity demonstrates a close correlation with the ethnic make-up of the city as a whole. This is also reflected at local facility level. The proposals are intended to serve the widest range of residents and to promote community cohesion by bringing different groups together through a programme of cultural and creative events and activities. It is recommended to monitor usage by a range of protected characteristics including ethnicity to ensure the new model is serving all sections of the community.

2.43 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. A large number 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 would 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. Following consultation the proposed opening hours have been amended at Belgrave Library to ensure the busy homework club can continued to be accessed by the children.

2.44 Children living in deprived areas are affected by child poverty. Under the recommendations multi-service centres including library provision will be located in areas of greatest need where possible. 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 in the area around Fosse Neighbourhood Centre which is recommended to close. Satellite libraries at local children's centres will be maintained 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.

2.45 Older people were over-represented in the consultation responses 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 the Council would work with groups meeting to socialise at Community Centres to support them through the community asset transfer of centres, or to explore alternative arrangements where the centre is recommended for closure. 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.

2.46 There is an impact on all groups using Fosse Neighbourhood Centre and Library due to the recommendation to withdraw from the building.

- There is proportionately higher use of the library by children especially younger children aged 5-9 years. The Children's BookBus routes would be reviewed to include weekly stops in the Fosse area to ensure children and young families continue to have access to books and reading. There are several libraries nearby which are considered accessible for local residents with 100% of residences falling within a 1.25 mile radius of alternative library provision. Local residents and service users would be proactively signposted to these alternative services as part of the transition programme, with in person visits and inductions arranged to welcome customer to alternative libraries including Westcotes library which is 0.5 miles (19 minutes' walk) from the Fosse Neighbourhood centre and New Parks Library which is 1.3 miles from Fosse Neighbourhood Centre directly accessible by the number 14 bus. The council will also explore locations for book drop offs and pick up points in the local area to enable residents to order books by phone or online for local pickup.
- There are proportionately fewer older people using the library. The Home Library Service which is available to all city residents would be promoted to residents and service users in Fosse ward during the transition period to ensure those with limited mobility are able to continue to borrow books through deliveries to their homes.
- Children in poverty could be impacted by the need to relocate the Alice Hawkins Community Projects foodbank. It is proposed to work in partnership with Alice Hawkins Community Projects which operates from the annex of the building and would be supported to relocate elsewhere within Fosse ward recognising the benefits delivered to local people.

2.47 There is an impact on all community room setting hirers due to the recommended 20% increase in price. However this will be mitigated by being phased in over two years and with good notice for groups to make arrangements with their members ahead of scheduled increases. Further to this our room hire rates are considerably lower than other local settings.

Public Sector Equality Duty (s.149 Equality Act 2010) – due regard and mitigations

2.48 The model is mindful of the requirement to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. Noting the considerations within the EIA and the consultation feedback the following mitigations and monitoring are adopted:

Issue / cohort	Mitigation / adjustment	Monitoring / trigger
Disabled users requiring assistance	Staffed sessions each week at all statutory sites; Accessibility tools available for all PCs; induction support for self-access; reasonable adjustments policy highlighted on-site and online.	Annual % usage by disabled users and assistance requests; if decline >10% review local staffed hours pattern.
Children and young people	Maintain Saturday opening and minimum one weekday evening at all statutory multi-service centres; safeguarding rules for self-access (under-16s accompanied); study support sessions continue to be offered at identified sites.	Term-time study-support session take-up; feedback from schools; if unmet demand evidenced, reallocate sessions.
Older people/digitally excluded	Targeted digital help drop-ins; promote Home Library Service; telephone support for reservations/renewals; Explore book drop-off/pick-up point in Fosse.	Track take-up of HLS and drop-ins; if demand outstrips capacity, increase volunteer support.

Accessibility and transport (practical access beyond distance)

2.49 For areas affected by closure (e.g., Fosse), the model has considered not only proximity of nearby alternatively libraries but also bus routes/frequency and walking times. The service will

signpost affordable travel options and create a local book drop/pick-up point. Staff will support affected users to transition to nearby libraries or to the Home Library Service where appropriate. The Children’s BookBus service will be reconfigured to include regular weekly stops in the Fosse area for young families and children aged 0 – 11yrs.

Statutory Duty

2.50 The recommended model is considered to fulfil the council’s statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons wishing to make use of it. The model has considered: (a) geographical coverage; (b) the range and quality of services offered (including reading, study support, digital access, assisted help); (c) the reasonable needs of different users and protected groups; (d) available resources and efficiency.

- Coverage. The recommended network provides access to 15 statutory library service points (plus a small non-statutory offer at Thurnby Lodge), with catchment modelling indicating 99.5% of residential properties are within 1.25 miles of a statutory site. Whilst distance alone is not conclusive the model has considered transport, safety, and ability to travel for children and disabled users in the equality analysis and mitigations below.
- Quality and modes of access. While staffed hours are reduced at some sites, overall access is maintained and in places extended through self-access technology (with live CCTV, induction and safeguarding controls). Assisted sessions and staffed periods are scheduled to ensure face-to-face help remains reliably available in evenings and at weekends across the network.
- Resources and efficiency. The model allows the service to live within its budget envelope while maintaining a city-wide statutory offer, targeted investment in buildings, and protection of core programmes (reading, children’s activities, study support, digital inclusion and the four Universal Offers).

Finance

2.51 Following consultation, the proposals have been revised to take into consideration the feedback received. The revised proposals recommended in this report would retain more services under council management and deliver a savings figure of up to £1.57 million.

2.52 It is noted that the recommendations would achieve around a reduced saving of £0.5 million less than the proposals consulted upon.

2.53 The proposed profile for savings is over a two-year financial period as follows. The savings profile takes into account the timescale for a range of projects required to implement the recommendations:

Table 21: Cumulative revenue savings achieved from recommendations

Financial Year	Cumulative revenue saving
2026 – 27	£500,000
2027 – 28	£1,570,000
Full year saving (future years)	£1,570,000

Risks and issues

2.54 The following risks and issues have been identified in relation to the recommendations.

Table 22: Risks and issues relating to recommendations

Risk or Issue	Proposed mitigation
<p>Community Asset Transfer Risk there is no viable interest in one or more community centres proposed for Community Asset Transfer</p>	<p>Early expressions of interest were received for all 6 community centres during the consultation period. The council has developed a robust policy and process to support community asset transfer. Third party infrastructure support would be provided to help community organisations to develop a viable business plan.</p>
<p>Community Asset Transfer Risk that community benefits would not be delivered or that existing community groups might be unable to continue</p>	<p>A robust business plan would be required to outline the community benefits and approach to supporting existing centre users. The plan would be included in the legal contract and would be monitored by the council to ensure the agreed outcomes are delivered.</p>
<p>Community Asset Transfer Issue: TUPE Transfer of staff may apply to one or more Community Asset Transfer scenarios</p>	<p>Any potential implications for Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) for staff will be clearly stated in the council's published CAT opportunities. The council's legal team will assess and advise as to whether TUPE would apply or not for each scenario.</p>
<p>Reduced opening hours There is a risk reduced opening hours may impact in accessibility of services.</p>	<p>The recommended opening hours have been revised following consultation to respond to the feedback received. All statutory multi-service centre libraries will have weekend opening on Saturdays, and at least one weekday evening beyond 5pm to ensure people working during weekdays can access services. Self-Access will be available for inducted customers at 8 library sites, extending current availability.</p>
<p>Recruitment of volunteers There is a risk the service will not be able to recruit volunteers to deliver added services and engage local residents</p>	<p>The service has a robust volunteer policy in place and uses a corporate system and procedures to recruit. The service has a strong record of volunteer recruitment and a good base of already active volunteers. Indications from the consultation are that communities want to volunteer to support services.</p>
<p>Sustainability of council run buildings There is risk that Neighbourhood Services buildings will deteriorate if backlog and ongoing maintenance and repairs are not able to be funded</p>	<p>Full condition surveys have been undertaken of all Neighbourhood Services buildings. Capital funding has been identified to invest in buildings which will be recommended to deliver council services in the future.</p>

<p>Future use of vacated buildings There is a risk that Fosse Neighbourhood Centre and St Matthews Centre may remain empty attracting Anti-Social Behaviour and with missed opportunities for the neighbourhood</p>	<p>Asset Development Reviews have been undertaken for the two buildings proposed for withdrawal, which are not considered suitable for community running. The Council's Housing and Estates divisions are engaged in planning for the future use of these sites.</p>
<p>Project delivery There is a risk that transformation projects may not be delivered on time, delaying budgetary savings and/or resulting in gaps in service</p>	<p>It is recommended that revenue savings are profiled to ensure services will continue to be delivered by council until community asset transfer processes have concluded. Neighbourhood Services would continue to run St Matthews Centre until reconfiguration works at the Children's Centre are complete.</p>
<p>Community groups and events There is a risk some community groups and events could be displaced by the recommended changes.</p>	<p>Self-access systems will be in place at many centres to support community groups to meet at times suitable for them. Neighbourhood Services officers will work with community groups to explore alternative locations where groups are displaced.</p>
<p>Communication of changes There is a risk that that local residents and service users are not aware of the changes to the service resulting in reduced usage and uncertainty of service availability.</p>	<p>A full communications programme will be put in place for each stage of the transformation to include all partners and stakeholders. Contacts collected through the consultation will be used to provide updates and communication the decision.</p>

7. Other documents

2.55 A separate Findings Report and Equalities Impact Assessment are available as separate reports.