

# Transforming Neighbourhood Services North West Area Engagement

Findings of the focus groups and public engagement  
As at 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015

*Prepared by:*

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*This report provides a summary of the findings of the focus groups and public engagement exercises which took place in November/December 2014 and November 2015.*

*It includes information about:*

- *The issues and options under consideration;*
  - *The consultation method;*
  - *The public response and views expressed;*
  - *The decisions taken in light of what was learnt.*
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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report summarises the outcomes of the focus groups and public engagement in order to develop proposals for the reorganisation and consolidation of neighbourhood buildings in the North West area of the city, being managed as part of the Transforming Neighbourhood Services (TNS) Programme. The TNS programme forms one strand of the “Using Buildings Better” programme which was launched in October 2015 to review around 250 operational council buildings.

Copies of the engagement forms used for the TNS North West engagement exercise are included as Appendices A and B to this document.

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

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

Two engagement exercises were undertaken in the North West area:

- An initial engagement on 12 neighbourhood buildings 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2014 until the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2014
- A targeted engagement on 2 additional youth centre buildings in the context of the original 12 neighbourhood buildings in the North West area

Both engagement exercises used the same methodology:

- A series of focus group meetings based on locality and age groups
- A questionnaire available in various locations across the area and online for people to provide individual responses and comments

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

### **Summary of initial engagement November – December 2014**

A total of 20 people attended the focus groups.

The main messages drawn from the focus groups are that:

- There was a general agreement with all of the groups that the services provided were more important than particular buildings
- There is support for transferring of assets through the Community Asset Transfer procedure

- Significant support for Libraries and the functions they perform and likewise the activities in community centres are important for local areas.

A total of 354 completed form responses were received and people were asked to identify which buildings they used and the reasons for it. The main reasons stated were:

- Ease of access, including long opening hours
- Friendliness of staff
- Convenience of location
- Good facilities and / or good accessible book stock
- Range of activities available
- Free internet access

People were also asked for ideas in terms of reorganising the services in the area in order to save money. The ideas drawn from these responses are summarised as follows:

- Amalgamate services provided into fewer buildings, based on location and proximity of other sites
- Transferring the ownership of the buildings to community groups
- Better advertising to increase usage and income
- Increasing room hire charges and other charges
- Asking for voluntary contributions from users of the sites

**NOTE: The initial engagement work was carried out prior to the alterations made to ward boundaries as part of the Ward Boundary Commission Review**

### **Summary of targeted engagement November 2015**

A total of 43 people took part in 5 focus group meetings held at New Parks Youth Centre, Stocking Farm Youth Centre and City Hall. 39 of the attendees were young people (under 19yrs).

A total of 133 questionnaires were completed, most on paper, but some online.

The key points from the feedback from this exercise are:

- There was general agreement amongst all of the groups that the services provided were more important than particular buildings
- The support of the youth workers was generally identified as the single most important feature of the youth service.
- Although there was strong support for specific buildings from many attendees, the key building consideration was the provision of a safe space which the young people felt was theirs.
- Sufficient space for youth activities and provision of facilities such as a kitchen, space for table tennis and a pool table, and a sexual health room were identified as essential.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

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

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

The programme approach is to consider each of 6 geographical areas in turn to identify methods by which the service delivery model can be transformed through opportunities to co-locate services and make better use of the assets available.

Initially the scope of the programme covered four service areas:

- Community Services
- Libraries
- Adult Skills & Learning
- Neighbourhood based customer services

In addition some other council services with a presence in the in the neighbourhoods were included in the where they formed a part of the future delivery, for example, by sharing locations. In North West area this included Neighbourhood Housing Offices, STAR Offices and Early Years pre-school settings.

In October the Council announced a city-wide review of its buildings called “Using Buildings Better”. The Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme now forms part of this wider programme and is extended to include other neighbourhood based service points.

In the North West area this has meant the inclusion of council run youth centre buildings in the area. A further piece of engagement work was undertaken in November 2015 to engage residents, users and stakeholders around the two additional buildings.

The scope of the North West area includes the following buildings:

- Tudor Centre
- Braunstone Frith Community Centre
- Beaumont Leys Neighbourhood Housing Office
- Mowmacre Neighbourhood Housing Office
- New Parks Neighbourhood Housing Office
- Stocking Farm Community and Healthy Living Centres
- Home Farm Community Centre
- Beaumont Leys Library
- New Parks Community Centre
- New Parks Library
- New Parks STAR
- Marwood Road STAR

*From October 2015*

- New Parks Youth Centre
- Stocking Farm Youth Centre

### **3. CONSULTATION METHOD**

#### **Objectives and techniques**

The following activities have been undertaken in the North West neighbourhood:

- Data collection exercise to identify the buildings in scope, costs associated, services provided (both internally and commissioned through voluntary sector organisations), usage statistics, historical information
- An initial engagement exercise was carried out for the city as a whole between April and July 2013 to raise awareness and gain an overview of the general views and attitudes of residents towards neighbourhood services
- A more in-depth and focussed engagement process carried out between 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2014 and 19<sup>th</sup> December 2014 to collect suggestions and comments from service users and residents (***subject of this report***)
- Following the inclusion of youth services in the programme, a targeted engagement process focusing on two youth centre buildings in the area was carried out between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> November 2015

The next steps are:

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

Both engagement exercises involved two main components:

- A series of focus group meetings based on locality and age groups
- A form available in various locations across the area and online for people to provide individual responses and comments

The details of the meetings held are as follows:

- Stakeholder meeting, Beaumont Leys Leisure Centre, 29<sup>th</sup> October 2014
- Focus Group Session, Beaumont Leys Library, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014
- Focus Group Session, Home Farm Community Centre, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014
- Focus Group Session, Tudor Centre, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014
- Focus Group Session, New Parks Library, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014
- Focus Group Session (young people), New Parks Youth Centre, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015
- Focus Group Session (young people), Stocking Farm Youth Centre, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015
- Focus Group Session (parents and residents), New Parks Youth Centre, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015
- Focus Group Session (parents and residents), Stocking Farm Youth Centre, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Representatives from the Young People's Council have conducted their own engagement in conjunction with the arranged focus groups, and submitted feedback through the

standard form.

A further focus group was held with members of the Young Peoples Council from the North West area to consider the addition of Youth Centres to the program.

Alongside this a number of informal meetings have taken place with individual stakeholders and groups to discuss the proposals.

A leaflet containing details of the proposals and a 'tear-off' response form was used to gather opinions on the proposals. These were widely distributed in the area, and a total of 2,000 leaflets were circulated in November and December 2014, and a total of 1,000 leaflets were circulated in November 2015.

The forms were also available on-line to receive comments from the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2014 until the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2014 and from 2<sup>nd</sup> until 29<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

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## **4. PUBLIC RESPONSE AND VIEWS EXPRESSED**

### **4.1 Initial engagement exercise, 3<sup>rd</sup> November – 19<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

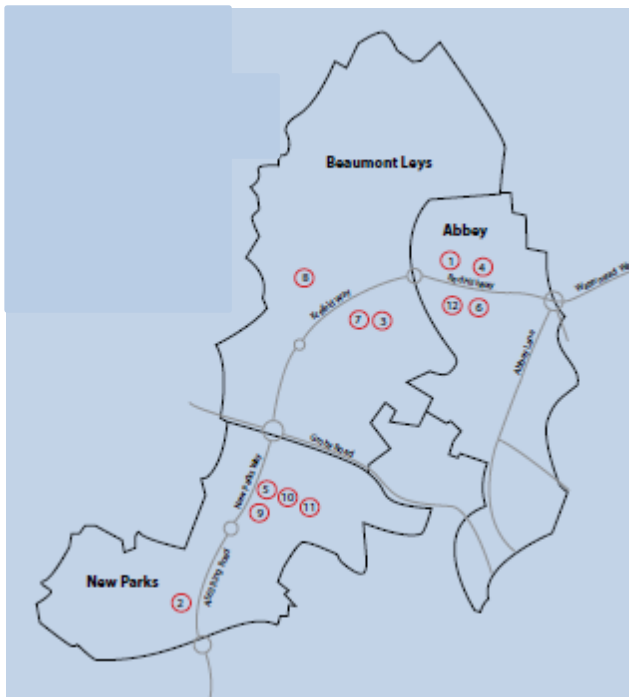
#### **Focus Groups**

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

- Children and younger people
- Working age people
- Older people

Children and Younger People were engaged through support of representatives of the Young People's Council.

The North West area of the city was subdivided into three wards based geographic areas to represent individual communities better and to link with the current facilities offered. The following picture shows a map of the area using the old ward boundaries:



A total of six focus groups were set up, one for working age and older people in each geographical area. Members for the focus group were recruited as volunteers.

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

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



## **Focus Group Views and Comments**

The following lists are the views and comments drawn from the Focus Group discussion meetings.

### **General Queries and Views**

- There was a general agreement with all of the groups that the services provided were more important than particular buildings
- There is support for transferring of assets through the Community Asset Transfer procedure
- Significant support for Libraries and the functions they perform and likewise the activities in community centres are important for local areas.

### **Beaumont Leys Library (1<sup>st</sup> December 2014)**

#### **Session 1:**

- There was support for libraries and the service and activities delivered from them. There was a consensus that Beaumont Leys library would be an ideal site for a multi-service centre
- The group supported the potential to transfer the running of some buildings through the Community Asset Transfer process
- The group agreed that services are the key consideration – they need to be delivered where they are needed
- The group suggested that transport, access and opening times in general would need to be considered for solutions going forward
- Beaumont Leys shopping centre was considered as an option for location of Neighbourhood Services
- There was a perception that Barley Croft Community Centre is not a preferred location to meet. One group runs roller skating sessions for 13 – 19yrs at Home Farm Community Centre. However the sessions are not well attended as the target audience struggles to access this location.

#### **Session 2: (6 attendees, including. 2 police community support officers)**

- There was strong support for retaining the current Beaumont Leys Library which is seen as an essential service. The library offers good customer service here, diverse uses, a community atmosphere and a range of sessions for children.
- There was agreement that the unoccupied side of the Beaumont Leys Library building should be brought back into use.
- The location of the Beaumont Way building was seen as good because of its immediate proximity to the shopping centre and sports centre, good parking and bus services, and recent investment in the transport infrastructure.
- It was suggested that both Home Farm and Jersey Road Housing Offices should move into the library building to create more efficient joined up services.
- It was agreed that the visibility of Beaumont Leys Library should be enhanced. Suggestions included opening up the entrance and refreshing the plaza outside which looks tired. One option would be to create a new entrance half way down so it is more accessible and a direct way in.
- There was discussion around the potential for the Beaumont Leys “village” to develop further in the future.
- Home Farm was considered for multi-services, but there was a consensus that there is insufficient space to develop here.

- It was suggested that Home Farm services including the Community Centre, Housing Office and STAR office could be well accommodated at Beaumont Way.
- Home Farm Community Centre was seen as appropriate for asset transfer as the building would provide a good base at the heart of local community.
- There was support for the Council sale of empty properties to avoid them standing empty and becoming subject to vandalism. It was suggested developers could convert some of these properties into flats as there is a shortage of one bedroom dwellings.
- The group summarised their discussion as follows: improve Beaumont Leys Library and co-locate other services within the same building to develop a multi-service centre.

### **Home Farm (1<sup>st</sup> December 2014)**

- There was a suggestion that Home Farm Community Centre should be offered for Community Asset Transfer. It was thought that local people and community groups who use the centre would support this approach.
- It was suggested that the Housing Office no longer needed so much space. There was a feeling that fewer people visit the office as services are provided in other ways.
- There was support for retaining Beaumont Leys Library – which was seen as essential for providing computer access, for Job Seekers Allowance claimants for example.
- A local youth group provider commented that there are limited services in Home Farm for under 13's. The group runs youth provision for 13-25 year olds but felt under pressure to provide sessions for younger children, but needed a large space to deliver the sessions from.
- The youth group provider commented that working at Barley Croft Community Centre could be challenging because it is attached to the school which could have negative associations for some young people and adults.
- The group commented that there are fewer established community groups in Home Farm compared to other parts of the city.
- The group suggested that Home Farm Community Centre does not have good usage, aside from one large organisation. For this reason it was felt there was no need for a staffed reception desk. However the nursery upstairs is good.
- The group suggested there was a need for more computer access the area.

### **Tudor Centre (2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014)**

#### **Session 1 (3 Attendees)**

- There was strong support for retaining the Tudor Centre and the services delivered there.
- The group agreed that The Healthy Living Centre is particularly well-used and serves an important function in promoting and supporting health and wellbeing in the community.
- The group commented that the STAR service is important to residents.
- There was a consensus that more youth services were needed in the area. The group feel that the Stocking Farm Youth Centre is currently underused even though they have the facilities.

- There was a suggestion that a skate park was needed in the area.

### **Session 2 (6 Attendees)**

- There was a discussion around better use of buildings. It was suggested that the Housing Office could be moved into the Tudor centre. The old Housing Office could be taken on by a community group or the land used to develop a housing scheme.
- There was agreement that the Tudor Centre is an extremely valuable resource for the community and is well used.
- The group commented that Stocking Farm Healthy Living Centre is also well used by local residents and has helped many people in the area. The group acknowledged the importance of the range of services offered including drug and alcohol support.
- There was a consensus that the Stocking Farm Youth Centre is not fully utilised.
- The group agreed that the Stocking Farm complex is not well signed and that local people had reported they could not find it. There was an Issue with visibility of the complex and with access from Marwood road entrance where the gate is often locked.
- There was support for Beaumont Leys Children, Young People and Family Centre (previously known as Surestart) which is important for many parents and children and has high use in the holidays.
- In summary the group agreed that the Tudor Centre is vital as a hub for the community.

### **Session 3 (3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014) (1 Attendee)**

- It was noted that Beaumont Leys Library is well used and would provide the best location for other services to move into. The building is well-lit with good access off the main road and a bus stop immediately outside. Ideally the library opening hours would be extended.
- It was suggested that the STAR office could be co-located with other services in the larger building.
- It was suggested that the Police station could be used as a community setting.
- As part of the process it is crucial to provide strong support and alternative settings for groups affected by changes to buildings use and support should be given to all groups that are affected.

### **New Parks Library (3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014) (1 attendee)**

- Braunstone Frith Community Centre currently accommodates private childcare provision. There is high demand for these services at very local level and thought will need to be given to this depending on proposals for the centre.
- The co-location of local services in a larger multi-use centre should be workable within the area.
- Community Asset Transfer for low use buildings would be welcomed.
- The Children, Young People and Family Centres, library and the community centre all provide valuable services and activities for local people.

- It was noted residents valued the high quality of childcare provision at the pre-school based at New Parks Community Centre. This should be considered as part of any proposals for the Centre.

### Written and Online Comments and Responses

In total 354 responses were received up until the closing date of the consultation. Only 267 responses provided a valid postcode.

The following table shows a breakdown of the wards in which respondents who provided a valid postcode reside:

WARD	Neighbourhood	Responses	%	WARD	Neighbourhood	Response	%
Beaumont Leys	North West	79	29.6	Latimer	North East	1	0.4
New Parks	North West	75	28.1	Stoneygate	East	1	0.4
Abbey	North West	50	18.7	Thurncourt	East	1	0.4
Western Park	West	15	5.6	Westcotes	West	1	0.4
Fosse	West	12	4.5	Countesthorpe	Not within City boundary	1	0.4
Castle	Central	6	2.2	Ellis	Not within City boundary	1	0.4
Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields	West	3	1.1	Millfield	Not within City boundary	1	0.4
Anstey	Not within City boundary	3	1.1	Ravenhurst and Fosse	Not within City boundary	1	0.4
Birstall Watermead	Not within City boundary	3	1.1	Birstall Wanlip	Not within City boundary	1	0.4
Groby	Not within City boundary	3	1.1	Forest Bradgate	Not within City boundary	1	0.4
Rushey Mead	North East	2	0.7	Rothley and Thurstaston	Not within City boundary	1	0.4
Forest	Not within City boundary	2	0.7	Thurmaston	Not within City boundary	1	0.4
Belgrave	North East	1	0.4	Markfield Stanton and Fieldhead	Not within City boundary	1	0.4
<b>Total responses with correct postcode</b>						<b>267</b>	

#### Key:

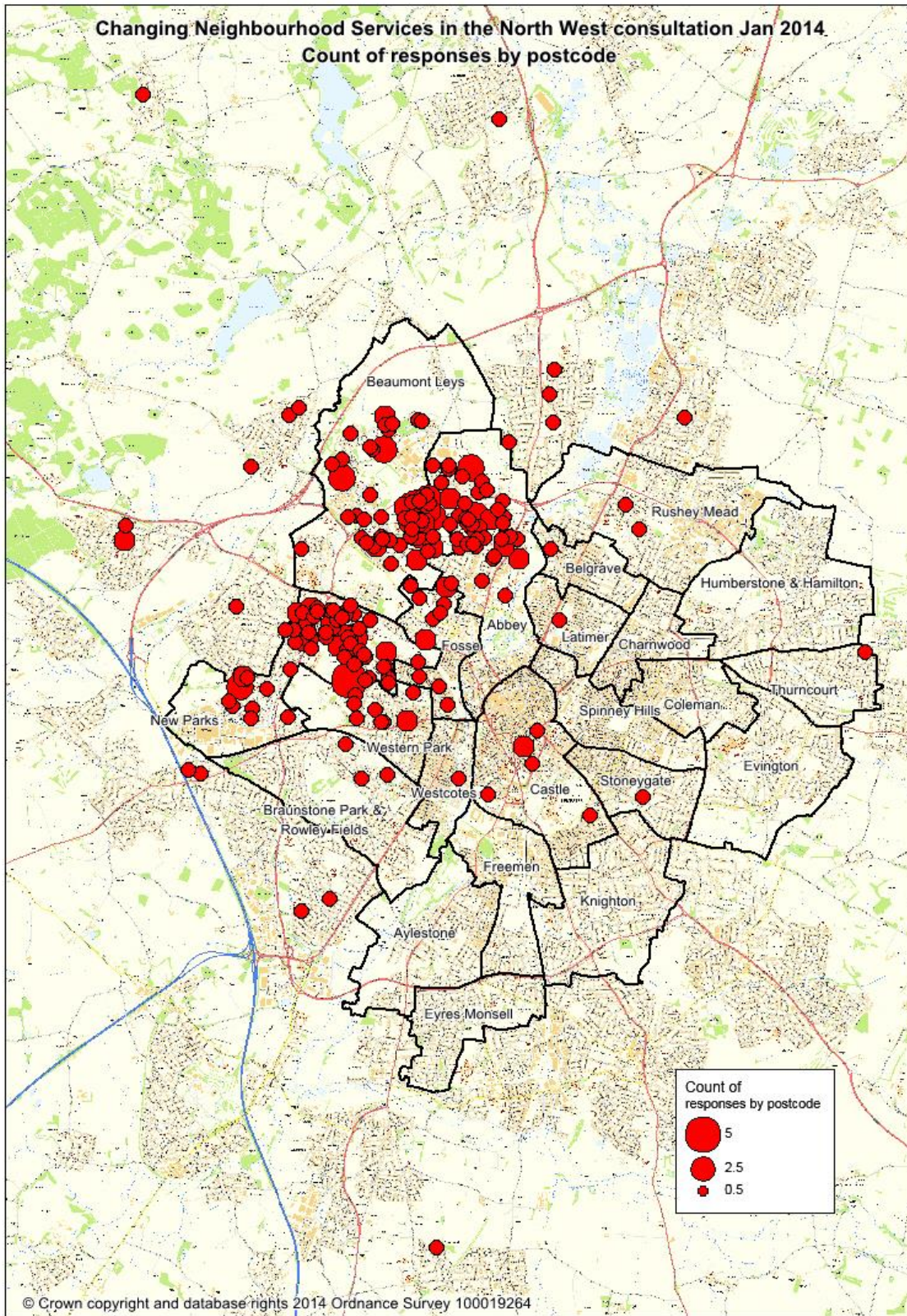
Green shaded cells represent the North West area – the focus of this engagement

Red shaded cells represent areas not within the City Boundary

Neighbourhood	N	%
North West	204	76.4
West	31	11.6
Central	6	2.2
North East	4	1.5
East	2	0.7
South	0	-
Not within City boundary	20	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>267</b>	

The following map shows the locations of respondents, where a valid postcode was provided as part of their response:

Changing Neighbourhood Services in the North West consultation Jan 2014  
Count of responses by postcode

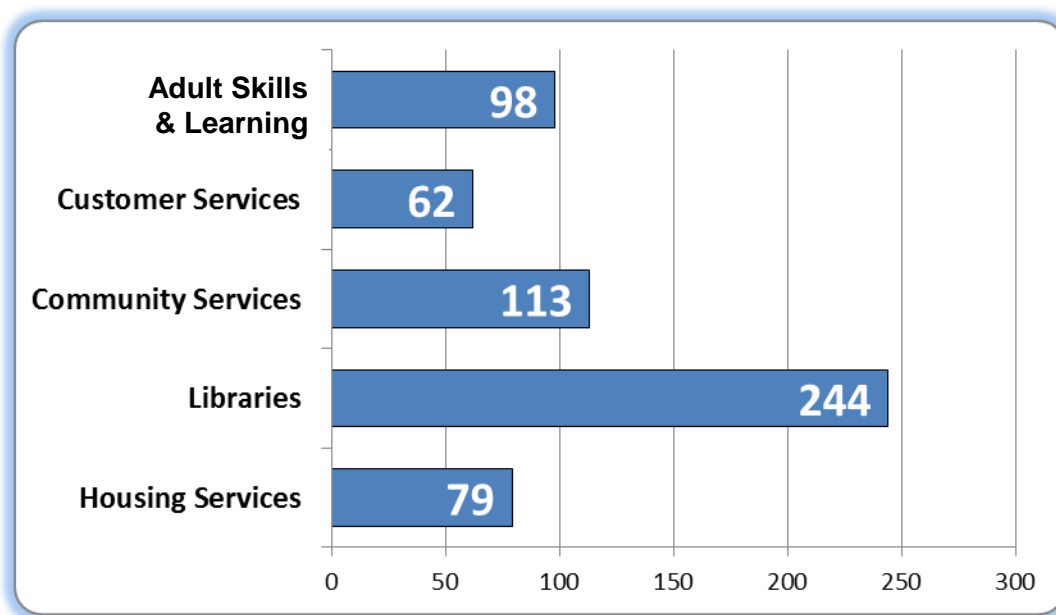


## Views and comments

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

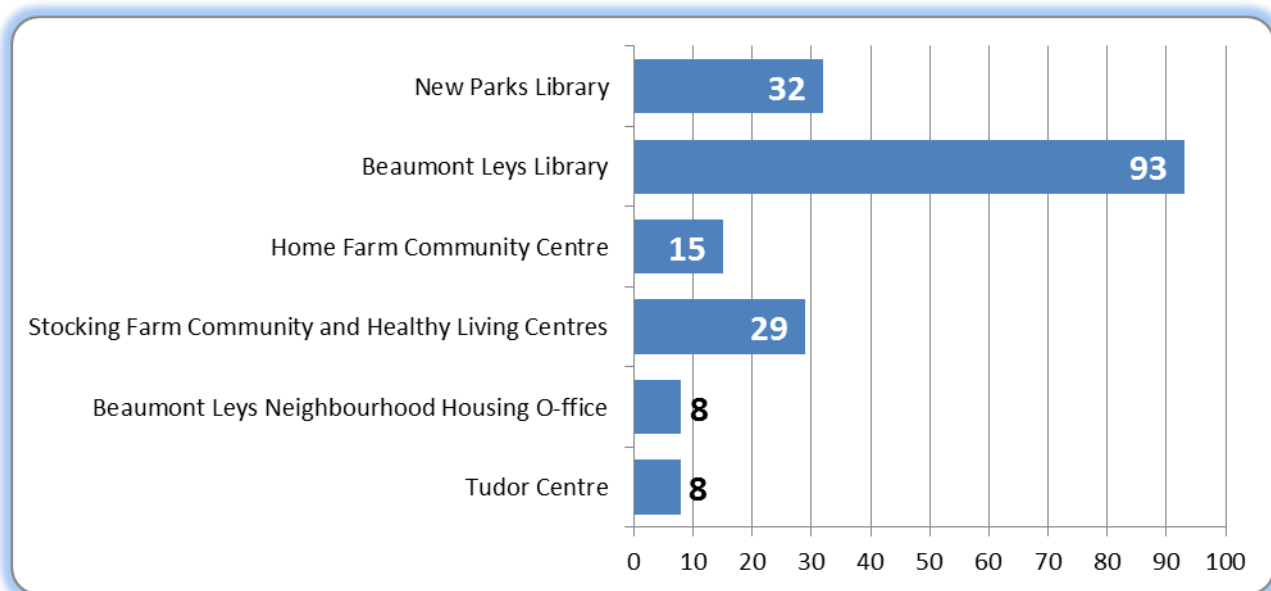
### Q.1. Which neighbourhood services do you use?

A total of 343 respondents provided an answer to this question (97% of a total of 354 respondents). Respondents were allowed to make multiple choices for this question and the following chart shows the percentage that selected each option:



### Q.2. Which building(s) do you use for these services and why? (For example: ease of access, friendliness of staff and so on)

A total of 346 respondents provided an answer to this question (98% of a total of 354 respondents). Respondents were provided a free text field to respond to this question and not all of the responses named a specific location which they use. The following chart shows the number of responses for each centre, where they were provided, or could be directly inferred:



Respondents also provided the reasons why they access services at particular buildings. In summary, the reasons given were as follows:

- Friendliness of staff
- Ease of access, including long opening hours
- Convenience of location
- Good facilities and / or good accessible book stock
- Range of activities available
- Free internet access

The following is a selection of the comments which were made in response to this question:

*“Beaumont Leys library. I use this library every day. I am a job seeker and I have signed a job seeker contract to job search online for 2 hours a day. Obviously on job seekers allowance I cannot afford broadband. If I did not have this facility I would be sanctioned and money stopped...”*

*“Beaumont Leys Library. I attend 3 social groups here. The premises are ideal. The staff are friendly and accommodating .For this reason I travel to this library even though I could go to one nearer to my home. I attend the Story Cafe, Knitting Group and Book Group. I am retired and these groups help me to keep in touch with people in pleasant surroundings, without these I would feel very isolated and excluded. The library plays a very important role in allowing communities to meet up, exchange views and information.”*

*“Beaumont Leys library is big enough to offer more than books (which it has a very good selection of) and pcs. There is space for an excellent toddler group as well as other groups like the knit and natter and reading groups which I attend. I frequently see teens use the numerous tables for study (although there still isn't enough at exam time). The staff are really welcoming, helpful and friendly too. It is also in the best place to serve all of Beaumont Leys with an excellent selection of bus services and parking.”*

*“I use Beaumont Leys Library very regularly, which to me is a lifeline! I use it for book borrowing, dvd hire, the Art Class on Mondays and Fridays as well as various other groups etc. My opinion of*

*this building is that it is perfect, as it is fully accessible, which is important to me as I am disabled, as well as being ideal for prams and pushchairs. It is also located in the middle of a busy shopping centre and a hub for a great number of bus routes that stop here. The computers and free wi-fi are also very handy... It is for all of these reasons that I feel that the service provided at this library CANNOT be met at any of the other suggested centres."*

*"Beaumont Leys Library. Convenient & easy parking. Friendly staff. Well organised building. Multi use of building. This area is used by most members of the public, i.e. public baths, gym, church, shopping ctr, police stn."*

*"Beaumont Leys NHO (Housing Office). Beaumont Leys Library. Children use library, I use housing office, HB, rent. Staff are friendly, helpful."*

*"Home Farm centre because I learned English and last year I did crime and justice course. It helps me to feel more confident and helps me to get job in future. I can use library because we read more books in the library."*

*"Home Farm Community Centre and Tudor Centre because in Home Farm I learn English. I used Tudor Centre for my children for nursery."*

*"New Parks Library, 1 mile from my home. Very helpful staff with good computer skills."*

*"I use all services as it helps me and my family. As for me, adult learning is very important to get my education, housing office to get support and pay my payments, library to support me and my children for learning, room hire for events and community to bring us together."*

*"(New Parks) The library for computer job searches and book borrowing also job club on Wednesdays. I don't think you can get any friendlier staff anywhere. The housing office and customer services are all in one anyway and the list is too many to mention for all the services they supply."*

*"(New Parks) Helpful, friendly staff (library). Easy to access instead of town (customer services). Opening hours (library). Good range of books (library) particularly children's"*

*"(New Parks) Library - homework on PCs, read books. Youth Centre: good fun, stops me feeling bored at home."*

*"(New Parks Youth Centre) I use these services because I feel very comfortable with the people that work there and they make the place very fun and just let us relax and support people all the time"*

*"(New Parks Youth Centre) I use the services because I feel safe in the environment and the people are really friendly."*

*"STAR are a good point of contact for accessing all local services."*

*"Beaumont Leys Stocking Farm. Because it is near my home and shops, Doctors, Dentist. Very helpful staff and kind."*

*"Stocking Farm healthy living centre. Friendly staff, local, nice modern and clean."*

*"Stocking Farm Healthy Living Centre. I use the health room to run a clinic through Leicester Recovery Partnership. The client group can access here easily & find the staff friendly. The clients are also able to find out 'first-hand' about what is going on in their community & can find things to*



*get involved in."*

*"To see drug worker. Healthy living centre. This place is cool"*

*"Stocking Farm Healthy Living Centre. Monday Playgroup."*

*"I use the healthy living centre. I do my maths and English in this building with Leicester College and it's a fantastic place to come because all the staff are very friendly and polite so it's a very welcoming place to come and learn."*

*"It is (easy) for me to get to the Tudor Centre, and things are on ground floor. And (I) like it there the staff and friendly and very helpful."*

*"Community Centres Libraries - New Parks and Beaumont Leys. Reasons for use: Meeting people (friendly staff), Access to services."*

The following chart categorises all of the comments made in response to Question 2 with regard to each building to show the key considerations for services users. Note that many respondents made several points.

Why building used	Beaumont Leys Library	Beaumont Leys NHO	Braunstone Frith CC	Home Farm CC	Marwood Road STAR	Mowmacre NHO	New Parks CC	New Parks Library	New Parks NHO	New Parks STAR	Stocking Farm CC & HLC	Tudor Centre CC	Other / Not specified	TOTAL
Friendliness of staff	45			2				46	5		19	2	6	125
Ease of access	45			2				16	12		8	2	6	91
Access to books & reading	35							17					16	68
Adult activities - informal learning	17			10				16				2	1	46
Computer & Wi-Fi access	16							19					7	42
Enquiries & advice, council services		31								1			1	33
Community information and friends											3		17	20
Homework help & study	1							6					12	19
Health advice, activities & facilities											19			19
Young children's activities	15													15
Youth activities													11	11
Building welcoming and safe											5		1	6
Room hire							3							3
Nursery facility												1		1
Networking and delivering services											1			1

### **Q.3. Do you have any ideas or suggestions about how we could reorganise neighbourhood services to save money?**

A total of 231 respondents answered this question out of the total of 354 (65%). This was an open question and did not put any restrictions on the respondent as to how to answer. In a general sense, the following are key points that are raised within the responses:

- Amalgamate services provided into fewer buildings, based on location and proximity of other sites. The most popular suggestions for multi-service centres where buildings are specified are:
  - Beaumont Leys Library
  - New Parks Centre Library & Housing Office
- Transfer ownership of suitable community buildings to community groups
- Better advertising to increase usage and income
- Increase income through room hire and other charges
- Ask for voluntary contributions from users of the site

In addition a significant number of responses focused on the need to improve services and facilities in order to increase usage. This is to deliver better value for money and ensure local services are fit for the future. These comments tended to focus on the quality of the services provided rather than the number of service points retained. Respondents focused on three areas for improvement:

- Delivering improved and joined up services
- Delivering more activities (eg adult learning and youth sessions)
- Providing better facilities (eg Wi-Fi)

Some respondents did not make suggestions for making savings, but were keen to express support for particular services. In many cases respondents also expressed support for the buildings where they accessed these services and were eager to make the case for no change at these sites. The most comments of this type were received for Beaumont Leys and New Parks Libraries.

The following is a selection of the comments which were made in response to Question 3:

*“One idea is to merge the Mowmacre Hill Housing Office with the Beaumont Leys Library - it would appear that a considerable part of the library building is no longer used to its full extent. This library building is very handy for me as I drive and can easily park in the car park to access it.”*

*“I would like to see the Beaumont Leys library used more efficiently as it is a large building and more community services could be offered from there rather than having a number of smaller community centres.”*

*“I would like more activities at Home Farm like sewing and more courses.”*

*“(New Parks) Just have one building for all three services.”*

*“(New Parks) The library and housing office is already joined by a door. The only way is for star to move to library.”*

*"A community partnership or lead organisation could run New Parks Community Centre retaining all the services that it currently offers and provide new opportunities. This would save Leicester City Council money and put communities at the heart of their local areas."*

*"It would make sense to locate several services in one building and adopt a 'one-stop-shop' approach. However, I would question whether some of the buildings in Beaumont Leys especially are fit for this purpose. It may make good sense to lease the community centres (Home Farm, Beaumont Lodge, etc) to community associations, whilst making sure that these groups have the support in place to do this."*

*"Use the first floor of New Parks Library to provide the services offered at New Parks Community Centre, e.g. multiple access centre."*

*"E.g. modify opening hours, investigate possibilities to increase usage, make better use of buildings and staff."*

*"Move the Beaumont Leys Neighbourhood Housing Office into the Home Farm Community Centre."*

*"Use key buildings as hubs like the library and get services to work from these buildings, saving on running cost of other buildings, make space count."*

*"Reduce the heat in the building. Energy-saving lights, solar panels, allow a small business/coffee shop in the foyer that pays rent."*

*"Encouraging the locals to volunteer"*

*"The library is the key the community"*

*"I think instead of closing these facilities down, it might be worth keeping the services all in one building instead of the various ones, e.g. for Beaumont Leys - have the Housing Office/Library & other services in one building."*

*"Transfer Home Farm Housing Office to Beaumont Leys Library"*

*"Combining some of your housing offices."*

*"I believe it is important to retain as many of the services as possible, as reduction will adversely affect the poorest and unemployed sections of the community. I understand unemployed people have to apply for jobs online & yet they are probably less able to afford this within their own homes. Perhaps reorganising the Housing offices by merging with community buildings could make some saving, although constant moving must cause a lot of expenditure."*

*"Advertise building more so better usage."*

*"...close down buildings that aren't used on a regular basis or buildings that are in need of a lot of repair."*

*"Close the large building at Stocking Farm, nobody uses it."*

*"Services need to be better promoted so they are very visible - need to shout a bit more about what they do"*

*"Get more things for the youth centre."*

The following chart categorises the ideas and suggestions made by respondents to Question 3. Note that some respondents made several suggestions.

**“Do you have any ideas or suggestions about how we could reorganise neighbourhood services to save money?”**

Suggestion category	Number of respondents
Amalgamate services provided into fewer buildings	40
Support for local building(s)	25
Improve facilities to increase use	21
Increase income with more room hire and sales	16
Provide more activities to increase use	14
Better advertising to increase usage and income	13
Continue to supplement services with volunteer help	12
Revise opening hours	9
Sell or lease under-used buildings	9
Energy saving schemes to reduce running costs	5
Introduce self-service for simple transactions	4
Procure cheaper services and equipment	3
Consult with local groups	2
Other suggestions	26

## **4.2 Further engagement exercise, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> November – 19<sup>th</sup> 2015**

With the launch of the Council's "Using Buildings Better" programme in October 2015 the scope of the Transforming Neighbourhood Services (TNS) project was extended to include additional Council run public buildings.

As a result the scope of TNS in the North West area was extended to include the two Council run youth centre buildings in New Parks and Stocking Farm.

A further exercise was undertaken to engage residents, users and stakeholders of the youth centres in the wider context of all 14 buildings now under consideration in the North West area.

The engagement exercise ran between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> November 2015 and used the same methodology as the earlier engagement. The questionnaire was adapted to include the two additional buildings.

### **Focus Groups**

Two focus groups were held at each youth centre, based on age:

- Young people
- Parents, residents and adult stakeholders

In addition a further focus group was held with the members of the Young People's Council who have an interest in the North West area.

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

- What services and buildings do you use in the area?
- Which buildings in this area could you get to and use?
- What are your most important considerations your youth services?
- Do you have any suggestions about how we could reorganise services to make savings?

A total of 43 people attended the focus groups.

### **Focus Group Views and Comments**

The following lists are the views and comments drawn from the Focus Group discussion meetings.

#### **General Queries and Views**

- There was general agreement amongst all of the groups that the services provided were more important than particular buildings
- The support of the youth workers was generally identified as the single most important feature of the youth service.
- Although there was strong support for specific buildings from many attendees, the key building consideration was the provision of a safe space which the young people felt was theirs.
- Sufficient space for youth activities and provision of facilities such as a kitchen, space for

table tennis and a pool table, and a sexual health room were identified as essential.

### **New Parks Youth Centre, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015 (15 young people)**

- The group identified staff help and support as the most important aspect of the service to help with personal issues and confidence building and to help with issues at school.
- Access to the Sexual Health Service and a private room is important.
- The group agreed the youth centre provides them with a suitable meeting space to be with friends and to make new friends.
- The group thought that the library was not appropriate for youth sessions, because young people need to be free to talk openly and express themselves without being told off by staff or offending young children or older people. Asked if the first floor library space could be used for youth sessions at dedicated times, the group thought the space would not be big enough and would not feel like their own.
- Although New Parks Youth Centre feels very safe the group felt less safe walking home at night time as the building is located past a stretch of open land not within sight of housing. Therefore they arrange to leave together in groups.
- A few people live next to Allextion Youth Centre but come to the New Parks building as they found it more attractive and welcoming.
- The group identified a kitchen and breakout space as other key facilities which must be considered for a youth service building.
- The group agreed the building was not open long enough and that this was not an efficient use of the facility.
- The group identified proximity to the local school as an important factor. It was agreed that convenience, visibility and easy access have resulted in good use of service. The location was considered to have a special value for helping young people who are having issues at school.
- The current facilities are regarded as good, but the most wanted improvement is the provision of free Wi-Fi for social media, searching the internet and finding information for homework and leisure.
- Only a few young people used other council buildings in the area. A couple visit the library, 4 or 5 use New Parks Leisure centre. The young people felt it was not feasible to visit Braunstone Leisure Centre as it is too far away, and they do not feel safe crossing the park or using the alleyway after dark.

### **New Parks Youth Centre, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015 (4 parents and residents)**

- One parent who regularly visited staff at the Youth Centre during the daytime recognised the help and support offered by staff working there.
- The facilities offered include a sexual health room, office, meeting rooms and kitchen. It was suggested that other services could make use of these facilities to use the building more efficiently.
- Attendees identified alternative youth provision in the area, including New Parks Boys Club (which is open to young men and women) and Allextion Youth Club both of which are non-council run services. Although some of their young people had attended these centres they preferred New Parks Youth Centre as they felt the building was better suited to their needs.
- For wider services in the area the group agreed that multi-service centres were a good

option. The New Parks Library and Neighbourhood Housing Office were suggested as the best option for multi-services in New Parks.

- Beaumont Leys Library was discussed as a good option for a multi-service centre, but that this would not be accessible for residents and especially young people living in New Parks.

### **Stocking Farm Youth Centre, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015 (20 young people)**

- The Youth Sessions are valued because they “take us off the streets” and “keep us out of trouble”.
- The staff are highly valued for their help and support with a wide range of issues. “The youth workers treat us like young adults not like when we are at school”
- Geographical location was a key issue as the young people all said they lived locally. They use this building because “it’s our nearest Youth Centre”
- The friendly and welcoming atmosphere was also identified as important – some have tried other centres but prefer Stocking Farm “I used to go to Allexton, but I like this one better”
- The Stocking Farm Youth Centre building is popular because of facilities such as the pool table, kitchen and ball court. The ball court is well used both during youth sessions and when the youth centre is not open.
- Most of the young people did not use any other council buildings, even within the Stocking Farm complex. The Community Hall and Healthy Living Centre were seen to be for other age groups and users. Nobody used the libraries or leisure centres in the North West as they were considered to be too far away.
- Two members of the group travelled from another area to use the centre because of the atmosphere. Three group members had tried Barley Croft Youth Centre but did not visit regularly as they preferred Stocking Farm.
- Suggestions for using buildings more efficiently were to close some of the other buildings on the site and to move services into the youth centre during the daytime.

### **Stocking Farm Youth Centre, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

- There were no attendees for this session possibly due to bad weather.

### **Young People’s Council – North West based members (5 members attending)**

- Other than the youth centres, buildings used by attendees were New Parks and Beaumont Leys Libraries and leisure centres. Their family members also used the New Parks Community Centre pre-school by preference.
- The ball court at Stocking Farm is well used both during and outside of youth session hours.
- The youth centres were seen as important in helping young people with a wide range of personal and social issues.
- Young people tend to use only their local youth centre, but can travel on foot and by bike within the local area.
- The group thought that Stocking Farm users would be able to travel to Home farm Community Centre, and could also cross the ring road to the Tudor Centre as it is well lit with good crossings.
- There was support for a multi-service centre which could include space for youth sessions. However the space would need to be big enough and have storage space and good facilities.
- Shared space was felt to present some issues especially where the space was shared with



younger children. It was felt that young people would not visit a centre where they were surrounded by resources and pictures intended for young children, or health messages for adults.

- There was a consensus that general proposals must be based on service usage figures and building capacity.

### Written and Online Comments and Responses

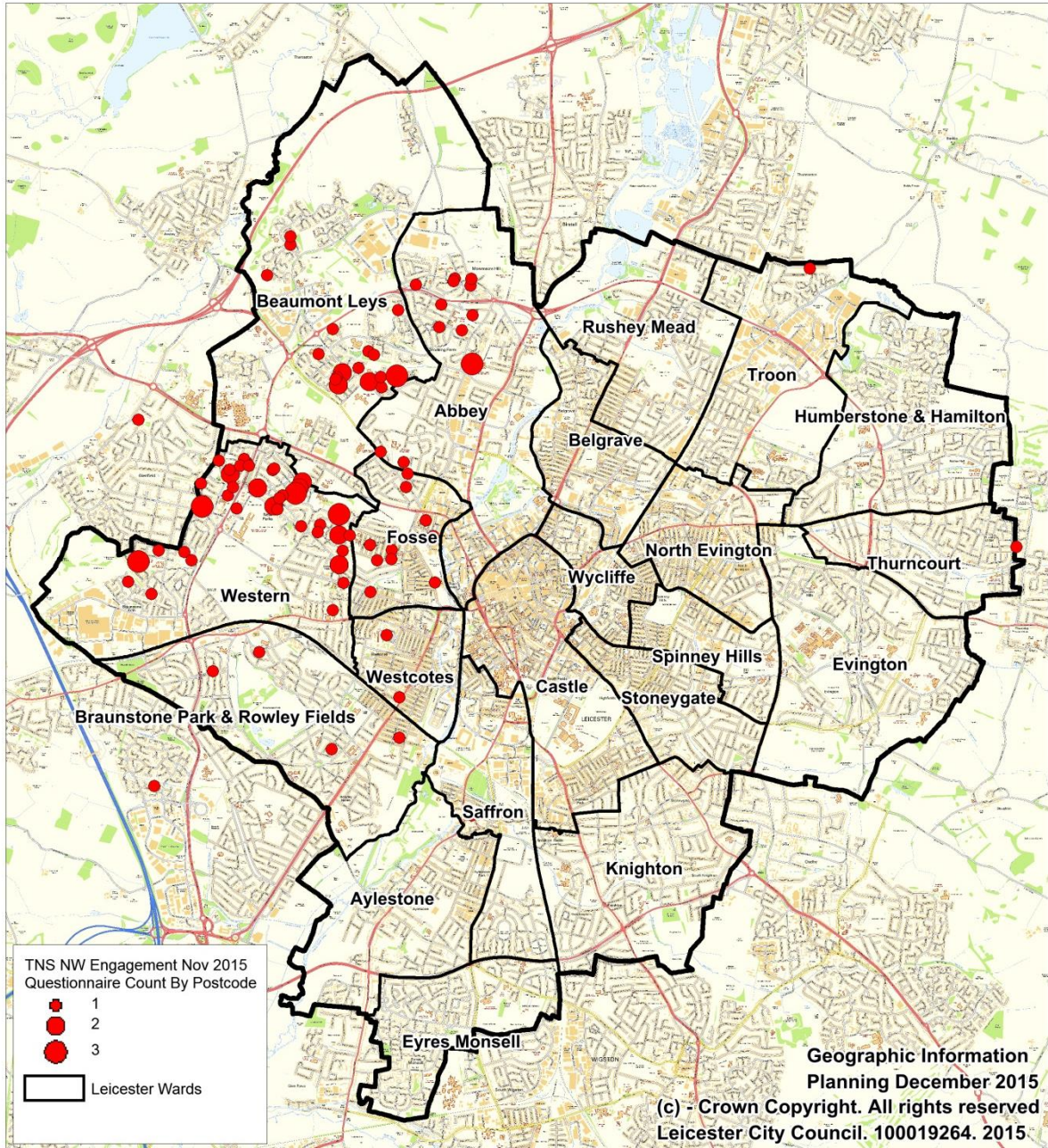
In total 133 responses were received up until the closing date of the consultation. Of these 108 responses provided a valid postcode.

The following table shows a breakdown of the wards in which respondents who provided a valid postcode reside:

Ward	Number of responses	%
Abbey	14	13%
Beaumont Leys	22	20%
Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields	4	4%
Fosse	11	10%
Saffron	1	1%
Troon	1	1%
Westcotes	2	2%
Western	53	49%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>108</b>	

The following map shows the locations of respondents, where a valid postcode was provided as part of their response:

TNS North West Engagement 1 - 29 November 2015 - Questionnaire Postcodes

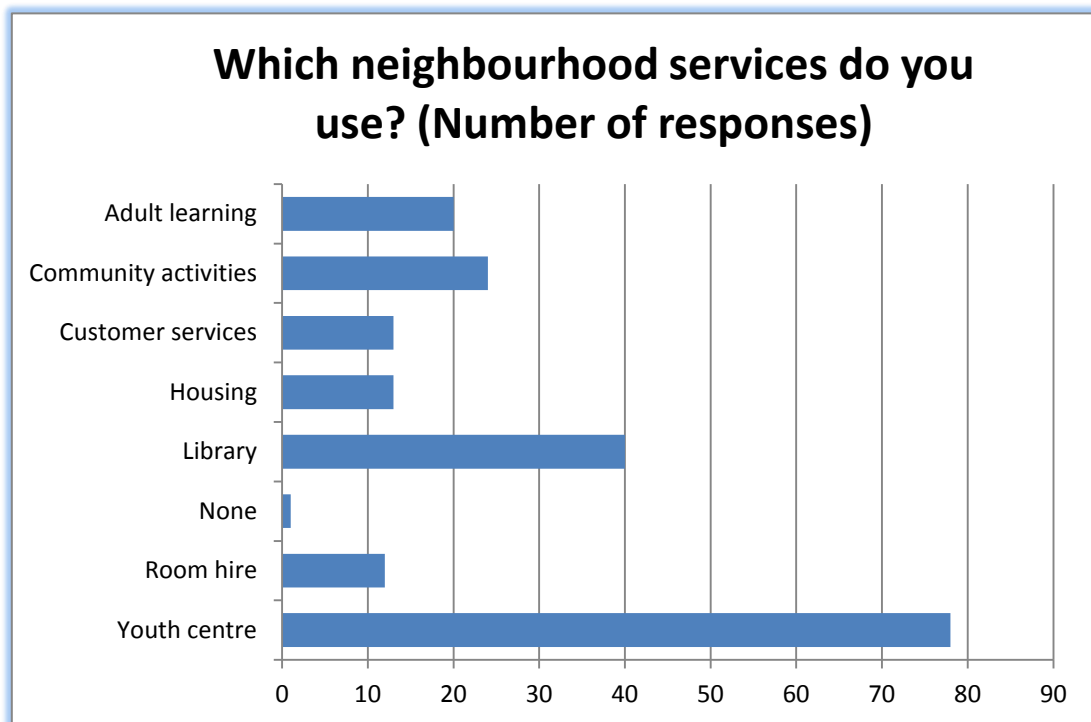


## Views and comments

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

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

A total of 133 respondents provided an answer to this question (100% of a total of 133 respondents). Respondents were allowed to make multiple choices for this question and the following chart shows the percentage that selected each option:

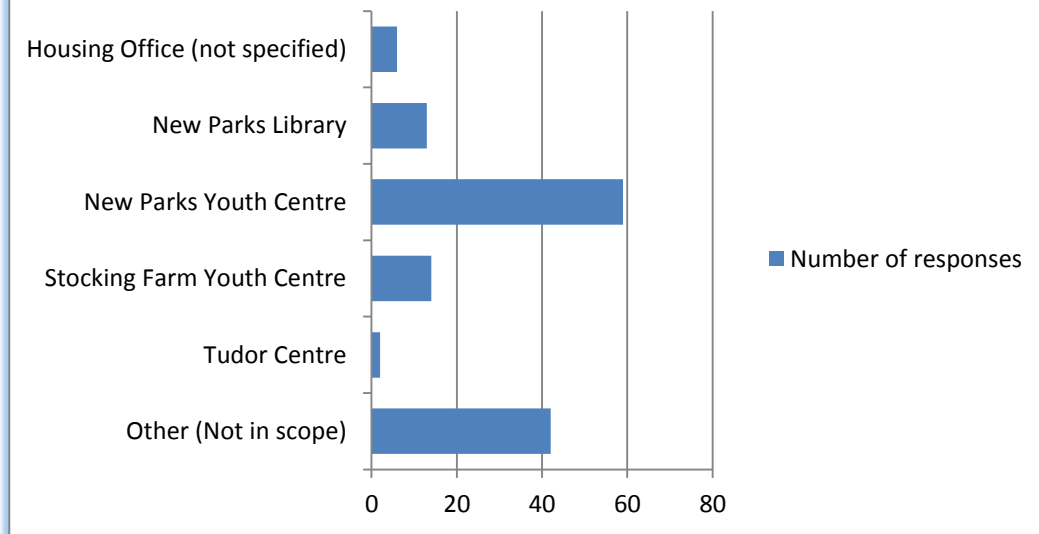


The consultation targeted youth centre users. 78 out of 133 respondents stated they used a youth centre. 40 respondents stated they used the library.

### Q.2. Which building(s) do you use for these services and why? (For example: ease of access, friendliness of staff and so on)

A total of 124 respondents provided an answer to this question (93% of a total of 133 respondents). Respondents were provided with a free text field to respond to this question and not all of the responses named a specific location which they use. The following chart shows the number of responses for each centre, where they were provided, or could be directly inferred:

## Which buildings do you use?



It is to be noted that users at Stocking Farm preferred to give their views in person at the focus group, and many did not therefore complete a questionnaire.

Although Barley Croft Community and Youth Centre is not one of the buildings included in the engagement exercise a number of questionnaires were completed at this site. The majority of respondents commented on the community activities provided at the centre with very few comments on the youth sessions which run from here.

Respondents also provided the reasons why they access services at particular buildings. The majority of the reasons given related to the services provided in the building and the staff as opposed to the building itself. However there are some key considerations around building location and facilities relating to the Youth Centres. In summary, the reasons given were as follows:

	New Parks Youth Centre	Stocking Farm Youth Centre	Barley Croft Community & Youth Centre	New Parks Library	New Parks Housing Office	Tudor Centre CC	Other Youth Setting / Not specified	TOTAL
Friendliness of staff	17	10	16	9				53
Ease of access	18	4	4		1	1		27
Community activities			14	9				23
Safe place to be / Our place	15	4		3				19
Food / lunch club / snacks	7		5	4				16
Something to do / have fun	11	3						14
Meeting friends	6	2	3					11
Activities & facilities eg Pool, table tennis, private room	6	3	2					11
Young carers sessions	4							4
Health clinic	3							3
Council transactions					3			3
Networking and delivering services	1	1					1	3
Volunteering opportunities	1		1					2
Computer and internet access				2				2
Homework help & study				1				1

**Q.3. Do you have any ideas or suggestions about how we could reorganise neighbourhood services to save money?**

88 respondents answered this question. A summary of the ideas received is given below:

- Fund raising through volunteers
- Host an after school club (charged for)
- Co-locate services at the Youth Centre
- Create a multi-service centre at New Parks Library & Customer Service Centre
- Introduce Wi-Fi to increase usage
- More weekend events at youth centres when they are closed
- Make youth centres available for private hire, eg birthday parties
- Provide help for parents at youth centres
- Reduce opening hours at the youth centre
- Do not locate youth sessions in Children, Young People & Family Centres
- Close buildings with low usage
- Less investment in road works to fund youth buildings
- Introduce small charges at youth centre sessions
- Increase opening hours to achieve better value
- Hire out rooms at youth centres when not in use

- Provide adult learning courses eg money management in youth centres
- Promote services better

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

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

The method of engagement using focus groups has been very well received by both members of the community and staff and has proved a successful method of seeking points of view and suggestions to take into account. The key messages to be taken forward from this engagement period are:

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

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

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

- Amalgamate services provided into fewer buildings, based on location and proximity of other sites
- Transfer the ownership of the buildings to community groups
- Better advertising to increase usage and income
- Increase room hire charges and other charges
- Allow rooms to be hired for private events
- Ask for voluntary contributions from users of the sites

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

- Majority of people supportive of the buildings they currently use and overall strong support for Libraries and the Stocking Farm Healthy Living Centre
- Beaumont Leys Library, New Parks Library and the Tudor Centre are suitable for multi-service use.

### **Lessons Learned**

The following are a summary of the lessons learned from the engagement process:

- The focus groups have been very positive and have proven to be a good method of engagement with members of the public
- There has been a good response rate to the engagement process with 487 completed questionnaires and 63 people attending focus group meetings
- The overall approach of involving stakeholders and members of the public early has proven beneficial as not only does it help to ensure that all concerns are heard, it also provides sufficient time to respond to these concerns on an evidence basis
- The process undertaken has enjoyed good co-operation between stakeholder individuals

- and groups, as well as other services
- A similar model of engagement will be used for the other areas of the city



## Appendix A – Engagement questionnaire 3<sup>rd</sup> November – 19<sup>th</sup> December 2014

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

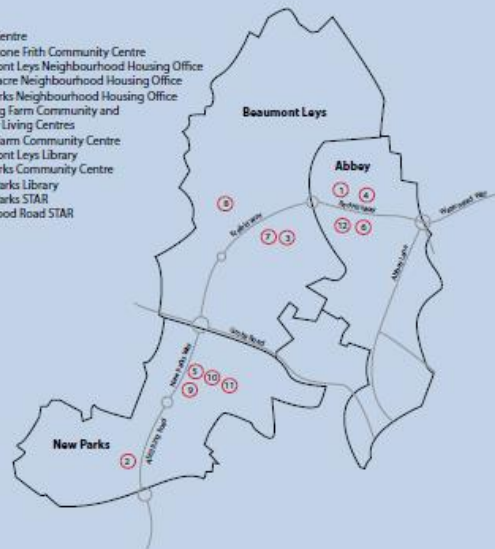
The closing date is 19 December 2014

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



### Neighbourhood buildings: North West area

1. Tudor Centre
2. Braunstone Frith Community Centre
3. Beaumont Leys Neighbourhood Housing Office
4. Mowmacre Neighbourhood Housing Office
5. New Parks Neighbourhood Housing Office
6. Stocking Farm Community and Healthy Living Centres
7. Home Farm Community Centre
8. Beaumont Leys Library
9. New Parks Community Centre
10. New Parks Library
11. New Parks STAR
12. Marwood Road STAR



### Changing neighbourhood services in your area

North west: Abbey, Beaumont Leys  
and New Parks

Your local services are going to change.  
We want to work with you to make these  
services fit for the future.



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



### Why are services changing?

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

### How do we make changes?

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

### Options

- Reducing the number of buildings we operate from
- Merging services into shared buildings: this has worked well elsewhere in Leicester and has led to longer opening hours
- Involving local people and groups in running some services
- Self-service facilities

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

### How you can get involved

We are inviting the local community to find out more about this programme and make suggestions for the North West area by 19 December 2014.

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

### What happens next?

We will consider all the ideas that people put forward and then hold a public meeting to feed back with proposals for change in the area. This will form part of a full public consultation in 2015.

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



### Your views

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

- Adult learning    Housing office    Library    Room hire  
 Community activities (such as cooking, crafts, dance and so on)  
 Leicester City Council customer services  
 None

2. Which building(s) do you use for these services and why?  
(For example: ease of access, friendliness of staff and so on)

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

4. What is your post code? .....

## Appendix B – Engagement questionnaire 2<sup>nd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> November 2015

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

The closing date is 29 November 2015

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



## Neighbourhood buildings: north west area

1. Tudor Centre
2. Braunstone Frith Community Centre
3. Beaumont Leys Neighbourhood Housing Office
4. Mowmacre Neighbourhood Housing Office
5. New Parks Neighbourhood Housing Office
6. Stocking Farm Community and Healthy Living Centres
7. Home Farm Community Centre
8. Beaumont Leys Library Centre
9. New Parks Community Centre
10. New Parks Library
11. New Parks STAR
12. Marwood Road STAR
13. New Parks Youth Centre
14. Stocking Farm Youth Centre



## Changing neighbourhood services in your area

North west: Abbey, Beaumont Leys and New Parks

Your local services are going to change.



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



In 2014, we spoke to people in the north west of Leicester about some council services in the area, ringed in grey on the map. Now the programme is expanding to include two more local buildings, ringed in red on the map: New Parks Youth Centre and Stocking Farm Youth Centre. We would like your views on how services could share buildings and work together.

### Why are services changing?

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

### How do we make changes?

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

### Options and benefits

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

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

### How you can get involved

We are inviting the local community to find out more about this programme and make suggestions for the North West area by 29 November 2015.

1. Come to a focus group on Tuesday 10 November: New Parks Youth Centre at 6pm or Stocking Farm Youth Centre at 7.15pm.
2. Submit your views online: [leicester.gov.uk/tns](http://leicester.gov.uk/tns)  
or
3. Fill out the form on the back of this leaflet.

### What happens next?

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

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



### Your views

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

- Adult learning    Housing office    Library    Room hire  
 Community activities (such as cooking, crafts, dance and so on)  
 Leicester City Council customer services    Youth Centre  
 None

2. Which building(s) do you use for these services and why?  
(For example: ease of access, friendliness of staff and so on)

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

4. What is your post code? .....