

# Appendix A:

# Transforming Neighbourhood Services

# East & Central Area Engagement

Findings of the focus groups and public questionnaire  
As at 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2017

*Prepared by:*

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



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

*It includes information about:*

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

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

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

- An initial engagement exercise was carried out between April and July 2013 to raise awareness and gain an overview of the general views and attitudes of residents towards neighbourhood services.
- Focussed engagement with residents and service users in the East and Central area of the city between January and February 2017 to help develop draft proposals for the transformation of the area **(subject of this report)**.
- Draft proposals are being developed based on the evidence received along with factual information collected from the relevant services and information around future usage from service providers and funders.
- A further period of consultation following completion of draft proposals will be held prior to any decisions being made.

The consultation period ran from 9<sup>th</sup> January and 24<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and was carried out in two main parts:

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

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

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

A total of eight focus groups were set up for people in each geographical area, including three for LCC housing tenants led by the Housing Service. A total of 98 people attended the focus group meetings. The main messages drawn from the meetings held with groups are that:

- There was significant support for libraries and the activities in community centres which are important for local areas.
- There was a general agreement with all of the groups that the services provided were more important than particular buildings
- There was general agreement with all groups that savings can be achieved by reorganising services to make better use of buildings
- While there is some support for transferring of assets through the Community Asset Transfer policy, there are also concerns about potential transfer to community groups and a preference for buildings to be retained under Council operation.

Between 9<sup>th</sup> January and 19<sup>th</sup> February a questionnaire containing details of the proposals and a 'tear-off' response form was also used to gather opinions on the proposals. These were widely distributed in the area, and a total of 5,000 leaflets were circulated. At the closure of the consultation on the 19<sup>th</sup> February 2017, a total of 2,346 completed form responses were received. People were asked to identify which

services and centres they used and the main reasons why. The main reasons for using services were:

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

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

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

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

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Transforming Neighbourhood Services – East and Central Area**

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

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

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

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

The buildings within the scope of the East and Central area are:

- St Matthews Centre
- African Caribbean Centre
- Coleman Neighbourhood Centre
- Highfields Library
- Coleman Lodge Community Centre
- Knighton Library
- St Barnabas Library
- Evington Library
- St Peters Neighbourhood Housing Office
- Humberstone Neighbourhood Housing Office
- Rowlatts Hill Neighbourhood Housing Office

The following central buildings are out of scope for the review of neighbourhood buildings. However respondents were given the opportunity to record their use of these buildings as part of the engagement questionnaire:

- Leicester Central Library (Central - not in scope)
- Adult Education Centre (Central – not in scope)

## **CONSULTATION METHOD**

### **Objectives and techniques**

The public engagement period for the East and Central area ran from 9<sup>th</sup> January – 19<sup>th</sup> February 2017. The aims of the engagement were to promote awareness of the TNS programme in the local area, to identify and engage stakeholders, to gather information on how neighbourhood services and buildings are currently used in the area and to collect any suggestions for change.

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

- Data collection exercise to identify the buildings in scope, costs associated, services provided (both internally and commissioned through voluntary sector organisations), usage statistics, historical information
- An initial city-wide engagement exercise was carried out between April and July 2013 to raise awareness and gain an overview of the general views and attitudes of residents towards neighbourhood services
- A more in-depth and focussed engagement process was carried out between 9<sup>th</sup> January and 19<sup>th</sup> February 2017 to collect suggestions and comments from service users and residents (**Subject of this report**)

The next steps are:

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

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

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

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

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

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

The details of the meetings held are as follows:

#### **Drop in sessions**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
Knighton Library	Castle	23 January 2017	10.30am – 12.00pm
Evington Library	Evington	24 January 2017	10.00am – 11.30am

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St Matthew Centre	Wycliffe	25 January 2017	2.00pm – 3.30pm
St Barnabas Library	North Evington	26 January 2017	11.00am – 12.30pm
Coleman Neighbourhood Centre	Evington	30 January 2017	12.00pm – 1.30pm

### **Focus groups**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
St Peters Neigh. Housing Office	Wycliffe	30 January 2017	2.30 – 4.30 pm
Humberstone Neigh. Housing Office	North Evington	31 January 2017	2.30 – 4.30 pm
Knighton Library	Castle	7 February 2017	6.30 – 7.30 pm
Evington Library	Evington	9 February 2017	6.30 – 7.30 pm
Rowlatts Hill Neigh. Housing Office	Evington	10 February 2017	2.30 – 4.30 pm
Coleman Neighbourhood Centre	Evington	13 February 2017	4.00 – 5.00 pm
St Barnabas Library	North Evington	13 February 2017	6.30 – 7.30 pm
African Caribbean Centre	Wycliffe	15 February 2017	6.30 – 7.30 pm

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

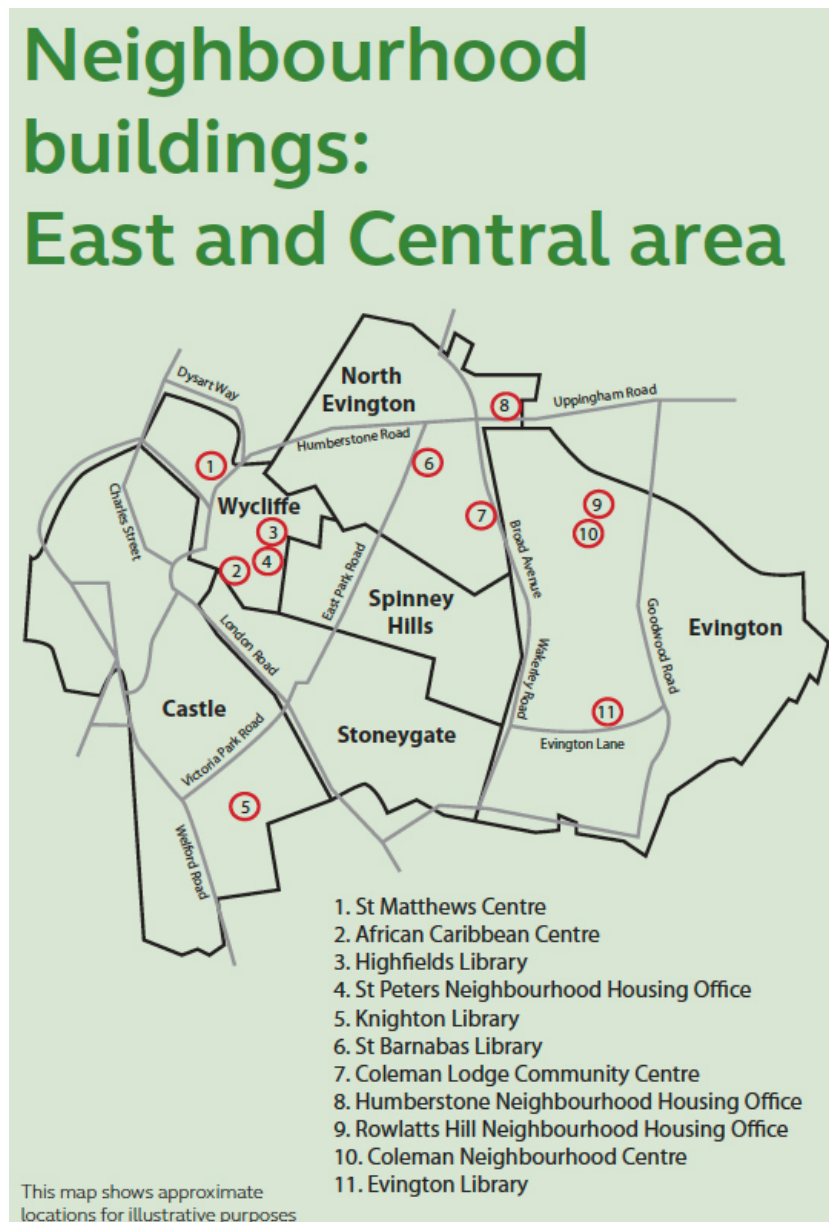
The form was also available at all public facing Council buildings in the East and Central area and online from 9<sup>th</sup> January to the 19<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

## PUBLIC RESPONSE AND VIEWS EXPRESSED

### Drop-in sessions and Focus Groups

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

The East and Central area of the city can be subdivided into six smaller geographic areas, relating to the wards they support. The map below shows these, which have been labelled as Castle, Wycliffe, North Evington, Spinney Hills, Stoneygate, Evington:



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

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

- Which neighbourhood services do you use?



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- Which centres do you use?
- Why do you use these centres? (e.g. ease of access, staff etc.)
- Do you have any ideas or suggestions about how we could reorganise neighbourhood services to save money?

A total of 98 people attended the focus group meetings.

### General Queries and Views arising from meetings

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

### Drop-In Sessions

Knighton Library	Castle	23 January 2017	10.30am – 12.00pm
Evington Library	Evington	24 January 2017	10.00am – 11.30am
St Matthew Centre	Wycliffe	25 January 2017	2.00pm – 3.30pm
St Barnabas Library	North Evington	26 January 2017	11.00am – 12.30pm
Coleman Neighbourhood Centre	Evington	30 January 2017	12.00pm – 1.30pm

### Knighton Library

- The library is a local community hub and important for local people to stay connected to information & community
- Use the building in the evening as a community space (rental rates need to be affordable as other nearby facilities are too expensive)
- Toilets for the public
- Staff are considered part of the wider community, helpful and aware of the vulnerable residents in the community.
- Library feels like a community centre used by people with mental health issues/learning disabilities.
- Automated provision will have an impact on social isolation, on low incomes use the library, and feel comfortable on the same level as everyone else.
- Nothing in this area to combine services with
- Groups who could use the library as a community venue WI & gardening club.
- Nowhere else for young people and elderly to go
- Only public building in the area including the neighbouring Knighton ward

### Evington Library

- A library service should remain in the area
- The library is a local community hub
- The library is small but has no space to make it bigger – ideally need a larger facility
- It would be useful to make greater community use from the after hours
- There was some interest in Community Asset Transfer and of community operation
- WCs are insufficient - if there is investment this should be addressed

**St Matthews Centre**

- Already a very busy centre, lots of different service in there
- Looks old and dated – need more investment
- Looks shabby from the outside – needs tidying up
- Very much a central hub of Council activity in the area
- Very popular venue for hire in the evenings

**(African Caribbean Centre)**

- There should be more activities taking place
- There should be a mix of public services available at the building
- There was a preference for the Council to keep this building open and continue to operate it

**St Barnabas Library**

- Very popular library locally
- A lot of children’s activity and engagement with local schools
- Parking is an issue in the area
- Large building and very busy

**Coleman Neighbourhood Centre**

- The groups using the centre place high value on it
- Overall activity has been low but evening use is good
- There was interest in potential Community Asset Transfer
- There were questions regarding the status Community groups should have to take on a building.
- Some people were not keen on seeing the building asset transferred as it is a valuable local resource.
- There was a preference for the Council to keep this building open and continue to operate it
- Room hire rates should be reduced as it is too expensive for community groups to hire the large hall regularly.
- Could combine Humberstone and Rowlatts to operate from Coleman NC
- Could other council services share the building – for example the Housing Office next door

**(Coleman Lodge Community Centre)**

- Overall activity is low
- There was interest in potential Community Asset Transfer

**Focus Group Meetings**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
St Peters Neigh. Housing Office	Wycliffe	30 January 2017	2.30 – 4.30 pm
Humberstone Neigh. Housing Office	North Evington	31 January 2017	2.30 – 4.30 pm
Knighton Library	Castle	7 February 2017	6.30 – 7.30 pm
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Coleman Neighbourhood Centre	Evington	13 February 2017	4.00 – 5.00 pm
St Barnabas Library	North Evington	13 February 2017	6.30 – 7.30 pm
African Caribbean Centre	Wycliffe	15 February 2017	6.30 – 7.30 pm

**St Peters Neighbourhood Housing Office**

**In attendance: 1**

- No comments or suggestions were raised

### **Humberstone Neighbourhood Housing Office**

#### **In attendance: 3**

- The Housing office is close by and in a convenient location
- Prefer for the office to stay open used every few months
- Would like office to stay – make a public toilet available

### **Knighton Library**

#### **In attendance: 22**

- The library is an important community hub
- The library is very busy and is used by all age ranges with especially high use by children and young people
- There are no other Council facilities in the area
- There is good scope to increase activity/use of the building out of hours
- Other facilities are expensive
- To keep the building sustainable income could be generated by making space available in the evening and on weekends and applying reasonable charges
- Desperately need public toilets
- Some concern over automation but largely welcomed, with a concept to make public pcs available after hours also.

### **Evington Library**

#### **In attendance: 15**

- Fantastic groups taking place
- Popular toddler time group
- Develop the library as part of the Evington “heritage village”
- Do not need a large counter, could use the space differently to make better use and generate income for hire
- Some local interest in Community Asset Transfer
- Local interest in community operation in conjunction with Council operation
- Fob access out of hours for greater community use

### **Rowlatts Hill Neighbourhood Housing Office**

#### **In attendance: 0**

- Residents or stakeholders did not attend

### **Coleman Neighbourhood Centre**

#### **In attendance: 14**

- Building is used a lot by different groups who work together in harmony
- Could the housing office move in to make the building sustainable and open more during the day
- Some interest in Community Asset Transfer, although some scepticism and expressed a preference for Council operation to ensure equality of access

### **(Coleman Lodge Community Centre)**

- Interest expressed in Community Asset Transfer
- Interest in sale and purchase of asset
- Some groups identified alternative locations to use

### **St Barnabas Library**

#### **In attendance: 23**

- Building is very important and has a social/community focus

- People are using the library more and moving away from traditional day centres
- Good attendance at breakfast clubs and other activities hosted by the library
- Need to make the space available after hours for communities to use
- Help to bring in more income
- Move Humberstone Housing office in to St Barnabas
- Adult Learning classes are popular need to provide more ESOL
- used a lot by different groups who work together in harmony
- Could the housing office move in to make the building sustainable and open more during the day

### **African Caribbean Centre**

#### **In attendance: 20**

- Use ACC to engage parents around educational development
- It is essential that the ACC is recognised not just as a facility within the ward but an anchor for the African Caribbean community in Leicester.
- Could public transport links be review – as this was considered lacking
- Should put more resources and council services in making the best use of the building
- Some encouraged by the volunteer operation of the ACC but other felt this did not work and would not like to see Community Asset Transfer of the building
- Some expressed preference for the Council to keep the building open under Council control with more services
- Could the building host training which almost exclusively takes place in the west of the city furthest point from this area

### **(St Matthews Centre)**

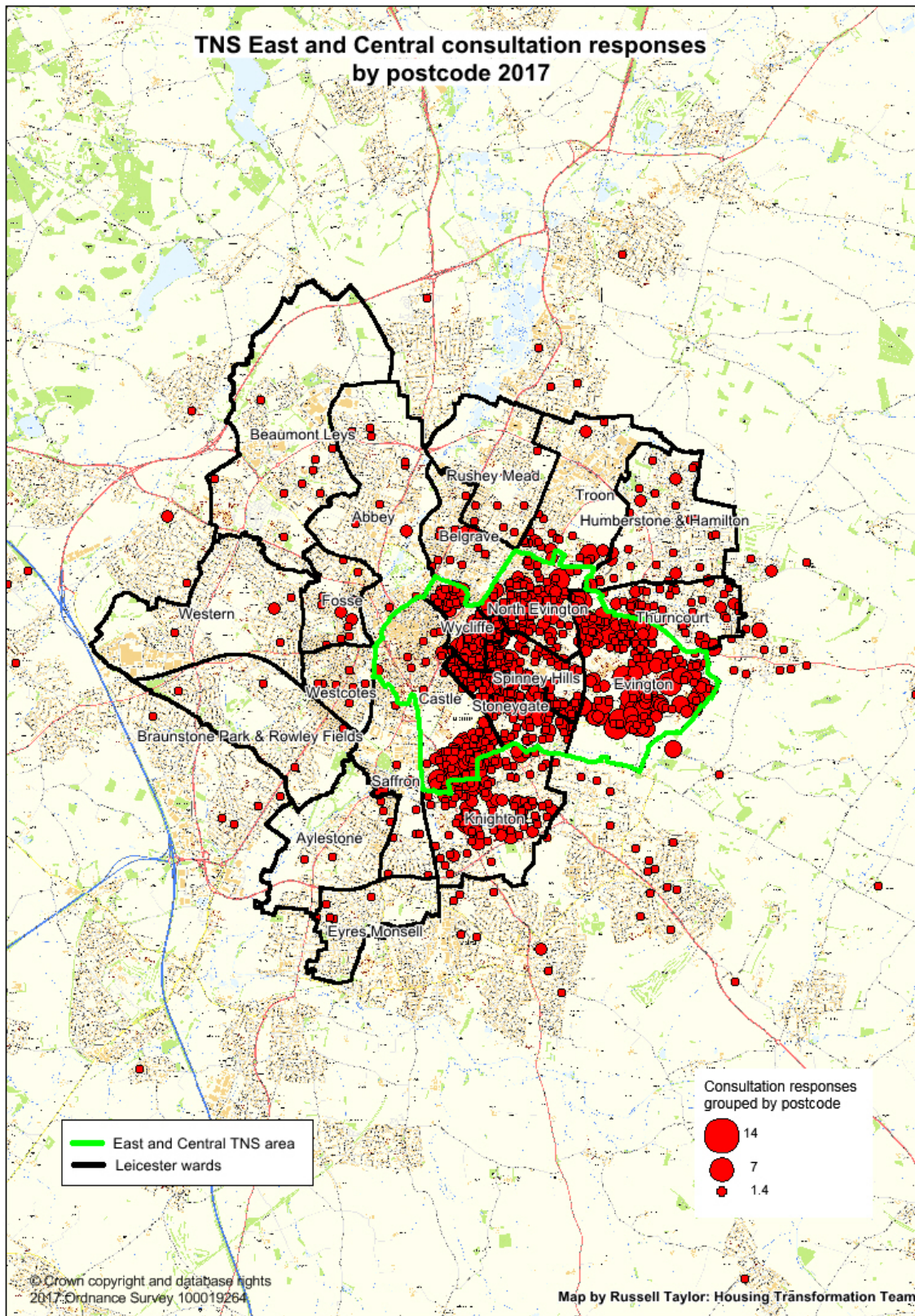
- A lot of groups use this building, sports hall is very busy
- Building has a lot of services in there, would help to put other public services (police or NHS) if there is space
- A lot of different communities with venues in the area but St Matthews Centre is seen as a neutral space available to all
- Building is very dated in and out – need to invest in it

### **(Highfields Library)**

- This building is out grown, needs more space to cater for demand
- Desperate need to public toilets
- Needs investing in – looking very tired and outdated
- Very busy building

## Written and Online Comments and Responses

In total 2,346 responses were received up until the closing date of the consultation. The following map shows the locations of respondents where a useable postcode was provided (86% of total responses):



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

LEICESTER WARDS	COUNT	%
Evington Ward	352	18.1
Wycliffe Ward	332	17.1
Stoneygate Ward	239	12.3
Castle Ward	229	11.8
Spinney Hills Ward	219	11.3
Knighton Ward	175	9.0
North Evington Ward	173	8.9
Thurncourt Ward	56	2.9
Humberstone and Hamilton Ward	36	1.9
Troon Ward	31	1.6
Saffron Ward	16	0.8
Belgrave Ward	14	0.7
Fosse Ward	13	0.7
Abbey Ward	11	0.6
Beaumont Leys Ward	10	0.5
Rushey Mead Ward	8	0.4
Westcotes Ward	7	0.4
Aylestone Ward	5	0.3
Eyres Monsell Ward	5	0.3
Western Ward	5	0.3
Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields Ward	4	0.2
<b>All valid postcodes within the City</b>	<b>1,940</b>	

**1,544 responses (with valid postcode) were from within the East & Central area - 76.4% of all responses with a valid postcode.**

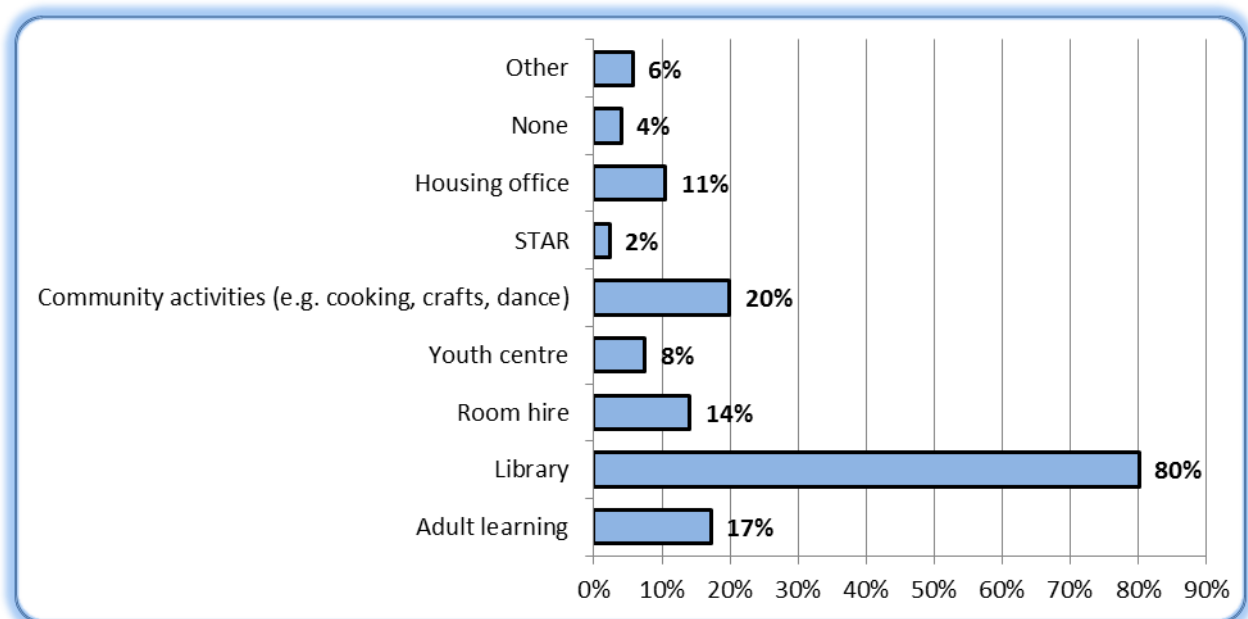
DISTRICT	RESPONSES	%
Leicester	1,940	95.9
Harborough	35	1.7
Oadby & Wigston	26	1.3
Blaby	10	0.5
Charnwood	7	0.3
Hinckley and Bosworth	4	0.2
<b>All valid postcodes</b>	<b>2,022</b>	

## Views and comments

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

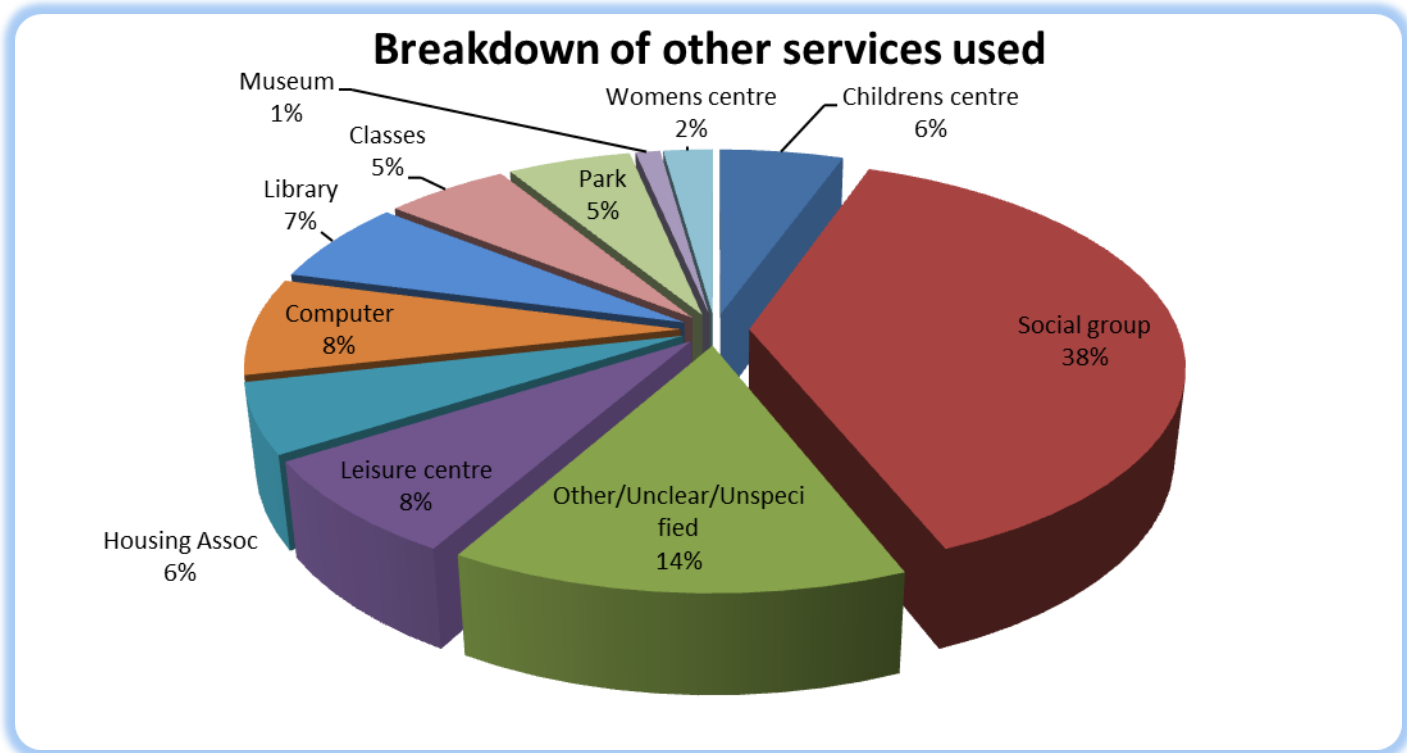
### Q.1. Which neighbourhood services do you use?

A total of 2,346 respondents provided an answer to this question (100% of a total of 2,346 respondents), however, it should be noted that an option was to indicate that no services were used, which 96 (4%) of respondents selected. Respondents were allowed to make multiple choices for this question and the following chart shows the percentage that selected each option:



- The service with the highest use of respondents across the East and Central area was the library, with 80% of all respondents selecting this option.
- 20% of all respondents used “Community Activities” across the range of centre.
- The third highest use was “Adult Learning” with 17% of respondents accessing this service in the East and Central area.

Respondents were given the opportunity to describe any other use they make of Neighbourhood Services in the area. A breakdown of the uses described by the 6% of responses relating to the ‘other’ category is shown in the graph below:

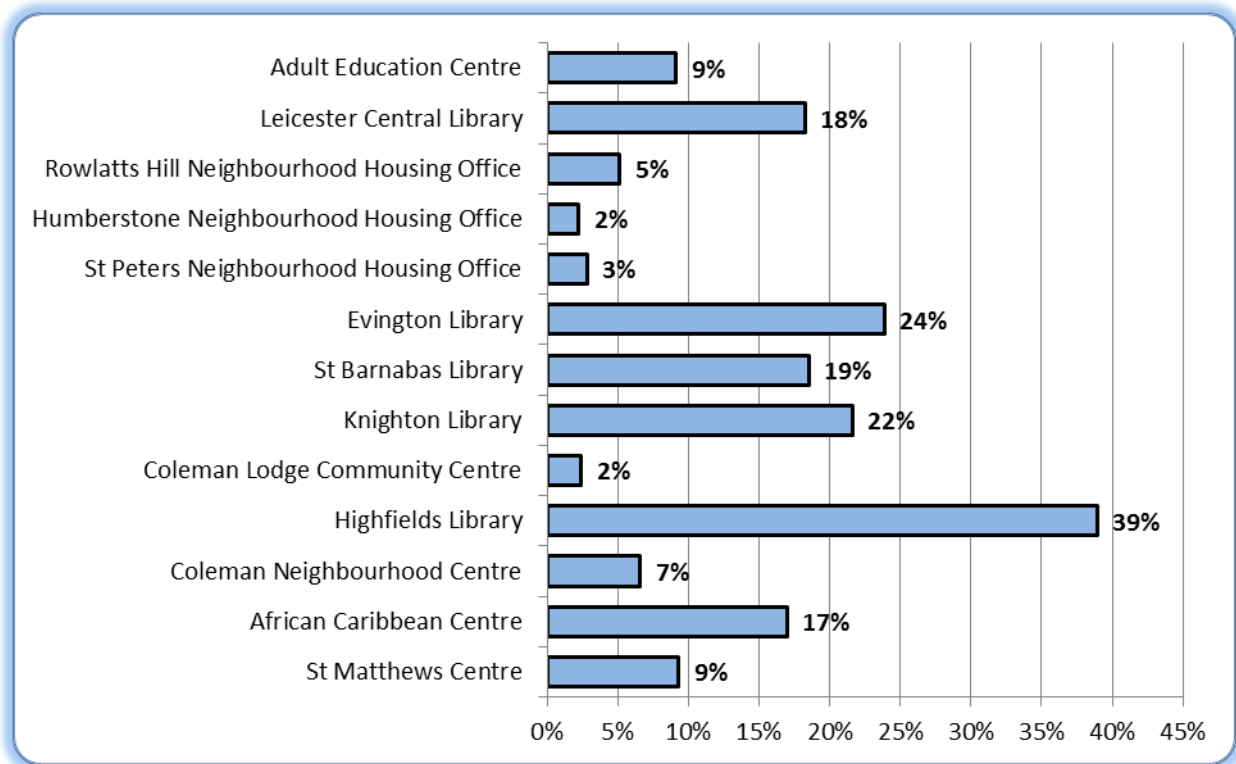


- Within “other” types of use the most popular was for social groups (e.g Age UK day club, sport/dance groups, babies/children’s groups etc), with 38% of those selecting “other” describing this type of activity
- The next most popular category was a group of miscellaneous responses with 11% of all those selecting “other” describing miscellaneous or unclear types of use.
- Of those selecting “other” 8% said they used Neighbourhood Services for activities in Leisure centres, and they use computers.

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

A total of 2,313 (99%) of respondents provided an answer to this question and 33 respondents (1%) did not provide an answer to this question. Respondents were allowed to make multiple choices for this question and the following chart shows the percentage that selected each option.





- The highest number of respondents to the engagement questionnaire said they used Highfields Library (39% of all respondents)
- The second highest number of respondents to the engagement questionnaire said they used Evington Library (24% of all respondents)
- The third highest number of respondents to the engagement questionnaire said they used Knighton Library (22% of all respondents)
- Users responding to the engagement were free to select multiple sites. Many respondents said they use multiple buildings, especially where buildings are located close to each other.

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

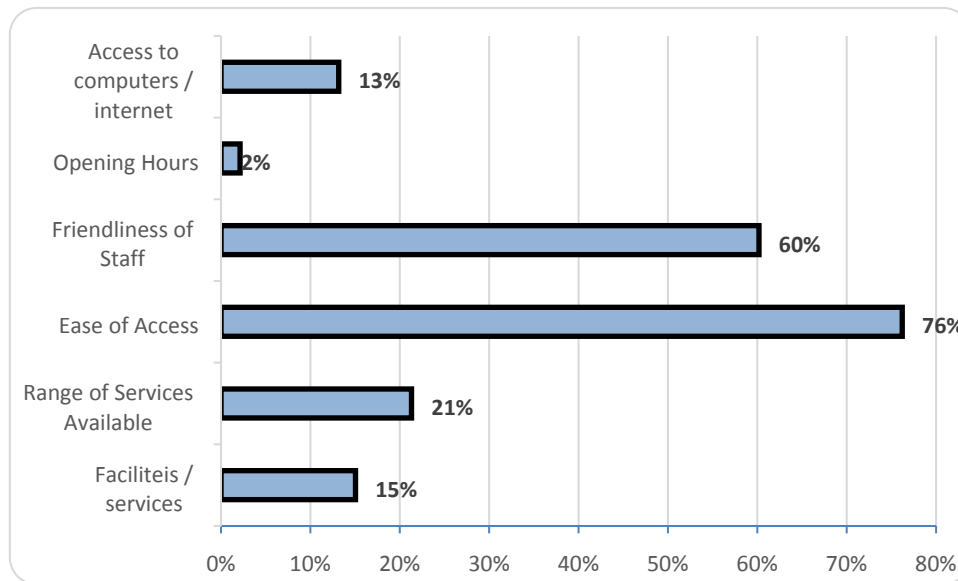
This was a free text response allowing respondents to state the reasons why centres were used. A total of 2,254 (96%) of respondents provided an answer to this question. It has been possible to broadly categorise the majority of these responses in order of importance as follows:

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

Also of importance were:

- Opening hours
- Access to the internet

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



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

A total of 1,538 (66%) of respondents answered this question. This was an open question and did not put any restrictions on the respondent as to how to answer. A wide range of points were made by respondents including strong support for specific local services and buildings.

Responses to this question can be generally categorised as follows:

Response category	Number of respondents
Suggestions for savings	601
Support for local services / no change	349
Other	585
No comments	811

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

Suggestion category	Number of respondents
Bring services together in fewer buildings	169
Deliver extra services eg adult learning	91
Use buildings more efficiently	19
Increase hire charges and other fees	25
Increase use to generate more income	5
More use of volunteers	57
Invest in buildings to increase use	32
Better promotion of services	29

Transfer buildings to the community	92
Reduce opening hours	70
Install self-service kiosks	6
Reduce staffing	6

From the 1538 responses to this question, 35 responses were received from people indicating they use services at one of the three neighbourhood housing offices. Points raised by these respondents can be broadly categorised as follows:

Suggestion category	Number of respondents
Better promotion of services	1
Bring services together in fewer buildings	1
Invest in buildings to increase use	1
No comments	26
Other	1
Suggestions for savings	1
Support for local services / no change	3
Transfer buildings to the community	1

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

*The library service seems to run well as it is. Not sure how it could be cut back.*

*"1) Provide more chargeable services e.g. copying, printing*

*2) Reduce staff hours*

*3) Hire out venues on Sundays etc*

*4) Chase fines*

*5) Reduce heating / lighting costs"*

*Charging nominal amounts for activities in specific buildings.*

*The need for library facilities is paramount and there is no other building within the area which would be suitable for sharing facilities.*

*No but the library is an important community hub and provides learning opportunities with books*

*More classes maybe paid groups or evening groups in the library, e.g. Book club, language learning. Maybe selling books or book products there. Please do not close the library, it is so important to future generations.*

*Lowering energy usage? Investing in self check out/return machines? Not restocking the music/DVD libraries unless titles are essential on local adult learning courses, for example? Or relocating these to one central location, maybe. Reducing opening hours to reflect most popular usage times. Also worth considering increasing fines, charging for advertising, rent out spaces to community groups, hosting council meetings and events in neighbourhood centres.*

*reduce hours . community libraries. smart libraries as pioneered elsewhere*

*I think it would be shortsighted to close centres which are important for local community like the local libraries. Schoolchildren and pensioners who are very overlooked can use these when they are within walking distance. I really think it adds to community well being and probably decreases spending in other areas eg. mental health - hard to quantify something like that but I'm sure it's true from the conversations I've had in my local libraries, it's a free place to go which is open and welcoming to all and enhances lots of people's lives. PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE don't close our local libraries!!!*

*There are no council community buildings in the local area. This area is already poorly serviced by LCC. Leave the library alone!*

*More efficiency centrally and at management level? In this area, there is very little in the way of 'neighbourhood services' available to cut.*

*There are so few services around Clarendon Park that there's little left to cut*

*"- use the venue for children's parties*

*- charge groups to use the venue*

*- I would use the venue as a reading group*

*- charge for computer use*

*- introduce library fines for children "*

*Could open libraries slightly later in the morning, but keep them open until later (e.g. 6:00/6:30pm) so that people at work can make use of the facilities, and so the library is staffed during popular hours.*

*"Most residents understand that money is tight and some services will have to be compromised. With specific reference to local library (Knighton) which I tend to use on a weekend, it's always busy and provides a wide range of services for a wide range of people.*

*Re libraries- get local community involved for meetings craft groups book clubs, volunteer reading support*

*A single housing office in the city centre.*

*CLOSE - Humberstone Neighbourhood Housing Office and Rowlatts Hill Neighbourhood Housing Office. Move part of their function into St. Barnabas library and the rest of the staff to council offices at Granby Street.*

*Have coffee / tea service in the library or in the gardens outside and make more of that space. More people would definitely attend!*

*Perhaps close them one day in the middle of the week. Introduce cafés etc to encourage self financing. Allow people to hire libraries for meetings. Provide incubation space for SMEs and start ups within public buildings. Make buildings more energy efficient.*

*Use libraries as the basic provision in all parts of the city to encourage adult and child literacy. Closing libraries limits access. Placing other services in libraries provides people with an additional reason to be there which is likely to increase book loans as people take advantage of being there.*

*see which centres are used the most - keep these open and if there are centres close together which can be merged - merge them*

*There looks to be several buildings in high fields close together- could they be rationalised? Reduce opening times of services? Use more volunteers to run libraries?*

*It is crucially important to safeguard this, the only community council run building in the area. It is well used, offers internet access and resources for adults and children. It is very near two primary schools and well used. Very difficult to answer without transparency on what the budgets are, and what the savings need to be? What counts as neighbourhood services? It is imperative to save this library. Only suggestion for saving money would be to cut the opening hours, if absolutely essential, but only by an hour or two a day - any more will impact on viability. But, this would have to be a last resort for our only community resource in this area. It would be a travesty to even contemplate shutting this crucial resource. There are many older people living near here and sheltered housing for old and young, and youth homes - eg ymca on Portland road, home for homeless vulnerable teenagers on Clarendon park road, and it is crucial these people in particular have places they can go, access computers, chat and be part of the community.*

*Open on a reduced hours basis.*

*Rent out space. Have a coffee provision. Move other services into libraries and make the local community hubs*

*allow Knighton library - and others to be used more as a community venue and hold events there - like you used to when there were professional library staff who could organise such things - this is what kept the libraries viable and relevant to people*

*Open hours which have the higher amount of usage in the library. Closing a day in the week.*

*More shared working and communication across services. Perhaps sharing space for example, you could have housing information in libraries etc. Community spaces such as libraries, community centres etc are becoming community hubs and this should be built upon. We can design and use these spaces better to make them a centre community hub. Leicestershire library and adult learning service are very much working together in partnership. A lot of the adult learning teams have their offices in libraries and run their lessons in library meeting rooms. This is a good example of sharing resources and spaces and perhaps the city library's could use this example.*

*Perhaps installing self service machines in the library, but informed and trained staff are also essential to help people.*

*Use space within the library to accommodate other local services but do not get rid of the library.*

*Have one building with multiple uses and good opening times. For example, combine the library with adult education and community centre and cafe.*

*Stick everything in one building in each area like the Brite Centre (preferably on a bus route in the area) and consider sharing with other services such as Police / health etc.*

*Hire the building to local groups? More local volunteers to run the services. Reduced hours as a last resort*

*A reduction in library opening hours (as long as different user groups were consulted on which times were most appropriate) would be far preferable to removing services completely from an area.*

*Those centres close together could merge - in that one could perhaps close, but it would be unfair for people to lose their jobs. Also, why not increase the activities or hiring facilities to increase revenue coming in from these centres?*

*Explore possibilities for multi-use of the spaces. Look at what other areas have successfully done. Encourage volunteering to support paid staff (where appropriate and with usual checks in place). Also, use by community groups. For example, family support services, public health programmes and programmes encouraging parents to read with their babies and young children can be based in libraries or community centres. These programmes can be seen as invest to save because of the longer term benefits in improved outcomes for children, families and vulnerable adults. If there is space, introduce cafe areas (as successfully*

*done by commercial bookstores) which can generate income (e.g. St Barnabas is a huge space), explore partnerships with commercial providers, e.g. Costa or Brucciani (local firm). Be imaginative re possibilities. We know that social isolation of older people is a huge problem resulting in shortened life expectancy and ill health. Support use of neighbourhood services to reduce isolation and loneliness.*

*Open it for fewer hours? But make sure some of those hours are after school hours for students.*

*Reduce staffing hours (but do not close services)*

*Combine those that are very close together*

*Possibly co-locate services that are currently in nearby buildings*

*Would it be possible to have other income streams from the library (which you may have but I am just not aware of), e.g.*

*- Offer children's birthday parties in the library (e.g. with one hour 'story time' and crafts related to the birthday child's favourite book) - although I don't know where children could have their snack/cake, does the library has a back room that could be used for food? Could you team up with another local business to provide food there?)*

*- At the moment there is toddler time once a week in the library. Could you offer additional paid for sessions, e.g. on Saturday morning/afternoons for different/wider age ranges? I think that would be a hit!*

*- Can you hire out the library as a venue in the evenings as a meeting room for book clubs etc. (you might be doing that already, don't know).*

*- Could you offer paid for afternoon sessions for help with homework? I know there is an afternoon school club at Avenue helping with homework and that is always full. The library would be a great venue for that, especially if the homework involves any 'research'. "*

*Combine services into one building where you can: African Caribbean Centre/highfields/St Peters then Rowlatts Hill/coleman then St Barnabas/Coleman*

*Open up community hubs/centres/library's in locations that can also run as a business - eg you could open a café like in the museum or rent out rooms for training or conferences. EG use the buildings and staff to earn money via different routes so that the not for profit aspect of the service that benefits communities, reduces social isolation can continue to reduce inequality and promote social cohesion. "*

*More advertising of what is on offer. Less focus on certain groups. Widen the involvement of other communities. Integrate communities. Offer more council support at these venues. Utilise the space (fill the rooms) and integrate health and social care from these venues.*

*In some locations there could be a joint use of community buildings where there are several buildings used by different groups or for different purposes. This opportunity is most likely to be available on the Estates such as Thurnby Lodge, Netherhall or Rowlets Hill in the east of the city. Opportunities are fewer in the old village centres, and if the library was to be lost in Evington, this would also result in the loss of a community resource at the heart of the village. Schools could offer more community services but with the increase in academy schools it will become more difficult to secure these facilities.*

*Combine physical spaces, use areas in the evening that are vacant in the evening. For example, crown hills community college is used by various community groups evenings and weekends...A good use of a great resource for all of the community.*

*The map of facilities in the east and central areas shows that in some wards other than Castle there are more than one such facility within a short distance. That raises the possibility of combining several services*

*in one building, depending on the amount of space they have. But of course you will be considering this strategy anyway.*

*Allow community groups to use the building when it is not being used as a library*

*Have more evening activities at the libraries - therefore hiring out rooms greater revenue*

*I would recommend the centre to be given full control of use for the local community of all groups And diversify and learn*

*You could perhaps house the services together in one building to save on premises costs and energy but you should retain the staff. These services are so important to this community.*

*Some services could generate money - many users would be happy to pay a fee for some services. Possibly the Housing Offices could be housed in the larger libraries. The library could be used by groups more widely. It is in a very accessible part of Evington, close to bus stops and a car park in Evington Park across the road. The library could be let for meetings in the evenings. Also considering where it is situated a cafe might be very popular there. I suggest a feasibility study for the running of a small cafe for drinks and snacks.*

*Merge services in one area.*

*The only thing that I can think of is to combine the services in common buildings, but it is important that these are central to the community. A library is an expression of the importance of learning and cultural development in a community. Not everyone has the funds to just buy what they need, and the building itself is a resource for the community. With increasing poverty in our society, these places are like little temples of civilisation. Communities need more than supermarkets and hairdressers!*

*Concentrate some services in centers so that you create a hub for the community. Have coffee shops on site, Evington village main street does not have any coffee shop and the library could fill that gap while becoming a focal point for the local community.*

*Combining services in one building should be cost-efficient and is also convenient for users (as at the BRITE centre or New Parks library). Knighton Library is not near any other council service centres and it would be a shame to see it close. Could other services be provided here (although the building is not very big)?*

## **Submissions**

- In addition to questionnaire submissions, a total of 627 emails and letters were received in support of their local facilities, this includes 610 letters of support for Highfields Library received from pupils at Moat Community College. The key points raised are:
  - not see closures of local facilities particularly libraries and community centres
  - The centre has good use by local residents
  - Interest in Community Asset Transfer of some buildings
  - A proposal from a local organisation to develop Evington Library for added community use
  - Proposals from two local organisations to develop Coleman Neighbourhood Centre

## **CONCLUSIONS**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Lessons Learned**

- The focus groups have been very positive and have proven to be a good method of engagement with members of the public.
- There has been a good response rate to the engagement process with 2,346 completed forms and good attendance at the focus group meetings.
- The overall approach of involving stakeholders and members of the public early has proven beneficial as not only does it help to ensure that all concerns are heard, it also provides sufficient time to respond to these concerns on an evidenced basis.




- The process undertaken has enjoyed good co-operation between stakeholder individuals and groups, as well as other services.


Appendix A: TNS East and Central engagement questionnaire

# Changing neighbourhood services in your area

East and Central area:  
Castle, Evington, North Evington,  
Spinney Hills, Stoneygate and Wycliffe



Your local services are going to change.  
[leicester.gov.uk/tns](http://leicester.gov.uk/tns)



## Why are services changing?

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

## How do we make changes?

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

## Options

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

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

## How you can get involved

We are inviting the local community to find out more about this programme and make suggestions for the east and central area by 19 February 2017.

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

## What happens next?

We will consider all the ideas that people put forward and then hold a public meeting to feed back with proposals for change in the area. This will form part of a full public consultation in 2017.

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



**Your views**

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

Adult learning  Library  Room hire  Youth centre

Community activities (e.g. cooking, crafts, dance)  STAR

Housing office  None  Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

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

St Matthews Centre  African Caribbean Centre

Coleman Neighbourhood Centre  Highfields Library

Coleman Lodge Community Centre  Knighton Library

St Barnabas Library  Evington Library

St Peters Neighbourhood Housing Office

Humberstone Neighbourhood Housing Office

Rowfatts Hill Neighbourhood Housing Office

Central services (not included in this review)

Leicester Central Library  Adult Education Centre

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

Please turn over

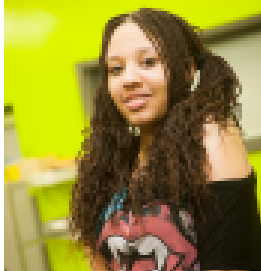
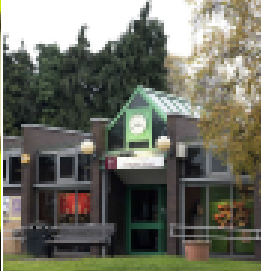
4. Do you have any ideas or suggestions about how we could reorganise neighbourhood services to save money?

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

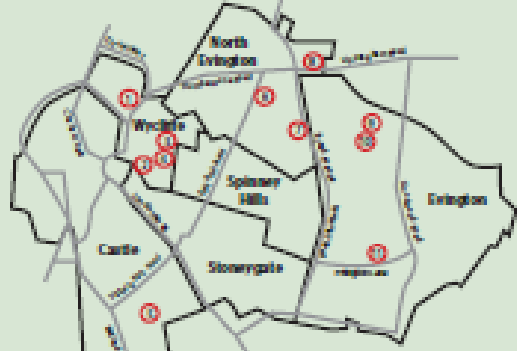
Please hand this form in to any Leicester City Council library, housing office, community, youth or leisure centre, or post to: Transforming Neighbourhood Services, Room 2.23 Town Hall, Town Hall Square, Leicester LE1 9BG

The closing date is 19 February 2017.

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

## Neighbourhood buildings: East and Central area



1. St Matthews Centre
2. African Caribbean Centre
3. Highfields Library
4. St Peters Neighbourhood Housing Office
5. Knighton Library
6. St Barnabas Library
7. Coleman Lodge Community Centre
8. Humberstone Neighbourhood Housing Office
9. Rowfatts Hill Neighbourhood Housing Office
10. Coleman Neighbourhood Centre
11. Evington Library

This map shows approximate locations for illustrative purposes.

Produced by Leicester City Council, communications and marketing team, 17.12

