

# Future of Library Services in North Somerset

## Consultation Summary Report

January 2026

Author: North Somerset Council



## Foreword

This report marks an important milestone in our ongoing commitment to engage communities in shaping future library services in North Somerset.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my thanks to the thousands of residents and stakeholders who took the time to contribute to this consultation. Your thoughtful responses and willingness to share your perspectives are greatly appreciated. The voices of our community are central to shaping the decisions we make, and your engagement ensures that our services reflect the needs and aspirations of our residents. A particular highlight of this consultation has been the outstanding level of engagement from young people, with over 500 children sharing their views. This is a powerful testament to the value that our younger residents place on library services and a positive reflection of our community's future.

The findings from this consultation will play a pivotal role in guiding our next steps and shaping library services. We will publish the decisions on our website and encourage residents and stakeholders to stay involved as our services develop.

My thanks also go to the team of people who helped promote the consultation and engaged with so many of you and to those who have undertaken the analysis. I know that they have taken that responsibility seriously to ensure that this report is a fair reflection of the many views shared with us and of the impacts that you told us the options for change would have.

Thank you once again for your contributions and ongoing support.



**Mandy Bishop**

Chief Executive, North Somerset Council

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## Executive summary

North Somerset Council carried out a 12-week public consultation between 31 July and 24 October 2025 on proposals to deliver £433,000 of savings within the library service as part of the council’s wider financial challenge. The consultation sought views on three options for change, including possible site closures, reductions in staffed hours, and alternative delivery models. It was open to anyone with an interest in the future of the library service.

A total of **4,912** responses were received to the consultation, including responses to a dedicated children’s survey. Further views were also shared through drop-in sessions and email correspondence.

### Consulted options for change

A summary of the three consulted options is set out in **Table 1** below.

**Table 1: Overview of three proposed options for change**

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#### Option A

##### Community library management opportunities

Local communities were offered the opportunity to manage libraries with the lowest usage in Winscombe and Pill, with the potential to remain part of the North Somerset network and retain access to LibrariesWest services. If no viable community-led solutions were identified, Winscombe and Pill libraries would be subject to closure.

Worle Library and Children’s Centre was identified as being at risk of closure unless a community-led or partner-led solution could be secured, due to the significant costs required for building repairs and ongoing maintenance.

##### Proposed service changes

- A reduction in opening hours was proposed across the remaining council-operated libraries.
- Where libraries closed, alternative methods of providing access to library services would be implemented to meet local needs.
- Reductions to central budgets were planned, including reducing spending on new books and digital resources by c£20k.
- An increase in income generation activities was proposed to support service sustainability.



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## Option B

### Community library management opportunities

Local communities were offered the opportunity to manage Winscombe Library, with the potential to remain part of the North Somerset network and retain access to LibrariesWest services. If no viable community-led solutions were identified, Winscombe Library would be subject to closure.

Worle Library and Children's Centre was identified as being at risk of closure unless a community-led or partner-led solution could be secured, due to the significant costs required for building repairs and ongoing maintenance.

### Proposed service changes

- A reduction in opening hours was proposed across the remaining council-operated libraries, including a full day closure at the For All Healthy Living Centre Library week.
- Where libraries closed, alternative methods of providing access to library services would be implemented to meet local needs.
- Reductions to central budgets were planned, including reducing spending on new books and digital resources by c£30k.
- An increase in income generation activities was proposed to support service sustainability.

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## Option C

### Community library management opportunities

Local communities were offered the opportunity to manage Pill Library, with the potential to remain part of the North Somerset network and retain access to LibrariesWest services. If no viable community-led solutions were identified, Pill Library would be subject to closure.

Worle Library and Children's Centre was identified as being at risk of closure unless a community-led or partner-led solution could be secured, due to the significant costs required for building repairs and ongoing maintenance.

### Proposed service changes

- A reduction in opening hours was proposed across the remaining council-operated libraries, including a full day closure at the For All Healthy Living Centre Library each week.
- Where libraries closed, alternative methods of providing access to library services would be implemented to meet local needs.
- Reductions to central budgets were planned, including spending on new books and digital resources.

- An increase in income generation activities was proposed to support service sustainability.

Respondents were also invited to suggest alternative ideas and solutions to help sustain services.

## Headline findings

### Views on the proposals

- Option B received the highest level of agreement (48.0% agreed, 27.0% neither agreed nor disagreed, 25.0% disagreed), followed by Option A (43% agreed, 23.0% neutral, 34.0% disagreed) and Option C (41.0% agreed, 27.0% neutral, 32.0% disagreed).
- None of the options achieved majority support, and around 1,000 or a fifth of respondents did not provide a response to whether they agreed or disagreed with any of the options.
- Free-text comments focused more on the overall proposals than on specific options, with strong concern about closures and reduced staffed hours.
- Only a very small minority supported closures; others favoured reduced hours or suggested alternative savings and income generation ideas.
- For Pill, respondents highlighted the impact that closure would have on low-income families, who rely on having a free, local library within easy reach. Many also stressed that Pill Library is a well-used community space, and its loss would remove an important place for children, families, and residents to meet, learn, and access support.
- For Winscombe and Worle, respondents were concerned about the possibility of their local library closing and the barriers this would create. People commonly highlighted the difficulty of travelling to alternative libraries, limited public transport options, and the impact on older residents, families, and those who rely on having a library within easy reach.

### How people use libraries

- Most respondents (92.7%) were North Somerset residents, with high participation from Pill, Winscombe, Clevedon, Portishead, and parts of Weston-super-Mare.
- Respondents were highly engaged users: nearly three-quarters (74.7%) visit weekly or monthly.
- Libraries were described as supporting people throughout their lives – from early reading and homework support to study space, digital access, and social connection.
- Most visits take place during staffed hours (83.1%), and many respondents praised the support and welcome provided by library staff.



## Children's survey findings

Children emphasised the importance of free book borrowing (93.8%), and 89.6% said closures would make it harder for them to borrow books. Many described libraries as safe, enjoyable places to read, learn, and spend time. Most simply said they did not want their library to close, often explaining that they would feel sad and that they enjoy going to the library.

## Perceived impacts

Personal impact was mixed, but community impact was a dominant theme. Respondents expressed strong concern about potential closures. Commonly cited impacts included:

- loss of space for clubs, groups, and regular activities (reading groups, ESOL cafés, coding clubs, social meet-ups)
- reduced access to books, study space, and digital resources, particularly affecting those without alternatives at home
- negative effects on children's literacy, confidence, and participation in activities such as the Summer Reading Challenge
- impacts on digital inclusion, especially for residents reliant on library computers and support
- increased travel time and cost, particularly for rural residents and those without private transport
- loss of safe, welcoming spaces used by vulnerable groups, including older people and those seeking social connection

Comments frequently highlighted the impact on children, emphasising early literacy, confidence, and the importance of free access to books and activities – especially for families without resources at home. Many also spoke about the legacy value of libraries, used across generations and expected to benefit future ones.

## Community involvement and income generation

- While respondents recognised the council's financial pressures, most opposed closures. They encouraged the council to prioritise reduced staffed hours, extended access, and income-generation options before considering the withdrawal of local provision.
- The most commonly suggested income-generation idea was hiring out space within library buildings. Other typical suggestions included advertising, partnerships with local organisations, and modest charges for certain services.
- Interest in community-managed libraries was mixed. While a small minority (13.0%) said they would consider supporting such a model, most preferred libraries to remain council-run. Comments typically focused on whether a community-managed

approach could be maintained in the long term, the pressure it would place on volunteers, and the risk of unequal provision if some communities were better placed than others to take on this responsibility.

### **Equalities and consultation limitations**

Equalities monitoring showed over-representation of older residents and under-representation of younger residents and minority ethnic groups. As with all voluntary consultations, findings reflect the views of those who chose to participate. Geographic variation in engagement and gaps in demographic data should be considered when interpreting the results.



# Glossary of terms

**Table 2: Glossary of terms**

## **Active user definition**

Active users are those library members who have borrowed a book, used a library computer, or had any other usage of library services recorded on the management system in the last 12 months.

## **BorrowBox**

A free to access digital service for borrowing eBooks, newspapers, magazines and audiobooks online. Accessible via app or website. Paid for by subscription through the LibrariesWest Consortium.

See also: [LibrariesWest partnership and borrowing](#).

## **Cabinet**

The group of elected councillors responsible for making key service and budget decisions.

## **Children's survey**

A tailored questionnaire designed to capture the views of younger participants during the consultation.

## **Community Hub**

Libraries used as multi-purpose spaces that support social interaction, learning, wellbeing, and access to services. Sometimes located alongside other services.

## **Community-managed library**

A library run mainly by volunteers or local organisations, with varying levels of council support.

## **Consultation**

A formal process where the council seeks public views before making decisions.

## **Conversation Cafe**

Informal sessions held in libraries to help people practise English, build confidence, and connect with others. See also: [ESOL](#).

## **Council-run library**

A library managed and funded directly by North Somerset Council, with professional staff and central service support.

## **Digital exclusion**

When people lack access to digital services, internet, or digital skills. Libraries help address this through free Wi-Fi, computer access, and staff support.

**e-Consult**

North Somerset Council's online consultation platform, through which individuals could submit formal responses.

**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

An assessment of how proposed changes may affect different groups, especially those protected under the Equality Act 2010.

**English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**

Classes and support for people learning English.

**Extended Access**

A service that allows registered library members to access certain libraries outside of staffed hours using a secure entry system.

**Full Council**

The meeting of all elected councillors where final decisions are made.

**Home Library Service**

A volunteer delivered service that delivers books and other materials to residents who are unable to visit a library independently, due to disability, illness, or caring responsibilities.

**Hoopla**

A cloud-based digital library service that some libraries outside of the LibrariesWest Consortium offer to their members, allowing instant streaming and borrowing of digital content such as movies, TV shows, music, and audiobooks via participating public libraries. North Somerset Libraries do not subscribe to this service.

**Libby**

A free-to-use web and mobile app that allows users to borrow ebooks, audiobooks, and other digital materials from public libraries, paid for by subscription. This service was previously provided by North Somerset Libraries but is now provided through BorrowBox. See also: [BorrowBox](#)

**LibrariesWest partnership and borrowing**

A partnership of seven library services in the South West of England (Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, Dorset, North Somerset, Poole, Somerset, South Gloucestershire). Membership gives access to resources across the whole area. See also: [BorrowBox](#).



**Local Studies/Archive Services**

Collections and resources held by libraries that document the history, geography, and culture of the local area. Most resources are accessed through the North Somerset Studies Library in Weston-super-Mare.

**Mobile Library**

A travelling library service that visits communities lacking a static library on a regular schedule, providing access to books and other resources.

**North Somerset Studies**

A special collection dedicated to local history, heritage, maps, newspapers, and archives for the North Somerset area. See also: [Local studies/archive services](#)

**Option A/B/C**

The specific proposals models presented in the consultation. Each option is explained in the main report.

**Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964**

An Act of Parliament that imposes a statutory duty on local authorities in England and Wales to provide a “comprehensive and efficient” public library service.

**Public Sector Equality Duty**

The duty under the Equality Act 2010 requiring councils to consider how services meet the needs of different groups.

**Reservation service**

The ability to request specific books (including from other libraries in the network) for collection at a chosen branch.

**Rhyme Time/Story Time**

Regular library sessions for pre-school children and their parents/carers that include songs, rhymes, and storytelling to support early literacy.

**Section 106 (S106) contributions**

Funding provided by developers under planning agreements, which can be used to support community facilities such as libraries.

**Stakeholder**

Any individual, group, or organisation with an interest in the future of library services.

**Summer Reading Challenge**

A national initiative encouraging children to read during the summer holidays, often supported by local libraries through themed activities and rewards.

## Universal Library Offers

A framework – developed with library leaders, frontline staff, and users and championed by **Libraries Connected** – to define the four core service areas essential to high-quality public libraries

- Reading
- Digital and information
- Culture and creativity
- Health and wellbeing



## 1. Introduction

This report summarises the responses to North Somerset Council's public consultation on the future of its library services, which ran from 31 July 2025 to 24 October 2025.

### 1.1. Options for change

Respondents were invited to comment on three proposed options for delivering the required savings, summarised below:

- **Option A** involved the potential closure of up to three libraries – Pill, Winscombe, and Worle – unless community groups stepped in to manage these sites. It also proposed a range of additional savings, including reductions in central budgets (including saving c£20k on the new books and digital resources budget) and reduced opening hours across the remaining council-run libraries. Increased income generation activity was also proposed.
- **Option B** proposed the potential closure of Winscombe and Worle Libraries, unless community groups stepped in to manage or support them. It also required c£30k savings from the books and digital resources budget, together with a reduction in opening hours at all libraries, including a full day closure per week at the For All Healthy Living Centre Library. Increased income generation activity was also proposed.
- **Option C** proposed the potential closure of Pill and Worle Libraries, unless community groups stepped in to manage or support them. It also required c£30k savings from the books and digital resources budget, together with a reduction in opening hours at all libraries, including a full day closure per week at the For All Healthy Living Centre Library. Increased income generation activity was also proposed.

Respondents were also encouraged to suggest alternative ideas and solutions to help sustain services. A full summary of each option is provided in [annex 1](#).

### 1.2. North Somerset's responsibility to deliver library services

North Somerset Council has a legal duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964<sup>1</sup> to provide a “comprehensive and efficient” library service for everyone who lives, works or studies in the area. We do this through a network of 11 static libraries located in towns and villages across the district, 10 of which are run by the Council and the other, Congresbury, a community-managed library. The council must also meet the

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<sup>1</sup> Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, c.75.

Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1964/75/contents>

public sector equality duty in the Equality Act 2010<sup>2</sup>, ensuring services reflect the needs of different communities.

Nationally libraries deliver across four ‘Universal Library Offers: reading, digital and information, culture and creativity and health and wellbeing; helping build a consistent library service across the country whilst being flexible enough to respond to the needs of local communities:<sup>3</sup>.

### 1.3. Consultation purpose

North Somerset Council must save £44 million over the next three years (2026-2028) across all services. As part of this, the library service has been asked to deliver £433,000 in savings, equivalent to just under 20% of the 2025/26 library budget.

When material changes to services are proposed, the council has a statutory duty to consult. Beyond this requirement, the council recognises the importance of listening to residents, community groups and other stakeholders. Libraries are a highly valued part of local life, and it is right that communities have the opportunity to share their views and suggest alternative ideas before decisions are made.

### 1.4. Public engagement and community response

This consultation generated broad public engagement. Libraries are a valued community resource, and proposals for change often generate strong feelings. For many residents, libraries represent access to resources, opportunities, and community connection.

Town and parish councils, community groups, and political representatives all took part, alongside many individual residents. The council has taken care to reflect the feedback received. Responses were wide-ranging, reflecting the different personal circumstances and priorities of those who contributed. The council would like to thank everyone who shared their views. This input will be helpful as elected members consider the path forward and continue to engage with communities where appropriate.

### 1.5. Purpose of this report

This report does not set out decisions or recommendations. Its sole purpose is to summarise the responses received during the consultation, so that decision-makers have a clear understanding of the views expressed and are able to make decisions informed by community opinion and feedback.

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<sup>2</sup> Equality Act 2010, c.15.

Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

<sup>3</sup> Libraries Connected, Universal Library Offers. Available at:

<https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/projects/universal-library-offers>



## 2. Methodology

This section sets out how the consultation was conducted, how responses were gathered, and how the data was analysed.

### 2.1. Consultation process

The consultation ran for 12 weeks (31 July-24 October 2025) and was open to all. Responses were gathered through:

- **Online submissions via eConsult** (the council's online engagement platform)
- **Paper questionnaires** available in libraries or by post
- **Email and postal correspondence** from individuals and organisations
- **Public drop-in events** held at libraries and community venues
- **Children's survey** designed specifically for younger participants

### 2.2. Promotion and engagement

The consultation was promoted widely to maximise reach and accessibility. Activity included:

- **Online channels** such as the council website, social media, and email newsletters
- **Offline channels** including posters, flyers, and local press coverage
- **Targeted communications** to key stakeholders (for example, town and parish councils, community groups)
- **Outreach** through equalities networks and children's services to support diverse participation

Efforts were made to ensure awareness extended across North Somerset, with tailored outreach to engage diverse audiences. A full list of promotional activities is provided in [annex 2](#).

### 2.3. Consultation questions and responses

The questionnaire contained 19 questions (see [annex 4](#) for a full list), combining:

- **Closed questions** (set options such as “yes” or “no”) to provide measurable patterns
- **Open questions** (free-text responses) to capture richer qualitative insights

A total of **4,403 consultation responses** were received via paper and online submissions. All paper responses were manually entered into the online system by library staff. Of these:

- **92.7% (4,083 respondents)** identified as North Somerset residents
- **2.5%** were individuals outside the area
- The remainder included council staff, library volunteers, town and parish council representatives, and a small number of business or organisational representatives

Based on Census 2021 data showing a population of approximately **216,700** in North Somerset<sup>4</sup>, this represents a response rate of around **2.0% of residents**. Including additional feedback from children's surveys, informal conversations at drop-in events, overall participation is estimated at around 5,000 individuals.

## 2.4. Data analysis

A mixed-methods approach was used:

- **Quantitative analysis:** Closed questions (set options such as “yes” or “no”) were summarised to identify overall trends and levels of agreement and disagreement.
- **Qualitative analysis:** All written comments were carefully read and “coded”, meaning each response was categorised according to the theme(s) it related to. Coding grouped similar points together and highlighted the main views across thousands of comments and was carried out manually by council officers; no automated or Artificial Intelligence tools were used.

Examples of coding:

- “I rely on the library computers because I don’t have internet at home” = **Digital Access**
- “The children’s area is too small and noisy” = **Facilities for Families and Young People**

By applying these codes consistently, recurring themes such as access, facilities, the community role of libraries and inclusion were identified. To ensure fairness and reliability, more than one council officer checked the coding and reviewed the process. Direct quotations are included throughout the report to illustrate these themes and reflect respondents’ views in their own words.

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<sup>4</sup> Based on 2021 Census data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), *Census 2021: Population and household estimates, North Somerset*. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

## 2.5. Use of qualitative language in reporting

This report uses terms like “many,” “some,” “a few,” and “several” to describe the feedback we received. Much of the consultation was shared through opentext comments, emails, letters, and conversations at drop-in sessions, so it isn’t possible to count these views precisely without losing important detail. Using qualitative terms is a fair and balanced way to reflect what people told us.

Consultation responses are also self-selecting, meaning they don’t represent a random sample of all residents. Using qualitative terms helps avoid overstating how common a particular view is and instead shows the relative strength of the themes within the feedback we received.

## 2.6. Limitations

As with all public consultations, the findings should be interpreted with care.

- **Voluntary participation** – Responses may reflect the views of those with stronger opinions or particular interest in library services.
- **Geographic variation** – Response rates varied by area; some communities are more heavily represented than others.
- **Local familiarity** – Respondents were often most familiar with their own local library, which may influence views on proposals affecting other sites.
- **Demographic data gaps** – Not all respondents completed demographic questions, limiting assessment of how well respondents represent the whole population of North Somerset.
- **Snapshot in time** – Views reflect the 12-week consultation period and may not account for opinions that have developed or changed since the consultation ended.
- **Separate children’s survey** – Children provided feedback through a simplified survey. While some questions mirrored those asked of adults, others were tailored to younger participants, meaning their responses are only partly comparable with adult submissions.

These limitations do not invalidate the findings but should be taken into account when interpreting the results.

## 2.7. Next steps

The findings from this consultation will be presented to Cabinet, the group of elected councillors responsible for key service and budget decisions. The feedback will inform their discussions on the future of library services and options for delivering the required savings. Cabinet may also decide that further engagement is needed before final decisions are made. The report of recommendations will also go to Full Council in February 2026

## 2.8. Timeline of next steps

The timeline below outlines the remaining stages in the decision-making process following this consultation.

- **Analysis and reporting:** November-December 2025
- **Cabinet consideration:** 11 February 2026
- **Full Council decision:** 17 February 2026
- **Ongoing engagement:** Spring 2026 onwards





### 3. Summary of responses

This section summarises the different ways people took part in the consultation and the range of feedback received.

#### 3.1. Overall participation

A total of **4,912 responses** were received to the consultation.

**Figure 1: Breakdown of responses to the libraries consultation by submission type**

Total responses – 4,912		
e-Consult and paper – 4,403	Children's survey – 500	Email and letters – 9

#### 3.2. Public drop-in sessions<sup>5</sup>

To complement the formal consultation, public drop-in sessions were held across North Somerset, giving residents the chance to engage directly with council officers. Around **186 individuals** attended these sessions, held at libraries and community venues.

Attendance varied by location, with some sessions attracting fewer than five participants, while others, such as those in Winscombe and Pill, saw attendance exceeding 30 individuals. As sessions were open and informal, attendance figures are approximate based on staff observations. This approach prioritised accessibility and ease of participation, though it limits the ability to report exact numbers. Attendance figures are summarised in **Table 3**.

**Table 3: Estimated attendance at public drop-in sessions**

Location	Date	Venue	Approximate attendance
Nailsea	Saturday 30 August	Nailsea Library	6
Winscombe	Tuesday 2 September	Winscombe Community Centre	40
Worle	Tuesday 9 September	Worle Library	26
Yatton	Thursday 11 September	Yatton Library	0
Clevedon	Monday 15 September	Clevedon Library	8
<b>Total</b>			<b>186</b>

<sup>5</sup> **Note:** This section sets out participation levels. A fuller summary of the results from the children's survey and the public drop in sessions is provided later in the report.

Location	Date	Venue	Approximate attendance
Pill	Wednesday 17 September	Pill Library and Children's Centre	30
Clevedon	Tuesday 30 September	Clevedon Library	6
For All Healthy Living Centre	Thursday 2 October	Healthy Living Centre	6
Nailsea	Tuesday 7 October	Nailsea Library	1
The Campus	Wednesday 8 October	The Campus	1
Portishead	Saturday 11 October	Portishead Library	8
Weston-super-Mare	Wednesday 15 October	Weston Library	13
Pill	Monday 20 October	Pill Library	34
Worle	Tuesday 21 October	Worle Library	7
<b>Total</b>			<b>186</b>

Attendance figures are approximate and based on staff observations at open sessions.

Drop-in session feedback is included within the site-specific feedback in [Section 11](#).

### 3.3. Overview of town and parish council and ward member feedback

Responses were also received from town and parish councils and from North Somerset ward members. The majority of contributions from town and parish councils and ward members were submitted through the main consultation questionnaire, with a smaller number received via email and letter.

In some cases, councillors responded in a personal capacity, while others submitted formal statements on behalf of their residents.

It should be noted that:

- **Some councils submitted multiple responses** – for example, several separate submissions were made in relation to Pill, reflecting the strength of local concern.
- **Public statements were also issued** by certain councils or ward members, adding to the formal record of views.
- **Positions may have evolved after the consultation period**, as discussions have continued. This report summarises only the feedback provided during the consultation period itself.

Feedback from Town and Parish Councils and Ward Members is set out in [Sections 12](#) and [13](#), reflecting both questionnaire responses and additional submissions received via email.

### 3.4. Children's survey

A dedicated children's survey ran alongside the main consultation. It was available online via SmartSurvey and in paper form across all library branches. Children either completed the survey independently or with the support of others, for example a parent or carer. In total, 500 responses were received. The eight question survey was tailored to be accessible to younger participants, with some questions mirroring those in the main questionnaire and others designed specifically for children.

Findings from the children's survey are presented in [Section 14](#).



## 4. Respondents

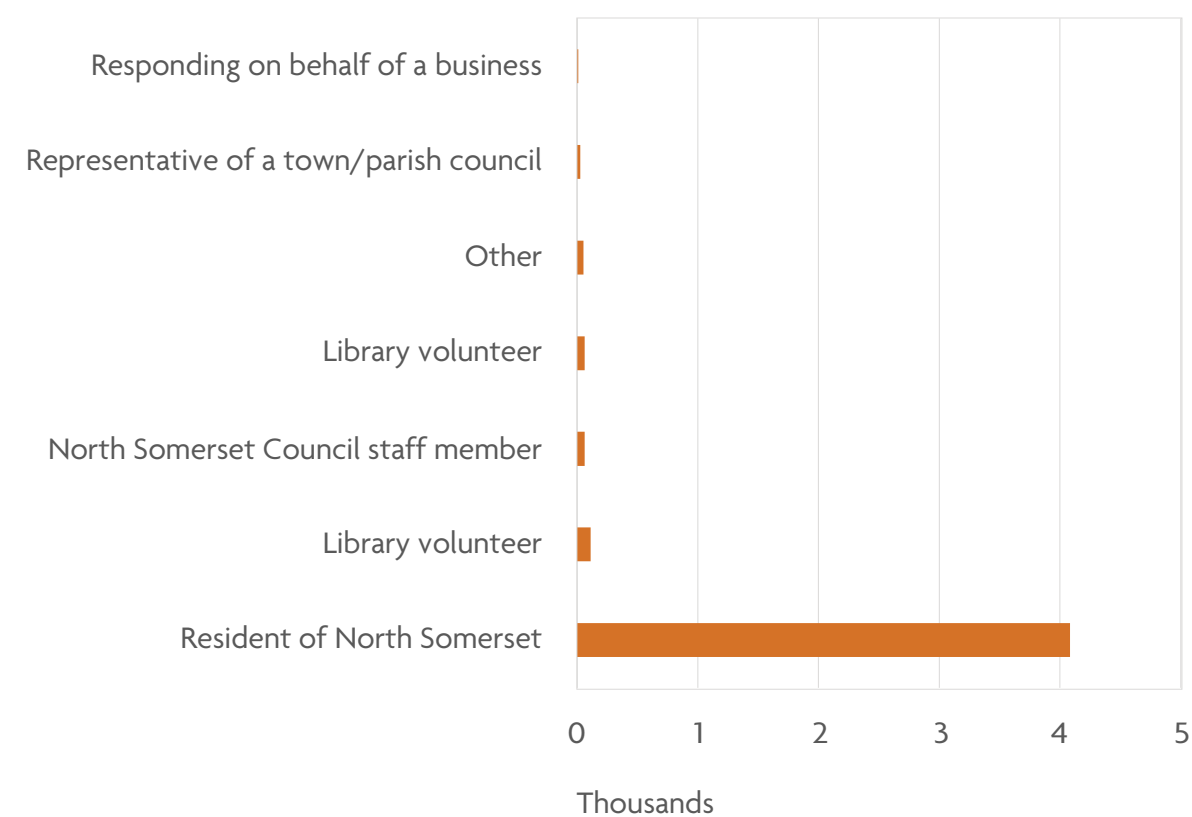
This section summarises who took part in the consultation and the characteristics of respondents who completed the main questionnaire.

### 4.1. Respondent type

This section reports on the **4,403 responses** submitted via paper and online questionnaires, which together form the main consultation dataset. Paper copies were manually entered into the online system by library staff. Other forms of feedback – including the children’s survey, public drop-in sessions, and submissions received by letter or email – are presented separately in the report, as they did not follow the same structured questionnaire format.

The majority of responses came from individuals with a direct connection to the area: **92.7% identified as residents of North Somerset**. While residents formed the overwhelming majority, additional contributions were received from council staff, library volunteers, town and parish councils, ward members and local businesses. Although smaller in number, these groups provide important perspectives.

**Figure 2: Proportion of responses by respondent type**



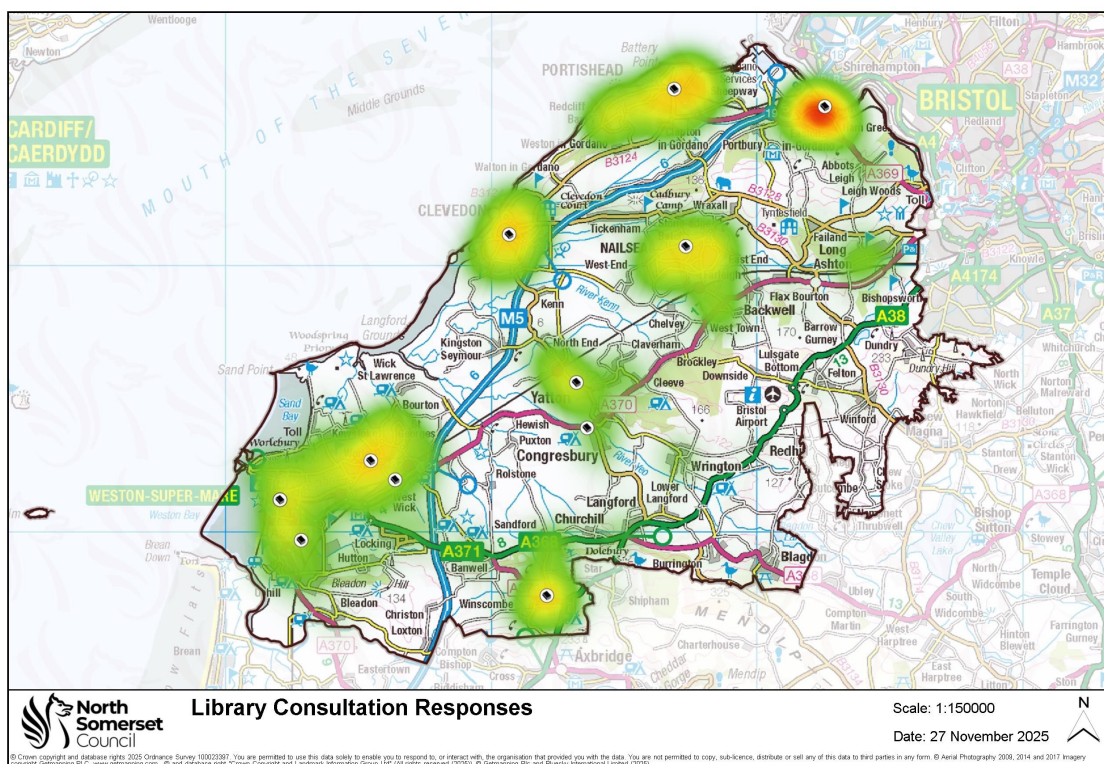
Respondent type	Count
Resident of North Somerset	4,083
Library volunteer	112



Respondent type	Count
North Somerset Council staff member	62
Library volunteer	61
Other	52
Representative of a town/parish council	25
Responding on behalf of a business	8

## 4.2. Geographic distribution of responses

**Figure 3: Geographic distribution of responses (paper and online submissions only)**



**Figure 3** presents a heatmap showing the geographic distribution of responses, based on postcode data provided by respondents. Areas of deeper colour intensity indicate higher concentrations of responses, while lighter zones reflect lower levels of engagement. Black dots mark the location of existing library branches, allowing comparison between response volumes and service coverage.

The map reveals strong engagement from some wards in Weston-super-Mare, Portishead, Clevedon, Nailsea, Yatton, Pill and Winscombe. Other areas such as Worle and Gordano Valley wards also show clear engagement.

This pattern indicates that response levels were not solely driven by population size, but also by the perceived impact of the consultation on local services. Pill stands out in particular, with a notably high response rate.



The map also shows responses from communities where usage of the Mobile Library is high, for example Long Ashton and Wrington.

While the heatmap provides valuable insight into geographic engagement, it is important to note certain limitations. Areas with higher population density or greater digital access may naturally generate more responses. Conversely, lower engagement in some rural areas may reflect barriers to participation rather than a lack of interest. These factors should be considered when interpreting the data.

The heatmap highlights both the breadth of public interest in the future of North Somerset's library services – from larger towns to smaller villages, and from communities with active branches to those without. These patterns provide useful context when interpreting the findings presented in later sections of the report.



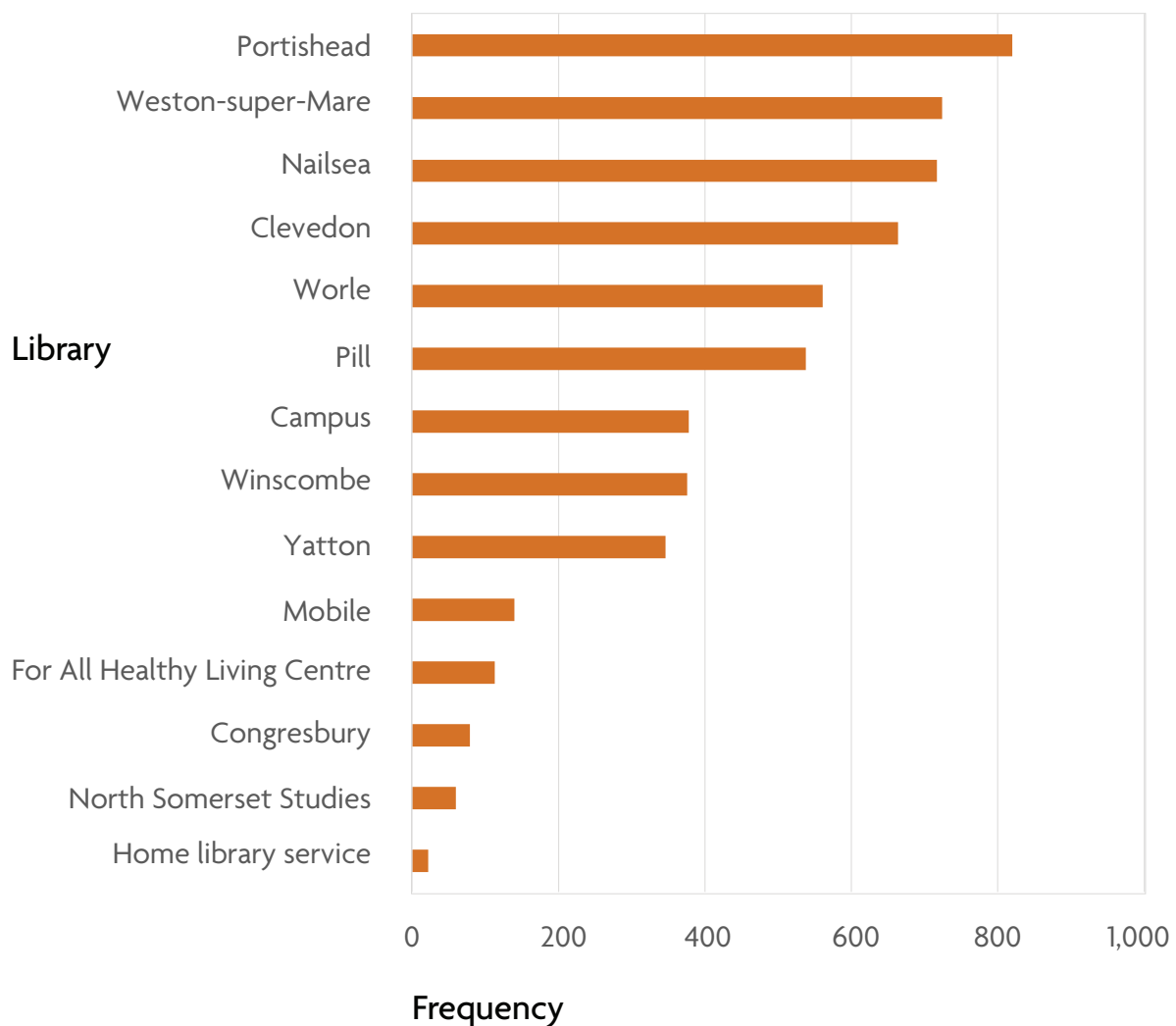
## 5. How people use library services

This section summarises how respondents currently use North Somerset's library services, including physical branches, online services, and wider engagement activities.

### 5.1. Current uses of library services

**Figure 4** summarises which physical library branches respondents reported using.

**Figure 4: Use of physical library branches (multiple responses allowed)**



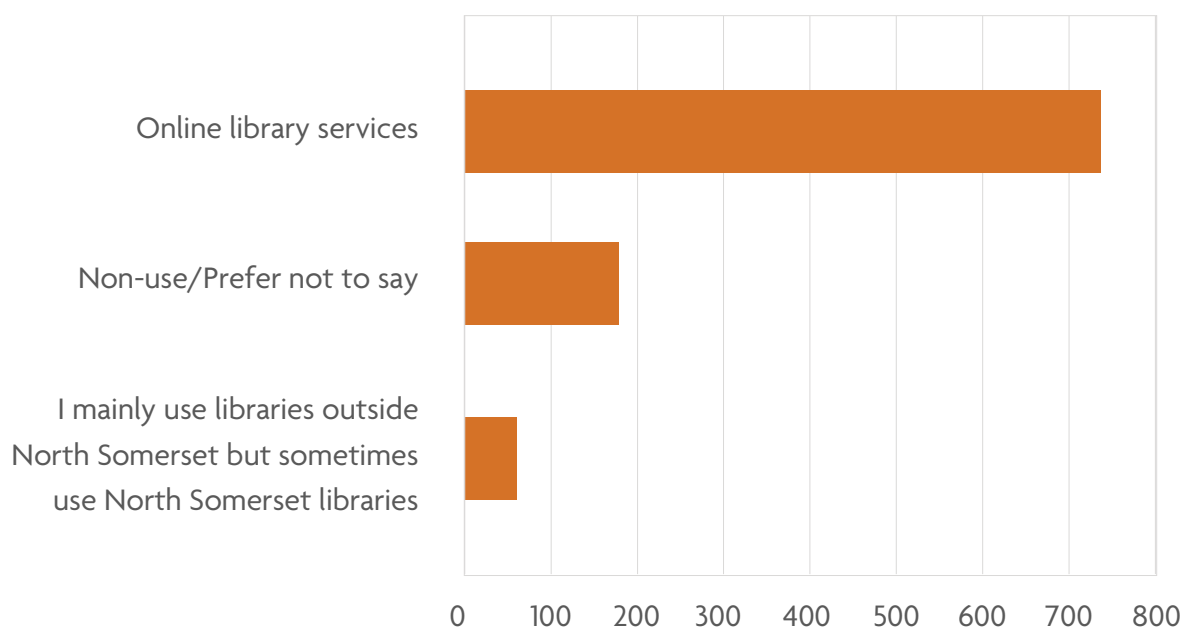
Place	Count
Home library service	22
North Somerset Studies	60
Congresbury	79
For All Healthy Living Centre	113
Mobile	140
Yatton	346

Place	Count
Winscombe	376
Campus	378
Pill	538
Worle	561
Clevedon	664
Nailsea	717
Weston-super-Mare	724
Portishead	820

Portishead Library received the highest number of selections, followed by Weston-super-Mare, Nailsea, and Clevedon. By comparison, Congresbury, North Somerset Studies, and the Home Library Service were selected less frequently.

Online library services were also widely used, highlighting the role of digital provision as an integral part of the overall library offer. A smaller group of respondents indicated limited or no current use of North Somerset library services, with some noting that they primarily access libraries outside the authority area.

**Figure 5: Use of online library services**



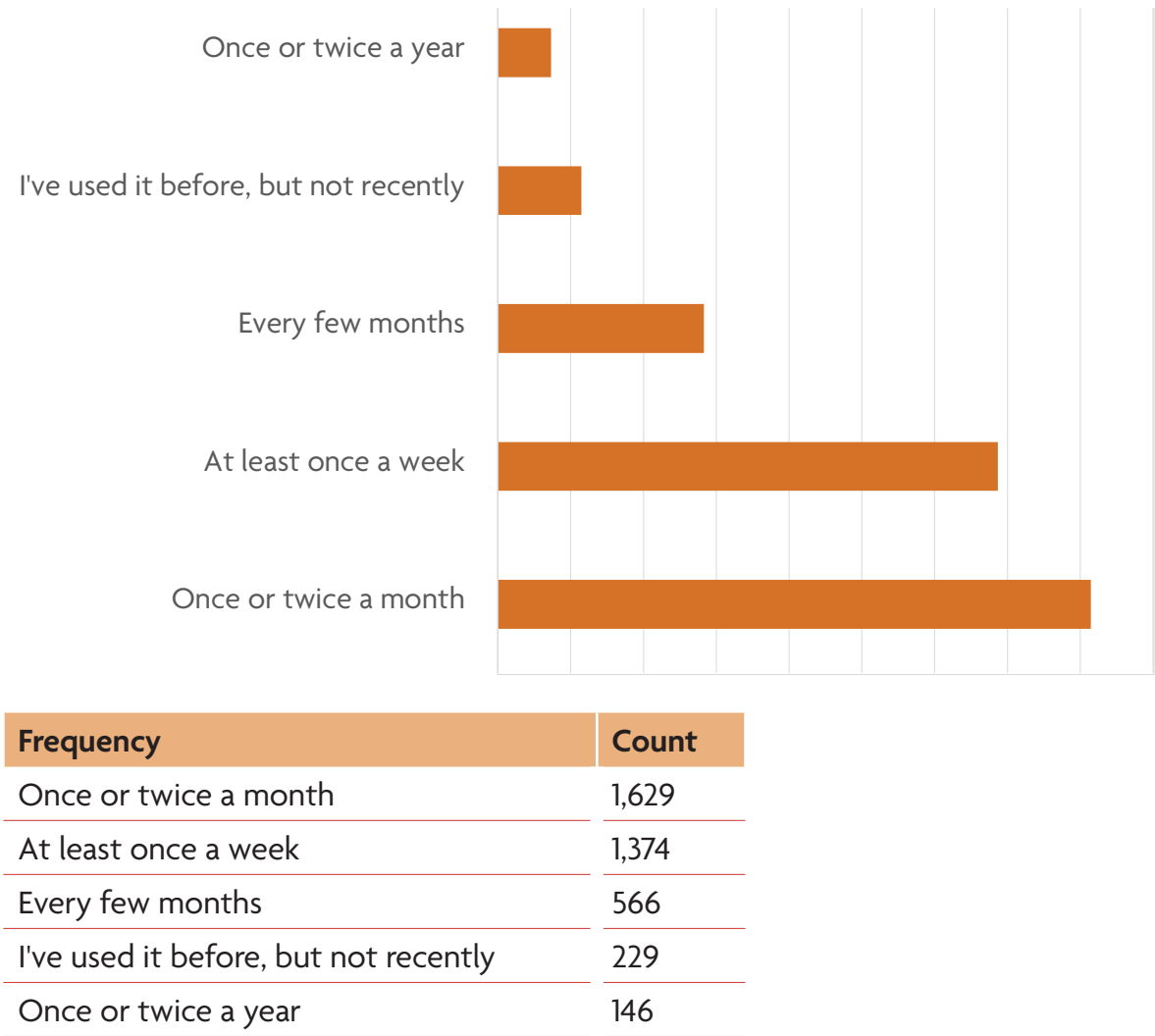
Place	Count
I mainly use libraries outside North Somerset but sometimes use North Somerset libraries	60
Non-use/Prefer not to say	179
Online library services	737



5.2. How frequently respondents use library services

Respondents were asked how frequently they use library services. **Figure 6** shows a breakdown of responses. Most respondents are active library users, with most (74.7%) using services on a weekly or monthly basis.

**Figure 6: Frequency of library use**



For some, libraries are an essential part of daily life. For instance, one respondent recognised this, stating: *“I visit the library every day it is open – it is a life saver for me, the only way for me to access a computer as I don’t have one at home.”*

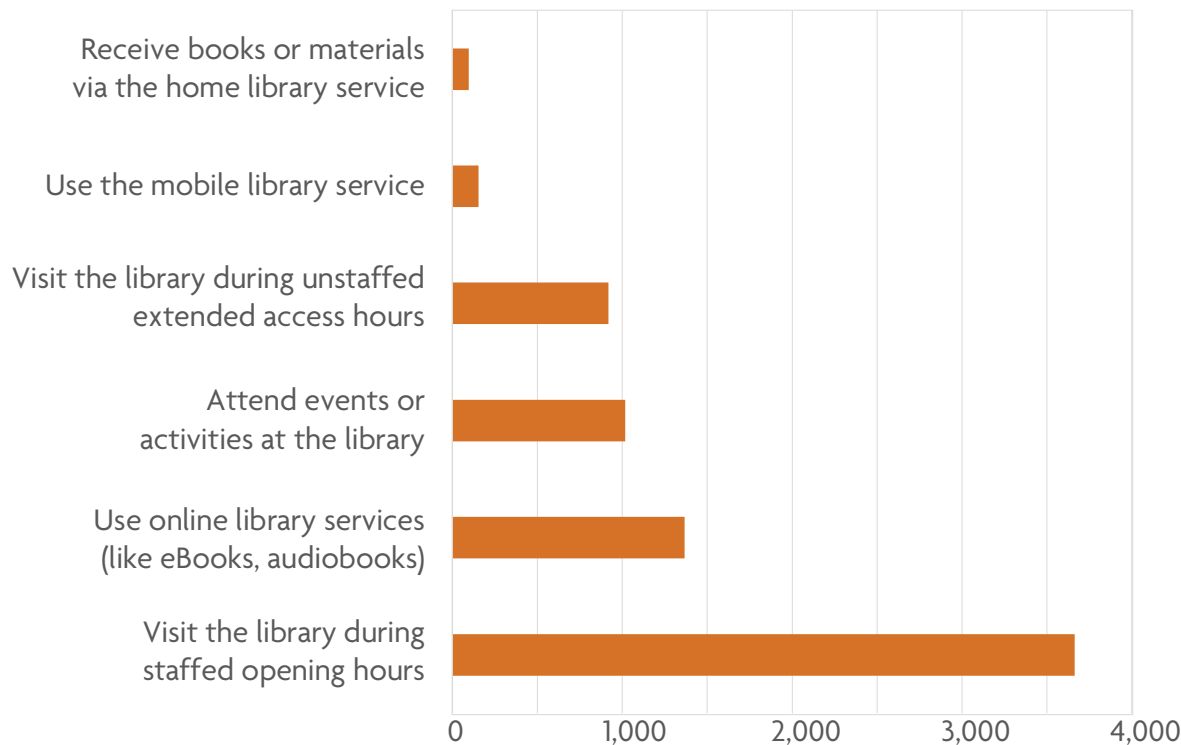
Others highlighted the seasonal value of libraries, with one respondent noting that *“I use the library as a warm space in winter, with the bonus of books.”* Some reflected on how their use has changed over time, such as the individual who commented, *“I used to use the library regularly when my children were young.”*

Together, these comments illustrate the diverse ways libraries support residents – from daily access to essential resources, to seasonal needs, and across different stages of life.

5.3. Ways respondents engage with library services

Figure 7 shows how respondents interact with library services.

Figure 7: Modes of engagement with library services



Usage type	Count
Visit the library during staffed opening hours	3,663
Use online library services (like eBooks, audiobooks)	1,366
Attend events or activities at the library	1,016
Visit the library during unstaffed extended access hours	918
Use the mobile library service	152
Receive books or materials via the home library service	95

The majority of respondents (83.1%) said they mostly visit the library during staffed opening hours. These patterns of engagement provide important context for the themes explored in Section 5.4.

5.4. Themes from written comments

Written comments provided further insight into how residents use library services. The main themes are summarised below.

### 5.4.1. Accessing books and reading materials

Borrowing books was the most frequently mentioned use of library services, with many respondents describing it as the main reason they visit a branch. Most people reported borrowing and collecting reservations during staffed hours, emphasising the value of having staff available to help locate items, offer recommendations, and support the reservation process. For many, this interaction formed an important part of their library experience.

Respondents valued being able to borrow regularly and access a wide range of titles through the LibrariesWest network. Many highlighted the convenience of reserving books online and collecting them locally. As one respondent explained, *“I often request books from other libraries in the South West network and collect them from my local branch.”* Another commented, *“Please don’t take away the ability to order books – it’s essential for our family.”*

Alongside borrowing itself, many respondents praised their local libraries as welcoming, well-run, and supportive places. One respondent noted, *“Borrowing books is simple, but it’s even better when staff are around to help.”* Another added, *“The staff are brilliant – they always help me find what I’m looking for.”*

Although mentioned by only a small number of respondents, those who did comment emphasised the importance of mobile library services for people who cannot easily reach a branch. This included older residents, people with limited mobility, and those living in areas with fewer transport options. One respondent said, *“Please don’t stop this service, it is so important for those of us getting older.”*

A few respondents also suggested that mobile provision could be expanded in certain communities where access to a physical library is limited or where public transport is poor. These views highlight the potential role of mobile services in improving reach and supporting residents who face barriers to accessing library buildings.

Together, these views underline that borrowing – supported by staffed access and a trusted local environment – remains at the heart of how residents use and value their library.

### 5.4.2. Using digital and IT services

Digital access featured prominently in the consultation feedback. Many respondents told us they use library technology regularly and consider it essential to managing daily activities. Computers, Wi-Fi, printing, scanning, and photocopying were frequently cited as vital facilities that support job searches, school and college work, family history research, and routine administrative tasks. These services were described as vital for residents needing reliable, affordable access to equipment.

Libraries also provide access to a range of digital reading platforms, including BorrowBox, which allow users to borrow eBooks, audiobooks, magazines and other digital content free of charge. Several respondents said they rely primarily on these

services, with one noting, *“I seldom visit the library in person but use BorrowBox all the time.”*

Alongside these platforms, respondents highlighted the importance of the LibrariesWest online catalogue and reservation system, which enables users to search for and request books from across the regional network. Some noted recent technical issues and stressed the need for continued investment in reliable digital systems.

Several respondents who had recently moved to North Somerset said the library was one of the first places they visited, especially before their home broadband was installed. As one new resident explained, *“When I first moved here, the library was the only place I could get Wi-Fi. I used it every day until my broadband was sorted.”*

Accessibility needs were also raised. Respondents stressed the importance of maintaining audiobook collections and digital formats for blind and partially sighted residents and ensuring that any changes do not reduce access to these resources.

Together, these views highlight the central role libraries play in supporting digital inclusion – providing equipment, connectivity, online resources, and a safe environment for study, work, and essential tasks.

#### 5.4.3. Children, families, and schools

Another recurring theme was the important role libraries play in promoting children's literacy, learning, and social development. Parents and carers described regular attendance at activities such as Rhymetime, Storytime, Lego Club, craft sessions, and holiday programmes, while childminders and schools reported bringing groups of children to participate. The Summer Reading Challenge was frequently mentioned as a valued initiative.

Respondents emphasised the wider benefits of these services, noting that libraries provide safe, welcoming, and affordable spaces for families. One parent explained, *“My two children love visiting the library – it's broadened their horizons and encouraged their love of books.”* Another added, *“The public library gives ALL local residents access to a wide range of resources... especially crucial when home might not be able to accommodate this.”*

Beyond current use, many respondents reflected on the legacy value of libraries in their own lives. Adults often described how they had used libraries since childhood, recalling formative experiences of borrowing books, joining reading clubs, or attending activities that sparked a lifelong love of learning. These reflections underline the enduring impact of libraries across generations. As one respondent put it, *“I grew up in the library – it gave me opportunities I couldn't have had at home, and now my children benefit in the same way.”* Another noted, *“Libraries have been part of my life since I was a child. They shaped my education, and I want the same for future generations.”*

Together, these views demonstrate that libraries are not only vital for children and families today but also carry deep personal and cultural significance as places



where generations have learned, connected, and grown. This legacy value reinforces the strength of feeling expressed in the consultation: libraries are seen as essential community assets whose benefits extend far beyond the present moment.

#### 5.4.4. Libraries as community hubs and civic access points

Libraries were widely described as important community hubs, offering a broad range of activities that bring people together. Respondents also referred to a wide range of other activities, including craft groups, hobby clubs, author talks, and informal meet-ups, which were valued for fostering connection and shared interests. One respondent reflected, *“Whilst I have attended the quiz and coffee mornings, I have made friends who have both helped me and I have been able to help them.”* Another described the library as *“a peaceful, welcoming space that offers comfort, learning, and a sense of connection.”*

A few respondents praised the Conversation Café and other language-support activities. These sessions were described as vital for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) learners – residents whose first language is not English – helping them build confidence, practise language skills, reduce isolation, and integrate into the community. Respondents noted that these groups provide a friendly, accessible environment for newer residents to meet others and navigate local life.

Libraries were also described as essential access points for local information and democratic engagement, particularly for residents who cannot access online services. People reported using libraries to obtain council information, pick up printed materials, and meet elected representatives. One respondent explained, *“I see my local councillor when necessary and obtain council information – for example the garden waste calendar – as I am not able to access online information due to disability.”*

Several respondents also highlighted the role of libraries in supporting health and wellbeing. People valued the calm, safe environment, opportunities for social interaction, and the sense of routine and comfort that library visits provided. For some, simply spending time in a peaceful, welcoming space was an important part of maintaining their wellbeing.

These perspectives underline the role of libraries not only as social and learning spaces, but also as trusted civic venues where residents can access council information, engage with local decision-makers, and stay connected to essential services.

#### 5.4.5. Accessibility, inclusion and community value

Respondents highlighted the role libraries play in reducing financial barriers to books, technology and educational resources. This was raised not only by those on low incomes, but also by residents who are otherwise financially secure yet increasingly mindful of rising household costs. One respondent explained, *“The library is a lifeline for us. We are a low-income family in that grey area where we earn too much for government help but not enough to keep up with the price of living. I love looking*

*through non-fiction books and trying them out to see if it's something I could justify spending money on."* Another added, *"As a pensioner, I use the library for both recreational reading and for research material to further my general interests. I believe that access to a library is vital for people of all ages."*

Alongside financial accessibility, respondents emphasised the importance of libraries for digital inclusion. Comments described libraries as essential for those without reliable access to computers or the internet at home. As one respondent put it, *"Not everyone can afford to buy books or has access to the internet at home. Libraries are essential for digital inclusion."* Another respondent commented, *"I don't have a computer at home, so the library is essential for me to access emails and print documents."*

Many respondents also highlighted the value of libraries as safe, calm and predictable environments, particularly for older residents, disabled users, neurodivergent people and families with young children. One resident shared, *"As an autistic person, libraries are our safe place. The reference librarians in my childhood library pretty much raised me. I would like to use the library here more."* Parents similarly described libraries as important for children's development and family wellbeing, with one noting, *"The library has been a sanctuary for me and my children, especially during difficult times."*

Several respondents described them as one of the few remaining public places where people can spend time without the expectation of paying. A Clevedon resident explained, *"On rainy days – of which there are plenty – this is the only free public building we can use in Clevedon. Without it, life outside the house with two children would be unaffordable."*

Taken together, these perspectives underline the role of libraries as inclusive, trusted community assets that provide far more than access to books. They offer safety, connection, digital access and essential support for residents who rely on them most.

#### 5.4.6. Volunteering

Volunteering emerged as an important theme in the consultation, with many respondents describing the range of opportunities available and the value volunteers bring to their local libraries. Volunteers contribute time, skills, and enthusiasm across a variety of roles, supporting both day-to-day activity and specialist programmes.

Examples included helping to run children's reading initiatives, supporting digital skills sessions, and assisting with community groups. One volunteer explained, *"I help with the Summer Reading Challenge, which is a great way to support children's enjoyment of books."* Another highlighted the contribution of volunteers to digital inclusion: *"Along with two other volunteers we run a Code Club (Digilocal) at Worle Library for local children. Many of our students walk to the premises."*

Volunteers also described supporting activities such as digital buddy schemes, literacy sessions, and local events. As one respondent said, *“I have helped with the digital buddy scheme at Clevedon Library and the children’s reading challenge during school holidays.”*

These accounts illustrate volunteering opportunities available within libraries and the significant impact volunteers have in extending what libraries can offer. Their involvement reflects a strong sense of community ownership and partnership with staff, helping to sustain and enhance services across North Somerset.

These patterns of use provide important context for understanding respondents’ views on the proposals, which are explored in [Section 6](#).





## 6. Views on the proposals

This section presents the respondents' views on the proposed options for change and provides a summary of the key themes raised in their feedback.

### 6.1. Overview of proposals

Respondents were asked for their overall response to each of the proposals. Response numbers were broadly consistent across the options, with 2,911 responses to Option A, 2,919 to Option B, and 2,896 to Option C. For clarity, the consulted options were:

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#### Option A

##### Community library management opportunities

Local communities were offered the opportunity to manage libraries with the lowest usage in Winscombe and Pill, with the potential to remain part of the North Somerset network and retain access to LibrariesWest services. If no viable community-led solutions were identified, Winscombe and Pill libraries would be subject to closure.

Worle Library and Children's Centre was identified as being at risk of closure unless a community-led or partner-led solution could be secured, due to the significant costs required for building repairs and ongoing maintenance.

##### Proposed service changes

- A reduction in opening hours was proposed across the remaining council-operated libraries.
- Where libraries closed, alternative methods of providing access to library services would be implemented to meet local needs.
- Reductions to central budgets were planned, including reducing spending on new books and digital resources by c£20k.
- An increase in income generation activities was proposed to support service sustainability.

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#### Option B

##### Community library management opportunities

Local communities were offered the opportunity to manage Winscombe Library, with the potential to remain part of the North Somerset network and retain access to LibrariesWest services. If no viable community-led solutions were identified, Winscombe Library would be subject to closure.



Worle Library and Children's Centre was identified as being at risk of closure unless a community-led or partner-led solution could be secured, due to the significant costs required for building repairs and ongoing maintenance.

### **Proposed service changes**

- A reduction in opening hours was proposed across the remaining council-operated libraries, including a full day closure at the For All Healthy Living Centre Library each week.
- Where libraries closed, alternative methods of providing access to library services would be implemented to meet local needs.
- Reductions to central budgets were planned, including reducing spending on new books and digital resources by c£30k.
- An increase in income generation activities was proposed to support service sustainability.

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## **Option C**

### **Community library management opportunities**

Local communities were offered the opportunity to manage Pill Library, with the potential to remain part of the North Somerset network and retain access to LibrariesWest services. If no viable community-led solutions was identified, Pill Library would be subject to closure.

Worle Library and Children's Centre was identified as being at risk of closure unless a community-led or partner-led solution could be secured, due to the significant costs required for building repairs and ongoing maintenance.

### **Proposed service changes**

- A reduction in opening hours was proposed across the remaining council-operated libraries, including a full day closure at the For All Healthy Living Centre Library each week.
- Where libraries closed, alternative methods of providing access to library services would be implemented to meet local needs.
- Reductions to central budgets were planned, including spending on new books and digital resources.
- An increase in income generation activities was proposed to support service sustainability.

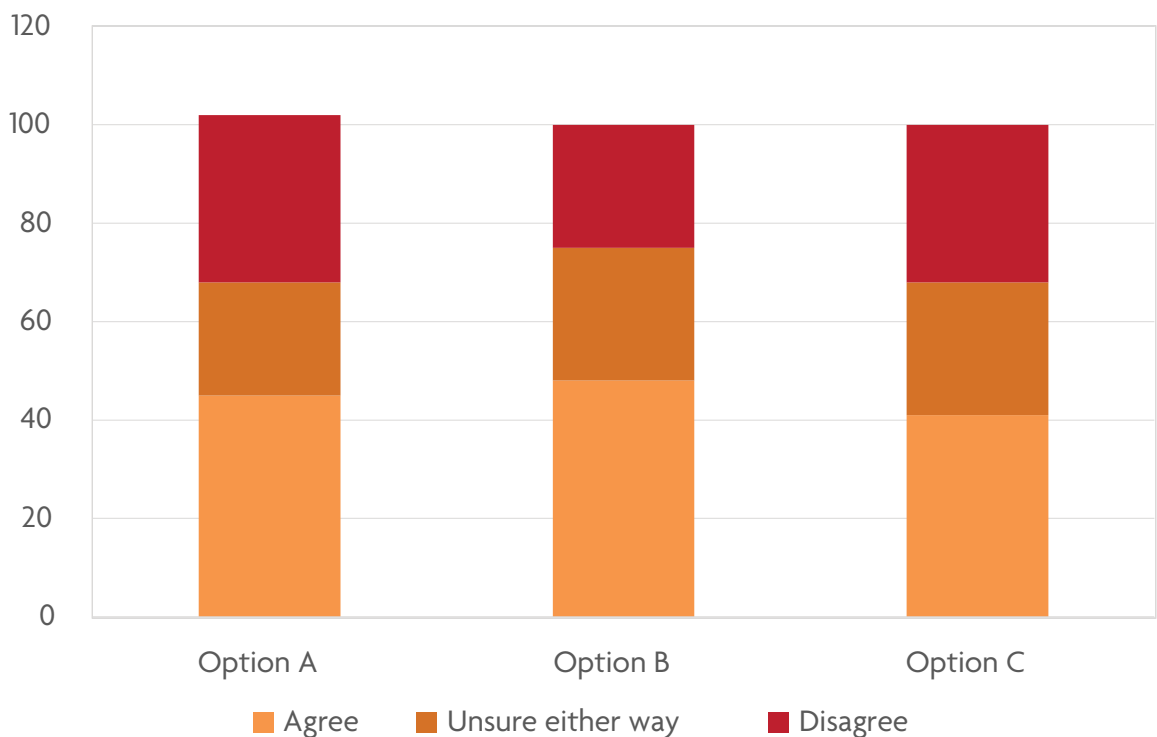
6.2. Views on the proposed options

The overall pattern of agreement with each option is summarised below and shown in the accompanying chart (see Figure 8). A full breakdown of responses, including the number of respondents who selected each level of agreement or disagreement, is provided in the annex 3.

- **Option A:** 43.0% agreed, 23.0% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 34.0% disagreed
- **Option B:** 48.0% agreed, 27.0% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 25.0% disagreed
- **Option C:** 41.0% agreed, 27.0% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 32.0% disagreed

It is notable that over 1,000 respondents did not provide an answer to any of the three proposals.

Figure 8: Levels of agreement with each option



	Agree	Unsure either way	Disagree
Option A	45	23	34
Option B	48	27	25
Option C	41	27	32

6.3. Overview of views on the options

Figure 8 shows that Option B received the highest level of agreement and the lowest level of disagreement of the three options. This option proposed retaining Pill Library within the North Somerset network, while closing Winscombe and Worle

Libraries unless a community managed solution came forward. Proposed reductions in other budgets, including removing £30k from the new books and resources budget, reductions in opening hours across other sites and increased income generation activity were also proposed.

All three options attracted broadly similar patterns of response (with Option B showing slightly more support). See [option summaries](#). Across all three options, around one quarter of respondents selected ‘neither agree nor disagree’, indicating that a notable proportion of respondents either did not engage with the options presented or felt unable to express a clear preference.

In the free text comments, many respondents expressed concerns about the potential impact of closures and reduced access. Many highlighted the importance of maintaining local access to books, digital services, support and community spaces. Some recognised the need for savings, but there was widespread worry about reduced opening hours, potential closures, and the effect these changes could have on people who rely on libraries.

A minority of respondents supported aspects of the proposals, including the suggested closures. Some felt that reduced opening hours would be preferable to losing a library altogether, while others argued the council should first consider alternative approaches such as income-generation initiatives or efficiency measures.

## 6.4. Summary of comments received in relation to the proposals

Most respondents discussed their views of the proposals without referencing which option they were referring to. The themes below bring together the main points raised and reflect the issues, concerns and suggestions shared by respondents.

### 6.4.1. Concerns about potential library closures and service reductions

Many respondents highlighted the role libraries play as community hubs and expressed strong concern about potential library closures. Comments raised included the potential for disproportionate impacts, particularly for rural communities and for areas where access to services or transport is limited. One respondent described libraries as *“a lifeline for parents, children, and the elderly”*, stating that closures would have *“long term consequences for our communities”*. Another respondent, commenting on their local library in Winscombe, said, *“Its closure would isolate many residents, particularly the elderly, in a large rural area with limited transport links.”*

A few respondents took a different view, supporting the closure of underused libraries and arguing that concentrating resources in larger, more accessible locations could be more efficient. Some felt that libraries were becoming less relevant in the digital age, with services increasingly shifting online.

One respondent commented, *“If libraries are underused, it makes sense to close them and focus resources on the most popular locations.”* Another said, *“I rarely use libraries anymore because of digital services. It’s time to modernise and focus on online resources.”*

Respondents also raised concerns about the impact of potential closures on children’s literacy and education. Comments highlighted the role libraries play in providing access to books, learning resources and safe study spaces. One respondent stated, *“Libraries are essential for children’s literacy and education. Closing them would deprive children of safe spaces to learn and grow”.*

Questions were also raised about the future of co-located services such as children’s centres if libraries at shared sites were to close. These comments related to the wider implications for families who rely on integrated provision. Others queried how savings would be achieved if buildings remained in use for children’s services, asking, *“There has been no mention of the children’s centre closing. Surely the building will have to be properly maintained if children are using it, so how will closing the library achieve the desired savings?”*

A few respondents raised concerns about the proposal to reduce book budgets, expressing worries that smaller or outdated collections could make libraries less relevant and discourage use. One respondent said, *“Not replacing books or keeping collections up to date is a false economy that will make libraries less relevant and deter users.”*

#### 6.4.2. Views on extended access, opening hours and staffing

The value of trained library staff was frequently emphasised, with respondents describing them as knowledgeable, approachable, and essential for helping users navigate services. Some respondents expressed a preference for reducing staffed hours or expanding self-service options rather than closing libraries outright. While some appreciated the flexibility of extended access, concerns were raised about safety and accessibility, particularly for women, older people, and those unfamiliar with technology. As one respondent stated, *“Extended access works well and could be expanded, but it’s important to retain some staffed hours for those who need assistance.”*

One respondent said, *“Reducing hours is far better than losing services altogether. Most people can fit their visits into the proposed hours.”* Another added, *“Reduced staffed hours are better than no hours”.* Others linked extended access directly to saving at-risk libraries: *“Extended access is brilliant. I would rather see a further day of extended access opening if it could save Pill and Winscombe.”*

#### 6.4.3. Views on community-led libraries

Views on community-led libraries were mixed. A small number of respondents indicated they would be willing to volunteer if required, with one stating, *“If it’s*



*not possible to keep Winscombe library open as a directly run service, I would be prepared to volunteer as part of a community scheme.”*

Alongside this, many respondents expressed uncertainty or concern about the sustainability of a volunteer-run model. Comments highlighted the challenges of relying on volunteers in areas where capacity may already be limited or where communities face barriers to accessing services. One respondent said, *“Volunteers already do lots in the village, and I think it will be very difficult to get sufficient people to work the library on a voluntary basis.”*

Some respondents also raised concerns about the potential devaluation of professional librarians, with one stating, *“Relying on volunteers to run libraries devalues the professionalism of trained librarians and risks long-term sustainability.”*

Feedback from parish councils and ward members are summarised in Section 12 and 13.

#### 6.4.4. Libraries as accessible spaces and digital inclusion

A recurring theme across the consultation was the importance of libraries as accessible spaces for all, particularly for those without alternative resources. Respondents emphasised that libraries provide free access to books, computers, and the internet – services that are essential for individuals who cannot afford them at home. As one respondent put it, *“Not everyone can afford to buy books or has access to the internet at home. Libraries are essential for digital inclusion.”*

Vulnerable groups frequently mentioned included older residents, disabled users, families with young children, neurodivergent people, and those on low incomes. Several respondents described libraries as safe, calm and predictable environments that support wellbeing. One resident shared: *“As an autistic person, libraries are our safe place. The reference librarians in my childhood library pretty much raised me. I would like to use the library here more.”*

Libraries were also valued as warm, welcoming spaces for social interaction and community connection. Parents highlighted their importance for children’s development and family wellbeing. One respondent noted, *“The library has been a sanctuary for me and my children, especially during difficult times.”* Another commented on the wider social role of libraries, saying, *“Libraries are one of the last free public spaces where people can gather without the expectation of spending money.”*

For some, libraries were described as the only affordable indoor space available locally. A Clevedon resident explained: *“On rainy days – of which there are plenty – this is the only free public building we can use in Clevedon. Without it, life outside the house with two children would be unaffordable.”*

#### 6.4.5. Concerns about social inequalities and community impact

Respondents expressed concerns that closures would make social inequalities worse, particularly in places where the library is seen as a crucial resource for low-income families. One respondent commented that *“the savings from closing libraries are minimal compared to the long-term costs of increased social isolation and reduced literacy.”*

Some respondents emphasised that libraries are essential community resources and highlighted the importance of maintaining access to books and learning, with a few referencing the council’s commitments in the Libraries Strategy to support this.

Several respondents asked for clearer information on library usage, costs and the potential impacts of the proposals to support informed decision-making. Some provided local insights and examples from their own communities to help ensure the Equality Impact Assessment reflects lived experience. These contributions will be considered as part of the council’s ongoing review of the assessment.

#### 6.4.6. Views of the consultation

Some respondents commented on the consultation process itself. These comments focused on how the information was presented and how easy it was to navigate. A number of respondents said they found the format challenging to follow, with one commenting, *“The format used to describe these changes makes it difficult to compare the three options.”*

Several respondents also expressed uncertainty about the references to Worle Library. Although it was included in the proposals, some said they could not easily identify it within the documentation. Comments included: *“Worle library does not seem to be on these options. It would be a great shame if this closes as I know it is well used by children from the nearby school,”* and *“Where is Worle library listed?”*

#### 6.4.7. Views on wider spending priorities

Some respondents questioned whether reducing library services was the most effective way to achieve financial savings and wanted reassurance that other potential options for reducing costs or generating income had been fully explored before changes to opening hours or potential closures were considered.

A number of respondents also referred to wider council decisions and local issues when reflecting on the proposals. These included concerns about parking fees and investment in Clevedon seafront. While not directly related to the library proposals, such feedback reflected broader perceptions of how the council prioritises spending and manages financial pressures.

Respondents raised concerns about the longer-term sustainability of library services. They questioned whether the current proposals might signal further reductions in the future and expressed uncertainty about the council’s ongoing ability to maintain investment in the service.

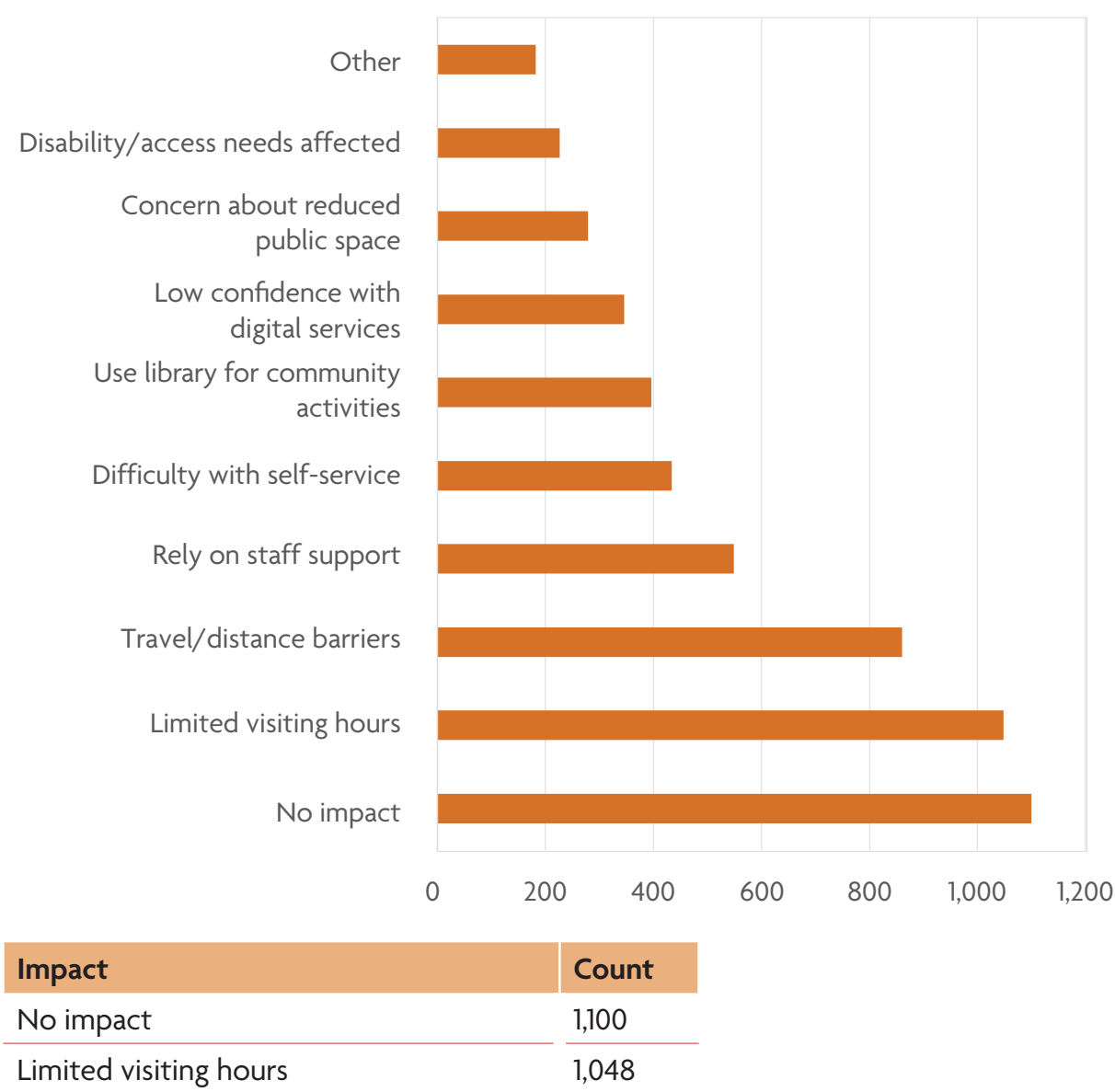
## 7. Impact of the proposals

This section summarises the impacts respondents felt the proposals would have on themselves, their households and their wider communities.

### 7.1. Overview of perceived impacts

Respondents were invited to select from a predefined list of possible impacts, with the option to choose more than one. A breakdown of the results is shown in **Figure 9**. The most common response was “no impact” (1,100 individuals). However, this requires careful interpretation. In many cases, “no impact” referred only to respondents’ own circumstances; these individuals nonetheless expressed concern about how the proposals could affect others, particularly children, older adults, disabled residents, and people experiencing financial hardship. A smaller proportion of respondents indicated that they would genuinely be unaffected.

**Figure 9: Reported impacts of proposed library changes**



Impact	Count
Travel/distance barriers	860
Rely on staff support	549
Difficulty with self-service	434
Use library for community activities	396
Low confidence with digital services	346
Concern about reduced public space	279
Disability/access needs affected	226
Other	182

Beyond this, the next most commonly reported concerns related to reduced staffed hours, difficulties travelling to alternative libraries, reliance on staff support, and low confidence in self-service or digital-only options. Respondents also highlighted the importance of libraries for community activities, safe public space and inclusion, with additional comments on disability access, book budgets and local identity.

Many respondents provided free-text comments that helped illustrate how the proposals could affect them, their households and their wider communities. The main impacts are summarised below.

### 7.1.1. Impact on access and convenience

One impact highlighted was that the effect of the proposals would vary significantly depending on where people lived and on their individual circumstances, particularly for those who live far from alternative branches or who have limited mobility.

Respondents in rural areas described long walking routes, limited bus services and the practical difficulties this creates for people who cannot travel far, older adults and those without access to a car. One resident explained, *“If Winscombe library closes, the nearest library is over an hour’s walk away, and there’s no reliable bus service.”*

Some noted that it would be difficult to travel between certain North Somerset towns or villages by public transport, meaning that accessing an alternative library would be challenging for those without a car or with limited mobility.

### 7.1.2. Impact on learning and development

Respondents highlighted a range of impacts on children, young people and learners. Libraries were described as essential for children’s education, school readiness and literacy, and as one of the few places offering quiet, reliable study space. Students and jobseekers noted that reduced evening or weekend hours would limit their ability to complete homework, revise, or carry out job searches.

Parents also emphasised the developmental role of early years groups and family activities. One explained that *“our much-needed baby groups, who offer support and an olive branch to new parents, would be demolished.”* Others said that reduced



Saturday hours would restrict children's access to books and limit family reading routines: *"My children love going to the library to choose their own books. It's helped them develop a love of reading."*

Activities such as Rhyme Time, Lego clubs and the Summer Reading Challenge were described as important opportunities for children to read, learn and take part in structured activities outside school. As one parent noted, *"The Summer Reading Challenge is the only time my son agrees to read at all."* Respondents felt that reduced provision would limit these opportunities and affect children's access to learning and enrichment.

### 7.1.3. Community and social impact

Respondents highlighted a range of community and social impacts. Libraries were described as safe, welcoming places where people can spend time and meet others. Older adults in particular noted that libraries help reduce loneliness, with one describing it as *"a warm, safe space where I can meet people and feel part of the community."* Another respondent explained, *"I enjoy coming to read in the library as a public space. It reduces isolation and is a social activity as opposed to reading at home."*

Alongside this, respondents highlighted the impact on community activities that rely on library spaces. Libraries were described as one of the few accessible venues available for a wide range of groups and events, including early-years sessions, craft clubs, reading groups, support groups, and activities for older residents. Many stressed that losing access to these spaces – or having fewer staffed hours in which they can run – would reduce opportunities for social connection, learning and community participation. Respondents noted that libraries host a breadth of activities that would be difficult to relocate elsewhere, and that reduced availability of space could limit the number and variety of groups able to operate.

### 7.1.4. Impact of reduced book and digital budgets

Respondents also raised concerns about the potential reduction in budgets for new books and digital resources. Many emphasised that access to a wide range of up-to-date titles is a key reason for using the library, and that a smaller budget could reduce choice and discourage use. One respondent noted, *"I rely on the library for new releases and audiobooks. A smaller budget will mean fewer options."*

Several respondents highlighted the importance of digital services such as BorrowBox and the LibrariesWest website/app. As one respondent put it, *"The reliability of the LibrariesWest website/app is more important to me than whether the library is staffed or not when I collect the books."*

### 7.1.5. Impact on library staff and service quality

Respondents consistently highlighted the central role of library staff in making services accessible, welcoming and effective. Staff were praised for their knowledge, kindness and personalised support, with many residents explaining that they rely on staff for tasks they cannot complete independently, particularly where digital systems or self-service technology present barriers. For example, one respondent described how staff help them reserve and issue books because using screens can trigger seizures.

Across the authority, staff were described as friendly, approachable and essential to creating a safe and supportive environment. Comments included: *“Staff always helpful,”* *“The staff at Nailsea Library are EXCELLENT,”* and *“My children love talking to the library staff.”* Some residents also noted the long-standing personal relationships they had built with staff – in some cases from an early age – and felt that reduced staffed hours could disrupt this continuity of support.

Alongside this appreciation, respondents expressed concern about the impact of reduced staffed hours, potential closures and increased reliance on volunteers. They felt these changes could limit access to support for disabled residents, older people and those with low digital confidence; place additional pressure on remaining staff; and reduce the human, relational element that many value. Several also noted the “unseen” work staff carry out – such as supporting residents wellbeing and managing complex enquiries – and questioned how this could be sustained with fewer staff or shorter hours.

Respondents also raised concerns about the pressure the proposals could place on staff, including workload, job security and the ability to maintain service quality. In comments about the mobile library service, particularly in rural areas, some questioned whether it could adequately replace a permanent branch. A small number of volunteers also noted that while they value how the mobile service is currently run, it would be difficult for it to meet local needs if the nearest physical branch were to close.

Overall, respondents conveyed a strong message: library staff are highly valued, and changes that reduce staffed presence or shift responsibilities to volunteers were seen as having wide-ranging implications for both service quality and staff wellbeing.

## 8. Reducing impacts, exploring alternative models, and income generation ideas

Consultation responses included a wide range of suggestions to reduce the impact of the proposals. Ideas focused on adapting service delivery, improving digital access, strengthening community involvement, and generating income, with many respondents offering practical, locally informed solutions.

### 8.1. Suggestions for maintaining service delivery and access

**Respondents proposed several ways to maintain access while reducing costs:**

- **Extending self-service and unstaffed hours**, supported by clearer information and training for less confident users.
- **Improving and expanding mobile library provision**, particularly in rural areas, **through more frequent visits and better stock rotation.**
- **Strengthening digital services**, including increasing the range of ebooks and audiobooks and reducing wait times.
- **Restoring or enhancing digital magazines and newspapers**, which some felt had declined in quality.

These suggestions focused on maintaining access to core services while adapting delivery methods to reduce pressure on physical buildings and staffed hours.

#### 8.1.1. Staffing and community-led models

Some respondents suggested volunteer involvement to support tasks such as shelving, events, or extended access hours. Others emphasised that volunteers should complement, not replace, professional staff, and that any community-led model would require training, coordination and ongoing council support.

Hybrid models – combining paid staff with volunteers – were suggested as a way to retain professional expertise while broadening community participation. Equity considerations were also raised, with concerns that volunteer capacity varies between communities: *“Wealthier villages, where people are more likely to be retired, will be able to open a community library whereas poorer communities are unlikely to be able to do so.”*

### 8.1.2. Access and opening hours

To maintain accessibility, respondents proposed:

- **Tailoring opening hours** to local demand, including evenings and weekends.
- **Coordinating hours across nearby libraries** so at least one branch remains open at key times.
- **Promoting extended-access schemes**, as some residents were unaware of them.
- **Offering any training on extended-access systems on multiple days and at different times**, to ensure residents with varying schedules can take part.
- **Ensuring transport links** support access to libraries with reduced hours or consolidated services.

These ideas focused on preserving practical access for working people, families, young people and those without private transport.

## 8.2. Income generation activities

### 8.2.1. Hiring out library space

The most common income-generation suggestion was to make greater use of library spaces for hire. Respondents proposed:

- Meeting rooms for community groups, classes, workshops and study sessions
- Spaces for baby groups, children's parties, author events and clubs
- Commercial or semi-commercial uses such as training sessions or co-working

Others stressed that hiring must not reduce public access or compromise the quiet, inclusive nature of libraries. Some worried that not all buildings are suitable for hire.

### 8.2.2. Partnerships and co-location opportunities

Respondents suggested exploring partnerships with schools, charities, health services and local businesses. Ideas included:

- Shared spaces with schools to reduce running costs
- Co-located services that attract high footfall
- Facilities such as cafés or refreshments to support longer visits and co-working



### 8.2.3. Other income-generating approaches

Respondents also suggested:

- Modest charges for reservations, printing or premium digital services, provided fees remained low enough not to deter use.
- Rotating stock, hosting book sales and accepting book donations to reduce purchasing and keep collections fresh.
- Energy-efficiency measures to reduce running costs, especially during extended-access hours.
- Retail options such as vending machines, pop-up cafés or small refreshment points to generate income and support longer visits.
- Voluntary donations, Friends groups, and legacy giving as ways for communities to contribute directly.
- Exploring sponsorship opportunities with safeguards around political messaging and advertising.
- Fundraising events such as events, book fairs, auctions, craft markets and community galas.
- Introducing carefully controlled advertising within libraries, provided that robust safeguards are in place to prevent political, commercial, or otherwise inappropriate content that could compromise the neutrality of library spaces.
- Using income from local parking charges to support library services
- Introducing optional membership schemes, where residents can contribute voluntarily in return for small benefits (for example, early event booking).
- Reviewing underused assets (for example, storage areas, surplus furniture) to identify items that could be sold or re-purposed.



## 9. Community involvement

This section summarises respondents' views on community involvement in sustaining library services, including interest in supporting or helping to run a community-managed library.

### 9.1. Community interest in supporting a managed library

Respondents were asked whether they would be interested in supporting or helping to run a community-managed library at one of the sites currently at risk. This question was designed to gauge the level of local appetite for community involvement in sustaining library provision. Table 4 below shows the breakdown of responses:

**Table 4: Interest in supporting a community-managed library**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	337	13.0
No	1,255	49.0
Not sure	971	38.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,563</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Although the majority did not feel able to commit, it is notable that 13.0% of respondents expressed interest. This represents a significant minority and demonstrates genuine community appetite for exploring the option. While not widespread, this level of support suggests a committed group of residents could form the basis for future involvement, provided clear expectations, resources, and support are in place.

It should also be noted that not all consultation respondents answered this question, suggesting that many did not feel in a position to commit.

Finally, while the table provides a snapshot of individual responses, the consultation also heard from town and parish councils and community groups. These are discussed in Section 12 and 13.

## 10. Equalities monitoring

This section summarises the equalities monitoring information provided by respondents and highlights how participation varied across different demographic groups.

### 10.1. Overview

Equalities monitoring data helps identify whether different groups of people are being reached and treated fairly. The data in this section is based only on respondents who completed the consultation through econsult or paper copies. Feedback submitted through other channels was not provided in a structured format and could not be included in this analysis. Findings therefore reflect the characteristics of those who chose to respond, rather than a representative sample of the North Somerset population.

In this section, Census 2021 refers to results based on data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in Census 2021: Population and household estimates, North Somerset. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

### 10.2. Age of respondents

A total of **2,899 respondents** (66.0% of all respondents) provided their age. The age profile of respondents was weighted towards older residents.

**Table 5: Age profile of respondents**

Age group	Number	% of those who gave age
Under 16	11	0.4
16-20	28	1.0
20-24	26	0.9
25-29	53	1.8
30-34	150	5.2
35-39	214	7.4
40-44	265	9.1
45-49	237	8.2
50-54	197	6.8
55-59	192	6.6
60-64	283	9.8
65-69	329	11.4
70-75	367	12.7
75+	547	18.9

Younger residents were significantly under-represented: only 1.4% of respondents were under 20, compared with 17.6% of the North Somerset population (Census 2021). Middle-aged groups (35-54) made up 31.5% of responses, broadly in line with local demographics. Older residents were over-represented, with nearly 60.0% of respondents aged 55+, compared with 23.9% of the local population aged 65+.

The consultation provides detailed insight into the views of older residents, but younger voices are under-represented.

### 10.3. Sex of respondents

Of the **4,403 respondents**, **2,797** (64.0%) provided their sex.

**Table 6: Sex profile of respondents**

Sex	Number	% of those who gave their sex
Male	881	31.5
Female	1,916	68.5

Female respondents made up more than two-thirds (68.5%) of those who provided this information, compared with 51.0% of the North Somerset population (Census 2021). Male respondents accounted for 31.5%, compared with 49.0% of the local population. The consultation reflects a higher proportion of female respondents compared to the local population.

### 10.4. Ethnicity of respondents

Of the **4,403 respondents**, **2,797** (64%) provided their ethnicity.

**Table 7: Ethnicity profile of respondents**

Ethnicity	Number	% of those who gave ethnicity
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	2,610	93.3
Irish	17	0.6
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0	0.0
Roma	1	0.0
Any other White background	86	3.1
White and Black Caribbean	4	0.1
White and Black African	4	0.1
White and Asian	18	0.6
Mixed other	10	0.4
Indian	6	0.2



Ethnicity	Number	% of those who gave ethnicity
Pakistani	1	0.0
Bangladeshi	2	0.1
Chinese	12	0.4
Any other Asian background	8	0.3
African	1	0.0
Caribbean	2	0.1
Any other Black/African/Caribbean background	4	0.1
Other ethnic group	5	0.2
Arab	1	0.0
Any other ethnic group	5	0.2

The majority of respondents (93.3%) identified as English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British, broadly reflecting the local population (96.0% White, Census 2021). People from minority ethnic backgrounds were represented in small numbers, accounting for less than 3.0% of responses compared with around 4.0% of the local population.

Perspectives from minority ethnic groups are present but limited due to low response numbers.

## 10.5. Health and disability

A total of **2,898 respondents** (66.0%) provided information about whether they have a physical or mental health condition lasting 12 months or more that affects their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

**Table 8: Health profile of respondents**

Response	Number	% of those who gave response
Yes, a lot	175	6.0
Yes, a little	418	14.4
No	2,275	78.6

Overall, 20.4% of respondents reported a condition that affects their daily activities, which is broadly in line with Census 2021 data for North Somerset (19.7%). The proportion of respondents reporting that their condition affects them “a lot” (6.0%) is slightly lower than the local population figure (9.1%). The consultation includes a range of experiences from people with long-term health conditions, though responses from those whose conditions affect them most strongly are somewhat fewer in number.

## 10.6. Language of respondents

A total of **1,901 respondents** (43.0%) provided information about the language(s) they speak and read

**Table 9: Language profile of respondents**

Language response	Number	% of those who gave language
English is their first language	1,802	94.8
English is not their first language	27	1.4
Can speak English very well	59	3.1
Other	13	0.7

The majority of respondents (94.8%) reported English as their first language. A small proportion (1.4%) reported that English is not their first language, and 3.1% said they speak English very well even though it is not their first language. The overall profile is broadly in line with Census 2021 data for North Somerset, although people whose first language is not English appear to be slightly under-represented.

## 10.7. Residence of respondents

A total of **3,872 respondents** (88.0%) provided a postcode that could be matched to a ward within North Somerset.

**Table 10: Ward location of respondents**

Ward	Number	% of those who gave postcode
Backwell	86	2.2
Banwell and Winscombe	297	7.7
Blagdon and Churchill	48	1.2
Clevedon East	75	1.9
Clevedon South	54	1.4
Clevedon Walton	107	2.8
Clevedon West	92	2.4
Clevedon Yeo	58	1.5
Congresbury and Puxton	54	1.4
Gordano Valley	167	4.3
Hutton and Locking	77	2.0
Long Ashton	124	3.2
Nailsea Golden Valley	120	3.1
Nailsea West End	78	2.0

Ward	Number	% of those who gave postcode
Nailsea Yeo	99	2.6
Nailsea Youngwood	63	1.6
Out of area	24	0.6
Pill	375	9.7
Portishead East	154	4.0
Portishead North	134	3.5
Portishead South	81	2.1
Portishead West	220	5.7
Weston-super-Mare Central	101	2.6
Weston-super-Mare Hillside	98	2.5
Weston-super-Mare Kewstoke	189	4.9
Weston-super-Mare Mid Worle	60	1.6
Weston-super-Mare Milton	85	2.2
Weston-super-Mare North Worle	106	2.7
Weston-super-Mare South Ward	62	1.6
Weston-super-Mare South Worle	84	2.2
Weston-super-Mare Uphill	93	2.4
Weston-super-Mare Winterstoke	73	1.9
Wick St Lawrence and St Georges	47	1.2
Winford	27	0.7
Wrington	59	1.5
Yatton	201	5.2

The highest numbers of responses came from Pill (9.7%), Banwell and Winscombe (7.7%), and Portishead West (5.7%). Other wards with notable engagement included Yatton (5.2%), Weston-super-Mare Kewstoke (4.9%), and Gordano Valley (4.3%). Smaller numbers of responses were received from rural wards such as Blagdon and Churchill (1.2%), Wick St Lawrence and St Georges (1.2%), and Winford (0.7%). A small number of respondents (0.6%) provided postcodes outside North Somerset.

When compared with Census 2021, engagement varied across the area. Pill, Banwell and Winscombe, and parts of Portishead contributed a higher share of responses than expected for the size of their populations. In contrast, responses from Weston-super-Mare wards and smaller rural areas were proportionally lower. This reflects the self-selecting nature of the consultation, where people who felt most affected by the proposals were more likely to take part.

Areas with particularly high engagement included:

- **Pill (9.7%):** With around 6,000 residents (less than 3.0% of the population), Pill contributed more than three times its population share.
- **Banwell and Winscombe (7.7%):** With around 9,000 residents (about 4.0% of the population), this ward contributed nearly double its population share.
- **Portishead West (5.7%):** Engagement was high relative to the ward's size within the wider Portishead area.
- **Gordano Valley (4.3%):** Slightly over-represented compared with its population. Heatmap analysis suggests residents use several different libraries and were well engaged.

Wards with lower engagement included:

- Weston-super-Mare wards, which together account for more than a third of North Somerset's population but individually contributed fewer than 3.0% of responses.
- Smaller rural wards, including Blagdon and Churchill, Wick St Lawrence and St Georges, and Winford, each contributing around 1.0% or less.

Overall, the consultation achieved strong engagement across North Somerset, with particularly high participation in Pill, Banwell and Winscombe, and Portishead. However, the uneven distribution of responses means the findings do not fully reflect the geographic profile of the area and should be interpreted with this in mind.

## 10.8. Additional barriers to accessing library services

Respondents were invited to describe any additional factors that make it harder for them to access or use library services. Feedback covered a broad range of personal circumstances and practical considerations. Many respondents highlighted the value of libraries as welcoming, staffed spaces and described how different aspects of service design can influence their ability to use them.

Common themes included:

- **Physical access:** some respondents noted that mobility difficulties, reliance on public transport, parking costs, or uneven pavements and ramps can make travel to and from libraries more challenging.
- **Digital access and confidence:** a number of respondents said they feel less confident using online systems or self-service technology. They emphasised the value of in-person support, particularly for those who are less familiar with digital tools.
- **Neurodiversity:** while libraries were often described as calm and supportive environments, some respondents mentioned that sensory factors, such as noise or lighting, can affect their experience.



- **Language and communication:** a small number of respondents whose first language is not English said they sometimes find written information difficult to understand and appreciate support from staff and conversation groups.
- **Financial pressures:** some respondents noted that the cost of travel, parking or limited household budgets can influence how often they are able to visit a library.
- **Awareness of services:** a number of respondents said they were not aware of certain services, such as extended-access hours or digital resources, and suggested clearer communication.
- **Opening hours and staffing:** some respondents with work or caring responsibilities said that limited opening times can make it harder for them to visit. Others highlighted the value of staff presence for guidance and reassurance.
- **Social and wellbeing needs:** several respondents described libraries as important community spaces that offer routine, connection and a place to study or relax.

Additional suggestions included creating sensory-friendly spaces, strengthening engagement with schools and young people, improving communication about available services, and ensuring resources and displays reflect a broad range of interests. Some respondents also noted that access to computers and the internet at libraries is important for those who do not have these at home. Respondents also highlighted opportunities to support access further, particularly through clear communication, consideration of different needs, and the continued availability of staffed spaces.



## 11. Site-specific and drop-in session feedback

This section summarises feedback relating to specific library sites, including comments submitted through the main questionnaire and insights gathered during drop-in sessions held at those locations.

### 11.1. The Campus Library

The Campus Library was mentioned in 135 responses (around 3.0%), often in connection with the proposed closure of Worle Library, as it is the nearest alternative for many residents. People described it as a modern, multi-purpose facility valued by students and families, though some noted practical issues such as transport links, reduced staffed hours and the availability of stock. Suggestions included improving transport connections, extending self-service access and strengthening community engagement.

At the drop-in session, challenges highlighted included travelling to the site from Worle without a car and the need for clearer information about how to use different library sites. They also reflected on the wider impact of changes elsewhere in the area and emphasised the value of services such as the ability to renew books.

### 11.2. Clevedon Library

Clevedon library was mentioned in 212 responses (around 5.0%). Clevedon library was highlighted positively in many responses, with residents valuing its role as a community hub offering extended access, children's activities and support for reading, learning and study. The proposed 30minute reduction to Saturday opening hours was generally seen as a minor change, though some respondents were concerned about the longer-term impact of reduced funding on book stock, staffing and resources. Suggestions included generating income through room hire, events and partnerships with local organisations.

Feedback from the two drop-in sessions echoed these themes. Attendees praised the library's services and asked questions about future provision, including the possibility of reopening on Thursdays and how book budgets would be managed. Many emphasised the importance of access to books, children's programming and opportunities for social contact, and some felt that additional local support – including from Clevedon Town Council – could help sustain and develop the service. Others expressed interest in expanding events and activities to attract a wider range of users.

### 11.3. Congresbury Library

Congresbury Library was mentioned in 36 responses (less than 1.0%), but the feedback provided clear insight into how the service is valued locally. Respondents frequently highlighted it as a strong example of a community-led model, praising the commitment of volunteers and the ongoing support provided by North Somerset Council, particularly for IT systems and outreach.

Residents described the library as an important local amenity for families, children and older people, supporting literacy, social connection and community life. Suggestions for future development included strengthening links with schools and community groups, improving transport options for those who find travel difficult, and exploring additional funding opportunities such as developer contributions.

#### 11.4. For All-Healthy Living Centre

The For All Healthy Living Centre Library was mentioned in 16 responses (less than 0.5%). Although a small proportion of overall feedback, respondents consistently described it as a safe, welcoming space valued by children, families and people who may be more vulnerable. Staff support was praised, and some felt that reduced staffed hours could make the service harder to use. Suggestions included exploring self-service options, involving volunteers, strengthening links with schools and community groups, and offering more activities to support engagement.

Feedback from the drop-in session reflected similar themes. Attendees spoke positively about staff and the wider benefits the library provides, particularly access to printed newspapers and public computers, which are important for adults with learning disabilities and those supported by carers. One attendee described using the library to update personal details during a period of housing disruption, highlighting the service's role for residents experiencing change.

A few practical issues were raised, including poor mobile phone signal affecting two-factor authentication on public computers. Attendees also discussed the value of extended access, the importance of printing services, and the positive way staff interact with young people. Some felt that Saturday opening would be helpful.

#### 11.5. Home Library Service

The Home Library Service was mentioned by eight respondents (less than 0.2%). Although a small proportion of overall feedback, comments highlighted its importance for residents who cannot visit a library in person, providing access to books and maintaining a connection with the wider service. One volunteer noted the value of close working with library staff and felt that changes to staffed hours or the wider network could affect how the service operates. Respondents suggested raising awareness of the Home Library Service so that more eligible residents know it is available.

#### 11.6. Mobile Library Service

The Mobile Library was mentioned in 240 responses (around 5.0%). Residents highlighted its importance for rural communities and for people who find it difficult to travel to a library building, valuing the flexible access it provides. Some felt that the current timetable, short stop durations and stock range can limit how useful the service is.

Respondents suggested that if more people rely on the Mobile Library in future, its capacity may need to be reviewed. Ideas included more frequent visits, additional stops at schools and care homes, better publicity, and equipping the vehicle with resources such as Wi-Fi or computers. A small number of respondents questioned whether the Mobile Library offers good value compared with investing in static libraries or digital services.

### 11.7. Nailsea Library

Nailsea Library was mentioned in 177 responses (around 4.0%). Respondents highlighted its welcoming staff, central location and value for families, children and older people. Some noted the impact of new parking charges and the proposed reduction of 1.5 staffed hours per week. Extended Access was helpful for some users but not suitable for everyone. A number of respondents also felt that book stock has been more limited since the library's relocation, particularly for teenagers, and stressed the importance of maintaining a varied collection. Suggestions included hosting more events, partnering with local organisations, expanding outreach to schools, hiring out space and improving promotion of Extended Access and digital services.

Feedback from the two drop-in sessions reflected similar themes. Attendees asked about future staffing levels, stock budgets and whether volunteer-run models were being considered. Additional questions covered parking charges, links with children's centres, the role of the outreach officer, opportunities for sixth-form volunteering and how Extended Access could be promoted more widely.

Opening hours were a key topic. For example, some attendees queried the effect of the proposed 30minute reduction on Saturdays. Staff noted that many customers use the library on an ad hoc basis, and some attendees felt that a full-day closure each week could affect usage patterns.

### 11.8. Pill Library and Children's Centre

Pill Library and Children's Centre were mentioned in 314 responses (around 7.0%). Residents described the library as a safe, welcoming space that supports families, children and older people, and plays an important role in reducing isolation. Many felt that closure would disproportionately affect those without access to a car, as travel to other libraries can be difficult. Option B – retaining Pill Library under council management – received strong support. Suggestions included extending opening hours through self-service or volunteer involvement, improving promotion, generating income through room hire or fundraising, and reinstating some Children's Centre activities.

Feedback from the two drop-in sessions echoed these themes. Attendees emphasised the library's importance in a community with higher levels of low-income households and asked questions about how usage data had been interpreted. Some noted that Pill has fewer staffed hours and no Extended Access, which they felt affects comparisons



with other sites. There was interest in exploring longer opening hours or Extended Access, while recognising the value of trained staff in providing support and specialist knowledge.

Attendees also discussed the reduction in Children's Centre services and the impact on families, highlighting the library's role in supporting children's literacy, social interaction and access to information. Transport barriers were raised, particularly for residents who rely on buses. Questions were also asked about the financial implications of different options and how investment is prioritised across the area.

There was strong support for Pill Library to remain council-run, with many emphasising the stability and expertise that trained staff provide. At the same time, there was clear community interest in contributing to the library's future. Both the Parish Council and the newly formed Friends of Pill Library group expressed commitment to supporting the service through volunteering, fundraising and promoting activities, alongside continued council management.

### 11.9. Portishead Library

Portishead Library was mentioned in 219 responses (around 5.0%). Residents highlighted its popularity, central location, ease of parking and good transport links. The library was valued as a busy community hub offering Extended Access, study space, children's activities and support for remote working. Many appreciated the convenience of reserving books online through LibrariesWest and collecting them locally. Concerns about the proposed 30minute reduction to Saturday opening hours mainly related to the impact on working people and families. Suggestions included expanding Extended Access, promoting services more widely, generating income through room hire or events, and strengthening outreach to schools and community groups.

Feedback from the drop-in session reflected similar themes. Attendees shared ideas for strengthening community links, including partnerships with local organisations and opportunities for volunteering. Some suggested additional study space and wider promotion of library services, such as placing information in GP surgeries or local venues.

Views on the future role of libraries varied. One attendee questioned the long-term need for public computers, while others emphasised the continuing importance of library services, including specialist staff to support children and young people. The value of centrally managed book purchasing and the contribution of the Home Library Service were also highlighted.

### 11.10. Weston-super-Mare library

Weston-super-Mare Library was mentioned in 200 responses (around 5.0%).

Respondents highlighted its role as a central and accessible service, valued for its study space, family activities, digital support and specialist resources such as the Local Studies Library. Staff were frequently praised for their support and expertise. Some

respondents were concerned about the proposed reduction to weekday evening and Saturday hours, noting that this could affect working people and families, students and those who rely on weekend access. Suggestions included expanding the library's role as a community hub, exploring income generation through events or room hire, and considering alternative venues in the longer term.

Feedback from the drop-in session was generally positive. Attendees did not raise concerns about the proposed changes and felt that the proposals would have limited impact on Weston Library. One attendee noted that additional provision in the Worle area may be helpful for residents who would find it difficult to travel to the Campus Library if changes were made there.

### 11.11. Winscombe library

Winscombe Library was mentioned in 251 responses (around 6.0%). Residents described it as a well-used and valued hub serving a wide rural area, supporting families, children, older people and those without digital access at home. Concerns centred on the potential impact of closure, particularly given the library's central, walkable location and the limited public transport to alternative sites. Respondents emphasised its role in supporting literacy, social connection and digital inclusion. While opposition to closure was strong, some felt that reducing staffed hours or expanding Extended Access could be considered as alternatives.

Feedback from the drop-in session reflected similar themes. Attendees noted that demand for the library may grow as the local population increases. Extended Access was viewed positively, and questions were raised about the future of the building and how running costs are managed. The library's visibility and position near the village centre were seen as key strengths, and some suggested that local organisations could help support the service. Others felt that any changes to opening hours should be shared fairly across the network.

Accessibility was a significant issue. Residents who do not drive, or who rely on mobility scooters, said they would struggle to reach other libraries. Attendees also highlighted the library's social role, including reading groups, coffee mornings and informal community contact. Views were mixed on volunteer-run models, with some uncertainty about capacity and continuity. While the mobile library was appreciated, most felt that a static library better meets local needs. Suggestions included exploring alternative buildings if relocation were required.

Some respondents asked about the financial case for different options and how savings compare with the wider council budget. They also pointed to Winscombe's older demographic, limited nearby provision and poor transport links as factors reinforcing the need for a local service. Respondents also expressed strong support for fundraising, with donations mentioned frequently as a preferred approach. Additional points included the importance of providing consultation materials in the library, access to home delivery services and the availability of reserved books.

### 11.12. Worle Library and Children's Centre

Worle Library was mentioned in 276 responses (around 6%). Residents highlighted its central location near Worle High Street and its importance for older people, families and those without private transport. Concerns focused on the impact of closure on access to books, computers and printing. While some acknowledged the financial challenges associated with the current building, others suggested exploring options such as relocation, community-led models or partnership approaches.

Feedback from the two drop-in sessions echoed these themes. Attendees described the library as a well-used local facility offering a wide range of activities, including reading groups, craft sessions, quizzes, coffee mornings and groups for families and older residents. Transport was a key issue, with many feeling that the Campus Library would be difficult to reach due to limited public transport links, making Worle particularly important for those who may struggle to travel elsewhere.

Attendees also asked about building maintenance, investment plans and how decisions about the site had been made. Some raised questions about the future of the polling station and other local facilities, such as the Local Studies opening times at the Town Hall. Several attendees queried the future of the children's centre and sought clarity on what changes were being proposed. Suggestions included renting out space to community organisations and considering alternative locations within Worle if relocation were required.

Attendees discussed the timing of the consultation in relation to town and parish council budget cycles and noted that some local councils were awaiting further information before considering community-managed options.

### 11.13. Yatton Library and Children's Centre

Yatton Library was mentioned in 83 responses (around 2.0%). Residents highlighted its well-used activities – including rhyme time, Lego clubs and reading groups – and valued its role in supporting families, children and older people. Staff were frequently praised, and the library was seen as a safe, inclusive space.

## 12. Town and parish council and ward member feedback

### 12.1. Overview

This section summarises the views of town and parish councils and ward members across North Somerset on the library consultation proposals. Responses have been assessed in table format for clarity and consistency and grouped where multiple submissions were received from the same area. Summary response tables are provided in [annex 5](#).

A total of **25 responses** were received from **12 different town and parish councils and ward members**. Some areas submitted more than one response (including Pill and Wrington), while others provided a single submission. Feedback ranged from acceptance of reduced staffed hours to strong opposition to closures. Pill and Abbots Leigh provided particularly detailed submissions describing the importance of their local libraries as community assets.

Across all responses, several common themes emerged: the role of libraries as trusted and accessible spaces; concerns about transport and the impact on communities facing greater socioeconomic challenges; questions about the feasibility of volunteer-led models; and a range of constructive suggestions for income generation and partnership working.

### 12.2. Libraries as community hubs

Town and parish councils consistently emphasised that libraries provide more than book lending services. They were described as trusted, accessible places that support wellbeing, reduce isolation and offer digital access. Pill, Winscombe, Churchill and Abbots Leigh highlighted the role of their local libraries in providing warm, welcoming spaces and hosting activities for children, families and older residents. Winscombe & Sandford noted that usage data may not fully reflect demand, citing issues with access technology, and emphasised the contribution of the library's central location to local activity and footfall.

### 12.3. Concerns about equity and access

Responses from Pill, Abbots Leigh and Wrington referenced local socioeconomic indicators and highlighted the importance of maintaining services in areas with higher levels of need. Pill West was noted as an area where residents may face additional barriers to accessing alternative provision. Wrington raised concerns that reducing static library provision could affect mobile library services across rural North Somerset, particularly for older residents without transport. Bleadon similarly highlighted limited



public transport and the absence of local schools as factors affecting access if nearby libraries were to reduce hours or close.

#### 12.4. Mixed views on community management

Congresbury & Puxton, referenced their own community-managed library as a positive example. Others expressed reservations. Abbots Leigh and Pill & Easton-in-Gordano Parish Council did not support community-managed models, citing limited volunteer capacity and the potential impact on communities with higher levels of need. The ward member for Pill suggested phased changes and support for Friends of Pill group, while emphasising the importance of ensuring that residents who rely most on library services are not disproportionately affected.

#### 12.5. Pragmatic acceptance of reduced hours

Several councils, including Flax Bourton and Wrington, acknowledged the financial pressures facing the council and indicated that reduced staffed hours, smaller stock budgets or increased self-service provision could be acceptable compromises. Nailsea Town Council, while neutral on the options, noted that external factors such as parking charges may influence library use.

#### 12.6. Constructive ideas to protect library services

Councils and ward members offered a range of practical suggestions to support the long-term sustainability of library services, including:

- Income generation through room hire, charging community groups and engaging local businesses (Abbots Leigh, Pill & Easton-in-Gordano, Yatton).
- Extended or unstaffed hours to broaden access (Pill & Easton-in-Gordano Parish Council; Pill ward member).
- Partnerships with schools, health services and community organisations to integrate libraries more closely with local service delivery (Pill ward member; Abbots Leigh Parish Council).
- Digital inclusion initiatives, such as loaning devices to residents who may face barriers to accessing online services (Mid Worle ward member).

#### 12.7. Overall sentiment

Overall, town and parish councils and ward members expressed concern about potential closures and questioned whether alternative models would meet community needs. While recognising the financial context, many emphasised the social, educational and health benefits of libraries and the importance of maintaining

accessible provision, particularly in areas with limited transport or higher levels of socioeconomic need.

More detailed summaries of the views expressed by Pill & Easton-in-Gordano Parish Council and Winscombe & Sandford Parish Council are provided in the next section ([Section 13](#)), **Email and letter responses**.



## 13. Email and letter responses

### 13.1. Overview

As part of the consultation process, nine submissions were received via email and letter. Each submission has been reviewed and is summarised below to provide a clear record of the views expressed. The single letter from a resident has been incorporated into the general responses. These are summarised by location where possible. In addition to these formal submissions, further correspondence was received from 68 individuals during the consultation period. Officers replied to this correspondence, and in some cases dialogue is ongoing.

### 13.2. Emails related to Pill Library and Children's Centre

#### 13.2.1. Friends of Pill Library

The Friends of Pill Library strongly oppose the closure or transfer of Pill Library to community management, advocating instead for its retention as a council-managed, community-supported service. They highlight the library's vital role in a small community with limited local services, particularly for children, families, and vulnerable individuals. The library hosts over 100 events annually, provides free IT access, and serves as a safe, warm space. Its location in Pill West, one of North Somerset's most deprived areas outside Weston-super-Mare, makes it a crucial preventative service, supporting education, wellbeing, and reducing social care demand.

Concerns were raised about the disproportionate impact of closure on disabled people, women, children, and the elderly, as identified in the Equality Impact Assessment. Accessibility is also a key issue, with the nearest alternative library in Portishead being costly and impractical for many residents. The financial case for closure is questioned, as the savings would be minimal compared to the overall library budget. The group argues that Pill Library offers excellent value for money, with lower per-resident costs than other North Somerset libraries.

Suggestions include exploring alternative cost-saving measures, such as reducing staffed hours in other libraries, and using Section 106 developer contributions to fund future improvements. They reject community management as unsustainable, citing limited local volunteer capacity and ongoing council costs. Instead, they propose enhancing the library through fundraising, events, and volunteer-supported extended hours, aligning with government guidance. They emphasise the library's growing importance due to planned housing developments and national literacy initiatives.

The Friends of Pill Library also undertook an engagement exercise at a local market event, capturing 16 responses to the proposed closure. All of the notes opposed closure and emphasised the library's valuable role within the community.

### 13.2.2. Pill and Easton-in-Gordano Parish Council

The Parish Council expressed support for Option B, which proposes that Pill Library continues to be managed and funded by North Somerset Council. This position was shared with the Friends of Pill Library group, reflecting a view that a council-run service is the most sustainable model for ensuring long-term viability.

Parish councillors engaged actively throughout the consultation process. Their position throughout the consultation period emphasised the library's role as a valued local asset in an area identified as having high need.

A formal consultation response was submitted early in the process. In addition to setting out their support for Option B, the Parish Council raised several concerns:

- **Transparency and openness:** Attendees at the drop-in meeting reported perceptions that the session was primarily focused on community-managed models, with limited exploration of alternatives.
- **Inclusivity of engagement:** Residents highlighted conflicting information about feedback methods, restricted drop-in hours, limited outreach to schools and businesses, and barriers for digitally excluded groups, particularly older residents.
- **Presentation of data:** Consultation materials described Pill Library as the least used in North Somerset. Residents noted this did not account for limited opening hours or local population size and therefore risked misleading comparisons.
- **Equality considerations:** The Equality Impact Assessment was viewed as underestimating potential impacts of closure on vulnerable groups, including children and older people.
- **Funding and analysis:** Concerns were raised about disparities in funding allocation compared to less deprived areas, and about the objectivity and transparency of post-consultation data analysis.

The Parish Council sought a detailed response by 17 October 2025. North Somerset Council provided this as part of continued discussions with the Parish Council.

## 13.3. Emails related to Winscombe Library

### 13.3.1. Winscombe and Sandford Parish Council

Winscombe & Sandford Parish Council submitted a detailed response to the consultation, strongly advocating for continued council funding and support for Winscombe Library (Option C). They highlighted the library's role as a vital community hub, fostering social connection, learning, and wellbeing, particularly for elderly and vulnerable residents. It emphasised the library's contribution to mental health, lifelong learning, and community cohesion, as well as its economic impact on the village centre by driving footfall to local businesses. Concerns were raised about equity and



accessibility, noting that alternative libraries are not realistically accessible for many due to limited public transport and the area's ageing population.

The Parish Council questions the reliability of current usage data provided by North Somerset Council, citing technical issues with the out-of-hours access system that likely under-report actual demand. They also expressed concern about the timeline for decision-making, requesting an earlier indication of NSC's direction to facilitate financial planning.

Other enquiries were raised, including the condition of the library building, ownership or lease arrangements, potential TUPE implications for staff, and whether the council will retain income from fines and charges. Clarification is also sought on the continuation of centrally funded services (e.g., IT, cleaning, book stock) and the availability of S106 contributions for the library.

They encouraged the council to carefully consider these points and provide timely responses, stressing the library's importance as a community asset and its role in supporting social and economic vitality in the area.

### 13.4. Email related to all North Somerset library services

#### 13.4.1. Healthy and Sustainable Communities Directorate, North Somerset Council

The Healthy and Sustainable Communities Directorate of North Somerset Council submitted a response highlighting the critical role libraries play in supporting the Council's Corporate Plan ambitions, particularly in health, wellbeing, education, inclusion, economic opportunity, and cultural engagement. They commended libraries as trusted, non-stigmatising spaces that reduce social isolation, support mental health, and provide safe environments, especially for vulnerable groups. Libraries' contributions to digital inclusion, employability, and cultural placemaking were also praised.

Key concerns included the potential impact of reduced physical access to libraries on vulnerable groups, such as those without digital access, older adults, disabled residents, and low-income families. They stressed the importance of mitigating these impacts through enhanced outreach, digital inclusion support, and partnerships with health and community services. The response also raised concerns about the sustainability and equity of community-managed library models, noting that not all communities have the capacity to replicate successful examples like Congresbury.

Suggestions for improvement included maintaining digital access and skills support as a core priority, exploring co-location opportunities with other cultural and community services, and ensuring community-managed libraries receive adequate training, funding, and professional input. They also proposed expanding public health services in libraries, such as health checks, stop smoking clinics, and healthy lifestyle advice, to generate income and enhance service impact.

The Directorate emphasised the need for robust Equalities Impact Assessments to guide decision-making and ensure changes are equitable and inclusive. They expressed willingness to collaborate on transforming library services through joint initiatives and place-based planning.

### 13.5. Letters related to Winscombe

#### 13.5.1. Year 6 pupils, Winscombe Primary School

A group of Year 6 pupils from Winscombe Primary School submitted a handwritten letter expressing their opposition to the proposed closure of Winscombe Library. They described the library as a calm, reliable space for people of all ages, valued for its accessible facilities, supportive staff, and role in promoting reading – particularly through initiatives like the Summer Reading Challenge. The letter also raised concerns about potential job losses for librarians and the impact of replacing the library with a commercial outlet.

#### 13.5.2. Year 5 pupils, Winscombe Primary School

Pupils from Maple Class, Year 5 at Winscombe Primary School submitted a letter expressing their support for retaining Winscombe Library. They highlighted the library's role in providing free access to books, supporting learning, and encouraging reading through initiatives such as the Summer Reading Challenge. The letter described the library as a valued part of the community and raised concerns about the emotional impact of closure, potential job losses, and the loss of routine for regular users.

### 13.6. Letters related to Worle

#### 13.6.1. Dan Aldridge, Member of Parliament for Weston-super-Mare

A submission was received from Dan Aldridge, Member of Parliament for Weston-super-Mare, expressing support for maintaining a library service in Worle. He described libraries as vital community assets that provide access to information and inclusive spaces for learning and connection. He welcomed North Somerset Council's proactive approach to consultation and encouraged continued collaboration with Voluntary Action North Somerset (VANS), other voluntary groups, and local residents to identify a sustainable solution. The success of Congresbury Library, operated by volunteers, was cited as a positive example of community partnership. He offered his continued support to protect this local service for Worle.

#### 13.6.2. Weston-super-Mare Labour Party

A submission was received from the Weston-super-Mare Labour Party regarding the future of Worle Library. The letter expressed concern about the risk of closure due to budget pressures and unresolved structural issues, including damp and wet rot. It

welcomed the council's consultation and emphasised the importance of libraries as community hubs that provide access to learning, books, and safe spaces for all ages. The Labour Party urged the council to work collaboratively with including Voluntary Action North Somerset (VANS), residents, and their local MP Dan Aldridge, to identify a viable solution. They confirmed their willingness to contribute, including through volunteering, to help sustain a library service in Worle for current and future generations.

### 13.6.3. Local resident letter

One resident submitted a letter commenting on the proposals for Worle Library and Children's Centre. The writer described the library as a convenient and well-used local facility for their household and praised staff for being helpful and informative. They expressed concern about the potential impact of closure on their ability to access services. While recognising the financial context, the resident suggested that efficiencies could be explored before reducing local provision.



## 14. Children's survey results

### 14.1. Overview

As part of the wider consultation on the future of libraries in North Somerset, a dedicated survey was conducted with children and young people to ensure their voices were directly heard. Libraries play a unique role in children's learning, leisure, and social development, and the survey sought to capture their experiences, the aspects they value most, and their ideas for improvement. This feedback provides a fuller picture of community priorities and highlights the perspectives of a group often under-represented in formal processes.

The findings from the children's survey will be used to ensure that decisions about the future of library services are inclusive and equitable. By understanding the needs and preferences of different age groups and communities, the council can work to minimise barriers to access and ensure that library services continue to support children's learning, leisure, and social development.

### 14.2. Age of respondents

The survey received 500 responses, with the largest group of respondents aged 5-8 years (33.2%), followed by those aged 9-11 years (24.2%). Children aged 0-4 years accounted for 21.2% of responses, while 12-15 year-olds made up 17.0%. A small proportion (4.4%) preferred not to state their age.

When comparing younger children (0-8 years) with older children (9-15 years), younger children were more strongly represented, accounting for 54.4% of responses, compared to 41.2% from older children. This suggests that younger children and their families may be more engaged with library services or more likely to participate in the survey.

It is important to note that the age profile of respondents is not fully representative of the child population in North Somerset, as indicated by the 2021 Census<sup>6</sup>. Younger children, particularly those aged 5-8, are over-represented, while older children aged 12-15 are under-represented. Findings should therefore be interpreted as illustrative of children's perspectives, with particular weight towards younger age groups.

The breakdown of responses by age is shown in Table 11.

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<sup>6</sup> Based on 2021 Census data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Census 2021: Population and household estimates, North Somerset. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>



**Table 11: Age of respondents**

How old are you?		
Answer choice	% response	Response total
0-4	21.2	106
5-8	33.2	166
9-11	24.2	121
12-15	17.0	85
Prefer not to say	4.4	22
answered		500
skipped		0

### 14.3. Libraries used by respondents

Children reported visiting a wide range of libraries across the area, as summarised in Table 12.

**Table 12: Libraries visited by respondents**

Which Libraries do you visit?		
Answer choice	% response	Response total
Campus Library	11.8	59
Clevedon Library	16.6	83
Congresbury Library	3.8	19
For All Healthy Living Centre (HLC)	8.0	40
Mobile Library	3.6	18
Nailsea Library	21.2	106
Pill Library	15.4	77
Portishead Library	19.8	99
Weston -super-Mare Library	16.2	81
Winscombe Library	5.2	26
Worle Library and Children's Centre	11.8	59
Yatton Library and Children's Centre	12.8	64
answered		500
skipped		0



Answer choice	% response	Response total
None	0.2	1
Prefer not to say	0.0	0
Other – please tell us	2.4	12
<b>answered</b>		<b>500</b>
<b>skipped</b>		<b>0</b>

Children reported visiting a wide range of libraries across North Somerset. The most frequently visited were Nailsea Library (21.2%) and Portishead Library (19.8%), followed by Clevedon Library (16.6%) and Weston-super-Mare Library (16.2%). Smaller but notable proportions of children reported using Pill Library (15.4%), Yatton Library (12.8%), and Worle Library and Children's Centre (11.8%).

A small number of respondents (2.4%) mentioned other libraries, including school libraries, Clifton Library, Bristol Central Library, and online resources. Only one respondent (0.2%) indicated that they do not visit any library.

#### 14.4. Frequency of library visits

Patterns of library use varied, but most children reported visiting regularly. Table 13 shows how often.

**Table 13: Frequency of library visits**

How often do you visit the library?		
Answer choice	% response	Response total
Daily	3.2	16
At least once a week	39.6	198
Once to twice a month	42.4	212
Every few months	17.2	86
Once or twice a year	1.0	5
I have used it before but not recently	2.2	11
Prefer not to say	0.4	2
<b>answered</b>		<b>500</b>
<b>skipped</b>		<b>0</b>

The majority of children reported visiting the library regularly, with 42.4% attending once or twice a month and 39.6% visiting at least weekly. A smaller proportion (17.2%) reported visiting every few months, while infrequent use (once or twice a year, or not

recently) was rare (3.2% combined). Daily visits were also uncommon (3.2%) but notable given the age group.

Younger children (0-8 years) were more likely to visit libraries frequently, with many attending weekly or monthly as part of family routines. Older children (9-15 years) were more likely to visit less frequently, reflecting differences in how age groups engage with library services.

### 14.5. Timing of library visits

Children were also asked when they typically visit libraries. Libraries were most commonly visited at weekends (66.6%) and after school (56.8%), indicating that they are primarily used outside of formal school hours. Around a third (30.0%) of respondents also visited during weekdays, while very few attended before school (0.8%).

Free-text responses highlighted that many children visit libraries during school holidays, half terms, or the summer, often for activities such as the Summer Reading Challenge. Others mentioned attending rhyme time, Storytime, coding clubs, or stay-and-play sessions, often accompanied by parents, childminders, or grandparents.

Table 14 summarises when children typically visit libraries.

**Table 14: Timing of library visits**

When do you visit the library?		
Answer choice	% response	Response total
Before school	0.8	4
During the day (week days)	30.0	150
After school	56.8	284
Weekends	66.6	333
Other – please tell us	14.0	70
answered		500
skipped		0

### 14.6. Importance of libraries

Children overwhelmingly identified free book borrowing (93.8%) as the most important role of libraries, followed by learning and literacy (62.0%) and activities and events (57.4%). Free internet and computer access (32.0%), information services (19.2%), and printing facilities (18.2%) were also valued.

Free-text responses emphasised the importance of libraries as safe, welcoming, and quiet spaces for reading, studying, and spending time. Many children highlighted the role of friendly staff in creating a positive experience, as well as the value of activities such as Lego Club, rhyme time, and the Summer Reading Challenge. Libraries were also seen as places for socialising, fostering community spirit, and providing free access to books for families who might otherwise struggle to afford them.

Table 15 shows which aspects of library services children consider most important.

**Table 15: Importance of library services**

#### What do you think are the most important things libraries do?

Some examples are listed but please tell us any other reasons

Answer choice	% response	Response total
Learning and literacy	62.0	310
Free book borrowing	93.8	469
Activities and events	57.4	287
Free internet and computers	32.0	160
Printing	18.2	91
Information	19.2	96
Other – please tell us	14.2	71
<b>answered</b>		<b>500</b>
<b>skipped</b>		<b>0</b>

## 14.7. Impact of library closures

Children were asked how they would be affected if their nearest library closed. Table 16 summarises how children felt they would be affected if their nearest library closed.

**Table 16: Impact of nearest library closing**

#### What would happen if your nearest library closed?

Answer choice	% response	Response total
I would not be able to borrow books any more	89.	448
I would not have anywhere quiet to go	30.8	154
<b>answered</b>		<b>500</b>
<b>skipped</b>		<b>0</b>

Answer choice	% response	Response total
I would miss going to library events or activities	56.6	283
I would not have anywhere to go after school or in the holidays	34.4	172
I would not have access to computers or technology	13.6	68
Anything else – Please tell us		87
<b>answered</b>		<b>500</b>
<b>skipped</b>		<b>0</b>

The majority of children (89.6%) indicated that the closure of their nearest library would prevent them from borrowing books. More than half (56.6%) said they would miss attending library events and activities, while around a third noted they would lose a quiet place to go (30.8%) or somewhere to spend time after school and during holidays (34.4%). A smaller but significant group (13.6%) emphasised the loss of access to computers and technology.

Free-text responses revealed emotional and practical concerns about library closures. Many children described feeling sad, upset, or angry at the prospect, with some highlighting the loss of access to books, activities, and a safe space to study or socialise. Practical barriers, such as increased travel distances and costs, were also raised, particularly for families reliant on walking or public transport.

#### 14.8. Ability to visit another library if nearest is closed

Children were also asked whether they would be able to access another library if their nearest one closed. Most children indicated that closure of their nearest library would make access to another library difficult. Over half (58.6%) said they could not go by themselves, and 57.0% felt travelling would be difficult. Nearly half (46.0%) noted that other libraries were too far away, while only 15.4% felt they could visit another library without issue. Table 17 shows whether children felt they could access another library if their nearest one closed.

**Table 17: Ability to visit another library**

If your nearest library closed, would you be able to visit another library?		
Answer choice	% response	Response total
I could not go by myself	58.6	293
<b>answered</b>		<b>500</b>
<b>skipped</b>		<b>0</b>



Answer choice	% response	Response total
The other libraries are too far away	46.0	230
Travelling to another library would be difficult	57.0	285
I could visit another library	15.4	77
Anything else – Please tell us		93
<b>answered</b>		<b>500</b>
<b>skipped</b>		<b>0</b>

Free-text responses highlighted the importance of local libraries such as Worle, Portishead, Pill, Nailsea, Weston, Clevedon, Winscombe, and Yatton. Many children described these libraries as integral to their routines, with proximity enabling regular visits. Families emphasised the accessibility of libraries like Nailsea for children with disabilities and the importance of Clevedon Library's extended access and welcoming staff.





# Annex

This annex provides supporting details on the consultation proposals. It sets out the types of changes being considered, the three options for achieving savings, the engagement activities undertaken, and the responses received from parish councils and ward representatives.



## Annex 1. Information on the three proposed options for change

### Overview

This section outlines the broad areas where changes could be made, explaining what each involves and its possible impacts.

To help meet savings targets and keep a sustainable library service across North Somerset, the Council is proposing a range of changes. These focus on how services are delivered, how costs are reduced, and how income is generated.

### Summary of potential changes

Table 19 shows the elements that are likely to change under each of the three options. We've also provided further information on each option (Option A, Option B, Option C) and its potential impacts to help you make an informed response.

**Table 18: Overview of changes for Options A, B and C**

### Potential changes

#### Community-managed libraries

**What this could involve:** In some areas, we may no longer run a library directly. Instead, local community groups could be supported to take on management.

**What this could involve:** Libraries could remain open in areas where a council-run model is no longer sustainable – but this would depend on local capacity and interest.

#### Alternative service delivery

**What this could involve:** In places where libraries may close or change, services could be offered differently (for example, via mobile library, drop-off points, partner venues, or the Home Library Service).

**Possible impacts:** People would still have access to library services, but in new formats or locations. Some people may have to travel further or use services differently.

### Changes to opening hours

**What this could involve:** Staffed hours may be reduced in some libraries, based on usage patterns. In some cases, self-service access could be extended so libraries remain open without staff present.

**Possible impacts:** Libraries would still offer access to a range of services but with fewer staffed hours. Customers may need to visit at different times than currently or visit during self-service hours

### Reducing central budgets

**What this could involve:** Savings could be made in areas like central staffing, the new book and digital resources budget, management, IT systems, equipment and stationery.

**Possible impacts:** Libraries would still have a range of books available to customers but spending on new books would reduce. The way services are supported behind the scenes would be affected.

### Income generation

**What this could involve:** Increased promotion of library spaces for hire, advertising, or partnerships with local organisations.

**Possible impacts:** This could bring in income to help support core services – but may reduce space available for community use in some locations.

## Option A

This option should achieve the full amount of savings if implemented in full. It could involve closing up to three libraries, alongside a reduction in opening hours across the remaining council-run libraries. Libraries would be kept open in locations where population and usage are highest. Savings would also be made from central budgets, including spending on new books and digital resources.

The impact on communities would depend on which, and how many, libraries closed and the number that transitioned to community-managed libraries.

Local communities would be offered the opportunity to manage libraries with lowest usage in Winscombe and Pill.

This would help keep these valued services running locally using volunteers. If community libraries form, they could potentially remain part of the North Somerset network and retain access to LibrariesWest services. If no viable community-led

solutions are found, these libraries may unfortunately have to close so that the required level of savings can be made. Where libraries close, access to library services will be offered in other ways to address local need. Feedback from the community is welcomed to help shape what support is offered.

Worle – due to anticipated future maintenance and repair costs, alongside the fact that alternative library services are available 1.5 miles away, the library is unable to keep operating from this venue. The community are invited to help shape the offer locally.

Under this Option for Change (A), the following libraries are not at risk of closure. However, the following table shows proposals for opening hours to be reduced in order to achieve additional savings from the staffing budget.

**Table 19: Option A – Proposed changes to opening hours and mitigations**

Below is a list of libraries, a description of the proposed change, reduction in weekly staffed hours and a summary of mitigations (a mitigation is a way of reducing the impact or its effect).

#### Campus library

**Changes:** Close at 6pm instead of 8pm on weekdays.  
Close at 1pm instead of 5pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

**Reductions:** 18

**Mitigations:** Introduce further self service facilities, enabling an overall increase in opening hours of 17 per week

#### Clevedon library

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 1pm on Saturdays

**Reductions:** 0.5

**Mitigations:** Increase self-service opening hours

#### Congresbury community-managed library

**Changes:** No change

**Reductions:** No change

**Mitigations:** None

**For All Healthy Living Centre library**

**Changes:** Close between 12.30pm and 1.30pm Monday – Friday

**Reductions:** 5

**Mitigations:** Explore self-service opening

**Nailsea library**

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 1pm on Saturdays.  
Close at 5pm instead of 6pm on Tuesdays.

**Reductions:** 1.5

**Mitigations:** Increase self-service opening hours

**North Somerset Studies library**

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 4pm on Saturdays.  
Close two days per week.

**Reductions:** 15.5

**Mitigations:** Promote new opening hours.  
Make alternative study space available.

**Portishead library**

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 1pm on Saturdays

**Reductions:** 0.5

**Mitigations:** Increase self-service opening hours

**Weston-super-Mare library**

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 4pm on Saturdays.  
Close at 5pm instead of 6pm on weekdays.

**Reductions:** 8.5

**Mitigations:** Explore feasibility of extending self-service hours between 5pm and 6pm daily.  
Promote digital access to library and council services.



**Yatton library and children's centre**

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 1pm on Saturdays

**Reductions:** 0.5

**Mitigations:** Increase self-service opening hours

Total saving of £433k.

**Option B**

A further option to achieve the full amount of savings if implemented in full is to close up to two libraries, alongside a reduction in opening hours across the remaining council-run libraries. Libraries would be kept open in locations where population and usage are highest and at Pill where usage is low, but community need is considered high. Keeping Pill Library as part of the North Somerset network would reduce the amount needed to be invested in outreach for that community. However, an additional £10,000 savings would be required on top of those for Option A from the new books and digital resources budget. To find the additional saving required it is proposed that the For All Healthy Living Centre library closes on Mondays, when its usage is lowest. The full list of proposed changes to opening hours to fund this option are shown below.

The impact on communities would depend on which, and how many, libraries closed and the number that transitioned to community-managed libraries. An analysis of the potential impact is available at [Libraries consultation – North Somerset Council Consultations](#)

The local community would be offered the opportunity to manage Winscombe Library, to keep the valued service running locally using volunteers. If a community library formed, it could potentially remain part of the North Somerset network and retain access to LibrariesWest services. If no viable community-led solution is found, this library may unfortunately have to close so that the required level of savings can be made. Where libraries close, access to library services will be offered in other ways to address local need. Feedback from the community is welcomed to help shape what support is offered.

Worle – due to anticipated future maintenance and repair costs, alongside the fact that alternative library services are available 1.5 miles away, the library is unable to keep operating from this venue. The community are invited to help shape the offer locally.

Under this Option for Change (B), the following libraries are not at risk of closure. However, the following table shows proposals for opening hours to be reduced in order to achieve additional savings from the staffing budget.

Total saving: £433k

The detail is shown in the accompanying information at [Libraries consultation – North Somerset Council Consultations](#)

### Table 20: Option B – Proposed changes to opening hours and mitigations

Below is a list of libraries, a description of the proposed change, reduction in weekly staffed hours and a summary of mitigations (a mitigation is a way of reducing the impact or its effect).

#### Campus library

**Changes:** Close at 6pm instead of 8pm on weekdays  
Close at 1pm instead of 5pm on Saturdays and Sundays

**Reductions:** 18

**Mitigations:** Introduce further self service facilities, enabling an overall increase in opening hours of 17 per week

#### Clevedon library

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 1pm on Saturdays

**Reductions:** 0.5

**Mitigations:** Increase self-service opening hours

#### Congresbury community-managed library

**Changes:** No change

**Reductions:** No change

**Mitigations:** None

#### For All Healthy Living Centre library

**Changes:** Close between 12.30pm and 1.30pm Tuesday-Friday  
Close all day Monday

**Reductions:** 11.5

**Mitigations:** Explore self-service opening

**Nailsea library**

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 1pm on Saturdays  
Close at 5pm instead of 6pm on Tuesdays

**Reductions:** 1.5

**Mitigations:** Increase self-service opening hours

**North Somerset Studies library**

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 4pm on Saturdays  
Close two days per week

**Reductions:** 15.5

**Mitigations:** Promote new opening hours.  
Make alternative study space available.

**Pill library**

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 1pm on Saturdays

**Reductions:** 0.5

**Portishead library**

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 1pm on Saturdays

**Reductions:** 0.5

**Mitigations:** Increase self-service opening hours

**Weston-super-Mare library**

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 4pm on Saturdays  
Close at 5pm instead of 6pm on weekdays

**Reductions:** 8.5

**Mitigations:** Explore feasibility of extending self-service hours between five and six daily.  
Promote digital access to library and council services.

Yatton library and children’s centre

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 1pm on Saturdays

**Reductions:** 0.5

**Mitigations:** Increase self-service opening hours

Option C

A further option to achieve the full amount of savings if implemented in full is to close up to two libraries, alongside a reduction in opening hours across the remaining council-run libraries. Libraries would be kept open in locations where population and usage are highest and at Winscombe where usage is relatively low to town libraries but where the library serves a significant rural population. Keeping Winscombe Library as part of the North Somerset network would reduce the amount needed to be invested in outreach to that community. However, an additional £10,000 savings would be required on top of those for Option A from the new books and digital resources budget. To find the additional saving required it is proposed that the For All Healthy Living Centre library closes on Mondays, when its usage is lowest. The full list of proposed changes to opening hours to fund this option are shown below.

The impact on communities would depend on which, and how many, libraries closed and the number that transitioned to community-managed libraries.

The local community would be offered the opportunity to manage Pill Library, to keep the valued service running locally using volunteers. If a community library was formed, it could potentially remain part of the North Somerset network and retain access to LibrariesWest services. If no viable community-led solution is found, this library may unfortunately have to close so that the required level of savings can be made. Where libraries close, access to library services will be offered in other ways to address local need. Feedback from the community is welcomed to help shape what support is offered.

Worle – due to anticipated future maintenance and repair costs, alongside the fact that alternative library services are available 1.5 miles away, the library is unable to keep operating from this venue. The community are invited to help shape the offer locally.

Under this Option for Change (C), the following libraries are not at risk of closure. However, the following table shows proposals for opening hours to be reduced in order to achieve additional savings from the staffing budget:

Total saving: £433k

Table 21: Option C – Proposed changes to opening hours and mitigations

Below is a list of libraries, a description of the proposed change, reduction in weekly staffed hours and a summary of mitigations (a mitigation is a way of reducing the impact or its effect).

**Campus library**

**Changes:** Close at 6pm instead of 8pm on weekdays.  
Close at 1pm instead of 5pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

**Reductions:** 18

**Mitigations:** Introduce further self-service facilities, enabling an overall increase in opening hours of 17 per week

**Clevedon library**

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 1pm on Saturdays

**Reductions:** 0.5

**Mitigations:** Increase self-service opening hours

**Congresbury community-managed library**

**Changes:** No change

**Reductions:** No change

**Mitigations:** None

**For All Healthy Living Centre library**

**Changes:** Close between 12.30pm and 1.30pm Tuesday – Friday.  
Close all day Monday.

**Reductions:** 11.5

**Mitigations:** Explore self-service opening

**Nailsea library**

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 1pm on Saturdays.  
Close at 5pm instead of 6pm on Tuesdays

**Reductions:** 1.5

**Mitigations:** Increase self-service opening hours



**North Somerset Studies library**

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 4pm on Saturdays.  
Close two days per week.

---

**Reductions:** 15.5

---

**Mitigations:** Promote new opening hours.  
Make alternative study space available.

---

**Portishead library**

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 1pm on Saturdays

---

**Reductions:** 0.5

---

**Mitigations:** Increase self-service opening hours

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**Weston-super-Mare library**

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 4pm on Saturdays.  
Close at 5pm instead of 6pm on weekdays.

---

**Reductions:** 8.5

---

**Mitigations:** Explore feasibility of extending self-service hours between 5pm and 6pm daily.  
Promote digital access to library and council services.

---

**Winscombe library**

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 1pm on Saturdays

---

**Reductions:** 0.5

---

**Mitigations:** Increase self-service opening hours

---

**Yatton library and children's centre**

**Changes:** Close at 12.30pm instead of 1pm on Saturdays

---

**Reductions:** 0.5

---

**Mitigations:** Increase self-service opening hours

---

## Annex 2. Promotion and engagement activities

### Overview

This section summarises how the consultation was promoted and how stakeholders were engaged.

### Briefings and meetings

- 14 public engagement sessions were held across the district
- Sessions with all ward members, Town and Parish Councils, and local MPs
- Library staff briefings and updates for volunteers
- Engagement with specialist groups, including the Disability Access Group, Young Staff Forum, and Opportunity North Somerset partnership group
- Meeting with Read Easy North Somerset
- Meeting with Winscombe Community Association
- Parish council meetings attended in person to discuss the consultation approach

### Direct communications

- Emails to all North Somerset councillors, Town and Parish Council chairs and clerks, MPs, and a wide stakeholder list
- Targeted messages to LibrariesWest registered users in North Somerset (over 50,000 recipients)
- Outreach to equalities stakeholders, arts and culture organisations, Alliance Homes, and library sector support groups
- Internal communications via an all-staff webinar, Town & Parish Digest, and Disabled Staff Group updates
- Messaging to over 21,000 North Somerset residents via the North Somerset Council (NSC) app
- Email to local History and research groups

## Publicity materials

- Posters, banners, and hard copies of questionnaires displayed in every library and the mobile, with supporting materials available on site
- Posters and information emailed to all ward and Town and Parish councillors to display and locally
- Copies shared at community venues such as Somewhere To Go in Weston
- Distribution through schools, children's centres, and family hubs, with officers visiting schools to support young people in completing questionnaires

## Media and online promotion

- Press releases at launch and with three weeks remaining, supported by coverage including a BBC Radio Bristol interview
- Promotion through the Council's website, NSC app, and newsletters such as eLife, Town and Parish Digest, and The Knowledge (the council's internal newsletter)
- Social media activity across Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, and Bluesky, with posts from Council accounts, councillors, and Children's Services, widely shared by partner organisations and community groups
- Reminder posts and updates issued as the closing date approached

## Community engagement

- Children's Services promoted the consultation through VOICE drop-ins, school outreach, and social media campaigns shared by multiple groups
- Local history and archaeology groups contacted regarding changes to the Local Studies Library
- Councillors promoted drop-in events and shared posters, FAQs, and children's surveys through newsletters and email signatures
- Equalities stakeholder group by the Inclusion and Corporate Development Officer
- North Somerset Together network monthly newsletter

### Annex 3. Consultation results (Question 4 breakdown)

Table 23 shows how respondents rated each option overall for question 4.

**Table 22: Consultations results for Question 4 (overall views on Options A, B and C)**

	Option A	Option B	Option C
Strongly agree	16%	19%	14%
Somewhat agree	27%	29%	27%
Neither agree nor disagree	23%	27%	27%
Somewhat disagree	11%	11%	11%
Strongly disagree	24%	15%	21%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>2,911</b>	<b>2,919</b>	<b>2,896</b>



## Annex 4. Consultation questions (Q1-Q19)

### Overview

This section lists the full set of consultation questions (Q1-Q19), covering respondent capacity, library usage, impacts, ideas for reducing impacts, income generation suggestions, interest in community management, barriers to access, and demographic information.

### Full question list

**Table 23: Consultation questions**

Question and response options

#### **Q1 Please tell us in what capacity you are responding to this consultation (mandatory)**

- Resident of North Somerset
- Live outside North Somerset
- North Somerset Council staff member
- Library volunteer
- Represent a ward/town/parish council (specify)
- Responding on behalf of a business (specify)
- Other (specify)

#### **Q1a Please specify where (if outside North Somerset)**

Free text

#### **Q1b Please provide the name of the ward/town/parish council you represent**

Free text

#### **Q1c Please provide the name of the business you are responding on behalf of**

Free text

#### **Q1d Please specify in which capacity you are responding**

Free text



**Q2 Please provide the full postcode of your home address, or the organisation you are responding on behalf of**

Free text

**Q3a Which North Somerset library services do you currently use, if any?**

List of libraries + online/home options + “none”

**Q3b Roughly how often do you use these services?**

- At least once a week
- Once or twice a month
- Every few months
- Once or twice a year
- Used before but not recently
- Prefer not to say

**Q3c How do you usually use our library services?**

- Visit during staffed hours
- Visit during unstaffed extended access
- Use online services
- Attend events/activities
- Use mobile library
- Receive books via home library
- Other (specify)

**Q4 What are your overall thoughts on these proposals?**

Grid: Strongly agree to Strongly disagree for Options A, B, C + free text

**Q5 How might these changes affect you?**

- Reduced access due to travel/transport
- Limited ability to visit during reduced hours
- Difficulty using self-service
- Lack of confidence with technology
- Disability/access need affected
- Use library space for community activities
- Concern about reduced space if hired out
- Rely on staff support
- No impact
- Other (specify)

**Q6 Please tell us more about how you, your household, or your organisation may be affected**

Free text

**Q7 Do you have any ideas for how we could reduce the impact of these changes?**

Free text

**Q8 Do you have any other ideas or suggestions for how the library service could: be delivered differently, work more closely with communities, improve accessibility, reduce costs?**

- Yes
- No + Free text

**Q9 If your comments relate to a specific library, please tell us which one**

Free text

**Q10 Do you have any suggestions for how the library service could raise income? (Ideas: hire spaces, advertising, fundraising, donations, sponsorships)**

Free text

**Q11 Would you be interested in supporting or helping run a community-managed library at one of the sites currently at risk?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure + Contact details

**Q12 Is there anything else you would like us to know about any barriers you face in using library services?**

Free text

**Q13 What is your age?**

Age bands: Under 16    75+ + Prefer not to say

**Q14a Fairness issues to consider (Equality Act 2010 characteristics)**

Tick all that apply (Age, Disability, etc.)

**Q14b Additional comments in relation to fairness considerations**

Free text

**Q15 Please tell us about the language(s) you speak and read**

- English main
- Not English main
- Can speak English very well
- Other (specify)

**Q16 What is your ethnic group?**

Standard ONS categories + Prefer not to say

**Q17 Do you have a physical or mental health condition lasting 12 months or more that reduces your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?**

- Yes, a lot
- Yes, a little
- No

**Q18 What is your sex?**

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

**Q19 What is your current employment status?**

- Employed
- Student
- Retired
- Unemployed (looking/not looking)
- Looking after home/family
- Carer
- Armed Forces
- Prefer not to say
- Other

## Annex 5. Town and parish council and ward member responses

### Overview

Summaries of submissions from local councils and representatives, showing library usage, views on proposals, impacts identified, suggestions, and overall sentiment.

### Abbots Leigh Parish Council

<b>Library services used:</b>	Pill Library and Children's Centre; weekly use by older residents, parents, childminders, nurseries, and school children; access to Wi-Fi, computers, warm room, hot drinks, phone charging
<b>Views on proposals:</b>	Strongly disagree with Options A and C; strongly agree with Option B
<b>Impacts identified:</b>	Closure would disadvantage residents; nearest alternative Portishead Library is 4.6 miles away; mobile library inadequate replacement
<b>Suggestions/ideas:</b>	Extend opening hours; hire out rooms; explore leasing to charities for business rate relief; work with Alliance Homes and local groups; improve bookings; engage businesses and schools
<b>Community management:</b>	Does not support community managed model; urges NSC to sustain service
<b>Overall sentiment:</b>	Strong defence of Pill Library as vital for deprived communities; Abbots Leigh willing to contribute financially via precept and fundraising

### Bleadon Parish Council

<b>Library services used:</b>	Range of nearby libraries; mobile library (recently reduced)
<b>Views on proposals:</b>	Somewhat disagree with Options A, B, and C
<b>Impacts identified:</b>	No permanent library; no local schools; poor transport links; closures/reduced hours would severely limit access
<b>Suggestions/ideas:</b>	Ensure reviews reflect community needs; deliver services locally; recognise ageing population and limited digital engagement; address disadvantage for young people
<b>Community management:</b>	Not applicable

<b>Overall sentiment:</b>	Concerned proposals run contrary to community needs; stresses vulnerability of older residents and children
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## Churchill Parish Council

<b>Library services used:</b>	Winscombe Library; online services
<b>Views on proposals:</b>	Strongly disagree with Option A; somewhat disagree with Option B; strongly agree with Option C
<b>Impacts identified:</b>	Library provides warm space, prevents loneliness, supports integration, gives children access to books, offers PC access
<b>Suggestions/ideas:</b>	None beyond stressing importance of library as hub
<b>Community management:</b>	No interest
<b>Overall sentiment:</b>	Strong recognition of library's social value; supportive of Option C

## Congresbury and Puxton Parish Council

<b>Library services used:</b>	Congresbury Community-managed Library; other local libraries
<b>Views on proposals:</b>	Supportive of community-managed model (Congresbury already operates this way successfully)
<b>Impacts identified:</b>	Continued reliance on Congresbury library; changes could affect frequency of use
<b>Suggestions/ideas:</b>	None specific; implicit support for community-run approach
<b>Community management:</b>	Positive — Congresbury cited as successful example
<b>Overall sentiment:</b>	Regular but not heavy users; supportive of community-managed model

## Flax Bourton Parish Council

<b>Library services used:</b>	Nailsea and Clevedon Libraries; occasional use of Campus, Congresbury, Portishead, Weston, Yatton, and online
<b>Views on proposals:</b>	Somewhat agree with Options A – C; prefer reduced hours over closures
<b>Impacts identified:</b>	Concern about volunteer shortages
<b>Suggestions/ideas:</b>	Maximise use of council buildings; hire out unused space



**Community management:** No interest

**Overall sentiment:** Supports reduced hours; sceptical about volunteer reliance; urges better asset use

## Nailsea Town Council

**Library services used:** Nailsea Library

**Views on proposals:** Unsure on Options A – C; closures should be avoided

**Impacts identified:** Concern about car parking charges reducing footfall

**Suggestions/ideas:** Encourage school children to visit; fund core services via Council Tax

**Community management:** No interest

**Overall sentiment:** Neutral on options; opposed to closures; concern about external barriers

## Winscombe and Sandford Parish Council

**Library services used:** Winscombe Library (central to village life)

**Views on proposals:** Strongly backed continued NSC funding; argued usage data underestimates demand due to faulty access-system technology

**Impacts identified:** Library is an essential social hub reducing isolation, supporting wellbeing, promoting learning; central location boosts local shops and village vitality; limited public transport makes alternatives impractical

**Suggestions/ideas:** Requested early indication of NSC's decision to plan 2026-27 budget; urged recognition of library's wider social and economic value

**Community management:** Not explicitly addressed; emphasis placed on continued NSC funding rather than transfer

**Overall sentiment:** Strong defence of Winscombe Library as vital for equity, accessibility, and community wellbeing; closure or reduction seen as disproportionate and harmful

## Wrington Parish Council (grouped responses)

**Library services used:** Multiple local libraries; weekly mobile library service in Wrington; occasional use of staffed hours and online

<b>Views on proposals:</b>	Opposed to closures; somewhat disagree with Options A – C; supportive of reduced hours/stock budgets and self-service if necessary
<b>Impacts identified:</b>	Closure of static libraries (Pill, Winscombe, Worle) would reduce mobile library hours for Wrington/Redhill; deprivation for elderly without transport; loss of access to books, digital resources, and NSC advice
<b>Suggestions/ideas:</b>	Support community-run libraries where possible; accept reduced hours/stock budgets and increased self-service as compromise
<b>Community management:</b>	Supportive in principle if community capacity exists
<b>Overall sentiment:</b>	Strong defence of libraries as vital resources; opposed

### Pill (grouped responses: Pill Ward Member, Pill and Easton-in-Gordano Parish Council, Abbots Leigh Parish Council)

<b>Library services used:</b>	Pill Library and Children's Centre; weekly or monthly use; venue for councillor meetings; wide community use (childminders, schools, Guides, health services, warm room, Wi-Fi, hot drinks)
<b>Views on proposals:</b>	Strongly disagree with Options A and C; strongly agree with Option B
<b>Impacts identified:</b>	Pill West is among the most deprived areas in North Somerset; closure would disproportionately affect vulnerable residents; Portishead alternative unviable; mobile library inadequate
<b>Suggestions/ideas:</b>	Reduce staff hours equitably; extend hours via volunteers/Friends groups; taper changes; invest in self-access; bring in Health and Children's Services; hire out rooms; explore leasing to charities; engage businesses and schools
<b>Community management:</b>	Parish Council and Abbots Leigh oppose community-managed model; Ward Member supports Friends groups but stresses tapering and shared responsibility
<b>Overall sentiment:</b>	Pill Library seen as a flagship community hub; closure would be unjust and short-sighted; strong unified support for Option B and retention of council management

## Banwell and Winscombe (ward member)

<b>Library services used:</b>	Winscombe Library (mainly for meetings); family use more regular; also Pill, Portishead, Weston, Worle, Yatton, and online services
<b>Views on proposals:</b>	Unsure on Options A – C; open to community management if supported locally
<b>Impacts identified:</b>	Family more affected than respondent; Winscombe library space limited
<b>Suggestions/ideas:</b>	Support for community management of Winscombe Library, retaining Libraries West connection
<b>Community management:</b>	Conditional support
<b>Overall sentiment:</b>	Pragmatic acceptance of savings need; cautious support for community management

## Portishead East (ward member)

<b>Library services used:</b>	Portishead Library; online
<b>Views on proposals:</b>	Strongly disagree with Options A – C
<b>Impacts identified:</b>	Cuts seen as false economy; risk to wellbeing and community support
<b>Suggestions/ideas:</b>	Optimise assets; partner with councils/community groups; learn from Cornwall
<b>Community management:</b>	Willing to support, but framed within strategic investment
<b>Overall sentiment:</b>	Strong opposition to cuts; passionate defence of libraries as essential hubs

## Weston South (ward member, combined responses)

<b>Library services used:</b>	Weston-super-Mare Library
<b>Views on proposals:</b>	No detailed option preferences recorded
<b>Impacts identified:</b>	Regular reliance on Weston Library; importance of maintaining weekly access
<b>Suggestions/ideas:</b>	None provided
<b>Community management:</b>	No clear position
<b>Overall sentiment:</b>	Consistent weekly use; emphasis on ongoing importance of access

## Annex 6. **Children's responses**

The following pages show posters and letters submitted by children from Winscombe.

Save

Our

Library

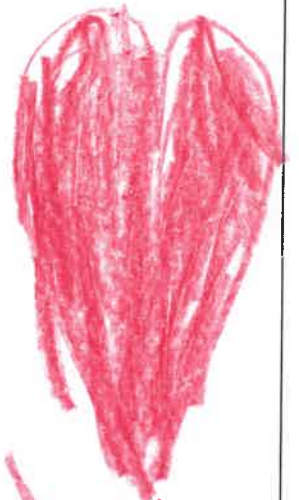
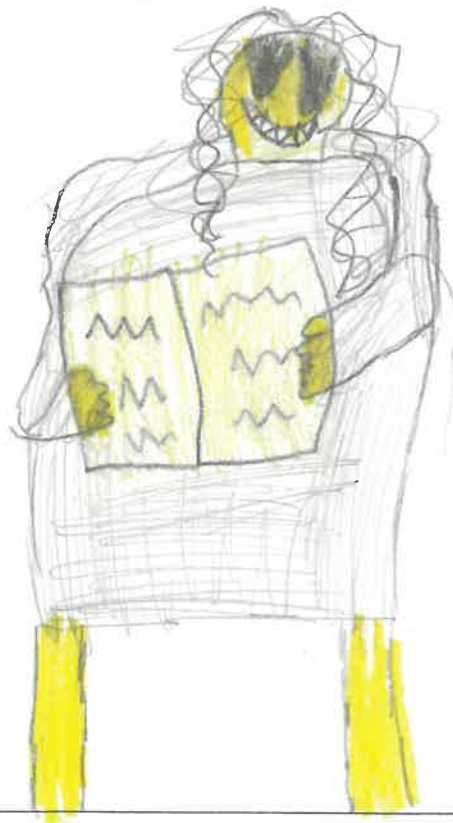




We love

Our

Library





# Save Our Library



Winscombe Primary School  
Moorham Road  
Winscombe  
North Somerset  
BS25 1HH  
22<sup>nd</sup> October 2025

To whom it may concern,

We are writing from year 5 at Winscombe Primary School in support of the library.

The library is important to us because we can get new books there. It's the only way that we can get books for free. Some of the books help us to learn. If you buy a book online and you don't like it, you can't return it but if you borrow it from the library you can and it hasn't cost any money. The library gives us the opportunity to read books that we didn't know about.

We have really enjoyed doing the summer reading challenge. Having the library in Winscombe encourages us to read more books. The Winscombe library is a five-star library. The library is a central part to our community and it would be a real lose to the village if it were to close. For some people it would ruin their daily routine and they would be heart-broken if the library closed.

It would be a real shame for those people that will lose their jobs if the library closes. How would it make you feel if you lost your job? We think you will really regret it if you close it. If you close the library people of Winscombe and surrounding area will be devastated.

Yours sincerely,

Maple Class

Year 5



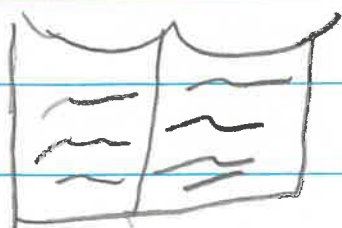
# Keep The Winscombe Library Open!

!!

We believe that the Library is a very important part of our community, we know that it is a calm reliable space for people of all ages. We would be devastated to see it go and become an other unreliable convenience store! It has incredible facilities such as: various options of books, you can easily borrow books with no hassle, it's also a very calm and relaxing place to study! As well, it would be a tragedy to see our wonderful Librarians lose their jobs! Also during the summer we have our 'Summer Reading Challenge' to keep us reading throughout the holidays!

Yours Sincerely, the Winscombe Primary 'Yr 6's'

Please reconsider, we want to keep our Library!





This publication is available in large print, Braille or audio formats on request.

Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English.

For all enquiries please contact  
[Libraries.review@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:Libraries.review@n-somerset.gov.uk)