

African Caribbean Centre Consultation

Findings of the public consultation

As at 22 November 2021

Prepared by LCC Neighbourhood Services



African Caribbean Centre consultation report

This report provides a summary of the findings of public consultation.

It includes information about:

- The options for the African Caribbean Centre,
 - The consultation method,
 - The public response and views expressed.
-

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises the outcomes of the public consultation on the usage of the African Caribbean Centre (ACC) and options for the future running of the Centre.

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

The consultation period ran from Tuesday 12th October 2021 until Sunday 21st November 2021. The consultation was carried out online and through paper questionnaires available at all LCC libraries and community centres.

The consultation was extensively promoted through a wide range of channels.

Existing partners, stakeholders and service users were contacted directly by letter or email message to ensure awareness of the consultation exercise. The consultation was promoted at the entrance to the ACC and service users were encouraged by staff members to complete a questionnaire during the consultation period. Posters were displayed at all 28 Neighbourhood Services Community Centres, Multi-Service Centres and Libraries as ACC users are distributed across the city.

A press release was issued to launch the survey with items appearing in the Leicester Mercury and the Assistant Mayor for Neighbourhood Services was invited to promote awareness of the consultation on Radio Leicester.

The consultation was promoted during the period through social media channels including Twitter and Facebook.

At the close of the consultation on the 21st November 2021, a total of 352 completed questionnaires were received. People were asked to identify whether they used the centre and if so which services they used. Respondents were also asked how they would prefer the centre to be run in the future and to provide any comments they might have. The main points drawn from the responses were:

- The consultation was widely promoted to all communities across Leicester city. It was made available online and as a paper questionnaire both in the African Caribbean Centre itself at all Council run community centres and libraries, as well as through social media and as a press release.
- The survey received a very high response rate with 352 questionnaires completed in total.
- The majority of respondents, 84%, were African Caribbean Centre users. The majority of those who responded use the centre at least once a month or more frequently.
- The most popular reasons for using the centre are social with 48% of respondents using the café, 47% attending social functions, 37% attending events and performances and 36% attending community group meetings.
- The centre is highly valued by users, with some commenting they have used the centre since childhood. Customers live across the city and many state they use the centre for cultural reasons.
- With regard to the future running of the centre, the majority of respondents who expressed a preference (53%) said they would prefer community organisations to be given the opportunity to take on the lease and running of the centre.

BACKGROUND

Current service provision

The African Caribbean Centre is located on Maidstone Street within the Highfields residential area. The community centre is run by Leicester City Council and offers a range of facilities on three floors. Previously the council operated the centre in partnership with a community organisation to provide volunteer support and promote its use. A large hall, stage and bar are located on the first floor. A community café, lounge area with public access computers and seminar room are available on the ground floor. The basement level includes an adult learning room classroom, dance studio and community radio room. Currently 45 partners and organisations are registered to deliver activities at the centre, with rooms hired on an hourly rate. The African Caribbean Centre is open 9am to 9.30pm Monday to Saturday and welcomes over 125,000 visitors each year..

Purpose of the consultation

The consultation was undertaken to identify the priorities of local people and community organisations for future use of the building. The views of the community were also sought on potential options for running the building in the future to engage local people in the development of proposals for the future running of the African Caribbean Centre. These proposals will be shared with the community together with next steps.

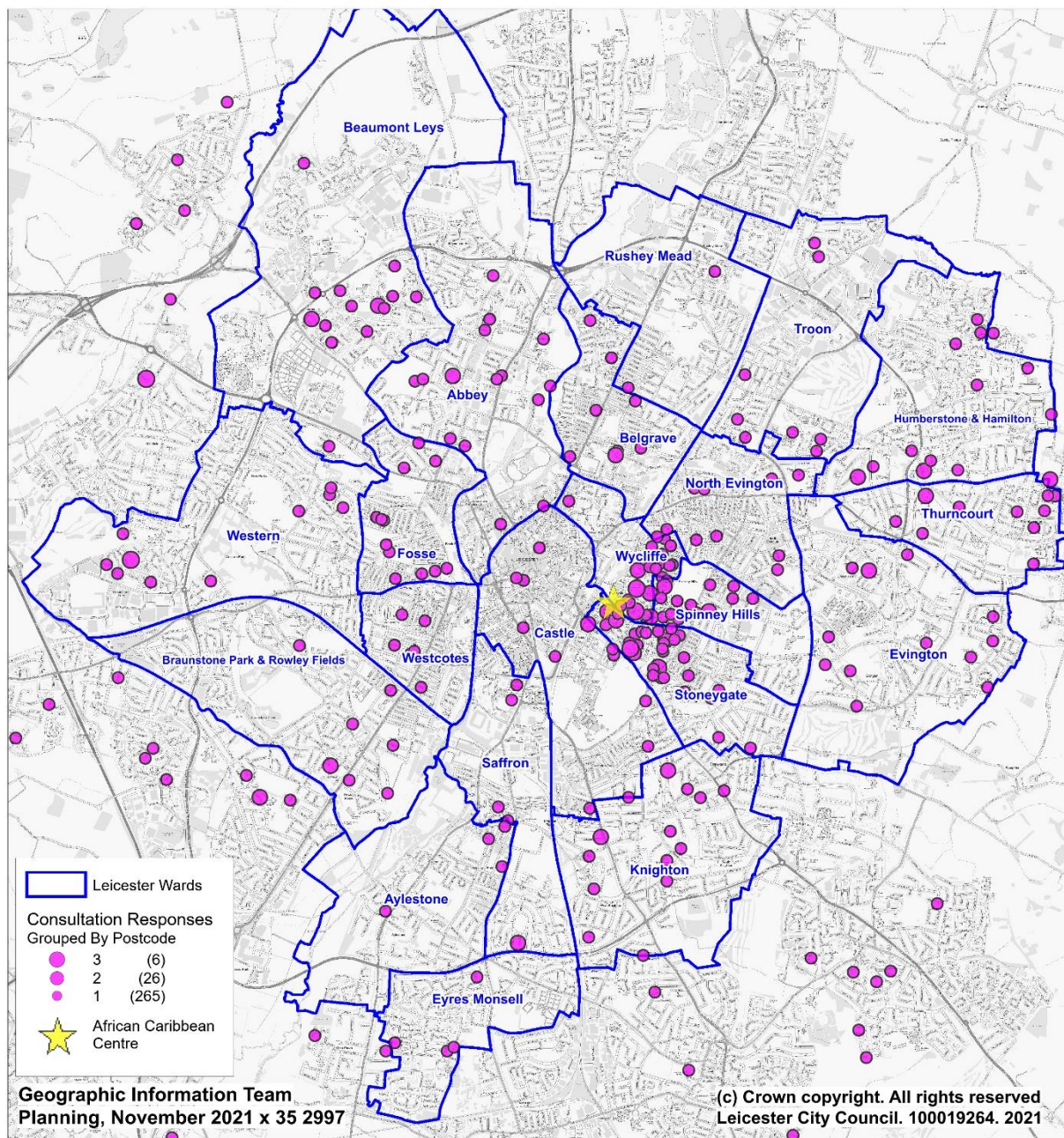
CONSULTATION RESULTS

In total 352 responses were received up until the closing date of the consultation. Of these, 238 were submitted online, and 114 were paper forms.

Question 1: Please tell us your postcode

335 people responded to this question. Postcodes supplied showed a cluster of respondents around the African Caribbean Centre in Wycliffe, Spinney Hills and Stonegate wards but with postcodes also distributed across the whole of the city. 261 respondents were city residents with 71 respondents living outside of the city. The following map shows the distribution of the postcodes given:

African Caribbean Centre - Consultation Responses By Postcode



Question 2: Have you used the African Caribbean Centre in the past three years?

All respondents answered this question. A high percentage (83.8%) of respondents said they had used the ACC in the last three years. It is noted that the centre was closed for 15 months between March 2020 and July 2021 due to national and local coronavirus restrictions:

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	295	83.8%
No	57	16.2%

Question 3: Do you use the centre as part of a community group or organisation?

288 (82%) respondents answered this question. The majority, 53% of respondents said they use the centre as part of a group.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	188	53.4%
No	100	28.4%
Not answered	64	18.2%

Respondents were asked to detail the group(s) they attended with. 55 different groups were referenced in total. 17 respondents attended Leicester Adult Skills And Learning Service (LASALS) classes.

Question 4: What types of activities do you take part in at the centre?

290 (82%) respondents answered this question. Respondents could select multiple options. The highest responses were for the café (48%), social functions (47%), events and performances (36%) and community group meetings (35%).

Option	Total	Percent
Café	170	48.3%
Social functions	165	46.9%
Events and performances	127	36.1%
Community group meetings	124	35.2%
Music and dance classes	89	25.3%
Public computers and Wi-Fi	72	20.6%
Children and young people’s activities	72	20.6%
Health and wellbeing sessions	65	19.6%
Advice and information sessions	64	18.2%
Adult learning courses	54	15.3%
Arts and crafts groups	52	14.8%
Fitness and exercise classes	47	13.4%
Church or religious group	35	9.9%
Other	16	4.6%
Not Answered	63	17.6%

Question 5: How often do you use the centre?

82% of respondents answered this question. 57% use the centre at least once a month or more frequently.

Option	Total	Percent
Less than once a month	89	25.3%
Once a month or more	74	21%
More than once a week	69	19.6%
Once a week	56	15.9%
Not Answered	64	18.2%

Question 6: Which areas of the centre do you use?

This question was answered by 82% of respondents. Multiple selections could be made for this question. The most popular response was the large hall (52%) followed by the café/lounge area (48%) and the public meeting rooms (36%).

Option	Total	Percent
Large hall	184	52.3%
Café lounge and social area	170	48.3%
Public meeting rooms	128	36.4%
Bar area	88	25%
Classrooms	80	22.7%
Dance studio	67	19%
Stage, changing rooms and performance equipment	46	13%
Consultation rooms	39	11%
Dedicated office space	20	5.7%
Not Answered	65	18.5%

Question 7: If you do not currently use the centre, please tell us why not?

This question was answered by most respondents who had answered “no” to question 2. 16% of all respondents answered this question. The most common reason for not using the centre was that they did not know what the centre offered (35 people).

Option	Total	Percent
I don't know what the centre offers	35	9.9%
The centre does not offer activities of interest to me	13	3.7%
The centre is not easy for me to travel to	6	1.7%
The centre does not offer the facilities I need	4	1.1%
Unable to book a room at the time I need	1	0.3%
Other	9	2.6%
Not Answered	296	84.1%

Question 8: How would you like to see the centre managed in the future?

All respondents answered this question. The most popular option was for Community organisations to be given the opportunity to take on the lease and running of the centre 48% of all responses, and 53% of all those who expressed a preference selected this option.

Comment	Total	Percent
Community organisations should be given the opportunity to take on the lease and running of the centre	168	47.7%
The council should run the centre in partnership with a community-based organisation	118	33.5%
The council should run the centre directly	31	8.8%
No preference	35	9.9%

Not Answered	0	0%
--------------	---	----

The following graph shows the options selected by all respondents who expressed a preference:

Comment	Total	Percent
Community organisations should be given the opportunity to take on the lease and running of the centre	168	53%
The council should run the centre in partnership with a community-based organisation	118	37.2%
The council should run the centre directly	31	9.8%

Question 9: Question 9: Do you have any other comments?

124 people (35%) responded to this question. The greatest number of comments expressed support for the option to offer the ACC to community groups for lease under the Council’s CAT policy. The comments have been categorised for analysis as follows. Some respondents commented on multiple points:

Comment	Total
Community organisations should be given the opportunity to take on the lease and running of the centre	41
The Centre is valuable and should be retained for the community	28
The council should run the centre in partnership with a community-based organisation	16
The ACC is important as the only African Caribbean community centre in Leicester	12
Suggestions for investment in the centre	10
There should be more provision for young people	7
The Council should run the centre directly	3
Welcoming / helpful staff	2
Running costs should be funded by Council to support community lease	2
The café service is valued	2
Bring back music evenings	2
Operational concerns if community group take on the running	2
The centre should not close	1
Parking improvements required	1
Other	21

The following are a representative selection of the comments made:

“African Caribbean centre is a community building for all. However from a child it has always been the only building for the African Caribbean community both young and old and still is to this day. It should provide community based activities for all ages and be accessible for private hire.”

“... This building in its small way enables some healing for both our youth and adults. We should be enabled to retain and develop it in a way that is fit for purpose.”

“Having lived in Leicester for all of my life, the African Caribbean Centre has been a part of my Caribbean Heritage living in Leicester. It is the one place we can call our own and know that the African Caribbean community who have been instrumental in managing the centre have African Caribbean communities best interests at heart. It needs to remain that way.”

“Basically I think the centre needs to be MUCH more proactive in meeting the needs of people (young people) in the area so a combination of City Council and Local input I think would be a more secure future for the Centre, but also would make the centre more accessible to ALL the different communities in Highfields.”

“Although it is a space that was designed to promote things for the Black community it is inclusive for all. It is a non threatening 'hub' for anyone to visit. This is very difficult to achieve. It is a safe place for old and young that has a real community feel. For those who attend regularly you quickly become a familiar face. It is also very safe for our young children / teenagers to go.”

“It is an important resource for all who live in Leicester. Steering by the Council could become too corporate, and it is important that communities can have independent spaces where they can decide what is important to them in the current climate, whilst being supported by the Council.”

“I have been going for over 50 years & now my children are benefiting. So please please please allow it to be leased as our lives & communities depend on it, please.”

“I love this centre it's been running for many years. It's the only Afro Caribbean Centre in Leicester which enables our Black Heritage People to come along and get involved with many different events and activities that are available for our community and also open to other ethnicities.”

“I think if the Centre is run by the Council, it would be better. It would prevent it from being taken over any specific community at the exclusion of others.”

“...I strongly support the idea of transferring the management of the facility to the organisation that use it most...”

“The ACC has been in the community for years.. it is a fantastic building with facilities that the community requested and want. I have watched our community fight for it year after year. This is the only community centre for the African Caribbean community along with other ethnic backgrounds. It should remain as the ACC and should be run along side the community...”

“The ACC is a key part of the Caribbean community and the relevant community organisations should be allowed to actively take part in its future”

“... I feel the ACC would be better managed by an African Heritage Community group on behalf on the council. This will create a better sense of ownership, raise its profile and interest within the African heritage community and maximise its utility.”

“The African Caribbean Centre is the only place in Leicester that Black African/Caribbean people are able to use and feel some sense of belonging without feeling uncomfortable and or disintegrated. It's the only safe haven for Black African/Caribbean people to get together uninterrupted and or pressured into not being in the right place.”

“The centre is and has been a focal point for the afro Caribbean community since I was a child, we talking over 40 years! This needs to remain open for future generations to come.”

“The centre is the hub of the African and Caribbean communities. Providing essential services for both young and old for the betterment of its users. It would greatly benefit the community if was self run, allowing the opportunity of autonomy in decision making, in the best interests of its users, for its users.”

“The council should share the running of the centre with community based organisations as it would give the best outcome for the community. This should be done till the community based are established in running the centre themselves”

“There is a long history to this centre. My understanding is that it was sold to the City Council from the working men’s club, for a peppercorn fee to specifically support the Black/African community of Leicester.. the city council has kindly supported and managed this for years. It is now the time for the community to have total responsibility and ownership for this centre...”

CONCLUSIONS

This consultation is to be used to consider the options for the future running of the African Caribbean Centre.

The key messages to be taken forward from this consultation period are:

- The consultation was widely promoted to all communities across Leicester city. It was made available online and as a paper questionnaire both in the African Caribbean Centre itself at all Council run community centres and libraries, as well as through social media and as a press release.
- The survey received a very high response rate with 352 questionnaires completed in total.
- The majority of respondents, 84%, were African Caribbean Centre users. The majority of those who responded use the centre at least once a month or more frequently.
- The most popular reasons for using the centre are social with 48% of respondents using the café, 47% attending social functions, 37% attending events and performances and 36% attending community group meetings.
- The centre is highly valued by users, with some commenting they have used the centre since childhood. Customers live across the city and many state they use the centre for cultural reasons.
- With regard to the future running of the centre, the majority of respondents who expressed a preference (53%) said they would prefer community organisations to be given the opportunity to take on the lease and running of the centre.
- It is recommended that, following the findings of the consultation, the Council explores the option for community organisations to be given the opportunity to take on the lease and running of the centre.

African Caribbean Centre survey

Consultation dates: 12 October – 21 November 2021

This survey is also available online at consultations.leicester.gov.uk

Overview

The African Caribbean Centre (ACC) is a social and cultural hub for local people. As part of our commitment to tackling racism and disadvantage in Leicester, we are asking for opinions on how the centre should be run in the future to provide the best service to the community.

About the centre

The African Caribbean Centre is located on Maldstone Street within the Highfields residential area. The community centre is run by Leicester City Council and offers a range of facilities on three floors. Previously the council operated the centre in partnership with a community organisation to provide volunteer support and promote its use.

A large hall, stage and bar are located on the first floor. A community café, lounge area with public access computers and seminar room are available on the ground floor. The basement level includes an adult learning room classroom, dance studio and community radio room.

Currently 45 partners and organisations are registered to deliver activities at the centre, with rooms hired on an hourly rate. The African Caribbean Centre is open 9am to 9.30pm Monday to Saturday and welcomes over 125,000 visitors each year.

Why your views matter

We want to work with local people and community organisations to identify priorities for future use of the building. We are also seeking the views of the community on potential options for running the building in the future.

We will consider all the ideas that people put forward and will develop proposals for the future running of the African Caribbean Centre. These proposals will be shared with the community later this year.

About you

[1] What is your postcode?

Please note: we collect postcode data to gain a better understanding of which parts of the city/county respond to our consultations. We cannot identify individual properties or addresses from this information.

Postcode

[2] Have you used the African Caribbean Centre in the past three years? (required field)

Please select only one item

Yes

No

If No, please go to Question 7

1



Your views as a centre user

[3] Do you use the centre as part of a community group or organisation?

Please select only one item

- Yes
No

If yes, please state which group or organisation

[4] What types of activities do you take part in at the centre?

Please select all that apply

- Café
- Public computers and Wi-Fi
- Adult learning courses
- Arts and crafts groups
- Music and dance classes
- Advice and information sessions
- Social functions
- Community group meetings
- Events and performances
- Fitness and exercise classes
- Children and young people's activities
- Church or religious group
- Health and wellbeing sessions
- Other

If other, please state

[5] How often do you use the centre?

Please select only one item

- Less than once a month
- Once a month or more
- Once a week
- More than once a week

[6] Which areas of the centre do you use?

Please select all that apply

- Dance studio
- Large hall
- Stage, changing rooms and performance equipment
- Public meeting rooms
- Café lounge and social area
- Classrooms
- Bar area
- Consultation rooms
- Dedicated office space

If you have used the centre in the past three years, please skip Question 7

Your views as not a current user

[7] If you do not currently use the centre, please tell us why not?

Please select all that apply

- I don't know what the centre offers
- The centre does not offer activities of interest to me
- The centre is not easy for me to travel to
- The centre does not offer the facilities I need
- Unable to book a room at the time I need
- Other

If other, please state

[11] Age:

Please select only one item

- under 18
- 18 - 25
- 26 - 35
- 36 - 45
- 46 - 55
- 56 - 65
- 66+
- Prefer not to say

[12] Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines a person as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities and has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months. People with HIV, cancer, multiple sclerosis (MS) and severe disfigurement are also covered by the Equality Act.

Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

If you have answered "Yes" to the above, please state the type of impairment that applies to you. People may experience more than one type of impairment; in which case you may need to tick more than one box. If none of the categories apply, please tick 'Other' and state the type of impairment.

Please select all that apply

- A long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy
- A mental health difficulty, such as depression, schizophrenia, or anxiety disorder
- A physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using your arms or using a wheelchair or crutches

A social / communication impairment such as a speech and language impairment or Asperger's syndrome / other autistic spectrum disorder

A specific learning difficulty or disability such as Down's syndrome, dyslexia, dyspraxia, or AD(H)D

Blind or have a visual impairment uncorrected by glasses

Deaf or have a hearing impairment

An impairment, health condition or learning difference that is not listed above (specify if you wish)

Prefer not to say

Other

[13] How would you define your religion or belief?

Please select only one item

- Atheist
- Bahai
- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jain
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- No religion
- Prefer not to say
- Other

[14] Sex

Please select only one item

Female

Male

Prefer to use my own term

Prefer not to say

If own term, please specify

Is your sex the same as you were assigned at birth?

Please select only one item

Yes

No

Thank you for completing the survey.

Please return all completed surveys by 21 November 2021 to:
African Caribbean Centre, Maidstone Rd, Leicester LE2 0UA or to any
Leicester City Council library or community centre.

Or by post to:
Beaumont Leys Library, Beaumont Way, Leicester LE4 1DS

For any queries, please contact communityservices@leicester.gov.uk