

# **Transforming Neighbourhood Services North East Area Consultation**

## **Findings of the public consultation**

**As at 24 October 2016**

Prepared by:

- Neighbourhood Services
- with the support of Transformation & Service Improvement Team

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

It includes information about:

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

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

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

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

- An initial engagement exercise was carried out between April and July 2013 to raise awareness of the TNS project and gain an overview of the general views and attitudes of residents towards neighbourhood services
- Focussed engagement with ward councillors, local MP, residents, service users, partners and stakeholders in the North East area of the city between June and July 2016 to help develop draft proposals for the transformation of the area
- Analysis of the data collected and the responses received through the engagement exercises to construct a draft model, which was presented to the City Mayor and Executive in August 2016.
- Assessments of equalities impact which will be further developed following consultation in order to inform the final decision
- Consultation on the draft model during September and October 2016, involving a series of meetings with resident groups, stakeholder groups and community groups and the availability of a form to complete to provide feedback, comment and suggestions against the draft proposals (**subject of this report**)

The consultation period ran from Monday 12 September 2016 until Sunday 23 October 2016 and was carried out in two main parts:

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

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

A petition concerning the proposals for the Belgrave area was also submitted and is referenced as part of this report.

In general the responses and comments received were all supportive of the buildings that each individual used. However there was a general acknowledgement that the services provided are more important to people than the buildings from which they are currently provided. There was a high level of engagement with the consultation and also in finding the best solutions for delivering services by using building better.

A total of 18 meetings were held upon request, covering a variety of community groups, open meetings, ward community meetings, and user groups. Approximately 720 people attended the meetings throughout the period. The main messages drawn from the meetings held with groups are that:

- Libraries and the functions they perform are highly valued as community hubs. In particular local residents value access to online information and services, promotion of reading for learning and leisure and support for children and young people's educational needs.
- There was significant support for the activities in community centres which are important for local areas
- There was good support for youth sessions from youth centre users. The key building consideration was the provision of a safe space which the young people felt was theirs. There was interest in working together with officers to find alternative solutions where potential building changes would impact upon youth sessions.
- In general there was agreement between groups that the services provided were more important than particular buildings. However in the Belgrave area many service users were keen to see both the library and the Neighbourhood Centre buildings retained.
- There was concern at the busiest sites about the feasibility of amalgamating services into fewer buildings.
- There was concern about proposals to reorganise lunch club provision at Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre in order to make better use of the building.
- There was general agreement with all groups that savings can be achieved by reorganising services to make better use of buildings
- There is some support for transferring of assets through the Community Asset Transfer procedure for less well used buildings, but also some concern that the community and existing users would continue to be able to use the buildings post transfer.
- There was enthusiasm amongst some groups to work with the council to find solutions, in particular at Rushey Mead with regard to potential asset transfer should the Recreation Centre be offered and at Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre with regard to raising income through room hire.

Between 12 September and 23 October a questionnaire containing details of the proposals and a 'tear-off' response form was also used to gather opinions on the proposals. These were widely distributed in the area, and a total of 5,000 leaflets were circulated. At the closure of the consultation on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2016, a total of 1,436 completed form responses were received. People were asked to identify which services and centres they used, what benefits they would receive from the proposals and any reasons why the proposals would disadvantage them. The main points drawn from the responses were:

- There is good support for the services and activities offered by community centres
- There is a high level of support for library services
- A large number of responses were received from Belgrave and Rushey Mead wards regarding the proposals for buildings in this area.
- Many respondents are concerned about the proposal to relocate Belgrave Library to Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre. Key concerns were around the availability of sufficient space and the impact on existing services and activities.
- Respondents are concerned to ensure that existing activities and services can continue under the building changes proposed. This was the case for the lunch club and exercise classes operating at Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre.
- There is strong support for the Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre and for the pre-school which operates there.

- There is good support for the proposal to improve access to the community hall at Hamilton Library

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

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## **BACKGROUND**

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

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

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

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

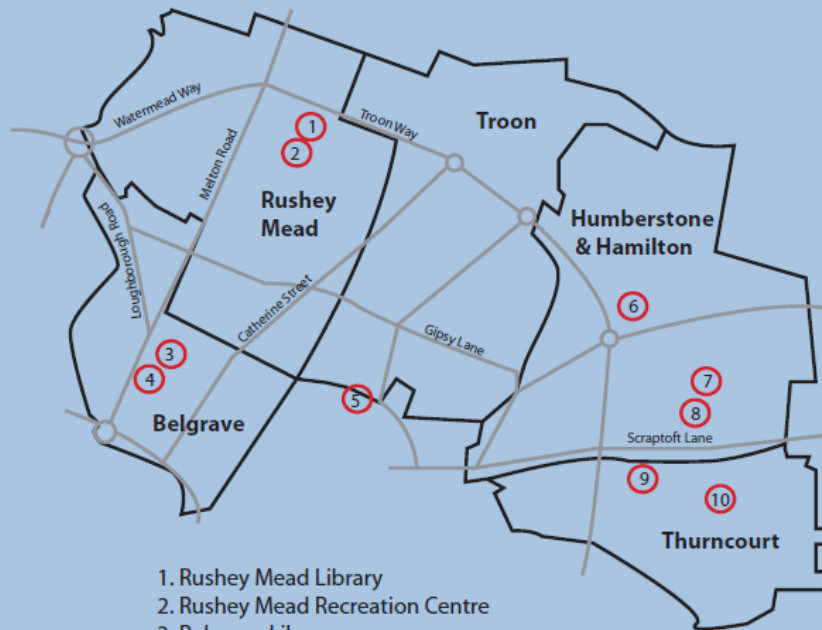
- Neighbourhood Services - Community Services and Libraries
- Adult Skills & Learning
- Customer Services
- Youth Centres

The buildings within the scope of the North East are:

- Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre
- Belgrave Library
- Armadale Centre
- Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre
- Hamilton Library & Learning Centre
- Northfields Neighbourhood Centre
- Rushey Mead Library
- Rushey Mead Recreation Centre
- Ocean Road Community Centre
- Thurnby Lodge Youth & Community Centre

The following map shows the wards covered by the north east neighbourhood and the community buildings which were included in the review. The wards included are: Belgrave, Rushey Mead, Troon, Humberstone & Hamilton and Thurncourt.

# Neighbourhood buildings: North east area



1. Rushey Mead Library
2. Rushey Mead Recreation Centre
3. Belgrave Library
4. Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre
5. Northfields Neighbourhood Centre (including Youth Centre)
6. Hamilton Library & Learning Centre
7. Armadale Youth Centre
8. Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre
9. Ocean Road Community Centre
10. Thurnby Lodge Youth and Community Centre

This map shows approximate locations for illustrative purposes

## **CONSULTATION METHOD**

### **Objectives and techniques**

The public consultation period for the North East area ran from 12 September 2016 until 23 October 2016. The aims of the consultation were to promote awareness of the TNS programme in the local area, to identify and engage stakeholders, to gather information on how neighbourhood services and buildings are currently used in the area and to collect any comments on the draft proposals made and any other suggestions for change.

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

- Data collection exercise to identify the buildings in scope, costs associated, services provided (both internally and commissioned through voluntary sector organisations), usage statistics, historical information
- An initial city-wide engagement exercise was carried out between April and July 2013 to raise awareness and gain an overview of the general views and attitudes of residents towards neighbourhood services
- A more in-depth and focussed engagement process was carried out between 6 June and 17 July 2016 to collect suggestions and comments from service users and residents
- Exploratory work into how buildings from other service areas not in the core scope i.e. Children's Centres, schools etc. could be utilised
- Analysis of the data collected and the responses received through the engagement exercises to construct a draft model, which was presented to the City Mayor and Executive in August 2016.
- Assessments of equalities impact which will be further developed during July of engagement in order to inform the final decision
- Consultation on the draft model during September and October 2016, involving a series of meetings with resident groups, stakeholder groups and community group and the availability of a form to complete to provide feedback, comment and suggestions against the draft proposals (**Subject of this report**)

The next steps are:

- Analysis of the data collected and the responses received through the engagement exercises to construct a set of proposals, which will be presented to the City Mayor and Executive for approval.
- Subject to this approval, commencement of implementation projects to effect the changes.

### **Summary of citywide engagement, April – July 2013**

Details of the previous engagements between April – July 2013 have been previously reported.

The main outcomes of these previous exercises were:

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



### **Summary of north east area engagement, 6 June – 17 July 2016**

During 6 June – 17 July 2016, 5 drop in sessions and 9 focus groups were held focusing on services and buildings in the North East area of Leicester. Questionnaires were made widely available at community buildings in the area and also online. A total of 1,191 questionnaires were completed, mostly on paper, but some online.

A separate report published in September 2016 is available outlining detailed analysis of the engagement period.

The report summarises the main outcomes of the initial engagement work as follows:

The main reasons given for using services were:

- Facilities/services (half of all responses)
- Range of services available (quarter of all responses)
- Ease of access
- Friendliness of staff

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

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

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

### **Summary of North East area Consultation, 12 September – 23 October 2016**

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

- A series of meetings with residents, service users and stakeholders. Two large consultation events were held at Hamilton Library and Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre respectively. The events were chaired by the Assistant Mayor for Neighbourhoods and attended by senior officers with a remit for the services in question. The events were open to everybody and were very well attended. In addition a series of consultation meetings with officers were arranged for interested community groups upon request. Focus groups were held at all three youth centres and a resident led focus group was arranged for stakeholders in the Belgrave area following expressions of interest at the consultation evening.
- A questionnaire was made available in paper format at community buildings across the north east area and online for people to provide individual responses and comments.

Additional responses have also been included in this report:

- Some groups made separate submissions which were not part of the questionnaire.
- A petition was circulated online and on paper.

The details of the meetings held are as follows:

Organisation/Person	Venue	Time/Date
The Mens/Ladies Exercise Groups	Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	Monday 26/09/16
Open Meeting	Hamilton Library	Monday 26/09/16
Open Meeting	Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	Tuesday 27/09/16
Rushey Mead ward meeting	Rushey Mead Recreation Centre	Tuesday 4/10/16
Pukaar group	Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	Friday 07/10/16
Ward Cllr Tour of Netherhall buildings	Netherhall NC & Armadale	Friday 07/10/16
Bethel Pneuma Tabernacle Church	Town Hall	Friday 07/10/2016
Northfields Youth Centre users	Northfields Youth Centre	Monday 12/10/2016
Armadale Youth Centre users	Armadale Youth Centre	Monday 12/10/2016
Thurnby Lodge Youth Centre users	Thurnby Lodge Youth and Community Centre	Tuesday 13/10/2016
Bright Bees Nursery	Telephone meeting	Wednesday 14/10/2016
Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre Lunch Club	Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	Friday 14/10/2016
Belgrave Focus Group (resident led)	Town Hall	Tuesday 18/10/2016
Islah Trust	Town Hall	Tuesday 18/10/2016
Asian Towers Lunch Club	Town Hall	Tuesday 25/10/2016
Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre Lunch Club	Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	Friday 14/10/2016
Rushey Mead Recreation Centre users	Rushey Mead Recreation Centre and Armadale Youth Centre	Monday 24/10/2016
Thurnby Lodge Management Committee	Thurnby Lodge Youth and Community Centre	Tuesday 25/10/2016

A questionnaire containing details of the engagement and a 'tear-off' response form was used to gather opinions on the proposals. A total of 5,000 paper questionnaires were widely distributed in the area from 12 September 2016 to 23 October 2016. The questionnaire was also made available on the Council's open consultation website. Translations of the text were made available in Gujarati, Punjabi and Urdu.

## **PUBLIC RESPONSE AND VIEWS EXPRESSED**

### **Consultation meetings**

A series of consultation meetings were held attended by residents, service users, community organisations and stakeholders in the North East area of the city. The meetings included two open consultation events held at Hamilton Library and Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre and chaired by the Assistant Mayor for Neighbourhoods.

In addition focus groups were held with young people at each of the three youth centres. A resident led focus group was also arranged for stakeholders in the Belgrave area who had expressed an interest at the consultation evening.

Meetings with individual groups were arranged upon request.

A total of 18 meetings were held during the period, with wide attendance from a range of residents, stakeholders, partners and service users. The Assistant Mayor for Neighbourhoods, ward councillors and Keith Vaz MP attended to support a number of the meetings. Officers for a range of services were available to facilitate and record the meetings.

An estimated total of 728 people attended the focus group meetings.

### **General Queries and Views arising from meetings**

- People attending the groups were protective of the sites that they currently use, but there was a general acceptance that locality based services are more important than particular buildings
- There were concerns about the busy-ness and capacity of some buildings proposed for amalgamation
- There was concern about the impact of co-location of services on existing user groups
- There was concern about the quality of the services proposed for reorganisation under the proposals, and in particular regarding the library service, community events and the lunch club in Belgrave.
- Concerns were raised about the costs of using buildings increasing, particularly if they are transferred to other organisations.
- Enquiries and discussions were held around the potential for asset transfer of buildings.

### **26 September: Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre Mens & Ladies Exercise Groups Number of attendees – 160 People**

Interpretation services present

A briefing was given outlining the draft proposals for the Belgrave area. Service users were asked for their thoughts about moving Belgrave Library into Belgrave Neighbourhood centre. There was a strong consensus of opinion against this idea. One service user asked for a show of hands for and against the idea. All present opposed the idea.

Some of the comments that were given:-

- Belgrave Neighbourhood centre isn't quiet enough for library use
- the building is already too busy with the services currently running there

- there isn't enough room to accommodate the Belgrave Library service
- what would happen to the services currently running in Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre if Belgrave Library moves into the main hall? The key concern for this group is the future of the exercise groups which require the large hall space to operate
- if the exercise groups were reduced or discontinued this would then affect users' mental and physical health
- users stated they want to keep Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre the way it is now
- moving the Belgrave Library into Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre would cause Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre to be overcrowded

Users highlighted the important health benefits of the exercise classes and the wider programme of activities at Belgrave. The classes are regarded as crucial for mental, physical and social wellbeing.

People thought that bringing in adult learning classes was a good idea, but noted there are already some classes for adults available at the Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre.

Users thought that the proposal to invest in the building was good, but some commented that it needed to be knocked down and rebuilt; this is because the building is very old.

Another service user suggested selling both Belgrave Library and Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre to fund a purpose built joint service centre located near the park and housing both the library and community centre.

Many service users have an emotional attachment to the building as they have been using it for 30 – 40 years.

Service users were happy regarding plans to review room hire so long as groups or services that are currently happening in the centre could continue. It was thought that existing users would be able to pay more.

The key issue for the exercise groups is that the current capacity is not sufficient.

Although the groups run 3 times a week they are so well attended that members can only come to one session.

## **26 September: Consultation event, Hamilton Library**

### **Number of attendees – 100 People**

**Panel:** Cllr Kirk Master, Asst Mayor for Neighbourhoods (Chair); Adrian Wills, Head of Neighbourhood Services; John Leach, Director Neighbourhoods & Enforcement; Cllr Vi Dempster, Keith Vaz MP

Adrian Wills explained the background to the TNS programme and outlined the proposals for the north east area. Clarification was requested and given on the council's community asset transfer policy.

Cllr Master asked for service user's comments and suggestions. Key points were as follows:

- Officers say that the proposals are "our" proposals but they're not our proposals. People didn't want the libraries to close nor did they want any cuts to happen.
- A Rushey Mead resident commented "Closing buildings will cause the services to be cut. You said that services won't be cut but due to moving libraries into community centres but this would happen because there isn't enough room for everything"
- If self-service was introduced into libraries then this wouldn't work, as we need the staff to help us find books, engage with the users and to help manage the building, keeping it clean, safe and accessible for all.

- A member of the Hamilton Resident's Association mentioned that Hamilton Library Centre main hall is well used. Could the community take this building on, and what skills would an organisation need to run the building successfully? Adrian Wills explained that where buildings are offered for Community Asset Transfer the council offers independent support working together with an organisation called Locality. Kerry Gray (Head of Adult Learning) also offered help in supporting organisations to gain the skills that they need. Reassurance was given that the current proposal was for the council to continue to run the library centre.
- MP Keith Vaz commented that residents pay for council services and the council has a responsibility to provide the services that the public want. Mr Vaz stated it was important that the right buildings were retained for community use.
- Many people suggested retaining Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre under council control and closing the Armadale Centre because it is better suited to community use and could accommodate youth sessions. There was a consensus amongst those attending that Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre was the preferred building.
- Some community groups use the centres to worship. If these buildings were closed they would need to find somewhere else to worship. A group using Thurnby Lodge Community Centre requested reassurance that they would not be displaced as a result of the proposals.
- Some service users suggested that Rushey Mead Library should have an extension; the library should not be combined with Rushey Mead Recreation Centre.
- It was suggested that some buildings that are not being occupied after 4pm be brought into use for the community to increase capacity in the area.
- Hamilton area doesn't offer many activities for Senior Citizens – it was suggested the council do more for in the area for this group.
- More information was requested regarding the lunch club at Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre. Would the proposed changes to the kitchen mean the lunch club is could be taken out of the Centre and relocated to another facility?
- Hamilton Residents Association welcomed the proposal to make the hall at Hamilton Library easier for the community to use. However it was felt the building isn't big enough; and the hall should ideally be extended into the garden. They also mentioned that the senior citizens struggle to get to other buildings and need transport. Cllr Vi Dempster advised that transportation could be organised through the ward funding bids.
- It is difficult to hire large halls in schools – could the council work with schools to open up these spaces and ensure they are affordable for community hire? Cllr Master suggested to that service users contact the schools governors to speak to them about the prices and room hire.
- It was suggested ongoing building maintenance costs should be taken into account when making decisions for the area.
- Parents using the nursery at Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre were concerned that it could close under the proposals. There was good support for the nursery and concern that there is limited alternative provision in the immediate area.

- There was concern Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre has been neglected and that the wrong centres were proposed for closure. The Netherhall dance group were concerned that the Armadale centre would not be suitable for them.
- Several service users were concerned that Ocean Road Community Centre is run down. If the centre is closed can the groups all be accommodated at Thurnby Lodge Community Centre which is very busy? Adrian Wills confirmed that officers would work with all groups to find the best solutions.
- It was stated that Thurnby Lodge Community Centre was also in need of refurbishment.

Cllr Master thanked members of the public for attending and advised interested groups to make individual appointments with council officers to discuss ideas or concerns.

### **27 September: Consultation event, Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre**

#### **Number of attendees – 200 People**

**Panel:** Cllr Kirk Master, Asst Mayor for Neighbourhoods (Chair); Adrian Wills, Head of Neighbourhood Services; John Leach, Director Neighbourhoods

An interpreter was present.

Before the meeting took place Children's author Alan Gibbons made an unplanned statement to the hall:

"People think libraries are important to people's education, health and wellbeing, they are right! Merging the libraries into the community centres would reduce the library service, this is not right! There will be fewer books, less room to relax and read. We need experienced librarians to operate the libraries. We should not let them close our libraries! Belgrave is the second most popular library in this city"

The meeting was lively, with widespread opposition to the proposal to move Belgrave Library into Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre. The key points raised were:

- Service users wanted to receive the notes from the earlier focus group meetings held in July
- Some service users didn't understand what was meant by library and customer service self-service terminals. Adrian Wills explained that these facilities would be offered in addition to the regular staff. There was no implication that communities would have to run the building for themselves.
- Service users want Belgrave Library to remain where it is. Reasons given included:
- Children need the library to help with their learning. The council should retain the full library service in its present location especially there if there could be cut backs in other Children's Services.
- There isn't enough room to run the library and the Neighbourhood Centre in one building.
- Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre is too noisy for library users.
- The number of books should not be reduced as books are crucial to learning to read and obtaining verified information which the internet cannot guarantee.
- People use the books at Belgrave Library to learn English. This is important to people who move to this country without knowing how to speak English.

- Cllr Master stated that the proposals were to reduce buildings, not services. Residents asked how the same library service could be delivered from Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre as other activities needed to be accommodated.
- If the library moved into the main hall it would not be possible to host larger events at the centre. Could the centre still be used as a polling station?
- Parking at Belgrave neighbourhood Centre is already problematic. How could library users travelling by car also be accommodated? “Would you build a bigger car park?”
- Both Belgrave Library and Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre are community hubs where old and young meet up with their peers. There were concerns this would not be possible due to capacity in the building.
- Tim Foster, Head Teacher at Abbey Primary School spoke on behalf of his students: “Belgrave library needs to stay as it is. People value the library – they don’t have the money to stock up on books. The year 6 students go to the library every Friday to develop their skills and knowledge and to improve on their studies. Moving the library into the Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre would stop these visits because there wouldn’t be enough room.”
- Service users asked where in the Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre the library would go? The centre is used efficiently and there isn’t enough room to move the library into the building.
- Belgrave Lunch club users had concerns about not cooking on site. What would happen to the kitchen staff and who would be cooking the food and how would the food be delivered?
- A young person stated the library was used by school children because it was quiet, but moving it into the Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre would cause disruption when young children are trying to study.
- Councillor Sood suggested to that there were other ways of increasing income, for example by refurbishing some of the rooms at BNC to create more capacity to increase income.
- Residents suggested that both buildings could continue to be run by increasing income. For example room hire charges could be increased at Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, or snacks sold at Belgrave Library
- Councillor Rita Patel said a few words to the service users. She mentioned that the community and the council needed to work together to come up with sustainable solutions. It was important to find solutions now as reductions in funding were inevitable.
- A number of residents requested a focus group be held to work on ideas for the two buildings.

Cllr Master thanked members of the public for attending and advised interested groups to make individual appointments with council officers to discuss ideas or concerns.

#### **4 October: Rushey Mead Ward Meeting**

**Number of attendees – 40 People**

**Panel:** Cllr Piara Singh Clair; Cllr Rita Patel; Cllr Ross Willmott;

Extract from Action Log – Item 4: TNS consultation

Lee Warner, Senior Project Manager, Neighbourhood & Environmental Services informed the meeting that the council was reviewing the way local services operated in the North East of the City which included the community facilities in Rushey Mead ward, Troon ward, Belgrave ward, Humberstone & Hamilton ward and Thurncourt ward.

It was noted that 1200 responses had been received for the initial consultation in June/July and from that a set of proposals had been developed which the council was now putting out for further consultation.

Officers to note concerns and feedback during discussion which included:

- There were not many services in the area and residents wanted the Rushey Mead Library and the Rushey Mead Recreation Centre to remain open
- If feedback included new proposals would they be considered and would people in the area be consulted on alternative suggestions?
- If Rushey Mead Library moved into Rushey Mead Recreation Centre space would be reduced and not enough room for all the facilities and functions both buildings run.
- The consultation did not say how much would actually be saved by the proposals.

Residents encouraged to respond to the consultation on the proposals before 23rd October 2016. Forms were available at local council buildings and online at the council's website. More information could also be obtained by emailing: - [TNS@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:TNS@leicester.gov.uk)  
ACTION: Councillor Patel to meet local residents to consider and help with their responses on the proposal for the Recreation Centre.

ACTION: The Community Engagement Officer to book the Recreation Centre for Tuesday 11/10/16 for the meeting between Councillor Patel and local residents.

### **5 October: Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre Lunch Club Committee**

#### **Number of attendees – 8 People**

Supported by: Cllr Manjula Sood; Cllr Mansukhlal Chohan

#### **Comments**

- Lunch club committee members identified important benefits of the lunch club as healthy eating, physical, mental and social wellbeing of elderly members.
- Control over the ingredients is very important. This is currently achieved by cooking in house and sourcing the food directly to ensure the quality of the meals is good.
- The social value of the lunch club was also highlighted. The social interaction afforded by the regular lunch club sessions was thought to be beneficial in terms of avoiding higher health care costs elsewhere in the public sector.
- The lunch club committee feel that the high numbers attending – up to 70 people each weekday – are due to the quality assurance around the in-house cooking. There is a concern that attendance and income would fall if the food was brought in from an outside provider.
- The current kitchen capacity was discussed. The committee felt that it would be possible to reduce the size of the kitchen by up to half and still cook in-house. This could be partially achieved by rationalising the current ageing cooking equipment which would require investment. Also substantial storage space could be reduced through changing to daily deliveries.



- The committee felt there was further potential to increase numbers and generate additional income.
- In summary the committee said that a smaller but appropriate kitchen could be accommodated to create additional space for hire income within the centre. Kitchen operations could be reviewed as part of a change project if agreed.
- If works were required following a decision then committee would be happy to arrange an alternative offsite during this period.

### **7 October: Pukaar Group**

#### **Number of attendees: 10 people**

The key points raised were:

- Concern that a decision has already been made
- Why weren't disabled people at the earlier meetings?
- Some people said they would have no objection to the proposals so long as their group could still meet at BNC.
- Others objected to the proposals. It was felt the centre is used by many people and stops them from getting depressed. Improves people both mentally and physically, doing activities such as exercise, festivals, yoga. People look forward to attending many activities that take place within this centre.
- BNC is the heart of the (Belgrave) community.
- Where could the library go? You can't put on any programs or hire the hall, if you put the library in there. If you put the library in the Small Hall there will be no dinner or lunch club.
- If you change the way the lunch club is provided, we won't get fresh food.
- What will happen to our children if the library moves, please don't abandon them? There are changes proposed for Rushey Mead Library too.
- Why do any buildings need to change? (Officers explained that council funding was reduced resulting in pressure to save money by reorganising services)
- The group agreed their key priority was the Neighbourhood Centre. "All the staff here respect us, they don't look at our disabilities only our abilities." "People will be left at home alone if you stop the lunch club or the exercise classes." "We can't afford to cook for ourselves, it costs too much to get all the ingredients just to make food for one person."
- What will happen to those people who are disabled, where will they go? One carer looks after so many of us, this avoids the need to have a one-to-one carer.
- "We come and go shopping, socialise, we are like a family here. We have given to the centre too. We had automatic doors (room 4) installed."
- Why doesn't it (the library) go to the Peepul Centre?
- What will happen to the library building, if it moves here?
- In summary it was felt there were already many services operating at BNC. Facilities around Cossington Street worked very well because everything is close by, and access is good. The lunch club is important as "one good meal a day makes a lot of difference to us. The food is really good here at BNC". The whole community is making use of BNC.

**7 October: Visits to Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre & Armadale Centre**  
**Number of attendees: 60 people**

Officers facilitated access to Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre and the Armadale Centre. In attendance: Cllr Vi Dempster, Cllr Rashmi Joshi, Cllr Gurinder Singh Sandhu, Keith Vaz MP.

**7 October: Bethel Pneuma Tabernacle Church**  
**Numbers attending: 4 people**

Comments

- The church has been worshipping at Thurnby Lodge Community Centre for several years. Meetings are every Sunday at 12noon – 3.30pm
- There was concern about the potential movement of activities from Ocean Road Community Centre to Thurnby Lodge Centre. What would happen to these groups and what would the impact be on existing users at Thurnby Lodge?
- Adrian Wills explained that the Neighbourhood Services team would work with the groups to find the best solutions for them. The withdrawal from one centre should not result in disruption of users at another centre. It may be the case that some small changes could be requested of groups to ensure existing activities could continue
- If Ocean Road was offered for Community Asset Transfer checks would need to be in place to protect existing.
- The group were asked to consider whether the current hire charges for council run community centres should be reviewed. It was acknowledged that budgets were reduced and that solutions should be found to enable the council to run services within the funding available. Part of the solution should involve income.
- The group highlighted that their current location at Thurnby Lodge Community Centre works very well for the group, and should continue as it is.
- It was suggested that the network of stakeholders built up through the TNS consultation process could be used to link interested groups together and to provide greater opportunities for sharing.

**12 October: Northfields Youth Centre focus group**  
**Number attending: 8 Young People**

- Young people were disappointed by the proposal to close the Youth Centre.
- They would like to know more about the alternatives which could be made available to young people in the area.
- The group were willing for officers to explore the local Play Scheme as a potential youth provision.

**12 October: Armadale Youth Centre focus group**  
**Number attending: 10**

- Young people were happy for other users to share their space when youth sessions are not happening
- They were happy that the proposal was not to close Armadale.

- They requested that Wi-Fi be installed

### **12 October: Bright Bees nursery at Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre**

#### **Number attending: 2**

- Government grants are available for the places at the nursery and therefore places are in high demand.
- Bright Bees nursery provides care for many children on a deprived estate. There is very little nearby provision elsewhere on the estate so the nursery is very important to local parents. The nursery is well regarded and has received good support from parents during the engagement and consultation periods.
- Whatever happens, the community centre is the best site for the nursery. The Netherhall building is well located for families on the estate and adaptations have been made to provide care for young children.
- Regardless of whether the building is retained under Council control or offered out to private organisations the nursery would still be required on the estate and preferably located at the Netherhall building.
- The nursery would be happy to be involved in alternative options for the running of the building depending on the decision taken.

### **13 October: Thurnby Lodge Youth and Community Centre**

#### **Number attending: 10**

- Young people were happy for other users to share their space when youth sessions are not happening
- They were happy with the proposals for the youth centres overall.

### **14 October: Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre Lunch Club**

#### **Number attending: 50 lunch club members**

In attendance: Cllr Mansukhlal Chohan; Cllr Manjula Sood; Cllr John Thomas; Keith Vaz MP; the lunch club committee

- Officers joined lunch club members, ward cllrs and Keith Vaz MP for a tour of the kitchens and a meal
- Around 50 lunch club members attended to demonstrate how the lunch club operates
- A tour of the kitchen was undertaken. The committee members explained that the food was freshly sourced and therefore good quality, healthy ingredients could be guaranteed by cooking on site.
- Many lunch club members are elderly and have attended for many years
- The case was made for the role played by the lunch club in keeping older people physically and mentally healthy through socially activity and healthy food.
- The lunch club at the neighbourhood centre serves as a base for some users. Some attendees drop in early in the morning, leave their bags at the centre and go out into town or the local area before returning for their meal at lunchtime.
- Some members said they were concerned about proposals to bring the library into the Neighbourhood Centre, as this may mean the lunch club is displaced. Some were worried that the lunch club sessions would be curtailed by bringing more activities into the centre.

- Some members made the point that the lunch club was saving the NHS money by keeping older people active and healthy.
- Lunch club members were against changing the present arrangements by bringing food in from outside. It was suggested that a healthy specification could be given to external providers. However there were concerns over loss of control over the sourcing and quality of the food.
- Some lunch club members were keen to increase lunch club income by bringing in more members. It was suggested this could be done by arranging transport (for example a minibus).
- Mr Vaz spoke in support of older people who rely on the lunch club.
- A petition to keep the lunch club without any change to operations was launched.
- Mr Vaz requested officers to accompany him for a short visit of the nearby Belgrave Library. He spoke to a number of users who supported the current facility.

### **18 October: Belgrave area Focus Group (resident led)**

**Number attending: 12**

Note of main discussion points:

The focus group was initiated by a local resident and facilitated by officers. Attendees had expressed an interest in attending a focus group at the earlier consultation event on 27 September, or from previous focus group meetings.

The main points were as follows:

#### Consultation

- There were suggestions that the consultation process could have been more extensive to ensure the widest possible reach. It was suggested that further work with community partners, business and voluntary sectors would be beneficial.
- There was feedback that some people are not clear what moving the library would mean in practice – would there be any reduction in service e.g. computers, books and staff?
- The consultation has been made available in a range of languages and with interpretation services at public meetings. However it was felt that people who cannot read (any language) or who do not use the services could have missed the consultation. There was concern that some communities in the area are hard to reach.
- There was a concern that the community believe a decision has already been taken. Adrian Wills confirmed this was definitely not the case but all agreed this perception was not helpful.
- The area based approach to consultation was questioned.
- Officers confirmed the Belgrave Business Association and the Belgrave Network Group had been contacted as part of the consultation. Leaflets were also distributed to local places of worship and doctors' surgeries. Separate youth focus groups had taken place during the same period.
- It was asked if the consultation could be extended.

### Proposal to relocate Belgrave Library service

- The proposal to move Belgrave Library from the current building on Cossington Street into the Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre was the main concern of attendees
- “We need the library and the Neighbourhood Centre. You can’t merge the buildings together – it won’t work”.
- “Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre and the Library are both absolutely vital”
- It was suggested the buildings should both be retained by increasing use and reviewing charging arrangements to raise income.
- It was suggested that services should be expanded to address the growing population in the area including the Ross Walk estate.
- It was stated with passion that the library is about more than books and computers. “It is a community hub offering vital interaction between knowledgeable library staff and local people. The library is crucial to the wellbeing of many local people.”
- One attendee was concerned about the proposal to introduce self-service kiosks as this would reduce interaction between staff and customers
- The book stock should not be reduced.
- The library was seen as a valuable local resource as it is used by all people of all ages, and is especially important to children, students and also older people.
- One attendee made a distinction between the library service and the building. Both are very important to the community, but the library building is seen as “a part of my heritage” and the place itself was of high value.
- The group rejected the proposal to close the library

### Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre

- Several attendees agreed that a more strategic approach was required overall
- Would it be possible to retain both the library and the Neighbourhood Centre by working with other sectors including business, voluntary and faith sectors?
- Several attendees felt that BNC was not being used efficiently and that there is capacity within the centre to increase occupancy and income
- The group felt the buildings should be reviewed together with other (non-council) buildings in the area. Examples included The Peepul Centre and the Health Centre which were felt to have spare capacity for community use.
- Several attendees identified the strong role played by the BNC in health and wellbeing, especially for elderly users. The lunch club was felt to provide good value for money as it keeps older people active and socially connected. BNC was described as a lifeline for some users.
- It was felt that Adult Social Care and the Health Service should be involved in options for the savings at a strategic level

### Lunch club

- The lunch club is very popular and plays an important role in keeping older people mentally and physically healthy.
- Two attendees felt that the lunch club should continue to cook food in house and that income could be increased by bringing more people in.

- It was stated that income has already been increased significantly by the involvement of the lunch club committee

### Solutions

- There was a consensus that organisations should work together to find solutions for the area.
- Some attendees felt there may be options for the lunch club to increase income by working with the faith sector for example. One lunch club member raised the need for transport to enable less mobile customers to attend – some of the group thought there may be charitable solutions to this.
- Some attendees were keen for the council to work with the business sector and possibly to explore a Community Asset Transfer of the Neighbourhood Centre to enable the community to access funding opportunities.
- The group confirmed they would be happy to meet again to explore more options and solutions.
- “People relate to these two buildings. We agree there has to be some change, but we should not be closing them. Development of services is required by working with other sectors. The answer is to increase income in this way.”

### **18 October: Islah Trust**

#### **Number attending: 6 people**

- An initial meeting was held during the engagement period in July 2016
- The group members confirmed that there was a general consensus the building should be offered for community asset transfer as they would like to see a sustainable future for the building.
- There was concern that very few new groups access the building. Islah would like to see the building open for more regular use.
- The group were concerned about what would happen if the building was leased to a non-local group – how would existing users be protected?
- Whatever the outcome of TNS the group are eager to continue using the building as it is ideally located for their members.

### **24 October: Rushey Mead Recreation Centre users including Men’s Milap Group and Panjabi Arts & Literary Academy UK**

#### **Number attending: 37**

Attending: Cllr Rita Patel; Cllr Piara Singh Clair

The meeting was arranged by ward councillors following an earlier meeting on 11 October to identify potential solutions for buildings through community involvement.

The key points raised were:

- An officer confirmed that no decisions had been made with regard to the buildings. It is not time to produce business plans as there is no decision to asset transfer buildings at the moment. The groups were invited to have a say on the future of the buildings, and potential options they have identified.
- On behalf of the whole group of local people Cllr Patel expressed that the first preference is that the council continue to run both centres

- Some groups did express an interest in taking over the recreation centre
- A general view was that if the council needed to reduce the number of buildings it runs, Rushey Mead organisations could work on a plan to take over the Recreation centre whilst the Council continues to maintain the library.
- An alternative suggestion was for the Local authority to retain responsibility for both buildings but for local people to develop and implement a business plan increase income at the recreation centre to offset running costs.
- The officer explained the next step would be to publish the consultation findings report and then propose an updated set of recommendations. When an executive decision has been made on the consultation we will know if there is an opportunity for Community Asset Transfer (CAT).
- If buildings were offered for CAT, more detailed financial information would be required.

Other comments regarding the Recreation Centre:

- There is a lack of car parking directly outside although shopping centre car park is nearby for about 20 cars. The group confirmed that most service users are locally based and walk to the building.
- It was also noted that the disabled toilets could be improved.
- People present confirmed that they felt there is no capacity to combine the Library with the Recreation Centre as there are too many people using the Recreation centre
- This is also the case for Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre and Belgrave Library
- Another option proposed by the group was to build on the side of the library, then that could be used as a community hall, freeing up the Recreation Centre for disposal. It was noted that the expense may be prohibitive.

Councillors thanked the group for their comments and ideas

### **25 October: Asian Towers Lunch Club**

#### **Attending: 2 people**

- The club attracts elderly people in Leicester mainly from the Melton road area but also some from Narborough Road & Evington. It has been running on a voluntary basis for over 30 years and provides vegetarian meals for people from an Asian background.
- Many attendees have mobility issues. The club has been based at the Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre (BNC) for many years.
- Around half of the members also attend the weekday lunch club
- Average attendance is 40 including volunteers
- Attendees mainly walking or travel by bus, or mobility scooters. Disabled attendees share lifts. One or two have blue badges and use car park if possible.
- Food is cooked on site by volunteers. Asian Towers could operate from a reduced kitchen, but could not continue if there was no commercial kitchen at all.
- It would be difficult to source food from outside providers because:

- there are religious and health requirements which cannot be catered for in the area (e.g. Jain food)
- freshly cooked food is a cultural draw
- there is a dislike of the “restaurant” taste
- Many elders can’t eat spicy food – only in house cooks can cater for the full range of dietary requirements
- In summary it was felt that the club would not survive the loss of a kitchen, but a reduced kitchen would be operable.

Other comments:

- Belgrave area is extremely densely populated and number of residents per house is high. There are also a number of new developments in the area. The future needs of the people living in the area should be taken into account.
- Belgrave Library is bucking the national trend – high use by young people and also for IT use.
- What about the Sports Centre? There is quite a lot of land in this area – would require capital, but could the Council rebuild a genuine multi-service centre

**25 October: Thurnby Lodge Community Association**

**Number attending: 9 people**

**Attending: Cllr Teresa Aldred, members of the TLCA**

The key points raised were:

- Unanimous support for retaining the Thurnby Lodge Community centre under council control and within a partnership.
- Youth activities help to contain anti-social behaviour. Key services bring older people together to overcome isolation and to promote healthy eating. An Alzheimer’s café and a police office are also provided from the community centre.
- Many volunteers support activities
- Multiple services and functions at the centre offer the one remaining focus of council supported activity in the area. Too many other council services have been lost so the residents can ill afford to lose the Thurnby Lodge Centre.

**Ocean Road Community Centre**

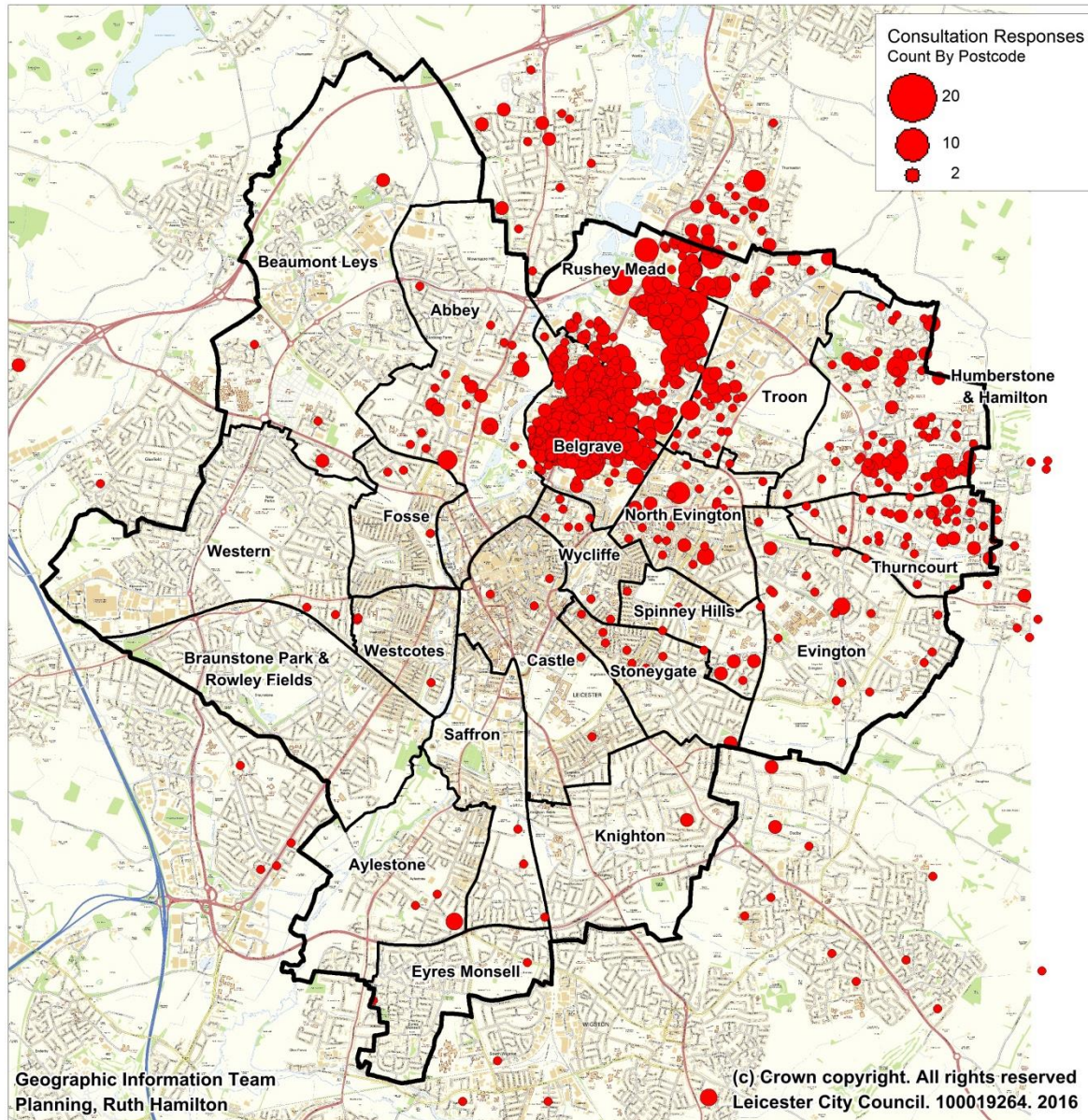
- There are some concerns over relocating the service to Thurnby Lodge Community Centre and possibly the Scout Hut if required, as there may be insufficient spaces and time slots
- If necessary, Thurnby Lodge Community Association (TLCA) may wish to put in a business case for a CAT of the centre and would consider running this themselves in order to ensure continued access to space for local groups. Concerns were expressed regarding outside groups having control of the site. The CAT criteria were outlined at this point.
- If the building is to be asset transferred, it was felt that investment in the centre is required such as a kitchen and toilet refit.
- Running costs of the site were requested.



## Written and Online Comments and Responses

In total 1,436 responses were received up until the closing date of the consultation. The following map shows the locations of respondents where a useable postcode was provided (92.8% of total responses):

### TNS North East - Consultation Responses By Postcode



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

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Count</b>
Belgrave Ward	486
Rushey Mead Ward	370
Humberstone and Hamilton Ward	104
Troon Ward	69
Thurncourt Ward	42
North Evington Ward	34
Abbey Ward	33
Evington Ward	21
Spinney Hills Ward	11
Stoneygate Ward	11
Wycliffe Ward	8
Beaumont Leys Ward	6
Castle Ward	5
Aylestone Ward	5
Fosse Ward	4
Saffron Ward	3
Westcotes Ward	3
Knighton Ward	2
Eyres Monsell Ward	2
Western Ward	2

**92%** of the total responses received (where a valid postcode was supplied) were from households within Leicester City. **83%** of valid postcodes supplied were from households within the North East TNS Area.

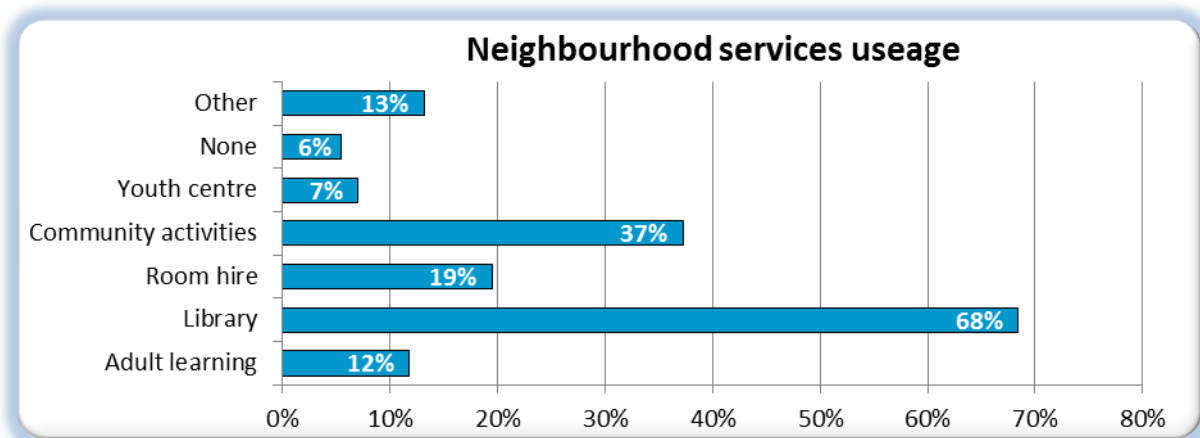
<b>Overview of postcodes supplied</b>	<b>Count</b>
Within Leicester City	1221
Missing / Incomplete / Incorrect PC	104
Outside Leicester City	111

## Views and comments

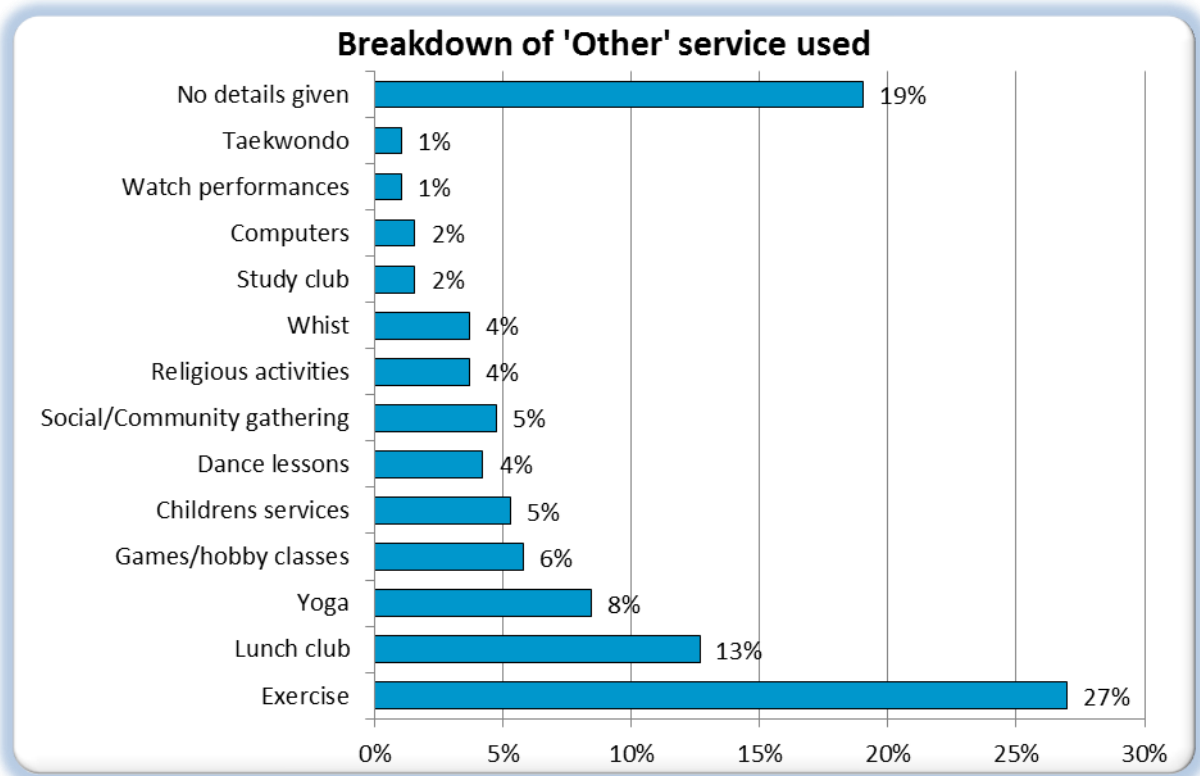
This section contains details of how people responded to the consultation questions. A copy of the questionnaire used has been included as Appendix A to this document. Responses to the questions asked are as follows:

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

This was a mandatory field for people to complete and so all 1,436 responses provided an answer to this question. It should be noted, however, that an option was to indicate that no services were used, which 79 (6%) of respondents selected. Respondents were allowed to make multiple choices for this question and the following chart shows the percentage that selected each option:

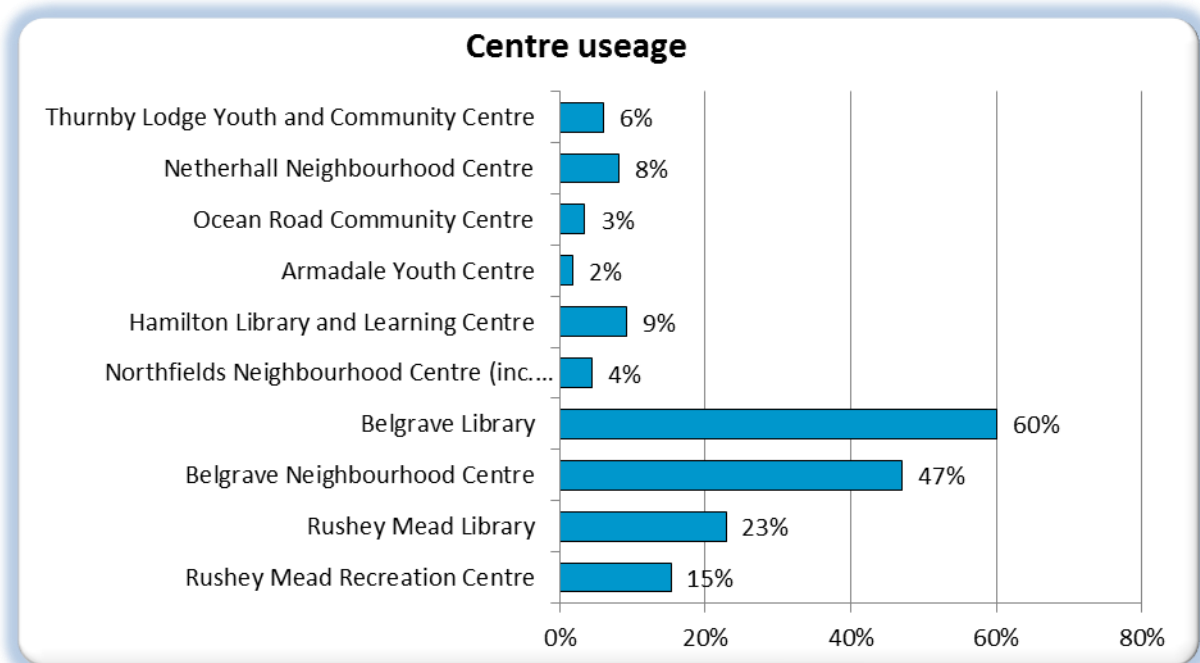


A breakdown of the 13% of responses relating to the 'other' category in the graph above are shown in the graph below:



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

A total of 1,401 (97%) of respondents provided an answer to this question and 36 respondents (3%) did not provide an answer to this question. Many respondents made multiple choices for this question and the following chart shows the percentage that selected each option.



### Q.3. What is your home post code?

The responses to this question are covered in the tables provided on pages 26 and 27 of this document

**Q.4. How would these proposals benefit you?**

A total of 1,219 (85%) of respondents answered this question. This was an open question and did not put any restrictions on the respondent as to how to answer. A wide range of points were made by respondents including statements relating to support for, or disagreement with the proposal.

Note that many respondents made points relating to questions 5 and 6. The points made have been included in the analysis for those questions (below).

Where respondents talked of benefits, they answered this question in one of two ways:

- How the existing services benefit me
- How the new proposals would benefit me

The responses can be categorised as follows:

Response category	Number of respondents
Indicating benefits from the proposals	105
Indicating no benefits from the proposals	602
Indicating the proposals will make no difference either way	21
Don't know	18
Current services benefit me	396
No response given	217

Of those who indicated benefits specifically from the proposals, the following types of benefit could be identified:

Benefit category	Number of respondents
Convenient location	49
Computer access	18
Co-location of services	14
Bring adult learning classes in to Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	5
Better access to Hamilton Library community hall	4
Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre – review of room hire arrangements to create space	2
Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre car parking controls	2
Community Asset Transfer	2
Benefit not specified	9

**Q.5. Is there anything in the proposal that would stop you from using neighbourhood services? If yes, please give the reason(s).**

A total of 834 (58%) of respondents answered this question. This was an open question and did not put any restrictions on the respondent as to how to answer. A wide range of points were made by respondents including strong support for specific local services and buildings.

Note that many respondents made points relating to questions 4 and 6. Those points made have been included in the analysis for those questions (above and below) to avoid duplication.

Responses to this question can be generally categorised as follows:

Response category	Number of respondents
The proposals would restrict / stop access for services	546
The proposals would not restrict access to services	101
Other comments	187
No comments	602

The question also asked respondents for the reasons why the proposals would stop them from using neighbourhood services. Responses given to this element of the question can be generally categorised as follows:

Suggestion category	Number of respondents
Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre will become overcrowded leading to poor quality / fewer services	211
Unable to travel to alternative facility	80
Loss of suitable community space at Netherhall	67
Parking facilities inadequate at proposed site	53
Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre too busy/noisy for library	41
Quality of reorganised service will not be suitable for me	41
Rushey Mead buildings are not large enough to amalgamate services	40
Children and young people will not want to/be able to use library at Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	39
Self-service terminals may be a barrier e.g. for elderly users	37
Alternative building/space is not welcoming	24
Festivals/large events will not be possible at Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre if library relocates	22
Loss of suitable community space at Northfields	17
Raised hire charges will prevent me from accessing services at Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	16
Loss of suitable community space at Ocean Road Community Centre	14

Loss of pre-school at Netherhall will affect local parents	10
Lack of community facilities in general on the Northfields estate	8

**A selection of the responses made is listed below:**

(Belgrave) “Yes self service will not be helpful as some books may be stolen and space - how many books can you get in there? We may have to wait even longer to order the books so access will be delayed. Further away from park and swimming baths so children will be loitering around and not be safe. Printing services will be affected. I pick my recycling orange bags from there too! We don't know people using the centre at the same time so whether the children are safe or not???????? At least in library there are staff present!”

(Belgrave) “There will be parking problems. The library will be noisy. And there will be reduced space for activities like Yoga and exercise.”

(Belgrave) “Yes, I would stop using many services if not all.

1. Room Hire:- I would stop using this facility as being Asian we have big functions in the house and I hire the hall. If I have a party at the hall where there will be library and other things combined I would not be able to keep eye on people attending my function.
2. Library:- If it is combined with Neighbourhood when ever there is a function or classes going on (i.e Dance class) then there will no quite area which is what library are for.”

“All the events run by library to bring community together will stop. I feel this would impact the community very much and some people would be socially isolated due to closure of the services. Not everyone able to afford Day care therefore uses library and community centres for social inclusions “

“The Belgrace NC would be too cramped with everyone squeezing into a limited space and books would be reduced.”

“BNC Lunch club: Yes, kitchen foods, fresh cooked food there. Will not available. Do not like outside food.”

“I run the Friday Bingo club with an average of 25-30 players who enjoy playing. (The other aspect). The meeting of those playing is companionship for those and many are, their getting away from loneliness.”

“Belgrave Library - It would only benefit us if they retained Sunday opening”

“The Hamilton Community Hall improvements would be good for better access”

“My younger siblings use the Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre to have dance lessons and dance exams. If you sell this building this will no longer happen! I enjoy to watch my sisters dance and they love to dance. If you sell the building where will they dance? The building is perfect!!”

(Belgrave) “I am autistic - I don't like change - I find it difficult. If the opening hours, e.g. Sunday opening retained that would be good. If the atmosphere/ safe place could be retained that would be excellent.”



(Northfields) "Don't shut it down because there wont be any thing to do in the area and if there is no youth centre people will do bad things."

(Northfields) "Stop my support from youth workers & where I meet friends."

(Belgrave Library) "Please not close library because I will feel upset and my friends will not be able to there homework at the library as we don't have Wi-Fi and computer at home so we come to the library almost every day to do our homework if the library shuts down so please don't close down the Leicester belgrave library."

"(Belgrave Library) yes if the belgrave library closes then I am aware that lots of children will also stop coming as they know that around the neighbourhood centre the area is unsafe. And therefore parents will forbid them to go out to the centre to get books and etc this will be a shame as whenever I go to the library I see all the young youth having a great time doing and helping each other with their homework. I also see how hard student revise their exams and see the study support teachers help when needed. This makes me feel upset because if all of these services stop then the youth will change and will be out of control as they will have nowhere to go for help support and advice."

(Belgrave) "I have significant sight loss so do not know layout of neighbourhood centre. This would cause unease of using this building, also self serve terminals would be impossible for me."

(Belgrave) "If the cost of room hire increases I fear exercise classes will become too expensive to attend. I meet my friends at these classes so my social life would be reduced."

(Belgrave) "Yes, if you get rid of it, it will be a great loss for myself and others using it. Especially people that have difficulty with languages whereas we can get lots of help attending the library."

(Netherhall pre-school) "Daughter goes to the nursery and she is suspected autistic and the change wouldn't be good for her as she doesn't like change"

(Belgrave) "This proposal will severely reduce the library service that can be offered to the people of Belgrave. More importantly the children will not be able to access the services they need. 1006 children took part in the summer reading challenge at Belgrave Library this year. Far higher than ANY other city library"

"Ocean Road should stay open for elderly people living close by. We should have to locate to Thurnby Lodge otherwise (bus ride). Armadale which I use on Mondays AM we could locate to Armadale youth centre (not too bad) "

"BNC Yes. I am able to travel directly to the BNC by public transport and the facilities for my exercise classes (ladies only) are perfect. There is adequate room and all the ladies attending with me find the sessions very beneficial for our physical and mental well being. The potential reduction in floor space and the attendance of males will put me and other ladies off from attending the BNC."

"I am very disappointed for the library to move to the BNC - BNC is not as child friendly as the current setting of Belgrave Library next to the park/children play area. BNC is quite gloomy/dark/big building and not as cheerful as current Belgrave library. This can put people off from access library for reading and personal develop purpose."

### Q.6. Any other comments?

A total of 903 (63%) of respondents answered this question. This was an open question and did not put any restrictions on the respondent as to how to answer. A wide range of points were made by respondents including strong support for specific local services and buildings.

Note that many respondents made points relating to questions 4 and 5. The points made have been included in the analysis for these questions (above) to avoid duplication.

Responses to this question can be generally categorised as follows:

Response category	Number of respondents
Against Belgrave Library relocation	410
Keep local services	119
Don't close my centre	112
Against Belgrave lunch club reorganisation	49
Community activities keep older people healthy, reducing impact on NHS	33
Reduce council staff / wages	25
Do not close Rushey Mead Library	16
Larger building/library extension needed at Rushey Mead	14
Retain Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre instead of Armadale Centre	12
No cuts / save money from other services	12
Youth Centres important for young people / keep me out of trouble	7
Raise hire charges to increase income	4
Other	69
No comments	533

#### A selection of the responses made is listed below:

"LCC have not considered that Northfield Centre is the only centre on the 'Troon' cluster. The youth in this area will not have an outlet if this centre is closed"

"If there is an option between The Rushey Mead Library and the Rushey Mead Recreation Centre, then I would definitely choose the library as people of all ages use and can use this facility. My decision is mainly based on our future generation and benefits they would derive from a well-facilitated library."

"The council's Proposals make sense. I agree with the proposals entirely to get rid of some buildings as having been to Ocean Road community centre and Northfields nothing much is going on here. So it makes sense to make better use of the centre."

(Belgrave) "Need to invest in the current buildings to make them fit for purpose, not sell them off or move services into other more cramped buildings. These venues are important hubs for the community, especially older people who already have few places to go to and to socialise. Maybe some of the money earmarked for improving Belgrave should go into

retaining the library.”

(Belgrave Asian Towers lunch club) “I am the president of the club. i would like to have club running. Its 28 years it is runnin we serve to elderly and disabled people. we serve hindu Jain food which is very healthy...”

(Hamilton Library) “...There should be flexibility on usage time for all within limits. This has put a stumbling block on our usage. We have been in Hamilton for over 20 years and paid thousands of pounds over the years for council tax. It is time now we get the facilities to use for all.”

(Netherhall NC) “Netherhall neighbourhood centre is a thriving well used building. None of the groups are able to move to the Armadale centre as it is not a suitable building for our needs.”

(BNC) “More access for disabled people

- Use surplus building for elderly people. Activities i.e. exercise club, yoga club, luncheon club.

- designate infant entrance, disabled parking”

(Belgrave library) “We attend the library also for a diabetes group. we have 45 members. Will be very upset and it will not help them, will be isolated.”

(Belgrave) “This proposal will change the local community in many ways literacy levels, social cohesion, access to internet + advice services to name but a few.”

(Netherhall NC) “I danced at Jill Gough School of Dance for 10 years and now my daughter attends. Most of the pupils are from the area. It would be devastating to close this centre”

“The services that the Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre provides for the elderly and vulnerables must be retained. For some people the lunch club may be the only opportunity to socialise with others and prevent loneliness and depression”

“I volunteer at the Belgrave library and help young children to read. I know this service will be also lost and disadvantage as well. It is just not building but it is our Belgrave library which have grown up and want to keep the library where it is for our community, our children and the elderly.”

“(Netherhall NC) The only way I would stop using it is if the Council knock it down. I have been coming to the centre since the dancing school started here. It has taken many years for them to find an ideal place to teach their classes and are very settled here.”

(Belgrave) “The services will be different. If you assure me the same number of books or the amount of genres available would still be there.”

“I understand there needs to be savings made, but the consequences of finding alternative uses and time it may take will probably end up costing us even more!! When proper planning and use for the buildings are decided, then it may be the right time to discuss.”

“If they close Netherhall NC and move us to the Armadale centre we will have to finish the bowls group because its not big enough. Same applys to Northfields NC”

“Very surprised that Netherhall Community is under threat considering high level of use. Central location. It would be a great loss to the local and surrounding areas.”

“The Rushey Mead recreation centre should be run as is and the library to run by community members. The belgrave neighbourhood centre needs upgrading/uplifting for it's current use and about time library was part of that building. The asian food should be available and left as is.”

“If you move library into Neighbourhood Centre, that would create problems for us because we do various activities there. We do have exercise sessions every week and that has been very useful to us. It has positive effect on our health e.g. we have to take less medication, it reduces the stress and it has also effect on arthritis.”

“Why did you create so many centres? This is the reason for the present situation. Secondly, the library should always be separate because people can read and do other activities without any disturbance. If you rent out other halls, that would generate extra income. If the library is moved to main hall, it will create many problems. Thank you.”

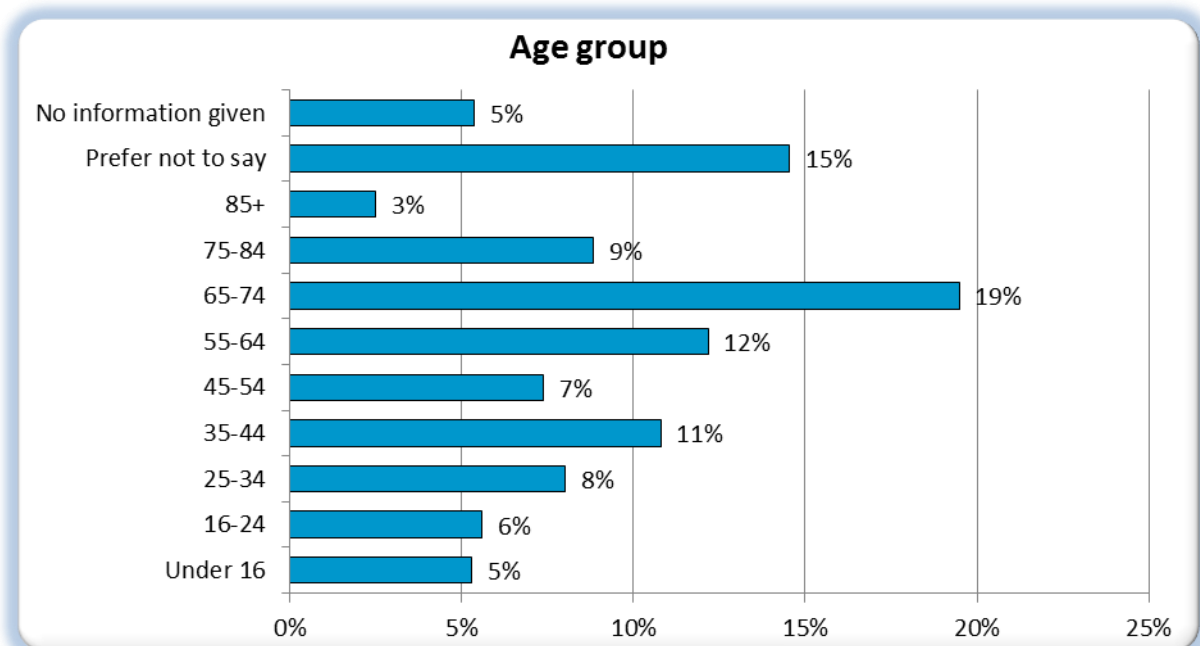
“You should keep the library open because they run English classes, have newspapers and help our children with their homework. That is good for childrens education.”

## Demographic information

The questionnaire included a number of demographic questions to assist in the analysis of results from the consultation. The following is a summary of the responses received:

### Q.1. Age

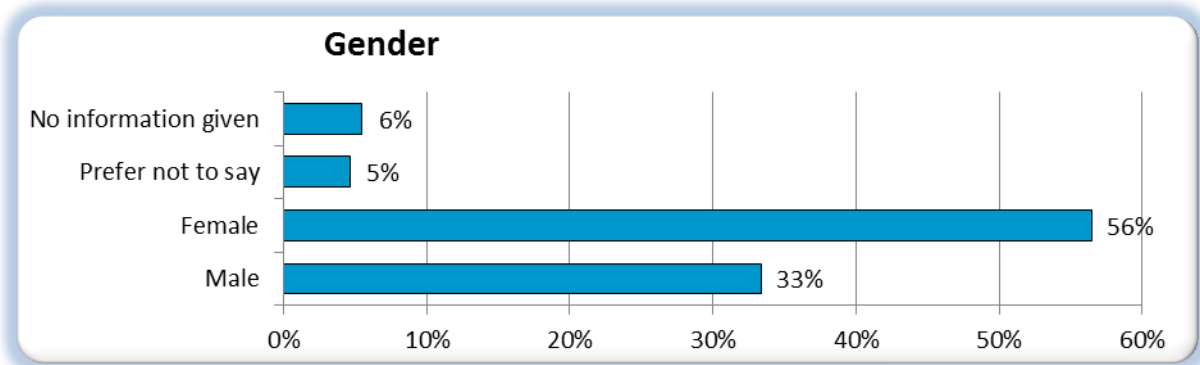
A total of 1359 (95%) of respondents answered this question, with a further 209 (15%) electing a preference not to say. The graph below shows the distribution of the age ranges of the respondents:



### Q.2. Gender

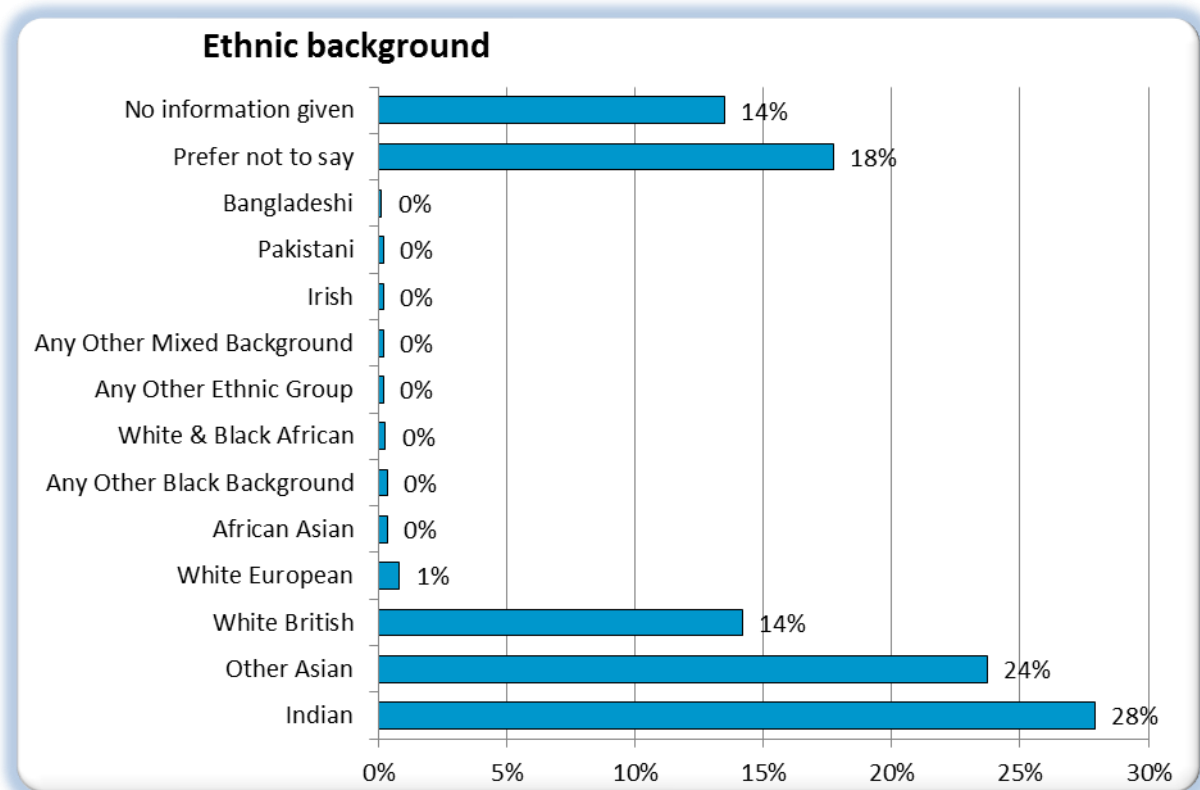
A total of 1357 (95%) of respondents answered this question, with a further 67 (5%)

electing a preference not to say. The graph below shows the distribution of the gender split of the respondents:



### Q.3. Ethnic Background

A total of 1,242 (86%) of respondents answered this question, with a further 255 (18%) electing a preference not to say. The graph below shows the distribution of the gender split of the respondents:



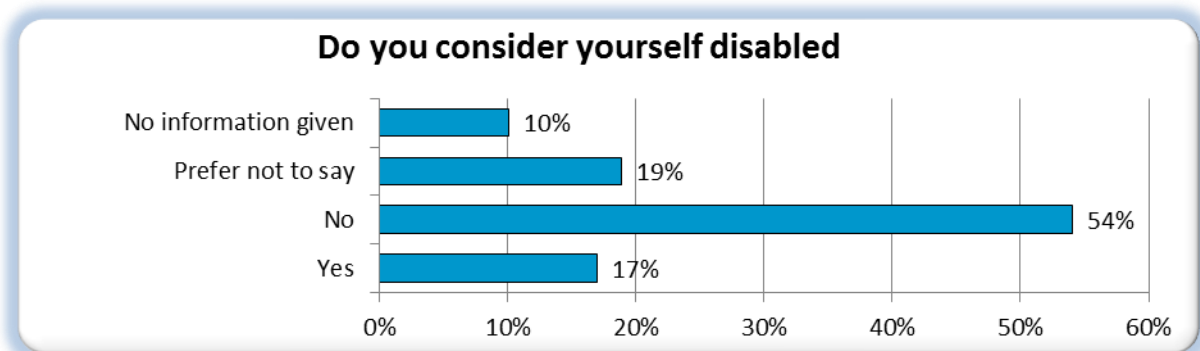
Please note this question was an open question without categories for the respondents to select. In order to produce the above charts a number of responses were categorised as follows:

- Those who described their ethnicity as a religion that is typically considered Asian have been assigned "Other Asian"

- Those who described themselves as Asian without stating Indian have been assigned "Other Asian"
- Those who described themselves as either British, White or English with no further detail have been assigned "White British"
- Those who described themselves as Black with no further detail have been assigned "Any other black background"

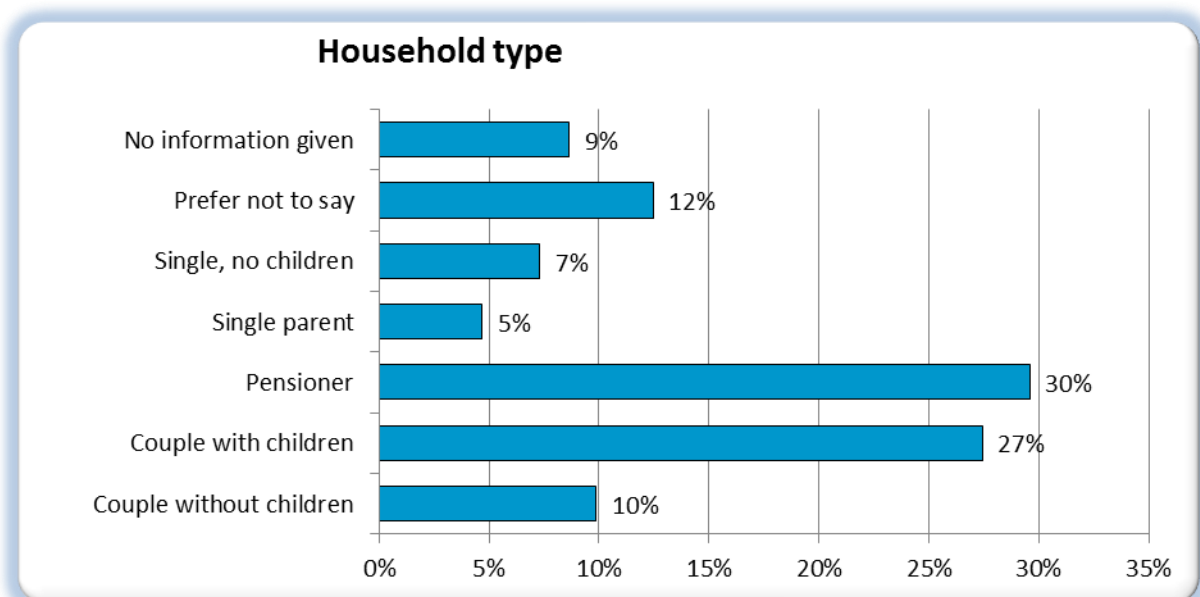
#### Q.4. Disability

A total of 1,291 (90%) of respondents answered this question, with a further 271 (19%) electing a preference not to say. The following graph shows a breakdown of respondents categorising themselves as disabled or not:



#### Q.5. Household Type

A total of 1,312 (91%) of respondents answered this question, with a further 179 (12%) electing a preference not to say. This question provided categories from which to choose and asked respondents to select one option only. The following graph shows a breakdown of how respondents categorised themselves:



#### Submissions

Some groups made submissions during the course of the engagement period through a range of channels.

These included:

- Mellor Primary School – letter signed by Head Teacher
- Email submissions from residents
- Unsolicited interest in Community Asset Transfer opportunities
- Email requests for further information

## **Petition**

A petition has been submitted with regards to the proposed relocation of Belgrave Library to Belgrave Centre, and the proposed changes to the operation of the Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre Lunch Club.

A total of 2,865 signatories were validated. An e-petition was also submitted supported by 2,253 people who gave a postcode in the city.

The combined text of the petitions is as follows:

The petition is in the following form:

“We the undersigned firmly oppose Leicester City Council’s plan to:

1) Close down the Belgrave Library with the intention of moving it to the Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre. There is no room for books, computers, tables and other resources inside the Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre and this will mean downscaling of the services. Both buildings are regularly and heavily used.

Belgrave Library is an invaluable resource for the pupils and families of local schools. Access to high quality literature is particularly essential during this period of economic hardship. Losing Belgrave Library will have a massively damaging impact on the education and future life chances of young people in the area.

2) Alter the provision of meals for the lunch club members. The kitchen at the Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre is adequate to provide freshly cooked and culturally appropriate vegetarian meals for the elderly; disabled and diabetic members of the lunch club.

Members are paying £ 4.20 per plate for this per day. This lunch club is vitally important for the vulnerable and lonely elderly people who come and socialise at the centre

3) We strongly oppose Leicester City Council's plan to close the Belgrave Library and to relocate it to the Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre.”

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This consultation is to be used to consider the draft proposals for transformation of services in the North East area of the city.

The method of consultation using large open consultation events and also smaller targeted group meetings upon request has been very well received by both members of the community and staff and has proved a successful method of seeking points of view and suggestions to take into account. The promotion of paper and online questionnaires has proved particularly successful, generating the highest response rate in the TNS process to date.

The number of responses received to the questionnaire and attendance numbers for the various meetings held indicate a good level of participation, and the demographic data collected demonstrates that the responses are representative of the community i.e. the demographic breakdown of responses shows good involvement from a wide range of stakeholders in the area.

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

- Libraries and the functions they perform are highly valued as community hubs. In particular local residents value access to online information and services, promotion of reading for learning and leisure and support for children and young people's educational needs.
- There was significant support for the activities in community centres which are important for local areas
- There was good support for youth sessions from youth centre users. The key building consideration was the provision of a safe space which the young people felt was theirs. There was interest in working together with officers to find alternative solutions where potential building changes would impact upon youth sessions.
- There was general agreement with all groups that savings can be achieved by reorganising services to make better use of buildings
- In general there was agreement between groups that the services provided were more important than particular buildings. However in the Belgrave area many service users were keen to see both the library and the Neighbourhood Centre buildings retained.
- There was concern at the busiest sites about amalgamating services into fewer buildings.
- There was concern about proposals to reorganise lunch club provision at Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre in order to make better use of the building.
- There is some support for transferring of assets through the Community Asset Transfer procedure for less well used buildings, but also some concern that the community and existing users would continue to be able to use the buildings post transfer.
- There was enthusiasm amongst some groups to work with the council to find solutions, in particular at Rushey Mead with regard to potential asset transfer should the Recreation Centre be offered and at Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre with regard to raising income through room hire.
- Many respondents are concerned about the proposal to relocate Belgrave Library to Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre. Key concerns were around the availability of



sufficient space and the impact on existing services and activities.

- Respondents are concerned to ensure that existing activities and services can continue under the building changes proposed
- There is strong support for the Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre and for the pre-school which operates there.

## **Lessons Learned**

- The consultation meetings have been a good method of engagement with a wide range of stakeholders including ward councillors, the local MP, staff, partners and members of the public
- There has been a good response rate to the engagement process with 1,436 completed forms and good attendance at the focus group meetings. The distribution strategy has been key in achieving this, with promotion of paper and online questionnaires and translated materials. It is to be noted that 127 responses were received in Gujarati (around 9%).
- The overall approach of involving stakeholders and members of the public early has proven beneficial as not only does it help to ensure that all concerns are heard, it also provides sufficient time to respond to these concerns on an evidenced basis
- The process undertaken has enjoyed good co-operation between stakeholder individuals and groups, as well as other services
- A similar model of engagement will be used for the other areas of the city

Appendix A: TNS North East consultation questionnaire

# Transforming Neighbourhood Services



## North east area consultation



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

### Background

Leicester City Council is reorganising neighbourhood services across the city. This includes libraries, community and youth centres and adult learning centres.

Significant cuts in government funding mean that we cannot continue to run services as we do now. But before making any proposals, in June and July 2016 we spoke to local people to find out what they wanted from their services. We also asked for suggestions for the future.



### What is happening now

Now we have developed a way forward and we would like to know your views. These proposals bring services together and make savings.



### Give your views

We are holding two events to discuss the proposals on Monday 26 September, 6 - 7.30pm at Hamilton Library and on Tuesday 27 September, 6.30 - 8pm at Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre. Please come along, or give your views online or fill out the form in this leaflet.



## Proposed changes

### Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre and Belgrave Library

- Consider moving Belgrave Library into Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre
- Consider moving some adult learning classrooms to Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre to deliver more English language and other classes
- Explore a range of options for disposal of any surplus buildings
- Redecorate some areas of Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre including the main hall
- Change lunch club provision to free up some of the kitchen space for more community use. A basic kitchen facility will be in place for community group use
- Review room hire arrangements to free up more space for additional activities and to increase income
- Install library and customer self-serve terminals
- Explore car parking controls to improve availability for centre users



### Armadale Youth Centre

- Retain the centre and the ball court
- Make minor alterations to accommodate some community activities which currently take place at Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre



### Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre

- Explore options for disposal of the building including sale, transfer under the council's community asset transfer policy or clearance for potential housing development
- Work with groups to identify the best location for their needs

### Rushey Mead Library and Rushey Mead Recreation Centre

- Combine library services and community activities in one of the buildings
- Install library self-service equipment
- Explore options for disposal of the other building including sale or transfer under the council's community asset transfer policy



### Northfields Neighbourhood and Youth Centre

- Explore options for disposal of the building including sale or transfer under the council's community asset transfer policy
- Work with groups to identify the best location for their needs
- Explore alternative options for delivering youth sessions in the area, including street based sessions

### Hamilton Library & Learning Centre

- Redevelop the building as 'Hamilton Library and Community Centre'
- Improve access to the hall for community use



### Ocean Road Community Centre

- Explore options for disposal of the building including sale, demolition or transfer under the council's community asset transfer policy
- Work with groups to identify the best location for their needs

### Thurnby Lodge Youth & Community Centre

- Retain the youth and community centre
- Increase use of the youth and community spaces to accommodate some relocated activities
- Explore ways of reducing centre running costs with existing partners



**Note:** If this consultation process identifies extra opportunities, we may consider other council buildings in the north east area.



## Your views

Give your views online at [leicester.gov.uk/tns](http://leicester.gov.uk/tns)

OR fill out this form. You can also come to discuss the proposals at two events. Details are on the front of this leaflet.

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

- Adult learning    Library    Room hire    Community activities  
(e.g. cooking, crafts, dance)
- Youth centre    None    Other (please specify) .....

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

- Rushey Mead Recreation Centre    Rushey Mead Library
- Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre    Belgrave Library
- Northfields Neighbourhood Centre (inc. Youth Centre)
- Hamilton Library and Learning Centre    Armadale Youth Centre
- Ocean Road Community Centre    Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre
- Thurnby Lodge Youth and Community Centre

3. What is your home post code? .....

4. How would these proposals benefit you?

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5. Is there anything in the proposal that would stop you from using neighbourhood services? If yes, please give the reason(s).

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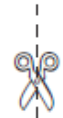
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(continued on next page)



6. Any other comments

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## Let us know about you

1. Age: ..... Prefer not to say

2. Gender: Male  Female  Prefer not to say

3. How would you describe your ethnic background?

..... Prefer not to say

4. Do you consider yourself to have a disability or health condition?

Yes  No  Prefer not to say

How does your disability or health condition affect your ability to access local services?

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.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

5. Household type:

Couple without children  Couple with children  Pensioner

Single parent  Single, no children  Prefer not to say

Thank you for completing this monitoring form. The information you have provided will be kept in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998 and will only be used for the purpose of monitoring. Your details will not be passed on to any other individual, organisation or group. Leicester City Council is the data controller for the information on this form for the purposes of the Data Protection Act.

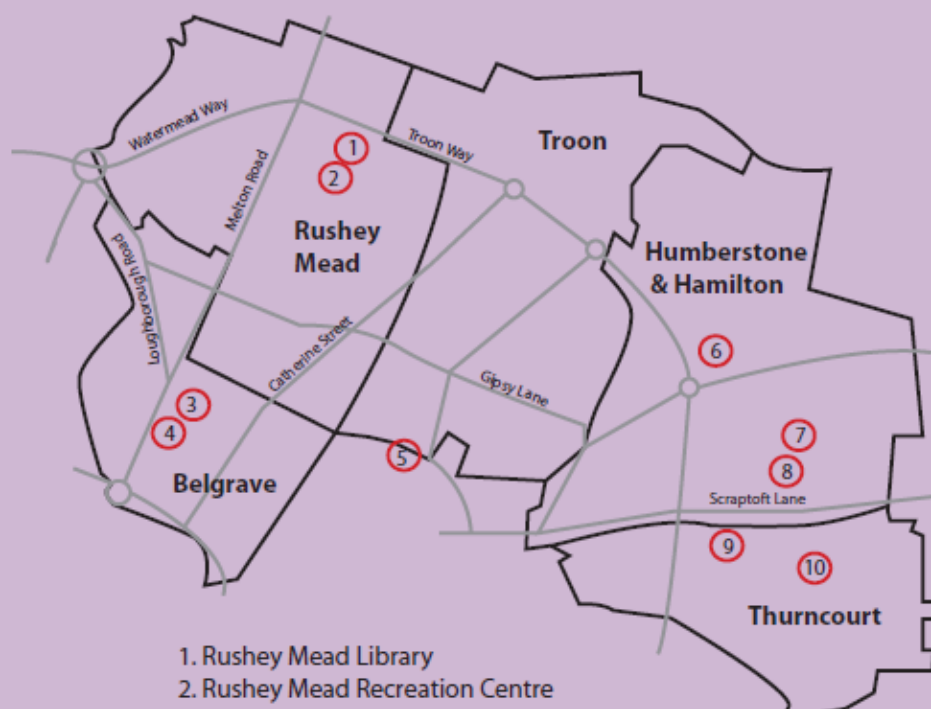
Thank you for giving us your views.

Please hand the form in to any Leicester City Council library, community or leisure centre, or post to:

Transforming Neighbourhood Services  
2nd Floor, Town Hall  
Town Hall Square  
Leicester LE1 9BG

**The closing date is 23 October 2016**

## Neighbourhood buildings (North east area)



1. Rushey Mead Library
2. Rushey Mead Recreation Centre
3. Belgrave Library
4. Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre
5. Northfields Neighbourhood Centre  
(including Youth Centre)
6. Hamilton Library & Learning Centre
7. Armadale Youth Centre
8. Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre
9. Ocean Road Community Centre
10. Thurnby Lodge Youth and Community Centre

This map shows approximate locations for illustrative purposes.

Produced by Leicester City Council, communications and marketing team, 09.16

