

Narrative feedback from focus groups

1. Engagement with children and young people

We responded to Cabinet's concern that our original engagement plans did not do enough to encourage the voice of children and young people. We carried out the following engagement activities.

Children and young people who visited each library were asked to write down their views about the library service (or they could do a drawing). Their comments and drawings were displayed on boards in the library. **150** children responded in this way.

Eleven outreach events were held in local schools (primary and secondary), with older young people (e.g., Creative Academy), local community groups (e.g., Aik Saath) and Youth Parliament. These events gained responses from almost **2,000** young people.

Comments and feedback from primary aged children

Why do you use the library?

The most popular reasons were:

- 46% to borrow and/or read books
- 13% to use the computers and/or printers
- 11% because it's peaceful and quiet
- 10% for doing homework

Of the children that borrowed or read library books, 60% read fiction and 40% read non-fiction/factual books.

Why don't you use a library?

The most popular reasons were:

- 32% my family doesn't have time to go to a library
- 20% because of Covid/lockdown
- 10% I have lots of books at home
- 8% my parents don't think about taking me
- 8% the library is too far away

What library events and activities have you attended?

- 47% Summer Reading Challenge
- 16% LEGO
- 13% Code/Computing clubs
- 10% Arts and crafts (e.g., Pumpkin carving, design a T-shirt, drawing challenge etc)

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What do you like about libraries in Slough?

- 26% the books (quality and quantity)
- 19% it's calm, quiet and peaceful
- 14% reading
- 8% having fun there
- 4% doing activities
- 4% using the computers/printers

What do you think libraries in Slough should do differently?

- 13% Have more books and comics
- 13% Have more activities
- 10% Have space to play and/or ways to borrow computer games
- 10% Have somewhere to eat
- 10% Have a way to tell you where on the shelf your book is/have someone to suggest what to read next
- 8% Not have to be quiet all the time

Comments and feedback from secondary school students

Why do you use the library?

- 32% space to study
- 32% attend events and activities
- 20% read/borrow books
- 12% to use computers/printers

Why don't you use a library?

Have a lot of books at home

Too tired

Use Kindle/e-readers

Access is difficult, especially at The Curve because there's nowhere to park

Appendix D4

What other services could libraries offer/what could they do differently?

Recommendation service	5 comments
Offer reading challenges	2 comments
Bring books to readers	1 comment
Readers to recommend which books to buy	1 comment
Have a wider range of books	3 comments
Later opening in the evenings	1 comment
Private study spaces	3 comments

Comments and feedback from young people (post 16)

What do you use the library for?

- Reading/borrowing books
- Studying
- Using computers and printers
- Attending events, workshops, and meetings

Why don't you use Slough library service (at all, or not very much)?

Opening times don't suit me/I don't have the time	7 comments
Buy my own books/books available at my place of study	2 comments
The computers are next to the Children's library (too noisy)	1 comment
Too quiet	1 comment
I have IT at home	1 comment
No free parking at/close to The Curve	1 comment
Concerns about unfriendly staff	1 comment

What could Slough library service do differently?

More space for group study	3 comments
Have vending machines/place to eat and drink	2 comments
Wider range of books (audio and hard copy)	2 comments
More co-location of other council services	1 comment
Play soothing background music	1 comment

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Machines that read books to you	1 comment
Sessions for younger children to read to adults	1 comment
Other activities (slides/climbing wall/zip line)	1 comment
More public events	1 comment
More private study areas	1 comment
Specific revision resources linked to exams	1 comment
Online ordering to bring books to you (at a cost)	1 comment
Drop-boxes to allow books to be returned without paying for parking	1 comment

Ranking of the suggested future models

1 st (most popular)	Keep all library buildings but reduce the hours they are open, the hours they are staffed, and the space dedicated to the library . Attract other users to rent space in the library building alongside the reduced library (co-location).
2 nd	Keep all the main library buildings open but reduce the opening and staffed hours at Langley and Cippenham and reduce the staffed hours at The Curve and Britwell libraries.
3 rd	Reduce the money available to spend on buying publications (both hard copy and eResources)
4 th	Close both Langley and Cippenham library buildings but maintain the staffing and opening hours at The Curve library and at Britwell library.
5 th (least popular)	Move all library services out of the current main library buildings and re-locate services to be delivered from a range of other locations (and online) across the borough

2. Engagement with residents and stakeholders at workshops/drop-in/presentations

50+ forum

Suggestions about future use/service delivery

- Can library services be delivered from the industrial estate? Could this central location be a base from which outreach work could be delivered?

Comments about current library services

- Why have Langley and Cippenham been singled out for possible closure and the other two libraries weren't? We explained about the other services were currently delivered from Britwell and The Curve which makes even considering closing these buildings more challenging.

Appendix D4

- The issue of difficulty parking at The Curve was raised
- Number of comments about the valued role of libraries to support communities.
- There were questions about the financial situation of the council.

Men's lunch club Langley

Suggestions about future use/service delivery

- Hosting a chess club was a popular suggestion.

Comments about current library services

- One participant said he found it difficult to locate the books and information he wanted at The Curve and found the old library better laid out.
- Two participants said they didn't use the library service as it doesn't stock the technical books they wanted.

Carers' Rights information day

Suggestions about future use/service delivery

- Events, services, and activities should cater for residents who don't speak English as a first language.

Comments about current library services

- Some passionate current library users commented that they had completed the survey and library services were very important to them.
- Some participants said they had stopped using the library service because of Covid and now didn't know when the libraries were open and weren't aware of the on-line offer.

Langley Library drop-in (December 2021)

Suggestions about future use/service delivery

- Some concerns were expressed about how safe it would be to use a library if there were other services operating from the same building.
- Can Thames Valley Police locate a police desk in Langley library to help make up for the closure of Langley police station?

Comments about current library services

- Local residents have started a petition specifically about keeping Langley library building open.
- Passionate support for the library service and some residents spoke about specific benefits they had felt from using the library.

SCVS Community Network on-line workshop

Suggestions about future use/service delivery

- Keep library locations open so activities can be run from there.
- Cippenham library has a good range of services for all ages.
- Activities like “seated exercise” at The Curve are popular.

Comments about current library services

- Health Watch run community events from libraries, and these are very popular.
- Allowing partner organisations to share the space will be important.
- A lower publications budget will need careful thought to strike the right balance between on-line and hard copy books.
- Will library service offer an on-line music service? Social Plugger was mentioned ([Social Plugger](#)) as a good offer for sound-based mindfulness.
- Whatever happens to the library service the new services must be well publicised.
- Include health and wellbeing support. Could be offered on-line and may be simple awareness raising or on-line chats.
- Could community/volunteer groups run the library service? They could offer their usual service but help people borrow and return books. Local groups could also run or support activities and events.
- Concern that alternatives like Open+ wouldn't work due to possible crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Community groups could work from or use facilities, but charges would need to be lower (or be offered for free).
- How can library buildings pay for themselves to make sure running the buildings are cost effective?
- Will corporate sponsorship from organisations like Circo be considered to keep a library building open?
- Suggestions were made to see if a coffee house chain could operate from libraries but there was a discussion that this has been tried and not enough money is made for it to be interesting to the business.
- Having somewhere to buy lunch in the library might encourage people to stay longer.

On-line library workshops (November & December)

Suggestions about future use/service delivery

- On-line library is good if you don't have a library close to where you live (Manor Park was mentioned).
- Can there be a library closer to Manor Park?
- Visiting a library is an important part of childhood.
- Could there be more opportunities for volunteering to keep a library service?
- The library service has to modernise and make more of e-books.
- Could people who work from home or run small businesses rent hot desks in the library to generate income?
- Could each library have a specialist theme?

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- Could there be a focus on delivering children's libraries especially in the areas where there are lots of children who use the library?
- Libraries should ask for book donations to reduce spend on new books.

Comments about current library services

- On-line library is good if you don't have a library close to where you live (Manor Park was mentioned).
- The old reference library was very useful.
- Having limited time-slots (due to Covid restrictions) is not good, felt rushed.
- Maidenhead library provides a better customer experience.
- The library is essential to parents who are home-schooling.
- Britwell library is in a good location and is within walking distance of the shops and where people live.
- Libraries are keeping our communities alive.
- Parking to use The Curve is very difficult.
- Some people like going to the libraries because they are vulnerable and meeting people there gives them comfort. Where will these people go?
- BorrowBox facility is not good – there is not a good enough choice of books.
- PressReader facility is excellent as it makes newspapers accessible to everyone.