



Essex County Council

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL EVERYONE'S LIBRARY SERVICE 2022-2026 CONSULTATION REPORT

PREPARED BY LAKE MARKET RESEARCH



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BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

BACKGROUND

Essex County Council is the second largest library authority in the country, serving a population of nearly 1.5 million residents across a network of 74 libraries, two mobile library vehicles, an online e-library service, and a home library delivery service provided by volunteers to residents who cannot access onsite or mobile services.

In 2019-20 (the last year unaffected by pandemic restrictions), the library service had 226,000 active users, 4.3 million visits, 3.9 million loans, and over 400,000 e-resources were borrowed. The service provides free internet access to users through computers and public Wi-Fi; free access to a range of online learning tools and a range of local studies resources and special collections available at different sites across the county. The service also runs a range of in-person and online activities for all age groups as well as activities to help people develop new skills, improve their health and wellbeing, connect with others in their community and reduce social isolation.

The world has changed significantly in the last 18 months. With a new administration and new Plan for Essex in place, Essex County Council are refocussing their vision and plans for the future of Library services. This plan sets out high-level aims for the service and the areas the service will be working on over the next four years:

- Library Service and Literacy
- Infrastructure and Communications
- Supporting communities and Levelling Up

Essex County Council launched a consultation with the aim of seeking views from Essex residents, library service users and organisations about the draft plan and the areas of focus for the next four years.

METHODOLOGY

The consultation was hosted on Essex County Council's consultation portal for 8 weeks from 26th November 2020 to 21st January 2022. The library survey was publicised extensively across the county.

Social media activity reached hundreds of thousands of local people through posts on ECC and Essex Libraries social media channels as well as a Facebook advertising campaign. The survey was also prominent on both the ECC and Essex Libraries websites and social media channels throughout.

The draft plan and survey were also shared directly with residents through resident and library newsletters. Prior and throughout the consultation, engagement was carried out with local, regional and national press, generating coverage in many local newspapers and on local radio stations.

Posters, popup banners and postcards have been displayed in libraries and staff have also been encouraging residents to give their thoughts on the plan. A number of groups have also been engaged with directly including the Young Essex Assembly, schools, faith leaders, as well as library clubs and groups.

POINTS TO NOTE

RESPONSE

- 2,213 responses were received via the consultation questionnaire - 2,185 from individuals and 28 responses from organisations. 7 emails were received to the consultation inbox and have been reviewed by this report's author.

- Please note that participation in consultations is self-selecting and this needs to be considered when interpreting responses.
- Responses to consultations do not wholly represent the wider Essex population and are reliant on awareness and propensity to take part based on the topic and interest.
- The majority of individual respondents are users of library services and indicated they have used library services in the last six months.

ANALYSIS

- Essex County Council were responsible for the design, promotion and collection of the consultation responses. Lake Market Research were appointed to conduct an independent analysis of feedback.
- All survey results are presented as percentages. Each chart title details the number of valid responses received to each question. Respondents could choose which questions they answered so the base size for each question will vary.
- The questionnaire contained a mix of single and multiple choice questioning. Where percentages for single choice questions do not sum to 100%, this is the result of computer rounding for each response code as percentages are displayed as whole numbers. The report notes where respondents were given the option of providing more than one answer.
- It should be remembered that a sample, and not the entire population of the County, has taken part in this consultation. As a result, all findings are subject to sampling tolerances, which means not all differences are statistically significant. In our analysis we have checked for statistical significance in the percentages for all questions between all demographic subgroups of respondents. Any demographic differences have been analysed using appropriate statistical means to check for statistical significance by comparing percentages and also taking into account the base sizes for each subgroup. Where there are significant differences in response between demographic subgroups, the report includes commentary to this effect. Statistical significance has been conducted at 95% confidence.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF INDIVIDUALS RESPONDING

The tables below depict the demographic profile of respondents against the Essex population¹ and the profile of library service users² (where comparable data is available). The proportion who left these questions blank or indicated they did not want to disclose this information has been included as applicable. Consistent with the ECC library user profile, a higher proportion of female residents took part in the consultation. The consultation received a higher proportion of responses from residents aged 55 & over compared to the ECC library user profile.

GENDER	Consultation Total %	Essex population %	Library user profile %
Male	24%	49%	32%
Female	70%	51%	53%
Non-binary/prefer to self-describe	0%	-	-
Prefer not to say / blank	5%	-	14%

¹ Based on 2020 population estimates for Essex County Council (excluding Southend and Thurrock). Age proportions have been recalculated to exclude those aged under 16.

² Based on profile of active library users (177,726 – used library card within the last year). District is based on home location selected at the point of joining the library.

AGE	Consultation Total %	Essex population %	Library user profile %
Under 16	1%	-	-
16-24	2%	12%	10%
25-34	7%	15%	14%
35-44	14%	15%	19%
45-54	15%	17%	14%
55-64	21%	15%	14%
65 & over	37%	26%	31%
Prefer not to say / blank	4%	-	3%

DISTRICT	Consultation Total %	Essex population %	Library user profile %
Basildon	7%	13%	13%
Braintree	11%	10%	10%
Brentwood	6%	5%	6%
Castle Point	5%	6%	5%
Chelmsford	15%	12%	14%
Colchester	17%	13%	14%
Epping Forest	6%	9%	8%
Harlow	3%	6%	6%
Maldon	4%	4%	4%
Rochford	5%	6%	6%
Tendring	10%	10%	9%
Uttlesford	5%	6%	6%
Southend	2%	-	-
Thurrock	0.4%	-	-
Another neighbouring county / other	2%	N/A	N/A
Prefer not to say / blank	2%	.	-

ETHNICITY	Consultation Total %	Essex population %
White British	86%	91%
White Irish	1%	1%
White other background	4%	3%
Mixed / multiple ethnic group	1.1%	1%
Asian / Asian British	0.9%	3%
Black / Black British	0.1%	1%
Other ethnic group	0.8%	<0.5%
Prefer not to say / blank	6%	-

WORKING STATUS	Consultation Total %
Employed full-time	23%
Employed part-time	16%
Self-employed	6%
Employed on flexible/zero hours contract	1%
In full-time education or training (e.g. college, university, apprenticeship)	2%
Not currently employed	5%
Volunteering	6%
Retired	40%
Other	3%
Prefer not to say / blank	5%

DISABILITY / IMPAIRMENT	Consultation Total %
No impairment	71%
Physical impairment	7%
Hearing impairment / deaf	5%
Mental health needs	3%
Visual impairment / blind	2%
Autism spectrum disorder	1%
Learning difficulties / disabilities	1%
Other	2%
Prefer not to say / blank	12%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2,185 respondents took part in the consultation as an individual. 28 organisations also took part in the consultation. There is significant alignment in response to the aims outlined amongst both groups.
- The vast majority of individual consultees responding are library users and have used library services in the last six months. This should be considered when interpreting responses.
- Library services have a significant impact on the lives of those responding to the consultation. As well as access to books (noted by 60% of those commenting), 28% reference reading as being crucial / enjoyable and that the service fosters reading. The ability to use the service as a family, either currently or in previous years, and the fond memories held is also evident with 41% commenting. 20% note the service offers mental health benefits and 24% note the service allows access free material that some couldn't afford to access in other ways.

AIM ONE

- Overall agreement with the sub areas of Aim One is strong in relation to supporting children to be ready for school and developing their reading skills, keeping stock and resources up to date and appealing, helping adults to improve their literacy, ensuring staff have the right skills and support to deliver the best service and providing books and resources in formats that meet changing needs.
- Overall support for delivering a new and exciting programme of events and activities and getting more residents involved in shaping the service is also high but the proportion strongly agreeing with this aim is comparatively lower – likely as a result of the exact nature of these initiatives being unknown.
- Agreement with the aims concerning exploration of new roles and opportunities for volunteers and new opportunities to generate income are comparatively lower than the other Aim One.

AIM TWO

- Overall agreement with the sub areas of Aim Two is high in relation to developing the mobile library offer to support service outreach and community engagement, improving communications to help engage with existing users and new audiences, developing a planned programme of buildings improvements, looking at options to reduce the carbon footprint of library buildings and improving communications and engagement with staff and volunteers.
- Agreement with the technological sub areas of Aim Two are comparatively lower than the other Aim Two areas at around two thirds agreeing with the aims of rolling out better mobile technology for staff & volunteers, updating printing services and launching a new online library platform. A significant proportion of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with these aims (possibly as a result of perceived relevance).
- Overall support for delivering a new and exciting programme of events and activities and getting more residents involved in shaping the service is also high but the proportion strongly agreeing with this aim is comparatively lower to other aims (likely as a result of the exact nature of these initiatives being unknown).

AIM THREE

- Overall agreement with the sub areas of Aim Three is high in relation to helping reduce digital exclusion and improve digital skills, connecting residents with other services that can support and enable them to live better lives, expanding outreach services further for other users and communities that need it, providing support for people to improve their employability and supporting residents to improve their health and wellbeing.
- Agreement with exploration of options for providing chargeable activities alongside the existing free activities is considerably lower than the other Aim Three areas at 50%. A significant proportion of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this aim (31%). 19% disagreed with this aim.

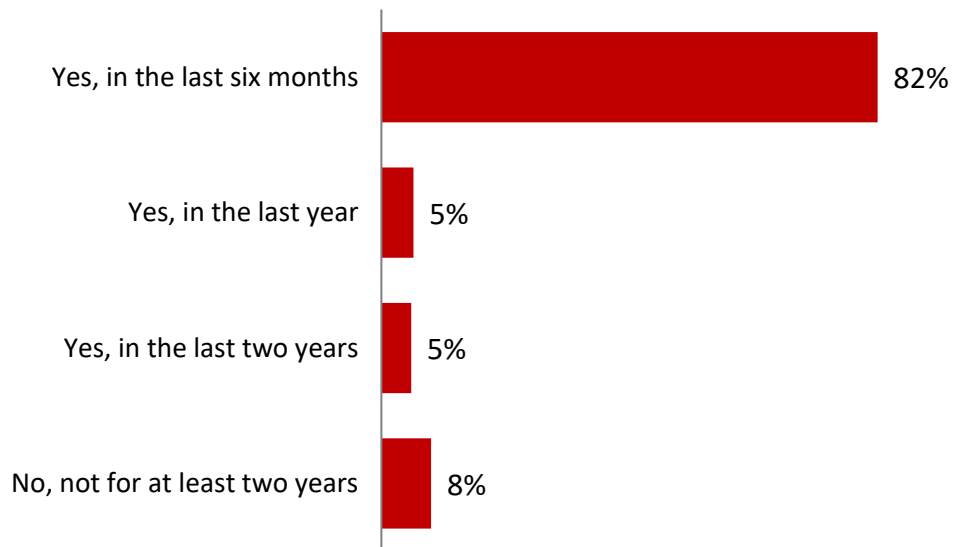
INDIVIDUALS - USAGE & FAMILIARITY WITH LIBRARY SERVICES

RECENCY OF LIBRARY SERVICE USE

The vast majority (92%) of those responding to the consultation have used Essex’s library facilities, either in person, via the home delivery service, mobile service or online in the last two years. 82% have used Essex’s library facilities in the last six months. Only 8% of those responding to the consultation indicated they have not used Essex’s library services for at least two years.

Have you used any of Essex’s library facilities, either in person, via the home delivery service, mobile service or online? Base: all Individual respondents answering (2,185), single response question

Net – Used services in last two years (individual responses combined to report net figure) | 92%



Supporting data table

Net – Used in last two years	92%
Yes, in the last six months	82%
Yes, in the last year	5%
Yes, in the last two years	5%
No, not for at least two years	8%

Whilst the majority of respondents across all demographic groups have used library services in the last six months, some significant differences were observed:

- Use in the last six months is higher amongst respondents aged 35-44 (87%) and respondents aged 65 and over (84%). Use in the last six months is lower amongst respondents aged 45-54 (76%).
- Use in the last six months is higher amongst respondents who are employed part time (84%) and respondents who are retired (85%). Use in the last six months is lower amongst respondents who are employed full time (73%).

INDIVIDUAL AWARENESS OF LIBRARY SERVICES

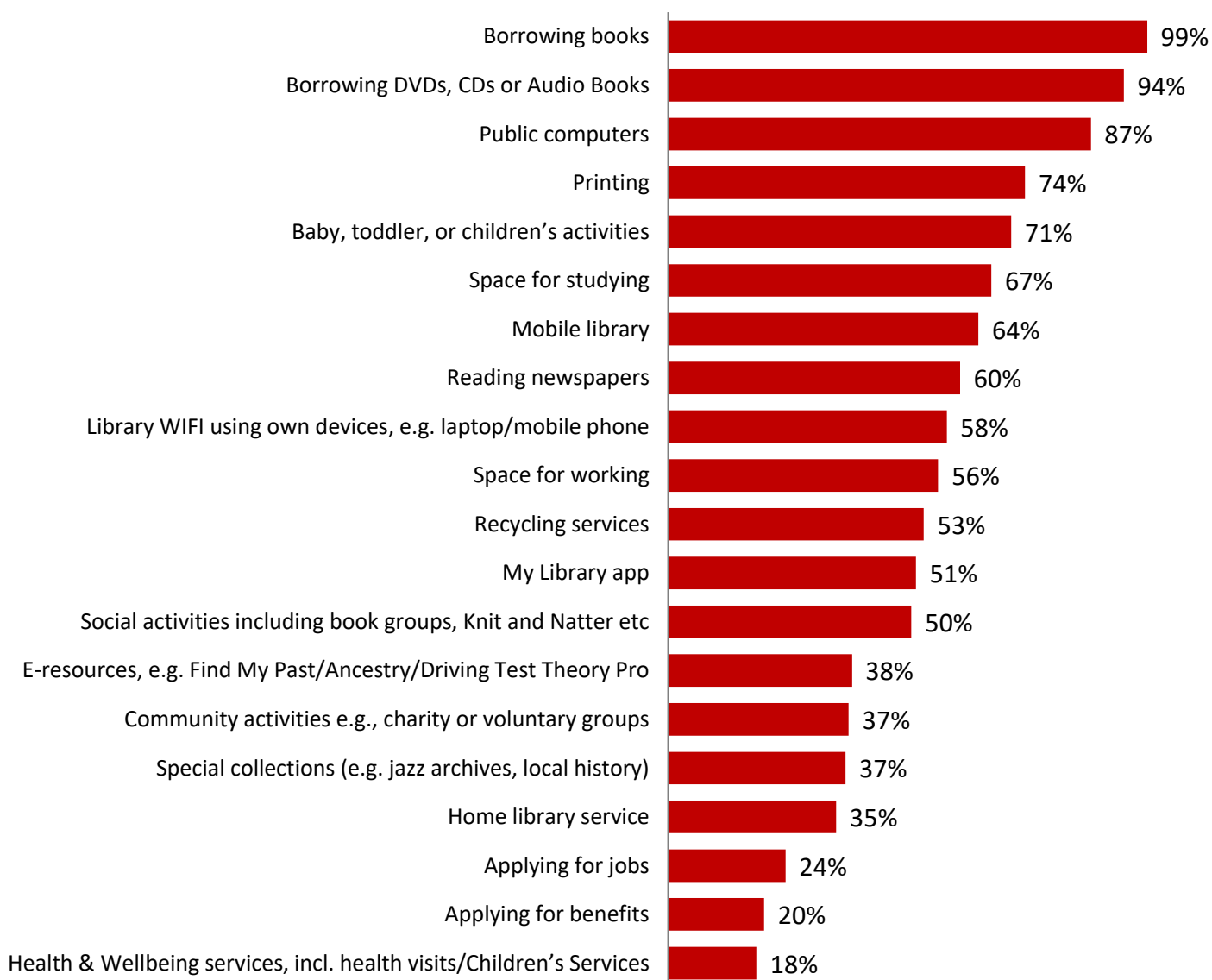
As expected, the vast majority of those responding to the consultation are aware of book borrowing (99%) and DVD, CD or audio book borrowing (94%) from the library service. Awareness of accessing technology either through use of public computers (87%) or printing (74%) is also high. Whilst access to library Wi-Fi using respondents own devices is lower at 58%.

Just over two thirds (67%) are aware of the service providing space for studying, whilst awareness of space for working is lower at 56%.

Claimed awareness of outreach services is mixed with 64% aware of the mobile library service and 35% aware of the home library service.

Awareness of community activities and health and wellbeing services are comparatively lower at 37% and 18% respectively.

Are you aware of the following library services? Base: all Individual respondents answering (2,184), multi response question



Supporting data table	
Borrowing books	99%
Borrowing DVDs, CDs or Audio Books	94%
Public computers	87%
Printing	74%
Baby, toddler, or children's activities	71%
Space for studying	67%
Mobile library	64%
Reading newspapers	60%
Library WIFI using own devices such as laptop or mobile phone	58%
Space for working	56%
Recycling services	53%
My Library app	51%
Social activities including book groups, Knit and Natter etc	50%
E-resources such as Find My Past, Ancestry, Driving Test Theory Pro	38%
Community activities e.g., charity or voluntary groups	37%
Special collections (e.g. jazz archives, local history)	37%
Home library service	35%
Applying for jobs	24%
Applying for benefits	20%
Health and Wellbeing services, including health visits and Children's Services	18%

A likely reflection of varying service provision across Essex, there are significant variations in awareness of specific services by district:

- Awareness of the Mobile Library service is higher amongst respondents who live in Braintree (72%), Maldon (71%), Uttlesford (68%), Tendring (67%), Colchester (67%) and Chelmsford (66%).
- Awareness of space for studying (73%) and being able to use the library Wi-Fi using respondents own devices (65%) is higher amongst respondents who live in Chelmsford.
- Awareness of social activities (62%) and community activities (50%) is higher amongst respondents who live in Rochford.
- Awareness of special collections is higher amongst respondents living in Colchester (47%) and Epping Forest (47%).

As expected, awareness of specific services also varies by age:

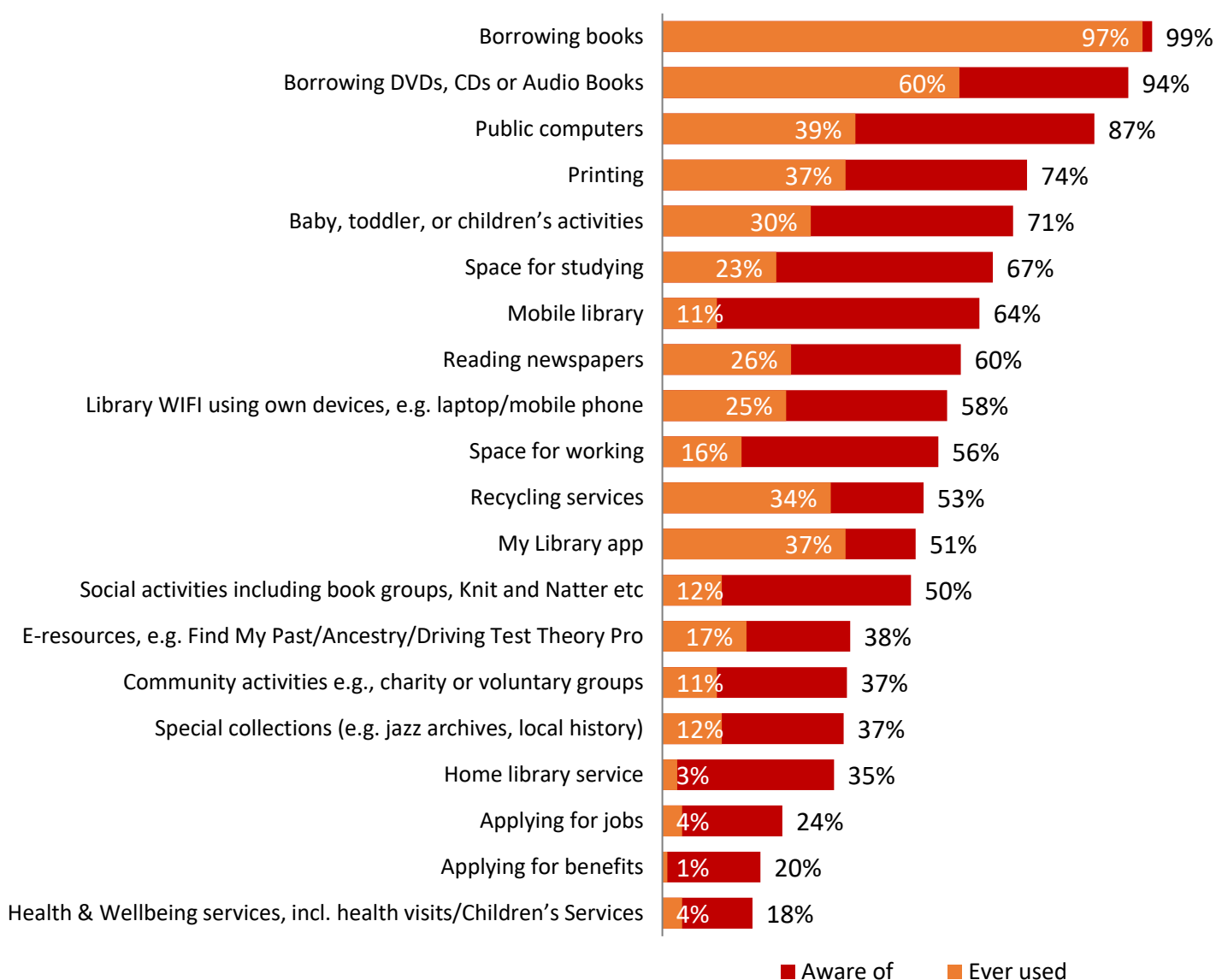
- Awareness of baby, toddler or children's activities is higher amongst respondents aged 25-34 (79%) and 35-44 (80%).

- Awareness of a number of services are higher amongst respondents aged 55-64 - the mobile library service (70%), reading newspapers (68%), 'My Library app' (58%), social activities (54%), special collections (44%) and the Home Library service.
- Awareness of the Mobile Library service, reading newspapers and social activities is also high amongst respondents aged 65 & over (66%, 65% and 54% respectively).
- Awareness of being able to use the library Wi-Fi using residents' own devices is high amongst respondents aged 25-34 (69% and 59% respectively).

INDIVIDUAL USE OF LIBRARY SERVICES

As expected, the vast majority of those responding to the consultation have borrowed books from the library (97%). 60% have borrowed DVDs, CDs or audio books before. Over a third have used public computers (39%), printing (37%), the 'My Library app' (37%) and recycling services (34%). Around a quarter have used the facilities for reading newspapers (26%) and the library Wi-Fi for use on respondents' own devices (25%). Claimed use of the outreach services is comparatively low at 11% for the mobile library service and 3% for the home library service.

Have you ever used the library service for any of the following? Base: all Individual respondents answering (2,170), multi response question



Supporting data table	Aware of	Ever used
Borrowing books	99%	97%
Borrowing DVDs, CDs or Audio Books	94%	60%
Public computers	87%	39%
Printing	74%	37%
Baby, toddler, or children's activities	71%	30%
Space for studying	67%	23%
Mobile library	64%	11%
Reading newspapers	60%	26%
Library WIFI using own devices such as laptop or mobile phone	58%	25%
Space for working	56%	16%
Recycling services	53%	34%
My Library app	51%	37%
Social activities including book groups, Knit and Natter etc	50%	12%
E-resources such as Find My Past, Ancestry, Driving Test Theory Pro	38%	17%
Community activities e.g., charity or voluntary groups	37%	11%
Special collections (e.g. jazz archives, local history)	37%	12%
Home library service	35%	3%
Applying for jobs	24%	4%
Applying for benefits	20%	1%
Health and Wellbeing services, including health visits and Children's Services	18%	4%

There are some significant variations in use of specific services by district:

- A higher proportion of respondents who live in Castle Point have used printing (56%), facilities to read newspapers (38%) and attending community activities (21%).
- A higher proportion of respondents who live in Colchester have used the public computers (44%) and special collections (21%).
- A higher proportion of respondents who live in Harlow have used the public computers (55%), printing (49%), space for studying (35%) and space for working (27%).
A higher proportion of respondents who live in Maldon have used the 'My Library app' (47%).
- A higher proportion of respondents who live in Uttlesford have used the e-resources (31%), Mobile Library service (24%), special collections (22%).

There are also significant variations in use of specific services by age:

- Prior use of baby, toddler or children's activities is higher amongst respondents aged 25-34 (41%), 35-44 (62%) and 45-54 (41%).

- Prior use of borrowing DVDs, CD or audio books is higher amongst respondents aged 45-54 (68%) and 55-64 (67%).
 - Prior use of facilities to read newspapers is highest amongst respondents aged 55-64 (31%) and respondents aged 65 & over (32%).
 - Prior use of the library Wi-Fi for respondents' own devices and the 'My Library app' is high amongst respondents aged 25-34 (41% and 49% respectively).
 - Whilst the base size is relatively low (n=32), a higher proportion of respondents aged 16-24 have used space for studying (56%).
-

COMMENTS ON PERCEIVED IMPACT OF LIBRARY SERVICE ON LIFE FOR INDIVIDUALS

Respondents were asked to detail the impact the library has had on their life in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 87% of respondents provided a comment relevant to the question.

The most common theme referenced is the service providing respondents access to books (60%); a theme supported by 28% also referencing reading as being crucial / enjoyable and that the service fosters reading. Being able to use the service as a family, either currently or in previous years, and the fond memories held are common with 41% commenting.

It is clear from the quantity and range of comments referenced that the service is valued by those using it and is seen as offering mental health benefits (20%), access to free material that some couldn't afford to access in other ways (24%), access to resources (18%) and wide ranging material (17%) as well as a place to work / study (15%).

Please tell us what impact the library service has had on your life, if any? Coded into themes

Base: all answering and providing a comment relevant to the question (87% of Individual respondents - 1,892), multi response question

% comments from Individual respondents answering (87%)	
Provides access to books	60%
Used as a child / take my children / grandchildren	41%
Lost without library / big part of life / rely on it / value / use regularly	36%
Reading is crucial / enjoyable / read a lot / fosters reading	28%
Free access / could not afford it otherwise	24%
Activities / groups / meetings	23%
Improves mental health / sanity / lifeline / isolation / socialising	20%
Provides access to other resources / ability to research	18%
Provides access to wide ranging material / new subjects / genres / authors	17%
Place to work / study	15%
Access to audiobooks / eBooks / CDs / DVDs	14%
Helpful / useful / accessible resource / service	13%
Welcoming / warm / comfortable / quiet / safe / pleasant surroundings	11%
Can reserve books online / collect books / drop-off & collections points	11%
Community asset	11%
IT / printing / photocopying / Wi-Fi / are essential	10%
Staff are friendly / helpful	10%
Expand knowledge / learn / educate / access to other genres / authors	10%
Used all my life	10%
Helped me through the pandemic / lockdown	9%

% comments from respondents answering (87%)	
Work for / worked for / volunteer for library service	5%
Access to newspapers / magazines - physical / online / on app	5%
Somewhere to read	4%
A collections point for LFTs / recycling point / collect refuse/recycling sacks	3%
Mobile library is an asset / home delivery service	3%
Better for environment to borrow rather than buy books	1%

Some example comments to support these themes are displayed below:

Libraries are the only place where anyone can go, regardless of socioeconomic background and be able to access all these amazing free services and are an essential part of our community, I attended rhyme time sessions with both my children and it was invaluable for meeting other parents when I may have otherwise felt isolated in my local area. We visit regularly as a family to take out books and love that the principle of libraries reduces waste and encourages a love of books and reading.

It was a life saver as a mother to young children. We didn't have much money and being able to have somewhere free to take them was invaluable, as well as being able to share books that I couldn't afford. It greatly improved my mental health.

It enables me to borrow a wide range of books including audiobooks which I would otherwise not be able to afford. I used to like the cafe in Colchester library as I felt it was supporting people with learning difficulties who worked there but that facility no longer exists. I have sometimes sat in the library for a quiet space.

I access/use library services most days. Most commonly, I request and borrow physical books from the library and audio books from the online service. As a full time carer, these are resources I would not have the money to purchase and would therefore not have access to. Alongside the resources I borrow from the library I also use the library space on a regular basis for teaching my son (who has additional needs and is partially home schooled). The library provides us with a space away from the home environment to complete his learning tasks. Without this dedicated space, educating him would be a much greater challenge as the home environment affords many more distractions for us both.

It is an integral part of our lives as a family . We visit the library often to borrow books (every three weeks or more often). We use the online resources daily especially the borrowbox and press reader apps. Our daughter has enjoyed the rhyme time sessions and one off craft events held in the library. The staff are wonderful, so friendly and helpful and we would be lost without our local library.

There are significant variations in the perceived impact of library services by age and reflect usage patterns:

- A higher proportion of respondents aged 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 referenced use as a child / taking their children / grandchildren (60%, 71% and 49% respectively)
- A higher proportion of respondents aged 35-44 and 45-54 referenced activities / groups / meetings (36% and 29% respectively).
- A higher proportion of respondents aged 35-44 referenced the library plays a big part in their life and would feel lost without the services offered (44%).
- A higher proportion of respondents aged 25-34 referenced use as a place to work or study (24%).
- A higher proportion of respondents aged 65 & over referenced access to other resources / ability to research (24%).

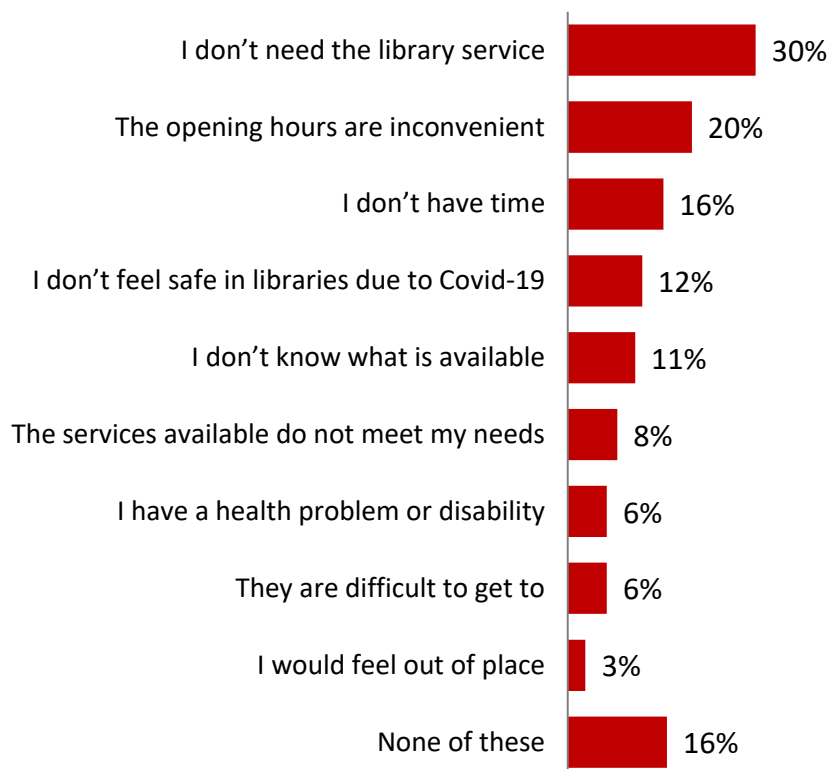
REASONS FOR NOT CURRENTLY USING LIBRARY SERVICES AMONGST INDIVIDUALS

Respondents were asked to select their reasons for not currently using Essex library services from a prompted list. 174 respondents responded to this question; 8% of respondents taking part.

The most common reason for not using Essex Library Service is simply not having a need to (30%), followed by a perception of inconvenient opening hours (20%) and not having the time to use them (16%). 11% of those not using the services are unsure of what is available.

If you do not currently use Essex Library Services, what are the reasons for this?

Base: all Individual respondents answering (174), multi response question



Supporting data table	
I don't need the library service	30%
The opening hours are inconvenient	20%
I don't have time	16%
I don't feel safe in libraries due to Covid-19	12%
I don't know what is available	11%
The services available do not meet my needs	8%
I have a health problem or disability	6%
They are difficult to get to	6%
I would feel out of place	3%
None of these	16%

INDIVIDUALS - OVERALL OPINION OF KEY AIMS PUT FORWARD

The draft 'Everyone's Library Service 2022-2026 plan' sets three high-level aims for the Essex Library service and the areas that the team will be working on over the next four years. These are:

1. Library Service and Literacy
2. Infrastructure and Communications
3. Supporting our communities and Levelling Up

Respondents were presented with the sub level aims within each of these three areas and asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each one. Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide feedback on each of the three high-level aims in their own words.

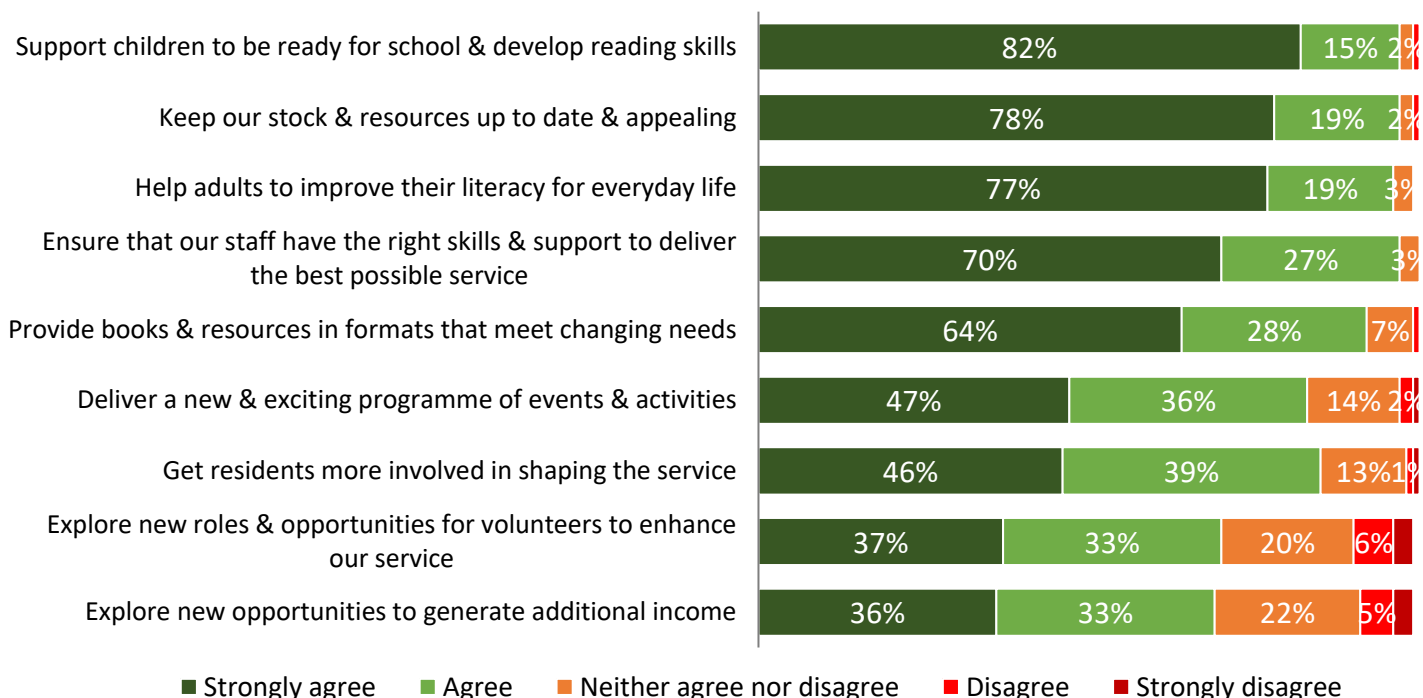
SUPPORT FOR AIM ONE AREAS – LIBRARY SERVICE AND LITERACY

Overall agreement is strong in relation to the stated aims of supporting children to be ready for school and developing their reading skills, keeping stock and resources up to date and appealing, helping adults to improve their literacy, ensuring staff have the right skills and support to deliver the best service and providing books and resources in formats that meet changing needs; all with at least 90% agreement. Strength of agreement (i.e. the proportion of respondents 'strongly agreeing') with these aims is also very high (64% or above).

Overall support for delivering a new and exciting programme of events and activities and getting more residents involved in shaping the service is high (84% and 85% respectively). However, strength of support is comparatively lower – likely as a result of the exact nature of these initiatives being unknown.

Agreement with the aims concerning exploration of new roles and opportunities for volunteers and new opportunities to generate income are comparatively lower than the other Aim One areas at 70% and 69% respectively.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed aims? Base: all Individual respondents answering (2,175), single response question for each aim



Supporting data table	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Support children to be ready for school & develop their reading skills	82%	15%	2%	1%	0%
Keep our stock & resources up to date & appealing	78%	19%	2%	1%	0%
Help adults to improve their literacy for everyday life	77%	19%	3%	0%	0%
Ensure that our staff have the right skills & support to deliver the best possible service	70%	27%	3%	0%	0%
Provide books & resources in formats that meet changing needs	64%	28%	7%	1%	0%
Deliver a new & exciting programme of events & activities	47%	36%	14%	2%	%
Get residents more involved in shaping the service	46%	39%	13%	1%	1%
Explore new roles & opportunities for volunteers to enhance our service	37%	33%	20%	6%	3%
Explore new opportunities to generate additional income	36%	33%	22%	5%	3%

There are a few significant variations in support between districts which likely reflect the perceived needs of particular libraries in different areas, and are as follows:

- Overall support for providing books and resources in formats that meet changing needs (97%), delivering a new and exciting programme of events and activities (90%), exploring new roles and opportunities for volunteers to enhance the service (79%), and exploring new opportunities to generate additional income is higher amongst respondents living in Basildon.
- Overall support for exploring new roles and opportunities for volunteers to enhance the service (65%) and exploring new opportunities to generate income (60%) is lower amongst respondents living in Colchester.

There are significant variations in the degree of support for particular aims by age:

- Strength of support (i.e. the proportion of respondents 'strongly agreeing') for supporting children to be ready for school and develop their reading skills increases with age and is highest amongst respondents aged 55-64 (84%) and aged 65 & over (85%).
- Strength of support (i.e. the proportion of respondents 'strongly agreeing') for keeping stock and resources up to date and appealing increases with age and is highest amongst respondents aged 45-54 (80%), 55-64 (79%) and aged 65 & over (82%).
- Strength of support (i.e. the proportion of respondents 'strongly agreeing') for helping adults to improve their literacy for everyday life increases with age and is highest amongst respondents aged 55-64 (80%) and aged 65 & over (81%).

- Strength of support (i.e. the proportion of respondents 'strongly agreeing') for ensuring staff have the right skills and support to deliver the best possible services increases with age and is highest amongst respondents aged 45-54 (73%), 55-64 (71%) and aged 65 & over (72%).
- Overall support for delivering a new and exciting programme of events and activities is higher amongst respondents aged 25-34 (91%).

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide any comments they had related to Aim One in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 29% of respondents provided a comment relevant to the question.

The most common theme referenced is the position that fully well trained and paid staff are critical to the library service (25%) and volunteers should be in addition to these staff and not replacing them (18%). Some are also concerned about a potential loss of physical books to electronic alternatives (14%) and the importance of improving the range of books / investing in physical book stock (13%).

Consistent with the comparably lower proportion of respondents agreeing, 12% of those providing a comment referenced the service should not be focusing on income generation and 10% indicated they do not support charging for services.

Do you have any other comments related to Aim One? Coded into themes, 3% or above reported
Base: all Individual respondents answering and providing a comment relevant to the question (29% of respondents - 638), multi response question

% comments from Individual respondents answering (29%)	
Fully well trained & paid staff are critical to the service	25%
Volunteers should not replace trained staff only be in addition to	18%
Concerned about loss of physical books to eBooks / digital alternatives	14%
Improve range of books / invest in books / maintain if not improve book stock	13%
Children's literacy / education is so important / support library involvement / links to schools	12%
Should not focus on income generation but providing a core service	12%
Charging for services is not welcome / free service for all / priority should be a free service	10%
Support aim one areas (non-specific)	9%
Support some chargeable services / activities / with caveats / proceed with caution	8%
More events / groups / clubs / socialising	8%
Library is crucial to all / community / benefits all	7%
Support volunteers in addition to staff	7%
Suggestion for service / event / group / activity	6%
Plans need further details / how will this be implemented / seems complex	6%
Increase awareness / promotion of library services	5%
Changes should not negatively affect current service levels	4%

% comments from Individual respondents answering (29%)	
Evolve to community hub / provide access to other services	4%
Service should be inclusive / not just about books	4%
Adults' literacy / education is so important / support library involvement	4%
Focus on providing books / core service / fostering reading / not involved in anything else	3%

Trained librarians are essential in the delivery of Library services and literacy. There must never be any kind of reliance on volunteers to do this, though of course volunteers should be encouraged to help.

I would caution relying too much on volunteers who may not be able to commit regularly. I would also not want to see space taken away from core library services for income generation etc.

I can see the appeal to the library of exploring new opportunities to generate income, but this needs a lot of thought - you could risk making people who can't afford these services feel excluded, feel the library is not for them or not access services which are free to use because they are worried there could be a fee.

The library should not be about making money and attempting to introduce commercial aspects adds pressure to deliver only in those areas, distracts staff from core business and discourages people from visiting.

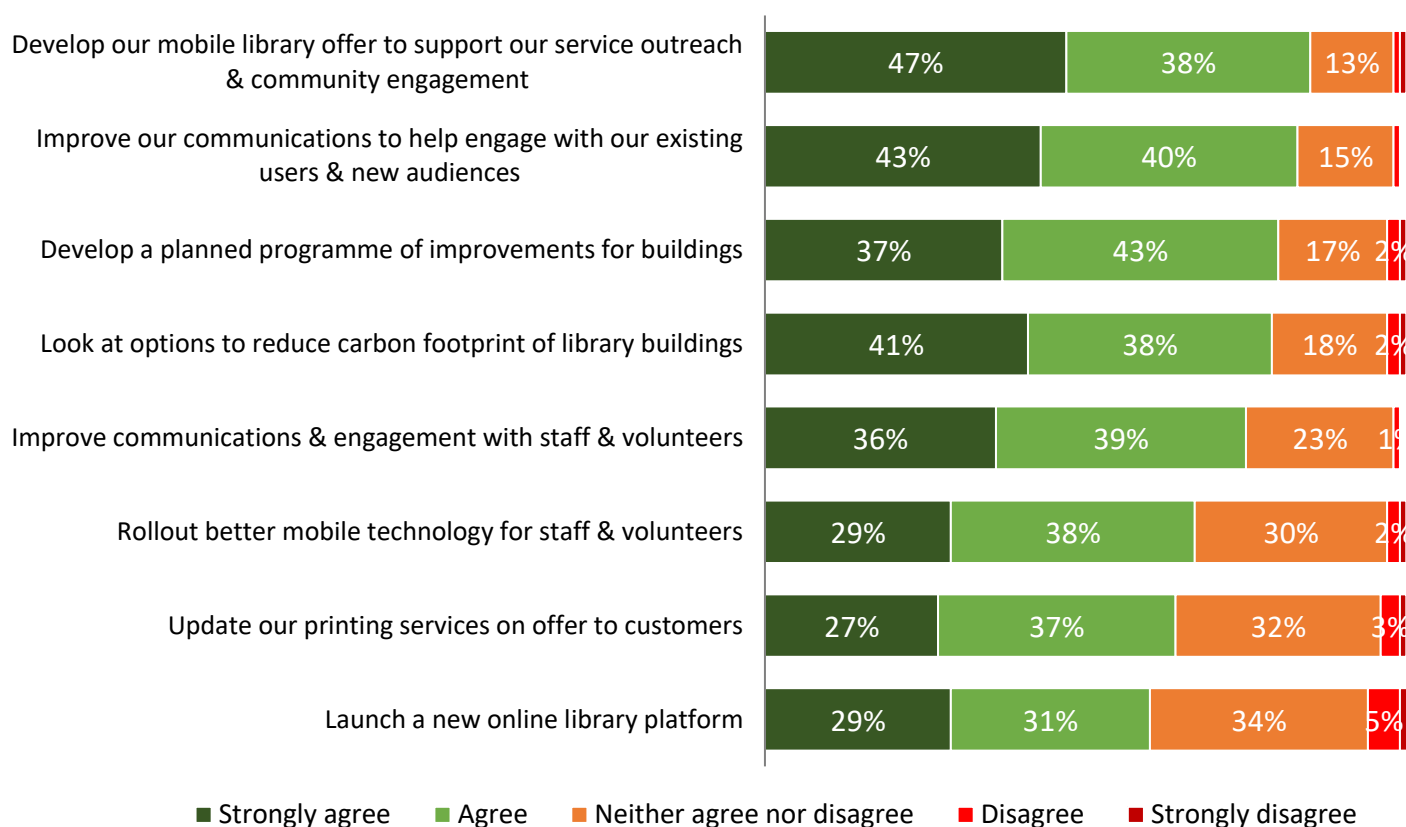
A very careful balance probably needs to be made between providing invaluable services, resources and generating further income, whilst keeping costs down as I think a huge proportion of the population are struggling on very low incomes and the struggle may become even harder and possibly much sooner rather than later. Pressure to deliver only in those areas, distracts staff from core business and discourages people from visiting.

SUPPORT FOR AIM TWO AREAS – INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Overall agreement is high with the stated aims of developing the mobile library offer to support service outreach and community engagement, improving communications to help engage with existing users and new audiences, developing a planned programme of buildings improvements, looking at options to reduce the carbon footprint of library buildings and improving communications and engagement with staff and volunteers; all with at least 75% agreement. Strength of agreement (i.e. the proportion of respondents ‘strongly agreeing’) with these aims is comparatively lower than observed for the top five areas of Aim One, however, at around four to five in ten.

Agreement with the technological sub areas of Aim Two are comparatively lower than the other Aim Two areas. 67% agree with rolling out better mobile technology for staff & volunteers, 64% agreeing with updating printing services and 60% agree with launching a new online library platform. A significant proportion of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with these aims (possibly as a result of perceived relevance).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed aims? Base: all Individual respondents answering (2,159), single response question for each aim



Supporting data table	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Develop our mobile library offer to support our service outreach and community engagement	47%	38%	13%	1%	1%
Improve our communications to help engage with our existing users and new audiences	43%	40%	15%	1%	0%
Develop a planned programme of improvements for our buildings	37%	43%	17%	2%	1%

Supporting data table	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Look at options to reduce the carbon footprint of our library buildings	41%	38%	18%	2%	1%
Improve communications and engagement with our staff and volunteers	36%	39%	23%	1%	0%
Rollout better mobile technology for staff and volunteers	29%	38%	30%	2%	1%
Update our printing services on offer to customers	27%	37%	32%	3%	1%
Launch a new online library platform	29%	31%	34%	5%	2%

There are significant variations in support by district and likely reflect the perceived needs of particular libraries are as follows:

- Overall support for updating the printing services on offer to customers (71%) and launching a new online library platform (71%) is higher amongst respondents living in Basildon.
- Overall support for updating the printing services on offer to customers (75%) is highest amongst respondents living in Castle Point.
- Overall support for improving communications and engagement with staff and volunteers (90%), developing a planned programme of improvements for buildings (89%), updating the printing services on offer to customers (79%) and rollout of better mobile technology for staff and volunteers (79%) is higher amongst respondents living in Harlow.

A few significant variations in the degree of support for particular aims by age:

- Overall support for developing the mobile library service to support service outreach and community engagement is higher amongst respondents aged 55-64 (89%) and 65 & over (87%).
- Strength of support (i.e. the proportion of respondents 'strongly agreeing') for launching a new online library platform is higher amongst respondents aged 25-34 (41%).

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide any comments they had related to Aim Two in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 22% of respondents provided a comment relevant to the question.

The most common theme referenced supports the areas highlighted within Aim Two and references communication / promotion of the library service is needed and communications should be improved (21%).

Consistent with response to Aim One, some are concerned about a potential loss of physical books to electronic alternatives (11%) and ensuring any changes are not to the detriment of the service as it stands currently (11%). Whilst a proportion put forward concerns on technology replacing staff / reducing personal contact (10%) and there already being enough online platforms available (10%), commentary also refers to suggested improvements to dated IT systems (9%), more / improved IT facilities within libraries (8%) and better technology / platforms to access online services remotely (8%).

Do you have any other comments related to Aim Two? Coded into themes, 3% or above reported
Base: all Individual respondents answering and providing a comment relevant to the question (22% of respondents - 485), multi response question

% comments from Individual respondents answering (22%)	
Communication / promotion / awareness of library service / improve content of comms	21%
Well trained / friendly / professional staff - proficient in tech support	13%
Retain if not expand book stock / invest in physical books / do not replace with digital alternatives	11%
Ensure changes are not to the detriment of service / space	11%
Buildings need updating / improving / better facilities / accessible	10%
Use of technology should not replace staff / reduce personal contact / supplement current service only / should not be an online service only	10%
Already have online platforms available / apps / are others needed / happy with current platforms	10%
Investment / improvement in mobile libraries / must not replace physical libraries	9%
Suggested improvements to current IT systems / systems are dated	9%
More / improved IT facilities within libraries / Wi-Fi / air printing / issues with IT	8%
In need of better technology / platforms to access online catalogue / online services remotely	8%
Buildings should be welcoming / provide a quiet space for reading/study / comfortable chairs	7%
Service must be fully inclusive - elderly / disabled - not everyone uses technology	7%
Support aim two areas (non-specific)	6%
Physical libraries important for community	6%
Plans need further details / how will this be implemented	6%
Can't comment on certain issues / don't understand some of the terms used	5%
Improved printing service not needed / contradicts carbon footprint reduction	4%
Carbon footprint reduction is a worthy aim	4%
No improvement to buildings necessary / not a priority	4%

% comments from Individual respondents answering (22%)	
Communication is adequate	4%
Where is funding coming from / sounds costly / how much will this cost	4%
Further consultation with stakeholders needed	3%
Meetings / events / groups / facilities for community outreach / services	3%

Of the above the most important is communication of the value of the library services and what is on offer to the residents so that they use the Library.

Promotion of services is all within the library and its own social media so most people don't know what is on offer. Events and activities should be promoted externally on village social media pages.

Whilst I admire the sentiment, this plan is in stark contrast to the previous five year plan. How will these improvements be funded? Is there still an insistence on libraries being self-funding, which simply doesn't work. Has the Community-run libraries plan which has never taken off, despite huge amounts of staff resource in its planning, been abandoned, or will savings be made by replacing staff with volunteers. You only have to look at other library services to see that in most cases volunteer-led libraries are not sustainable.

The online, app and e-book offer is really important in the modern world and the library has made great strides forward on this front in recent years. It's important to build upon this and continue to increase the e-book offer and keep it up to date. It would also be great for many if library e-books could be compatible with Kindle, the most popular e-reader, though I appreciate this is a wider issue than within Essex libraries.

Buildings should be inviting and accessible for all; children, those with disability mental, physical and sensory. The community need to know what the library has to offer. Outreach on social media can be improved. I feel the existing online library platform is underused. People won't use it if they do not know it exists!

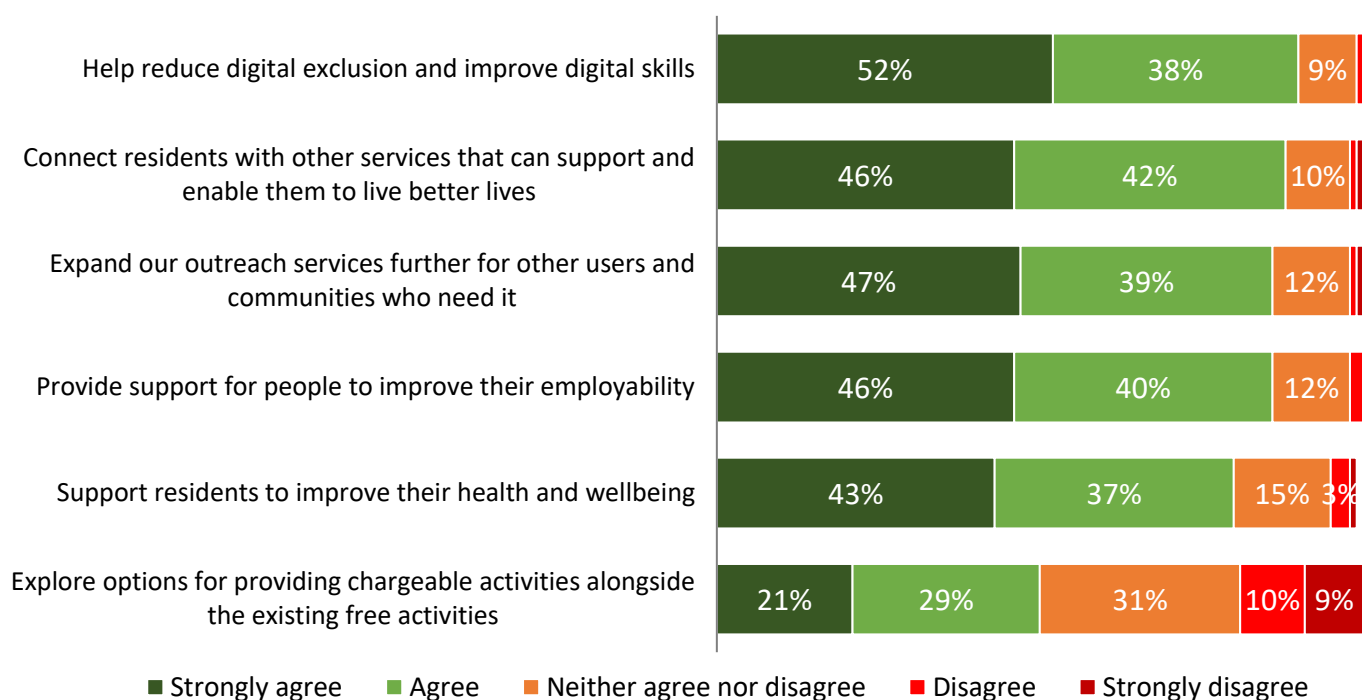
SUPPORT FOR AIM THREE AREAS – SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES AND LEVELLING UP

Overall agreement is high in relation to the stated aims of helping reduce digital exclusion and improve digital skills, connecting residents with other services that can support and enable them to live better lives, expanding outreach services further for other users and communities that need it and providing support for people to improve their employability; all with at least 85% agreement. Strength of agreement (i.e. the proportion of respondents ‘strongly agreeing’) with these aims is comparatively lower than observed for the top five areas of Aim One, however, at between four and five in ten.

Overall agreement for supporting residents to improve their health and wellbeing is high (80%).

Agreement with exploration of options for providing chargeable activities alongside the existing free activities is considerably lower than the other Aim Three areas at 50%. A significant proportion of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this aim (31%). 19% disagreed with this aim.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed aims? Base: all Individual respondents answering (2,159), single response question for each aim



Supporting data table	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Help reduce digital exclusion & improve digital skills	52%	38%	9%	1%	1%
Connect residents with other services that can support and enable them to live better lives	46%	42%	10%	1%	1%
Expand our outreach services further for other users and communities who need it	47%	39%	12%	1%	1%
Provide support for people to improve their employability	46%	40%	12%	2%	1%
Support residents to improve their health & wellbeing	43%	37%	15%	3%	1%
Explore options for providing chargeable activities alongside the existing free activities	21%	29%	31%	10%	9%

A few significant variations in support by district and likely reflect the needs of particular geographical areas are as follows:

- Overall support for providing support for people to improve their employability is higher amongst respondents living in Tendring (91%) and Harlow (88%).
- Overall support for exploring options for providing chargeable activities alongside the existing free activities (41%) is lower amongst respondents living in Colchester.

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide any comments they had related to Aim Three in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 17% of respondents provided a comment relevant to the question.

Over one in five (22%) of those providing a comment noted a preference for the service to stick to the core offering and not be involved in other services that are provided elsewhere. Consistent with the comparably lower proportion of respondents agreeing, 14% of those providing a comment noted they believe all services should be free and nothing should be chargeable. 11% also referred to the potential for chargeable services to exclude or deter people.

Some noted the library service could act as a community hub / encourage socialisation (12%) and a hub for health / outreach (8%).

Do you have any other comments related to Aim Three? Coded into themes, 3% or above reported
Base: all Individuals answering and providing a comment relevant to the question (17% of respondents – 379), multi response question

% comments from Individual respondents answering (17%)	
Should stick to core services / not be involved in other services that are provided elsewhere	22%
All services should be free / nothing chargeable	14%
Could act as a community hub / socialisation	12%
Chargeable services likely to exclude / deter people	11%
Changes must not compromise book stocks / opening hours / staffing levels / space / service	9%
Hub for health / other services / outreach	8%
Support this aim	8%
Plans need further details / how will this be implemented	8%
Provide activities / groups / clubs / events	7%
Staff should focus on library service / too much for them to do if services expanded	7%
Services must be promoted / advertised / attract new users	6%
Some chargeable services could be beneficial / acceptable / must be cautious	6%
Staff must be appropriately trained	6%
IT support/training / equipment / online functionality required	6%
Chargeable services should be in addition to free services / not compromise free services	5%

% comments from Individual respondents answering (17%)	
Do not turn libraries into an online service only / do not replace physical books	4%
Space could be rented out / space for activities	4%
Could signpost services / provide information but nothing further	4%
Should not be commercialised / not a money-making operation	3%

In expanding library services, it is essential not to lose sight of the primary purpose of a library - to provide books to borrow and the range of available books could be expanded – i.e. more books in the libraries.

On the whole, there are a number of organisations that already support the local community. IAG is a skilled role and we already have a CAB and a local college that can offer these activities. Let these established organisations carry on doing what they are being funded for and allow the library service to do what it does best.

I think libraries can be key to bringing communities together, and organisations should be able to utilise library spaces and rent them after closing hours (gets people into the building who might not otherwise and could encourage them to use libraries more often in the future).

Often libraries are in the centre of town, accessible, visible and with working hours opening times. There is an important and valuable role for libraries to play in acting as a connector and referrer of people to other community-based services to support health wellbeing, employability and so on.

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide any comments on chargeable services they would like to see if they supported the provision of chargeable services. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 32% of respondents provided a comment relevant to the question.

Just under one in five (18%) of those providing a comment noted they believe all services should be free and nothing should be chargeable. 9% also referred to the potential for chargeable services to exclude or deter people.

Of those that put forward ideas for potential chargeable services, the most common are arts & crafts / artist exhibitions (16%), talks by authors / writing workshops (13%), café / refreshment provision (12%) and activities for children / teenagers / including after school / school holiday specific activities (12%).

If you support the provision of chargeable activities (alongside existing free activities), which chargeable activities would you like to see, if any? Coded into themes, 3% or above reported

Base: all Individual respondents answering and providing a comment relevant to the question (32% of respondents – 709), multi response question

% comments from Individual respondents answering (32%)	
All services should be free / nothing chargeable	18%
Chargeable services likely to exclude / deter people	9%
Arts & crafts / artist exhibitions	16%
Prepared to pay / charge must be reasonable / if to cover costs / donations	14%
Talks by authors / writing workshops	13%
Café / refreshment provision	12%
Activities for children / teenagers / including after school/school holidays	12%
Workshops / courses / learning / talks / lectures	11%
Printing / photocopying / computer use / IT support	11%
Renting out space / providing space for groups / meetings / activities	10%
Only charge for additional services / core services must be free	8%
Drama / music / film / photography	8%
Host clubs / community groups / meetings / social groups	7%
Out of hours use	6%
Collaborate with / provide space for commercial services – banks, post office, solicitors / council	6%
Chargeable activities cannot take precedence over core services / detract from core services	5%
Some charging for services is needed (non-specific)	5%
Games (board & computer) / jigsaws / toys / DVDs	4%
More information required / examples	4%
Book clubs / reading groups / recommendations	4%
Act as community hubs	4%
Health services / mental health / wellbeing	4%

% comments from Individual respondents answering (32%)	
Baby / toddler groups	3%
Life skills / numeracy / literacy skills / CV writing / employability	3%
History / geology / ancestry	3%
Adult education / support for students	3%
Learning a language / sign language	3%
Small contribution to running costs / charge for inter-library lending / more for late fees	3%

INDIVIDUALS - FUTURE OF ESSEX LIBRARIES

At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were also given the opportunity to provide feedback in their own words in relation to:

1. Any other comments related to the plan for Essex Libraries
2. What they would like to see from Essex Libraries in the future

INDIVIDUALS OTHER COMMENTS RELATED TO ESSEX LIBRARIES PLAN

For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 28% of respondents provided a comment relevant to the question.

A quarter (25%) of those providing a comment requested that all current libraries should stay open or were concerned about their local library building closing. In addition, 16% commented on how important the library service is to the community / residents.

Some reiterated previous comments in terms of a larger range of material / book stock (13%) and fully trained staff and volunteers / having enough staff (12%). 8% requested longer opening hours / opening on additional days.

7% highlighted that they would welcome more detail on the plans in terms of implementation and funding.

Do you have any other comments related to the plan for Essex Libraries?

Coded into themes, 3% or above reported

Base: all Individual respondents answering and providing a comment relevant to the question (28% of respondents - 613), multi response question

% comments from respondents answering (28%)	
Libraries must stay open / concerned about closures of particular libraries	25%
Crucially important for community / vital for residents	16%
Offer a large range of materials / increase book / up-to-date stock	13%
Support plans outlined	13%
Staff & volunteers must be fully trained / polite / friendly / need to make sure of enough staff	12%
Longer opening hours required / open on more days	8%
Must be inclusive / accessible / cater to all	8%
Communication / engagement / promote services / attract new users	8%
Plans need further details / how will this be implemented / where is funding coming from	7%
Should be supported / invested in / funded / secured for future	6%
Services to be free / no charging	6%
Important to focus on core library services	6%
Activities / groups / meetings are needed	5%
Service / opening hours / space must be maintained	5%

% comments from respondents answering (28%)	
Used as a community resource / information point for services	5%
Praise for current libraries / staff	5%
In need of upgrade / new facilities / parking / toilets / refreshment provision	4%
Continue to offer IT support / use of equipment / Wi-Fi / online provision	4%
Volunteers should not replace trained / paid staff	4%
Online offer should not replace physical books	4%
Offer a safe / quiet environment	3%
Awareness of this consultation is poor / criticism of consultation	3%

Please commit to keeping all of Essex's libraries open - they are a lifeline for so many residents.

All existing libraries should be kept as they are, run by Essex County Council with paid staff and no reduction in opening hours or services.

Libraries should continue to operate and none should be closed down. Not everyone has access to the internet for reading and learning services, and even those who do may not wish to use the internet for this purpose. From a personal point of view, I learn much more easily reading from a book than from a screen.

Make libraries more accessible for all. Utilise libraries for the community, include coffee areas, provision for talks with people of interest. Children's groups, assistance for those with extra needs. Our libraries can be so much more than just borrowing books.

I would hope that libraries will continue to be provided for local people to enable those from a variety of groups to participate and enjoy them. Libraries should be well stocked to encourage usage. The running down of libraries has put many people off visiting at all. Encourage activities that will bring people back to their local library.

INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS RELATED TO FUTURE OF ESSEX LIBRARIES

For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 73% of respondents provided a comment relevant to the question.

Under one in five (19%) requested that all current libraries should be retained and closures should be avoided. In addition, 12% commented on the importance of the continuity of the current service / maintaining the existing service.

A quarter (25%) of those providing a comment would like to see a good stock of books / wider / more up to date range of books. Other common comments put forward focused on the social aspect of the service and its development – activities / events / opportunities to socialise (17%), more of a community focus / community hub moving forward (17%), engaging / working with schools / children / young people (12%).

What would you like to see from Essex Libraries in the future?

Coded into themes, 3% or above reported

Base: all Individual respondents answering and providing a comment relevant to the question (73% of respondents – 1,589), multi response question

% comments from respondents answering (73%)	
Good stock of books / wider range of books / keep up-to-date	25%
Avoid closures / retain current libraries / expand	19%
Activities / events / clubs / opportunities to socialise	17%
More of a community focus / community hub / community engagement moving forward	17%
Longer opening hours / open more days / everyday / out of hours usage	14%
Engaging / working with schools / children / young people / catering for	12%
Friendly / professional fully trained paid staff / not replaced by volunteers	12%
Continuity of current service / maintain existing service / happy with service	12%
Increase awareness / promotion of library services / attract new users	11%
Be inclusive / accessible for all	10%
Welcoming / friendly / quiet / safe environment / for study / reading / working	10%
Support learning / literacy / research / continue to foster reading	8%
Up-to-date resources / info / well stocked (unspecified)	8%
Provision of audiobooks / eBooks / online services / digital resources / keep up-to-date	7%
Provision of IT / printers / Wi-Fi / IT support / some improvement required to IT	6%
Evolving / dynamic up-to-date/improved services / adapting to needs of users / vary by library	6%
Space to use for clubs / groups / meetings / socialising	6%
Improved search / online library system / app / collection/return system	6%
Modern / keep up-to-date buildings with facilities i.e. toilets, parking	4%
Be a free service to all to use	4%

% comments from respondents answering (73%)	
Selected services / collaboration / signposting non-library services	4%
Continual funding / investment / support / fit for future	4%
Integrated / balance of physical & digital resources / keep up-to-date	3%
Focus on core library services / don't get involved in other services nor income generation	3%
Continue / expand mobile libraries / home delivery service	3%
Café / refreshment provision	3%

A continued commitment to meeting the diversity of borrowers' needs, i.e. not restricting book stock and other services to those that are useful to the majority but making sure that minority interests are catered for.

I am really happy with the service received so far. We enjoy visiting different libraries around Chelmsford. Perhaps more outdoor reading events in the spring/summer? We attended a lovely event where the library joined forces with Heart and Sole walking group to go for a walk then have a story in the park. Lovely experience had by all. A great way to bring the community together.

A far more dynamic and integrated service which combines a variety of local and community services and which reaches out positively to the community it serves..

ORGANISATIONS - OVERALL OPINION OF KEY AIMS PUT FORWARD

28 organisations responded to the consultation:

- 12 responded from community groups
- 10 responded from town or parish council
- 4 responded from other public bodies
- 1 responded from a registered charity
- 1 did not disclose the type of organisation they represent

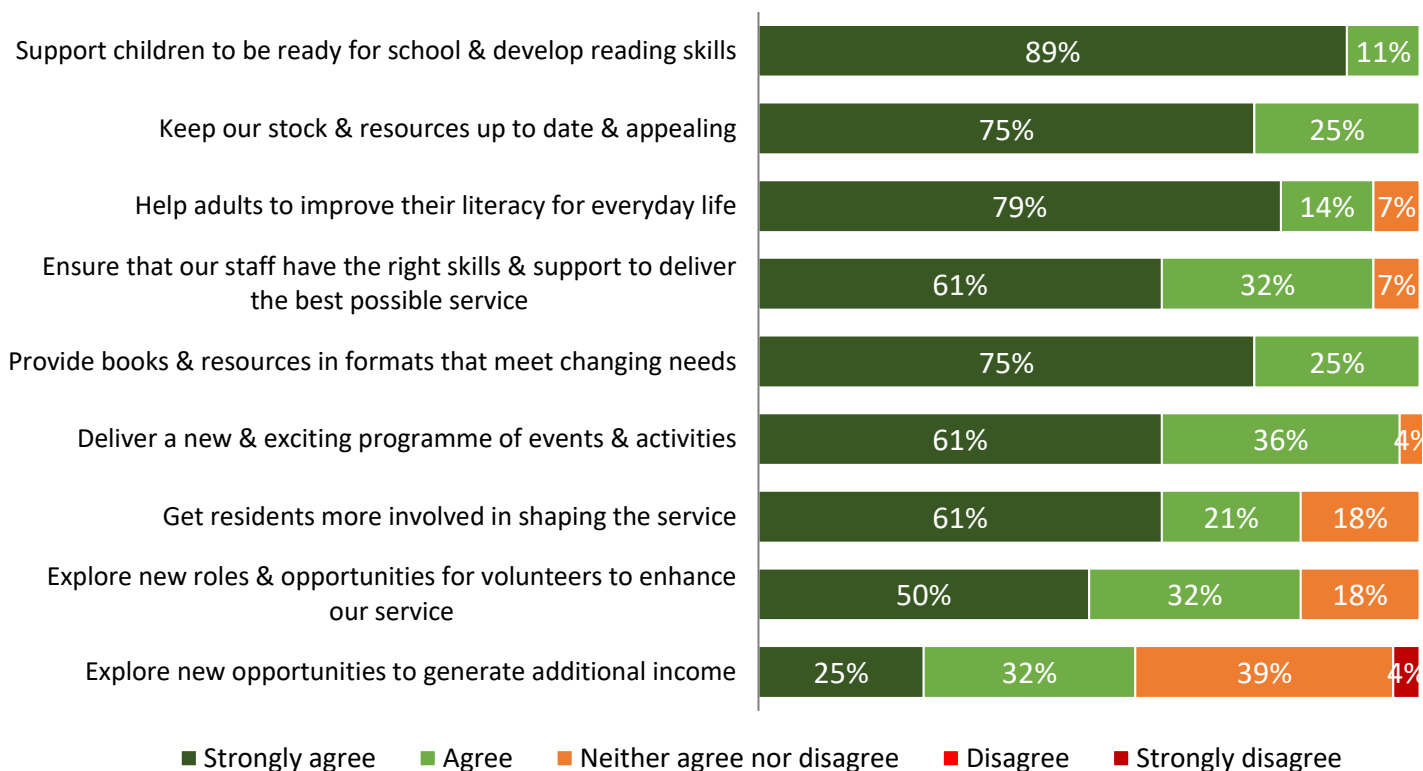
Consistent with the approach for individuals, organisation respondents were presented with the sub level aims within each of the three areas and asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each one.

SUPPORT FOR AIM ONE AREAS – LIBRARY SERVICE AND LITERACY

Consistent with trends observed amongst individual respondents, overall agreement is strong in relation to the stated aims of supporting children to be ready for school and developing their reading skills, keeping stock and resources up to date and appealing, helping adults to improve their literacy, ensuring staff have the right skills and support to deliver the best service and providing books and resources in formats that meet changing needs. Agreement is also high for delivering a new and exciting programme of events and activities.

Also consistent with the trend observed amongst individual respondents, agreement with exploring new opportunities to generate income is comparatively lower than the other Aim One areas. A higher proportion neither agreed nor disagreed with the aim.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed aims? Base: all organisations answering (28)



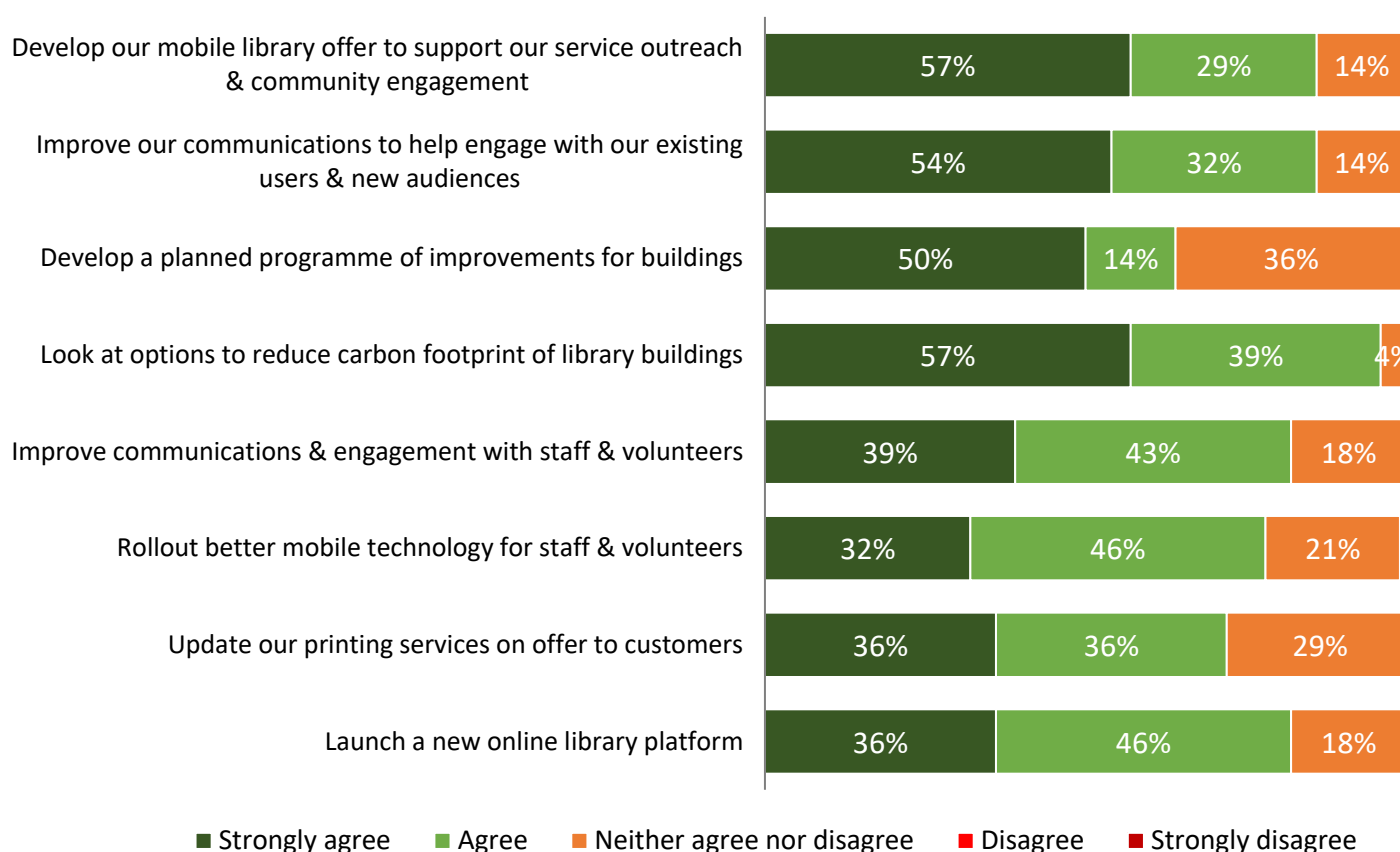
Supporting data table	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Support children to be ready for school & develop their reading skills	89%	11%	0%	0%	0%
Keep our stock & resources up to date & appealing	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%
Help adults to improve their literacy for everyday life	79%	14%	7%	0%	0%
Ensure that our staff have the right skills & support to deliver the best possible service	61%	32%	7%	0%	0%
Provide books & resources in formats that meet changing needs	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%
Deliver a new & exciting programme of events & activities	61%	36%	4%	0%	0%
Get residents more involved in shaping the service	61%	21%	18%	0%	0%
Explore new roles & opportunities for volunteers to enhance our service	50%	32%	18%	0%	0%
Explore new opportunities to generate additional income	25%	32%	39%	4%	0%

SUPPORT FOR AIM TWO AREAS – INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Overall agreement is high with the stated aims of developing the mobile library offer to support service outreach and community engagement, improving communications to help engage with existing users and new audiences and looking at options to reduce the carbon footprint of library buildings. In contrast to individual respondents, agreement with developing a planned programme of buildings improvements is lower (with a significant proportion neither agreeing nor disagreeing).

Consistent with trends observed amongst individual respondents, agreement with the technological sub areas of Aim Two are comparatively lower than the other Aim Two areas.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed aims? Base: all organisations answering (28)



Supporting data table	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Develop our mobile library offer to support our service outreach and community engagement	57%	29%	14%	0%	0%
Improve our communications to help engage with our existing users and new audiences	54%	32%	14%	0%	0%
Develop a planned programme of improvements for our buildings	50%	14%	36%	0%	0%
Look at options to reduce the carbon footprint of our library buildings	57%	39%	4%	0%	0%
Improve communications and engagement with our staff and volunteers	39%	43%	18%	0%	0%

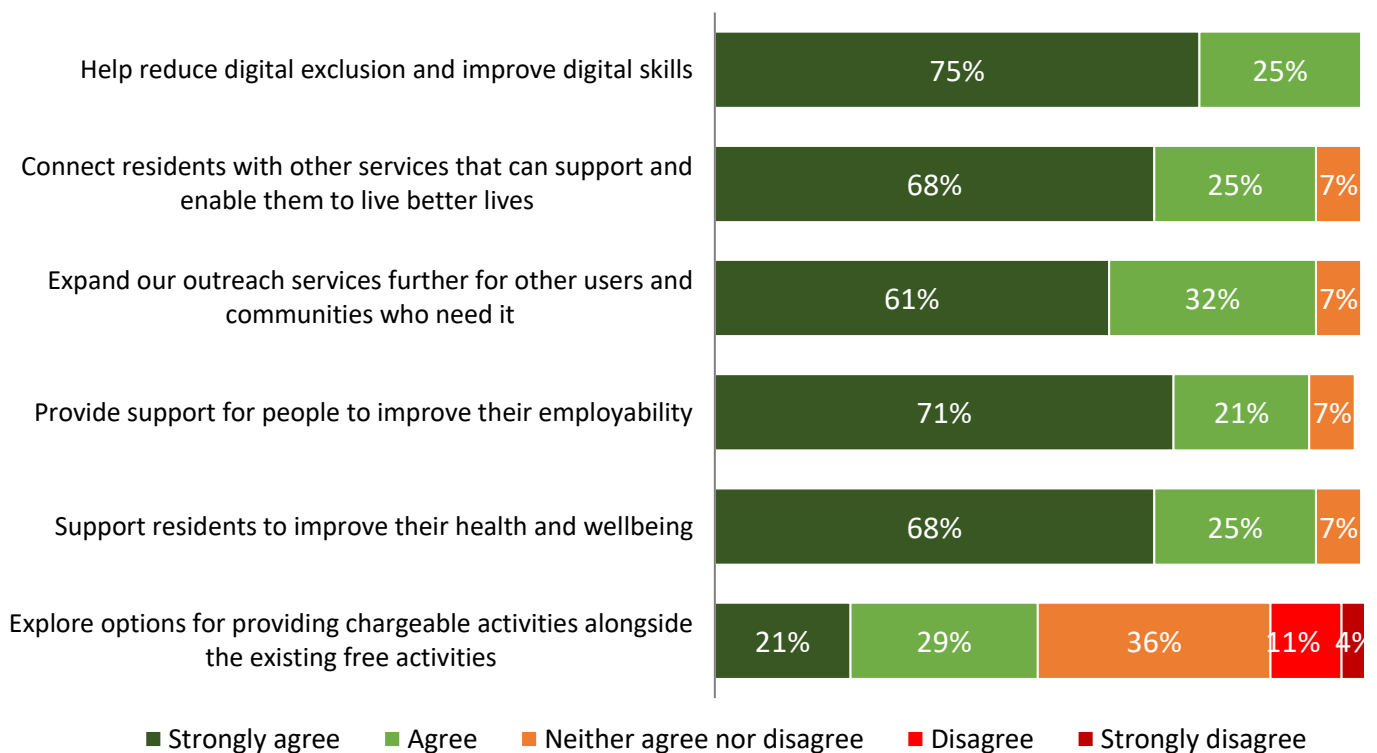
Supporting data table	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Rollout better mobile technology for staff and volunteers	32%	46%	21%	0%	0%
Update our printing services on offer to customers	36%	36%	29%	0%	0%
Launch a new online library platform	36%	46%	18%	0%	0%

SUPPORT FOR AIM THREE AREAS – SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES AND LEVELLING UP

Overall agreement is strong in relation to the stated aims of helping reduce digital exclusion and improve digital skills, connecting residents with other services that can support and enable them to live better lives, expanding outreach services further for other users and communities that need it, providing support for people to improve their employability and supporting residents to improve health and wellbeing.

Consistent with individual respondents, agreement with exploration of options for providing chargeable activities alongside the existing free activities is considerably lower than the other Aim Three aims.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed aims? Base: all organisations answering (28)



Supporting data table	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Help reduce digital exclusion and improve digital skills	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%
Connect residents with other services that can support and enable them to live better lives	68%	25%	7%	0%	0%
Expand our outreach services further for other users and communities who need it	61%	32%	7%	0%	0%
Provide support for people to improve their employability	71%	21%	7%	0%	0%
Support residents to improve their health and wellbeing	68%	25%	7%	0%	0%
Explore options for providing chargeable activities alongside the existing free activities	21%	29%	36%	11%	4%

This report was produced for Essex County Council's Chief Executive's Office

For more information email: research@essex.gov.uk