

A summary of responses to Cheshire East Council's

Library Service Consultation 2023



Executive Summary

Introduction

Background to the consultation

In January 2023 Cheshire East Council consulted proposals during its Budget Consultation to revise Library Services, so that **£1,056,000** worth of savings could be made from the service over 4 years.

[The council received a large amount of feedback during this Budget Consultation](#), with much of this feedback opposed to the proposed savings to be made from Library Services. The council listened to this feedback and as a result revised the original proposals so that Saturday and evening library opening, and the mobile library service, would not be cut.

Consultation on the revised Library Service proposals

During June and July 2023 Cheshire East Council consulted on these revised proposals, which were to reduce the opening hours of Cheshire East libraries, and to reduce funding for the purchase of new books and newspapers. The full material that was consulted on is given in Appendix 1.

The consultation was widely promoted and received a total of 3,200 consultation engagements, including 2,776 survey responses, 255 event attendees, 128 email / letter responses and 41 social media engagements. In addition there was an Alsager Library 'read-in' protest attended by 179 people, and [a House of Commons spoken contribution relating to the consultation from Fiona Bruce MP](#).

Consultation responses were invited from anyone who wished to respond, with the consultation being heavily promoted within the Cheshire East libraries that the proposals would potentially impact. The consultation was not run as a referendum nor as a statistically robust random sample survey. 98% of survey responses were from library users, with 2% being from library non-users.

Net opposition to the proposed new opening hours

Overall, 23% of respondents supported the proposed new opening hours, 10% neither supported nor opposed them, and 65% opposed them. This gave overall net opposition to the proposed new opening hours of -44%.

Some respondent types more likely to support the proposals

Although there was an overall net opposition of -44%, some respondent types were more likely to support the proposed new opening hours, including:

- Digital Influence Panel members with a net support of +10% (253 responses)
- Library service non-users with a net support of +6% (65 responses).

Older respondents were less likely to oppose the proposed new opening hours, with those aged 75 plus having net opposition of -22%, compared to -61% net opposition for those aged under 35.

Net opposition to the proposed new opening hours was also lower for those that supported one of the closure options A or B at -25%, whereas those that didn't support closure option A or B had net opposition of -96%.

Reluctant acceptance of the proposals

There was some reluctant acceptance and support expressed for the proposals, particularly if it meant that libraries would stay open, and some thankfulness that Saturday and evening opening hours were not being cut as had originally been proposed in the Budget Consultation.

Keep libraries open

However, a large proportion of respondents were against the proposals and stated that opening hours should just remain as they are. Reasons given as to why libraries are so important were captured within the Budget Consultation of January 2023, and have not been repeated here – [see page 37 of the Budget Consultation report for detailed feedback on the value of libraries to stakeholders.](#)

Other respondents suggested the proposals should be tweaked to ensure a more comprehensive service to:

Keep libraries open every day – Respondents suggested having reduced opening hours each day rather than full day closures, perhaps by opening later in the morning, or by only having half day closures

Keep the larger libraries open for longer – Many felt it unfair that the largest libraries in the borough were losing most hours, when these service the largest and most deprived populations, and have the most visitors.

Alternative service delivery – Suggestions here included that:

- Library provision across the borough should be balanced between the North and South of the borough
- Libraries should become more automated and open without staff
- Libraries should be run with the use of volunteers
- A review of library staffing structures was needed to become more efficient

- Town and Parish Councils could become more involved in their funding and /or running
- The council should look to alternative service delivery models as used by other local authorities including those in Staffordshire, Cheshire West & Chester, Midlothian, and Llandaff

Concerns about the proposed new opening hours

Respondents raised some specific concerns about the proposed new opening hours including:

Keep libraries open on Fridays – Of all the specific days of the week respondents felt libraries should not close, Friday was the one that seemed to be most popular. Respondents felt Fridays were particularly busy days, and this was especially felt to be the case at Congleton, Holmes Chapel, Macclesfield, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow libraries. There was some suggestion Monday would be a better day to close instead.

Keep libraries open on market days – Respondents felt libraries should not be closed on local market days, as these were days when a lot of visitors were in town and when libraries were well used. This was especially felt to be the case at Alsager Library on Wednesday, Macclesfield Library on Friday, Nantwich Library on Friday, and Sandbach Library on Thursday.

Some days have a lot of activities on – Respondents also suggested that some days proposed for closure in some libraries were particularly busy days for library activities and groups, including Crewe Library on Wednesday and Thursday, Holmes Chapel Library on Wednesday, Knutsford Library on Thursday, and Poynton Library on Thursday.

Preferred option for future library closures

Within the consultation material, Cheshire East Council put forward 2 options for future library closures – option A being for all libraries to close on the same day each week, and option B being for at least 1 library to stay open in each Group A to F every day of the week.

56% of respondents stated they preferred option B, 18% of respondents selected option A, with 19% of respondents stating in the “other” box that libraries should be kept open as they currently are.

Respondents commented on the proposed Library Groupings A to F:

- Some felt Knutsford Library should be grouped with Wilmslow or Macclesfield, and not in the group with Holmes Chapel, Middlewich and Sandbach

- Some felt Alsager Library should be in the same group as Crewe
- Some felt Congleton Library should be grouped with Macclesfield or Sandbach

Alternative income generation or funding ideas for libraries

The most commonly suggested ideas for income generation or alternative funding for Cheshire East libraries included:

- Let out space / rooms for exhibitions, meetings, literary festivals etc
- Charge a small voluntary fee for events and activities
- Café / Tea room / Refreshment provision
- Sell books, take donations of new ones
- Fund raise – Place donation boxes in libraries, fundraise locally, obtain funding from grants and foundations
- Attract sponsorship from local businesses and organisations, charge for advertising
- Charge banks for space to provide their services in libraries
- Share space with other organisations such as charities, tourist information offices, Citizens Advice Bureau, Post Offices, Town & Parish Councils
- Charge for library membership, but only for those that can afford it
- Seek funding from Town & Parish Councils

Conclusions

Strong opposition to the proposals

As with the Budget Consultation conducted in January 2023 this Library Service Consultation 2023 received a significant number of responses, with many passionately opposing the proposed reductions to Library Service provision in Cheshire East.

These responses, alongside other forms of protest such as the Alsager Library ‘read-in’ which was attended by 179 people, and the House of Commons spoken contribution by Fiona Bruce MP, clearly indicate that the Library Service is a highly important service to many Cheshire East residents, and that libraries have clearly evolved to become more than just places to borrow books, but something more fundamental and vital within Cheshire East communities.

Differences of opinion between library users and non-users

The level of opposition from respondents to the proposals remains very high, though it is down slightly from the level of opposition received during the Budget Consultation (down from -58% net opposition to -44%). This perhaps reflects that residents are pleased to see Saturday and evening opening, and the mobile library service, retained.

It is also worth noting that non-library users showed net support of +6% to the proposals – this indicates that while the service is incredibly important to those that use it, if a referendum of the whole Cheshire East population was conducted there might actually be net support for the proposed service cuts. There was a certain acceptance among some respondents that local government finances are currently very challenging, and that cuts are needed from services.

This may also suggest that in future, income to run and expand the service may need to come from service users or from income generated from within the service itself, as well as from Council Taxpayers, with many library users feeding back that they would be willing to contribute financially to the running of the service somehow, and that many users are affluent. It was emphasised however, that the service must remain free to those who cannot afford to contribute.

Alternative service provision and a long-term strategy

Those in opposition strongly suggested the proposals put forward were inadequate, and the council should strongly explore the possibility of keeping the larger libraries open for longer, or the possibility of opening libraries later in the day, so that full day closures are avoided, and so the service can attract as much footfall as possible, and generate as much revenue as possible.

It is also clear that there are alternative ways of delivering library services, with examples from around the country being provided, that should be thoroughly explored as options to ensure libraries are open for as long as possible in future. Respondents listed many ideas for income generation and funding that should also be thoroughly explored to this end.

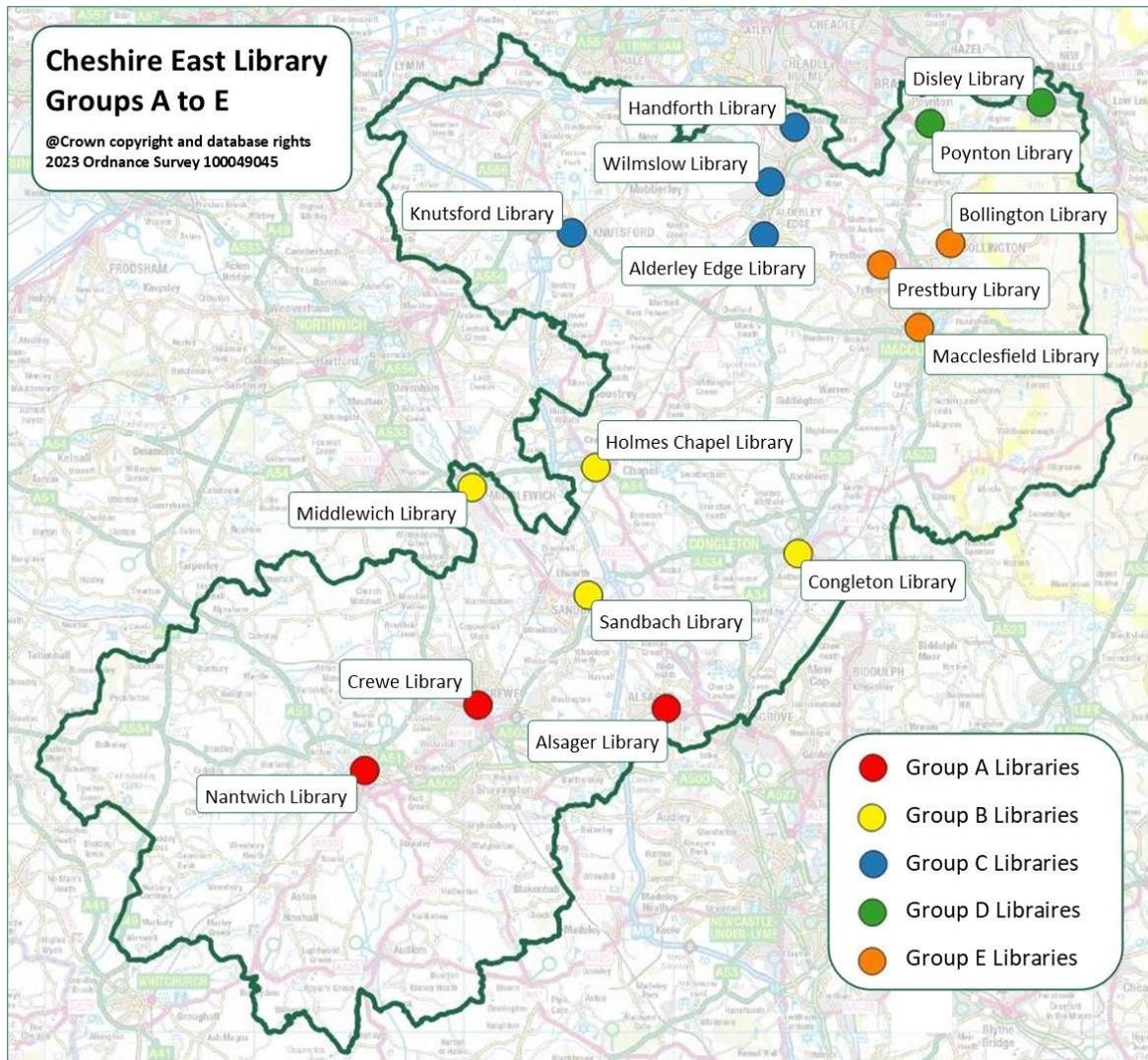
As Penny Mordaunt stated in a parliamentary debate on the Library Service proposals “I encourage [Cheshire East Council] to be a bit more entrepreneurial by generating income, working with partners, asking for business support and doing the many other things that councils up and down the country have done to secure such vital services”.

Any future service improvements should also be clearly set out within a long-term library strategy, that is coproduced with key stakeholders, to ensure the Library Service evolves and expands in harmony with the communities they serve.

Local considerations

It is clear there are local considerations which must be considered when designing Library Services, such as perhaps not shutting on Fridays or on market days, ensuring that any activities that are lost on closed days are transferred over to alternative days smoothly, and that any changes to opening hours are advertised clearly and widely.

Finally, based solely on suggestions from survey respondents a suggested redesign of Library Groupings is presented in the following map, though this is based on a relatively low number of individual responses:



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The protest pictures used on the front and back covers of this report were supplied by the organiser of an “Alsager Library read-in” event which took place on 4 July 2023, in protest at the proposed reductions in opening hours at Alsager Library (see email response #105 for more detail). The supplier of these photos consented to them being published within this report and had sought consent from all those in the photos for them to be made public.

Introduction

Background to the consultation

In January 2023 Cheshire East Council consulted on a draft Medium Term Financial Strategy during its Budget Consultation. The draft MTFS put forward in January 2023 was an extremely challenging one, given the impact of the cost of living crisis and inflation on council finances.

This draft MTFS included proposals to revise library service provision to deliver **£1,056,000** worth of savings over the next 4 years.

[The council received a large amount of feedback during this Budget Consultation](#), with over 2,300+ responses received in total. Much of this feedback opposed the proposed savings to be made from Library Services.

The council listened to this feedback, and as a result made the following changes to the original MTFS Library Service proposal:

- It reduced the amount of money to be saved from the Library Service by **£170,000**, with these savings to be found elsewhere
- It reversed its proposal to close all Libraries in Cheshire East on Saturdays, as this is the only time of the week some customers can visit
- It reversed its proposal to close all Libraries in Cheshire East in the evenings, as this is the only time of the week some customers can visit
- It reversed its proposal to close the Mobile Library Service, as this is vital for rural customers who are unable to travel

Consultation on the revised Library Service proposals

Between 9 June and 9 July 2023 Cheshire East Council consulted on the revised Library Service proposals. These proposals were to reduce the opening hours of Cheshire East libraries, and to reduce funding for the purchase of new books and newspapers. The full material that was consulted on is outlined in Appendix 1.

Consultation methodology

The consultation was promoted to a wide range of stakeholders including local residents, Cheshire East visitors, Cheshire East Council staff, library users, local businesses, local Councillors and local Town and Parish Councils.

The consultation was promoted through the following mediums:

- The Digital Influence Panel
- [Media releases](#)

- [Social media](#)
- Paper consultation packs and posters distributed in all libraries
- Library staff briefings
- The Town and Parish Council network
- Council Members Briefings
- 1 to 1 conversations with local Councillors and Town and Parish Councils

Consultation response

Consultation responses were invited from anyone who wished to respond, with the consultation being heavily promoted within the Cheshire East libraries that the proposals would potentially impact. The consultation was not run as a referendum nor as a statistically robust random sample survey.

In total there were 3,200 consultation engagements, including:

- 2,470 online survey responses
- 306 paper survey responses (from 1,140 distributed in total)
- 255 event attendees
- 125 email responses
- 41 social media engagements
- 3 letter responses

Further to these engagements there were 2 other key events that took place in relation to the consultation:

- An Alsager Library 'read-in' protest attended by 179 people
- [A House of Commons spoken contribution relating to the consultation from Fiona Bruce MP](#)

Reading this report

The main sections of this report contain an analysis of the survey responses received during the consultation.

Feedback received via email, letter, social media, and through events is summarised in the appendices.

Proposed new library opening hours

The proposal

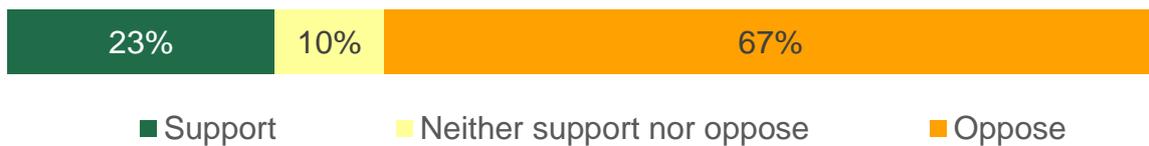
Within the consultation material, Cheshire East Council set out the proposed new opening hours for each Cheshire East Library. Detailed information about these proposals can be found in Appendix 1.

Overall support for the proposed new opening hours

Overall 23% of respondents supported the proposed new opening hours, 10% neither supported nor opposed them, and 65% opposed them.

This gave overall net opposition to the proposed new opening hours of -44% (%support - %opposition).

Generally speaking, how strongly do you support or oppose these proposed new opening hours?



Number of responses = 2,680

Differences in level of support by respondent type

Levels of support to the proposed new opening hours varied depending on respondent type. While service users had a net opposition of -45%, service non-users had net support of +6%, and Digital Influence Panel members had a net support of +10%.

Older respondents were less likely to oppose the proposed new opening hours, with those aged 75 plus having net opposition of -22%, compared to -61% net opposition for those aged under 35.

Generally speaking, how strongly do you support or oppose these proposed new opening hours?	Support	Neither support nor oppose	Oppose	Net support / opposition	Total valid responses
All respondents	23%	10%	67%	-44%	2,680
Service users	23%	9%	68%	-45%	2,534
Service non-users	43%	20%	37%	+6%	65
Digital Influence Panel	47%	16%	37%	+10%	253
Under 35	15%	9%	76%	-61%	166

35-44	17%	8%	75%	-58%	472
45-54	19%	9%	72%	-53%	416
55-64	26%	10%	64%	-38%	495
65-74	27%	10%	63%	-36%	605
75 plus	34%	11%	55%	-22%	377

Differences in level of support by views on library closures

Levels of support to the proposed new opening hours also varied depending on whether respondents supported one of the closure options A or B, or whether they indicated that they felt all libraries should remain open as they are.

While those that supported library closure option A or B had net opposition to the proposed new opening hours of -25%, those that felt all libraries should remain open as they are had net opposition of -96%.

Generally speaking, how strongly do you support or oppose these proposed new opening hours?	Support	Neither support nor oppose	Oppose	Net support / opposition	Total valid responses
All respondents	23%	10%	67%	-44%	2,680
Supported library closures option A or B	31%	12%	56%	-25%	1,797
Supported neither option A nor B – Felt all libraries should remain open as they are	1%	1%	98%	-96%	474

General comments about the proposed new opening hours

Survey respondents were asked to comment on the proposed new opening hours. The below tables summarise the general responses made in reply to this question.

General opposition to the proposals (294 comments in total)

<p>Do not reduce library opening hours</p> <p>Library hours should not be reduced at all, if anything hours should be increased. The savings proposed are disproportionate to the negative social impact of a reduction in hours. Libraries are a fundamental part of a civilised society. "Cutting libraries during a recession is like cutting hospitals during a plague." (Quote by Eleanor Crumblehulme, a Library Assistant from Canada).</p> <p>Instead of reducing hours, the council should be aiming to increase footfall and literacy. The council should encourage reading, not discourage it. "Children's literacy is in a national crisis, yet the council's contribution is to reduce access to books!"</p>	<p>212</p>
<p>Keep libraries open every day</p> <p>Reduced opening hours each day, or having half day closures across more days, would be preferable to full day closures. For example go for three half day closures instead of a 1 whole day closure and a half to avoid a full day closure, or open libraries after 10am, cutting 1 to 2 hours at the beginning of each day. Weekday morning closure preferred.</p>	<p>27</p>
<p>Keep larger libraries open for longer</p> <p>Why are the biggest and busiest libraries losing the most hours, and the smaller are losing the least? Why is the council penalising the bigger, more cost-effective libraries, over the much smaller ones? This does not seem to make good business sense, and it doesn't seem right that some libraries are facing no changes at all.</p> <p>Perhaps there should be some ratio drawn up between hours of closure and population numbers. If you are after a utilitarian solution you would shut small libraries & sell off their buildings to conserve the larger ones, but this is perhaps not politically acceptable. Is it just a coincidence that Prestbury and Alderley Edge are the 2 wealthiest areas and have</p>	<p>27</p>

no proposed closures, compared to Macclesfield which is far bigger and busier, and has 16 hours of proposed closures? It is the libraries in the areas with most need that face the largest reduction. Group A and B libraries should not be closing at all.	
Fear reductions in hours will lead to further closures in future	15
If hours are reduced, footfall will drop off, which could be used justify further closures in future. It will lead to a snowball effect. Where does it end? Reducing hours means reduction of use which inevitably is a self-fulfilling prophecy, and that is a worry for the future of the library service as a whole. Any further reductions would be strongly opposed.	
Concerns for employees who will lose their jobs / income – Where is the loyalty to the library staff that worked through the pandemic?	13

General acceptance of and support for the proposal (108 comments in total)

Reluctant acceptance for the need for cuts and for the proposal	
Reduced opening is better than no opening at all, and there is support if these changes will help to keep all libraries open as much as possible. This is the lesser of two evils. Hopefully, these reductions in hours will be rescinded as soon as circumstances allow, and it's not a one-way reduction in services. Appreciate that thanks to Conservative cuts to Local Authority budgets difficult decisions have to be made.	39
Support for the proposals	
The proposals are supported as long as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new opening hours are well publicised • Activities are moved to days when the library is open • Closures are on days of least footfall 	18
The proposal seems a reasonable compromise and looks well thought out. It is good that there will still be evening and weekend openings, plus closing at different times means working people still have good access.	
Support for Option A – All libraries open on the same day is easier to remember.	19
Support for Option B – If libraries are closed on different days this would allow staff to be deployed to other libraries.	7
Support for Saturday opening – It is good that Saturday closures have been reversed.	8

Support for evening opening – It is good that evening closures have been reversed, though a concern Macclesfield still seems to be getting evening closures.	7
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Comments on specific days of opening and library groupings (46 comments in total)

<p>Day of opening comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday – Don't close libraries on Fridays, too many libraries are going to be shut on a Friday. Statistics show that more people are in the workplace on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and working at home on a Monday and Friday. Lots of people finish work early on Fridays or work from home on Fridays which would make it easier for them to visit the library then (16 comments) • Monday – Close libraries on a Monday. It would make more sense to close all libraries on Mondays when fewer people are in the towns than at the end of the week when more people are about. Closing on a Monday when lots of other things in town are closed, and when there are often bank holidays might be better (6 comments). • Monday – Keep libraries open on a Monday (3 comments) • Tuesday – Close libraries on a Tuesday (2 comments) • Thursday – Don't close libraries on Thursdays. Traditionally senior citizens are more likely to use a library on Thursday, so it would make sense to consider closing them on other days (3 comments) • Market days – Don't close libraries on market days (3 comments) • Consecutive day closures – Avoid them (3 comments) • Consecutive day closures – It would be better to close on consecutive days as it saves on heating bills (2 comments) 	38
<p>Library Groupings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grouping libraries disadvantages those who do not drive • Local bus services are not good enough to travel between libraries • Library opening hours should be synchronised with local bus timetables • Encouraging people to travel between libraries is not green • Group B has no access on Wednesday afternoon 	8

Alternative saving and income generation ideas (46 comments in total)

Alternative savings ideas:	24
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut back on council employee wages and Councillor allowances. "Library Assistants are on just over £11 an hour, unlike Councillors who are voting on whether to give themselves a £500 increase in allowance, a Chief Executive who gets more than the Prime Minister and who got a £25,000 pay rise, and that's not to mention all the others who earn a salary of more than £100,000 a year. Cut the wages of the Chief Executive and anyone on over £70,000 a year, or better still get rid of them altogether!" • Use volunteers to keep libraries open • Stop delivering highways projects like Middlewich Road project which always go over budget • Save money by not cutting down trees at Poynton Pool • Make more cuts from other services • Decommission CEC buildings where no one is working from • Improve service efficiency, are libraries being run as efficiently as they could be? • Have unstaffed libraries – Have access by passcode to libraries for longer hours than the staffed hours, similar to what has been introduced by Stockport Libraries. Make libraries automated • Close 2 of the libraries in the North of Cheshire East, as there are more there than in the South of the borough 	
<p>Increase revenue ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charge current library users that can afford it to use the service, but keep it free for those for whom it is a lifeline. Many users could easily afford to contribute and would do so willingly. Keep libraries open by asking for a voluntary donation of £1 or £2 per item borrowed for those who can afford to pay • Raise the highest rate of Council Tax, leave the other rates the same • Fund raise from local businesses • Rent out rooms in libraries • Host paid events • Sell tea / coffee in conjunction with a national tea / coffee operator • Have book launches and author talks • Partner with local organisations • Ask residents for new book donations 	17
<p>Alternative service delivery</p> <p>Alternatively service delivery options need to be thoroughly explored. Proactively engage with other services within the council to explore how they can exploit the versatility of library places to enhance their own services. More needs to be</p>	5

done to utilise the buildings and space more. Encourage other organisations to use them. Find ways to incorporate depleted council and community services within them, banking, post office, etc.	
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Other comments (12 comments in total)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This consultation is a fait accompli, a decision has already been made. This proposal is a quick fix • Events – Successful events should be retained, ensure events that are on days that close are moved over to other days, e.g. rhyme time and story time • Book fund – Retain the book fund, Reducing funding for books / newspapers will reduce the value of the service • It goes against the law as reducing hours so drastically will mean it is no longer a comprehensive service • Proposals will have an impact on Customer Service Points too • Close all libraries • Going ahead with this plan will adversely affect the council's reputation • Opposition to option B 	12
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Library specific comments on the proposed new opening hours

Survey respondents were asked to comment on the proposed new opening hours. The below tables summarise the replies made for each individual library in reply to this question.

Alderley Edge Library (16 comments in total)

Close the library. Sell the property, and replace it with a pop-up mobile library, or send people to Wilmslow Library which is just around the corner.	9
Why is Alderley Edge Library not having any reduction in hours too? Especially as it is one of the least used / quietest libraries? Why reduce hours of busier libraries instead?	5
How does changing the day make any difference?	1
Close it on a Thursday.	1

Alsager Library (65 comments in total)

Do not reduce the library opening hours. We don't have many facilities in Alsager as it is a small town so the library has a significant role to play in the community.	30
Wednesday – Don't close on Wednesday, as that is also market day in Alsager, and there are a lot of activities on that day in the library.	15
Support for proposed hours, support for keeping it open in the evenings and at weekends. Close an additional day too.	5
Thursday – Don't close on Thursday, there are a lot of activities on that day in the library.	6
Income ideas – Charge for membership, charge for clubs / activities. Ask for a voluntary donation of £1 per visit. Use the space in the library better to generate income.	3
Library Groupings – Don't close Alsager Library on the same day Crewe Library.	2
Monday – Better to close on a Monday instead.	1
Wednesday – Close in the morning instead of afternoon.	1
People won't be able to remember the new hours.	1
Savings ideas – Have a skeleton staff to keep the library open.	1

Bollington Library (17 comments in total)

Do not reduce the library opening hours.	9
Support for the proposal, close it for an additional day.	4
Friday – Close Friday afternoon instead.	1
Provide somewhere to return books on days it is closed.	1
Keep it open at the weekends.	1
Open every day – Open later in the day to save hours instead.	1

Congleton Library (42 comments in total)

Do not reduce the library opening hours	10
Friday – Don't close on Friday, many people go to the town to go shopping on a Friday. You will also lose a source of income each month from Congleton u3a as the poetry group meets in the meeting room on a Friday.	9

Wednesday – Don't close on Wednesday, there are craft, knit and natter activities on this day.	3
Fear reductions in hours will lead to further closures in future. If hours are reduced, footfall will drop off, which will justify further closures. It will lead to a snowball effect.	3
Open every day – Close 3 half days instead of 1 whole day and a half. At least that would mean the library is open every day.	3
Wednesday – Close all day Wednesday as the whole town is closed on Wednesday.	2
Monday – Not a busy day, close on Monday instead.	2
Library Groupings – Close Congleton and Sandbach on different days.	2
Tuesday – Close on Tuesday instead, it is not a busy day.	2
Library Groupings – Congleton has better links with Macclesfield than Alsager. Alsager should be linked with Crewe.	1
Reduce smaller libraries by more hours instead.	1
Close on consecutive days instead.	1
Close an additional day.	1
People won't be able to remember the new hours.	1
Income suggestions – Coffee shop, craft sales.	1

Crewe Library (102 comments in total)

Do not reduce the library opening hours. Spend budget on the library instead of on multi-storey car parks. Reduce the number of councillors by 50%. Cancel wasteful road-building programme and release millions for services.	47
Thursday – Don't close on Thursday as it is a busy day, there is games club, over-50s social activities, Learn My Way, Games Club, Reading Group, Crafternoon Tea and Family History Group.	17
Keep larger libraries open for longer – With Crewe being the biggest town in the county, serving the most people why are the hours reducing so much more in comparison to other libraries that serve smaller areas? Surely it would make sense to keep the libraries that are accessible to the most amount of people open more. This library serves some of the most deprived areas in Cheshire East. Keep the two biggest libraries open all the times, Crewe and Macclesfield as they are Principal Towns with growing populations and have the largest collections of books.	13
Wednesday – Don't close on Wednesday, there is baby bounce, Learn My Way, Games Club, Reading Group and Crafternoon Tea. Closing on a Wednesday is out of line with retail units in the town. Crewe library holds computer classes on Wednesday.	9
Open every day – Open later in the day to save hours instead e.g. open after 10am.	5

Open every day – Close 3 half days instead of 1 whole day and a half. At least that would mean the library is open every day.	3
Monday, Tuesday – These are better days to close, those are the days the market is closed too.	2
Closures should be based on busiest times.	2
Why close the library when the Lifestyle Centre is open anyway?	2
Friday afternoon – Close on a Friday instead.	1
Library Groupings – Support for grouping Crewe with Nantwich.	1

Disley Library (20 comments in total)

Close the library.	6
Why is Disley Library not having any reduction in hours too? Especially as it is one of the least used / quietest libraries? Why reduce hours of busier libraries instead?	5
Support Disley hours remaining as they are.	5
Do not reduce the library opening hours.	4

Handforth Library (7 comments in total)

Do not reduce the library opening hours.	4
Close the library. Sell the property, and replace it with a pop-up mobile library, or send people to Wilmslow Library which is just around the corner.	1
Close an additional day.	1
Tuesday – Save hours by ending the Tuesday late opening instead.	1

Holmes Chapel Library (28 comments in total)

Do not reduce the library opening hours.	7
Friday – Don't close on Friday, this is a day parents are off with their children. Friday is a day that people often work from home or take as a longer weekend, hence may wish to use the library for their weekend reading. There is a well attended book club on a Friday.	7
Wednesday – Don't close on Wednesday. Many groups use the library on a Wednesday.	4

Support the proposal	2
Open every day – Close 3 half days instead of 1 whole day and a half. At least that would mean the library is open every day.	1
Monday – Would be a better day for closure.	1
Tuesday – Would be a better day for closure.	1
Library Groupings – Support proposal.	1
Weekend opening is important.	1
Library Groupings – Split with Sandbach.	1
Close an additional day	1

Knutsford Library (58 comments in total)

Thursday – Don't close on Thursday, it is busy, lots of groups meet on a Thursday, craft club, story times for children, different discussion and book groups, groups for the vulnerable. This would leave Knutsford with no library service between 1pm on Wednesday and 9am on Friday. This was late night opening, which is important for those who work 9 to 5. Late night opening is needed. Closing Thursday removes one of the late night openings. Don't reduce late night opening.	21
Do not reduce the library opening hours.	13
Open every day – Close 3 half days instead of 1 whole day and a half, or open later in the day to save hours.	5
Monday – Better to close on Monday than Thursday.	5
Library Groupings – Knutsford should be in Group D.	2
Friday – Would be a better day to close.	2
Wednesday – Would be a better day to close as this is a half day in Knutsford.	2
Close an additional day	1
People won't be able to remember the new hours.	1
Fear reductions in hours will lead to further closures in future. If hours are reduced, footfall will drop off, which will justify further closures. It will lead to a snowball effect.	1
Monday – Bus only runs on a Monday.	1
Tuesday – Would be a better day to close.	1

If you insist on further closures then you will need to alter the borrowing periods and fines for late returns to allow people access to return books.	1
Reduce levels of staff on at any one time.	1
Saturday – Would be a better day to close.	1

Macclesfield Library (283 comments in total)

Do not reduce the library opening hours, it needs longer hours not shorter ones.	73
Friday – Don't close on Friday, Friday is market day and is one of the town's busiest shopping days, closing the library on Friday seems incompatible with the busy-ness of the town. Friday all day close is unforgivable. Friday is only the quietest day for visitor numbers because there are no pre-school groups. Friday is also a common day for mums to not work and therefore take young children to the library. Macclesfield Art Group hold an annual exhibition usually from a Friday until the Saturday of the following week. We would lose up to a total of 3 days viewing time. Closing on a Friday and opening on a Saturday seems strange.	65
Keep larger libraries open for longer – With Macclesfield being the biggest town in the county, serving the most people why are the hours reducing so much more in comparison to other libraries that serve smaller areas? Surely it would make sense to keep the libraries that are accessible to the most amount of people open more. Shut the smaller libraries instead. 16 hours is around 30% of the opening hours which is much more than some of the smaller libraries! Why have Macclesfield's Library opening hours been affected so disproportionately? This is surely your flagship library? From a business sense this makes no sense to me. This town also has high levels of deprivation, as evidenced by the tartan rug. If there has to be savings it should be at the smaller libraries which serve a smaller population. Macclesfield is the busiest library in Cheshire East and has consistently been the busiest in the whole of the North West (CIPFA). Too many hours are being proposed for Macclesfield, this is dramatic and unfair.	61
Late night closures – Don't close both late nights (Tues & Thurs), this goes against what we said in our introduction about not closing on late nights, "It is appalling this is clearly stated at the beginning of the consultation that this is not going to happen, yet is buried in the enclosed document". Shutting Thursday evening is not good for those who have 9 to 5 jobs. Close Thursday morning instead. A book group also runs on a Thursday evening. Evening opening is essential.	16
Monday – Better to close on Monday than Friday. Other establishments in Macclesfield are closed on Monday.	12
Support for the proposal, reduced hours are better than closures, as long as the changes are communicated to the community then it should work, support only because Saturdays and evenings are protected.	11

Open every day – Open slightly later and then close a bit earlier so it is still open every day. Only close half days instead to ensure the library is open every day.	10
Wednesday – Don't close on Wednesday, there are childrens events that happen on Wednesdays.	8
Barclays Bank – What will happen as a result to Barclays Bank in the library?	4
Library Groupings – Bollington does not provide anywhere near as many services as Macclesfield Library does, how can that be a replacement? Poor bus services mean people cannot visit Bollington or Prestbury instead.	4
Wednesday – Do a full day closure on Wednesday, people are used to places being closed half-day on Wednesdays in Macclesfield.	3
Tuesday – Better to close on Tuesday than Friday.	3
Thursday – Better to close on Thursday than Friday, close Thursday afternoon when hardly anyone visits	2
There's a lack of imagination for keeping libraries open, the library is not used to its best advantage	2
Fear reductions in hours will lead to further closures in future. If you cut hours, you will lose customers and a few years down the line it will be deemed necessary to cut hours further etc etc. This happened in Hampshire.	2
Saturday – Open longer on Saturday.	2
Book renewal dates will need to take account of closed days.	1
Town Hall – This library seems to do a lot of what the town hall used to do, the town hall should be closed, and any remaining services moved to the library.	1
Income ideas – Have Corporate Events.	1
Library Groupings – Macclesfield and Congleton Libraires should avoid closing at the same times.	1
Volunteers – Use them to keep libraries open.	1

Middlewich Library (13 comments in total)

Do not reduce the library opening hours.	5
Support proposed reduction in hours rather than closure.	3
Monday – Close in the morning rather than the afternoon.	2
Support weekend opening.	1
Income ideas – Book donations, author talks.	1
Close an additional day.	1

Nantwich Library (132 comments in total)

Do not reduce the library opening hours. Closing means loss of income through room hire, book sale, hold fees.	50
Friday – Don't close, Friday is market day, a busy day in town and would be the WORST DAY to close for the full day. The 3 busiest days in Nantwich are market days on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Factories sometimes close for half a day on Fridays. Also a storytime group runs on a Friday, many preschool children / toddler groups use the service on a Friday, and children come into the library after school on Friday to do their weekend homework.	31
Wednesday – Would be a better day to close. Wednesday is quiet as it is half day close for many businesses. It would make sense to close on Wednesday and half day on Friday.	11
Monday – Don't reduce hours. There is a Family History workshop in the library on a Monday afternoon, as well as Welsh Language classes.	7
Open every day – Only close for 2 half days, or 3 half days. Open later in the morning, close earlier in the evening.	7
Support proposal – As long as new hours are well publicised, and late night opening is retained. Also opposed to forced redundancies.	5
Tuesday – Keep the late night opening as there are language classes in the evening.	4
Monday – Would be a better day to close. Closure on Monday would make more sense as most businesses close on Mondays in Nantwich.	4
Market day – Tuesday, Thursday and Friday are market days in the town, the library should be open on these days.	4
Income ideas – Paid tuition / classes. A daily tea table (not just a coffee machine), with a small fee, with a weekly book recommendation. We would pay for more craft sessions or reading buddy seasons.	2
Tuesday – Would be a better day to close.	2
Saturday – Keep open on a Saturday.	1
Library Groupings – Support Nantwich being grouped with Crewe.	1
Nantwich Library is well overstaffed and I have seen them reading books in working hours.	1
Thursday – Don't change the late night to a Thursday.	1
Volunteers – Use volunteers to keep the library open.	1

Poynton Library (115 comments in total)

Thursday – Don't close on Thursday. Thursday mornings is one of the busiest , liveliest days in the library, there is a singing group on that day for small children 10am - 10:30 (rhymetime) which is well attended. The Town Council quoted	35
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as saying: "If there is no alternative to the reduction in hours, the Town Council would ask that the Thursday closure is reviewed as this is a busy day, with many young children attending "Rhyme Time" and replaced by a Monday which is a much quieter day".	
Do not reduce the library opening hours.	25
Friday – Don't close on Friday. Many people shop in the village on Friday. Also rugby tots is on in the same building so lots of preschoolers visit the library before or after this. If the library must close half day on Friday please close in morning, not afternoon.	21
Monday – Ok to close on Monday as a lot of shops are closed on a Monday, Monday there are a lot of businesses closed in Poynton so would make sense to close then instead of Thursday.	8
Don't close on adjacent / consecutive days, there is too much concentrated closed time at the end of week.	5
Open every day – Open later every day, only close 2 half days. The Town Council quoted as saying: "The Town Council would also ask Cheshire East to consider opening later by one hour each day, which we believe could eliminate the half day closure." Would prefer close for 3 half days If has to close.	5
Wednesday – Ok to close this day. Wednesday was always half day closing and some shops still keep to that.	5
Keep larger libraries open for longer – Why is Poynton losing hours but Disley is not? Poynton has a very large population compared to Disley. Poynton seems to be losing a lot – 12 hours seems excessive, and seems out of proportion.	4
Close the library and sell the property, replace it with a pop-up mobile library. Close an additional day.	2
Thursday – Ok to close on Thursday.	1
Friday – Ok to close on Friday.	1
Tuesday – The quietest day of the week is Tuesday, when the proposal is to stay open until 7pm. This is pointless.	1
Fear reductions in hours will lead to further closures in future.	1
Library Groupings – Poynton should be linked closely with Wilmslow and Bollington	1

Prestbury Library (16 comments in total)

Close the library, have a visit from mobile library for the few people who do not drive.	10
Why is Prestbury Library not having any reduction in hours too? Especially as it is one of the least used / quietest libraries? Why reduce hours of busier libraries instead?	5
Do not reduce the library opening hours.	1

Sandbach Library (69 comments in total)

Thursday – Don't close on Thursday, this is market day in Sandbach. Many people make Thursday the one day they go to Sandbach, to visit the market. This would seem to be a day when people are more likely to combine shopping with visiting the library. "You plan to close on market day. Disasterous." "People are in Sandbach on a Thursday as its market day why would you shut then as people will be in town?".	23
Do not reduce the library opening hours.	17
Don't close on adjacent / consecutive days, there is too much concentrated closed time at end of week being proposed. Under the proposal the library would only be open 0.5 days during second half of the week.	8
Friday – Don't close on Friday, half day Friday would also inconvenience many people who finish work early for the weekend. Thursday and Fridays are busy days in Sandbach, when people are in town to visit the market. This would seem to be a day when people are more likely to combine shopping with visiting the library.	7
Keep larger libraries open for longer – Sandbach seems to be losing a lot, 12 hours seems excessive, and seems disproportionate. Other libraries are not having as significant cuts e.g. Middlewich. Other libraries in the same group are not losing as many hours as Sandbach is.	4
Tuesday – Ok to close on Tuesday. Tuesday afternoon closed would be better received as it was traditionally half day closing in Sandbach.	2
Wednesday – Ok to close on Wednesday. Making the full closing day Wednesday would be better as some shops already have half day closing at this time.	2
Monday – Ok to close on Monday.	2
Fear reductions in hours will lead to further closures in future. How far down the road before you end up with a virtual library?	1
Support the proposals.	1
Library Groupings – Sandbach is closely aligned with Holmes Chapel.	1
Close an additional day.	1

Wilmslow Library (46 comments in total)

Do not reduce the library opening hours.	15
Friday – Don't close it on Friday. Most part time workers have Mondays or Fridays off, if the library is closed on a Monday or Friday this will prevent a lot of people from being able to visit and use the library. Many people shop at	13

Sainsbury's and Wilmslow centre on Friday. Fridays are the days that most working Mum's take off to be with their children - so closing on this day will impact children's literacy more than any other day. It seems illogical to close on a Friday then open for the morning only on Saturday. This must have implications for maintaining heating etc especially in the winter. There are group events on Fridays, such as those run by East Cheshire Eye Society.	
Open every day – Close on 3 mornings instead, open later and close earlier.	6
Monday – Better to close on a Monday than a Friday.	3
Tuesday – Better to close on a Tuesday than a Friday.	2
Income ideas – Hire out one of the rooms upstairs to local businesses for their 'away days'.	1
Keep larger libraries open for longer – With Wilmslow being one of the biggest towns in the county, serving the most people, why are the hours reducing so much more in comparison to other libraries that serve smaller areas? Surely it would make sense to keep the libraries that are accessible to the most amount of people open more. This is one of the busiest libraries.	1
Keep it open on Saturdays	1
Tuesday – Half day closure should be in the morning, so people working and school children can still use it.	1
Close an additional day.	1
Have more evening hours.	1
Thursday – Better to close on a Thursday than a Friday.	1

The Mobile Library (12 comments in total)

Do not reduce the library opening hours, do not cut the mobile library, this is an essential service. Think about the people who are unable to access the standard libraries, these are likely people who will also have other issues and it is flying in the face of the health of humanity to reduce the hours these operate.	5
Make better use of the mobile library, Change the schedule of the mobile library, the service needs better promotion as some don't see it.	4
The mobile library is a luxury that should not be kept at the expense of the closure of the main libraries. This should be cut in favour of keeping larger libraries open.	2
Consider book boxes, with requests that a library van can replenish on a rota, to save the cost of an actual mobile library van.	1

Proposed new library services delivery

The proposal

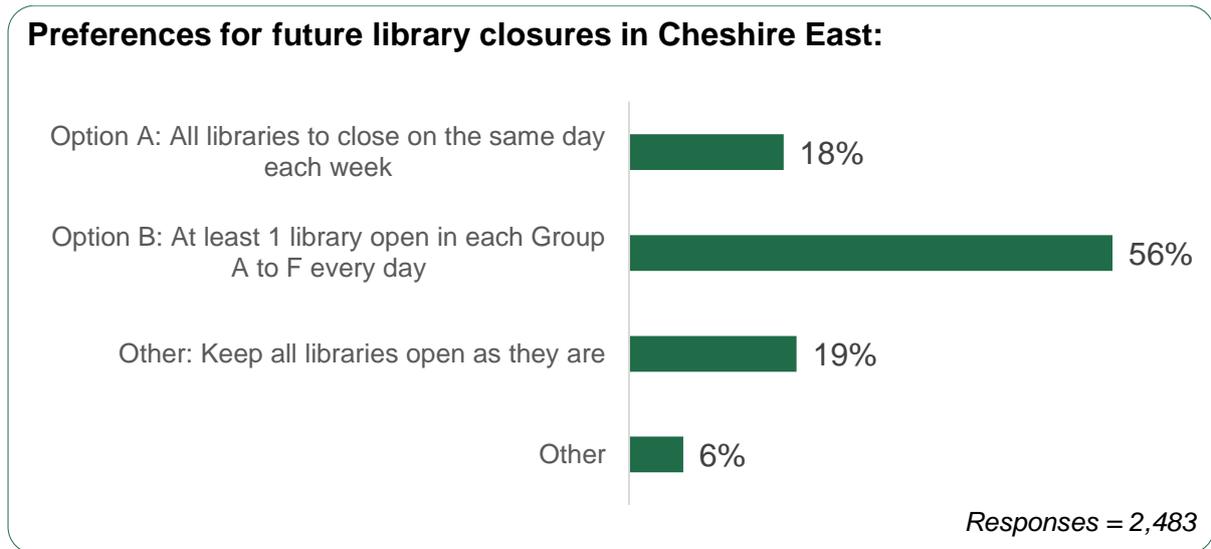
Within the consultation material, Cheshire East Council put forward 2 options for future library closures – option A being for all libraries to close on the same day each week, and option B being for at least 1 library to stay open in each Group A to F every day of the week. Respondents could also suggest “Other” options if they wished to.

Detailed information about these proposals can be found in Appendix 1.

Preferences for future library closures

56% of respondents stated that they preferred option B – at least 1 library to stay open in each Group A to F every day.

18% of respondents selected option A, with 19% of respondents stating in the “other” box that libraries should be kept open as they currently are.



6% of respondents suggested an alternative idea in the “other” box, and these suggestions included:

- Close individual libraries based on usage levels (2%)
- Keep larger libraries open as they are, close or reduce the hours of the smaller ones (1%)
- Close libraries in the mornings, afternoons or evenings rather than for whole days (1%)
- Every library to open at least half a day every day (1%)
- Consider local factors to determine closures – Public transport links, local events, market days, town closure days (0%)

- Close libraries in the North of the borough (0%)
- Open only outside school hours (0%)
- Combination of option A and B (0%)
- Keep libraries open with the use of volunteers (0%)
- No preference (0%)

Comments on delivering library services in local areas

Survey respondents were asked if they had any comments to make about delivering library services in local areas, a total of 1,100 comments were left to this section which have been analysed and coded into six distinct themes presented below.

The value/importance of library services (877 references)

- The library is valued/important/needed in the local area (482 comments)
- They are more than places to borrow books, they are central to the community/community hub (237 comments)
- Internet access for those digitally excluded (58 comments)
- They combat loneliness and social isolation (58 comments)
- The use of warm hubs in winter means opening hours need to be kept (42 comments)
- Against the proposals/Alternative suggestions (443 references)
- Libraries should be a protected service, vital provision. No changes to opening hours seek cuts and savings elsewhere (254 comments)
- Alternative revenue idea (124 comments)
- Closures should be usage and data-based such as footfall. Why are the largest most used libraries taking the largest cuts? (65 comments)

Impacted by proposed changes (313 references)

- Children and families would miss the benefits the service provided to education and interaction (148 comments)
- Individuals on low income would be disproportionately affected by the proposed changes, often cannot afford to travel to alternative library (55 comments)
- Elderly individuals would lose important social interaction opportunities (51 comments)
- Concerns about the impact on library staff who were seen as highly skilled and valued, protect their working hours (38 comments)
- Individuals with low mobility/disabilities (12 comments)
- Impact on rural areas, especially those with poor transport links (9 comments)

Opening hours or opening day comment (244 references)

- Late night and weekend service must be provided for those who work/ can only access at these times (86 comments)
- Closure day not suitable, proposals of days to close, don't close over market days (Monday seem to be preferred in some locations) (52 comments)
- Don't close libraries on the same day, what if that's the only day someone could access the service? (36 comments)
- Partial closure during the day better than a complete closure (31 comments)
- Closures of group days not acceptable, mostly Thursdays in Poynton being on the popular Rhymetime group day (14 comments)
- Don't make closure days confusing/ well advertise the changes (14 comments)
- Adjusting the opening hours may generate savings, e.g. later morning opening (11 comments)

Delivery of library services proposal comment (153 references)

- Keeping other libraries open would make no difference, can't travel would only use the local one (78 comments)
- Library groupings seem strange, Knutsford is too northern to be accessed within the group, no transport links between Alsager and Congleton (22 comments)
- The mobile library is well used and should cover the gaps in service made by closures (26 comments)
- Disproportionate number of libraries in the north, the small ones such as Prestbury and Alderley Edge should close and be covered by the mobile library (12 comments)
- Service should be provided based on need such as deprivation and low income (15 comments)

Other comments (23 references)

- General approval for the proposals (7 comments)
- The consultation with have limited impact, decision has already been made (4 comments)
- An out-of-hours book return box should be placed at each library to allow returns while closed (12 comments)

Alternative income generation or funding ideas for libraries

Survey respondents were asked if they had any ideas for income generation or alternative funding suggestions for Cheshire East libraries.

Summary of all responses

The below table summarises all of the income generation or funding ideas made.

Income generation and alternative funding suggestions	Count
Let out space / rooms for exhibitions, meetings, literary festivals etc	102
Charge a small voluntary fee for events and activities like story telling sessions, Rhymetime, Meet the Author, Knit and Natter, Book / reading clubs, Craft events, Art events, Baby groups, language courses, floristry, lego groups, programming workshops	56
Café / Tea room / Refreshment provision	42
Books – Sell second hand ones including at local events, take donations of new ones	24
Fund raise – place donation boxes in libraries, fundraise at fairs and festivals, sell raffle tickets, run charity events, obtain funding from grants and foundations	16
Sponsorship from local businesses and organisations, charge for advertising, including on the mobile library vans	12
Banking services – Charge banks for space to provide these services	8
Share space with other organisations and charge them to hire the space, including charities, Learning Centres, Tourist information offices, Citizens Advice Bureau, Post Offices, Town & Parish Councils	8
Charge for library membership / book borrowing, only for those that can afford it	7
Town & Parish Council funding	6
Charge a fee for mobile library book deliveries	5
Sell items – Artwork, local prints / have a gift shop	5
Let out space for coworking	4
Amazon / parcel collection lockers	4
Charge for WiFi / IT services	4

Reduce heating	2
Rent out DVDs / games	1
Cash machine – Place them in libraries for a fee	1
Charge for car parking	1

Responses by individual libraries

The below tables lists the income generation or funding ideas made for each individual library.

Alderley Edge library (11 suggestions in total)

Close this library / more cuts at this library as it has less users	5
Service at Wilmslow means this library is not justified	1
Use volunteers	2
Open at 10:30am	1
Obtain funding from grants and foundations	1
Run story telling sessions with small fee per session, £5	1

Alsager library (32 suggestions in total)

Let out the upstairs space to groups	10
Library valued, don't cut funding	6
Don't close on Wednesday as it's market day	3
Refreshment charge	3
Fundraise at fairs and festivals locally	2
Sell second-hand books	2
New build contributions	2
Amazon locker	2
Take donations of stock / more new books	2
Small gift shop to promote local independent trade	2
Rent out more modern DVD's/games	1

Small fees for groups such as rhyme time	1
Open at 10AM	1
Loss of a support group as each day has an event	1
Banking services	1

Bollington library (13 suggestions in total)

Library is valued, don't cut funding	4
Charged for events such as reading groups/ Afternoon or evening lectures	3
Open at 10AM	2
Use volunteers	1
Use library for exhibitions that are charged for	1
Regular events for kids	1
Half day on Wednesday like the shops in the village	1
Book sale stall at the Love Bollington Market	1
Community hub services such as cash machine, post office, café	1
One off joining fee	1

Congleton library (17 suggestions in total)

Hire out meeting room	7
Coffee shop or refreshment facilities	1
Use volunteers	3
Share space with services such as Springboard, Congleton Learning Centre, tourist info or charity	3
Charged for groups (meet the author) / increase charges at groups such as Knit and Natter	2
Open at 10AM	1
Book sales	1
Move to smaller cheaper premises	1
Provision for affordable baby groups in Congleton is poor in the middle of the week, could Rhymetime be expanded?	1
Workshops on programming	1

Crewe library (35 suggestions in total)

Library is valued, don't cut hours	10
Hire out the small library room once door is added	6
Seek sponsorship for library	5
Use volunteers	2
Charged for events and book evenings	2
Savings elsewhere	2
Open at 9:30AM/ later	2
Half-day on Wednesday/ don't close Thursday afternoon	2
Refreshment/Café facilities	1
Post office	1
Variation to Nantwich library	1
Library membership	1
Take book donations	1

Disley library (11 suggestions in total)

Further cuts at this library due to limited footfall/ close this library	3
Ask Parish Council for funding	2
Small charge for groups held here such as knit and chat	2
Open one Saturday out of two	1
Open at 10:30AM	1
Lyme Park to contribute funds	1
Increase prices at book sales	1
Combined service with citizens advice/ railway enquiries	1
Hire out the space after opening hours	1

Handforth library (2 suggestions in total)

Open at 10AM	1
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Close for a half day on Sunday afternoon	1
More book sales/ fundraising events	1

Holmes Chapel library (18 suggestions in total)

Renting out room space/ better advertised	9
Closing for an extra day / on a rota basis with Knutsford and Wilmslow	2
Small fee for groups such as Rhymetime / Craft and art events	2
Use volunteers	1
Increase in funding from Parish Council	1
Open at 10AM	1
Pop-up tearoom in the community room	1
Charge 50p for each book borrowed by adults	1
Banking hub	1
Art exhibitions	1
Reduce staff on each shift	1
Reduce heating	1

Knutsford library (19 suggestions in total)

Charged for events such as book reading evening/ classes/ baby groups/ craft sessions	9
Use of volunteers	3
Reduce the staffing level	2
Refreshment provision	2
Charge for wi-fi/ IT services	2
Open at 10AM	2
Charge advertising for businesses	1
Close all day on Wednesday	1
Close all day on a Monday	1

Add a small meeting room	1
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Macclesfield library (95 suggestions in total)

Hire out room upstairs (23 comments)	23
Refreshment facilities (18 comments)	18
Library is valued, don't cut hours (16 comments)	16
Charged for events/clubs (12 comments)	12
Donations and fundraising such as raffle tickets (10 comments)	10
Arts/Literary festival/evening events/exhibitions (8 comments)	8
No new books/ sale of old stock (7 comments)	7
Use volunteers (5 comments)	5
Use one of the large meetings rooms for co-working facilities (4 comments)	4
Opening later in the day, 9:30AM/10AM or close earlier (3 comments)	3
Shared space with community services such as Macclesfield Visitor Information Centre (2 comments)	2
Charge for ICT services (2 comments)	2
Closure on Monday (2 comment)	2
Redesign layout upstairs for more space for community activities (1 comment)	1
Work with Macc Cultural Forum (1 comment)	1
Library membership fee (1 comment)	1
Solar panels on the roof (1 comment)	1
Sponsorship from local companies such as AstraZeneca (1 comment)	1

Middlewich library (6 suggestions in total)

Use volunteers (1 comment)	1
Open at 10AM (1 comment)	1
Charged for events such as language courses or floristry (1 comment)	1
Amazon lockers (1 comment)	1
Refreshment provision (1 comment)	1
Advertise book donations more (1 comment)	1

Ask Ansa to sponsor the purchase of new books (1 comment)	1
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Nantwich library (58 suggestions in total)

Charged for events such as language courses/ school reading clubs/baby and toddler sessions/book evenings with authors	12
Private room hire upstairs in library	10
Library is valued, don't cut funding	10
Refreshment provision	7
Open at 10AM/later	5
Sale of items, such as artwork and prints of local artists	3
Cuts elsewhere such as the town ranger	2
Open longer on Saturdays	2
Council tax provision/ town council contributions	2
Library membership fee for those that can afford it	2
Close on Sunday and Wednesday afternoon	1
Sponsorship from Chatwins/Barclays	1
Charity events to generate income	1
Close the library and transfer to a shared space	1
Close on different days to Crewe library	1
Collaborate with local schools/colleges such as Reaseheath	1
Use volunteers	1

Poynton library (21 suggestions in total)

Library is valued, don't cut funding/ cut elsewhere	5
Refreshment provision	3
Closure on Thursday will impact the baby and toddler group	4
Closure would be better on a Monday, Half day on Wednesday to mirror businesses.	4
Charged for events such as Lego/Rhymetime/Arts and craft sessions, including evening sessions	9
Open at 10AM/ later to generate half day saving	2
Small charge for loaning books	1

Charge for car parking in Poynton village	1
Take donations of books/ sell off old stock	2

Prestbury library (10 suggestions in total)

Close this library/ replace with mobile library	5
Use volunteers	1
Further cuts in hours as it has less users	1
Open at 10:30AM	1
Charged for groups such as Rhyme time	1
Advertise the library better	1

Sandbach library (13 suggestions in total)

Energy efficiencies in building	1
Open a parcel collection hub	1
Sell books new to order/ old stock	2
No reduction on Thursday/ Friday hours	3
Small joining fees	1
Open at 10AM	1
Hire out to paying groups e.g., U3A	2
Art exhibitions by local groups	1
Refreshment facilities	1
Town council for funding	1

Wilmslow library (26 suggestions in total)

Hire out library space for talks/exhibitions/performances	6
Online booking for meeting room space/ make more of hiring this out	6
Donated books/ sell old stock	3
Library is valued, cuts elsewhere	3
Use volunteers	2

Keep open on Friday	2
Banking services	3
Small charge for book clubs, toddler clubs, art clubs	2
Refreshment facilities	1
Open at 10AM	1
Fundraising/donation box	1

Mobile library (25 suggestions in total)

Small charge per visit / delivery fee for books	5
Close service, too costly	4
Volunteer service	3
Combine into a mobile community hub with banking/library/medical services	3
Refreshment services	2
Expanded area (Sutton, Langleys, Lyme Green, Aston)	2
Service valued, don't remove	2
Advertisement on vehicle for income	2
Donations/ contributions	1
Electric vehicle	1

Conclusions

Strong opposition to the proposals

As with the Budget Consultation conducted in January 2023 this Library Service Consultation 2023 received a significant number of responses, with many passionately opposing the proposed reductions to Library Service provision in Cheshire East.

These responses, alongside other forms of protest such as the Alsager Library 'read-in' which was attended by 179 people, and the House of Commons spoken contribution by Fiona Bruce MP, clearly indicate that the Library Service is a highly important service to many Cheshire East residents, and that libraries have clearly evolved to become more than just places to borrow books, but something more fundamental and vital within Cheshire East communities.

Differences of opinion between library users and non-users

The level of opposition from respondents to the proposals remains very high, though it is down slightly from the level of opposition received during the Budget Consultation (down from -58% net opposition to -44%). This perhaps reflects that residents are pleased to see Saturday and evening opening, and the mobile library service, retained.

It is also worth noting that non-library users showed net support of +6% to the proposals – this indicates that while the service is incredibly important to those that use it, if a referendum of the population as a whole was conducted we may find that the proposed service cuts would be more palatable to residents overall. There was a certain acceptance among some respondents that local government finances are currently very challenging, and that cuts are needed from services.

This may also suggest that in future income to run and expand the service may need to come from service users or from income generated from within the service itself, with many consultees feeding back that they would be willing to contribute somehow, and that many users are fairly affluent. It was emphasised however, that the service must remain free to those who cannot afford to contribute.

Alternative service provision and a long-term strategy

Those in opposition strongly suggested the proposals put forward were inadequate, and the council should strongly explore the possibility of keeping the larger libraries open for longer, or the possibility of opening libraries later in the day, so that full day closures are avoided, and so the service can attract as much footfall as possible, and generate as much revenue as possible.

It is also clear that there are alternative ways of delivering library services, with examples from around the country being provided, that should be thoroughly explored

as options to ensure libraries are open for as long as possible in future. Respondents listed many ideas for income generation and funding that should also be thoroughly explored to this end.

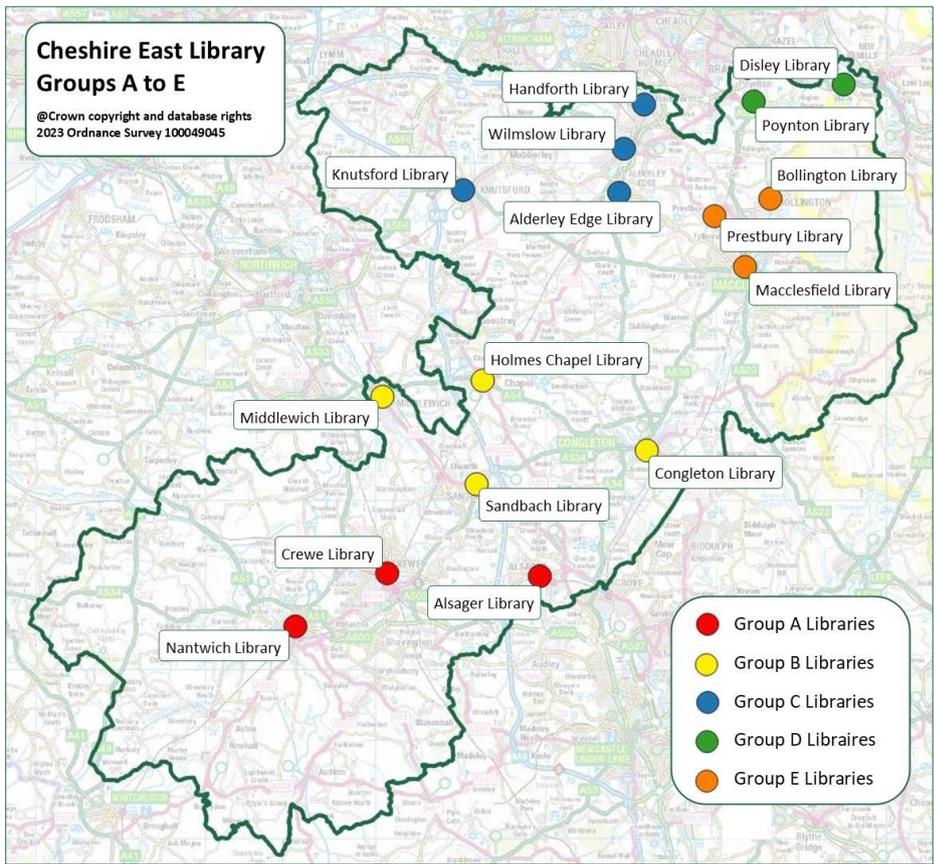
As Penny Mordaunt stated in a parliamentary debate on the Library Service proposals “I encourage [Cheshire East Council] to be a bit more entrepreneurial by generating income, working with partners, asking for business support and doing the many other things that councils up and down the country have done to secure such vital services”.

Any future service improvements should also be clearly set out within a long-term library strategy, that is coproduced with the key stakeholders, to ensure the Library Service evolves and expands in harmony with the communities they serve.

Local considerations

It is clear there are local considerations which must be taken into account when designing Library Services, such as perhaps not shutting on Fridays or on market days, ensuring that any activities that are lost on closed days are transferred over to alternative days smoothly, and that any changes to opening hours are advertised clearly and widely.

Finally, based on suggestions within the survey a suggested redesign of the Library Groupings is presented in the following map:



Appendix 1 – The consultation material

During the consultation the council set out its proposals within its consultation material, that respondents could then feedback on. A summary of this material is provided below.

Consultation on revised Library Service proposals

The revised Library Service proposals consulted on were to reduce current opening hours so that all libraries would be closed for at least 1.5 days during the week, and to reduce funding for the purchase of new books and newspapers.

This would mean libraries that are:

- Currently not closed in the week would close for a day and a half e.g. Alsager, Congleton, Crewe, Macclesfield, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach & Wilmslow
- Currently closed for 0.5 days in the week would close for an additional day e.g. Holmes Chapel & Knutsford
- Currently closed for 1 day in the week would close for an additional half day e.g. Bollington, Handforth & Middlewich
- Currently closed for 1.5 days or more in the week would stay as they are e.g. Alderley Edge, Disley, Prestbury

If these proposals were not delivered that would result in an overspend within Library Services for the year 2023 to 2024. This overspend would then need to be found in savings from the following year's budget, on top of any further savings that might be required.

Delivering Library Services in local areas

Cheshire East Council is proposed to close each library in Cheshire East for at least 1.5 days a week. There were 2 options presented for how this could be done.

Option 1: Close all libraries across the borough on the same day each week e.g. All libraries are closed all day Thursday and half day Wednesday.

Option 2: Ensure that at least 1 library is open in each Group A, B, C, D, E and F every day of the week (see the list and map below of the Library Groups A to F). This would mean different libraries in each group would open on different days during the week.

Group A = Crewe and Nantwich libraries

Group B = Alsager, Congleton and the Mobile libraries

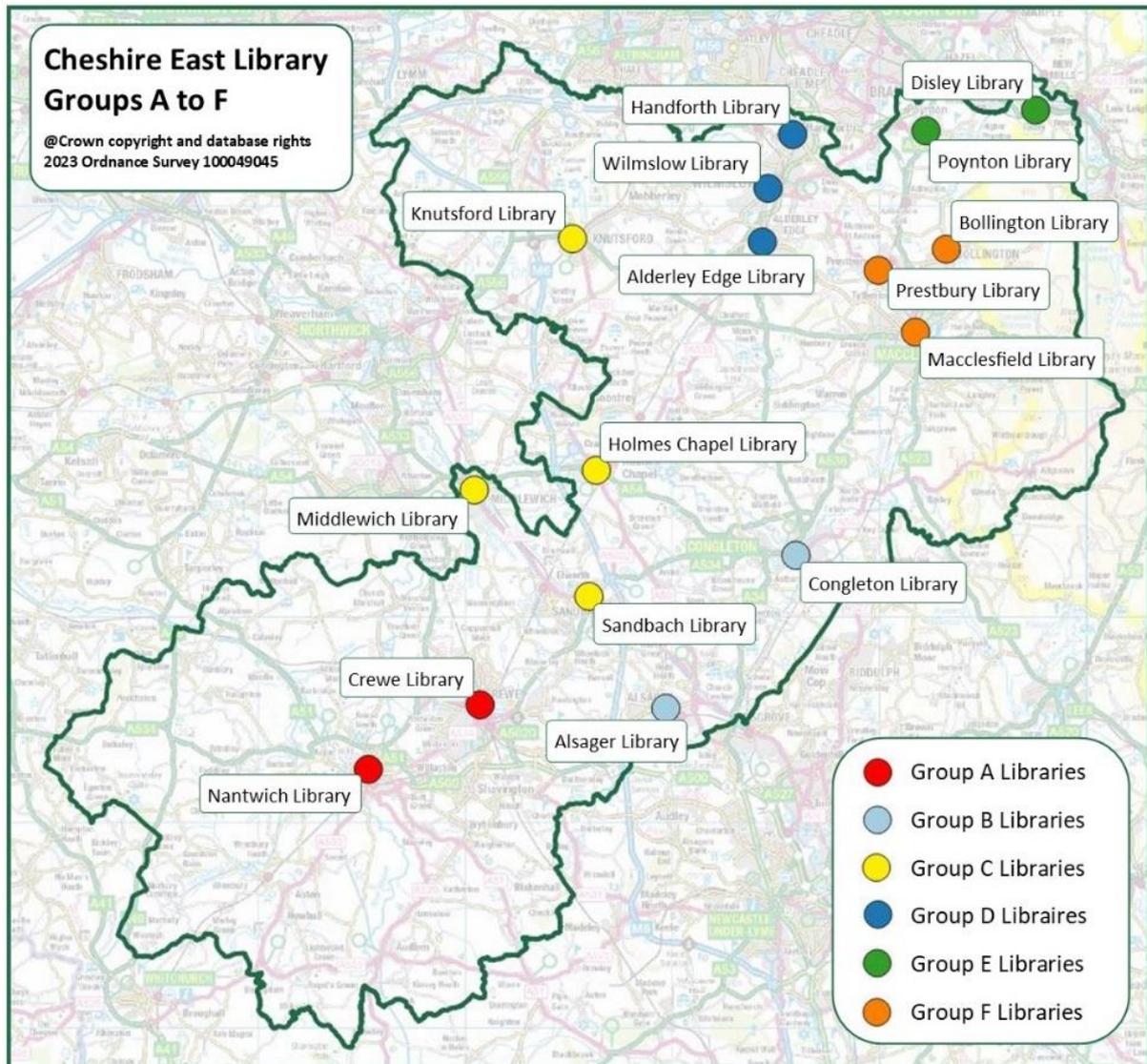
Group C = Holmes Chapel, Knutsford, Middlewich and Sandbach libraries

Group D = Alderley Edge, Handforth and Wilmslow libraries

Group E = Disley and Poynton libraries

Group F = Bollington, Macclesfield and Prestbury libraries

Libraries were grouped together based on the relative size of the library groupings, how close libraries are to each other, and the ease of access between them.



The proposed new library opening hours

Cheshire East Council also proposed to close Cheshire East libraries on each of the days as set out below.

The proposed changes to opening hours were based on key library usage data for each library, including daily visitor numbers, issues and returns data, and computer

usage stats, alongside other local considerations. Generally speaking the days proposed for closure were recommended on the quietest days for each library.

Group A	Proposed change	Total proposed reduction in hours
Crewe library	Close Wednesday and half day Thursday	14 hours
Nantwich library	Close Friday and half day Monday	12 hours
Group B		
Alsager library	Close Thursday and half day Wednesday	12 hours
Congleton library	Close Friday and half day Wednesday	12 hours
Mobile library	No changes being proposed	0 hours
Group C		
Holmes Chapel library	Close Wednesday and half day Friday	7.5 hours
Knutsford library	Close Thursday	10 hours
Middlewich library	Close half day Monday	4 hours
Sandbach library	Close Thursday and half day Friday	12 hours
Group D		
Alderley Edge library	No reduction in hours, but proposing to close on a Thursday open on a Friday	0 hours
Handforth library	Close half day Monday	4 hours
Wilmslow library	Close Friday and half day Tuesday	12 hours
Group E		
Disley library	No changes being proposed	0 hours
Poynton library	Close Thursday and half day Friday	12 hours
Group F		
Bollington library	Close half day Thursday	4 hours
Macclesfield library	Close Friday and half day Wednesday	16 hours
Prestbury library	No changes being proposed	0 hours

Extra information provided to support the consultation

The following extra information was also provided during the consultation:

- [Details about the proposed new opening hours for each Cheshire East library](#)
- [Key statistics about Cheshire East Libraries](#)
- [An Equality Impact Assessment](#)

Appendix 2 – Email feedback

All email responses

Given the large number of email response to the Library Consultation 2023, all emails received during the consultation have been printed verbatim in the following separate report:

[Library Service Consultation 2023 – All email feedback \(PDF, 1.82MB\)](#)

Summary of all email feedback

In total 125 emails were received during the consultation, including from the following Councillors and organisations:

- Councillor Jos Saunders (email #32)
- Cranage Parish Council (email #73)
- Congleton Town Council (email #90)
- Sandbach Town Council (email #94)
- Alderley Edge Parish Council (email #99)
- Disley Parish Council (email #103)
- Crewe Town Council (#107)
- Poynton Town Council (email #108)
- Bollington Town Council (email #110)
- Knutsford Town Council (email #111)
- Macclesfield Literary and Philosophical Society (email #113)
- Nantwich Town Council (email #119)
- Councillor Mary Brooks (email #120)
- Councillor Sue Adams (email 125)

A summary of the contents of all emails received is provided below.

Email topic / comment	No. of email references
Opposition to the proposals, including specifically at the largest libraries	105
Income ideas, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening bank and post office desks in libraries • Local Town & Parish Council funding • Lottery funding • Cafes in libraries • Auctions to raise funds • Charging users to use services such as computer use or book borrowing, or for admin services • Renting out library space / rooms, including to Town & Parish Councils or Citizens Advice Bureau • Getting sponsorship from local businesses 	14

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid for courses • PC games evenings • Book sales 	
<p>Savings ideas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop paying council staff over £100,000 • Use volunteers in libraries • Reduce libraries staff numbers • Review library staffing roles and levels • Reduce the size of the libraries 	10
Support for the proposals	9
<p>Keep libraries open by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening them later in the day • Closing them sooner in the day • Having half day closing only • Opening without staff • Opening outside school hours only 	9
<p>Suggests improving library efficiency by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a 3-week rolling rota • Increasing book loan times / lending periods • Allowing book borrowing across all libraries • Handing libraries over to local councils to run • Adopting an alternative service delivery model such as those used in Staffordshire County Council, CW&C, Midlothian, and Llandaff 	6
Town Councils exploring ways of keeping the library open, particularly through top-up funding	6
Suggests proposals will prevent charity fund raising initiatives, and local organisations using libraries to deliver events / groups	5
<p>Library Groupings comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knutsford should be grouped with Wilmslow and Macclesfield • Congleton should be grouped with Macclesfield and Sandbach 	3
Opposition to the book fund reduction	2
Concern this will set a precedent for future cuts	2
Asks what other options have been considered by the council?	1
Alderley Edge – Specific issues around the library receiving less funding from CEC as compared other libraries, its use of volunteers to support the service, and a request that hours are amended to enable late night opening once a week. Supports the change to Friday opening.	1
Suggests alternative opening days	1
Asks where the long-term strategy for the Library Service is	1
Suggests ideas to ensure their group can still meet	1
Suggests public transport is not good enough to enable efficient travel between different libraries	1

A summary of the number of emails that referenced each library is provided below.

Individual library	No. of email references
Alderley Edge library	1
Alsager library	8
Bollington library	2

Congleton library	3
Crewe library	6
Disley library (support for hours)	3
Holmes Chapel library	2
Knutsford library	5
Macclesfield library	15
Nantwich library	6
Poynton library	8
Sandbach library	4
Wilmslow library	3

Appendix 3 – Letter feedback

In total 3 letters were received during the consultation. including from Fiona Bruce MP (letter #2).

All letters have been published verbatim below in the date order they were received and have been anonymised to protect the identity of the individual sending the response, unless the individual is a Member of Parliament or local Councillor. Brief summaries of the content of each email have also been provided.

Letter response #1

Date letter received: 16 June 2023

Summary of content:

Opposition to the proposals, particularly at Macclesfield.

Full letter:

16th June 23 Macclesfield
Library
Jordangate

To the library I've been asked what I think about any forthcoming changes I've been visiting the library since 2014 with the reading group and for £3 I really enjoy it. I'm aware of all the services available and its very useful to know Also theres Help for people who have no computer or no reading skills Theres a vast amount of knowledge the library provides. I Just hope the library future is not closed,

Name withheld.

Letter response #2

Date letter received: 20 June 2023

Summary of content:

Response on behalf of Fiona Bruce MP. Opposition to the proposals.

Full letter:

FIONA BRUCE MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dr L O'Donnell
Chief Executive
Cheshire East Council
Westfields, Middlewich Road
Sandbach, CW11 1HZ

20th June 2023

Our Ref: C/Walton/FB/HC
Please quote the reference on any correspondence

Dear Lorraine,

I write on behalf of my constituents who are very concerned about the proposals to cut the number of days that local libraries are open in Cheshire East.

As I am sure you know, local libraries are a vital source of community and information for many people. Far more than just a place to obtain the loan of a book, I know that many constituents in need have been directed to local libraries for help and crucial support like access to public computers and the internet, to close all libraries for at least a day a week will be a considerable loss to many local communities.

I should be most grateful if my concerns about this could be recorded and any proposal to reduce library opening times cancelled.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,



Fiona Bruce MP
Member of Parliament for the Congleton Constituency
www.fionabruce.org.uk

Serving communities across Alsager, Astbury, Betchton, Breerton, Church Lawton, Congleton, Cranage, Elworth, Etitley Heath, Goostrey, Holmes Chapel, Middlewich, Moston, Mount Pleasant, Mow Cop, Rode Heath, Sandbach, Scholar Green, Smallwood, Somerford, Swettenham, Twemlow, Wheelock and the surrounding areas

Westminster Tel: 0207 219 2969 • Constituency Tel: 01260 274 044
Email: fiona.bruce.mp@parliament.uk • www.fionabruce.org.uk

Personal data you share with us is held in accordance with Fiona Bruce MP's Privacy Notice. Information on how your data is held and processed can be found at <http://www.fionabruce.org.uk/privacy>. Hard copies available on request.

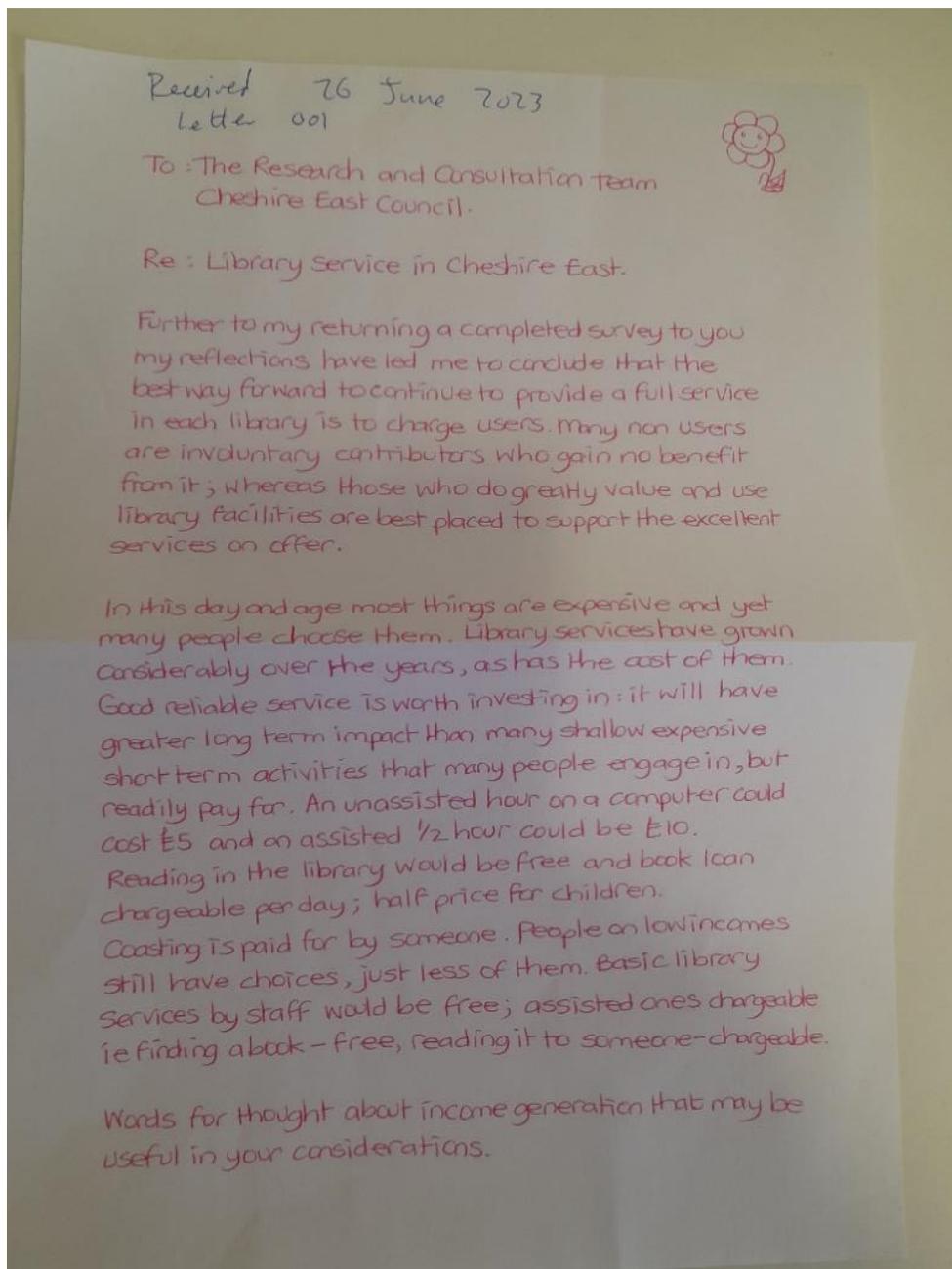
Letter response #3

Date letter received: 26 June 2023

Summary of content:

Suggests charging library users to help fund the service. States non-users are involuntary contributors who gain no benefit from the service. Charges could be for unassisted or assisted computer use (up to £10 per half hour), charges to loans books per day, etc.

Full letter:



Appendix 4 – Events and protests feedback

During the consultation face to face discussions took place between Cheshire East Council's Library Services management team and the stakeholders listed below – in total there were 255 individual engagements through these events.

Additionally a “read-in” protest was held at Alsager Library which was organised by members of the community, and there was a spoken contribution relating to the consultation from Fiona Bruce MP in the House of Commons.

Date	Meeting type	Who with	Attendees
13/02/2023	Staff briefing	CEC Library Staff North briefing 2	60
13/02/2023	Staff briefing	CEC Library Staff Mid briefing 2	35
13/02/2023	Staff briefing	CEC Library Staff South briefing 2	20
26/05/2023	Meeting / Discussion	Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport	2
05/06/2023	Staff briefing	CEC Library Staff North briefing 1	55
05/06/2023	Staff briefing	CEC Library Staff Mid briefing 1	30
05/06/2023	Staff briefing	CEC Library Staff South briefing 1	18
06/06/2023	Meeting / Discussion	Cheshire West & Chester Libraries, Cheshire Libraries Shared Services	2
16/06/2023	Informal library visit	MP Mullen and Councillor Posnett	2
16/06/2023	Informal library visit	Councillor Burton	1
20/06/2023	Meeting / Discussion	Town and Parish Council Network Meeting	16
21/06/2023	Meeting / Discussion	Councillor Burton	1
27/06/2023	Meeting / Discussion	Congleton Town Council	2
27/06/2023	Meeting / Discussion	Councillor Posnett	1
27/06/2023	Meeting / Discussion	Councillor Critchley	1
29/06/2023	Meeting / Discussion	Crewe Town Council	2
29/06/2023	Meeting / Discussion	Poynton Town Council	3
04/07/2023	Library "read-in" protest	Non CEC protest, led by members of the community	179
06/07/2023	Meeting / Discussion	Councillor Braithwaite	1
07/07/2023	Meeting / Discussion	Wilmslow Town Council	3
10/07/2023	House of Commons debate	Fiona Bruce MP	1

Notes from 3 of these events are recorded below.

Town and Parish Council network meeting – 20 June 2023

Number of guest attendees: 16

Organisations represented at the meeting:

- Brereton cum Smethwick Parish Council
- Congleton Town Council
- Disley Parish Council
- Handforth Town Council
- High Legh Parish Council
- Holmes Chapel Parish Council
- Hulme Walfield & Somerford Booths Parish Council
- Knutsford Town Council
- Ollerton with Marthall and Over Alderley Parish Councils
- Poynton Town Council
- Sandbach Town Council
- Shavington cum Gresty Parish Council

Following introductions to CEC Staff, Tom Shuttleworth (Interim Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods) delivered a presentation outlining a background to the process, the proposals and associated timelines.

At the end of the presentation, the following questions were asked with the responses outlined delivered for each.

Question from Poynton Town Council

Q. Why Thursday closure at Poynton – understand, from sitting on reception in shared area, that it appears to be the busiest day.

A. Not set in stone, potential to alter via consultation but noted that visitors numbers are similar.

Q. Instead of closing for half a day, could there be scope to open later each day?

A. Noted it has been looked at, doesn't give quite the same savings – could be reviewed as part of development of proposal if consultation feedback illustrates this preference.

Question from Handforth Town Council

Q. What data had been used to establish opening days / times?

A. Includes a visitor count (some automatics & some manual) plus members, PC usage and borrowing rates.

Q. Noting Handforth Garden Village (4K houses), there was a proposal for a new library. Has this been considered / factored into the these proposals?

A. Would be inappropriate to comment of specifics but acknowledged this exercise was about the here and now. As and when any major developments come forward, a view will be taken at that point regarding local amenities including libraries.

Q. Is information being shared between neighbouring Town and Parish Councils?

A. No, would be down to individual Town and Parish Councils to instigate this. Jackie Weaver offered ChALC's support in brokering these discussions.

Question from Knutsford Town Council

Q. Can we see the user data?

A. Yes, has been added to consultation pages of website (& shared in the meeting 'chat').

Q. Is it possible to see specific usage in days / times?

A. Yes at large libraries – done by counters although estimates used at smaller libraries.

Q. Noted that the group suggested for Knutsford wasn't accessible by public transport – can this be considered?

A. Can be reviewed & potentially altered.

Q. Has a split day been considered – closing at lunchtime?

A. Noted that is more difficult, particularly at larger sites & would also need to consider staff contracts & willingness to work split shifts. Not totally out of the question, will review usage figures, but seems more problematic than other potential options.

Q. What will the reduction in the Book Fund mean in practice?

A. Purchasing less bestsellers – was 1-2 per site but will be max 1 per library. Noted, in the current model, there was a small over recovery so there is the potential, should this option be progressed, to reinvest the surplus into the Book Fund.

Q. How does the proposals impacts Cheshire West & Chester [CWAC]?

A. Regular updates take place with CWAC & Library Shared Services but specific impact hasn't been fully resolved. Noted that CWAC are undertaking their own review but is at a relatively early stage.

Question from unknown

Q. Are cuts in 2023/24 or all years?

A. Is a rolling plan – revised service will be embedded in 2023/24 with that service then offered moving forward.

Q. Is there a Strategic Plan for Libraries in Cheshire East – or is one to be developed?

A. At this point, nothing further planned beyond the scope of the exercise set out in the consultation exercise.

Question from Holmes Chapel Parish Council

Q. Is there the option for volunteers to support the running of the library service – particularly at the smaller sites?

A. Noted that this is the case at some sites. It will be reviewed going forward but not in the short term. Not a consideration to replace paid staff with volunteers in this proposal.

Question from Congleton Town Council

Q. Noted that usage is high – particularly of PCs, can anything be done to reduce the impact – flag: warm spaces, understand budget cuts. Also noted that the Town Council hadn't received increased funds from developments outside the boundary. Specific question related to the number of staff required to operate the library and whether this could be reviewed.

A. Same staffing levels required to operate the library and there will be the expectation to complete same tasks as currently so more pressure placed on the staff.

In relation to the point re. parish councils getting increased funds from developments, it would need to be the Town Council (or ChALC) that brokered these conversations.

Q. When the library is closed [as per the proposed model or alternative], can there still be access to the meeting room?

A. No, not when the library is closed.

Q. Noted that the costs proposed seemed high.

A. Happy to provide granularity but would need to schedule a separate meeting.

Question from Knutsford Town Council

Q. In favour of shorter days [suggested earlier in the meeting], is there an alternative?

A. The proposed model, which can be altered – in terms of days closed, would be for neighbouring libraries to assist to add capacity – acknowledging limitations with public transport.

Alsager Library read-in protest – 4 July 2023

179 people attended a “read-in” protest at Alsager Library between 3-4pm on 4 July 2023, to protest against the proposed reduction in hours at Alsager Library. This event was not organised nor hosted by Cheshire East Council.



House of Commons Debate – 10 July 2023

[Fiona Bruce MP raised concerns in the House of Commons about Cheshire East Council plans to reduce opening hours at Libraries in Cheshire East in Parliament.](#)

Speaking in Parliament Fiona Bruce MP asked:

‘Labour-led Cheshire East Council has proposed to close all libraries for at least one and a half weekdays every week. In my constituency, that will affect libraries in Alsager, Sandbach, Holmes Chapel, Middlewich and Congleton. Does the Leader of the House agree that members of Congleton Town Council and others are absolutely right to oppose that inexplicable proposal, bearing in mind its negative and, indeed, potentially damaging impact not only on young people’s learning but on many of my least well-off constituents, who depend on libraries for welfare checks, bus applications, computer use for job applications, to read the local papers, and many other everyday essentials?’

Penny Mordaunt MP (Leader of the House of Commons) responded:

‘I agree with her: that is a crazy solution to a problem of constrained resource. Why have an asset, with all those overheads, just to shut it for part of the week? I encourage her council to be a bit more entrepreneurial by generating income, working with partners, asking for business support and doing the many other things that councils up and down the country have done to secure such vital services, including, in some cases, community asset transfers. I hope that, in addition to securing a debate and asking a question on Monday, she can also get her council to buck up.’

Photo shows Fiona Bruce MP in the House of Commons raising concerns about library closures



Appendix 5 – Social media engagement

10 posts advertising the consultation were posted the council's corporate Twitter account (@CheshireEast). The consultation was also promoted on individual library Facebook pages as well.

The content posted on the corporate Twitter account was "Have your say on plans for your local library. Take part in our consultation on proposals for library opening hours across the borough. Find out more and respond to the consultation by 9 July".

Only metrics from the corporate Twitter engagement have been captured below.

Corporate Twitter Engagement

Total audience reached = 370,428

Total number of click throughs = 161

Total number of corporate Twitter engagements (likes, comments & shares) = 41

Appendix 6 – Newspaper articles

As of 9 July 2023, a total of 10 newspaper articles had been published throughout the duration of the consultation. These are listed below.

Date	Publication	Link
09/06/2023	Cheshire East Council	https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/council_information/media_hub/media_releases/have-your-say-on-plans-for-cheshire-east-libraries.aspx
12/06/2023	The Nantwich News	https://thenantwichnews.co.uk/2023/06/12/consultation-launched-on-cuts-to-cheshire-east-library-services/
12/06/2023	Crewe Nub News	https://crewe.nub.news/news/local-news/council-unveils-plan-to-cut-back-crewe-and-nantwich-library-opening-hours-187660
21/06/2023	Crewe Nub News	https://crewe.nub.news/news/local-news/crewe-councillors-urge-mp-to-lobby-for-funding-to-stop-towns-library-services-being-cut-188973
21/06/2023	The Nantwich News	https://thenantwichnews.co.uk/2023/06/21/councillors-urge-mp-on-action-to-stop-cheshire-east-library-cuts/
23/06/2023	Northwich Guardian	https://www.northwichguardian.co.uk/news/23606996.cheshire-east-planning-cut-library-opening-hours/
23/06/2023	Knutsford Guardian	https://www.knutsfordguardian.co.uk/news/23606996.cheshire-east-planning-cut-library-opening-hours/
04/07/2023	Stoke Sentinel	https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/stoke-on-trent-news/mum-takes-direct-action-protest-8569028
06/07/2023	The Nantwich News	https://thenantwichnews.co.uk/2023/07/06/letter-cecs-cut-back-plan-for-libraries-is-atrocious/
07/07/2023	The Nantwich News	https://thenantwichnews.co.uk/2023/07/07/nantwich-library-to-close-fridays-and-half-day-mondays-under-cec-cuts/

Appendix 7 – Survey respondent demographics

Gender

71% of survey respondents were female, 25% male.

Gender	Count	Percent
Female	1,884	71%
Male	667	25%
Prefer not to say	96	4%
Other	14	1%
Total valid responses	2,661	100%

The 14 “other” responses comprised of the below which have been printed verbatim:

- “Non-binary” (x2)
- “Adult human female by biological sex” (x2)
- “Being male or female is not a ‘gender identity’. It’s a biological sex.”
- “Bibliophile”
- “Monkey”
- “MYOB”
- “Pathetic”
- “Retired businessman“
- “There’s only 2 genders”

Age group

Survey respondent numbers by age group were as follows:

Age Group	Count	Percent
Under 35	169	6%
35-44	482	18%
45-54	422	16%
55-64	502	19%
65-74	622	23%
75 plus	386	14%
Prefer not to say	96	4%
Total valid responses	2,679	100%

Health or disability status

Survey respondent numbers by health or disability status were as follows:

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? This includes problems related to old age.	Count	Percent
Yes	400	15%
No	2105	79%
Prefer not to say	151	6%
Total valid responses	2,656	100%

