



# KENT COUNTY COUNCIL FOLKESTONE LIBRARY CONSULTATION REPORT



PREPARED BY LAKE MARKET RESEARCH



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 596 responses were received to the consultation questionnaires (including Easy Read). An additional 4 emails / letters were received. Feedback from all sources have been included in this report.
- The most common means of finding out about the consultation was Facebook (32%), followed by at a Folkestone and Hythe district library (23%) or from a friend or relative (19%).
- 80% of consultees visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill prior to its temporary closure to some degree (defined as consultees visiting at least once a week up to and including less regularly prior to closure). 57% were frequent visitors and visited at least once a month. 14% of consultees have visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill in the past and 6% have never visited.
- 51% of consultees have used other Folkestone and Hythe district libraries while Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill has been temporarily closed. 18% used the online e-library service and 15% used 'Folkestone Library – Heritage and Digital Access' at 5 Grace Hill. 35% have not used any temporary or alternative services.
- 55% disagree with KCC's proposal to permanently leave the Folkestone Library building at 2 Grace Hill and find an alternative town centre location for the library and registration service. Strength of disagreement is high with 50% strongly disagreeing and 6% tending to disagree. 38% agree with KCC's proposal (21% strongly agree, 17% tend to agree);
- Consultees were asked to indicate their reasons for their response to the proposal. With significant proportions of consultees agreeing and disagreeing with the proposal, free text feedback is mixed. The key themes in support of keeping the library at 2 Grace Hill are listed below:
  - The history of the building / part of local heritage / a landmark
  - Repairs should be made to keep the building as a library
  - The building belongs to the community
  - The building is suitable in terms of building and location as a library.
- Key themes in support of finding an alternative town centre location are as follows:
  - The location would be central / convenient / beneficial,
  - Perceived high repair / maintenance costs at 2 Grace Hill
  - Generally being a more cost-effective option.
- 50% disagree with KCC's current preferred option to move the library and registration service to / rent space at FOLCA on the high street. Strength of disagreement is high with 43% strongly disagreeing and 8% tending to disagree. 43% agree with KCC's current preferred option (27% strongly agree, 15% tend to agree).
- Consultees were asked to indicate their reasons for their response. With significant proportions of consultees agreeing and disagreeing, free text feedback is mixed. The reasons put forward in support of moving to / renting space at FOLCA are broadly consistent with comments to the first proposal. The reasons put forward for keeping the library at 2 Grace Hill are also broadly consistent, however, a proportion also raised concerns that FOLCA is considered unsuitable / it's too much work and too costly to convert FOLCA / it requires maintenance.

# BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

## Background

Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill temporarily closed in December 2022 because it became unsafe for customers and staff. Since then, Kent County Council (KCC) has been investigating the extent and cost of the works needed to bring the building back into use, exploring ways to fund the repairs to the 2 Grace Hill building, looking at other locations in Folkestone town centre where the library could be located, and considering the future of the Grace Hill building.

The strength and depth of local feeling regarding this building and the importance of Folkestone's town centre library and registration service is recognised. While options are still at a formative stage, they have developed to the point that KCC have shared these in the form of a public consultation to listen to views before progressing any further.

KCC are committed to securing a permanent town centre location for the library and registration service. Having carefully considered the options KCC proposed the following to go to public consultation:

- Permanently leave the Grace Hill building and find an alternative town centre location for the Folkestone town centre library and registration service.
- Take forward work with Folkestone & Hythe District Council on moving the service to FOLCA on the high street.

## Consultation process

On the 18 July 2024, an eight-week consultation was launched and ran until the 11 September 2024. The consultation invited residents, library users and other interested parties to provide views on the proposed options or suggest potential alternatives.

Feedback was captured via a consultation questionnaire which was available on the KCC engagement website ([www.kent.gov.uk/folkestonelibrary](http://www.kent.gov.uk/folkestonelibrary)). Hard copies of the consultation material, including the questionnaire were also available in all Folkestone and Hythe district libraries and on request. Easy Read and large print formats were available from the consultation webpage and consultation material and the webpage included details of how people could contact KCC to ask a question, request hard copies or an alternative format. A Word version of the questionnaire was provided on the webpage for people who did not wish to complete the online version.

A consultation stage Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was carried out to assess the impact the proposals could have on those with protected characteristics. The EqIA was available as one of the consultation documents and the questionnaire invited consultees to comment on the assessment that had been carried out. An analysis of responses to this question can be found with the overall findings' sections of this report.

Activities to raise awareness of the consultation and encourage participation, included the following:

- Four in person drop-in sessions at Wood Avenue Library and 5 Grace Hill at the Folkestone Library - Heritage and Digital Access.
- Promotion via library staff and displays in all Folkestone and Hythe district libraries, including paper copies of the consultation document and questionnaire.

- Emails to key stakeholders, including Folkestone and Hythe Member of Parliament, local KCC Members, Folkestone and Hythe District Council, Town and Parish Councils, community groups, local charity organisations, library groups and partners.
- Local schools were contacted twice, at the beginning and towards the end of the consultation. The consultation period coincided with the annual library school age children's Summer Reading Challenge which is a busy time of year seeing many families visiting libraries.
- Press releases at the start of the consultation and towards the end and a half page advert in the Kent Messenger Folkestone & Hythe Express newspaper.
- E-mail Invite to 549 people and organisations registered with Let's talk Kent who had expressed an interest in hearing about new consultations on libraries in the district of Folkestone and Hythe.
- Promotional material displayed at 2 Grace Hill and other public buildings in Folkestone, including the Family Hub, Adult Education building, Folkestone & Hythe District Council offices, Folkestone Town Council, Hythe Town Council and Sandgate Parish Council offices and local charity offices such as Age UK, South Kent Mind and Social Enterprise Kent.
- Promoted on FOLCA digital screen.
- Social media posts from Folkestone Library, Kent Libraries and KCC's corporate social media accounts, including paid Facebook adverts to extend the reach of the consultation beyond those who follow KCC's channels.
- Promotional links from the Folkestone Library service webpage on Kent.gov.
- Articles in KCC's residents' e-newsletter.

Promotional activity was also undertaken by the Save Folkestone Library group, New Folkestone Society and other members of the community who took copies of the promotional material.

A summary of interaction with the consultation website and documents can be found below:

- 5,180 visits to the consultation webpage by 4,673 visitors.
- 834 downloads of the main consultation document, 32 of the Easy Read format and 7 of the large print version.
- 264 views of the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).
- 146 downloads of the Word version of the questionnaire, 14 of the Easy Read survey and 4 of the large print version.
- 123 downloads of the breakdown of repair costs document.
- 53 downloads of the Equality Impact Assessment.

## **Consultation response**

There were 600 responses to this consultation:

- 510 were submitted online and 86 questionnaires were submitted in hard copy or by email. 9 of the hard copy questionnaire were Easy Read versions.
- An additional 4 emails / letters were received by the KCC project team. Their open feedback has been combined with that collected from the official consultation questionnaire and are included in this report's analysis.

## Points to note

- Consultees were given the choice of which questions to answer / provide a comment for. The number of consultees providing an answer to each question is shown on each chart / data table featured in this report.
- Consultees were asked to detail the reasons for their views in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed the comments made for each of these questions and grouped common responses together into themes. These themes are reported where relevant in this report. Please note the percentages in these data tables will exceed the sum of 100% and comments often cover more than one theme.
- Please note the sum of individual percentages in any single choice question in this report may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
- Please note that participation in consultations is self-selecting and this needs to be considered when interpreting responses. The consultation was widely promoted across Folkestone and Hythe but inclination to take part in the consultation is subject to individual personal topic interest and service usage.
- Whilst this consultation was open to all residents and stakeholders to participate, it should be noted that 80% of consultees responding indicated they visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill to some degree before its temporary closure (defined as consultees visiting at least once a week up to and including less regularly prior to closure).
- KCC were responsible for the design, promotion and collection of the consultation responses. Lake Market Research were appointed to conduct an independent analysis of feedback.

# CONSULTATION PROFILE AND AWARENESS

## Response profile

The majority of consultees responding to the consultation questionnaire are Folkestone and Hythe residents (92%); 4% of consultees are residents that live somewhere else in Kent or further away. 7 questionnaire submissions were received from Parish / Town / Borough / District / County Councillors, 1 on behalf of a Town, Parish or District Council in an official capacity, 2 as a representative of a local community group or residents' association and 1 on behalf of an educational establishment, such as a school or college.

CONSULTEE TYPE	Count	Percentage
As a Folkestone and Hythe resident	546	92%
As a resident from somewhere else in Kent or further away	20	4%
As a member of KCC staff	5	1%
A Parish / Town / Borough / District / County Councillor	7	1%
On behalf of a Town, Parish or District Council in an official capacity	1	0.2%
As a representative of a local community group or residents' association	2	0.3%
On behalf of an educational establishment, such as a school or college	1	0.2%
Other / As something else (Member of Parliament, former resident / library user, member of the local artistic and creative community / organiser of Folkestone Music Town and as an employee of the Arts Council England / Conservation Architect on behalf of Heritage Conservation)	8	1%
Blank	4	1%
Total	596	

In addition to the consultation questionnaires, letters / email were received from:

- Folkestone Town Council
- Creative Folkestone
- Previous member of staff at Folkestone Library
- A library user unable to complete the consultation questionnaire.

## Demographic profile

The tables below show the demographic profile of resident consultees who completed the consultation questionnaire (568 in total). The proportion who left these questions blank or indicated they did not want to disclose this information has been included as applicable.

<b>POSTCODE AREA (resident consultees only)</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
CT18	37	7%
CT19	210	37%
CT20 1	76	13%
CT20 2	93	16%
CT20 3	44	8%
CT20 (no further detail)	8	1%
CT21	51	9%
Other postcode area	41	7%
Blank	8	1%

<b>GENDER (resident consultees only)</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	160	28%
Female	262	46%
Prefer not to say / blank	146	26%

<b>GENDER SAME AS BIRTH (resident consultees only)</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	417	73%
No	2	0.4%
Prefer not to say / blank	154	26%

<b>AGE (resident consultees only)</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
16-24	4	1%
25-34	26	5%
35-49	113	20%
50-59	78	14%
60-64	39	7%
65-74	109	19%
75-84	51	9%
85 and over	6	1%
Prefer not to say / blank	142	25%



<b>DISABILITY</b> (resident consultees only)	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	64	11%
- Physical impairment	36	6%
- Sensory impairment	10	2%
- Longstanding illness or health condition	28	5%
- Mental health condition	19	3%
- Learning disability	7	1%
- Other	3	1%
No	351	63%
Prefer not to say / blank	123	22%

<b>CARER</b> (resident consultees only)	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	53	9%
No	369	65%
Prefer not to say / blank	123	22%

<b>ETHNICITY</b> (resident consultees only)	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
White English	346	61%
White Scottish	9	2%
White Welsh	4	1%
White Northern Irish	2	0.4%
White Irish	10	2%
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	1	0.2%
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	2	0.4%
Mixed White & Asian	3	1%
Black or Black British Caribbean	3	1%
Arab	1	0.2%
Chinese	2	0.4%
Other (including White British, White European)	33	6%
Prefer not to say / blank	152	27%

<b>RELIGION</b> (resident consultees only)	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
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Yes	141	25%
- Christian	121	22%
- Buddhist	2	1%
- Jewish	3	1%
- Other	11	2%
No	261	46%
Prefer not to say / blank	146	29%

<b>SEXUALITY (resident consultees only)</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Heterosexual / Straight	337	59%
Bi / Bisexual	15	3%
Gay man	14	32%
Gay woman / Lesbian	8	1%
Prefer not to say / blank	194	34%

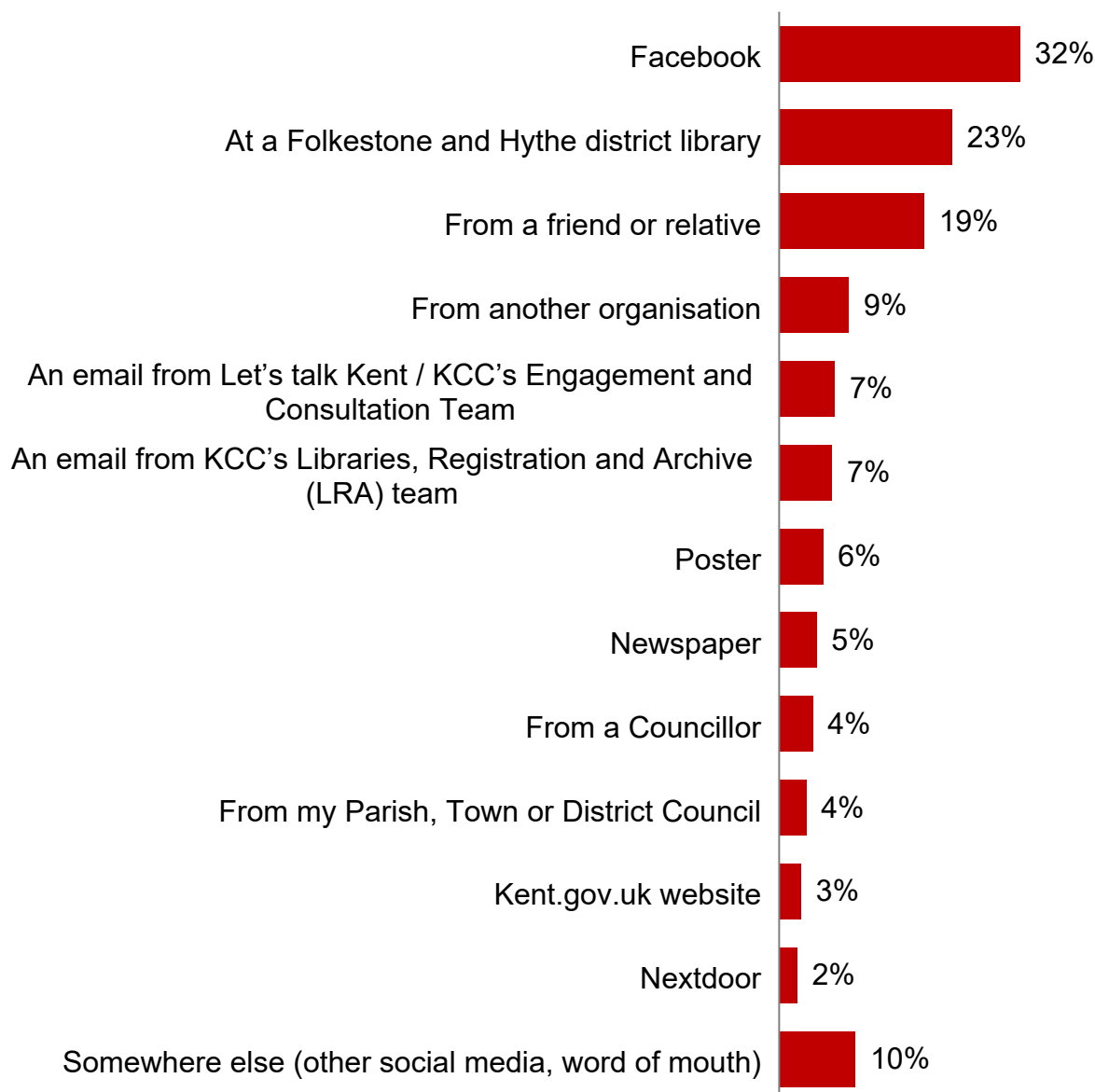
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## Consultation awareness

The most common means of finding out about the consultation is Facebook (32%), followed by at a Folkestone and Hythe district library (23%) or a friend or relative (19%).

9% found out from another organisation and 14% found out via a prompted email (7% from Let's talk Kent / KCC's Engagement and Consultation Team and 7% from KCC's Libraries, Registration and Archive (LRA) team).

**How did you find out about this consultation?** Base: all providing a response (591)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of responses	Percentage
Facebook	192	32%
At a Folkestone and Hythe district library	136	23%
From a friend or relative	113	19%
From another organisation	54	9%
An email from Let's talk Kent / KCC's Engagement and Consultation Team	44	7%
An email from KCC's Libraries, Registration and Archive (LRA) team	41	7%

<b>SUPPORTING DATA TABLE</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Poster	34	6%
Newspaper	29	5%
From a Councillor	26	4%
From my Parish, Town or District Council	21	4%
Kent.gov.uk website	17	3%
Nextdoor	14	2%
Other / somewhere else (other social media, word of mouth)	59	10%

# VISITING FOLKESTONE LIBRARY AT 2 GRACE HILL AND TEMPORARY / ALTERNATIVE SERVICES

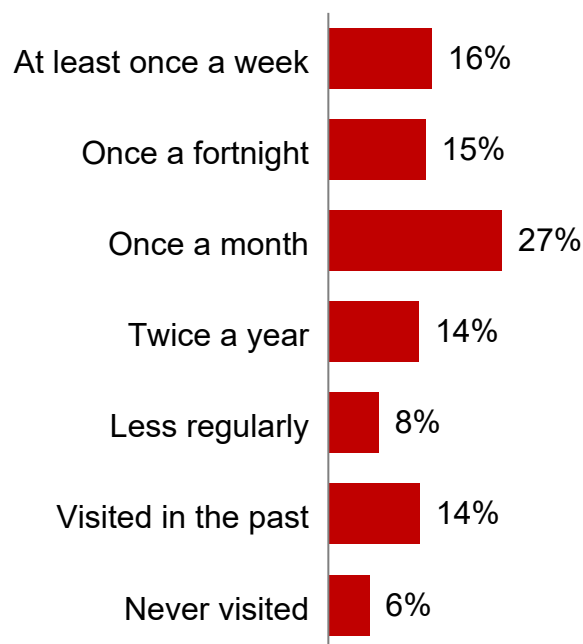
## Frequency of visiting Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill prior to temporary closure

80% of consultees visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill prior to its temporary closure to some degree (defined as consultees visiting at least once a week up to and including less regularly). 57% were frequent visitors and visited at least once a month.

14% of consultees visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill in the past and 6% have never visited.

### *How often did you visit Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill before its temporary closure?*

Base: all responding to consultation (575)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of responses	Percentage
Net – Visited to some degree (At least once a week to less regularly)	458	80%
Net – At least once a month	329	57%
At least once a week	90	16%
Once a fortnight	86	15%
Once a month	153	27%
Twice a year	83	14%
Less regularly	46	8%
Visited in the past	81	14%
Never visited	36	6%

The table below depicts the proportion of consultees who visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill before its temporary closure by resident gender, age, disability and postcode area groups.

Frequency of visiting is highest amongst residents aged 35-49 (60% visited at least once a month) and residents living in the CT20 1 postcode area (72%) and lowest amongst residents aged 75 and over (43% visited at least once a month).

<b>% visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill at least once a month</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male residents	86	56%
Female residents	154	57%
Residents aged 35-49	68	60%
Residents aged 50-64	68	57%
Residents aged 65-74	59	55%
Residents aged 75 and over	24	43%
Residents who have a disability	37	55%
Residents who do not have a disability	202	58%
Residents living in CT18 postcode area	16	43%
Residents living in CT19 postcode area	135	66%
Residents living in CT20 1 postcode area	54	72%
Residents living in CT20 2/3 postcode area	64	47%
Residents living in CT21 postcode area	27	52%

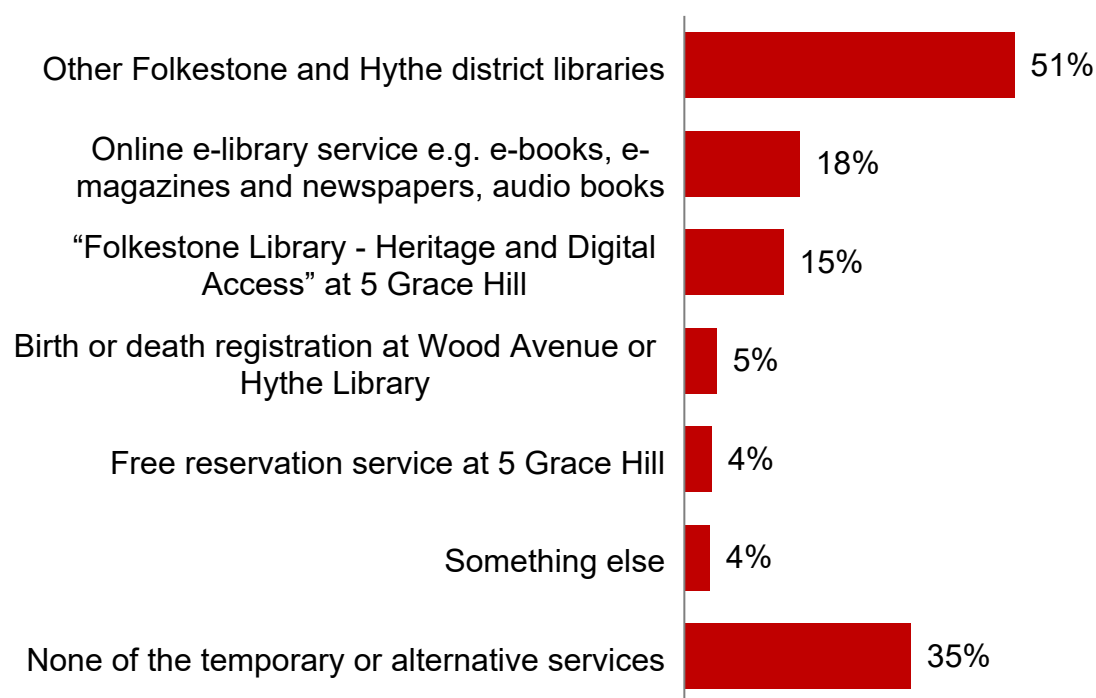
\* Please note that the number of resident consultees aged 34 and under taking part in this consultation is too small to include in the table above.

## Use of temporary or alternative services while Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill has been temporarily closed

Half of consultees (51%) indicated they used other Folkestone and Hythe district libraries while Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill has been temporarily closed. 18% used the online e-library service and 15% used 'Folkestone Library – Heritage and Digital Access' at 5 Grace Hill.

Just over a third (35%) indicated they did not use any temporary or alternative services.

**Which of these temporary or alternative services have you used while Folkestone library has been temporarily closed?** Base: all responding to consultation (570)



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of responses	Percentage
Other Folkestone and Hythe district libraries	291	51%
Online e-library service e.g. e-books, e-magazines and newspapers, audio books	101	18%
"Folkestone Library - Heritage and Digital Access" at 5 Grace Hill	87	15%
Birth or death registration at Wood Avenue or Hythe Library	29	5%
Free reservation service at 5 Grace Hill	25	4%
Something else	20	4%
None of the temporary or alternative services	201	35%

The table below depicts the proportion of consultee subgroups who used temporary or alternative services while Folkestone Library has been temporarily closed by frequent / less frequent visitor groups, gender, age, disability and postcode area groups.

A higher proportion of consultees who visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill visited other Folkestone and Hythe district libraries and 'Folkestone Library – Heritage and Digital Access' at 5 Grace Hill while Folkestone Library has been temporarily closed. In addition, use of temporary or alternative services is lowest amongst residents aged 50-64 and residents living in the CT20 postcode area.

<b>% selected</b>	<b>% other Folkestone and Hythe district libraries</b>	<b>% "Folkestone Library - Heritage and Digital Access" at 5 Grace Hill</b>	<b>% none of the temporary or alternative services</b>
Visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill <u>at least once a fortnight</u> before closure	65%	23%	24%
Visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill <u>less than once a fortnight</u> before closure	49%	14%	35%
Male residents	51%	19%	36%
Female residents	54%	13%	32%
Residents aged 35-49	59%	14%	35%
Residents aged 50-64	44%	18%	43%
Residents aged 65-74	52%	16%	29%
Residents aged 75 and over	57%	11%	28%
Residents who have a disability	50%	23%	33%
Residents who do not have a disability	53%	14%	34%
Residents living in CT18 postcode area	54%	8%	32%
Residents living in CT19 postcode area	60%	12%	31%
Residents living in CT20 1 postcode area	36%	30%	41%
Residents living in CT20 2/3 postcode area	44%	15%	44%
Residents living in CT21 postcode area	60%	10%	27%

\* Please note that the number of resident consultees aged 34 and under taking part in this consultation is too small to include in the table above.



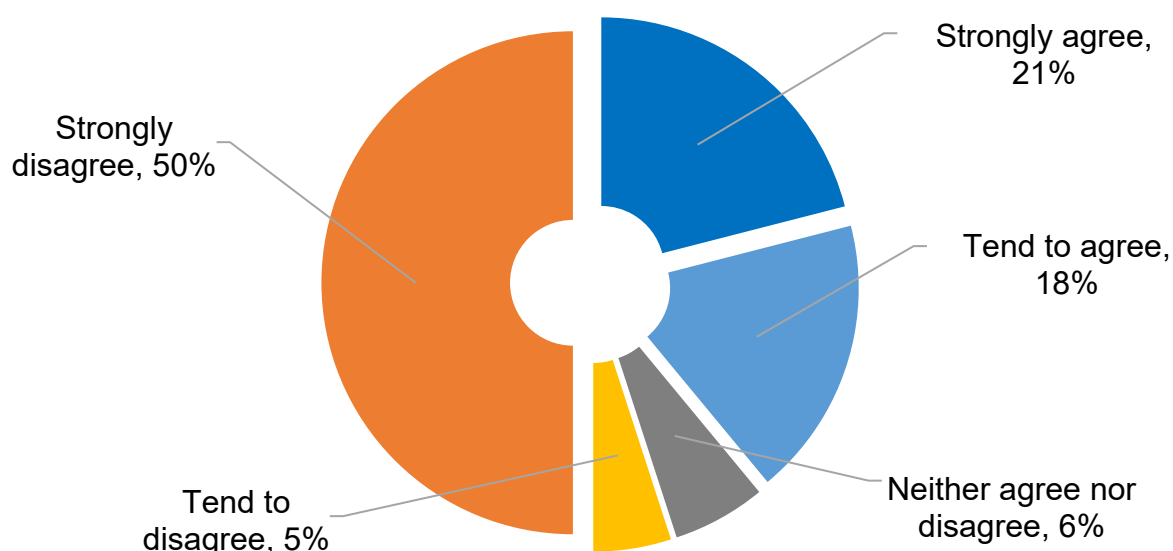
## RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION PROPOSALS

This section of the report details response to the two proposals put forward in the consultation.

### Proposal to permanently leave the Folkestone Library building at 2 Grace Hill and find an alternative town centre location for the library and registration service

38% indicated they agree with KCC's proposal to permanently leave the Folkestone Library building at 2 Grace Hill and find an alternative town centre location for the library and registration service (21% strongly agree, 17% tend to agree). Over half (55%) indicated they disagree with KCC's proposal to permanently leave the 2 Grace Hill building and find an alternative town centre location. Strength of disagreement is high with 50% strongly disagreeing and 6% tending to disagree.

**How much do you agree or disagree with our proposal to permanently leave the Folkestone Library building at 2 Grace Hill and find an alternative town centre location for the library and registration service?** Base: all providing a response (594), the sum of individual percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of responses	Percentage
Net – Agree	228	38%
Net – Disagree	328	55%
Strongly agree	125	21%
Tend to agree	103	17%
Neither agree nor disagree	36	6%
Tend to disagree	33	6%
Strongly disagree	295	50%
Don't know	2	0%

The table below depicts response to the proposal by consultee subgroups by frequent / less frequent visitors of the Folkestone Library building at 2 Grace Hill, users / non-users of temporary or alternative services, gender, age, disability and postcode area groups.

Agreement with the proposal is higher amongst consultees who have either visited the Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill in the past or have never visited (56%), consultees who have used temporary or alternative services since closure (43%) and consultees with a disability (56%). Conversely, agreement with the proposal is lower amongst consultees who used to visit the Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill at least once a fortnight (28%) and consultees who have not used temporary or alternative services since closure (34%).

Agreement with the proposal is lowest amongst residents aged 35-49 (29%) and residents who live in the CT20 1 postcode area. Agreement is highest amongst residents aged 75 and over (61%).

<b>% selected</b>	<b>% Net - Agree</b>	<b>% neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>% Net - Disagree</b>
Visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill <u>at least once a fortnight</u> before closure	28%	5%	67%
Visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill <u>less than once a fortnight</u> before closure	39%	6%	55%
Visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill <u>in the past or never visited</u>	56%	5%	37%
<u>Used</u> temporary or alternative services since closure	43%	6%	51%
<u>Have not used</u> temporary or alternative services since closure	34%	5%	61%
Male residents	41%	5%	53%
Female residents	44%	5%	50%
Residents aged 35-49	29%	10%	61%
Residents aged 50-64	41%	4%	55%
Residents aged 65-74	52%	2%	46%
Residents aged 75 and over	61%	4%	33%
Residents who have a disability	56%	0%	42%
Residents who do not have a disability	41%	6%	53%
Residents living in CT18 postcode area	50%	3%	47%
Residents living in CT19 postcode area	36%	5%	59%
Residents living in CT20 1 postcode area	29%	11%	61%
Residents living in CT20 2/3 postcode area	42%	6%	51%
Residents living in CT21 postcode area	40%	6%	52%

\* Please note that the number of resident consultees aged 34 and under taking part in this consultation is too small to include in the table above.

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### **Reason for agreement rating (Proposal to permanently leave the Folkestone Library building at 2 Grace Hill and find an alternative town centre location for the library and registration service)**

Consultees were asked to detail their reasons for their level of agreement with the proposal to permanently leave the Folkestone Library building at 2 Grace Hill and find an alternative town centre location for the library and registration service in their own words. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section. 97% of consultees provided a comment to this question.

Consistent with significant proportions of consultees agreeing and disagreeing with the proposal, free text feedback is mixed. A number of the common themes noted expressed reasons for wanting the library to remain at 2 Grace Hill (all percentages are based on the proportion of consultees answering the question):

- Grace Hill is historic / part of heritage / iconic / landmark / beautiful / listed – 34%
- Grace Hill should be repaired / restored / renovated and remain a library / preserved – 30%
- Grace Hill belongs to the community / it's a public space / asset / was a gift / part of Folkestone – 20%
- Grace Hill is suitable for a library / Grace Hill is purpose built – 15%
- Prefer current Grace Hill location / accessible / good location – 11%

Reasons for supporting the proposal to find an alternative town centre location were also evident:

- Library should be in a good location / central / convenient / town centre / would be beneficial to town – 21%
- Repair / maintenance costs are high at Grace Hill – 10%
- Cost effective to move to town centre / KCC doesn't have money for repairs – 10%
- Generally agree with moving library to another location – 9%

13% of consultees answering believe that Grace Hill has been left to deteriorate by KCC / KCC has neglected Grace Hill.

***Please tell us the reason for your answer in the box below.***

Base: all consultees providing a response (575), themes 2% and above reported below

<b>% THEME</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Grace Hill is historic / part of heritage / iconic / landmark / beautiful / listed	195	34%
Grace Hill should be repaired / restored / renovated and remain a library / preserved	174	30%
Library should be in a good location / central / convenient / town centre / would be beneficial to town	121	21%
Grace Hill belongs to the community / it's a public space / asset / was a gift / part of Folkestone	114	20%
Grace Hill is suitable for a library / Grace Hill is purpose built	84	15%
Grace Hill has been left to deteriorate by KCC / KCC neglected Grace Hill	73	13%
Prefer current Grace Hill location / accessible / good location	66	11%
Repair / maintenance costs are high at Grace Hill	58	10%
Cost effective to move to town centre / KCC doesn't have money for repairs	57	10%
Generally agree with moving library to another location	50	9%
Any library location to be accessible with parking / good public transport / easy to get to	49	9%
Concerned about future of Grace Hill if library moves / don't want it to be sold off	44	8%
Like the suggestion of FOLCA / would make use of the building	39	7%
Library is / could be a community hub	36	6%
Permanent library facilities required ASAP / no preference as to location	34	6%
New location would attract more people / higher footfall / passing foot traffic / be more visible	33	6%
Good idea to share site with other services	33	6%
Need new library / modern / up to date facilities / spacious	32	6%
Disagree with relocating library	32	6%
Libraries are essential	29	5%
Alternative locations / sites (including FOLCA) are not suitable / there are other plans for FOLCA	29	5%
Grace Hill is poorly maintained / outdated / unsafe to access	28	5%
Sassoon Gallery / exhibition space is valuable / don't want to lose them	27	5%
Costly to convert new site to a library	25	4%
Grace Hill has access issues / in a poor location / lack of public transport / parking	20	3%
<b>% THEME</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Host events / venue hire / café to raise revenue	18	3%

Grace Hill should be repaired / used for something else (not a library)	17	3%
Cost effective to invest in Grace Hill	17	3%
Consider Creative Folkestone proposal	17	3%
Grace Hill building not accessible for users with disabilities / accessibility is difficult	9	2%

Example comments, in consultees own words, supporting the themes of wanting the library to remain at 2 Grace Hill can be found below:

**“The library building is a significant, purpose-built local landmark that should be brought back to its best through its use as a library. It is in a good location and is well loved by the community.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“The Grace Hill building is a heritage building and should be preserved. The library there was excellent and it was a good community asset and base with huge potential to be an amazing community space that is much needed. The building and the library space go together.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“The Grace Hill building is a beautiful, purpose-built library building. It was gifted to the community and was designed to serve the more deprived side of the town, hence its location on the east side of the town centre. This community has very few beautiful public buildings and we love our library. It instils a sense of civic pride as well as being a space for residents to escape often overcrowded homes. It's a place for people to study and I know of many young people who share bedrooms who relied on it as a quiet place to revise for exams/write essays etc. It's an important warm hub in winter for people who live on the more deprived side of town and who are struggling with the cost of heating their homes, and it's a place where children from households with high levels of deprivation to access books and develop a positive relationship with reading in a location close to their homes. Many on the east side of the town are digitally excluded and need to access the computer terminals in the library. The building also has one of the few significant gallery spaces in a town with a high level of people making their livings creatively. We can't afford to lose these important facilities anywhere, but particularly in this specific location.”** (Parish / Town / Borough / District / County Councillor)

**“I strongly disagree with the proposal to permanently leave the Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill. The library is a historically significant community asset, deeply valued for its unique atmosphere, cultural importance, and its role in connecting the town to its heritage. Relocating to a more commercially-focused space risks diminishing its identity, disrupting the quiet and reflective environment, and undermining long-standing community connections.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“The Grace Hill library is a community asset of huge historic, local and practical importance for the people of Folkestone. It was given to the people of Folkestone; and should stay in the service of the people of Folkestone. It has provided a valuable library service for many years, in an area of the town that has many challenges, and where library services are of crucial importance to the community. It was not maintained by Kent County Council and was allowed to run into disrepair. The library needs to be repaired by Kent County Council and re-opened as a library to the community.”** (Other)

**“Grace Hill Library is of vital importance to the people of Folkestone, most notably those in the Central, East and Harbour wards. These parts of Folkestone are some of the most deprived in Kent and the Library should be there to provide a safe and warm space to relax, learn and access local services. Reopening of the Library in its original Grace Hill site is essential for the health and wellbeing of local residents and we would wish to see the refurbishment and reopening of the Grace Hill Library.”** (Response received by letter, Town Council)

Example comments, in consultees own words, supporting the proposal to find an alternative town centre location can be found below:

**“From the available figures it seems that Grace Hill would not only be extremely expensive to repair and there would be an ongoing requirement for remedial work in the future. I believe a central location would make the library far more accessible.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“I would prefer to have a library sooner rather than later. The FOLCA building is conveniently located for bus services and on level ground which makes accessibility easier. It will draw more footfall into the town centre and be a useful purpose for a publicly owned building.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“Reluctantly I tend to agree because it is a part of our heritage. I visited Grace Hill library from the age of 4 and have fond memories of the building, museum and library. However, I find your report about the state of the building and cost of repairs well written and convincing.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“I think having a centrally located library along with other services will aid footfall in that part of town. A newly, purpose-built refurbishment will me more accessible to those with disabilities. Close to other facilities in town including transport links and parking.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“The location at Grace Hill is an unattractive part of the town on a one-way system. The opportunity to move to a High Street location with much larger footfall with improved access is too good to be missed even without the considerable savings that will be made with this option. Buildings like the library at Grace Hill are outdated & no longer suited to the delivery of modern library services, as well as being hugely expensive to maintain.”** (A resident from somewhere else in Kent or further away)

**“The building is some way from the bus stop in town and needs to be in the centre of town and easily accessible for children and others to go to whereas it is currently on a very busy road on the outskirts and not near other facilities.”** (Parish / Town / Borough / District / County Councillor)

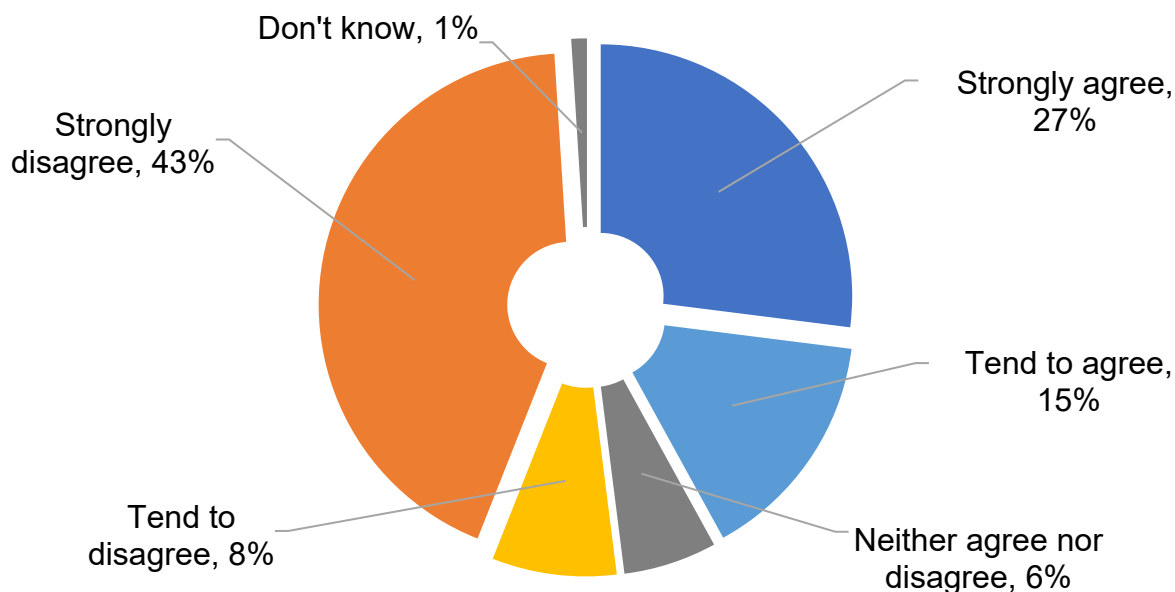
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### **Current preferred option to move the library and registration service to / rent space at FOLCA on the high street**

43% indicated they agree with KCC’s preferred option to move the library and registration service to / rent space at FOLCA on the high street (27% strongly agree, 15% tend to agree). Half (50%)

indicated they disagree with KCC's preferred option to move the library and registration service to / rent space at FOLCA on the high street. Strength of disagreement is high with 43% strongly disagreeing and 8% tending to disagree.

**How much do you agree or disagree with our current preferred option to move the library and registration service to / rent space at FOLCA on the high street?** Base: all providing a response (593), the sum of individual percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



<b>SUPPORTING DATA TABLE</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Net – Agree	253	43%
Net – Disagree	299	50%
Strongly agree	162	27%
Tend to agree	91	15%
Neither agree nor disagree	36	6%
Tend to disagree	46	8%
Strongly disagree	253	43%
Don't know	5	1%

The table below depicts response to the proposal by consultee subgroups by frequent / less frequent visitors of the Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill, users / non-users of temporary or alternative services, gender, age, disability and postcode area groups.

Agreement with the proposal is higher amongst consultees who have either visited the Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill in the past or have never visited (57%), consultees who have used temporary or alternative services since closure (47%). Conversely, agreement with the proposal is lower amongst consultees who used to visit Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill at least once a

fortnight (34%) and consultees who have not used temporary or alternative services since closure (36%).

Agreement with the proposal is lowest amongst residents aged 35-49 (41%) and residents living in the CT19 postcode area (38%). Agreement is highest amongst residents aged 75 and over (65%).

<b>% selected</b>	<b>% Net - Agree</b>	<b>% neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>% Net - Disagree</b>
Visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill <u>at least once a fortnight</u> before closure	34%	4%	62%
Visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill <u>less than once a fortnight</u> before closure	43%	8%	50%
Visited Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill <u>in the past or never visited</u>	57%	6%	34%
<u>Used</u> temporary or alternative services since closure	47%	6%	36%
<u>Have not used</u> temporary or alternative services since closure	36%	7%	57%
Male residents	45%	6%	47%
Female residents	47%	7%	46%
Residents aged 35-49	41%	8%	50%
Residents aged 50-64	39%	7%	54%
Residents aged 65-74	52%	5%	42%
Residents aged 75 and over	65%	7%	26%
Residents who have a disability	51%	8%	38%
Residents who do not have a disability	46%	5%	48%
Residents living in CT18 postcode area	58%	3%	39%
Residents living in CT19 postcode area	38%	8%	54%
Residents living in CT20 1 postcode area	42%	5%	53%
Residents living in CT20 2/3 postcode area	46%	4%	49%
Residents living in CT21 postcode area	40%	8%	50%

\* Please note that the number of resident consultees aged 34 and under taking part in this consultation is too small to include in the table above.



## Reason for agreement rating (Current preferred option to move the library and registration service to / rent space at FOLCA on the high street)

Consultees were asked to detail their reasons for their level of agreement with the proposal to move the library and registration service to / rent space at FOLCA on the high street in their own words. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section. 89% of consultees provided a comment to this question.

Consistent with significant proportions of consultees agreeing and disagreeing, free text feedback for this proposal is also mixed. Free text reasons for supporting the move / renting space at FOLCA on the high street can be found below (all percentages are based on the proportion of consultees answering the question):

- Library should be in a good location / central / convenient – 27%
- It would be accessible / easy to get to / good parking / public transport – 15%
- Makes sense to use FOLCA building / make use of FOLCA / good for town – 14%
- FOLCA is acceptable / good choice – 10%
- New location would attract more people / higher footfall / passing foot traffic – 7%

Consistent with response to the first proposal, there are also a number of themes that express reasons for wanting the library to remain at 2 Grace Hill and perceptions that FOLCA is not suitable:

- Grace Hill should be repaired / restored / renovated and remain a library – 18%
- FOLCA is unsuitable / too much work to convert FOLCA / requires maintenance – 14%
- Concerned about renting a building not owning / renting is costly / renting is risky – 9%
- Costly to convert FOLCA to a library / could be more / same cost to repairing Grace Hill – 9%
- Prefer Grace Hill / unnecessary to move elsewhere – 9%
- Grace Hill is historic / part of heritage – 8%

11% of consultees answering comment that FOLCA should be used for something else (not a library).

***Please tell us the reason for your answer in the box below.***

Base: all consultees providing a response (529), themes 3% and above reported below

<b>% THEME</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
It would be a central location / good location / convenient	141	27%
Grace Hill should be repaired / restored / renovated and remain a library	93	18%

It would be accessible / easy to get to / good parking / public transport	77	15%
Makes sense to use FOLCA building / make use of FOLCA / good for town	78	14%
FOLCA is unsuitable / too much work to convert FOLCA / requires maintenance	74	14%
FOLCA should be used for something else (not a library)	58	11%
FOLCA is acceptable / good choice	54	10%
Concerned about renting a building not owning / renting is costly / renting is risky	50	9%
Costly to convert FOLCA to a library / could be more / same cost to repairing Grace Hill	47	9%
Prefer Grace Hill / unnecessary to move elsewhere	46	9%
Grace Hill is historic / part of heritage	41	8%
New location would attract more people / higher footfall / passing foot traffic	39	7%
Libraries are assets to community / should be treated as assets / invested in / central to the community	37	7%
It has not yet been agreed with FHDC that FOLCA can be used as a library	33	6%
Concerned with future of Grace Hill / don't sell off Grace Hill	29	5%
Good idea to share site with other services	28	5%
Need new library / modern / up to date / spacious	28	5%
Grace Hill is a purpose-built library	28	5%
Concerned about timescales to convert FOLCA to library	24	5%
Grace Hill has been left to deteriorate by KCC / KCC neglected Grace Hill	23	4%
Cost effective to move to FOLCA / costly to repair Grace Hill	21	4%
Criticism of consultation / questions posed	19	4%
Space / library services / facilities will be diluted / compromised / reduced at FOLCA	14	3%

Example comments, in consultees own words, supporting the themes of moving / renting space at FOLCA on the high street can be found below:

**“FOLCA is in the town centre - better located than Grace Hill. FOLCA needs to be in public use and would be a hub in the town centre. It's close to public transport. Although 2 Grace Hill has a strong place in my heart, so too does FOLCA and I would very much like to see it at the centre of community life. "The Forum" in Norwich city centre is a useful comparison, albeit a fairly new building and not a repurposed department store.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“FOLCA is in the heart of the town centre. It is vital this building is bought back into use, and the library will provide a key anchor in this building, driving footfall and activity that it vitally needed in the town centre. It will align well with proposals for a new town centre park. It is more accessible, directly off the bus, and easy to get to on foot and cycle.”**  
(Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“It is central to the town. It could be used as a multi-use space. It might attract more people due to its location. It is easy to access. It might be easier and more economic to maintain. FOLCA has been empty for too long and is an important building in our town centre which needs to be reopened and used before it deteriorates any further.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“I believe this main high street location is a better option for a library that serves the community. Especially too if this will co-locate services all together. The glass-fronted windows presents an opportunity to present the library and books in a modern way and to make sure people are aware of the library and its services. I believe there is a lot of potential at this location to include other business, services, a cafe and a co-working space also, making it truly a hub for the community.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

Example comments, in consultees own words, underpinning the reasons for wanting the library to remain at 2 Grace Hill and perceptions that FOLCA is not suitable can be found below:

**“I disagree with renting space in the FOLCA building because it risks compromising the unique identity and historical significance of Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill. Moving to a mixed-use commercial space may prioritize footfall and flexibility over the cultural and community value that the current library offers. The FOLCA location could dilute the quiet, reflective environment essential to a library and reduce its role as a cultural hub. Renting space in a commercial building also leaves the library vulnerable to future changes in use or rent increases.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“I don't believe it is the right location and don't believe it has been chosen with the public's interest at heart. I do not believe the library should be part of the town centre regeneration. I also believe the Grace Hill site is a phenomenal building both architecturally, culturally and historically; a rare gem in Folkestone's landscape which should be preserved for the benefit of local people.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“FOLCA is not an acceptable building. It requires substantial internal work and would take 2-3 yrs minimum or likely longer. Also, there is no agreement with FHDC to relocate there, nor will there be. Moving would also entail losing the Sassoon gallery and also the Heritage Tudor fireplace and modern artworks very likely also only a more perfunctory and reduced library/computer etc facility.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“I just don't see the long-term value in moving from a purpose-built, much-loved location to a new location which is designed as a department store! The FOLCA building could be a valuable community space, but I just don't think relocating the library here is a sensible long-term plan.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“Folding the library into another building with mixed use will diminish what it can offer, range of books available, services, accessibility, etc. Seems a neat way to reduce the**

**importance of libraries for local communities when in fact more funding and resource should be given to them.” (Folkestone and Hythe resident)**

**“By moving west to the new site, the Library will be in an area of significantly less deprivation. It will also then border an area further to the west of significant affluence. It will be leaving an area of the town that is surrounded by areas of high deprivation. The building is a Grade II listed building which means it is of ‘special interest and warranting every effort to preserve it’. The proposal has no approach to preserving the building. The responsibility for this sits with KCC as owners. It would not be appropriate to just off-load the building, so it suffers whatever fate awaits it.” (Letter from local stakeholder organisation)**

**“The FOLCA building is not purpose built for a library. It is going to be years before it will be usable. Where is the money going to come from to renovate it? The position of the Grace Hill building was chosen for it's accessibility to the more deprived parts of Folkestone. That is where it should stay. You are asking people to vote for something which is not defined in any way. You have given no idea of the proposed size of the library, what else will be in the building? You quote a sum of £150.000 or thereabouts, that seems a paltry amount to spend on a library. You do not give figures on any other costs, such as rent, and you haven't even got the agreement of Folkestone and Hythe District Council to go ahead with this proposal.” (Representative of a local community group or residents' association)**

**“The FOLCA building should become a shopping place again, that is what is desperately lacking in Folkestone. Something like a department store or another Wilkinsons. Grace Hill should remain the library. The historic look of the Grace hill building should be the library. My pupils at my primary school enjoyed visiting the Grace hill library over the years and it always held a sense of peace and quiet, a place to read and a place to look through the archives. That is where we would like to return to with our pupils. At the moment my pupils do not have a local library. The FOLCA building is not even prepared as a library and it is the wrong venue completely. By closing Grace hill you have prevented hundreds of pupils from enjoying the library.” (Behalf of an educational establishment, such as a school or college)**

**“Regarding the Debenhams site, there is much evidence of the need for extensive maintenance issues to be addressed going forward. Has the building been checked for asbestos? The seagull problem outside the Debenhams area is the worst anywhere I've seen when passing, so I assume the roof will be as big a problem for the Debenhams building as it is for the library roof. Looking round the back of the Debenhams store, the potential fire hazards looked horrendous. I speak from having surveyed so many libraries. Does this still happen in libraries?” (Response sent by letter, Folkestone and Hythe resident)**

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### **Any comments on the alternative options considered or any other options or ideas that should be considered**

Consultees were asked if they had any comments on alternative options considered or any other options / ideas that should be considered in their own words. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section. It should be noted that under two thirds of consultees (59%) provided a response to this question.

Half of consultees answering (50%) would like to see Grace Hill repaired / restored / renovated and to remain a library. 11% commented that the Grace Hill building is historic / part of heritage.

18% of consultees answering expressed a desire to share the Grace Hill building with other services / partner services in order to keep the library there.

15% of consultees answering indicated they generally agree with the relocation to FOLCA / it seems the most sensible alternative.

**Please tell us if you have any comments on the alternative options we have considered or if there are any other options or ideas you think we should consider.**

Base: all consultees providing a response (353)

<b>% THEME</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Grace Hill should be repaired / restored / renovated and remain a library	176	50%
Share Grace Hill with other services / partner services to keep library there	64	18%
Generally agree with relocation to FOLCA / appears to be most sensible alternative	51	15%
Grace Hill is historic / part of heritage	39	11%
New location must be central / accessible	26	8%
Don't want Grace Hill to be sold off / concerned for future	26	8%
Consider proposals by Creative Foundation	25	7%
Make use of space at Grace Hill / venue hire / café / tourist attraction	24	7%
Seek alternative funding for Grace Hill	22	6%
Suggested other locations (e.g. former Wilkinsons building, Bouverie House (SAGA), Bouverie House Business Centre (above Burger King), alternative KCC building, old job centre, former retail units in town centre, Queens House, Civic Centre)	20	6%
New location will have modern / up to date facilities / spacious / safe	18	5%
Become a community hub / for community use	18	5%
Seek alternative use for Grace Hill	17	5%
Library must have specific facilities / services / activities	14	4%
<b>% THEME</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Agree with sale and leaseback / could be viable	14	4%
Permanent library facilities required as soon as possible	13	4%
Temporary library provision is not suitable for the long term	13	4%
Criticism of consultation	13	4%
Grace Hill is not suitable for future use / building too restrictive	12	3%

Good idea to share site with other services at new location	12	3%
There are no viable options	12	3%
Not cost effective to repair Grace Hill	11	3%
An alternative to Grace Hill needed	10	3%
Grace Hill should be sold off	10	3%
Grace Hill has been left to deteriorate by KCC / KCC neglected Grace Hill	10	3%

Example comments, in consultees own words, supporting the theme that Grace Hill should be repaired / restored / renovated and remain a library can be found below:

**“The council have a responsibility for this grand building. No option should be considered that removes it from council ownership. Selling and releasing would be counterintuitive. Selling entirely would leave this valuable building at risk in the hands of other developers. Avenues for repairing, upgrading and making the building fit for future use should be adopted. This should offer options for revenue generation including events and weddings etc. It should take advantage of its prime cultural location in between the museum, Quarterhouse and high street. Local authorities across the country are using their assets for public good - see Waltham Forest Town Hall. Why should Folkestone set a precedent?”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“To sell Grace Hill and then lease back part of the building for the library and registration services is a preposterous idea which, for future generations, would not make good financial sense but would leave residents to foot the bill for evermore. Surely owning Grace Hill outright is by far the better option: freehold versus leasehold, the former wins by a long way. Looking for another building in the town centre to use as a public library does not make good financial sense, given that the Grace Hill library was built for that very purpose and can be used again as an important community facility.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“I understand that council budgets are under great strain and that difficult decisions need to be made. However, there are other options to keep Folkestone Library open, that have the backing of many in the community. For example, Creative Folkestone has put forward a proposal to keep library services at Grace Hill as a Community Hub.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“I am strongly of the view that KCC should explore funding and partnership options for refurbishment of the Grace Hill building and returning full library services to the building with much more commitment and enthusiasm. Having stated that any option is better than this it is no surprise that seeking innovative solutions to Grace Hill are dismissed in the consultation document as too difficult. This could be a great example by KCC of how to create a viable new future for this key building in Folkestone's heritage with determined effort to seek external funding rather than just giving up.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

Example comments, in consultees own words, supporting the theme of sharing Grace Hill with other services can be found below:

**“I believe that the council ought to: "Make repairs to the Grace Hill building, re-open Folkestone Library and co-locate with other services." If they chose to dispose of the Grace Hill, they will probably face the maintenance liability of the building before they encounter a buyer; who would have to comply with the listed building liabilities anyway.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“Repair grace hill and restore library and gallery plus new complementary partner services (or rent space to community businesses to generate income ongoing from the space).”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“Make repairs to the Grace Hill building, re-open Folkestone Library and co-locate with other services. Whilst costlier in capital terms this is the correct long-term option which any custodian has the duty to pursue. Try explaining other options to your kids in ten years.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“Give us back our library at Grace Hill. Make the repairs. Co-locate other services there and consider using the upstairs as a community centre/small theatre space.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

Example comments, in consultees own words, underpinning the theme of generally agreeing with relocation to FOLCA / FOLCA appearing to be most sensible alternative can be found below:

**“Continuing with the temporary provision is not an option: this is not a suitable main library service for this size of town. I agree that repairing Grace Hill building is too expensive. Use of another town centre building would be okay, but FOLCA is ideal.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“If the FOLCA building were sympathetically made useable as a state-of-the-art library and registration service, with exhibition space this would be acceptable.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“If the resolution to move from Grace Hill is taken, FOLCA appears to be the most sensible option and could even represent an opportunity to regenerate library and associated services - it could be a very positive step. If FOLCA does not prove possible - and there appears to be some doubt - I have concerns about other possible appropriate locations as there seem to be no further obvious options.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“I truly feel that Grace Hill, even in a repaired and fully-functioning state, is no longer a viable location for the town's library and registration services. As sad as it is to for the library to lose its original, historic home, a central location in town with similar space available is what is best for its future. I believe FOLCA is the best option, but if it were no longer viable then another building in the town centre would be desirable.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

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## Any comments on anything not already covered

Consultees were asked if they had any other comments on anything else that hadn't already been covered in their own words. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section. It should be noted that just over a third of consultees (35%) provided a response to this question.

19% of consultees answering commented on concerns they had with the consultation exercise / whether a decision had already been made / queried whether all potential options had been outlined. 17% of consultees commented that Grace Hill has been left to deteriorate by KCC / KCC has neglected Grace Hill.

17% of consultees put forward a variety of suggestions for facilities / activities that could be introduced at Grace Hill or FOLCA to benefit visitors / potentially generate income (e.g. community events / classes, facilities for children, café / refreshments).

## Is there anything else, not already covered, that you would like to tell us?

Base: all consultees providing a response (210)

% THEME	Number of responses	Percentage
Criticism of consultation / concern decision has already been made / concern not all options outlined / questions posed	38	19%
Suggestions for specific facilities / activities at Grace Hill or FOLCA / to benefit visitors / possibly generating income (e.g. children's section, community rooms / events / meetings, coffee shops)	34	17%
Grace Hill has been left to deteriorate by KCC / KCC neglected Grace Hill	34	17%
Grace Hill should be repaired / restored / renovated and remain a library / remain with KCC	33	16%
Libraries are essential / enjoy using the library	25	12%
Grace Hill is historic / part of heritage	22	11%
Good location / accessible / passing foot traffic / central to town	15	7%
New location must be modern / up to date facilities / spacious / disabled access	14	7%
Permanent library facilities required ASAP	14	6%
Agree with relocation to FOLCA	13	6%
Concerned for future of Grace Hill if unused / sold / difficult to find buyer	12	6%
Libraries are welcoming / warm / safe places / inclusive	11	5%
Gallery / exhibition / art space needed / don't want to lose Sassoon Gallery	8	4%
Consider Creative Foundation proposal / Grace Hill should be for community use	8	4%



<b>% THEME</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
This is more than about saving money / KCC should look at bigger picture	6	3%

Example comments, in consultees own words, supporting the main theme of consultation concerns / whether a decision had already been made / queries about whether all potential options had been outlined can be found below:

**“The recommendation is heavy handed and peremptory - who exactly is making this recommendation - they should be named and questioned to see if they have self-interested motivations.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“You have not provided all the relevant information, the FOLCA building has significant structural issues and it will incur a significant cost to the public purse to repair. How does this compare the cost of repairing Grace Hill? Why have you not released more details of the Creative Folkestone offer so that residents can make an informed choice rather than one based on misleading information.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“Who is ultimately accountable for the lack of investment, early identification of necessary building works & wider oversight of the Grace Hill Library? This has not been made clear.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“When looked at from the outside, the estimate for the repairs (compared to the total repair budget allocated for county libraries), suggests that either the repair estimate is over inflated, or the setting of the budget is woefully inadequate for the current liabilities. Setting a budget which is unable to meet existing, known liabilities seems to be loading the dice in favour of the answer being planned for!”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

Example comments, in consultees own words, underpinning the theme of suggestions for specific facilities / activities at Grace Hill or FOLCA / to benefit visitors / possibly generating income can be found below:

**“People love coming into the town centre. Successful libraries round the country have a very active children's section. Few things can be more important than engaging with kids while they are young.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“If a new library moved to FOLCA maybe we could have a community room to hold Pilates and Yoga classes in. I would love it if there were a cafe in the new library. We will need toilets of course. In the old Grace Hill library, the toilets were sometimes closed due to hooliganism. I could never understand why they didn't have a key system. I would patronise temporary art exhibitions and book events/talks in the new FOLCA building. I think it is important to have printers/photocopiers available and don't mind paying for print outs and copies.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“I owe the library of my childhood so much. Spent hours escaping from an unhappy home life reading and studying. There also needs space for older children to sit and do homework after school. Information on sports facilities for teenagers. Children go home after school and often are expected to do home duties or otherwise just hang out and get into trouble.”** (A resident from somewhere else in Kent or further away)

**“Once repaired, many of the rooms could be rented to community groups to offset some of the ongoing running costs, you could also lease space for a small coffee shop to bring in additional revenue. These spaces could be offered outside of standard library hours too, to increase opportunity for revenue. In the first instance however, engaging local building companies and contractors to provide discounted services or materials in return for public recognition would no doubt reduce initial costs. An open call for public donations too would make sense and I don’t doubt would have a great response.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

**“Open a coffee shop in the library. It’ll attract more people, give you more funds to claw back from fixing the busking and get more families in the building.”** (Folkestone and Hythe resident)

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## RESPONSE TO EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Consultees were asked to provide the views on KCC's equality analysis on in their own words. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section.

Only 22% of consultees provided a response to this question.

Amongst those commenting, the most important area of consideration are visitors with a disability / Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (32%) in terms of access and facilities provided. 20% of consultees answering commented that the library site (2 Grace Hill or FOLCA or an alternative) must be accessible to all in terms of parking and public transport / ease of access.

***We welcome your views on our equality analysis and if you think there is anything else we should consider relating to equality and diversity?***

Base: all consultees providing a response (133)

% THEME	Number of responses	Percentage
Disability / SEND must be considered	42	32%
Site must be accessible to all / parking / public transport	27	20%
Everyone should be considered / treated equally / included / catered for	20	15%
Families / children / young people must be considered	16	12%
Elderly must be considered	15	11%
Lower income must be considered	15	11%
Criticism of consultation / is this consultation reaching everyone?	11	8%
Equality analysis seems adequate	11	8%
Equality is irrelevant to this	8	6%
Vulnerable people (unspecified) must be considered	6	5%
Ethnic minorities must be considered	4	3%
Equality analysis seems inadequate	2	2%
Comments unrelated to equality analysis	11	8%

Example comments, in consultees own words, supporting the theme of disability / SEND considerations can be found below:

**“By accident or design, the proposed relocation to FOLCA will provide better access for older and people with physical disabilities, since it is closer to bus stops and on flat ground. The hilly location at Grace Road and nearby Payers car park makes it more accessible to people who can afford to drive. I realise that it is accidental, but this inadvertently discriminates against people with lower disposable incomes.”** (Folkestone & Hythe resident)

**“I am part of a neurodiverse family. The change to building would mean that myself and my two autistic children would not use the library. My daughter has an anxiety-based condition, and she has grown up using this library and it is a safe space she has been able to access. She won't feel comfortable accessing one in town. With having another building, I wonder if the council has considered noise impacts and light impact and colours etc. Libraries have always been quite sensory toned-down spaces which are accessible for autistic and people who are neuro diverse. Mixing a library purpose with other purposes will make a library inaccessible for a lot of neurodiverse children and adults.”** (Folkestone & Hythe resident)

**“Grace Hill has step-free access to everything on the ground floor. Would this be possible in the FOLCA building?”** (Folkestone & Hythe resident)

**“I appreciate your commitment to a central location as this is more accessible, due to various reasons, including train access. Please do not assume that everyone can just drive or get buses to further out locations as has been assumed with the alternative locations (for children's services), as this has not been easy for us at all (due to disabilities) and has hugely reduced accessibility for us.”** (Folkestone & Hythe resident)

**“A new library needs to be wheelchair accessible. Also have dimmer switches for lights for neuro diverse customers. Provide toilets etc, baby change. A quiet space for breast feeding.”** (Folkestone & Hythe resident)

Example comments, in consultees own words, underpinning the theme of the library site being accessible to all / have parking / public transport access can be found below:

**“I believe relocating to the FOLCA building will be fairer giving access to all and more parts of our community will know of it's existence being in such a visible location.”** (Folkestone & Hythe resident)

**“The original library is easier to access from domestic properties and the creative quarter, where much research originates. The proposed bus station is moving nearer to the original library.”** (Folkestone & Hythe resident)

**“Having elderly parents parking is always an issue in the town centre. The reduction of bus services could also be a factor for elderly people that don't drive or do not have family that could take them. I guess the same could be said for Grace Hill locations though.”** (Folkestone & Hythe resident)

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## NEXT STEPS

The feedback from this consultation is being reported to the 22 January Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee and will be taken into consideration before any decisions are taken.

Temporary provision will stay in place until any permanent options are delivered.

KCC will continue to keep the consultation webpage updated with the latest Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) as well as updating on the Folkestone Library [webpage](#)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://local.kent.gov.uk/kb5/kent/directory/service.page?id=YRWoQMs70mE&communitychannel=9>

## Section 1 – About you

### Q1. How are you responding to this consultation?

Please select the option from the list below that most closely represents how you are responding to this consultation. *Select **one** option.*

- As a Folkestone and Hythe resident
- As a resident from somewhere else in Kent or further away
- On behalf of a friend or relative ([please complete this questionnaire using their information](#))
- As a member of KCC staff
- As a Town, Parish, District or County Councillor
- On behalf of a Town, Parish or District Council in an official capacity
- As a representative of a local community group or residents' association
- On behalf of a charity or Voluntary, Community or Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisation
- On behalf of a business owner or representative
- On behalf of an educational establishment, such as a school or college
- Other, please tell us:

**Q1a. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please tell us the name of your organisation. Please write in below.**

**Q2. Please tell us the first 5 characters of your postcode:**

Please do not reveal your whole postcode. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please use your organisation's postcode. If you are responding on behalf of someone else, please use their postcode. We use this to help us to analyse our data. It will not be used to identify who you are.

**Q3. How did you find out about this consultation? *Select all that apply.***

- An email from KCC's Libraries, Registration and Archive (LRA) team
- An email from Let's talk Kent / KCC's Engagement and Consultation Team
- At a Folkestone and Hythe district library
- Facebook
- From a Councillor
- From a friend or relative
- From another organisation
- From my Parish, Town or District Council
- Kent.gov.uk website
- Poster
- Newspaper
- Nextdoor
- Other, please tell us:

**If you are responding on behalf of an organisation or as a member of KCC staff, please go to question 6.**

If you are responding as a resident or on behalf of a friend or relative, please continue to the next question (question 4).

**Q4. How often did you visit Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill before its temporary closure? Select one option.**

- At least once a week
- Once a fortnight
- Once a month
- Twice a year
- Less regularly
- Visited in the past
- Never visited

**Q5. Which of these temporary or alternative services have you used while Folkestone Library has been temporarily closed? Select all that apply.**

- "Folkestone Library - Heritage and Digital Access" at 5 Grace Hill
- Free reservation service at 5 Grace Hill
- Other Folkestone and Hythe district libraries
- Online e-library service e.g. e-books, e-magazines and newspapers, audio books
- Birth or death registration at Wood Avenue or Hythe Library
- None of the temporary or alternative services
- Other, please tell us:

## Section 2 – Our proposals



KCC is committed to securing a permanent town centre location for the library and registration service. Having carefully considered the options at this stage we are proposing to permanently leave the Grace Hill building and find an alternative town centre location for Folkestone's town centre library and registration service.

More information on the proposal can be found from page 12 of the consultation document.

**Q6. How much do you agree or disagree with our proposal to permanently leave the Folkestone Library building at 2 Grace Hill and find an alternative town centre location for the library and registration service? Select one option.**

A question will follow on our preferred alternative town centre location.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

**Q6a. Please tell us the reason for your answer to Q6 in the box below.**

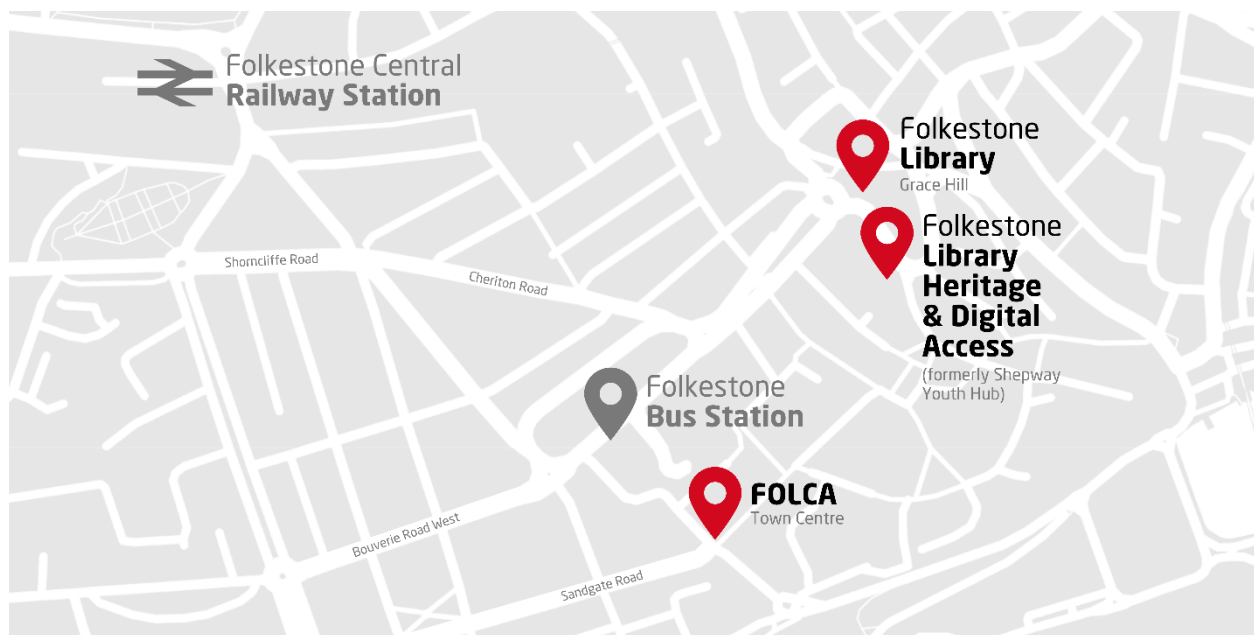
Please do not include any personal information that could identify you or anyone else in your answer.

Our current preferred option is to find space in another town centre location for the library and registration service to move into. The most viable location at present is FOLCA on the high street.

Following the purchase of the former Debenhams store, now named FOLCA, Folkestone & Hythe District Council's ambition is to deliver a mixed-use building in the heart of Folkestone. The District Council has appointed an architect to develop a concept design with a combination of public sector, community and commercial space, including potentially space for KCC to deliver the Folkestone town centre library and registration service. Discussions with the District Council have progressed positively to the point where we believe this option for Folkestone Library is feasible and viable. Subject to this consultation and decision process, we are proposing to take forward the detailed work with the District Council needed to realise this project.

More information on why this is our current preferred option can be found from page 12 in the consultation document.

The map below shows the location of Folkestone Library at 2 Grace Hill, the current temporary provision 'Folkestone Library Heritage & Digital Access' at 5 Grace Hill and FOLCA on the high street.



**Q7. How much do you agree or disagree with our current preferred option to move the library and registration service to FOLCA on the high street? *Select one option.***

A question will follow on the other options we have considered for Folkestone's town centre library and registration service.

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree

Don't know

**Q7a. Please tell us the reason for your answer to Q7 in the box below.**

Please do not include any personal information that could identify you or anyone else in your answer.

Before reaching our preferred way forward, a number of other options were considered:

- Continue with temporary provision permanently and exit the 2 Grace Hill building.
- Make repairs to the Grace Hill building, re-open Folkestone Library and co-locate with other services.
- Relocate full library service to another existing KCC building.
- Sell Grace Hill and then lease back part of the building for the library and registration service.
- Look for another building in the town centre for the library and registration service if FOLCA was no longer a viable option.

More information on these options can be found from page 17 of the consultation document.

Whilst this consultation asks for views on our proposals to permanently leave the Grace Hill building and work towards a new library and registration service in FOLCA, it is also an opportunity to comment on the other options we have considered and for other ideas to be suggested. You can tell us your ideas and suggestions in the question below.

**Q8. Please tell us if you have any comments on the alternative options we have considered or if there are any other options or ideas you think we should consider.**

If your comments relate to a specific option, please make that clear in your answer. Please do not include any personal information that could identify you or anyone else in your answer.

**Q9. Is there anything else, not already covered, that you would like to tell us? Please write in below.**

Please do not include any personal information that could identify you or anyone else in your answer.

## **Section 3 – Equality analysis**

**To help ensure that we are meeting our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 we have carried out an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIAs) on our proposals.**

An EqIA is a tool to assess the potential impact any proposals could have on the protected characteristics: age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. At KCC we also include carer's responsibilities. The EqIA is available online at [www.kent.gov.uk/folkestonelibrary](http://www.kent.gov.uk/folkestonelibrary), in paper / hard copy from any Folkestone and Hythe district library or on request.

**Q10. We welcome your views on our equality analysis and if you think there is anything we should consider relating to equality and diversity. Please add any comments below.**

Please do not include any personal information that could identify you or anyone else in your answer.

## Section 4 – More about you

We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally, and that no one gets left out. That's why we are asking you these questions. We will only use this information to help us make decisions and improve our services.

**If you would rather not answer any of these questions, you don't have to.**

**It is not necessary to answer these questions if you are responding on behalf of an organisation.**

If you are responding **on behalf of someone else**, please answer using their details.

**Q11. Are you...? Select *one* option.**

Male

Female

I prefer not to say

**Q12. Is your gender the same as at your birth? Select *one* option.**

Yes

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

No

I prefer not to say

**Q13. Which of these age groups applies to you? Select *one* option.**

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

0-15

60-64

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

16-24

65-74

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

25-34

75-84

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

35-49

85+ over

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

50-59

I prefer not to say

**Q14. Do you regard yourself as belonging to a particular religion or holding a belief? *Select one option.***

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to say

**Q14a. If you answered 'Yes' to Q14, which of the following applies to you? *Select one option.***

- Christian
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Other
- I prefer not to say

If you selected Other, please specify:

The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a long standing physical or mental condition that has lasted, or is likely to last, at least 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis, and HIV/AIDS, for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

**Q15. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010? Select one option.**

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to say

**Q15a. If you answered 'Yes' to Q15, please tell us the type of impairment that applies to you.**

*You may have more than one type of impairment, so please select all that apply. If none of these applies to you, please select 'Other' and give brief details of the impairment you have.*

- Physical impairment
- Sensory impairment (hearing, sight or both)
- Longstanding illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy
- Mental health condition
- Learning disability
- I prefer not to say
- Other

Other, please specify:



A Carer is anyone who provides unpaid care for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support. Both children and adults can be carers.

**Q16. Are you a Carer?** *Select one option.*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

**Q17. Are you ...?** *Select one option.*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Heterosexual/Straight
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bi/Bisexual
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gay man
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gay woman/Lesbian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

**Q18. To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong? Select *one* option.** (Source 2011 Census)

<input type="checkbox"/>	White English	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White & Black Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Scottish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White & Black African
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White & Asian
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Northern Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed Other*
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Gypsy/Roma	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British African
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Irish Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British Other*
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Other*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arab
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British Other*		

\*Other - If your ethnic group is not specified on the list, please describe it here:

This report was produced for Kent County Council