

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL MOBILE LIBRARIES CONSULTATION

Prepared by Lake Market Research for Kent County Council

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This report complies with ISO: 20252 standards and other relevant forms of conduct



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1. RESEARCH CONTEXT

1.1 BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Kent County Council's Libraries, Registration and Archive Service launched a public consultation on the future of the Mobile Libraries service on the 22nd January 2016. The Consultation document featured 28 pages of A4 (see Appendix A for full text) detailing:

- Background and context
- Key facts about the existing Mobile Library Service
- How Kent County Council have reviewed the routes
- Proposed criterion and its impact
- Options that have been considered
- The impact of the proposed changes
- Providing alternative access to library services
- Having your say via Consultation Questionnaire
- Next steps

The consultation questionnaire was designed by Kent County Council and featured a number of open ended questions together with eight closed questions:

1. Are you completing the questionnaire on behalf of? (Closed)
2. Do you currently use the Mobile Library Service? (Closed)
3. Please give the name of the Mobile Library stop you use? (Free text)
4. When did you last use the Mobile Library Service? (Closed)
5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed criterion? (Stops that have had 2 or less visitors on average over a period of October 2014 and September 2015) (Closed)
6. Are there any alternative or other criteria you think we should use? (Free text)
7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed change? Changing frequency of visits to each location to 2 weeks (Closed)
8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed change? Changing days of operation from Monday to Friday to Tuesday to Saturday (Closed)

9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed change? Increasing minimum stopping time to 30 minutes (Closed)
10. Please tell us the reasons for your answers to previous three questions (Free text)
11. Having read about the different ways to access KCC Library services, which of the following options would be best for you? (Closed)
12. After considering our proposal, will you still be able to access KCC Library services? (Free text)
13. We have completed an Equality Impact Assessment and we welcome your views on the assumptions we have made. (Free text)
14. If you still have concerns about how you would access the library service in the future, or have any other comments, please let us know (Free text)

1.2 METHODOLOGY

Consultees were invited to submit their views on the proposals via each of the following channels:

1. In paper form via a personalised invitation pack sent through the post to users registered to the Mobile Library service
2. An online questionnaire featured on the kent.gov website

The consultation period ran for a period of 6 weeks from 22nd January to 4th March 2016 (allowing a little extra time for postage). All paper questionnaires received by 8th March were reviewed and processed by the data entry team at Lake Market Research. These questionnaires were then combined with the online responses received at Kent County Council to produce overall statistics for this report.

1 Easy Read version of the questionnaire was returned.

Emails / letters were also sent directly to Kent County Council by users as well as Groups / Councils / Organisations in response to this Consultation. These have been reviewed to ensure consistency with the findings of the questionnaire.

1.3 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETING THE DATA

It should be noted that a proportion of users / Kent residents participated in this Consultation rather than all residents of the Kent County Council area; and the results are therefore subject to sampling error, which means that not all differences are statistically significant.

Given the self-selecting nature of this consultation, it was expected that the majority of those completing the Consultation document would be users of the Mobile Libraries Consultation. This expectation was realised with the final profile of Consultees responding at 86% using the Mobile Library Service and 84% used in the last month. It is therefore important to note that the findings of this Consultation are likely to be based on users of the Service and do not therefore represent Kent residents as a whole.

With these assumptions in mind and according to Kent County Council's borrower profile, 5,423 borrowers actively borrowed items from the Mobile Library service during 2014-15. For the purposes of this report, we have used this figure to calculate the confidence level and confidence interval that the Consultation results can be based on. With a sample size of 1,247 Individual users taking part in this Consultation for example, we can assume that results are accurate to a +/-2.4% at a 95% confidence level. For example, with a confidence interval of 2.4% and 47% percent of your sample picking an answer you can be "sure" that if you had asked the question of the entire relevant population between 45% (47- 2) and 49% (47 + 2) would have picked that answer. The 95% confidence level means you can be 95% certain of the percentage shown is accurate to +/- 2.4%. It is worth noting however that it is likely that given the nature of this Consultation, the most positive and the most concerned residents have taken part at an overall level.

No weighting has been applied to the data received and all open questions were reviewed and coded into "themes" to provide quantitative analysis in this report, alongside residents free text comments.

1.4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the team at Kent County Council for all their work in developing the project. We would also like to thank everyone who took the time to complete the Consultation documentation.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 CONSULTATION RESPONSE PROFILE

1,554 responses have been recorded for the Consultation across Mobile Library service users and other groups - 1,418 are Individuals; accounting for 91% of the sample.

The Mobile Library Service users responding to the Consultation are from a range of age groupings and both gender groups. 59% of the Mobile Library Service users responding are aged 65 and over. 75% of the Mobile Library Service users responding are female.

18% of Mobile Library Service users responding consider themselves disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010 (9% chose not to answer). 50% of these indicated they have a physical impairment and 22% indicated they have a sensory impairment. 29% indicated they have a long standing illness or health condition.

Comparing response statistics to the Mobile Library Service user profile reveals that the gender and age profile of those taking part broadly reflects the Mobile Library Service user profile. A slightly higher proportion of females responded compared to the profile breakdown; however it is worth noting that users were invited and may well have responded to the Consultation on behalf of their household as opposed to at an individual user level.

At a broad level the age profile of those using the Mobile Library Service is consistent with the profile of those responding. It should be noted however that the lower age band of 49 and under is quite vast and the majority of those responding are from the 35-49 year old age band. The proportion registered for the Mobile Library Service and are aged 0-19 years old have been removed from the calculation below in order to make a realistic comparison to those completing the Consultation.

Consultees were asked to enter their postcode for classification purposes. The postcodes collected have been assigned to an area/district accordingly for analysis purposes. Representation has been achieved across all areas; validating the Consultation approach (i.e. sending Consultation packs and questionnaires directly to registered users through the post). 22% of Mobile Library Service users responding preferred to not identify their postcode.

Comparing response statistics to the Mobile Library Service user profile reveals that the area profile of those taking part broadly reflects the Mobile Library Service borrower profile.

2.2 USE OF MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE

The vast majority of Consultees (86%) indicated that they currently use the Mobile Library service. As expected, claimed usage is higher amongst those that identified themselves as an 'Individual' at 88% and those that identified themselves as a 'relative / friend of the Mobile

Library user' at 86%. Claimed current usage amongst District / Town / Parish Councils is lower at 32%.

Focusing specifically on 'Individuals', current usage is high amongst all age groups and both gender groups; although significantly higher amongst females (92%) and those aged 75-84 (97%) and those aged 85 and over (96%). A significantly higher proportion of Individuals that indicated they are disabled claim they currently use the Service (93%).

All users who completed the Consultation were asked to indicate which Mobile Library Service stop(s) they currently use. Answers given here were then cross referenced with the list of stops provided by Kent County Council to confirm users' stops. A high proportion of the users responding to the Consultation from Ashford, Dover, Dartford, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks currently use a stop that is being proposed for closure or a stop that is proposed for a Saturday alternative. This should be taken into account when reviewing the response differences by district.

It should also be noted that a high proportion of the users responding to the Consultation from Dartford, Dover, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks and Shepway currently use a stop that is being proposed for closure.

2.3 AGREEMENT WITH CRITERION FOR WITHDRAWAL

Further to their review of the Consultation document, Consultees were first asked to indicate their level of agreement (on a five point scale) with the proposed criterion to assess the future of mobile library stops, namely: "Closure of stops that have had two or less visitors on average over the period October 2014 to September 2015".

Just under two thirds of Consultees (64%) indicated they agreed with the proposed criteria; 12% indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed and 23% indicated they disagreed with the proposed criteria. Agreement is broadly consistent by age group and both gender groups. Agreement is significantly higher amongst those who have used the Mobile Library Service in the last year / more than a year ago (74%) compared to those who have used the Service within the last month (63%).

A significantly higher proportion of Individuals who are not disabled agreed with the criterion (69%). We hypothesise that a higher proportion of Individuals who consider themselves disabled believe they may not be able access the Service if the proposed changes are made. As expected, agreement is significantly higher amongst those who use a stop that is not proposed for withdrawal (72%).

Agreement with the criterion is highest amongst Canterbury (72%), Maidstone (71%), Sevenoaks (73%) and Gravesham (79%) users. Agreement is lowest amongst Ashford (60%), Shepway (55%), Tonbridge & Malling (59%), Thanet (52%) and Dartford (50%) users.

2.4 ALTERNATIVE CRITERIA

Consultees were then asked to describe any alternative or other criteria they thought Kent County Council should use in their own words. The free text comments were reviewed and coded into “themes” to provide quantitative analysis for this question.

It is important to note that two thirds of Consultees (66%) did not provide any answer to this question. A number of themes were reported amongst those answering but the most common alternative criteria mentioned were proximity to a static library / access to main library, access to public transport and regular bus services, potential access by schools / children / clubs / new housing, number of books issued per person at each stop, different evaluation needed for isolated / rural / deprived areas, proximity to other Mobile Library Service stops or eligibility for Home Library Service / access to alternative mobile services.

There were also some suggestions put forward to maintain access to the Mobile Library Service for all currently using; namely monthly / less frequent visits for underused stops to preserve stops , combine underused stops so each community is still visited once / one stop in each location and criteria should be reduced / only remove if no-one is using.

2.5 AGREEMENT WITH PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS / CHANGES TO STOPS

Consultees were then asked to indicate their level of agreement with three proposed improvements / changes to the Mobile Library stops, namely:

1. Changing the frequency of visits to each location to every two weeks
2. Changing the days Kent County Council operate the Mobile Library Service from Monday to Friday to Tuesday to Saturday
3. Changing the minimum stop time, increasing it from 10 minutes to 30 minutes

Just over two thirds of Consultees (67%) indicated they agreed with the proposed change to frequency of visits; 13% indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed and 19% indicated they disagreed with the proposed change.

Agreement is broadly consistent by the majority of age groups and both gender groups; although significantly higher amongst those aged 85 and over (78%) and lower amongst those aged 49 and under (50%).

Agreement with the proposed change in frequency of visits is highest amongst Maidstone (75%), Dover (75%), Shepway (77%), Swale (72%), Thanet (85%) and Gravesham (79%) users. Agreement is lowest amongst Ashford (59%), Dartford (65%) and Sevenoaks (62%) users.

Consultees were asked to describe their reasons for their answers concerning proposed improvements and changes in their own words. The free text comments were reviewed and coded into “themes” to provide quantitative analysis for this question. 69% of those answering gave a positive comment towards the proposed change. The comments put forward focused on fortnightly visits being frequent enough and that a proportion of users were already used to having fortnightly visits.

42% of those answering gave a negative comment or had a concern towards the proposed change in frequency. The comments put forward focused on a preference for weekly stops / more frequent visits and fortnightly visits creating confusion / people forgetting what week the library van visits.

Moving on to the proposed change in days of operation from Monday to Friday to Tuesday to Saturday, 69% of Consultees indicated they agreed with the proposed change and 13% indicated they disagreed with the proposed change. Just over a quarter (26%) indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed; likely as a result of the variability in frequency times currently in operation (i.e. some stops are already fortnightly; some are weekly).

Agreement is broadly consistent by the age groups and both gender groups; although lower amongst those aged 34 and under (51%) and those aged 35-49 (55%). Agreement is significantly higher amongst those who have used the Mobile Library Service in the last year / more than a year ago (76%) and within the last three months (73%) compared to those who have used the Service within the last month (56%).

Agreement with the proposed change in the days of operation is highest amongst Swale (70%), Dartford (70%) and Gravesham (65%) users. Agreement is lowest amongst Ashford (51%) and Tunbridge Wells (55%) users.

Consultees were asked to describe their reasons for their answers concerning proposed improvements and changes in their own words. The free text comments were reviewed and coded into “themes” to provide quantitative analysis for this question. 66% of those answering gave a positive comment towards the proposed change. The comments put forward focused on the change of day not making a difference and making sense, a Saturday service allowing more residents to access the service and avoiding Bank Holiday Mondays.

33% of those answering gave a negative comment or had a concern towards the proposed change. The comments put forward focused on the proposed time or day change being inconvenient and perceptions that it will reduce the number of people using the service.

There is variability in response concerning access to the Mobile Library service for children. Comments were received from a number of schools highlighting that some of the proposed changes in days / times meant that they wouldn't be able to access the service. Conversely, there were also responses from parents whereby the proposed changes in days / time prevented them from taking their children to the service.

Just over three quarters (76%) of Consultees indicated they agreed with the proposed change in extending the minimum stopping time; 16% indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed and 7% indicated they disagreed with the proposed change.

Agreement is broadly consistent by the majority of age groups and both gender groups; although significantly higher amongst those aged 85 and over (83%) and lower amongst those aged 49 and under (71%). Agreement is significantly higher amongst those who use a stop that is not proposed for withdrawal (80%) compared to those who use a stop proposed for withdrawal (60%). We hypothesise that this is due to a preference for more stops and shorter stop times as opposed to fewer stops and longer stop times.

Agreement with the proposed change in stopping time is highest amongst Tonbridge & Malling (82%), Sevenoaks (80%) and Gravesham (94%) users. Agreement is lowest amongst Dartford (60%) users.

Consultees were asked to describe their reasons for their answers concerning proposed improvements and changes in their own words. The free text comments were reviewed and coded into “themes” to provide quantitative analysis for this question. 79% of those answering gave a positive comment towards the proposed change. The comments put forward focused on the increased stopping time making sense, allowing more time to browse

24% of those answering gave a negative comment or had a concern towards the proposed change. The comments put forward focused on a more tailored approach to stopping times, a preference for more stops as opposed to longer stopping times and 30 minutes being too long.

2.6 FUTURE ACCESS TO KCC LIBRARY SERVICES

Consultees were then asked to indicate which of the options for accessing Kent County Council Library services they would prefer. Please note that Consultees were given the opportunity to provide more than one response at this question – 23% of Consultees chose more than one response.

Just under half of Consultees (47%) indicated access via a visit to a library building would be best for them. This proportion is consistent with Kent County Council Mobile Library usage recordings in which half of users claim to also visit a library building.

A third of Consultees (33%) indicated the Home Library Service would be best for them; 22% indicated the Online Library Services would be best for them and 4% indicated Touch a New World would be best for them. Just under a quarter (23%) indicated that none of these services would be best for them; a combination that likely consists of those who consider it not possible to access these services and those who would prefer not to access library services through an alternative route.

There are significant differences by gender, age group, last access to the service and disability; consistent with likely usage patterns you would hypothesise for these services:

- A significantly higher proportion of females indicated that none of the services prompted would be best for them;
- The proportion indicating a visit to a library building and/or Online Library Services would be best decreases with age; The proportion indicating the Home Library Service would be best increases with age; A significantly higher proportion of those aged 75 and over indicated that none of the services prompted would be best for them;
- A significantly higher proportion of those who have not used the Mobile Library Service within the last month indicated that a visit to a library building or Online Library Services would be best; A significantly higher proportion of those who have used the Mobile Library Service within the last month indicated that none of the services prompted would be best for them;
- A significantly higher proportion of those who consider themselves disabled indicated that the Home Library Service would be best for them.

Consultees were then asked to indicate whether they will still be able to access library services after considering Kent County Council's proposal. 77% of Consultees indicated that they will still be able to access library services. 12% indicated they would not be able to access library services and 11% indicated they were unsure.

There are significant differences by gender, age group, last access to the service, disability and those impacted by proposed stop withdrawals; consistent with likely usage patterns you would hypothesise for these services:

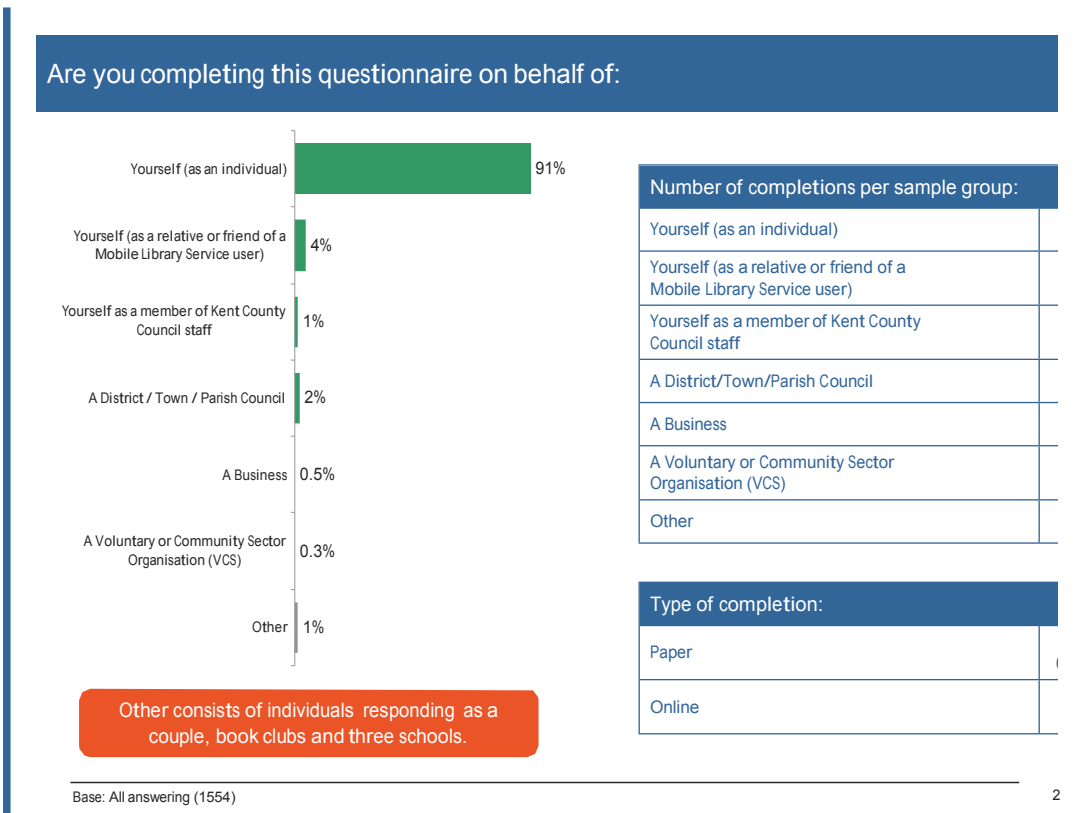
- A significantly higher proportion of males indicated they would still be able to access library services;

- A lower proportion of those aged 49 and under and 85 and over indicated they would still be able to access library services;
- A significantly higher proportion of those who have not used the Mobile Library Service within the last month indicated they will still be able to access library services;
- A lower proportion of those who consider themselves disabled indicated they would still be able to access library services.

3. CONSULTATION RESPONSE PROFILE

1,554 responses have been recorded for the Consultation across Mobile Library service users and other groups:

- 1,418 Individuals (accounting for 91% of the sample)
- 56 relatives or friends of a Mobile Library service user (accounting for 4% of the sample)
- 35 from representatives from District, Town or Parish Councils (accounting for 2% of the sample)
- 15 members of Kent County Council staff
- 7 businesses
- 5 Voluntary or Community Sector organisations
- 18 classifying themselves as ‘Other’ (Consultees in this category responding as a couple, on behalf of a Book Club or a School)



3.1 PROFILE OF MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE USERS RESPONDING

The Mobile Library Service users responding to the Consultation are from a range of age groupings and both gender groups. 7% of the Mobile Library Service users responding to the Consultation preferred not to provide their age. 59% of the Mobile Library Service users responding are aged 65 and over. 75% of the Mobile Library Service users responding are female.

18% of Mobile Library Service users responding consider themselves disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010 (9% chose not to answer). 50% of these indicated they have a physical impairment and 22% indicated they have a sensory impairment. 29% indicated they have a long standing illness or health condition.

Profile of individuals responding (1)	
Users of the Mobile Library Service	
Gender	Disabled as set out in Equality Act 2010
Male	24
Female	75
Prefer not to say / not answered	1
Age	Type of impairment applies for those answering yes *
24 and under	Physical impairment
25 – 34	Long standing illness or health condition
35 – 49	Sensory impairment
50 – 59	Mental health condition
60 – 64	Learning disability
65 - 74	Other
75 - 84	Prefer to not say / not answered
85 and over	
Prefer not to say / not answered	

* Please note that people could select more than one type of impairment

3

8% of the Individuals responding to the Consultation preferred not to answer the ethnicity question. 92% of the Individuals responding indicated they are White English; 2% indicated they are of BME origin.

14% of the Individuals responding to the Consultation preferred not to disclose their religious beliefs. 58% of the Individuals responding indicated they belong to a religion.

Profile of individuals responding (2)	
Users of the Mobile Library Service	
Ethnicity	
White English	92
White Scottish	1
White Welsh	1
White Northern Irish	0.07
BME	2
White Irish	0.37
White Other	2
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	0.15
Mixed White & Black African	0.07
Mixed White & Asian	0.37
Asian / Asian British – Indian	0.15
Asian / Asian British – Pakistani	0.07
Asian / Asian British – Other	0.45
Prefer not to say / not answered	2
Belong to a particular religion	
Yes	
No	
Prefer not to say / not answered	
Religious beliefs applies for those answering yes	
Christian	
Buddhist	
Hindu	
Jewish	
Muslim	
Sikh	
Other	
* Black Minority Ethnic (BME) population is defined as all ethnic groups excluding White English, White Scottish, White Welsh and White Northern Irish	
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3.2 PROFILE OF MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE USERS RESPONDING VS. MOBILE LIBRARY ACTIVE BORROWER PROFILE AND CENSUS STATISTICS

The table below compares:

- 1) The 2011 Census Population statistics for Kent by gender and age;
- 2) The Kent County Council Mobile Library profile by gender, age and district sourced from Borrowers;
- 3) The profile of known Mobile Library users taking part in the Consultation by gender, age and district.

Comparing these statistics reveals that the gender and age profile of those taking part broadly reflects the Mobile Library Service user profile. A slightly higher proportion of females responded compared to the profile breakdown; however it is worth noting that users were invited and responded to the Consultation on behalf of their household as opposed to at an individual user level.

At a broad level the age profile of those using the Mobile Library Service is consistent with the profile of those responding. It should be noted however that the lower age band of 49 and under is quite vast and the majority of those responding are from the 35-49 year old age band. The proportion registered for the Mobile Library Service and are aged 0-19 years old have been removed from the calculation below in order to make a realistic comparison to those completing the Consultation.

Profile of individuals responding versus Census statistics (1)

	2011 Census Population statistics *1	Profile of known Mobile Library Active Borrowers *2	Profile of Mobile Library Service Consultation response *3
GENDER			
Male	48%	32%	24%
Female	52%	68%	76%
AGE			
49 and under	51%	19%	16%
50 – 59	16%	8%	9%
60 and over	33%	73%	77%

*1 Source: 2011 Census Statistics as published on Kent County Council's website

*2 Source: Mobile Library Active Borrower Profile supplied by Kent County Council. Please note unknowns and ages 0-19 have been removed from the calculation to provide a realistic comparison to those completing the Consultation.

*3 Please note Consultation response percentages have been recalculated to exclude non response

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Consultees were asked to enter their postcode for classification purposes. The postcodes collected have been assigned to an area/district accordingly for analysis purposes.

The table below represents the proportions of questionnaires submitted by residents living in each of the Kent areas/districts. Representation has been achieved across all areas; validating the Consultation approach (i.e. sending Consultation packs and questionnaires directly to

registered users through the post). 22% of Mobile Library Service users responding preferred to not identify their postcode.

Comparing these statistics reveals that the area profile of those taking part broadly reflects the Mobile Library Service borrower profile.

To provide an approximation for the proportion of the Mobile Library Service users responding to the Consultation, the number of borrowers registered by KCC was compared to the number of users responding to the Consultation; at a total level and by district. KCC registered 5,423 users and 1,418 users responded to the Consultation; a 26% response rate overall. Broken down by district, response is particularly high in Tonbridge and Malling (43%), Gravesham (28%), Thanet (24%) and Dartford (23%).

It is worth noting that users were invited and responded to the Consultation on behalf of their household as opposed to at an individual user level so the proportion of users responding may be higher.

Profile of individuals responding versus Census statistics (2)				
	2011 Census	Profile	Proportion	% of
Ashford				
Canterbury				
Maidstone				
Dover				
Shepway				
Swale				
Tonbridge & Malling				
Thanet				
Tunbridge Wells				
Dartford				
Sevenoaks				
Gravesham				

* Please note users were invited to respond as households rather than individual users so % answering may be higher

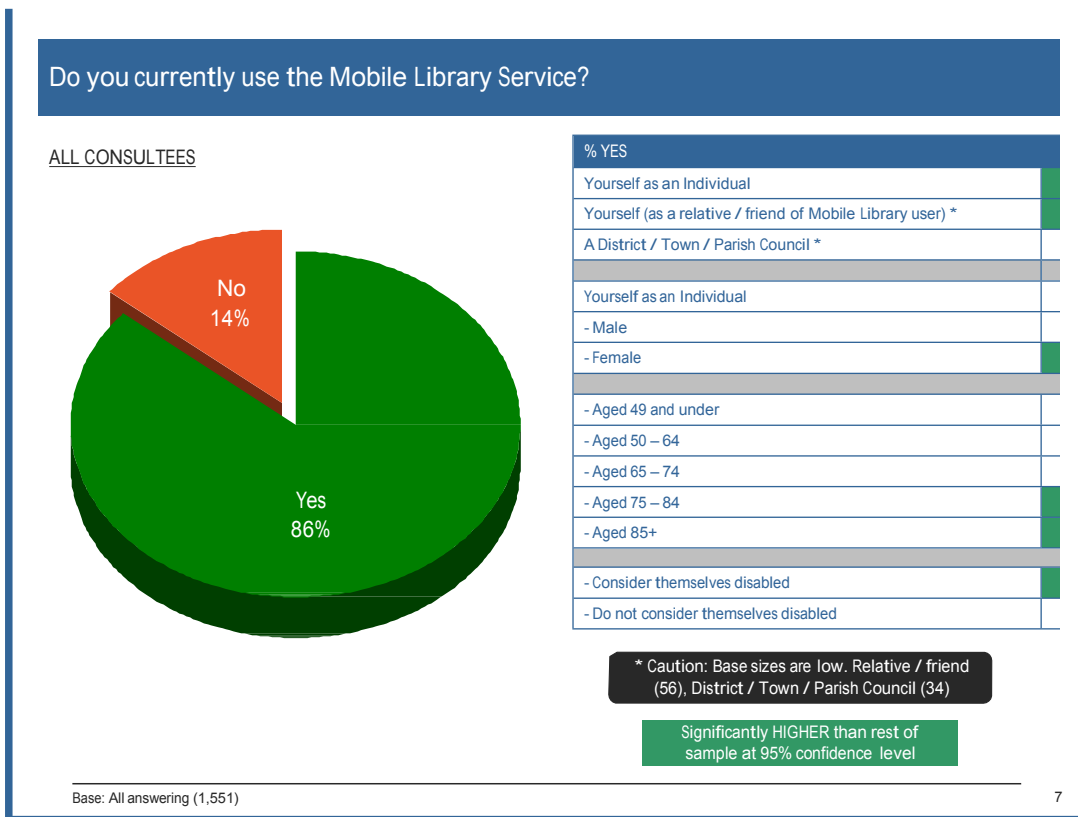
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4. CURRENT USAGE OF SERVICE AND IMPACT OF STOP CLOSURE

4.1 CURRENT USAGE OF MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE

As indicated previously, the vast majority of Consultees (86%) indicated that they currently use the Mobile Library service. As expected, claimed usage is higher amongst those that identified themselves as an 'Individual' at 88% and those that identified themselves as a 'relative / friend of the Mobile Library user' at 86%. Claimed current usage amongst District / Town / Parish Councils is lower at 32%.

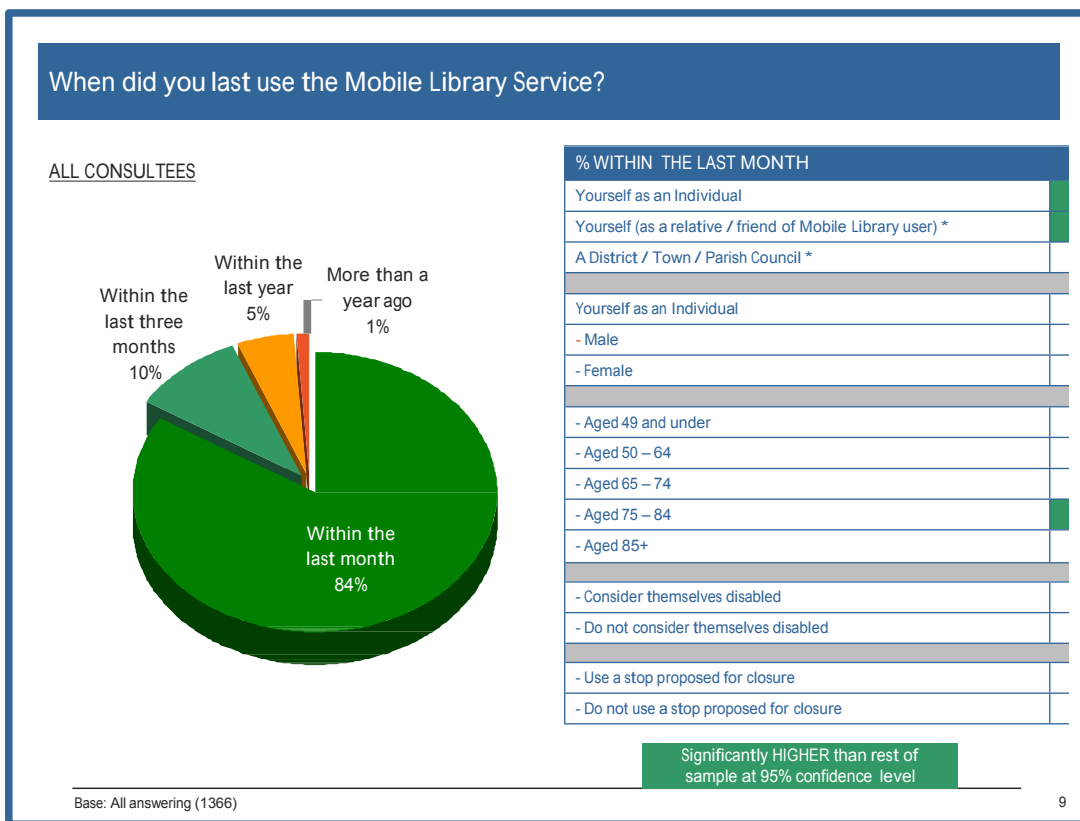
Focusing specifically on 'Individuals', current usage is high amongst all age groups and both gender groups; although significantly higher amongst females (92%) and those aged 75-84 (97%) and those aged 85 and over (96%). A significantly higher proportion of Individuals that indicated they are disabled claim they currently use the Service (93%).



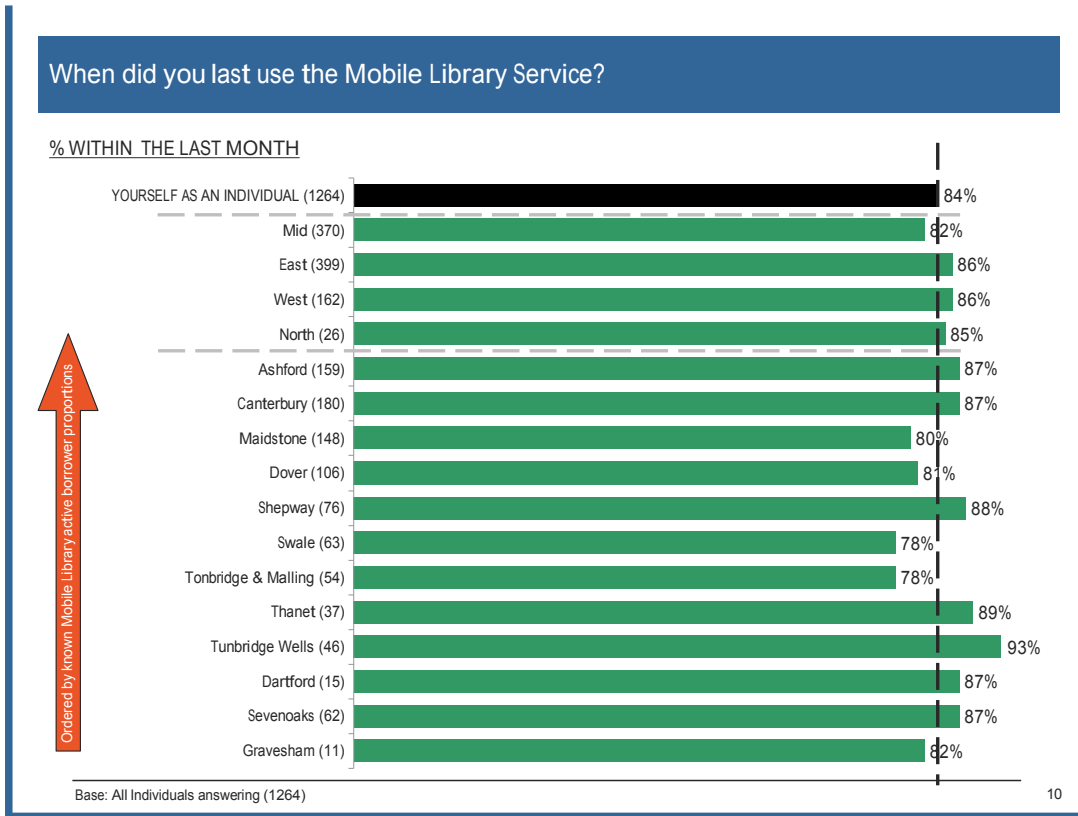
Consultees were also asked to indicate when they last used the Mobile Library Service. 84% of Consultees indicated they last used the service in the last month and 10% last used the service in the last three months.

Consistent with current usage patterns, the proportion last using the service in the last month is higher amongst those that identified themselves as an 'Individual' at 84% and those that identified themselves as a 'relative / friend of the Mobile Library user' at 80%. Claimed last usage amongst District / Town / Parish Councils is lower at 62% in the last month.

Focusing specifically on 'Individuals', current usage is high amongst the majority of age groups and both gender groups; although significantly higher amongst those aged 75-84 (93%) and lower amongst those aged 49 and under (66%).



The proportion last using the service in the last month is high across all the Kent districts responding; notably in Tunbridge Wells (93%), Thanet (89%), Shepway (89%), Ashford (87%), Canterbury (87%), Dartford (87%) and Sevenoaks (87%).



4.2 STOPS USED BY MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE USERS AND PLANNED CLOSURE IMPACT

All users who completed the Consultation were asked to indicate which Mobile Library Service stop(s) they currently use. Answers given here were then cross referenced with the list of stops provided by Kent County Council to confirm users' stops. The most common stops by district are highlighted in the tables below. The stops that have been proposed for withdrawal by Kent County Council are highlighted in grey and the stops that have been proposed for a Saturday have been highlighted in green.

A high proportion of the users responding to the Consultation from Ashford, Dover, Dartford, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks currently use a stop that is being proposed for closure or a stop that is proposed for a Saturday alternative. This should be taken into account when reviewing the response differences by district in the questions that follow.

Stop proposed for withdrawal

Stop proposed for a Saturday

Ashford	Stop name	Number completing Consultation
	Ham Street	Bour13
	Brabourne Lees	Pros12
	Hastingleigh	Evin10
	Pluckley	Blac10
	Bromley Green	Nr9
	Chartham Hatch	How9
	Old Wives Lees	Low9
	Bethersden	Forg7
	Aldington	Nr6
	Boughton Aluph	Flyin6
	Challock	Che6
	High Halden	Chur6
	Smarden	Villa6
	Biddenden	Woo5
	Chilham	The5
	Singleton	Aske5

Canterbury	Stop name	Number completing Consultation
	Barham	Villa
	Bridge	Gre
	Blean	Villa
	Thanington	Com
	Herne	Mill
	Nackington	The
	Tyler Hill	Tyle
	Beltinge	High
	Chartham	St
	Herne	Win
	Herne Bay	Dai
	Seasalter	Appl
	Wickhambreaux	The

Beltinge	Bishopstone Drive	5
Hoath	Church	5
Ickham	Church	5
Tankerton	Pier Avenue	5
Thanington	New House Lane	5

Maidstone	Stop name	Number completing Consultation
Grove Green		Com
Teston		Chur
Grove Green		St
Kingswood		Holl
Loose		Car
Barming		Heat
Loose		Lanc
Tovil		Outs
Barming		Appl
Hollingbourne		Villa
Sutton Valence		Bott
Barming Heath		St
Harrietsham		Wes
Langley		She
Maidstone		Man
Wormshill		The

Dover	Stop name	Number completing Consultation
Shepherdswell		The
Shepherdswell		Rail
Eastry		Villa
Kingsdown		King
Wingham		St
Capel		Vict
River		Lewi
Shepherdswell		Eyth
Whitfield		Com
Capel		Villa
East Stourmouth		Risi
Eythorne		Will
River		Dub
Staple		Chur
Wootton		Wo
Worth		Blue

Shepway	Stop name	Number completing Consultation
Greatstone		Jolly
Saltwood		The
Sellindge		Nr
Lympne		Belc
St Mary's Bay		Baili
St Mary's Bay		The
Elham		High
Lydd On Sea		The
Palmarsh		Wyc

Seabrook	Seabrook Court	4
Sellindge	Nr Greenfields	4
Swingfield	The Street	4

Swale	Stop name	Number completing Consultation
Hartlip		Dan
Rodmersham		Villa
Selling		Wo
Throwley Forstal		The
Doddington		Sun
Faversham		Bra
Murston		Chur
Grove Park		San
Lower Halstow		Scho
Tunstall		Cro
Upchurch		Chur
Warden Bay		Cliff

Tunbridge Wells	Stop name	Number completing Consultation
Lamberhurst		Villa
Matfield		The
Five Oak Green		Oak
Lamberhurst		The
Frittenden		Villa
Horsmonden		Back
Brenchley		Chur
Hawkenbury		Spre
Langton Green		Gre
Tunbridge Wells		Coni

Dartford	Stop name	Number completing Consultation
New Barn		Faw
Wilmington		Ger
Betsham		Coly
Leyton Cross		Tred
Southfleet		Villa
Wilmington		Me
Hawley		Ash
New Barn		Sout
Wilmington		War
Wilmington		The

Sevenoaks	Stop name	Number completing Consultation
Sevenoaks		Me
Fordcombe		Villa
Eynsford		Polly
South Darent		Gorr
Chiddingstone		
Causeway		Rich
Crockenhill		Chur
Eynsford		High
Fordcombe		Hed

Halstead	The Cock PH	4
Horton Kirby	Rashleigh Way	4
Leigh	The Green	4

Gravesham	Stop name	Number completing Consultation
Istead Rise		Sho
Shorne		The
Cobham		The
Istead Rise		Dow
Chalk		Orli
Culverstone		Will
Lower Higham		Che
Lower Shorne		Bur
Shorne		Rac

The table below summarises the proposed withdrawals planned by Kent County Council by district at a total level. The column on the far right of the table summarises the proportion of users responding to the Consultation who currently use a stop that is being proposed for closure. A high proportion of the users responding to the Consultation from Dartford, Dover, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks and Shepway currently use a stop that is being proposed for closure.

Planned closures vs. proportion responding impacted by closure					
	Number of static libraries	Current number of stops	Proposed number of stops	% reduction	% responding impacted by closure
Total	99	651	283	57%	21%
Dartford	9	20	5	75%	45%
Thanet	8	42	11	74%	23%
Gravesham	10	17	5	71%	0%
Tonbridge	9	47	15	68%	18%
Dover	6	80	30	63%	28%
Tunbridge Wells	9	30	12	60%	29%
Swale	7	55	23	58%	19%
Sevenoaks	11	39	17	56%	28%
Canterbury	5	86	42	51%	18%
Maidstone	11	85	43	49%	16%
Shepway	8	58	30	48%	29%
Ashford	6	92	50	46%	23%

8

5. AGREEMENT WITH CRITERION FOR WITHDRAWAL

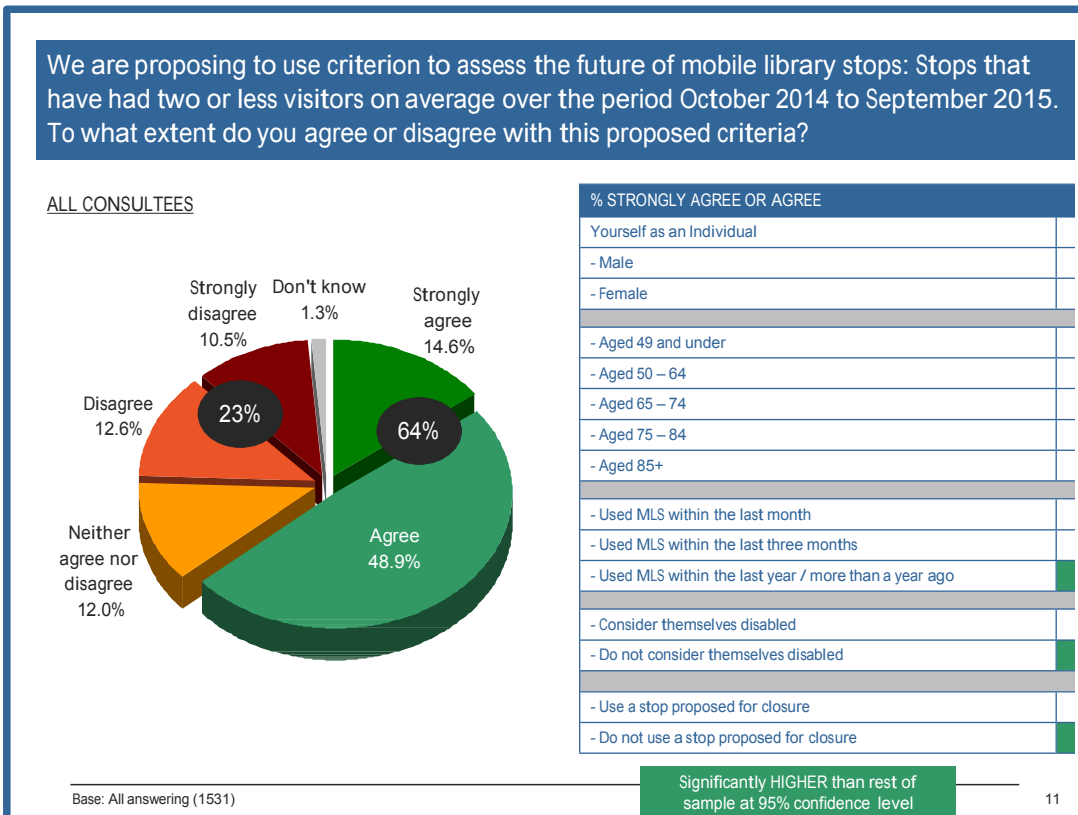
Further to their review of the Consultation document, Consultees were first asked to indicate their level of agreement (on a five point scale) with the proposed criterion to assess the future of mobile library stops, namely: “Closure of stops that have had two or less visitors on average over the period October 2014 to September 2015”.

Just under two thirds of Consultees (64%) indicated they agreed with the proposed criteria; 12% indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed and 23% indicated they disagreed with the proposed criteria.

Individuals

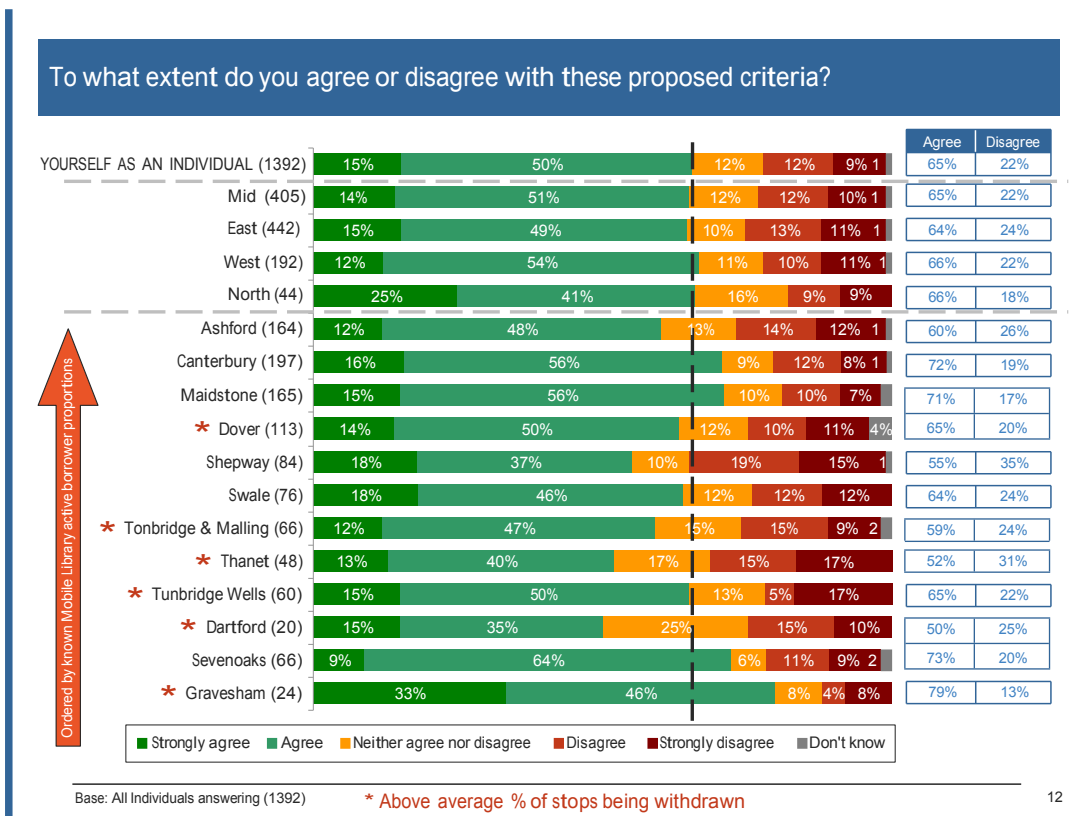
Focusing specifically on ‘Individuals’, agreement is broadly consistent by age group and both gender groups. As perhaps expected, agreement is significantly higher amongst those who have used the Mobile Library Service in the last year / more than a year ago (74%) compared to those who have used the Service within the last month (63%).

There are also significant differences when comparing Individuals who indicated themselves as disabled and not disabled; a significantly higher proportion of Individuals who are not disabled agreed with the criterion (69%). We hypothesise that a higher proportion of Individuals who consider themselves disabled believe they may not be able access the Service if the proposed changes are made. As expected, agreement is significantly higher amongst those who use a stop that is not proposed for withdrawal (72%).



The chart below displays the results of this question by area and by district. Please note that the districts results have been ranked in order of the number of Mobile Library Service active borrower proportions provided by Kent County Council.

Agreement with the criterion is highest amongst Canterbury (72%), Maidstone (71%), Sevenoaks (73%) and Gravesham (79%) users. Agreement is lowest amongst Ashford (60%), Shepway (55%), Tonbridge & Malling (59%), Thanet (52%) and Dartford (50%) users.

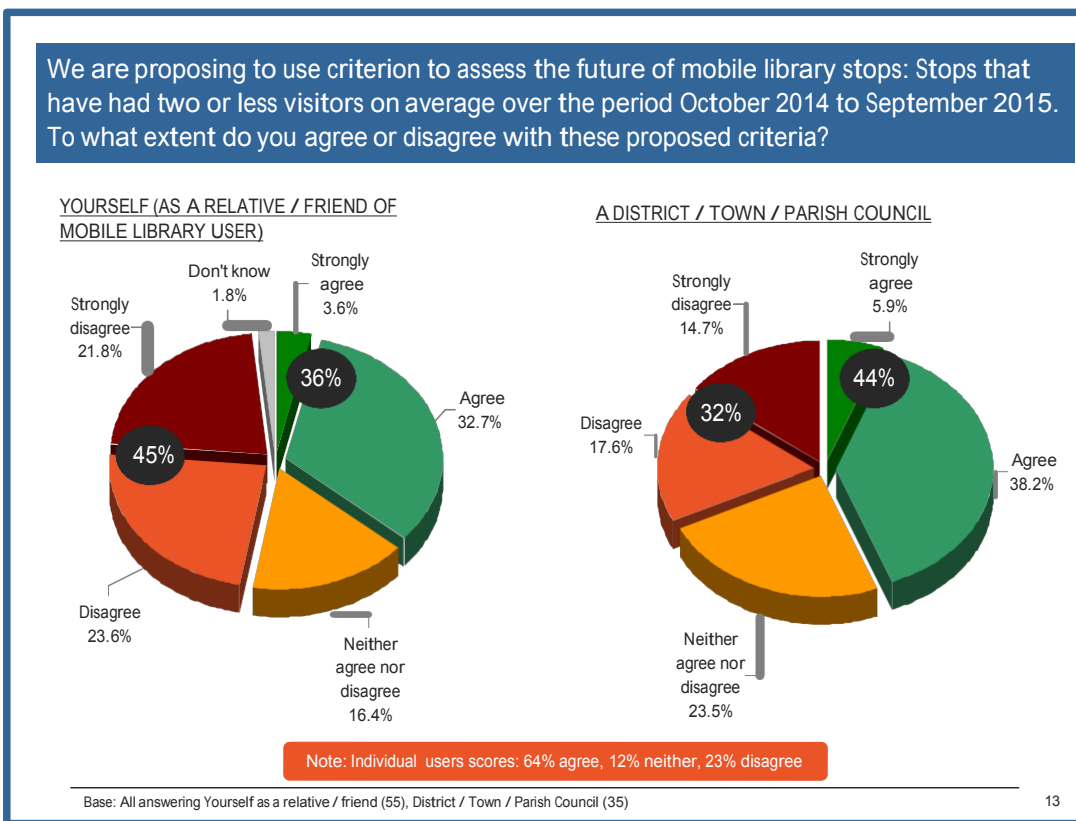


Relative / friend of Mobile Library user

Focusing specifically on the Consultees who answered as a 'friend or relative of the Mobile Library user', agreement is much lower than that observed for users as a whole (36% compared to 64% for users) and disagreement is much higher (45% compared to 23% for users).

District / Town / Parish Council

Focusing specifically on the Consultees who answered as a representative from a 'District / Town / Parish Council', agreement is also much lower than that observed for users as a whole (44% compared to 64% for users) and disagreement is much higher (32% compared to 23% for users).



6. ALTERNATIVE CRITERIA

Consultees were then asked to describe any alternative or other criteria they thought Kent County Council should use in their own words. The free text comments were reviewed and coded into “themes” to provide quantitative analysis for this question.

It is important to note that two thirds of Consultees (66%) did not provide any answer to this question. As a result the majority of the responses depicted below represent alternative criteria / concerns about the existing criteria.

A number of themes were reported amongst those answering but the most common alternative criteria mentioned were:

1. Proximity to a static library / access to main library – 13% (also common amongst those aged 49 and under – 24%)
2. Access to public transport and regular bus services – 8%
3. Potential access by schools / children / clubs / new housing – 7%
4. Number of books issued per person at each stop – 6%
5. Different evaluation needed for isolated / rural / deprived areas – 5%
6. Proximity to other Mobile Library Service stops or eligibility for Home Library Service / access to alternative mobile services – 5%

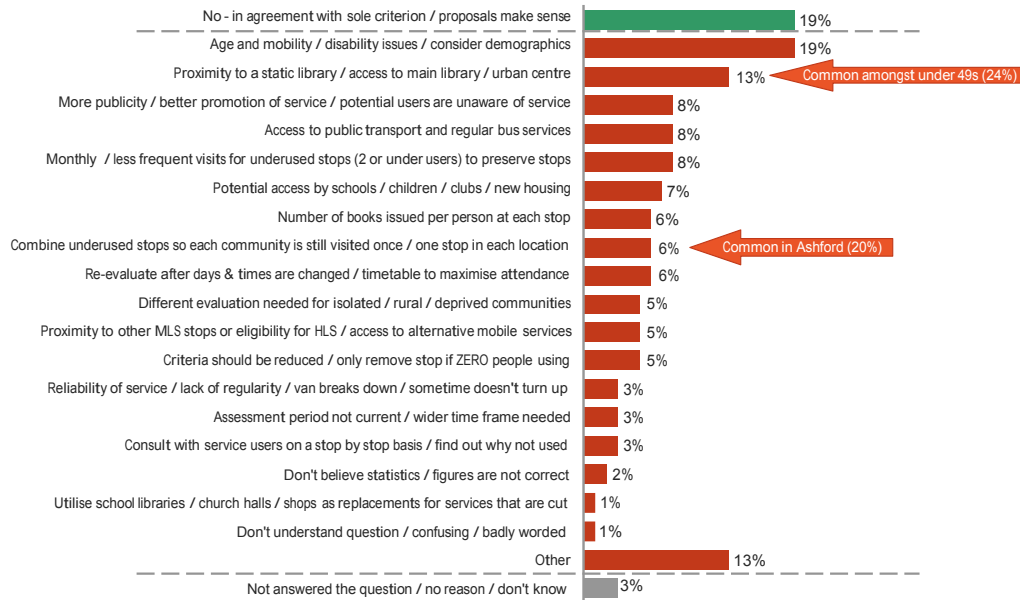
There were also some suggestions put forward to maintain access to the Mobile Library Service for all currently using:

1. Monthly / less frequent visits for underused stops to preserve stops - 8%
2. Combine underused stops so each community is still visited once / one stop in each location – 6%
3. Criteria should be reduced / only remove if no-one is using – 5%

Are there alternative or other criteria you think we should use?

ALL CONSULTEES

Please note: 66% of Consultees left this question blank



Base: All answering (532)

14

SOMEEXAMPLECOMMENTSFROMINDIVIDUALCONSULTEESINCLUDE:

"No seems very fair the proposed sites do not have enough visitors to make it viable."

"No. Frequency of use is reasonable."

"How many books are issued? Could have 2 old ladies taking 1 book each or 2 taking 10. I also use my tickets to get books for both myself and my husband so although we count as 1, we are really 2 users."

"Disabled users who might have difficulty getting to a static library should be given extra consideration."

"Need to take into account non appearance days potential data, due to vehicle maintenance, weather conditions, road access, and build in a "mean" usage figure to be applied on those days."

"Whilst it is helpful to have clear criteria, I'm not sure if a "one size fits all" approach is best given the large number and differing nature of the stops involved. There may be occasions where a stop does not meet the minimum average user criteria but an exception may be appropriate. However, I do support the need for the service to be efficient and, in general terms, the criteria chosen seems a reasonable approach."

"Distance of stopping location in relation to the nearest static library building. KCC should be using this service to maximise availability of this service."

"Reduce frequency and number of stops instead of sweeping all stops off the map completely."

"Your criterion is based solely on people who use the library. Surely you should also be canvassing the local people at any stop that has less than 2 visitors why they don't or can't use it. For instance if a stop has now become too difficult for the elderly."

"Agree with criteria but not with proposals - unless can show that more has been done to promote where not utilised sufficiently."

"Change the period of assessment to more current."

SOME EXAMPLE COMMENTS FROM CONSULTEES FROM A DISTRICT / PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL INCLUDE:

“Who actually uses the library at each stop, taking into account age and physical ability of the user.”

“You should also consider the demographics of an area including the age and mobility issues of current and future service users, and accessibility to alternative libraries, including mobile libraries.”

“Council understands that there are some concerns that the service may be costing more than the benefit received. But in a changing world with people living longer, but often being confined to their home in a small rural village, there is need for special consideration.”

“Focusing on stops that have had 2 or less visitors on average over the stated period is a good place to start but for the stops that may be proposed to end, you need to make some enquiries as to the people who use those stops.”

“Assessment not wide enough.”

“When assessing whether or not a stop would be removed there should be evidenced consideration of the area composition in relation to age or deprivation; and accessibility to library provisions should be taken into consideration.”

“A mobile library should serve rural communities and it is needed whether 1 or 100 people use it.”

“If the mobile library stops are cancelled due to lack of use then the few users should be identified and targeted for Home Library Visits or Touch a New World Scheme. Geographical clustering information should be used.”

“Please ensure that the needs of the elderly population and inability of many to access information by any other means, such as the internet, have been fully taken into account.”

“Ratio of people in the area. If a percentage was used this could be fairer.”

7. AGREEMENT WITH PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS / CHANGES TO STOPS

Consultees were then asked to indicate their level of agreement with three proposed improvements / changes to the Mobile Library stops, namely:

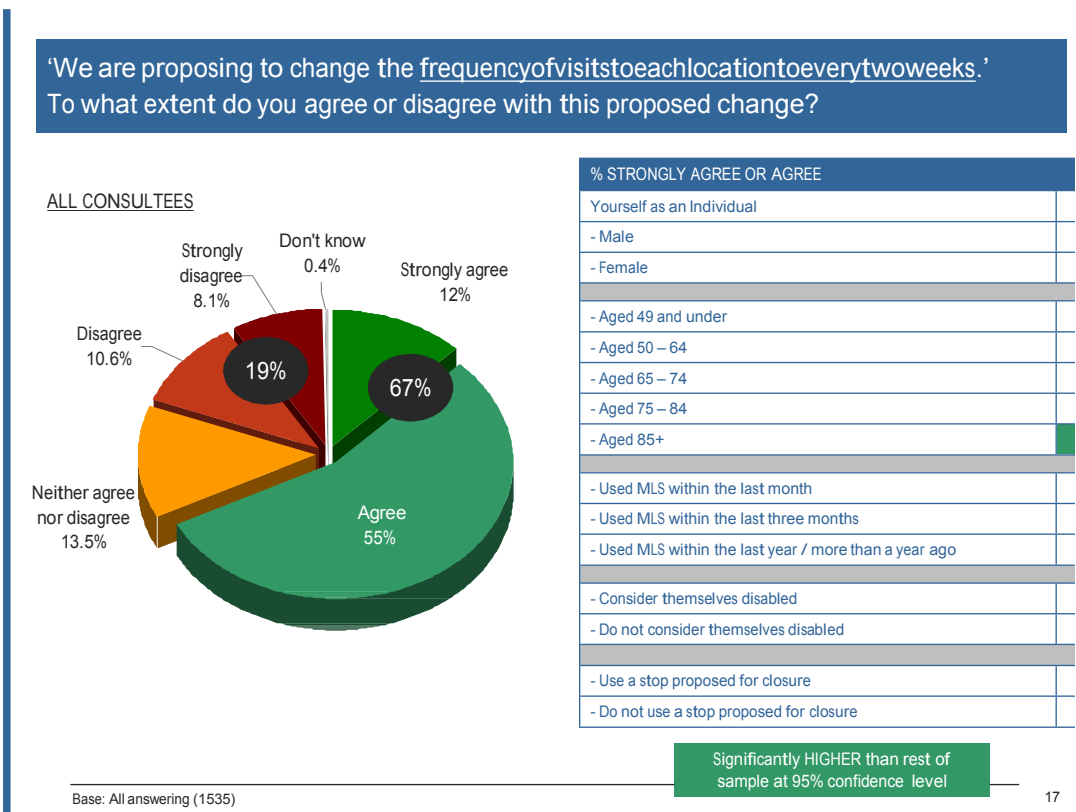
4. Changing the frequency of visits to each location to every two weeks
5. Changing the days Kent County Council operate the Mobile Library Service from Monday to Friday to Tuesday to Saturday
6. Changing the minimum stop time, increasing it from 10 minutes to 30 minutes

7.1 FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO EACH LOCATION TO EVERY TWO WEEKS

Just over two thirds of Consultees (67%) indicated they agreed with the proposed change; 13% indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed and 19% indicated they disagreed with the proposed change.

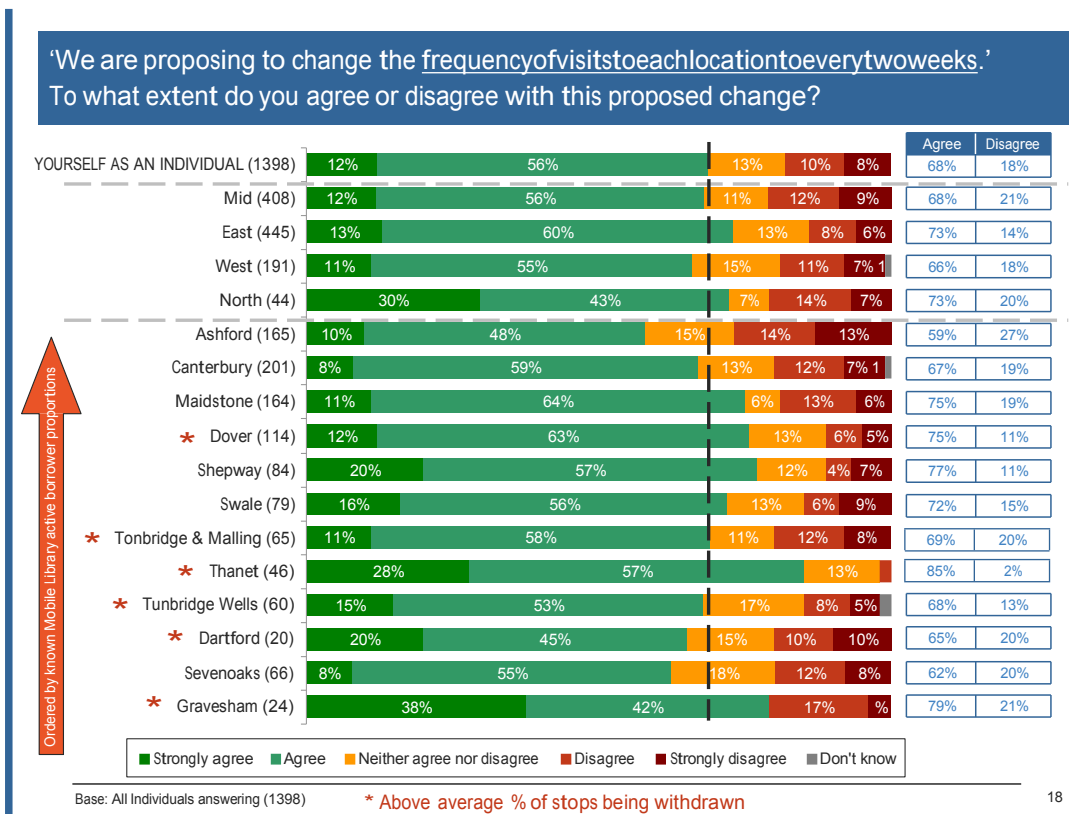
Individuals

Focusing specifically on 'Individuals', agreement is broadly consistent by the majority of age groups and both gender groups; although significantly higher amongst those aged 85 and over (78%) and lower amongst those aged 49 and under (50%). There are no significant differences by claimed last usage of the Mobile Library service or disability.



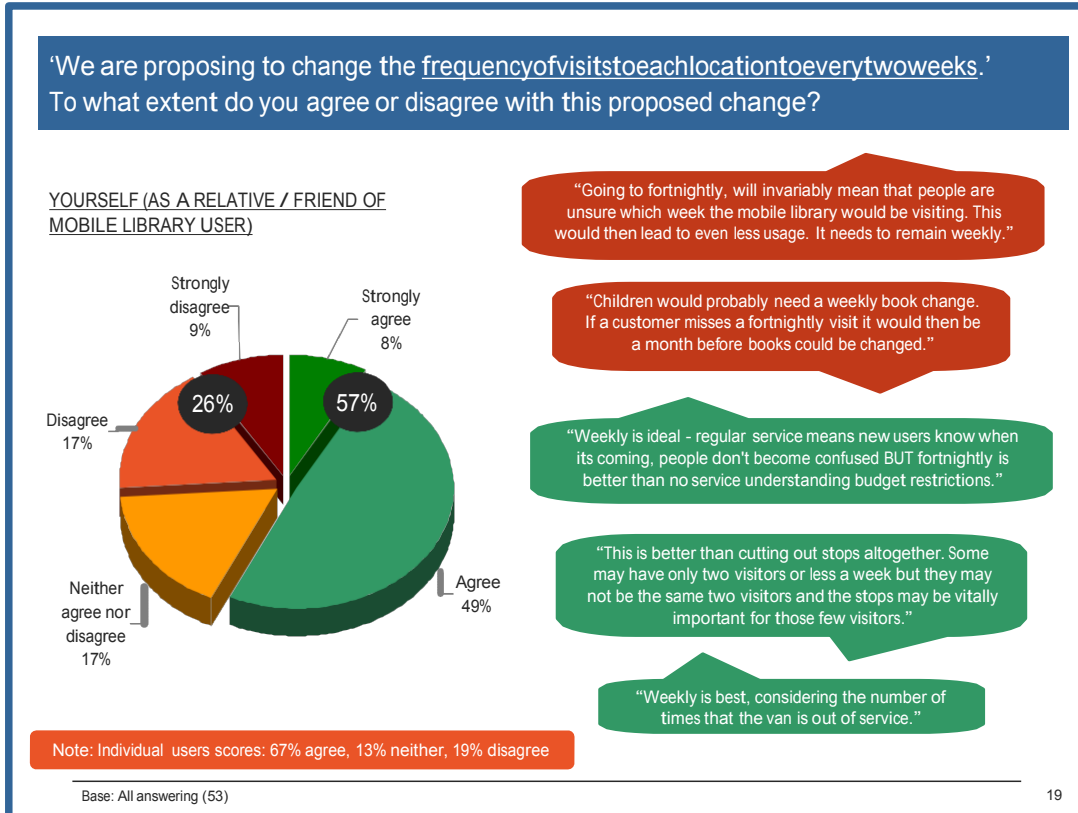
The chart below displays the results of this question by area and by district. Please note that the districts results have been ranked in order of the number of Mobile Library Service active borrower proportions provided by Kent County Council.

Agreement with the proposed change in frequency of visits is highest amongst Maidstone (75%), Dover (75%), Shepway (77%), Swale (72%), Thanet (85%) and Gravesham (79%) users. Agreement is lowest amongst Ashford (59%), Dartford (65%) and Sevenoaks (62%) users.



Relative / friend of Mobile Library user

Focusing specifically on the Consultees who answered as a 'friend or relative of the Mobile Library user', agreement is lower than that observed for users as a whole (57% compared to 67% for users) and disagreement is higher (26% compared to 19% for users).

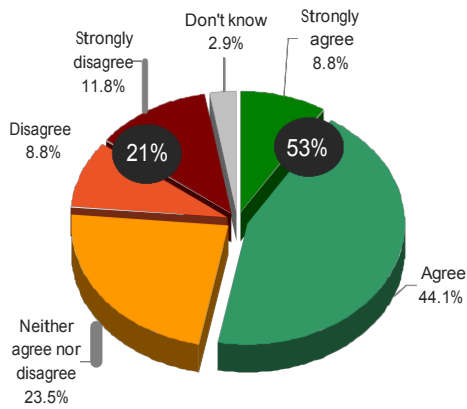


District / Town / Parish Council

Focusing specifically on the Consultees who answered as a representative from a 'District / Town / Parish Council', agreement is also lower than that observed for users as a whole (53% compared to 67% for users) but the proportion who selected 'neither agree nor disagree' is also higher (24% compared to 13% for users).

'We are proposing to change the frequency of visits to each location to every two weeks.'
To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed change?

A DISTRICT / TOWN / PARISH COUNCIL



Note: Individual users scores: 67% agree, 13% neither, 19% disagree

Base: All answering (34)

"Mobile Library service is under financial strain, this will give a service and cut costs."

"The users range from very young to very old and may not be physically able to attend the library van frequently. There is a dependency on the routine of the mobile facility for all users."

"If this preserves the service then it is reluctantly accepted."

"At some stops this may be appropriate but for stops where it is used every week with a reasonably high turnout it may be better to stick to one a week."

"Changing the frequency of the visits at each location will need to be heavily publicised so that residents are aware and can perhaps plan ahead and borrow more books or items of interest to see them through the fortnight."

7.2 REASONS FOR AGREEMENT RATING - FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO EACH LOCATION TO EVERY TWO WEEKS

Consultees were asked to describe their reasons for their answers concerning proposed improvements and changes in their own words. The free text comments were reviewed and coded into “themes” to provide quantitative analysis for this question.

It is important to note that just over half of Consultees (54%) did not provide any answer to describe their reason for their agreement to changing frequency of visits.

69% of those answering gave a positive comment towards the proposed change. The comments put forward focused on fortnightly visits being frequent enough and that a proportion of users were already used to having fortnightly visits:

1. Makes sense / like the idea / fortnightly is sufficient – 27%
2. Two weeks is optimum time / can borrow enough books to last two weeks – 22%
3. Already have fortnightly visits / only use fortnightly – 13%
4. Frequency changes are better than losing the service altogether – 9%
5. Makes no difference to me / no major impacts – 8%
6. More economical / cuts costs / saves money / reduces pollution – 8%

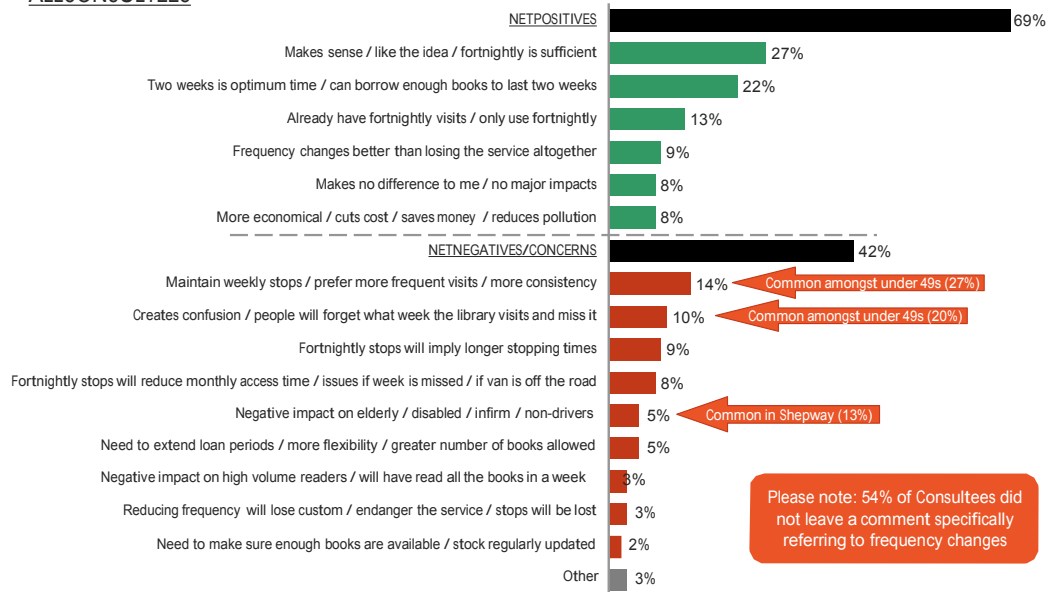
42% of those answering gave a negative comment or had a concern towards the proposed change. The comments put forward focused on a preference for weekly stops / more frequent visits and fortnightly visits creating confusion / people forgetting what week the library visits:

1. Maintain weekly stops / prefer more frequent visits / more consistency – 14% (higher amongst those aged 49 and under – 27%)
2. Creates confusion / people will forget what week the library visits and miss it – 10% (higher amongst those aged 49 and under – 20%)
3. Fortnightly stops will imply longer stopping times – 9%
4. Fortnightly stops will reduce monthly access time / issues if week is missed / if van is off the road – 9%
5. Negative impact on elderly / disabled / infirm / non drivers – 5% (higher amongst those living in Shepway – 13%)

6. Need to extend loan periods / more flexibility / greater number of books allowed – 5%

‘We are proposing to change the frequency of visits to each location to every two weeks.’
Please tell us the reasons for your answer.

ALLCONSULTEES



Base: All answering (720)

21

SOME EXAMPLE COMMENTS FROM CONSULTTEES INCLUDE:

“My stop was already 2 weeks so no change.”

“Stopping fortnightly should not be a problem for the majority of users except if the van does not turn up, then we will have to wait a month between changes.”

“Saves money and fortnightly is quite adequate.”

“It is much easier for people to remember a weekly service compared to a fortnightly one, so I would rather see less stops but a weekly service.”

“Every two weeks is okay but think you may lose custom as people will get confused as to what week it is.”

“I think the mobile should continue to visit weekly. They would be unable to carry more items from the mobile to their home so would therefore run out of reading / listening materials.”

“Some people like changing books every week.”

“Two weeks is a good time span to read the books borrowed.”

“I go to the library once a fortnight and take enough books out to last me at least this long.”

“Reducing the frequency of the mobile library is far better than losing the mobile library altogether.”

“As long as there are enough books of my choice, I am quite agreeable to the service being fortnightly but would like to be able to have 4 books.”

“I do not want you to reduce to two weeks for the reason that for my village there is going to be a cut in service from 180 minutes per month to 60 minutes per month. This is a huge reduction in time. If someone elderly misses a week they will have to wait much longer to get another book.”

“For some, those who rely on reading as their principal entertainment, fortnightly is not ideal.”

“No point having a THREE week loan cycle if the mobile unit only visits every TWO weeks!”

7.3 CHANGING DAYS OF OPERATION FROM MONDAY TO FRIDAY TO TUESDAY TO SATURDAY

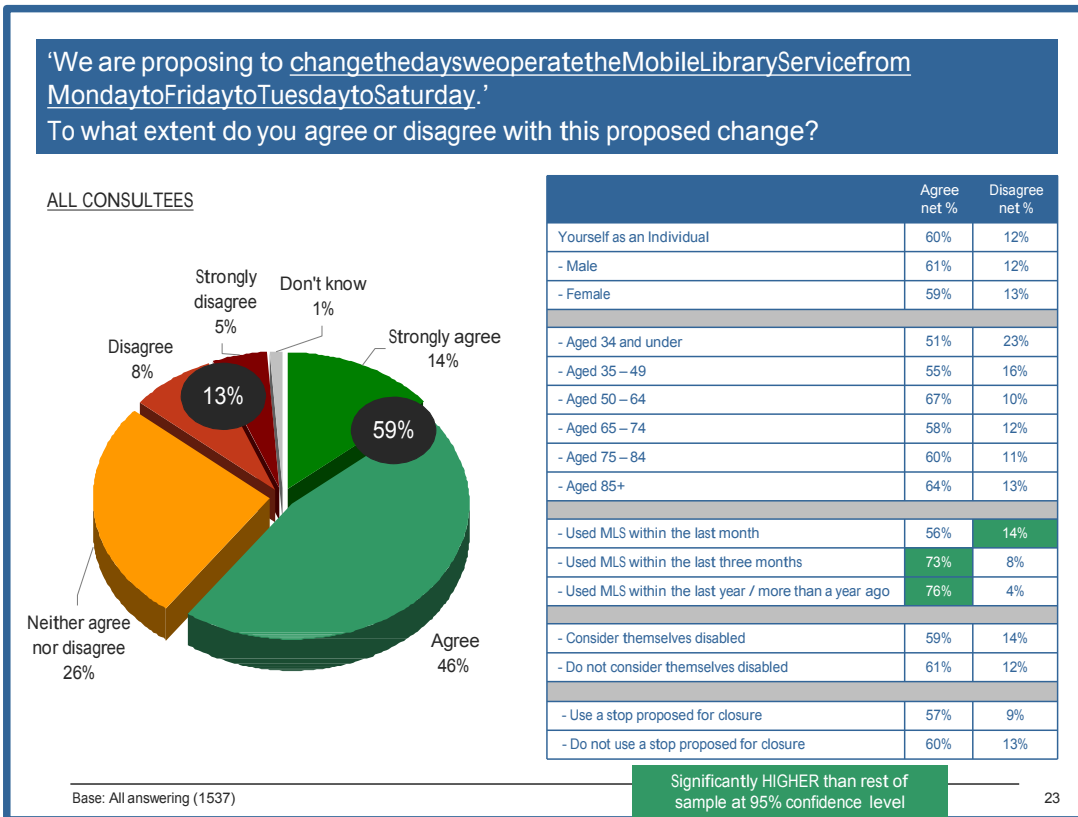
69% of Consultees indicated they agreed with the proposed change and 13% indicated they disagreed with the proposed change. Just over a quarter (26%) indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed; likely as a result of the variability in frequency times currently in operation (i.e. some stops are already fortnightly; some are weekly).

Individuals

Focusing specifically on 'Individuals', agreement is broadly consistent by the age groups and both gender groups; although lower amongst those aged 34 and under (51%) and those aged 35-49 (55%).

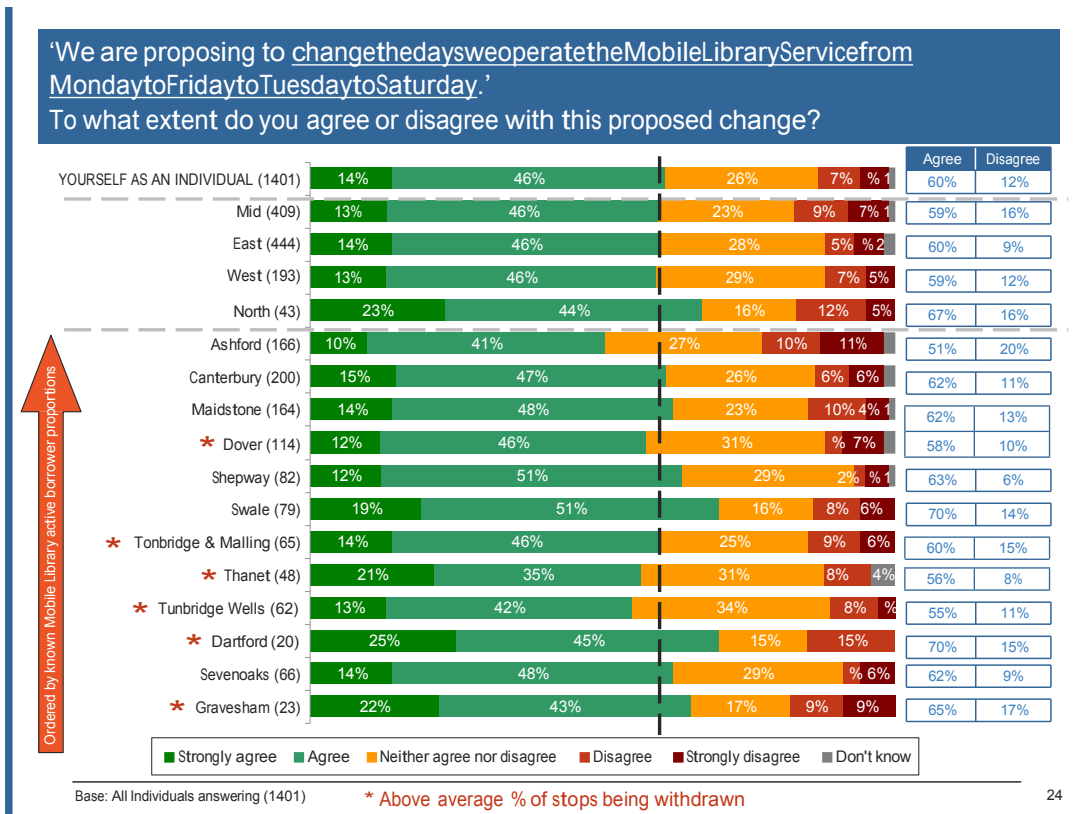
As perhaps expected, agreement is significantly higher amongst those who have used the Mobile Library Service in the last year / more than a year ago (76%) and within the last three months (73%) compared to those who have used the Service within the last month (56%).

There are no significant differences when comparing those with a disability and those without a disability.



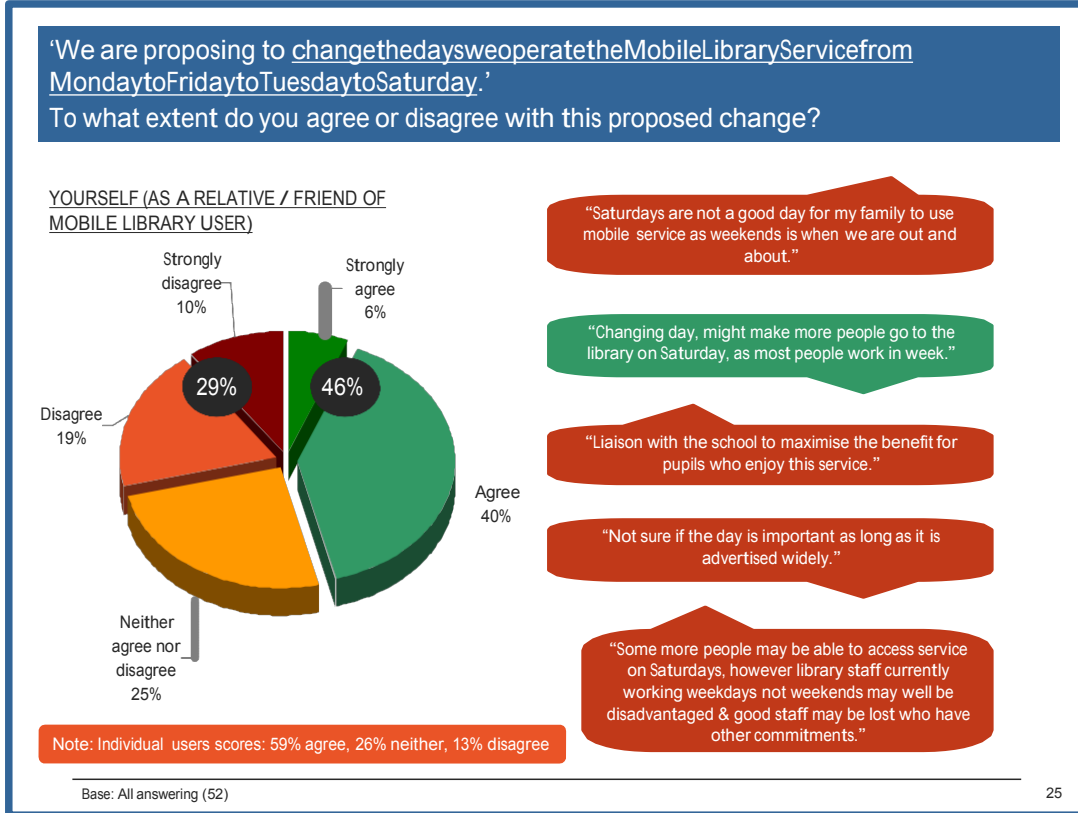
The chart below displays the results of this question by area and by district. Please note that the districts results have been ranked in order of the number of Mobile Library Service active borrower proportions provided by Kent County Council.

Agreement with the proposed change in the days of operation is highest amongst Swale (70%), Dartford (70%) and Gravesham (65%) users. Agreement is lowest amongst Ashford (51%) and Tunbridge Wells (55%) users.



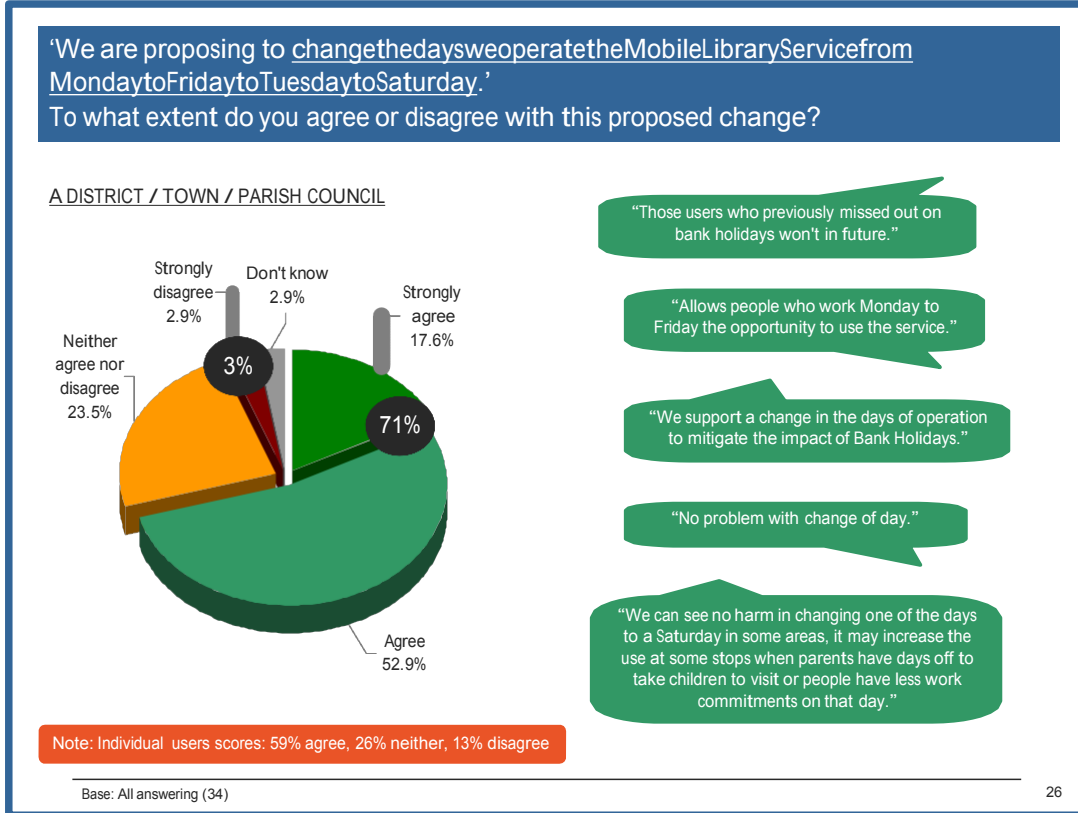
Relative / friend of Mobile Library user

Focusing specifically on the Consultees who answered as a 'friend or relative of the Mobile Library user', agreement is lower than that observed for users as a whole (46% compared to 59% for users) and disagreement is higher (29% compared to 13% for users).



District / Town / Parish Council

Focusing specifically on the Consultees who answered as a representative from a 'District / Town / Parish Council', agreement is higher than that observed for users as a whole (71% compared to 59% for users); a contrast to other questions regarding changes to the service.



7.4 REASONS FOR AGREEMENT RATING - CHANGING DAYS OF OPERATION FROM MONDAY TO FRIDAY TO TUESDAY TO SATURDAY

Consultees were asked to describe their reasons for their answers concerning proposed improvements and changes in their own words. The free text comments were reviewed and coded into “themes” to provide quantitative analysis for this question.

It is important to note that just over half of Consultees (54%) did not provide any answer to describe their reason for their agreement to changing days of operation.

66% of those answering gave a positive comment towards the proposed change. The comments put forward focused on the change of day not making a difference and making sense, a Saturday service allowing more residents to access the service and avoiding Bank Holiday Mondays:

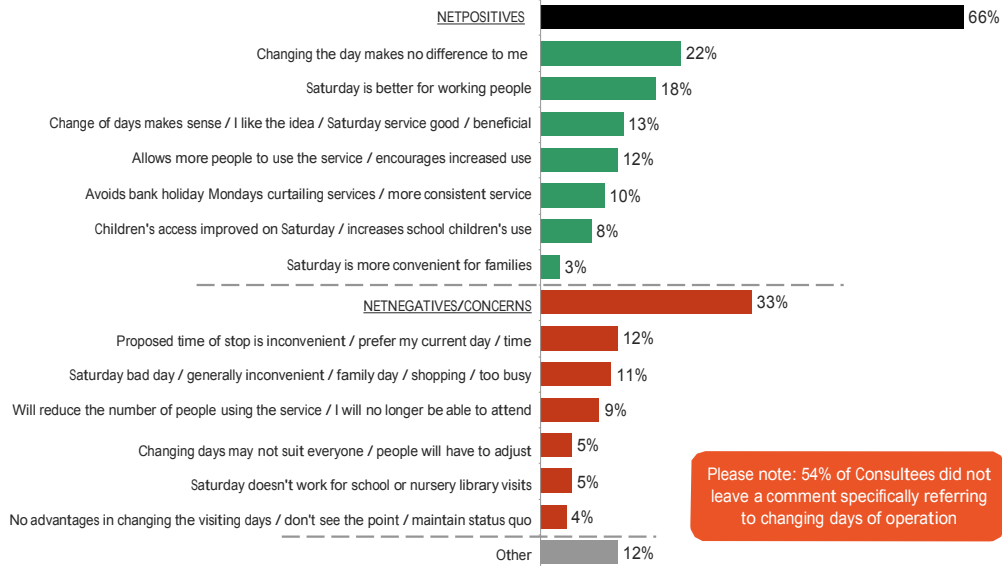
1. Changing the day makes no difference to me – 22%
2. Saturday is better for working people – 18%
3. Change of day makes sense / like the idea / Saturday service is good – 13%
4. Allows more people to use the service / encourages increased use – 12%
5. Avoids Bank Holiday Mondays curtailing services / more consistent service – 10%
6. Children’s access improved on Saturday / increase school children’s use – 8%
7. Saturday is more convenient for families – 3%

33% of those answering gave a negative comment or had a concern towards the proposed change. The comments put forward focused on the proposed time or day change being inconvenient and perceptions that it will reduce the number of people using the service:

1. Proposed time of stop is inconvenient / prefer my current day / time – 12%
2. Saturday is a bad day / generally inconvenient / family day / shopping / too busy – 11%
3. Will reduce people using the service / I will no longer be able to attend – 9%
4. Changing days may not suit everyone / people will have to adjust – 5%
5. Saturday doesn’t work for school or nursery library visits – 4%
6. No advantages in changing the visiting days / maintain status quo – 4%

'We are proposing to changethedaysweoperatetheMobileLibraryServicefrom MondaytoFridaytoTuesdaytoSaturday.'
Please tell us the reasons for your answer.

ALLCONSULTEES



Please note: 54% of Consultees did not leave a comment specifically referring to changing days of operation

Base: All answering (715)

27

SOMEEXAMPLECOMMENTSFROMCONSULTEESINCLUDE:

- "Avoid Mondays or lots of visits will be lost for Bank hols."
- "Saturday bus times would enable families better access to the bus."
- "I am retired so can go on any day."
- "I have no issue with changes the DAYS but I DO object to the change in timings. I DO NOT wish it to come at the proposed time of 10-11:30am as my 3 children are in school then and we will be unable to use this service."
- "Saturday is a very busy day in many households and often involves not being at home."
- "Saturday is a very busy traffic time so crossing the road to reach the library van an extra hazard to everyone."
- "I cannot see any advantage in changing the day."
- "Changing Days - nice to include a weekend day for those working who may not be able to make midweek stops."
- "I work during the week so I can't use the mobile library but if you extend to include Saturdays then I could use it."
- "If you use Saturday small local schools would not be able to use the library."
- "If the library was to come on a Saturday, I wouldn't be able to use it. I have someone give me a lift to my shopping and they can only do it on Saturdays."
- "It is key to ensure users know the dates and times."
- "Disappointed our library service will be during school/work hours as my children enjoy going to the mobile library"
- "My mobile van will be changing to Saturday which is not a good day for me."
- "The current day and time is convenient and well known."

A number of specific comments from schools were also made and should be taken into account before determining route days and times. Examples of these are shown below:

"I think at least one stop per village should continue. Especially in the case of Pluckley, which currently has 3, all of which you are proposing to stop! As I have already stated the school have organised to include a trip to the mobile library into their school week/curriculum and I'm sure they would very much like this to continue. If the time at the stop were to be extended then perhaps other classes within Pluckley School would also use this service."

"My main concern is that you are proposing changing the Ulcombe stop day from a Monday to a Saturday. My children attend Ulcombe primary school and if this change is made, the school will no longer be able to visit the library as part of the school day, as they currently do. The school does not have it's own library and it is too far away from a static library to take children there. Personally I would still take my children, but there are a large number who would not have access to a library if school did not show them how to use the mobile service. I understand cuts must be made, so am not complaining about the reduction in times it stops but please do not change Ulcombe to a weekend day."

"However, timing is critical. In our own case, at The Ridgeway, Smeeth, the library bus arrives immediately after school on a Wednesday. All children who live on this rural road (4 families, 10 children) regularly congregate here to select and renew books, to discuss authors and our bus driver (Andy) goes out of his way to suggest new titles to read. The age range is 1-10 years. The new proposed time is 11.05 am on a Friday, all of us parents work and therefore none of us/the children will be able to use the new service, we would like to. Please consider the current usage and timings when planning the new schedule. Have you considered the importance of post school stops to our educational future."

"The mobile library is parked opposite the school in Leeds. I visit the library occasionally with my daughter after school as do a lot of parents. If the proposed changes go ahead, the library would stop on a Saturday at 9.05. We are very busy Saturday mornings and therefore would not visit. School children would not see the library and therefore probably not visit. If it is visible after school to children they want to visit it."

"It does make sense to have longer visit fortnightly, especially as you can take out a large quantity of books in one go. It makes sense to get rid of Mondays to eliminate bank holidays Mondays. But care should be taken that if you know a school visit's the van, that that day is not moved to a Saturday like you propose to do in Chilham. Please do not move Chilham's day to a Saturday, as this will stop the children being able to visit as part of school."

"The new timetable would mean the library was at Chilham on a Saturday instead of a Friday. This means it would no longer be available to the village school who use it at every visit, it introduces children to the library service and gives them a wide range of books. Since it is proposed that on Fridays the van would visit Boughton Aluph and Challock it would be easy to include Chilham in this rota."

Conversely, there are also comments made from users who currently take their children to the Mobile Library service outside of school hours and do not wish the stop they use to move to a time where their children are in school:

"For me personally the days do not make a difference the only problem is you propose to change our time at Rodmersham. We use this as a family after school for my little girl to choose books she looks forward to a Thursday because of this. By altering the time to during the day the children would not be able to attend therefore the numbers will decrease and unfortunately then you will stop our stop too :(I enjoy going on the bus and my daughter enjoys interacting with the older generation on the bus. It will be very sad to lose this as it brings a sense of community to the village and encourages the younger generation to read instead of sitting in front of the television."

"I understand there is a need to cut costs and understand that if a service isn't being fully utilised then changes need to be made. However I disagree with changing the days and times of those that are being utilised. I visit the mobile library after school with my children on a Tuesday, the new proposed time of Wednesday at 13.35 means that we will not be able to use it anymore which is a great shame. There are many young families and children who go to the nearby primary school (Palmarsh) who I am sure don't even know the mobile library is there every week (a 2 minute walk) after school. Perhaps KCC should consider better advertising of the current service before cutting / changing them?"

"I think that it is fair to bring the van fortnightly as personally that suits my children and it is not necessary to have it here every week. I have no issue with changes the DAYS but I DO object to the change in timings. I DO NOT wish it to come at the proposed time of 10-11:30am as my 3 children are in school then and we will be unable to use this service."

"I am strongly disagreeing with the day/time change, as moving the time to 9.30 will seriously affect the opportunity for my daughter and other children being able to use the facility as they will be at school at this time. This will therefore not benefit this age range in the use of the library for resources or to get books out for leisure entertainment. I have no problem with the day change but am strongly opposed to the time change."

The comment below also highlights some pre-conceptions about eligibility for the Home Library Service:

"My work schedule (shifts) and having a child of school age make it near impossible to go the local library regularly. The mobile library was a godsend, even if I wasn't home my daughter could pop in. Now that will all be gone completely with us not qualifying for the home service either. The home library service would be a good alternative but my local library van driver told me there are criteria (which are not mentioned in your booklet) that I wouldn't meet (disabled etc). In reality that means losing yet two more library members. I can see the service isn't viable at the moment as it is but this seems an all or nothing knee jerk reaction. Why not leave one stop in Deal, fortnightly, for a year and see how that works? The proposed time for the only stop in the area (hillcrest gardens) is such that neither working people nor children will be able to use it."

7.5 CHANGING MINIMUM STOP TIME FROM 10 MINUTES TO 30 MINUTES

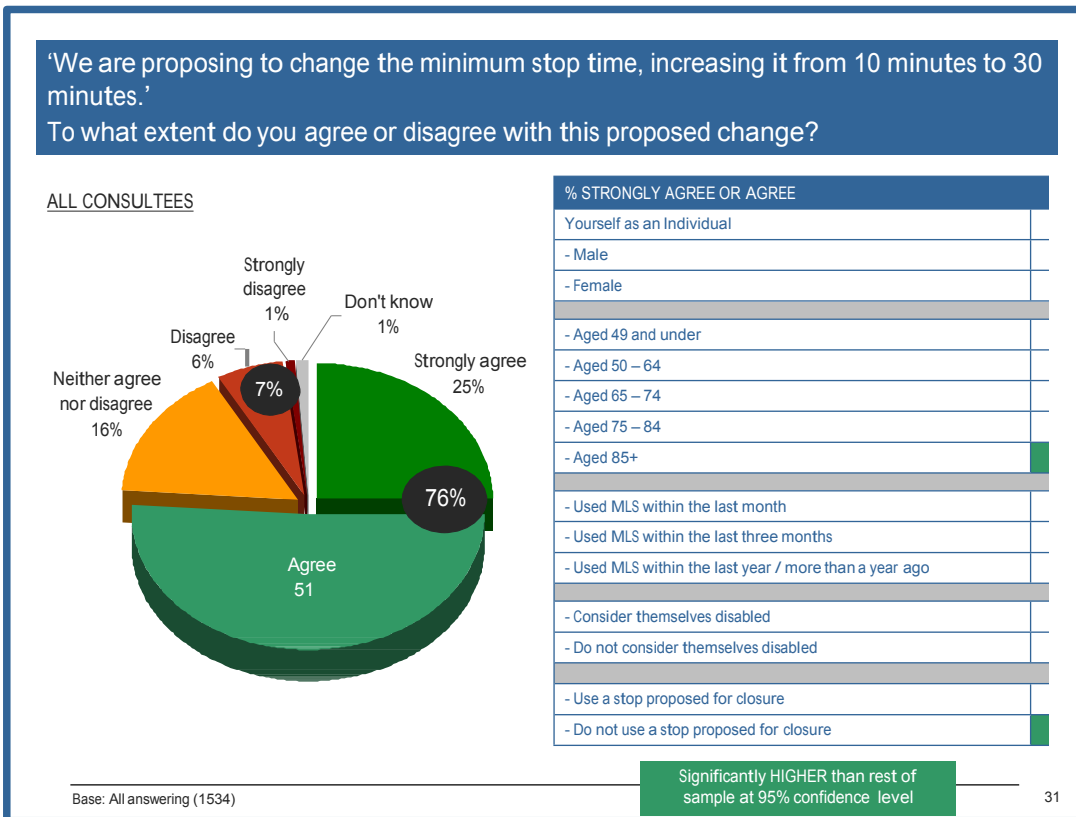
Just over three quarters (76%) of Consultees indicated they agreed with the proposed change; 16% indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed and 7% indicated they disagreed with the proposed change.

Individuals

Focusing specifically on 'Individuals', agreement is broadly consistent by the majority of age groups and both gender groups; although significantly higher amongst those aged 85 and over (83%) and lower amongst those aged 49 and under (71%)

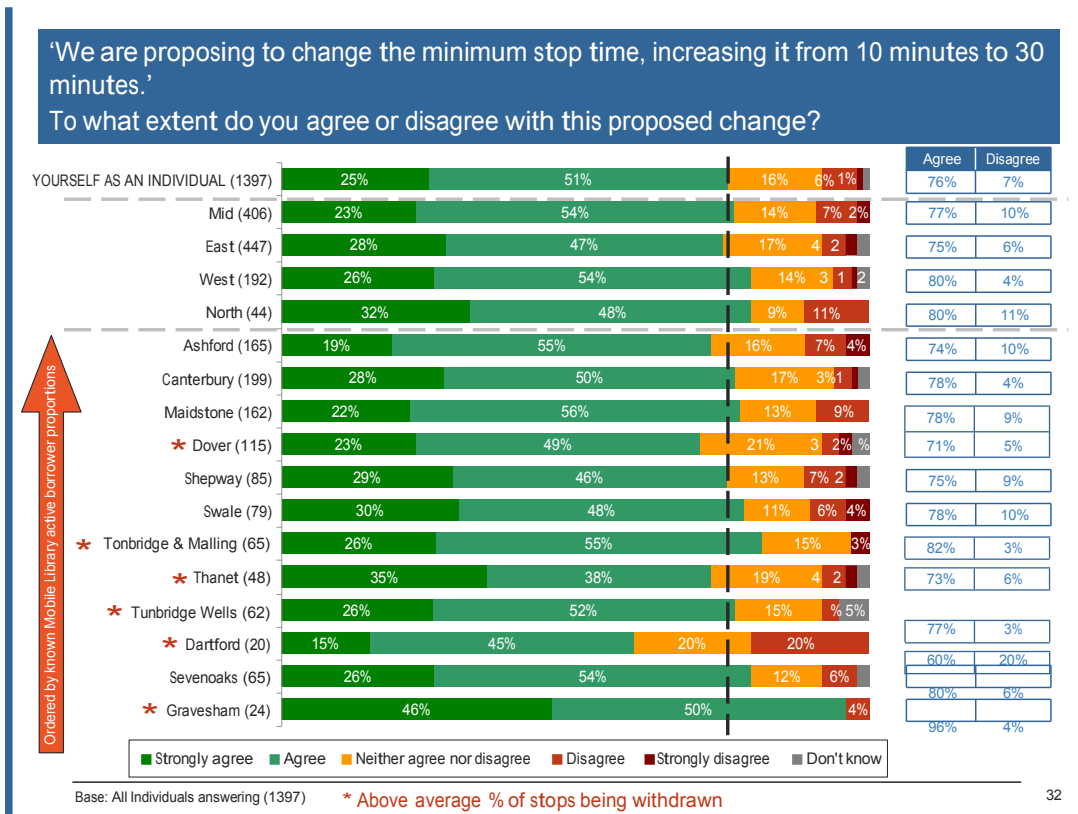
There are no significant differences by claimed last usage of the Mobile Library service or disability.

Agreement is significantly higher amongst those who use a stop that is not proposed for withdrawal (80%) compared to those who use a stop proposed for withdrawal (60%). We hypothesise that this is due to a preference for more stops and shorter stop times as opposed to fewer stops and longer stop times.



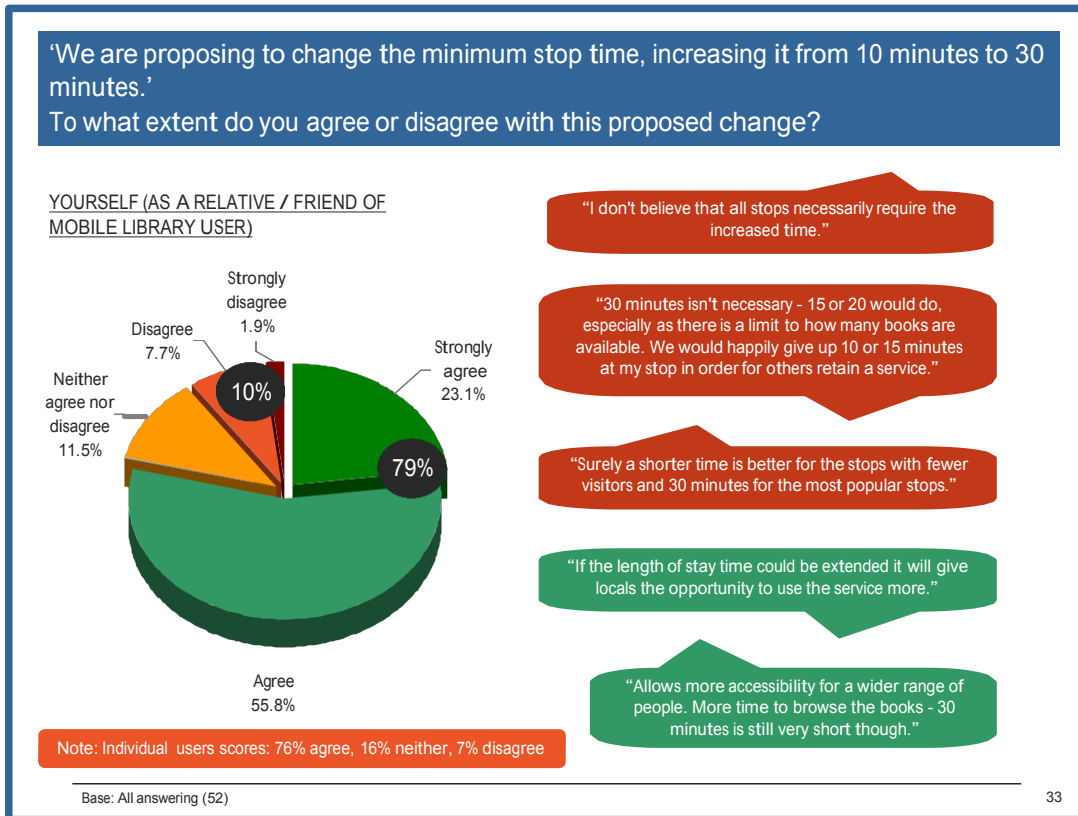
The chart below displays the results of this question by area and by district. Please note that the districts results have been ranked in order of the number of Mobile Library Service active borrower proportions provided by Kent County Council.

Agreement with the proposed change in stopping time is highest amongst Tonbridge & Malling (82%), Sevenoaks (80%) and Gravesham (94%) users. Agreement is lowest amongst Dartford (60%) users.



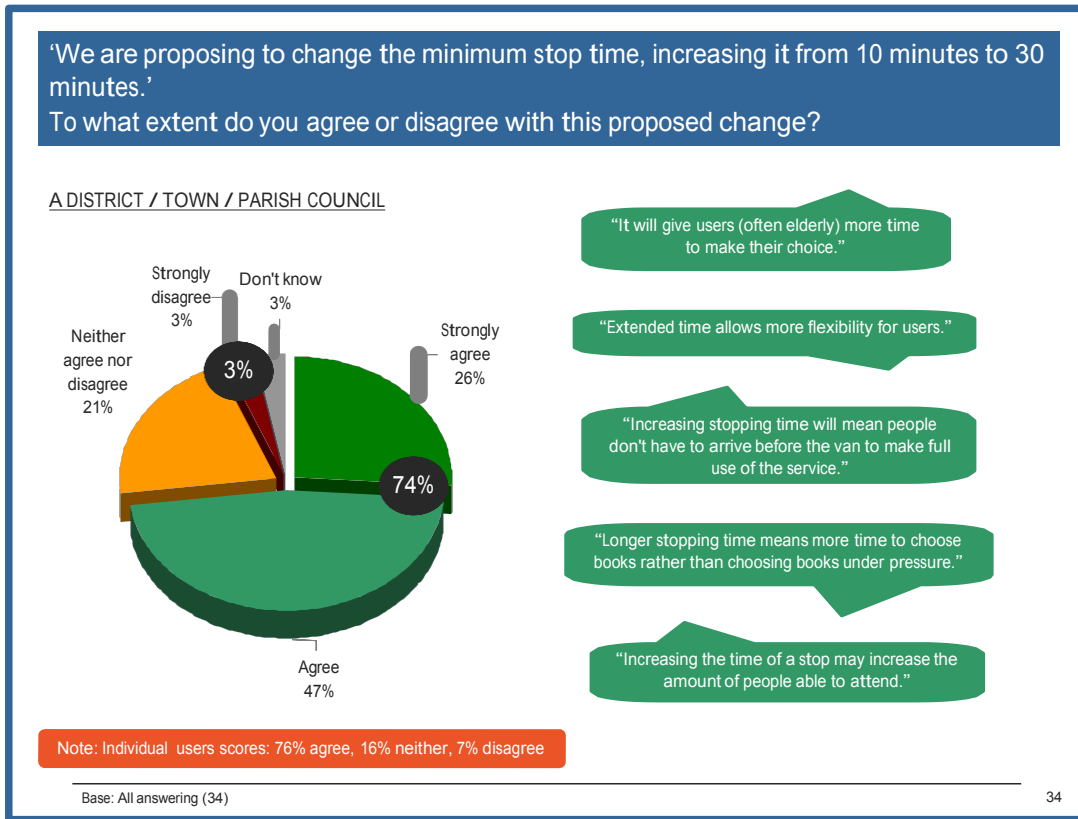
Relative / friend of Mobile Library user

Focusing specifically on the Consultees who answered as a 'friend or relative of the Mobile Library user', agreement is broadly consistent with that observed for users as a whole (79% compared to 76% for users) and disagreement is broadly consistent (10% compared to 7% for users).



District / Town / Parish Council

Focusing specifically on the Consultees who answered as a representative from a 'District / Town / Parish Council', agreement is also broadly consistent with that observed for users as a whole (74% compared to 76% for users) and disagreement is broadly consistent (3% compared to 7% for users).



7.6 REASONS FOR AGREEMENT RATING - CHANGING MINIMUM STOP TIME FROM 10 MINUTES TO 30 MINUTES

Consultees were asked to describe their reasons for their answers concerning proposed improvements and changes in their own words. The free text comments were reviewed and coded into “themes” to provide quantitative analysis for this question.

It is important to note that just over half of Consultees (52%) did not provide any answer to describe their reason for their agreement to changing days of operation.

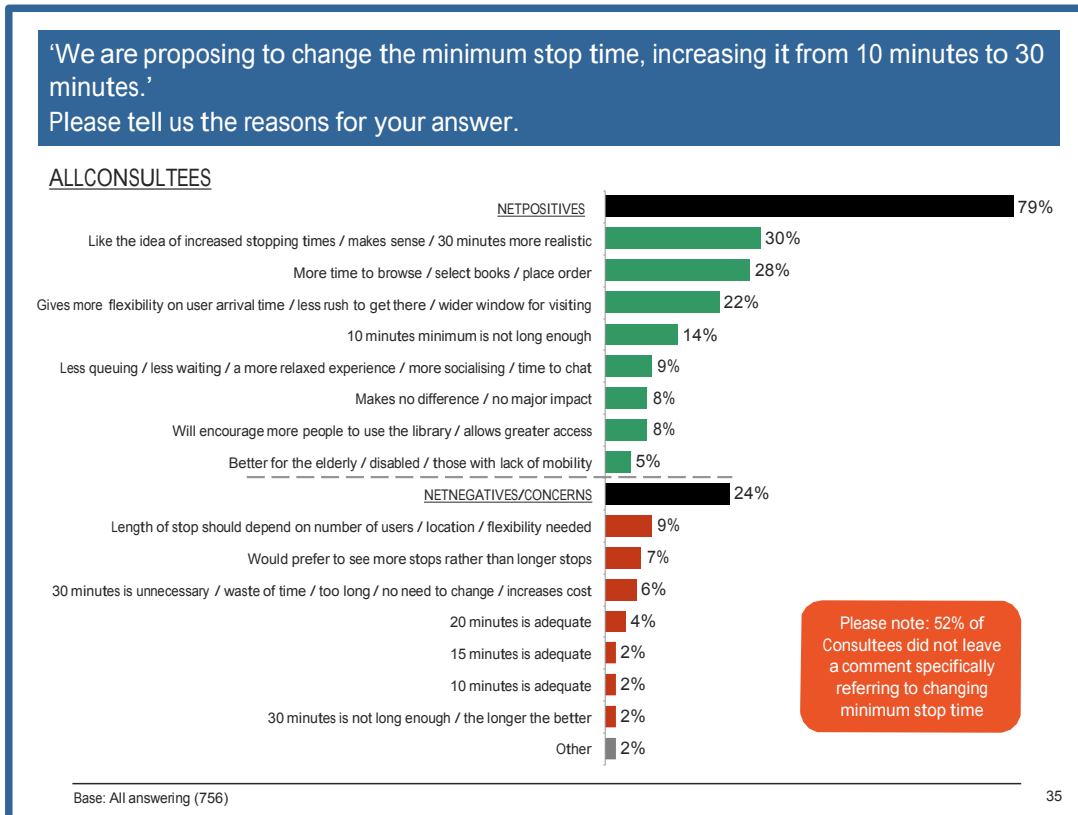
79% of those answering gave a positive comment towards the proposed change. The comments put forward focused on the increased stopping time making sense, allowing more time to browse / enhancing the experience and giving flexibility on potential usage:

1. Like the idea of increased stopping times / makes sense / 30 minutes more realistic – 30%
2. More time to browse / select books / place order – 28%
3. Gives more flexibility on user arrival time / less rush to get there / wider window for visiting – 22%
4. 10 minutes minimum is not enough – 14%
5. Less queuing / less waiting / a more relaxed experience / more socialising / more time to chat – 9%
6. Makes no difference / no major impact – 8%
7. Will encourage more people to use the library / allows greater access – 8%
8. Better for the elderly / disabled / those with a lack of mobility – 5%

24% of those answering gave a negative comment or had a concern towards the proposed change. The comments put forward focused on a more tailored approach to stopping times, a preference for more stops as opposed to longer stopping times and 30 minutes being too long:

1. Length of stop should depend on number of users / location / flexibility needed – 9%
2. Would prefer to see more stops rather than longer stops – 7%
3. 30 minutes is unnecessary / waste of time / too long / no need to change – 6%

4. 20 minutes is adequate – 4%
5. 15 minutes is adequate – 2%
6. 10 minutes is adequate – 2%
7. 30 minutes is not long enough / the longer the better – 2%



SOMEEXAMPLECOMMENTSFROMCONSULTEESINCLUDE:

“Over 10 minutes at stops allows better browsing and more time for queuing.”

“Extending the time means you are less likely to miss the library.”

“Good as we are always worried we will miss our time slot.”

“30 minutes makes it more of a community occasion.”

“If there are fewer stops I believe it must be for at least 30 minutes to give a small amount of flexibility to what time people can arrive. It is not always possible to be dead on time.”

“I welcome extra time to browse the shelves.”

“30 minutes is fairer, especially for old age people whose mobility is bad.”



7.7 REASONS FOR AGREEMENT RATING – GENERAL COMMENTS MADE

A number of general comments were made within the free text comments box that asked Consultees to describe their reasons for their answers concerning proposed improvements and changes. These free text comments were reviewed and coded into “themes” to provide quantitative analysis for more general comments made.

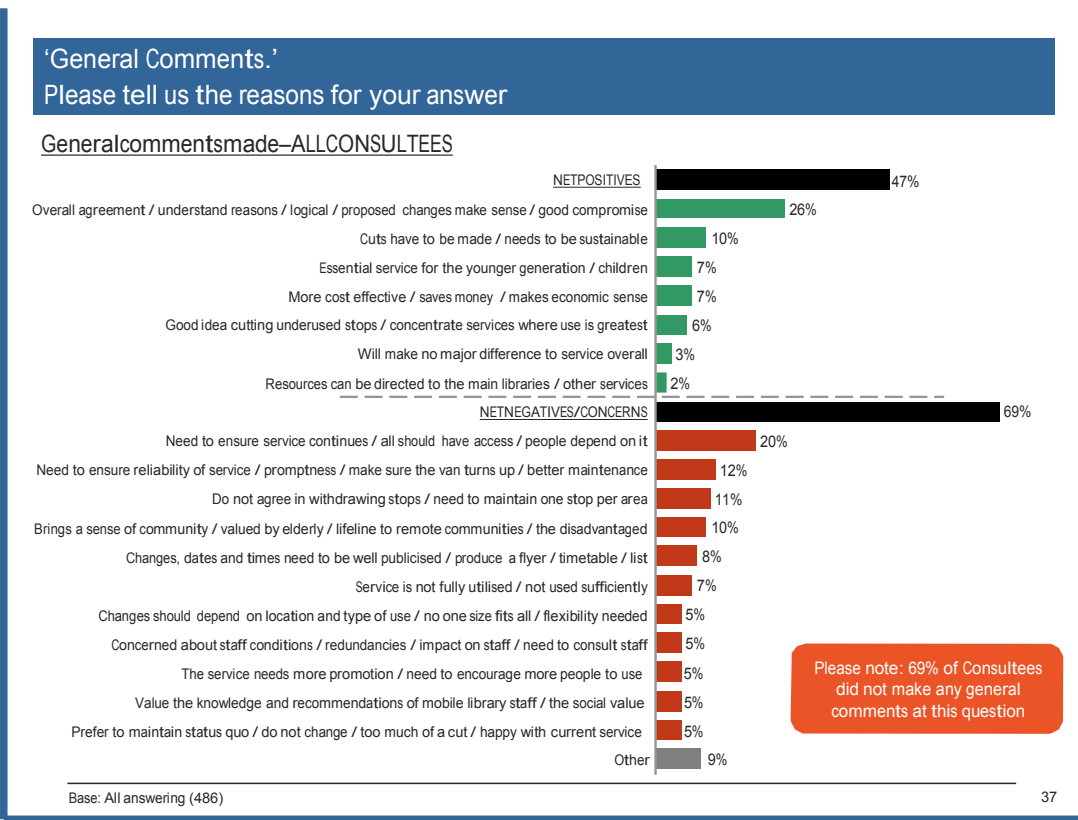
It is important to note that just over two thirds of Consultees (69%) did not make any other general comments that were not specific to the three proposed improvements / changes.

47% of those answering made a positive comment. The comments put forward focused on an overall agreement with the proposals being put forward and a recognition that savings need to be made:

1. Overall agreement / understand reasons / logical / proposed change make sense – 26%
2. Cuts have to be made / needs to be sustainable – 10%
3. Essential service for the younger generation / children – 7%
4. More cost effective / saves money / makes economic sense – 7%
5. Good idea cutting underused stops / concentrate services where use is greatest – 6%
6. Will make no major difference to service overall – 3%
7. Resources can be directed to the main libraries / other services – 2%

69% of those answering gave a negative comment or had a concern towards the proposed change. The comments put forward focused on the need to ensure the service continues and the importance of it to particular groups as well as recommendations for future improvements to the service:

1. Need to ensure service continue / all should have access / people depend on it – 20%
2. Need to ensure reliability of service / promptness / make sure the van turns up / better maintenance – 12%
3. Do not agree with withdrawing stops / need to maintain one stop per area – 11%
4. Brings a sense of community / valued by elderly / lifeline to remote communities – 10%
5. Changes, dates and times need to be well publicised / produce a flyer / timetable – 8%
6. Service is not fully utilised / not used sufficiently – 7%



SOME EXAMPLE COMMENTS FROM CONSULTEES INCLUDE:

"I am happy to review changing frequency, days and times, but removing the service altogether in the villages is unfair."

"The mobile library offers an excellent alternative to the hassle of using the town centre library. I like to be able to get to it easily. The reservations service is good and the librarian knowledgeable and helpful."

"I understand cuts have to be made, but please consider the old people who have limited mobility. They rely on books."

"I have always had a positive experience of using the mobile library and value the staff who provide this service."

"Mobile library service does a great job out here in the countryside. Would be a shame to lose this asset. I've read many books I might not have chosen in a static library with enthusiasm from staff onboard & ordering for me. Most recently, I've hardly been able to put it down. Sign of a good book!"

"This is a key service which may be seen as an easy target for cuts, but it provides a valuable community service which should not be trivialised."

"At a time when literacy in children seems to be on the decline in comparison with people of my generation (when children) access to books is very important."

"I have no idea how I will be able to access the library service in the future. This is most disappointing."

"If the service is withdrawn, I expect my daughter and myself to stop being library members."

"Need to advertise it more, leaflets through letter boxes, park up at shopping centres. Get the word out. Spoken to others, their comments: don't know it existed; know about service but don't know dates and times; don't know where it parks up."

"I do have a question how many people will lose their jobs and from the 11 vehicles currently in use how many will be decommissioned and what are the possibilities of a charity taking up some of the stops in villages, would this be possible?"

8. FUTURE ACCESS TO KCC LIBRARY SERVICES

8.1 FUTURE MEANS OF ACCESSING KCC LIBRARY SERVICES

Consultees were then asked to indicate which of the options for accessing Kent County Council Library services they would prefer. Please note that Consultees were given the opportunity to provide more than one response at this question – 23% of Consultees chose more than one response.

Just under half of Consultees (47%) indicated access via a visit to a library building would be best for them. This proportion is consistent with Kent County Council Mobile Library usage recordings in which half of users claim to also visit a library building.

A third of Consultees (33%) indicated the Home Library Service would be best for them; 22% indicated the Online Library Services would be best for them and 4% indicated Touch a New World would be best for them. Just under a quarter (23%) indicated that none of these services would be best for them; a combination that likely consists of those who consider it not possible to access these services and those who would prefer not to access library services through an alternative route.

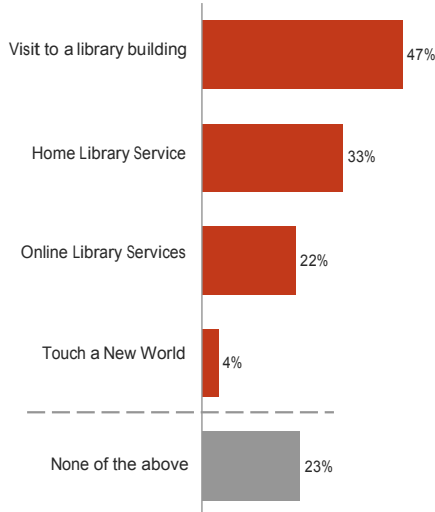
Focusing on Individuals specifically, there are significant differences by gender, age group, last access to the service and disability; consistent with likely usage patterns you would hypothesise for these services:

- A significantly higher proportion of females indicated that none of the services prompted would be best for them;
- The proportion indicating a visit to a library building and/or Online Library Services would be best decreases with age;
- The proportion indicating the Home Library Service would be best increases with age;
- A significantly higher proportion of those aged 75 and over indicated that none of the services prompted would be best for them;
- A significantly higher proportion of those who have not used the Mobile Library Service within the last month indicated that a visit to a library building or Online Library Services would be best;
- A significantly higher proportion of those who have used the Mobile Library Service within the last month indicated that none of the services prompted would be best for them;

- A significantly higher proportion of those who consider themselves disabled indicated that the Home Library Service would be best for them.

Having read about the different ways to access KCC library services, which of the following options would be best for you?

ALL CONSULTEES



Please note: Consultees were given the opportunity to provide more than one response at this question – 23% of Consultees chose more than one response

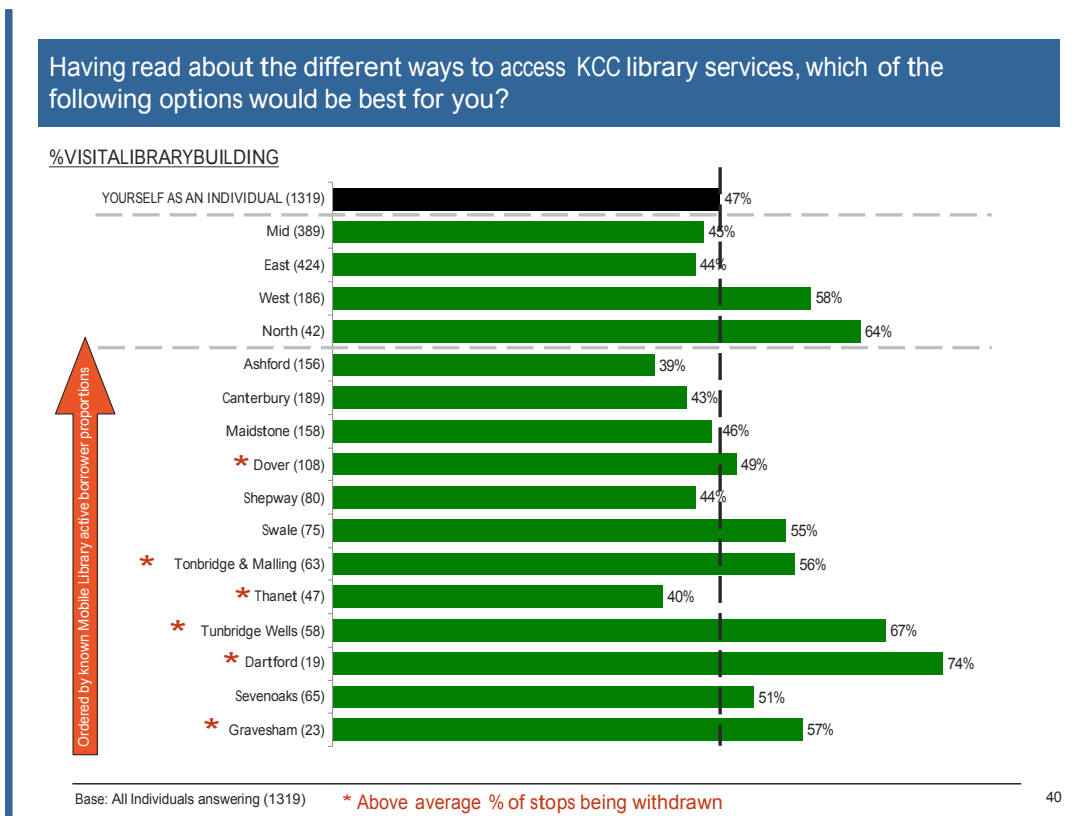
	Visit to a library building	Home Library service	Online Library services	Touch a New World	None of the above
Yourself as an Individual	47%	33%	22%	4%	23%
- Male	53%	32%	26%	3%	17%
- Female	46%	34%	20%	4%	24%
- Aged 49 and under	64%	19%	36%	4%	20%
- Aged 50 – 64	70%	24%	35%	6%	13%
- Aged 65 – 74	52%	30%	26%	3%	21%
- Aged 75 – 84	34%	42%	9%	4%	26%
- Aged 85+	15%	58%	4%	2%	29%
- Used MLS within the last month	40%	36%	16%	4%	28%
- Used MLS within the last three months	69%	30%	32%	3%	8%
- Used MLS within the last year / more than a year ago	63%	27%	31%	4%	11%
- Consider themselves disabled	24%	56%	10%	4%	25%
- Do not consider themselves disabled	55%	27%	25%	4%	21%

Base: All answering (1440)

39

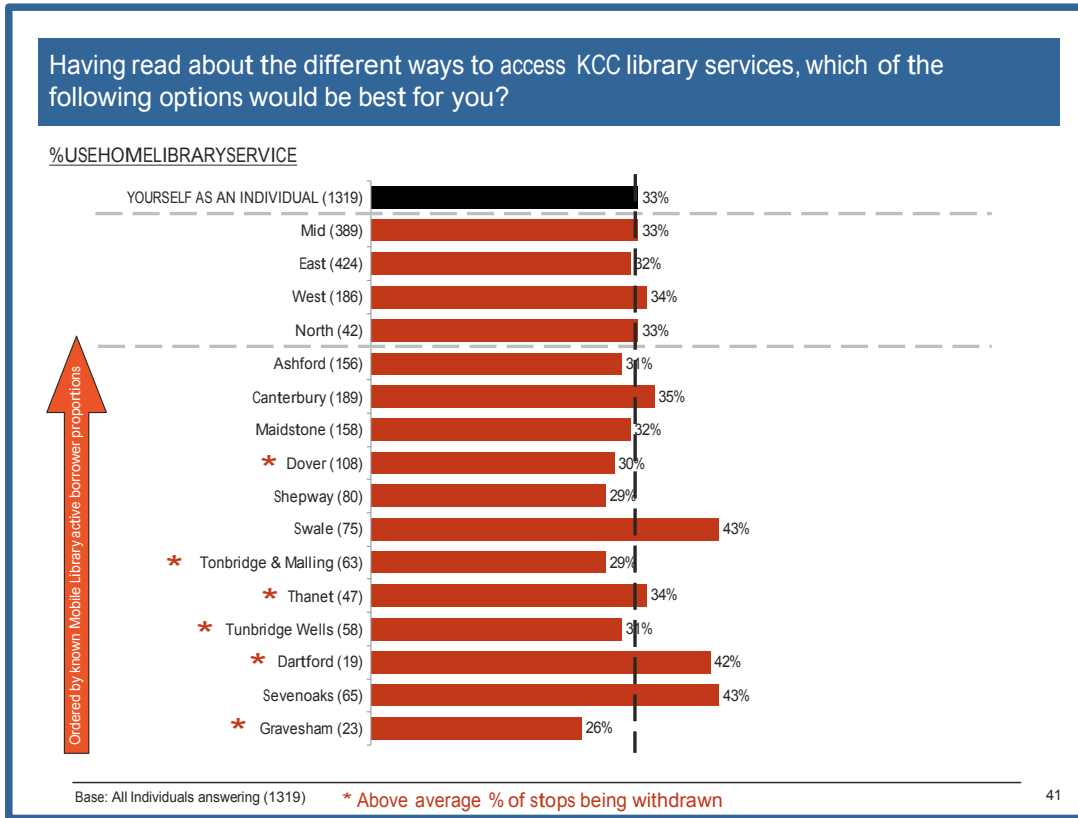
The chart below displays the proportion of users indicating a visit to a library building would be best for them.

The proportion indicating a visit to a library building would be best for them is highest amongst Swale (55%), Tonbridge & Malling (56%), Tunbridge Wells (67%), Dartford (74%) and Gravesham (57%) users. Agreement is lowest amongst Ashford (39%), Canterbury (43%), Shepway (44%) and Thanet (40%) users.



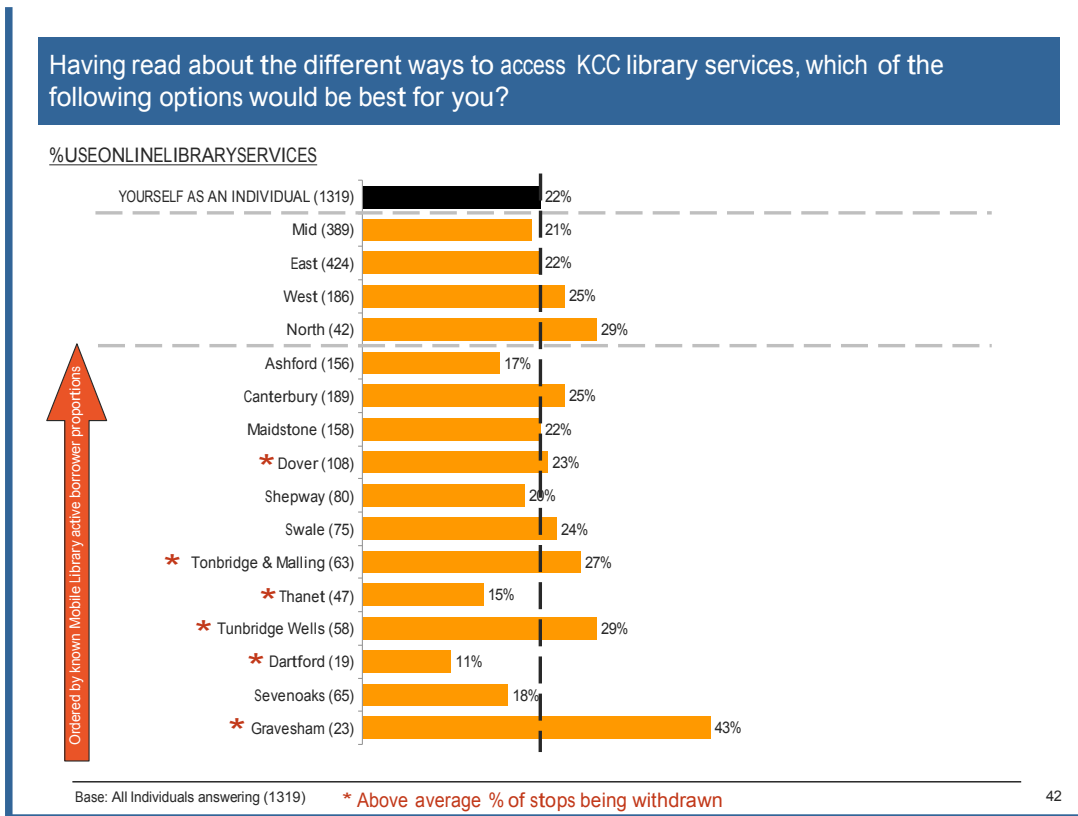
The chart below displays the proportion of users indicating the Home Library Service would be best for them.

The proportion indicating a visit to a library building would be best for them is highest amongst Canterbury (35%), Swale (43%), Dartford (42%) and Sevenoaks (43%) users. Agreement is lowest amongst Shepway (29%) and Gravesham (26%) users.



The chart below displays the proportion of users indicating the Online Library Services would be best for them.

The proportion indicating a visit to a library building would be best for them is highest amongst Canterbury (25%), Tonbridge & Malling (27%), Tunbridge Wells (29%) and Gravesham (43%) users. Agreement is lowest amongst Ashford (17%), Thanet (15%), Dartford (11%) and Sevenoaks (18%) users.



There is no variability in usage for the Touch a New World Service, with usage at 9% or below across all districts.

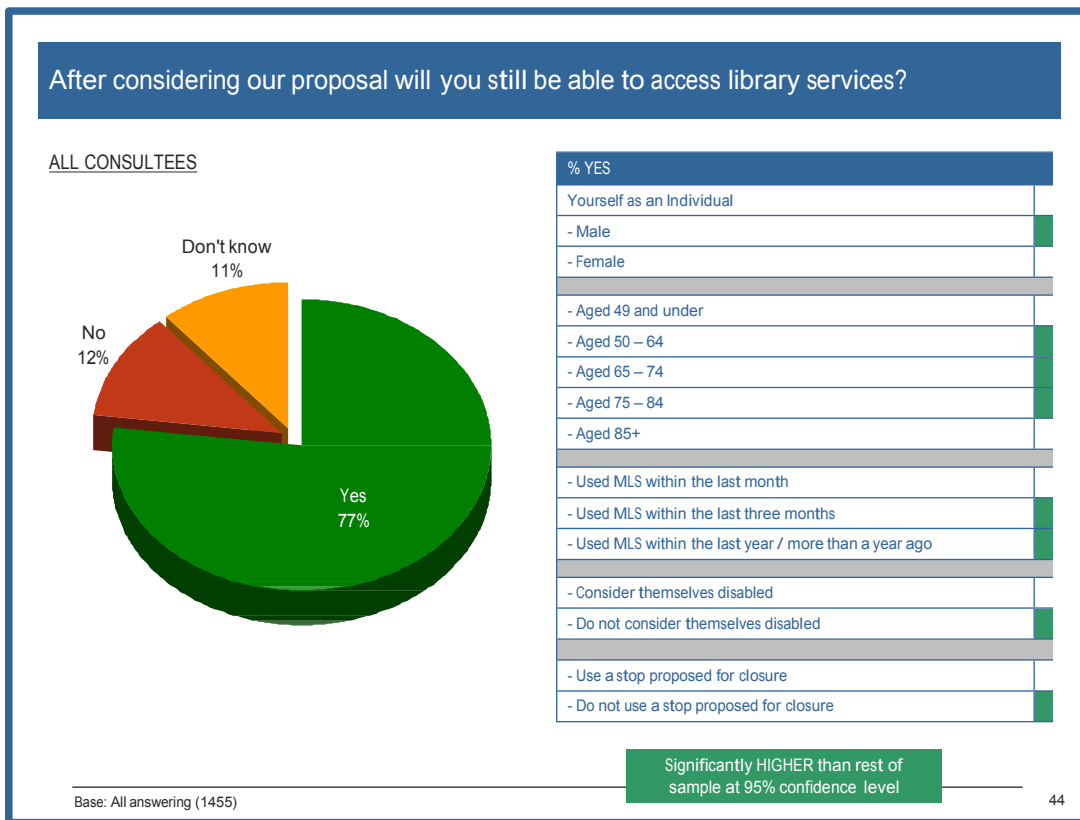
8.2 FUTURE MEANS OF ACCESSING KCC LIBRARY SERVICES

Consultees were then asked to indicate whether they will still be able to access library services after considering Kent County Council's proposal.

77% of Consultees indicated that they will still be able to access library services. 12% indicated they would not be able to access library services and 11% indicated they were unsure.

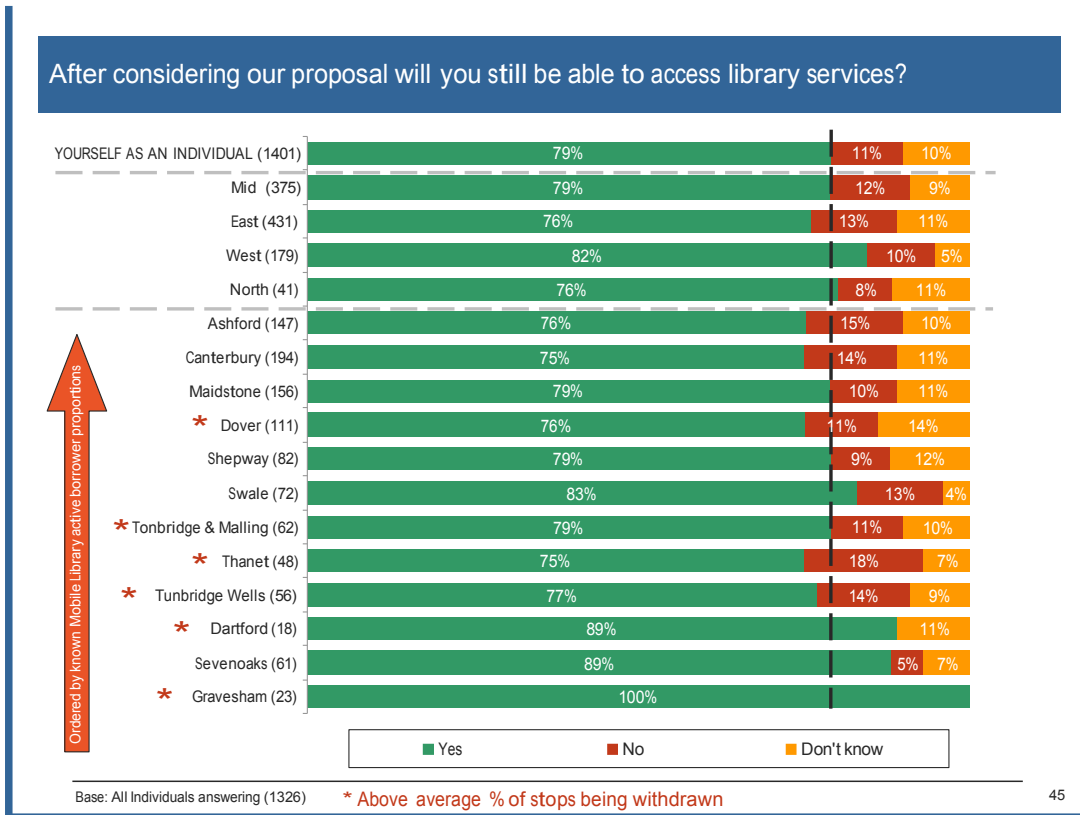
Focusing on Individuals specifically, there are significant differences by gender, age group, last access to the service, disability and those impacted by proposed stop withdrawals; consistent with likely usage patterns you would hypothesise for these services:

- A significantly higher proportion of males indicated they would still be able to access library services;
- A lower proportion of those aged 49 and under and 85 and over indicated they would still be able to access library services;
- A significantly higher proportion of those who have not used the Mobile Library Service within the last month indicated they will still be able to access library services;
- A lower proportion of those who consider themselves disabled indicated they would still be able to access library services.



The chart below displays the results of this question by area and by district. Please note that the districts results have been ranked in order of the number of Mobile Library Service active borrower proportions provided by Kent County Council.

Agreement that Consultees will still be able to access library services is highest amongst Dartford (89%), Sevenoaks (89%) and Gravesham (100%) users. Although agreement is also high in Swale (83%), the proportion disagreeing is also high (13%). Agreement is lowest amongst Ashford (76%), Canterbury (75%), Dover (76%) and Thanet (75%) users.



9. ANY OTHER COMMENTS / CONCERNS

Consultees were asked to describe any other options that they would like to see considered or anything else they would like to see the Mobile Library service deliver that it doesn't at present.

It is important to note that just over half of Consultees (54%) did not make any other comments at this question.

There were a number of positive comments made at this question as well as a number of concerns. The positive comments include:

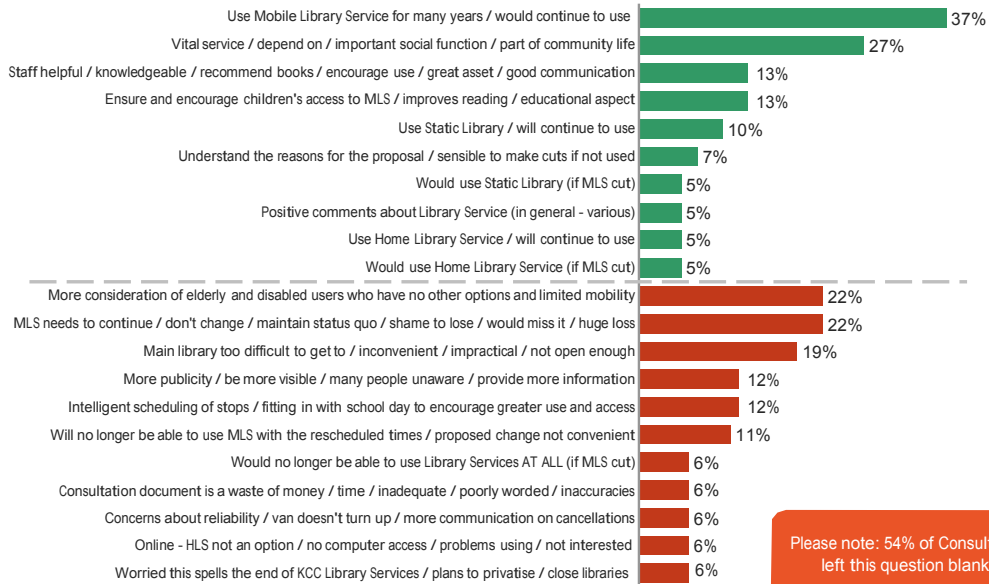
1. Use Mobile Library Service for many years / would continue to use - 37%
2. Vital service / depend on / important social function / part of community life - 27%
3. Staff are helpful / knowledgeable / recommend books / encourage use / great asset / good communication - 13%
4. Ensure and encourage children's access to Mobile Library Service / improves reading / education aspect - 13%
5. Understand the reasons for the proposal / sensible to make cuts if not used - 7%

The concerns made include:

1. More consideration of elderly and disabled users who have no other options and limited mobility - 22%
2. Mobile Library Service needs to continue / don't change / maintain status quo / shame to lose / would miss it - 22%
3. Main library is too difficult to get to / inconvenient / impractical / not open enough - 19%
4. Needs more publicity / be more visible / many people unaware / provide more information - 12%
5. Needs to be an intelligent scheduling of stops / fitting in with school day to encourage greater use and access - 12%
6. I will no longer be able to use Mobile Library Service with the rescheduled times / proposed change not convenient - 11%

'If you still have concerns about how you would access the library service in the future, or have any other comments, please let us know.'

ALL CONSULTEES



Please note: 54% of Consultees left this question blank

Base: All who answered (728)

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10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

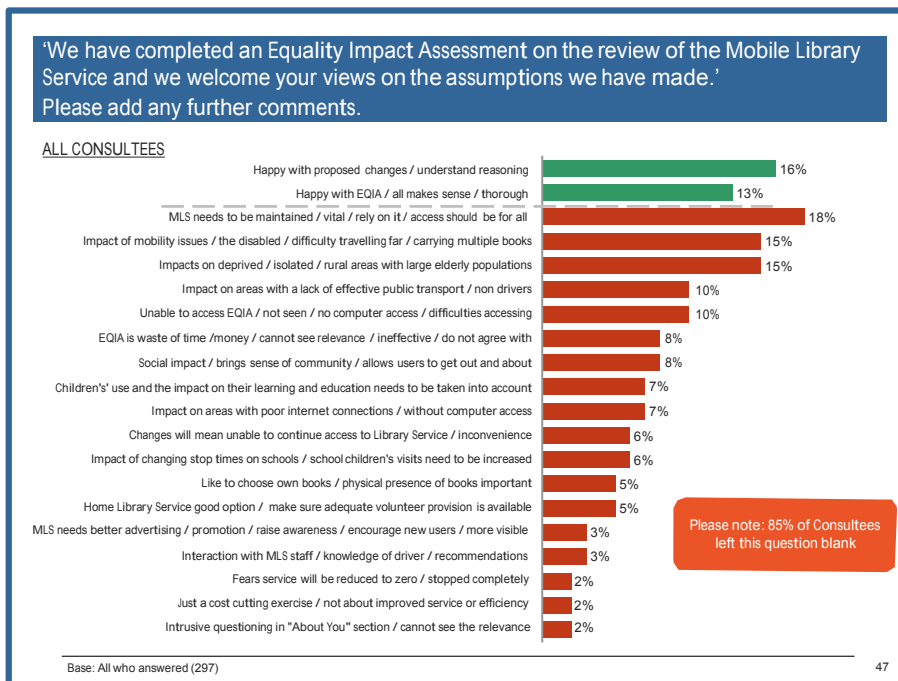
Kent County Council completed an Equality Impact Assessment to see if the service change could affect anyone unfairly. The Consultation questionnaire invited Consultees to note their views on the assumptions that had been made and the conclusions drawn. The Consultation document provided a link to the Assessment conducted.

It is important to note that the majority of Consultees (85%) did not make any comments at this question (this proportion is broadly consistent with other Consultations that Kent County Council have run).

16% of those providing a response indicated they were happy with the proposed changes / understand the reasoning behind the changes; comments not specifically referencing the Equality Impact Assessment. 13% of those providing a response indicated they are happy with the Equality Impact Assessment and it makes sense / is thorough.

Of the concerns raised, the most common are:

- Impact of mobility issues / the disabled / difficulty travelling far / carrying multiple books - 15%
- Impacts on deprived / isolated / rural areas with large elderly populations - 15%
- Impacts on areas with a lack of effective public transport / non drivers - 10%



11. APPENDIX

A copy of the full Consultation document (including the questionnaire) can be found below:



Mobile Library
Consultation docume