

Archive Search Room Opening Hours Consultation Report

1. Introduction

Libraries, Registration and Archives (LRA) reviews its services regularly to ensure that it continues to meet customer need and demand, so that LRA resources are focussed where they are most needed. As part of this approach, LRA has reviewed the opening hours of the Archive search room at the Kent History and Library Centre (KHLC), Maidstone.

The consultation outlined the proposal to reduce the opening hours for the Archive search room from 55 to 40 per week, which would result in a net a saving of £10,000.

Current hours	Proposed hours at time of public consultation
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday (9am-6pm)	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (9am-5pm)
Thursday (9am-8pm)	Thursday (9am-5pm)
Saturday (9am-5pm)	Saturday (9am-5pm)

The proposal is based on data on current use of the service which has reduced over recent years. The availability of other local archive facilities has also been taken into account.

2. Consultation process

The consultation ran for five weeks from 5 February to the 12 March 2018 and the following groups were targeted:

- Archive search room customers
- Archive User group
- Archive service customers including those who use us online
- KCC Members
- We have also consulted with key partners; Canterbury Cathedral Archives, Medway (MALSC), National Archives

The following methods were used to inform customers about the consultation:

- Consultation document explaining rationale, setting out the proposal and providing information on how people could have their say
- Posters at KHLC and Archive search room

- Entry on consultation directory (kent.gov.uk/archivesearchroom) and an invite sent to 6,075 registered users who have expressed an interest in being kept informed on KCC consultations regarding libraries and archives
- A dedicated page on the Archive website (kentarchives.org.uk) with a copy of the poster which signposted people to the consultation documents and questionnaire so they could reply online
- Link to the consultation in each team member's email signature
- Staff were briefed to promote the consultation and provide support to customers who needed assistance to understand the proposals and to respond.

Consultees were invited to submit their views on the proposals via a questionnaire that could be filled out either in hard copy or online via the consultation directory. Hard copy questionnaires were available in the search room or on request and could be returned via a drop box in the search room.

All consultation material included details of how people could request alternative formats but none were requested. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was completed prior to consultation which was available as part of the consultation. Comments on this have been used to update the EqIA which will be considered, along with the rest of the consultation responses, by the Cabinet Member before making a final decision.

3. Consultation Response

The consultation asked participants to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the proposal and for any feedback on the proposals and the EqIA.

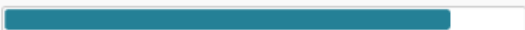

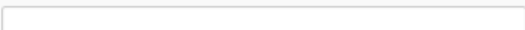





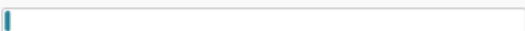

109 responses in total were received. 105 responses were via the online questionnaire and 4 were via paper.

One letter was received during the consultation which formed part of the results. This letter was replied to and the questions raised were used to produce a set of FAQs which were made available in the Archive search room and on the website.

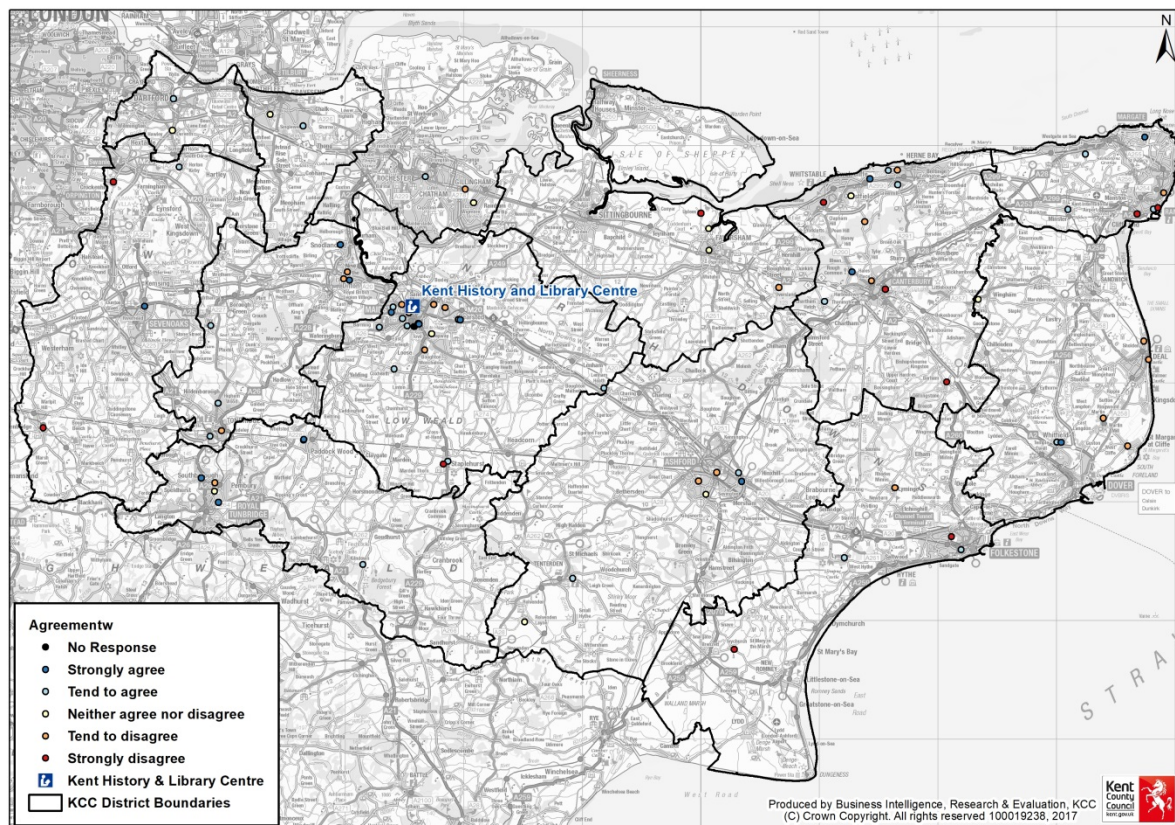
The questionnaire asked consultees in what capacity they were responding to the consultation. See the breakdown of responses below:

Q1. Are you responding...?

Please select the option from the list below that most closely represents how you will be responding to this consultation.

As an individual		86% (94)
As a representative of a local history / community group		1% (1)
On behalf of an educational establishment, such as a school or college		0% (0)
As a member of KCC staff		3% (3)
On behalf of a Parish / Town / Borough / District Council in an official capacity		2% (2)
As a professional genealogist		4% (4)
As a solicitor or legal representative		0% (0)
As a depositor		0% (0)
On behalf of a charity, voluntary or community sector organisation (VCS)		1% (1)
Other		4% (4)

Question 2 asked participants for their postcode details to help us analyse the data



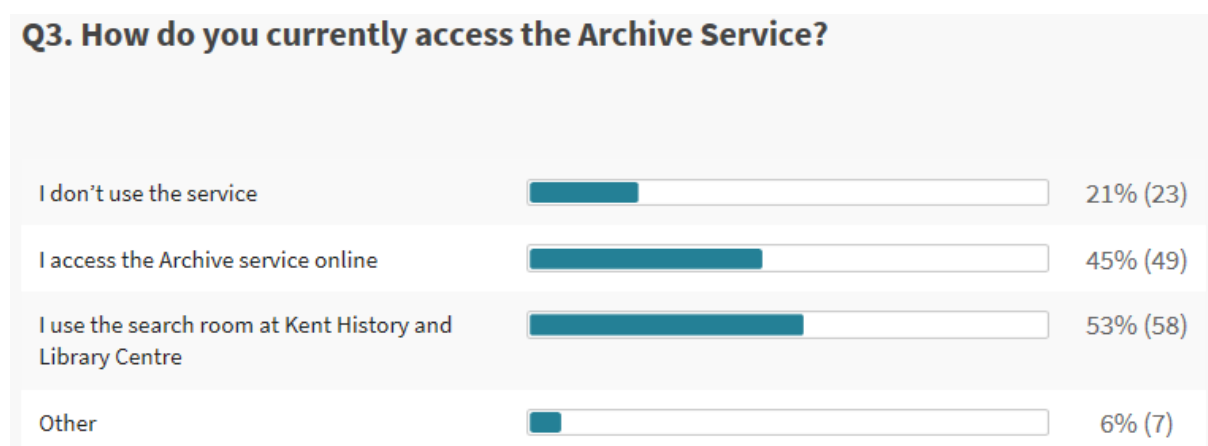
Participants were also from:

Bristol
Essex
Norfolk

Somerset
Southampton
Surrey

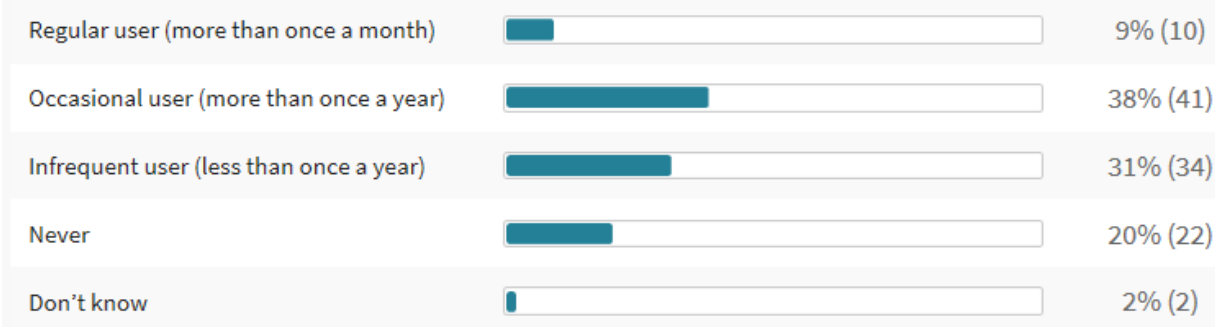
Wiltshire
Wolverhampton
USA

Q3. How do you currently access the Archive Service?



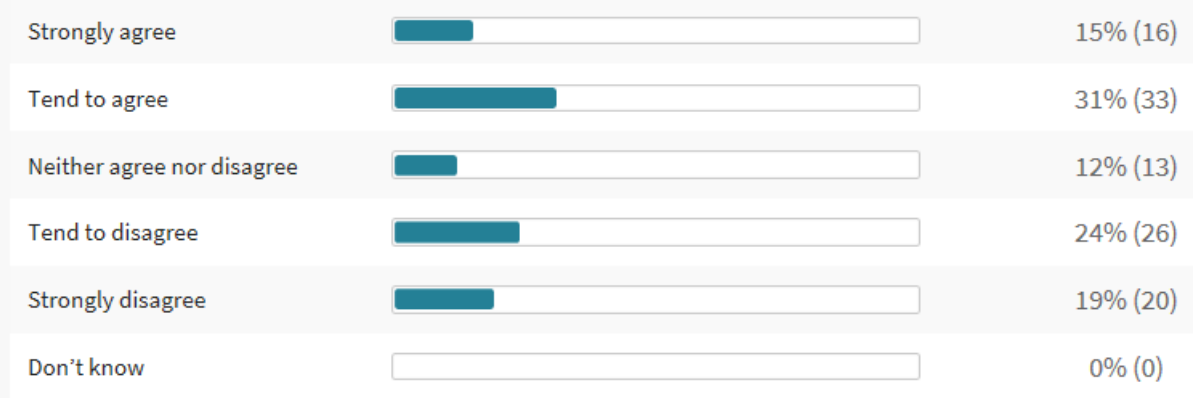
The majority of participants were users of the Archive Search Room although many online users and non users took part in the consultation: Of the users 86% were individuals

Q4. Please tell us how often you visit the Archive search room at Kent History and Library Centre?



20% of those who responded never use the service and the largest groups were those who are occasional and infrequent users.

Q5. Having read the proposal and the rationale to what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to the Archive search room opening hours?



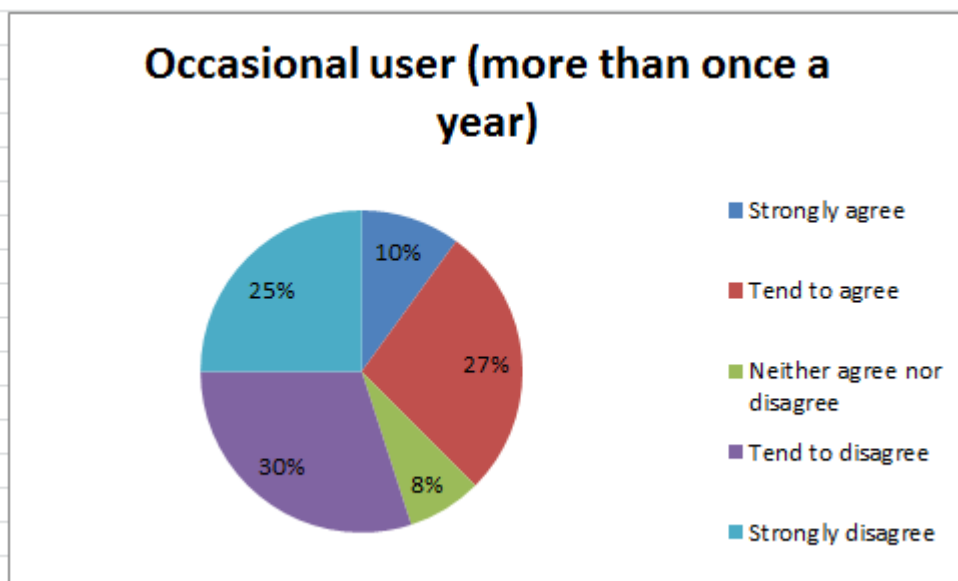
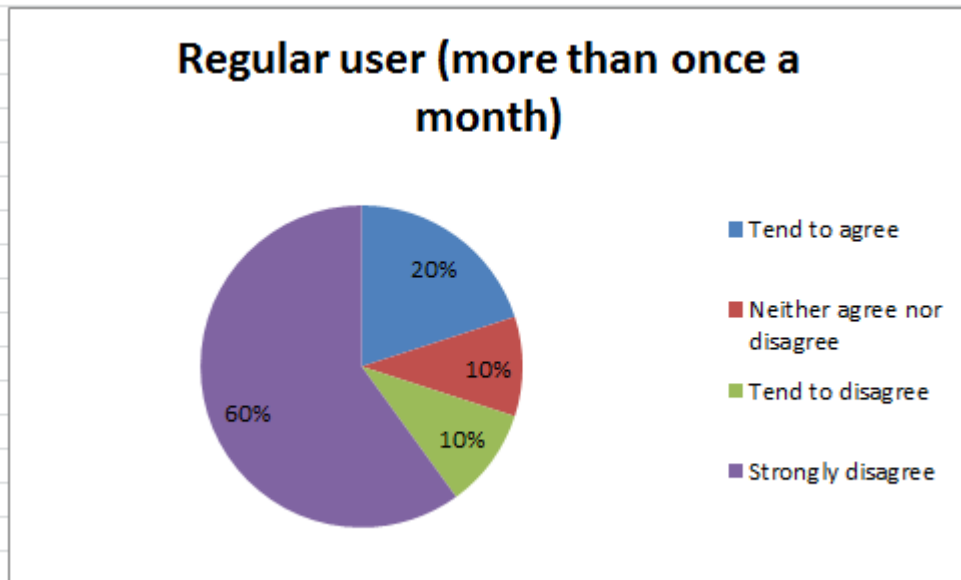
Agreement with criterion relating to frequency of usage

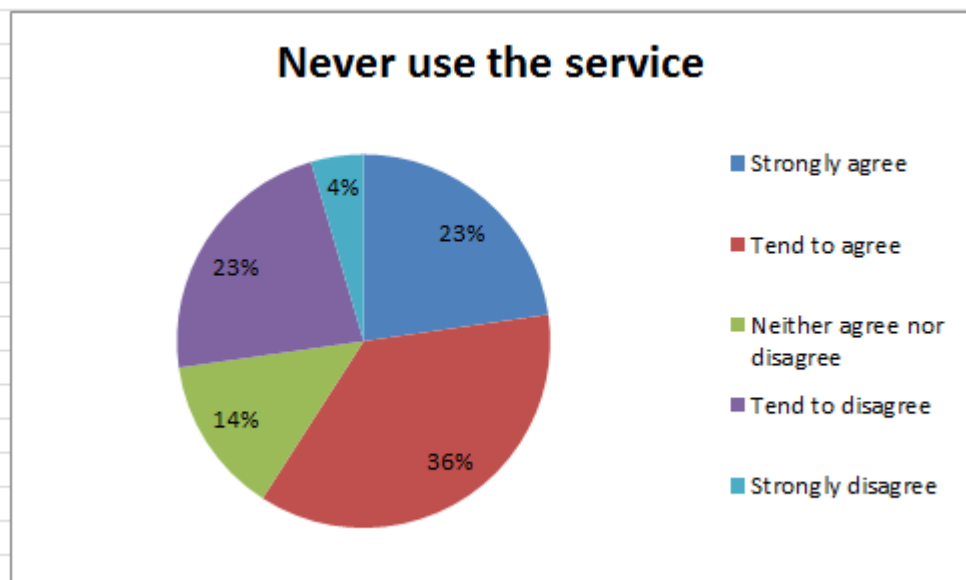
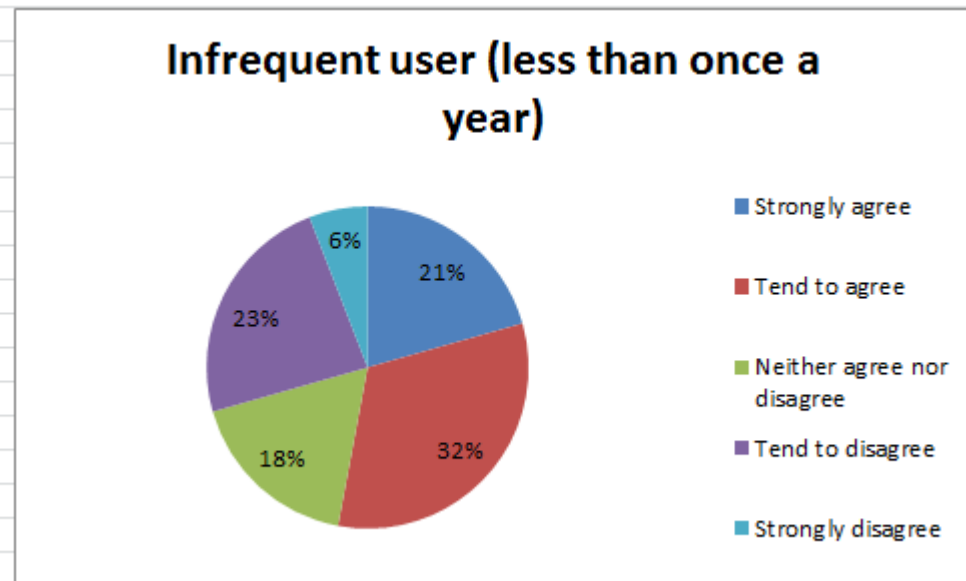
Participants were first asked to indicate their level of agreement (on a five-point scale) with the proposed criterion to assess future opening hours proposal.

Overall 46% of customers strongly agree and tend to agree with the proposals. 43% tend to disagree or strongly disagree, 12% neither agree nor disagree

If we just look at the way individuals (the largest group responding) the result is overall 48% strongly agree and tend to agree with the proposals.

Agreement with the proposal according to frequency of use

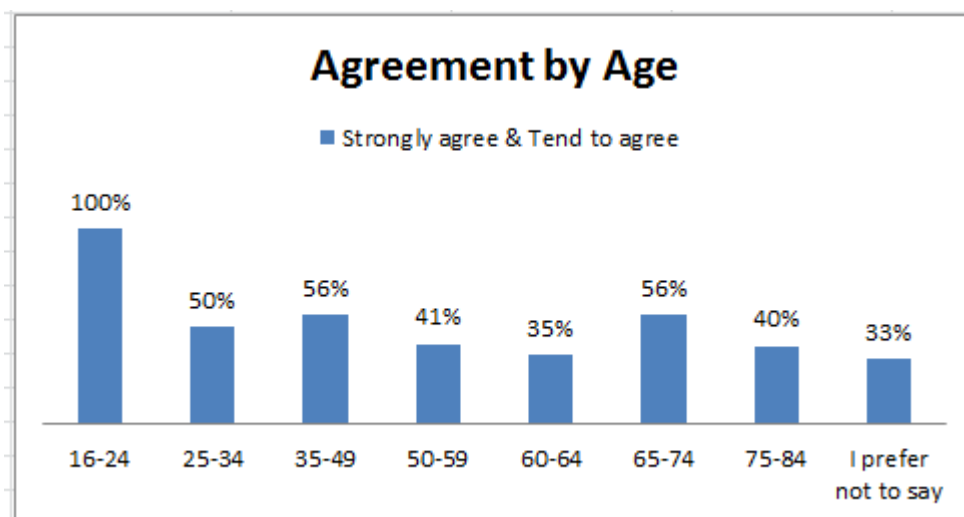




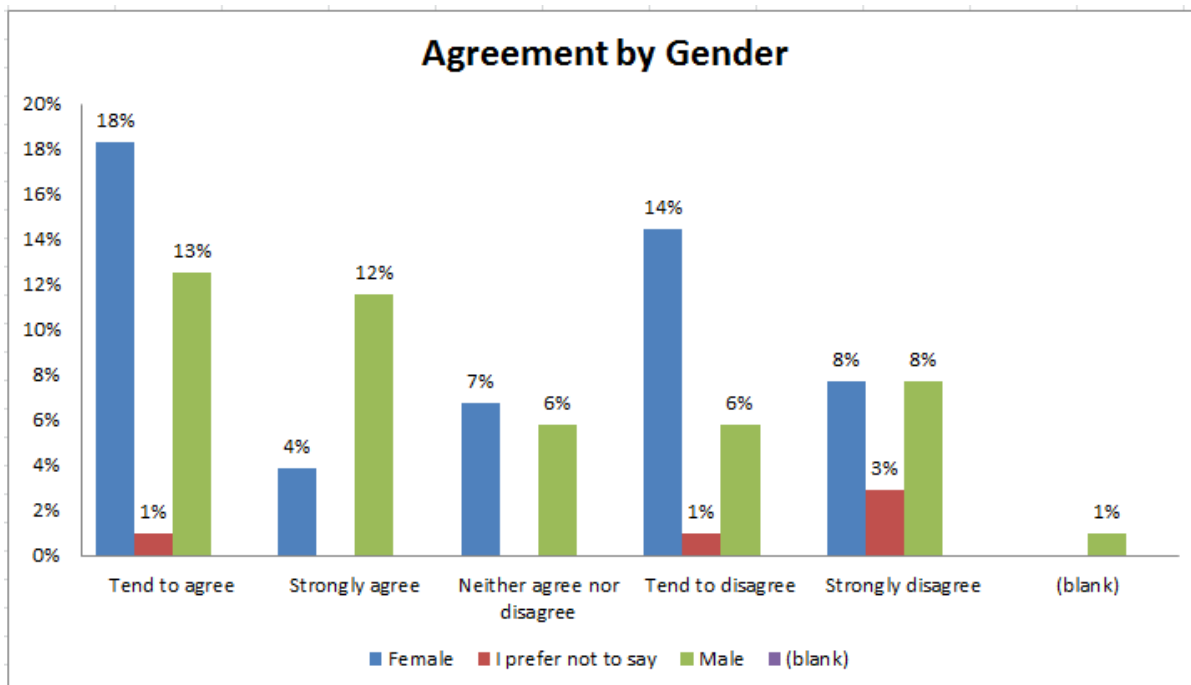
Comparing these charts it is apparent that the more frequent the use of the service the more inclined responders are to disagree with the proposals.

Agreement by Age

The percentage of participants who both strongly and tend to agree with the proposal was broken down by age. The age group 16-24 represents only one response which is why it is showing at 100%. The lowest rate of agreement is in the age group 60-64 at 35% and the rest are broadly the same. Age does not seem to be a factor with agreement to the proposals.



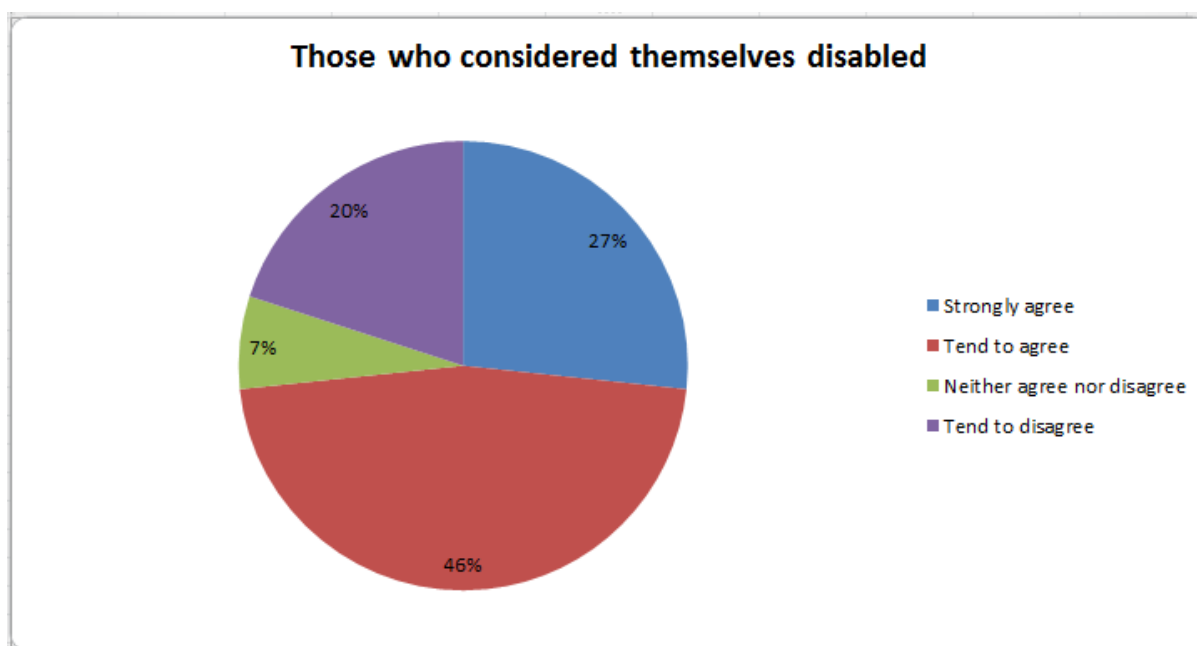
Agreement by gender



56% of males strongly or tended to agree and 44% of females strongly or tended to agree with the proposals.

Agreement by disability

15 participants considered themselves disabled and of those 73% strongly and tended to agree with the proposals.



Q5a asked consultees to add any comments they had on the proposal including any alternative proposals for opening hours or days that the Archive search room could close.

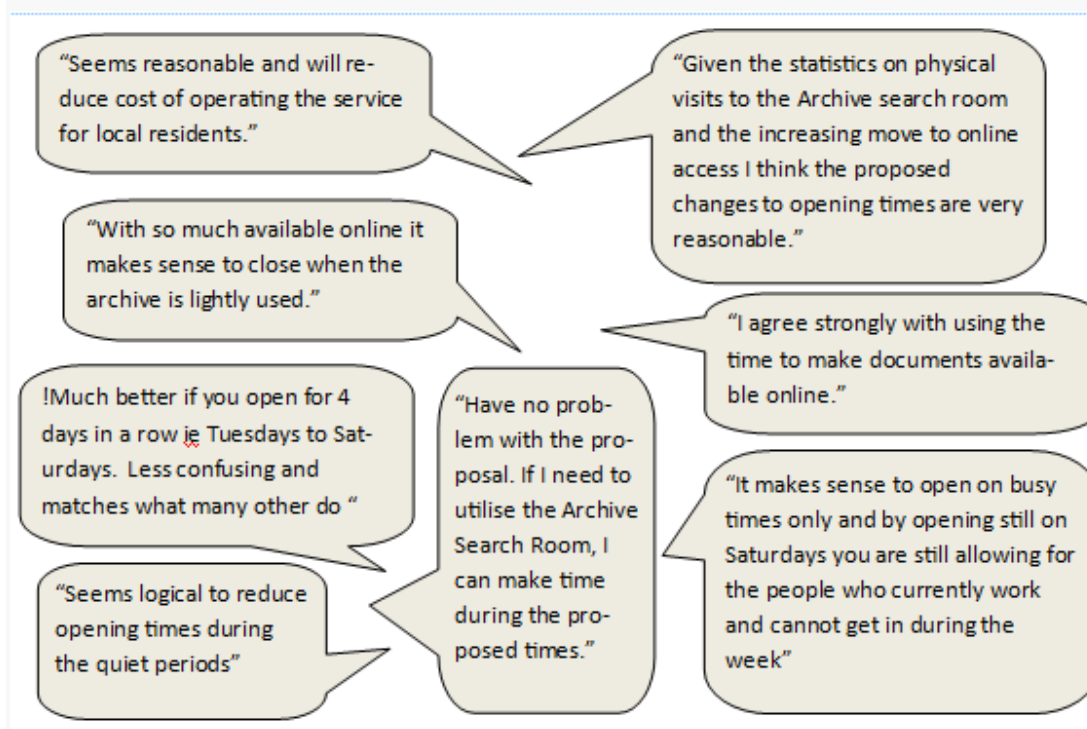
The free text comments were reviewed and coded into “themes” to provide quantitative analysis for this question. Some consultees gave multiple suggestions so the % of all comments will not equal 100%. Approximately two thirds of participants (67%) provided comments to this question. A number of themes were reported amongst those answering but the most common criteria mentioned were:

Comment	Number of comments	% of comments
Agreement with the proposals	24	33%
Welcoming digitisation	8	11%
Keep late night opening	31	42%
Close on Monday	13	18%
Keep open on Friday	13	18%
Other suggested opening hours – included	17	23%

Open later every day		
Open later on the day that open in the eve		
Close at 3pm one day		
Open 12-8 every day		
Close at 3pm Mon-Fri and at noon on Saturday		
Close 7pm on late night		
Open shorter days		
Open all day Saturday		
Open an extra hour on Saturday		

The following are a snapshot of the comments that were coded into themes from individuals and other interested parties

Comments from those supporting the proposals



“Seems reasonable and will reduce cost of operating the service for local residents.”

“Given the statistics on physical visits to the Archive search room and the increasing move to online access I think the proposed changes to opening times are very reasonable.”

“With so much available online it makes sense to close when the archive is lightly used.”

“I agree strongly with using the time to make documents available online.”

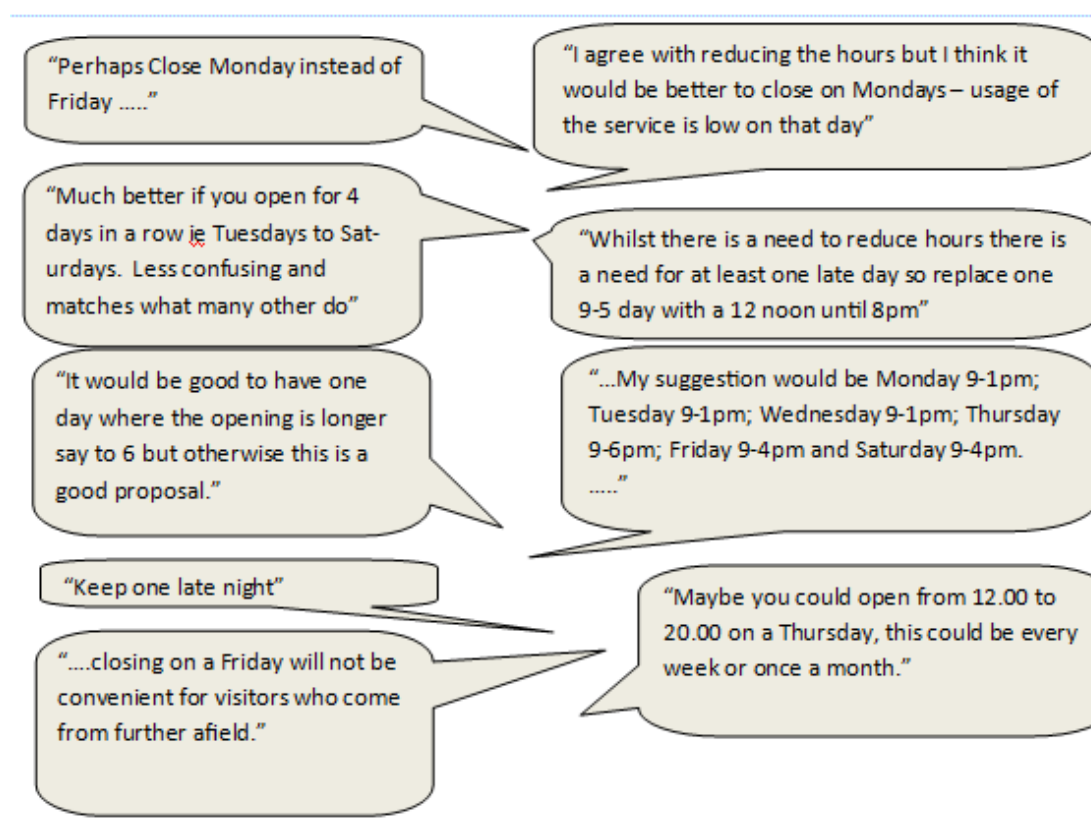
!Much better if you open for 4 days in a row ie Tuesdays to Saturdays. Less confusing and matches what many other do “

“Have no problem with the proposal. If I need to utilise the Archive Search Room, I can make time during the proposed times.”

“Seems logical to reduce opening times during the quiet periods”

“It makes sense to open on busy times only and by opening still on Saturdays you are still allowing for the people who currently work and cannot get in during the week”

Comments from those who disagreed with the proposals



Q6 Participants were asked to comment on the initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) on the proposals for the Archive search room opening hours.

We asked this question to find out if participants felt the proposal would unfairly affect any of the protected characteristics.




22 Participants responded to this question. The free text comments were reviewed and coded into “themes” to provide quantitative analysis for this question.

Comment	Number of comments	% of comments
No impact	9	41%
Impact on carers	3	14%
Age	3	14%
Disability	1	4%
Gender	1	4%
Religion or belief	1	4%
Other (did not relate to the EQIA)	7	32%



More analysis on this is covered in the updated EQIA

The following charts show the “About You” information that was captured as part of the consultation questions.





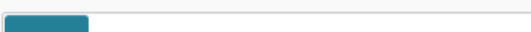

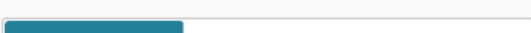



Q7. Are you....?

Male		44% (46)
Female		51% (53)
I prefer not to say		5% (5)

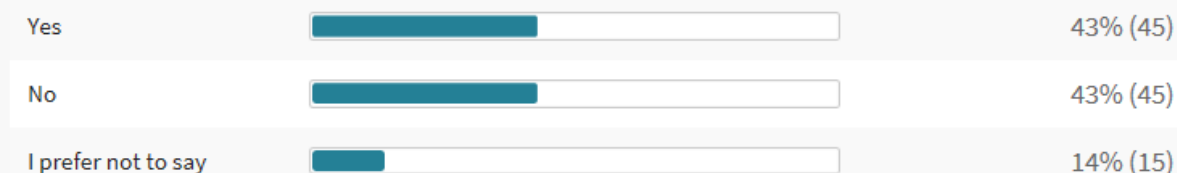
Q8. Is your Gender the same as your birth?

Yes		91% (93)
No		0% (0)
I prefer not to say		9% (9)

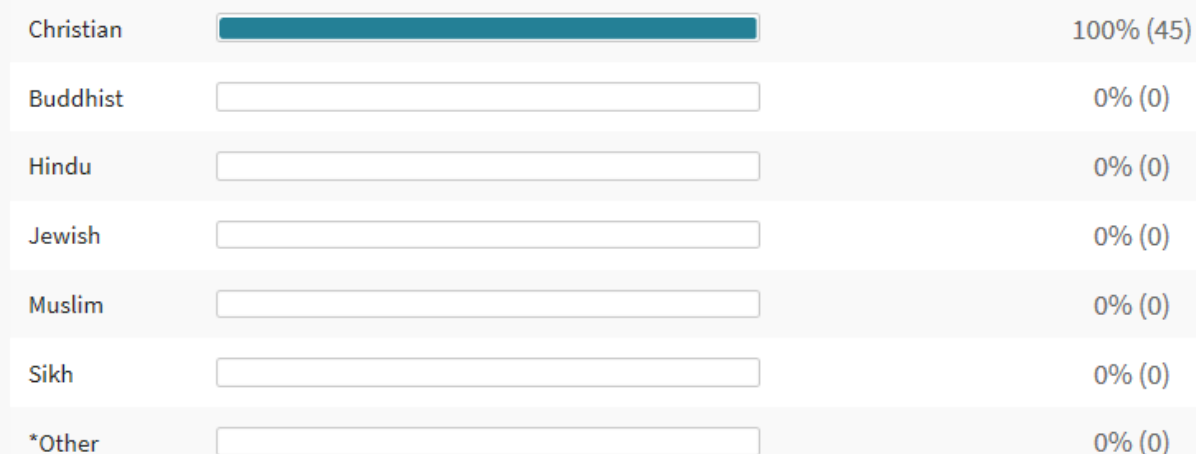
Q9. Which of these age groups applies to you?

0-15		0% (0)
16-24		1% (1)
25-34		6% (6)
35-49		9% (9)
50-59		16% (17)
60-64		19% (20)
65-74		34% (36)
75-84		10% (10)
85 + over		0% (0)
I prefer not to say		6% (6)

Q10. Do you regard yourself as belonging to a particular religion or holding a belief?



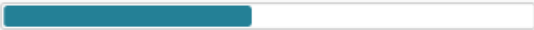






Q10a. Which of the following applies to you?



Q11. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?



Q11a. Please tell us which type of impairment applies to you.












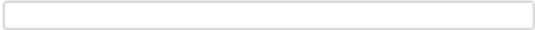
Physical impairment		47% (7)
Sensory impairment (hearing, sight or both)		40% (6)
Long standing illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy		73% (11)
Mental health condition		7% (1)
Learning disability		0% (0)
I prefer not to say		0% (0)
Other*		7% (1)

Q12. Are you a Carer?

A Carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, 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.

Yes		9% (9)
No		87% (91)
I prefer not to say		5% (5)

Q13. To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong? *(Source: 2011 census)*

White English		81% (84)
White Scottish		2% (2)
White Welsh		0% (0)
White Northern Irish		0% (0)
White: Irish		1% (1)
White: Gypsy/Roma		0% (0)
White: Irish Traveller		0% (0)
White: Other*		3% (3)
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean		0% (0)
Mixed: White and Black African		0% (0)
Mixed: White and Asian		1% (1)
Mixed: Other*		0% (0)

Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	<input type="text"/>	0% (0)
Mixed: White and Black African	<input type="text"/>	0% (0)
Mixed: White and Asian	<input type="text"/>	1% (1)
Mixed: Other*	<input type="text"/>	0% (0)
Asian or Asian British: Indian	<input type="text"/>	0% (0)
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	<input type="text"/>	0% (0)
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	<input type="text"/>	0% (0)
Asian or Asian British: Other*	<input type="text"/>	0% (0)
Black or Black British: Caribbean	<input type="text"/>	0% (0)
Black or Black British: African	<input type="text"/>	0% (0)
Black or Black British: Other*	<input type="text"/>	0% (0)
Arab	<input type="text"/>	0% (0)
Chinese	<input type="text"/>	0% (0)
I prefer not to say	<input type="text"/>	13% (13)

Q14. Are you...?

Heterosexual/Straight	<input type="text"/>	71% (71)
Bi/Bisexual	<input type="text"/>	1% (1)
Gay man	<input type="text"/>	1% (1)
Gay woman/Lesbian	<input type="text"/>	0% (0)
Other	<input type="text"/>	1% (1)
I prefer not to say	<input type="text"/>	26% (26)

4. Next steps

The results of the consultation will be presented at the Growth Economic Development and Communities Cabinet meeting on 9 May. They will be asked to make a recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services.

Customers will be notified of the decision by;



- A copy of this report, the Cabinet Committee paper and revised EqIA being made available in the search room and online via the consultation directory.
- Notice of three full working weeks will be given to customers before any changes come into effect
- Revised signage and information will be put in place at Kent History and Library Centre and on our website.

Carol Westwood, Customer Insight and Engagement Manager

Julie Maddock, Customer Insight and Engagement Officer

15 March 2018