

Final Libraries Consultation

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

(Please note this list of questions and answers will be added to and updated throughout the consultation.
The date at the top states when the document was last updated)

Consultation process questions

Q) Will there be in-person consultation sessions?

A) Yes - in-person sessions will take place in each library from the 2nd-26th September. Dates can be found on the BCC Libraries consultation webpage and on the Be Heard Platform
www.birminghambeheard.org.uk/bcc/lcf24

Q) Can I only complete the survey online?

A) No, you can also complete a paper copy at any Birmingham Library. Alternatively, you can share your views in the LibrariesPublicConsultation@birmingham.gov.uk or attend one of the in-person sessions.

Q) In the consultation survey available in any other format?

A) Yes, you can request a large print hard copy version from any Birmingham Library. You can also request for the questionnaire to be in other languages from any Library. If you require assistance completing the survey, please contact LibrariesPublicConsultation@birmingham.gov.uk

Q) Once the consultations ends. When will the decisions be made?

A) We are aiming for a report to cabinet in November with a recommended model.

Q) Why the budget saving?

A) Community libraries has had a substantial savings target for 2 years. The current financial pressures increased the target for 25/26. The budget for the Council for 24/25 was set by the elected members at full Council. Further information about this decision can be found at
(www.birmingham.gov.uk/news/article/1430/budget_proposals_20245_and_20256)

Consultation proposal questions

Q) When will the libraries be open on weekends/weekdays/outside of office hours etc?

A) Decisions regarding opening days and hours will be made after feedback from the final consultation- this forms part of the consultation questions.

Q) What is VCS?

A) Voluntary and Community sector

Q) Why are the buildings no longer fit for use?

A) Current library buildings have not been well maintained for many years. Most are older buildings which are expensive to maintain and modify. Maintenance and capital budgets are insufficient. Several library buildings are listed or subject to covenants.

Q) How is this a greater provision of service across the city?

A) The proposed additional Mobile library Vehicle would allow the opportunity to increase the coverage of Library services by increasing the number of stops. This will include areas that have never received Library Provision in the past and were selected due to high IMD need

Q) What is IMD?

A) IMD-Indices of Multiple Deprivation- these are widely used datasets in the UK to classify the relative deprivation of small areas. They are compiled by weighting multiple components of deprivation and creating a single score of deprivation. The IMD is based on seven domains of deprivation, including income, employment, education, health, crime, housing and living environment.
The IMD data used is on slide 68 of the consultation pack.

Q) How is a greater number of services being offered?

A) Within the Community Library Hubs proposal a wider range of services and organisations will be col located allowing greater connections and opportunities for residents. The services available will be based on the data collected for that area and tailored to that local community for example employment and skills, home and money.

Q) Which buildings will be used that are not BCC buildings?

A) BCC is committed to ensuring library services are provided in the designated Ward. However, this may not involve the existing library building. The decision will depend on the condition of the building, and efforts will be made to explore co-location options or alternative locations. In option 4, 4 libraries (Aston, Harborne, Selly Oak, and Tower Hill) will be delivered from Co locations, these buildings are not owned by BCC.

Q)If a Partner-led Library opportunity doesn't happen, will you create another Library?

A) No, if a Partner-led Library does not happen then the Library provision will close and a Mobile Library stop will be added, some outreach activities may be offered depending on the need data of that ward.

Q) Why isn't money being invested in the closed building to bring it back into use instead of using other non BCC buildings?

A) The amount of money required to bring some BCC Libraries up to compliant Health & Safety requirements is not affordable therefore seeking co-location opportunities is a more cost-effective solution and allows for maximum building-based provision opportunities.

Q)What is the process due to the library being in trust?

A)Where a service operates out of an Asset held in Trust, the Council is effectively the tenant/occupier and the Trust acts in the role as Landlord. As such should any service choose to end its operations and therefore the use and occupation of the asset, the Council may be obliged to exit and hand the asset back to the Trust through some form of 'surrender' process

Q)What does co-location mean?

A)Co-location would normally mean that the library will move into an alternative building not owned by BCC

Q)If an organisation expresses an interest in running a library will that make it less likely to remain BCC controlled/run?

A)All options will be considered for the new library provision

Q)Will any libraries that are to be 'co-located' remain open in their present incarnations until their new premises are ready to move into? When will any libraries closures take place?

A)Subject to the outcome of the consultation, a cabinet paper will be presented to the Council's Cabinet after the summer, with options and recommendations. Depending on the outcome of the decision, we anticipate any changes would commence in the Autumn.

Q)What is Libraries at Home?

A)f you are unable to leave your house (and have been assessed as such), we can drop books off at your home.

Q)How will the mobile library service be enhanced?

A) It will need a wider range of books to attract a wide audience. It will be enhanced by additional Vehicle which will enable more stops and wider coverage across the city. Additional services could be offered such as Home and Money advice.

Q)The consultation states that no decisions have yet been made, but option 4 is clearly the council's preferred option. How can we trust that this consultation is fair and objective when a decision already appears to have been made?

A)The Council continues to have an open mind about the future provision of library services in Birmingham and the consultation provides citizens and library users with the opportunity to provide and input into that and

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respond to some proposals. Our decision makers will consider the responses to the consultation before making final decisions.

Priority List rankings questions

Q)Why have these factors been selected?

A) The factors selected in the analysis are Community Need and Access& Usage. Data on usage and access provides details how communities use libraries and how accessible they are. Data on community need combines data on seven dimensions: income; employment; education; health; crime; and housing and services.

Q)Have you looked at what the community might be in the near future relying on projections?

A) No. We could not get projections at a local level.

Q)How does the ranking work and who had made the decision on the ranking?

A) Libraries are ranked per indicator (1-35), equal weighting is then given to each indicator

Q)Why isn't the Library of Birmingham ranked?

A) The consultation is on Community Libraries, Library of Birmingham is not classed as a Community Library

Q)How can we be sure that this ranking has been done correctly?

A) The ranking has been done using a basic excel formula, checked by BCC staff. The logic and excel calculations had been quality assured by an analyst at the Office for National Statistics

Q)What usage data field did we use?

All the data field are outline in the Libraries Consultation -Final stage Appendix slide 67 and 68

Q)What is the information on property decisions and business knowledge and where can I view

A)Combinations of future plans for the building for example regeneration projects, Income generation potential, whether the building is in trust, and plans for the area BCC/Regional level.

Q)What is used for the building condition and location?

A)Cost to run, maintenance costs, where the building is situated, other local assets, transport links.

First stage of consultation question

Q)How was the 45% decline in usage in the first consultation pack calculated?

A) Following the last statutory consultation in 16/17, the libraries were tiered which resulted in some expected decline in usage in 2018. The decline in usage between 2014-2023 is 48% and the decline in membership is 45%, but some of this is attributable to the implementation of the tiered model and libraries having reduced hours.

Data for the priority list was based on Jan 2023-Dec 2023 data