

Appendix A: The future of library provision in East Barnet/New Barnet - Final consultation report

Executive Summary

Residents were consulted on the proposal to relocate the Library in East Barnet to the proposed future leisure centre at the Victoria Recreation Ground in New Barnet for an 8 week period from October – December 2016. In addition to an online questionnaire, residents and library users were invited to attend drop-in sessions in the locality to hear about the plans and have their say.

Due to the localised nature of the proposal, the response was relatively low with a total of 52 respondents to the questionnaire and 62 residents present at the drop-in sessions. As well as usual resident engagement methods, approximately 4,000 letters were delivered to local addresses. As expected, the response was mixed with more than half of comments made during drop-in sessions being supportive of the proposal and just under half of questionnaire respondents being supportive of the proposal. Residents who attended drop-in sessions were encouraged to also complete a questionnaire, therefore it should be noted that there may be overlap in the results where views that were recorded at drop-in sessions were repeated in questionnaires. For that reason, the results of the questionnaire and the drop-in sessions will be reported separately in this appendix.

The consultation was undertaken around the same time as public information sessions on the wider changes to the library service as agreed for implementation earlier in the year. There were a number of negative comments regarding the reduction in library space and the transfer of the Library to a Partnership library from April 2017 made by residents that were against the proposal to relocate the library. These comments have been recorded in this report however it should be recognised that these particular comments do not relate to the changes being consulted on here.

In general, those who were less supportive of the proposal are users of the current Library building who currently walk to the library in 5-15minutes. Understandably, most of these residents want to retain the library in its current location as it is convenient. Many questionnaire respondents and residents who attended the drop-in sessions were supportive of the relocation both in terms of improved location to them personally as well as improved facilities for the local area. A number of residents referred to the benefits to them of having multiple services on one site as well as the benefit of increased usage of the library services in that locality.

This report details the method undertaken and the full results of the consultation undertaken.

1. Background

The council recognises that libraries are a universal and unique service that offers learning opportunities to all from the early years through to retirement. Our ongoing ambition is for libraries to continue to:

- help all children in Barnet to have the best start in life; developing essential language, literacy and learning skills, and developing a love of reading from an early age
- provide residents with the skills to live independently; to improve their health and wellbeing, and to get a job and progress whilst in work
- bring people together, acting as a focal point for communities and assisting resident groups to support their local area.

After a comprehensive review and extensive consultation with residents and library users the council have committed to retaining all 14 of the current libraries, as well as the Home & Mobile and digital library service as part of the new strategy for the Library Service.

Residents tell us that co-locating library services with other services is a good way to tackle some of the financial challenges faced by the Library Service. This paper reports on the results of an 8 week consultation with residents on the proposal to relocate the Library to the Victoria Recreation Ground in New Barnet. The opportunity to provide new library facilities in this part of the borough has arisen from the council's decision to invest in new leisure facilities to replace those offered at Church Farm in 2019. This decision followed extensive consultation with local residents.

1.1 Proposed future library location

The proposed future site for the Library is 0.9miles north-west from the existing building. It is well connected by public transport with a number of bus routes and New Barnet train station a 5 minute walk away. There is a direct bus route (number 384) from Crescent Road near the current library to Lawton Road opposite the proposed future location, a journey taking approximately 10minutes. The map below indicates the current and proposed future location for the library.

1.2 Why move the library?

In addition to tackling some of the financial challenges faced by the council, there are a number of other factors contributing to the council's decision to consult on the proposal to relocate the library:

1.2.1 Usage and footfall

All libraries in Barnet have seen usage fall by more than 25% in the last 10 years, however the Library in East Barnet has seen the greatest reduction in usage of 52% in this time period. In contrast, projected footfall at the new leisure facility is more than 3 times that of the current library. When residents were consulted on the council's proposals for future leisure provision in Barnet, 65% of respondents said they would consider accessing library services from a leisure centre. It is likely that the library would see a significant increase in use through the proposed relocation,

benefitting greater numbers of residents in addition to generating greater income to the community-based organisation that will be delivering the Partnership library service from East Barnet.

1.2.2 Transport and facilities

The proposed new location is well connected by public transport. The number 384 bus stops on Lawton Road by the vehicle entrance to the leisure centre. In addition, there are a number of other bus routes within a 5 – 10 minute walk of the proposed future location:

383 - The Spires to Woodside Park Station

307 - Barnet Hospital to Brimsdown Station

184 - Chesterfield Road to Turnpike Lane Station or Victoria Road

326 - The Spires to Brent Cross Shopping Centre

626 - Dame Alice Owen's School to Finchley Central Station or North Finchley Bus Station

New Barnet train station is approximately a 10 minute walk away with connections into London and Welwyn Garden City.

Relocating the library to the new premises within the leisure centre would provide brand new library facilities with lower running costs for the Partnership Library organisation in addition to reduced maintenance costs for the council. In addition to the new location providing co-located leisure facilities, there will also be a cafe on site and more parking than at the present library site.

1.2.3 Good example of this model working well

There are already many examples of libraries having been successfully co-located with other community facilities, both in London and elsewhere in the UK. For example, Sutton Council has co-located one of their libraries with three other community-led services, including a leisure centre. The library now attracts more visitors, many of whom wouldn't have otherwise used a traditional, stand-alone library. Hillingdon and Greenwich Councils, likewise, have libraries in buildings shared with leisure centres.

2. Technical details and method

In summary, the consultation was administered as follows:

- The consultation on the future library provision in East Barnet and New Barnet was open for eight weeks, from the 24 October 2016 to 19 December 2016.
- The consultation was published on Engage Barnet <http://engage.barnet.gov.uk> together with a consultation document which provided detailed background information about the proposal for relocating East Barnet Library.
- Respondent's views were gathered via an online survey. Paper copies were also made available in East Barnet Library and on request.
- Six drop-in sessions were held at the current library site in addition to venues in the vicinity of the proposed future location.

- The consultation was widely promoted via letter to approximately 4000 addresses in the surrounding area; the council website; Twitter; Facebook; and posters in East Barnet library.
- Further promotion was undertaken with schools through an inclusion in the regular school circular as well as individual letters sent to 6 schools in the immediate vicinity of the current and proposed future library sites.

3. Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was developed to ascertain residents' views on the proposal to relocate East Barnet Library to be collocated with the new leisure centre at the Victoria Recreation Ground. In particular, residents were asked:

- whether they tended to agree or disagree with the proposal
- how likely they would be to use the library should it be located within the proposed new leisure centre
- for reasons why they would/would not be likely to use the library in the proposed new location

In order to enable further understanding of individual responses the questionnaire also included:

- An open ended question where respondents were invited to write in any comments on why they agree or disagree with the proposal
- Open ended questions on reasons why respondents would be likely or unlikely to use the library in the proposed new location
- Questions to establish whether respondents are current users of East Barnet Library (or another library), the frequency of their use and the time /transport taken to reach the library. If the respondents were not current users, they were directed to a question on reasons why they do not use the library currently.
- Key demographic questions to help understand the views of different demographic groups.

Throughout the questionnaire and where applicable hyperlinks were provided to the relevant sections of the consultation document. Where questionnaires were made available in the library and on request, they were packaged with a consultation document to ensure all respondents were equipped with the same information.

4. Drop-in sessions

Six drop-in sessions were held to provide residents with the opportunity to ask questions directly to officers regarding the proposal. The sessions were held over 4 weeks on different days and at different times to ensure accessibility to all. Table 1 below gives the details of these drop-in sessions.

Table 1: Details of six drop-in sessions held during the consultation period

Drop-in session location	Date	Drop-in between
East Barnet Library	Tuesday 15 November	2 – 4pm
East Barnet Library	Tuesday 15 November	6 – 8pm
East Barnet Library	Thursday 17 November	11am – 1pm
New Barnet Community Centre	Thursday 1 December	11am – 1pm
St James Church, New Barnet	Thursday 1 December	4 – 8pm
New Barnet Community Centre	Monday 12 December	10am – 12noon

A number of officers were present at these sessions; numbers of residents attending were recorded in addition to the questions and comments made.

5. Response to the consultation

A total of 52 questionnaires were completed and 62 individuals attended the face-to-face drop-in sessions.

Residents who attended drop-in sessions were encouraged to also complete a questionnaire, therefore it should be noted that there may well be overlap in the results where views that were recorded at drop-in sessions were repeated in questionnaires. For that reason, the results of the questionnaire and the drop-in sessions will be reported separately in this appendix. Of those that completed a questionnaire, 48 were responding as Barnet residents with the remaining 4 respondents not answering the question.

6. Protected characteristics

The council is required by law, Equality Act 2010, to pay due regard to equalities in eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people from different groups. The protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, religion or belief and sexual orientation. To assist us in complying with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 we asked the general public consultation respondents to provide equalities monitoring data for 6 of these characteristics and explained that collecting this information will help us understand the needs of our different communities and that all the personal information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be stored securely in accordance with our responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998. Table 2 below shows the profile of respondents to the questionnaire in relation to these characteristics.

Table 2: Profile of respondents to the questionnaire in relation to the 6 protected characteristics

Protected Characteristic		Number	Percentage
Gender			
	Female	26	50%
	Male	18	35%
	Prefer not to say	1	2%
	Did not answer	7	13%
	TOTAL	52	100%
Pregnancy and maternity			
	Pregnant	2	8%
	On maternity leave	0	0%
	No/Skipped	24	92%
	TOTAL	26	100%
Age			
	Under 16	0	0%
	16-17	2	4%
	18-24	2	4%
	25-34	5	10%
	35-44	6	12%
	45-54	9	17%
	55-64	11	21%
	65-74	8	15%
	75+	1	2%
	Prefer not to say	1	2%
	Did not answer	7	13%
	TOTAL	52	100%
Ethnicity			
	Asian	2	4%
	Black	1	2%
	Mixed (White and Black Caribbean)	1	2%
	White	36	69%
	Other	1	2%
	Prefer not to say	4	8%
	Did not answer	7	13%
	TOTAL	52	100%
Disability			
	Yes	5	10%
	No	35	67%
	Prefer not to say/skipped	5	10%
	Did not answer	7	13%
	TOTAL	52	100%
Religion			

	Agnostic	1	2%
	Atheist	10	19%
	Baha'i	0	0%
	Buddhist	0	0%
	Christian	18	35%
	Hindu	0	0%
	Humanist	0	0%
	Jain	0	0%
	Jewish	4	8%
	Muslim	0	0%
	Sikh	1	2%
	No religion	7	13%
	Prefer not to say	3	6%
	Other religion/belief (please specify)	0	0%
	Did not answer	8	15%
	TOTAL	52	100%

As the data set is relatively small and the impact localised in one area of the borough, the profile of respondents as shown in table 2 has not been compared to the general public data for Barnet. Furthermore, approximately 13% of respondents (7 or 8 out of 52) did not answer the questions on protected characteristics therefore there is limited accuracy in drawing conclusions from responses based on the protected characteristics. Nevertheless, an Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken using both data from this consultation in addition to a needs assessment of the population (and wards specifically) undertaken as part of the wider Library Service Review. The Equalities Impact Assessment can be viewed in Appendix B.

7. Interpretation of results

Due to the localised nature of this consultation, the number of responses was relatively low. As expected the majority of respondents (44 out of 52) were current users of East Barnet Library. Due to this small sample size, throughout the analysis, numbers of respondents will be quoted along with percentages where necessary. Where percentages do not add up to 100, this may be due to rounding, or the question is multi coded. All open ended questions that invite respondents to write in comments, are multi-coded and therefore add up to more than 100 per cent.

All open-ended responses to questions in the consultation have been classified based on the main themes arising from the comment, so that they can be summarised. There were a number of comments relating to the wider changes to the library service taking place in 2017. These included comments around the concept of Partnership libraries and the use of volunteers. These comments were recorded and, as they do not directly relate to this specific consultation, they are reported under 'other' in the coding for open-ended questions.

8. Calculating and reporting on results

The results for each question are based on “valid responses”, i.e. all those providing an answer (this may or may not be the same as the total sample) unless otherwise specified. The base size may therefore vary from question to question.

9. Questionnaire results in detail

9.1 Co-locating library services

9.1.1 Proposal to relocate East Barnet library to co-locate with the proposed new leisure centre at the Victoria Recreation Ground

Residents were asked how far they agree or disagree with the proposal to relocate East Barnet library, a map was supplied (in print or as a link) showing the current and proposed future location of the library.

Respondents that agree

- 23 respondents strongly agreed or tended to agree, 18 of these are current users of East Barnet Library and stated that they would be likely to use the library should it relocate as proposed.
- 5 respondents that agree with the proposal are not currently users of East Barnet Library, 4 of these stated that they would be likely to use the library should it relocate. They gave reasons including: intention to use it when they use the other leisure facilities; improved location; and greater parking availability.

Respondents that disagree

- 26 respondents strongly disagreed or tended to disagree, 23 of these are current users of East Barnet Library. 6 respondents stated that they would be likely to use the library should it relocate and 20 said they would be unlikely.
- 2 of the respondents that disagreed do not currently use the library and both stated that they would not intend to use it should it relocate due to lack of convenience and no requirement to use a library.

Chart A shows the full response to this question.

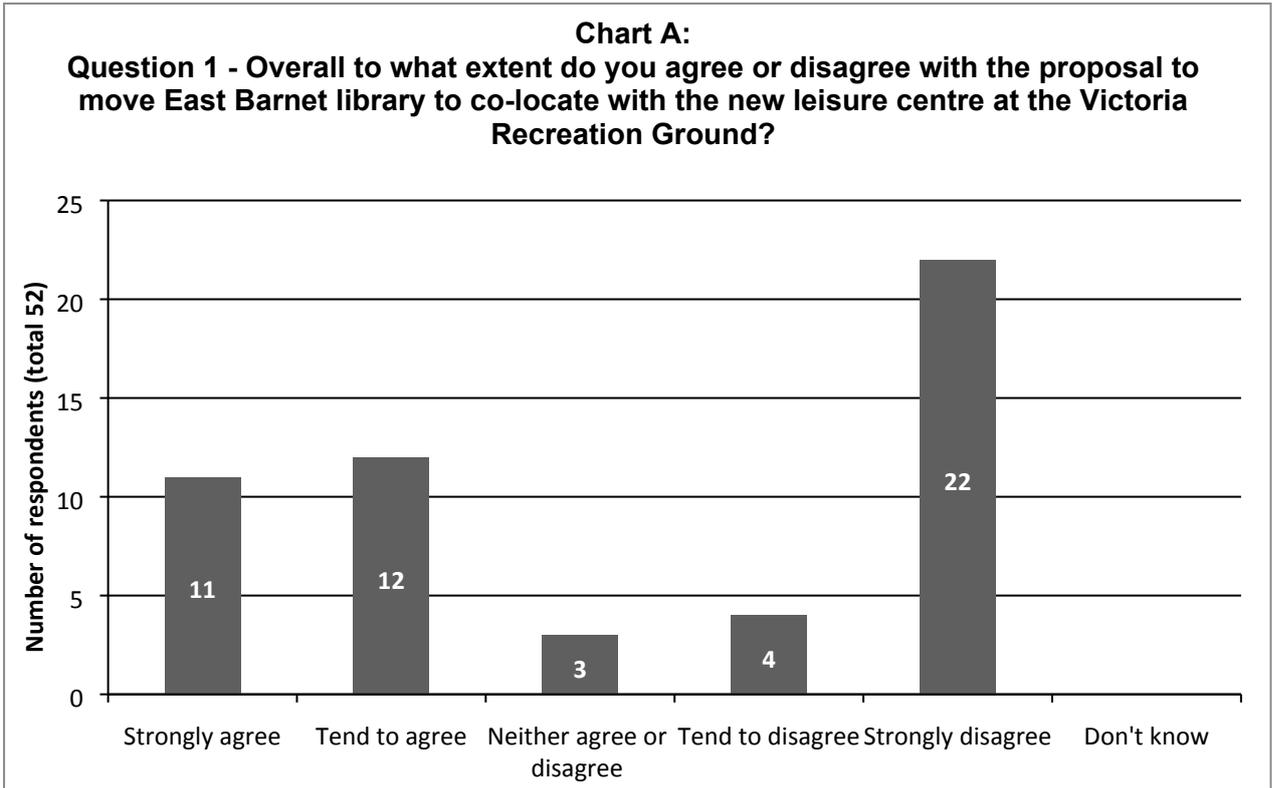
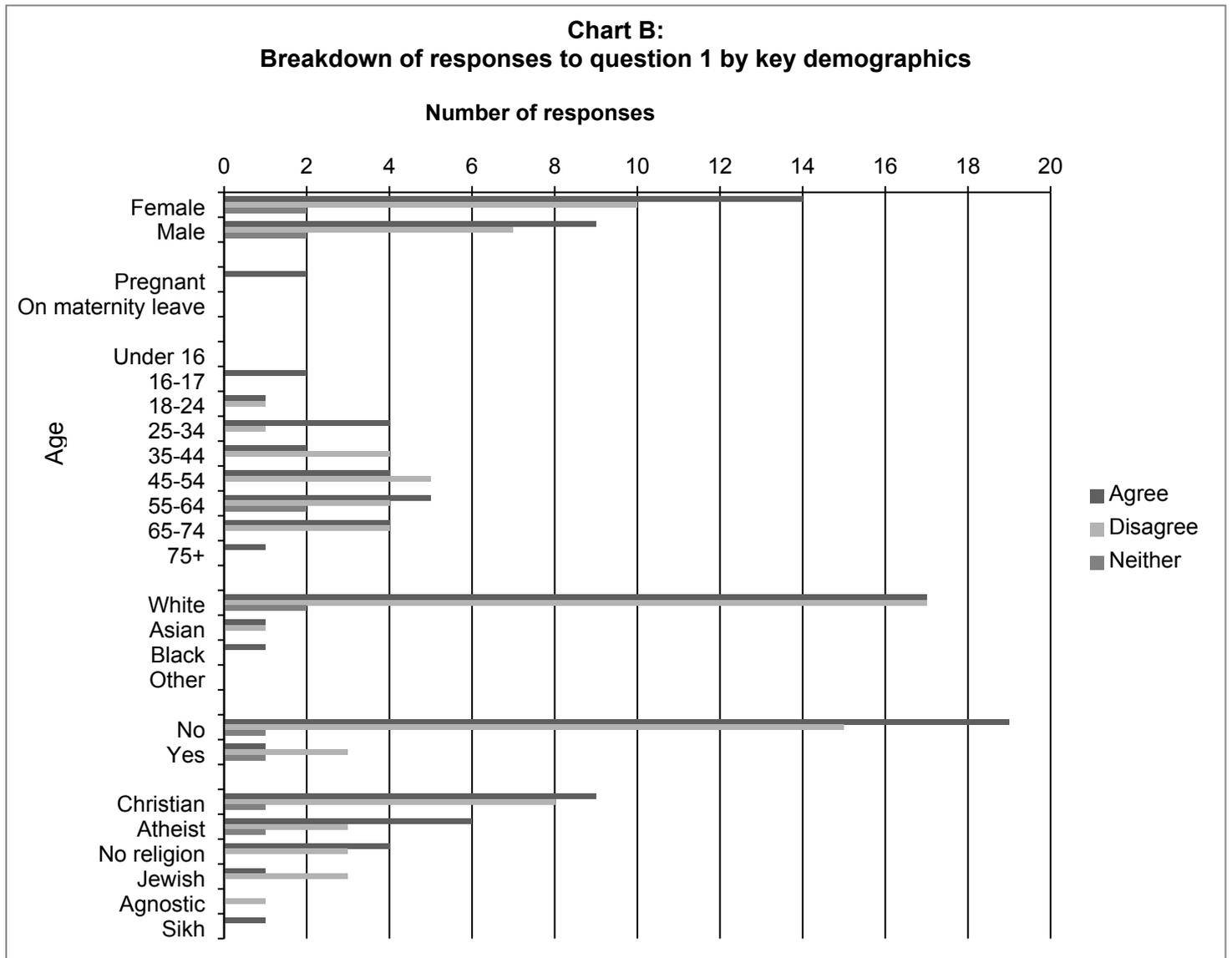


Chart B shows a breakdown of the responses to question 1 by key demographics. There are 3 bars representing the categories of response for each characteristic:

- Agree – respondent selected strongly agree or tend to agree
- Disagree – respondent selected strongly disagree or disagree
- Neither agree or disagree



9.1.2 Reasons given by those who agree with the proposal to relocate East Barnet Library

Table 3 gives full details of the type of comments received on why respondents agreed with the proposal to relocate East Barnet Library. The table is ranked by how frequently the reasons were mentioned by respondents. The most frequently mentioned reasons as to why respondents supported the proposal were: improved location for themselves or their families to make use of the library services; and the benefits to them and other residents of co-locating multiple services on one site.

Table 3: Response to question 2, reasons given by those who agree with the proposal

Overall to what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to move East Barnet library to co-locate with the new leisure centre at the Victoria Recreation Ground?	%	Base ¹
THOSE WHO AGREE	100%	23
No reason given	9%	2
Improved location/accessibility	48%	11
Benefit of multiple services on one site	39%	9
Increased usage of the library	30%	7
Financial benefits	13%	3
Benefit to the local area	9%	2
Other	4%	1

9.1.3 Reasons given by those who disagree with the proposal to relocate East Barnet Library

Table 4 gives full details of the reasons why respondents disagreed with the proposal to relocate East Barnet Library. Again, the table is ranked by how frequently the reasons were mentioned by respondents. The most frequently mentioned reasons as to why respondents were less supportive of the proposal were: reduced convenience for them indicated by increased distance to travel; and loss of the facility for the village of East Barnet and/or local schools in East Barnet.

Table 4: Response to question 2, reasons given by those who disagree with the proposal

Overall to what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to move East Barnet library to co-locate with the new leisure centre at the Victoria Recreation Ground?	%	Base ²
THOSE WHO DISAGREE	100	26
No reason given	8%	2
Reduced convenience (increased distance to travel)	46%	12
Loss of facility for the village/schools	23%	6
Other ³	23%	6

¹ Respondents could write in more than one comment. Percentages are calculated on the number of respondents who indicated they agree with the proposal.

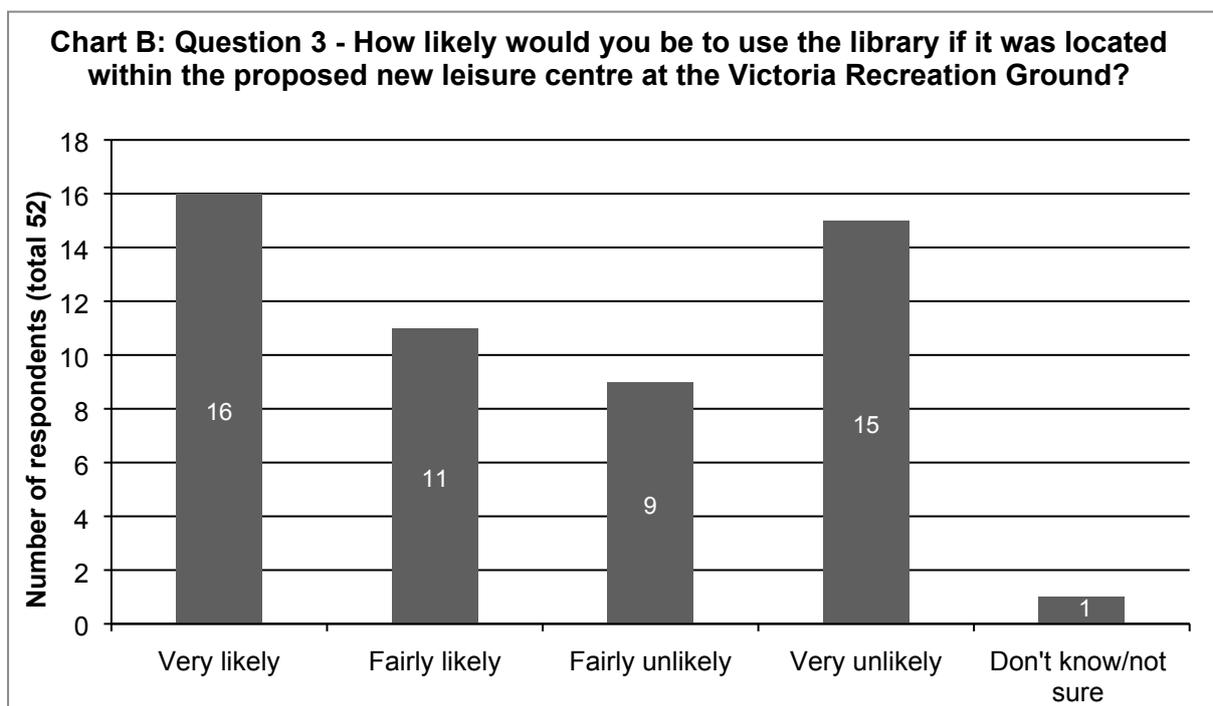
² Respondents could write in more than one comment. Percentages are calculated on the number of respondents who indicated they do not agree with the proposal.

³ There were a number of comments received that related to the wider changes to the library service as part of the Library Service Review, including concerns over the Partnership library model, reduced opening hours and safety and security of unstaffed libraries. These are described as 'other' in table 4 above.

Impact of selling the library (potential for more development)	15%	4
Concern over co-location with busy leisure facility/parking	12%	3
Do not want leisure centre to be built at all	12%	3

9.1.4 How likely would you be to use the library if it was located within the proposed new leisure centre at the Victoria Recreation Ground?

Approximately half of respondents (27 out of 52) said they would be very likely or fairly likely to use the library in its proposed new location. Just under half of respondents (24 out of 52) said they would be very unlikely or fairly unlikely to use the library in its proposed new location. Chart B shows a full breakdown of the response to this question.



Respondents were directed to separate questions for the reasoning behind their answer depending upon their response. They were given a number of options to choose from as well as an opportunity for free text to express any reasons not captured in the options given. Table 5 shows the reasons selected by those who would be likely to use the library (some respondents selected more than one option). The table is ranked by how frequently the reasons were mentioned by respondents. 6 respondents left additional comments in the free text field, 3 of these referenced the relatively small distance between the current and proposed future site and others referred to the benefits and value they gain from the library and therefore they would be likely to use it even if it moves. One referenced the benefit of modern facilities at the proposed new building.

Table 5: Response to question 4, reasons respondents would be likely to use the library

How likely would you be to use the library if it was located within the proposed new leisure centre at the Victoria Recreation Ground?		
	%	Base ⁴
Those who would be likely to use the library	100%	27
It is near to where I live/work	70%	19
I intend to use it when I use the other facilities at the proposed leisure centre	51%	14
Other	22%	6
It is convenient for public transport	11%	3
There will be greater parking availability	11%	3

Table 6 shows the reasons selected by those who would be unlikely to use the library. The table is ranked by how frequently the reasons were mentioned by respondents. 8 respondents left additional comments in the free text field and these mostly related to inconvenience to them of the proposed location and increased distance to travel as well as concern over reduced opening hours.

Table 6: Response to question 5, reasons respondents would be unlikely to use the library

How likely would you be to use the library if it was located within the proposed new leisure centre at the Victoria Recreation Ground?		
	%	Base ⁵
Those who would be unlikely to use the library	100%	24
It is not convenient	67%	16
It is too far to travel	58%	14
Other	21%	5
I have no need to use the library	13%	3
I use another public library	0%	0

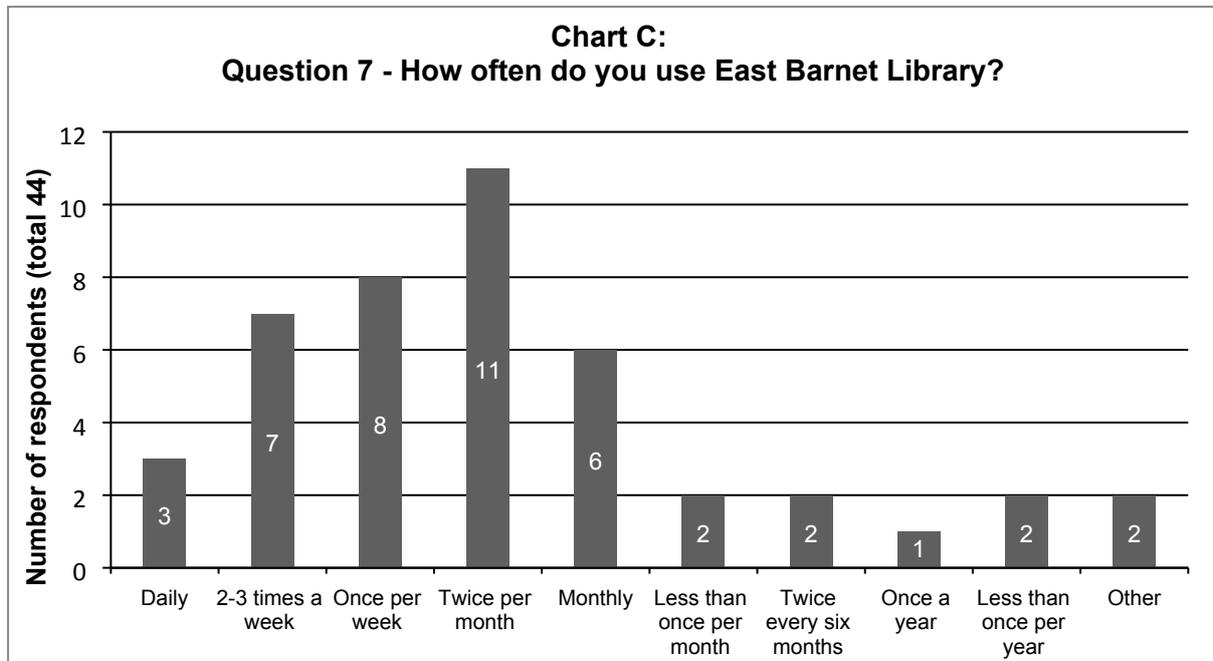
As expected the majority of those who disagreed with the proposal (total 26 out of 52) responded as unlikely to use the library should it relocate. However 6 individuals did respond that they would be very or fairly likely to use the library if it were relocated.

⁴ Respondents could select more than one reason. Percentages are calculated on the number of respondents who indicated they would be likely to use the library.

⁵ Respondents could select more than one reason. Percentages are calculated on the number of respondents who indicated they would be unlikely to use the library.

9.2 Current usage of East Barnet Library

In order to analyse the views of users, respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their current use of East Barnet Library. Of the 52 respondents to the questionnaire, 44 use East Barnet Library and 7 do not (1 respondent did not answer). Of those who use East Barnet Library, Chart C shows how often they told us they use the library.

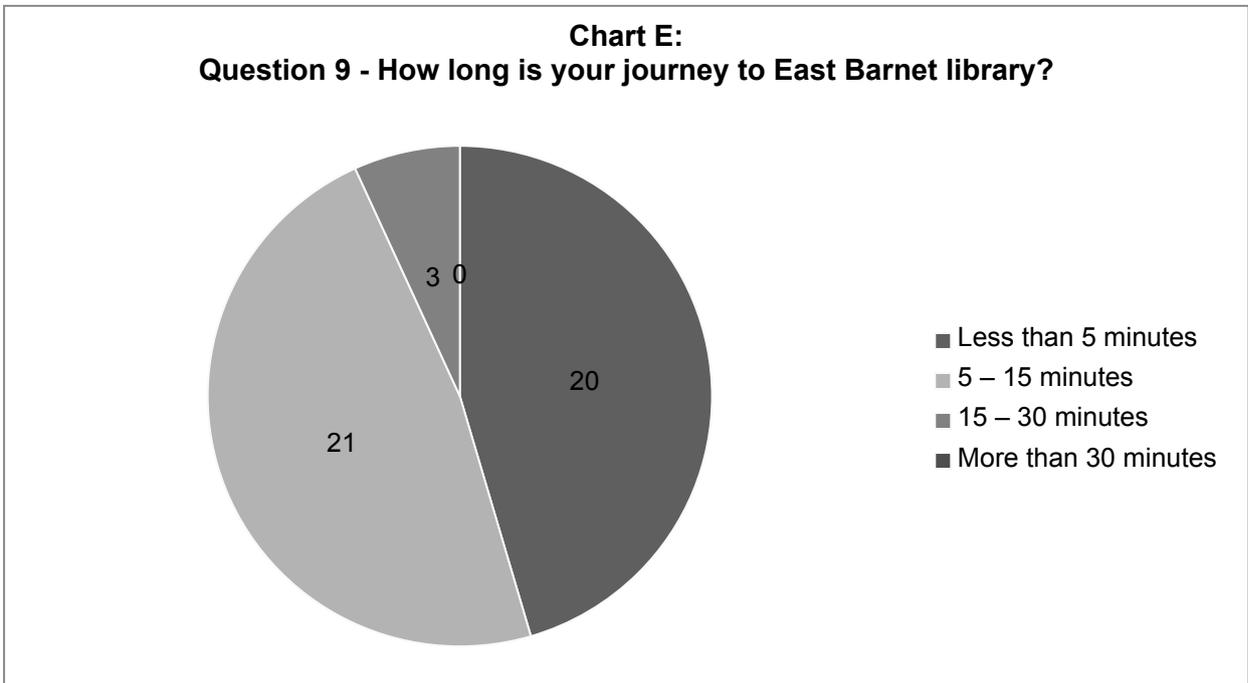
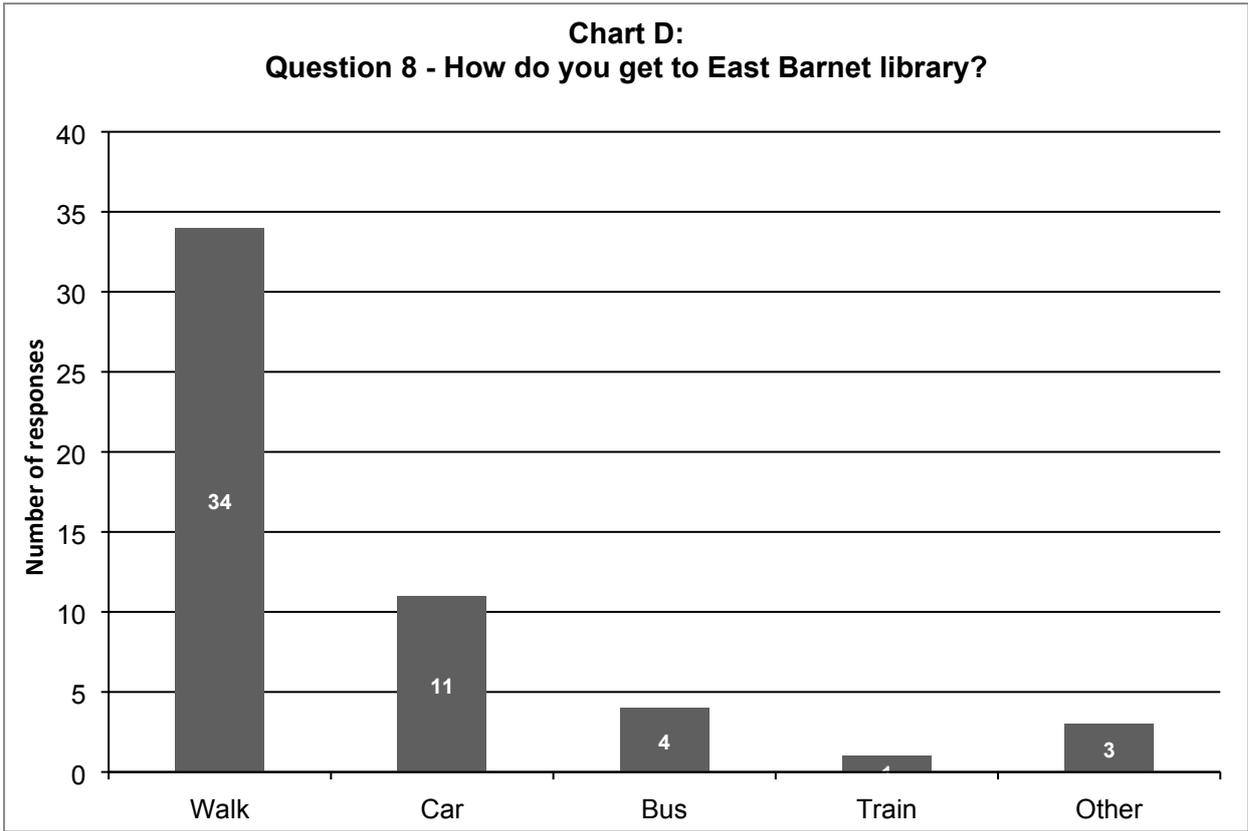


Out of the 44 individuals that indicated they use East Barnet Library, 35 stated that they use it monthly or more often.

Of those who use the library monthly or more often, 16 strongly disagree with the proposal to relocate the library and 4 tend to disagree (total 20 out of 35 disagree). Most of the comments and reasons left related to the inconvenience to individuals of the proposed location. 18 of these individuals (18 out of 20) currently walk to the library.

12 of those who use the library monthly or more often (12 out of 35) strongly agree or tend to agree with the proposal to relocate the library. 3 neither agreed or disagreed.

Charts D and E show how questionnaire respondents currently get to the library and how long their journey time is.



A number of respondents who currently use East Barnet Library selected multiple modes of transport however the majority of individuals walk to the library all or part of the journey. 3 respondents selected 'other'; they each specified that they travel by

bicycle to the library currently. All respondents who currently use East Barnet Library travel for 30 minutes or less in order to reach the library

10. Drop-in session results in detail

A total of 62 people attended the 6 drop-in sessions. The comments made by individuals were recorded and have been classified based on the main themes arising from the comments, so that they can be summarised. In addition, those attending drop-in sessions were encouraged to take part in the main questionnaire therefore some individual views may be reported both through the questionnaire and the drop-in sessions.

In summary:

- 32 comments were supportive of the proposal, 25 were less supportive and 4 were reflected as being neutral.
- Of those in support of the proposed relocation, the greatest numbers of comments were classified as: the co-location providing benefits of multiple services on one site; the relocation having the potential to generate increased use of the library; and the relocation providing the opportunity for a new library building.
- Of those who were less supportive of the proposal, the greatest numbers of comments were classified as: loss of the library facility for the village of East Barnet and the current local schools; reduced convenience; and 'other'.
- The 'other' category was made up of comments relating to the wider changes to the library service including: concerns over the use of volunteers and the Partnership library model and concern over changing opening hours. One resident also expressed concern over illumination of the walkways in the park and resident safety.

Table 7 – Classification of comments made during drop-in sessions on the proposal to relocate East Barnet Library. (Total comments classified - 61)

Classification of comments supportive of the proposal to relocate East Barnet Library	Number of comments	Percentage of total comments
Benefit of multiple services on one site	9	15%
Increased usage of the library	6	10%
Opportunity for a new library	6	10%
Benefit to the local area	5	8%
Financial benefits	3	5%
Improved location/accessibility	3	5%
Total supportive comments	32	52%
Classification of comments less supportive of the proposal to relocate East Barnet Library	Number of comments	Percentage of total comments
Loss of facility for the village/schools	7	11%
Other	7	11%

Reduced convenience	5	8%
Concern over co-location with busy leisure facility/parking	4	7%
Do not want leisure centre to be built at all	2	3%
Total less supportive comments	25	41%

Neutral comments	4	7%
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Throughout the face-to-face consultation sessions it was necessary to reiterate that this proposed relocation lies separately to the wider suite of changes happening within the Library Service as part of the broader Library Service Review.

11. Conclusion

The Library Service is a highly valued resource in Barnet and as part of the wider Library Service Review, Barnet Council is maintaining all 14 of the Borough's libraries whilst making significant savings. As part of this review, the council committed to exploring opportunities, where they arise, for libraries to be re-provided in new, fit-for-purpose buildings. The response to this consultation regarding the proposal to relocate the Library to co-locate with the proposed new leisure centre was, as expected, mixed. The current Library building is located in a residential area and a significant number of the respondents who submitted a questionnaire or attended drop-in sessions live close to the library, within a few minutes walk. These residents understandably would like to retain the library in its current position, although a number who spoke to officers face to face appreciated the benefits that could be realised through co-location with the proposed leisure centre.

The site of the proposed new leisure centre in New Barnet, just under a mile from the current library, is also in a residential area. Many residents who responded to the consultation were very positive about the potential for library services in this area. In addition to personal benefits of co-location with the leisure facilities in a modern building, many residents cited wider benefits including increased footfall in the library and wider reach to those who may not currently use the library.

In conclusion, results from both the questionnaire and drop-in sessions were mixed with approximately half of respondents supportive of the proposal to relocate the Library and half of respondents less supportive of the proposal.