

#LetsTalkLibraries Employees, Partners and Businesses **Consultation Response Report**

Produced by Consultation and Engagement Team
for Dorset Council

April 2022

#LetsTalkLibraries Employees, Partners and Businesses

Consultation Response Report

<p>What was the consultation about?</p>	<p>This consultation forms part of a larger piece of work looking at how Dorset Council’s library service can better meet the needs of its communities now and in the future. Respondents were asked for their views to help shape a new library strategy which will inform how Dorset Council develop and deliver the service in the future. There are 23 council-run and 8 community-managed libraries in the Dorset Council area.</p> <p>The current library strategy is 11 years old. There have been significant changes in public behaviour and digital technology, and the impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic have been felt. The updated strategy will look to the future of Dorset’s libraries and how can they best meet the needs of residents and communities, now and over the next five to ten years.</p> <p>This first phase of public consultation allowed Dorset Council to understand the views of Dorset’s residents towards their use of the library service. The consultation (which included surveys and targeted workshops) did not include any proposals for change, but it allowed us to better understand the issues raised and challenges faced by different groups within our communities. The responses will be brought together with evidence around local need and responses from our partners (e.g. NHS and voluntary sector).</p> <p>A draft library strategy will be produced, before a second public consultation takes place later in 2022.</p>
<p>What did we need to find out</p>	<p>The aim of this specific consultation was to gather the views of our employees, volunteers, councillors, our voluntary and community sector partners, businesses and our public sector partners. Dorset Council is looking for ways we can join up and complement delivery across services and sectors, utilising libraries to maximise our reach and impact in communities. The Council wanted to hear from organisations about opportunities to collaborate in the future, or ways in which libraries can support the different sectors.</p>
<p>Over what period did the consultation run?</p>	<p>The consultation period ran from 25 October 2021 until midnight on 7 January 2022.</p>
<p>What consultation methods were used?</p>	<p>The survey was available online. It included free text sections for people to add other comments.</p>
<p>How many responses were received overall?</p>	<p>275 responses were received overall to the survey. 3 responses selecting ‘Public Sector Organisation’ will be shared separately – 2 were found to be members of the public and one Dorset Council so these have been shared separately with the service, leaving 272 valid</p>

	<p>responses. 37.1% were Dorset Council Library Employees or Volunteers, and 21.7% from Dorset Council employees (non-library). 16.2% came from the Voluntary Community Sector and 10.3% were volunteers at a Community Managed Library. 8.5% were Businesses and 3.3% Councillors. 2.2% were public sector organisations and 0.7% Town and Parish Councils.</p> <p>Two 'out-of-format' responses were also received and have been commented on separately.</p>
How representative is the response to the wider population?	<p>Only individual respondents to this survey (e.g., employees, councillors) were asked for data about themselves. This equalled 197 respondents. 50% of respondents were over the age of 55, approximately a quarter under the age of 35. 80.1% of respondents were female against the current Dorset profile that shows 49.8% male and 51.1% female. 89.5% identify themselves as White British which is fairly typical of the wider population. 4.9% consider themselves to be disabled, which is similar to a Dorset figure of 5% based on those claiming either Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments or Attendance Allowance. 45% are Christian, 37.8% have no religion. 81% describe their sexual orientation as heterosexual.</p>
Where will the results be published?	<p>The results will be published on the Dorset Council website and the #LetsTalkLibraries webpage.</p>
How will the results be used?	<p>The results will be used to help shape a new library strategy which will inform how Dorset Council will develop and deliver the service in the future.</p>
Who has produced this report?	<p>Consultation and Engagement team, Dorset Council, April 2022</p>

Executive Summary

The aim of this consultation was for Dorset Council to hear from our employees, volunteers, councillors, our voluntary and community sector partners, businesses and our public sector partners. We wanted to identify ways to join up and complement delivery across services and sectors, utilising libraries to maximise reach and impact in communities and to identify opportunities to collaborate in the future, or ways in which libraries can support other sectors.

272 valid responses were received to the survey. 37.1% were Dorset Council library employees or Volunteers, and 21.7% from Dorset Council employees (non-library). 16.2% came from the Voluntary Community Sector and 10.3% were volunteers at a Community Managed library. 8.5% were Businesses and 3.3% Councillors. 2.2% were public sector organisations and 0.7% town and parish councils. Two additional 'out-of-format' responses were received and have been reported on separately.

Library Employees/Volunteers

What works well:

- borrowing service and checking stock (97.7%)
- ability to check stock and reserve online (91.5%)
- provision of technological services – wi-fi, computers, printing, scanning (74.4%)
- Home Library Service (74.4%)

What works less well:

- providing information about a different council service (30.2%)
- providing community spaces (37.2%)
- digital support (39.5%)

One current library service they would improve/change – provision of community spaces (16.1%)

Library Employees/Volunteers, other Dorset Council employees, councillors and town and parish councils

These groups were asked a series of questions relating to how the library service can help deliver the council's priorities. The most common responses are summarised below:

Reading and literacy:

- working with schools
- hosting workshops, groups and events (e.g. for those with learning disabilities, parent/child, book groups)
- working with Dorset Council and other organisations to identify and work with vulnerable groups and those with literacy needs
- employees training to support groups with a variety of needs (e.g. learning disabilities, dyslexia, autism)

Gaining skills, jobs and building businesses:

- supporting access to digital services (including IT classes and using technology)
- relevant training sessions and workshops and working with employment providers such as the Job Centre
- library employees frequently mentioned Skills and Learning and the Job Club; training sessions and training employees to support were also often mentioned. Non-library

employees respondents felt training sessions and digital support were important alongside working with businesses to network, offer talks and future opportunities

Healthier lives and reduce social isolation:

- through community and social groups, events and clubs (e.g. reading, parent/toddler, knit and natter)
- offering links/information/events especially to those who are vulnerable and at risk (e.g. isolated or older people).
- working with established providers (e.g. LiveWell) and also more informal groups (e.g. workshops, classes (yoga, wellbeing)
- libraries can also provide information and signpost people to support.

Community arts and wider cultural activity:

- through more creative use of library space e.g., hosting events, being a venue or allowing use of library premises (High numbers suggested this)
- libraries promoting and advertising local events - provide complementary activities and resources to events in their area.
- engage and collaborate with different and diverse organisations across Dorset.

Climate change and the climate/ecological emergency:

- through libraries taking on an 'education' role (e.g., workshops, materials, raising awareness).
- libraries themselves could be more energy efficient (in terms of their building and energy sources) and engage in greener practices (e.g., recycling).
- supporting and promoting greener transport options for both employees and library visitors was seen as important as was working with other organisations.

Questions on non-users, partnership working and future income streams.

The same groups were asked a series of questions relating to how the library service can engage non-users, work with other services/partners and generating income. The most common responses are summarised below:

Non-users:

- better advertising and marketing of the library offer could attract non-users from a variety of target groups. Rebranding the library as a community hub/space and integrating it with other services
- diversifying the library offer via more events/activities to widen its appeal and to draw people in beyond traditional reasons
- some respondents stated that people do not always know that a library is free to use/visit, some said that it was important to engage people from an early age
- library employees felt that improving understanding of their offer was especially important; non-employees highlighted diversifying the offer and events and having flexible opening times to allow more people to visit

Work with other services/partners:

- work with health partners, ranging from established organisations through to drop-in/wellbeing sessions, social prescribing and less formal activities both on and off site

- linking up and collaborating with other Dorset Council services and the voluntary and community sector to identify those who may benefit from the library
- library employees/volunteers mentioned sharing information, programmes and having displays

Generating income:

- charging for events
- hiring/rental of library space
- having a shop or café/refreshment facilities.
- charging for digital services
- some commented that libraries should not be an income generating service and some stressed the importance of not excluding those who may not be able to pay.

Voluntary and Community Sector

54.5% of respondents from this group said that they delivered a service in Dorset libraries. A significant number of responses came from organisations linked to libraries (e.g. the Royal Voluntary Service, Friends), so the service offered closely linked to their role, e.g. the Home Library Service or supporting events. When asked how they could work with the library, comments from this group mostly relate to the Home Library Service, how well it works, how important it is and how it would benefit from further promotion. Other comments suggest how the library premises could be used more widely for activities and other services and how volunteers can help and make people aware of other services on offer.

Other VCS organisations gave a range of suggestions as to how they could work with the library. Examples include the libraries hosting events, workshops and activities; acting as a hub to disseminate information; support developing IT skills; organisations referring/promoting the libraries and reading materials and offering transport options to those who cannot make it to the library. Two respondents did not see any benefit to working together.

Businesses

When asked what opportunities would be most beneficial to the business community, it was suggested that libraries could offer hot-desking, co-working spaces and bookable meeting rooms (both 56.5%) and to host network events and give access to intellectual property advice and market research databases (both 47.8%). When asked to expand, respondents highlighted the benefits of bookable meeting rooms and hot desking.

Businesses offered a wide range of suggestions of how libraries could support people develop better skills, jobs and to build a business; these built on previous answers from other respondents earlier in the survey. The most frequently mentioned suggestions were for libraries to support workshops and sessions relating to business start-up advice, specific knowledge and skills that businesses need, or sessions relating to career development. Networking events and opportunities, marketing and facilitating access to the internet were also suggested.

Public Sector Organisations

The next set of questions focused on Public Sector organisations that responded to the survey. Comments mostly focus on sharing information with the public on safety, health and wellbeing; organisations support promoting the use of libraries and running clinics and groups from the libraries themselves.

How can we develop our Dorset Council library service in the future?

Overall, respondents felt that libraries should look to developing their offer in terms of:

- more events, workshops and hosting groups (e.g., children's activities, arts and crafts, sessions relating to well-being, having guest speakers and the community sharing skills)
- work closer with local services and organisations and share library space with them when appropriate to help support and inform a wide range of target groups. Suggestions that the library should be more of a 'community hub' for support and information
- some of those who felt current services should be better advertised also suggested looking at how the library is branded and marketed
- look at the digital offer and digital services and the role the libraries could play in supporting skills development and access to equipment
- performing an outreach service – both for those who are older/isolated/rural but also to inform individuals and groups about what services the library can offer
- library as an inclusive, social space where everyone can feel safe
- there were a few comments about ensuring libraries at least maintain their core offer

Any Other Comments

Final comments reflected findings throughout the rest of the report:

- respondents stressed that libraries are an important part of life and a community asset and are especially vital to the vulnerable
- they are an engaging and accessible space and should work closely with other organisations
- some library employees raised concerns about their relationship with the council and offered suggestions on how they as employees can feel valued and be utilised better

Overall, responses suggest that library services that could be considered 'traditional' are still important but there is scope, and an appetite, for libraries to offer more and have a broader focus and role in serving the community. Respondents were keen to see wider use of the library space and for libraries to work more closely with a wide range of partner organisations. This could be in terms of hosting events, providing information or identifying potential groups who may benefit from engaging with the library.

Background

The consultation explained:

Introduction

Dorset Council has launched a public consultation to develop a new library strategy, which will inform how we develop and delivery our library service in the future.

As well as hearing from the public, we want to hear from our employees, volunteers, councillors, our voluntary and community sector partners, businesses and our public sector partners.

The council are looking for ways we can join up and complement delivery across services and sectors, utilising libraries to maximise our reach and impact in communities. We want to hear from you about opportunities to collaborate in the future, or ways in which libraries can support your sector.

The survey closes on the 7 January 2022. Analysis of individual responses will be presented in an anonymised form. However, official responses, provided on behalf of your organisation may be attributed publicly.

Following the close of the consultation, the survey responses will be brought together with evidence around local need and responses from the public. We will produce a draft library strategy which will be the focus of a second consultation, to be held in summer 2022.

Keep up to date with the latest information by visiting dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/lets-talk-libraries or, by following #letstalklibraries on our Dorset Council social media channels.

The Consultation

The consultation period ran from 25 October 2021 to midnight on 7 January 2022.

Very few questions were compulsory. A copy of the survey is available in the appendix.

Analysis Method

Questions were considered on an individual basis. Overall responses were examined, and specific responses of respondents from different organisational groups were looked at. The main method of analysis was looking at the percentage of respondents who expressed a view on each question.

For each open question the text comments have been studied and “coded” depending on what issues were raised. The coded comments are then reported on based on the amount of times those individual issues have been raised. Total redacted comments are provided in an appendix. Note: some figures may not sum due to rounding.

Response Method

Overall, 275 responses were received to the survey and two out of format.

Out of format responses

An out-of-format response is a response received separately to the main consultation survey. It is often a letter or e-mail sent directly to the service. As it often a general response to the consultation and not referring to specific questions, the main points are summarised here. Two responses were received; one from the Bridport Local Area Partnership (BLAP) Management Team and Citizens Advice in Dorset (CAiD) Managers Group.

BLAP

Recognition of need for the evolution of libraries; heart of offer should remain enabling reading, supporting learning and literacy and improving access to information. A library should cater for all groups and ages. Hope for investment, improvement and modernisation – not cost-cutting.

The main points raised were:

- libraries can act as 'hubs', especially in rural areas, but this should not distract from a library delivering its main purpose
- libraries can help address digital exclusion via providing access to online services. They can deliver basic digital skills training
- support the use of Council Customer Service Operatives to help with queries but this will not be suitable in all libraries. Could have a dedicated hotline within a library instead
- maintain professional and trained employees. Smaller volunteer-run libraries should be given sufficient access to professional support
- welcome strong links with existing bodies (e.g., Citizens Advice) and there are further opportunities for linking up and signposting.

CAiD

Feel that there are a number of benefits from co-location which contribute to the desired 7 outcomes for libraries. Libraries as a community hub provides a safe space to work with vulnerable people and furthers EDI objectives. CAiD recommend the following:

- libraries as a 'hub' model to be embedded in future strategy – these should be promoted to show they cater to different needs and are inclusive of the wider community and most vulnerable
- access to digital technology and learning IT skills is vital, ensuring it is available in rural locations
- support the use of trained Council Customer Service Operatives who have good access and integration with other council departments and the VCS. Could have community access telephone booths in rural areas

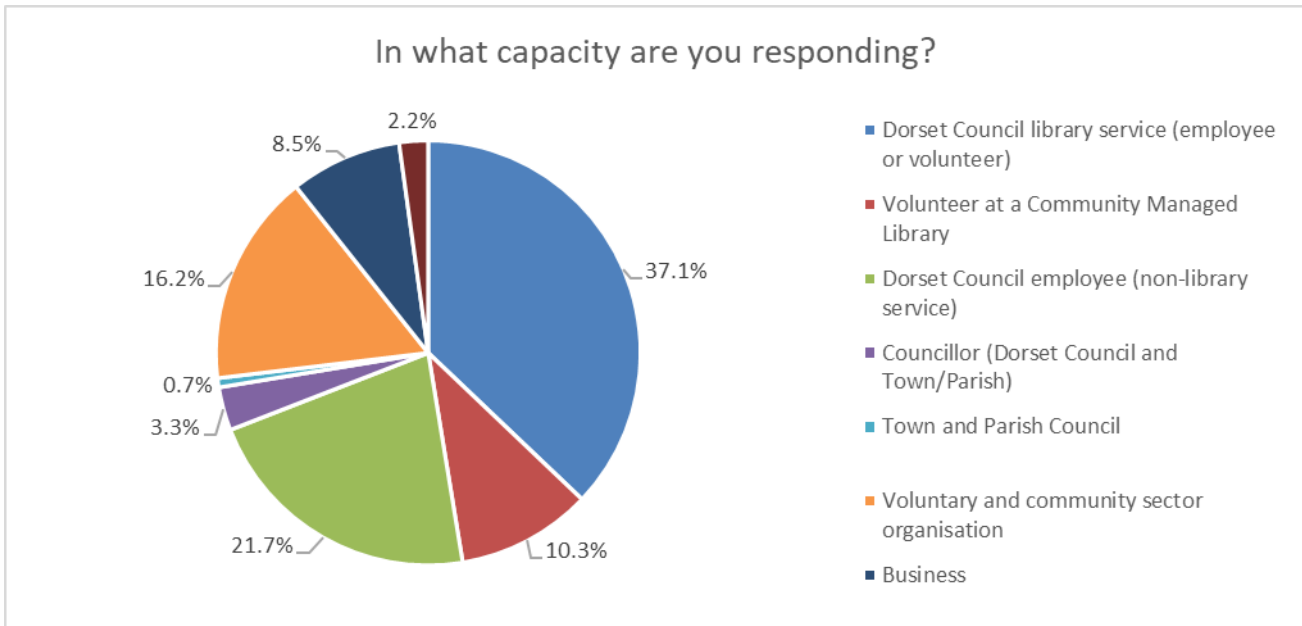
About respondents

272 valid overall responses were received to the survey.

Q. In what capacity are you responding?

Over a third of respondents are involved in Dorset Council libraries in some capacity (37.1%), with a further fifth (21.7%) other employees of the Council. 16.2% are from the Voluntary and Community Sector and 10.3% volunteer at a Community Managed Library. 8.5% of respondents were businesses and 2.2% public sector organisations. Nine councillors (3.3%) and two Town/Parish councils (0.7%) responded to the consultation.

Total:272	% of all respondents	Number
Dorset Council library service (employee or volunteer)	37.1	101
Volunteer at a Community Managed Library	10.3	28
Dorset Council employee (non-library service)	21.7	59
Councillor (Dorset Council and Town/Parish)	3.3	9
Town and Parish Council	0.7	2
Voluntary and community sector organisation	16.2	44
Business	8.5	23
Public sector organisation	2.2	6



The tables below show the individual employment groups of Dorset Council Employees, organisations, councils and businesses that responded to the consultation. Whether their response is an 'official response' is also indicated where relevant.

Table of Dorset Council Employees

Respondents who were employees of Dorset Council - but not library employees - indicated their area of work. Where possible the job roles have been grouped.

Service/Area of work	No of employees
Childrens Services	9
Place	4
Education	4
Housing & Adults Care	4
Public Health	3
Customer Services	3
Digital and Change	3
ICT	2
Planning	2
Commercial and Procurement	2
Corporate Services	2
Communications	1
Assets & Property	1
Democratic and Electoral Services	1
Dorset Council Waste	1
Dorset History Centre	1
Dorset Music Hub	1
Ethnic Minority Employee Network (representative for group)	1

Highways	1
Leisure	1
Organisational Development	1
Pensions Team	1
Revenues Office	1
Tricuro	1

Table of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations

The table below shows the names of VCS organisations who responded to the consultation and whether the response was an official response or not. There were multiple responses from the Royal Voluntary Service (17). Four organisations chose not to identify themselves.

Voluntary and Community Sector	Official response
Artsreach	Yes
Blackmore Vale Line Community Rail Partnership	No
Chunky	Yes
Code Club	No
Community Hub	No
Country Cars	No
Dial a ride	Yes
Diocesan Advisory Committee	No
Ferndown Community Support CIC	Yes
Friends of Puddletown Library	Yes
Friends of Wareham Library	Yes
Friends of Weymouth Library	Yes
Gold Hill Museum	No
Help and Care	Yes
Landance CIC	Yes
Purbeck Coast Radio	No
RBL Ferndown Model Society	Yes
Read Easy Blackmore Vale North	Yes
Royal Voluntary Service/Home Library Service (17)	Yes (3) No (14)
School Governor	No
Shaftesbury Car Link	Yes
Unspecified organisations/rather not say (4)	
Water Lily Project	Yes
Wimborne Food Bank	Yes
Wyvern	No

Additional out-of-format responses were received from two other VCS organisations: Bridport Local Area Partnership, and Citizens Advice in Dorset.

Table of Town and Parish Councils

Two town councils responded to the consultation.

Council	Official response?
West Moors Town Council	Yes
Ferndown Town Council*	(unspecified)

*This was identified from the email address provided.

Table of Businesses

23 businesses responded to the survey, 19 were official responses.

Business	Official response?
AndyKnillArt	Yes
AsOne theatre company Ltd not for profit	Yes
Attention2detail	Yes
Bellair Haye Pork	Yes
CC&HR Services Ltd	Yes
cloud9studio	Yes
Dorset Arts Development Service CIC (Trading as The Arts Development Company)	Yes
Ebit Business Solutions	No
Ferndown Community Tours LLP	Yes
Footprint Ecology	Yes
I am an independent Equity Release Adviser	No
Ikon Business Solutions	Yes
Judith Teasdale (Historic Landscape Consultant)	Yes
Kites for Schools	No
Marketing West SW Ltd	Yes
Minster Joinery Ltd	Yes
My Financial Planner Limited	Yes
SAC Bookkeeping	Yes
Seajar Digital	Yes
Soundbyte Solutions (UK) Ltd	Yes
The Almshouse of St John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist	Yes
Weymouth Golf Club	No
Weymouth Heritage Centre Ltd	Yes

Table of public sector organisations

There were 6 public sector responses – 2 of these were received from the NHS Dorset CCG, one official and one unofficial.

Public Sector Organisation	Official response
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service	Yes
Dorset CCG	Yes
HMPPS	No
NHS Dorset CCG	No

South Western Ambulance Service	No
Wimborne University of the Third Age (u3a)***	No

***organisation left in here

Library Employee/Volunteers

The following questions were answered by those who identified themselves as either an employee or a volunteer at a library, whether a Dorset Council or a Community Managed library.

Q. In your opinion, what current library services work very well?

Respondents could select multiple answers to this question. Nearly all respondents selected the library service of 'Borrowing – physical items' (97.7%) and ability to check stock and reserve online (91.5%) as services that work very well. Provision of technological services such as the provision of wi-fi, computers, printing and scanning also scored highly (76.7%) as did the home library service (74.4%)

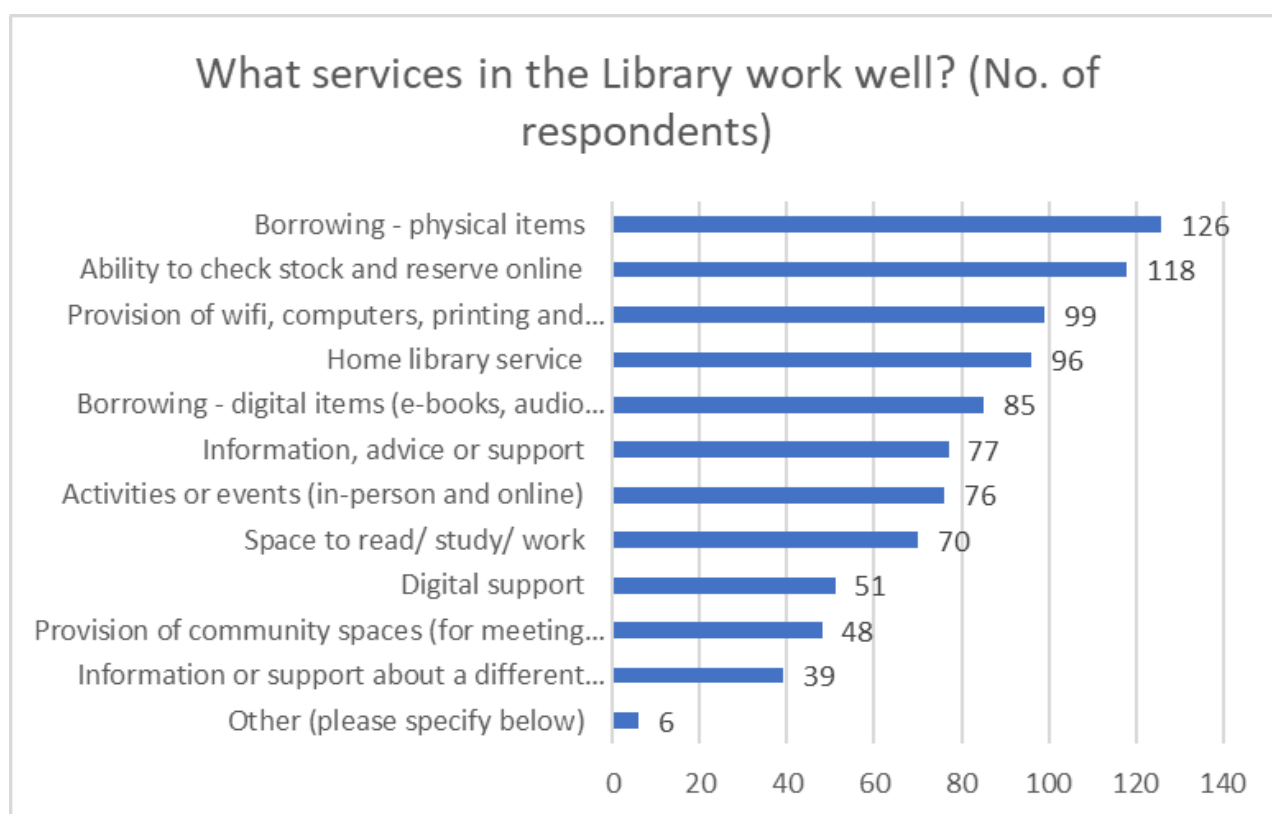
Providing information about a different council service (30.2%), provision of community spaces (37.2%) and digital support (39.5%) were less often selected as services that work well.

Respondents:129	% of respondents	Number
Ability to check stock and reserve online	91.5	118
Borrowing - physical items	97.7	126
Borrowing - digital items (e-books, audio books, e-zines etc.)	65.9	85
Space to read/ study/ work	54.3	70
Activities or events (in-person and online)	58.9	76
Information, advice or support	59.7	77
Information or support about a different council service (which does not relate to the library)	30.2	39
Provision of wifi, computers, printing and scanning facilities	76.7	99
Digital support	39.5	51
Provision of community spaces (for meeting / reading)	37.2	48
Home library service	74.4	96
Other (please specify below)	4.7	6

Note: Respondents could select multiple answers for this question

Five of those who selected 'other' gave the following reasons. These are provided verbatim in the table below.

Other
I would like to see more on family history and more towards the local community like sale of books to make revenue maybe a stationary shop help those who are studying
Learning opportunities / Universal Credit support delivered in partnership with Skills and Learning and CAB.
Our library provides digital support on a one-to-one basis. Customers are familiar with the staff member making them feel relaxed. Staff knowledge is good but there are times when we don't know the answers, a member of staff who does solely digital work, would be able to have drop in sessions, booked sessions and training sessions to help our customers get the best out of their digital knowledge. Rhyme Time for the babies and Toddlers is always popular, and kids that read today will be the readers of the future. Kids love a good story and craft session.
safe space for people to meet - we've had job interviews, meeting friends and customers with dementia feeling safe. breast feeding mums, sheltering from bad weather
Support/ safe/friendly space for anyone feeling isolated, lonely or just in need of a chat.



Q: If you would like to provide any additional information about your selections, please provide it here.

45 respondents offered additional comments. Most frequently mentioned was either a lack of, or loss of, space for other services, community groups or a quiet space separate so as not to disturb those in the main library. It was acknowledged much depended on size and layout. Digital services were also frequently mentioned including difficulties with technology (either not working or lacking) and it was felt wireless printing would be a helpful service to offer. Customer services points were felt to work well where present and allowed for more joined-up working;

employees should be trained to know more beyond their own library. Some respondents acknowledged that they were answering as things currently are and it varies dependent on the library concerned.

Further comment	Mentions
Lack of/Loss of/Inaccessible space for other services/quiet spaces/layout	16
Digital services - could be better, tech not good/available (e.g. scanning, self-service, no mobile signal, Borrowbox, website)	8
Answering as things are currently/available, it varies/different dependent on library, emphasis on utility not impact	6
Wifi printing service would be beneficial	5
Would benefit from a Customer Service point for joined up working	4
Digital support/apps/services work well when available	4
Library does the basics well/cope and run well	4
A Customer Service point generally works well in a library	3
Home Library Service - good, under-utilised, extend remit to care homes/support from health	3
Digital champions - none/difficult to use	3
Employees need more knowledge/training beyond own library/day of work	3
Public lack awareness of space/services in library	3
Comment about accessibility (e.g., keep free access, make membership easy, keep virtual due to covid)	3
Comment about difficulties (stock management, HLS, online not as popular as face to face)	3

Q. If there was one current library service that you could change or improve, what would it be?

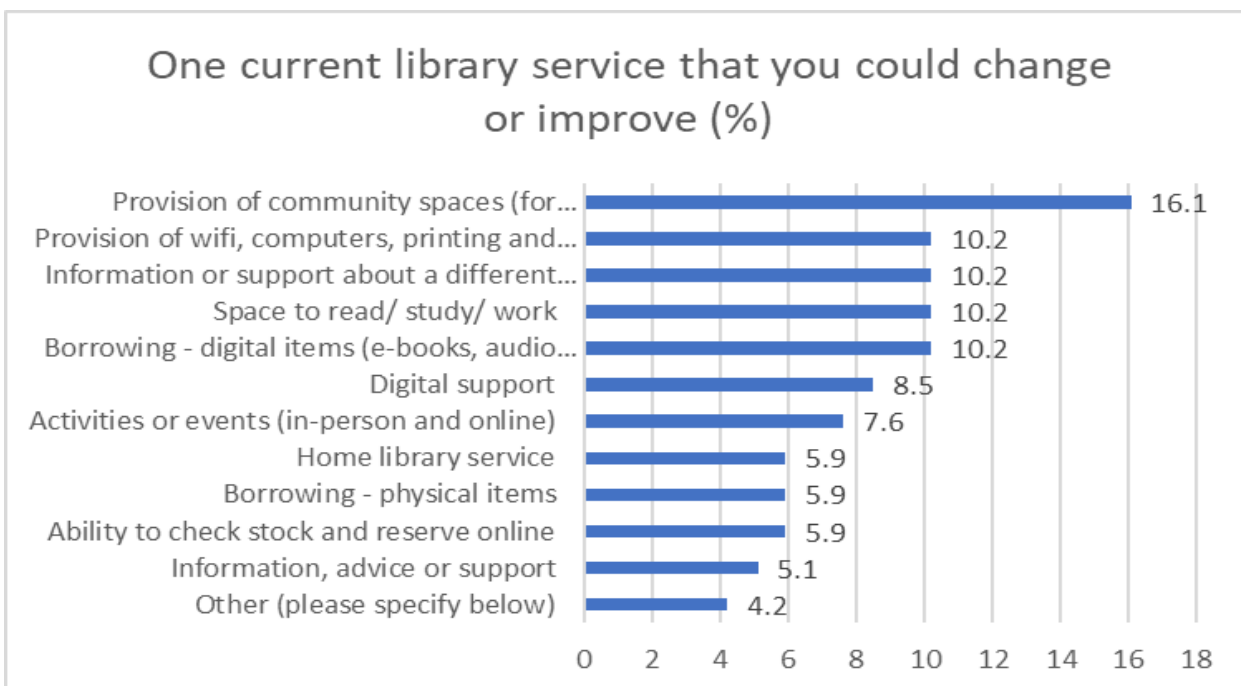
Respondents were asked which one current library service that they would change or improve. There was a spread of responses with the highest being improving/changing the provision of community spaces (16.1%). Borrowing digital items, space to read/study/work, provision of wifi, computers, printing and scanning and information or support about a different council service (which does not relate to the library) were all also selected more frequently (10.2% for each option).

	% of all respondents	Number
Ability to check stock and reserve online	5.9	7
Borrowing - physical items	5.9	7
Borrowing - digital items (e-books, audio books, e-zines etc.)	10.2	12
Space to read/ study/ work	10.2	12

Activities or events (in-person and online)	7.6	9
Information, advice or support	5.1	6
Information or support about a different council service (which does not relate to the library)	10.2	12
Provision of wifi, computers, printing and scanning facilities	10.2	12
Digital support	8.5	10
Provision of community spaces (for meeting / reading)	16.1	19
Home library service	5.9	7
Other (please specify below)	4.2	5

Those who responded 'other' expanded on their answers and these are presented verbatim in the table below.

Other
Better advertisement of library services to the wider public (non - library users)
I would change the way the library service is promoted to the wider community.
Marketing - lot's of missed opportunities due to capacity within library teams. Would be great to have a dedicated Marketing Officer that is also joined up with other Dorset Council Services.
Sunday opening - a lot of one-person households are excluded from activities and services because they are working. with retirement age increasing every year and loneliness a big factor, Sunday opening would really raise the profile of the service and give access to more people.
Wider range of books in variety of formats



Q If you would like to provide any additional information about your selections, please provide it here.

67 respondents provided further information about their responses. As with the previous question, most respondents commented on the lack or loss of space, or on how space is currently used in the library. Developing a reliable digital offer was also important, again wifi printing was highlighted. Some commented on libraries being a customer service outpost and training employees to offer support in other areas relating to council business and also with digital/IT support. Some respondents commented on the use of the Home Library Service and where they felt improvements could be made. Others suggested that libraries could work more in partnership with other groups and organisations, holding events and being used out of hours.

Any further information - one library service change or improve	Mentions
Lack of/loss of space/community area/private/quiet areas/hire space to widen provision	13
Digital offer- better technology/apps/awareness/phone signal/user-friendly/hub	12
Libraries as a Customer Service Outpost/train employees to support requests (including digital and IT) to be onecouncil.	11
Improvements to the HLS - provision for care homes, advertise, operations, removal.	7
Wifi printing from customer devices	7
Work with other organisations/groups/promotion/more events/out of hours use/community hub (e.g. TIC)	7
Greater choice of books/more copies/stock/newer/availability/money for books	6
Nothing to change/happy as it is	3
Raise awareness of library services/what is in each library	3
All of the above/multiple services could be developed	2
Offer card payment opportunities	2
Children's Activities/tablets for teenagers, keep them coming back	2

Employees (library and non-library), library volunteers, Councils/Councillor

The next set of questions were answered by Dorset Library/Community Managed employees and volunteers, other Dorset Council employees, councillors and Town and Parish Councils.

Respondents were advised: In the future we would like to understand how you think the Dorset Council library service can help deliver the council's priorities in Dorset. You do not have to reply to each priority, please reply to those you can and leave the remaining boxes blank. All ideas are welcome!

Q. In the future, how can libraries help to improve reading and literacy skills in children, adults and those who have a learning disability?

153 respondents answered this question: 100 Dorset Library/Community Managed employees and volunteers, 42 other Dorset Council employees, 9 councillors and 2 Town and Parish Councils.

Respondents felt that libraries can help with reading and literacy skills via partnership working e.g. working with schools (whether pro-actively helping identify need, loaning books), Dorset Council services (e.g. children's, adults) or other organisations/partners linked to supporting those with literacy needs. It was also felt that the library could host or support workshops, groups and classes (e.g., for those with learning disabilities, parent and child groups). It was suggested that it would be beneficial to train employees to support different needs or to help identify relevant material for a library user, however some urged caution about the service having enough resource to do so. A number of children's activities, including existing ones such as the Summer Reading Challenge, were identified to support literacy and reading, and for adults it was suggested specific support would be appropriate such as Read Easy and 1:1 support. The importance of a private and quiet space and a welcoming and inclusive environment was also highlighted.

How can libraries help to improve reading/literacy skills?	Mentions
Work with schools (proactive id, loan books, link advisor)	37
Workshops/groups/classes/events (e.g. for LD, parent/child, book groups)	33
Work with Dorset Council/other services/other orgs/partners to work with vulnerable groups and to identify childrens/adult literacy need/new services	28
Trained employees (Learning disability, general support, autism, BSL, 1:1, dyslexia, dementia, identify material)	28
Children's Activities (summer reading challenge (expand), games, workshops to interest them, homework club, after-school)	24
Adult specific support service e.g. Easy Read org, those with LD	22
Wide selection/range of books for all levels (identify them/suitable literature for need)	18
Open/inclusive/positive/safe/welcoming environment for all/to learn	16
Digital - online/IT support/digital platforms, engaging tech/fun/learning/safe links/listening catalogue	13
Advertise the offer/books/resource more/that it is free	13
Reading opportunities/sessions/incentives/social	12
Outreach - go out and help, mobile libraries, carehomes, schools etc.	8
Teacher/tutor 1:1 support - space for private	8
Use volunteers to support (e.g. readers, Friends)	7
Resources/Information/Displays	6
Accessible e.g. free for those with LD, digital options, creche for parents, evolve to meet needs, keep local	5
Opening at the times needed (for young people, open longer, too limiting)	4
Engage with local/national initiatives/funding	3
Attract non-users by being community hub/reaching out	2
Pets at Therapy/Reading to Dogs	2
Expand core offer/be aware of need	2

There were similar comments made by both library employees/volunteers and the 'others' (Dorset Council non-library employees, councillors, town and parish councils). Both highlighted links to schools as important, library employees mentioned wider partnership working as something they felt was key along with adult specific support. The top three for 'other' respondents was workshops, schools and children's activities.

Q. In the future, how can libraries help people gain better skills, better jobs and help people build their business?

135 respondents answered this question: 84 Dorset Library/Community Managed employees and volunteers, 42 other Dorset Council employees, 8 councillors and 2 Town and Parish Councils.

Across all respondents, it was felt that libraries can help and support with better skills, jobs and building businesses in a number of ways; the top three were supporting access to digital services (such as developing IT skills, digital champions and access to technology), providing appropriate training sessions and workshops, and working with the job centre and other job providers. They also suggested a number of ways that businesses could be worked with such as having them come into the library space to network, to provide workshops, career talks and making links with a view to employment and mentoring opportunities. Libraries could also provide reference information and signpost people, and train employees to support people in developing their skills and job prospects. Libraries could also work with a range of community groups, including those who would help them identify and access specific groups who may need more support with literacy, for example.

Libraries help with better skills, jobs and building business	Mentions
Support access to digital (e.g. IT skills, digital champions, rent technology, have wifi outside library hours, digital skills partnership)	39
Training sessions/workshops/classes (e.g. excel, HMRC, coding, life skills, job apps, CV, website design)	37
Work with Job Centre/job providers/CAB/kickstart/DWP/Skills & Learning esp. Job Club	37
Work with businesses - have them come into library to network, workshops, careers talks, directory, link with them for job ops, mentoring ops, skill sharing, advertising space	26
Provide information sources/reference material/links/online	19
Work with community groups, organisations, council and schools (e.g. given of working to identify low literacy groups, non-English speaking, CV advice, volunteering ops, have on site)	18
Train dedicated employees to support/be approachable/have enough employees	18
Opening hours - be flexible, have learning opportunities at other times (e.g. evening, weekends)	7
Support adult education	6
Offer hot desk/meeting/office space (individual/groups)	5
Not central role of a library - could signpost	4
Outreach - attend job fairs, school open days	4
Other	4
1-1 coaching	3
Advertise the resources/offer the library has	3
Support accessing education/literacy/provide space	3
Don't know/not sure/research what provision looks like	3
Give start-up businesses access to resources e.g. printing	2
Libraries should support businesses and vice versa	2
Encourage - stay local, start interest young	2

When looking specifically at comments by those who work or volunteer in a library, the most mentioned was that of linking with job providers; many made reference to Skills and Learning and the Job Club. Access to digital services, training sessions and training employees were also mentioned frequently. For the 'others' (non-library DC employees and councillors), they also felt training sessions and digital services were important alongside working with businesses to network, offer talks and opportunities.

Q. In the future, how can libraries help people live healthier lives and reduce social isolation?

159 respondents answered this question: 102 Dorset Library/Community Managed employees and volunteers, 47 other Dorset Council employees, 7 councillors and 2 Town and Parish Councils.

The comments suggest respondents feel that the libraries can help with healthier lives and to reduce social isolation through being a community and social hub. This may consist of providing a range of social groups or events (e.g. reading groups, parent and child groups, knit and natter). Also suggested was the library being a welcoming social space or hub with the facilities to encourage people to dwell and socialise e.g., with a café or coffee morning, or specifically offering links/events/information for those more vulnerable and at risk (e.g. those who are isolated). More specific health support could be provided through working with established providers, hosting workshops and classes and providing information and signposting. There were similar findings for both library employees/volunteers and those in the other groups; the latter group especially focused on the groups and being a social space.

How can libraries help people lead healthy lives?	Mentions
Community/social groups/clubs or events/talks (e.g. reading, toddler groups, knit and natter)	50
Link/events/information for at risk/vulnerable/isolated/lonely/older/carers	30
Health - work with providers (e.g. LiveWell), workshops, classes (yoga, mindfulness, books, pets as therapy)	29
Social space, welcoming space	27
Provide information displays and support material/books/signpost	20
Activities for all ages/do together	15
Café/coffee shop	13
Community focal/support point/centre/advice and activities	13
Coffee mornings/tea and chat	12
Mobile/book vans/HLS/go out to support (e.g. those with dementia, care homes)	12
Advertise/promote health benefits, free service/programme/to groups	11
Skilled, approachable employees who can talk/help	6
Opening hours (e.g. later for events, social time)	6
Digital inclusion schemes - access services and link to orgs	5
Accessible buildings/space/facilities/welcoming/parking	5
Keep a library local/co-locate/support community libraries	4
Cookery courses	4
Encourage activities - e.g. volunteering, trips, art project	4

Work with VCS/orgs, promote to them	4
Other	4
Education sessions	2
Research - look at other libraries, ask communities	2

Q. In the future, how can libraries help support local community arts and wider cultural activities and events?

135 respondents answered this question: 85 Dorset Library/Community Managed employees and volunteers, 40 other Dorset Council employees, 8 councillors and 2 Town and Parish Councils.

Respondents overwhelmingly suggested that a library could support local community arts and wider cultural activities and events with more creative use of its space, namely either hosting events/being a venue or providing space for groups to use, e.g. for events or rehearsals. It was suggested that libraries could help to promote and advertise local events, and their wall space used to display art and local works. Libraries could also support events in the area where they are based by taking part or providing complementary activities and resources. It was also suggested that libraries should engage and collaborate with different organisations across Dorset. There were similar findings for both library employees/volunteers and those in the other groups. Some employees commented that libraries could serve a function in the cultural sector that the tourist information centres used to, others that it was important to support funding opportunities.

Libraries support local arts/cultural events	Mentions
Host events/venue/use premises/provide space (e.g. general, exhibitions, arts, literary, museum, taster sessions, rehearsal space, speakers)	90
Promote local events to the community/advertising	24
Display arts/display space/display local works/make attractive	20
Support events elsewhere (e.g. literary festival, film fest, school play, children activities, parades, resource & employees, outreach, national, provide/more relevant books)	17
Engage/collaborate with different and diverse communities across Dorset, schools, arts, organisations, archives.	14
Library already does support this	6
Library should be a hub	5
Funding opportunities (e.g. find, become cultural hub)	4
Accessible - Longer opening hours, sufficient employees/skills	4
Sell event tickets	3
Cascade information (no longer have TICs)	3
Research - ask those involved, see what local talent there is.	3
Other/not role of library	3
Libraries/T&PC have/use a Facebook page	2
Arts award for children/community competitions	2
Meets objectives - healthy, social contact	2

Q. In the future, how can libraries help respond to climate change and the climate and ecological emergency?

122 respondents answered this question: 77 Dorset Library/Community Managed employees and volunteers, 36 other Dorset Council employees, 7 councillors and 2 Town and Parish Councils.

The table below shows the overall themes raised by the respondents. Most frequently suggested was libraries taking an 'education' type role in responding to climate change, with examples given such as workshops, events, guest speakers, displays, awareness weeks and activities for children. Others felt that libraries themselves could be more energy efficient, whether looking at the buildings themselves and their energy use or developing greener practices within the libraries themselves (e.g., recycling). Supporting and promoting greener transport options for both employees and users was deemed to be important as was working with other organisations, charities and businesses and promoting events. Some felt that libraries in themselves were 'green' options due to the nature of borrowing books.

How can libraries help respond to climate change/emergency	Mentions
Educate people - e.g. workshops, guest speakers, promotional material, stall with information, book displays, awareness week, show a small change making a difference	51
More efficient/greener buildings and energy solutions (e.g. solar power, LED lighting)	35
Greener practices in libraries e.g. reduce waste, no excess paper, print, plastic, recycled/sustainably sourced books, ecologically safe products.	26
Improving/encouraging recycling opportunities within the library	18
Support/promote greener transport options for employees and users (e.g. electric vehicles, public transport, libraries in accessible areas)	14
Work with other organisations/businesses/promote events	12
Promote swap shops/lending/donating books - libraries are a green option	10
Don't know/NA/Not sure/Each library is different	7
Library as a point to drop off some recycling	6
Libraries showcase best practice/sustainability	6
Initiatives e.g. small refill shop, tree/plant planting, ask the public, take library to communities	6
Promote/Invest in digital - catalogue to view before travelling, order, e-books	6
Co-locate services/open longer so fewer trips required	5
Align/work with Council on initiatives (and govt) (e.g. surgeries)	4
Target set to enable motivation, small changes then build up	3

When looking at the responses from library employees/volunteers versus others (non-library DC employees and councillors), the top suggestions were the same. In the latter group, they were more likely to mention more promotion-style education activities; working with organisations and finding digital solutions were also popular.

Non-users, partnership working and income generation

Respondents were advised: We want our libraries to remain at the hearts of their communities now and in the future. To achieve this, we need to make sure we are meeting the needs of our communities. We particularly want to engage and support residents who traditionally don't use the library. We need to understand how we can make our library service relevant to their needs in the future.

Q. How could the Dorset Council library service encourage non-library users to access the service in the future?

177 respondents answered this question: 111 Dorset Council Library/Community Managed employees and volunteers, 55 other Dorset Council employees, 9 councillors and 2 Town and Parish councils.

The most effective way to encourage non-users to use the library service was overwhelmingly felt to be better advertising and marketing of what a library has to offer. Respondents felt that its resources and the benefits of engaging with a library could be better promoted to a wide range of target groups and via various methods. Some felt that the library could be rebranded as more of a community hub/space and integrated with other services, and also offer a more diverse range of events, activities and clubs to widen its appeal. It was felt that if people had a reason to come into a library, they may then stay/come back. Some respondents commented on the need for flexibility in opening hours to enable people to visit at a time that suits them and others suggested a café or coffee shop might entice visitors in. Respondents also commented on improving the digital offer and trying to engage parents and children from an early age. Research into why non-users do not use a library was felt to be important, alongside working with organisations who engage with the non-user demographic to bring them into the library. Overall, there was a sense of respondents feeling that the library needs to be a welcoming and inclusive space for all.

How could the Dorset Library Service encourage non-users	Mentions
Better/More advertising/marketing - especially to raise awareness of what the library can offer, its resources and promote its benefits (inc. suggested locations, methods, target groups, books, public info sessions, inc. offline, promote green credentials)	89
Rebrand as a community hub/space/inclusive/integrate with other services/council services	26
More/diverse activities/events/clubs and groups to widen appeal	24
Bring people in for reasons other than traditional (e.g. events, partners, join with community, tours, hire space) - they may come back	22
Opening hours - review/extend/standardise	17
Café/coffee shop/refreshments/have a shop	17
Digital - improve offer - more online/virtual events/services/books/learning/printing service/better website/availability	16
Engage children earlier/encourage from an early age/childrens centres/wider education work/parents and toddlers/dispel quiet myth	15
Research why they do not use a library/think outside box/find service they want	14
Events/service/work with other organisations in non-user demographic (Job centre, CAB, NHS, orgs, charities)	14

School sessions for primary schools/improve links/open days/liaise/prioritise minority	13
More welcoming building/modern life/invest in space/refurbishment/sit and read space/younger people	12
Engage communities/groups/schools/young parents/children to develop their understanding of libraries - go out there	10
Safe space to sit/read/meet/social space	10
Library processes - longer loan times, abolish overdue fees, keep free	8
Outreach - get out there/take library to them, expand HLS to beyond housebound, co-locate in cafe/shop, access catalogue in other setting e.g. via VR headset	8
Adult education opportunities	5
Businesses - employer/workplace networks/invite to use space/WFH/partner to bring in young people	5
Too difficult/nothing works/already meet need	4
Employees - trained (e.g. on social media)/recruit from harder to reach groups	3
Give reason to come into the library, incentivise	3
Facilities - have toilets	2
Do not have everything online - older population	2
Raise awareness within the Council to other services	2
Services - click and collect	2

Advertising was a key message from all respondents to this question. Library employees felt that improving understanding of their offer was especially important; non-employees highlighted diversifying the offer and events and having suitable opening times.

Q. What opportunities are there for libraries to work with other services and local partners to improve access to services and support the health and wellbeing offer?

Respondents were advised: The council are looking for ways we can join up and complement delivery across services and sectors, utilising libraries to maximise our reach and impact in communities.

There were 139 responses to this question: 88 Dorset Council Library/Community Managed Library employees and volunteers, 41 other Dorset Council employees, 8 councillors and 2 Town and Parish councils.

Overwhelmingly, respondents felt there were opportunities to work with partners in the health sector, whether established organisations like LiveWell, offering and hosting drop-in or wellbeing sessions, working with GPs and health visitors or social prescribing activities. These were mentioned in terms of hosting on-site at the library but also outreach and having a presence in places such as the GP surgery. It was clear that respondents felt that there were opportunities for working together and that libraries are a trusted space to do this. Linking up and collaborating with other Dorset Council services was also felt to be important, especially social care and children's services, digital champions and to identify those who may benefit from the library. There was also support for linking to the voluntary and community sector to reach a range of diverse groups and partnering with schools, again both on and off site. Sharing information – e.g., on programmes, having displays – was mentioned frequently by library employees and volunteers.

Libraries to work with services/partners to improve access/support the health and wellbeing offer?	Mentions
Health and wellbeing services and opportunities (Public Health/LiveWell, drop in, GPs, social prescribing, wellbeing sessions, health visitor, baby etc)	71
Yes, many opportunities (trusted space/enhance use/signposting/rebrand)	22
Share information (programmes/displays/searches)	18
Link with Social Care, care leavers, early years/childrens centres, youth workers	15
Other Dorset Council services collaborate to engage communities/identify vulnerable/update/communicate/ esp. digi champs	15
Link to the VCS (groups, charities, homeless, nursing homes, faith groups, help integration etc)	14
Link with Schools (e.g. outreach, use by schools)	13
Link with/use by CAB	9
Outreach (e.g. village halls, social groups, carehomes, shops, community space, advertise in other spaces)	7
Link with other organisations/support/individuals(general)	7
Resource/process: Will require staffing/resource/volunteers/good comms/networking events/identify potential at local level	7
Link with cultural orgs (e.g. archives, local history, reminisce, music/wellbeing)	6
No comment/don't know	6
Link with legal/public services e.g. police	5
Councillors/MPs use library for surgeries etc	4
Link with businesses/offices/workplaces	4
Link with legal/public services e.g. solicitors, housing	3
Children's Activities	3
Other comments	3
Library should be a community activities/hub	2
Link with minority groups (inc religious)	2
Link with adult education/skills and learning	2
Digital offer - host online activities, support to contact health	2

Q. Do you have any suggestions about how the Dorset Council library service can generate more income in the future?

Respondents were advised: By 2030, we expect to see further changes in technology and how the public prefer to access services and we expect to face ongoing pressure on local Government funding. We will need to continue to explore ways to be more financially resilient and generate income.

There were 151 responses to this question: 94 Dorset Council Library/Community Managed Library employees and volunteers, 48 other Dorset Council employees, 7 councillors and 2 Town and Parish councils.

Suggestions for income focused on charging for a range of events, workshops and classes or receiving income from hiring/renting out library space. Some respondents suggested this could be outside of library opening hours. Having an onsite shop selling old books, arts/crafts, taking commission from sales, branded library stock, books or a traditional gift shop was suggested,

along with a refreshment facility such as a café. Other suggestions included charging for digital services and reinstating charges for reserving/requesting books. Some respondents felt that a library should not be generating income or be a commercial entity.

Some respondents stressed that any charges should not exclude people from attending and using the library; some suggested a phased system of charges and donations. When commenting on space and hire of the building, it was suggested to ensure that the buildings are fit for purpose (e.g. accessible). There were similar responses from library employees/volunteers and the other groups.

Suggestions for generating income	Mentions
Charge - events (e.g. author, coding, workshops, classes, film nights)	52
Hire/rent space (inc out of hours, ensure compliant building)	48
Shop (gifts, old books, arts/craft, commission, branded)	35
Café/coffee shop/refreshments	31
Charges for digital services - e.g. courses, access to PC, rent tech/equipment, printing	19
Charges for reservations/requests (or donate)	13
Should not be generating income/not commercial/Lobby for budget/review costs how many libraries can be supported	12
Business - partnership/hire space/hot desk, breakfasts	10
Membership fees/Loyalty card	8
Enforce/increase charges for overdue books	7
Fundraising e.g. market for donations/events, donations box, endowment, car boot	7
Advertising	6
Sponsorship	6
Offer services e.g. pick-up/drop off collection point, post office, box office hub/commission, check passports	6
Other suggested charges - home delivery, e-book, online, books/dvds, print to order	6
Make savings - employees, energy	5
Library must be fit for purpose/accessible	5
No suggestion	4
Schools, e.g. packs to rent	3
Ensure those who need it are not penalised/keep book borrowing free	3
Research/brainstorm ideas/work with other services	2
Work with streaming services	2
Government initiatives/increased funding projects	2
Do not charge if overdue - donate instead	2
Other comments	2
Parking - Rent car park space, EV charge points	2
Other income suggestions e.g. community banking, mobile library to workplaces for a fee	2

Voluntary and Community Sector

The next section was completed by those who work in the voluntary and community sector. They were asked about any services they provide in Dorset libraries and to identify opportunities to work together.

Q. Do you currently deliver any services in Dorset libraries?

Just over half of respondents said that they deliver services in Dorset libraries (54.5%).

	% of all respondents	Number
Yes	54.5	24
No	45.5	20

Q. What services do you provide?

As many of the voluntary and community organisation responses were linked to libraries e.g., the Royal Voluntary Service and Friends of various libraries, most services are linked to the activities of these groups – the Home Library Service and hosting, supporting and promoting events or use of the library. Some individual organisations do offer other services at the library, such as education and health services, 1:1 reading sessions for adults, a local oral history group, a code club for children and sharing of financial information.

What services do you provide?	Mentions
Home Library Service	15
Events - hold, support, assist (e.g. author/book talks)	3
Library support - fundraising, council policy input, encourage volunteers	3
Promote events/usage of library	2
Run/volunteer at community managed library	2
Education and health	1
Coaching 1:1 reading for adults	1
Local oral history group	1
Code club for 9 - 13 years	1
Share information on loansharks	1

Respondents were advised: There is a network of 23 council managed libraries and a further eight community managed libraries spread across Dorset. We want our libraries to remain at the hearts of their communities now and in the future.

Q. What opportunities do you see for the voluntary and community sector to work more closely with libraries, to help improve access to services and support the health and wellbeing offer?

These responses have been divided up into those who are providing a library service and those who offer other services. The comments are largely provided verbatim due to the low number, longer responses have been summarised (these are indicated by asterisks**). Full comments are available in the appendix.

The first table shows suggestions from the Royal Voluntary Service and Friends of various local libraries (17). Comments mostly relate to the Home Library Service, how well it works, how important it is and how it would benefit from further promotion. Other comments suggest how the library premises could be used more widely for activities and other services and how volunteers can help and make people aware of other services on offer.

Voluntary and Community Sector working with the Library
**RVS partnership with Dorset Council for 17 years has worked well in providing the home library service. Surveys have shown all aspects of the service are appreciated. Reach could be extended by working with Digital Champions/Embedded Digital Champions.
Increase networks with other community stakeholders - eg GP practices - to identify people who temporarily or permanently would gain from a home delivery service. Keeping books and reading as a lifeline for people and also reducing social isolation.
More advertising of the Home Library Service. More interaction between Library and Volunteers
Delivering books and ebooks is the primary need but also a befriending service for the housebound. Working with schools is also valuable.
Volunteers could help shelve books? We could also be more proactive in promoting library service.
Enough people to keep libraries open, whether paid or voluntary employees
**HLS is valued. Volunteers could make clients aware of full range of opportunities in the library service/other DC services. Some may want to visit for book clubs/socials/themed gatherings etc. Would need to investigate car insurance.
A bigger promotion and engaging with library users informing them of our service which can be streamlined when people are unable to travel to a library.
I believe a library should include information to the community on services available other than library services. Especially in a rural library it can be a source of information on many other services or a point where public can be directed to a service they may require but not know is available
There are many existing opportunities- it's about making them aware to those who would benefit.
Use of volunteers in libraries. Bringing other services into libraries like citizens advice, a meeting place for community groups like Carers groups
There are many people within North Dorset who need our service but word does not always reach them despite articles, poster publicity etc. Maybe a mail drop. Talks can also be given to other organisations within the community sector if this is useful.
A great chance to continue the valuable service offered to those unable to access the libraries
**Publicise HLS more. Use libraries to promote community cohesion/encourage those who feel isolated e.g. book group, put in touch with people. Reinstate mobile library service for relatively isolated communities.
Use of library premises for a wider range of activities such as games, reading groups and other community activities. Access to IT training/ Digital Champions. Shared management of library facilities with, for example, local church and Parish Councils and individuals in other community groups.
**Friends remit: 1. Promote events. 2. Run events – meet in supportive environment. Refreshments would enhance a visit and provide safe/supportive space for them outside of their own home
**Cater for all age groups – attract from across the community. Run IT activities for all, especially those not IT literate, link with digital champions. Lower cost of photocopying/printing for library members/commercial. Develop Home Library Service. Reinstate mobile libraries and introduce 'pop up' libraries to cater for needs of rural or deprived areas. Encourage voluntary sector to take part in

running peripheral activities in the library. Prioritise the provision of community room and space for use by the community – current concern in Weymouth. Work with and loudly promote links with care homes, clubs, BID, schools. Host special events, Introduce quiet days/space. See also q.5.

Other Voluntary and Community sector organisations – 24 responses were received to this question. The comments are largely provided verbatim due to the low number, longer responses have been summarised. Full comments are available in the appendix.

Organisations gave a range of suggestions as to how they could work with the library. Examples include the libraries hosting events, workshops and activities; acting as a hub to disseminate information; support developing IT skills; organisations referring/promoting the libraries and reading materials, and offering transport options to those who cannot make it to the library. Two respondents did not see any benefit to working together.

Voluntary and Community Sector working with the Library
Act as a hub to disseminate information about organisations which can help. Face to face recruitment into service industries.
Advice and support for accessing academic journals etc on line
**As the rural touring arts organisation in Dorset we see the potential for programming shows and workshops in some libraries. Funding rules (Arts Council) mean programme work has to be in communities that do not have access to performances/workshops. Potential for 'wrap-around' events to take place in a library with a show taking place in the local venue.
At Dial a Ride we can assist with transporting people to and from the library if they have mobility issues
Bring in 4 or 5-year olds and some older children. Most at these ages are suitable to understand what they might be just looking at the pictures with help from volunteers who can ask some easy questions and make the children laugh! Hopefully, they will love to come again and bring some pictures they have done, to show the others.
Clearer, memorable opening hours Venue for talks, presentations Provision of space for meetings
Help and support with IT, especially for very small businesses, and people without any technology education
Help the community and provide a hub for community for information, resource and IT. The most important service is the lending of books and provide up to date books that the community so desperately need access to. The computers is also critical to help the financial challenged families so they and their children do not get left behind and deprived of this modern communication medium.
I do not see libraries or indeed the council as being a useful part of what we do for disabled people.
**Run free dance performances/workshops in school/libraries to encourage engagement with the arts and themes of each project. Partnership with libraries crucial to development process, enhance projects/fundraising. Stronger partnership could be supported by libraries running outdoor activities/workshops that draw people into library without pressure of feeling they need to take out a book. Collaborate with various art forms – running in accessible spaces will allow libraries and arts to reach a wider cross-section of community (and people feel theatre/arts and libraries are for them).
**Displays of society's output – general interest and recruitment opportunity. Could arrange displays across sites – complementary to subjects library is pursuing (e.g. Hobby book promotion – dolls houses, boats, railways etc). Need to work with libraries to increase mutual reach.
In the past we have referred our beneficiaries onto reading and writing courses at the library. It would be great if organisations like ourselves could also come in and give short talks about the services we offer for the community. We love to network and work collaboratively with those around use more effectively.
It might be helpful to have volunteer-run libraries in the villages, in village halls, community rooms, even in pubs.
N/A

None. Stay professional, pay library staff to curate books etc, and stop trying to get your responsibilities done on the cheap.
Our community radio station is able to promote events at Swanage library, I often mention the volunteer bureau that used to run there and promote books on health and well being
Perhaps to share access to museum library
Promote what libraries are doing more widely and frequently. Library activities are rarely, if ever, mentioned in the local free press or on social media- such as the Wareham Community Group on Facebook.
Provision of space for workshops etc,
**Reading and the ability to have access to reading material is so very important for everyone. Statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons. Libraries must be warm, welcoming, social space – keep open for people whether statutory service or a community volunteering effort.
Subsidised transport opportunities to get residents to libraries by financially supporting the voluntary community transport schemes. This could be done by setting aside a proportion of the amount taken in charges annually (a bit like the bag for life scheme) to support local small voluntary/community groups.
**Lots of opportunities – more used, better they serve community. Offer supports the health and wellbeing offer. Libraries should go further out into the community to promote services to attract wide range of users. Support of Military Covenant and support to healthcare and key workers.
**We offer Social Prescribing Services across Dorset with staff mainly based in GP surgeries and referrals coming to them from health services. Library presence means community presence to those who currently do not engage with GPs. Work with people with range of needs relating to quality of life – lots of agencies who work within libraries are networks clients will benefit from.
We would love to work with our local families to support families facing poverty. Maybe to do some initiatives like treasure hunts or events in our town? I have been aiming to go down there & have a discussion with them

Businesses

Respondents were advised: We would like to explore how libraries could support and work more closely with Dorset’s business community. Respondents were asked what opportunities they felt would be most beneficial to the business community and where they felt libraries could support people in developing better skills, jobs and building a business.

Q. Which of the following opportunities do you think would be most beneficial to the business community? (Select up to 3)

Respondents could select up to three answers for this question. As the table below shows, businesses that responded felt that libraries could offer hot-desking, co-working spaces and bookable meeting rooms (both 56.5%). Also popular was hosting network events and access to intellectual property advice and market research databases (both 47.8%).

	% of all respondents	Number
Hot desk spaces/co-working spaces	56.5	13
Hosting networking events	47.8	11
Bookable meeting rooms	56.5	13
Access to ‘makerspaces’ (3D printers etc)	17.4	4
Access to Intellectual Property advice and market research databases	47.8	11
Other	17.4	4

Other
A quiet place to work. At the moment Bridport Library is too noisy
Ability to advertise our services to the local community.
Hireable rooms for presentations and lectures
Use our expertise and let us run workshops , storytelling, and play performances for the elderly .

If you would like to provide any additional information about your selections, please provide it here.

Nine respondents gave further information. The comments are largely provided verbatim due to the low number, longer responses have been summarised (these have been indicated by asterisks**). Full comments are available in the appendix. Comments mostly relate to bookable meeting space and hot-desking and the benefits of doing so, and resources.

Comments
Ability to advertise our services to the local community.

For Smaller businesses with limited office space the idea of being able to book meeting rooms with Clients is a big plus, a more private setting with less distraction would be a useful asset to any business
**Library member – space in Dorchester invaluable – bookable meeting rooms, hot-desking which is good for mental health and socialising, seeing the services on offer as we walk through. [name redacted]
I think all the options above are valuable to the business community; I've selected the three choices on the basis these are based around physical spaces which we know are often requested and sought after, particularly in easy to reach locations which libraries can potentially offer.
I use the library service all the time to a) obtain a range of reference books for short use, rather than buying them all the time and b) for on-line resources such as access to the various Oxford Dictionaries on-line. I also used to use the British Standards on-line until, alas, that was terminated.
If not already done, I think libraries could play a key role in helping with mental health with a clear section on books that can support people to feel better and encouraging a book club for people to meet etc
**Opportunities to meet in person better than reliance on digital. Web designer, but service businesses rely on/benefit from meeting real people/useful connections. 'Skill and knowledge share' service – people offer own experience/advice on different areas of business (Speed event)
Quite happy to pay for bootable meeting rooms and hot desk use.
The cost and availability of usable spaces within Weymouth, Melcombe Regis, and Portland

Q. In the future, how can libraries help people gain better skills, better jobs and help people build their business?

20 respondents answered this question. The comments here are largely provided verbatim due to the low number, longer responses have been summarised. Full comments are available in the appendix.

Businesses offered a wide range of suggestions which build on previous answers from other respondents earlier in the survey. The most frequently mentioned suggestions are for libraries to support workshops and sessions relating to business start-up advice, specific knowledge and skills that businesses need or relating to career development. Networking events and opportunities, marketing and facilitating access to the internet were also suggested.

Comments
Access to Business workshops/ Events on starting, running and Maintaining a business Recruitment Drives HR and Health and Safety advice. Networking events with other SMEs online courses.
Access to the internet for those without access.
Advise on career and skill development opportunities.
Be a hub for all sorts of Workshops. Use our theatre practitioner expertise. Building confidence, communication skills, public speaking, team building, and developing entrepreneurial ideas with expanding the imagination.
Business to business event hosting, and networking events
By providing common resources, particularly those that are either emerging or expensive for an individual to acquire. I.e. books were once scarce now most information can be acquired online - so what is the 21st century equivalent of the 19th century book?
Courses in advanced IT skills such as Web Development, film making, social media
I feel the Library does not promote the services it has to offer

If not already done, I think libraries could play a key role in helping with mental health with a clear section on books that can support people to feel better and encouraging a book club for people to meet etc. Having business people to talks at the library, have a room where podcasts can be recorded so businesses can use this - podcasts are the best e-book! Thanks
**Libraries in unique position – physical space to progress ideas/skills/welcome, people feel equal. Access workshops/training/meet-ups in 'neutral' space potentially linked to employment/training. Spend time together can be a catalyst for more formal development – empower people to take own idea forward and to connect/collaborate/learn from/work with.
Libraries bring people into the town centre which is good for all local businesses. Libraries have on-line services which assists those who have no internet service at their place of residence. Facility for researching any given project with information close at hand.
Marketing advice - Use of social media.
More marketing, perhaps through the TIC?
Offering meeting and networking opportunities, training courses and support
On line resource for marketing/product development
Possibly through some in-library training events? At the moment, most events seem to be aimed at children or leisure interest, which is excellent. But I have been struck by how little (curatorial) colleagues are aware of what the library service has to offer.
**Space for networking, work with Dorset Growth Hub/Outset to be 'drop-in' space for advice if starting business. Leave business cards/leaflets for local products/services. Southbourne Library did this well. Tap into retirees/older part-timers as mentors/skill-share with younger businesses.
Seminars, conferences with guest speakers
**Managed return to office by spreading out, but lost meeting room space. Wareham area lacks safe meeting spaces that can be easily booked. Fast broadband/co-working space would help – would also reduce commute for some workers.
There are two skills that only the well- educated have good access to: 1. Report Writing - which includes resumes, submissions, simple contracts, applications, designing advertisements etc 2. Public Speaking - which can include job interviews, being part of any committee, or even court appearances. Our public libraries can play a big role in developing skills and confidence. It would be fantastic if our libraries could give opportunities to those who need it.

Public sector organisations

As a reminder, the public sector organisations responding were:

Public Sector Organisation	Official response
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service	Yes
Dorset CCG	Yes
HMPPS	No
NHS Dorset CCG	No
South Western Ambulance Service	No
Wimborne University of the Third Age (u3a)**	No

Respondents were advised: There is a network of 23 council managed libraries and a further eight community managed libraries spread across Dorset. We want our libraries to remain at the hearts of their communities now and in the future.

Q. What opportunities do you see for your public sector organisation to work more closely with libraries, to help improve access to services and support the health and wellbeing offer?

The comments are largely provided verbatim due to the low number. Full comments are available in the appendix. Comments mostly focus on sharing information with the public on safety, health and wellbeing, organisations supporting and promoting the use of libraries, and running clinics and groups from the libraries.

Comment
<p>I am pleased that the library already works closely with us, allowing us to have a permanent notice board on site not only to advertise our latest activities to the public and also keep those members without internet a means of seeing up to date information. We also hold some of our smaller groups in the library study area. In the past, the library has let us host some short information mornings in the reception area during the academic year. It would be great to continue these post pandemic. Wimborne u3a has also been warmly welcomed at Corfe Mullen Library for similar open events. Wimborne u3a are grateful to our libraries for supporting us so well.</p>
<p>Information about libraries in FYI Employee Daily/Weekly Bulletin Information for the patients - there is a vaccination clinic happening here at the moment</p>
<p>Libraries provide an excellent community asset for information sharing with the public on health and wellbeing issues, as well as providing digital resources for anyone who may not have them at home. Being able to point people to a physical location where they can go to find out more information is a opportunity that we could use much more than we currently do.</p>
<p>Our Safe and Well Visits which promote fire safety along with health and wellbeing. During these visits we could promote the use of libraries within the communities and referrals for our Safe and Well Visits could be made. We have previously operated a stand within the libraries and these have been well received and supported.</p>
<p>Replying as an individual, I would like to see the use of Pets as Therapy in libraries, for example, the Paws to read scheme.</p>
<p>We would gladly run vaccination clinics, lonely and frequent caller days and other projects from the local libraries, this could include sharing information such as hand-washing and about our Patient Participation Panel</p>

All respondents

Respondents were advised: We want to hear from our employees, volunteers, councillors, partners and businesses about how we can make our library service relevant to our resident's needs in the future.

Q. How could we develop our Dorset Council library service in the future?

There were 192 responses to this question; 81 from Dorset Council and Community Managed Libraries, 39 from other Dorset Council services, 41 from the Voluntary and Community sector, 18 Businesses, 7 councillors, 4 public sector organisations, 2 Town and Parish councils.

Overall, respondents felt that in the future libraries should look to develop their offer in terms of more events, workshops and hosting groups. They suggested a wide variety of topics such as children's activities, arts and crafts, sessions relating to well-being, having guest speakers and the community sharing skills with each other. Some suggested it would be an opportunity to mix generations of people. It was felt that libraries could work closer with local services and organisations and share library space with them, when appropriate, to help support and inform a wide range of target groups. These linked to suggestions that the library should be more of a community hub for support and information; some of those who felt current services should be better advertised also suggested looking at how the library is branded and marketed. There were numerous comments about the digital offer and digital services and the role the libraries could play in supporting skills development and access to equipment. Performing an outreach service was also important, whether with regard to reaching those who are older, isolated or live in rural locations, or to inform and engage individuals and groups about what services the library can offer. Respondents also talked about the library as an inclusive, social space where everyone can feel safe. There were a few comments about ensuring libraries at least maintain their core offer.

The top three for both library employee/volunteers and the 'others' were also as in the table below: events/workshops, working with other organisations and looking at the digital offer. Next most frequently mentioned for employees was better advertising and marketing and defining the role of the library, reflecting their earlier responses.

How could we develop our Dorset Library Service for the future?	Mentions
Events/workshops hosting (e.g. childrens activities, arts, workshops, wellbeing, mix old/young, games, speakers, promotions, skills sharing)	65
Work with/share space with local services/community groups/partners/charities/public sector (e.g. police, mental health, sexual health, domestic abuse, youth workers, children, adults, ethnic minority groups)	39
Digital offer (e.g. support services, access, ensure up to date, rent tech, invest, digital doorway, VR catalogue, paid help, app, club)	36
Outreach (e.g. especially to older/rural areas, but also pop-up events, stalls, various venues, phone boxes, stalls, vans, contact groups)	35
Better advertising/marketing - rebranding/define role/free/for all/dedicated professional support	27
Café/refreshments	22
Social space for everyone/inclusive/community hub venue	22
Working with schools	16
Opening hours - standardise/longer/flexible	15

Services (e.g. collection point, home delivery, post office, TIC, sell tickets, streaming, community bank)	15
Work with businesses (workspace, workshops, work exp for young people, talks, hot desk, Chamber, young entrepreneurs)	15
Hire space out/for groups to run things (inc garden/out of hours)	14
Environment - professional/modern/inspiring/enthusiastic e.g. art display, interactive	13
Employee Review - new job descriptions/trim/training/resilient/motivated/informed/more diverse recruitment/train vols.	13
Books - buy more/update stock/retain/organise	11
Layout - space to study/homework, work or teens, diversity, private appts	11
Research - views, other libraries and what they are doing, where the gaps are, for diverse communities	9
Other suggestions/comments	9
Don't know/not sure/been said	8
Provide information/local info and support	8
Ensure retain core function of library/keep free/open	8
Council - hub for Council services/one stop info shop/face-to-face/single customer view	8
Shop (e.g. books, gifts)	6
Incentives - loyalty schemes/memberships/competitions	5
Everyday object loans - Library of things/other types of loan	5
Facilities - free parking, toilet, creche, charge points	4
Library processes - abolish fines (donations)/longer loan/open access catalogue	4
Promote/expand the HLS (e.g. into care homes, with care providers)	4
Repair shop/book swap/recycle	4
Widen offer/bring in for other reasons/be cutting edge/relevant/open to new ideas	4
Advertising/Sponsorship	3
Need to be valued by the Council/councillors, can share DC directives	3
Support literacy for children and adults	3
Library orientation sessions/tours - bring in	2
Transport - bring people into the library	2
Encourage hybrid physical/digital model	2

Vision

Respondents were asked: To help inform the vision for the Dorset Council library service, use 3 words that you think should describe the service **in 10 years' time**. You have up to 25 characters per word - so most words will fit. Responses from all 275 respondents have been included here.

The word cloud below shows the top 30 more frequently mentioned words (or similar). The most frequently used words were accessible, community, innovative, inclusive, modern, exciting, educational and friendly.



Q. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about libraries that you haven't been able to so far?

135 respondents answered this question. 54 from Dorset Council and Community Managed Libraries and 81 from all the other sector groups.

Respondents gave a wide range of responses to this question, mostly reflecting findings throughout this report; namely that libraries are an important part of life and community asset, and especially vital to those who are vulnerable. Raising the profile of libraries was felt to be important; they are an engaging and accessible space and they should work with other organisations.

Library employees gave some concerns over their relationship with the council, suggesting they could be utilised better and have more communication with the council itself. Employees also felt that they could be invested in and listened to and would like time to meet with each other and to share ideas. Libraries should also be open to moving with the times and exploring new ways of working.

Any other comments	Mentions
Positive comment about libraries as a resource/part of life/appreciated/community asset	20
Use employees better, treat better - communicate more with them, value, invest/listen, resource, give time to meet and share ideas	16
Importance of library to community/vulnerable/lonely/isolated/older/access without digital/those not online and reaching them	15
No further comment	14
Better promotion/raise awareness/improve profile	12
Employees are engaging/make a good library	10
Accessible, engaging space for all, keep free	8
Work with other organisations (to promote/attract/space/support) e.g. railways, TIC, museum, public info, village hall, neighbourhoods etc.	8
Be open to new ways of working and change/persevere/pioneering library/mix of libraries, research	8
Activities - e.g. for families, out of hours, mixing, book clubs, young people	7
Changes to opening hours (e.g. increase, trial new, 24/7	6
Education - schools, reduce gap, green practice	6
Move with times but keep traditional/don't forget core (e.g. books)	6
Consider layout e.g. have quiet/noisy sections	5
Facilities - toilets, parking, wheelchair accessibility	4
Digital - online helpful, good in pandemic, focus on help with computers/hire tech etc.	4
More/range of books, keep books	4
HLS is of value/important service/extend to care home	4
Library processes - Card payments, IT support, no overdue charges	3
Other comment	3
Libraries West - promote/good service (2) offputting (1)	3
Irrelevant as adult/not useful	2
Make sure they stay open	2
Business/community based/workspace	2
Council should visit more/have link officer	2
Support society to adapt/will take time to adapt post-pandemic	2

Keeping informed

144 respondents would like to be kept informed on the progress of the library strategy.

Total:144	Number
Dorset Council library service (employee or volunteer)	37
Volunteer at a Community Managed Library	12

Dorset Council employee (non-library service)	31
Councillor (Dorset Council and Town/Parish)	5
Town and Parish Council	2
Voluntary and community sector organisation	32
Business	17
Public sector organisation	8*

*inclusive of other responses

About You

We collect diversity information, not only to ensure any changes do not unfairly impact on specific sectors of the community, but also to try to make sure our consultation response comes from a representative sample of local residents.

These questions were answered by those who are employees, volunteers or councillors.

Age

The tables below show the profile of people taking part in the consultation.

	Under 18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-and over	Prefer not to say
% of responses in age group	0.0	2.2	8.2	14.7	20.7	25.0	25.0	4.3

Gender

The current profile of the residents of Dorset shows 49.8% male and 51.1% female. Individual respondents to this survey overwhelmingly describe their gender as female (80.1%). The one self-described was genderqueer.

	Male %	Female %	Prefer to self describe %	Prefer not to say %
What best describes your gender?	13.8	80.1	0.6	5.5

	Yes %	No %	Prefer not to say %
Is your gender identity the same as the sex you were assigned at birth?	94.4	0.6	5.0

Sexual Orientation

Most respondents identified as heterosexual/straight (81.0%), 15.1% preferred not to say. Three respondents are gay/lesbian (1.7%), two are bi (1.1%), and two use another term (1.1%).

	%
Bi	1.1
Gay/lesbian	1.7
Heterosexual/Straight	81.0
I use another term (please describe)	1.1
Prefer not to say	15.1

Disability

4.9% of respondents considered they had a disability. This equates to 9 people. Responses from disabled people were about average at 4.9% of responses compared to a Dorset figure of 5% based on those claiming either Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments or Attendance Allowance.

	Yes %	No %	Prefer not to say %
Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act, 2010?	4.9	87.9	7.1

When looking at the specific disabilities of the 9 people responding, Three said they have a physical disability, three a long-standing illness or health condition, three a mental health condition. two have a sensory impairment, and two a learning disability/difficulty. One preferred not to say and one said 'other' – Asperger's syndrome.

Ethnic Group

With 89.5% of the respondents saying their ethnic group was White British this is fairly typical of the wider population. The 'other' ethnic group was Scottish.

	%
White British	89.5
White Irish	1.1
Gypsy/Irish traveller	0.6
Any other white background	1.7
Asian/ Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.0

Asian/ Asian British - Chinese	0.0
Asian/ Asian British - Indian	0.0
Asian/ Asian British - Pakistani	0.0
Any other Asian background	0.0
Black/Black British - African	0.0
Black/Black British - Caribbean	0.6
Any other black background	0.0
Mixed ethnic background – White and Asian	0.6
Mixed ethnic background – White and Black African	0.0
Mixed ethnic background – White and Black Caribbean	0.0
Any other mixed background	0.0
Prefer not to say	5.5
Any other ethnic group	0.6

What best describes your religion/belief?

The most common religion/belief was Christian (45.0%) with 37.8% having no religion. Those who responded other were Agnostic, Spiritual, Pagan, Interfaith and Atheist (preference to no religion)

	%
Buddhist	1.1
Christian	45.0
Hindu	0.0
Jewish	0.0
Muslim	0.0
Sikh	0.0
No religion	37.8
Other	4.4
Prefer not to say	11.7