#LetsTalkLibraries 5-15
Consultation Response Report

Produced by Consultation and Engagement Team
for Dorset Council

April 2022

#LetsTalkLibraries 5-15

Consultation Response Report

What was the consultation about?	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 eight community-managed libraries in the Dorset Council area. The current library strategy is 11 years old. Over those 11 years, 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 10 years. 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 will allow 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). A draft library strategy will be produced, and views sought on it through a second public consultation later in 2022.
What did we need to find out	The aim of the consultation was to find out specifically the views of children and young people aged five to 15 years old. They were asked about their current use of the library, what they enjoyed taking part in and what they would like to see in their local library. Those who did not use the library were asked why not and what would make them be more inclined to use it in the future.
Over what period did the consultation run?	The consultation period ran from 25 October 2021 until midnight on 7 January 2022.
What consultation methods were used?	The survey was available online and paper versions were available in local libraries. The survey included a free text section for people to add other comments.
How many responses were received overall?	476 responses were received to the survey in total. Most were aged 5 – 10 years old (70.4%), about a quarter were 11 – 15 (27.3%) and 2.3% were 16 plus. Some responses were completed by the parent on behalf of the child.
How representative is the response to	Looking at Dorset Council mid-year 2020 estimate data, 44.079 children were aged 5 – 15 years. Of this group 53% were aged 5 – 10 and 47% 11 – 15 years. Therefore, the younger age group are over-represented

the wider population?	as compared to the older group. No other data was collected from the respondents to allow further comparison.
Where will the results be published?	The results will be published on the Dorset Council website and the #LetsTalkLibraries webpage.
How will the results be used?	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.
Who has produced this report?	Consultation and Engagement team, Dorset Council, January 2022

Executive Summary

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 eight community-managed libraries in the Dorset Council area. The aim of this consultation was to find out specifically the views of children and young people aged five to 15 years old. They were asked about their current use of the library, what they enjoyed taking part in and what they would like to see in their local library. Those who did not use the library were asked why not and what would make them be more inclined to use it in the future.

476 responses were received to the survey in total. Most respondents were in the younger age group 5 – 10 years old (70.4%), about a quarter were 11 – 15 (27.3%) and 2.3% were 16 plus. Some responses appear to have been completed by the parent on behalf of the child. 26.2% of respondents said that they live in the West Dorset, with a relatively even response rate across Weymouth and Portland (17.4%), Eastern Dorset (16.6%), Central Dorset (15.7%), Purbeck (15.7%). 7.1% of respondents said they live in the BCP area, with 1.3% elsewhere outside Dorset.

Three quarters of respondents use their school library (75.6%), those who do not have a school library do use, or have used, a local library instead. 64.9% go to their local library and 22.7% sometimes go. Five respondents do not use either a school or local library. The main reasons given by those who said they do not visit their local library were because they have their own books and they have their own computer with access to the internet. What they would like to see in their local library are mostly activities of a creative nature – music activities and art and craft sessions – and also digital activities and clubs. A quarter would like help with homework.

92.2% of respondents visit the local library with an adult. The most popular library activity was looking at the books/DVDs and choosing which ones to borrow (84.6%), followed by taking part in organised activities (54.7%) and sitting in chairs and reading (52.3%). Just over a quarter like to learn and find things out (28.8%).

74% of respondents have taken part in an activity at their local library; the most frequently attended activities were Rhyme Time (57.2%) and arts and craft workshops (57.2%). A third attended 'other' activities, of which the most popular were the Reading Challenge, Lego days, hunts and trails and the Harry Potter event. Three quarters of respondents said they feel happy after taking part in local library activities (75.7%), 44.7% have learned something new.

Nearly all respondents said that they would keep visiting the library when they are older (97.8%). When asked what they would like to see in the future, there was a reasonable spread of responses across the suggested activities. The most popular were arts and craft sessions (54.4%), clubs such as board game or role play clubs (37.6%) and computer Minecraft/VR clubs (36.9%), and space for reading (37.1%). 34% would like to hear authors or poets talk about their books. When asked what else they would like to see in the library in the future, the top answer was more/wider range of books.

Background

The consultation explained:

Introduction

We want to hear from Dorset's children!

Tell us what you think of libraries. Do you like visiting libraries? What do you do when you visit? What would make you visit? How could libraries be more fun in the future?

The survey is designed for those ages 5-15 years old. There is also a survey available for those who are 16yrs+

To say thank you to those who complete the survey, there will be the option to be entered into a prize draw to win a £25 Amazon voucher (three £25 vouchers in total will be awarded)

The technical bit

The survey closes at midnight on 7 January 2022. Responses will be anonymous and no one will be able to identify you from your answers.

Our webpage dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/lets-talk/libraries provides all the latest updates.

The survey is **best viewed** on a computer or tablet. If using a mobile phone please view in landscape mode.

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 were looked at, such as those who do not use their local or their school library. 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. If there are a few number of text responses and coding is not possible, these comments have been provided verbatim. Total redacted comments are provided in an appendix. Note: some figures may not sum due to rounding.

Response Method

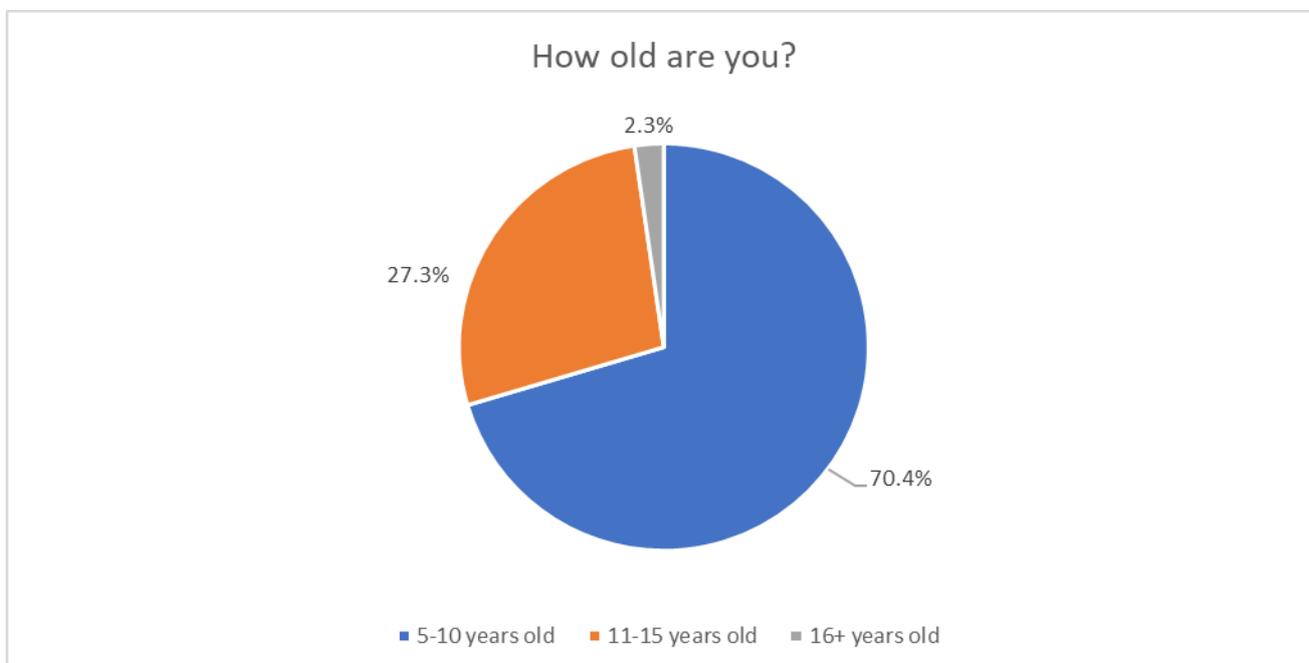Overall, 476 responses were received; it is not clear how many were paper copies that were inputted.

About respondents

476 overall responses were received.

Q. How old are you?

Most respondents were between 5 and 10 years old (70.4%), a further quarter were 11 – 15 years old (27.3%). 2.3% of respondents said they were 16 years or over; in some cases it appears that when asked how old they are, the parent/carer or guardian has inputted their own age.
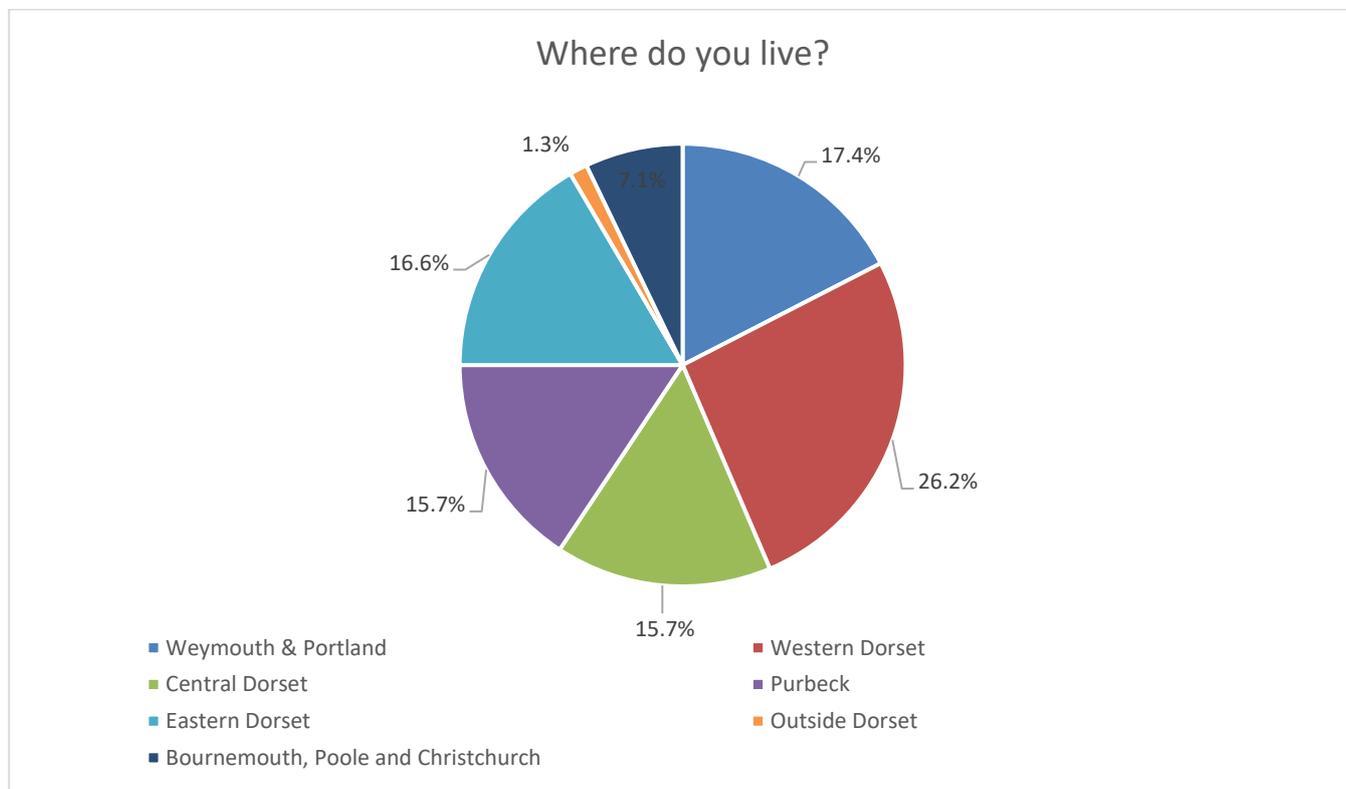
	% of all respondents	Number
5 – 10 years old	70.4	335
11 – 15 years old	27.3	130
16+ years old	2.3	11

How old are you?

Q. Click on the map (or list) roughly where you live

Respondents were presented with a map of the Dorset area (and its surrounds) and asked to indicate roughly where they live. 26.2% of respondents said that they live in the West Dorset, with a relatively even response rate across Weymouth and Portland (17.4%), Eastern Dorset (16.6%), Central Dorset (15.7%), Purbeck (15.7%). 7.1% of respondents said they live in the BCP area, with 1.3% elsewhere outside Dorset.

	% of all respondents	Number
Weymouth and Portland	17.4	81
Western Dorset	26.2	122
Central Dorset	15.7	73
Purbeck	15.7	73
Eastern Dorset	16.6	77
Outside Dorset	1.3	6
Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch	7.1	33

Where do you live?

- Weymouth & Portland
- Western Dorset
- Central Dorset
- Purbeck
- Eastern Dorset
- Outside Dorset
- Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch

Q. Do you use your school library?

Three quarters of respondents said that they use their school library (75.6%), 17.7% do not use their school library, and 6.6% said that their school doesn't have a library. All of those who said that their school doesn't have a library later said that they currently visit or have visited (pre-Covid) their local library.

	% of all respondents	Number
Yes, I use the library at my school	75.6	354
No, I don't use the library at my school	17.7	83
My school doesn't have a library	6.6	31

Q. Do you visit your local library? (in your town or village)

About two thirds of respondents said that they go to their local library (64.9%), 22.7% sometimes visit, and 8.6% go but stopped due to COVID-19. 3.8% said that they never go to local libraries. Of all respondents, five said that they do not use any libraries, whether at school or a local library (1%).

	% of all respondents	Number
Yes, I go to my local library	64.9	309
I sometimes go to my local library	22.7	108
Yes, I go to my local library but I stopped because of COVID-19	8.6	41
I never go to local libraries	3.8	18

Non-users of local library

Q. If you don't visit your local library, why not?

Respondents could select multiple answers to this question. For the 18 respondents who said that they do not visit their local library, the top two reasons were because they have their own books (55.6%) and they have a computer and access to the internet (55.6%) 27.8% said that there are no activities that interest them, 22.2% that they don't like reading and 22.2% gave additional reasons which are detailed verbatim in the table below.

Respondents - 18	% of all respondents	Number
I can't get to the library	5.6	1
I don't like it there	5.6	1
I don't like reading	22.2	4
I have my own books	55.6	10
I have my own computer and access to the internet	55.6	10
There are no activities that interest me	27.8	5
Or you can tell us why you don't go in the box below (other)	22.2	4

Note: respondents could select as many options as they liked.

Tell us why here (other):

Comments
I have no time to go to a library
Only just old enough to really be taking an interest.
I went once with mum but the no of books was low compared to our last library in Hampshire. Then Covid started.
As a family, we don't have time during the week, Saturdays are full of clubs and chores and Sundays the libraries aren't open. But even if they were, we possibly wouldn't prioritise going to one anyway, unless it did a mean brunch.

Q: What would you like to see in your local library that would make you want to go?

The same 18 respondents were then asked what they would like to see in their local library. The most popular responses were of a creative nature: music activities (41.3%) and art and craft sessions (35.3%). Next were digital activities such as computers with access to the internet (23.5%) and computer, Minecraft and VR clubs (23.5%). 23.5% also said they would like help with homework. Three respondents gave other suggestions which are detailed verbatim in the table below.

Respondents - 18	% of all respondents	Number
I would like help with homework	23.5	4
I would like reading and writing groups	17.6	3

I would like board game or role play clubs (e.g. Dungeons & Dragons)	11.8	2
I would like e-books, e-magazines and e-comics	17.6	3
I would like to listen to audio books	5.9	1
I would like computers with access to the internet	23.5	4
I would like space for reading	17.6	3
I would like Code Clubs	0.0	0
I would like computer, Minecraft and VR clubs	23.5	4
I would like art and craft sessions	35.3	6
I would like to hear authors or poets talk about their books	5.9	1
I would like music activities	41.2	7
I would like dance activities	11.8	2
I would like theatre and drama workshops	5.9	1
Let us know what else you would like in the box below	17.6	3

Note: respondents could select as many options as they liked.

Tell us what else you would like here:

Comments
A film club
Lego or Mecanno club. More books. More areas to read. Not have to be so quiet
A soft play area, Lego and general toys to play with. Cake and hot chocolate.

Non-users of local and school library

As stated, five respondents said that they did not use a school library or their local library. Of these, four were between the ages of 11 – 15 years and one over 16 (21). The main reasons for not using a library were because they have their own computer and access to the internet, and there are no activities that interest them (both 60% or three respondents). Interestingly, the most popular answer for what would make them want to attend a library was computers with access to the internet (60% or 3 respondents, two of whom answered that they have their own computer at home). Other responses that attracted multiple selections included reading and writing groups (2) and e-books, magazines and comics (2).

Q. Do you visit the local library with an adult?

92.2% visit the local library with an adult. Of those who said they do not visit the library with an adult, all bar two said they were over the age of 11.

	% of all respondents	Number
Yes, I visit the local library with an adult	92.2%	416
No, I don't visit the local library with an adult	7.8%	35

Q. What three things do you enjoy the most when you go to the local library? (you can tick up to three options)

The most popular library activity was looking at the books or DVDs on the shelves and choosing ones to borrow (84.6%), followed by taking part in organised activities (54.7%) or sitting in chairs and reading (52.3%). Just over a quarter like to learn and to find things out (28.8%).

	% of all respondents	Number
I like to look at the books or DVDs on the shelves and choose ones to borrow	84.6	385
I like to go on the computers and access the internet	7.0	32
I like to take part in activities that the local library has organised	54.7	249
I like to sit in the chairs and read my book	52.3	238
I like to learn and find things out	28.8	131
I like seeing my friends or meeting other children	14.3	65
Other (tell us what else you like below)	10.3	47

Note: respondents could select as many options as they liked.

Tell us what you like here

When asked to specify what else they like about the library, respondents reiterated their enjoyment of choosing and borrowing books; some even specified they enjoy collecting books they have reserved from other libraries and scanning their own books. Other specified activities they enjoy, the peaceful atmosphere and being able to talk to library employees.

Activity	No of mentions
Choosing/borrowing/collecting reserved books	15
Talking to library employees	4
Reading	4
Treasure hunt	4
Enjoy scanning own books out	4
Colouring in	4
Misc activities and events	4
Peaceful, quiet, safe atmosphere	4
Playing with toys	3
Misc services (e.g. wifi, talking books, screens)	3
Being read to	2
Reading challenge	2
Doing homework	2
Other	2

Q. Have you ever taken part in activities at your local library?

Three quarters of respondents have taken part in an activity at their local library.

	% of all respondents	Number
I have been to a library activity	74.0	335
I have never been to a library activity	26.0	118

Q. What activities have you been to at your library or online? (you can tick more than one)

Respondents could select as many activities as they liked for this question. The most frequently selected activities by respondents by some margin were Rhyme Time (57.2%) and art and craft workshops (57.2%). About a third said they had attended 'other activities' and these are specified in the second table below. Other popular activities include the Reading Challenge, Lego days, hunts and trails and the Harry Potter event.

	% of all respondents	Number
I have been to reading and writing groups	10.8	36
I have been to Rhyme Times	57.2	190

	% of all respondents	Number
I have been to Chatterbooks	4.5	15
I have been to Code Clubs	6.6	22
I have been to art and craft workshops	57.2	190
I have listened to authors or poets talk about their books	11.7	39
I have been to music activities	9.9	33
I have been to dance activities	2.1	7
I have been to theatre and drama workshops	5.1	17
I have been to holiday clubs	10.2	34
Other (tell us what other activities you have been to below)	31.6	105

Note: respondents could select as many options as they liked.

Tell us what other activities you have been to.

Activity	No. of mentions.
Reading Challenge	40
Lego	31
Hunts and trails (e.g. treasure, character, library hunts and trails)	15
Harry Potter day/event	14
Zoo lab	5
Quizzes and Puzzles	5
Other themed events	5
Science Day	4
Storytime (inc online)	4
Elmer Day	3
Animation workshops	3
Miscellaneous talks	3
Space/Planetarium	3
Other miscellaneous activities	3
Drama/Theatre e.g. Fossil/Mary Anning	3
Dungeons and Dragons	2
Attending with school	2
Craft Activities	2
Art competition/awards	2
Christmas Activities	2
Rhyme time	2

Q. How do you feel after taking part in local library activities?

Respondents could select as many answers as they like for this question. Three quarters of respondents said that they feel happy after taking part in local library activities (75.7%). 44.7% said they have learned something new, and about a quarter said they were proud (26.2%). 25.2% said that they feel more confident reading. Eight respondents gave other feelings they experience after taking part such as feeling excited. These are reported verbatim in the second table below.

	% of all respondents	Number
I have learned something new	44.7	149
I feel more confident reading	25.2	84
I feel more confident using the computer	4.2	14
I feel happy	75.7	252
I am proud	26.1	87
I don't feel any different	7.2	24
Other – or you can tell us how you feel below	2.4	8

Note: respondents could select as many options as they liked

Tell us how you felt:

Comments
I feel like I have connected with my community more and met more people
After I do a library activity I feel excited.
I am grateful for the time that librarians have taken to organise a fun activity.
I'm more in the mood for reading
I feel safe, its a nice space with knowledgeable and helpful people. The Librarian knows which books I would like
Sometimes I don't feel any different.
I feel brave
I feel excited.

Q. As you get older, do you want to keep visiting your local library?

Nearly all respondents said that they would like to keep visiting the library when they are older (97.8%). Of those who said they will not keep visiting the library when they are older, five were aged 5 – 10 years and five 11 – 15 years.

	% of all respondents	Number
Yes, I would like to keep visiting the library when I am older	97.8	443
No, I won't visit the library when I am older	2.2	10

Q. What would you like to see in your local library in the future?

Overall, there was a reasonable response to nearly all the suggested future activities a library could offer. The most popular were arts and craft sessions (54.4%), clubs such as role play clubs (37.6%) and computer, Minecraft and VR clubs (36.9%) and more space for reading (37.1%). 34% said they would like to hear authors or poets talk about their books.

	% of all respondents	Number
I would help with homework	22.6	101
I would like more reading and writing groups	26.4	118
I would like board game or role play clubs (e.g. Dungeons & Dragons)	37.6	168
I would like to see e-books, e-magazines and e-comics	21.7	97
I would like to listen to audio books	30.0	134
I would like more computers with access to the internet	15.7	70
I would like more space for reading	37.1	166
I would like more Code Clubs	22.4	100
I would like more computer Minecraft & VR clubs	36.9	165
I would like more art and craft sessions	54.4	243
I would like to hear authors or poets talk about their books	34.0	152
I would like more music activities	26.4	118
I would like more dance activities	25.1	112

	% of all respondents	Number
I would like more theatre and drama workshops	27.3	122
Other – let us know what else you would like in the box	16.3	73

Note: respondents could select as many options as they liked

Let us know what else here:

The most frequent suggestion for the future was libraries having more books or a wider range of books. A range of different genres were recommended such as comedy, age-specific books and specific books series. One respondent suggested books that help prepare children for modern life, such as on LGBT issues. Other suggestions included a wide variety of clubs and activities and there was support for Lego Club. Some respondents indicated that they would like some form of café or refreshments, others had suggestions on improving library processes.

Like to see more of/suggestions	No of mentions
More/wider range of books.	25
Clubs (e.g. D&D, history, re-enactment, Amiibo, gardening, homework/breakfast, book, singing/drama, chess, coding, writing)	12
Activities (e.g. trails, hunts, outdoors, outdoor play, dressing up, storytelling, happiness, tanks, computer games, for babies, older, families)	12
Lego club	9
Classes (e.g. art & craft, media, coding, meditation, spanish, chemistry, education, school visits)	8
Café/refreshments/snacks	7
Library processes - e.g. faster interlibrary, searches, book swap, make recommendations and offer reviews to help select books.	6
To be open more/longer	4
A quiet area	4
More reading challenges (e.g. other seasons)	3
Seating/space to read	3
As it is - back to normal/keep employees/still open	3
Rhymetime/Storytime	2
Authors/adults to read to children	2
Plays/theatre performance	2
Other (a smiley face!)	1

When looking at individual age groups, there are some differences in the order of preferred future activities for the older age group where 'space for reading' was also the most popular choice (41.5%):

5- 10-year-olds
- art and craft sessions (64.7%)
- board game or role play clubs (40.3%)

- computer Minecraft & VR clubs (37.2%)
- authors and poets talking about their books (34.7%)

11–15-year-olds
- space for reading (41.5%)
- computer Minecraft & VR clubs (38.1%)
- authors and poets talking about their books (33.9%)
- board game or role play clubs (31.4%)

Answers from those aged 16 or over were spread across the options available.