

## Libraries proposed for closure

### Blackfield Library

The consultation received a total of 117 responses directly related to Blackfield Library, four of which were from business, groups or organisations. A *Save Blackfield Library* petition signed by 721 people was also received. 60% of those who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 18% of respondents supported the closure and a further 22% would prefer an alternative approach. 99 of the 117 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Hythe Library (94%), Lymington Library (24%) and Totton Library (23%). A public drop-in session was held on 6 February 2020, which was attended by 10 members of the public.

Those who commented on Blackfield Library described it as a valued service (27%), whilst others expressed concern over the impact of specific groups within a deprived area such as Blackfield should the Library close (24%) however respondents acknowledged that footfall is very low. A lot of comments stated that the respondent did not actually use the Library even though they did not support the closure.

Blackfield Library catchment area has an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score of 6.5 (1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived) – see Appendix 1 for definition of IMD and how it is used to measure community need. It has an educational IMD score of 4.6 out of 10 (Hampshire average is 7). To mitigate this impact, the Library service would look to undertake further engagement with primary and secondary schools within the catchment area to provide access to services and support literacy. The School Library Service would further look to engage with children and young people within the catchment area to minimise impact to this specific group.

Carer Groups Library membership is available to Early Years providers, care homes, sheltered accommodation and playgroups, therefore it is believed that this scheme will support older adults living in group settings and/or organisations supporting Early Years development.

The Library Service has invested significantly in digital titles of both eBooks and eAudiobooks since the outbreak of Covid-19 and there is now a much wider selection of titles including children's titles available to all library customers with digital access.

The proportion of the population with no cars in the catchment is 9.2%, above the Hampshire average of 5.8%. 15.6% of the catchment population live in the 20% most deprived areas in the country. The time and cost of travel to an alternative Library was a concern to respondents of the public consultation. The Library Service recognises that additional costs will be incurred by people travelling to an alternative library, either by public transport or in a private vehicle. Travel times to Hythe Library (the nearest alternative Library) are around 12 minutes by car and 18 minutes by public transport. As neither Libraries are far from bus services or car parks this was not assessed as being a high impact to users. Those customers living in the rural

outskirts of Blackfield may experience some challenges due to irregular bus services.

Vulnerable and isolated residents, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, Ready Reads, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour scheme. For more information about these services please see Appendix 1. Internet and Broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure.

The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to people adversely impacted, should Blackfield Library be removed from the portfolio.

If Blackfield Library no longer forms part of Hampshire's statutory Library Service community organisations would be welcome to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

### **Chineham Library**

The consultation received a total of 1,751 formal responses directly related to Chineham Library, 12 of which were from business, groups or organisations. 69% of those who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 6% of respondents supported the closure and a further 25% would prefer an alternative approach. 1,118 of the 1,751 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Basingstoke Discovery Centre (86%), South Ham Library (21%) and Tadley Library (17%). A public drop-in session was held on 4 February 2020, which was attended by approximately 400 members of the public.

Comments received through the consultation were of genuine surprise that Chineham Library was being considered for closure, respondents (19%) found the location of the Library very convenient and would be concerned about the difficulty it may cause people to travel to Basingstoke to visit their nearest alternative Library (Basingstoke Discovery Centre). Respondents commented on the valued service (18%), specifically the valued staff members (11%) and the activities such as Rhymetime, 14% of respondents were particularly concerned that the closure would disadvantage children. Alternative suggestions were included in the comments such as sharing the building with another service.

In addition the Friends of Chineham Library submitted a formal response to the proposed closure including concerns that the Comprehensive Review Process using a measure of unique users to Chineham Library had skewed the performance of Chineham Library. This feedback has prompted the Library Service to revise the Comprehensive Review methodology (see paragraph 97 to 101) to reduce the importance of the unique user data, by including the total number of library members that used a library within the past year. The impact of this change to the review

process and the number of active users means that Chineham is no longer being proposed for closure.

Chineham Library catchment area has an IMD score of 8.0 (1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived). It has a slightly higher than average population of 0-17 year olds over 60 (23% vs the Hampshire average of 21%).

It is therefore proposed that Chineham Library be retained on the basis that the costs can be reduced and, when taken together with the number of people adversely impacted and the position of Chineham in the revised Comprehensive Review (paragraphs 97 – 101), it means that Chineham is no longer considered to be a poorly performing library. The service will also look to reduce opening hours in line with the remaining portfolio.

### **Elson Library**

The consultation received a total of 564 responses directly related to Elson Library, 15 of which were from businesses, groups or organisations. 72% of those who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 4% of respondents supported the closure and a further 24% would prefer an alternative approach. 414 of the 564 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Gosport Discovery Centre (90%), Fareham Library (35%) and Lee-on-Solent Library (30%). A public drop-in session was held on 11 February 2020, which was attended by approximately 150 members of the public.

Around 60% of people said this is a well-used library and a community space where other public services are provided – for example local schools especially appear to use this Library weekly. 71% of respondents access Elson Library for the full range of resources on offer. The responses discussed a very well used and loved Library that would be hugely missed whilst 41% of respondents were particularly concerned about the impact on specific groups if the Library were to close. 32% of respondents were concerned about the impact of closure on the community as a whole. Of the 130 households that only use Elson library, 17 households or 13% had children age 0-4 years and a similar number had children age 5-8 years.

The Education Attainment in the Elson catchment is 3.5 (which is lower than the Hampshire average of 7.0). The Service will be developing new ways of working in this area to ensure that the Library Service Vision and commitment to children's literacy is achieved. A targeted solution will be developed to support the community, such as the delivery of services from alternative community buildings already well used in that location. The Service will engage with local schools to encourage them to join the existing School Library Service which supports the majority of Hampshire schools with high quality stock and this may be a viable alternative for children and young people who are unable to travel to an alternative library.

Carer Groups Library membership is available to Early Years providers, care homes, sheltered accommodation and playgroups, therefore it is believed that this scheme will support older adults living in group settings and/or organisations supporting Early Years development.

The Library Service has invested significantly in digital titles of both eBooks and eAudiobooks since the outbreak of Covid-19 and there is now a much wider selection of titles including children's titles available to all library customers with digital access.

The proportion of the population with no cars in the catchment is 9.2%, above the Hampshire average of 5.8%. Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 5.2 (1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived) and 8.2% of the catchment population live in the 20% most deprived areas in the country. Whilst Elson Library is in close proximity to alternative branches respondents mentioned infrequent bus services to Gosport Discovery Centre. Travel times to Gosport Discovery Centre (the nearest alternative Library) are around 8 minutes by car and 24 minutes by public transport. The Library Service recognises that additional costs will be incurred by people travelling to an alternative library, either by public transport or in a private vehicle. Where possible services to support literacy will be delivered in a local community building, to prevent these services users needing to travel.

Vulnerable and isolated residents, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, Ready Reads, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour scheme. For more information about these services please see Appendix 1.

In addition to the new ways of working outlined in paragraph 193 - 198 above the Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to people adversely impacted, should Elson Library be removed from the portfolio.

If Elson Library no longer forms part of Hampshire's statutory Library Service community organisations would be welcome to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

### **Emsworth Library**

The consultation received a total of 1,003 responses directly related to Emsworth Library, five of which were from businesses, groups or organisations. 73% of those who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 6% of respondents supported the closure and a further 21% would prefer an alternative approach. 479 of the 1,003 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Havant Library (78%), Waterlooville Library (23%) and Petersfield Library (20%). A public drop-in session was held on 14 February 2020, which was attended by approximately 150 members of the public.

51% of respondents said that the Library was very well valued within the community and expressed particular concern for the impact on specific groups (50%) should it close. In addition, respondents were highlighted concerns around children's resources and the ease of location for older people who do not have the ability to travel to Havant. Respondents raised concerns on the impact of travel to an

alternative library if Emsworth Library were to close (18%), particularly around the infrequent bus routes, the high cost of public transport and the environmental impact of travelling to access a service that otherwise would have been within walking distance. There were also concerns raised for those with mobility problems having to travel further whilst carrying heavy books.

Emsworth Library was one of the 10 poorer performing libraries identified in the Public Consultation for potential closure. It has a high level of community support and a higher number of unique users than any other library proposed for closure. During the consultation period, a proposal came forward from the community to relocate the library into Emsworth Community Centre at a significantly lower cost. This proposal was discussed at a public meeting in Emsworth on 10 February, attended by approximately 200 people, where it received strong support, so long as the library continued to be run by the Library Service. Since then Emsworth Community Association has submitted an Expression of Interest to host the library in their Community Centre at minimal cost, provided that it is run by the Library Service. This alternative proposal is considered a positive way forward and would change the financial viability of Emsworth Library by significantly reducing operating costs.

It is therefore recommended that Emsworth Library is retained on the basis that it can be moved to Emsworth Community Centre (see paragraph 97 to 101 for more detail of the comprehensive review summary). The Service will also look to reduce opening hours of Emsworth Library in line with the remaining portfolio to reduce operating costs.

### **Fair Oak Library**

The consultation received a total of 519 responses directly related to Fair Oak Library, six of which were from businesses, groups or organisations. 70% of those who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 6% of respondents supported the closure and a further 24% would prefer an alternative approach. 340 of the 519 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Eastleigh Library (71%), Winchester Discovery Centre (40%) and Chandler's Ford Library (28%). A public drop-in session was held on 11 February 2020, which was attended by approximately 110 members of the public.

Respondents to the consultation were most concerned about the impact of a Library closure on specific groups leading to inequalities within the local community (54%). In addition to these, concerns were raised about the impact of having to travel to an alternative Library (23%) for older people or those with mobility issues (17%) and children and young people (17%). Respondents felt that Fair Oak Library is a vital part of the community (22%) and that the Library is currently situated in a very convenient location (18%).

Fair Oak Library catchment area has an IMD score of 9.1 (1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived). It has a slightly higher than average population over 60 (27% vs the Hampshire average of 25%). It has a slightly lower IMD score for educational attainment (6.9 out of 10) compared to the Hampshire average (7 out of 10). The

Library Service would look to mitigate the impact through work with local schools and the Schools Library Service in addition to the digital offer.

Carer Groups Library membership is available to Early Years providers, care homes, sheltered accommodation and playgroups, therefore it is believed that this scheme will support older adults living in group settings and/or organisations supporting Early Years development.

Concerns were raised by respondents about the predicted population growth for the Fair Oak area. The Service has taken predicted population growth across the County into account, including in the Fair Oak area, along with changing patterns of demand for the services it provides. Officers are satisfied that surrounding libraries (Eastleigh, Winchester Discovery Centre, Chandler's Ford, Hedge End and Bishop's Waltham) provide sufficient coverage and have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the Fair Oak community.

The time and cost of travel to an alternative Library was a concern to respondents of the public consultation. The alternative Library to Fair Oak is Eastleigh Library which is located on the first floor of the Swan Shopping Centre in Eastleigh. Travel times are around 14 minutes by car and 25 minutes by public transport.

It is some distance from the bus station in Eastleigh to the Library and people were also concerned about paying to park at the shopping centre. Library users could choose to visit Chandler's Ford, Hedge End or Bishop's Waltham Libraries which are a short journey by car and there is currently some free parking at both locations. Both of these locations are accessible by public transport, The Library Service would look to support older people and those with mobility issues through the Home Library Service and the extensive digital offer.

The Library Service has invested significantly in digital titles of both eBooks and eAudiobooks since the outbreak of Covid-19 and there is now a much wider selection of titles including children's titles available to all library customers with digital access.

Vulnerable and isolated residents, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, Ready Reads, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour scheme. For more information about these services please see Appendix 1.

The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to people adversely impacted, should Fair Oak be removed from the portfolio.

If Fair Oak Library no longer forms part of Hampshire's statutory Library Service community organisations would be welcome to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

## Horndean Library

The consultation received a total of 308 responses directly related to Horndean Library, two of which were from businesses, groups or organisations. 66% of those who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 12% of respondents supported the closure and a further 22% would prefer an alternative approach. 218 of the 308 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Waterlooville Library (78%), Petersfield Library (38%) and Havant Library (31%). A public drop-in session was held on 10 February 2020, which was attended by approximately 50 members of the public.

Respondents to the public consultation expressed concern that the closure of Horndean Library will impact negatively on those who live within the catchment area bringing about potential inequalities (49%). Comments highlighted specific groups who may not have access to private transport (20%) and those who are older or have mobility issues (19%). In addition to this 23% of respondents commented on the convenient location of Horndean Library with a further 16% who felt that if the Library were to close this would lead to a reduction in the number of people who could access the Library Service.

Horndean Library catchment area has an IMD score of 8.8 (1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived). It has a higher than average population over 60 (32% vs the Hampshire average of 25%). Horndean catchment Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 8.8, however, 2.2% of the catchment population live in the 20% most deprived areas in the country.

The impact of travelling to an alternative Library was a concern for some respondents to the consultation however Horndean residents have high levels of private car ownership within the area. The alternative Library (Waterlooville) is around 12 minutes by car and 21 minutes by public transport. Neither Library is far from bus services or car parks, but the Library Service recognises that additional costs will be incurred by people travelling to Waterlooville, either by public transport or in a private vehicle. Those customers living in the rural outskirts of Horndean may experience some challenges due to infrequent bus services.

Carer Groups Library membership is available to Early Years providers, care homes, sheltered accommodation and playgroups, therefore it is believed that this scheme will support older adults living in group settings and/or organisations supporting Early Years development.

The Library Service has invested significantly in digital titles of both eBooks and eAudiobooks since the outbreak of Covid-19 and there is now a much wider selection of titles including children's titles available to all library customers with digital access. Internet and Broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure.

Vulnerable and isolated residents, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, Ready Reads, apply for the Home Library

Service or the Good Neighbour scheme. For more information about these services please see Appendix 1.

The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to people adversely impacted, should Horndean be removed from the portfolio.

If Horndean Library no longer forms part of Hampshire's statutory Library Service community organisations would be welcome to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

### **Lee-on-the-Solent Library**

The consultation received a total of 963 responses directly related to Lee-on-the-Solent Library, 16 of which were from businesses, groups or organisations. 72% of those who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 6% of respondents supported the closure and a further 22% would prefer an alternative approach. 661 of the 963 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Gosport Discovery Centre (50%), Stubbington Library (36%) and Fareham Library (33%). Public drop-in sessions were held on 6 and 13 February 2020, which were attended by approximately 145 members of the public in total.

Respondents to the public consultation expressed concern that specific groups may be impacted if Lee-on-the-Solent Library were to close. Respondents specifically mentioned older people (24%) and those who cannot access transport easily (24%). 28% of respondents felt that a Library fulfils a public need and 18% felt that Lee-on-the-Solent Library was very convenient to use for their current lifestyle. 31% of respondents viewed Lee-on-the-Solent Library as a community hub.

Lee-on-the-Solent Library catchment area has an IMD score of 8.2 (1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived). It has a higher than average population over 60 (34% vs the Hampshire average of 25%).

Carer Groups Library membership is available to Early Years providers, care homes, sheltered accommodation and playgroups, therefore it is believed that this scheme will support older adults living in group settings and/or organisations supporting Early Years development.

The Library Service has invested significantly in digital titles of both eBooks and eAudiobooks since the outbreak of Covid-19 and there is now a much wider selection of titles including children's titles available to all library customers with digital access.

The proportion of the population with no cars in the catchment is 6.1%, above the Hampshire average of 5.8%. The time and cost of travel to an alternative Library was a concern to respondents of the public consultation. Travel times to Gosport

Discovery Centre (the nearest alternative Library) are around 13 minutes by car and 28 minutes by public transport.

Vulnerable and isolated residents, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, Ready Reads, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour scheme. For more information about these services please see Appendix 1.

The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to people adversely impacted, should Lee-on-the-Solent Library be removed from the portfolio.

If Lee-on-the-Solent Library no longer forms part of Hampshire's statutory Library Service community organisations would be welcome to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

### **Lyndhurst Library**

The consultation received a total of 684 responses directly related to Lyndhurst Library, four of which were from businesses, groups or organisations. A save Lyndhurst Library petition signed by 684 people was also received. 60% of those who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 15% of respondents supported the closure and a further 26% would prefer an alternative approach. 227 of the 684 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Lymington Library (33%), Totton Library (26%) and Romsey Library (16%). A public drop-in session was held on 14 February 2020, which was attended by approximately 55 members of the public.

Respondents to the public consultation highlighted inequalities which may arise (54%) if Lyndhurst Library were to close. Concerns were raised that those without access to transport would be disadvantaged (22%) and in particular respondents were concerned with specific groups such as older people or those with mobility issues (17%). 22% of respondents felt it was important that everyone should have access to a local Library and that Libraries form an important public service (22%). In addition to this 17% of people felt that Lyndhurst Library is in a convenient location for their current lifestyle.

Lyndhurst Library catchment area has an IMD score of 7.4 (1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived). It has a higher than average population over 60 (38% vs the Hampshire average of 25%).

Carer Groups Library membership is available to Early Years providers, care homes, sheltered accommodation and playgroups, therefore it is believed that this scheme will support older adults living in group settings and/or organisations supporting Early Years development.

The time and cost of travel to an alternative Library was a concern to respondents of the public consultation. Travel times to Totton Library (the nearest alternative Library) are around 12 minutes by car and 18 minutes by public transport. Respondents to the consultation raised concerns about travel times and the reliability of public transport. They felt that a number of factors, including Lyndhurst being very rural and the main high street being situated on a hill may cause difficulties for older people or those with mobility issues reaching the nearest bus stop. There is also increased traffic during school holidays and summer months with heavy congestion due to the one-way system through Lyndhurst, this would increase travel times to the nearest alternative Library. Those customers living in the rural outskirts of Lyndhurst may experience some challenges due to infrequent bus services. The proportion of the population with no cars in the catchment is 4.7%, below the Hampshire average of 5.8%.

The Library Service has invested significantly in digital titles of both eBooks and eAudiobooks since the outbreak of Covid-19 and there is now a much wider selection of titles including children's titles available to all library customers with digital access. Internet and Broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure.

Vulnerable and isolated residents, including older people, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, Ready Reads, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour scheme. For more information about these services see Appendix 1.

The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to people adversely impacted, should Lyndhurst Library be removed from the portfolio.

If Lyndhurst Library no longer forms part of Hampshire's statutory Library Service community organisations would be welcome to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

## **Odiham Library**

The consultation received a total of 325 responses directly related to Odiham Library, two of which were from businesses, groups or organisations. A save Odiham Library petition signed by 420 people was also received. 73% of those who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 8% of respondents supported the closure and a further 19% would prefer an alternative approach. 214 of the 420 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Basingstoke Discovery Centre (58%), Fleet Library (52%) and Chineham Library (34%). A public drop-in session was held on 6 February 2020, which was attended by approximately 120 members of the public.

Respondents to the consultation were concerned that those without access to a private vehicle would be significantly impacted if Odiham Library were to close as public transport within the area is limited (31%). Respondents were particularly concerned about the impact of closure on specific groups within the community such as older people (18%) and children and young people (19%). 25% of respondents felt the Library was in a particularly convenient location and that if the Library were to close it would make it more difficult to access Library services (20%).

Odiham Library catchment area has an educational attainment score of 8.0 which is above the Hampshire average of 7.0 it has an IMD score of 8.8 (1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived). Odiham does have a slightly higher than average number of younger people within the area (23% vs the average of 21% in Hampshire).

Carer Groups Library membership is available to Early Years providers, care homes, sheltered accommodation and playgroups, therefore it is believed that this scheme will support older adults living in group settings and/or organisations supporting Early Years development.

The Odiham catchment area is largely rural and there are the limited public transport options for customers living within this area. Travel times to Alton Library (the nearest alternative Library) are around 16 minutes by car and 30 minutes by public transport. The time and cost of travel to an alternative Library was a concern to respondents of the public consultation. The proportion of the population with no cars in the catchment is 2.5%, below the Hampshire average of 5.8%.

The Library Service has invested significantly in digital titles of both eBooks and eAudiobooks since the outbreak of Covid-19 and there is now a much wider selection of titles including children's titles available to all library customers with digital access. Internet and Broadband services in rural areas have improved significantly over the past few years as a result of investment in infrastructure.

Vulnerable and isolated residents, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, Ready Reads, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour scheme. For more information about these services please see Appendix 1.

The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to people adversely impacted, should Odiham Library be removed from the portfolio.

If Odiham Library no longer forms part of Hampshire's statutory Library Service community organisations would be welcome to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.

### **South Ham Library**

The consultation received a total of 558 responses directly related to South Ham Library, eight of which were from businesses, groups or organisations. 68% of those

who responded preferred to keep the Library open and reduce opening hours across all Libraries. Around 7% of respondents supported the closure and a further 25% would prefer an alternative approach. 458 of the 558 responders regularly use an alternative Library – most commonly used were Basingstoke Discovery Centre (87%) and Chineham Library (51%). A public drop-in session was held on 7 February 2020, which was attended by approximately 50 members of the public.

Respondents to the consultation highlighted that the Library provides an important public service (24%) and that the Library in its current location is very convenient (19%). Respondents felt that if the Library were to close there would be many who would no longer be able to access the service (16%). 18% of respondents felt that the Library should be accessible to all and that children would be particularly impacted (14%).

The South Ham catchment area has an IMD score of 7.1 (1 is most deprived and 10 is least deprived). There is a higher than average population of 0-17 year olds (23% vs the average of 21% in Hampshire). The Educational Attainment score in the South Ham catchment is 5.9 (which is lower than the Hampshire average of 7.0). The Service will engage with local schools to encourage them to join the existing School Library Service which supports the majority of Hampshire schools with high quality stock and this may be a viable alternative for children and young people who are unable to travel to an alternative library.

Carer Groups Library membership is available to Early Years providers, care homes, sheltered accommodation and playgroups, therefore it is believed that this scheme will support older adults living in group settings and/or organisations supporting Early Years development.

The proportion of the population with no cars in the catchment is 6.4%, above the Hampshire average of 5.8%. Index of Multiple Deprivation score is 7.1 and 3.6% of the catchment population live in the 20% most deprived areas in the country. The time and cost of travel to an alternative Library was a concern to respondents of the public consultation. The Library Service recognises that additional costs will be incurred by people travelling to Basingstoke Discovery Centre, either by public transport or in a private vehicle. Travel times to Basingstoke Discovery Centre are around 7 minutes by car and 17 minutes by public transport.

The Library Service has invested significantly in digital titles of both eBooks and eAudiobooks since the outbreak of Covid-19 and there is now a much wider selection of titles including children's titles available to all library customers with digital access.

Vulnerable and isolated residents, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to use digital services, Ready Reads, apply for the Home Library Service or the Good Neighbour scheme. For more information about these services please see Appendix 1.

The Library Service will still be able to offer an efficient and comprehensive service to people adversely impacted, should South Ham Library be removed from the portfolio.

If South Ham Library no longer forms part of Hampshire's statutory Library Service community organisations would be welcome to apply for a one-off pump priming award through the Recreation and Heritage Community Fund towards the costs of transitioning into independent library models. Such awards would be individually assessed and would be expected to be less than £10,000.