

# Mobile Library consultation

## Consultation Results

August 2016

### Introduction

Following a Library Service review in 2014, and a reduction in the number of mobile library vehicles, it has been necessary to review the current service provided by mobile libraries across Cheshire West and Chester Borough. The proposal is to maintain 100 stops (of the 135 current stops) and improve accessibility to the service by implementing a three week rota instead of the current four week rota. This would bring the service in line with loan periods at static libraries. Wherever possible, at the busier locations, stop times would be increased.

The consultation ran until 13 July 2016 and was well publicised, especially to Mobile Library Service users, who were encouraged to take part. 222 people completed the survey, either online or on paper. This report summarises the results of the survey which will help to inform the final decision.

### Summary and Key Messages

- ❖ Almost all of the 222 respondents were local residents and about two-thirds used the Mobile Library Service about once a month and three-fifths frequently used another static library. Over three-quarters of respondents were aged 65 or over and over three-quarters were female
- ❖ Just under half the respondents said that they had difficulty in using library services due to health issues, mainly because of mobility issues and difficulties in carrying items home, making them eligible for the Home Library Service.
- ❖ Most respondents said how much they valued the Mobile Library Service and how important it was to people in their community, for both the library service and the social contact. A few mentioned that they had been unhappy with the unreliability of the service, during the period of staff and service disruption mid-2015. The service has run consistently, however, since November 2015.
- ❖ There is likely to be an impact on some users if the Mobile Library Service no longer visits their stop, with over a quarter of respondents saying they would not use the Library Service at all, a similar number saying they would use it less often and forty two percent saying they would use a static library. This was mainly due to the difficulties in accessing the alternatives, because of poor health or transport issues. Of the alternative library provision, using static libraries was the most popular, although a few would use another mobile library stop or the Home Library Service



- ❖ There were mixed views about the proposed new timetable, with some commenting that it was better for them and similar numbers commenting that it was worse. A few said that the proposals were sensible in light of challenges faced by the service and changes to service delivery.
- ❖ There were a number of detailed suggestions, including the need for effective publicity of the new timetables, which will be passed on to the Library Services Manager for consideration.



## 1: Background

There are currently 135 Mobile Library stops (excluding duplicate stops) across Cheshire West and Chester. Following a Library Service Review in 2014, and a reduction in the number of mobile library vehicles, it has been necessary to review the current service provided by the Mobile Library. Currently, there are approximately 550 library customers actively using the Mobile Library Service in Cheshire West.

The Mobile Library Service offers a current and wide range of stock including adult and junior books and also audiobooks. With internet connectivity and access to the web based Library Management System, customers have access to stock across the authority and are able to make reservations and update their accounts. Mobile Library staff can also provide online council information and an enquiry service. There is also free access for library members, to a wide range of online resources, including eBooks, via the Libraries' webpage.

The proposal was to maintain 100 stops and improve accessibility to the service by implementing a three week rota. This would be instead of the current four week rota and would bring the service in line with loan periods at static libraries. Wherever possible, at the busier locations, stop times would be increased. Any residents affected by the proposed changes, with restricted mobility, would be entitled to the Home Library Service. This service (provided in partnership with the Royal Voluntary Service) would deliver books to each resident's home. The offer for schools, pre-schools and nurseries would be standardised through the offer of a paid subscription to the Education Library Service (ELS). This would enable these organisations to have access to a wider range of books, tailored to their needs, as well as materials and curriculum support. These are not available through the Mobile Library Service. It is proposed that routes would be reviewed on a six monthly basis to maintain effective service provision.

## 2: Detailed Results

222 people completed the online survey or the paper equivalent, although not everyone answered all questions. Additional correspondence was sent directly to the Library Services Manager.

### Use of Mobile Library Stops

Respondents were given a list of current Mobile Library stops and were asked which they currently use. 79 stops from across the borough were listed, as shown in the table below, along with the number of responses from people using that mobile library stop. The largest number of responses was received from those using the stop at Waverton shops. Some respondents did not list their mobile stop.



**Figure 2.1: Number of respondents from the Mobile Library stops listed below**

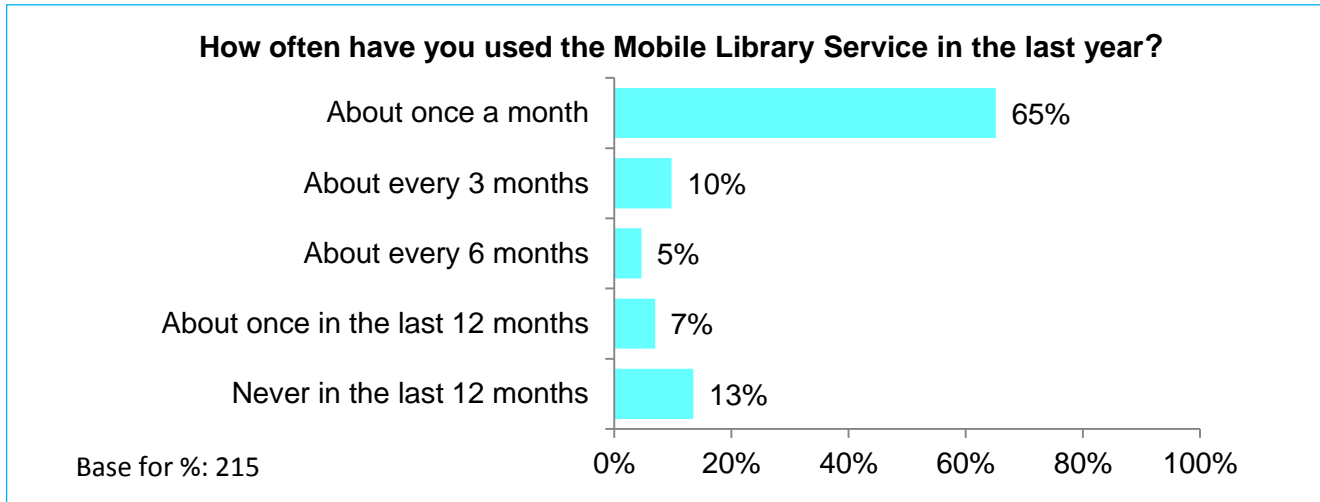
Mobile Stop	Replies	Mobile Stop	Replies
Aldford Church	1	Kelsall Community Centre	5
Allostock, Princess Road	4	Kelsall Hallows Gate	1
Antrobus, Village Hall	1	Kelsall, Old Coach Road	1
Ashton Hayes	1	Kingsley Community Centre	1
Ashton House Nursery	1	Kingsmead, Dukes Way	3
Backford Church	3	Lea by Backford, Grove Road	1
Barrow, village pump.	1	Ledsham Village	1
Bickley, St Wenefreds Green	1	Little Budworth, Booth Avenue	2
Boughton, Ingham Close	1	Little Sutton, Joan Barlett Close	1
Burton Village Hall	5	Little Sutton, The Sutton, Gleneagles Rd	1
Burwardsley Post Office	1	Littleton, Garth House	2
Castle, Highbank Road	1	Lower Whitley Village Hall	2
Christleton, Quarry Lane	5	Malpas, Craddock Court	3
Churton, Opp White Horse	1	Malpas, Mates Lane	1
Comberbach Post Office	4	Manley Post Office	3
Davenham, Fountain Court	2	Mickle Trafford	1
Davenham, Hartford Road	1	Mickle Trafford Pre School	1
Delamere Park Community Centre	3	Mickle Trafford, Shrewsbury Arms	1
Delamere, Eddisbury Hill	2	Moulton, Monument	2
Dodleston, Red Lion	4	No Mans Heath, Cross O'th' Hill	1
Dodleston, St Mary's Road	1	Pulford, Old Lane	1
Duddon, Back Lane	1	Rowton, Holly Cottage	2
Dunham, bus stop	1	Rudheath, Spar shop	1
Farndon	2	Saughall, Winery	2
Farndon, Memorial Hall/Quarry Hill	1	Tarvin, Sunshine Nursery	1
Farndon Memorial Hall	7	Tattenhall, Ravensholme Court	1
Farndon Speedway	2	Tilston	1
Frodsham, Kingsley Green	1	Tilston, Inveresk Road	7
Great Barrow	1	Tiverton, Village Green	3
Great Budworth, church	4	Utkinton, Farm Shop	1
Great Sutton Shops	1	Waverton	1
Guilden Sutton	2	Waverton shops	18
Guilden Sutton car park	1	Willaston Methodist church	1
Guilden Sutton Village Hall	4	Willington Lay by	2
Hargrave Church	1	Wimbolds Trafford, Hob Lane End	2
Hartford, Booth Road	2	Wimbolds Trafford, Ince Lane	1
Hartford, Riddings Lane	4	Wincham	1
Horton, Village Green	1	Wincham, Ashwood Park	2
Huntington Post Office	1	Wincham, Green Lane	6
		Winsford, Hazelmere	2



## Frequency of use and impact of proposed changes on use of library service

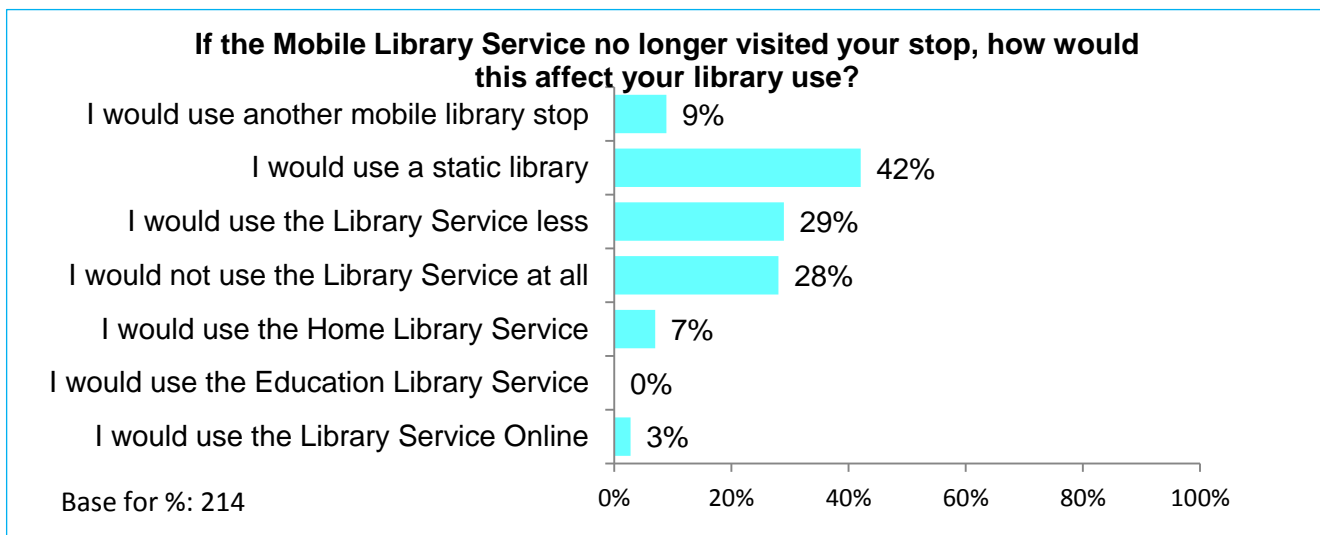
Respondents were asked how often they had used the Mobile Library Service in the previous 12 months and how the proposed changes would affect their library use. Respondents had been shown the proposed new Mobile Library Service timetable.

**Figure 2.2: Frequency of use of the Mobile Library Service by respondents**



- About two-thirds (65%) of respondents had used the Mobile Library Service about once a month, during the previous year
- About an eighth (13%) of respondents had not used the service at all in the previous year. A few comments suggested that this was because it had become unreliable and they had lost track of the timetable, or that they didn't know about the service in their area.

**Figure 2.3: Impact of proposed changes on library use**



Respondents could choose more than one option, so % will total more than 100%



- The chart above shows that the biggest cohort of respondents would use a static library, with 42% choosing that option
- Over a quarter of respondents (28%) said they would not use the Library Service at all and a further 29% said they would use the library service less
- About a tenth (9%) of respondents said they would use another mobile library stop
- 7% said they would use the Home Library Service (HLS) and the details of the 17 people who wanted to be contacted about it, have been passed on to the Library Service.

Respondents who said they would use another mobile library stop, or a static library, were asked to specify which one. The table below shows their current mobile library stop and the library they would use instead. Not all respondents gave the current mobile stop used.

**Figure 2.4: Alternative library provision that would be used**

<b>Current mobile stop used</b>	<b>Mobile stop or static library that would be used instead</b>
Allostock, Princess Road	Holmes Chapel Library
Allostock, Princess Road	Holmes Chapel Library, HLS
Allostock, Princess Road	Knutsford, Holmes Chapel
Antrobus, Village Hall	Northwich, Barnton
Ashton Hayes	Helsby, Chester
Backford Church	Upton
Barrow, village pump.	Helsby or Upton library, Waverton mobile
Burton Village Hall	Neston
Castle, Highbank Road	Northwich
Christleton, Quarry Lane	Chester, Great Boughton
Christleton, Quarry Lane	Great Boughton
Christleton, Quarry Lane	Upton
Christleton, Quarry Lane	Waverton Shops mobile, Great Boughton, Upton
Comberbach	Northwich
Comberbach The Post Office	Antrobus Village Hall
Craddock Court	Chester, Whitchurch
Delamere, Eddisbury Hill	Sandiway
Dodleston, St Mary's Road	Dodleston, Red Lion
Duddon, Back Lane	Sandiway
Dunham Hill, bus stop	Helsby
Farndon	Wrexham
Farndon, Memorial hall	Chester, Great Boughton
Farndon, Memorial hall	Farndon, Speeds Way
Great Budworth Church	Northwich, Winsford
Great Budworth Church	Northwich

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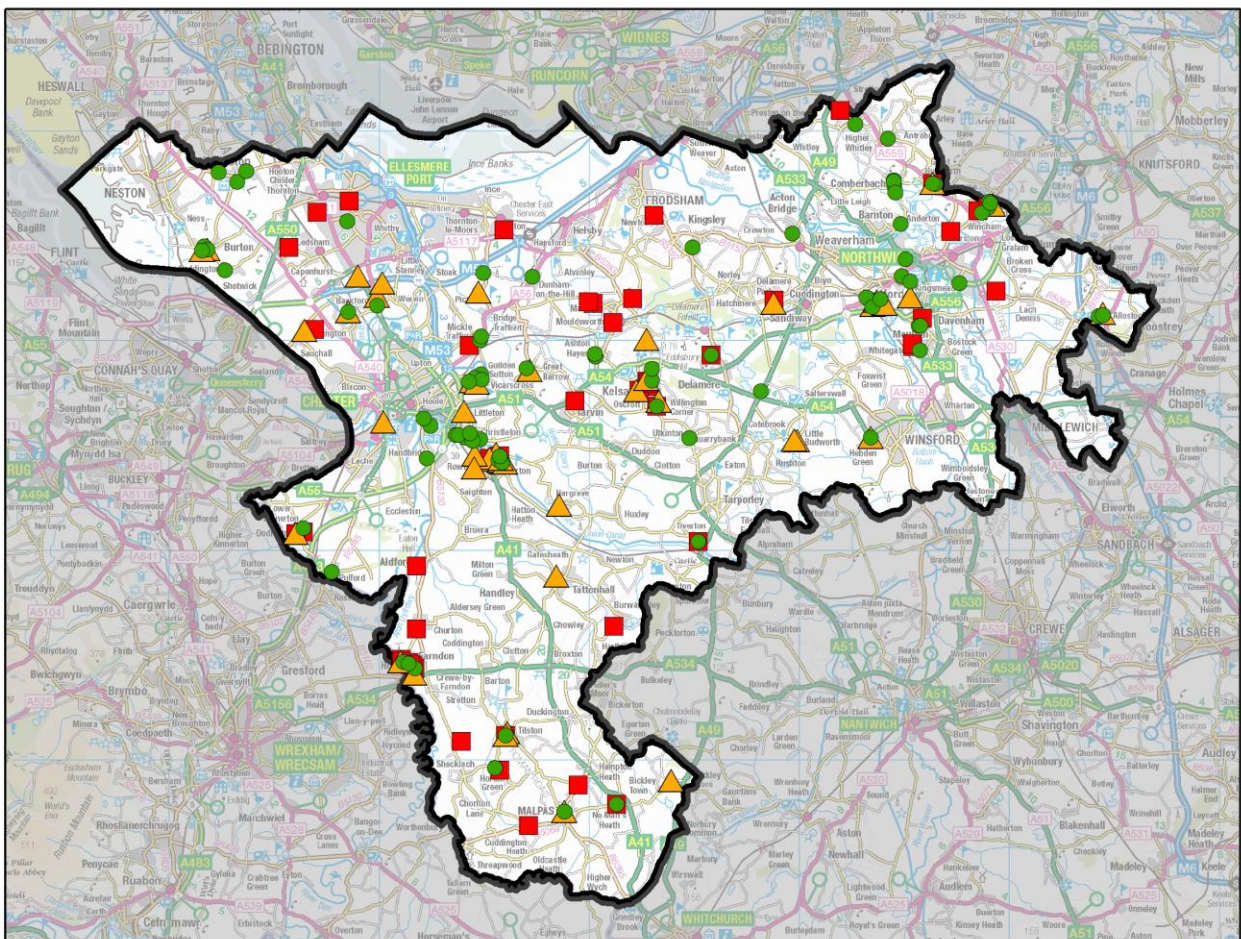


<b>Current mobile stop used</b>	<b>Mobile stop or static library that would be used instead</b>
Guilden Sutton Village Hall	Great Boughton
Guilden Sutton Village Hall	Great Boughton, Chester
Hartford, Booth Rd	Hartford, Riddings Lane
Hazelmere, Winsford	Winsford Library, which is not very conveniently situated.
Horton, Village Green	Malpas Library
Huntington Post Office	Caldy Valley retail outlet car park
Kelsall Community Centre	Chester (one said with great difficulty)
Kelsall Old Coach Road	Community Centre Kelsall
Kingsley Community Centre	Frodsham, Northwich
Kingsmead	Northwich
Lea by Backford, Grove Road	Upton
Little Budworth Booth Avenue	Winsford Library
Manley Post Office	Ashton Hayes, Peel Hall Lane
Mickle Trafford	Helsby
Mickle Trafford, Shrewsbury Arms	Chester
Moulton Monument	Northwich
Pulford Old Lane	Dodleston Red Lion (Mobile stop), Great Boughton
Rudheath, Spar shop	Northwich
Saughall Village Winery	Upton
Tilston, Inveresk Road	Malpas Library if I can get transport
Tilston, Inveresk Road	Upton, if I could get there
Tilston, Inveresk Road	Whitchurch Library is my nearest library but I need transport to get there.
Tiverton, Village green	Tarporley
Tiverton, Village green	Tarporley High School
Utkinton, Farm shop	Tarporley
Waverton shops	Chester
Waverton shops	Christleton Quarry Lane
Waverton shops	Great Boughton
Waverton shops	Tarvin, Chester, Great Boughton, Bishops High
Waverton shops	Vicars Cross or Upton and reliant on getting a lift there
Willaston Methodist church	Chester, Neston
Willington Layby	Kelsall Community Centre, Upton
Wincham, Ashwood Park	Northwich
Wincham, Green Lane	Northwich
Wincham, Linnards Lane	Northwich



**Figure 2.5: Map of postcodes of respondents showing how the proposed changes to the Mobile Library Service would affect their use of libraries**

The map below shows the postcodes of respondents and what effect the proposed changes would have on their use of libraries. The green circles indicate respondents who would use a different library service, including another mobile stop, a static library, the Home Library Service and online services. The orange triangles indicate respondents who would use the Library Service less often and the red squares indicate respondents who would not use the Library Service at all. All of the categories are spread across the borough.



**Effect on respondents of proposed changes to Mobile Library Service 2016**



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Ordnance Survey 100049046 (03 August 2016)

**Key**

- Respondents who would use a different Library Service
- ▲ Respondents who would use the Library Service less
- Respondents who would not use the Library Service at all
- Cheshire West and Chester Boundary

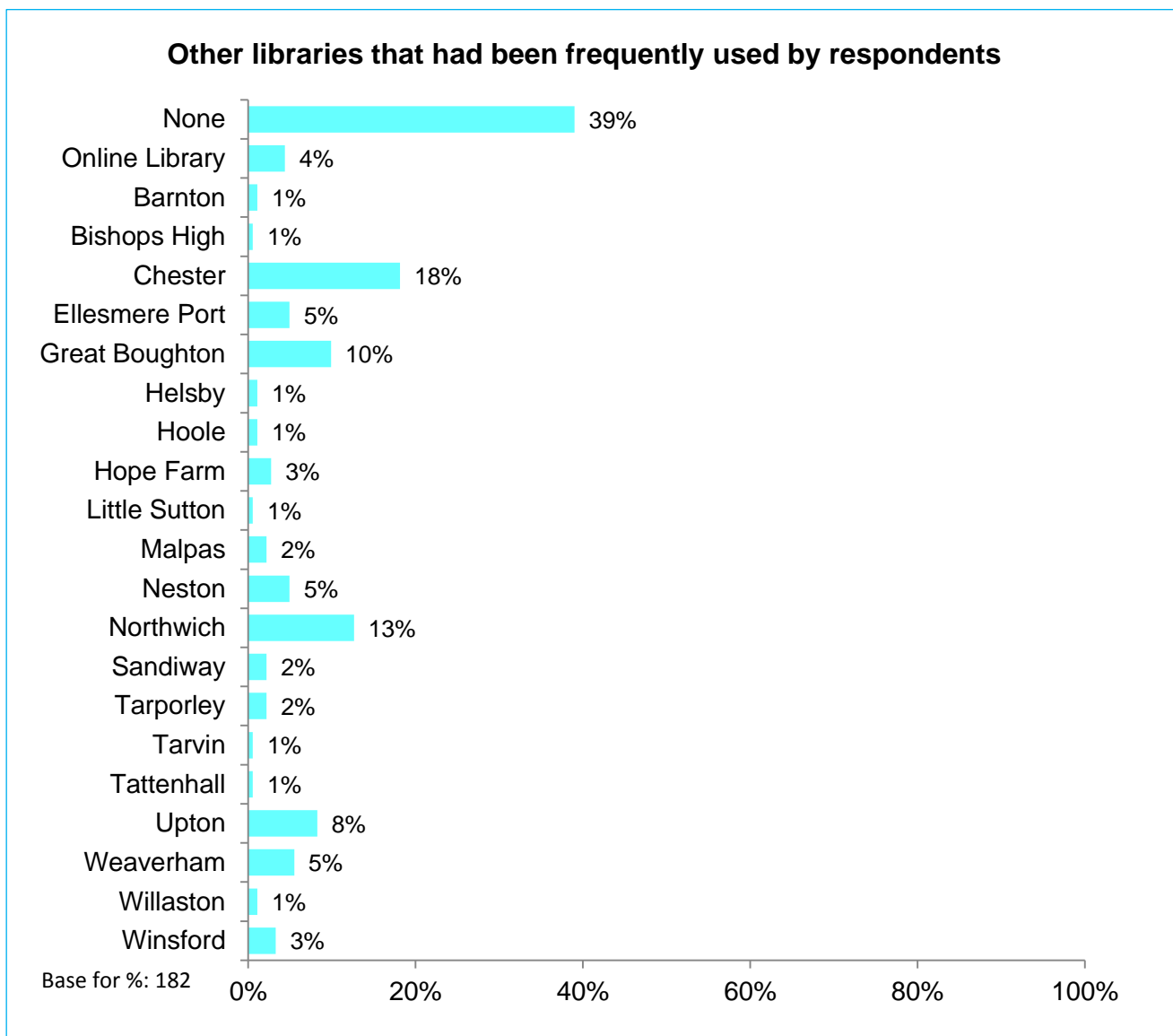




## Frequency of using other libraries in the borough

Respondents were asked to identify other libraries that they frequently use (six times a year or more often).

Figure 2.6: Other libraries that had been frequently used by respondents



Respondents could choose more than one option, so % will total more than 100%

- The chart above shows that three-fifths of respondents use another library frequently
- The top three most popular 'other libraries' were Chester (18%), Northwich (13%) and Great Boughton (10%).

### 3: General comments

Respondents were asked if they had any other comments about the proposed new provision.

❖ There were 117 comments, from which the key messages were:

- Many respondents emphasised how much they valued their Mobile Library Service and what an essential service it was for many people, especially those living in rural areas. Many praised the high level of service and helpfulness of staff. They did not want the service to be reduced, including respondents who did not use the service themselves, but recognised how important it was to other people in their community, both for the library service and socialising

“I think mobile services are essential for older people as a social link and practically for those without a car...I would like to see other events at mobile stops to encourage use such as going to other community events, for example, toddler groups and old friends meetings. This would increase take up and help the lonely, of all ages, to socialise.”

- There was concern that they or the people they represent would be unable to use the proposed new Mobile Library Service or alternative library services. Many did not have access to public transport and would find it impossible to travel to other venues. Although the Home Library Service (HLS) would be an alternative option for some people, a few said how much they valued the social aspect of visiting a library, which they felt would not be the same with the HLS. The comment below is made by someone who is not losing their mobile library stop in the proposed changes, but it sums up how important the service is

“I like the mobile library. It is hard for me in a wheelchair. Nobody wants to take me. The two that bring our books are wonderful. The most obliging people I have ever met. You should be very proud of them. Reading is the only thing that I do. Please don't take that away from me. I like the mobile the best. It's lovely for me to see very friendly people, not one thing is a trouble to them. It is the only time I go out.”

- Some commented about the disruption to the Mobile Library Service in 2015 and wanted “a regular service which was not interrupted by breakdown of vehicles or lack of staff”. A few said they had stopped using the service as it had been so unreliable that they no longer knew what the timetable was. A reliable three week rota was welcomed
- There were mixed views about the proposed new timetable. Some said it was an improvement e.g. at Kingsmead where the new time would catch children coming out of primary school. A few commented that the proposed stop times were too short for certain locations e.g. Waverton and Davenham.
- Some mentioned the need to better publicise the timetable of the Mobile Library Service and detailed specific local places to do so
- There were many detailed comments about specific issues which have been passed on to the Library Services Manager for consideration.



## 4: Profile of Respondents

222 respondents completed the survey.

### Figure 4.1: Type of respondent

People were asked in what capacity they had responded and the table below shows the responses of the 213 respondents who answered this question. They could choose more than one option.

Type of respondent	Percentage
Local resident	98%
An employee of Cheshire West and Chester Council	1%
An Elected Member of Cheshire West and Chester Council	1%
An Elected Town or Parish Councillor of Cheshire West and Chester Council	4%
A local business	2%
A member of a voluntary or community organisation	12%
Other	2%

- Those who chose 'other' named several local organisations, two said they were former employees of Cheshire West and Chester Council and one was a former resident.

### Figure 4.2: Age and gender

Respondents were asked which age group and gender they belonged to. 213 respondents answered the question about age group, and 209 answered the question about gender.

Age group	Percentage
Under 16	1%
16 - 24	0%
25 - 44	7%
45 - 54	4%
55 - 64	12%
65 - 74	32%
Over 75	45%

Gender	Percentage
Male	22%
Female	77%

- Over three-quarters of respondents were aged 65 or over
- Over three-quarters of respondents were female.



### Figure 4.3: Difficulty in using libraries due to disability or health issues

Respondents were asked if they find it difficult to use facilities like libraries because of the reasons displayed in the table below. They could choose more than one answer; 176 respondents answered this question.

Type of disability or health issue	Percentage
Mobility (e.g. walking short distances or climbing stairs)	27%
Carrying (e.g. carrying items home from the library)	27%
Hearing (e.g. deafness or partial hearing)	11%
Eyesight (e.g. blindness or partial sight)	5%
Dexterity (e.g. lifting or reaching)	9%
Learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia)	2%
Mental health problem (e.g. depression)	2%
None of the above	55%
Other	13%

- Over half (55%) of respondents indicated that they did not have difficulty in using facilities in the libraries. Most of those who did specified this was because of ‘mobility’ and ‘carrying’ reasons
- A tenth said they had a hearing disability and a tenth said they had difficulties with dexterity

## 5: Next steps

The information from this report will be used to inform the decision about the proposals to change the Mobile Library Service.



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