

Stockport Central Library Consultation 2021

For Stockport Council



Qa Research
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1. Executive Summary

The Stockport Central Library Consultation involved a number of research elements to ensure a variety of user and potential users were consulted. A face to face quantitative survey was undertaken with a representative sample of Stockport residents in order to provide a robust analysis of their views. This survey was supplemented by a face to face survey of non-residents; an open access online survey hosted on the Council's website (with paper copies available in libraries); an online children's survey; and four online focus groups with Stockport residents.

Reaction to the proposal

Participants were first presented with information about the Future High Streets Funding award, current levels of usage of Central Library, the pledges the Council has made about future usage of the building if the move goes ahead, where Stockroom would be and what it could include inside.

Reaction to the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom was very much divided.

Results across each element of the consultation varied, in the representative face to face survey of residents:

- 47% agree with the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom (including 21% who 'strongly agree')
- 29% disagree (including 15% who 'strongly disagree')
- 25% undecided ('neither agree nor disagree' or 'don't know')

In the open access online survey, the views were different with:

- 38% agreeing (including 21% who 'strongly agree')
- 55% disagreeing (including 47% who 'strongly disagree')
- 7% undecided ('neither agree nor disagree' or 'don't know')

Some demographic groups were significantly more likely to disagree with the proposal and these include:

- those aged 65+ (41% disagree in the representative face to face resident survey and 57% disagree in the open access online survey)
- those with no children under 18 in the household (33% disagree in the representative face to face survey of residents and 53% disagree in the open access online survey)

- and those who said they visit Central Library (37% disagree in the representative face to face resident survey and 62% disagree in the open access online survey).

In the qualitative research, which mirrors the quantitative findings, there were a mix of views for and against but those really opposed to the proposed plans were much more strident and forthright in their opposition.

There is an obvious affection for the building, even amongst those who rarely or never use it as a library. For those who were very vocally opposed from the start of the focus groups to any change, the primary reason is a concern about what might happen to the Central Library building if the current library within is relocated. A clearer plan for the building's future may alleviate these concerns for some.

Any support for the proposed plans was conditional and based on a number of assumptions and caveats. The proposed development was viewed as a small piece in a much bigger project, if the ultimate aim is to regenerate the heart of the town centre. Many wanted to know more about what else was planned to achieve this as they felt Stockroom in itself would not be enough. They also wanted to know more about what else Stockroom would offer and provide, that is not already available in Central Library. Any support is also subject to the Central Library building being preserved and continuing to be accessible for the people of Stockport.

Impact on library use

If the Central Library is relocated to Stockroom, 76% of residents in the representative face to face resident survey and 73% in the open access online survey would be likely to visit it in the future.

In the representative face to face survey:

- 44% of residents said they visit Central Library, and out of these 94% say they would visit at some point if the library was relocated.
- 56% of residents never visit Central Library, out of these 62% say they would visit at some point if the library was relocated.

In the online open access survey:

- 85% of respondents said they visit Central Library, and out of these 71% say they would visit at some point if the library was relocated.
- 15% of respondents never use Central Library, out of these 87% say they would visit at some point if the library was relocated.

2. Introduction

Stockport has successfully bid for £14.5m of Government 'Future High Streets Fund' money to transform vacant retail units in the heart of the high street, Merseyway.

The Future High Streets Fund bid was for Stockroom.

Stockroom is an idea for a 21st century, universal learning and discovery space which could give the people of Stockport an opportunity to learn new skills, practice arts and crafts, enjoy live music and performances, use free services, and benefit from cutting-edge learning and IT facilities.

Stage 1 of the research (reported separately) explored what uses Stockroom could have and how those uses could benefit potential children, young people, adults and the town as a whole.

Stage 2 of the research (reported back in this report) involved a formal consultation to understand the level of support and impact on people if library services currently provided in Central Library are relocated into the new Stockroom development.

The Central Library Consultation involved a number of research elements to ensure a variety of users and potential users were given the opportunity to have their say.

The results of each part of the research are presented in separate chapters in this report to ensure clear communication of the results. The different aspects of the consultation were:

- A representative face to face survey of Stockport residents (see Chapter 4)
- A face to face survey of non-residents, including shopping & leisure visitors; workers; and business travellers who live *outside* Stockport (Chapter 5)
- An online survey, hosted on the Council's website, open to anyone to complete, with a paper version of the survey available in libraries and public buildings (Chapter 6)
- An online and paper version children's survey open to those aged under 18 (Chapter 7)
- Four qualitative focus groups (Chapter 8)

The findings and feedback from 2 library staff focus groups undertaken by Stockport Council have been reported on separately.

3. Aims & Objectives

The main aims of the wider Central Library consultation were to:

- Ensure the views of a wide range of audiences are included in the consultation;
- Understand current usage patterns of the Central Library;
- Gauge support for the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom;
- Explore reasons for agreement and disagreement with the proposal;
- Measure likely future use of library services if moved to Stockroom;
- Identify any differences in attitude between different demographic groups.

4. Face to face survey of Stockport residents

This chapter summarises the findings of a face to face survey of a representative sample of Stockport residents.

4.1 Methodology

This element of the research was conducted using quantitative face-to-face interviews, with 60 interview shifts being undertaken (these also included the non-resident interviews as reported in chapter 5).

Interviewers used a set questionnaire programmed on a tablet (designed by Qa Research and Stockport Council to meet the research objectives and included in appendix 9.1 for reference) and were stationed in various locations in Stockport.

Interviewers were given the freedom to choose on-street locations where footfall was high, though not in the immediate vicinity of the existing Central Library.

The interviews took place between 6th September and 11th October 2021.

Respondents were selected at random, with the next person being approached and asked to participate in the research as soon as the previous interview was completed. Only one person per party was interviewed.

To ensure a representative sample, the fieldwork had minimum quotas applied based on age bands, gender and ethnicity. Corrective weighting has been applied at analysis to ensure the final sample aligns with the actual adult (18+) population profile of Stockport.

Background information

At the start of the survey, the following text and images (provided by Stockport Council) were shown on the tablet screen to all participants.

Stockport Council has been awarded £14.5 million funding to spend on a new facility in Merseyway Shopping Centre called Stockroom.

The Council's done some engagement seeking opinions on what facilities could be in there. Now the Council is looking for views on moving the existing library service from Central Library building on the A6 into Stockroom in Merseyway.

It is becoming a challenge to deliver a 21st century library service in the building due to its layout and investment needed. Also the Heritage and Archives service only has a temporary accreditation as the collections' storage is substandard.

Unfortunately rules say Stockport Council can't spend the new funding on improving Central library building. That said, they don't want to demolish or abandon the building – it's Grade II listed and a much loved part of our town's heritage.

Everywhere library visitor numbers are declining but the Council believe Stockroom will attract more people to use the service. It is also hoped Stockroom will breathe new life into empty retail space and bring people to the town centre.

Stockroom is bigger than Central Library and will provide better storage for valuable collections. It will have car parking spaces; a café, research and study spaces, wifi and computers to use by all as well as events and other activities.

The following questions are in relation to what I have explained.

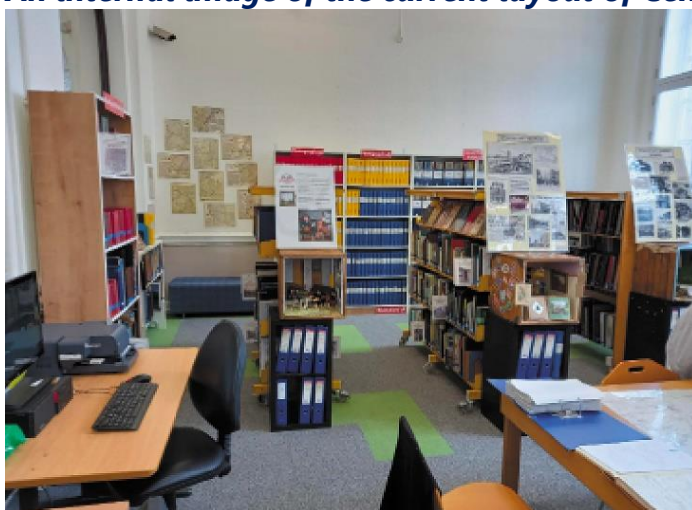
This is an exterior picture of the current Central Library building on the A6



This is an exterior CGI image of what Stockroom might look like



An internal image of the current layout of Central Library



This shows the footprint of the space that Stockroom will have



Sampling and statistical robustness

In total 566 surveys were completed.

The overall sample of 566 (and given the Stockport population aged 18+ is c. 230,300) provides findings which in research terms means we can be 95% confident that the data at an overall level has a variance no more than +/-4.1% accuracy.

Therefore, these findings are based on a sample size considerably within the +/-5% standard industry error rate required to provide statistically robust results at an overall level.

A note on analysis and how the data is presented

The base sizes (i.e. how many people answered the question) is also shown in each chart or table.

Please note that when interpreting results throughout this report not all percentages will equal 100% due to rounding (with any figures of 0.5 or higher being rounded up). Where the figure is shown as 0% at least one respondent gave this answer but the total count makes up less than 0.5% of the overall total; a blank shows no-one has given this answer.

Some questions were multiple response questions: respondents had the option of giving more than one response. These percentages may be higher than 100%.

Open-ended verbatim questions have been coded, grouped together and shown as percentages.

The analysis was run using Askia software. The questions have been cross-tabulated by different demographics, with relevant statistically significant differences being commented upon within the report, how useful or relevant this is needs to be determined by the reader.

To avoid confusion in comparison to other chapters 'respondents' are referred to as 'residents' in this chapter.

4.2 Key findings – who completed the survey

The survey asked a number of demographic questions and the profile of residents that completed the survey is shown below. The findings relating to attitudes to the proposal have been cross tabulated with any statistically significant differences in attitudes by demographics being highlighted.

Gender

Quotas were set and the data weighted based on ONS 2020 population estimates.

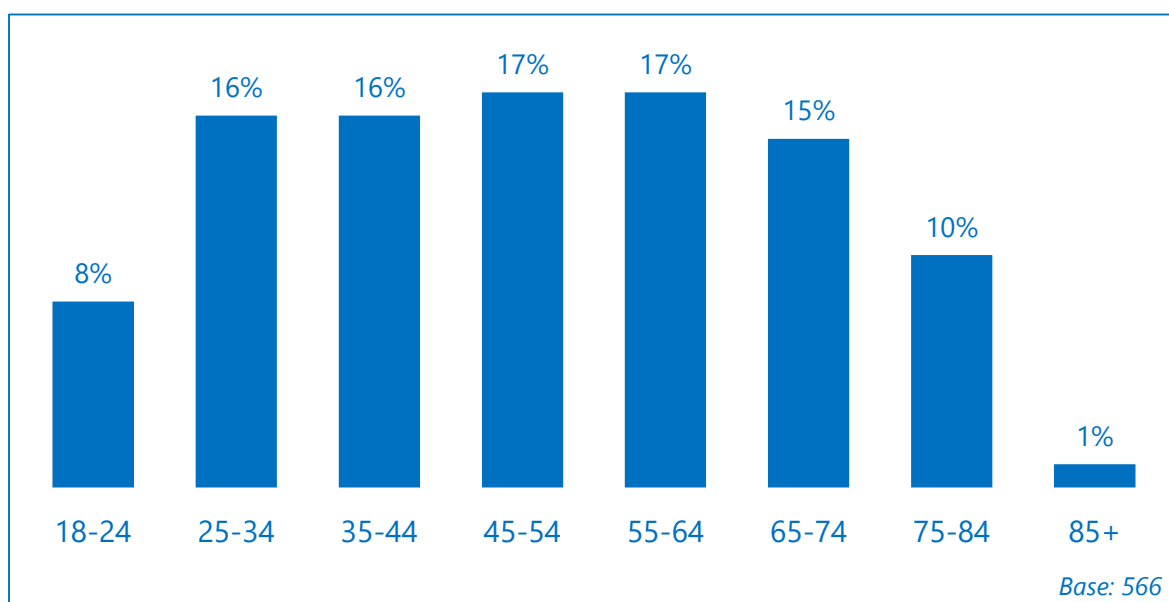
52% of the sample were female, 48% male, and 0% (1 resident) non-binary.

Age

Quotas were also set and the data weighted based on ONS 2020 population estimates.

The age bands of those completing the survey are shown in the following chart.

A quarter, 24% of the sample were aged under 35, 50% were aged 35-64 and 26% were aged 65+.



Ethnicity

Residents were presented a list and asked how would they define their ethnic group?

Quotas were set and the data weighted based on 2011 Census data. Overall, 93% of the sample were from a white ethnic background, and 7% were from a BAME ethnic background.

| Ethnicity | % |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| Net - White | 93% |
| White British | 91% |
| White Irish | 1% |
| Gypsy / Roma | 0% |
| White Other | 1% |
| Net - Black | 4% |
| Black or Black British African | 3% |
| Black or Black British Caribbean | 1% |
| Black Other | - |
| Net - Mixed | 1% |
| Mixed White/Black African | 1% |
| Mixed White/Black Caribbean | 0% |
| Mixed White/Asian | 0% |
| Mixed Other | - |
| Net - Asian | 1% |
| Asian or Asian British Indian | - |
| Asian or Asian British Pakistani | 1% |
| Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi | 0% |
| Asian or Asian British Chinese | 0% |
| Asian or Asian British Other | - |
| Net - Other | 0% |
| Arab | 0% |
| Other ethnic background | 0% |
| Prefer not to say | 0% |
| Base | 566 |

Disability or long-term health condition

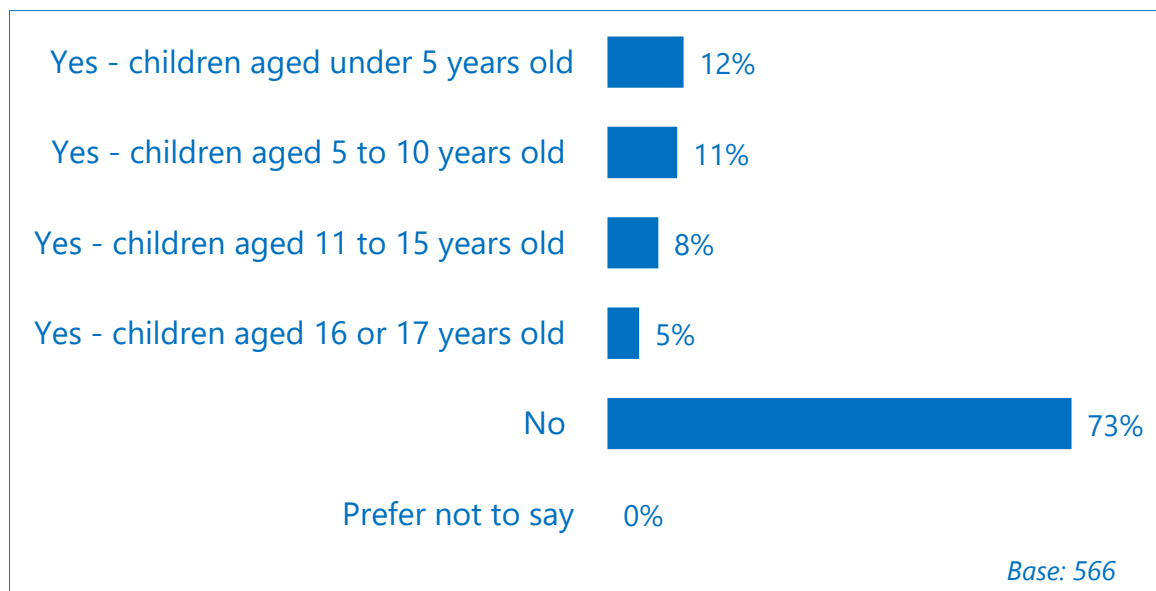
18% of residents have a disability or long-term health condition.

80% selected 'no' and 1% 'prefer not to say'.

Children under 18 living at home

Residents were given various age categories and asked if they had any children under the age of 18 in their household.

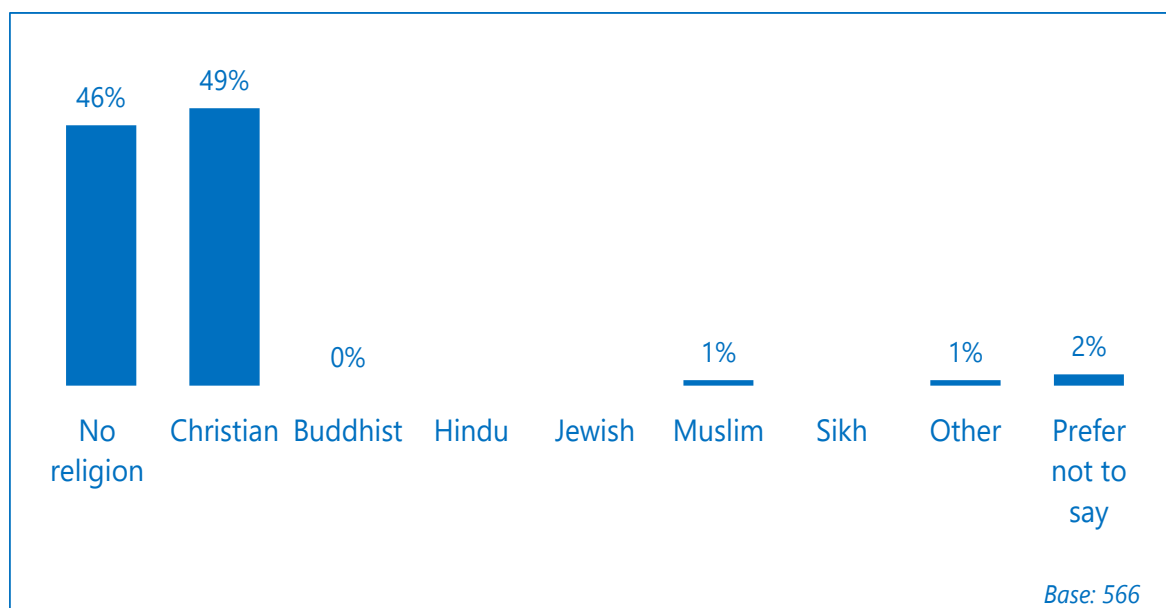
27% of residents had children under the age of 18 living at home.



Religion or belief

Residents were presented a list and asked what is your religion or belief?

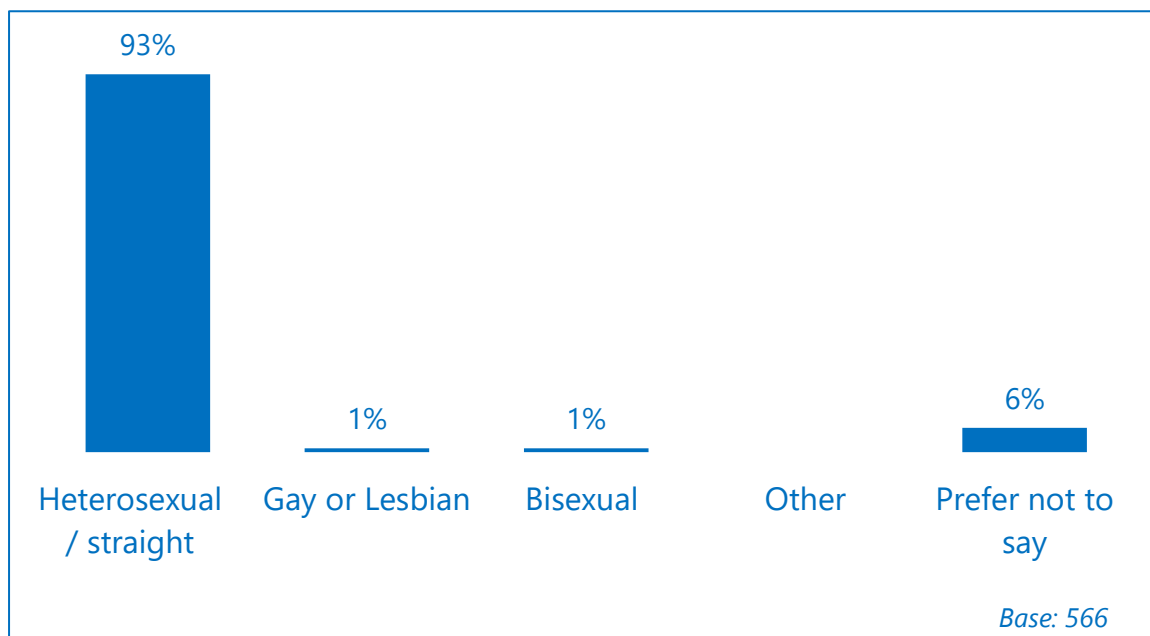
46% of residents said 'no religion' and 49% said 'Christian'.



Sexuality

Residents were presented a list and asked what is your sexuality?

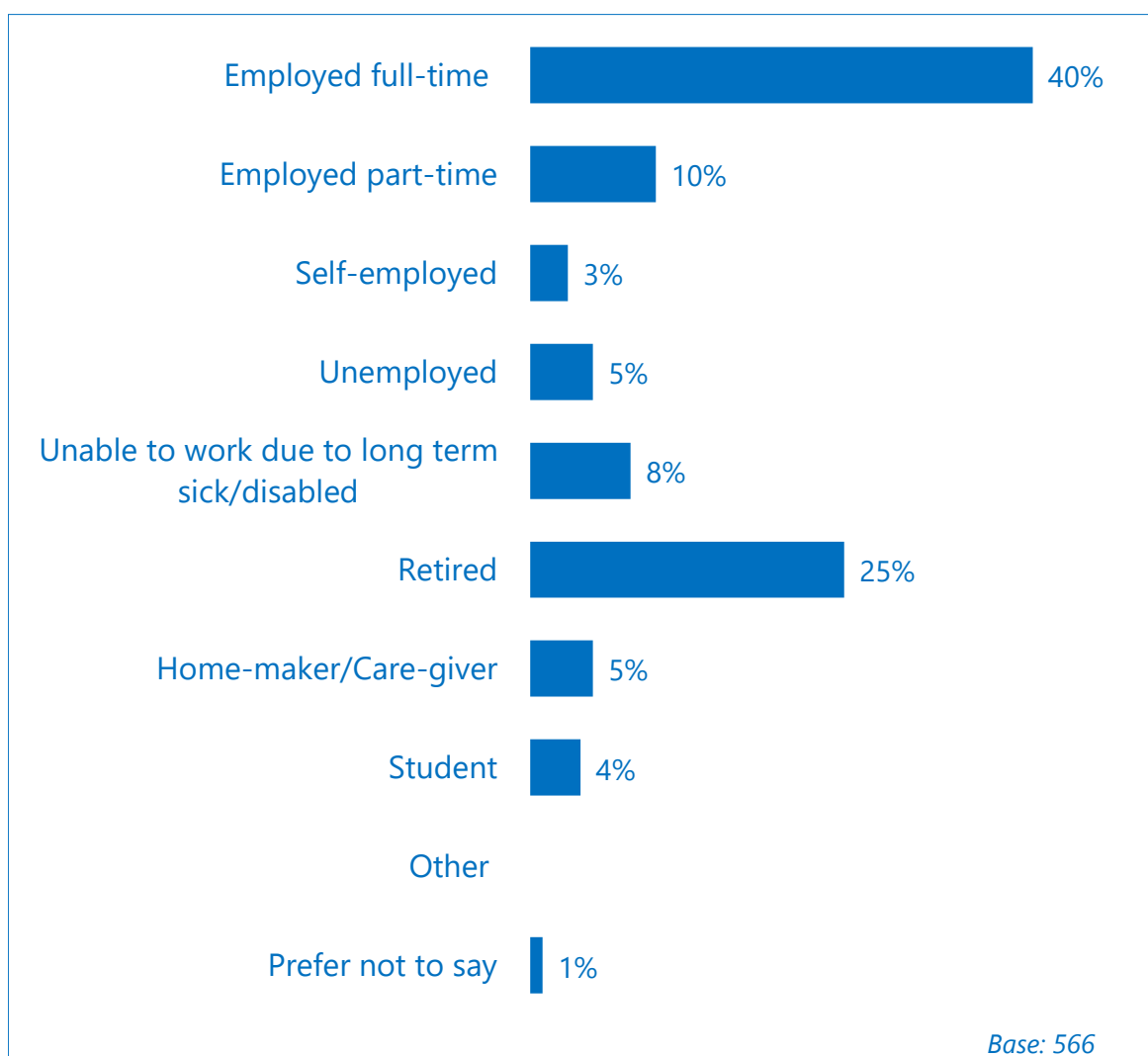
93% of residents said 'heterosexual/straight', 1% 'gay or lesbian', 1% 'bisexual' and 6% 'prefer not to say'.



Employment status

Residents were presented a list and asked what is your employment status?

More than half were employed (52%), with 47% not in employment (including 25% who were retired) and 1% preferring not to say.



Amongst those in employment:

- 99% were not furloughed
- 0% (1 person) were currently furloughed for all of their contracted hours
- 0% (1 person) were currently furloughed for some of their contracted hours

Geographical area

A screener question ensured all respondents were Stockport residents.

Residents covered a wide geographic spread across Stockport. During the survey they were asked to provide a full home postcode, though some would only provide part of the postcode and 3% refused to do so.

The postcode districts of those completing the survey are shown in the following table.

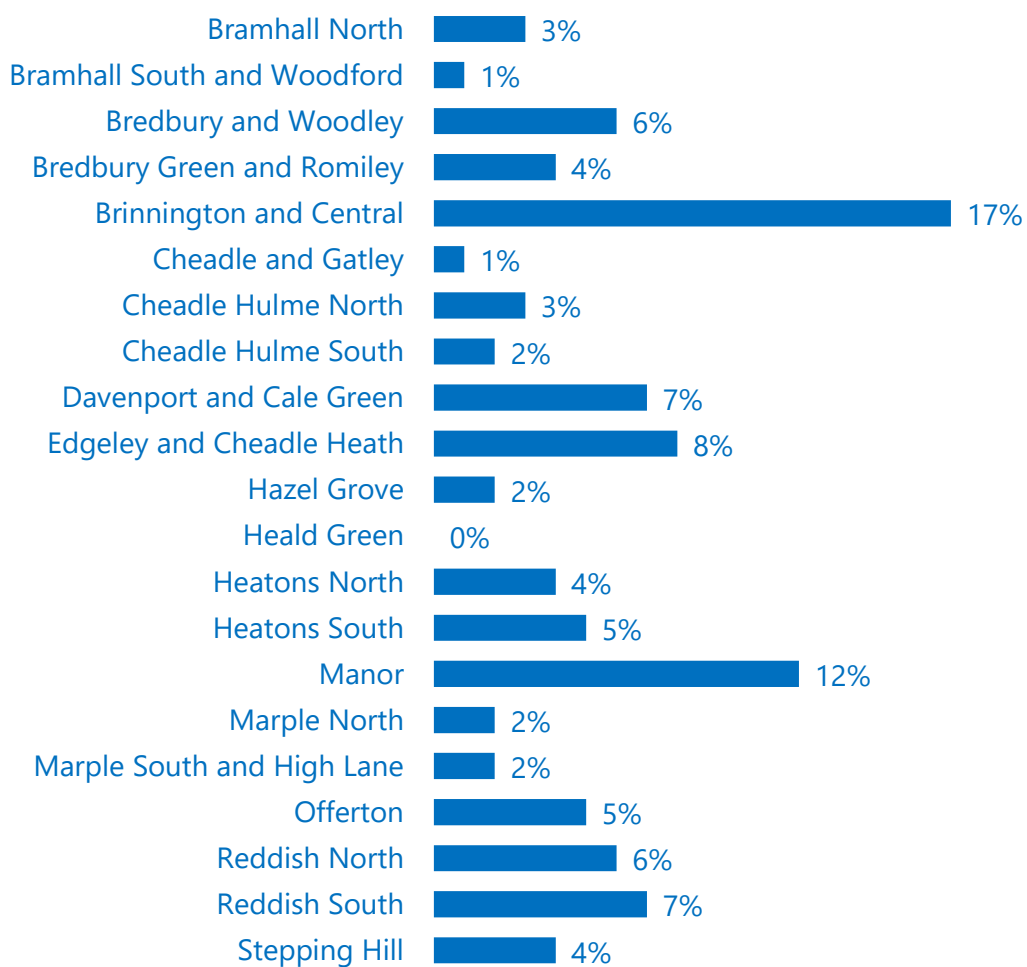
and 'Other', are shown in the table overleaf.

Compared to the open access online survey this sample includes a higher % of respondents from SK1 and SK5 and a lower % from SK7 and SK8. No quotas or controls were placed on geography in either sample and hence some variation is to be expected.

This variation in geography is unlikely to have a significant impact on the results, as no significant differences in attitude to the proposal existed by postcode sector.

| Postcode | % |
|-------------|------------|
| SK1 | 15% |
| SK2 | 13% |
| SK3 | 13% |
| SK4 | 14% |
| SK5 | 15% |
| SK6 | 12% |
| SK7 | 5% |
| SK8 | 7% |
| SK9 | 0% |
| SK12 | 0% |
| SK14 | 1% |
| M19 | 1% |
| Refused | 3% |
| Base | 566 |

Where a full postcode was given the ward in which they live has also been calculated, and is shown in the chart overleaf.



Base: 502

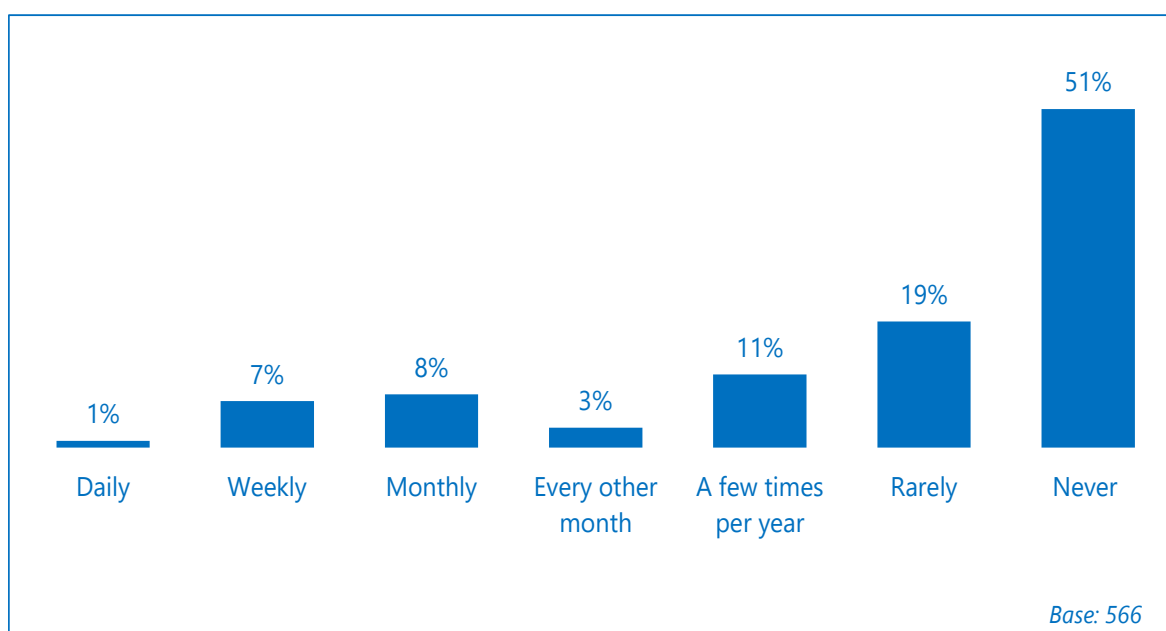
4.3 Current library usage

Usage of any Stockport Council library buildings or services

To provide detail about current library usage, residents were firstly asked how often they use Stockport Council's library buildings or services. Responses are shown in the below chart.

Approaching half (49%) said they visit Stockport Council's library buildings or services, and this includes 16% who use them at least monthly (i.e. daily, weekly or monthly).

Half (51%) 'never' use Stockport Council's library buildings or services.

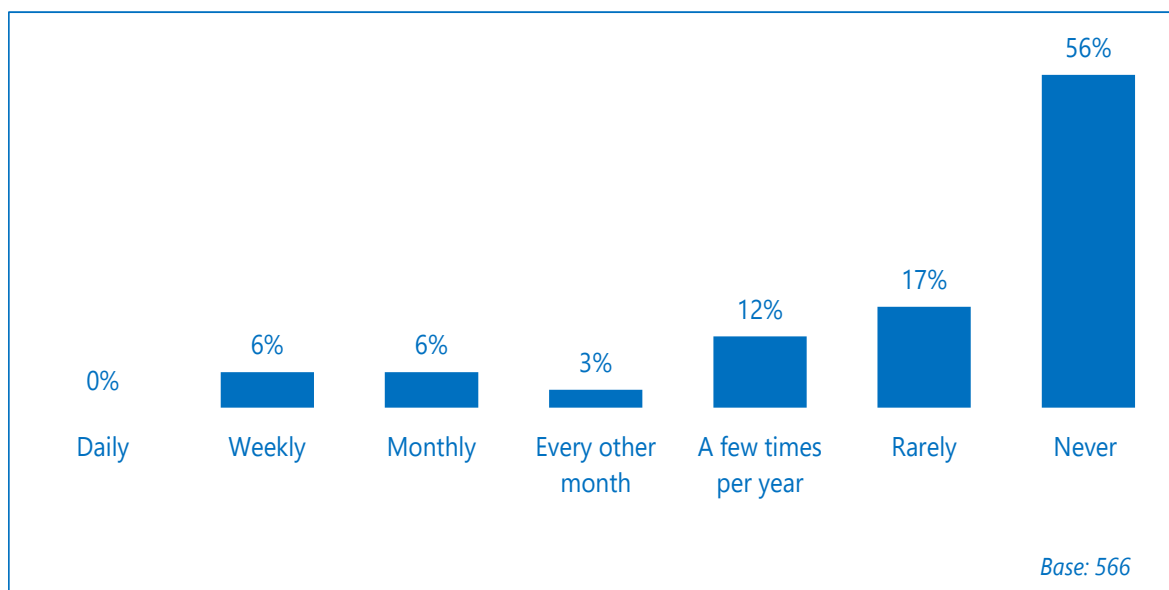


Usage of Central Library in Stockport

Residents were also asked how often they visit Central Library in Stockport.

44% said they visit Central Library, and this includes 13% who visit at least monthly (i.e. daily, weekly or monthly).

More than half (56%) 'never' visit Central Library.

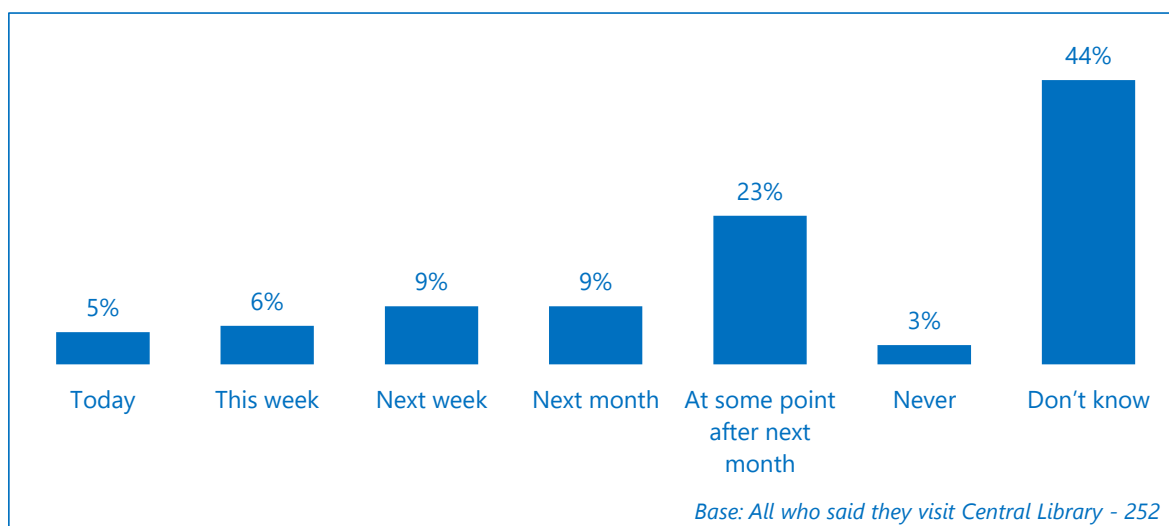


Residents who said they visit Central Library were asked when they next plan to visit the Central Library building. Responses are shown in the below chart.

29% of residents plan to visit within the next month (including today, this week, next week or next month).

There was a large degree of uncertainty over this question with 44% replying 'don't know'.

3% of those who have visited before said they will 'never' visit Central Library.



Individual library services

This section focuses on the following library services:

- Book loans – in person
- Book loans – online
- Computer or Wi-Fi access
- Heritage and archive materials
- Council advice and guidance
- Browse a range of periodicals and news publications
- Research or study

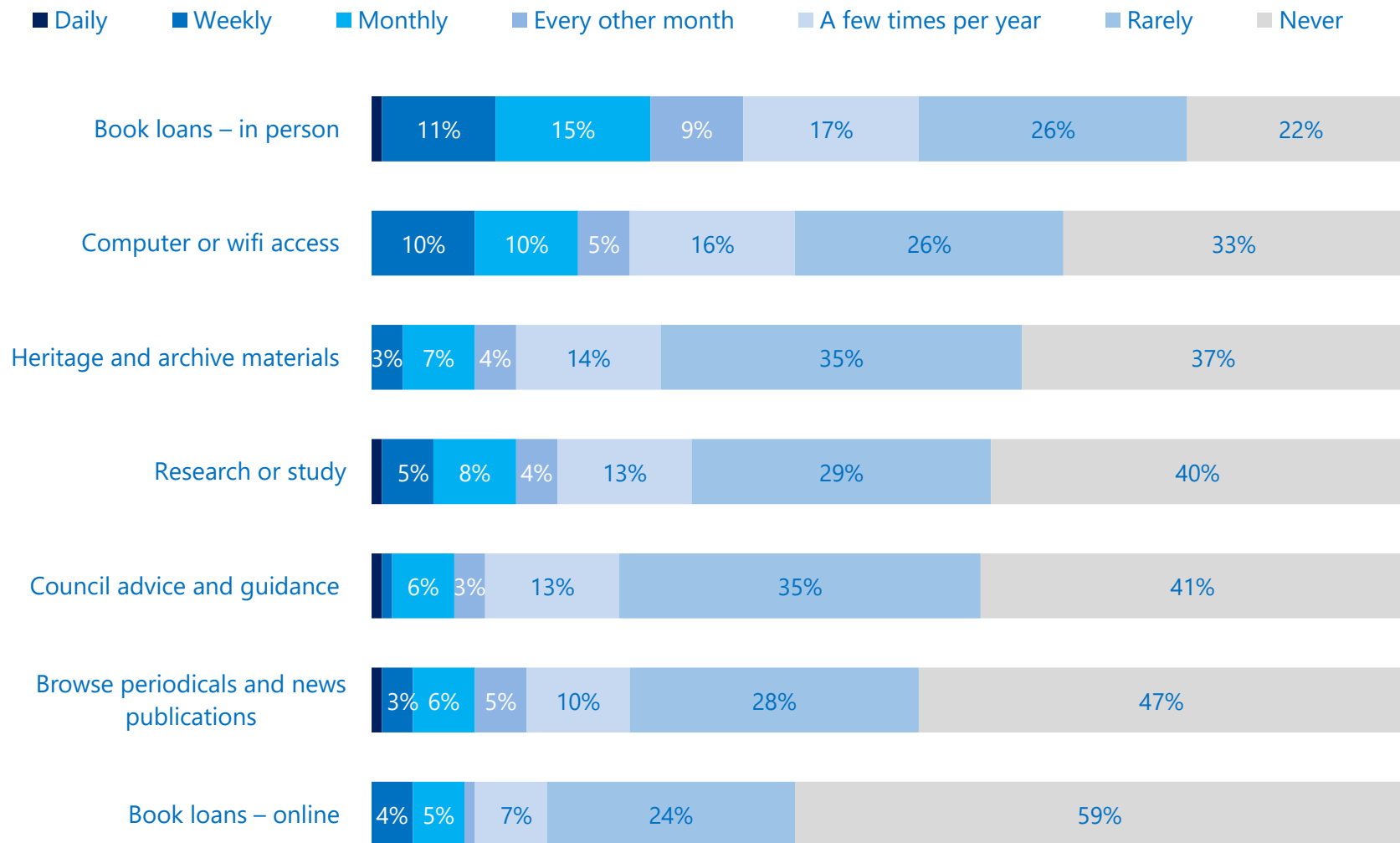
Residents who said they visit Central Library were asked how often they use each of the library services. Responses for each service are shown in the chart overleaf and ranked in order of the % who ever use each one.

Any percentage less than 1% is shown in the coloured bars but without any text to avoid the chart becoming too jumbled.

‘Book loans – in person’ is the most used, with 78% of residents who said they visit Central Library using the service. This includes 26% who use the service at least monthly (including daily, weekly, and monthly).

‘Computer or wifi access’ is used by 67% of residents who said they visit Central Library. This includes 19% who use the service at least monthly (including daily, weekly, and monthly).

The least used service is ‘Book loans – online’, which is used by 41% of residents who said they visit Central Library. This includes 10% who use the service at least monthly (including daily, weekly, and monthly).



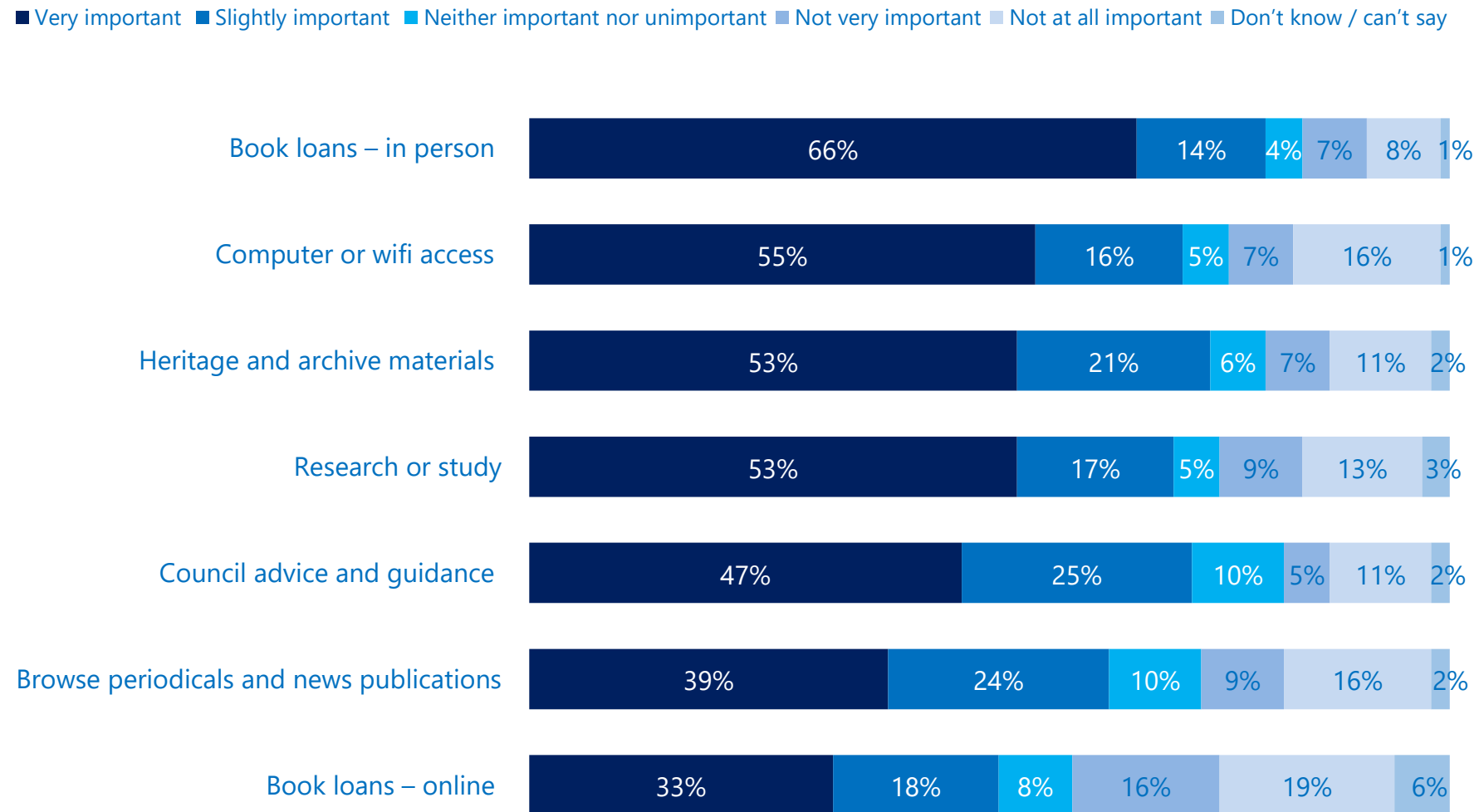
Base: All who said they visit Central Library - 252

Residents who said they visit Central Library were also asked to what extent each of the library services is important to them. Responses for each service are shown in the chart overleaf and ranked in order of the % rating each one as 'very important'.

Two-thirds (66%) of residents who said they visit Central Library said that 'Book loans – in person' is 'very important' to them. 15% rated it as 'not important' (either not very or not at all).

More than half of residents who said they visit Central Library said that 'computer or wifi access' (55%); 'heritage and archive materials' (53%) and 'research or study' (53%) is 'very important' to them.

At the other end of the scale 'Book loans – online', is 'very important' to 33% of residents who said they visit Central Library. More than a third (35%) rated it as 'not important' (either not very or not at all).



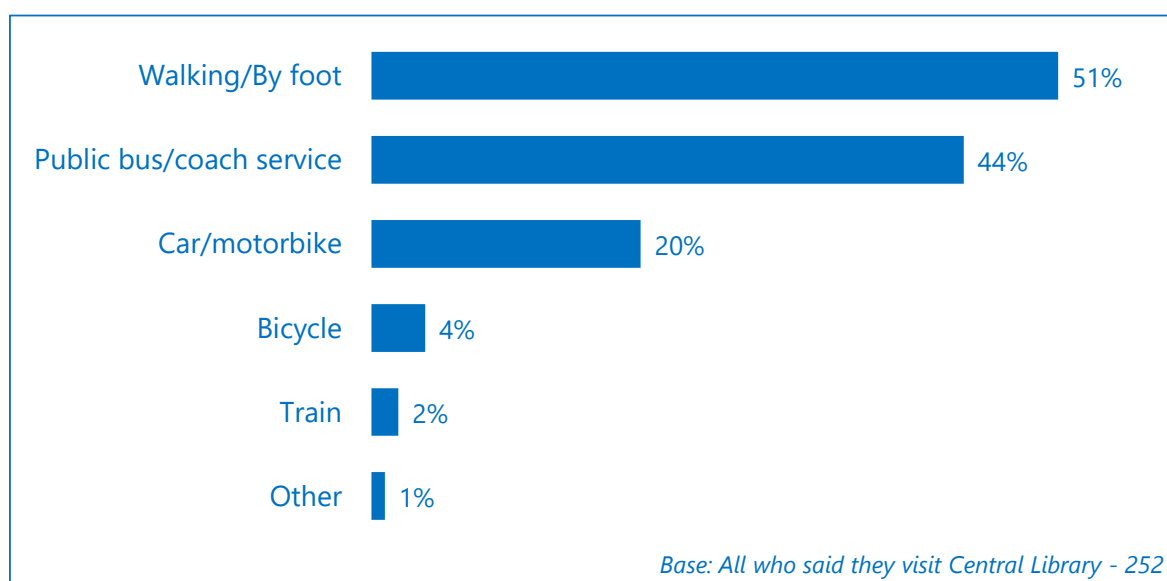
Base: All who said they visit Central Library - 252

Modes of transport to Central Library

Residents who said they visit Central Library were next asked which modes of transport they typically use to travel to the Central Library building.

Multiple answers could be given, with the findings shown below in ranked order.

Half (51%) of residents typically travel to the Central Library building via 'walking/by foot'. The second most common mode of transport was 'public bus/coach service' (44%). A fifth (20%) said they typically travel by 'car/motorbike'.



Quality of service provided by Central Library

Residents who said they visit Central Library were also asked how they would rate the quality of the service provided by the Central Library in the following areas:

- Variety and availability of books
- Public PCs and internet access
- Community events and activities
- Family and children's activities
- Heritage library services (e.g. archives to explore Stockport's or your own family history)
- Provision of other information e.g. tourist information or information about council services

Responses for each service are shown in the chart overleaf and ranked in order of the % rating each one as 'very good'. Anyone who responded that they 'never used

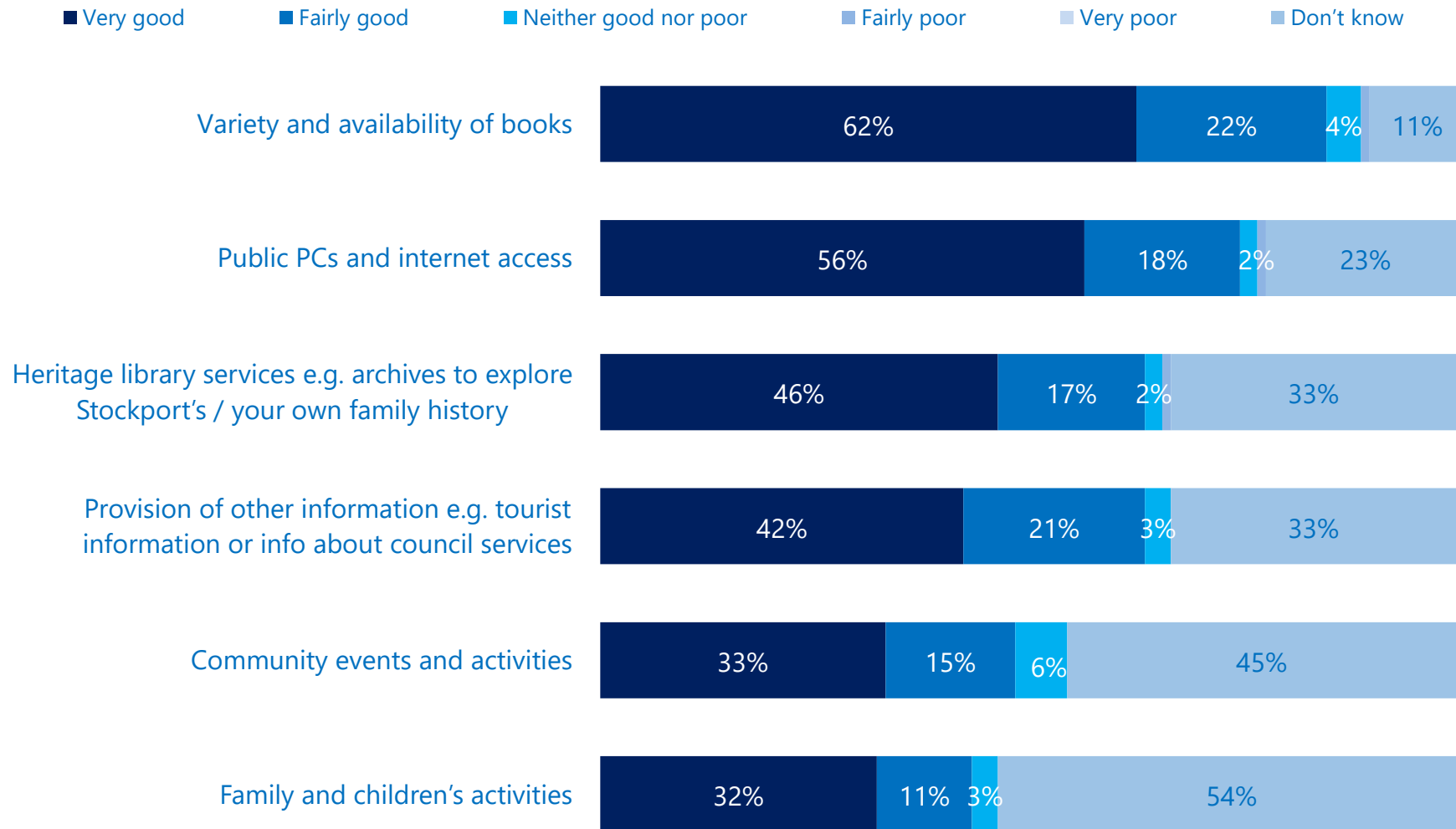
this service' have been removed from the analysis, so the totals are based on those using each service.

Any percentage less than 1% is shown in the coloured bars but without any text to avoid the chart becoming too jumbled.

62% of residents who said they visit Central Library said that 'Variety and availability of books' is 'very good'. 1% rated it as 'poor' (either fairly or very). One in ten (11%) responded 'don't know'.

A high proportion of residents who said they visit Central Library had limited or no knowledge of the quality of the services. This increased to as high as 54% saying 'don't know' about 'family and children's activities'.

The vast majority of residents who had an opinion were positive about the quality of the services on offer. Very few residents rated any of the services as poor (either 0% or 1% for each service).



Base: All who ever use each service - in order shown above 251; 234; 224; 210; 227; 235

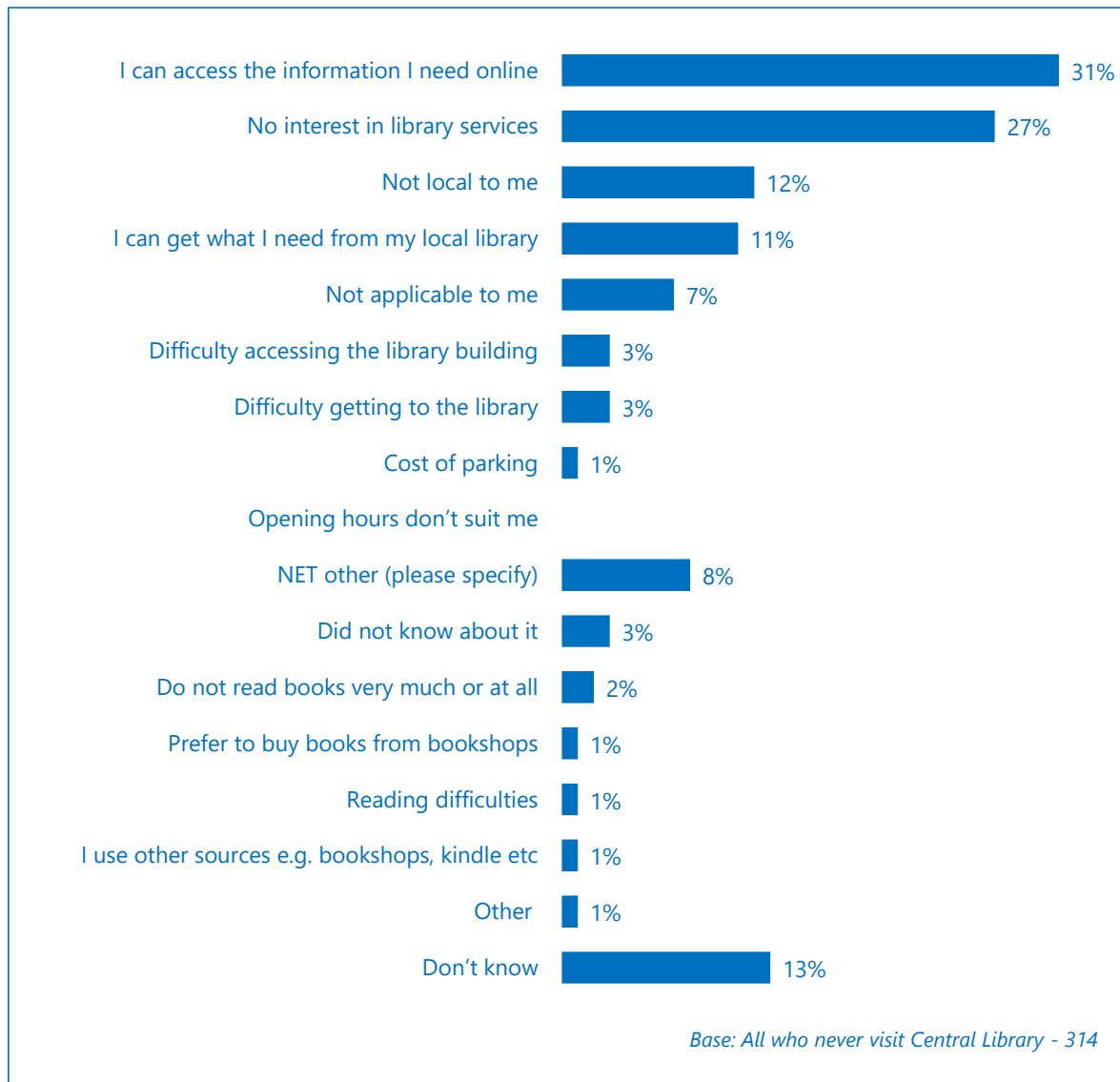
Reasons for not visiting Central Library

Residents who said they never visit Central Library were asked why not?

Residents were given a list and asked to select any that explained why they never used Central Library. The prompted options are shown in the chart overleaf. There was also the opportunity to add 'other' reasons. The net 'other' figure is shown in the chart, with the individual answers being coded and grouped together below it.

The main two reasons for never visiting Central Library were 'I can access the information I need online' (31%) and 'no interest in library services' (27%).

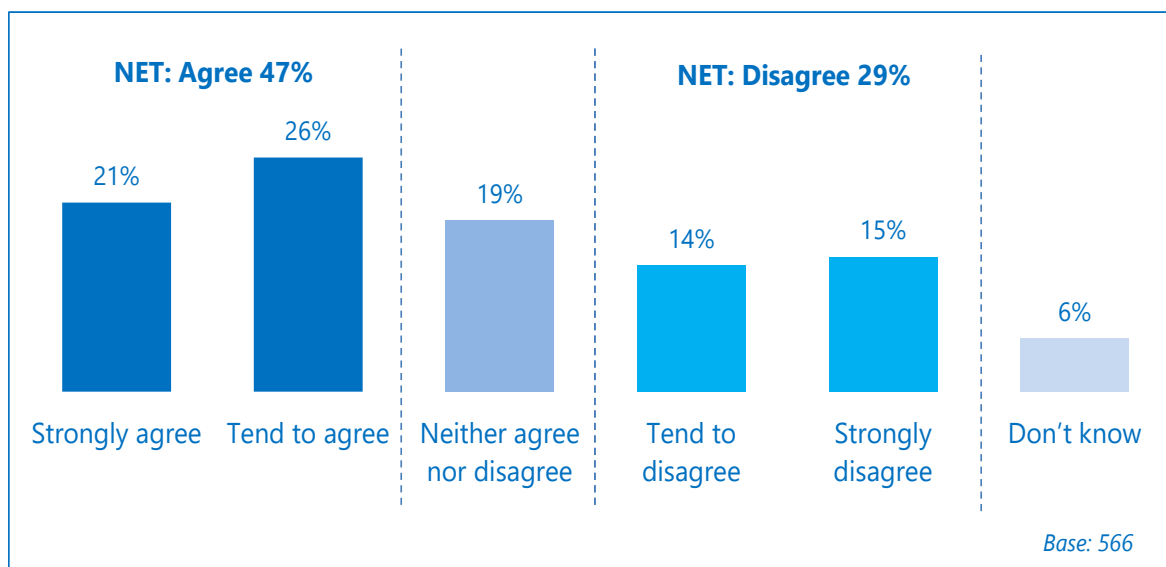
A minority said that they don't use the library due to reasons specific to accessing the building e.g. 'difficulty accessing the library building' (3%), 'difficulty getting to the library' (3%), 'cost of parking' (1%) or the 'opening hours don't suit me' (not a reason for any residents).



4.4 Reaction to the proposal to move library services

Following a summary of the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom, residents were then asked how far they agree or disagree with the proposal.

47% of residents NET: Agree (including strongly and tend to) with the proposal to move library services. 29% NET: Disagree, 19% 'Neither agree nor disagree' and 6% 'Don't know'.



There are various statistically significant differences, as outlined overleaf, in the reactions between different demographic groups.

Any cell shaded green shows a statistically significant difference compared to another group in the same category shaded red (e.g. by age, gender, ethnicity etc).

To summarise key differences, residents from a BAME ethnic background; No impairment, disability or long term health condition; with children under 18 in the household; and those likely to visit Central Library if it is moved are all significantly more likely to NET: Agree with the proposal.

Residents aged 65+; from a white ethnic background; with any religion or belief; with any impairment, disability or long term health condition; with no children under 18 in the household; and those who said they visit Central Library are all significantly more likely to NET: Disagree with the proposal.

It should be noted that some of these differences may be explained through the demographic profile of certain groups, for example, those surveyed from a BAME ethnic background had a considerably younger age profile than those from a white ethnic background.

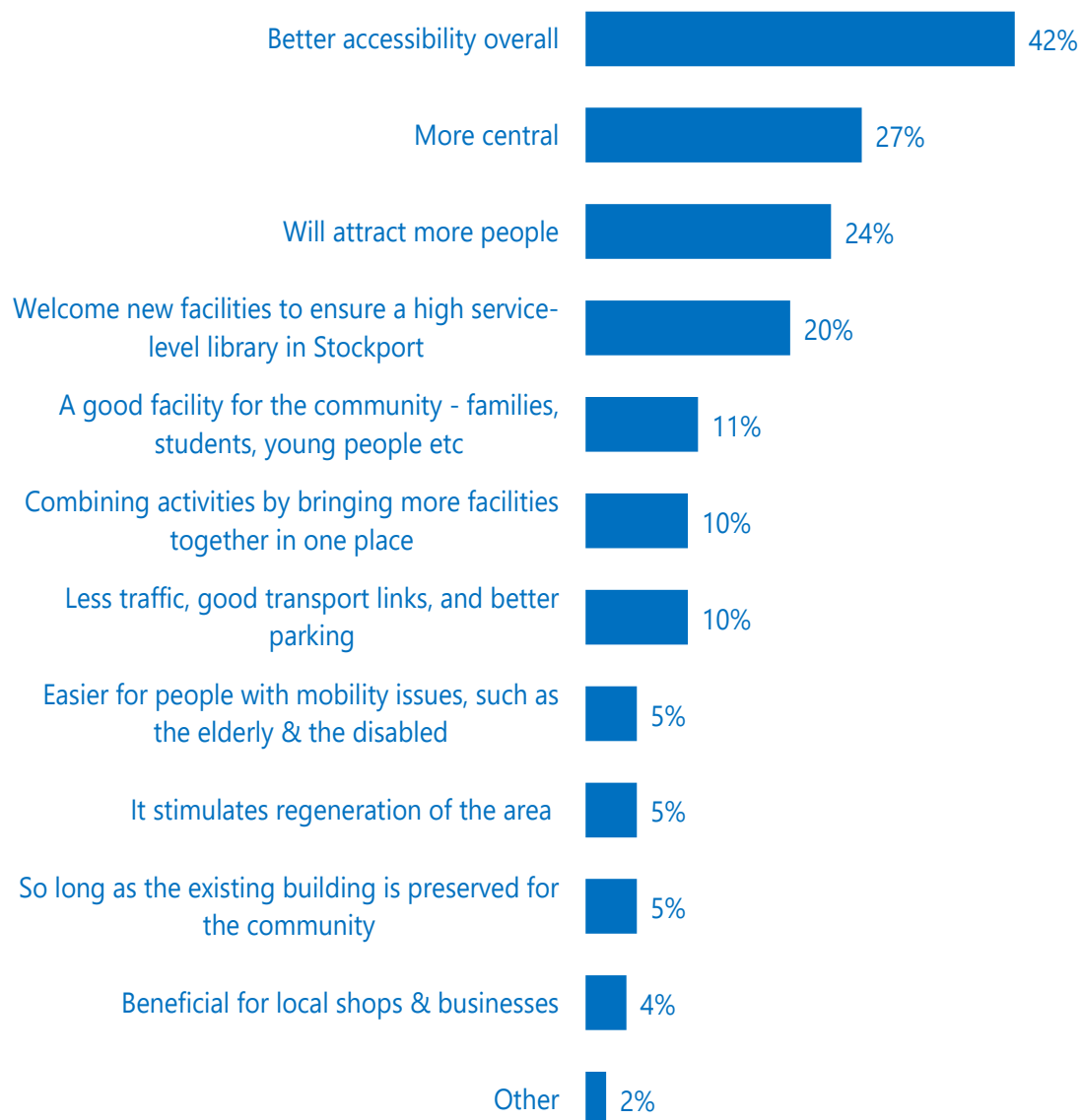
Amongst those with any impairment, disability or long term health condition, data suggests that results are not just down to age. Base sizes mean that results need to be treated with caution, but those aged 35-54 with any impairment, disability or long term health condition were more likely to NET: Disagree with the proposal (45%) than those aged under 35 (33%); 55-64 (39%) or those aged 65+ (32%).

| Demographic group | % NET Agree | % Neither/Nor | % NET Disagree | % Don't know |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| Under 35 | 51% | 25% | 16% | 7% |
| 35-64 years old | 47% | 18% | 20% | 6% |
| 65+ years old | 41% | 14% | 41% | 4% |
| | | | | |
| Male | 47% | 21% | 26% | 6% |
| Female | 47% | 16% | 31% | 6% |
| | | | | |
| White ethnic background | 46% | 19% | 30% | 6% |
| BAME ethnic background | 63% | 23% | 11% | 4% |
| | | | | |
| Any religion or belief | 50% | 13% | 32% | 4% |
| No religion or belief | 44% | 24% | 25% | 6% |
| | | | | |
| Any impairment/disability | 35% | 18% | 38% | 9% |
| No impairment/disability | 50% | 18% | 27% | 5% |
| | | | | |
| Any children u18 in household | 59% | 14% | 19% | 7% |
| No children u18 in household | 42% | 20% | 33% | 5% |
| | | | | |
| SK1 postcode | 41% | 17% | 36% | 7% |
| Other Stockport postcode | 48% | 18% | 29% | 5% |
| | | | | |
| Said visit Central Library | 43% | 15% | 37% | 5% |
| Never visit Central Library | 50% | 22% | 22% | 6% |
| | | | | |
| Likely to visit CL if moves | 54% | 15% | 26% | 5% |
| Likely to never visit CL if moves | 24% | 38% | 32% | 6% |

Reasons for agreeing with the proposal

The 47% of residents who 'agree' with the proposal were then asked in an open-ended question, to please explain why you agree with the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom?

The verbatim answers given have been coded, grouped together and shown in ranked order overleaf.



Base: All who agree with proposal to move library services - 265

To provide a feel and a flavour of the verbatim comments given for the top 5 reasons for agreeing with the proposal (which have been coded and shown in percentage format in the chart above) a handful of quotes are shown below.

Better accessibility overall (42% of those agreeing)

"People coming in on the bus can use it as they won't have to walk up the hill."

"Now you have explained what is happening, I think it is a good because you can get to it easier."

"I think it's a good idea as it's more central and more accessible right in the centre which will potentially attract more usage as people can easily access it whilst shopping in the complex."

"More accessible to people especially disabled people. Bring more people into the centre."

More central (27% of those agreeing)

"I think it good because here is more central as its current location is out of the way with no parking."

"I think it's lonely over there. A new facility will be much better and open up to younger generation."

"No parking at the old one, it's not convenient. It's never advertised. Central is more handy."

"More central. Safer due to pedestrianised area in the centre."

Will attract more people (24% of those agreeing)

"Central so more people would pass therefore more chance of people using the service, especially if it was in a purpose built centre with eating and drinking services. If there's also a community centre it would attract different age groups."

"More people will use it of all ages. Internet cafe and its central."

"Local to shoppers, bring kids in to use the facilities. Better location."

"It will attract people into the shopping area better for elderly."

Welcome new facilities to ensure a high service-level library in Stockport (20% of those agreeing)

"Old building is a bit tired. Think it will be nice when we get all these new community facilities in the town centre."

"The old building is uninviting, cold and it's not obvious that it can provide modern resources to people. If the cafe was good I'd definitely visit then have a nosey to see what other services were available."

"More space for books! General resources are thinning so it's good to keep offering them in a town centre scenario."

"More space more things on offer. There's no toilet in the library that I know of so that would help massively with little ones!"

A good facility for the community - families, students, young people etc (11% of those agreeing)

"So people can use the services more. More access for kids and teenagers. Easier to use libraries/computers here than at school sometimes and it'll give kids privacy to use the computers away from school and home where there are distractions."

"It's old school up there, the new built is for new life, i.e. youngster. So I think it will be beneficial for the people of Stockport to have it locally."

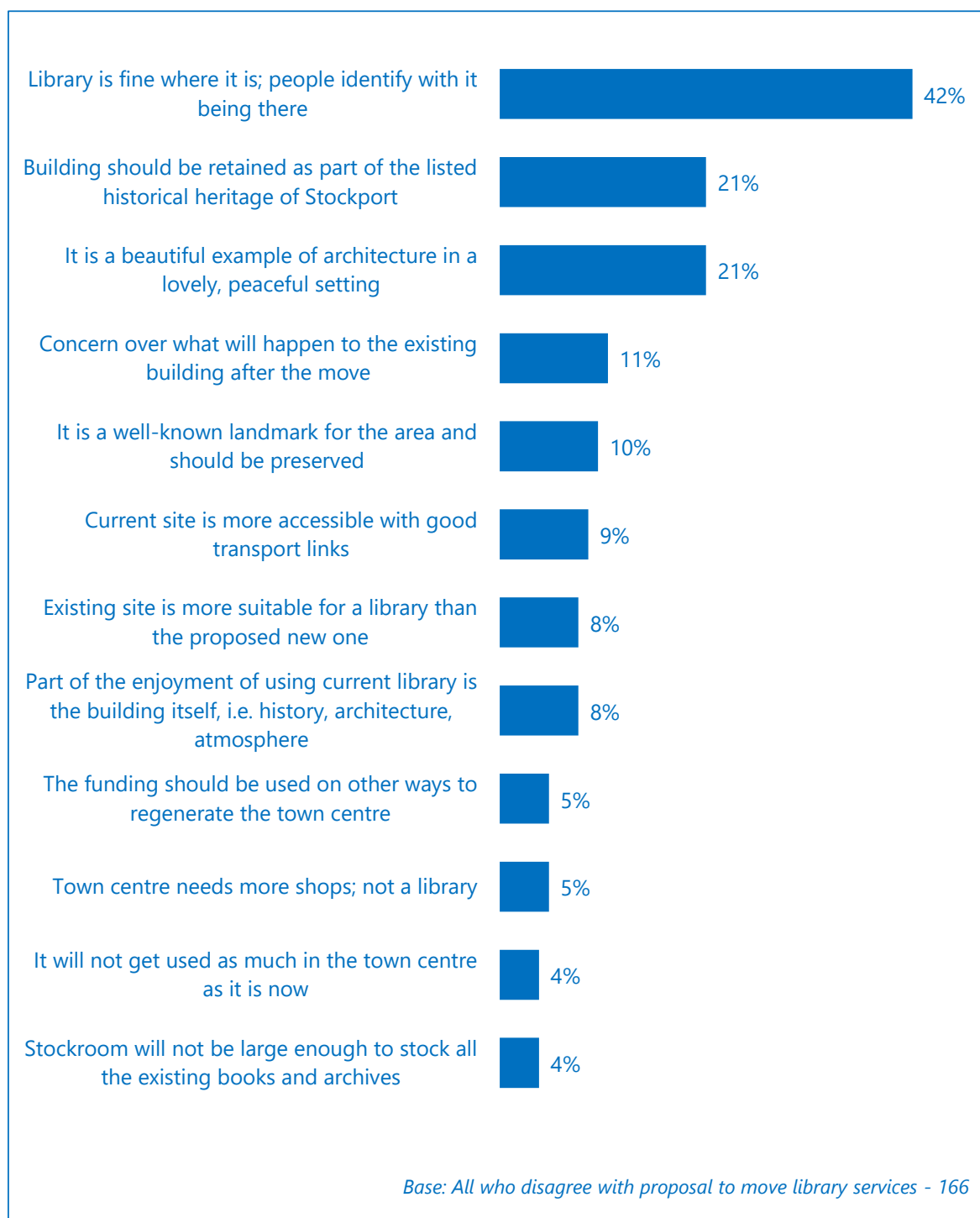
"For children to give them something other than school to attend. My child is 8 and there isn't much for him here so this proposal sounds really good and much needed."

"Having it in a central place is a good idea to encourage most especially children to read."

Reasons for disagreeing with the proposal

The 29% of residents who 'disagree' with the proposal were then asked in an open-ended question, to please explain why you disagree with the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom?

The verbatim answers given have been coded, grouped together and shown in ranked order below.



To again provide a feel and a flavour of the verbatim comments given for the top 5 reasons for disagreeing with the proposal (which have been coded and shown in percentage format in the chart above) a handful of quotes are shown below.

Library is fine where it is; people identify with it being there (42% of those disagreeing)

"It's an iconic building in Stockport and it should stay where it is."

"Because the library building is the library building why should it be moved."

"I used to use central library when I was at college really near each other. It's a lovely old building welcoming to study quietly. Don't think it would get used as much in the centre."

"It should be left where it is because it is a historic building. It's built for it and the library sits well in there."

Building should be retained as part of the listed historical heritage of Stockport (21% of those disagreeing)

"Because it is an great building with historical significance which I enjoy sitting in, unlike the soulless Merseyway."

"It's local heritage and a listed building. Part of our history."

"Because it's part of our heritage and should remain where it is for future generations. It important people can learn about the history of Stockport."

"Leave it as it is! It's part of Stockport history and a beautiful building with those windows."

It is a beautiful example of architecture in a lovely, peaceful setting (21% of those disagreeing)

"I believe the social benefits of the beautiful environment of central library is being ignored by solely concentrating in n the services instead of the social aspect as many people are extremely isolated due to present circumstances and the library can be of benefit to these people."

"People are used to it here and it's a beautiful building which is pleasant to visit."

"It is convenient, a pleasant environment. I think it should be kept as it."

"A beautiful building peaceful and quiet. It's memorable."

Concern over what will happen to the existing building after the move (11% of those disagreeing)

"It's a fantastic building and they are taking more heritage from stockpot - more likely flats will be there."

"Not sure that moving would be better. Fearful of what may happen to the old building."

"Nice building leave it where it is, should not be moved to make way for housing or some other rubbish."

"The building is of historic interest and it would be a shame if fell into disrepair. The council say it will still be used for public use but for how long?"

It is a well-known landmark for the area and should be preserved (10% of those disagreeing)

"It's an institution for generations of people. A beautiful building which can't be destroyed."

"Great building, keep it as it is. That building is Stockport through and through."

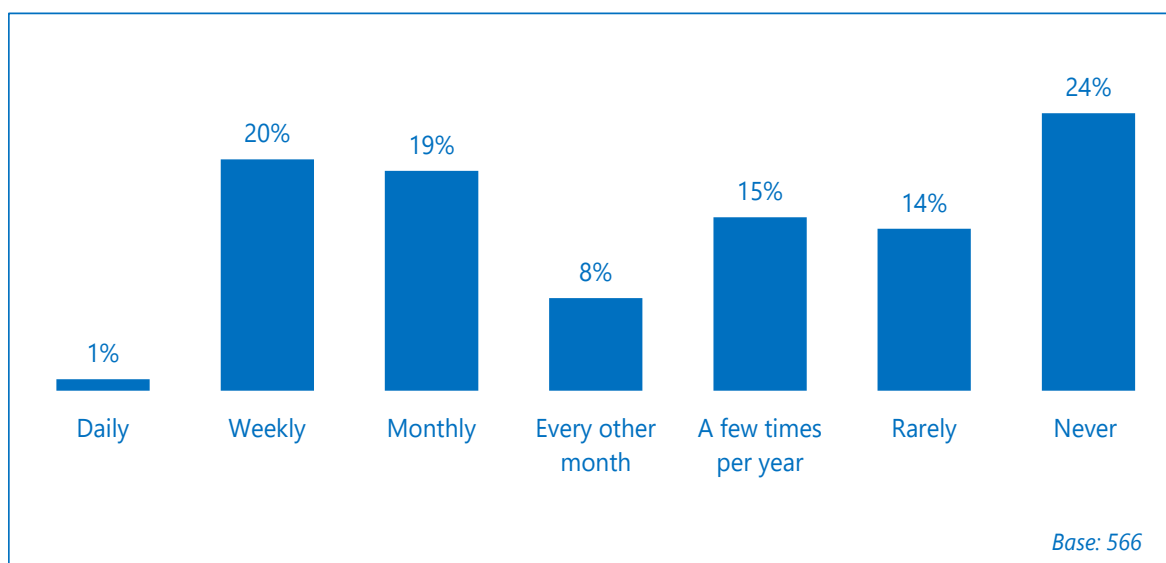
"Because the library has always been there. Every knows where it is, it is a landmark. That's why I don't want it to close not because I use it. It is a magnificent building."

Likely future use of library in new location

Residents were also asked, based on the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom, how often they think they would visit the library in the new location?

Three-quarters (76%) would be likely to visit the library in the new location, and this includes 21% who would visit at least weekly (i.e. daily or weekly).

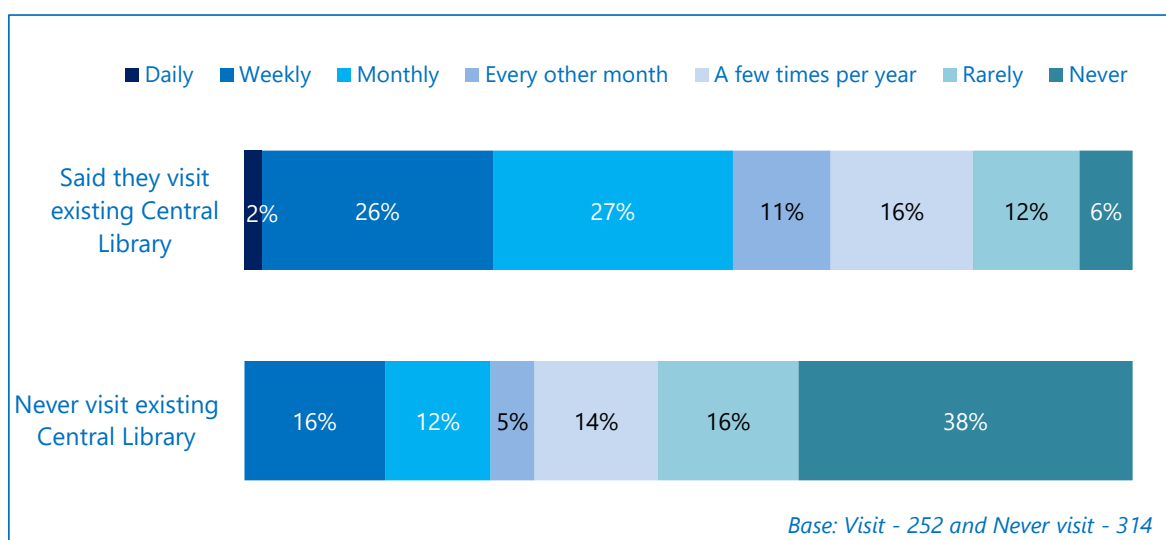
A quarter (24%) would 'never' visit the library in the new location.



The chart overleaf shows likely future usage amongst those who said they visit the existing Central Library and those who never visit it.

6% of those who said they visit the existing Central Library said that they will 'Never' be likely to visit the library in the new location. 28% would visit at least weekly (i.e. daily or weekly).

38% of those who never visit the existing Central Library said that they will 'Never' be likely to visit the library in the new location. The remaining 62% of current non-users are likely to visit the library in the new location and 16% would visit at least weekly (none would visit daily).



4.5 Ideas for alternative uses for the Central Library building

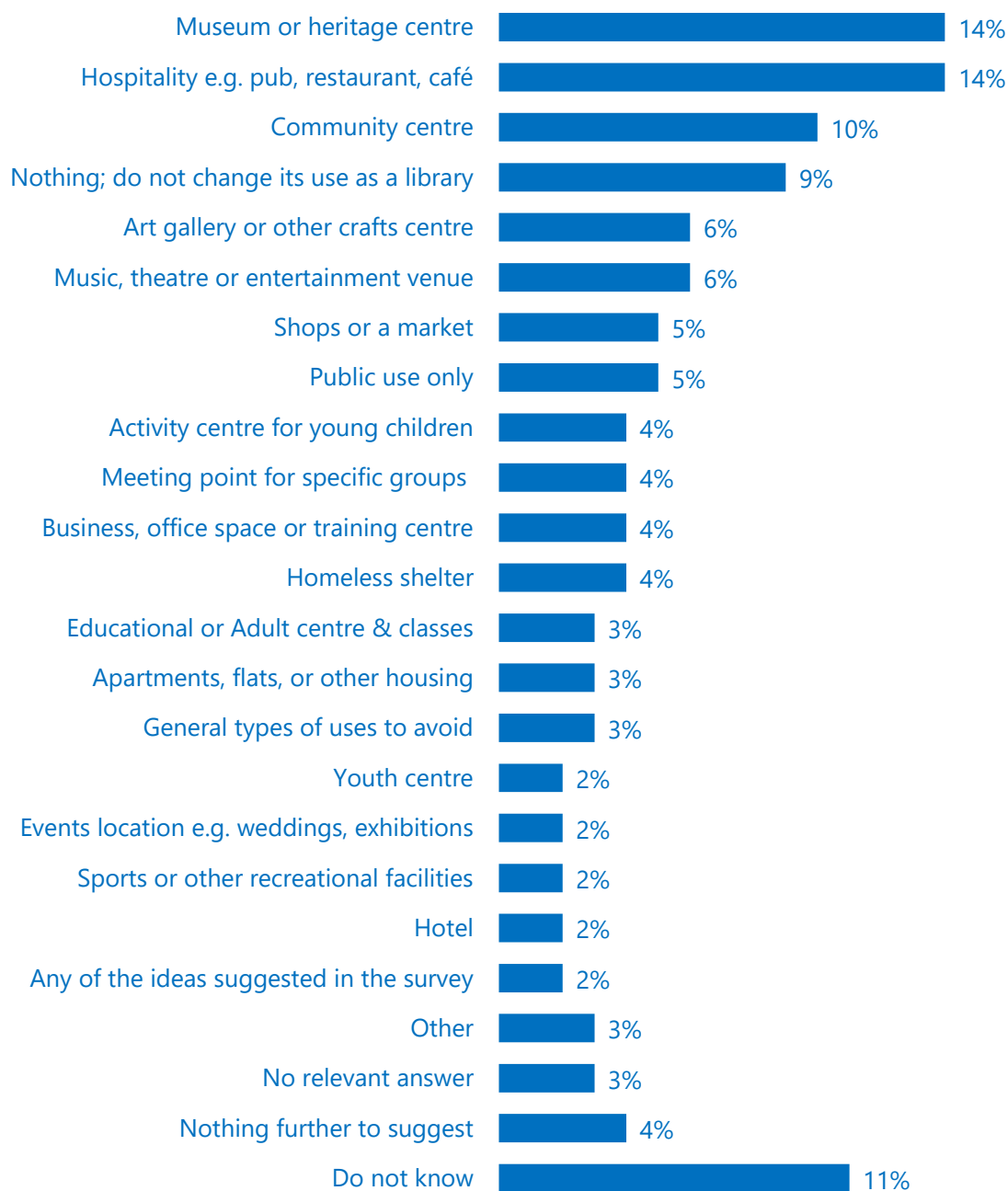
Residents were next informed that if a decision is made to relocate the library service from the Central Library building, the Council is exploring potential future uses and have made the following comments:

- It will not demolish or abandon the building
- It will not sell the freehold to it
- It will not allow the building to be developed for residential use
- Any potential use will ensure that public access can be retained to the building

Initial work that the Council has undertaken has highlighted a number of potential uses based on experience of what other similar buildings have been used as elsewhere in the country including: hospitality; food and beverage; shared office or working space uses; other Council uses; other public sector uses; community uses.

Residents were then asked in an open ended verbatim question what they thought about these suggestions and whether they have any other suggestions for alternative uses for the Central Library building if the library service is relocated to Stockroom?

The verbatim answers given have been coded, grouped together and shown in ranked order overleaf.



Base: 566

To provide a feel and a flavour of the verbatim comments given for the top 3 suggestions (which have been coded and shown in percentage format in the chart above) a handful of quotes are shown below.

Museum or heritage centre (14% of residents)

"May be a museum, a timeless museum with the old structure building to retain the building."

"Heritage centre like St. Mary's church or combine the two. All in one place."

"Museum or art gallery. Theatre or old style classroom where children can experience how things used to be."

"A heritage building on the history of Stockport."

Hospitality e.g. pub, restaurant, café (14% of residents)

"Probably a multi-cultural restaurant, not very formal, relaxing and affordable."

"Cafe that appeals to the older generation Tea and cakes elderly event Workshops for the elderly Have a history of Stockport area where elderly people can reminisce about the past and what Stockport is all about."

"Function rooms, meeting rooms or beer festival or foodie Friday. Artisan market."

"Nice restaurant / wine bar. Not a Wetherspoons!"

Community centre (10% of residents)

"Other public or community use, not private sector, usage stay for community use. Pandemic has shown us that community usage need to be at forefront."

"Community space would be good. For dance or yoga type classes. Community events."

"Community like a coffee shop or a book shop with local people working in there with special needs."

"Community Start Well centre! Stockport hub. The 2 Start Well centres aren't easy to get to so one in Stockport centre will be good."

4.6 Other comments and suggestions about the proposal

Finally, residents were asked what other comments or suggestions they have about the proposal to move services from Central Library to Stockroom?

The verbatim answers given have been coded, grouped together and shown in ranked order below. Two-thirds (65%) had nothing further to suggest.



To provide a feel and a flavour of the verbatim comments given for the top 3 other comments (which have been coded and shown in percentage format in the chart above) a handful of quotes are shown below.

Access will be better at the new site and more convenient for most people (7% of residents)

"It would be more accessible closer to the shopping centre."

"Town centre location would be better and if it's in Merseyway everyone will know where it is."

"It's better for families and people who have no transportation."

"It would be easier to drop in whilst shopping not lunch break if it were more central."

The old library should be retained as it is (7% of residents)

"Not the right place that's why the shops have shut there's not enough people go down the side streets. People will just see an empty library on A6 and think it's closed."

"I disagree with moving the facilities to a soulless prefabricated building with no atmosphere from a beautiful historic building in pleasant surroundings."

"I'd like to keep the library as it is. Lots of history and an important part of Stockport."

"Why is the council ruining our heritage, Stockport is not what it used to be. Many old dilapidated building and they want the library building to be one of them."

Good footfall in new location may attract more visitors to the library (4% of residents)

"I think I might visit more when it is relocated because it could be part of a shopping trip"

"It's easier in town especially for elderly my kids and grandchildren would use it more."

"My daughter and I may use it as it's on bus route and more convenient."

"Putting facilities all together in one area will help bring people into the town and use them more."

5. Face to face survey of visitors

This chapter summarises the findings of a face to face survey of visitors (including shopping visitors, leisure visitors, workers and business travellers who live *outside* Stockport).

5.1 Methodology

This element of the research was conducted using quantitative face-to-face interviews, with 60 interview shifts being undertaken (these also included the resident interviews as reported in chapter 4).

Interviewers used a set questionnaire programmed on a tablet (designed by Qa Research and Stockport Council to meet the research objectives and included in appendix 9.1 for reference) and were stationed in various locations in Stockport. Interviewers were given the freedom to choose on-street locations where footfall was high, though not in the immediate vicinity of the existing Central Library.

The interviews took place between 6th September and 11th October 2021.

Respondents were selected at random, with the next person being approached and asked to participate in the research as soon as the previous interview was completed. Only one person per party was interviewed.

Background information

At the start of the survey, the following text and images (provided by Stockport Council) were shown on the tablet screen to all participants.

Stockport Council has been awarded £14.5 million funding to spend on a new facility in Merseyway Shopping Centre called Stockroom.

The Council's done some engagement seeking opinions on what facilities could be in there. Now the Council is looking for views on moving the existing library service from Central Library building on the A6 into Stockroom in Merseyway.

It is becoming a challenge to deliver a 21st century library service in the building due to its layout and investment needed. Also the Heritage and Archives service only has a temporary accreditation as the collections' storage is substandard.

Unfortunately rules say Stockport Council can't spend the new funding on improving Central library building. That said, they don't want to demolish or abandon the building – it's Grade II listed and a much loved part of our town's heritage.

Everywhere library visitor numbers are declining but the Council believe Stockroom will attract more people to use the service. It is also hoped Stockroom will breathe new life into empty retail space and bring people to the town centre.

Stockroom is bigger than Central Library and will provide better storage for valuable collections. It will have car parking spaces; a café, research and study spaces, wifi and computers to use by all as well as events and other activities.

The following questions are in relation to what I have explained.

This is an exterior picture of the current Central Library building on the A6



This is an exterior CGI image of what Stockroom might look like



An internal image of the current layout of Central Library



This shows the footprint of the space that Stockroom will have



Sampling and statistical robustness

In total 93 surveys were completed.

The overall sample of 93 (and using an estimated population of 100,000 potential visitors¹) provides findings which in research terms means we can be 95% confident that the data at an overall level has a variance no more than +/-10.2% accuracy.

¹ The mathematics of probability prove that the size of the population is irrelevant unless the size of the sample exceeds a few percent of the total population you are examining. Population size is only likely to be a factor when you work with a relatively small and known group of people.

Therefore, these findings are based on a sample size outside the +/-5% standard industry error rate required to provide statistically robust results at an overall level. The results do still provide an interesting perspective on the views of a different user group.

A note on analysis and how the data is presented

The base sizes (i.e. how many people answered the question) is also shown in each chart or table.

Please note that when interpreting results throughout this report not all percentages will equal 100% due to rounding (with any figures of 0.5 or higher being rounded up). Where the figure is shown as 0% at least one respondent gave this answer but the total count makes up less than 0.5% of the overall total; a blank shows no-one has given this answer.

Some questions were multiple response questions: respondents had the option of giving more than one response. These percentages may be higher than 100%.

Open-ended verbatim questions have been coded, grouped together and shown as percentages.

The analysis was run using Askia software. The questions have been cross-tabulated by different demographics, with relevant statistically significant differences being commented upon within the report, how useful or relevant this is needs to be determined by the reader.

To avoid confusion in comparison to other chapters 'respondents' are referred to as 'visitors' in this chapter.

5.2 Key findings – who completed the survey

The survey asked a number of demographic questions and the profile of visitors that completed the survey is shown below.

Reason for visit to Stockport

63% were visiting as a leisure visitor to Stockport; 20% as a regular place of work, 11% on an everyday shopping trip and 5% on a business trip.



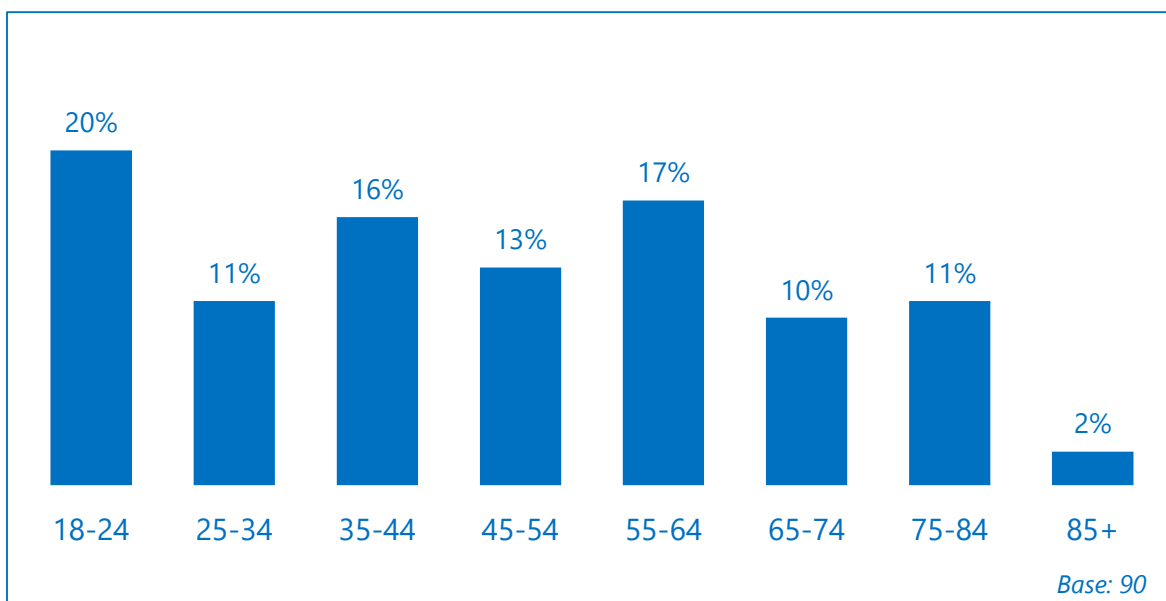
Gender

51% of the sample were male, 48% female, and 1% responded 'prefer not to answer'.

Age

The age bands of those completing the survey are shown overleaf.

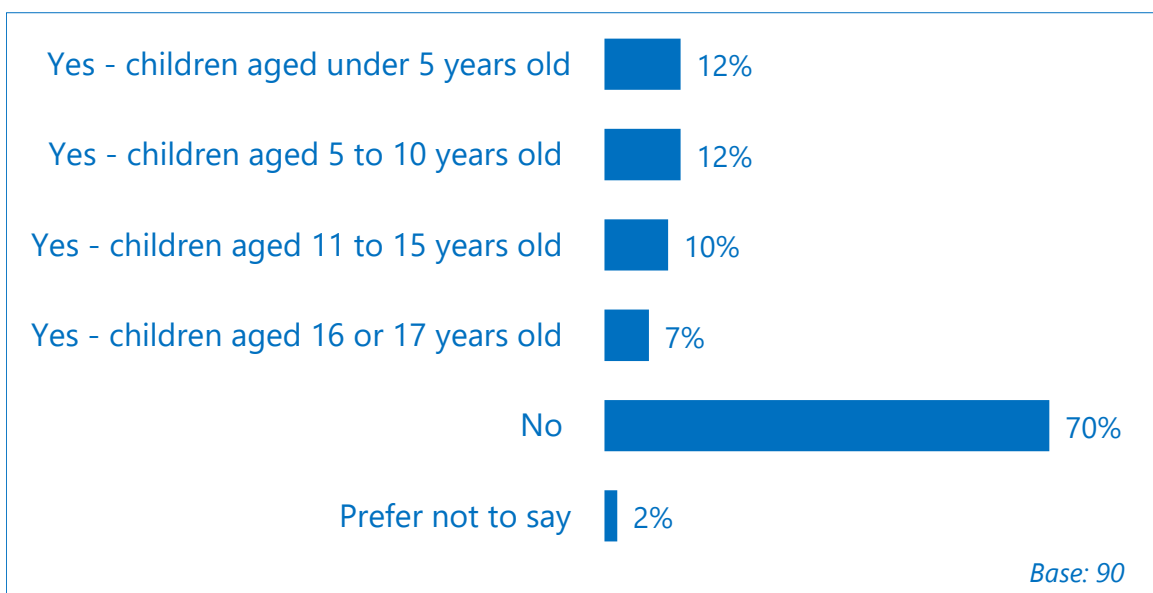
A third, 31% of the sample were aged under 35, 46% were aged 35-64 and 23% were aged 65+.



Children under 18 living at home

Visitors were given various categories and asked if they had any children under the age of 18 in their household?

28% of visitors had children under the age of 18 living at home.



Disability or long-term health condition

18% of visitors have a disability or long-term health condition.

80% selected 'no' and 2% 'prefer not to say'.

Ethnicity

Visitors were presented a list and asked how would they define their ethnic group?

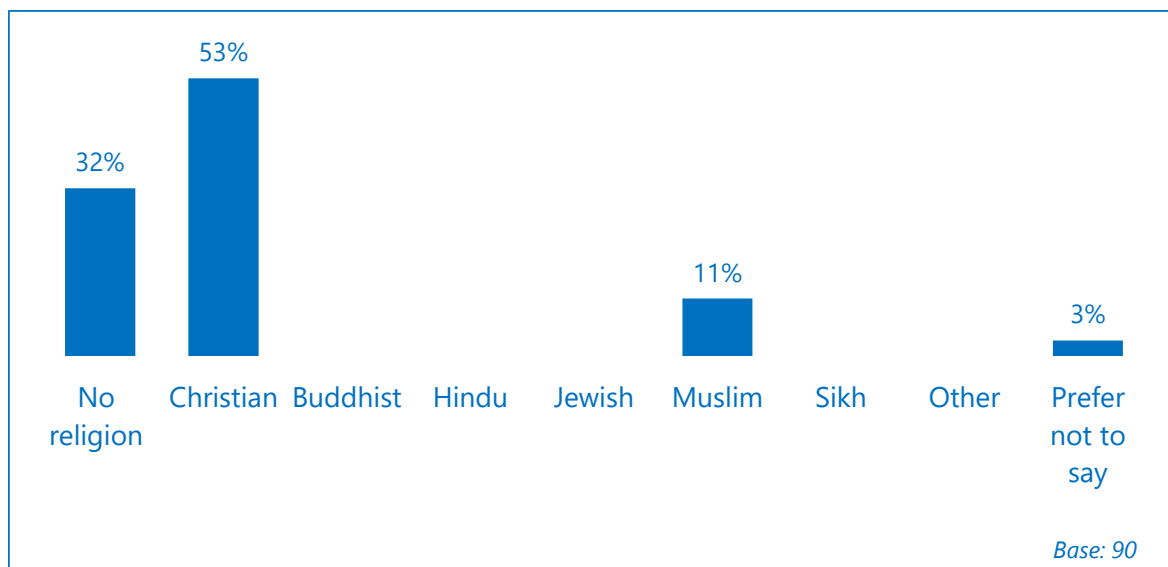
Overall, 79% of the sample were from a white ethnic background, 20% were from a BAME ethnic background, and 1% responded 'prefer not to answer'.

| Ethnicity | % |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| Net - White | 79% |
| White British | 78% |
| White Irish | - |
| Gypsy / Roma | - |
| White Other | 1% |
| Net - Black | 6% |
| Black or Black British African | 6% |
| Black or Black British Caribbean | - |
| Black Other | - |
| Net - Mixed | 4% |
| Mixed White/Black African | - |
| Mixed White/Black Caribbean | 1% |
| Mixed White/Asian | 3% |
| Mixed Other | - |
| Net - Asian | 10% |
| Asian or Asian British Indian | 3% |
| Asian or Asian British Pakistani | 6% |
| Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi | 1% |
| Asian or Asian British Chinese | - |
| Asian or Asian British Other | - |
| Net - Other | - |
| Arab | - |
| Other ethnic background | - |
| Prefer not to say | 1% |
| Base | 90 |

Religion or belief

Visitors were presented a list and asked what is your religion or belief?

32% of visitors said 'no religion', 53% said 'Christian', 11% 'Muslim' and 3% 'prefer not to say'.



Sexuality

Visitors were presented a list and asked what is your sexuality?

88% of visitors said 'heterosexual/straight' and 12% said 'prefer not to say'.

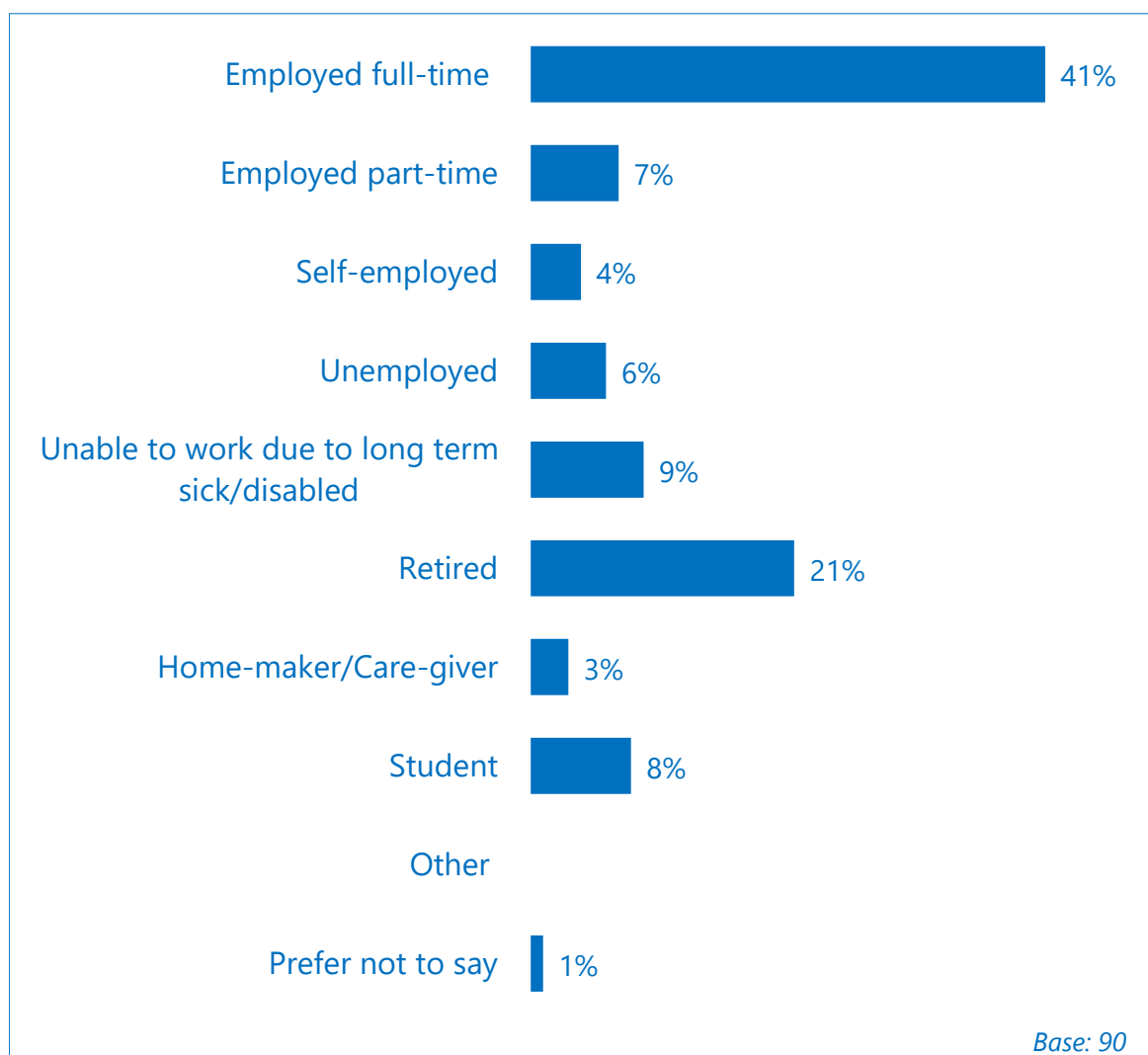


Employment status

Visitors were presented a list and asked what is your employment status?

More than half were employed (52%), with 47% not in employment (including 21% who were retired) and 1% preferring not to say.

Amongst those in employment all (100%) were not currently furloughed.



Geographical area

A screener question ensured all respondents were visitors to Stockport and not residents.

Visitors covered a wide geographic area. During the survey they were asked to provide a full home postcode, though some would only provide part of the postcode and 6% refused to do so.

Where full postcodes were provided the Local Authority of those completing the survey are shown in the following table, with 43% from Manchester and 20% from Tameside.

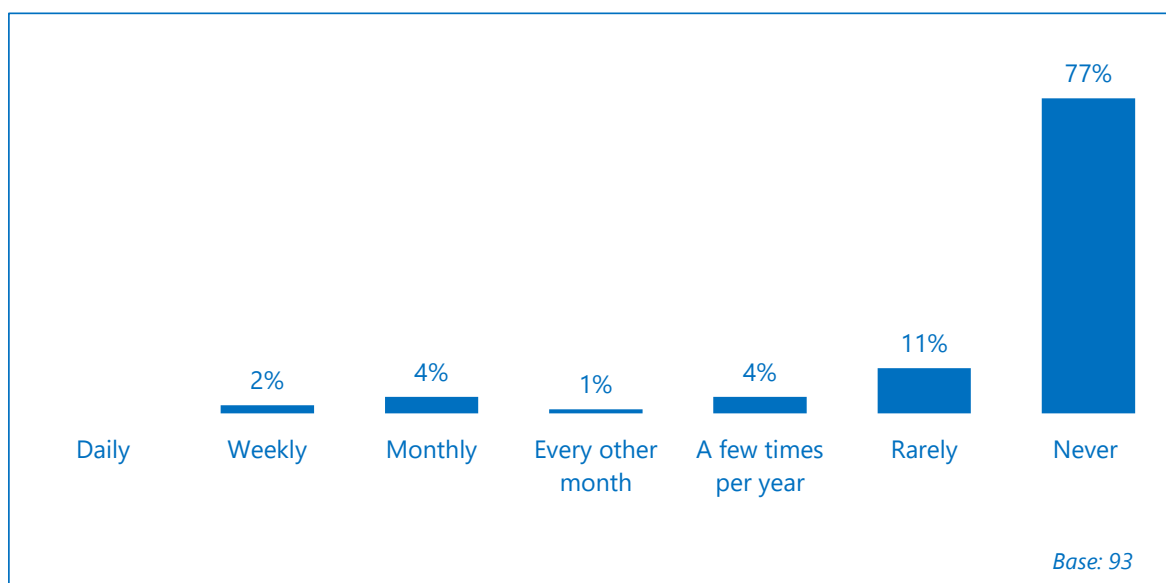
| Local Authority | % |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Manchester | 43% |
| Tameside | 20% |
| Trafford | 6% |
| Cheshire East | 5% |
| Oldham | 5% |
| Bury | 2% |
| High Peak | 2% |
| Salford | 2% |
| Bolton | 1% |
| Rochdale | 1% |
| Staffordshire Moorlands | 1% |
| Not enough detail provided | 5% |
| Refused | 6% |
| Base | 82 |

5.3 Current library usage

Usage of any Stockport Council library buildings or services

To provide detail about current library usage, visitors were firstly asked how often they use Stockport Council's library buildings or services. Responses are shown in the following chart.

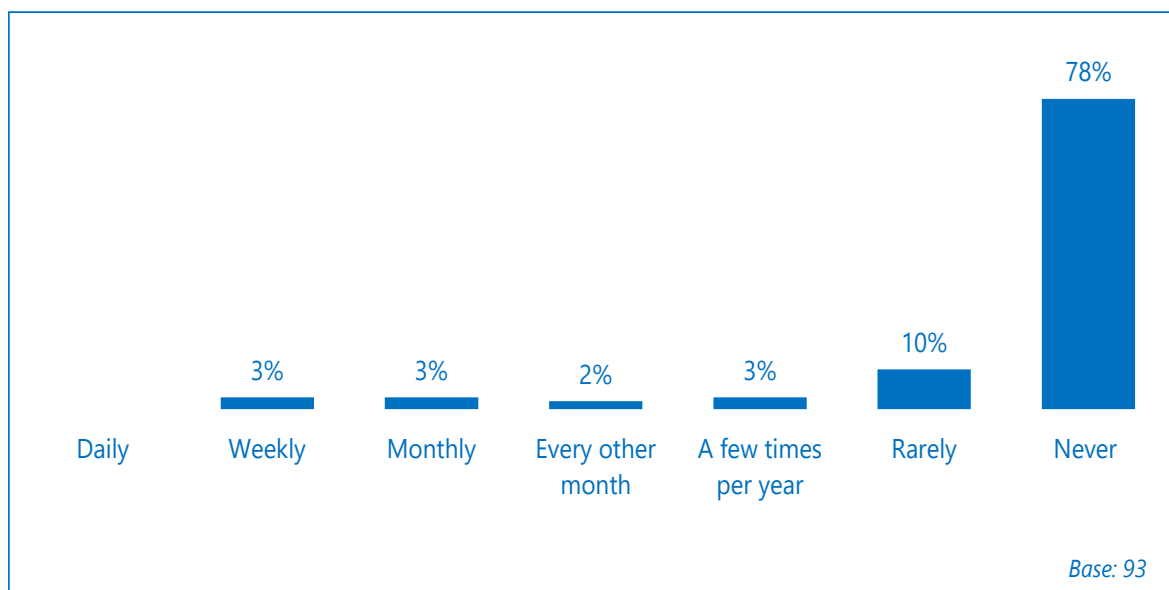
77% 'never' use Stockport Council's library buildings or services. Of the rest 6% said they use them at least monthly (i.e. daily, weekly or monthly).



Usage of Central Library in Stockport

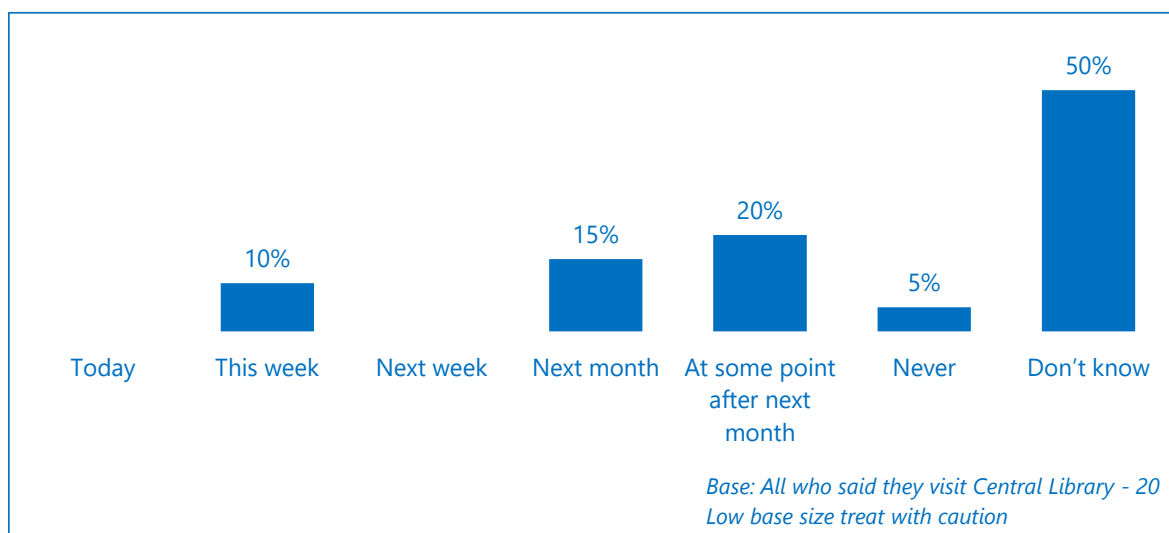
Visitors were also asked how often they visit Central Library in Stockport and all responses are shown in the chart overleaf.

78% 'never' visit Central Library in Stockport. Of the rest 6% said they visit at least monthly (i.e. daily, weekly or monthly).



Visitors who said they visit Central Library (20 visitors so results should be treated with caution) were asked when they next plan to visit the Central Library building. Responses are shown in the below chart.

There was some degree of uncertainty over this question with 50% (10 people) replying 'don't know'. 5% (1 person) said they would 'never' visit.



Individual library services

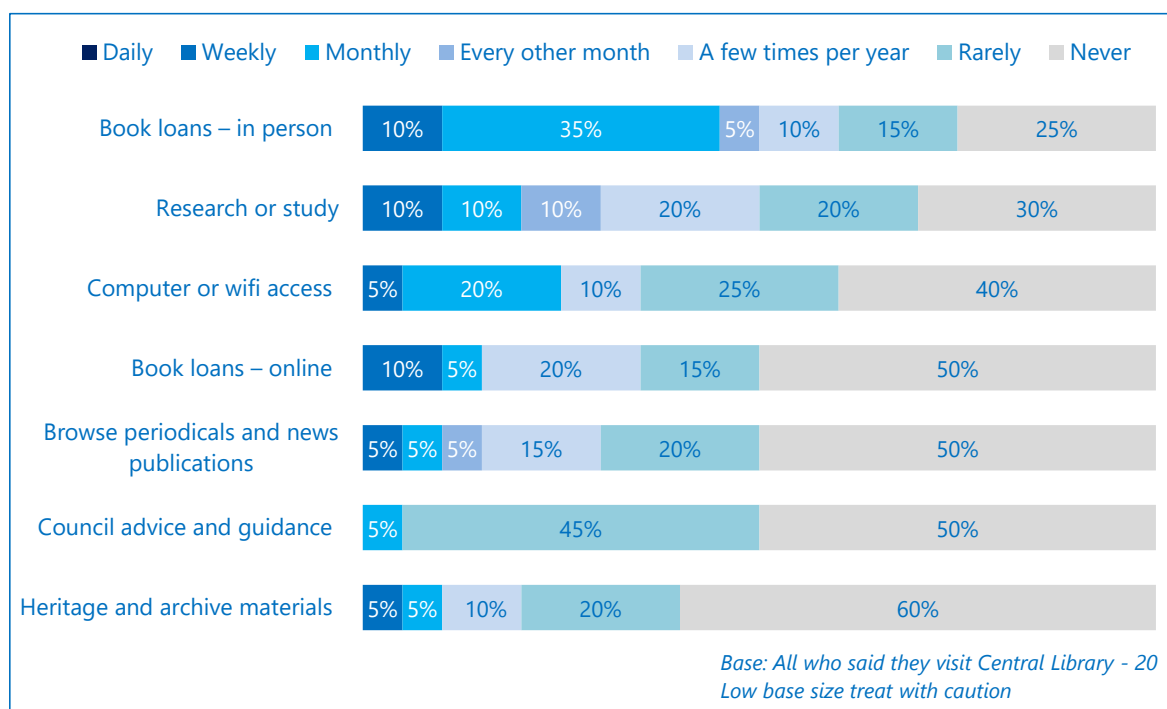
This section focuses on the following library services:

- Book loans – in person
- Book loans – online
- Computer or wifi access
- Heritage and archive materials
- Council advice and guidance
- Browse a range of periodicals and news publications
- Research or study

Visitors who said they visit Central Library (20 visitors so results should be treated with caution) were asked how often they use each of the library services. Responses for each service are shown in the below chart and ranked in order of the % who ever use each one.

'Book loans – in person' is the most used, by 75% of visitors who said they visit Central Library (15 people).

The least used service is 'heritage and archive materials', used by 40% of visitors who said they visit Central Library (8 people).

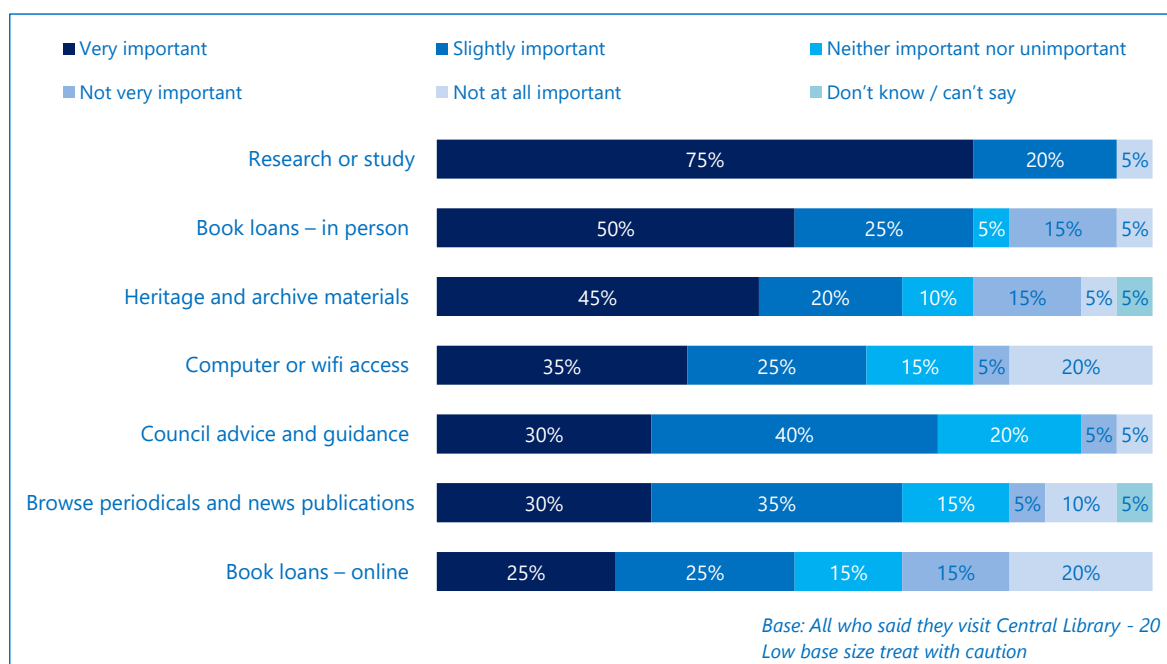


Visitors who said they visit Central Library (20 visitors so results should be treated with caution) were also asked to what extent each of the library services is important

to them. Responses for each service are shown in the chart below and ranked in order of the % rating each one as 'very important'.

'Research or study' is the service rated as most important by visitors who said they visit Central Library (75% or 15 people said 'very important').

'Book loans - online' is the service rated as least important by visitors who said they visit Central Library (25% or 5 people said 'very important').



Modes of transport to Central Library

Visitors who said they visit Central Library (20 visitors so results should be treated with caution) were next asked which modes of transport they typically use to travel to the Central Library building.

Multiple answers could be given, and of the 20 visitors answering the question, 10 said they used a 'public bus/coach service', 6 said 'walking/by foot' and 5 said 'car/motorbike'.

Quality of service provided by Central Library

Visitors who said they visit Central Library were also asked how they would rate the quality of the service provided by the Central Library in the following areas:

- Variety and availability of books
- Public PCs and internet access
- Community events and activities
- Family and children's activities
- Heritage library services (e.g. archives to explore Stockport's or your own family history)
- Provision of other information e.g. tourist information or information about council services

Of the 20 visitors who said they visit Central Library, all rated the quality of the services listed above as good if they had used the service before (several for each service said they had never used the service before or did not know).

Reasons for not visiting Central Library

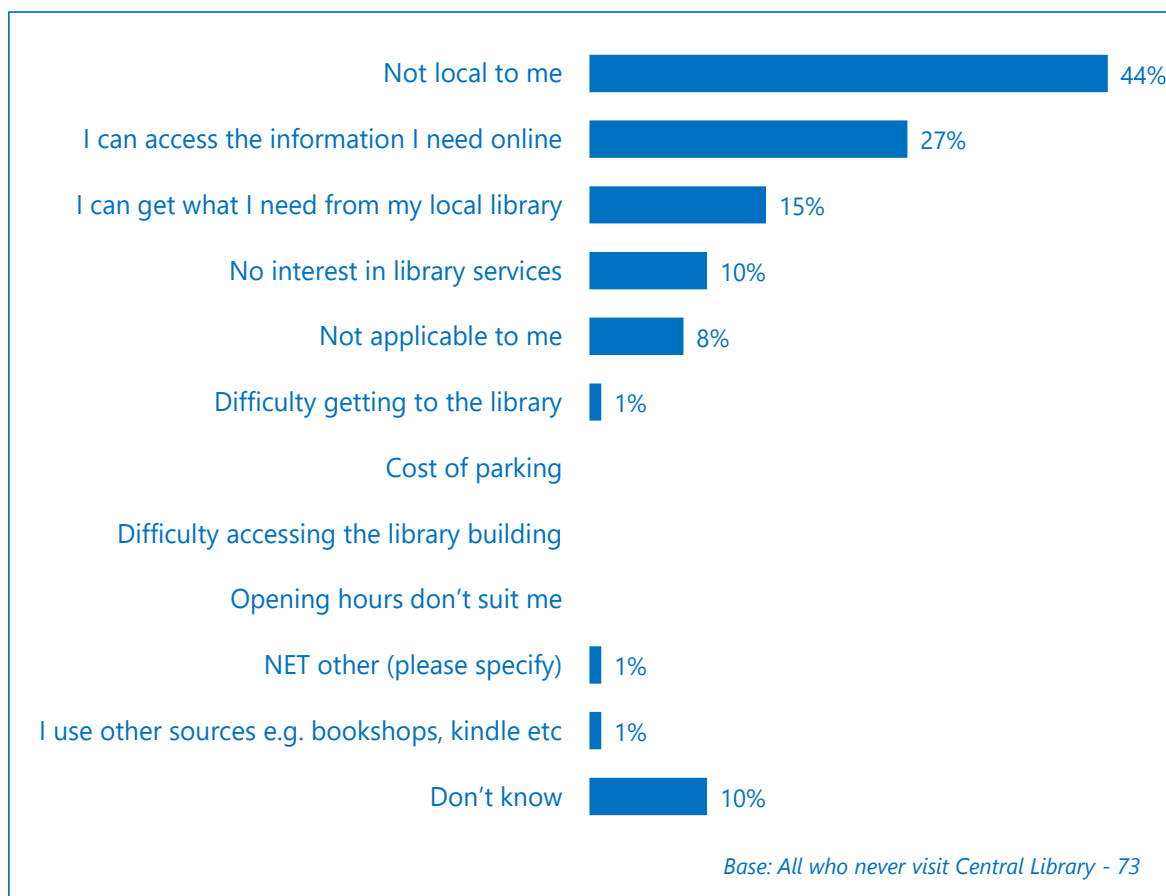
Visitors who said they never visit Central Library were asked why not?

They were given a list and asked to select any that explained why they never visit Central Library. The prompted options are shown in the chart overleaf.

There was also the opportunity to add 'other' reasons.

The main two reasons for never visiting Central Library were that it is 'Not local to me' (44%) and 'I can access the information I need online' (27%).

One person said that they don't use the library due to difficulty getting to it.

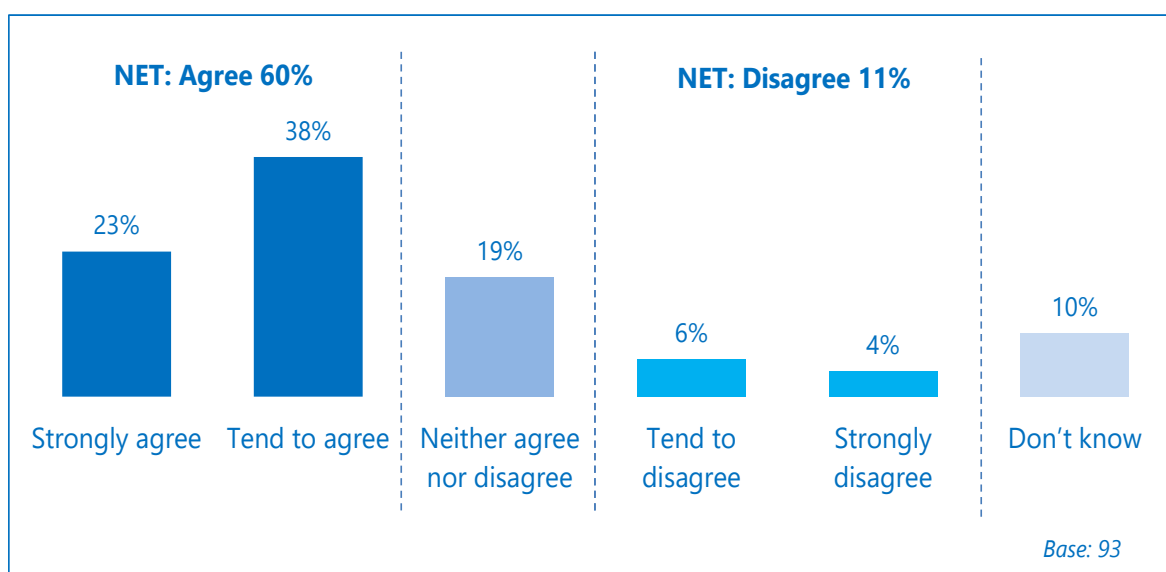


5.4 Reaction to the proposal to move library services

Following a summary of the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom, visitors were then asked how far they agree or disagree with the proposal? A full breakdown of responses is shown in the chart overleaf.

60% of visitors said that they NET: Agree (including strongly and tend to) with the proposal to move library services. 11% NET: Disagree, 19% 'Neither agree nor disagree' and 10% 'Don't know'.

There are no statistically significant differences in the reactions between different demographic groups.

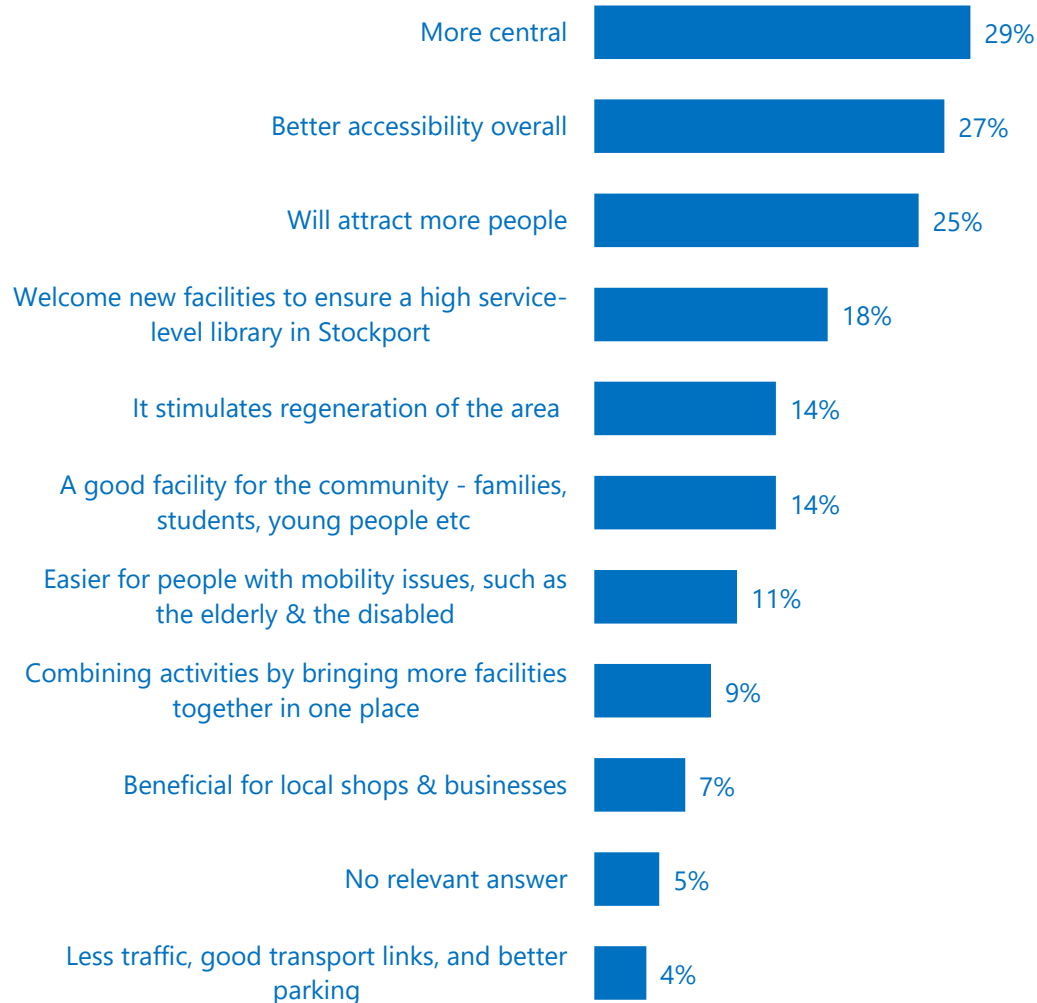


Reasons for agreeing with the proposal

The 60% of visitors who 'agree' with the proposal were then asked in an open-ended question, to please explain why you agree with the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom?

The verbatim answers given have been coded, grouped together and shown in ranked order overleaf.

These reasons are very similar to those provided by residents, with the fact it is 'more central'; has 'better accessibility overall'; and 'will attract more people' being the top three reasons given.



Base: All who agree with proposal to move library services - 56

Reasons for disagreeing with the proposal

The 11% of visitors who 'disagree' (10 people) with the proposal were then asked in an open-ended question, to please explain why you disagree with the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom?

The verbatim answers given have been coded and grouped together and shown in ranked order overleaf.

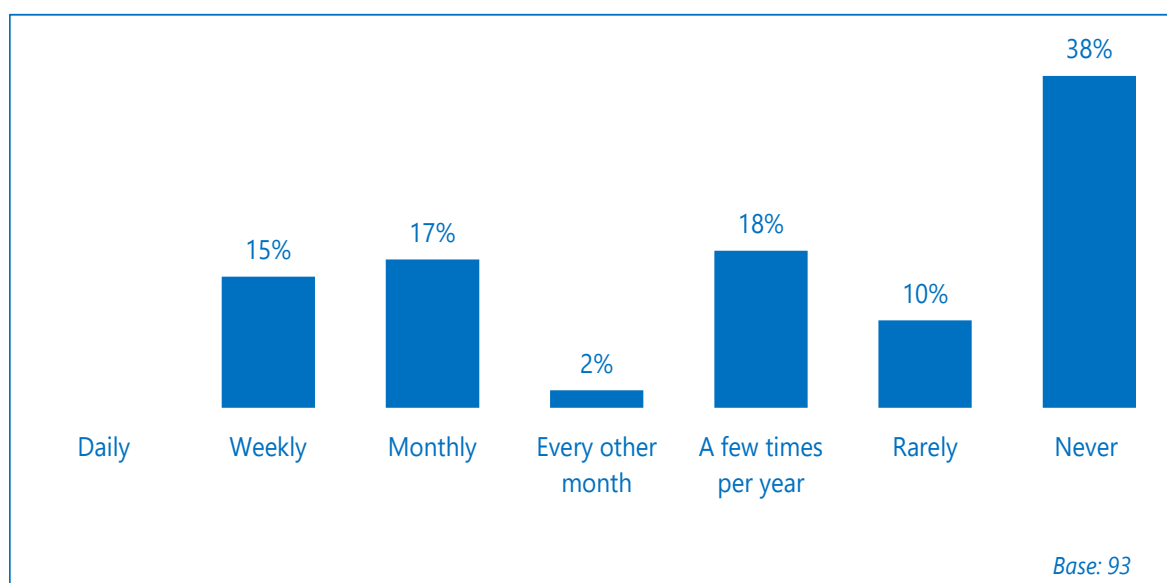
| Reason for disagreeing | N |
|--|-----------|
| Library is fine where it is; people identify with it being there | 3 |
| Concern over what will happen to the existing building after the move | 2 |
| A busy town precinct is not a suitable location for a library | 2 |
| No relevant answer | 2 |
| Building should be retained as part of the listed historical heritage of Stockport | 1 |
| It is a beautiful example of architecture in a lovely, peaceful setting | 1 |
| It is a well-known landmark for the area and should be preserved | 1 |
| Part of the enjoyment of using this library is the building itself, i.e. its history, architecture, atmosphere etc | 1 |
| Current site is more accessible with good transport links | 1 |
| It is a useful resource for students where it is | 1 |
| Town centre needs more shops; not a library | 1 |
| Base | 10 |

Likely future use of library in new location

Visitors were also asked, based on the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom, how often they think they would visit the library in the new location?

62% would be likely to visit the library in the new location, and this includes 15% who would visit at least weekly (i.e. daily or weekly).

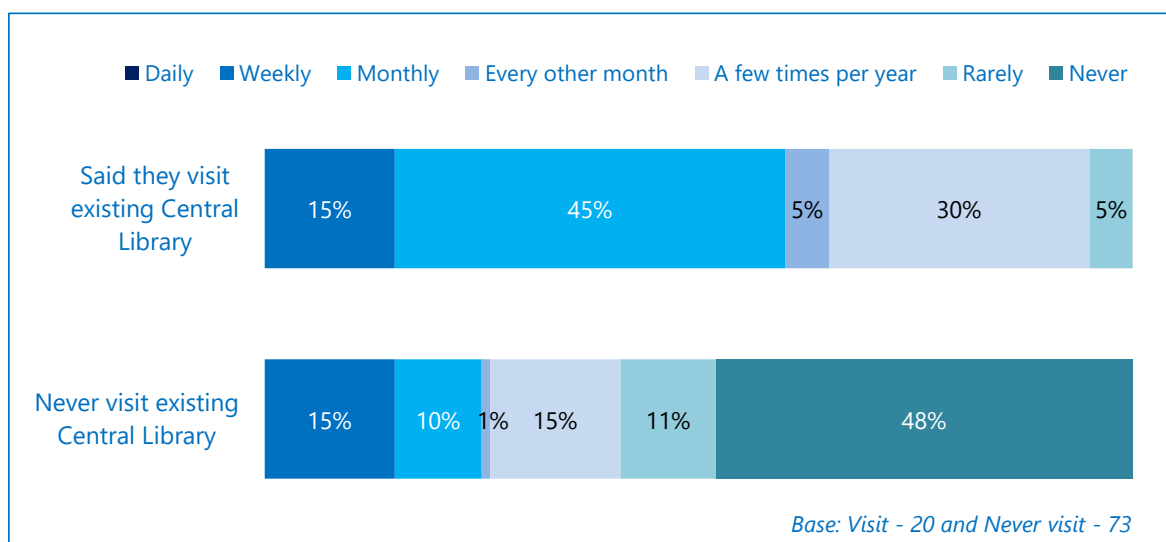
38% would 'never' visit the library in the new location.



The below chart shows likely future usage amongst those who said they visit the existing Central Library and those who never visit it.

All of those who said they visit the existing Central Library, said that they will be likely to visit the library in the new location; none said 'Never'.

48% of those who never visit the existing Central Library said that they will 'Never' be likely to visit the library in the new location. The remaining 52% of current non-users are likely to visit the library in the new location and 15% would visit at least weekly (none would visit daily).



5.5 Ideas for alternative uses for the Central Library building

Visitors were next informed that if a decision is made to relocate the library service from the Central Library building, the Council is exploring potential future uses and have made the following comments:

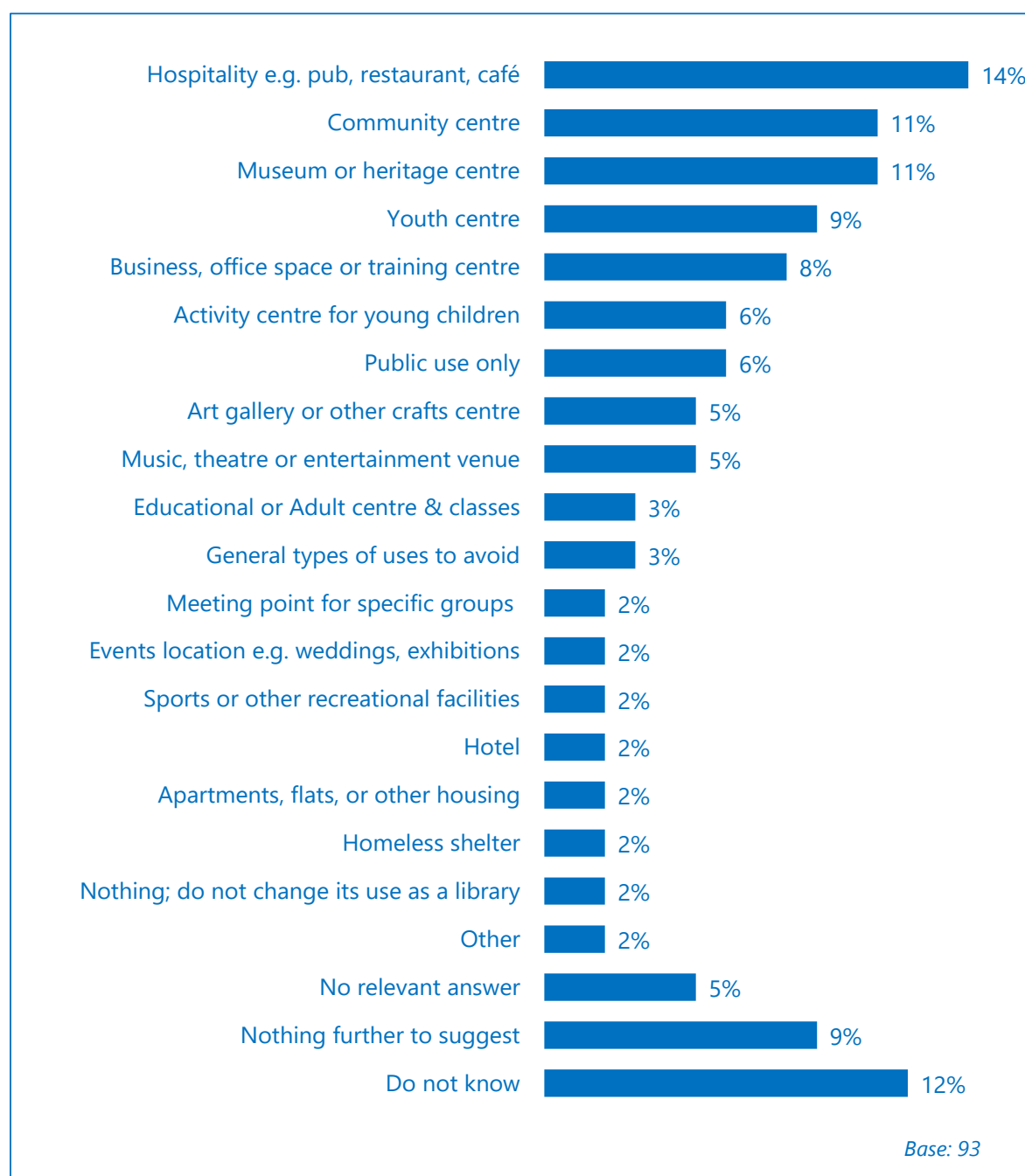
- It will not demolish or abandon the building
- It will not sell the freehold to it
- It will not allow the building to be developed for residential use
- Any potential use will ensure that public access can be retained to the building

Initial work that the Council has undertaken has highlighted a number of potential uses based on experience of what other similar buildings have been used as elsewhere in the country including: hospitality; food and beverage; shared office or working space uses; other Council uses; other public sector uses; community uses.

Visitors were then asked what you thought about these suggestions and whether they have any other suggestions for alternative uses for the Central Library building if the library service is relocated to Stockroom?

The verbatim answers given have been coded, grouped together and shown in ranked order below.

These answers are very similar to those provided by residents, with 'hospitality e.g. pub, restaurant, café'; 'community centre'; and 'museum or heritage centre' being the top three suggestions given.

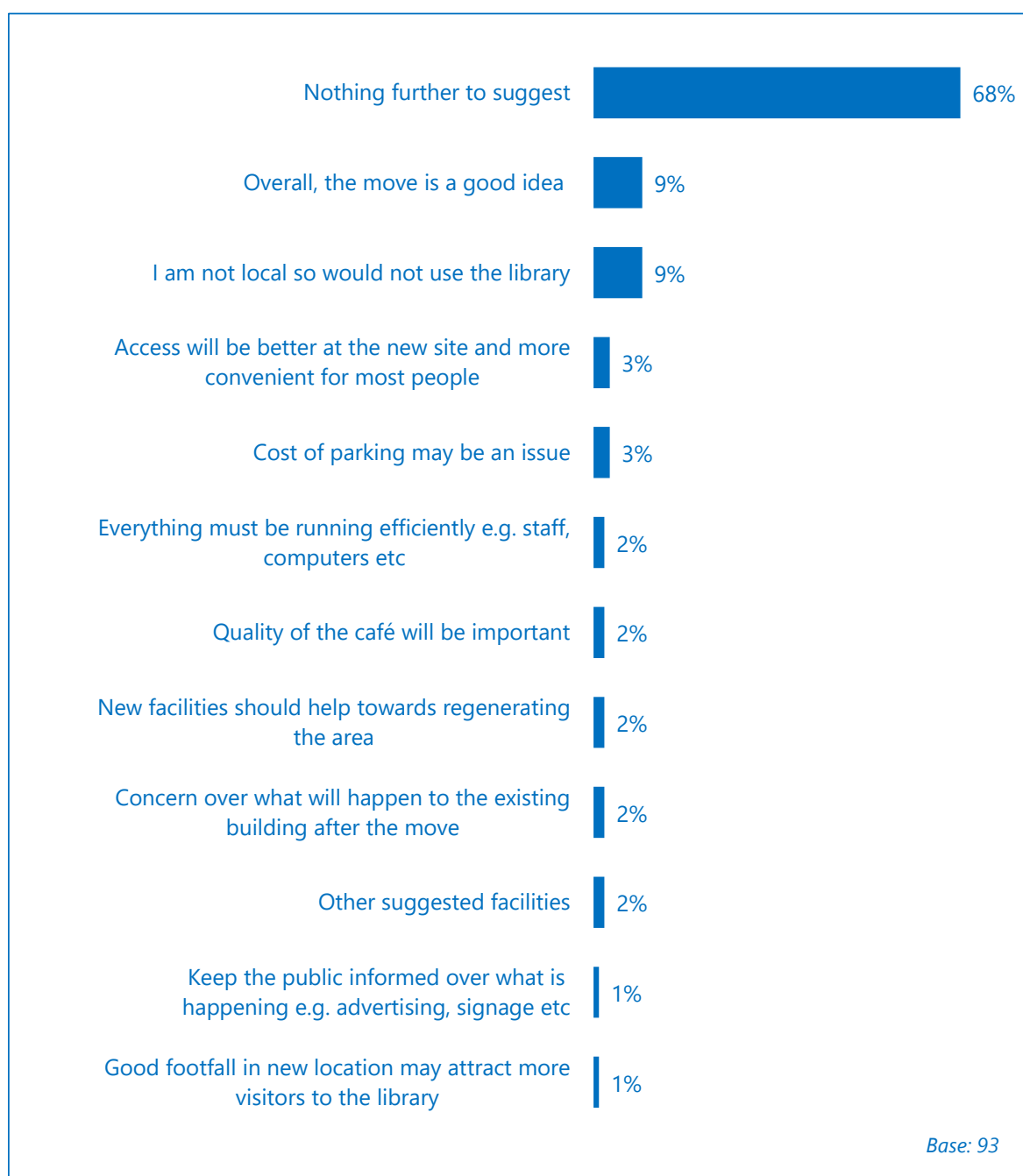


5.6 Other comments and suggestions about the proposal

Finally, visitors were asked what other comments or suggestions they have about the proposal to move services from Central Library to Stockroom?

The verbatim answers given have been coded, grouped together and shown in ranked order below. 68% had nothing further to suggest.

The other most common responses were that 'Overall the move is a good idea' (9%) and 'I am not local so would not use the library' (9%).



6. Open access consultation survey

This chapter summarises the findings of an open access consultation survey. Anyone, whether a Stockport resident or not could access and complete this survey during the consultation period.

6.1 Methodology

A quantitative survey was designed by Qa Research and Stockport Council to meet the research objectives.

The survey could be completed in the following ways:

- As an online survey via the Stockport Council website
- As a paper survey available in libraries and public buildings

The consultation was promoted extensively through the Council's networks, through social media, communicating via partners and to communities through mailouts and displays in public buildings across the borough.


Groups such as Save Stockport's Historic Central Library have also circulated the consultation link to the survey via social media.

Safeguards were put in place to avoid the same individual responding multiple times, but at least one individual has claimed to have completed the survey multiple times.

The consultation period was between 23rd August and 18th October 2021.

Background information

Before completing the survey, the following information was provided. The images and text are taken from the online consultation survey hosted on the Stockport Council website.



Proposal to move Central Library services to Stockroom Consultation

Overview

Stockport Council has been awarded £14.5 million Future High Streets Funding by the government to spend on Stockroom. Thanks to the people who took part in the first phase of engagement on Stockroom which received 1299 responses to an online survey as well feedback from various stakeholder groups.

Following the positive response to the proposal to include 21st Century library facilities in Stockroom, we now want to consult with people about moving the Town Centre library services from Central Library into Stockroom.

We would now like to consult with all stakeholders to understand the level of support and impact on them if library services currently provided in Central Library relocated into the new Stockroom development in Merseyway. All feedback will be used to inform any decisions made on this proposal.

In the UK, every Council has to provide a "comprehensive and efficient library service" by law. Each Council has to decide how best to provide this service in terms of its physical location; access; and types of services on offer.

These services include but are not limited to book loans; computer and Wi-Fi access; heritage and archive material access; activities and events; council advice and support and much more. Some of these services operate from the Central Library building on the A6 close to Stockport Town Centre. Central Library was opened in 1913 and has operated as the Town Centre library since then.

Closed 18 Oct 2021
Opened 23 Aug 2021

CONTACT
consultation@stockport.gov.uk

The layout of the building was suitable for how people used libraries through much of the 20th Century. However, the way the building is laid out and the investment needed make it a challenge to deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service, fit for the 21st Century, from the building. The Heritage and Archive library is also only on a provisional accreditation and Place of Deposit status as the Archive Service Accreditation assessment identified risks in current storage that could damage the local heritage collections.

The rules governing how the Future High Streets Fund money can be spent mean spending it on refurbishing Central Library is not possible. The money must be spent on supporting the High Street and repurposing vacant retail space. It is important to note that this is a government award which has been given to Stockport Council and this investment will not mean less Council investment in any of our community library buildings across the borough.

[A series of frequently asked questions about this proposal can be viewed here](#) (opens in a new window).

External image of the Central Library building



Internal image of the Central Library building



Share  

Sampling and statistical robustness

In total 1,752 surveys were completed.

Given this sample is random and completely open to anyone to complete, an overall sample of 1,752 (and given the population who could have wished to complete is 300,000 or more) provides findings which in research terms means we can be 95% confident that the data at an overall level has a variance no more than +/-2.3% accuracy. This is considerably within the +/-5% standard industry error rate required to provide a statistically robust results at an overall level.

However, comparison with the rigorously sampled and quota controlled face-to-face survey of residents suggests the sample is skewed toward existing library users (85% of respondents to the online survey said they visit Central Library, compared to 44% of Stockport residents in the representative face to face survey). This suggests that caution should be exercised by readers when interpreting the findings.

A note on analysis and how the data is presented in the report

The base size (i.e. how many people answered the question) is shown on each chart. Those completing the survey could skip any questions they did not want to answer so the base sizes for each question will vary.

Please note that when interpreting results throughout this report not all percentages will equal 100% due to rounding (with any figures of 0.5 or higher being rounded up). Where the figure is shown as 0% at least one respondent gave this answer but the total count makes up less than 0.5% of the overall total; a blank shows no-one has given this answer.

Some questions were multiple response questions: respondents had the option of giving more than one response. These percentages may be higher than 100%.

Open-ended verbatim questions have been coded, grouped together and shown as percentages.

The analysis was run using Askia software. The questions have been cross-tabulated by different demographics, with relevant statistically significant differences being commented upon within the report, how useful or relevant this is needs to be determined by the reader.

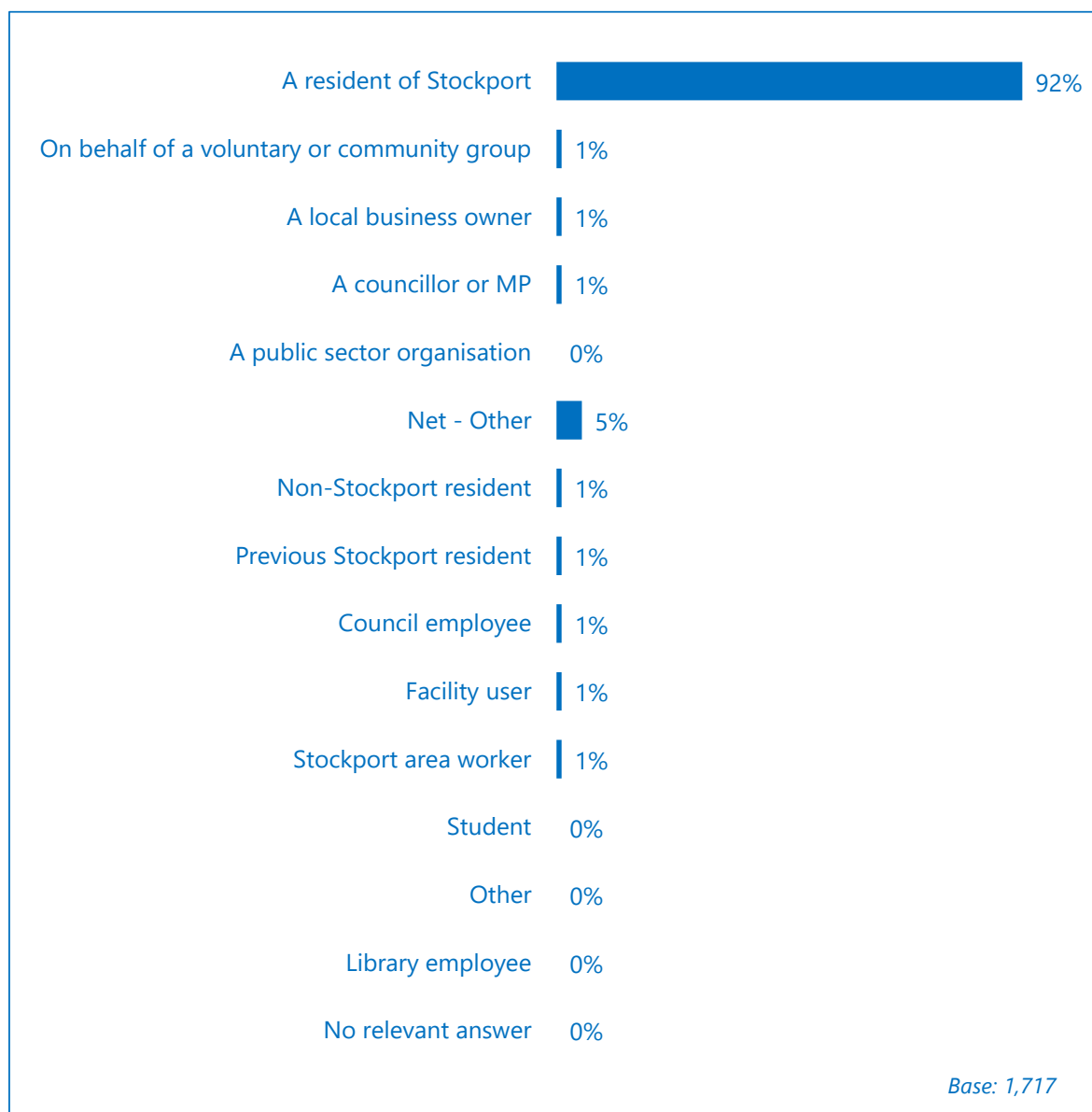
6.2 Key findings – who completed the survey

The survey asked a number of demographic questions and the profile of respondents that completed the survey is shown below. The findings relating to attitudes to the proposal have been cross tabulated with any statistically significant differences in attitudes by demographics being highlighted.

Who or what responding as

92% were responding as a resident of Stockport.

The rest of the sample represented a variety of other roles and organisations shown in the chart below.

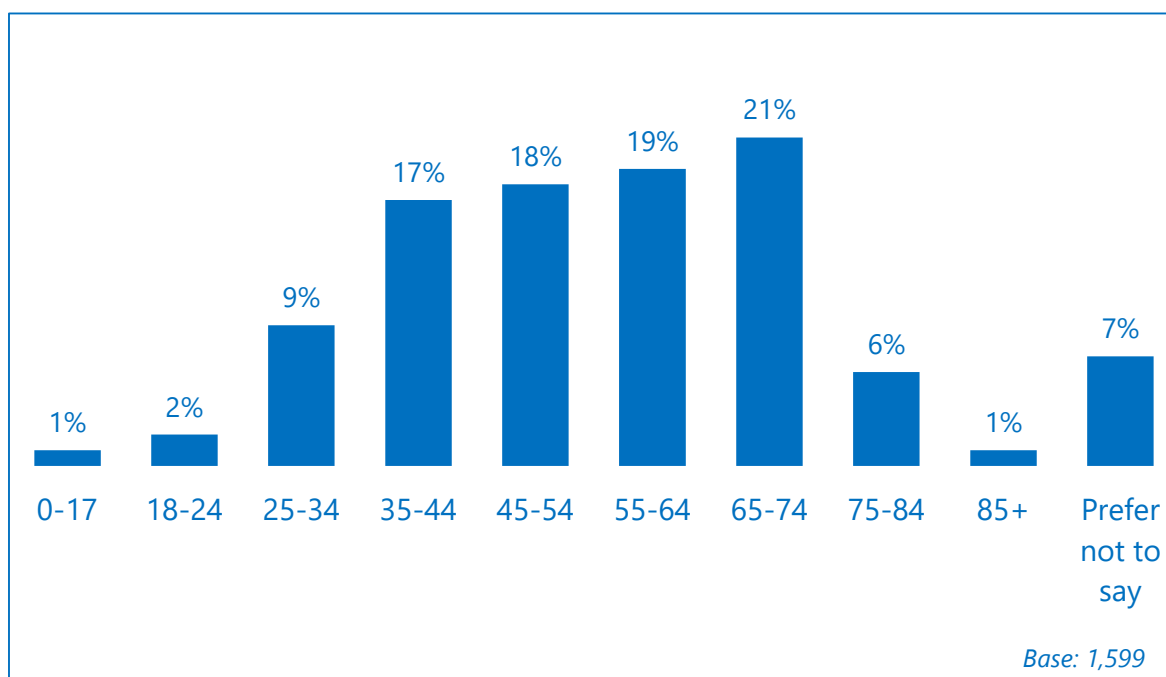


Gender

58% of the sample were female, 37% male, 0% non-binary; 0% self-describe and 5% prefer not to answer.

Age

The age bands of those completing the survey are shown in the following chart. 12% of the sample were aged under 35, 54% were aged 35-64 and 28% were aged 65+.



Ethnicity

Respondents were presented a list and asked how they define their ethnic group?

Overall, 88% of the sample were from a white ethnic background, and 4% were from a BAME ethnic background, with 8% responding 'prefer not to say'.

| Ethnicity | % |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Net - White | 88% |
| White British | 85% |
| White Irish | 1% |
| Gypsy / Roma | 0% |
| White Other | 2% |
| Net - Black | 0% |
| Black or Black British African | 0% |
| Black or Black British Caribbean | 0% |
| Black Other | 0% |
| Net - Mixed | 1% |
| Mixed White/Black African | 0% |
| Mixed White/Black Caribbean | 0% |
| Mixed White/Asian | 1% |
| Mixed Other | 0% |
| Net - Asian | 1% |
| Asian or Asian British Indian | 0% |
| Asian or Asian British Pakistani | 0% |
| Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi | 0% |
| Asian or Asian British Chinese | 1% |
| Asian or Asian British Other | 0% |
| Net - Other | 1% |
| Arab | 0% |
| Other ethnic background | 0% |
| Prefer not to say | 8% |
| Base | 1,542 |

Disability or long-term health condition

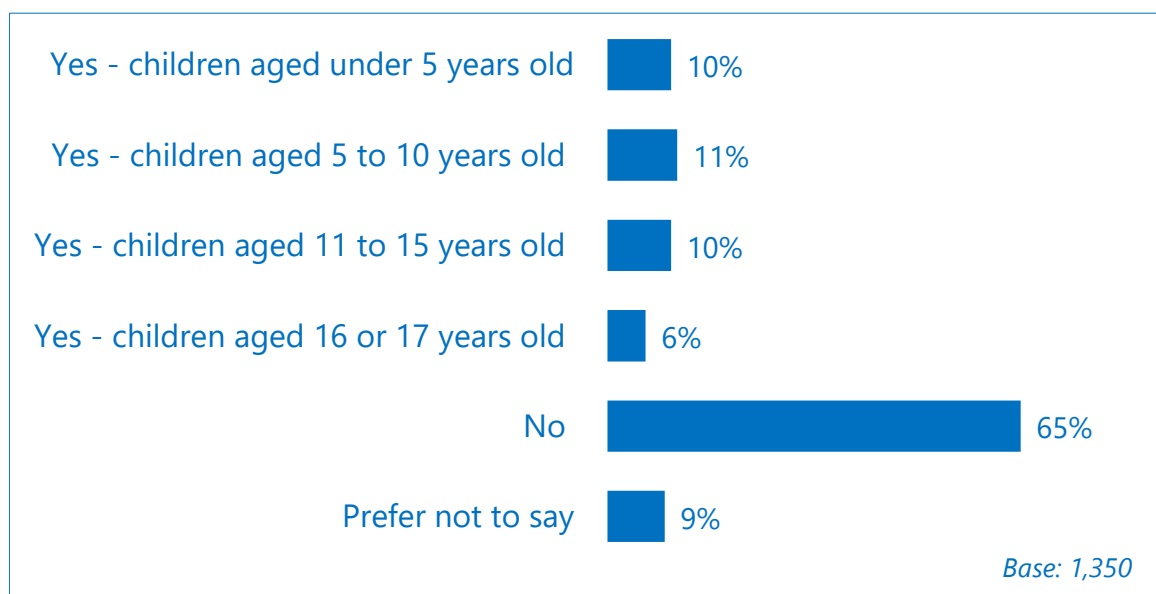
21% of respondents have a disability or long-term health condition.

70% selected 'no' and 9% 'prefer not to say'.

Children under 18 living at home

Respondents were given various categories and asked if they had any children under the age of 18 in their household?

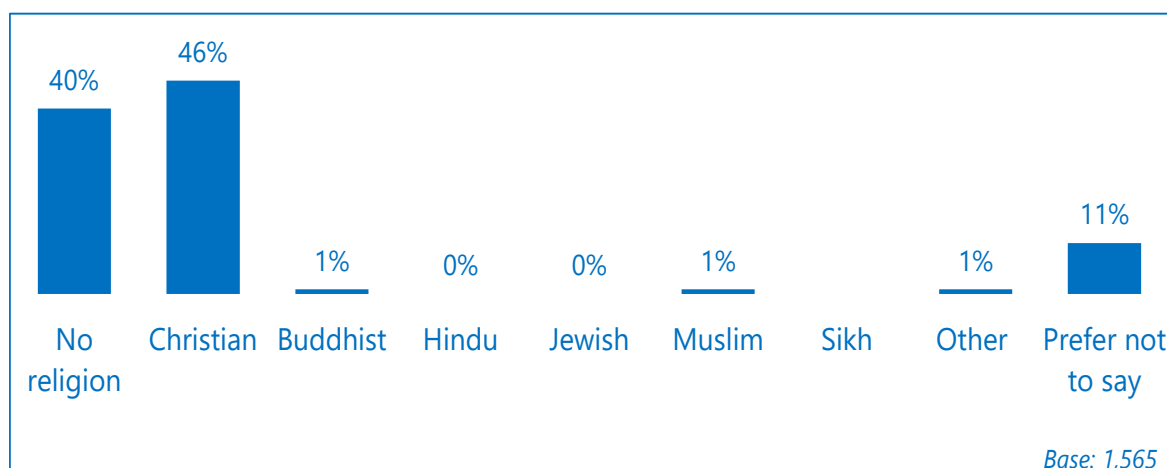
26% of respondents had children under the age of 18 living at home, 65% did not and 9% 'prefer not to say'.



Religion or belief

Respondents were presented a list and asked what is your religion or belief?

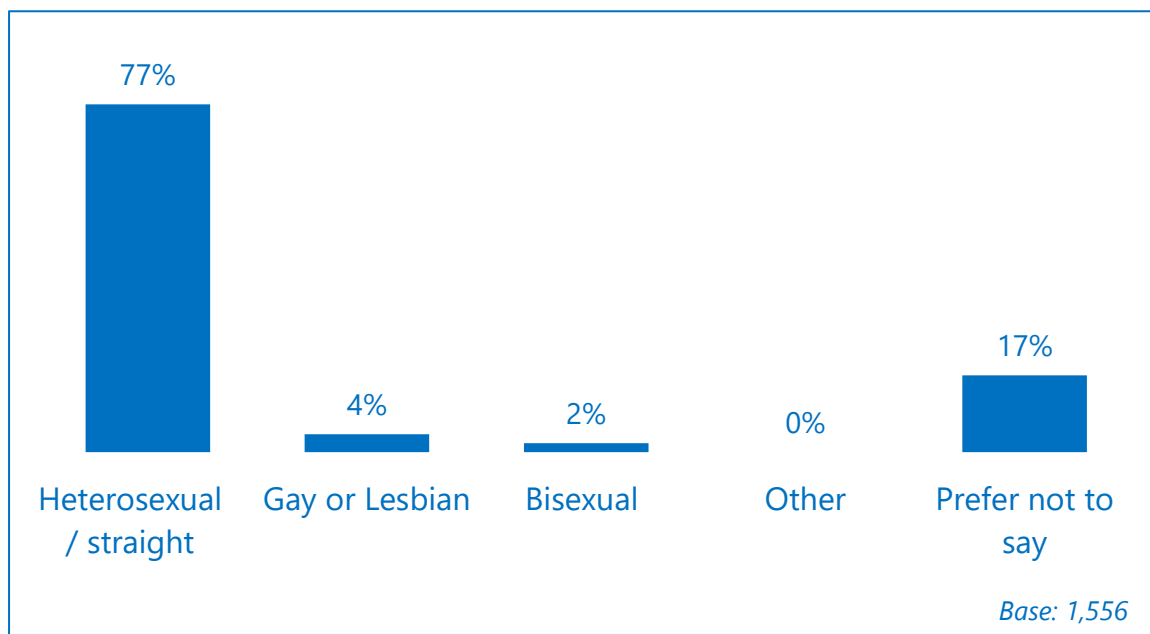
40% of respondents said 'no religion', 46% said 'Christian', a small number also selected Buddhist (1%), Muslim (1%), Hindu (0%), Jewish (0%) and Other (1%). One in ten (11%) said 'prefer not to say'.



Sexuality

Respondents were presented a list and asked what is your sexuality?

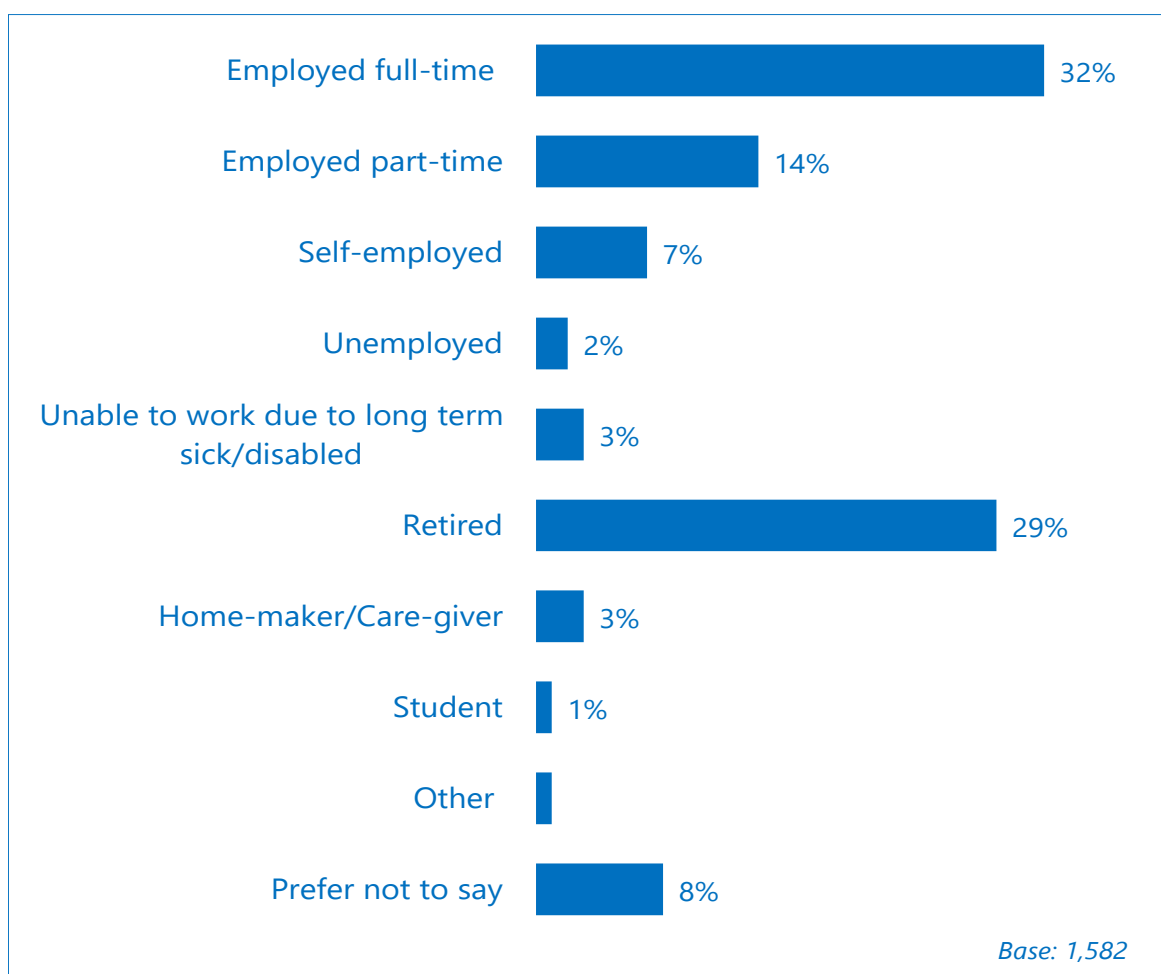
77% of respondents said 'heterosexual/straight', 4% 'gay or lesbian', 2% 'bisexual', 0% 'other' and 17% 'prefer not to say'.



Employment status

Respondents were presented a list and asked what is your employment status?

More than half were employed (54%), with 38% not in employment (including 29% who were retired) and 8% preferring not to say.



Amongst those in employment:

- 95% were not furloughed
- 1% were currently furloughed for all of their contracted hours
- 1% were currently furloughed for some of their contracted hours
- 3% prefer not to say

Geographical area

Respondents covered a wide geographic spread across Stockport and a minority from elsewhere. In the survey they were asked to provide a full home postcode, though some chose to leave this blank or incomplete.

The SK postcode districts of those completing the survey, along with 'Manchester' and 'Other', are shown in the table overleaf.

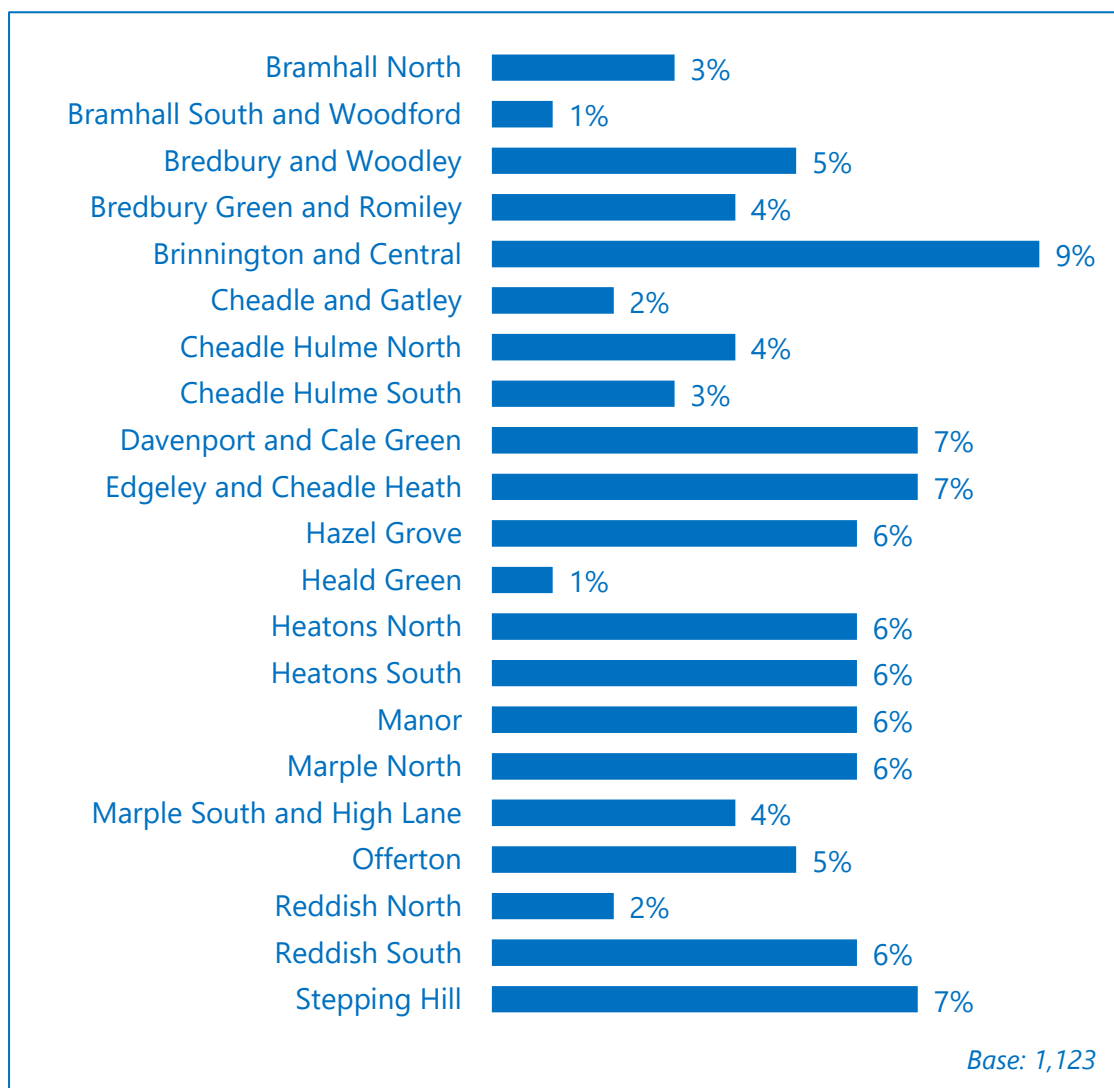
Compared to the representative face to face survey of residents this sample includes a lower % of respondents from SK1 and SK5 and a higher % from SK7 and SK8. No

quotas or controls were placed on geography in either sample and hence some variation is to be expected.

This variation in geography is unlikely to have a significant impact on the results, as only those living in postcode sector SK5 were significantly more likely to NET: Disagree with the proposal (69%).

| Postcode | % |
|-------------|--------------|
| SK1 | 6% |
| SK2 | 14% |
| SK3 | 14% |
| SK4 | 14% |
| SK5 | 7% |
| SK6 | 17% |
| SK7 | 11% |
| SK8 | 10% |
| SK9 | 0% |
| SK10 | 0% |
| SK12 | 0% |
| SK13 | 0% |
| SK14 | 1% |
| SK16 | 0% |
| SK22 | 0% |
| SK23 | 0% |
| Manchester | 2% |
| Other | 1% |
| Base | 1,362 |

Where a full postcode was given the ward in which Stockport based respondents live has also been calculated. The chart overleaf shows a good spread across all wards, with one in ten (9%) from 'Brinnington and Central'.



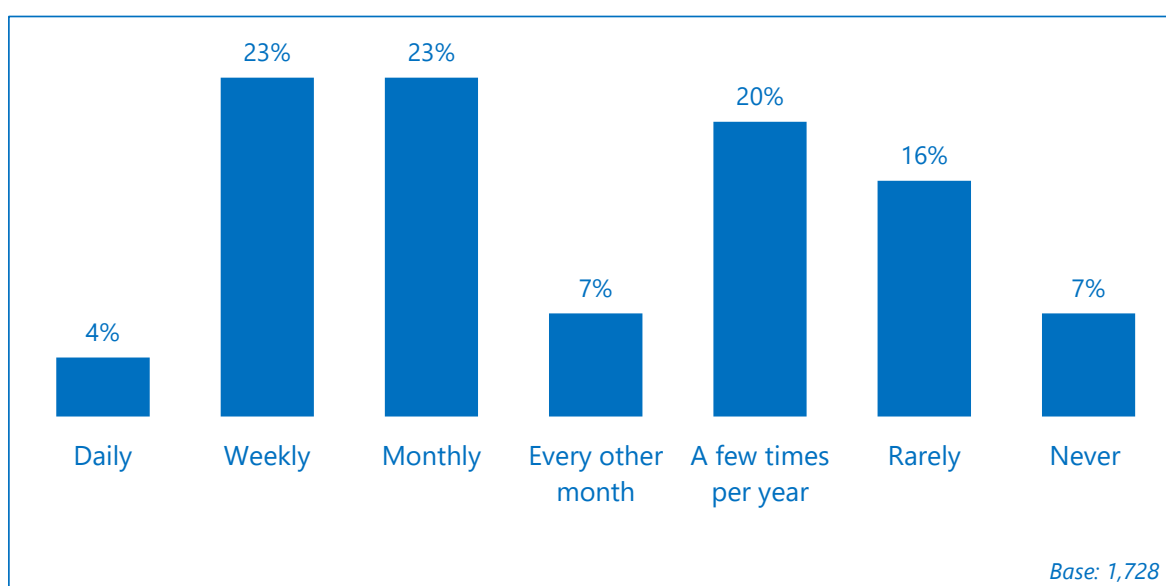
6.3 Current library usage

Usage of any Stockport Council library buildings or services

To provide detail about current library usage, respondents were firstly asked how often they use Stockport Council's library buildings or services. Responses are shown in the chart below.

The majority (93%) said they use Stockport Council's library buildings or services, and this includes 50% who use them at least monthly (i.e. daily, weekly or monthly).

7% 'never' use Stockport Council's library buildings or services.

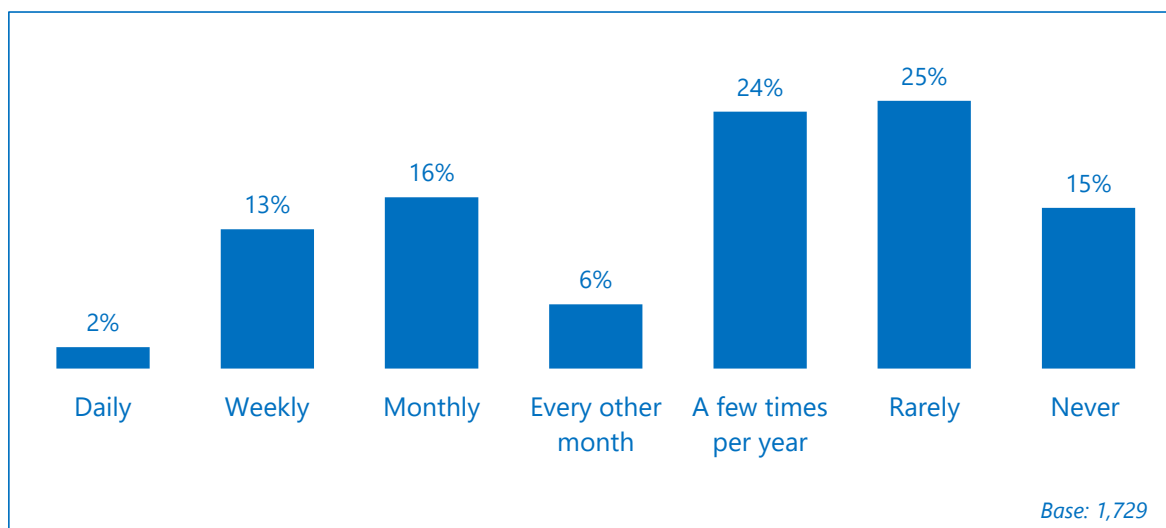


Usage of Central Library in Stockport

Respondents were also asked how often they visit Central Library in Stockport and all responses are shown in the chart overleaf.

85% said they visit Central Library, and this includes 31% who visit at least monthly (i.e. daily, weekly or monthly).

15% 'never' visit Central Library.



Respondents who said they visit Central Library were asked when they next plan to visit the Central Library building.

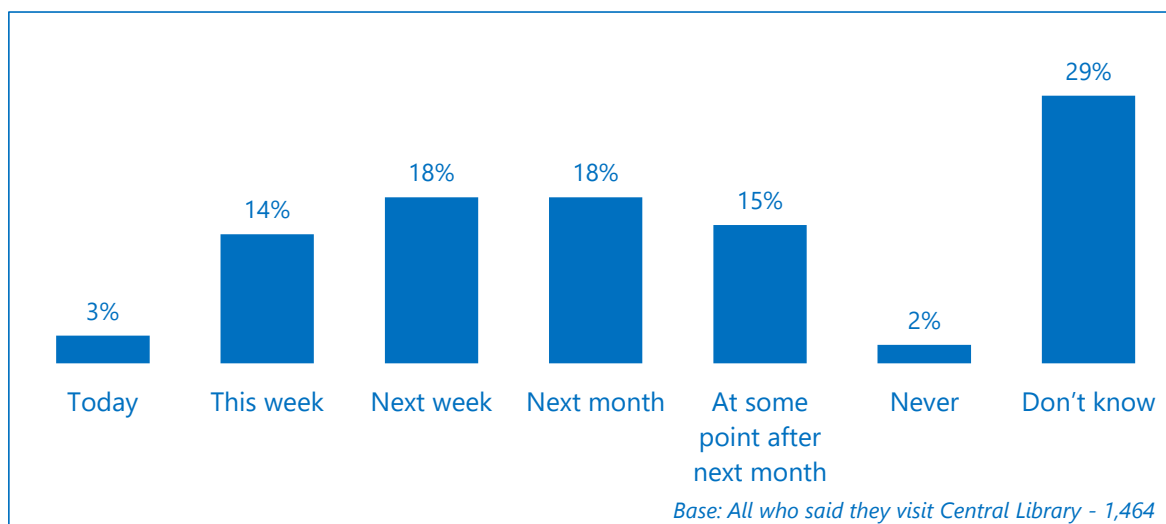
Responses are shown in the chart overleaf.²

53% of respondents plan to visit within the next month (including today, this week, next week or next month).

Some degree of uncertainty also exists, with 29% replying 'don't know'.

2% of those who said they had visited before said they will 'never' visit Central Library.

² 8 respondents completed this question on a paper survey even though they previously stated they have *never* visited Central Library. These responses have been **excluded** from the data shown. These 8 responses break down as follows: 2 said they would visit next week; 1 at some point after next month and 5 don't know



Individual library services

This section focuses on the following library services:

- Book loans – in person
- Book loans – online
- Computer or wifi access
- Heritage and archive materials
- Council advice and guidance
- Browse a range of periodicals and news publications
- Research or study

Respondents who said they visit Central Library were asked how often they use each of the library services. Responses for each service are shown in the chart overleaf and ranked in order of the % who ever use each one.³

Any percentage less than 1% is shown in the coloured bars but without any text to avoid the chart becoming too jumbled.

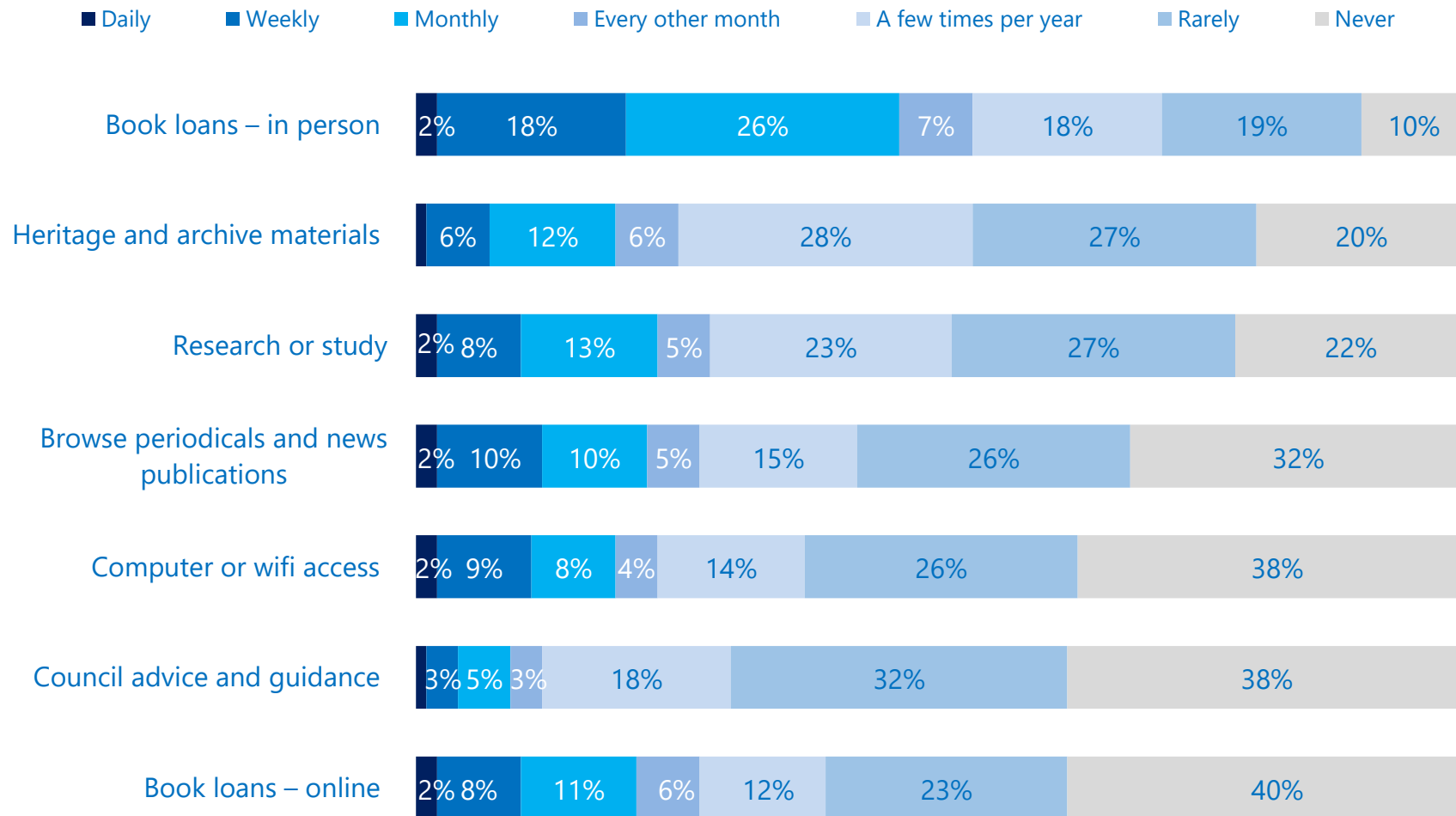
'Book loans – in person' is the most used, with 90% of those who said they visit Central Library using the service. This includes 46% who use the service at least monthly (including daily, weekly, and monthly).

³ Between 9 and 13 respondents (varying by service) completed this question on a paper survey even though they previously stated they have *never* visited Central Library. These responses have been **excluded** from the data shown.

'Heritage and archive materials' is used by 80% of those who said they visit Central Library. This includes 19% who use the service at least monthly (including daily, weekly, and monthly).

'Research or study' is used by 78% of those who said they visit Central Library. This includes 23% who use the service at least monthly (including daily, weekly, and monthly).

The least used services were 'Book loans – online' (used by 60% of those who said they visit Central Library); 'Council advice and guidance' (62%) and 'Computer or wifi access' (62%).



Base: All who said they visit Central Library (in order of each service above)- 1,369; 1,389; 1,365; 1,353; 1,317; 1,329; 1,272

Respondents who said they visit Central Library were also asked to what extent each of the library services is important to them. Responses for each service are shown in the chart overleaf and ranked in order of the % rating each one as 'very important'.⁴

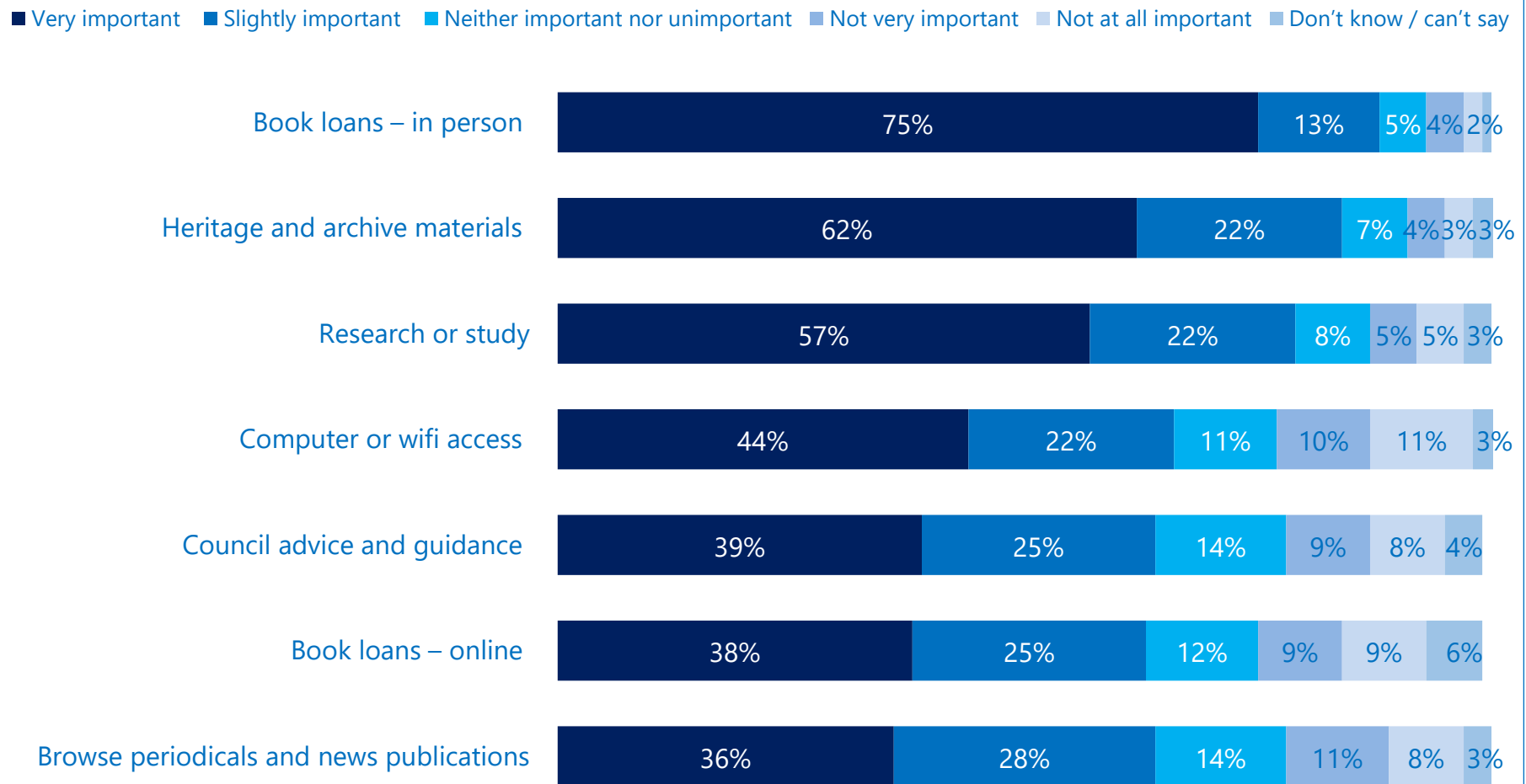
Any percentage less than 1% is shown in the coloured bars but without any text to avoid the chart becoming too jumbled.

Three-quarters (75%) of respondents who said they visit Central Library said that 'Book loans – in person' is 'very important' to them. 6% rated it as 'not important' (either not very or not at all).

Around three-fifths of respondents who said they visit Central Library said that 'heritage and archive materials' (62%) and 'research or study' (57%) is 'very important' to them.

At the other end of the scale 'Browsing periodicals or news publications, is 'very important' to 36% of respondents who said they visit Central Library. One-fifth (19%) rated it as 'not important' (either not very or not at all).

⁴ Between 12 and 15 respondents (varying by service) completed this question on a paper survey even though they previously stated they have *never* visited Central Library. These responses have been **excluded** from the data shown.



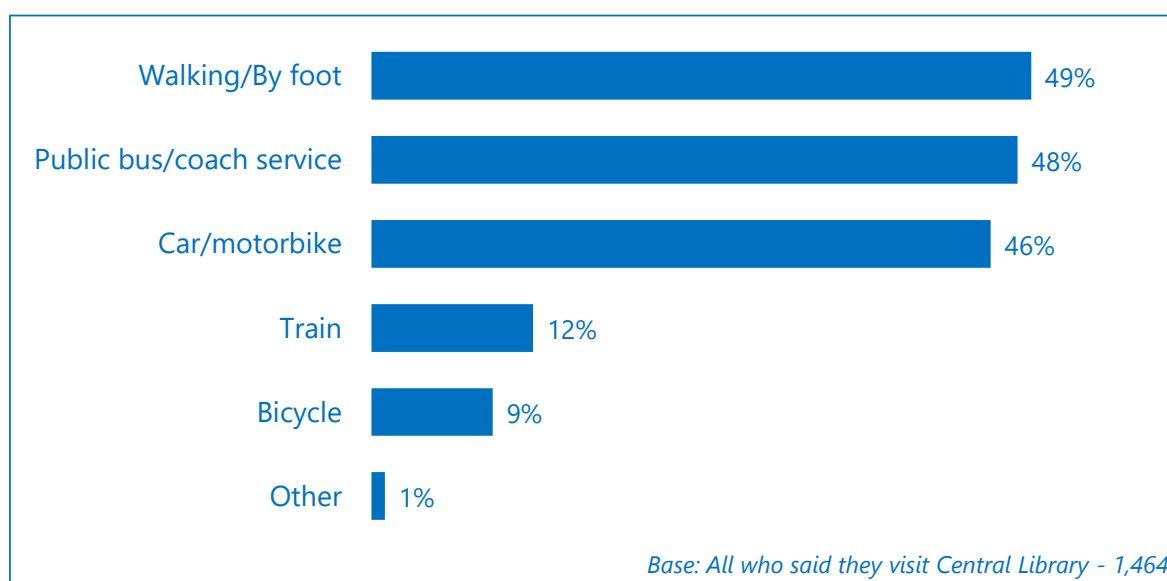
Base: All who said they visit Central Library (in order of each service above) - 1,430; 1,421; 1,411; 1,395; 1,402; 1,369; 1,402

Modes of transport to Central Library

Respondents who said they visit Central Library were next asked which modes of transport they typically use to travel to the Central Library building.

Multiple answers could be given, with the findings shown below in ranked order.⁵

Three modes of transport were used by just under half of respondents who said they visit Central Library, with 49% travelling by 'walking/by foot', 48% travelling by 'public bus/coach service' and 46% travelling by 'car/motorbike'.



Quality of service provided by Central Library

Respondents who said they visit Central Library were also asked how they would rate the quality of the service provided by the Central Library in the following areas:

- Variety and availability of books
- Public PCs and internet access
- Community events and activities

⁵ 15 respondents completed this question on a paper survey even though they previously stated they have *never* visited Central Library. These responses have been **excluded** from the data shown. These 15 responses break down as follows: 7 said 'public bus/coach service'; 6 said 'car/motorbike'; 2 said 'train'; 1 said 'walking/by foot'; and 1 said 'do not travel to Central Library'.

- Family and children's activities
- Heritage library services (e.g. archives to explore Stockport's or your own family history)
- Provision of other information e.g. tourist information or information about council services

Responses for each service are shown in the chart overleaf and ranked in order of the % rating each one as 'very good'. Anyone who responded that they 'never used this service' have been removed from the analysis, so the totals are based on those using each service.⁶

Any percentage less than 1% is shown in the coloured bars but without any text to avoid the chart becoming too jumbled.

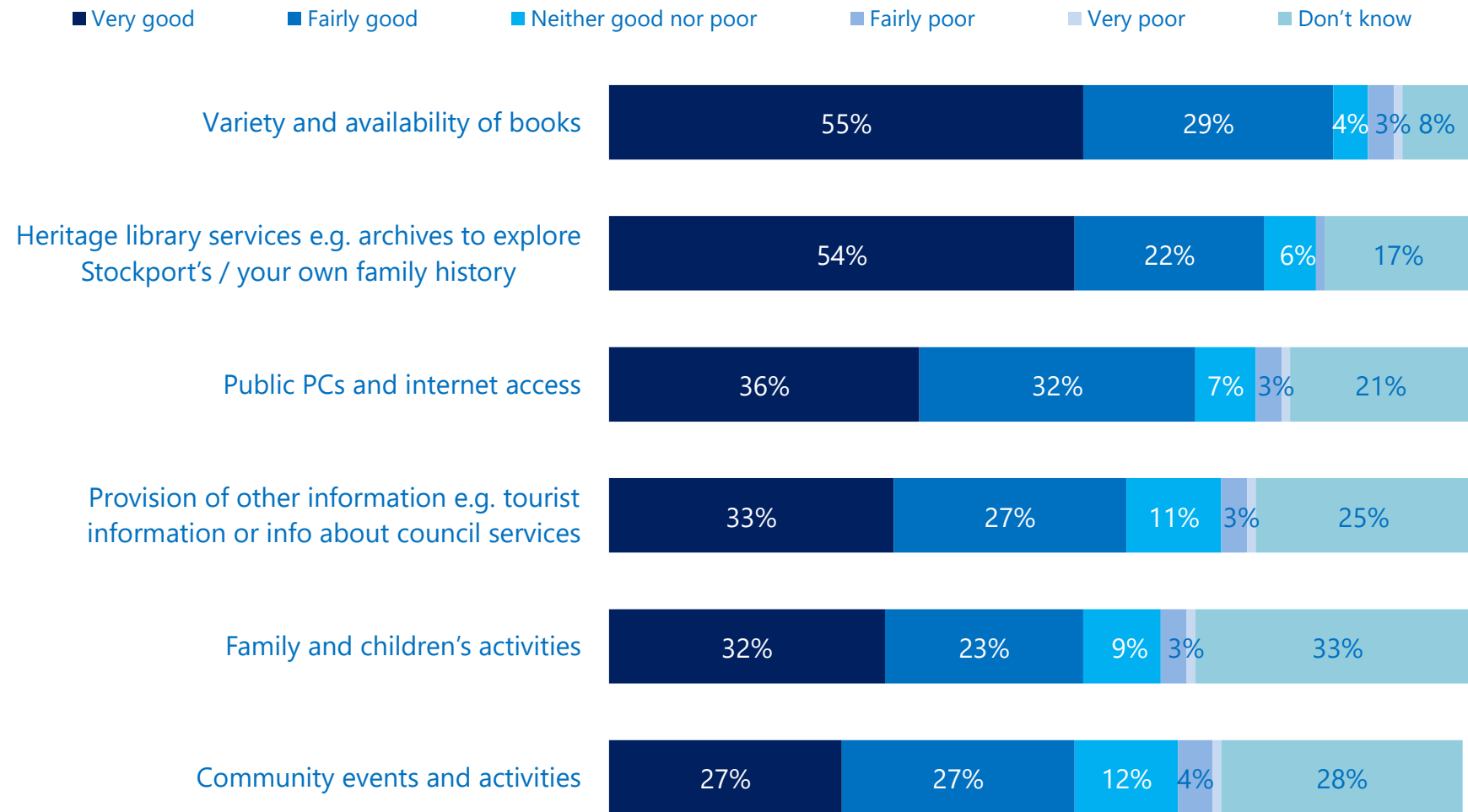
More than half (55%) of respondents who said they visit Central Library said that 'Variety and availability of books' is 'very good'. 4% rated it as 'poor' (either fairly or very). A further 8% responded 'don't know'.

54% of respondents who said they visit Central Library said that 'Heritage library services' is 'very good'. 1% rated it as 'poor' (either fairly or very). A further 17% responded 'don't know'.

A high proportion of respondents who said they visit Central Library had limited or no knowledge of the quality of the services. This increased to as high as 33% saying 'don't know' about 'family and children's activities'.

The vast majority of respondents who had an opinion were positive about the quality of the services on offer. Very few residents rated any of the services as poor (between 1% and 5% for each service).

⁶ Between 8 and 11 respondents (varying by service) completed this question on a paper survey even though they previously stated they have *never* visited Central Library. These responses have been **excluded** from the data shown.



Base: All who ever use each service - in order shown above 1,386; 1,291; 1,180; 1,234; 1,136; 1,186

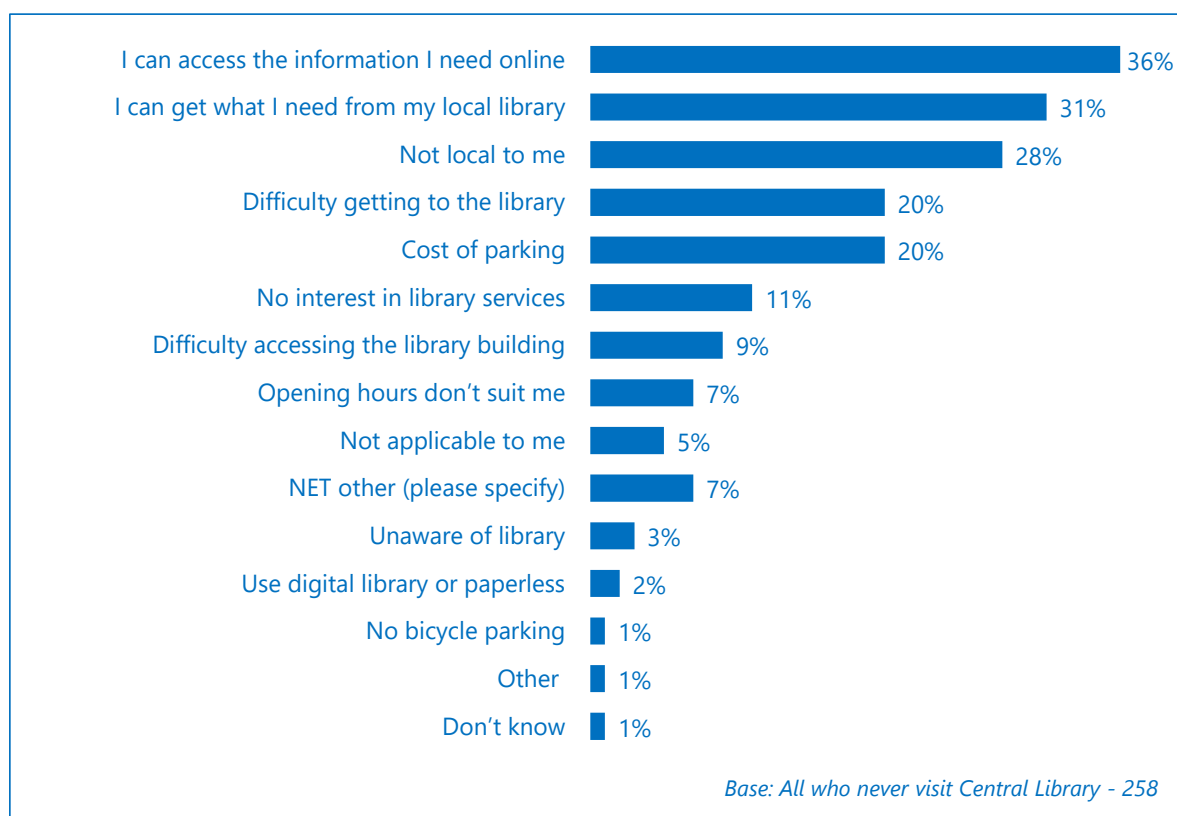
Reasons for not visiting Central Library

Respondents who said they never visit Central Library were asked why not?

Respondents were given a list and asked to select any that explained why they never used Central Library. The prompted options are shown in the chart below.⁷

There was also the opportunity to add 'other' reasons. The net 'other' figure is shown in the chart, with individual answers being coded and grouped below it.

The main three reasons for never visiting Central Library were 'I can access the information I need online' (36%) and 'I can get what I need from my local library' (31%) and that Central Library is 'not local to me' (28%).

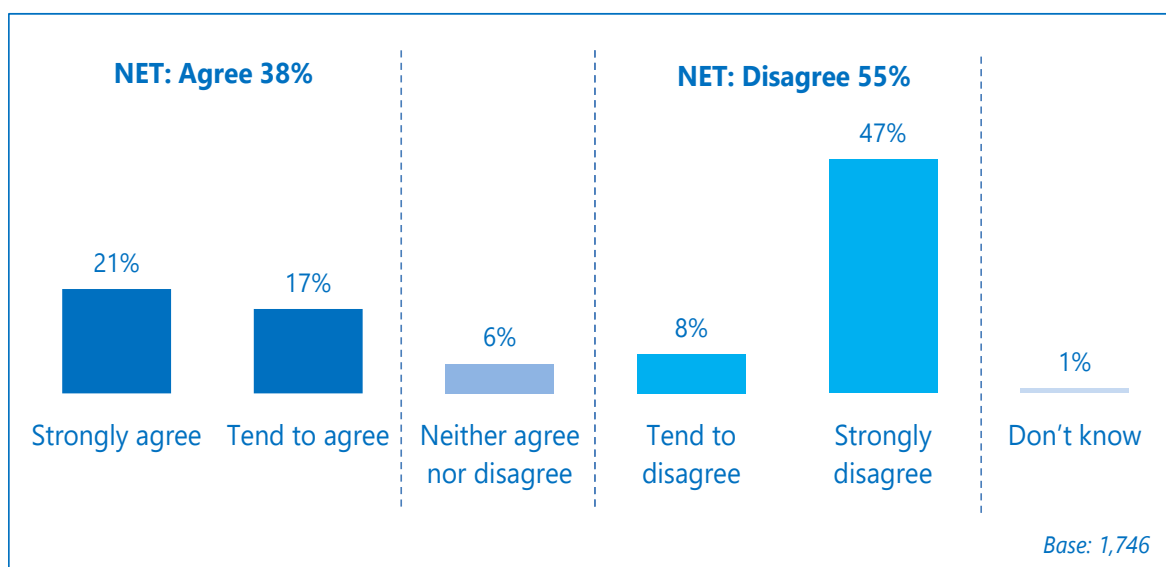


⁷ 48 respondents completed this question on a paper survey even though they previously stated they have do visit Central Library. These responses have been **excluded** from the data shown. These 48 responses break down as follows: 18 said 'I can get what I need from my local library'; 17 said 'difficulty getting to the library'; 16 said 'not local to me'; 12 said 'cost of parking'; 8 said 'opening hours don't suit me'; 6 said 'I can access the information I need online'; 6 said 'Difficulty accessing the library building'; 5 said 'not applicable to me' 1 said 'no interest in library services' and 2 said 'don't know'.

6.4 Reaction to the proposal to move library services

Following a summary of the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom, respondents were then asked how far they agree or disagree with the proposal.

38% of respondents NET: Agree (including strongly and tend to) with the proposal to move library services. 55% NET: Disagree, 6% 'Neither agree nor disagree' and 1% 'Don't know'.



There are various statistically significant differences, as outlined overleaf, in the reactions between different demographic groups.

Any cell shaded green shows a statistically significant difference compared to another group in the same category shaded red (e.g. by age, gender, ethnicity etc).

To summarise key differences, respondents aged under 65; with no impairment, disability or long term health condition; with children under 18 in the household; not a resident of Stockport; and those likely to visit Central Library if it is moved are all significantly more likely to NET: Agree with the proposal.

Respondents aged 65+; from a white ethnic background; with any impairment, disability or long term health condition; residents of Stockport; and those who said they visit Central Library are all significantly more likely to NET: Disagree with the proposal.

It should be noted that some of these differences may be explained through the demographic profile of certain groups, for example, those surveyed from a BAME

ethnic background had a considerably younger age profile than those from a white ethnic background.

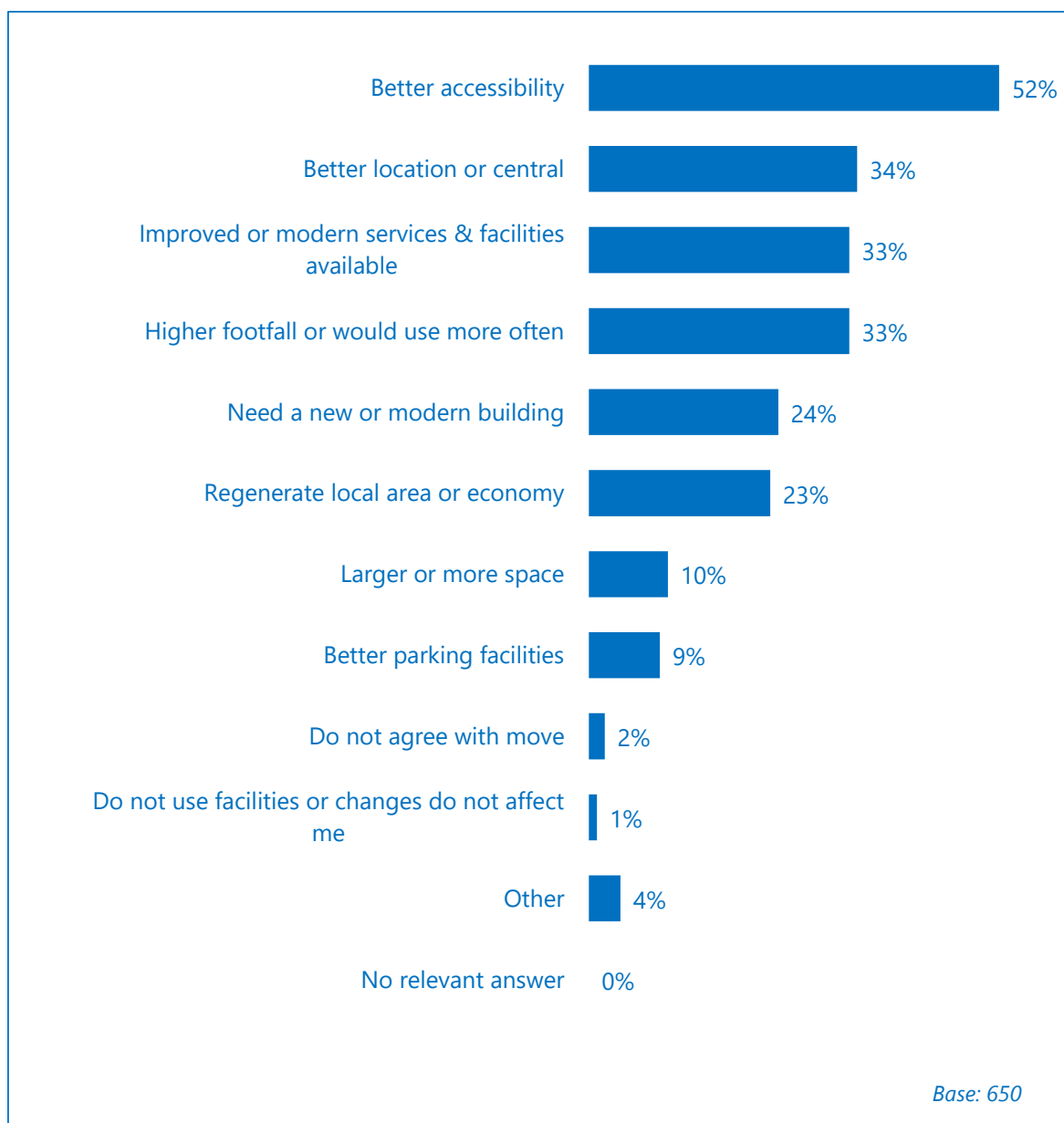
Amongst those with any impairment, disability or long term health condition, data suggests that results are not just down to age. Base sizes mean that results need to be treated with caution, but those aged Under 35 with any impairment, disability or long term health condition were slightly more likely to NET: Disagree with the proposal (67%) than those aged 35-64 (63%) or those aged 65+ (61%).

| Demographic group | % NET Agree | % Neither/Nor | % NET Disagree | % Don't know |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| Under 35 | 47% | 6% | 45% | 2% |
| 35-64 years old | 41% | 6% | 53% | 1% |
| 65+ years old | 36% | 5% | 57% | 1% |
| | | | | |
| Male | 42% | 5% | 51% | 2% |
| Female | 38% | 6% | 55% | 1% |
| | | | | |
| White ethnic background | 41% | 5% | 53% | 1% |
| BAME ethnic background | 53% | 10% | 36% | 2% |
| | | | | |
| Any religion or belief | 32% | 6% | 56% | 1% |
| No religion or belief | 46% | 6% | 47% | 1% |
| | | | | |
| Any impairment/disability | 32% | 5% | 63% | 1% |
| No impairment/disability | 44% | 6% | 49% | 1% |
| | | | | |
| Any children u18 in household | 47% | 5% | 47% | 1% |
| No children u18 in household | 40% | 7% | 53% | 1% |
| | | | | |
| Resident of Stockport | 32% | 6% | 56% | 1% |
| Not a resident | 53% | 4% | 42% | 2% |
| | | | | |
| Said visit Central Library | 32% | 6% | 62% | 1% |
| Never visit Central Library | 77% | 9% | 12% | 2% |
| | | | | |
| Likely to visit CL if moves | 52% | 8% | 39% | 1% |
| Likely to never visit CL if moves | 2% | 2% | 95% | 1% |

Reasons for agreeing with the proposal

All respondents were then given the opportunity to say why they 'agree' with the proposal. They were asked in an open-ended question, to please explain why you agree with the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom?

The verbatim answers given have been coded, grouped together and shown in ranked order overleaf.



To provide a feel and a flavour of the verbatim comments given for the top 5 reasons for agreeing with the proposal (which have been coded and shown in percentage format in the chart above) a handful of quotes are shown below.

Better accessibility (52% of those agreeing)

"Easier access as all on one level and no hill to climb as older and with mobility and balance issues."

"I believe that the move will not only improve accessibility to the library (as it's closer to the new hub and car parks), but parents who don't visit or infrequently visit the library are more likely to do so due to it being in close proximity to retail and leisure facilities. I believe that removing any barriers (whether physical or otherwise), will greatly improve child literacy."

"It would make it more accessible. The new space and better lay out would help in terms of accessibility for people with mobility issues, as well as encouraging the passing footfall to take advantage of the range of services the library offers that they ordinarily would not know about. It would become a focal point in the town centre and opening say a café within the building would encourage more visitors to browse the books, access services and pass the time."

"Library access needs to be very accessible, the current building although beautiful is now not practical or inviting for new lenders or to encourage the younger generation."

Better location or central (34% of those agreeing)

"A more central location where much more people frequent, especially near Redrock. Will also give the empty shops chance to be reused and keep everything in one location for people."

"Current central library is not central. It would be more accessible to in the Town Centre Precinct. Better for disabled access and for young families."

"I never use the Central Library because it isn't my local library and it's painfully difficult to get to and then access with 3 young children. Also the Stockport Hub in the town centre is so much easier to use and welcoming for children."

"The location of the current library on the A6 with the relatively narrow pavements, air pollution and noise from road traffic makes it an unappealing location. Particularly for children."

Improved or modern services and facilities available (33% of those agreeing)

"Although I don't want to see the current building abandoned I can see the need for extensive modernisation of facilities and the examples of how other local authorities had increased library usage with similar schemes was impressive."

"Central modern facilities are essential to our community and young children. A hub for more than just borrowing books would encourage more visitors."

"Footfall at Central Library is in decline, as is the condition of the building. Without spending an awful lot of money now, and in maintenance over the coming years, Central sadly isn't really fit for purpose for the 21st century. Despite being much smaller, the Hub is getting a greater footfall which is an indication that the customer finds the location convenient and the modern design and layout to be welcoming and appealing. Stockroom library will be bigger than Central and could be a great modern library if done properly. It's also good that it will be located alongside other facilities, making it more of a destination. Hopefully it may start to revitalise the town centre too."

"In my experience, modern library facilities are far more popular with younger people (e.g. for use of books, cafes and study spaces) and so I think the Stockroom development would encourage far more visitors across a broader age range.."

Higher footfall or would use more often (33% of those agreeing)

"It may encourage people to access books (and cultural services?) who don't currently. It will be more of a modern take on a library."

"It would make it more accessible. The new space and better lay out would help in terms of accessibility for people with mobility issues, as well as encouraging the passing footfall to take advantage of the range of services the library offers that they ordinarily would not know about. It would become a focal point in the town centre and opening say a café within the building would encourage more visitors to browse the books, access services and pass the time."

"My family live in Stockport and we regularly go to the Town centre at the weekend. The Library is something we never think of visiting because of its location. I think having a central place and utilising the empty shops is an excellent idea and I will be happy to use the space as part of our weekend visits. I am also glad to hear the Library as it stands will be a heritage site, it is part of our history and a beautiful building."

"The proposed would offer better access to all and carpark facility. I would be more likely to use the library whilst visiting the shopping precinct.."

Need a new or modern building (24% of those agreeing)

"Central library is old and dated. Does not feel particularly inviting or a place one would like to visit unless it was necessary."

"Modern, easier access for me and children, and old central library is tired old and no fun."

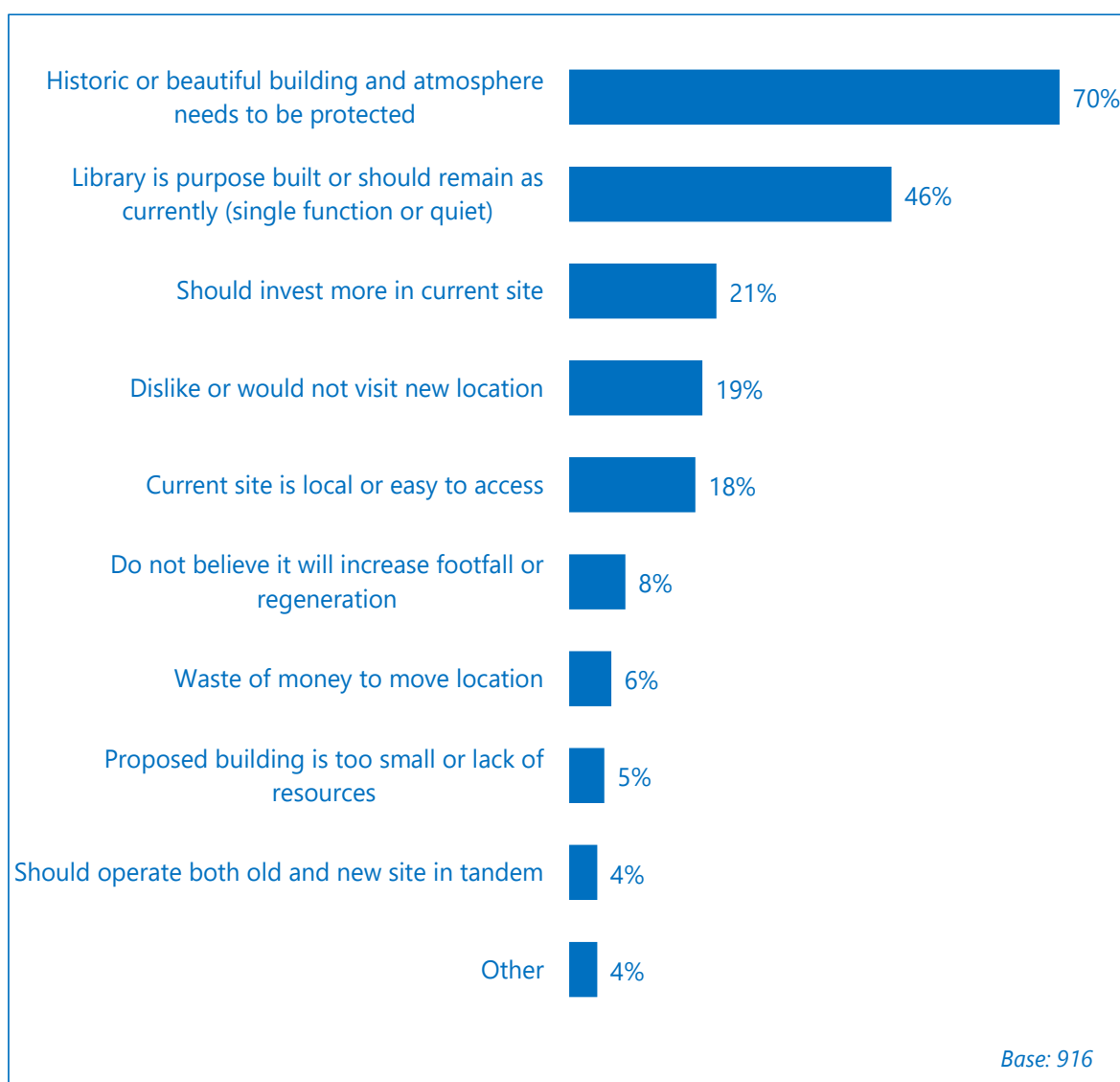
"I love the idea of a brand new and modern library facility that would provide services for people of all ages and from all walks of life. I really love Manchester Central Library for the same reason, though Stockroom would be much nearer for me to get to. It would be even better once the new bus station is ready and there is a tram from East Didsbury into Stockport."

"Having greater access to books in a newer and cleaner environment just seems like a no-brainer."

Reasons for disagreeing with the proposal

All respondents were then given the opportunity to say why they 'disagree' with the proposal. They were asked in an open-ended question, to please explain why you disagree with the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom?

The verbatim answers given have been coded, grouped together and shown in ranked order overleaf.



To again provide a feel and a flavour of the verbatim comments given for the top 5 reasons for disagreeing with the proposal (which have been coded and shown in percentage format in the chart above) a handful of quotes are shown below.

Historic or beautiful building and atmosphere needs to be protected (70% of those disagreeing)

"A beautiful building. Important to me and the people of Stockport. A part of our heritage."

"Because Stockport's central library is a historic building it needs to stay exactly that Stockport's historical library. And needs renovation and keeping it for generations to come. Schools should have trips to the library to educate children on it uses and history."

"Because the central library is a beautiful old building that it's pleasure to choose books in, and the proposed new library looks like a series of functional box rooms which won't tempt me to browse at all."

"I feel that the loss of the library from such a beautiful heritage building such as the one that Stockport Central Library currently used would be a great loss for the community and for Stockport as a whole. The library is a place that is welcoming, comforting, there when you need help or support or when you're lonely and need someone to talk to, whether that's because you're a young mother at home most of the day on you own with young children or because you're old and the library might be the only chance you get to speak to someone all day."

Library is purpose built or should remain as currently (46% of those disagreeing)

"Due to the historical and local heritage of the town, it has and always will be "The Library" it was built purposely as a Library so I see no reason how it cannot continue to be Stockport's Library."

"A library should be a peaceful haven for readers & users, without too much noise & disturbance. If the proposed Stockroom is open plan it would mean a busy noisy space, which would deter library users."

"Central Library is a historic building and I think we should preserve our history and continue to use the building for its long established purpose. I want all people, but especially children growing up in Stockport like I did to feel connected to the towns history. I agree with modernising and making services accessible but I don't think that has to mean that we abandon the old library building and start from scratch. I would also like to know what will become of the old building if it is no longer being used for this purpose!"

"I enjoy visiting the library. I like the architecture and the general atmosphere. It is a pleasant place to read and relax. I see no reason to move it to a characterless building such as the Stockroom."

Should invest more in current site (21% of those disagreeing)

"A beautiful building. Could the same money be used to restore it and have a more dynamic service."

"The current building has a strong connection and history in the local area and is on a main road making it easy to access. The money could be better spent improving the existing building rather than on a brand new building."

"We have a wonderful asset in the historic town centre library building. Most local authorities cherish assets like this and invest in them to improve them. Stockport Council has a very poor record in maintaining the historic buildings in the town and I am not surprised that this proposal has been put forward."

"The Carnegie heritage building is important for the town and can easily be renovated for modern usage. This has been done numerous times e.g. Manchester Central and around the country. It is also on the A6 with a bus stop directly outside and what could become a civic heritage corridor along the A6."

Dislike or would not visit new location (19% of those disagreeing)

"As you walk in to the Central Library you feel a distinct purpose for the building. The layout feels right and generates an atmosphere of learning. It's light and airy and so is a good place to study. The location of the new Stockroom facility is, by comparison, oppressive and lacking character."

"Hideous idea - just make the current one more accessible. The town centre is already run down, with no decent shops/public spaces, it's dirty and ugly and needs completely knocking down and starting again. Why move from a beautiful building that suits being a library very well. Moving it won't increase uptake of services - it will just make people use the others more."

"I'm more put off with having to actually go into the centre of Stockport. It's not somewhere I wanted to go and I like the fact I can park near the current library and it's quiet. It's people who want to be in there and not used a somewhere for kids to mess around it. Also it's a proper library not like the crazy design of the new buildings. I have a small son in a pram and have no issues with Central Library."

"The precinct is a dump. I avoid it at all costs."

Current site is local or easy to access (18% of those disagreeing)

"Central library is accessible where it is, close to train station and a6 for buses. The building needs investment not moving to Merseyway."

"It's more accessible where it is, why do you have to change things? No decent shops in Stockport in Town, not worth going into the centre of town anymore, only a few places left that are worth visiting i.e. the plaza, hat works, town hall, you need to open more retail shops to attract the public back or like the 'historic market' it will die."

"Our stunning purpose built beautiful Grade II Listed Carnegie Library has everything, including disabled parking 80 m away, and it is very near to the railway station."

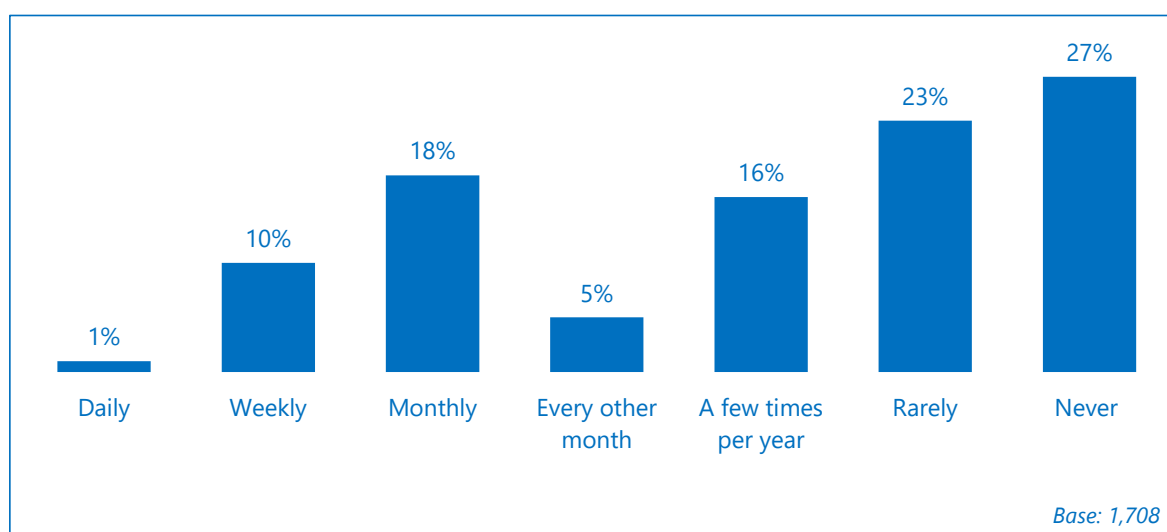
"The library is easily accessible for me in its current location. It's a beautiful building that should be used for its original purpose. Why spend tax money on a project that isn't required. It would be such a shame to lose a Stockport landmark which will inevitably happen if the service is moved."

Likely future use of library in new location

Respondents were also asked, based on the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom, how often they think they would visit the library in the new location?

Three-quarters (73%) would be likely to visit the library in the new location, and this includes 11% who would visit at least weekly (i.e. daily or weekly).

A quarter (27%) would 'never' visit the library in the new location.

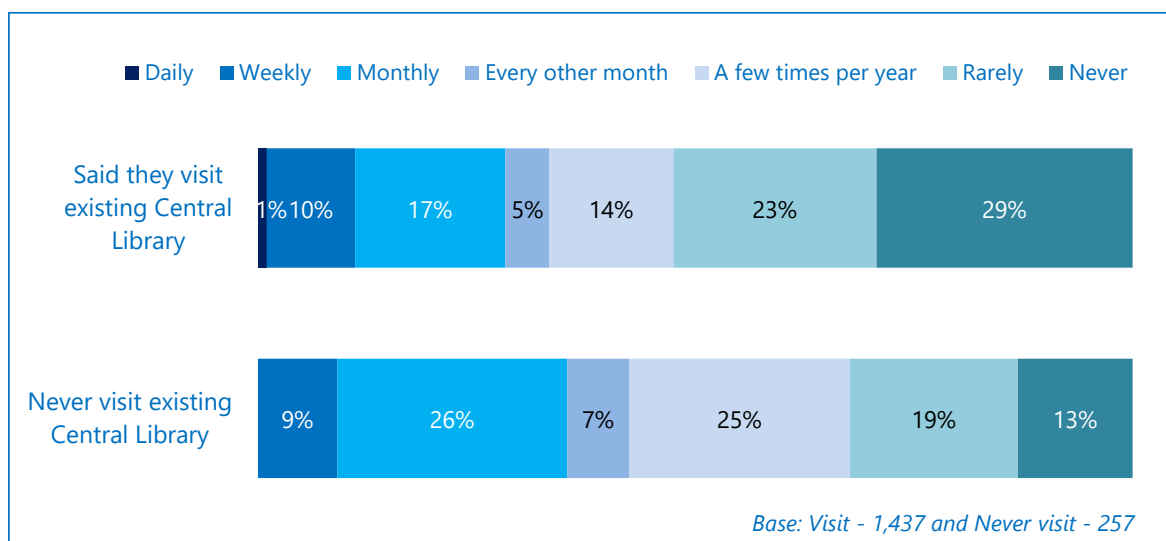


The chart overleaf shows likely future usage amongst those who said they visit the existing Central Library and those who never visit.

Three in ten (29%) of those who said they visit the existing Central Library said that they will 'Never' be likely to visit the library in the new location. 11% would visit at least weekly (i.e. daily or weekly).

13% of those who said they never visit the existing Central Library said that they will 'Never' be likely to visit the library in the new location. This means that 87% of those

who said they never visit the existing Central Library are likely to visit the library in the new location. 9% would visit at least weekly (none would visit daily).



6.5 Ideas for alternative uses for the Central Library building

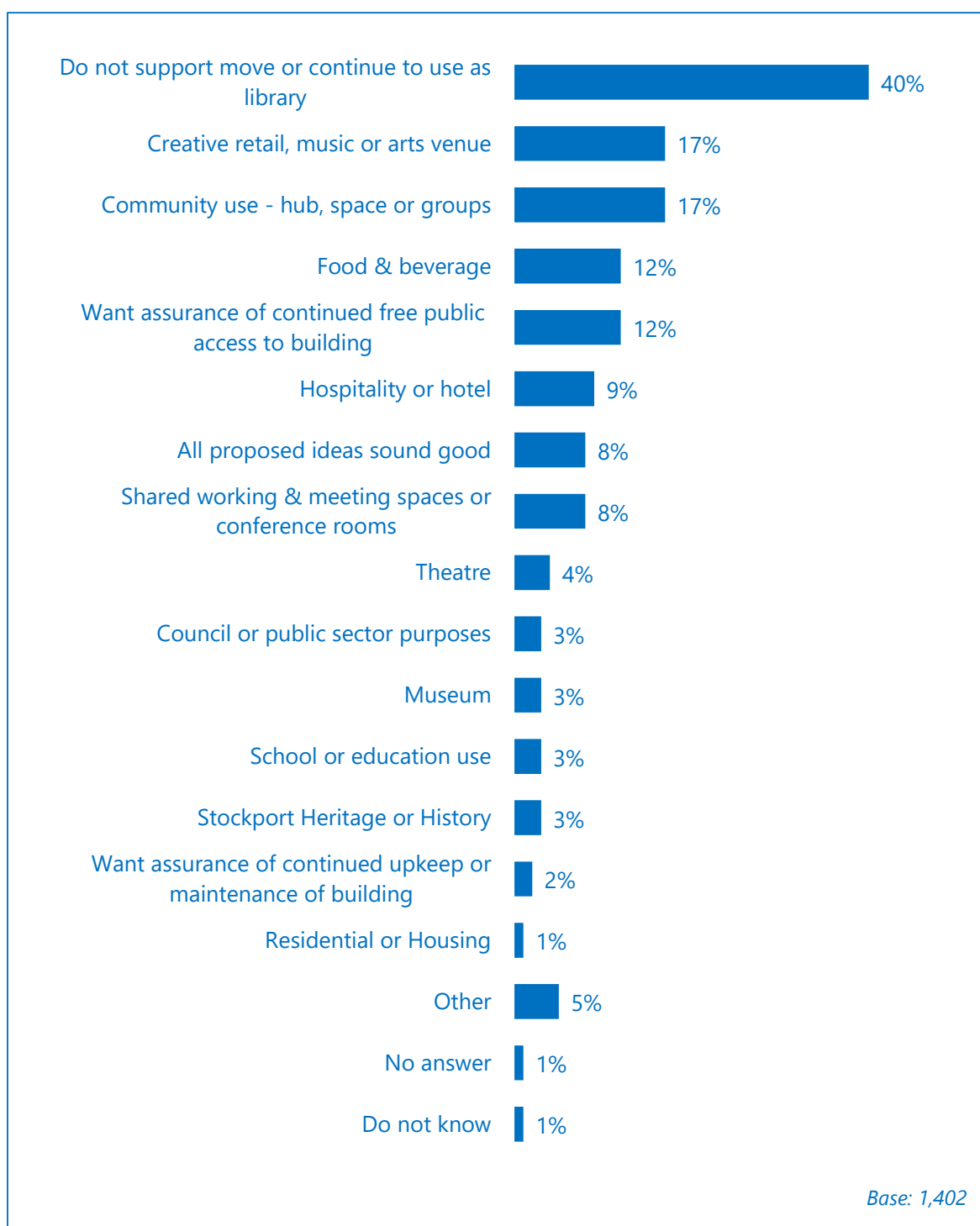
Respondents were next informed that if a decision is made to relocate the library service from the Central Library building, the Council is exploring potential future uses and have made the following comments:

- It will not demolish or abandon the building
- It will not sell the freehold to it
- It will not allow the building to be developed for residential use
- Any potential use will ensure that public access can be retained to the building

Initial work that the Council has undertaken has highlighted a number of potential uses based on experience of what other similar buildings have been used as elsewhere in the country including: hospitality; food and beverage; shared office or working space uses; other Council uses; other public sector uses; community uses.

Respondents were then asked in an open-ended verbatim question what they thought about these suggestions and whether they have any other suggestions for alternative uses for the Central Library building if the library service is relocated to Stockroom?

The verbatim answers given have been coded, grouped together and shown in ranked order overleaf.



To provide a feel and a flavour of the verbatim comments given for the top 5 suggestions (which have been coded and shown in percentage format in the chart above) a handful of quotes are shown below.

Do not support move or continue to use as library (40% of those responding)

"All these things could be placed in the Central library why do we have to lose these beautiful buildings."

"Absolutely don't want library to relocate. Cannot envisage it moving. In the awful scenario that it does, would hope building can be used for research, arts, performances & cafe. Absolutely not to be lost to the people of Stockport. Disagree with restaurants etc the building should remain intact as it is and not walks knocked down etc to accommodate bars etc this would be awful."

"Do not repurpose, invest in keeping this building as it is. Would you relocate the town hall to the shopping centre? Thought not."

"I am outraged at some of these suggestions. A restaurant, are you joking, many closing down. Firstly needs to be maintained properly, not modernised but sympathetically renovated but made fit for purpose as a library and kept in public sector. Should not be given over to charities or groups. Possibly meeting rooms but it is a library, keep it as such."

Creative retail, music or arts venue (17% of those responding)

"A space for music and arts event with a stage would be good, when events aren't on I think it should be a food court type of place with small food vendors. And lots of comfy chairs to relax in. People need to walk uphill to it, so make going here worthwhile."

"Exhibition space for local arts + crafts, apprentices. Linked to schools, colleges, or any groups for displays of projects or end of term/ course work."

"I think it should be turned into a Craft/ Art Centre for artist and crafter to be able to rent or a place where Art/craft for wellness could be provided for larger numbers of people. NOT FOR OFFICE SPACE."

"More arts and community use is desperately needed. no more office space or cafes are required. It should encourage creativity and social / community activities e.g. arts on prescription."

Community use - hub, space or groups (17% of those responding)

"Community use for kids workshops for schools, home educators, disability groups, teenage groups."

"Community use, social enterprise and Prince of Wales innovative ideas that add harmony and sustainability, business and charitable organisations who can bring ideas and initiatives all together in one building, so we can help, encourage and

transform lives of our younger generation which can enhance and help towards building a sustainable community for all generations to enjoy."

"Community uses idea. A space to allow people to have office space to start up new businesses, cafe getting young / disadvantage people the opportunity to work and gain experience. Should have some kind of display to remind people of its original use, as a library."

"It should be a community hub in keeping with previous use. Maybe a performance venue but not a commercial enterprise."

Food & beverage (12% of those responding)

"Food and Beverage use would be great! Stockport is really starting to prosper in this sector in the Old Town. It would be great to have something like this on the A6."

"I agree with the suggestions in the above list. Personally I think hospitality uses, food and beverage - with licensed café/bar that did some easy meals not just light bites would be really good. This could help liven the space and the centre out of core shopping hours. A multi-use venue for bands or performances could really be a boost to evening economy in the town centre and activity."

"I think hospitality and food and beverages would be a good use of the building so that all the facilities would be open to all residents of and visitors to Stockport. The building could also be used for weddings. The main drawback to all of these options is the lack of free parking, which puts many people off visiting the centre of Stockport (including me)."

"Cafes, bars, small independent markets etc, all of which would be ethical and eco with info to help educate people who are living ethically, eco/environmentally friendly to help them change their lifestyles. Concerts (small) lunchtime and evenings."

Want assurance of continued free public access to building (12% of those responding)

"As a public building the library should be retained for the local public, and not corporate, council or private use. Definitely not a boutique hotel, which would limit this to paying guests who are unlikely to be locals. Whatever the use (food outlet, community space, theatre), the building should be accessible to locals and the Council should maintain the building to a good standard. The building should not be sold to private developers."

"Fairly relaxed as long as public access maintained - but please never a boutique anything, hotel or otherwise."

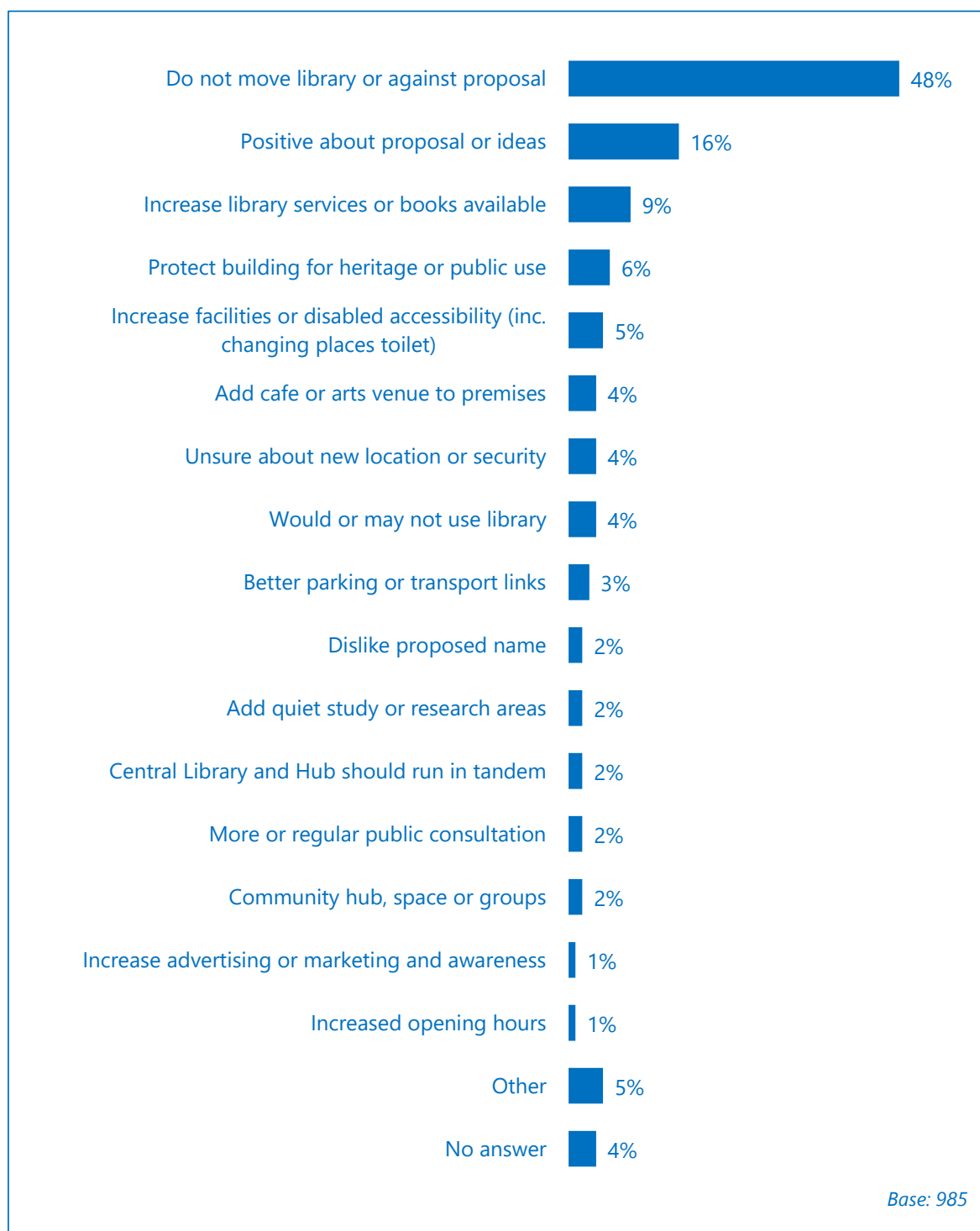
"I don't think the current Central Library building should be used for commercial purposes. It was gifted to the people of Stockport and should remain as a public building for community use, ideally as a library, as this was its intended purpose when it was built."

"If public access is maintained that reassures me somewhat but I would like to see definite plans sooner rather than later. Heritage buildings have been left to rot in the past, Woodbank Hall is a prime example. Youth services have been decimated in Stockport, would it be possible to make some provision for our young people in the building?"

6.6 Other comments and suggestions about the proposal

Finally, respondents were asked what other comments or suggestions they have about the proposal to move services from Central Library to Stockroom?

The verbatim answers given have been coded, grouped together and shown in ranked order below. Nearly half (48%) gave a comment falling under the category 'do not move the library or against the proposal'.



To provide a feel and a flavour of the verbatim comments given for the top 5 other comments (which have been coded and shown in percentage format in the chart above) a handful of quotes are shown below.

Do not move library or against proposal (48% of those responding)

"As already stated think the move is an unnecessary political decision and should not go ahead."

"Don't do it and spend the money on maintenance of the existing property."

"I am totally opposed to moving library services from their current location in Central Library. A multi-functional facility, including Council information services, social opportunities and possibly spaces for cultural outlets may be fine but NOT INCLUDING LIBRARY SERVICES which need to STAY WHERE THEY ARE IN CENTRAL LIBRARY."

"I think that it is a bad idea. Why change something that works well and that most of the Stockport residents are happy with. Moving will have costs as well!"

Positive about proposal or ideas (16% of those responding)

"I agree with the proposal and think it is a shame that many people are short-sighted and do not see the immense benefits of moving the building to a more suitable, central location. It will provide greater opportunities to attract people to use the library service and having a close proximity to so many car park spaces will help to attract families or other people who don't use the service at the moment."

"I have seen other relocated libraries that have been well executed by use of vision, quality build etc. Let's not think too sparingly even in these austere times. And for goodness sake Stockport council be open and transparent regarding future possibilities for the old building and communicate these well."

"I think it's a great idea, and I think it would bring more people into the town centre. Myself and my children come to Stockport town centre very frequently and would love to be able to pop into the library for a book or comic book, or an arts workshop while we're in town shopping."

"I think it would be a good, positive, modern move and a good step in the right direction for the new direction of libraries in 2021. It is a shame as Central is a nice building however if it is going to be kept for public use I think on the whole this is a good idea."

Increase library services or books available (9% of those responding)

"As long as all the books are kept and the print stock is expanded - fine. More purchases of actual print books and less focus on computers and e-books please. We don't need a glorified internet cafe and we don't want spaces for tedious displays when such areas could be packed with books. Would be good to do display of work by group such as Pure Innovations and other local artists in amongst the books."

"It would be great to have more books in the new library but also have better IT facilities like the hire of iPads."

"You have mentioned a couple of libraries in your article. Manchester central library is now really modern with virtual books, historical information all now digital, a film library, touch screens that open up information. Stockport needs a library for the 21st century."

"Please have lots of access to computers and internet for members of public, staff on hand to train people."

Protect building for heritage or public use (6% of those responding)

"Having read the proposals I feel this isn't as bad as I thought it was, providing the current building is retained for public use in some way."

"I agree that the potential move to Stockroom offers the potential to make it accessible to a wide range of people, whilst at the same time attempting to reinvigorated the Shopping centre. However I do not agree with vacating a heritage building without having a clear plan and purpose in mind for the building. Without this and without a firm commitment from the Council I predict that within 5-10 years the Council will have disposed of the heritage asset."

"You need to be clear about what's going to happen to Central Library building first, before diving into Stockroom. Internet access and lending facilities in the centre of Stockport will be really valuable to large sections of the community (just not me), but sacrificing one of Stockport's most identifiable architectural assets to do if leaves me very conflicted.."

"The building must be cared for and not lose its characteristic charm. Stockport town centre has enough ugly buildings."

Increase facilities or disabled accessibility (5% of those responding)

"All the reference and specialist books should also be moved. The Stockroom also needs a cafe area and nice seating so people can sit and browse. It needs to be a place where people want to stay and spend time. Get floor plants in and make a homely atmosphere. You will then get people accessing all it has to offer. Mums will bring kids for story time if they can also sit down with a coffee."

"In order for the new library space to be accessible to myself and my disabled child, it MUST include a 'Changing Places' disabled changing area. My daughter is too big to use a baby-change and not independent enough to use a disabled toilet."

"For the service to be able to offer and provide free space/ groups/ community/ support for those who are vulnerable. Either due to home circumstance or those with additional needs."

"Make it as accessible-friendly as possible, e.g. lots of resources for the hard-of-hearing and visually impaired, easy to move between floors when in a wheelchair, disabled toilets etc. Plenty of toilets (gender neutral? or have a gender neutral one as an option). More computers."

7. Children's survey

This chapter summarises the findings of an online children's survey open to those aged under 18.

7.1 Methodology

A simplified quantitative survey suitable for completion by children was designed by Qa Research and Stockport Council to meet the research objectives.

The survey could be completed in the following ways:

- As an online survey via the Stockport Council website
- As a paper survey available in libraries and public buildings

The children's consultation has been promoted through the Secondary Head Teachers Consortium as well as being distributed to the Primary Heads Consortium.

The consultation period was between 15th September and 18th October 2021.

Background information

Before completing the survey, the following information was provided. The images and text are taken from the online survey hosted on the Stockport Council website.

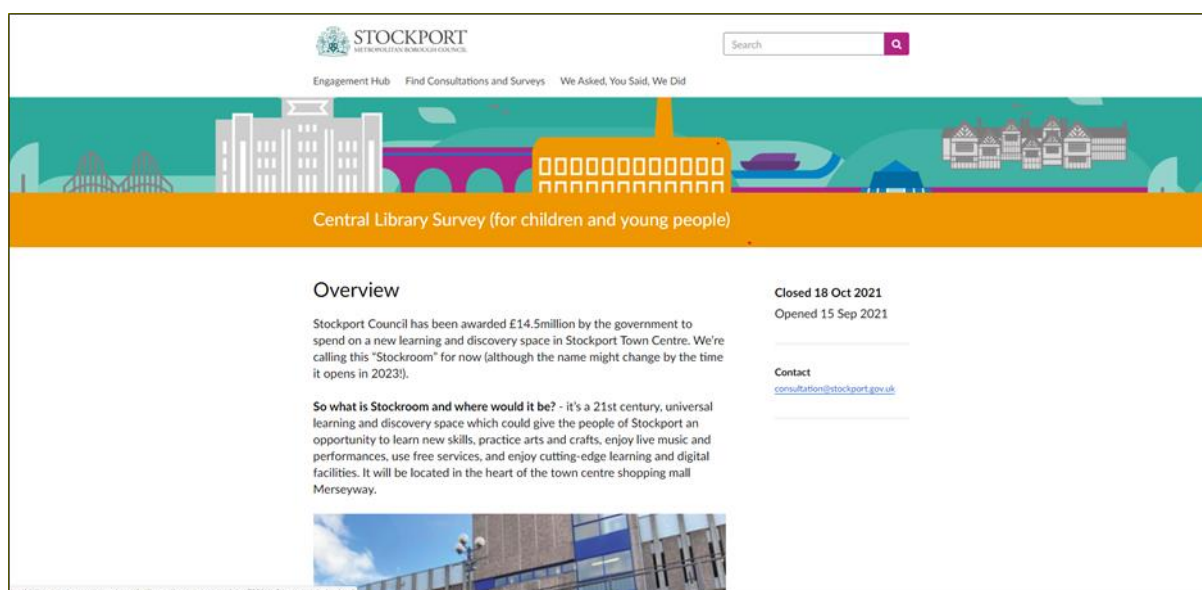




Image of Adlington Walk



Image of what Stockroom could look like

We've already asked people what would be important to see in Stockroom. Some of the things people told us were important to them are currently provided at Central Library on the A6 – things like study space, access to books, free IT and being able to learn about Stockport's history. So now we are asking people what they think about moving the Town Centre library services from Central Library (on the A6 opposite McDonalds) to Stockroom.

Image of Central Library Building



We know that as time goes on young people are borrowing less books from Central Library. Book loans for young people age 10-14yrs has fallen by 35% and by 61% for those aged 15-19yrs. Some people have asked why we aren't going to spend the money on modernising Central Library, but there are rules about how the money from the government must be spent that mean this isn't possible.



Before the council decides what to do, they want to know more about what children and young people think about this idea – especially children and young people who use, or have used, the Central Library in the past. But they are also interested to know what you think about their ideas for the new library building.

Please complete the survey to give us your views – we do not need to know your name but it would help us if you can tell us your age and the name of the school you go to.

Thank you for your help!

Sampling and statistical robustness

In total 150 surveys were completed.

The overall sample of 150 (and assuming an estimated population of 28,200 young people aged 10-17 in Stockport) provides findings which in research terms means we can be 95% confident that the data at an overall level has a variance no more than +/-8.0% accuracy.

Therefore, these findings are based on a sample size outside the +/-5% standard industry error rate required to provide statistically robust results at an overall level. The results do still provide an interesting perspective on the views of a different user group.

A note on analysis and how the data is presented in the report

The base size (i.e. how many people answered the question) is shown on each chart. Those completing the survey could skip any questions they did not want to answer so the base sizes for each question will vary.

Please note that when interpreting results throughout this report not all percentages will equal 100% due to rounding (with any figures of 0.5 or higher being rounded up). Where the figure is shown as 0% at least one respondent gave this answer but the total count makes up less than 0.5% of the overall total; a blank shows no-one has given this answer.

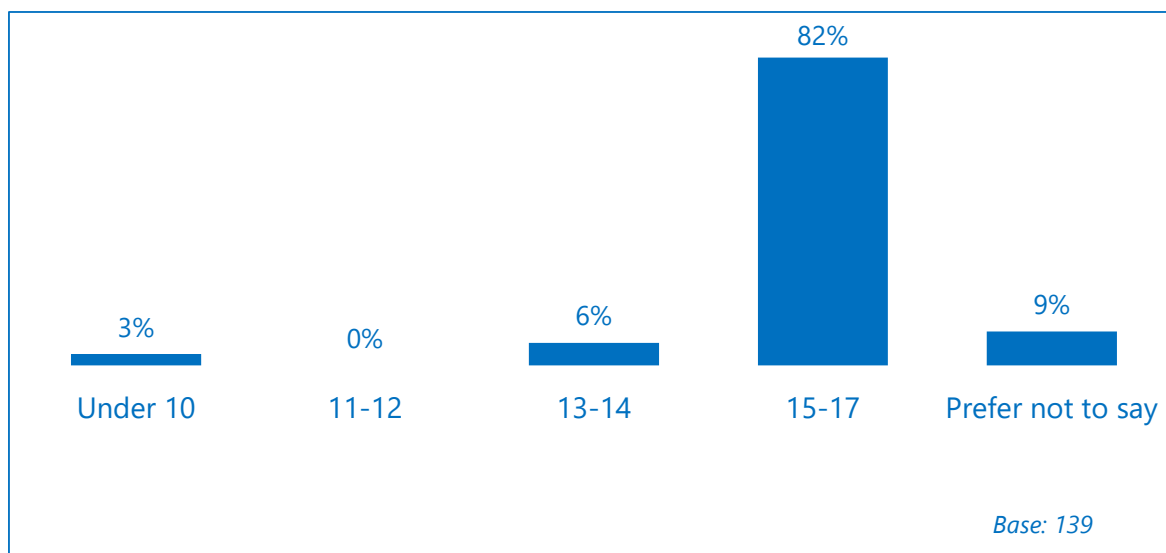
Some questions were multiple response questions: respondents had the option of giving more than one response. These percentages may be higher than 100%.

Open-ended verbatim questions have been coded, grouped together and shown as percentages.

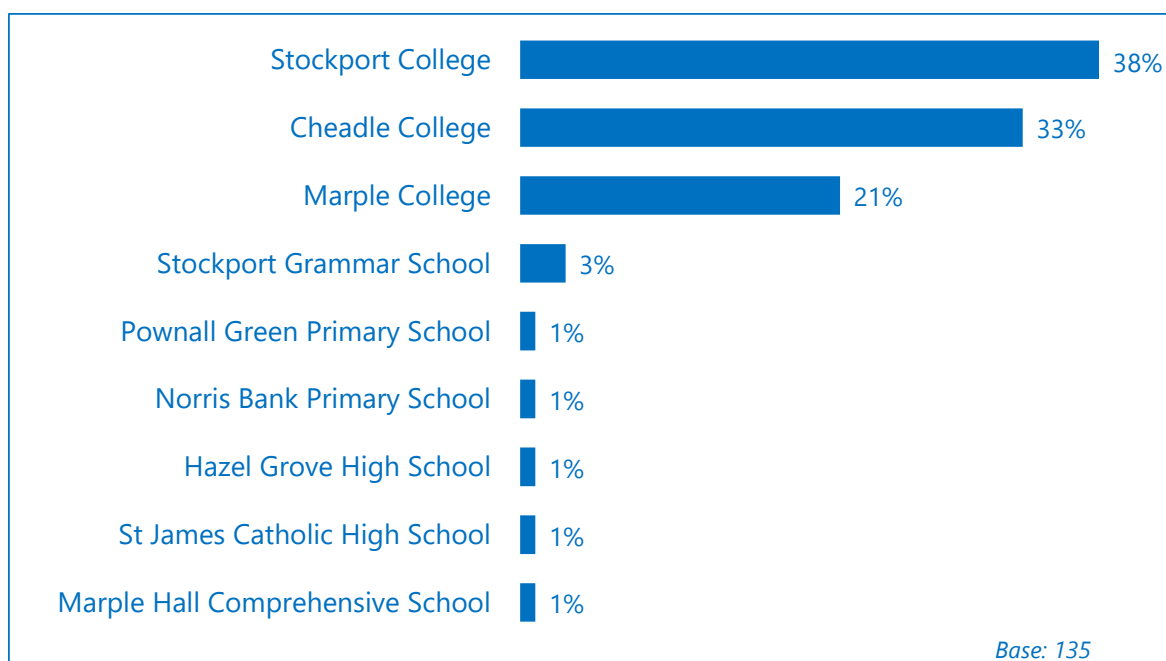
The analysis was run using Askia software. The questions have been cross-tabulated by different demographics, with relevant statistically significant differences being commented upon within the report, how useful or relevant this is needs to be determined by the reader.

7.2 Key findings – who completed the survey

In total, 150 children and young people completed the online survey. As shown in the chart below, the majority of respondents (82%) were aged between 15 and 17.

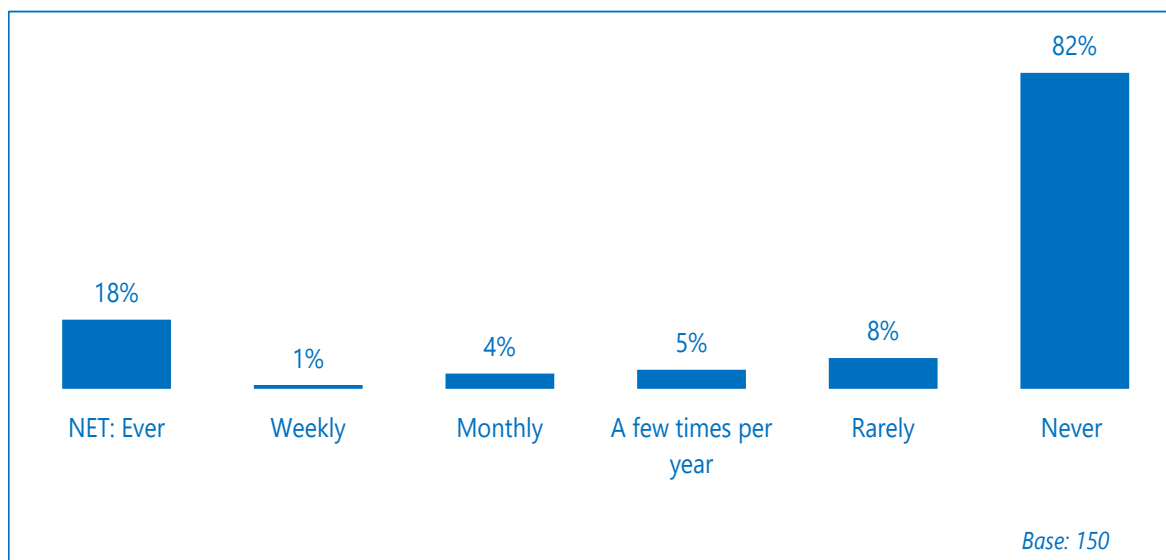


The following schools and colleges were represented in the responses, with the largest proportion of responses coming from Stockport College (38%), followed by Cheadle College (33%).

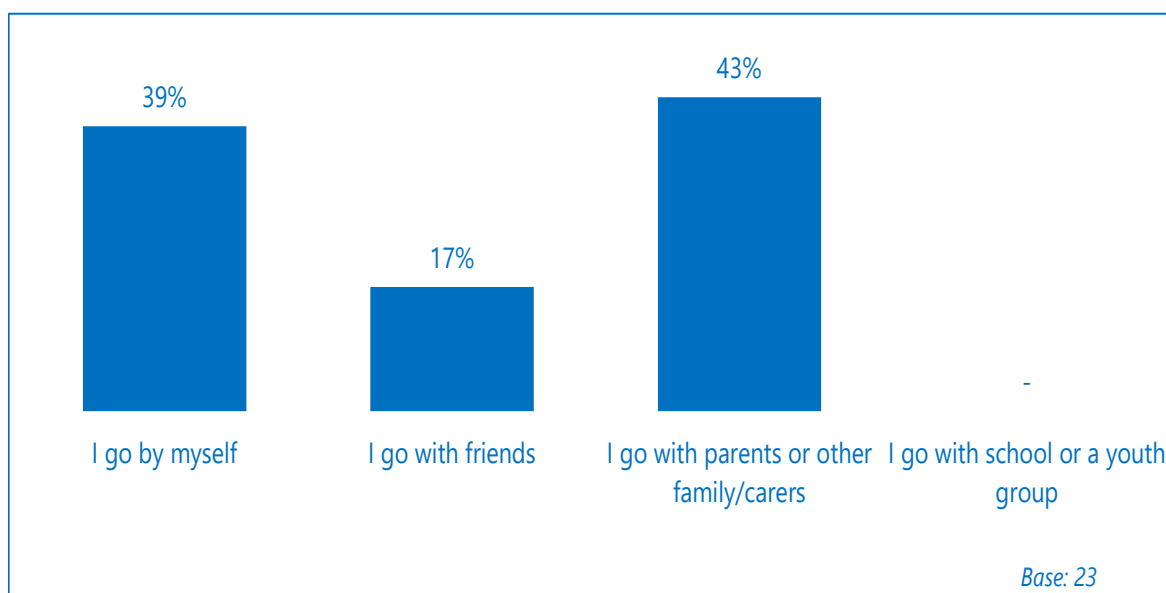


7.3 Current library usage

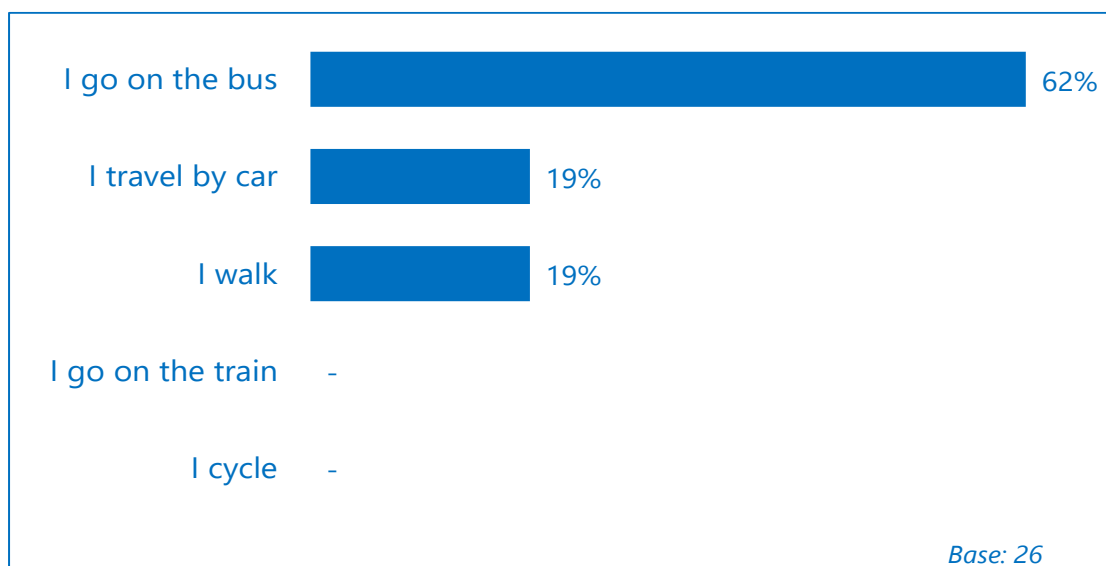
Overall, the majority of respondents (82%) never use Central Library. Of those that do (18%) respondents were most likely to say that they used Central Library 'rarely' (8%).



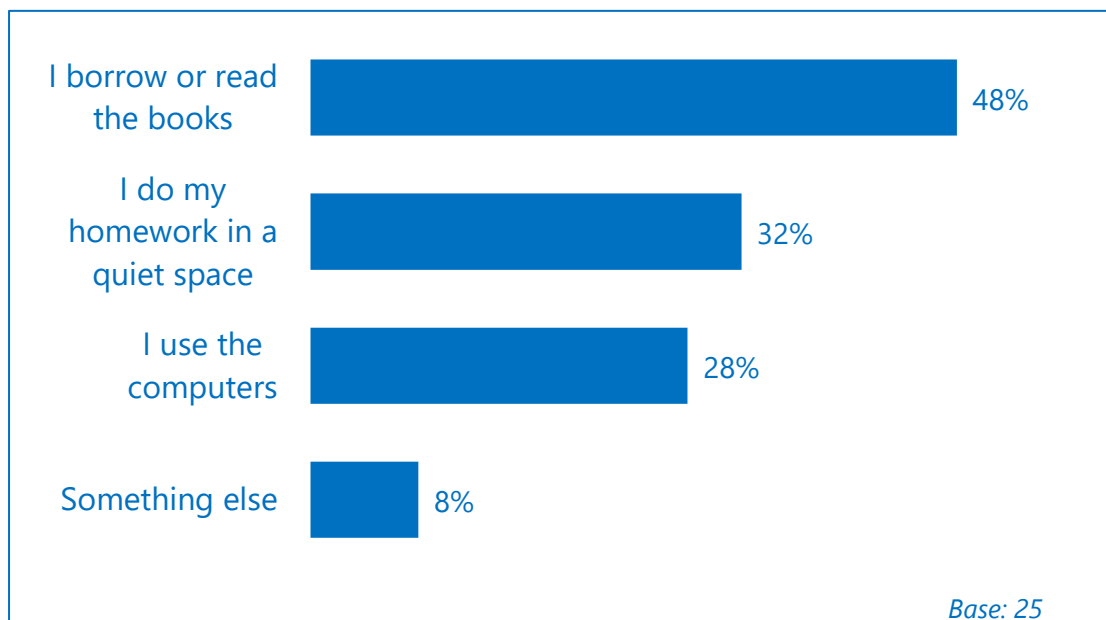
As illustrated below, those that said they visit Central Library were most likely to visit with parents/carers (43%), followed by visiting alone (39%), a further 17% visited with friends.



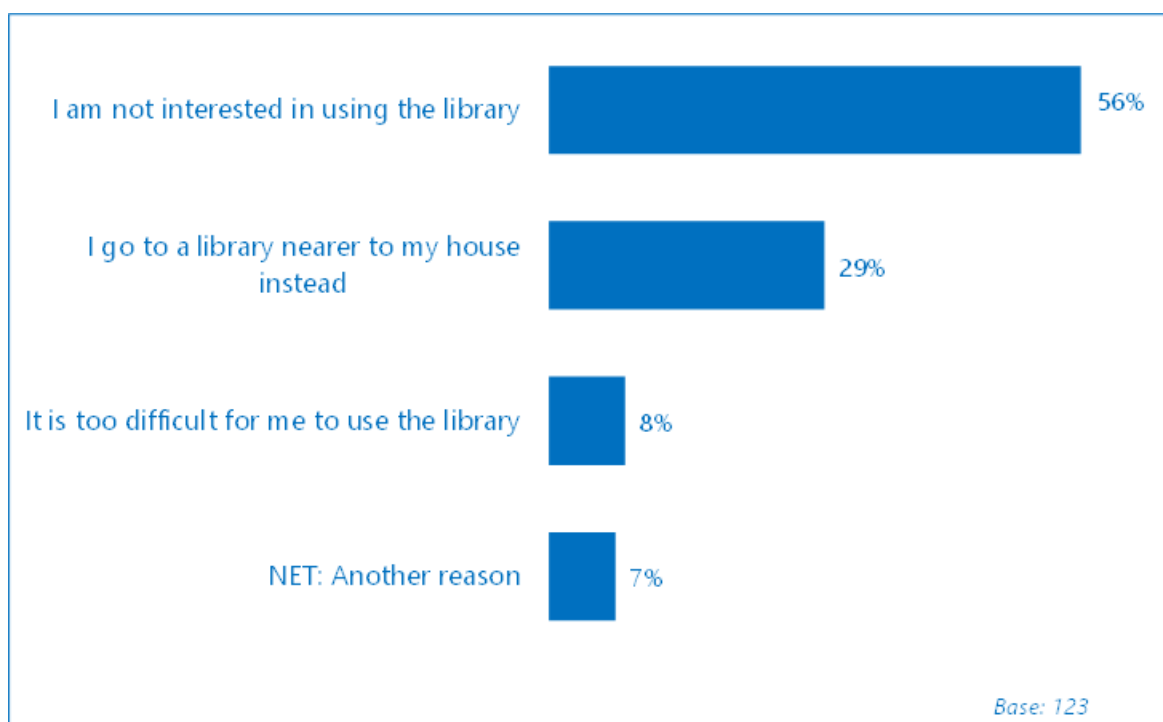
As shown below, in terms of mode of transport, those who said they visit Central Library were most likely to travel by bus (62%), or on foot or by car (19%).



In terms of activities whilst at Central Library, as shown below, children and young people were most likely to be borrowing books (48%), or doing homework in a quiet space (32%), a further 28% used the computers and 8% offered an 'other' response which included doing research or simply 'looking around'.



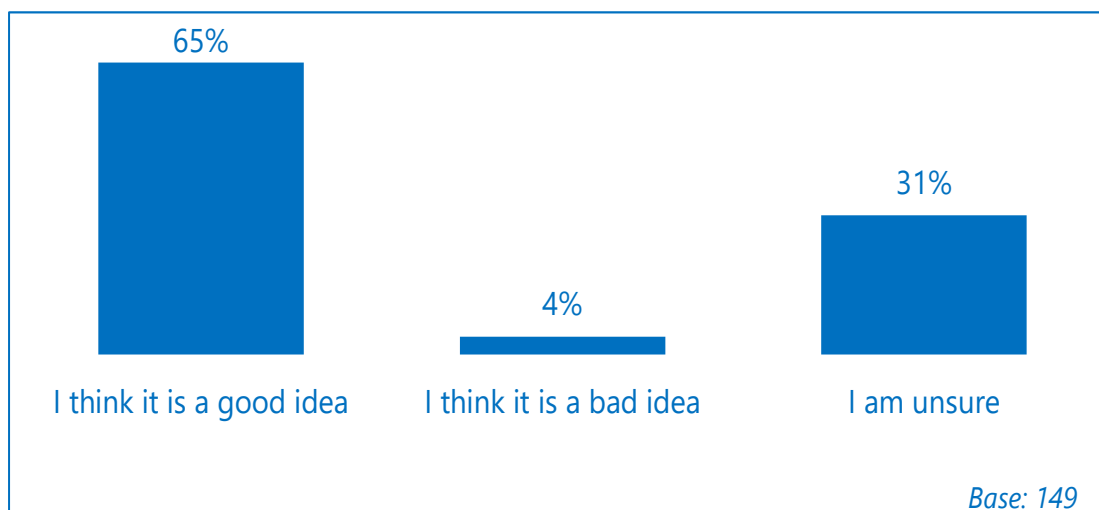
Those who had never used Central Library were asked why. As the chart below shows, over half (56%) were not interested in using the library, 29% used a library nearer to their home instead, and 8% found it difficult to travel to the library. A further 7% offered other reasons including, not knowing Central Library was there or it being closed during the pandemic.



7.4 Reaction to the proposal to move library services

Children and young people were asked for their views on the idea of moving Central Library to Stockroom in Merseyway.

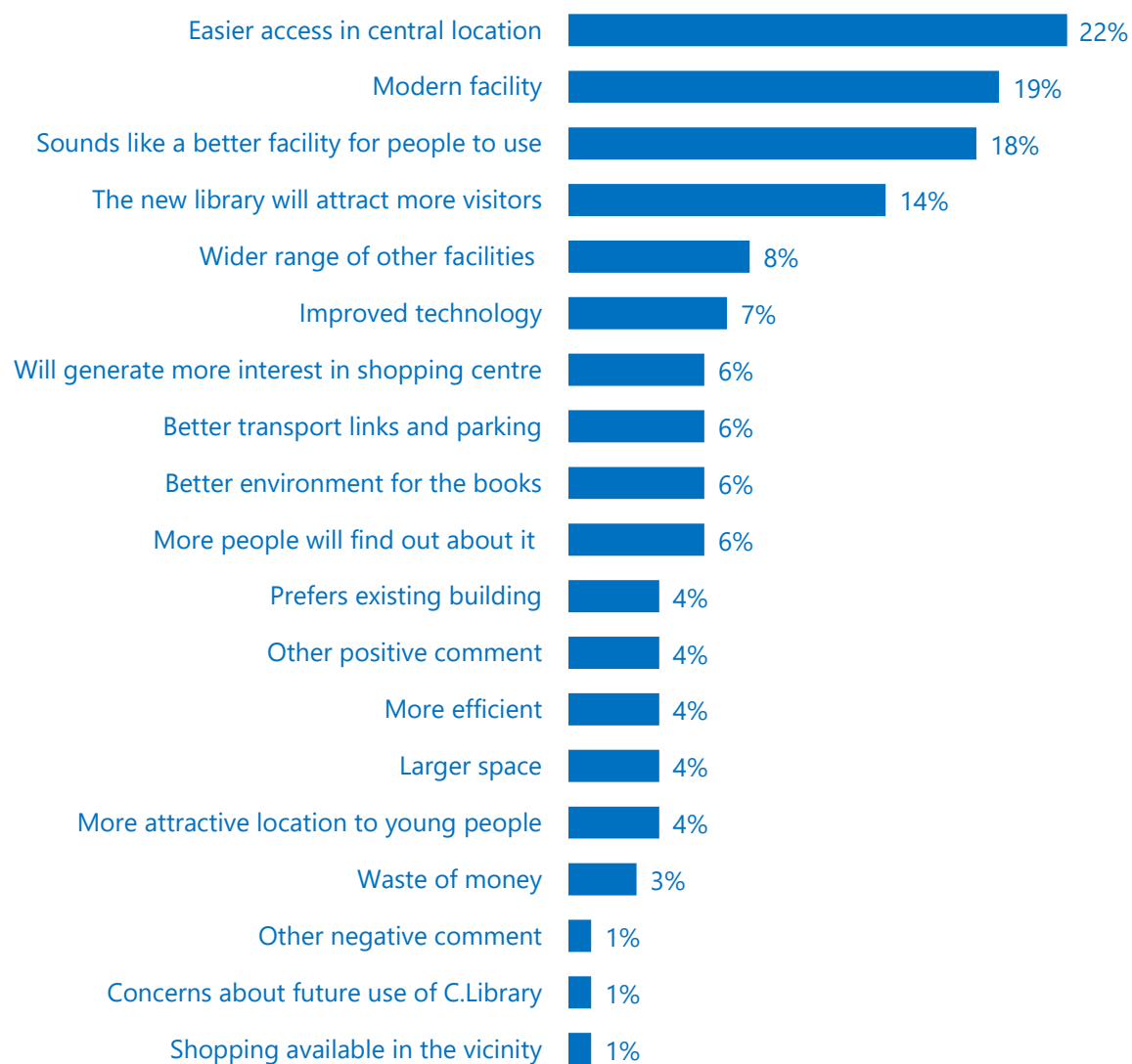
As illustrated overleaf, nearly two thirds of children and young people (65%) thought that this was 'a good idea', just less than a third (31%) were unsure, and 4% thought it was a 'bad idea'.



Children and young people were asked, in an open-ended verbatim question, to provide more detail on the reasons for their response.

As shown overleaf most of the comments provided were positive, in support of the proposals, citing 'easier access in a central location' (22%), a 'modern facility' (19%), 'sounds like a better facility for people to use' (18%), and 'the new library will attract more visitors' (14%).

Negative views related to a preference for the existing building (4%), a 'waste of money' (3%), and concerns about the future use of Central Library (1%).

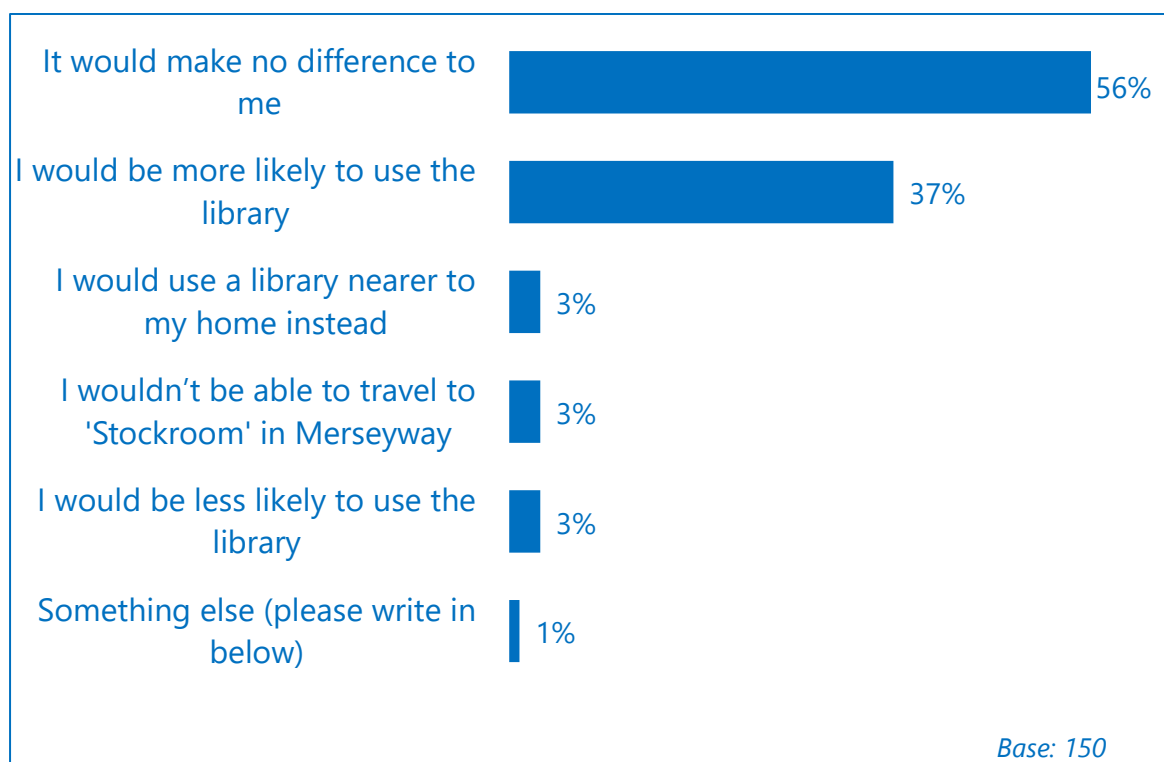


Base: 72

Children and young people were also asked what difference it would make to them if the Central Library moved to Stockroom in Merseyway.

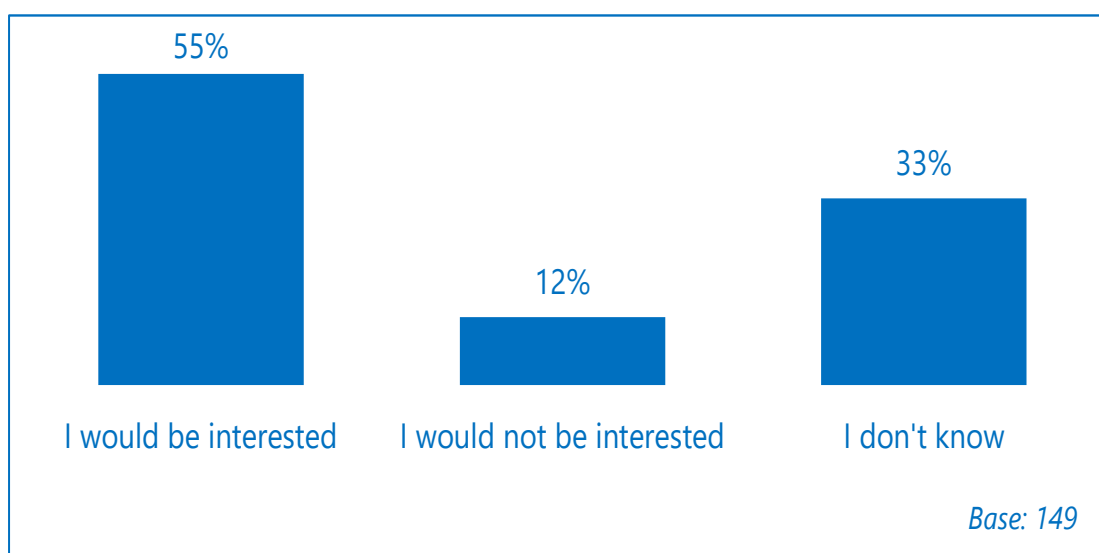
As shown below, over half (56%) stated that it would make no difference to them, and 37% stated they would be more likely to use the library.

3% stated that they would be less likely to use the library, and a further 6% stated that they would use a library nearer to home instead or wouldn't be able to travel to Stockroom.



Finally, children and young people were asked if the Central Library did move to Stockroom, whether they would be interested in visiting it.

As shown overleaf, just over half (55%) stated they would be interested, a third (33%) were unsure, and 12% said they would not be interested.



8. Qualitative focus groups

This chapter summarises the findings from the four qualitative focus groups undertaken to supplement the quantitative research.

8.1 Methodology & sample

Four online focus groups, each lasting 90 minutes were conducted via Zoom.

Participants were recruited from those in the stage 1 quantitative survey who said they would be happy to be recontacted for future research on the topic.

The four groups were split:

- Parents with school aged children (with a mix of those with Primary & Secondary aged children at home)
- People with disabilities or long term health condition (with no quotas on the nature of any disability)
- Older people (i.e. all aged 65+)
- Younger people – all pre-family lifestage (three were aged 18-24 topped up by three aged 25-34 once all the youngest adult contacts had been exhausted)

All the participants recruited live in Stockport, with a mix of those who currently use Central Library & those who either use no library or another library.

The focus groups were undertaken w/c 27 September & w/c 4th October.

Participants were paid a monetary incentive as a thank you for their time and contribution.

8.2 Feedback from Qualitative Focus Groups

Background

Nearly every participant across the four different focus groups, had lived in the Stockport area for more than a decade, some considerably longer.

They were all keen to see the town centre improve and be regenerated.

"I'm interested to see how they can improve Stockport and obviously try to stop the downward sort of thing where it's been heading really" – parent group

"Stockport has desperately needed funding for the last 25 years that I've lived here for, I've seen you know, the shops that have been closing down. It is quite sad to realise that even though people do come to Stockport, as soon as you go in, you want to leave" - people with disabilities group

Even though they acknowledge many things could improve, there is an affection for Stockport and a desire for the town to be a pleasant place to live.

Attitudes about Central Library

When shown an image of the outside and the inside of Central Library and asked for the first words which come to mind, the words frequently chosen were iconic, beautiful, grand, historic, big, traditional, unique, landmark and part of Stockport.

"The architecture is in keeping with the rest of the good looking bits of Stockport" – parent group

"The library is really beautiful. It's got big windows, it's spacious, it's got that big glass ceiling right in the middle of it flooded with natural light" – parent group

"Part of Stockport's history" - people with disabilities group

"It's a historic landmark. You know, I've always seen it as a central focal point of ever coming into Stockport. It's one of the rare few buildings outside of the Town Hall and the War Museum Art Gallery that really stands out" - people with disabilities group

"It's like unique to Stockport. I wouldn't say it's a focal point because it's not the first thing that comes to your mind for Stockport but there is definitely an aspect of that" – young adult group

In every session there were mentions of Carnegie giving the building to the people of Stockport and/or it being a listed building.

There is an obvious affection for the building, even amongst those who rarely or never use it as a library.

"Civic pride, I'm proud of that building. And I'm proud to be in a town that has it" - older people group

"I think about the fact it was a gift ... it's something really precious to Stockport" - people with disabilities group

"I always go to the one in Central Library and I personally prefer that one [library] because with the huge dome it's like some beautiful building, like a 19th century philanthropist has donated it to Stockport and I think being at the Merseyway centre is not the same, it doesn't give you the same sense of grandeur" – young adult group

However, there was general agreement that the Central Library is rather difficult to get to, because of the busy A6, limited public transport and lack of parking. Some described it as somewhat stranded and now being in the wrong place.

"It is halfway up the hill on the A6 so I guess it could be easier for people to get to the town centre" - people with disabilities group

"I find the location a bit intimidating, just where it is on that bit of the A6, there's quite often a lot of trouble around like the McDonald's and things like that. And I don't feel that comfortable. It's a really, really noisy road" - people with disabilities group

"It's in an awkward place, obviously built on the hill, which isn't ideal, and it's on the A6 which isn't accessible for a lot of people unless you know you've got a bus, or you can walk. And I also find that the parking situation in Stockport is a bit of a nightmare surrounding the pay and display for access to the library, so I think that could possibly be looked into by the Council" - people with disabilities group

"Obviously, years ago, it will have been made without all of the pollution and the traffic. If you try to take small children there it's just one of those things that

you have to kind of think about ... children and traffic is never a good combination" - parent group

"Central Library is a bit out of the way, which means I'm less likely to either pop in, or I'll use my local library to order things from Central Library to it because I don't want to make that special effort to go into town and kind of you know, up the hill. But yeah, it is absolutely beautiful when you go in there and it does feel special, but I don't tend to have the time to actually do that" – young adult group

Although it was seen as being convenient for the college and used by some of the students in the young adults group as an alternative quiet space to studying at college.

Participants struggled to suggest anything else they felt Central Library should offer users which it currently doesn't provide. Without recognising the improvements which would be possible through more space and a new build, the premise for moving the library is not clearly understood which impacts on reactions to the proposed changes.

"The facilities are really good. It's got hundreds of 1000s of books, they've got good computer facilities as well, lifts for disability access. As a whole it just seems a really good library" – young adult group

There is a general acceptance that Central Library, in both the exterior and interior, is looking a bit neglected and in need of investment.

Although the building feels a little run-down and in need of some restoration, there is no real awareness of how much money might be required to repair and upgrade the Central Library or how this could or would be paid for.

For those who were very vocally opposed from the start of the focus groups to any change, the primary reason is a concern about what might happen to the Central Library building if the current library within is relocated. A clearer plan for the building's future may alleviate these concerns for some.

"I think we should distinguish between the services that people need, and the buildings that we want to protect" - older people group

"The building is very well loved by the people of Stockport, but is it the building or the books... the facility or function? Surely that could happen anywhere. And the main thing is keeping the building, as long as the people in Stockport can

go in the building and appreciate the building. Does it really matter that it's not about books anymore?" - people with disabilities group

Usage of Central Library

There were only a few very regular users of Central Library within each of the focus group sessions, with more using their local library most frequently.

"[Central Library] has some quite good information on local history. So that's why I would use Central Library. Otherwise, I use Marple library every week" - older people group

"I used to use it kind of regularly in my first year of college, literally, just because it got me out the college, it was just a place to go just to pass time, really" – younger adult group

However, even non-users of Central Library or indeed non-users of their local library still had a strong opinion about the planned changes as it is seen as a major change for the people of Stockport.

Reactions to the proposal to move library services

Participants were shown a similar presentation about the proposed changes as was used on the Council consultation website, outlining details of the Future High Streets Funding, current usage of Central Library, the pledges the Council has made about future usage of the building if the move goes ahead, where Stockroom would be and what it could include inside.

There is much agreement that the town centre is in decline and needs turning around. However, opinions were mixed whether relocating the content of Central Library is part of the solution required to breathe new life into the High Street.

The immediate and main concern for those opposed to the move is about future use of the Central library building. They want to make a stand to protect what they see as the history and heritage of Stockport. They were very quick, sometimes even before seeing the presentation slides, to voice their opposition.

Reasons for being supportive

There is support for the proposed plans but this is conditional and based on a number of assumptions and caveats.

There is a strong desire for the town centre to become a vibrant, exciting and enticing area to go to for shopping and events but as few feel the Stockroom development by itself will achieve this goal, there was a desire to know about wider strategic plans the Council might have to regenerate the town centre.

“Stockport needs a rocket up its bum so if this is like the kickstart to that, I agree” - parent group

Many recognised the need and desire to improve Merseyway, even if they did not always agree that moving Central Library was the answer to the challenge.

“I think Merseyway is one of the places that really does need that sort of investment, it's a soulless hole in the middle of what is otherwise quite an architecturally interesting area with lots of history, but there's this concrete blank at the heart of it, which is a real shame” – parent group

“I think the plans look really good. I think the space looks really nice. And I think it could potentially be a start to regenerate the area, you know you've got to start somewhere. Yes some of those shops are not great, some of the footfall isn't there at the moment but you know, it actually might be more accessible and it might be more visual and visible ... but devil's advocate how will they [the library] draw more people in? why are they not doing that at Central Library anyway?” - parent group

Several mentioned Manchester Central Library, as a positive example of a nice building which attracts visitors, in part because of its architecture, it's location but also as it has interesting and appealing temporary exhibitions.

There are doubts that moving the library to Stockroom in itself will result in either greater usage of the library service, or a considerable boost in numbers of those visiting the town centre. This led participants to suggest the need for Stockroom to have a much broader and appealing offer to attract residents.

Suggestions included a well-publicised and regular event programme, either in Stockroom and/or outside in the high street, an area within the library where people can just relax and go for free, professionally put together rotating exhibitions focussing on local heritage or art and creative makers classes for children and adults.

"It almost feels as though I'm going off on a tangent but actually, it feels to me as though it comes ultimately to the heart of this is that in those plans, there's no mention of anything like any kind of maker space, or arts and craft facilities, or anything that gets young people involved in doing stuff. And I think that's going to be absolutely core to the success of any redevelopment of any kind of library service. I think one of the things I read about in the initial proposals was the potential for some kind of high-tech maker space to be part of this. If that's fallen out, I think that's a real shame" – parent group

"If it's just a library then I can use the local library, but if you've got all this other stuff going up, then that's the reason to go there" - people with disabilities

Having adult education classes, access to council services and space for community groups in Stockroom was all seen as useful.

"Citizens Advice Bureau, Jobcentre Plus, I don't know, adult education stuff, you know, bringing some more public services around the library, you know, not just thinking about retail, but bringing other things that people may want to go to" - older people group

The additional 'offer', depending on what this may include, has the opportunity to make participants who are undecided switch to being generally more supportive, because they can see the importance and value of a public facility which provides the types of services that they envisage.

"For me if the right things go along with this development and the rest of that space is used well then potentially it does generate footfall which helps to drive more use and regeneration of the area as well, then I see a positive from that" – parent group

"If there are those things happening within that, such as art clubs or things for kids to do, then definitely sign me up. I think that is something I would like to do. But I think it is about knowing the full picture of what's going to be in the Stockroom" – parent group

"I think if anything that you can do at the moment in Central Library, you can do in the new place, and more than great" - people with disabilities group

"So if you think about services, maybe just like expanding it more than just being about education and learning, like it's a place to go and you know, actually just exist for free, one of the few places people can still do that, to socialise or just sit for free for a bit" – younger adult group

For a few who want to use or knew about the current archives provision, additional funding and a new location is seen as positive in terms of accessibility and protection of this resource.

"I think the concerns about the local history and archive facilities that are at Central Library just not really happening and just being sort of put away in the corner really needs to be addressed and suggest maybe looking at what they do with the People's History Museum in Manchester... they employ archivists, and you can go on a tour of the archive, it's very much alive. It's not just a storeroom, which I can see potentially happening" - people with disabilities group

However, the lack of any detail regarding any wider 'offer' made it difficult for many to be fully supportive of the proposed change, given they did not feel they were being given the whole picture to make a judgement on.

Support is also likely to be stronger for moving the library service if residents knew for certain what the Central Library might be used for. Not knowing this is the 'elephant in the room' and makes some who may support a move, reluctant to endorse the proposed plans, preferring to remain on the fence, until they know this.

"I think it could be a good thing but I would like to know what they propose rather than it [Central Library] just sort of like being empty for years and then before you know it, there is flats going in or something, it would be nice to know what the plans are because the building is stunning" – parent group

"I would feel very differently about the building in Merseyway if I thought there was a decent plan in place for the current building, I really feel that they should have gone hand in hand" - older people group

"I think the move to make it more accessible and having sort of like a multi-use building is a really good idea ... if it is done right, I think this this will be a benefit to Stockport" – young adult group

Questions and concerns

The proposed development was viewed as a small piece in a much bigger project, if the ultimate aim is to regenerate the heart of the town centre. Many wanted to know more about what else was planned, as they felt Stockroom in itself would not be enough and risks becoming a bit of a white elephant. There was a general consensus that more needs to be done to the surrounding area to make the investment worthwhile.

Many in the younger adult and parent focus groups spontaneously mentioned how they would like to see the Underbanks and the Old Market Hall being supported so they can continue to develop, so wanted to know how the Stockroom plans would work in conjunction to enhance the town centre, helping bring footfall to all these areas.

Questions were asked about what residential developments were planned to bring people back into the town, what strategy there was to support and encourage independent retailers, how would safety and anti-social behaviour be tackled to make people want to come into the town centre in the evening, how will different pockets of development being 'joined-up', what else would be in Stockroom to provide a reason to visit and what else in a wider town centre development would provide a reason to visit. Without knowing more about a wider strategic plan and holistic vision, they were left to judge the Stockroom proposal in isolation.

"I'd say Stockport is a bit rundown, its got some gorgeous buildings. We are seeing quite a bit of regeneration which is really exciting because there's lots of really lovely buildings and small businesses, so that's quite encouraging. But the main sort of hub of it has certainly died I'd say, the market, the market used to be buzzing, the Market Hall again is a spectacular building. So yeah, great people and everything but unfortunately I think it needs a bit of investment and some thought" – parent group

Questions were asked about the service that would be provided within a new Stockroom library, with a desire for 'friendly' staff rather than lots of automation and also regular opening hours. Many library users have been frustrated with limited and changing opening hours in their local libraries during the pandemic.

"And also when they talk about, you know, this all singing and dancing, new digital space, that it's not just digital, and it's not just self-service, and it doesn't turn into your local supermarket and its self-service checkout, I think in order for the people to use it, especially talking about accessibility as well...it needs to be fully staffed. And that people if they need to speak to somebody can get help, from a human being ... there needs to be an investment in people at the new location" - people with disabilities group

It is not clear from the information presented how Stockroom will be more accessible for those with disabilities; any specific details were missing from the presentation.

Depending on the answers to these questions, knowing more details may make residents more (or less) supportive of the proposed plans.

Reasons for being unsupportive

It is very difficult for residents to disentangle or treat in isolation their views about the proposed Stockroom development, their concerns about what will happen to the Central Library building and their hopes for a wider redevelopment of the town centre.

Those opposed, frequently in the focus group discussions came back with comments related to the future of Central Library.

"So what are they going to do with the building? That's my real concern is, you know, shifting things along, offering all these added extras but what's happening to the building? Is that staying for the public, for the community?"
- parent group

"I'm very, very concerned that this is a gigantic waste, a vanity project for Stockport to publish the fact that the town has not died" - older people group

"I'm just sceptical on how they [Stockport Council] are going to keep their promise that the original building isn't going to be messed around with" – young adult group

Despite being told in the presentation about the proposed plans that the Central Library building will not be demolished, nor sold, or redeveloped for housing and will retain public access, most participants, even those who see a benefit to the services which could be provided in Stockroom, were concerned and cynical about any pledge made by the Council. It is this which primarily underpins the lack of support amongst those who oppose the proposal.

"I also just don't believe that they won't just abandon Central Library or sell it, they just will" – young adult group

Few participants regularly shop in Merseyway, choosing to travel outside Stockport for a retail shop of any duration. The area was described as run-down, dirty and unsafe. This association has an impact on the appeal of the proposed plans, with many perceiving that any development will quickly become unused unless the wider area experiences a considerable transformation.

"It's not a nice place to be at night there's no pubs, there's no bars, there is nothing open until you go right over the other side to Redrock, it doesn't feel safe or nice around there" – parent group

"I'd rather shop there then go to like the Trafford Centre or Manchester because it is small and manageable, I've got a disability, so I struggle to stay on my feet for too long ... but at the moment it's like a really dodgy school corridor. There's nothing in it that I visit. I just use it to get from one place to another" - people with disabilities group

"What's going to happen when the shops are shut? And the library is open until seven o'clock? Is it a safe space? Is it a safe space for women? Is it safe space for anybody? Safe space for children? How do you make it safe space in the evening?" - older people group

"I think it will be easy to get to, but it being in Merseyway is probably going to result in a lot of like unpleasant people showing up there. And I can imagine it would probably get trashed pretty quickly, to be honest, that's my main concern" – young adult group

Therefore, the rationale for using the Future High Street funding to move the library service, from Central Library, as a catalyst for regeneration of the high street was not accepted by those who oppose the proposed plans.

"For me having the library in town seems completely ridiculous because it's in an area that no one even passes by. I mean the shopping centre can't even keep their shops open so how is it going to support a library" – parent group

"I'm a bit confused here because we've got a library service that we say is catering for 40 to 50% less people, we've got a shopping centre that people don't want to visit. How is putting the two together going to make it more successful? That doesn't add up to me, we've got cafes in town, we've got spaces in town for people to use that they don't go to.. People don't want to go to the library they don't want to go to the shops they [the Council] put them together and expect it to work" – parent group

"I think it's a huge waste of money because whilst it might have some facilities that are perhaps more appropriate than the current Central Library building, overall I think, well there are very few benefits really, I think we're better working with the Central Library as it is. I don't know what happens to the rest of Stockport but I think it's just going to continue its decline regardless of whether there's a shiny new library there or not" - older people group

"I think the issue is the funding around like the shops that surround it, so for example I wouldn't necessarily go into Stockport to use the shops because they're not particularly pleasant and if you were to move the library I would need more than just to use of the library ... so I think the investment in the

wider area is going to be quite important to making it desirable attract a cross section of people via the sort of events that you put on there” – young adult group

“I’m kind of mixed on it. I feel like it’s a good use of disused space but I don’t really think it’s going to rejuvenate the local area. I don’t really think it’s going to draw people in. I think it might just be something that people like pop into when they’re already there. But it’s better than nothing but then I am still also worried about the old building” – young adult group

Those opposed could not see why £14.5 million was being proposed to be spent on a new library, when they already have a Central Library, which would benefit from such investment. This led to those opposed to suggest using such money to repair the current Library and make it suitable for the 21st Century, without any appreciation of the costs or feasibility of this, or that the funding is predicated on projects to regenerate the High Street (despite being told in the presentation).

“Whatever they’re moving to this Stockroom, why rather than doing that just keep it inside the Central Library, modernise the inside, I don’t understand what the issue is, what is the point of moving it” – young adults group

“I think it’s a bad idea. I don’t think the benefits of moving to the Merseyway centre outweigh the cons of staying in Central Library, it’s going to be a way better idea to modernize Central Library than build something brand new. All the ideas they have currently got I think they should implement inside the library we already have” – young adults group

Possible future uses of the Central Library should the proposal plans go ahead

There was common agreement that should the proposed plans go ahead, then the Central Library building itself should continue to be an asset for the residents of Stockport. It is very much seen as a building which belongs to the people of Stockport.

“It should be about serving the community” – parent group

“It’s got to be something that it retains its status as a community asset, and that it doesn’t become something that is for private profit, or for exclusive private use” – parent group

“I’m reassured by the pledges around the future of Central Library. I wasn’t aware of those pledges. And I was concerned about what would happen to that

building in future once it was vacated by the library ... I think it's really important to have public access to the building and the fact that it won't be sold off and converted into residential" - people with disabilities group

"I feel quite strongly, I wouldn't want to see Stockport Central Library building go the same way [as other 'neglected' buildings mentioned such as Woodbank Hall and a former bank now the Stockport Carpet Centre]" - older people group

However, in all sessions, some participants felt the Council had wasted opportunities and reneged on promises about other heritage or landmark buildings that they own.

"I have no trust in that commitment because they've neglected other buildings. Why should I trust them on this?" - older people group

"They say they are not going to sell the freehold, it is not going to be abandoned and it's going to be left with public access but they said the exact same thing with the Post Office which is now the Post Box, I think it is called, it got left abandoned for 10 plus years, got disused before being sold and turned into apartments" – young adult group

Although participants had lots to say about various potential uses which they would or would not support, the economic reality including the cost of maintenance and upkeep of the Central Library building were not mentioned as factors or considerations in their desired choices.

Suggestions for potential future usage included being an innovation hub for small start-up businesses within Stockport, with the Council charging a nominal rent as a help to kick-start local entrepreneurship.

Some felt it should be taken over by the local college.

Others suggested it be filled with local social enterprises, or provide access to council services, have access to community help or citizen's advice, be a hub for different charities or due to its size a mix of all these.

"I was thinking about what's been done at the Corn Exchange in Manchester. So it's, it's, you know, there's restaurants and small independent retailers, rather than, you know, High Street, generic retailers. I don't think we do enough to encourage social enterprises. And there's much more in Manchester of that. It would be a great space for use for those sort of people to come together maybe like a sort of, you know, co-operative hub" - people with disabilities group

Even though the presentation said it would not be turned into residential properties, participants in the focus groups repeated and strongly emphasised that they did not want this to happen, nor did they want it to become a hotel.

With many cafes and bars nearby, although some mentioned this as a possible use, others wanted to see a different focus. The same rationale was used for not using the space as a produce hall, market type space, or for independent shops, given that these are already available and just getting established in and around the Underbanks and Old Market Hall.

"Whether something like a restaurant or a cafe would work, but then we've got kind of, you know, the new, the Old Market Hall has been taken over by lots of independent restaurants, so I don't think we necessarily need a second one of those when that one's kind of still part of being new" – young adult group

Some liked the idea of such an iconic building becoming a performance space, although others raised questions over what might or might not be suitable. For those in the younger and parents group this often meant live music and bands, whereas in the older people group this was more as an art or drama venue.

"I think it would be wonderful if there was really a good vision for it. It's a magical place. It's the most beautiful place ... maybe an art hub" - older people group

What underpinned all suggestions was the desire for the building to continue to play a part in making a positive difference to the people of Stockport.

"Turn it into some sort of like art like hub because you can keep the sort of integrity of the building, you don't have to modernize it in any way but then you're also introducing like other things into Stockport that we don't necessarily have" – young adult group

There is a strong desire for the building to be used, to be preserved and protected and for it to have public access.

"It needs to be seen and used by the community" - parent group

Overall summary

When asked whether they feel it is a good or bad idea to move Central Library to Stockroom in Merseyway, there were a mix of views for and against but those really opposed were much more strident and forthright in their opposition.

For over half of the respondents the proposed plans are overall seen as a possible positive first step to regenerate the town centre but much depends on what other plans and investments will also take place.

"I think, if it can be used as a way of regenerating the centre, and it works as the first step in a series of redevelopments, then it could be a good idea. But there are those caveats about what else is going to be going on there and what we do with the other building" - parent group

Support is also based on their desires for Stockroom to provide additional services – the offer is expected to be considerably better than what is available at Central Library to warrant any move.

This support is also subject to the Central Library building being preserved and continuing to be accessible for the people of Stockport.

"I'd say it's a good idea. The only caveat I have is about what they would do with the old building and I think that's what it all comes down to and understanding what else is going to be in the Stockroom" - parent group

Hence, whilst some were willing to be supportive with caveats, others preferred to sit on the fence, unable to make a firm declaration until they knew more; the plans for the library as presented not being enough in themselves.

"I'm kind of gonna sit on the fence a little bit, but I'm swaying more to good idea ... regenerating it all, that's a huge undertaking, I get that and maybe this is just the starting point, the first rung of the ladder to try and get that happening but hopefully, it won't be kind of like just putting a sticking plaster on it" – parent group

"I didn't find it possible to say it's either good or bad idea I don't think we've got enough information, I don't think they have thought the plan out enough, we don't know whether the retail will pick up, we don't know what the use of the old library will be. There are a lot of unknowns for me" - older people group

There is a smaller cohort who throughout the focus group they attended remained strongly opposed to any move because they cannot see the value of moving the content of Central Library to a new building in Merseyway, nor do they trust the Council to invest in and preserve the Central Library building, nor retain public access, despite the promises being made. The information presented did not provide any information to change their mind.

"I think the value of that building is as a library, I think that's its intrinsic value ... as a shell, it's got no value to me. It doesn't mean anything. To me, the gift was as a library. And that's what I think that's our heritage" - people with disabilities group

"I can just see the library getting moved to Stockroom the library not working and them cancelling the whole thing ... the Council have a knack of not really listening to people and not communicating ... so there's a real issue of trust with Stockport Council and their developments" – parent group

9. Appendix

9.1 Face to face survey questionnaire

Proposal to move Central Library services to Stockroom Consultation

Good morning/afternoon, my name is..... I am working for an independent research company called Qa Research on behalf of Stockport Council. We would be grateful if you could spare some time to answer some questions about a proposal to move existing library services from the Central Library building into Stockroom in Merseyway.

Before we begin, I'd like to reassure you that the interview will be carried out according to the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct; all the information provided will be treated as anonymous and confidential in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Let me know if there are any questions you do not wish to answer.
You can withdraw from the research at any time.

This leaflet explains the research, how the information you give me will be used and kept secure, and includes contact details for Qa Research. Our lawful basis for processing your personal data is consent and explicit consent.

Standard references to append to data set:

Interviewer name

Date

Time

S1. Which of the following best describes you/your visit today?

READ OUT

Single response

- Stockport Resident (you pay council tax to Stockport Council)
- Everyday shopping trip (a shopping trip that is part of your regular routine)
- Regular place of work
- On a business trip
- A leisure visitor to Stockport

S2. Do you agree to take part in this research?

Yes

No – THANK AND CLOSE

Section 1: Current usage of library services

Stockport Council has been awarded £14.5 million funding to spend on a new facility in Merseyway Shopping Centre called Stockroom.

The Council's done some engagement seeking opinions on what facilities could be in there. Now the Council is looking for views on moving the existing library service from Central Library building on the A6 into Stockroom in Merseyway.

It is becoming a challenge to deliver a 21st century library service in the building due to its layout and investment needed. Also the Heritage and Archives service only has a temporary accreditation as the collections' storage is substandard.

Unfortunately rules say Stockport Council can't spend the new funding on improving Central library building. That said, they don't want to demolish or abandon the building – it's Grade II listed and a much loved part of our town's heritage.

Everywhere library visitor numbers are declining but the Council believe Stockroom will attract more people to use the service. It is also hoped Stockroom will breathe new life into empty retail space and bring people to the town centre.

Stockroom is bigger than Central Library and will provide better storage for valuable collections. It will have car parking spaces; a café, research and study spaces, wifi and computers to use by all as well as events and other activities.

The following questions are in relation to what I have explained.

Q1. How often do you use Stockport Council's library buildings or services?

READ OUT

Single response

Daily
Weekly
Monthly
Every other month
A few times per year
Rarely
Never

Q2. And how often do you visit the Central Library building in Stockport?

READ OUT

Single response

Daily
Weekly
Monthly
Every other month
A few times per year
Rarely
Never

If NEVER AT Q2 GO TO Q8, ALL OTHERS ASK Q3

Q3. When do you next plan to visit the Central Library building in Stockport?

READ OUT

Single response

Today
This week
Next week
Next month
At some point after next month
Never
Don't know

Q4 How often do you use each of the following library services?

READ OUT AND SELECT ONE ANSWER FOR EACH SERVICE

Single response

Daily
Weekly
Monthly
Every other month
A few times per year
Rarely
Never

LOOP Q4

Book loans – in person
Book loans – online
Computer or wifi access
Heritage and archive materials
Council advice and guidance
Browse a range of periodicals and news publications
Research or study

Q5 And to what extent are each of the following library services important to you as a Stockport resident?

Only show highlighted text if resident at S1

READ OUT AND SELECT ONE ANSWER FOR EACH SERVICE

Single response

Not at all important
Not very important
Neither important nor unimportant
Slightly important
Very important
Don't know / can't say

LOOP Q5

Book loans – in person
Book loans – online
Computer or wifi access
Heritage and archive materials
Council advice and guidance
Browse a range of periodicals and news publications
Research or study

Q6. Which of the following modes of transport would you typically use to travel to the Central Library building?

READ OUT AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

Multiple response

Walking/By foot
Bicycle
Car/motorbike
Public bus/coach service
Train
Other (please specify)

Q7. How would you rate the quality of the service provided by the Central Library in each of the following areas...

READ OUT AND SELECT ONE ANSWER FOR EACH SERVICE

Single response

- Very poor
- Fairly poor
- Neither good nor poor
- Fairly good
- Very good
- Don't know
- Never used this service prior to the Covid-19 pandemic

LOOP Q7

Variety and availability of books

Public PCs and internet access

Community events and activities

Family and children's activities

Heritage library services (e.g. archives to explore Stockport's or your own family history)

Provision of other information e.g. tourist information or information about council services

If NEVER AT Q2 ASK Q8, ALL OTHERS GO TO Q9

Q8. Why do you never use the Stockport Central Library?

READ OUT AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

Multiple response

- No interest in library services
- Difficulty getting to the library
- Difficulty accessing the library building
- Opening hours don't suit me
- Not applicable to me
- Not local to me
- I can access the information I need online
- Cost of parking
- I can get what I need from my local library
- Don't know
- Other (please specify)

ASK ALL

Section 2: Proposal to move library services

Stockport Council are asking people to complete this questionnaire to understand people's views on the proposed move of library services from the Central Library building, into Stockroom as described earlier.

Q9. How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom?

Single response

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

If AGREE AT Q9 ASK Q10

Q10. Please explain why you agree with the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom?

WRITE IN

If DISAGREE AT Q9 ASK Q11

Q11. Please explain why you disagree with the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom?

WRITE IN

ASK ALL

If a decision is made to relocate the library service from the Central Library building, the Council is exploring potential future uses. They have already made the following comments:

- It will not demolish or abandon the building
- It will not sell the freehold to it
- It will not allow the building to be developed for residential use
- Any potential use will ensure that public access can be retained to the building

If the library is relocated to Stockroom, this is likely to be in Summer 2023 at the earliest and the library will be retained in the current building until then. Given this is around two years away, the Council are at the early stages of considering alternative uses for the building once it becomes vacant.

Initial work that the Council has undertaken has highlighted a number of potential uses based on experience of what other similar buildings have been used as elsewhere in the country and what there might be demand for. There may be other uses suggested through this process or come to light in the next two years. Current options, which could be combined, are: hospitality; food and beverage; shared office or working space uses; other Council uses; other public sector uses; community uses.

Q12. We would like to hear what you think about these suggestions and if you have any other suggestions for alternative uses for the Central Library building if the library service is relocated to Stockroom?

WRITE IN

Q13. Based on the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom, how often do you think you would visit the library in the new location?

READ OUT

Single response

Daily

Weekly

Monthly

Every other month

A few times per year

Rarely

Never

Q14. What other comments or suggestions do you have about the proposal to move services from Central Library to Stockroom?

WRITE IN

Q15. Are you responding as...

A resident of Stockport

On behalf of a voluntary or community group
 A local business owner
 A public sector organisation
 A councilor or MP
 Other (please specify)

IF Q15 IS RESIDENT, COUNCILLOR/MP OR OTHER ASK SECTION 3; ALL OTHERS GO TO Q26
Section 3: About you

Finally, we'd like to find out a little more about you. Answering these questions is entirely voluntary. If there are any questions that you'd rather not answer, there is an option for prefer not to say. No identifiable information will be shared in public reports.

Q16. What is your gender?

READ OUT

Single response

Male
 Female
 Non-binary
 Prefer to self-describe
 Prefer not to answer
 Other (please specify)

Q17. What is your age?

READ OUT

Single response

0-17
 18-24
 25-34
 35-44
 45-54
 55-64
 65-74
 75-84
 85+
 Prefer not to answer

Q18. How would you define your ethnic group?

READ OUT

Single response

White English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
 White Gypsy or Irish Traveller
 White - Irish
 White - any other White background, please specify
 Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
 Mixed - White and Black African
 Mixed - White and Asian
 Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background, please specify
 Black or Black British African
 Black or Black British Caribbean
 Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, please specify
 Asian or Asian British Indian

Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi
 Asian or Asian British Pakistani
 Asian or Asian British Chinese
 Any other Asian background, please specify
 Other ethnic group – Arab
 Any other ethnic group, please specify
 Prefer not to answer

Q19. How would you define your religion or belief?

READ OUT

Single response

No religion
 Christian
 Buddhist
 Hindu
 Jewish
 Muslim
 Sikh
 Other, please specify
 Prefer not to say

Q20. What is your sexuality?

READ OUT

Single response

Heterosexual/straight
 Gay or Lesbian
 Bisexual
 Other, please specify
 Prefer not to say

Q21. Do you consider yourself to have an impairment, disability, or long term health condition?

READ OUT

Single response

Yes
 No
 Prefer not to say

Q22. What is your employment status?

READ OUT

Single response

Employed full-time
 Employed part-time
 Self-employed
 Unemployed
 Unable to work due to long term sick/disabled
 Retired
 Home-maker/Care-giver
 Student
 Other
 Prefer not to say

If Q22 is employed full-time or employed part-time ask Q23, Others go to Q24

Q23. Are you...?

READ OUT

Single response

Furloughed for all of your contracted hours

Furloughed for some of your contracted hours

Not furloughed

Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

Q24. Do you have any children under the age of 18 in your household?

READ OUT AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

Multiple response

Yes - children aged under 5 years old

Yes - children aged 5 to 10 years old

Yes - children aged 11 to 15 years old

Yes - children aged 16 or 17 years old

No

Prefer not to say

Q25. What is your postcode? (This will be used for analysis purpose only. It will not be used to identify you, or be passed on to any third parties)

Postcode fields

Prefer not to say

Prize draw

Q26. Would you like to be entered into the prize draw to win a £100 high street shopping voucher? The draw will be administered by Stockport Council. You will be asked to provide your name and contact details if you would like to be entered in the draw for a chance to win. If your name is selected, you will be contacted on the telephone number or email address you have provided. Your contact details will not be used for any other purpose. Names will be selected at random. Entering the prize draw is voluntary, you do not have to enter the draw to take part in the consultation.

Yes I consent to being entered into the draw

No I would not like to be entered

If Q26 is Yes ask Q27-29, Others go to Q30

Q27. As you would like to take part in further research, I need to record some details. Firstly your name...

Open ended

Q28. What is your email address?

Open ended – please ensure can be left blank

Q29. What is your phone number?

Open ended – please ensure can be left blank

ASK ALL

Q30. As part of our quality control procedure, a research supervisor may contact you in order to confirm the accuracy of the interview and to ensure you were happy with the interview.

This information will not be used for any other purpose nor given to any 3rd parties. In order to do this, can we take your name and telephone number?

Yes (collect details)

No

If yes collect details - if not go to end of survey

Name:

Telephone number:

Thank and end survey

Project details

Project number **Stake04-8868**

Location [STAKE04-8868 Stockroom Stakeholder Engagement](#)

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This research has been carried out in compliance with the International standard ISO 20252, (the International Standard for Market and Social research), The Market Research Society's Code of Conduct and UK Data Protection law.

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