

Bury Library Service

Initial Public Consultation

August 2016

Bury Council

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Bury Council

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1 Introduction

Mott MacDonald were commissioned by Bury Council to undertake consultation with local residents regarding their usage of, and views on options for changes to, the local library service.

This research was undertaken in response to the Government's 2016/17 Comprehensive Spending Review, which requires Bury Council to make financial savings over the next four years. As a result of this, while Bury Council remains committed to retaining a high quality library service, it is accepted that some changes will be necessary to the way in which the service is delivered.

Bury Council is currently undertaking a wider consultation exercise on the future of library services, with paper questionnaires distributed within its libraries in order to gain the views of active library users plus a link to an online version of the consultation questionnaire available on the Council's website¹. However, this component of the research sought to engage with a random sample of Bury residents, in order to gain insight into the extent to which they are currently using library services and their views on a range of principles which the council proposes should underpin any changes to the service in the future.

These proposed principles, developed by Bury Council, are:

- **Principle 1:** To provide a Library Service across the borough which provides all residents with access to libraries and to electronic services sufficient in number, range and quality to support reading for pleasure, lifelong learning, the development of new skills and the effective use of information.
- **Principle 2:** To ensure the needs of more vulnerable residents and groups protected by Equalities legislation are taken fully into account in the provision of these services.
- **Principle 3:** To ensure the resources committed to the Library Service are used as efficiently as possible by exploring options to reduce running and maintenance costs and to share premises with Council and other services.
- **Principle 4:** To explore options for investing in technology to improve access to the Library Service, for example by extending opening hours, increasing our digital offer and enhancing provision for those with sensory impairments.
- **Principle 5:** To welcome the contribution that members of the community can make to the Library Service as volunteers, supporting both traditional and digital services.
- **Principle 6:** To meet local aspirations for a network of community spaces across the borough in which the Council and local communities can work together as partners in meeting local needs.

Source: Bury Council Library Services

This research utilised a questionnaire designed by Bury Council, which mirrors the questionnaire distributed within local libraries, and was delivered using a computer-aided telephone interview (CATI) methodological approach. A copy of this questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

A CATI methodology was selected as it enables effective engagement with a random sample of local residents – with interviewers guiding respondents through the questions over the telephone. These

¹ <http://www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=12184>

interviews were undertaken by Protel, who were commissioned by Mott MacDonald to support on this research task due to their CATI facilities and expertise.

All Bury residents over the age of 16 years were eligible for participation in this research, with Protel adopting a three stage sampling approach to compile a robust random telephone sample. This included using the Postal Address File (PAF) and BT OASIS file, followed by supplementary lifestyle databases and Random Digital Dial (RDD).

A quota of 500 interviews was set at the outset of the project, with this offering a margin of error of +/- 4.4% (based on a viewpoint shared by 50% of respondents) at a 95% confidence level.

Quantitative data has been analysed utilising SPSS statistical analysis software, and open ended comments have been thematically coded to draw out key points made by respondents.

This report summarises headline findings to emerge from these CATI interviews.

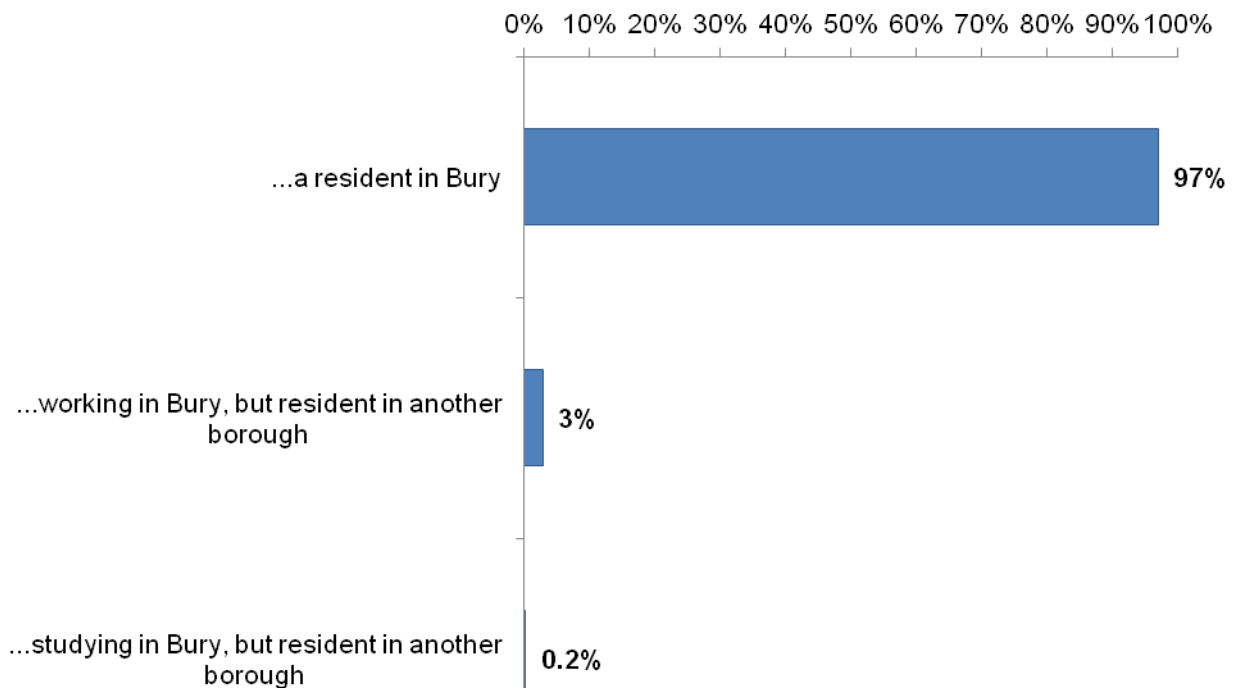
2 Sample Profile

This section of this report provides a demographic overview of those who participated in the research.

2.1 Resident Status

Respondents were asked to indicate the capacity in which they were participating in this survey, as presented in Figure 2.1:

Figure 2.1: Please indicate whether you are:



Base: 500

The majority of respondents (97%) were residents in Bury.

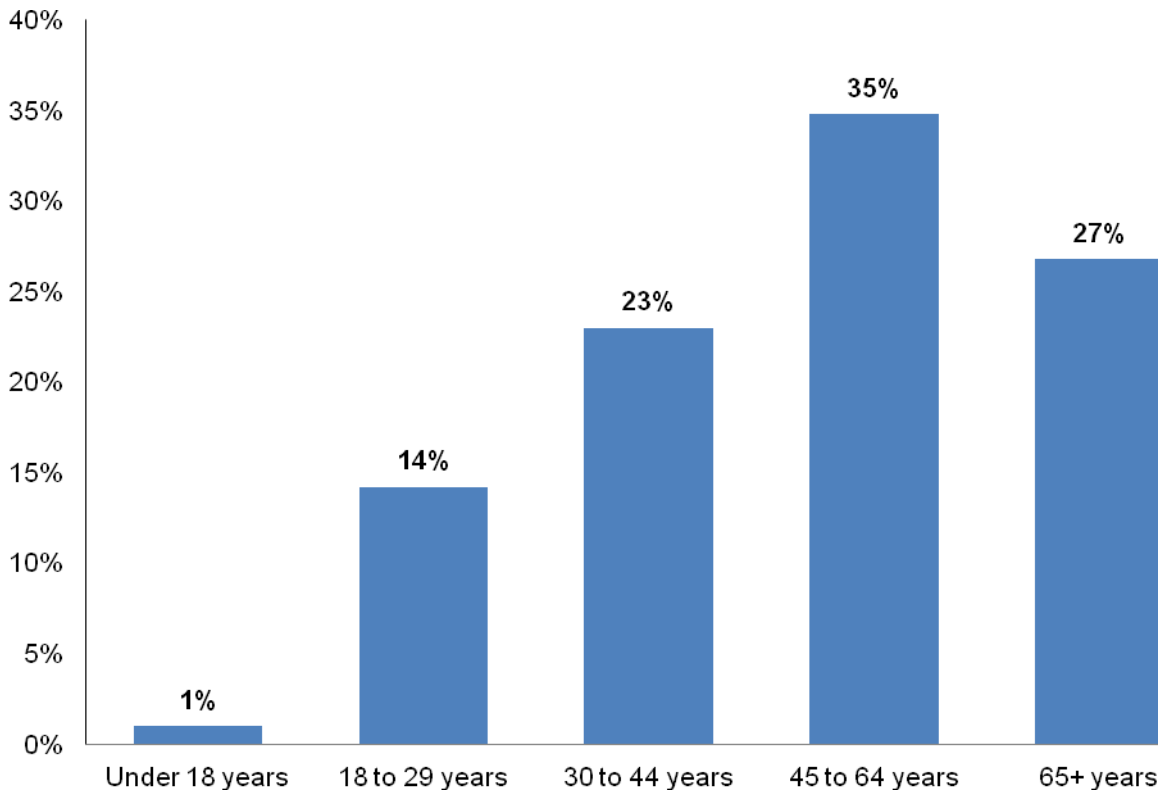
2.2 Gender

Just over half of respondents identified as Female (53%), whilst just less than half identified as Male (47%).

2.3 Age

The age categories which respondents indicated that they belonged to are presented in Figure 2.2 below:

Figure 2.2: What is your age?



Base: 499

Just over a third of respondents indicated that they were aged between 45 and 64 years (35%).

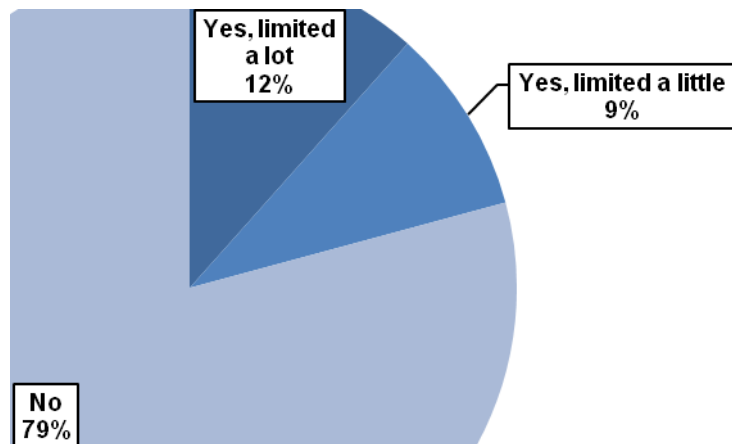
2.4 Ethnicity

In terms of ethnicity, of a total of 499 respondents who provided this information, 94% identified as white (94%), whilst 6% identified as belonging to a black or minority ethnic group (BAME).

2.5 Disability

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt that their day-to-day activities were limited due to a health problem or disability, as presented in Figure 2.3 overleaf:

Figure 2.3: Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? Include problems related to getting older.



Base: 500

Over 20% of respondents indicated that their day-to-day activities were limited to some extent by a disability or health problem (21%).

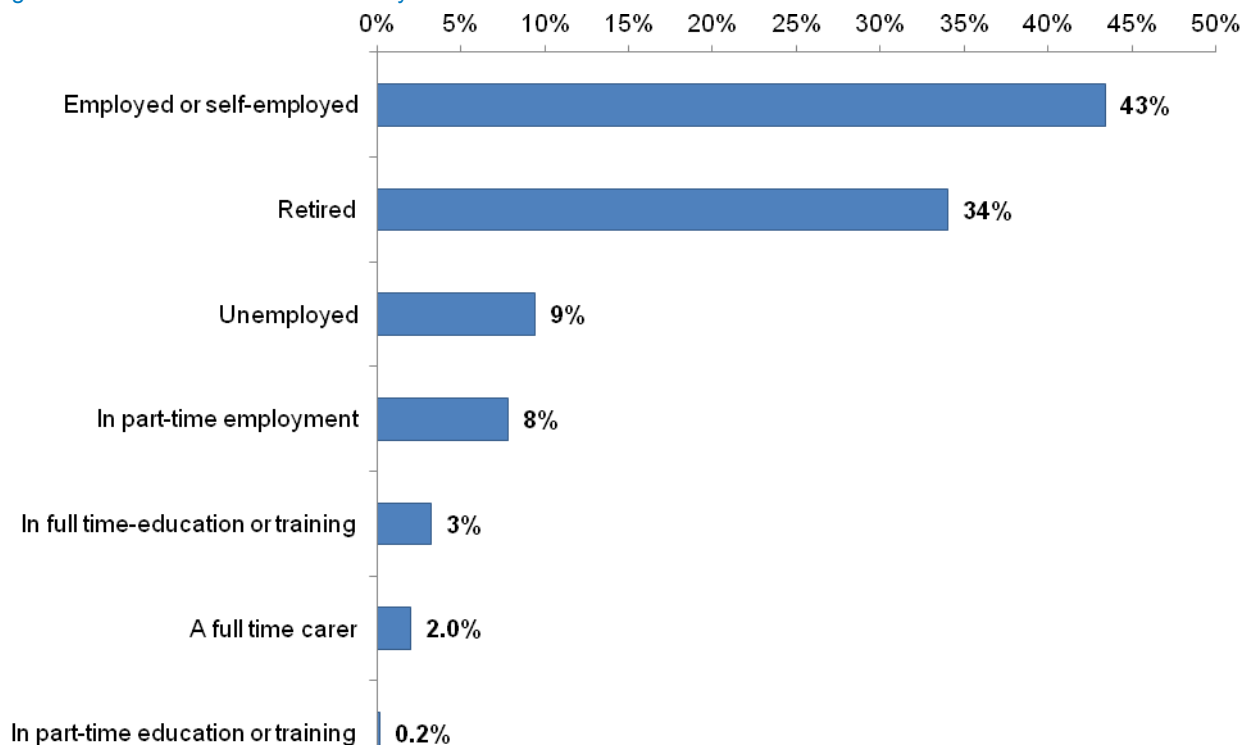
2.6 Caring Responsibilities

Almost a fifth (18%) of respondents indicated that they had caring responsibilities, including caring for family, friends, neighbours or others due to long term health problems, disabilities or problems associated with age.

2.7 Employment Status

Respondents' employment status is presented in Figure 2.4 below:

Figure 2.4: Please indicate whether you are:



Source: Insert source text here

Just over two fifths of respondents indicated that they were employed or self-employed (43%), while over one third indicated that they were retired (34%).

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3 Main Findings

This section of the report details the main findings to emerge from CATI interviews undertaken with a random sample of 500 Bury residents.

3.1 Principles for Change

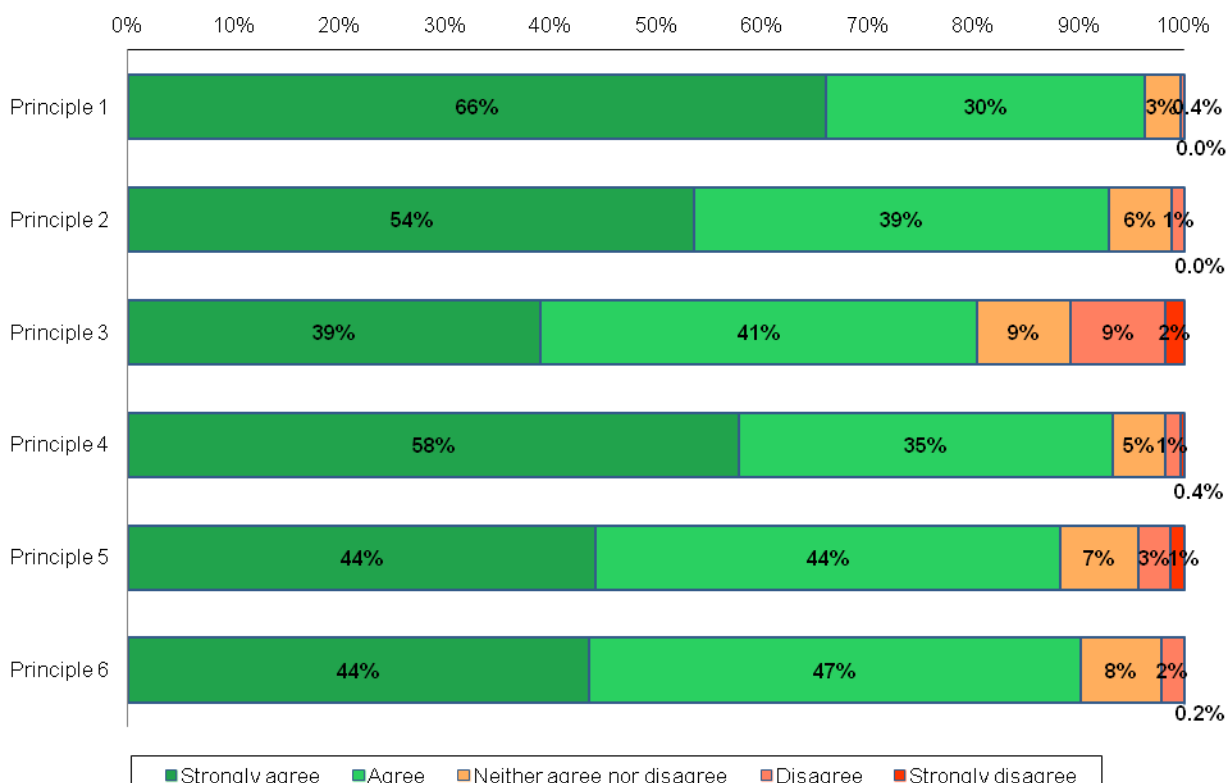
At the outset of the questionnaire, respondents were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with the proposed principles which Bury Council has developed to underpin changes to their library service.

- **Principle 1:** To provide a Library Service across the borough which provides all residents with access to libraries and to electronic services sufficient in number, range and quality to support reading for pleasure, lifelong learning, the development of new skills and the effective use of information.
- **Principle 2:** To ensure the needs of more vulnerable residents and groups protected by Equalities legislation are taken fully into account in the provision of these services.
- **Principle 3:** To ensure the resources committed to the Library Service are used as efficiently as possible by exploring options to reduce running and maintenance costs and to share premises with Council and other services.
- **Principle 4:** To explore options for investing in technology to improve access to the Library Service, for example by extending opening hours, increasing our digital offer and enhancing provision for those with sensory impairments.
- **Principle 5:** To welcome the contribution that members of the community can make to the Library Service as volunteers, supporting both traditional and digital services.
- **Principle 6:** To meet local aspirations for a network of community spaces across the borough in which the Council and local communities can work together as partners in meeting local needs.

Source: Bury Council Library Services

Figure 3.1 overleaf presents the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with each of these statements:

Figure 3.1: The Council is proposing six key principles to guide the development of options for change [to the library service]. Please indicate whether you agree or not with each one:



Base: 500

There were generally high levels of agreement across each of these principles, with this ranging from 80% (Principle 3) to 96% (Principle 1).

Table 3.1 below presents these statements sorted in descending order based upon level of agreement:

Table 3.1: Proposed Principles by Level of Agreement

		Level of Agreement (Combined Strongly Agree and Agree %)	Level of Disagreement (Combined Strongly Disagree and Disagree %)
Principle 1:	To provide a Library Service across the borough which provides all residents with access to libraries and to electronic services sufficient in number, range and quality to support reading for pleasure, lifelong learning, the development of new skills and the effective use of information.	96%	0.4%
Principle 2:	To ensure the needs of more vulnerable residents and groups protected by Equalities legislation are taken fully into account in the provision of these services.	93%	1%
Principle 4:	To explore options for investing in technology to improve access to the Library Service, for example by extending opening hours, increasing our digital offer and enhancing provision for those with sensory impairments.	93%	2%
Principle 6:	To meet local aspirations for a network of community spaces across the borough in which the Council and local communities can work together as partners in meeting local	90%	2%

		Level of Agreement (Combined Strongly Agree and Agree %)	Level of Disagreement (Combined Strongly Disagree and Disagree %)
	needs.		
Principle 5:	To welcome the contribution that members of the community can make to the Library Service as volunteers, supporting both traditional and digital services.	88%	4%
Principle 3:	To ensure the resources committed to the Library Service are used as efficiently as possible by exploring options to reduce running and maintenance costs and to share premises with Council and other services.	80%	11%

Base: 500

Respondents were then asked if there were any other principles which they felt should be taken into account during the review. A total of 90 respondents suggested additional points, which are summarised in the list below:

- Libraries need to stay open (19 comments)
- Access/services for children (10 comments)
- Disability access (8 comments)
- Computer / IT / Internet facilities are very important (6 comments)
- Services for vulnerable / disadvantaged people (5 comments)
- Access/facilities for the Elderly (5 comments)
- Flexible opening times (4 comments)
- Need to retain paper books (3 comments)
- Facilities for ethnic minorities / non-English speakers (3 comments)

A further 31 comments were classified as ‘other / miscellaneous’, whilst 4 respondents indicated that they were unsure which other principles should be included at this stage.

3.2 Use of Library Services

Respondents were asked whether they currently use Bury’s Library Service, as presented in Figure 3.2 overleaf:

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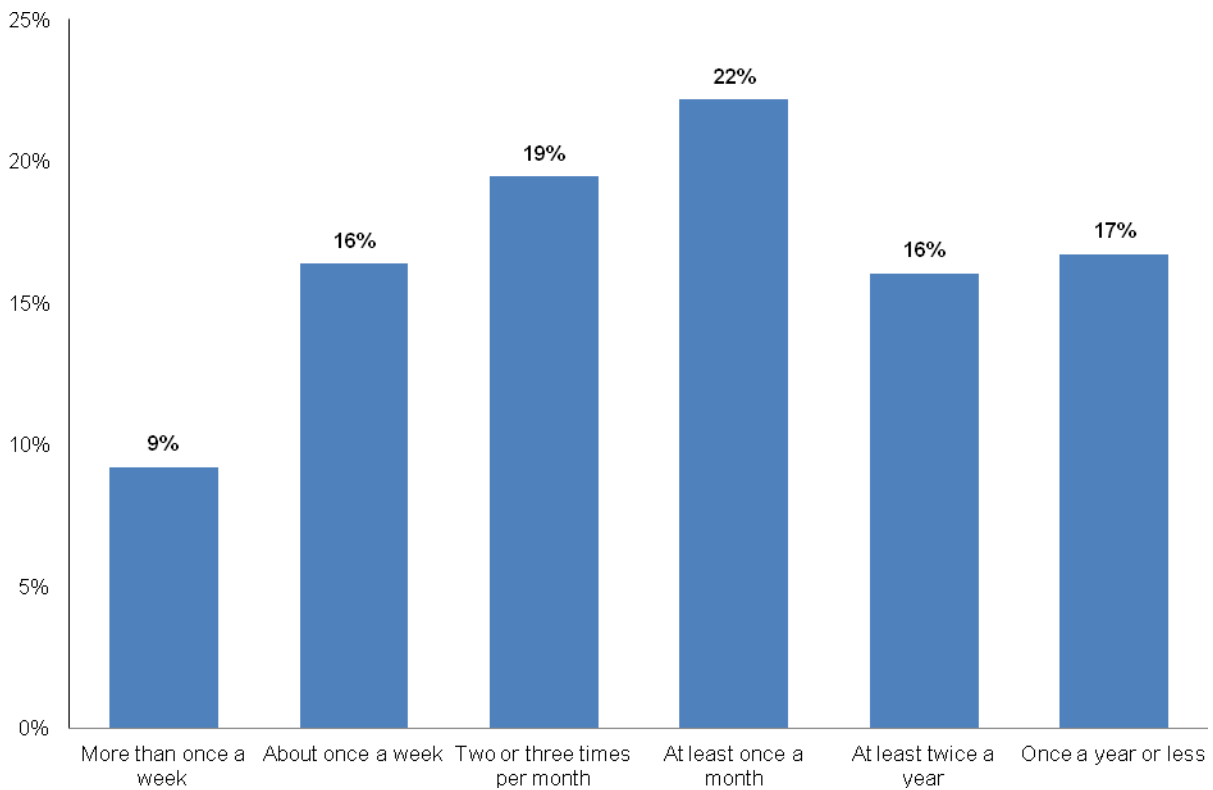
Figure 3.2: Do you use Bury's Library Service



Base: 500

Almost 6 in 10 respondents reported that they do currently use the Library Service.

Figure 3.3: Approximately how often do you visit a library?

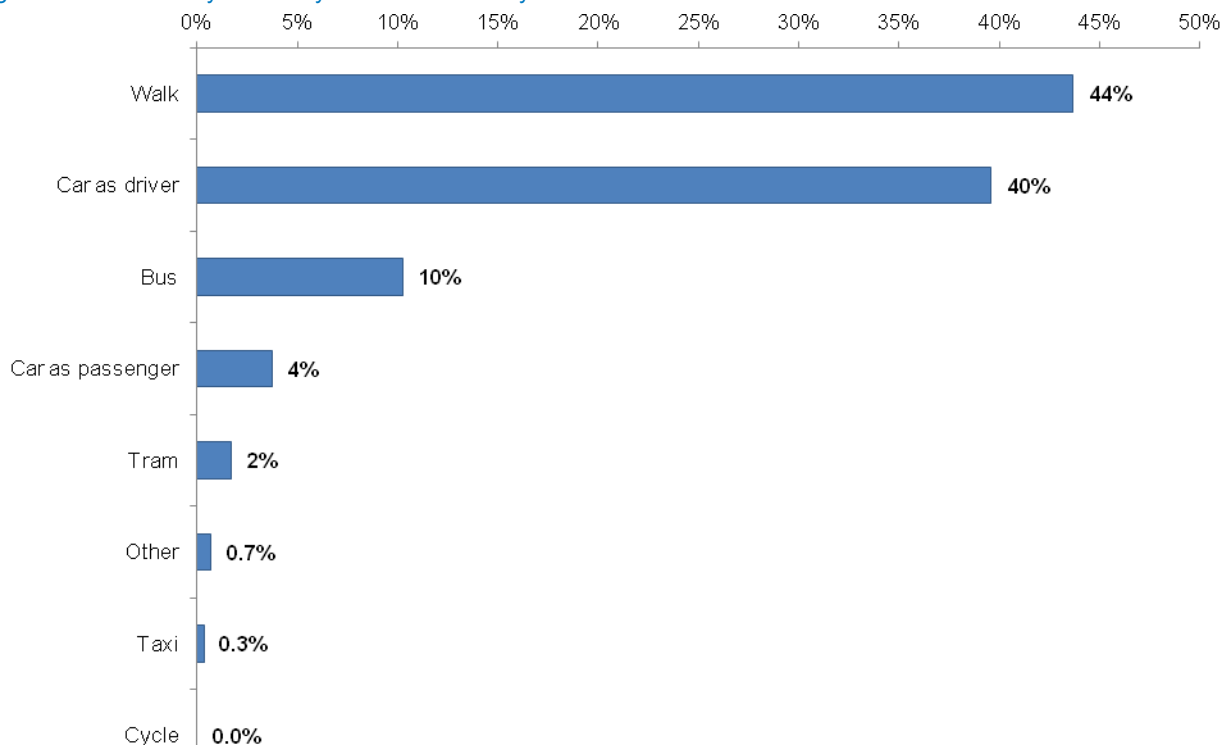


Base: 293

Two thirds of those who **do** currently use the Library Service indicated that they do so once a month or more often (66%); suggesting frequent usage of the service amongst this random sample of Bury residents.

Respondents were then asked how they usually travel to the library, as detailed in Figure 3.4 overleaf:

Figure 3.4: How do you usually travel to the library?

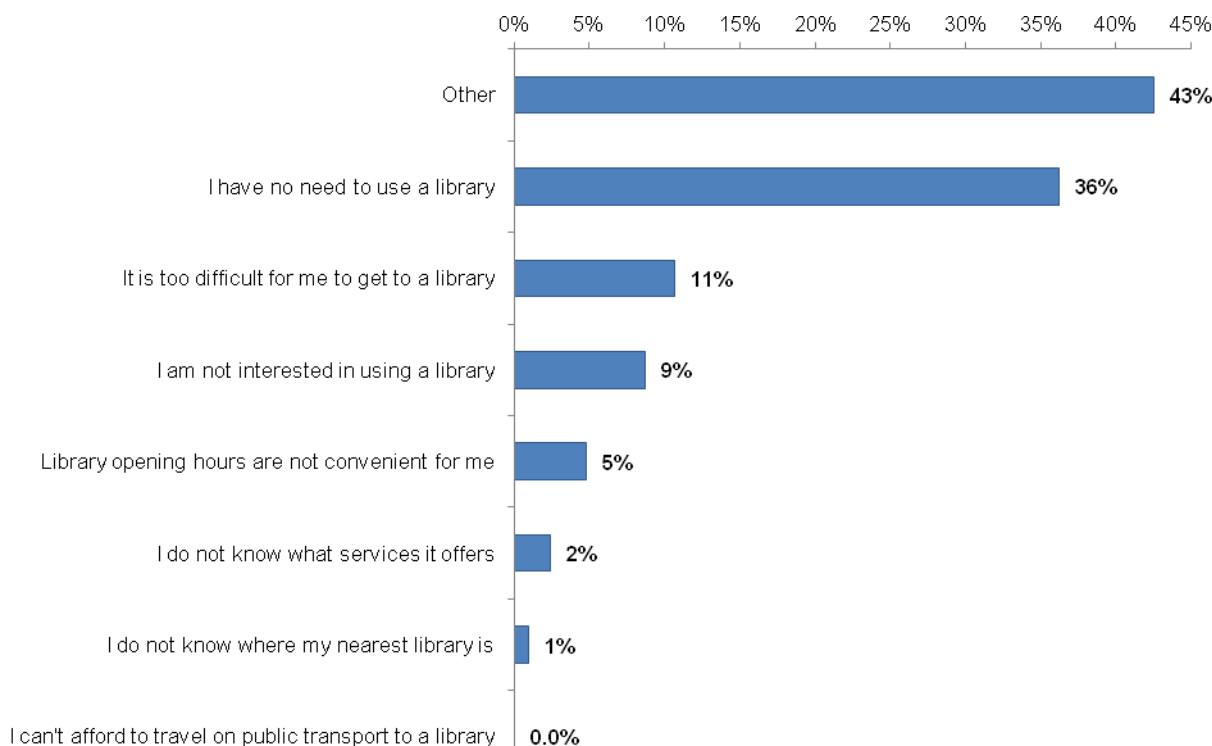


Base: 293

Similar proportions of respondents reported travelling to the library on foot (44%) or as the driver of a car (40%). This suggests a possible tension between the use of sustainable, active modes and the use of private transport to access the service and the potential to promote alternative means of accessing the service to encourage mode shift.

Those who indicated that they **do not** currently use the Library Service were asked why this was the case, as presented in Figure 3.5 overleaf:

Figure 3.5: Please indicate below the reason/s why you do not use Bury's Library Service.



Base: 207 (Multiple Response)

Almost a third of respondents indicated that they have no need to use a library (32%); potentially suggesting the need for further promotion of the range of facilities and services offered in order to challenge this perception.

Of those who stated an 'other' reason for not using the Library Service, these included:

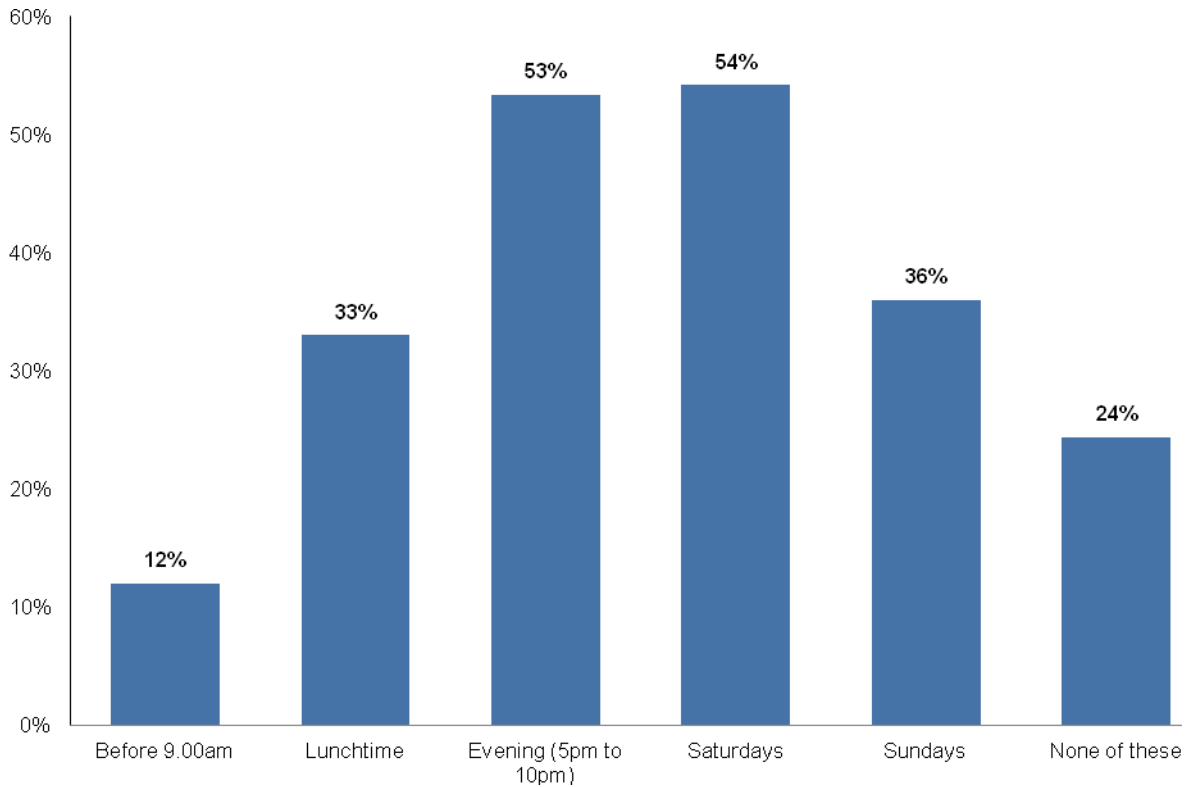
- Don't have time / too busy to use service (18 comments)
- Unable to use service due to own or family member's illness / health condition (16 comments)
- Prefer using online resources (14 comments)
- Use alternative library services / resources (e.g. work / university) (11 comments)
- Prefer to buy own books / read at home / given books by friends and family (11 comments)
- I do not read much/like to read / unable to read (7 comments)
- Prefer to read electronic books / Kindle (4 comments)
- Parking issues (2 comments)

3.3 A Future Library Service

Respondents were asked to consider a number of options for the future of Bury Library Service, including issues of opening hours, digital services and new technologies.

In terms of opening times, respondents were asked whether a proposed range of extended opening times would make it easier for them to access the library, as outlined in Figure 3.6 overleaf:

Figure 3.6: The Council may consider options for extending opening hours. Please indicate which times, if any, would make it easier for you to use the Library Service. Note that the library may not be staffed at all these times.



Base: 500 (Multiple Response)

Over half of respondents felt that the Library Service being accessible during the evenings from 5pm to 10pm (53%), would make it easier for them to make use of the service. Over half also indicated that opening on Saturdays (54%) would make accessing the service easier.

Improvements to digital services, and the potential impact of this upon respondents' likelihood of using library services was also explored, as outlined in Figure 3.7 overleaf:

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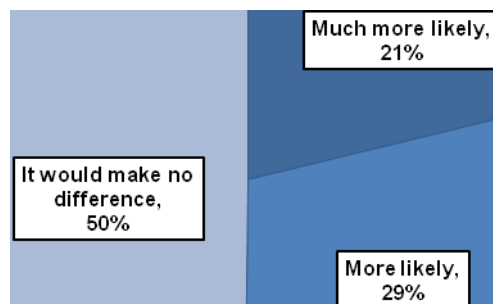
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Figure 3.7: The Council is considering improving digital services within its Library Service.

These might include: downloadable e-newspapers and magazines, music and video streaming, increased online resources for researching local and family history, remote access on all devices to the library catalogue and free Wi-Fi.

Would you be more likely to use the Library Service, or use it more than you do now, if these services were available?

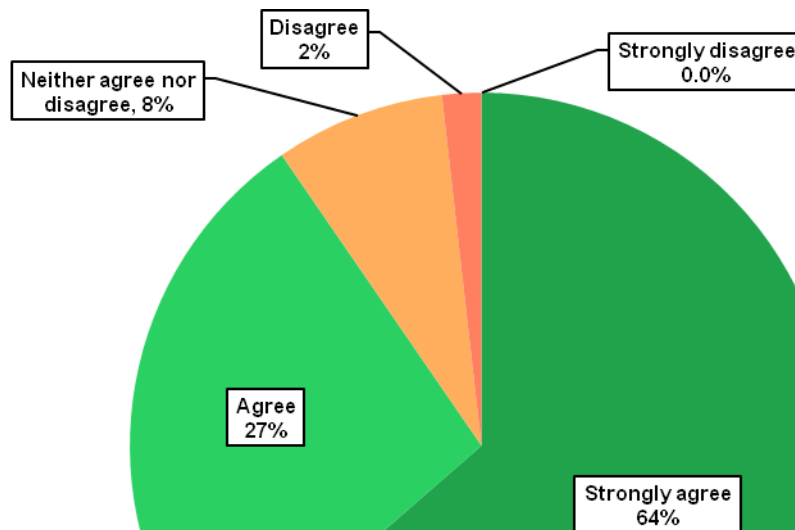


Base: 500

Half of respondents indicated that improving digital services would have no impact on their usage of the Library Service (50%).

Respondents were then asked whether they felt that the Library Service should endeavour to help everyone to take advantage of new technologies, as presented in Figure 3.8 overleaf:

Figure 3.8: The Council would like the Library Service to help everyone take advantage of new technologies. Do you agree that the Library Service should develop in this way?



Base: 500

Nine in 10 respondents felt that the Library Service should develop so as to help everyone to take advantage of new technologies (91%).

Respondents were also asked whether they would consider volunteering to support the Library Service in Bury, with a third of respondents (33%) indicating that they would be willing to do so.

3.4 Other comments

At the close of the survey, respondents were asked if they had any other points they wished to make regarding the Bury Library Service Review, with 136 respondents providing further comments.

Key themes to emerge within these comments are detailed below:

- Don't close the library / libraries (24 comments)
- Library provides a valuable service to the community (17 comments)
- Libraries / services are good (16 comments)
- Computer / IT / internet services are very good (12 comments)
- Services for children / young people are important (8 comments)
- Libraries / services need to be better / not what they used to be (7 comments)
- Library staff are very good (7 comments)
- Keep / get more books (6 comments)
- Longer opening hours (5 comments)

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- Services for the elderly / disabled are important (5 comments)
- Services for vulnerable / disadvantaged are important (3 comments)
- Free parking / parking issues (3 comments)
- Mobile library is good / need a mobile library (3 comments)
- Coffee machine would be good (3 comments)

A further 31 comments were made which were categories as 'other / miscellaneous'.

4 Conclusions

This section summarises key conclusions to emerge from this research.

This study was undertaken using CATI interviews with a random sample of 500 Bury residents in order to explore their current usage of the Library Service and views on proposals for the future of this.

When presented with six key principles to guide the development of the library services in the future, there was a high level of agreement with each of these, as presented Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1: Proposed Principles by Level of Agreement

	Level of Agreement (Combined Strongly Agree and Agree %)	Level of Disagreement (Combined Strongly Disagree and Disagree %)
Principle 1: To provide a Library Service across the borough which provides all residents with access to libraries and to electronic services sufficient in number, range and quality to support reading for pleasure, lifelong learning, the development of new skills and the effective use of information.	96%	0.4%
Principle 2: To ensure the needs of more vulnerable residents and groups protected by Equalities legislation are taken fully into account in the provision of these services.	93%	1%
Principle 4: To explore options for investing in technology to improve access to the Library Service, for example by extending opening hours, increasing our digital offer and enhancing provision for those with sensory impairments.	93%	2%
Principle 6: To meet local aspirations for a network of community spaces across the borough in which the Council and local communities can work together as partners in meeting local needs.	90%	2%
Principle 5: To welcome the contribution that members of the community can make to the Library Service as volunteers, supporting both traditional and digital services.	88%	4%
Principle 3: To ensure the resources committed to the Library Service are used as efficiently as possible by exploring options to reduce running and maintenance costs and to share premises with Council and other services.	80%	11%

Base: 500

Maintaining access to the libraries for all Bury residents, as well as providing specific support for more vulnerable residents emerged as key priorities amongst respondents.

As well as maintaining the service, respondents also indicated that they were key to see the ongoing development of the Library Service, through extended opening hours, broadening digital service capabilities and offering specific, innovative, services for those with sensory impairments.

Notably, around 6 in 10 respondents indicated that they currently make use of the Library Service (59%); with two thirds of those who do use the service doing so at least once a month (66%).

Amongst those who do not currently use the library service, a perception that they have no need to use this was prevalent amongst around a third of respondents (32%). This suggests the need to promote the wide range of services available within across the Library Service, plus the need to broaden the service offer in line with the principles and proposals set out within this consultation.

Around three quarters of respondents felt that extended opening times may make it easier for them to use the Library Service; with over half expressing a preference for access to this during evenings (53%) and on Saturdays (54%).

A more mixed view was evident in responses towards the impact of improvements to the Library Service's digital service offer; with half of respondents indicating that this would make no difference to the amount they choose to access the Service (50%).

In contrast, 9 in 10 respondents felt that the Library Service should develop so as to provide access to, and allow Bury residents to take advantage of new technologies (91%). This suggests that, whilst many residents may have access to digital services such as laptops, tablets, smartphones and the internet at home, the prospect of the Library introducing residents to new and innovative technologies was appealing to respondents as a way forward for the Service.

Overall, respondents demonstrated relatively frequent usage of current library services, plus a strong sense of agreement with each of the principles proposed by Bury Council to secure the ongoing development of the Library Service despite funding constraints. This is particularly noteworthy given the random nature of the sample for this research, with this element of the consultation providing insight into the views of a cross-section of Bury residents rather than focussing specifically on engagement with known library users.

Appendices

Appendix A. Questionnaire

Bury Library Service

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Why Bury Council is reviewing its Library Service and is asking you to complete this survey

In response to Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, the Council must find ways of delivering savings over the next four years.

The Council remains committed to retaining a high quality library service, but anticipates that there will be changes.

However, the Council will continue to provide a service that meets its legal duties, including to its more vulnerable residents and to groups protected by Equalities legislation.

It will support the aspirations of residents of all ages for lifelong learning, access to books and information.

In reviewing the service, the Council will consider how technologies, including computers and digital services, can continue to improve the Library Service. The Council will look at the contribution the Library Service can make to helping everyone take advantage of these technologies.

The Council recognises the importance of libraries as community spaces. The review will explore options for strengthening their role in meeting community needs.

This survey asks for your views on these issues and about your current use of the Library Service. Whether you use the service or not, you are invited to participate. The Council values the views of all residents.

PRINCIPLES

The Council is proposing SIX KEY PRINCIPLES to guide the development of options for change. Please indicate whether you agree or not with each one.

PRINCIPLE 1 To provide a Library Service across the borough which provides all residents with access to libraries and to electronic services sufficient in number, range and quality to support reading for pleasure, lifelong learning, the development of new skills and the effective use of information.

Please indicate below whether you agree with Principle 1.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

PRINCIPLE 2 To ensure the needs of more vulnerable residents and groups protected by Equalities legislation are taken fully into account in the provision of these services. *Please indicate below whether you agree with Principle 2.*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

PRINCIPLE 3 To ensure the resources committed to the Library Service are used as efficiently as possible by exploring options to reduce running and maintenance costs and to share premises with Council and other services.

Please indicate below whether you agree with Principle 3.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

PRINCIPLE 4 To explore options for investing in technology to improve access to the Library Service, for example by extending opening hours, increasing our digital offer and enhancing provision for those with sensory impairments.

Please indicate below whether you agree with Principle 4.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

PRINCIPLE 5 To welcome the contribution that members of the community can make to the Library Service as volunteers, supporting both traditional and digital services.

Please indicate below whether you agree with Principle 5.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

PRINCIPLE 6 To meet local aspirations for a network of community spaces across the borough in which the Council and local communities can work together as partners in meeting local needs.

Please indicate below whether you agree with Principle 6.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

7. Do you feel there are other key principles that should be taken into account during the review?

Yes

No

8. If yes, what are these principles? Please outline briefly in the box below.

YOUR USE OF THE LIBRARY SERVICE

9. Do you use Bury's Library Service?

Yes

No

If your answer is No, please go directly to questions 12

YOUR CURRENT USE OF THE LIBRARY SERVICE

10. Approximately how often do you visit a library? (Please tick one box only)

More than once a week

About once a week

Two or three times per month

At least once a month

At least twice a year

Once a year or less

11. How do you usually travel to the library?

- Car as driver
- Car as passenger
- Bus
- Tram
- Walk
- Taxi
- Cycle
- Other (please specify)

WHY YOU DO NOT USE BURY'S LIBRARY SERVICE

This question is for people who do not currently use a library.

12. Please indicate below the reason/s why you do not use Bury's Library Service.

Check all that apply.

- I do not know what services it offers
- I am not interested in using a library
- I have no need to use a library
- I live too far away from a library
- Library opening hours are not convenient for me
- I do not know where my nearest library is
- It is too difficult for me to get to a library
- I can't afford to travel on public transport to a library
- Other (please specify)

A FUTURE LIBRARY SERVICE

Your answers to the questions in this section will help the Council as it considers options for developing Bury's Library Service.

13. The Council may consider options for extending opening hours. Please indicate which times, if any, would make it easier for you to use the Library Service. Note that the library may not be staffed at all these times.

- before 9am
- lunchtime
- evening (5pm to 10pm)
- Saturdays
- Sundays

14. The Council is considering improving digital services within its Library Service. These might include:

- downloadable e-newspapers and magazines
- music and video streaming
- increased online resources for researching local and family history
- remote access on all devices to the library catalogue
- and free Wi-Fi.

Would you be more likely to use the Library Service, or use it more than you do now, if these services were available?

- Much more likely
- More likely
- It would make no difference

15. The Council would like the Library Service to help everyone take advantage of new technologies. Do you agree that the Library Service should develop in this way?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

16. Would you consider volunteering to support the Library Service in Bury?

Yes

No

17. Are there any other comments you would like to make about Bury's Library Service review? Please use the space below to provide these.

ABOUT YOU

These questions are optional. Please feel free to skip any that you do not want to answer.

18. Please indicate whether you are

- Resident in Bury
- Working in Bury, but resident in another borough
- Studying in Bury, but resident in another borough

19. Are you...?

- Male
- Female
- Other – please specify

20. What is your age?

- under 18
- 18 to 29
- 30 to 44
- 45 to 64
- 65+

21. What is your postcode?

22. What is your ethnic group?

- White - Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
- White - Irish
- White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- White - other
- Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed - White and Black African
- Mixed - White and Asian
- Mixed - other
- Black or Black British - Caribbean
- Black or Black British - African
- Asian or Asian British - Indian
- Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British - Chinese
- Asian or Asian British - other Asian background
- Arab
- Other ethnic group

23. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? Include problems related to getting older.

- Yes, limited a lot
- Yes, limited a little
- No

24. Do you look after, or give any help or support, to family members, friends, neighbours or others because they have:

(a) long term physical or mental health problems or disabilities (b) problems due to getting older?

- No
- Yes

25. Please indicate whether you are:

- Employed or self-employed
- In part-time employment
- Retired
- A full time carer
- In full time-education or training
- In part-time education or training

- Unemployed

***Thank you for taking the time to
complete this survey***