Bury Libraries Review
Initial public consultation: Summary of findings from a random sample of Bury residents
Mott MacDonald, August 2016

1. Method

The research engaged with a random sample of Bury residents over the age of 16. A three stage sampling approach was used to compile a robust random telephone sample. Interviewers guided respondents through the questions. A quota of 500 interviews was undertaken, offering a margin of error of +/- 4.4% at a 95% confidence level.

2. Demographic overview of those sampled

- **Residence** 97% were resident in the borough and 3% were working in Bury but resident elsewhere.
- **Gender** 53% of those sampled were female. For the population of Bury as whole, 51% are female (Source: 2011 Census).
- **Age** The age distribution of the sample is broken down below. The breakdown for the population of Bury as a whole is shown in brackets (Source: ONS).
    - 16-17: 1% (3%)
    - 18-19: 14% (18%)
    - 30-44: 23% (24%)
    - 45-64: 35% (33%)
    - 65+: 27% (22%)
- **Ethnicity** 94% of those sampled identified as white, 6% as BAME. For the population of Bury as whole, the BAME population is 15% (Source: Census 2011)
- **Disability** 21% of those sampled indicated that their lives were limited by a health problem or a disability. For the population of Bury as a whole, 18% have a limiting long term illness (Source: Census 2011).
- **Caring responsibilities** 18% of those sampled indicated that they had caring responsibilities.
- **Employment status** Just over two fifths of respondents indicated that they were employed or self-employed (43%), while over one third were retired (34%). 9% indicated that they were unemployed. The unemployment rate in Bury 2015/16 was 5.4% of the economically active population. The higher reported rate in the sample may be explained by respondents who were either long term sick or 65+ reporting that they were unemployed.

3. Main findings

A. *Principles for Change*

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

Table 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	96%	0.4%

		Level of Agreement (*Combined Strongly Agree and Agree %*)	Level of Disagreement (*Combined Strongly Disagree and Disagree %*)
	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.	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%

B. Use of the library service

- 59% of those sampled said they used the library service.
- 66% of those who said they used the library service used it at least once a month, equivalent to almost 40% of all those sampled in the research. 25% of those using the service (equal to almost 15% of the total sample) did so at least once a week.
- 82% of those sampled - or close to half of the total - said they used the library service at least twice a year. National data on library usage for 2014/15 indicated that 34% of adults had visited a library in the last 12 months (DCMS, Taking Part 2014/15 Quarter 4 2015, p.27). This suggests that Bury adults have a significantly higher rate of library usage than average.
- Similar proportions of respondents reported travelling to the library on foot (44%) as driving a car (40%). 10% used public transport.
- Of the 41% who said they did not use the library service, 45% said they had no need or interest in using the service.

C. A future library service

- **Extended opening hours** More than half of those sampled indicated that both evening and Saturday opening (5-8pm) would make it easier for them to access the library service.
- **Digital services** Half of respondents indicated that improving digital services would make it much more or more likely that they would use the library service. 50% indicated that it would have no impact.
- **Digital access** Nine in 10 respondents felt that the Library Service should help everyone to take advantage of new technologies (91%).
- **Volunteering** A third of respondents (33%) indicated that they would be willing to consider volunteering to support the library service.