# Analysis of Free Text Questions to the Bath Library Design survey.

There were 574 responses to the questionnaire.

## *Please include your comments about the design of the proposed library*

**Of the 574 responses to the survey - 92 respondents (the largest category) objected to the library relocation.** The following particular reasons were given:

* Suitability of the current library venue
* Cost of the move
* The community and cultural significance of the existing library
* Unsuitability of Lewis House location, accessibility and design plan

**From the 574 responses to the questionnaire- 54 respondents objected to the principle of the One Stop Shop integration**. Particularly:

* Users did not view the use of libraries and access to OSS services as necessary or compatible
* Perceived security risks involved with integrating the functions, particularly regarding children
* Impact of OSS taking space from library capacity, reducing content and space

A number of respondents highlighted their satisfaction with the current provision/venue in the Podium which can be summarised as:

* **Liking the current library (56** **respondents)** citing it’s city centre location, ease of access and size/comfort
* **A comfortable and pleasant space (9** **respondents)** citing comfortable seating, natural light and open plan space

### Concerns about design, space and accessibility of Lewis House

From the 574 responses received, a number of respondents expressed concerns over the proposed design and specifically in relation to the suitability of Lewis House. These can be summarised as:

* **Smaller space available (51 respondents)** and with specific relation to following comments about book numbers and accessibility. There were also a number of comments indicating general dislike of Lewis House as a building and Manvers Street compared to the Podium area.
* **Lack of detail/poor quality of design plan (51 respondents)** including lack of scale, measurements, inaccessible fonts and colours, low resolution and size and the appearance of several designated areas significantly overlapping with stairwells.
* **Accessibility concerns** **(45 respondents)** with particular concern around the less central location, parking available, access for physically impaired/children and splitting the library across multiple floors.
* **Concern about reduction in book numbers and existing services (20 respondents)** given the reduced floor space and impact of large stairwells.
* **Children’s area - 9 respondents were in favour** of a separate children’s area, while **8 were opposed** to the idea. Reasons cited included concern over leaving children in a designated area while browsing on another floor while others felt it should be separate from quiet study areas.

**20 respondents replied that they were in favour of the redesign** citing that it didn’t matter where the library was situated as long as the services and provision remained the same.

A number of comments expressing design concerns also **criticised the specifics of this consultation**, including the lack of question around moving the library at all and lack of clarity in the information put out by the council.

### The purpose, use and priorities of libraries

Of the 574 responses to the survey, some respondents made specific reference to the perceived purpose and use of libraries and the most important functions and services provided. These can be summarised as:

* **Browsing physical content (50 respondents)** was highlighted as preferable to searching a computerised catalogue, citing the value of finding titles you would not otherwise be exposed to.
* **Books and browsing are of primary importance (33 respondents)** and should be given priority over any other services.
* **The importance of library staff (18 respondents)** highlighted the importance of having trained librarians to interact with and wanting move rather than less in the future.
* **More books (16 respondents)** specifically stated that they wanted an increase in numbers of physical titles available in the library (as opposed to available for order).
* **Activity space (15 respondents)** was seen as a desirable feature with reference made to author lectures, book clubs and literary festivals.
* **Quiet study areas (13 respondents)** cited the importance of designated quiet areas for study, free from distractions.
* **Opposed to increase in computerised services (10 respondents)** specifically referring to book catalogues, ordering services and increasing provision of computer/laptop space.
* **Internet and computer access (7 respondents)** including desks, power points for laptop use and free WiFi.

## *What would encourage you to use the library more often?*

### Objections to proposals for library relocation and consolidation with the One Stop Shop

**Of the 574 responses, 94 respondents (the most common category) objected to the library relocation**. The following reasons were given

* Convenience/Transport/Accessibility
* Proximity to Waitrose
* Satisfaction with current design/appearance

**18 respondents objected** to the principle of the One Stop Shop (OSS) integration, the following reasons were given

* Users of the library services have not used the OSS in the past, preferring digital channels
* Safety and Security of the integrated services, perception of higher security risk in an integrated One Stop Shop/The proposed venue

### Improvements to service provision

Out of the 574 responses, a number of respondents highlighted a wide range of improvements to service provision to help them use the library more, which can be summarised as:

* **More/Better books (86 respondents)**, it should be noted that “better” does not have a consistent definition and suggestions range from a more rigorous application of the dewey-decimal system to a reduction in popular “pulp” fiction. In addition 6 respondents requested better access to Reference Materials and 5 respondents requested better access to Periodicals
* **Increased/Improved activities and events (55 respondents)** across all audiences.
* **Dedicated Space (36 respondents)** : With particular comment made regarding availability of the multi-use space. A further 8 respondents raised improvements in tables/seating as important.
* **Availability of qualified librarians** **(25 respondents)**
* **Increased opening hours (25 respondents)** With particular comment made regarding evening and weekend provision
* **Improved IT facilities (17 respondents)** Responses ranged from requests for more beginners training to improved wi-fi access. (1 respondent asked for all computers to be removed).
* **Refreshments/Café Facilities (17 respondents)** The provision of a nearby café area (such as that currently provided by the Waitrose café, was popular.

### Transportation and Access

**From the 574 completed surveys - 29 respondents raised transportation and access issues.** Issues were primarily raised about the need to ensure appropriate disabled access to the library site and for a city centre site.

Issues were both in terms of relative differences between the Manvers St. and Podium sites.

### Design and Ambience

**17 respondents raised the design and overall ambience** of the site as an important factor. A further 6 respondents raised the need for a quiet space. A repeating theme was the idea of both “cosiness” and light in design.

As an associated theme, 11 respondents raised general cleanliness or repairs and maintenance as an issue.