

CABINET

11 JULY 2017

OUTCOME OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THOMAS AVELING PUBLIC LIBRARY

Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Howard Doe, Deputy Leader and Housing and Community Services
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Summary

This report sets out the results of the public consultation on the future of Thomas Aveling Public Library, where the Council has indicated its preferred option to close the library.

The outcome of public consultation will be considered by the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6 July 2017 and its comments will be reported to Cabinet in an addendum report.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 places on local authorities a statutory duty to provide 'a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' in the area that want to make use of it.
- 1.2 Under the Council's constitution, the Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation has delegated authority to manage the library and public information services of the Council in compliance with current legislation and the policies of the Council. The decision to close a library exceeds this delegation and is therefore a matter for the Cabinet.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council provides a comprehensive library service, and the development of the town centre community hubs is at the forefront of best and national

library practice. The service consists of 16 library and community hub buildings (including Thomas Aveling) and two mobile libraries, employing 140 staff. The budget is £2.9m (direct expenditure). The annual budget for books and other information resources is £270,000.

- 2.2 The central role of the Library Service is to support reading as the gateway to literacy and participation in society. Events and activities attracted over 65,000 people in 2016-17 making libraries and hubs vibrant places for learning, fun and personal development. The community hubs provide access to council services with face-to-face contact for a variety of enquiries about the council and partners' services.
- 2.3 Members will be aware that even in the recent times of financial restraint the Council has continued to invest in the service, primarily through the development of the community hubs, maintaining and enhancing the council's presence in local communities. Of particular and recent note are the £1m investment at Strood Community Hub, the £500,000 at Twydall, and £100,000 at Hempstead Library. In November 2016 the then Minister for Libraries wrote to the portfolio holder congratulating the council for making the community hubs such a success, mentioning Strood Community Hub in particular that had featured in the 2015 publication from the national Libraries Taskforce, 'Libraries Shaping the Future: toolkit and case studies'.
- 2.4 This modernisation of the role of libraries has led to increased use of these buildings. Overall 2016-17 was a very successful year for the Library Service with visits up by 2% to 1,151,251. Issues increased by 0.25%, active computer users increased by 18%; event attendance increased by 10%, and web visits by 12%. Members will wish to note that this increased use of Libraries is in contrast to the national trend. Taking Library visits as an example, in 2015-16 physical visits continued to fall nationally as they have been doing year on year to 3,800 per 1,000 population. Medway's figure stood at 4,100 per 1,000 population (source: CIPFA Public Library Statistics 2016). In December 2016 a spokesperson for the Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Professionals (Cilip) said that nationwide 340 libraries had closed over the past eight years.
- 2.5 No council service can be excused the need to support the achievement of a balanced budget. Libraries have made reductions in the past (predominantly achieved through back office efficiencies) and along with other services was asked to put forward options in the last budget round. These options focused on services and facilities where customer use was low, so had least impact on service users. This included the proposal to align opening hours at the libraries co-located with the four main town centre community hubs (whose hours were changed last year to a 6.00pm closure, leaving an inconsistent service to customers); Grain Library (the least used of all council libraries), and Thomas Aveling library.
- 2.6 Thomas Aveling School and Community Library is located in a building within the grounds of Thomas Aveling Secondary School in Arethusa Road, Rochester. The school is part of the Fort Pitt Thomas Aveling Academies Trust. The library is a combined school and small public branch library and was opened in its present form in 2006. It provides all of the regular branch library lending facilities, Wi-Fi and PC access, and some events.

- 2.7 The library is situated at the back of the school and the only entrance for the general public is from Arethusa Road into the main school gates, following the road round the side of the main buildings to the library and playing fields at the rear.
- 2.8 The public library opening hours cover 21 hours a week:
Monday – Friday 3pm to 6pm;
Saturday 10am to 4pm.
- 2.9 The library service currently pays the school £6,500 per year rent for use of the building. The library staffing budget is £29,600 per annum. This expenditure would form the financial saving. There is a notice period of six months to give to the school to withdraw from the current arrangement and officers would seek to negotiate on its length if the decision to close is taken.
- 2.10 The proposal for the potential closure of the library was included in the Capital and Revenue Budgets 2017/18 report submitted to Full Council on 23 February 2017.
- 2.11 An analysis of Thomas Aveling’s performance was undertaken and set out in the consultation document. Public consultation started on 21 April 2017, and ran to 15 June 2017.

3. The case for change

- 3.1 The consultation document issued included an analysis of issues in relation to the proposals for Thomas Aveling. It set out the usage of the library compared to other libraries, and also what is known about the 910 customers who borrowed items from the library between January 2016 and February 2017. The analysis also looked at the demographic profile of the users who registered at Thomas Aveling and have borrowed an item over the last two years.
- 3.2 The service measures customer use of libraries through four key statistical indicators, as well as measuring customer satisfaction across the whole service. Thomas Aveling’s performance compared to the other 15 libraries is set out below:

Indicator	2016-17 ranking	2015-16 ranking	Notes
Items borrowed	15 th	14 th	Performance declining, less items borrowed in 2016-17
Visits	11 th	12 th	Performance improved, but likely to reflect after school use given worsening data on items borrowed
Enquiries	15 th	15 th	
Events & activities attendance	15 th	15 th	

- 3.3 The least well performing library is Grain library, and Members will want to understand why the option to close Thomas Aveling has come forward before Grain. There are special circumstances at Grain, where the community is more remote from other library locations, and where the library is integrated

into the opening of the other community facilities also housed at the Chapel building. Nevertheless, officers are currently investigating how a service that makes greater use of volunteers can be developed at Grain. This is not an approach that is seen as required or appropriate at Thomas Aveling public library.

3.4 The analysis of the 910 Thomas Aveling customers indicated the following user breakdown:

- 273 (30%) are Thomas Aveling school students;
- 264 (29%) are of primary school or early years age;
- 210 (23%) are adult users;
- 66 (7%) are over 60;
- 97 (11%) other users, other teenagers; staff; teachers.

3.5 Further analysis showed that:

- The 910 customers borrowed 14,120 items from Thomas Aveling Community Library between January 2016 and February 2017. Taking the direct running costs of £36,100 this means that each issue is costing £2.50;
- Those 910 people also borrowed 35,575 items from other Medway libraries, most notably Chatham, Rochester and Strood. This indicates that for many borrowers Thomas Aveling is not the main library that they use;
- The data also tells us that these borrowers had actually joined the library service at many other locations, most notably Chatham, Rochester and Strood;
- The use of the library is very heavily influenced by young people and usage falls dramatically during school holidays e.g. in October 2016 the average number of daily visitors was 153, for the October half term this figure reduced to 29, and during August, in the school holidays, the average number of daily visits was 36. The average Saturday footfall can be 50 per cent of weekday footfall;
- Of the books that were issued between April 2016 and end February 2017 at Thomas Aveling Community Library, 71% have been books for young people and 29% were books for adults. The equivalent figures for all Medway libraries' books issued in the same period shows that 53% were adult books and 47% were books for children.

3.6 The demographic analysis of the registered users of Thomas Aveling showed that:

- Females users are over-represented compared to the population, whilst males are under-represented;
- 0-18 year olds are over represented compared to the population reflecting usage by school pupils after school;
- All other age groups, including those over 65, are under-represented;
- Black and minority ethnic users constitute a modestly higher proportion of users compared to the population.

3.7 The conclusions that the Library service drew from this data analysis was that Thomas Aveling is not meeting the needs of the local population. The very low

use by people over 65, traditionally strong supporters of the service, is unusual. However, this finding has come as no surprise to local staff who frequently hear from older people that it is not their preference to visit the school site generally, and especially during the dark winter afternoons and evenings.

3.8 The preponderance of use of the library by young people is initially a welcome finding but is likely more reflective of the lack of use by adults, as demonstrated by the atypical adult/young people book borrowing ratio.

3.9 A rise in visits as has occurred at Thomas Aveling recently is generally seen positively as it provides the service with the opportunity to 'cross-sell' other services to customers and this is a part of the overall strategy for supporting customers. Looking at the interaction between visits and issues (of books and CDs) one would expect an increase in visits (as happened in 2016-17) to be matched by an increase in issues, but the reverse has happened – more young people have attended but borrowed less items. The anecdotal testimony of library staff is that many young people are using the library as a place to wait for collection after school.

3.10 In the consultation document the council set out its preferred option based on the above analysis. It made clear that this was not a decision based on statistics or costs per issue alone. The key factor in arriving at its preferred option was the lack of opportunity to change the library offer to current users and non-users in any progressive way. The following arguments were cited:

- Opening the library at 3pm is not when most people want to come and borrow books and take part in activities. Most libraries have a range of opening hours, but they are rigid at Thomas Aveling due to the limitations of the school-based site. Evidence from other locations illustrates that many adult customers prefer to make use of their library in the morning and early afternoon. The current opening hours of 3-6pm weekdays are unable to be altered and do not offer the service the ability to engage with all residents and provide space for a range of community groups;
- The location of the library at the rear of a large secondary school does not encourage adults to venture on site when the school closes down for the day. Older people in particular tell library staff that in the winter they do not want to walk all the way round to the back of the school site;
- The council has an excellent relationship with the school who have been good partners in seeking to make the school and community library concept work. However, this co-location was conceived in a different era of school governance arrangements, and when the child protection and school security agendas were very different. The current site does not provide the opportunity to invest and reshape the service to encourage more use or to develop the community hub concept on this site;
- Where the council has been able to invest in a library through building improvements and enhancing the activity offer, the results are evident. Twydall and Hempstead are two such buildings and both have shown substantial growth in footfall and book loans. For these two buildings in 2016-17, visits have increased by 17% and 18%, borrowing has increased

by 17% and 27% and computer use has increased by 20% and 25%. It is believed that other libraries that are also performing less well can benefit from a review of their activities and events, and hopefully in the future from building improvements too. This is not possible at Thomas Aveling.

Taking account of all of the constraints at Thomas Aveling Community Library, the data that had been gathered, and the operational knowledge of running the service, officers concluded that the library is not meeting the needs of the community in the manner being achieved at most other libraries.

3.11 A diversity impact assessment (DIA) was completed for Thomas Aveling, and has been updated in the light of consultation, and will be further amended if required, following the Cabinet's decision. Having considered the DIA issues, the consultation document included four proposals that could form the core elements of alternative provision mitigating the impact of closure of Thomas Aveling library. They were outlined to assist consultation respondents to comment directly on the Council's possible mitigation proposals. The four elements were:

- Visit a community hub. Chatham, Rochester and Strood are nearest and as 'community hubs' provide good opening hours, facilities and events;
- Provide a stop from the Mobile Library which includes books for both children and adults;
- Market the on-line services that are available to mitigate partly the need to travel to another library;
- Seek to contact older residents, care homes and residential homes about services as they are under-represented amongst the current user base.

4. Consultation

4.1 An eight week consultation ran from 21 April to 15 June 2017 providing the opportunity to involve the public in the consideration of the future of Thomas Aveling Library. The consultation document (Appendix 1) included a questionnaire that was available online on the Council's website, with hard copies available to those who requested one. The consultation was drawn directly to the attention of the 910 recent users of the library (January 2016 – February 2017) through e-mail and letter. Three drop-in consultation sessions took place, including on a Saturday morning.

4.2 The report on the consultation findings can be found at Appendix 2. There were also a small number of letters and other communications received during the consultation period, and the views expressed at the public drop-in sessions. All of these contributions have been reflected in the report on consultation. The responses have provided a good range of opinions and suggestions.

4.3 Results from the Questionnaire

The survey received 151 responses; this would represent a maximum response of 16.6% if all came from the 910 Thomas Aveling users who were contacted about the consultation. Of those responding, 145 identified themselves as current Thomas Aveling users. Summary results in relation to the proposals that were offered for the future of Thomas Aveling are set out in

the table below, with the key headline being that 87% of respondents did not wish to see the library closed and replaced with alternative provision.

Proposal	No of respondents	% of respondents
1. Replace the library with alternative provision as outlined in consultation document	11	7%
2. Current service to remain in place	131	87%
3. Withdraw the service without alternative provision	3	2%
4. Propose an alternative option	4	3%
Did not answer	2	1%
TOTAL	151	100%

4.4 Respondents' profile and how they currently use Thomas Aveling

- ❖ Of the full 151 respondents:
 - 91% were members of the public; (12 did not say; 2 said they represented an organisation)
 - 74% identified themselves as living in Rochester
 - the gender make-up was 64% female, and 24% male (others did not specify), similar to the registered user profile.

- ❖ Across the age ranges
 - 23% were aged 35-44
 - 15% were under 1;
 - 14% were 45-54
 - 11% were 55-64
 - 9% were 25-34.

- ❖ 22 people said they had a long standing health problem or disability.

- ❖ 60% of respondents identified themselves as White British. The next two largest ethnic groups with 5% were, 'Any other white background' and 'Black/Black British – African'.

- ❖ Visit patterns - the three main visiting patterns were:
 - 32% visited at least once a month
 - 27% visited at least once a week
 - 22% visited at least once a fortnight.

- ❖ Usage of the library
 - 95% of respondents used the library to borrow books
 - 27% used a computer
 - 24% attended an event
 - 24% borrowed DVDs
 - 14% carried out homework after school
 - 4% used the library as a safe place to wait to be picked up.

4.5 Use of other libraries and other library services

The questionnaire also sought to understand the use by respondents of other library buildings and other library services, and people's willingness to use a service they do not currently use. Of the respondents who currently use Thomas Aveling, 39% currently use another library, with Rochester, Chatham and Gillingham as the most used alternatives. Of the 6 non-Thomas Aveling users who responded these were also the most used alternative libraries. Of the 131 respondents who would prefer the current service to remain in place, 37% do already use an alternative library.

4.6 Only a very small number of current Thomas Aveling user respondents (6-7%) are currently using other library services such as eBooks and eAudio books, the mobile library and other online electronic resources. This low use was also replicated amongst the non Thomas Aveling users who responded. But when asked if they would consider using these facilities there was a positive response: 32% would consider using eBooks; 27% would consider using the mobile library and 21% other electronic resources.

4.7 Issues and concerns raised during consultation

Set out below are key issues of concern and suggestions made by respondents drawn from the free text in the survey, correspondence received and the public drop-in sessions.

Issues raised in public meetings and correspondence	Service response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of a local community facility, and events and activities • Support for the calm atmosphere at Thomas Aveling • Thomas Aveling welcomes autistic children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community hubs, whilst necessitating travel, provide a more developed service, with access to the whole range of council services through trained customer contact officers • Hubs also provide more events for adults, young people and older people, and more opportunities to engage with a range of community groups • Spaces are frequently being reviewed at libraries to create more seating areas, and a better mix of activities • All Libraries welcome people with autism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of library will affect local children's literacy and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community hubs with their longer opening hours offer more support for young people, with more library assistant and librarians that can offer help with homework enquiries • There is a far wider volume and range of stock • The Outreach and Partnership Team provide expert advice on literacy, books and reading to schools and the early year's sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of ICT facilities – PCs, internet access and printing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT at Thomas Aveling library is limited compared to other libraries. Greater offer at nearby community hubs, including more staff

	support to help people get on-line
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport / parking – convenience and cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community hubs are 10-12 minutes by car; 15-26 minutes by bus; 34-50 minutes by foot. • e-services can substitute for some visits, e.g. book renewals by phone and online; eBook and eAudiobook download • A number of branch libraries are able to provide free parking and details can be provided
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative hub activities often booked up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities and events at Thomas Aveling are not well supported • They are popular at other libraries but there is equal chance to book onto them • An increase in activities at other venues is possible if there is demand
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have not found the mobile service a good alternative as you have to wait outdoors and the visit time is restricted • Can the mobiles meet the needs of wheelchair users? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile library service offers a service commensurate with a small branch; the stock is up to date, and changed regularly • Customer feedback is positive • The driver is an experienced Library assistant • The mobile has a satellite IT link so staff can check the online catalogue, reserve books etc. for customers • The mobiles have a lift that can accommodate many sizes of wheelchair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could the council consider the use of volunteers at Thomas Aveling? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacing staff with volunteers does not address the concerns about the rigidity of opening hours and the consequent lack of opportunity to improve the service • Volunteers already add value to the service in a number of ways (e.g. at events and activities; home library service couriers)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could the council consider income generating activities including commercial hirers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scope to do this is very limited both on the school site and on the current opening hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could the council use the building more intensively with schools, community groups and churches? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are limitations on what can be expanded at the library, recognising and respecting the school's use of the library for a range of day time learning activities alongside the library use. But this type of approach is what happens at other libraries where activities are more easily accommodated within longer and more flexible opening hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could the council move to another building, possibly sharing with another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new building could address the opening hours issue but these longer opening hours would lead to higher cost, not currently

service or partners?	affordable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has Thomas Aveling been promoted enough locally? Could that be piloted? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas Aveling has been equally promoted, but has not had as large a range of events and activities to promote due to the opening hours. Author events tend to take place at the Hubs where customer demand for seats can be met

4.8 Conclusions from consultation

- Consultation has shown that a large majority of the 151 respondents - 87% - are against closure. The majority view expressed at the consultation drop-ins was also against closure.
- Given that the proposal to examine the future of Thomas Aveling was drawn to the attention of recent users, the 16% response to the survey and 40 attendees at the drop-ins could be regarded as low.
- To some extent that response rate may reflect the fact that nearly 4 out of 10 current users already make use of other libraries, particularly community hubs with their larger service offer.
- The greatest concern at closure has been expressed by those local and regular users, visiting the library daily, weekly or fortnightly (84 current users, 58% of Thomas Aveling user respondents)
- It has to be acknowledged that the closure of Thomas Aveling would represent a loss of a local and convenient service to these regular library users. Some have indicated that the costs of public transport and car parking will either exclude them or discourage them from visiting any alternative library on as regular a basis.
- The survey also showed that the popular times for visiting the library are Saturday morning and early afternoon, and between 3.00-5.00 on weekdays. Whilst the Saturday findings mirror the general library experience that morning through to mid-afternoon is most popular, the late afternoon preference is surprising. This may reflect the current habit for accessing local library services.
- Current use of online facilities is low, but there is a preparedness of around a third of library users to consider trying these other facilities.
- A number of positive suggestions were made by questionnaire respondents and those that attended the drop-in sessions: to increase partnership working with community, church and other local groups; to use volunteers; to have more events; and to promote all of those things more. All of those proposals are key features in the programming at other libraries where those activities are accommodated as they are spread over more hours, fitting in with local demands and the availability of organisations, groups and volunteers. Within the constraints of the Thomas Aveling hours it has not been possible to generate the attendance

at events that we see in other comparable branch libraries, despite the exhaustive effort of the local staff.

5. Analysis and consideration of mitigations

- 5.1 Officers' conclusion from their initial consideration of the use and performance of Thomas Aveling library was that it was not meeting the needs of the community. Furthermore, Thomas Aveling could not be developed to do so due to the restricted opening hours. Opening the library at 3.00pm in the afternoon during the week is the wrong time to attempt to offer the modern library experience – a place where users can access books for pleasure; where business can be carried out with the council online, and where users can access information on council services and anything else. The council's library offer has changed fundamentally since it took up the option to move into the school site, and so has the demand and expectation of most of the public.
- 5.2 The dialogue through the consultation period has not produced a solution to this fundamental opening hours issue that hampers attempts to re-invigorate the offer and attract more users.
- 5.3 Prior to taking a decision on the future of the library, Members need to consider the impact of closure and consider whether a number of mitigation measures would make a closure decision a reasonable decision to take. The consultation document, as it had indicated a preferred option, outlined four broad areas of mitigation to enable respondents to reflect on their merit and reasonableness. They are outlined in 3.11 above and in brief they were to visit a community hub; provide a stop from the Mobile Library; market the on-line services; and seek to contact older residents, care homes and residential homes to offer the assisted services and increase older people's take-up of the service.
- 5.4 Members will have noted that four out of ten Thomas Aveling users are already electing to use other libraries, particularly the community hubs. Members could reasonably conclude that the remaining comprehensive library service, and particularly the community hubs at Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham and Strood, constitute a sufficient mitigation to all users. Noting that 32% of survey respondents are using Thomas Aveling on an at least monthly basis, they may further conclude that the level of inconvenience for those users and other less frequent users is modest and manageable. As acknowledged in 4.8 above, very local users of the library will most feel the effect of closure; some have expressed concern at travel and parking costs. Many residents do not have the convenience of living particularly close to a local library or community hub and maintain good reading and library visit habits.
- 5.5 A further mitigation for customers using Thomas Aveling more frequently will be to provide a local visit from the community mobile library, maintaining a local face to face option. There is currently a fortnightly mobile slot available late morning on a Thursday. There is some scope, albeit limited, for there to be some experimentation with both the location and the timing of that stop. The mobile does already stop in some other local places, and all of these can be advertised to the current users.

- 5.6 The Library service offers a range of on-line services – catalogue search; book reservation and renewal; download of eBooks and eAudio books; accessing other online resources. There is little use made of these services by the current users, but the survey revealed some preparedness to use these services in the future. There could also be an offer to come and sample the online services with the support of a library member of staff.
- 5.7 A further mitigation to ease a transition period will be to provide existing users with a menu of library services and details of events and activities at different hubs and branch libraries.
- 5.8 The analysis of current users indicated a surprisingly low number of older users and more marketing of the library service will take place to draw attention to this important group of the range of services that are available. For those older people with any particular challenges, the Outreach and Partnership team will make contact with care home and residential homes and increase awareness of the home library service.
- 5.9 Members will note that young people who currently use the service and go to Thomas Aveling School will continue to have access to school library facilities during the day. These users constituted 273 (30%) of the 910 recent borrowers.
- 5.10 Taken together, officers believe that the impact of the closure of Thomas Aveling library can be effectively mitigated. In the case of older people there is the prospect of increased use. A priority area is to support parents of very young children to hold onto their library habit. The service already works with a number of local schools and will channel its efforts through existing and new contacts.

6. Options

- 6.1 The Cabinet has the following options:
- (a) To keep Thomas Aveling library open, and ask officers to investigate other means of generating similar savings, both from Thomas Aveling and more widely across the Library service
 - (b) To close Thomas Aveling library, implementing the mitigations outlined above or as directed by Cabinet. The council made clear in the consultation document that this was its preferred option
- 6.2 Option (a) is effectively a do nothing option. It will provide a status quo service for a relatively small number of loyal library customers. It will not address the fundamental issue of the rigid opening hours that is preventing Thomas Aveling from developing along the path of other branch libraries. Officers are not recommending this option.
- 6.3 Option (b) is recommended. It addresses the fundamental hours issue, and there are a range of mitigations that can cushion the impact of closure on local users as well as introduce them to the better and wider range of services available elsewhere.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 Thomas Aveling Public Library costs £36,100 per annum to run - £6,500 rent for use of the building; staffing £29,600. In a full year this expenditure will be saved. In the current year, if closure were to go ahead in late July/August, the saving would be £21-24,000. The Library service will seek to make up the shortfall on the full year saving by managing other budgets through the rest of the year.
- 7.2 No staff redundancies or costs will result from the implementation of closure, nor will any staff lose the contracted hours that they work at Thomas Aveling School. Vacant posts have provided the service with the opportunity to re-provide staff with those hours at other libraries. This will be the subject of individual and local arrangements.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 The Council's duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons who wish to make use of it is not compromised by the decision to close Thomas Aveling Library. The remaining 15 libraries, the 2 mobile libraries and the on-line service clearly constitute a comprehensive service.
- 8.2 This report and the Diversity Impact Assessment (Appendix 3) sets out proposed actions for different types of users and these will mitigate the impact of closure.
- 8.3 The obligation on Thomas Aveling School to facilitate a community library was secured via a Section 106 agreement, as part of a wider application to develop the site. The agreement provides for the library scheme to be reviewed in conjunction with the council. If the Cabinet decides to close the library so that the need for it is no longer required, the S106 can be varied to reflect this situation. That would require a report to the Planning Committee.

9. Risk management

- 9.1 Risk management is an integral part of good governance. The Council has a responsibility to identify and manage threats and risks to achieve its strategic objectives and enhance the value of services it provides to the community. Earlier comment has set out the proposed mitigations to the closure option and they are briefly summarised here.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating (after mitigations)
Budget pressure	Council fails to take action to limit expenditure to available resources, or there is delay in implementation.	Robust project management of the Cabinet's decision, allied to the careful management of the Library service budget.	C III
Young children and teenagers reduce their use of the library service	The support that Libraries provide to reading as a foundational activity for a successful education is reduced.	Provide information directly on alternative libraries and the on-line services to all our known younger readers and their families, of routes to community hubs, and details of their activities.	D IV
Adults reduce their use of the library service		Provide information directly on alternative libraries and the on-line services, of routes to community hubs, and details of their activities.	D IV

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 Cabinet is asked to consider the comments of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 10.2 Cabinet is asked to decide whether to agree the closure of Thomas Aveling Public library.
- 10.3 If closure is the decision, Cabinet is further asked to:
 - 10.3.1 Agree that the precise closure date be agreed by the Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services.

10.3.2 Agree that negotiations with Thomas Aveling School in relation to the notice period for the rent be conducted by the Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation, in consultation with the Chief Legal Officer and the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services.

10.3.3 Note that the implementation of the mitigations outlined in paragraph 5 of the report will be undertaken by the Director of Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services.

10.3.4 Note that the Planning Committee will be asked to consider a report to vary the obligation on the school to facilitate provision of a community library as set out in the agreement made further to conditions to the relevant Planning decision.

11. Suggested reasons for decision

11.1 The recommendation to Cabinet to close Thomas Aveling Public Library is due to it being a poorly performing library, with limited use by the local population. There is no scope to improve the library offer, as has been achieved elsewhere, due to the fixed and limited opening hours, with the library only available Monday to Friday from 3.00pm, not the most popular time that the public make use of libraries.

11.2 Alternative and better facilities and services for all users are available at other libraries, particularly the Community Hubs and these form a key part of a range of mitigation proposals that can be out into place.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices:

1. Consultation Document and Survey
2. Consultation Findings
3. Diversity Impact Assessment

Background papers:

None



Consultation

Supporting documents

Thomas Aveling School and Community Library

Arethusa Road - Rochester - ME1 2UW

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FOREWORD

We are immensely proud of our libraries and community hubs here at Medway Council, and we know that they are very popular with residents.

Whilst councils up and down the country have been reducing library services we have been investing in ours: £1million in a new Strood Community Hub; £500,000 at Twydall; £100,000 at Hempstead; and £100,000 in the book purchasing fund. We have turned the main town centre libraries into community hubs. These hubs not only provide the existing library service to residents but also give the opportunity to ask questions face-to-face about other council services, such as planning, housing, benefits and environmental services.

In all libraries residents can access free Wi-Fi and computers, and a whole range of events and activities. This modernisation of the role of libraries has led to increased use of these buildings and this programme is continuing. We have also increased our online offer as part of the transformation of council services.

But we are not immune from the continued pressure on budgets that councils face, arising primarily from the reduction in central government support. This year we are seeking to make reductions in our day-to-day expenditure and one of those proposals affects Thomas Aveling Community Library.

This document sets out our thinking and our preferred option which is to close Thomas Aveling Library. We have concluded that the modern library experience cannot be successfully implemented at Thomas Aveling. This is due to the lack of day time access to the building and the constraints of the school site. In this document we have outlined some alternative proposals that would mitigate a closure, if that were to be implemented.

All views will be reported back to the council's Cabinet prior to any final decision being taken.

Please do take the opportunity to let us know your views.

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the council's consultation proposals in relation to the future of Thomas Aveling Community Library. It is in three parts:

- Our explanation about why we are having this consultation, including details about the library services that we provide across the whole of Medway
- The consultation questionnaire which is available online and in hard copy format
- An appendix detailing the data that we have used to guide our assessment of Thomas Aveling Community Library.

MEDWAY'S LIBRARY PROVISION

Medway Council provides a comprehensive library service, and the development of the town centre community hubs is at the forefront of best and national library practice, recently praised by Libraries Minister Rob Wilson, MP.

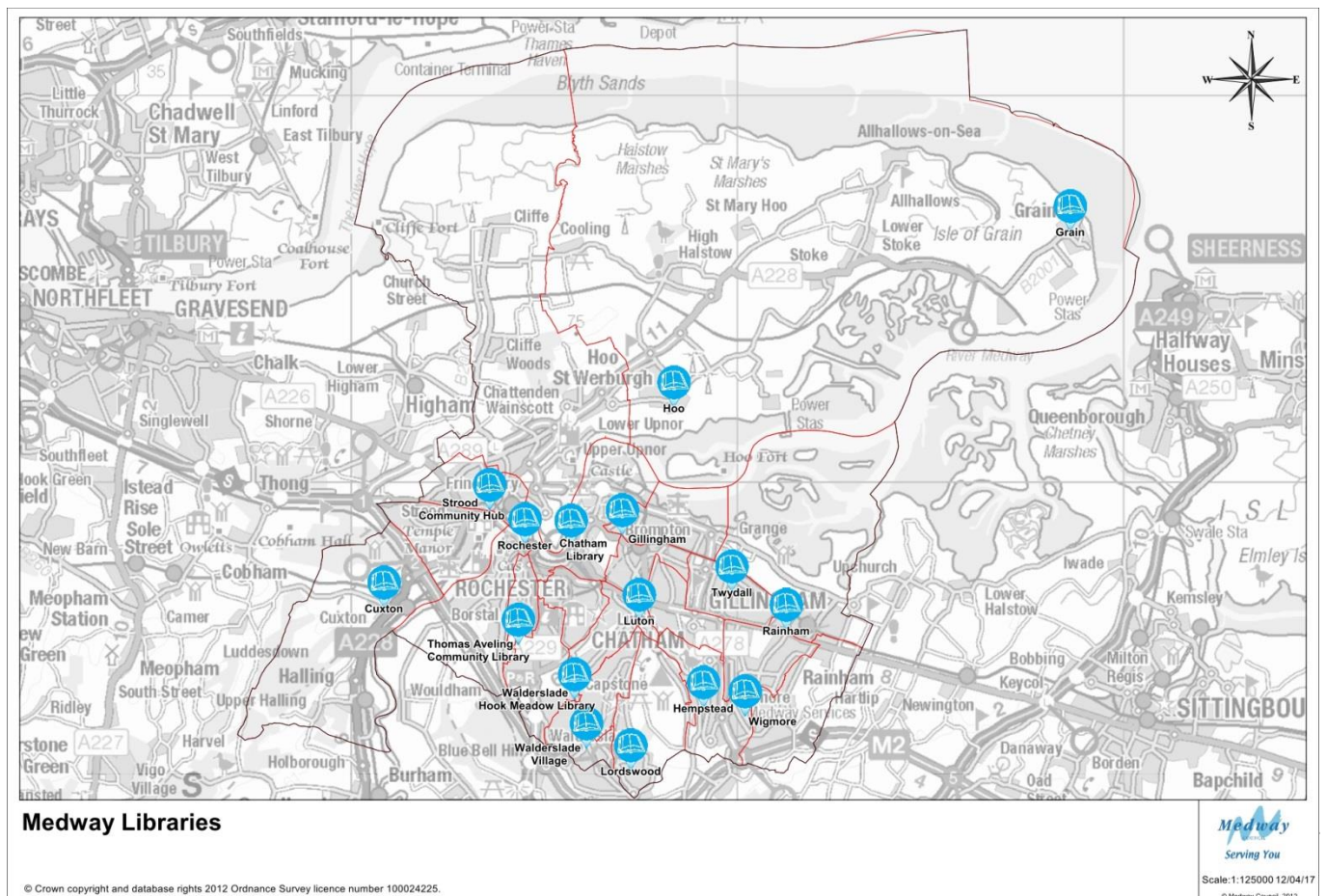
The central role of the Library Service is to support reading as the gateway to literacy and participation in our society. Our events and activities attracted over 65,000 people in 2016-17, making libraries and hubs vibrant places for learning, fun and personal development.

The service consists of 16 library and community hub buildings and two mobile libraries, employing 140 staff. The budget in 2016-17 was £3m. The annual budget for books and other information resources is £270,000. The service has a track record of bringing in additional funding from grant applications - over £150,000 in the past year.

The community mobile library offers 64 stops over a two week period, and the children's mobile visits 22 schools and early year's locations. Currently libraries provide a range of opening hours from around 18-27 hours a week for the smaller libraries, and 51-53 hours for the larger buildings. Library buildings are in total open for 565 hours a week. The five hubs are at:

- Chatham
- Gillingham
- Rochester
- Strood
- Twydall

These buildings are a gateway to council services, providing face to face contact for a variety of enquiries about the council and partners' services. Expert staff are on hand to offer advice, and trained library staff are available to respond to enquiries about books, research and any other information needs. The staff also help people to get online too.



THE DIFFERENCE ALL OF THIS MAKES

The library service also provides the opportunity to take part in a whole range of activities both provided directly by library staff and with partner organisations. These activities make a real impact on people's lives and add real value to the services that the council is able to offer.

Giving young people a great start in life

- **Bookstart** – through a partnership with the UK's largest reading charity, Bookstart aims to encourage parents and carers to read with their child by providing free materials to individuals and early years settings (3609 babies, 3454 three year olds and 3,454 reception children - 2016/2017)
- **Summer Reading Challenge** - this challenge aims to keep school age children reading over the long summer break to ensure that their reading attainment levels do not drop off. Last summer approximately 3000 children took part
- **Baby Bounce and Rhyme / Toddler Shake and Boogie** - these fun events for very young children and their families develop language skills, promote books and reading. Last year over 30,000 residents took part.

Promoting reading at the heart of what we do

- **Reader's groups** - the service has a whole range of groups spread right across the service. Over 20 groups are provided and they include a visually impaired readers group, a hard of hearing, poetry, crime, play readers and teenage reading group
- **Reading Ahead** (formerly the six book challenge) - a project aimed at adults who lack reading confidence and provides incentives to get them reading, now provided at four venues
- **Events** - over 200 different events and activities are provided and last year 65,308 people attended an event or activity in their local library. The service has developed a national profile for well known author events with up to 200 people attending each time. Famous authors that have visited include Andy McNab, Martina Cole, Peter James, Julian Stockwin and Joanna Trollope.

Reaching everyone in our community

- **Home library service** - this provides a vital service to those residents with difficulties in visiting library buildings and is provided with support from volunteer couriers.
- **Service to residential homes and sheltered accommodation** - over 30 homes receive collections of books three times a year
- **Visually impaired service** - libraries are able to offer a postal loan service for visually impaired customers. This provides spoken word CDs to more than 100 Medway residents
- **Conversation café** - with help from our Friends group we are able to provide this opportunity at two locations for customers, whom English is not their first language, to practice in an informal setting
- **Stock** - is provided in a range of community languages and a free class for people with English as a second language is run at Chatham Community Hub.

THOMAS AVELING SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY LIBRARY

The Current Library

Thomas Aveling School and Community Library is located in a purpose built building within the grounds of Thomas Aveling Secondary School in Arethusa Road, Rochester. The school is part of the Fort Pitt Thomas Aveling Academies Trust. The library is a combined school and small public branch library and was opened in its present form in 2006.

The library service currently pays the school £6,500 per year rent for use of the building. Staffing of the library costs £29,600 per annum.

The public library opening hours cover 21 hours a week:

- Monday – Friday 3pm to 6pm
- Saturday 10am to 4pm

The library is situated right at the back of the school as illustrated on the map below and the only entrance for the general public is from Arethusa Road into the main school gates, and following the road around the side of the main buildings to the library and playing fields at the rear.

It provides a collection of adult and children's fiction and non-fiction books, as well as some DVDs. Spoken word CDs and large print books are also provided.

The following activities are provided:

- Baby Bounce and Rhyme - every Wednesday, average attendance four to five children
- Pop in and Play - every Saturday, average attendance is about five people
- Teatime story time – every Saturday, average attendance is about three people

Computers and printing facilities belonging to the school are available for the public.



Thomas Aveling School and Community Library

Use of Thomas Aveling Library

Key data on how often the library is used compared to other Medway libraries is summarised below and drawn from the tables given in the supporting data appendix.

Items borrowed – Thomas Aveling was 14th out of 16 Libraries for books/DVDs issued in 2015-2016. In 2016-2017 Thomas Aveling was 15th (and issued fewer items), so performance has declined.

Visits to the library - Thomas Aveling was 12th out of 16 Libraries for visits in 2015-2016. In 2016-2017 it moved up to 11th position. Performance has improved but it is felt that this data is skewed by the after school use that pupils make of the library, as all other indicators are falling, especially issues.

Enquiries to the library - Thomas Aveling, for both years, only sits above Grain Library in terms of the number of enquiries answered.

Event and activities attendance - Thomas Aveling had the poorest attendance in 2015-2016. In 2016-2017 Thomas Aveling has moved just above Grain.

What do we know about the users of Thomas Aveling Community Library?

We know that:

- 910 customers borrowed 14,120 items from Thomas Aveling Community Library between January 2016 and February 2017. Taking the direct running costs of £35,800 this means that each issue is costing £2.50.
- The breakdown of the 910 by borrower type is given in the appendix but 273 (30%) of them are Thomas Aveling school students, and a further 264 are of primary school or early years age. Only 210 (23%) of the 910 were regular adult users, and only 66 (7.3%) were over 60 years of age.
- Those 910 people also borrowed 35,575 from other Medway libraries, most notably Chatham, Rochester and Strood. This suggests that for many borrowers Thomas Aveling is not the main library that they use.
- The data also tells us that these borrowers had actually joined the library service at many other locations, most notably Chatham, Rochester and Strood.
- The use of the library is very heavily influenced by young people and usage falls dramatically during school holidays e.g. in October 2016 the average number of daily visitors was 153, for the October half term this figure reduced to 29, and during August, in the school holidays, the average number of daily visits was 36. The average Saturday footfall can be 50 per cent of weekday footfall.
- Of the books that were issued between April 2016 and end February 2017 at Thomas Aveling Community Library, 71% have been books for young people and 29% were books for adults. The equivalent figures for all Medway libraries' books issued in the same period shows that 53% were adult books and 47% were books for children. So the surprisingly low use by Adults is reflected in these figures.

How does the demographic profile of those who joined the library at Thomas Aveling relate to the population of the area?

The appendix gives an analysis of 560 registered users of Thomas Aveling who have used their library card over the last two years. Registered user status identifies where a person first joined the library and we have used the post code given at that time as an indicator of people who are local to Thomas Aveling. We have made two population comparisons; one of all registered users (wherever they live in Medway) and another for registered users who live near to the library (1km radius).

Both sets of data indicate the same trends:

- Females users are over-represented compared to the population, whilst males are under-represented
- 0-18 year olds are over represented compared to the population
- All other age groups, including those over 65, are under-represented
- Black and minority ethnic users constitute a modestly higher proportion of users compared to the population.

All of this data has indicated to us that the library is not meeting the needs of much of the local population. We are very surprised at the relatively low number of adults over 65, traditionally strong users of library services. Whilst the strong attendance at the library by young people is welcome, our staff have observed that this is very much reflective of the library being used as a venue for students to wait to be collected after school. Homework may be being undertaken, but books are not being borrowed in the numbers that we would expect and activities are not being supported.

WHY WE NEED TO CHANGE THE SERVICE AND OUR PREFERRED OPTION

The success of any library is not based solely on attendance and book issues. The council's vision is to make all libraries an essential resource for the community. A place where you can access books for pleasure; where you can do business with the council online and face to face; and where you can get information about anything else. And they will be fun places where you can meet other parents and children, have coffee after an organised walk, knit and natter, or play with Lego. We are not achieving this vision at Thomas Aveling Community Library.

Opening our doors at 3pm in the afternoon is not when most people want to come and take part in those activities. Most libraries have a range of opening hours, but they are rigid at Thomas Aveling due to the limitations of the school based site. Evidence from other locations (see the hour by hour visit data in the appendix) does illustrate that many adult customers do prefer to make use of their library in the morning and early afternoon. The current opening hours of 3-6pm weekdays are unable to be altered and do not offer the service the ability to engage with all residents and provide space for a range of community groups.

The location of the library at the rear of a large secondary school does not encourage adults to venture on site when the school closes down for the day. Older people in particular tell our staff that in the winter they don't want to walk all the way round to the back of the school site.

The council has an excellent relationship with the school who have been good partners in seeking to make the school and community library concept work. However, this co-location was conceived in an era when schools were within local authority control and the child protection and school security agendas were very different. The current site does not give us the opportunity to invest and reshape the service to encourage more use.

Where we have been able to invest in a site through building improvements and enhancing our activity offer, the rewards are there for all to see. Twydall and Hempstead are two such buildings and both have shown substantial growth in footfall and book loans. For these two buildings in 2016-2017, visits have increased by 17% and 18%, borrowing has increased by 17% and 27% and computer use has increased by 20% and 25%. We believe that other libraries that are also performing less well can benefit from a review of their activities and events, and hopefully in the future from building improvements too. We do not see this as possible at Thomas Aveling.

Taking account of all of the constraints at Thomas Aveling Community Library, the data that we have, and our knowledge of running the service, we believe that the library is not attracting people in the numbers that we should, and that therefore we are not meeting the needs of the community in the way that we are doing at most other libraries.

After reviewing the information we have available to us the council's preferred option is that we should withdraw the community library. But we need your views before we make a final decision about the community library.

NB

- Thomas Aveling pupils will retain their access to the school library facilities
- No staff redundancies will result from the implementation of the preferred option as vacant posts will enable staff to be redeployed elsewhere in the service.

IF THOMAS AVELING WAS TO CLOSE, WHAT COULD ALTERNATIVE PROVISION LOOK LIKE ?

We cannot say exactly what alternative provision would look like as we would wish to take account of the ideas put forward during this consultation. However, we cannot expect people to comment without having some idea of what the council would be putting in place, so the following ideas are indicative of what could be done.

Visit a community hub

For the majority of users, we would be recommending that where they wish to visit a library they go to one of the nearest community hubs, which are at Chatham, Rochester and Strood. Whilst this is a longer journey for those users currently local to the school we believe that the facilities, opening hours and the diversity of activities and events on offer – especially for younger children - will be worth the journey. Our easy return policy and one card for the whole authority makes this an option that is achievable for many members of the public. The data on the 910 recent users quoted above demonstrated that Thomas Aveling users already make great use of other libraries. Rochester is just 2 miles away, and about a quarter of an hour by bus. Chatham is 3 and a half miles away and about 23 minutes by bus.

Provision of a local stop by the Mobile Library for adults and children

The Mobile Library provides a first rate convenient service, an offer similar to a small branch library, with books for adults and children. We could arrange for it to stop in a convenient location in the local area. This would normally be every two weeks but could be more frequent if there was the demand.

Reminding people of our convenient on-line offer through better marketing

You can search the library catalogue and reserve books on-line. There are free eBooks and eAudiobooks to download and you can have online access to reference works, encyclopaedias, and local information. We would take the opportunity of the changes proposed to advertise these convenient services.

Contacting older residents, care homes and residential homes

We would also further promote our home library service for residents who find it difficult to attend the library; the service provided to people in local residential homes, and the postal service for visually impaired customers.

QUESTIONNAIRE

DATA ABOUT MEDWAY'S LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY HUBS SERVICE AND THOMAS AVELING COMMUNITY LIBRARY

The following library assessment provides a variety of data on different aspects of Medway Council Library Service. It focusses on Thomas Aveling Community Library and shows where it sits within the whole library service.

Medway Library Service consists of:

- 16 static Libraries - six of these sit within a wider council offer called community hubs
- Two mobile libraries - a general community mobile library and one that serves young people through visits to schools and early year's settings
- Two prison libraries provided on a contract for the National Offender Management Service
- Home Library Service - an extensive service to the housebound in their homes, provided with support from volunteer couriers
- Residential homes and sheltered accommodation - purchased on contract from Kent County Council
- Postal Service for the visually impaired - purchased on contract from Kent County Council.

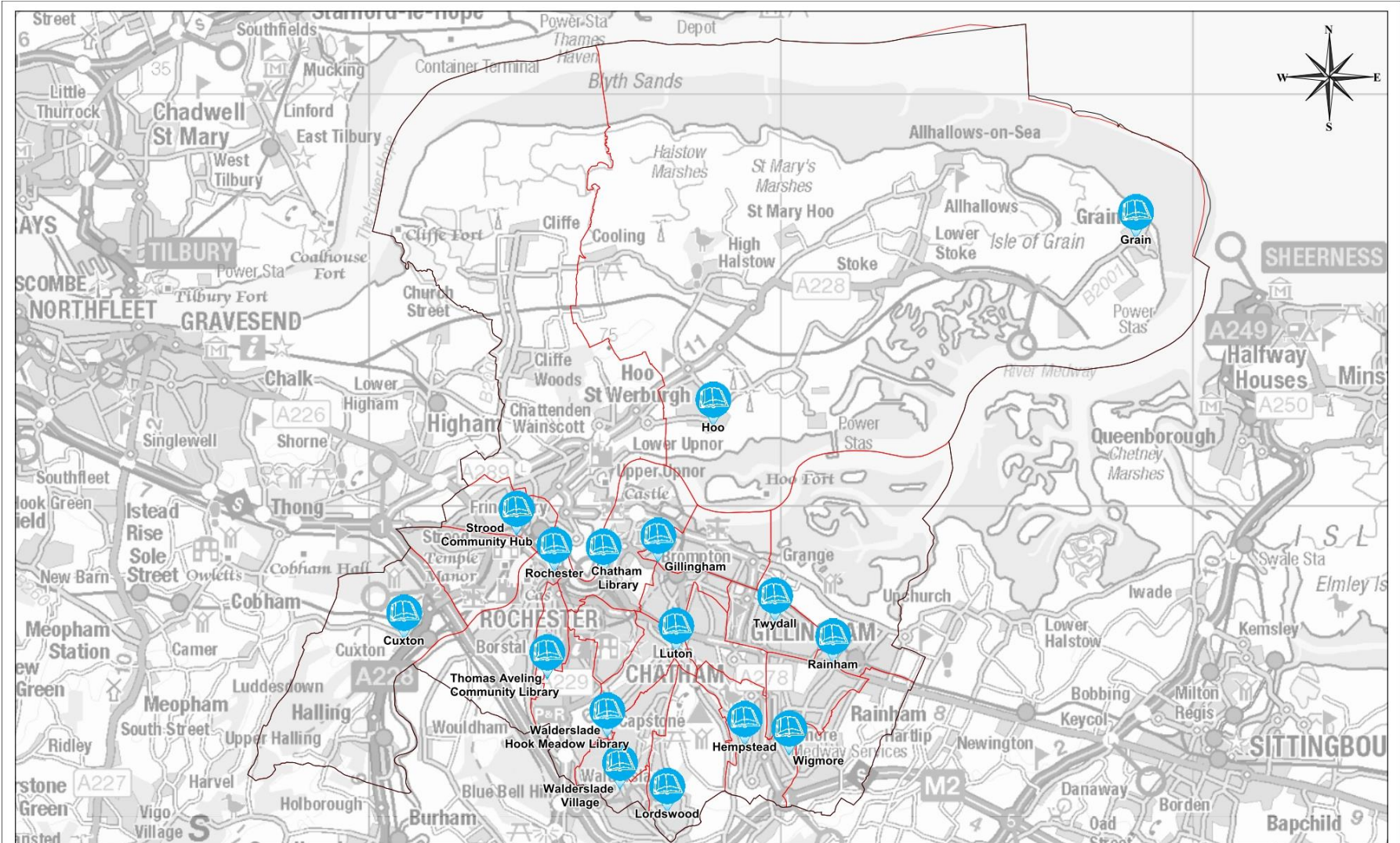
The Service offers residents access to a range of core services:

- A wide variety of stock to borrow - including adult and children's fiction and non-fiction books
- Books in large print, community languages and for adult learners
- eBooks and eAudiobooks
- Audio books for all ages
- Electronic information sources available online
- DVDs - including boxed sets
- Newspapers and magazines
- Information technology - over 140 access computers, free internet use, free Wi-Fi, printing, scanning and photocopying facilities
- Study space
- Events and activities - a whole range of events and activities for adults and young people
- Public information
- Trained staff to support the public in making use of all of the above
- Range of opportunities for volunteering.

Medway Libraries are available to anyone who lives or works in Medway, as well as visitors. Customers can register at one library but their card allows them to borrow and return to any one of the council's libraries. Lending stock may be requested and renewed online at any time, and delivered to any branch for collection. Libraries also host events and hire out spaces to partner agencies and community groups offering a range of services, advice and activities.

LOCATION OF LIBRARIES

Compared to its family of comparative authorities, Medway has a higher than average number of libraries (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting Library Statistics 2014-15). Residents have a good choice of libraries to visit and the easy return policy (borrow from one, return to any other) increases the flexibility for borrowers.



Medway Libraries

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Scale: 1:125000 12/04/17

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RECENT PERFORMANCE OF MEDWAY'S LIBRARIES

Statistically, the size and scope of the interaction with the public is set out in the following table:

Medway Library Service use - summary of all branches	2015-2016	2016-2017	% Change
Visits	1,133,811	1,151,215	+ 1.5%
Issues (books/ DVDs/ spoken word CD's)	931,321	934,575	+ 0.35%
Active borrowers	36,564	34,783	- 4.9%
Computer sessions	160,441	180,083	+ 12.2%
Event attendance	59,287	65,308	+ 10.2%
Enquiries	200,544	214,545	+ 7.0%
Web visits	235,960	264,133	+ 11.9%

The immediately past year 2016-2017 has been a very positive one for the Library Service, with most indicators moving positively forward, very much bucking the national trend which is generally seeing a decline in visits and issues. There is no doubt that the creation of community hubs has been instrumental here, bringing greater footfall into these larger libraries. Credit also needs to be given to Libraries' staff where the array of activities has also played an important part in this predominantly positive trend.

LIBRARY USE FOR ALL MEDWAY LIBRARIES

PERFORMANCE BY BRANCH - ISSUES

Medway Libraries – library performance by ISSUES	
Library	2015-16
Gillingham Library and Community Hub	134,397
Strood Library and Community Hub	101,479
Chatham Library and Community Hub	87,187
Wigmore Library	67,604
Rainham Library	57,475
Rochester Library and Community Hub	55,520
Walderslade Village Library	42,186
Lordswood Library	39,356
Hoo Library	30,881
Twydall Library and Community Hub	28,331
Walderslade Hook Meadow Library	24,033
Luton Library	23,743
Cuxton Library	20,486
Thomas Aveling School and Community Library	14,261
Hempstead Library and Community Hub	13,780
Grain Library	6,039

Medway Libraries – library performance by ISSUES	
Library	2016-17
Gillingham Library and Community Hub	150,165
Strood Library and Community Hub	92,531
Chatham Library and Community Hub	78,811
Wigmore Library	63,751
Rochester	56,647
Rainham	55,109
Lordswood Library	41,824
Walderslade Village Library	41,444
Cuxton	35,915
Twydall Library and Community Hub	31,818
Luton Library	28,048
Hoo Library	27,477
Hempstead Library and Community Hub	20,544
Walderslade Hook Meadow Library	20,216
Thomas Aveling School and Community Library	13,692
Grain Library	4,665

For the year 2015-2016 Thomas Aveling Community Library, in terms of static libraries, issued the **third least** books/ DVDs (14th out of 16). For 2016-2017 it has issued the **second least** books/ DVDs (15th out of 16).

PERFORMANCE BY BRANCH - VISITS

Medway Libraries - library performance by VISITS	
Library	2015-16
Rochester Library and Community Hub	188,100
Gillingham Library and Community Hub	175,329
Strood Library and Community Hub	171,641
Chatham Library and Community Hub	167,951
Rainham Library	55,534
Lordswood Library	54,375
Wigmore Library	48,516
Walderslade Village Library	36,988
Twydall Library and Community Hub	35,496
Hoo Library	35,424
Walderslade Hook Meadow Library	26,642
Thomas Aveling School and Community Library	26,501
Luton Library	26,192
Cuxton Library	23,479
Hempstead Library and Community Hub	20,704
Grain Library	4,817

Medway Libraries - library performance by VISITS	
Library	2016-17
Rochester Library and Community Hub	203,763
Gillingham Library and Community Hub	171,101
Chatham Library and Community Hub	166,174
Strood Library and Community Hub	137,264
Rainham Library	57,574
Lordswood Library	55,593
Wigmore Library	46,297
Twydall Library and Community Hub	45,728
Walderslade Village Library	37,792
Hoo Library	31,768
Thomas Aveling School and Community Library	29,313
Hempstead Library and Community Hub	26,086
Luton Library	25,410
Walderslade Hook Meadow Library	24,286
Cuxton Library	23,289
Grain Library	4,362

For library visits, Thomas Aveling Community Library in 2015-2016 generated the fifth fewest visits for static libraries and in 2016-2017 the sixth fewest, an improved position. However, we believe that this use is very heavily influenced by young people e.g. in October 2016 the average number of daily visitors was 153, for the October half term this figure reduced to 29 and during August, in the school holidays, the average number of daily visits was 36. On Saturdays the footfall for Thomas Aveling can be 50% of the weekday footfall.

PERFORMANCE BY BRANCH - ENQUIRIES

Medway Libraries - library performance by ENQUIRIES	
Library	2015-16
Chatham Library and Community Hub	3,410
Gillingham Library and Community Hub	3,176
Rochester Library and Community Hub	2,109
Strood Library and Community Hub	1,684
Wigmore Library	919
Twydall Library and Community Hub	850
Walderslade Village Library	844
Walderslade Hook Meadow Library	680
Rainham Library	567
Hoo Library	498
Lordswood Library	480
Luton Library	441
Cuxton Library	293
Hempstead Library and Community Hub	229
Thomas Aveling School and Community Library	211
Grain Library	155

Medway Libraries - library performance by ENQUIRIES	
Library	2016-17
Chatham Library and Community Hub	3,785
Gillingham Library and Community Hub	3,614
Strood Library and Community Hub	2,191
Rochester Library and Community Hub r	1,957
Twydall Library and Community Hub	1262
Walderslade Village Library	948
Wigmore Library	800
Rainham Library	674
Walderslade Hook Meadow	643
Hoo Library	640
Lordswood Library	608
Cuxton Library	474
Luton Library	441
Hempstead Library and Community Hub	291
Thomas Aveling School and Community Library	276
Grain Library	182

For enquiries Thomas Aveling Community Library, for both years, only sits above Grain in terms of the number of enquiries answered for static libraries. It has followed the general trend of an increase in enquiries.

PERFORMANCE BY BRANCH – EVENTS ATTENDANCE

Medway Libraries - library performance by EVENTS ATTENDANCE	
Library	2015-16
Strood Library and Community Hub	11,824
Gillingham Library and Community Hub	9,014
Rochester Library and Community Hub	6,056
Lordswood Library	5,223
Wigmore Library	3,910
Chatham Library and Community Hub	3,863
Luton Library	3,726
Rainham Library	3,054
Hoo Library	2,934
Walderslade Hook Meadow Library	2,016
Walderslade Village Library	1,891
Hempstead Library and Community Hub	1,859
Cuxton Library	1,681
Grain Library	1,038
Thomas Aveling School and Community Library	948
Twydall Library and Community Hub *	250

Medway Libraries - library performance by EVENTS ATTENDANCE	
Library	2016-17
Strood Library and Community Hub	11,307
Gillingham Library and Community Hub	9,208
Rochester Library and Community Hub r	6,095
Chatham Library and Community Hub	5,940
Lordswood Library	4,988
Luton Library	4,087
Rainham Library	3,971
Wigmore Library	3,919
Hempstead Library and Community Hub	3,756
Hoo Library	2,787
Walderslade Village Library	2,272
Twydall Library and Community Hub	1,813
Cuxton Library	1,789
Walderslade Hook Meadow Library	1,246
Thomas Aveling School and Community Library	1,186
Grain Library	944

NB * Twydall Library did not run events from January to July 2016 as it was in a temporary location.

For 2015-2016 Thomas Aveling Community Library had the poorest event attendance and for 2016-2017 it sits only above Grain.

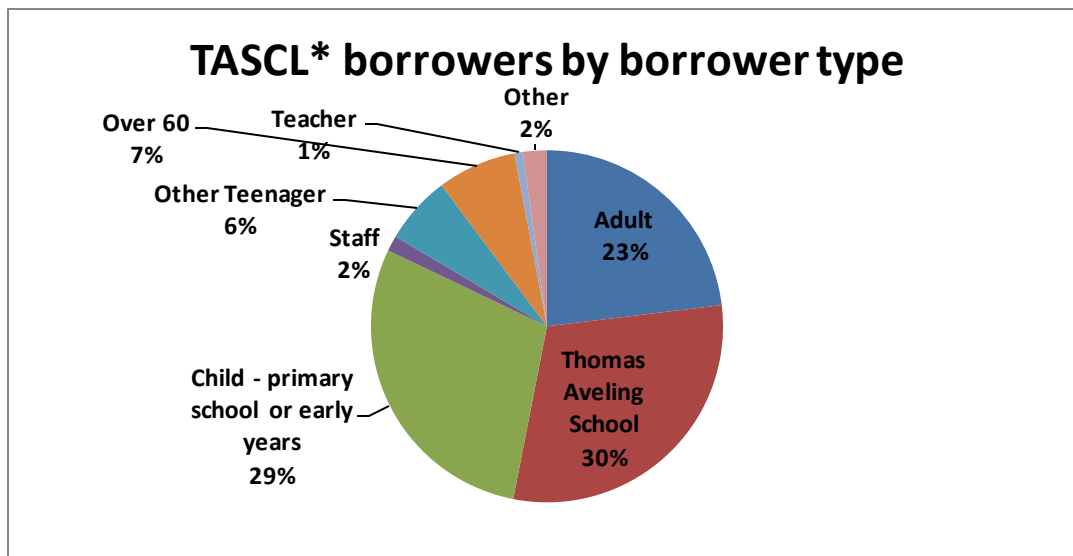
ACTIVE USE OF THOMAS AVELING COMMUNITY LIBRARY

910 unique users borrowed an item from Thomas Aveling Community Library during public library opening hours from 31 January 2016 to 1 February 2017. They borrowed a total of 14,120 books from the library. In the same period these borrowers borrowed a total of 35,575 from other Medway libraries.

Branch	Loans	Percentage
Chatham	2201	6.19%
Cuxton	430	1.21%
Gillingham	51	0.14%
Grain	106	0.30%
Hempstead	153	0.43%
Hoo	92	0.26%
Lordswood	246	0.69%
Luton	175	0.49%
Rainham	923	2.59%
Rochester	1928	5.42%
Strood	2860	8.04%
Thomas Aveling Community Library	14120	39.69%
Twydall	128	0.36%
Walderslade HM	513	1.44%
Walderslade V	1183	3.33%
Wigmore	436	1.23%
Mobiles, MALSC, Events Mobile,	1627	4.57%
Online Renewals	3402	9.56%
Telephone renewals via Customer Contact	944	2.65%
School users	4057	11.40%

This table illustrates that active customers of Thomas Aveling Community Library make use of a range of libraries, they are not restricted to one service point - their one library card gives access to all libraries and they can return items taken out at any location.

**Unique users who have borrowed a book from Thomas Aveling Community Library
31 January 2016 to 1 February 2017**



Borrower type	Number
Adult	210
Thomas Aveling School	273
Child (primary school or early years)	264
Staff	13
Other Teenager	57
Over 60	66
Teacher	7
Other	20
Total	910

This chart and table illustrates how little use is made of the library by adults and the over 60's compared to the use made by young people.

Thomas Aveling borrowers by their registered branch

Registered at	Number	Percentage
Chatham	141	15.49%
Cuxton	3	0.33%
Gillingham	40	4.40%
Hempstead	2	0.22%
Hoo	6	0.66%
Lordswood	8	0.88%
Luton	10	1.10%
Mobile (incl events)	12	1.32%
Children's Mobile	56	6.15%
Rainham	10	1.10%
Rochester	156	17.14%
Strood	60	6.59%
TASCL	281	30.88%
School	98	10.77%
Twydall	5	0.55%
Walderslade HM	10	1.10%
Walderslade V	7	0.77%
Wigmore	4	0.44%
Unknown	1	0.11%
Total	910	100.00%

This table illustrates that residents tend to make use of more than one library. In this case many customers also use Rochester and Chatham.

PATTERN OF VISITS TO LIBRARIES – MOST POPULAR TIMES

Our knowledge of staffing libraries tells us that early to mid morning tends to be the most popular time, although that can be varied of course by attendance for particular events. At Gillingham we have a thermal counter that counts in real time enabling hourly statistics to be recorded (unfortunately we do not have this feature at other libraries). We have taken data for three different months (April, June and August 2016) and provided the hourly average attendance. The conclusion that the opening hours of Thomas Aveling Community Library are not at the best time, is supported below:

Gillingham	9am-10am	10am-11am	11am-12pm	12pm-1pm	1pm-2pm	2pm-3pm	3pm-4pm	4pm-5pm	5pm-6pm	6pm-7pm
April/June/August 2016										
Average	64.67	95.78	79.73	73.12	76.56	70.91	68.32	58.83	38.7	19.14

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics profile for users registered at Thomas Aveling Community Library who have used a Medway library in the last 2 years.

February 2017 - There are 560 users who registered at Thomas Aveling Community Library and have used a Medway library in the last two years (26 January 2015 to 25 January 2017).

For the purpose of this exercise the postcodes recorded within the library user data were matched to small areas called Output Areas. Output Areas are statistical geographies produced as part of the Census 2011, they provide a similarly sized area in terms of population to allow comparison for Census data. On average there are 129 households in an Output Area.

1. Data relating to all library users who are registered at Thomas Aveling Community Library and reside in Medway.

There were 543 library users matched to an Output Area by their postcode. Demographic information relating to gender, age and ethnicity was provided from the Library Service records. This was then compared to Census 2011 data which is the only data source that provides gender, age and ethnicity data for small geographic areas such as Output Areas.

Gender

The data is based upon 540 library users (three users did not have their gender recorded) and an output area population of 42,220 - please note some of the output areas are a significant distance from Thomas Aveling Community Library and it is likely that the populations in these areas would visit other libraries.

	Users registered at Thomas Aveling (%)	Census (%) based on OA
Female	64.3	50.4
Male	35.7	49.6

Females are overrepresented in the library data when compared to the census information - 64.3% compared to 50.4%.

Age

The data is based upon 543 library users and an output area population of 42,220 - please note some of the output areas are a significant distance from Thomas Aveling Community Library and it is likely that the populations in these areas would visit other libraries.

	Users registered at Thomas Aveling (%)	Census (%) based on OA
0 - 18	52.1	24.4
19 - 44	24.7	36.6
45 - 64	13.4	24.8
Over 65	9.8	14.2

Young people aged 0 to 18, account for more than half of users registered at the library. This is more than double the percentage of the same age group recorded in the Census 2011. All other age groups are underrepresented in the library data compared to the census population. Thomas Aveling pupils will of course retain their access to the library

Ethnicity

Due to small numbers the data has been grouped into two:

- Black and Minority Ethnic
- White.

Those in the White group could be recorded as any of the following sub categories:

- English
- Welsh
- Scottish
- Northern Irish
- British
- Irish
- Gypsy
- Irish Traveller
- Other White

Those in the BME group are any ethnicity in the following major categories or any subcategory beneath these:

- Mixed/multiple ethnic group
- Asian/Asian British
- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Black British
- Other ethnic groups

The library data is based upon 339 library users, the other 204 users had either declined to provide their ethnicity or it was not recorded for those users. The Census data is based upon an output area population of 42,220 - please note some of the output areas are a significant distance from Thomas Aveling Community Library and it is likely that the populations in these areas would visit other libraries.

	Users registered at Thomas Aveling (%)	Census (%) based on OA
White	80.5	87.0
BME	19.5	13.0

The library data shows a higher proportion of BME users than the community data.

2. The following data relates to all Thomas Aveling Community Library registered users residing in an Output Area within 1km of Thomas Aveling Community Library.

To understand the use of the library from those who live nearby a further analysis was carried out. The Output Areas used were those where the centre of their populations fell within a 1km buffer from Thomas Aveling Community Library. The centre of the population is calculated by the Office for National Statistics; this is called a population weighted centroid and acts as a summary reference point for the centre of the population in an Output Area.

In all there were 369 library users who live in an Output Area within 1km of the library.

Demographic information relating to gender, age and ethnicity was provided from the Library Service, this was matched to Census 2011 data which is the only data source that provides gender, age and ethnicity data for small geographic areas such as Output Areas.

Gender

The data is based upon 369 library users, and an output area population of 11,714.

	Users registered at Thomas Aveling (%)	Census (%) based on OA
Female	63.9	48.6
Male	36.1	51.4

Females are overrepresented in the library data when compared to the census information - 63.9% compared to 48.6%.

Age

The data is based upon 369 library users and an output area population of 11,714.

	Users registered at Thomas Aveling (%)	Census (%) based on OA
0 - 18	53.9	24.3
19 - 44	22.2	33.0
45 - 64	13.0	25.4
Over 65	10.8	17.2

The Young people aged 0 to 18 account for more than half of users registered at the library. This is more than double the percentage of the same age group recorded in the Census 2011. All other age groups are underrepresented in the library data compared to the census population.

Ethnicity

Due to small numbers the data has been grouped into two:

- Black and Minority Ethnic
- White

Those in the White group could be recorded as any of the following sub categories:

- English
- Welsh
- Scottish
- Northern Irish
- British
- Irish
- Gypsy
- Irish Traveller
- Other White

Those in the BME group are any ethnicity in the following major categories or any subcategory beneath these:

- Mixed/multiple ethnic group
- Asian/Asian British
- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Black British
- Other ethnic groups

Those in the library data is based upon 222 library users, the other 147 users had either declined to provide their ethnicity or it was not recorded for those users. The Census data is based upon an output area population of 11,714.

	User registered at Thomas Aveling (%)	Census (%) based on OA
White	78.4	84.8
BME	21.6	15.2

The library data shows a higher proportion of BME library users than the community data.

THOMAS AVELING COMMUNITY LIBRARY - PROXIMITY TO OTHER NEARBY LIBRARIES

To Chatham Library and Community Hub

Method	Miles	Time taken
By car – fastest route	3.4	12 minutes
By bus route 145 - every 10 minutes	2.7	24 minutes
On foot	2.2	42 minutes
Cycle	2.4	11 minutes

To Rochester Library and Community Hub

Method	Miles	Time taken
By car – fastest route	2	10 minutes
By bus route 145 – every 10 minutes	2	15 minutes
On foot	2	34 minutes
Cycle	1.75	9 minutes

To Strood Library and Community Hub

Method	Miles	Time taken
By car – fastest route	3	11 minutes
By bus route 145 to Rochester frequent buses to Strood (141,190,700,191)	3	26 minutes
On foot	3	50 minutes
Cycle	3	18 Minutes

The future provision of public library services at the Thomas Aveling Community Library - have your say

This consultation seeks your opinion on the future of the Thomas Aveling Community Library Service. Your comments will help us develop your service requirements.

Before you complete this short survey, may we suggest that you review the consultation documents and supporting data.

Please note: the provision of the school library service for Thomas Aveling School will remain in place to meet the needs of the students.

The consultation runs from Friday 21 April until 5pm on Thursday 15 June 2017.

Comments must be received by 5pm on Thursday 15 June 2017.

How you use your library

Do you use the Thomas Aveling Community Library?

- Yes
 No

How often do you use the Thomas Aveling Community Library?

- Almost every day
 At least once a week
 At least once a fortnight
 At least once a month
 At least once every six months
 Less frequently

At what time do you mostly visit the Thomas Aveling Community Library? (Please choose all that apply)

- Weekdays 3-4pm
 Weekdays 4-5pm
 Weekdays 5-6pm
 Saturdays 10-12 noon
 Saturdays 12-2pm
 Saturdays 2-4pm

When attending the Thomas Aveling Community Library, please say how you make use of the facilities: (Please choose all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> To borrow books | <input type="checkbox"/> To use the computers | <input type="checkbox"/> For a safe place to wait to be picked up from school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To borrow DVDs | <input type="checkbox"/> To carry out homework after school | <input type="checkbox"/> Other reason |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To attend a library event | | |

If other, please say:

Do you also use any other libraries?

- Yes
 No

Which libraries do you use? (Please choose all that apply)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chatham | <input type="checkbox"/> Lordswood | <input type="checkbox"/> Strood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cuxton | <input type="checkbox"/> Luton | <input type="checkbox"/> Twydall |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gillingham | <input type="checkbox"/> Medway Community Mobile Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Walderslade Hook Meadow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grain | <input type="checkbox"/> Rainham | <input type="checkbox"/> Walderslade Village |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hempstead | <input type="checkbox"/> Rochester | <input type="checkbox"/> Wigmore |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hoo | | |

Which of the following library services do you currently use or would consider using? (Please choose all that apply and note that they are all FREE)

	Currently use	Would consider using
eBooks and eAudiobooks - a large selection of free books available to download to a variety of mobile devices. Staff can help support you in getting up and running	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobile Library Service - our mobile library visits different locations throughout Medway and is fully accessible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electronic resources - online access to reference works, encyclopaedias, local information and much more	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Home Library Service - for those customers who find getting to the library difficult, books are delivered to your home by a volunteer courier	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postal service for the visually impaired - spoken word CDs delivered to your home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Residential homes/sheltered accommodation - a collection of books delivered to your location	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which libraries do you use? (Please choose all that apply)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chatham | <input type="checkbox"/> Lordswood | <input type="checkbox"/> Strood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cuxton | <input type="checkbox"/> Luton | <input type="checkbox"/> Twydall |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gillingham | <input type="checkbox"/> Medway Community
Mobile Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Walderslade Hook
Meadow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grain | <input type="checkbox"/> Rainham | <input type="checkbox"/> Walderslade Village |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hempstead | <input type="checkbox"/> Rochester | <input type="checkbox"/> Wigmore |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hoo | | |

Which following library services would you consider using in the future?

- To borrow **books**
- To borrow **DVDs**
- To attend a **library event**
- To use the **computers**
- To carry out **homework** after school/college
- To borrow eBooks and eAudiobooks** - a large selection of free books available to download to a variety of mobile devices. Staff can help support you in getting up and running
- To use the **Mobile Library Service** - our mobile library visits different locations throughout Medway and is fully accessible
- To use the **electronic resources** - online access to reference works, encyclopaedias, local information and much more
- To use the **Home Library Service** - for those customers who find getting to the library difficult, books are delivered to your home by a volunteer courier
- To receive the **Postal service for the visually impaired** - spoken word CDs delivered to your home
- To use the **Residential homes/sheltered accommodation service** - a collection of books delivered to your location
- Other reason

If other, please say what

Tell us your views

In the consultation document, we set out our preferred option to close Thomas Aveling Community Library. We are now seeking your views on this and alternative proposals.

As identified on page 8 of the consultation document please tell us which of the following options you would prefer. (Please choose one only)

- Replace the current library with tailored alternative provision that could consist of the following services - Mobile Library Service, Home Library Service, service to residential homes, other Community Hub libraries etc
- The current service to remain in place
- Withdraw the service without alternative provision
- Suggest an alternative option that has not been considered

If you would like to suggest an alternative option, please comment in the box below

What would be your preferred time to visit your local library? (Please select one box only)

- Weekday Morning (9:00-12:00)
- Weekday afternoon (12:00-17:00)
- Weekday evening (17:00-19:00)
- Weekday evening (19:00-21:00)
- Saturday Morning (9:00-12:00)
- Saturday afternoon (12:00-17:00)
- Other

Please give details

Please say which other Medway library services you currently make use of:

- eBooks
- eAudiobooks
- The community mobile library
- A community hub
- Another Medway Council library*
- Home library service
- Other

If other, please say what

*Medway Library cards can be used at any public library in Medway and books can be borrowed and returned at different branches.

About you

Medway is committed to consulting with all its residents and so, to ensure that all groups within the community have the opportunity to participate in this consultation, we would appreciate it if you could provide us with the following information. The information provided will remain private and confidential and will not be used for any other purpose. You are under no obligation to provide the following information and it will not affect your input if you choose not to.

Your Contact Details

Full Name

Email Address

Address

Post code

Type of Consultee (Please select one of the below option)

- Member of the public
- Local Authority
- Business
- Councillor/MP/Parish Council
- Charity/Community/Faith Group
- Other

If other, please say:

Are you? (please tick one box only)

- Male
- Female
- I prefer not to say

In which of the following age bands do you fall? (please tick the appropriate box)

- Under 16
- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75+
- I prefer not to say

Do you have any long-standing health problem or disability? Long-standing means anything that has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months. (please select the appropriate box)

- Yes No I prefer not to say

If yes, what is the nature of your health problem or disability? (please select the appropriate boxes)

- Health Diagnosis Mental Health I prefer not to say
 Hearing Impairment Physical Impairment Other
 Learning Disability Sight Impairment

If other, please say what

What is your ethnic group?

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> White - English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British | <input type="radio"/> Any other mixed / multiple ethnic background | <input type="radio"/> Asian / Asian British - Pakistani |
| <input type="radio"/> White - Irish | <input type="radio"/> Black / Black British - African | <input type="radio"/> Asian / Asian British - Bangladeshi |
| <input type="radio"/> White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller | <input type="radio"/> Black / Black British - Caribbean | <input type="radio"/> Asian / Asian British - Chinese |
| <input type="radio"/> Any other White background | <input type="radio"/> Any other Black / African/ Caribbean background | <input type="radio"/> Any other Asian background |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed - White and Black Caribbean | <input type="radio"/> Asian / Asian British - Indian | <input type="radio"/> Other - Arab |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed - White and Black African | | <input type="radio"/> Any other ethnic background |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed - White and Asian | | <input type="radio"/> I prefer not to say |

If other, please say:

In which area do you live? (Please select one box only)

- Chatham Rochester Gillingham
 Strood Rainham Rural areas of Medway
 Outside the Medway area I prefer not to say

Thank you for completing this survey.

Protecting your personal information.

Medway Council will keep the information provided above as confidential. Access to, retention and disposal of this information will be strictly in accordance with data protection requirements. It will be used solely to ensure that Medway Council meets obligations under equality legislation. Individuals will not be identifiable in any reporting. Your personal data will be processed in accordance with Medway Council's Data Protection notice.

Responses will be kept for one year and then destroyed.

LIBRARIES FOR LIFE

www.medway.gov.uk/libraries

 www.facebook.com/medwaylibraries

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Medway

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INTRODUCTION

It was agreed at Council on 23rd February as part of the budget setting report to carry out a consultation on the future of the Thomas Aveling Community Library based in the grounds of Thomas Aveling Secondary School.

This report provides analysis of the consultation results that took place between 21st April and 15th June 2017.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

151 responses were received. Of the 151 responses, 96% (145) use Thomas Aveling Community Library and 4% (6) do not. 91% (137) were members of the public, 74% identified themselves as living in Rochester.

All 151 respondents were asked which option they would prefer as an outcome.

- 87% (131) would prefer the current Thomas Aveling Community Library service to remain in place
- 7% (11) would like the current Thomas Aveling Community Library service to be replaced with a tailored alternate provision
- 3% (4) have suggested an alternative solution
- 2% (3) would withdraw the service without alternate provision
- 1% (2) did not answer

Of the 145 that do use the service, 39% (56) also make use of other libraries in Medway.

- 73% (41) use Rochester library
- 32% (18) use Chatham library
- 25% (14) use Gillingham library

The most popular activities were:

- 95% (138) to borrow books
- 27% (39) to use the computers
- 24% (35) to attend an event
- 24% (35) to borrow DVDs
- 14% (21) to carry out homework after school

Of the 131 who would prefer the current service to remain in place:

- 32% (42) use the Thomas Aveling Community Library service at least once a month
- 28% (37) at least once a week
- 22% (29) at least once a fortnight
- 38% (50) would consider using at least one alternate service (i.e. eBooks/electronic resources)
- 58% (76) do not use an alternative library of which 29% (22) would consider using at least one alternate service
- 37% (49) do use an alternative library

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FINDINGS OF THE THOMAS AVELING COMMUNITY LIBRARY CONSULTATION 2017

Of the 49 who use an alternate library:

- 71% (35) use Rochester Hub
- 41% (20) use other libraries
- 31% (15) use Chatham Hub

METHODOLOGY

The consultation period was for eight weeks and commenced on 21 April 2017 at 9am and ended on 15 June 2017 at 5pm.

Of the 153 responses that were received, 2 individuals made 2 responses in the same name; therefore we have included their first response and disregarded the second, leaving 151 responses remaining for analysis.

SURVEYS

The consultation was drawn to the attention of 910 recent users (who had used the library between January 2016 and February 2017) through email and letter, inviting them to complete the survey either online or by a paper version that could be collected at the service. The analysis of the 910 Thomas Aveling customers indicated the following user breakdown:

- 30% (273) Thomas Aveling school students
- 29% (264) primary school or early years
- 23% (210) adult users
- 7% (66) over 60
- 11% (97) other users, other teenagers, staff, teachers.

Paper surveys were also made available in all other community hubs in Medway. 100 paper surveys were collected from Thomas Aveling Community Library, but no further paper surveys were received from any of the other library community hubs.

FACE TO FACE

Three drop in meetings were held alongside the consultation survey to give residents an opportunity to meet a libraries manager and discuss the proposal. These meetings were held in Thomas Aveling School and Community Library on:

- Thursday, 18 May 2017 with Duncan Mead, Library Services Manager
- Saturday, 27 May 2017 with Chris White, Head of Libraries, Business Support and Community Hubs
- Tuesday, 30 May 2017 with Duncan Mead and Chris White

The meetings were an opportunity for residents to discuss the proposal in addition to or as an alternative to completing the survey. Across the three meetings 40 residents attended.

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FINDINGS OF THE THOMAS AVELING COMMUNITY LIBRARY CONSULTATION 2017

OBSERVATIONS

The complete breakdown of all question responses can be found in the FINDINGS section of this report at page 6.

SURVEY

USAGE

Of the 151 responses, 96% (145) responded that they do use Thomas Aveling Community Library and 4% (6) do not.

Of the 145 respondents that do use the service:

- 32% (47) use the library at least once a month, of which
 - 43% (20) use the service Saturdays 10-12noon
 - 40% (19) use the service weekdays 3-4pm
- 27% (39) at least once a week, of which
 - 56% (22) use the service Saturdays 10-12noon
 - 41% (16) use the service weekdays 4-5pm
- 22% (32) at least once a fortnight, of which
 - 53% (17) use the service Saturdays 10-12 noon
 - 47% (15) use the service weekdays 4-5pm

Overall, of all 145 respondents (multiple choice question):

- 47% (68) visit Saturday 10-12noon
- 41% (59) visit weekday 4-5pm
- 37% (54) visit weekday 3-4pm

SERVICES USED

Of the 145 respondents that do use the service (multiple choice question):

- 95% (138) use the service to borrow books
- 27% (39) to use the computers
- 24% (35) for attending library events
- 24% (35) borrowing DVDs
- 14% (21) to carry out homework after school
- 4% (6) for a safe place to wait to be picked up after school
- 14% (21) responded as 'other'

Of the 145 that do use the service, 39% (56) also make use of other libraries in Medway. Of these, 73% (41) use Rochester, 32% (18) use Chatham and 25% (14) use Gillingham.

We asked what other alternate library services are currently used (multiple choice), 18% (26) responded. Of the 145 that do use the service, 7% (10) use eBooks and eAudiobooks, 6.2% (9) use electronic resources and 5.5% (8) use a mobile library service.

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FINDINGS OF THE THOMAS AVELING COMMUNITY LIBRARY CONSULTATION 2017

We also asked what other alternate library services the user would consider using (multiple choice). 50% (72) responded. Of the 145, 32% (46) would consider using eBooks and eAudiobooks, 27% (39) the mobile library service and 21% (31) electronic resources.

Of the 6 respondents that do not use Thomas Aveling Community Library, all responded with at least one library in Medway that they do use. 67% (4) use Rochester, 33% (2) use Chatham and the same result for Gillingham.

OUTCOME PREFERENCE

All 151 respondents were asked which option they would prefer as an outcome:

- 87% (131) would prefer the current service to remain in place
- 7% (11) would like the current library to be replaced with a tailored alternate provision
- 3% (4) have suggested an alternative solution
- 2% (3) would withdraw the service without alternate provision
- 1% (2) did not answer.

All 131 that would prefer the current service to remain in place were current users of the service.

Of this 131, 32% (42) use the service at least once a month, 28% (37) at least once a week and 22% (29) at least once a fortnight.

58% (76) do not use an alternative library, 37% (49) do. Of the 49 that do use an alternate library, 71% (35) use Rochester, 41% (20) use other libraries and 31% (15) use Chatham.

31% (41) would consider using eBooks and eAudiobooks, 27% (35) would consider using the mobile library service and 21% (28) would consider using electronic resources.

All respondents were asked which time they would prefer to visit their local library. 32% (49) would prefer weekday afternoon 12-17pm, 25% (38) Saturday morning 9-12noon, 21% (32) Saturday afternoon.

They were also asked which other Medway library services they currently make use of. 19.2% (29) use community hubs, 18.5% (28) use another Medway Council library and 6% (9) use eBooks.

FACE TO FACE

Here is a summary of the issues that were raised at the three drop in meetings and through other correspondence received :

- Loss of a local community facility, and events and activities
- Support for the calm atmosphere at Thomas Aveling
- Thomas Aveling welcomes autistic children
- Loss of library will affect local children's literacy and learning
- Loss of ICT provision – public computers, Internet and printing.
- Transport and parking issues with alternative libraries. Including the associated costs of visiting Community Hubs such as bus fares and parking charges.

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FINDINGS OF THE THOMAS AVELING COMMUNITY LIBRARY CONSULTATION 2017

- Other hub activities often booked up
- The Mobile Library is not a good alternative, including restricted working hours and outdoor waiting.
- Can the mobile libraries meet the needs of wheelchair users ?
- The use of volunteers would help with savings
- Could income be generated through other means to support the library?
- Could the council use the building more intensively with schools, community groups and churches ?
- Use a different venue – such as the former library on Fairway or combined service with a Children’s Centre
- The library at TASCL has not been advertised / promoted enough

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FINDINGS OF THE THOMAS AVELING COMMUNITY LIBRARY CONSULTATION 2017

FINDINGS

Question 1: Do you use the Thomas Aveling Community Library?

	YES	NO
NUMERATOR	145	6
DENOMINATOR	151	151
PERCENTAGE	96%	4%

If they answered YES to question 1:

(These are the respondents that completed a survey, and do use Thomas Aveling Community Library)

Question 2: How often do you use the Thomas Aveling Community Library?

	Almost every day	At least once a week	At least once a fortnight	At least once a month	At least once every six months	Less frequently	Not answered
NUMERATOR	13	39	32	47	10	3	1
DENOMINATOR	145	145	145	145	145	145	145
PERCENTAGE	9%	27%	22%	32%	7%	2%	1%

Question 3: At what time do you mostly visit the Thomas Aveling Community Library? (Please choose all that apply)

	Weekdays 3-4pm	Weekdays 4-5pm	Weekdays 5-6pm	Saturdays 10-12 noon	Saturdays 12-2pm	Saturdays 2-4pm
NUMERATOR	54	59	39	68	44	39
DENOMINATOR	145	145	145	145	145	145
PERCENTAGE	37%	41%	27%	47%	30%	27%

Question 4: When attending the Thomas Aveling Community Library, please say how you make use of the facilities: (Please choose all that apply)

	To borrow books	To borrow DVDs	To attend a library event	To use the computers	To carry out homework after school	For a safe place to wait to be picked up from school	Other
NUMERATOR	138	35	35	39	21	6	21
DENOMINATOR	145	145	145	145	145	145	145
PERCENTAGE	95%	24%	24%	27%	14%	4%	14%

REGENERATION, CULTURE, ENVIRONMENT & TRANSFORMATION

FINDINGS OF THE THOMAS AVELING COMMUNITY LIBRARY CONSULTATION 2017

Question 5: If other, please say:

21 comments were received to detail other uses of the library. Within these 21 comments were 29 other responses that were not specific in question 4, which can be broken down as follows:

Photocopying	7
Printing	4
School Class/time with pupils/study	4
Recycling bags	3
To read	2
Borrow puzzles	2
Craft classes	2
Enter Summer Reading challenge	1
Local information	1
Volunteer work	1
Borrow audio books	1
Computer advice	1

Question 6: Do you also use any other libraries?

	YES	NO	Blank
NUMERATOR	56	83	6
DENOMINATOR	145	145	145
PERCENTAGE	39%	57%	4%

Question 7: Which libraries do you use? (Please choose all that apply)

	Chatham	Gillingham	Hempstead	Rochester	Luton	Community Mobile	Rainham	Strood	Twydall	Walderslade Hook Meadow	Walderslade Village	Not answered
NUMERATOR	18	14	2	41	2	4	4	9	3	2	3	2
DENOMINATOR	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56
PERCENTAGE	32%	25%	4%	73%	4%	7%	7%	16%	5%	4%	5%	4%

Question 8: Which of the following library services do you currently use or would consider using? (Please choose all that apply and note that they are all FREE)

CURRENTLY USE

	eBooks and eAudiobooks	Mobile library service	Electronic resources	Home Library Service	Postal service for the visually impaired	Residential homes/ sheltered accommodation
NUMERATOR	10	8	9	4	0	0
DENOMINATOR	145	145	145	145	145	145
PERCENTAGE	7%	6%	6%	3%	0%	0%

REGENERATION, CULTURE, ENVIRONMENT & TRANSFORMATION

FINDINGS OF THE THOMAS AVELING COMMUNITY LIBRARY CONSULTATION 2017
WOULD CONSIDER USING

	eBooks and eAudiobooks	Mobile library service	Electronic resources	Home Library Service	Postal service for the visually impaired	Residential homes/ sheltered accommodation
NUMERATOR	46	39	31	13	7	7
DENOMINATOR	145	145	145	145	145	145
PERCENTAGE	32%	27%	21%	9%	5%	5%

If they answered NO to question 1:

(These are the respondents that completed a survey, but do not use Thomas Aveling Community Library)

Question 9: Which libraries do you use? (Please choose all that apply)

	Chatham	Gillingham	Community Mobile	Rochester	Walderslade Hook Meadow	Walderslade Village
NUMERATOR	2	2	1	4	1	1
DENOMINATOR	6	6	6	6	6	6
PERCENTAGE	33%	33%	17%	67%	17%	17%

Question 10: Which following library services would you consider using in the future?

	To borrow books	To borrow DVDs	To attend a library event	To borrow eBooks and eAudiobooks	To use the Mobile Library Service	To use electronic resources
NUMERATOR	6	1	4	3	1	3
DENOMINATOR	6	6	6	6	6	6
PERCENTAGE	100%	17%	67%	50%	17%	50%

Question 11: If other, please say what

No responses

ALL RESPONDENTS

(These are all respondents that completed a survey regardless of if they use Thomas Aveling Community Library or not)

Question 12: Please tell us which of the following options you would prefer (please choose one only)

	Replace the current library with tailored alternative provision	The current service to remain in place	Withdraw the service without alternative provision	Suggest an alternative	Not answered
NUMERATOR	11	131	3	4	2
DENOMINATOR	151	151	151	151	151
PERCENTAGE	7%	87%	2%	3%	1%

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Question 13: If you would like to suggest an alternative option, please comment

Re open the old Fairway library.
The main reason I use Thomas Aveling is because it is near to where I live and easy to park. I would like the service to remain as it is, but if this is not the final decision made I would suggest that free parking should be made available at other libraries for library users, in addition to the other suggestions for alternative library provision. I would use the library a lot more if I didn't have to pay parking. I'm not sure how you could stop shoppers using the car park if it was free, but perhaps one way round this would be to offer a refund of parking fees at the library if a book is borrowed, event attended or computer is used.
The current facility is an invaluable but under exploited facility in a prime location to serve a community that is remote from town centre services. Therefore the most obvious solution is to retain the current service, expanded to include other Medway Council services (cost sharing with those services as appropriate) alongside a campaign to raise the profile of the facility by publicising its presence and improving signage. It would also seem sensible to grow the partnership with Thomas Aveling (and other local schools) as well as reach out to local churches and community groups to also partner with the Council for the small but valuable community resource. We have formed the view that the narrow remit of the consultation is to targeted at just reducing budgets and not at getting the best value service for the local community, It is strongly recommended that future consultations adopt a much more holistic approach, with a broader scope to exploit the resources fully in each location.
Have volunteers run the library for free (maybe close on Saturday, due to hours being too long to work for free). A different volunteer per day? Give them only simple duties, no dealings with fines etc.

Question 14: What would be your preferred time to visit your local library (please select one box only)

	Weekday Morning 9:00-12:00	weekday afternoon 12:00-17:00	Weekday evening 17:00-19:00	Weekday evening 19:00-21:00	Saturday morning 9:00-12:00	Saturday afternoon 12:00-17:00	Other
NUMERATOR	12	49	7	2	38	32	9
DENOMINATOR	151	151	151	151	151	151	151
PERCENTAGE	8%	32%	5%	1%	25%	21%	6%

Question 15: If other, please give details

Weekday 4pm-9pm
Weekday 2pm-7pm. Saturday 9am-5pm
Weekday 4pm-7pm. Saturday 9am-5pm
Weekday 4pm to 9pm
weekdays 3-6
8 am to 7 pm Monday to Saturday
No specific time
Anytime
Library used for classes and revision also by sixth form, required during the day.

Question 16: Please say which other Medway library services you currently make use of

	eBooks	eAudiobooks	Community mobile library	A community hub	Another Medway Council library
NUMERATOR	9	3	6	29	28
DENOMINATOR	151	151	151	151	151
PERCENTAGE	6%	2%	4%	19%	19%

Question 16a: If other, please say what

No responses

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Question 17/18/19: Name, email address and address detail which has been excluded from these findings

Question 20: Post code

	ME1	ME4	ME5	ME7	ME20	CT2	Not answered
NUMERATOR	96	4	3	5	1	1	41
DENOMINATOR	151	151	151	151	151	151	151
PERCENTAGE	64%	3%	2%	3%	1%	1%	27%

Question 21: Type of consultee

	Charity/ community/ faith group	Member of the public	Other	Not answered
NUMERATOR	1	137	1	12
DENOMINATOR	151	151	151	151
PERCENTAGE	1%	91%	1%	8%

Question 22: If other, please say

Other
Student

Question 23: Are you?

	Male	Female	Prefer not to say	Not answered
NUMERATOR	36	96	1	18
DENOMINATOR	151	151	151	151
PERCENTAGE	24%	64%	1%	12%

Question 24: In which of the following age bands do you fall?

	Under 16	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	75+	Prefer not to say	Not answered
NUMERATOR	23	4	13	35	21	16	11	3	14
DENOMINATOR	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151
PERCENTAGE	15%	3%	9%	23%	14%	11%	7%	2%	9%

Question 25: Do you have any long standing health problem or disability?

	YES	NO	Prefer not to say	Not answered
NUMERATOR	22	102	7	20
DENOMINATOR	151	151	151	151
PERCENTAGE	15%	68%	5%	13%

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Question 26: If yes, what is the nature of your health problem or disability?

	Health diagnosis	Hearing Impairment	Learning Disability	Mental Health	Physical Impairment	Prefer not to say	Not answered
NUMERATOR	6	2	1	2	4	2	5
DENOMINATOR	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
PERCENTAGE	27%	9%	5%	9%	18%	9%	23%

Question 27: If other, please specify

Specific condition detail which has been excluded from these findings

Question 28: What is your ethnic group?

	White - English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British	White - Irish	Any other White background	Asian / Asian British - Bangladeshi	Asian / Asian British - Chinese	Asian / Asian British - Indian	Any other Asian background
NUMERATOR	90	5	7	1	3	4	1
DENOMINATOR	151	151	151	151	151	151	151
PERCENTAGE	60%	3%	5%	1%	2%	3%	1%

	Black / Black British - African	Black / Black British - Caribbean	Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	Any other mixed / multiple ethnic background	Any other ethnic background	Prefer not to say	Not answered
NUMERATOR	7	1	3	3	2	11	13
DENOMINATOR	151	151	151	151	151	151	151
PERCENTAGE	5%	1%	2%	2%	1%	7%	9%

Question 29: Other, please state

Other, please say
British / Filipino
British and Russian dual national
Bulgarian

Question 30: In which area do you live?

	Chatham	Rochester	Gillingham	Rainham	Rural area of Medway	Outside of the Medway area	Prefer not to say	Not answered
NUMERATOR	10	111	5	1	2	2	1	19
DENOMINATOR	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151
PERCENTAGE	7%	74%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	13%

REGENERATION, CULTURE, ENVIRONMENT & TRANSFORMATION

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CROSS TABULATION ANALYSIS OF THOSE THAT WISH THE SERVICE TO REMAIN OPEN

Those that chose to keep the current service vs frequency of usage of the library

	Almost every day	At least once a week	At least once a fortnight	At least once a month	At least once every six months	Less frequently	Not answered
NUMERATOR	13	37	29	42	7	2	1
DENOMINATOR	131	131	131	131	131	131	131
PERCENTAGE	10%	28%	22%	32%	5%	2%	1%

Those that chose to keep the current service vs use of other libraries

	YES	No	Blank
NUMERATOR	49	76	6
DENOMINATOR	131	131	131
PERCENTAGE	37%	58%	5%

Those that chose to keep the current service vs alternative services they would consider using

	eBooks and eAudiobooks	Mobile library service	Electronic resources	Home Library Service	Postal service for the visually impaired	Residential homes/ sheltered accommodation
NUMERATOR	41	35	28	13	7	7
DENOMINATOR	131	131	131	131	131	131
PERCENTAGE	31%	27%	21%	10%	5%	5%

Those that chose to keep the current service vs age and days/times they use the library

	Weekdays 3-4pm	Weekdays 4-5pm	Weekdays 5-6pm	Saturdays 10-12 noon	Saturdays 12-2pm	Saturdays 2-4pm
Under 16	4	10	8	9	11	12
16-24	0	0	2	2	1	1
25-24	8	6	2	4	1	2
35-44	14	15	11	15	7	7
45-54	3	10	6	12	9	7
55-64	3	2	4	8	5	2
65-74	3	5	2	3	2	3
75+	4	3	1	4	2	1
Prefer not to say	1	0	0	1	1	1
Not answered	7	4	3	5	2	1
NUMERATOR	47	55	39	63	41	37
DENOMINATOR	131	131	131	131	131	131
PERCENTAGE	36%	42%	30%	48%	31%	28%

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Those that chose to keep the current service vs age and how they use the library

	To borrow books	To borrow DVDs	To attend a library event	To use the computers	To carry out homework after school	For a safe place to wait to be picked up from school	Other
Under 16	19	7	7	10	5	0	2
16-24	2	0	0	1	2	0	1
25-24	12	3	5	0	0	0	1
35-44	31	10	12	8	5	1	3
45-54	18	5	6	6	4	2	4
55-64	11	3	1	3	2	1	4
65-74	8	0	0	3	1	0	1
75+	10	1	0	1	0	0	1
Prefer not to say	2	0	1	1	1	1	0
Not answered	12	5	0	5	1	0	4
NUMERATOR	125	34	32	38	21	5	21
DENOMINATOR	131	131	131	131	131	131	131
PERCENTAGE	95%	26%	24%	29%	16%	4%	16%

Those that say they use the Thomas Aveling Community Library service vs frequency of usage and times

		Weekdays 3-4pm	Weekdays 4-5pm	Weekdays 5-6pm	Saturdays 10-12 noon	Saturdays 12-2pm	Saturdays 2-4pm
Almost every day	NUMERATOR	7	8	7	6	7	6
	DENOMINATOR	13	13	13	13	13	13
	PERCENTAGE	54%	62%	54%	46%	54%	46%
At least once a week	NUMERATOR	12	16	12	22	13	8
	DENOMINATOR	39	39	39	39	39	39
	PERCENTAGE	31%	41%	31%	56%	33%	21%
At least once a fortnight	NUMERATOR	10	15	9	17	10	7
	DENOMINATOR	32	32	32	32	32	32
	PERCENTAGE	31%	47%	28%	53%	31%	22%
At least once a month	NUMERATOR	19	16	9	20	10	15
	DENOMINATOR	47	47	47	47	47	47
	PERCENTAGE	40%	34%	19%	43%	21%	32%
At least once every six months	NUMERATOR	4	3	1	2	2	2
	DENOMINATOR	10	10	10	10	10	10
	PERCENTAGE	40%	30%	10%	20%	20%	20%
Less frequently	NUMERATOR	2	1	1	0	1	0
	DENOMINATOR	3	3	3	3	3	3
	PERCENTAGE	67%	33%	33%	0%	33%	0%
Not answered	NUMERATOR	0	0	0	1	1	1
	DENOMINATOR	1	1	1	1	1	1
	PERCENTAGE	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	100%

Diversity impact assessment – Appendix 3

TITLE <i>Name/description of the issue being assessed</i>	This is a further revised DIA for the proposed closure of Thomas Aveling Library. It was originally updated in the light of the work undertaken to produce a consultation document (April 2017). It has now been further updated following public consultation and the analysis of those results.
DATE <i>Date the DIA is completed</i>	26 June 2017
LEAD OFFICER <i>Name and title of person responsible for carrying out the DIA.</i>	Chris White, Head of Libraries, Business Support and Community Hubs Duncan Mead, Library Services Manager

1 Summary description of the proposed change

- *What is the change to policy/service/new project that is being proposed?*
- *How does it compare with the current situation?*

Following a review of budget options, and as a part of the overall Budget of the Council for 2017-18, the Council had indicated that its preferred option for the future is to close the public library at Thomas Aveling secondary school as it is not possible to provide the full range of library services and activities with the restricted opening hours.

The final decision will be taken at the meeting of the Cabinet on 11 July. They will also be considering any views expressed by the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 6 July who will be reviewing the results of public consultation.

Background

Thomas Aveling Library is open to the public from 3-6pm each weekday afternoon and is also open on a Saturday from 10am-4pm.

During school hours the library only operates as a school library exclusively for the pupils of Thomas Aveling School. The school library service will not be affected by this proposed change.

The Library provides the following regular events:

- Baby, Bounce and Rhyme every Wednesday
- Pop in and Play every Saturday
- Teatime Story time every Thursday

2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment

- *Eg: Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user records etc.*
- *Eg: Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile*

Summary

The key factor in the council's considerations on the future of the library at Thomas Aveling has been the constraints arising from the fixed opening hours and the position at the rear of the school site, making it very difficult to create a library that can offer the full experience that is on offer at other local branch libraries, and is an essential resource for the community.

The Thomas Aveling public consultation document set out a range of data that was also used to arrive at the council's preferred option to close Thomas Aveling public library. It also illustrated its poor performance when compared to other libraries.

Performance

Four key indicators of success have provided the main statistical data that indicates that Thomas Aveling is not performing well and is not meeting the needs of the local community :

- On issues of books and DVDs, Thomas Aveling came 15th out of 16 Libraries for issues in 2016-17, a worse performance than in 2015-16.
- On visits to Libraries, performance in 2016-17 was up on 2015-16, although we believe that this figure is skewed by the after school use that pupils make of the library.
- On enquires, Thomas Aveling only sits above Grain library in terms of the number of enquiries answered
- On events and activities, Thomas Aveling had the poorest attendance in 2015-16 (when Twydall library was in temporary accommodation for six months), and had moved just above Grain in 2016-17.

Profile of users

The consultation document also profiled 910 customers who borrowed items from Thomas Aveling between January 2016 and February 2017. This indicated that they also borrowed many more books from other libraries, particularly from Chatham, Rochester and Strood.

This data also confirmed that use of the library is very heavily influenced by young people – 30% of users are Thomas Aveling school pupils and a further 29% are of early years or primary school age. The service believes that the school pupils use the library for homework and as a safe place to wait to be collected after school. Whilst this boosts the 'visits' indicator there is no increase in issues, and it would normally be expected to observe the two to rise together.

The service also knows that usage drops dramatically during school holidays.

Diversity impact assessment – Appendix 3

e.g. in October 2016 the average number of daily visitors was 153, for the October half term this figure reduced to 29 and during August 2016, in the school holidays, the average number of daily visits was 36. Saturday is commonly a very busy day at libraries, however for Thomas Aveling the footfall can be 50% of the weekday footfall.

Demographics

Demographic information relating to gender, age and ethnicity was provided from Library service records for registered users (i.e. those that first joined at Thomas Aveling) and who have used a Medway library in the last two years. Two population comparisons were made, one of all registered users (wherever they live in Medway) and another for registered users who live near the library (1km radius). Both sets of data indicate the same trends :

- Female users are over-represented compared to the population, whilst males are under-represented
- 0-18 year olds are over-represented compared to the population
- All other age groups including those over 65, are under-represented
- Black and minority ethnic users constitute a modestly higher proportion of users compared to the population

Attendance at events

The Library Service advertises and provides a range of events at this building, however the take up has been low. Outside of Grain library, Thomas Aveling has the lowest event attendance of Medway Libraries. At the regular weekly events average attendance for the following three activities is shown :

- Baby, Bounce and Rhyme every Wednesday - average attendance 4-5 children
- Pop in and Play every Saturday - average 5 people
- Teatime Story time every Thursday - average attendance 3 people

Opening hours and site layout

Analysis of attendance patterns has indicated that the most popular times for libraries to be open are in the morning and early afternoon. Thomas Aveling is not able to open its doors prior to 3.00pm, school finishing time. The location of the library at the rear of the school site does not encourage adults to come on site; older people in particular mention this as a deterrent especially during the winter months.

Diversity impact assessment – Appendix 3

3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

Is it likely to :

- *Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups?*
- *Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups?*
- *Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't?*

(insert ✓ in one or more boxes)

Protected characteristic groups	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age	X	x	
Disability			
Gender reassignment			
Marriage/civil partnership			
Pregnancy/maternity			
Race	x		
Religion/belief			
Sex			
Sexual orientation			
Other (eg low income groups)	x		

With the strong use by young people, any proposals for change need to focus on this group. With the surprisingly low use by older people, it is flagged that there is an opportunity here to advance equality by increasing the use of library services by this broad age group.

4 Summary of the likely impacts

- *Who will be affected?*
- *How will they be affected?*

This updated DIA (26.6.17) also reflects on the findings from the public consultation

The report on the findings of the Thomas Aveling Community Library Consultation tells us that 151 people responded to the questionnaire; 87% were against closure, which was also the overriding view expressed at the

Diversity impact assessment – Appendix 3

three public consultation drop-in sessions. Forty people attended three public consultation meetings. The issues that they were concerned about are set out in the Findings report and they are each commented upon in the covering committee report.

The impact on reading, especially for young people (as had already been flagged in the earlier DIA) is raised as a concern by users and non-users. The costs of travel and parking were raised as barriers to using other library facilities, and the earlier DIA had flagged at section 3 that low income groups could potentially be a further disadvantaged group, as they may not be able to make use of alternative facilities as frequently because of the travel costs.

The consultation document data had set out that 910 people had used Thomas Aveling library to borrow something in the year from January 2016 to February 2017. Thirty per cent (273) of this group are Thomas Aveling pupils and it is regarded that the impact on this group will be very modest as the school library will continue.

A further 29% of users (264) are young children of early years or primary school age. This is a key target age group for the Libraries service as the value to learning is well known if reading can be established as a regular and enjoyable activity. Mitigations are aimed at responding to this age group.

Adult borrowers (210) and other teenagers (57) will also be affected in that they would have to travel further to use another library should closure go ahead, but we know that of all the books that the 910 borrowed only 40% were from Thomas Aveling, suggesting that good use is already being made of alternative libraries by many customers.

The service was surprised that only 66 users were aged over 60. Members of this age group are often more regular users of libraries; the service believe that better marketing could lead to a rise in older readers in the locality of Thomas Aveling which would be a positive impact. This would apply to fit and healthy people aged 60+ who can travel to other locations, and to those who have some access difficulties and may be able to be supported through the home library service and the service provided to residential and care homes.

The user profile informed the service that Thomas Aveling borrowers of Black and Minority Ethnic origin, were modestly over represented compared to the local population. We do not know much more about the background to this group (are they settled BME people with a strong library habit, or more recently settled people with a high educational component to their use ?) The service had hoped to gain more information about this group from consultation, and although there were responses from this group, the reasons for that higher use have unfortunately not become more apparent. All of the other mitigations that are outlined below will apply equally to this

group of users and additional needs that may come to light can if necessary be addressed.

5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

- *Are there alternative providers?*
- *What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?*
- *Can demand for services be managed differently?*

In order to draw comment from survey respondents, the consultation document set out four proposals that could form the elements of alternative provision to mitigate the closure of Thomas Aveling library were that to go ahead. :

- Visit a community hub. Chatham, Rochester and Strood are nearest and as 'community hubs' provide good opening hours, facilities and events
- Provide a stop from the Mobile Library – that includes books for children and adults
- Market the on-line offer of the library service to mitigate the travel that would be required
- Seek to contact older residents, care homes and residential homes about services as they are so under-represented amongst the current user base

Following the analysis of the survey findings, those four elements continue to be the key mitigations. Generic provision that applies to all age groups are as follows :

- Make use of a community hub (or other branch library)
The Library Service has 15 other libraries in total so there is a good range of alternative libraries where a visit is required or desired. For Chatham, Rochester and Strood the consultation appendix indicated travel times to these venues as follows : 10-12 minutes by car; 15-26 minutes by bus; 34-50 minutes by foot.
- Use the mobile library
The mobile library provides a service to both adults and children commensurate with a small branch library. The report to the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee has indicated that a fortnightly mobile stop on a Thursday afternoon can be quickly made available, and that there is some flexibility to trial the location and timing of that stop.

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- Use online services

Consultation responses have indicated that current Thomas Aveling users are making only modest use of online services, but towards a third have indicated a willingness to use them. Through these facilities, the library service is not just confined to physical buildings as it has this '24/7' presence, and this will be further advertised to both users and non-users :

- website provides for book catalogue search and loan renewal
- eBooks and eAudiobooks download
- a range of electronic information resources

Evidence shows that use by all library users of these electronic services has increased and now sits at 12.6 % of all library loans; it is a growing and very accessible service.

The concerns expressed at the cost of private or public transport and at car parking are accepted as potential constraints for those residents and users who currently walk to the library or make a short trip by car. Mitigation here is seen as coming in several ways. First, there is a reasonable expectation that less regular visits can take place. These can then be supplemented by use of the mobile library service and online services.

Young people who use the library service now and attend Thomas Aveling School will continue to have access to the school library during the day. It will be noted that this group constituted 30% (273) of the 910 group who had borrowed an item between January 2016 and February 2017. This is seen to be a reasonable mitigation for this important group.

Younger users of the library and those not students at Thomas Aveling will be able to utilise the mitigations outlined above.

For the small number of families with young children making use of the regular events, particular effort will be made to contact them and set out the alternative libraries, their range of events and how to travel to them. The events at the Community Hubs are well attended, vibrant and fun and would add considerably to the socialisation and development of babies and toddlers. As free events it is felt that they are well worth the travel.

The analysis of existing users showed up a relatively small group of 60+ users. It is felt that there is an opportunity to increase the use of the library service to this age group. For the general older population that will come from further marketing of the service. The Outreach and Partnership team will also make contact with care homes, residential homes and through contacts with community groups, seek to establish demand for either the home library service or for the book boxes provided to homes.

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6 Action plan

- *Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence*

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date
Report to Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee	DM	6.7.17
Report to Cabinet	DM	11.7.17
In the light of decisions further revise DIA if necessary	DM	July/Aug 17

7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be:

- *to proceed with the change, implementing action plan if appropriate*
- *consider alternatives*
- *gather further evidence*

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

Due to the constraints on improving the service due to the fixed opening hours, the current site limitations, and the low levels of use of the current service, and recognising the alternative service offers that can be provided, the officer recommendation to Cabinet is to proceed with the proposed closure.

8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that:

- *the recommendation can be implemented*
- *sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned*
- *the Action Plan will be incorporated into service plan and monitored*

Assistant Director

Date

26.6.17

Contact your Performance and Intelligence hub for advice on completing this assessment

RCC:	phone 2443	email: annamarie.lawrence@medway.gov.uk
C&A: (Children's Social Care)	contact your normal P&I contact	
C&A (all other areas):	phone 1481	email: paddy.cahill@medway.gov.uk
BSD:	phone 2472/1490	email: corppi@medway.gov.uk
PH:	phone 2636	email: david.whiting@medway.gov.uk

Send completed assessment to the Corporate Performance & Intelligence Hub (CPI) for web publication (corppi@medway.gov.uk)