

# Essex County Council Everyone's Library Service 2022 – 2026 consultation summary report

Prepared by Lake Market Research

February 2022

# Background and Methodology

## Background and aim of consultation:

- Essex County Council is the second largest library authority in the country, serving a population of nearly 1.5 million residents across a network of 74 libraries, two mobile library vehicles, an online e-library service, and a home library delivery service provided by volunteers to residents who cannot access onsite or mobile services:
- With a new administration and new Plan for Essex in place, Essex County Council are refocussing their vision and plans for the future of Library services. This plan sets out high-level aims for the service and the areas the service will be working on over the next four years:
  - Library Service and Literacy
  - Infrastructure and Communications
  - Supporting communities and Levelling Up
- Essex County Council launched a consultation with the aim of seeking views from Essex residents, library service users and organisations about the draft plan and areas of focus

## Methodology:

- The consultation was hosted on Essex County Council's consultation portal for 8 weeks from 26th November 2020 to 21st January 2022.
- The consultation was publicised through a range of channels, including ECC and Essex Libraries social media channels and websites, resident and library newsletters Essex is Green social media channels, local, regional and national press.

## Point to note:

- 2,213 responses were received via the consultation questionnaire - 2,185 from individuals and 28 from organisations. 7 emails were received and reviewed by this report's author.
- Please note that participation in consultations are self-selecting and this needs to be considered when interpreting responses.
- Responses to consultations do not wholly represent the wider Essex population and is reliant on awareness and propensity to take part based on the topic and interest.
- Essex County Council were responsible for the design, promotion and collection of the consultation responses. Lake Market Research were appointed to conduct an independent analysis of feedback.

# Profile of respondents taking part

- The tables on the right depict the demographic profile of Individual respondents against the active profile of Essex library users<sup>1</sup>. The proportion who left these questions blank or indicated they did not want to disclose this information has been included as applicable.
- The vast majority of the respondents completed the survey as ‘a resident from Essex’.
- The consultation achieved representation across demographic groups and districts.

1) Based on profile of active library users (177,726 – used library card within the last year). District is based on home location selected at the point of joining the library.

	Total	Library user %
Male	24%	32%
Female	70%	53%
Non-binary	0%	0%
Prefer not to say / blank	5%	14%
Under 16	1%	-
16-24	2%	10%
25-34	7%	14%
35-44	14%	19%
45-54	15%	14%
55-64	21%	14%
65 & over	37%	31%
Prefer not to say / blank	4%	3%

	Total	Library user %
Basildon	7%	13%
Braintree	11%	10%
Brentwood	6%	6%
Castle Point	5%	5%
Chelmsford	15%	14%
Colchester	17%	14%
Epping Forest	6%	8%
Harlow	3%	6%
Maldon	4%	4%
Rochford	5%	6%
Tendring	10%	9%
Uttlesford	5%	6%

- 28 organisations responded to the consultation: 12 from community groups, 10 from town or parish councils, 4 from other public bodies, 1 from a registered charity and 1 did not disclose the type of organisation they represent.

## Executive Summary

Library services have a significant impact on the lives of those responding to the consultation. A number of benefits are highlighted including access to books, fostering reading / enjoyment of reading, a service for the family / all generations, mental health benefits and access to free material that some couldn't afford otherwise.

Overall agreement is particularly strong for five of the aim one areas with a significant proportion strongly agreeing with these aims. Agreement with exploration of new roles and opportunities for volunteers is markedly lower amongst individuals responding and new opportunities to generate additional income is markedly lower amongst individuals and organisations responding.

Overall agreement is high for five of the aim two areas; although the proportion strongly agreeing is lower than the highest ranking aim one areas. Agreement with the technological sub areas of Aim Two are comparatively lower than the other Aim Two areas e.g. printing services offer and new online library platform, amongst individuals and organisations responding.

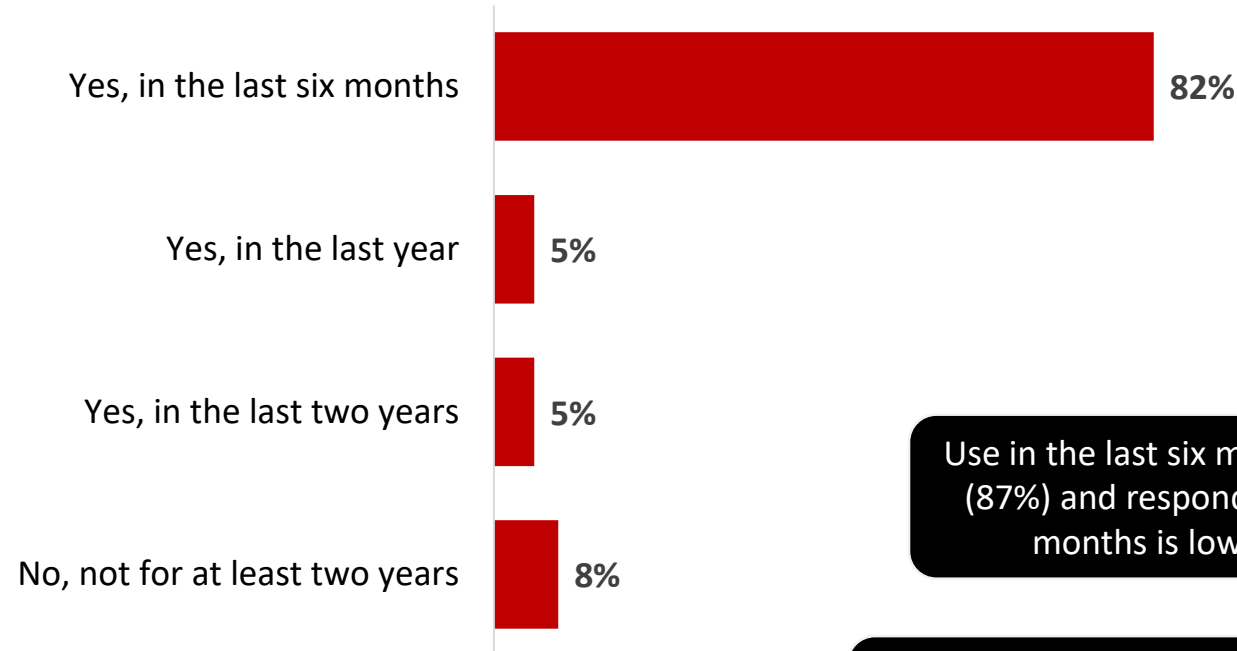
Overall agreement is high for five of the aim three areas; although the proportion strongly agreeing is lower than the highest ranking aim one areas amongst individuals. Agreement with exploration of options for providing chargeable activities alongside existing free activities is markedly lower amongst individuals and organisations.

# Usage and familiarity with library services

## Recency of library use

- The vast majority (92%) of those responding to the consultation have used Essex’s library facilities, either in person, via the home delivery service, mobile service or online in the last two years. 82% have used Essex’s library facilities in the last six months.
- Only 8% of those responding to the consultation indicated they have not used Essex’s library services for at least two years.

*Have you used any of Essex’s library facilities, either in person, via the home delivery service, mobile service or online?*



Supporting data table		%
Yes, in the last six months		82%
Yes, in the last year		5%
Yes, in the last two years		5%
No, not for at least two years		8%

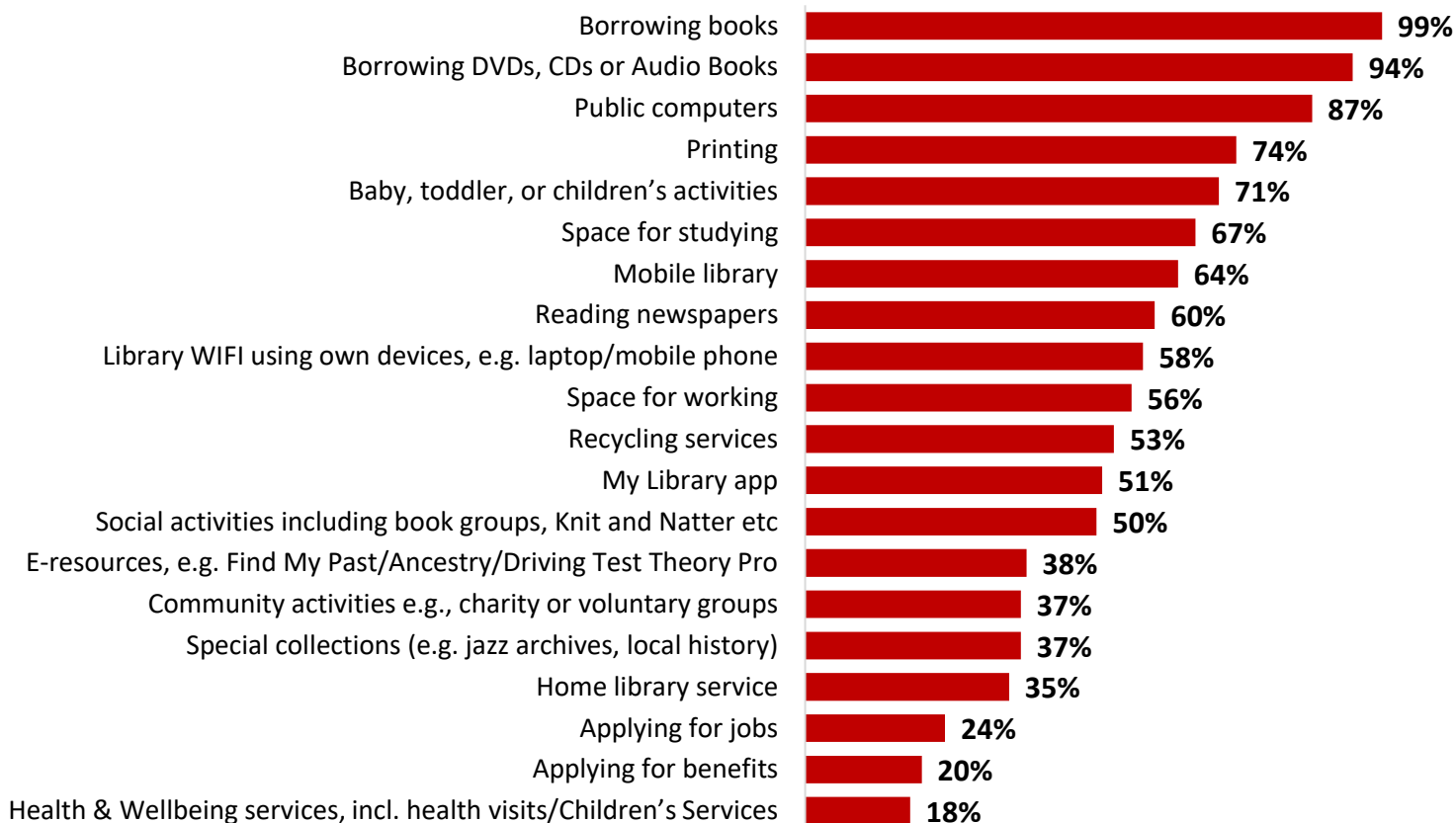
Use in the last six months is higher amongst respondents aged 35-44 (87%) and respondents aged 65 and over (84%). Use in the last six months is lower amongst respondents aged 45-54 (76%).

Use in the last six months is higher amongst respondents who are employed part time (84%) and respondents who are retired (85%). Use in the last six months is lower amongst respondents who are employed full time (73%).

## Individual awareness of library services

- As expected, the vast majority are aware of book borrowing (99%) and DVD, CD or audio book borrowing (94%). Awareness of accessing technology through use of public computers (87%) or printing (74%) is also high.
- Just over two thirds (67%) are aware of the service providing space for studying and 56% are aware of space for working. Claimed awareness of outreach services is mixed with 64% aware of the mobile library service and 35% aware of the home library service.
- Awareness of community activities and health and wellbeing services are comparatively lower at 37% and 18% respectively.

### *Are you aware of the following library services?*



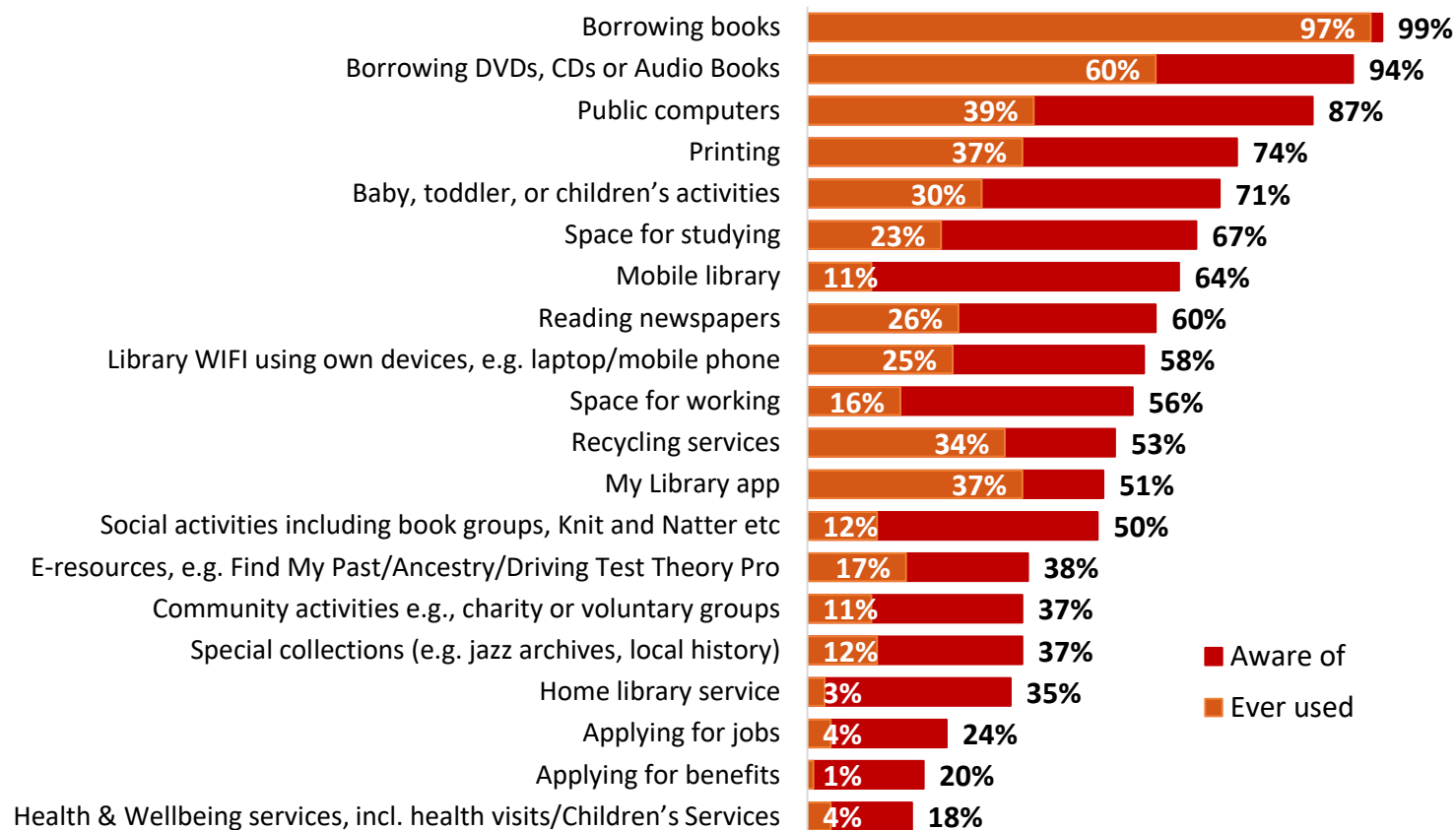
Supporting data table	%
Borrowing books	99%
Borrowing DVDs, CDs or Audio books	94%
Public computers	87%
Printing	74%
Baby, toddler or children's activities	71%
Space for studying	67%
Mobile library	64%
Reading newspapers	60%
Library WIFI using own devices	58%
Space for working	56%
Recycling services	53%
My Library app	51%
Social activities including book groups, Knit and Natter	50%
E-resources, e.g. Find My Past / Ancestry / Driving Test Theory Pro	38%
Community activities, e.g. charity or voluntary groups	37%
Special collections	37%
Home library service	35%
Applying for jobs	25%
Applying for benefits	20%
Health and Wellbeing services	18%

Base: all Individuals answering (2,184)

# Individual use of library services

- As expected, the vast majority have borrowed books from the library (97%). 60% have borrowed DVDs, CDs or audio books before.
- Over a third have used public computers (39%), printing (37%), the ‘My Library app’ (37%) and recycling services (34%). Around a quarter have used the facilities for reading newspapers (26%) and the library Wi-Fi for use on respondents’ own devices (25%).
- Claimed use of the outreach services is comparatively low at 11% for the mobile library service and 3% for the home library service.

Have you ever used the library service for any of the following?



Supporting data table	Aware	Use
Borrowing books	99%	97%
Borrowing DVDs, CDs or Audio books	94%	60%
Public computers	87%	39%
Printing	74%	37%
Baby, toddler or children's activities	71%	30%
Space for studying	67%	23%
Mobile library	64%	11%
Reading newspapers	60%	26%
Library WIFI using own devices	58%	25%
Space for working	56%	16%
Recycling services	53%	34%
My Library app	51%	37%
Social activities including book groups, Knit and Natter	50%	12%
E-resources, e.g. Find My Past / Ancestry / Driving Test Theory Pro	38%	17%
Community activities, e.g. charity or voluntary groups	37%	11%
Special collections	37%	12%
Home library service	35%	3%
Applying for jobs	25%	4%
Applying for benefits	20%	1%
Health and Wellbeing services	18%	4%

Base: all Individuals answering (2,170)



# Individuals comments on perceived impact of library service on life

- Access to books is the most common theme (60%); supported by 28% also referencing reading as being crucial / enjoyable and the service fosters reading. Being able to use the service as a family, either currently or in previous years, and the fond memories held are common with 41% commenting.
- One in five believe the services offers mental health benefits and 18% believe it offers access to free material that some couldn't afford to access otherwise.

Individuals comments on impact of library service, coded into key themes	%
Provides access to books	60%
Used as a child / take my children / grandchildren	41%
Lost without library / big part of life / rely on it / value / use regularly	36%
Reading is crucial / enjoyable / read a lot / fosters reading	28%
Free access / could not afford it otherwise	24%
Activities / groups / meetings	23%
Improves mental health / sanity / lifeline / isolation / socialising	20%
Provides access to other resources / ability to research	18%
Provides access to wide ranging material / new subjects / genres / authors	17%
Place to work / study	15%
Access to audiobooks / eBooks / CDs / DVDs	14%
Helpful / useful / accessible resource / service	13%
Welcoming / warm / comfortable / quiet / safe / pleasant surroundings	11%
Can reserve books online / collect books / drop-off & collections points	11%
Community asset	11%
IT / printing / photocopying / Wi-Fi / are essential	10%
Staff are friendly / helpful	10%
Expand knowledge / learn / educate / access to other genres / authors	10%
Used all my life	10%
Helped me through the pandemic / lockdown	9%
Work for / worked for / volunteer for library service	5%
Access to newspapers / magazines - physical / online / on app	5%
Somewhere to read	4%

Please note - 87% of Consultees answered this question

*Libraries are the only place where anyone can go, regardless of socioeconomic background and be able to access all these amazing free services and are an essential part of our community, I attended rhyme time sessions with both my children and it was invaluable for meeting other parents when I may have otherwise felt isolated in my local area. We visit regularly as a family to take out books and love that the principle of libraries reduces waste and encourages a love of books and reading.*

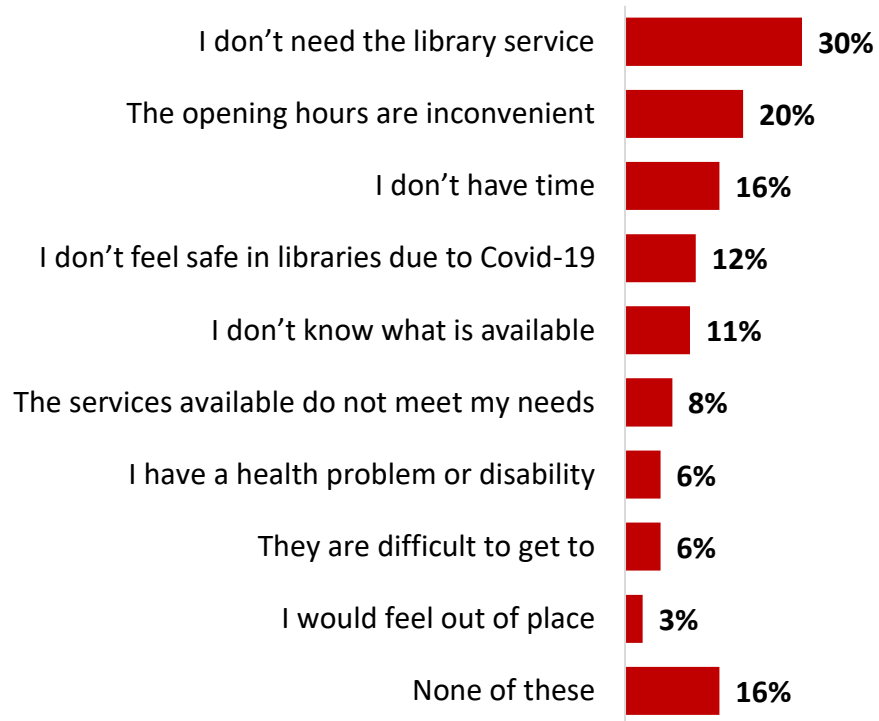
*I access/use library services most days. Most commonly, I request and borrow physical books from the library and audio books from the online service. As a full time carer, these are resources I would not have the money to purchase and would therefore not have access to. Alongside the resources I borrow from the library I also use the library space on a regular basis for teaching my son (who has additional needs and is partially home schooled). The library provides us with a space away from the home environment to complete his learning tasks. Without this dedicated space, educating him would be a much greater challenge as the home environment affords many more distractions for us both.*

*It is an integral part of our lives as a family. We visit the library often to borrow books (every three weeks or more often). We use the online resources daily especially the borrowbox and press reader apps. Our daughter has enjoyed the rhyme time sessions and one off craft events held in the library. The staff are wonderful, so friendly and helpful and we would be lost without our local library.*

## Reasons for not currently using library services

- The most common reason for not using Essex Library Service is simply not having a need to (30%), followed by a perception of inconvenient opening hours (20%) and not having the time to use them (16%).
- 11% of those not using the services are unsure of what is available.

*If you do not currently use Essex Library Services, what are the reasons for this?*



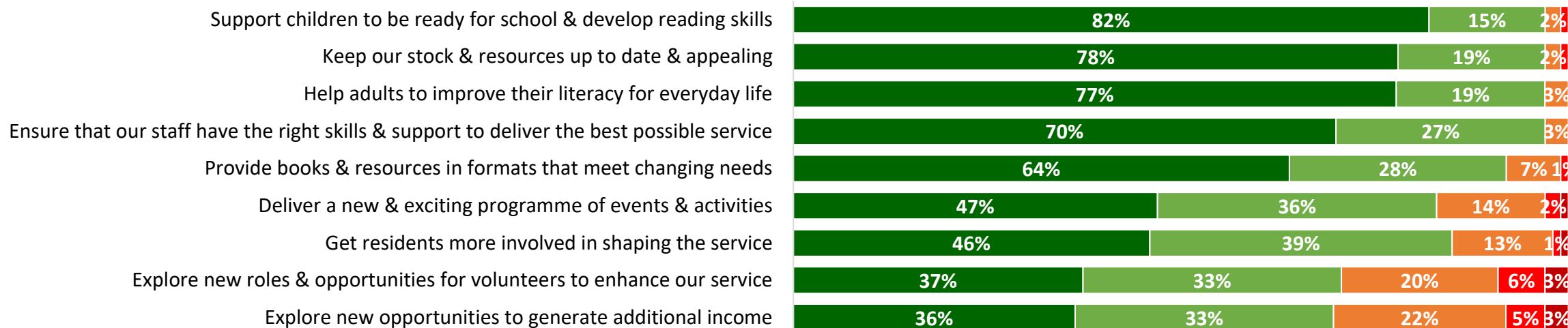
Supporting data table	%
I don't need the library service	30%
The opening hours are inconvenient	20%
I don't have time	16%
I don't feel safe in libraries due to Covid-19	12%
I don't know what is available	11%
The services available do not meet my needs	8%
I have a health problem or disability	6%
They are difficult to get to	6%
I would feel out of place	3%
None of these	16%

# Individuals overall opinion of key aims put forward

# Individuals support for Aim One areas – Library Service and Literacy

- Overall agreement is particularly strong for five of the aim one areas with a significant proportion strongly agreeing with these aims.
- Agreement with exploration of new roles and opportunities for volunteers and new opportunities to generate additional income is markedly lower.

## To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed aims...?



Supporting data table	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly
Support children to be ready for school & develop reading skills	82%	15%	2%	1%	0%
Keep our stock & resources up to date & appealing	78%	19%	2%	1%	0%
Help adults to improve their literacy for everyday life	77%	19%	3%	0%	0%
Ensure our staff have the right skills & support to deliver the best possible service	70%	27%	3%	0%	0%
Provide books & resources in formats that meet changing needs	64%	28%	7%	1%	0%
Deliver a new & exciting programme of events & activities	47%	36%	14%	2%	1%
Get residents more involved in shaping the service	46%	39%	13%	1%	1%
Explore new roles & opportunities for volunteers to enhance service	37%	33%	20%	6%	3%
Explore new opportunities to generate additional income	36%	33%	22%	5%	3%

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

## Individuals comments on Aim One areas – Library Service and Literacy

- The most common theme noted is that fully well trained and paid staff are critical to the library service (25%) and volunteers should be in addition to these staff and not replacing them (18%). Some are also concerned about a potential loss of physical books to electronic alternatives (14%) and the importance of improving the range of books / investing in physical book stock (13%).
- Consistent with the comparably lower proportion of respondents agreeing, 12% of those providing a comment referenced the service should not be focusing on income generation and 10% indicated they do not support charging for services.

<i>Individuals comments on Aim One areas, coded into key themes</i>	<i>%</i>
Fully well trained & paid staff are critical to the service	25%
Volunteers should not replace trained staff only be in addition to	18%
Concerned about loss of physical books to eBooks / digital alternatives	14%
Improve range of books / invest in books / maintain if not improve book stock	13%
Children's literacy / education is so important / support library involvement / links to schools	12%
Should not focus on income generation but providing a core service	12%
Charging for services is not welcome / free service for all / priority should be a free service	10%
Support aim one areas (non-specific)	9%
Support some chargeable services / activities / with caveats / proceed with caution	8%
More events / groups / clubs / socialising	8%
Library is crucial to all / community / benefits all	7%
Support volunteers in addition to staff	7%
Suggestion for service / event / group / activity	6%
Plans need further details / how will this be implemented / seems complex	6%
Increase awareness / promotion of library services	5%
Changes should not negatively affect current service levels	4%
Evolve to community hub / provide access to other services	4%
Service should be inclusive / not just about books	4%
Adults' literacy / education is so important / support library involvement	4%
Focus on providing books / core service / fostering reading / not involved in anything else	3%

Please note - 29% of Consultees answered this question

*Trained librarians are essential in the delivery of Library services and literacy. There must never be any kind of reliance on volunteers to do this, though of course volunteers should be encouraged to help.*

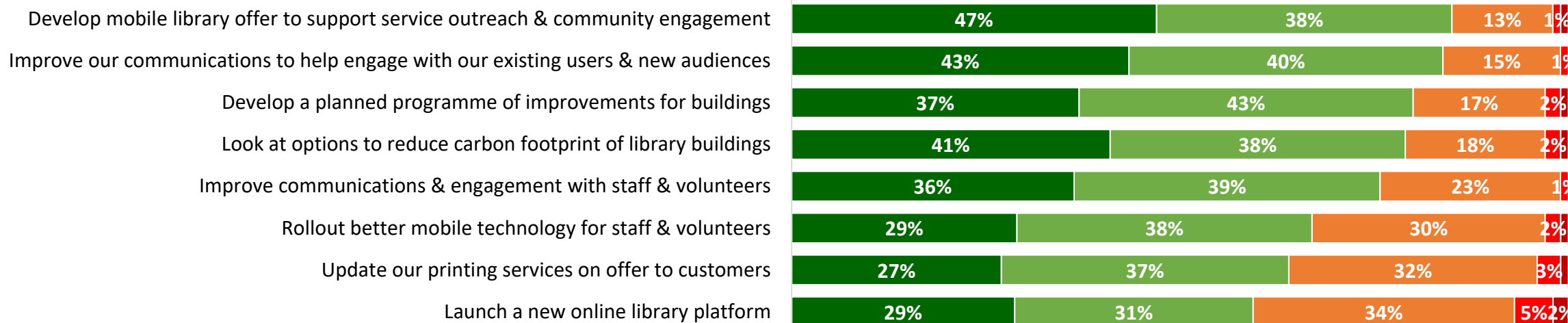
*I can see the appeal to the library of exploring new opportunities to generate income, but this needs a lot of thought - you could risk making people who can't afford these services feel excluded, feel the library is not for them or not access services which are free to use because they are worried there could be a fee.*

*A very careful balance probably needs to be made between providing invaluable services, resources and generating further income, whilst keeping costs down as I think a huge proportion of the population are struggling on very low incomes and the struggle may become even harder and possibly much sooner rather than later. Pressure to deliver only in those areas, distracts staff from core business and discourages people from visiting.*

# Individuals support for Aim Two areas – Infrastructure and Communications

- Overall agreement is high for five of the aim two areas; although the proportion strongly agreeing is lower than the highest ranking aim one areas.
- Agreement with the technological sub areas of Aim Two are comparatively lower than the other Aim Two areas e.g. printing services offer and new online library platform.

## *To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed aims...?*



Supporting data table	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly
Develop mobile library offer to support service outreach & community engagement	47%	38%	13%	1%	1%
Improve our communications to help engage with our existing users & new audiences	43%	40%	15%	1%	0%
Develop a planned programme of improvements for building	37%	43%	17%	2%	1%
Look at options to reduce carbon footprint of library buildings	41%	38%	18%	2%	1%
Improve communications & engagement with staff & volunteers	36%	39%	23%	1%	0%
Rollout better mobile technology for staff & volunteers	29%	38%	30%	2%	1%
Update our printing services on offer to customers	27%	37%	32%	3%	1%
Launch a new online library platform	29%	31%	34%	5%	2%

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

## Individuals comments on Aim Two areas – Infrastructure and Communications

- The most common theme references communication / promotion of the service is needed and communications should be improved (21%). Some are concerned about a potential loss of physical books to electronic alternatives (11%) and ensuring any changes are not to the detriment of the service as it stands currently (11%).
- Whilst a proportion put forward concerns with regards to technology, suggestions are made to improve dated IT systems (9%), more / improved IT facilities within libraries (8%) and better technology / platforms to access online services remotely (8%).

<i>Individuals comments on Aim Two areas, coded into key themes</i>	<i>%</i>
Communication / promotion / awareness of library service / improve content of comms	21%
Well trained / friendly / professional staff - proficient in tech support	13%
Retain if not expand book stock / invest in physical books / do not replace with digital alternatives	11%
Ensure changes are not to the detriment of service / space	11%
Buildings need updating / improving / better facilities / accessible	10%
Use of technology should not replace staff / reduce personal contact / supplement current service only / should not be an online service only	10%
Already have online platforms available / apps / are others needed / happy with current platforms	10%
Investment / improvement in mobile libraries / must not replace physical libraries	9%
Suggested improvements to current IT systems / systems are dated	9%
More / improved IT facilities within libraries / Wi-Fi / air printing / issues with IT	8%
In need of better technology / platforms to access online catalogue / online services remotely	8%
Buildings should be welcoming / provide a quiet space for reading/study / comfortable chairs	7%
Service must be fully inclusive - elderly / disabled - not everyone uses technology	7%
Support aim two areas (non-specific)	6%
Physical libraries important for community	6%
Plans need further details / how will this be implemented	6%
Can't comment on certain issues / don't understand some of the terms used	5%
Improved printing service not needed / contradicts carbon footprint reduction	4%
Carbon footprint reduction is a worthy aim	4%
No improvement to buildings necessary / not a priority	4%
Communication is adequate	4%
Where is funding coming from / sounds costly / how much will this cost	4%

Please note - 22% of Consultees answered this question

*Promotion of services is all within the library and its own social media so most people don't know what is on offer. Events and activities should be promoted externally on village social media pages.*

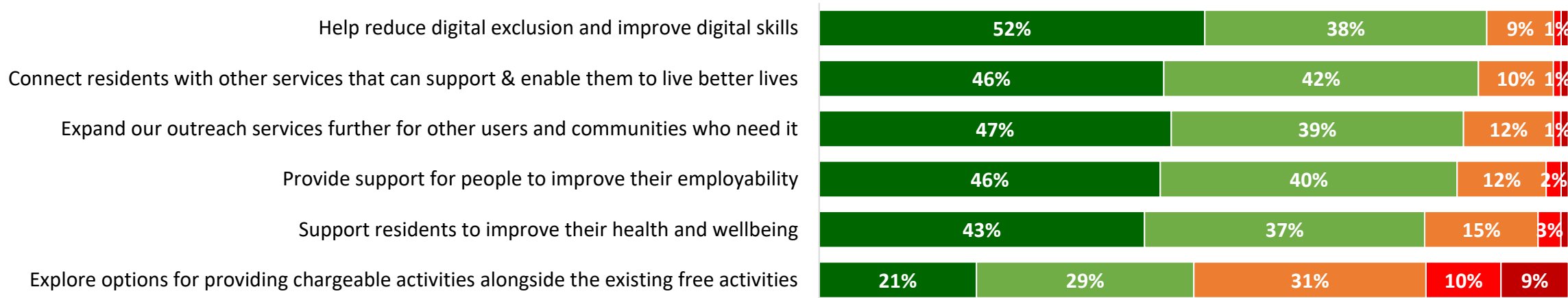
*The online, app and e-book offer is really important in the modern world and the library has made great strides forward on this front in recent years. It's important to build upon this and continue to increase the e-book offer and keep it up to date. It would also be great for many if library e-books could be compatible with Kindle, the most popular e-reader, though I appreciate this is a wider issue than within Essex libraries.*

*Buildings should be inviting and accessible for all; children, those with disability mental, physical and sensory. The community need to know what the library has to offer. Outreach on social media can be improved. I feel the existing online library platform is underused. People won't use it if they do not know it exists!*

# Individuals support for Aim Three Areas – Supporting Communities and Levelling up

- Overall agreement is high for five of the aim three areas; although the proportion strongly agreeing is lower than the highest ranking aim one areas.
- Agreement with exploration of options for providing chargeable activities alongside existing free activities is markedly lower.

## To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed aims...?



Supporting data table	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly
Help reduce digital exclusion and improve digital skills	52%	38%	9%	1%	1%
Connect residents with other services that can support & enable them to live better lives	46%	42%	10%	1%	1%
Expand our outreach services further for other users and communities who need it	47%	39%	12%	1%	1%
Provide support for people to improve their employability	46%	40%	12%	2%	1%
Support residents to improve their health and wellbeing	43%	37%	15%	3%	1%
Explore options for providing chargeable activities alongside the existing free activities	21%	29%	31%	10%	9%

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



# Individuals comments on Aim Three areas – Supporting Communities and Levelling up

- Over one in five (22%) of those providing a comment noted a preference for the service to stick to the core offering and not be involved in other services that are provided elsewhere. 14% of those providing a comment noted they believe all services should be free and nothing should be chargeable. 11% also referred to the potential for chargeable services to exclude or deter people.
- Some noted the library service could act as a community hub / encourage socialisation (12%) and a hub for health / outreach (8%).

<i>Individuals comments on Aim Three areas, coded into key themes</i>	<i>%</i>
Should stick to core services / not be involved in other services that are provided elsewhere	22%
All services should be free / nothing chargeable	14%
Could act as a community hub / socialisation	12%
Chargeable services likely to exclude / deter people	11%
Changes must not compromise book stocks / opening hours / staffing levels / space / service	9%
Hub for health / other services / outreach	8%
Support this aim	8%
Plans need further details / how will this be implemented	8%
Provide activities / groups / clubs / events	7%
Staff should focus on library service / too much for them to do if services expanded	7%
Services must be promoted / advertised / attract new users	6%
Some chargeable services could be beneficial / acceptable / must be cautious	6%
Staff must be appropriately trained	6%
IT support/training / equipment / online functionality required	6%
Chargeable services should be in addition to free services / not compromise free services	5%
Do not turn libraries into an online service only / do not replace physical books	4%
Space could be rented out / space for activities	4%
Could signpost services / provide information but nothing further	4%
Should not be commercialised / not a money-making operation	3%

Please note - 17% of Consultees answered this question

*In expanding library services, it is essential not to lose sight of the primary purpose of a library - to provide books to borrow and the range of available books could be expanded – i.e. more books .*

*I think libraries can be key to bringing communities together, and organisations should be able to utilise library spaces and rent them after closing hours (gets people into the building who might not otherwise and could encourage them to use libraries more often in the future).*

*Often libraries are in the centre of town, accessible, visible and with working hours opening times. There is an important and valuable role for libraries to play in acting as a connector and referrer of people to other community-based services to support health wellbeing, employability and so on.*

## Individuals comments on chargeable areas they would like to see

- Just under one in five (18%) of those providing a comment noted they believe all services should be free and nothing should be chargeable. 9% also referred to the potential for chargeable services to exclude or deter people.
- Of those that put forward ideas for potential chargeable services, the most common are arts & crafts / artist exhibitions (16%), talks by authors / writing workshops (13%), café / refreshment provision (12%) and activities for children / teenagers / including after school / school holiday specific activities (12%).

Please note - 32% of Consultees answered this question

<i>Chargeable activities individuals would like to see, coded into key themes</i>	<i>%</i>
All services should be free / nothing chargeable	18%
Chargeable services likely to exclude / deter people	9%
Arts & crafts / artist exhibitions	16%
Prepared to pay / charge must be reasonable / if to cover costs / donations	14%
Talks by authors / writing workshops	13%
Café / refreshment provision	12%
Activities for children / teenagers / including after school/school holidays	12%
Workshops / courses / learning / talks / lectures	11%
Printing / photocopying / computer use / IT support	11%
Renting out space / providing space for groups / meetings / activities	10%
Only charge for additional services / core services must be free	8%
Drama / music / film / photography	8%
Host clubs / community groups / meetings / social groups	7%
Out of hours use	6%
Collaborate with / provide space for commercial services – banks, post office, solicitors / council	6%

<i>Chargeable activities individuals would like to see, coded into key themes</i>	<i>%</i>
Chargeable activities cannot take precedence over core services / detract from core services	5%
Some charging for services is needed (non-specific)	5%
Games (board & computer) / jigsaws / toys / DVDs	4%
More information required / examples	4%
Book clubs / reading groups / recommendations	4%
Act as community hubs	4%
Health services / mental health / wellbeing	4%
Baby / toddler groups	3%
Life skills / numeracy / literacy skills / CV writing / employability	3%
History / geology / ancestry	3%
Adult education / support for students	3%
Learning a language / sign language	3%
Small contribution to running costs / charge for inter-library lending / more for late fees	3%

## Significant differences in agreement with aims by age

- A higher proportion of respondents aged 55 & over strongly agree with four of the aim one statements (supporting children, keep up to date / appealing stock resources, improving adult literacy and staff skilling). A higher proportion of respondents aged 25-44 strongly agree with delivering a new and exciting programme of events and activities.
- A higher proportion of respondents aged 55 & over support mobile library service development and a higher proportion of respondents aged 25-34 strongly agree with launching a new online platform.

*To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed aims...?*

AIM ONE – LIBRARY SERVICE AND LITERACY	Aged 25-34	Aged 35-44	Aged 45-54	Aged 55-64	Aged 65+
% strongly agreeing with aim to support children to be ready for school and develop their reading skills	76%	81%	83%	84%	85%
% strongly agreeing with aim to keep stock resources up to date and appealing	72%	78%	80%	79%	82%
% strongly agreeing with aim to help adults improve their literacy for everyday life	70%	74%	77%	80%	81%
% strongly agreeing with aim to ensure staff have the right skills and support to deliver the best possible services	59%	67%	73%	71%	72%
% strongly agreeing with aim to deliver a new and exciting programme of events and activities	54%	58%	48%	49%	42%

AIM TWO – INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS	Aged 25-34	Aged 35-44	Aged 45-54	Aged 55-64	Aged 65+
% overall support for developing the mobile library service to support service outreach and community engagement	83%	78%	83%	89%	87%
% strongly agreeing with aim for launching a new online library platform	41%	27%	33%	30%	25%

% significantly higher response than other age groups

## Significant differences in agreement with aims by district

- Differences in response are particularly evident from respondents living in Basildon and Harlow. A higher proportion of Basildon residents support four of the aim one areas and two of the aim two areas.
- A higher proportion of Harlow residents support four of the aim two areas.

*To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed aims...?*

AIM ONE – LIBRARY SERVICE AND LITERACY	Basildon	Castle Point	Colchester	Harlow	Tendring
% overall support for providing books and resources in formats that meet changing needs	97%	94%	89%	91%	92%
% overall support for delivering a new and exciting programme of events and activities	90%	85%	80%	86%	85%
% overall support for exploring new roles and opportunities for volunteers to enhance our service	79%	78%	65%	70%	67%
% overall support for exploring new opportunities to generate additional income	79%	71%	60%	63%	70%

AIM TWO – INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS	Basildon	Castle Point	Colchester	Harlow	Tendring
% overall support for developing a planned programme of improvements for buildings	83%	78%	81%	89%	82%
% overall support for improving communications and engagement with staff and volunteers	79%	76%	76%	90%	77%
% overall support for rollout of better mobile technology for staff and volunteers	72%	68%	69%	79%	66%
% overall support for updating the printing services on offer to customers	71%	75%	66%	79%	63%
% strongly agreeing with aim for launching a new online library platform	71%	63%	57%	67%	58%

AIM THREE – SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES AND LEVELLING UP	Basildon	Castle Point	Colchester	Harlow	Tendring
% overall support for providing support for people to improve employability	84%	86%	86%	88%	91%
% overall support for exploring options for providing chargeable activities alongside the existing free activities	54%	56%	41%	51%	52%

% significantly higher response than other districts

% significantly lower response than other districts

# Individuals other comments related to the Essex libraries plan

- A quarter (25%) of those providing a comment requested that all current libraries should stay open or were concerned about their local library building closing. In addition, 16% commented on how important the library service is to the community / residents.
- Some reiterated previous comments in terms of a larger range of material / book stock (13%) and fully trained staff and volunteers / having enough staff (12%). 8% requested longer opening hours / opening on additional days.

<i>Other comments related to the plan for Essex libraries, coded into key themes</i>	<i>%</i>
Libraries must stay open / concerned about closures of particular libraries	25%
Crucially important for community / vital for residents	16%
Offer a large range of materials / increase book / up-to-date stock	13%
Support plans outlined	13%
Staff & volunteers must be fully trained / polite / friendly / need to make sure of enough staff	12%
Longer opening hours required / open on more days	8%
Must be inclusive / accessible / cater to all	8%
Communication / engagement / promote services / attract new users	8%
Plans need further details / how will this be implemented / where is funding coming from	7%
Should be supported / invested in / funded / secured for future	6%
Services to be free / no charging	6%
Important to focus on core library services	6%
Activities / groups / meetings are needed	5%
Service / opening hours / space must be maintained	5%
Used as a community resource / information point for services	5%
Praise for current libraries / staff	5%
In need of upgrade / new facilities / parking / toilets / refreshment provision	4%
Continue to offer IT support / use of equipment / Wi-Fi / online provision	4%
Volunteers should not replace trained / paid staff	4%
Online offer should not replace physical books	4%

Please note - 28% of Consultees answered this question

*Libraries should continue to operate and none should be closed down. Not everyone has access to the internet for reading and learning services, and even those who do may not wish to use the internet for this purpose. From a personal point of view, I learn much more easily reading from a book than from a screen.*

*Make libraries more accessible for all. Utilise libraries for the community, include coffee areas, provision for talks with people of interest. Children's groups, assistance for those with extra needs. Our libraries can be so much more than just borrowing books.*

*I would hope that libraries will continue to be provided for local people to enable those from a variety of groups to participate and enjoy them. Libraries should be well stocked to encourage usage. The running down of libraries has put many people off visiting at all. Encourage activities that will bring people back to their local library.*

# Individual comments related to the future of Essex libraries

- A quarter (25%) of those providing a comment would like to see a good stock of books / wider / more up to date range of books.
- Other common comments focused on the social aspect of the service and its development – activities / events / opportunities to socialise (17%), more of a community focus / community hub moving forward (17%), engaging / working with schools / children / young people (12%).

<i>What individuals would like to see from Essex libraries in future, coded into key themes</i>	<i>%</i>
Good stock of books / wider range of books / keep up-to-date	25%
Avoid closures / retain current libraries / expand	19%
Activities / events / clubs / opportunities to socialise	17%
More of a community focus / community hub / community engagement moving forward	17%
Longer opening hours / open more days / everyday / out of hours usage	14%
Engaging / working with schools / children / young people / catering for	12%
Friendly / professional fully trained paid staff / not replaced by volunteers	12%
Continuity of current service / maintain existing service / happy with service	12%
Increase awareness / promotion of library services / attract new users	11%
Be inclusive / accessible for all	10%
Welcoming / friendly / quiet / safe environment / for study / reading / working	10%
Support learning / literacy / research / continue to foster reading	8%
Up-to-date resources / info / well stocked (unspecified)	8%
Provision of audiobooks / eBooks / online services / digital resources / keep up-to-date	7%
Provision of IT / printers / Wi-Fi / IT support / some improvement required to IT	6%
Evolving / dynamic up-to-date/improved services / adapting to needs of users / vary by library	6%
Space to use for clubs / groups / meetings / socialising	6%
Improved search / online library system / app / collection/return system	6%
Modern / keep up-to-date buildings with facilities i.e. toilets, parking	4%
Be a free service to all to use	4%
Selected services / collaboration / signposting non-library services	4%
Continual funding / investment / support / fit for future	4%

Please note – 73% of Consultees answered this question

*A continued commitment to meeting the diversity of borrowers' needs, i.e. not restricting book stock and other services to those that are useful to the majority but making sure that minority interests are catered for.*

*I am really happy with the service received so far. We enjoy visiting different libraries around Chelmsford. Perhaps more outdoor reading events in the spring/summer? We attended a lovely event where the library joined forces with Heart and Sole walking group to go for a walk then have a story in the park. Lovely experience had by all. A great way to bring the community together.*

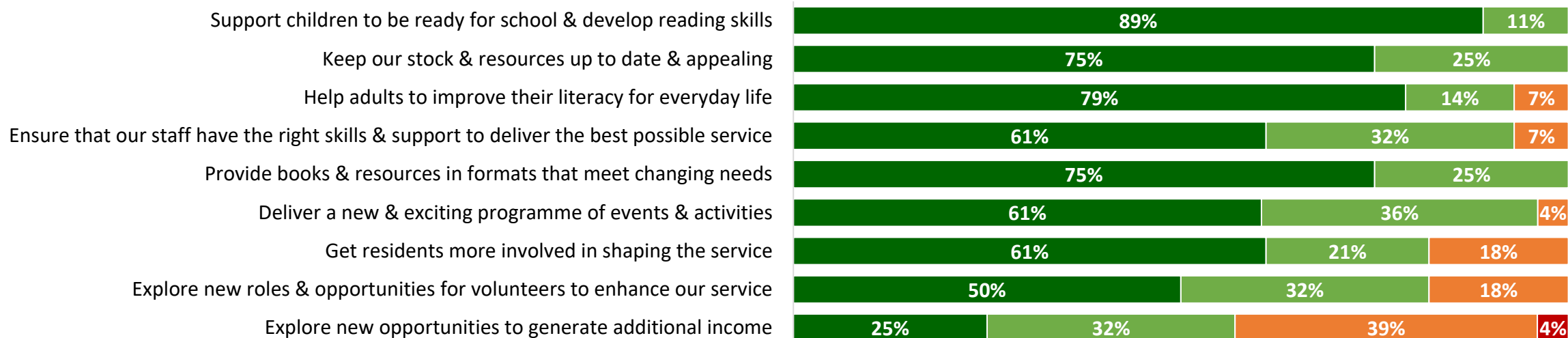
*A far more dynamic and integrated service which combines a variety of local and community services and which reaches out positively to the community it serves.*

# Organisations overall opinion of key aims put forward

# Organisations support for Aim One areas – Library Service and Literacy

- Overall agreement is strong for eight of the aim one areas with a significant proportion strongly agreeing with these aims.
- Agreement with exploration of new opportunities to generate additional income is markedly lower.

## *To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed aims...?*



Supporting data table	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly
Support children to be ready for school & develop reading skills	89%	11%	0%	0%	0%
Keep our stock & resources up to date & appealing	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%
Help adults to improve their literacy for everyday life	79%	14%	7%	0%	0%
Ensure our staff have the right skills & support to deliver the best possible service	61%	32%	7%	0%	0%
Provide books & resources in formats that meet changing needs	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%
Deliver a new & exciting programme of events & activities	61%	36%	4%	0%	0%
Get residents more involved in shaping the service	61%	21%	18%	0%	0%
Explore new roles & opportunities for volunteers to enhance service	50%	32%	18%	0%	0%
Explore new opportunities to generate additional income	25%	32%	39%	0%	4%

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



# Organisations support for Aim Two areas – Infrastructure and Communications

- Overall agreement is high for all aim two areas; although the proportion strongly agreeing is lower than the highest ranking aim one areas.
- Agreement with the technological sub areas of Aim Two are comparatively lower than the other Aim Two areas e.g. printing services offer and new online library platform.

## To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed aims...?

Develop mobile library offer to support service outreach & community engagement

Improve our communications to help engage with our existing users & new audiences

Develop a planned programme of improvements for buildings

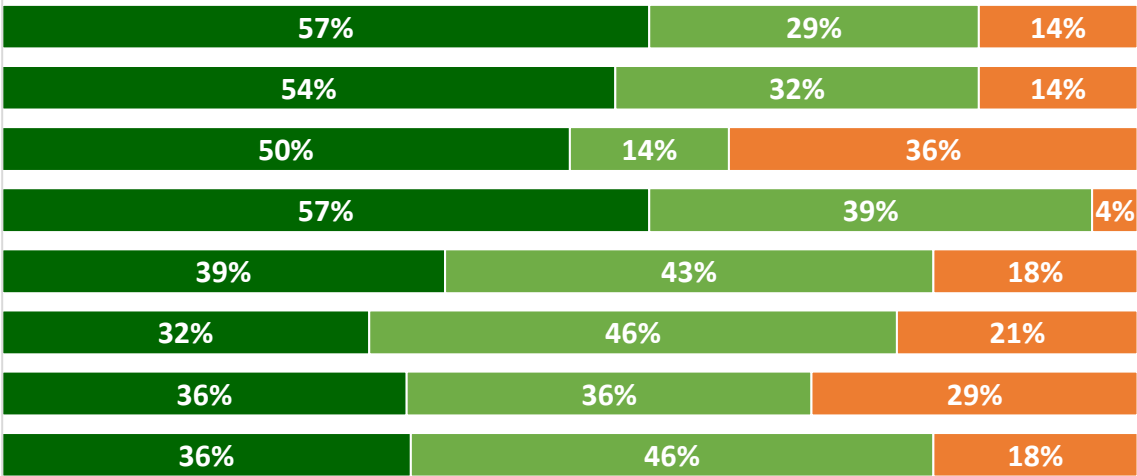
Look at options to reduce carbon footprint of library buildings

Improve communications & engagement with staff & volunteers

Rollout better mobile technology for staff & volunteers

Update our printing services on offer to customers

Launch a new online library platform



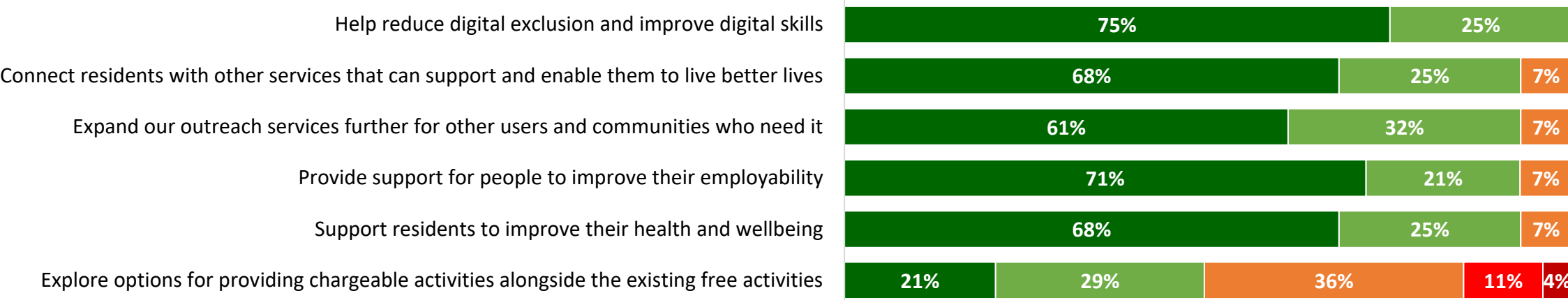
Supporting data table	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly
Develop mobile library offer to support service outreach & community engagement	57%	29%	14%	0%	0%
Improve our communications to help engage with our existing users & new audiences	54%	32%	14%	0%	0%
Develop a planned programme of improvements for building	50%	14%	36%	0%	0%
Look at options to reduce carbon footprint of library buildings	57%	39%	4%	0%	0%
Improve communications & engagement with staff & volunteers	39%	43%	18%	0%	0%
Rollout better mobile technology for staff & volunteers	32%	46%	21%	0%	0%
Update our printing services on offer to customers	36%	36%	29%	0%	0%
Launch a new online library platform	36%	46%	18%	0%	0%

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

# Organisations support for Aim Three Areas – Supporting Communities and Levelling up

- Overall agreement is strong for five of the aim three areas. In addition, a significant proportion strongly agree with these aims.
- Agreement with exploration of options for providing chargeable activities alongside existing free activities is markedly lower.

*To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed aims...?*



Supporting data table	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly
Help reduce digital exclusion and improve digital skills	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%
Connect residents with other services that can support & enable them to live better lives	68%	25%	7%	0%	0%
Expand our outreach services further for other users and communities who need it	61%	32%	7%	0%	0%
Provide support for people to improve their employability	71%	21%	7%	0%	0%
Support residents to improve their health and wellbeing	68%	25%	7%	0%	0%
Explore options for providing chargeable activities alongside the existing free activities	21%	29%	36%	11%	4%

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

