Library and Heritage Strategy

Consultation analysis
1 Introduction

Southwark has a library service to be proud of with a network of modern libraries located across the borough. We are one of the highest performing services in the country and we continue to invest and develop new libraries and services. We have modern physical and digital spaces, extensive resources and well-trained and motivated staff. We know that residents are proud of their libraries and use them as the first place they go to for information, access to council services, for reading, study, learning and cultural enrichment.

In order to ensure that library and heritage services are relevant and provide what our communities want and need we launched the ‘Let’s talk about libraries’ consultation in September 2018 which ran for eight weeks. We are currently developing a library and heritage strategy setting out our proposed approach to provide a modern service for the future, and the consultation responses will inform this strategy. 1,782 responses to the consultation were received.

In developing library and heritage services we are focusing on key themes relating to digital literacy, health and well-being, reading and learning, cultural and community use and telling the story of Southwark through heritage and archive services. The consultation focused on these key themes, as does the analysis below.

A separate shorter consultation was carried out with children, the results of which are analysed in a section 11 below. 345 responses were received to the children’s consultation. We also carried out focus groups with library staff, data from which is again analysed in section 12 below. Full detail of the adult survey responses is included as Appendix A, and the key themes and findings are summarised below.

2 Benchmarking data

In August 2018 we generated some benchmarking data on the age, gender and ethnicity of library users that could be used as a comparator to the age, gender and ethnicity of those people responding to the consultation survey. This allowed us to monitor whether we were reaching the full range of people using our libraries with the consultation.

The baseline data showed that 57% of current library members were female and 43% male. The equalities data from the survey responses showed that 59.5% of respondents were female, 29% male and the remainder declined to answer this question. This indicates that proportionately more survey responses were received from female library users as compared to the baseline membership data.

Benchmarking data on age showed that 61% of current library members are aged 18-59, 33% are children and young people, and 6% over 60. This was mirrored by the ages of the survey respondents with 61% of respondents to the adult consultation aged 18-55. A separate consultation was held for younger children to make sure that the views of this important age group were taken into account. This ensured that the consultation reached the full range of ages required to gather meaningful data on library services.
Ethnicity baseline data showed the largest groups of existing library members as White British (30%), Black African (14%) and Black British (14%). 11% of people declined to answer the consultation question on ethnicity, and of those that answered 38% were White British and 8% Black British (significantly lower than the 14% of existing Black British borrowers). The consultation responses segmented some of the African ethnicities, but added up this totalled 4% (again significantly lower than the 14% of existing Black African library members). The consultation was clearly less successful in reaching members of the Black African and Black British communities as compared to existing library membership data. There were, however, a wide range of ethnicities reached by the consultation, with only Filipino and Pakistani not being selected by respondents.

When analysing consultation responses it is important to be aware of the range of people reached, as described above, and how this could influence the findings. In order to reach more respondents, including more non-users and those within the protected characteristics, the online survey deadline was extended by two weeks and was promoted in mail outs to all Southwark Presents card holders and to everyone who attended the council’s annual firework display. 658 additional responses to the consultation were received as a result of this.

3 Library usage (questions 1-5)

The first question asked which library or libraries the respondent currently uses, and the replies corresponded to the size and existing usage levels of our 12 libraries- Canada Water, Dulwich and Peckham were the most frequently used, with Brandon and Kingswood the least used.

Question two asked how frequently the respondent uses the library, with weekly the most popular reply (40% of respondents). 89% of respondents used the library at least monthly, with only 1% not currently using our libraries. This indicates that the consultation has predominantly reached existing library users, so results should give us a good indication what our existing users think of services, and what new services they require. The low number of non-users reached means the consultation results will be of limited use in determining what we need to do to attract more non-users to our services.

Question three asked how important specific services are to respondents, with a free text box for users to add anything that wasn’t listed. The chart below summarises the results by showing the percentage of respondents who said that a service was either very important or somewhat important:
Borrowing books was the most popular answer with 90% of respondents saying this was either very important (79%) or somewhat important (11%). Using the library for study space (61%) was a popular answer, as were a number of digital services such as internet use (58%), using a computer, printer or scanner (61%) and using the Wi-Fi (61%). The least popular services for respondents were the home library service (20%), using a meeting room (30%) and borrowing talking books (33%).

Respondents were invited to complete a free text box with any additional library services that are important to them but weren’t listed in the first part of the question. 412 respondents entered something in the ‘other’ box. 56 did not suggest another service but instead left a positive comment about library services in general. Two examples are:

Good libraries show the council care about their communities.

Libraries are a space where I feel valued as a customer. The staff are always extremely nice to me and make me feel at home.

29 respondents said that they came to the library to enjoy the space and to meet people. Comments included:

The library is my refuge, my sanctuary, my retreat. When I feel overwhelmed by life or grief, I go to a library and immediately feel at peace. A library is not just a source of practical services for me; a library heals my soul.

Community space to be warm, safe and enriched by books, for all ages, incomes and backgrounds.

Meeting people - libraries have been a lifeline during maternity leave.
33 respondents said that children’s activities are important to them, specifically the Bookstart and Rhymetime sessions:

Weekly Bookstart sessions are absolutely fantastic. The children’s book collection and reading space is essential.

19 respondents valued the study space, 18 said that they enjoyed having a café in the library, and 10 people noted the benefits of toilet facilities. 16 people said that they valued the reservations system and the ability for the library service to source books and other items that were not currently in stock. 15 respondents said that the collection of garden waste/dog waste bags from a library was important to them, highlighting that libraries are a good focal point for the distribution of materials for other council departments.

Question four asked for respondents to state their preferred opening hours and the chart below summarises the responses according to which libraries the respondents had selected in question one:

![Chart showing preferred opening hours](chart.png)

The preference at most libraries was for more evening opening.

Question five asked ‘if you are not currently a library user which of the following best describes your reasons for not using the library.’ As most of the respondents were regular library users 87% of people did not answer this question. 6% of people said they were too busy to use the library, 4% said opening hours were not suitable, 2% said services were not relevant and 2% said libraries were not accessible from where they live.

A free text box allowed respondents to further explain why they don’t currently use library services. 160 people completed this part of the question, with the majority of respondents using the opportunity to state that they are currently library users and to make positive comments about the service. 24 respondents mentioned opening hours with three stating they were happy with the current opening hours. There were some requests for earlier opening but the majority of respondents asked for libraries to be open later in the evenings. This reinforces the answers from the previous question around opening times.
respondents listed their lifestyle as a reason—either they normally buy their books or don’t have the time to use the library.

4 Digital library services (questions 6-7)

Question six listed a number of digital services commonly provided by libraries and asked respondents which of these they were interested in using. The chart below summarises the services that respondents selected:

The most popular services were using a computer, printer or scanner (923 respondents), using the Wi-Fi (919 respondents), and help with email or the internet (719 respondents). There was also a free text box for people to enter any digital services they would be interested in that weren’t featured in the list. 91 people completed this box and the most popular request was for more IT training sessions (25 respondents) on subjects such as the internet, email, Wi-Fi, online genealogy, Office applications, coding and social media. A number of people requested services that are already available (e.g. eBooks and eAudio, access to a printer, digital access to periodicals) so this indicates that some raising of awareness is required around existing library and heritage digital services.

There were a number of positive comments about libraries digital services from people who do not currently use them but appreciate the value of these services:

I don't need these services - but I think they're very important for those who do need them. My brother in law used libraries extensively during a period of homelessness, and this was a vital service. It should be available to all.

While I don’t use these services at the moment, I have used them -needed them- in the past. They are a CRUCIAL part off keeping life together if you need a bit of help at some stage. A lifeline when there are few others.
Question seven asked respondents what type of IT learning sessions they would be interested in, and this chart summarises the responses:

The majority of respondents did not select anything from the list, suggesting either that they consider themselves to be proficient in these areas or that they have no interest in improving their skills in these areas (1004 respondents). The most popular selections from the list were help using a computer, printer or scanner (328 respondents) and help with using online council services (304 respondents).

In addition to selecting from the list of IT learning sessions provided there was a free text box to list additional digital subjects that people would be interested in learning about. 194 respondents completed this part of the question, and a large number of respondents stated that they were already proficient in IT therefore have no need for additional assistance or training:

I'm quite tech savvy myself, but think these are so valuable to those that are not.

I am proficient in all of the above but neighbours and family relatives are not and either need or use these services.

These services aren't essential for me but I know the community relies on IT provision in libraries - so I'd tick all boxes on behalf of others!

I am fairly digital literate so don't need any of these (and have Wi-Fi, computer, etc. at home) but recognise this is important, particularly for low income households.

This explains the large number of people who did not select any answers in the previous part of question seven. Other replies echoed the suggestions in the free text box of question six, with respondents asking for learning sessions on subjects such as internet, email, Wi-Fi, online
genealogy, Office applications, coding, using council services, and social media (most of which are already provided in libraries IT training programme).

The most common request was for learning sessions on coding/programming (20 respondents), which indicates the increasing popularity of this area of digital provision. Libraries currently provide coding workshops for children and are currently looking at extending this provision and adding coding groups for adults.

5 Services to promote health and wellbeing (question 8)

Question eight asked which health related resources and activities respondents would be interested in using. The responses are summarised in this chart:

Borrowing books on health related issues was by far the most popular response (914 respondents), with health checks (558 respondents) and counselling sessions (568 respondents) also popular. A free text box enabled respondents to list any additional services that they would be interested in using and 150 people completed this part of the question. The most popular suggestions were health related events including library walks (13 respondents), classes around exercise, nutrition, blood pressure and weight (14 respondents), health related support groups (eight respondents) and meditation, yoga and mindfulness classes (nine respondents).

There were some positive comments about the contribution of the library and heritage service to resident’s wellbeing, including identifying the library space as a potentially key place for health and wellbeing work:

The library is a perfect place for calm and could be a restorative venue for meetings with therapists / councillors.
The library space itself can be a good promoter of health and wellbeing. Keeping it quiet and calm, and with plenty of seating, and perhaps with reminders of how important a calm environment can be, would be very useful.

I would be interested in how libraries could provide spaces for social support and wellbeing activities for adults with long term health conditions and disabilities, especially people with mental health problems and dementia, who are often isolated and lonely. Activities could include reading groups, developing computer skills, etc.

I think that the health and wellbeing of the library goes beyond being a place to access services - in many cases the existence of the library in the community for people to use is itself fundamental to health and sense of community and therefore wellbeing.

6 Books, reading and learning (questions 9-11)

Question nine asked respondents what type of books they were interested in, and it is no surprise that adult fiction and adult non-fiction were the most popular, as the survey was targeted at adults (76% of respondents selected both adult fiction and adult non-fiction). A free text box asked respondents if there were any other types of books they would be interested in reading and the suggestions here were incredibly varied and covered almost the full range of books provided by the library service. There were no clear themes that could be identified due to the variety of the responses, and the stock team will work though the full list and ensure that sufficient books in each area are purchased for libraries.

Question ten asked which book format respondents would consider using, with hard copy books the overwhelming favourite (1437 respondents). Responses are summarised in this chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard copy books</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large print books</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eBooks/eAudio</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking books on CD</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 11 asked which community or group activity respondents would be interested in participating in, with responses summarised in this chart:
The most popular activities were using the library for study space (816 respondents) and reading groups (655 respondents). We have seen computer coding mentioned frequently in question seven, and it also received a good response in this question with 437 respondents interested in participating in this activity.

When asked if there are any other types of learning or community group activities that respondents would be interested in participating in, 19 people suggested IT/technology related topics such as interest in maker spaces, computer coding, networking with people about technology, and using business software. 19 respondents mentioned children’s activities with requests for more reading and creative writing workshops. Other suggestions include counselling/mentoring (which came up in question eight about health and wellbeing), games/quizzes, local history and language classes/ESOL. A Canada Water customer has suggested AA meetings at Canada Water Library – ‘there are no local AA support groups for this growing population.’ Again there is a crossover here with question eight where eight people identified health support groups as a service that libraries could provide.

7 Arts and cultural services in libraries (questions 12-14)

Question 12 asked respondents which activities they would be interested in attending, with a high level of response (over 50%) for all the listed activities:
When asked if there were any other types of arts or cultural activities that respondents would be interested in attending, 17 respondents requested more art related activities such as artists talks, art exhibitions, and talks on paintings. The second most popular theme was history and specifically local history (10 respondents). 7 people suggested sporting activities such as yoga and martial arts, and 7 suggested dance and drama activities.

Question 13 listed a range of activities for children and young people and asked respondents to select those they were interested in attending. A large number of people did not complete this question (970 respondents). Of those who did, storytime events (492 people) and computer coding clubs (437 respondents) were the most popular answers. This chart summarises the responses:
When asked whether there were any other types of events and activities for children and young people they would be interested in attending, 12 respondents said they would be interested in reading/book clubs and sessions to help children with reading. 9 respondents requested cultural activities such as ‘mindfulness, yoga, art and music, story writing, drama through stories’ and singing events. 2 people suggested youth forums and one asked for ‘talks for young adults to engage.’

Question 14 asked respondents found out about library events and activities, and the most popular method was through leaflets and posters in libraries (1234 respondents), which shows how important in-house advertising is. Word of mouth (595 respondents) and Southwark Life magazine (587 respondents) were also popular:

When asked how they found out about library events (other than the methods listed) 13 respondents stated that they found out about activities in the libraries via an email from library staff, 10 respondents used Facebook to find out about library activity, and six people cited school as a means of finding out. Four respondents were told about events by library staff, four from local newspapers and four from the Southwark Presents mailing list.

8    Community activities in libraries (questions 15-17)

Question 15 asked respondents if they would be interested in volunteering in libraries, with 73% of people not answering this question. Of those who did respond the most popular volunteer activities were assisting with activities for children (204 respondents), assisting with homework clubs (187 respondents) and running book groups (187 respondents):
48 respondents left their details and said they would be interested in finding out more about volunteering. The list was passed onto the Volunteer Programme Coordinator who has contacted all of the respondents and explained how they can get involved with volunteering for the library and heritage service.

Question 16 asked respondents if they would use meeting rooms for hire in libraries. 31% said they would, 56% said they wouldn’t, and 13% did not answer the question. Three people left their details and said they would like more information about library meeting room facilities- they have all been contacted and further information provided.

Question 17 asked if respondents, or someone they know, would be interested in using the Home Library Service. 20% said yes, 63% said they weren’t interested, and 17% did not answer this question. Nine people left their details and said they would like more information about the Home Library Service- they have all been contacted and further information provided.

9  Telling the story of Southwark through heritage and archives (questions 18-20)

Questions 18-20 focused on the heritage and archive services. Question 18 asked respondents which digital heritage services they would be interested in using. A digitised photography collection was the most popular answer (708 respondents), followed by virtual reality museum tours or exhibitions (673 respondents) and viewing local newspapers online (637 respondents):
Respondents were also asked whether there are any other digital heritage and archives services they would be interested in using. 101 people completed this part of the question. The most popular suggestion was an increase in digital heritage information (19 respondents), with provision of digitised photographs, artwork, maps and newspapers specifically requested:

More digitisation of local heritage and history resources would be great.

Local maps and photos are great to be able to access online.

Seven respondents would be interested in using online family history/genealogy resources and two requested online courses.

Question 19 asked respondents if they are not currently using heritage or archive services which reason from the list best describes why not. 40% of respondents said they were not aware of the services provided, which indicates heritage and archives services could benefit from some increased promotion. The chart below summarises the responses to this question:
A free text box allowed respondents to provide more detailed information about why they are not currently using heritage or archive services. There were 103 answers to this part of the question, with lack of awareness of the services provided or how to access them coming up repeatedly again (20 respondents).

Question 20 provided a list of heritage and archive services and asked respondents which they would be interested in using. Finding out about local history was the most popular answer (1038 respondents) followed by attending exhibitions (679 respondents) and accessing archived local newspapers, films, photographs or maps (645 respondents). Responses are summarised in this chart:
The next part of this question provided a free text box for respondents to list any other heritage or archive services they would be interested in using. 88 people completed this, with 11 respondents requesting either the re-opening of the Cuming Museum or a place for a permanent physical museum space in the borough. Ten respondents listed activities or services that are already provided, indicating again a need for better publicity for heritage and archives services. Eight respondents wanted more information on black history and heritage and there were a small number of further requests for digitisation of key resources including maps:

It would be amazing if some of the material at the local studies library could be put online. I use the old maps on the Southwark website frequently.

10 What residents value about services and ideas for improvement (questions 21-22)

The last two questions on the survey generate a huge amount of qualitative data by asking what respondents value most about library and heritage services (822 responses) and how could services be improved (621 responses).

The main thing that people said they value about our services is the ability to borrow a library item, with most people mentioning books but others also listing DVDs, CDs, eBooks and the ability to source books to read through the reservations system:

I remember the old Rotherhithe library on Albion St and it's limited collection. Since Canada Water opened I read so much more, thanks to the huge range of books on offer. I also really like that you can reserve books from other Southwark libraries - generally I can always get my hands on whatever I'm wanting to read and that's just amazing.

The range of books; the service and help from staff; the opportunity to try new authors; the learning I gain; accessing books that are sometimes hard to find.

The fact that it exists, that the library card opens up cultural activities beyond the library, that the books I wish to read are there and it introduces me to books I did not know I wanted to read until I saw them in the library!

A large number of respondents valued the library buildings themselves and the range of facilities on offer, particularly the sense of community and inclusiveness of the library space:

I absolutely love the library. Dulwich library is in a beautiful building and the books are always wonderfully showcased. For a fairly small library, it has a brilliant collection and mix of latest titles and classics, plus some interesting oddities and cult books. I couldn't be without it. It makes me feel part of a very rich community. It also has brilliant opening hours, which I feel very lucky to have.

As I said before the library provides an invaluable quiet and calm space. I fully support digitisation and encouraging computer use for all but I think the quiet space of the library is really important, especially in a hectic city like London.
That they are inclusive. There is no need to buy an expensive coffee or drink or be intimidated out of entering a library. They are places where people from all walks of life meet and where people of limited means can access services they might not be able to afford at home.

Libraries give everyone the opportunity to broaden their knowledge and horizons - they are the essential focal points of a community - they make a difference.

I can not even imagine now poorer life would be for me and the community without an easy accessible library. It gives me a great peace of mind knowing that if my needs were to change, somebody at the library would help me.

There were a lot of positive comments about staff and IT facilities, and many respondents also valued the availability of study space:

I appreciate the study areas, provision of tables and chairs and a place where I could charge my laptop whilst I am studying. I appreciate the free Wi-Fi so that I could access my resources online. I like the presence of small café downstairs as I spend long hours studying.

There were many responses where people listed a range of library services that they valued:

Libraries have always played a vital role in my life from when I was a child exploring literature to an adult increasing my knowledge of the world and its people. When I couldn’t afford to buy a book libraries were my life line. I’ve also explored films on DVD. I’ve attended poetry readings, music events, art exhibitions and have done research in local history. They are places for quiet, down time, researching topics, exploring travel sections and inspiring me and friends.

I value the library's reliability and access to knowledge and assistance/support through the life cycle, from baby craft groups to support with GCSEs, knowledge re: health problems, quiet space to work/concentrate, information about new books and being able to borrow.

When asked how the library and heritage services could be improved, one of the most popular responses was praise for the existing services, for example:

I think they are great as they are. Southwark can be proud of its library services.

They don't need improvements, they just need to be allowed to continue to run.

it is an EXCELLENT service, having worked in another London borough library service before, I was always envious of Southwark's provision, esp. the investment in new buildings. fantastic to see it, a beacon against current trend of closures.

There were a wide range of suggestions for improvements that could be made, the most popular of which I have summarised here:

1 Buy more books- many comments on increasing stock provision in libraries, including eBooks and AV materials.
2 Reducing noise in libraries- including suggestions that libraries should be zoned so that there are certain areas where a level of noise is acceptable and others for silent study.

3 Improvements in opening hours- which links in with the responses to the earlier survey question on opening hours.

4 Facilities improvements- mainly focused around cleanliness of toilet facilities.

5 More events and author talks in libraries.

6 Reminder notices when books are due for return- also some comments on reducing reservation fees and level of fines.

7 More publicity- a lot of people said that they would like more promotion of library services as they weren’t always aware of activities and services on offer.

8 More study space- particularly during exam periods; and availability of tables and chairs to use while reading books.

9 Provision of a permanent space for display of items from the Cuming collection.

There were many other specific comments made, which will be organised by library and

11 Children’s consultation

Children and young people are the future and form an essential part of library and heritage provision. The separate children’s consultation survey has been useful as it has informed us about the services children enjoy and those they would like to see in the future. There were 345 respondents, and a wealth of data was gathered including interesting drawings and comments in the free text box for question five. As a consequence we have several improvement ideas to take forward.

Question one asked how often children use the library. There were a total of 331 answers to this question with 50% using the library very often, 38% sometimes and 12% not very often. This indicates that most children who completed the survey are regular library users. A survey specifically targeted at non-users would be required to highlight reasons for non-usage.

Question two asked what activities children enjoy doing in the library, with respondents able to select more than one answer if required. The most popular responses were:

- Reading books 39%
- Arts and Crafts 24%
- Computers – to play and study 17%
- Playing with friends 7%
- Doing homework 7%
- Selecting and choosing books 5%
- Summer Reading Challenge 5%
- Colouring 4%
The highest percentage of children enjoyed reading in the library, with computer usage also popular. Arts and crafts were popular among respondents, including other art related answers such as drawing and colouring. Although mentioned only twice each there were other interesting answers that endorsed what we already do such as having DVDs, typing, printing, code clubs, quizzes and maths (during homework clubs and Explore Learning Workshops).

Question three asked what activities children would like to see in the library, and with 213 responses to this we now have a good indication of what things children would like to see us offering. The most popular answers were:

- We do everything/Can’t think of anything 24%
- Reading Club 6%
- Gaming PS4 5%

The most popular response was that we are already providing the services and activities that children need, but the other responses indicate improvements that can be made.

Storytime sessions/reading clubs for older children is an area to develop. We have a regular under-fives storytelling programme at all libraries that isn’t in place for ages six years and above. ChatterBooks, Picture This, and Manga Club are popular activities for ages six and above but the focus is not storytelling. Although stories are told during class visits there is still a training need to focus on storytelling skills for primary school aged children.

More activities at weekends was requested. Most libraries carry out a weekend activity, mainly a craft session. An audit will be done to find out whether more story or craft sessions can be introduced. An investment in PS4 games and equipment will be considered at some libraries in response to requests for this. Increased publicity of existing services is required as there were some requests for things we already provide.

Requests for a film club at Peckham Library were made, which will be considered. There were some requests for more eBooks for children, specifically non-fiction e-books to assist children with their homework, so more will be purchased.

Survey responses indicated that working with teenagers is an area that requires development. We currently have an extensive all year round volunteer programme for ages 14 to 17 where they are involved in assisting staff to run our reading challenges. We also have several students carrying out the DofE Award and completing their school work experience. We need to investigate more activities to engage with this age range- this could include an online book group, which was one of the suggestions. More staff training to build confidence when working with this age group will be organised.

Question four asked respondents to rate the library service, with 72% of children responding with either ‘love it’ or ‘great.’ Only two respondents didn’t like the service:
Question five asked whether children would like to tell us anything else about the library service, and there were a number of positive comments made about the newly refurbished East Street Library:

- I think that the workers here are very friendly and give me help when it is needed. Also the library is beautiful.
- I like the new kid friendly area for my little sister.

There were many positive comments about library staff (there were no negative comments about staff at any library throughout the survey responses):

- The staff are very kind to me. I really like the books. It's really nice and quiet and I love it.
- The library / libraries in Southwark are fantastic. New books, great staff, they know locals by name and are super helpful. Really great service.
- I really like using the library on a cold wintery day, you are all really kind.

The negative comments that came up more than once were related to cleanliness of toilet facilities and blocks on using the library computers to play certain computer games. Several children are frustrated with the game filters- we need to look at other ways to engage children with technology that is fun and without safeguarding issues. We will also conduct an audit of toilet facilities and whether or not they need to be improved/cleaned more often.

Question six indicated the age range of children responding to the survey. The survey was aimed at ages 5-11. We have found that the 9 to 11s are more able to read and understand the questions whereas the younger age ranges rely on parents/carers. Although 12 plus was not an age choice provided on the children’s survey a few responded. This chart summarises the number of respondents to the children’s consultation survey by age range:
As a result of the survey responses we have identified ten initial actions to address some of the more common comments:

1) Areas for staff training: storytelling for children 5 to 11 years and working with young people 12 to 17 years.
2) Develop more activities for 12 to 17 years i.e. Wii Club etc.
3) Increase range of activities provided in libraries such as: theatre shows, dance and singing.
4) Purchase more non-fiction eBooks for children related to the national curriculum, key stages 2 to 4.
5) Explore safe ways to engage children with fun IT activities.
6) Keep in mind that children enjoy using computers for play and study and reflect this in refurbs and new builds.
7) Increase the number of weekend activities.
8) Continue to promote our activities, particularly ChatterBooks.
9) Introduce a film club at Peckham Library.
10) Ensure toilets are all clean and accessible.

12 Staff focus groups

There were four workshops attended by 25 members of library staff, and a lot of useful comments were made.

Digital Connections – key themes included suggestions for more tailored sessions to help members of the public get online and assistance from partners to help customers fill in forms online e.g. one stop shop staff, job centre staff etc. Staff suggested a need to improve the technology that we offer the public e.g. Wi-Fi enabled printing, contactless payments, and faster broadband speeds.

Health and wellbeing Connections – staff wanted to build on work already done in libraries providing activities and events to combat loneliness and promote a feeling of wellbeing e.g.
book clubs, film clubs and adult talks. Staff felt that libraries could provide venues for health related activities and events run by others e.g. stop smoking courses, health checks etc. It was felt that the books on prescription scheme needed more publicity.

**Reading and Learning Connections** – staff thought that hard copy books are still our key offer, but there should be more targeted use of community profiling to make our books responsive to community needs. There is a huge amount of pressure on our study space and staff suggested that we need to use all available space including meeting rooms to satisfy the need at key times of year. Library staff wanted to maintain and build on the outreach work, class visits, and under 5’s and children’s activities that we already offer.

**Cultural Connections** – it was suggested that we could display works by local artists and make some money by charging commission on sales. Staff thought that we should link with partners from Southwark Presents and offer our libraries as venues for their theatre, music and dance performances. It was suggested that we should have more cultural events for teenagers and offer more opportunities for them and younger children to get involved in the creative arts.

**Community Connections** – staff believed that we could work with other organisations to come up with events e.g. Fun Palaces. We could offer our meeting spaces for ESOL groups, training for citizenship tests etc. It was suggested that we need more marketing of our meeting room spaces and could consider renting them out for parties.

**Heritage Connections** – staff felt there should be a travelling collection of museum objects and also more digital access to museum and archive collections. Another idea was that there should be an events programme throughout the borough of local history walks and talks.

### 13 Conclusions and next steps

The number of responses to the survey means that we have generated some really useful data on the library and heritage service in Southwark, including comments on existing activities and services and suggestions for additional services. All of this will feed into the library and heritage strategy, as this was the primary aim of the consultation exercise.

Some of the key conclusions that can be drawn from the consultation, including next steps, are:

**Input into draft library and heritage strategy**- the consultation will inform an updated draft of the strategy that takes into account the activities and services that respondents have identified as being a priority. The consultation survey was organised around the key themes of the strategy, therefore incorporating the key messages from the survey responses into the strategy document should be straightforward.

**Promotion of existing services required**- awareness around some existing services was shown to be lacking in survey responses, so there is a clear need to more effectively promote existing services. A lot of the things respondents asked for are already in place and clearly need to be promoted better, particularly the services of the local studies library and archives as awareness of the services offered here was shown to be limited.
Suggestions for new services - the consultation responses highlighted some existing services that can be expanded in order to meet a clear demand, for example the programme of code clubs in libraries. There were also suggestions for new services that will be investigated and implemented if they are viable and if there is sufficient demand.

‘You said, we did...’ - it is important to make a summary of consultation responses available to the public so that they can see what other people have been suggesting and how this fits in with their own priorities. It is also important to show that we are acting upon the comments and suggestions made. A ‘you said, we did’ campaign will achieve both of these objectives by showing residents and library users the key things that were identified as a result of the consultation and explaining what the library and heritage service is doing to address the comments and suggestions that have been made.

Staff consultation - as above with the ‘you said, we did’ campaign for the public, it is important that staff know that we value their comments. All the comments made by staff during the staff consultation focus groups will be addressed and a summary of responses made available to staff alongside an explanation of what we are doing to address the comments and suggestions made.