



REPORT TO: Paul Blantern  
 TITLE OF REPORT: **Northamptonshire Libraries and Information Service Review 2017 V3**  
 DATE: September 2017  
 AUTHOR:

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## Executive Summary

Years of efficiency measures have ensured that Northamptonshire library service is exceptionally cost effective. However, the service is now so squeezed that when the staff are unexpectedly absent, the library cannot open. Since the last review in 2011, Northamptonshire libraries have evolved to offer more and more with the same levels of resources. There is no room for further efficiency savings - a fundamental redesign or continued investment is needed.

The National Libraries Taskforce promotes the transformation agenda and alternative models of delivery are emerging across the country. Northamptonshire already offers itself as a case study for an alternative model of delivery, since the library service is now delivered by a Community Interest Company.

The population in Northamptonshire is growing and the levels of need in the population in Northamptonshire are also growing. Conversely, levels of central government funding to the county are falling and the council needs to continue to make huge cuts to its spending. Libraries are not immune from this.

The 36 libraries in Northamptonshire have stood in the same place for years, decades or sometimes longer and yet they are remarkably well placed to meet the greatest areas of need in the county. The delivery of the core universal offer in libraries is sound and is enhanced by an exceptionally broad range of additional services which contribute towards keeping Northamptonshire residents feeling well and feeling connected.

Libraries have been innovative in securing income or benefits in kind despite traditional sources of income diminishing. In particular the service couldn't deliver the breadth of services it does without the commitment of its volunteers. In Northamptonshire, you are just as likely to meet a volunteer in a library as a paid member of staff. Recently, the Registration Service has moved in to libraries which maximises benefits for people at times of greatest change in their lives. Increasingly, the local library will provide a face-to-face access point to County Council and district and borough services.

Usage of libraries nationally is declining. Attitudes towards libraries are changing too. More people believe that libraries are more important for the community but not as valuable to them personally. Similarly, visits to libraries have fallen in Northamptonshire. However in Northamptonshire, physical visits are declining at a slower rate than borrowing. Active membership is also declining at a faster rate than physical visits. In short, more people are visiting for reasons other than borrowing, and more and more of these people are not members of the library.

This paper sets out options to meet the challenges that the service faces and design a library service footprint of the future. This review sets out the rationale for preserving the greater part of the service that serves the most people who visit libraries, for ensuring the broadest geographical spread with libraries that are well situated to add most value to communities and for developing a service that secures the best value for public money.



## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose and scope of this document

Northamptonshire County Council needs to find £115.9 million of savings over the next four years predominantly to meet social care costs in the county. The Library and Information Service share in this financial challenge and seek to reduce costs to the tax payer. The low cost per visit compared to other library services demonstrates that this cannot be achieved by further efficiencies alone, and requires a more fundamental reshaping of the service to ensure it is fit for the future.

This document will comprehensively examine the current Northamptonshire Library and Information Service as it operates over its current 36 static and one mobile site against four measures of accessibility, quality, availability and sustainability in line with the review approach recommended by the National Libraries Taskforce. It will examine key statistics and trends within the service before setting out options about how a future library service may be shaped. It will test these proposals against the common design principles of library services and consider the impact of the proposals on the residents of Northamptonshire. This document will underpin the consultation with Northamptonshire residents and key stakeholder groups, the outcomes of which will inform the new library strategy 2017-2021.

### 1.2 Introduction to Library Service

Northamptonshire Libraries and Information Service, “LibraryPlus”, provides a comprehensive range of services through 36 community hub libraries and a mobile library, enabling face to face access to a range of public services. It sees almost 2.5 million physical visitors each year and an additional 600,000 virtual visits by customers using online resources. Each library has a range of books, audiobooks and DVDs and over 2 million items are borrowed every year.

LibraryPlus staff are highly skilled and offer a range of enquiry and support services to their local communities including information, digital support and support with wellbeing assessments, Blue Badge, Bus Pass and Charity Link applications. They signpost and make warm referrals to a range of other local organisations and work closely with colleagues from a number of services for the benefit of the customers. The recent Adult Public Library User Survey highlighted that of the 6227 respondents, there is a 97% satisfaction rate for customer service.

Since April 2016, NCC has commissioned First for Wellbeing, the Community Interest Company owned by Northamptonshire County Council, Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust and the University of Northampton to deliver the Library and Information Service, recognising the pivotal role that libraries play in improving the wellbeing of individuals and communities.

There are 153 FTE staff involved in delivering the service. The service costs in total £5.53million per annum to deliver excluding property costs. The service earns £920k



through its income generating activities. The cost to the tax payer is therefore £4.61million per annum. With property running costs added to this, the total costs of the service are £6.02million per annum.

CIPFA collect data from local authorities nationally to determine relative value for money of library service provision. The most recent data available is from 2015/6. This demonstrates the exceptional value for money that Northamptonshire Libraries and Information Service presents compared to Northamptonshire's neighbouring local authorities.

Cost per visit based on CIPFA Net Expenditure (excluding Capital Charges)	2015/16
Cambridgeshire	£2.58
Leicestershire	£4.29
Northamptonshire	£1.53
Oxfordshire	£3.58
Warwickshire	£3.23

### 1.3 Demographic trends in Northamptonshire

Many of the financial challenges facing the county can be attributed to the changing face of the county's population. Northamptonshire is a growing county, with a population of 733,128. It has 312,370 properties and an employment rate of 79.1%.

Based on current projections, by 2024, the population of Northamptonshire will have grown by approximately 9% (from 2014); faster than the projected 7.5% increase for England and 4<sup>th</sup> highest out of the English counties. The Borough of Corby within Northamptonshire is projected to have the 5<sup>th</sup> fastest population growth in the country at 16.7% (11,000 people) by 2024; this is the fastest growth rate outside of London.

This rate of growth in the county adds additional pressures to public services. To meet current and projected demand 26 Primary, 6 Secondary and 2 Special new schools are required in Northamptonshire by 2021. An estimated 12% of families in Northamptonshire with a dependent child under 18 were represented in the children's social care caseload during 2014/15.

An above average increase in over 65's is projected in Northamptonshire by 2024 with 65-84 year olds predicted to increase by 26.9% compared to the England average of 18.4%. Demand for Adult Social Care provision in Northamptonshire is expected to increase by 25% by 2021.

### 1.4 Northamptonshire Libraries Strategy 2011-2015

It is important to set this current review in context by understanding some of the recent history of the library service. Following public consultation, a detailed Library Review was undertaken in 2011. At the time, the service had already made £2.87million of savings over the previous 5 years from 2006-2011 to secure its position as the most cost effective



library service in the country. In 2011, the service was costing £4.6million excluding property costs and it launched an ambitious plan to reduce this further to £3.52million.

Following the review, it undertook to:

- Exploit its premises by utilising closed times and co-locating with other services to a value of £250,000
- Increasing volunteer support from 400 to 1600
- Providing services to other authorities that save them money and generate income for us £590,000 a year by 2015
- Making further staffing reductions £300,000 over two years
- Keep up £800,000 income each year
- Enjoy regular support from Charitable Trust, Friends groups and Districts and Boroughs worth £60,000 a year

Over the subsequent years it undertook a number of initiatives to attempt to realise this ambition with variable success.

Use of premises outside of library opening hours hasn't proven to be sustainable, especially given the increased opening hours that the 2011 review afforded. Co-location of Registration Offices into libraries throughout 2016 and 2017 has been the most successful example of this, and whilst this has saved over £50k per annum in property costs, this has not been realised as extra income to the library service.

Volunteer support has increased significantly from 400 volunteers in 2011 to 922 individual volunteers in 2016/7. However volunteers are used to enhance rather than to provide basic services and although their contribution is worth the equivalent of £315,000 without oncosts per annum, this is in kind and has not realised itself as savings to the library service budget.

In this time period, the service has taken on the delivery of universal children's centres services, absorbing activity worth £444,000, and by innovation in deploying staff has managed to deliver this within its existing resources. There are currently 21 libraries that are designated as Children's Centres.

Despite the reduction in traditional income streams such as fines, DVD hire and computer/internet use, the service has maintained income generation through expanding its retail and traded services offer. Similarly the ambition of providing library services to other local authorities proved to be unsustainable despite significant resources being invested in this venture.

The Charitable Trust was founded but proved unsustainable, and has since ceased to exist. Districts and Boroughs have had similar financial challenges to meet and income from these sources has remained small. The Friends Groups have provided significant and very valued support for libraries but have preferred to spend funds on tangible items for their home library, and this contribution in kind has therefore not realised savings in the library budget.



The 2011 review set out a bold vision for 2015, where services would be enhanced, all libraries would be open on Sundays, customers would benefit from personalised e-alerts, and libraries would provide the access point to a range of “Plus” services. The library service has worked consistently to bring about this transformation from solely libraries into vibrant community hubs. Whilst the anticipated extra income generation has not materialised, the vision about the pivotal role that libraries would play in the community has been achieved and continues to be delivered in 2017/8 with no increase in tax payer contribution from the levels in 2011/2.

## 1.5 National Library Taskforce Ambition 2016-2021

It is important that Northamptonshire takes account of the regional and national context when reviewing the Library Service to ensure that it is line with current best practice. The National Library Taskforce exists to build upon and add value to existing good practice, partnerships and other activities that are already supporting public libraries. It creates a strong and coherent narrative around the contribution public libraries make to society and to local communities, and reports to ministers from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

The Taskforce advises that these are challenging times for councils and the library services they run, noting that the way people use libraries and their expectations of public services are changing. It recognises that financial and demographic challenges are increasing, and standing still is not an option. It advises that councils need to adapt and think beyond previous efficiency approaches, to take a more transformational approach to delivering services locally.

It argues that the existing public library estate shouldn't be “preserved in aspic”, and that many public libraries were built decades ago and since then, there may have been dramatic changes in population, transport, technology and patterns of use.

*“Almost every aspect of modern life is changing rapidly. Shopping, learning, leisure and entertainment have changed radically from a decade ago; all expect to evolve further over the next few years. Libraries face the same challenges. They're already adapting and developing their offer to respond to changing needs and circumstances, and will need to do so even more in the future.”* – Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021

## 2 Common Design Principles for this review

The seven common design principles for libraries enable any proposed options to be tested objectively.

### 2.1 Meet legal requirements

Local authorities have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 ‘to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons’ in the area that





want to make use of it. In considering how best to deliver the statutory duty each library authority is responsible for determining, through consultation, the local needs and to deliver a modern and efficient library service that meets the requirements of their communities within available resources.

In providing this service, local authorities must, among other things:

- have regard to encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service
- lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area

## **2.2 Shaped by local need**

Any proposals would meet this principle if it could be demonstrated that libraries are well placed to meet the greatest areas of need in the county both geographically considering the rural nature of the county, and also socio-economically considering the multiple socio-economic indicators.

## **2.3 Focus on public benefit and deliver high quality user experience**

Any proposals would meet this principle if it could be demonstrated that the most used, accessible, modern, and fit for purpose facilities have been considered. Those libraries already operating in a community hub model providing multiple services for the benefit of the community would be best placed to meet this principle.

## **2.4 Make decisions informed by evidence**

The National Libraries Taskforce suggests that any decisions should pay regard to evidence of accessibility, quality, availability and sustainability of the library service. In this review, a wide range of evidence will be considered including value for money, geographical coverage, areas of need, usage and trends, accessibility, income generation, use of space and suitability of library premises for future development.

## **2.5 Support delivery of consistent core offers**

Any proposals would need to demonstrate that they support delivery of the core library offer. In Northamptonshire, the core offer is sound and well embedded across every library. The work of the large libraries provides the supporting structures for the work of the medium and smaller libraries. The infrastructure which the service depends on to deliver the core offer relies on the retention of the large libraries and the digital and online offer.

## **2.6 Promote partnership working, innovation and enterprise**

Northamptonshire Libraries work in partnership with a number of local and national organisations to deliver enhanced services to customers. Examples of national partnerships include:



- The British Library to deliver the Northamptonshire Business and Intellectual Property service
- The Reading Agency and Society of Chief Librarians for Books on prescription, Read yourself well and the Summer Reading Challenge
- The Bookstart Trust for Bookstart services

Local partnerships are based on the need of the community at individual libraries and may be with a housing association, a charity, a community group or credit union. Libraries tend to support partnerships by offering accessible community spaces, expertise, and resources to customers.

Libraries that meet this principle will be those that are the most connected with their community.

## 2.7 Use public funds effectively and efficiently

When benchmarked against other local authority library provisions, it could be argued that the current library service provides exceptional value for money. However, within the service, some libraries are more cost effective than others when cost per visit is used as the measure.

To meet this principle, any proposals would need to demonstrate that costs of property, staffing and infrastructure have been taken into account.

## 3 Accessibility

### 3.1 The physical library offer

The service's 36 libraries are spread throughout the county. In 2008, it was calculated that just under 85% of the county's population live within 2 miles of their nearest static library. However the geographical spread is uneven, with a concentration of libraries in Northampton, Wellingborough and Kettering boroughs.

There are 8 large libraries, one for each district and borough in the County, with the addition of Northamptonshire Central Library. These are located in:

- Corby
- Kettering
- Wellingborough
- Rushden
- Northampton (Weston Favell)
- Daventry
- Towcester
- Northamptonshire Central

Together, these 8 libraries account for:

- 59% of the total physical visits in the county
- 50% of all borrowing (physical stock) in the county



- 51% of all library service costs including staffing
- 57% of all property costs
- 40.2% of all universal children's services attendances
- 58% of income generated

There are a further 15 libraries categorised as medium libraries. These are located in:

- Abington
- Brackley
- Brixworth
- Burton Latimer
- Desborough
- Duston
- Higham Ferrers
- Hunsbury
- Irtlingborough
- Kingsthorpe
- Long Buckby
- Oundle
- Raunds
- Rothwell
- Thrapston

Together, these 15 libraries account for:

- 34% of the total physical visits in the county
- 41% of all borrowing (physical stock) in the county
- 35% of all library service costs including staffing
- 27% of all property costs
- 40.2% of all universal children's services attendances
- 35% of income generated

The remainder of the county's libraries are considered to be small libraries. These 13 libraries are located in:

- Danesholme
- Deanshanger
- Earls Barton
- Far Cotton
- Finedon
- Irchester
- Middleton Cheney
- Moulton
- Roade
- St James
- Wollaston
- Woodford Halse
- Wootton

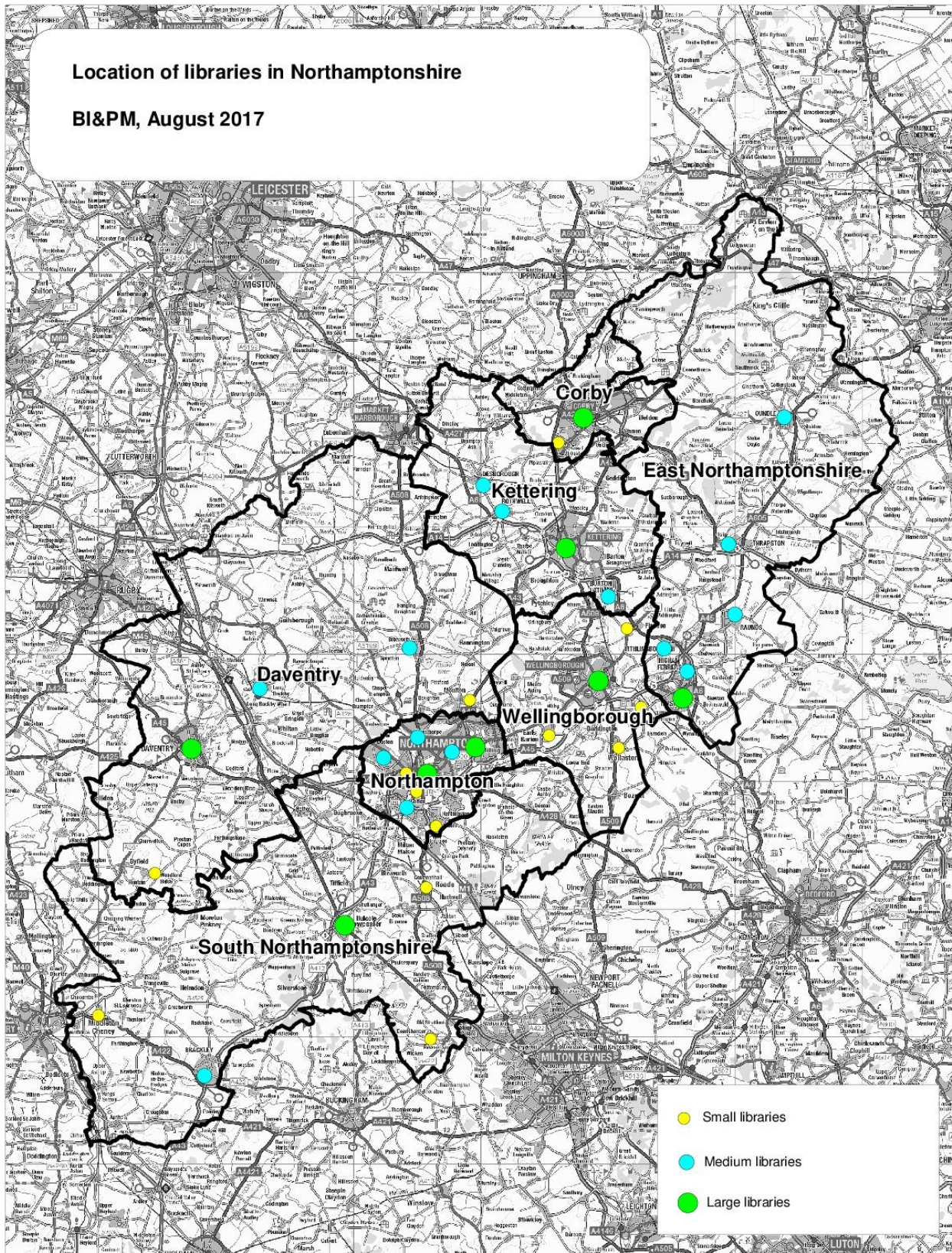
Together, these 13 libraries account for:

- 7% of the total physical visits in the county
- 9% of all borrowing (physical stock) in the county
- 14% of all library service costs including staffing
- 16% of all property costs
- 12.6% of all universal children's services attendances
- 7% of income generated



Location of libraries in Northamptonshire

BI&PM, August 2017



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### 3.2 Meeting local needs

Libraries have an important role to play in meeting the needs of their communities. Some communities have more need than others and therefore it is important to understand the location of Northamptonshire libraries in relation to the areas of need in the county.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the main statistical overview of relative need covering the whole of England. It is formatted using small geographical areas called Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), of which there are 32844 across the country, with 422 of them falling within Northamptonshire. Each LSOA represents around 1,600 people.

The IMD considers information and data from 7 domains before ranking each LSOA relative to others nationally. These 7 domains are:

- Income
- Employment
- Education
- Health
- Crime
- Barriers to Housing & Services
- Environment

Of the 422 LSOAs in the county, 29 LSOAs are amongst the top 10% most deprived in England and 40 fall within the next 10% most deprived nationally. Therefore, 16.4% of the LSOAs in Northamptonshire are amongst the top 20% most deprived nationally. This equates to approximately 110,733 county residents.

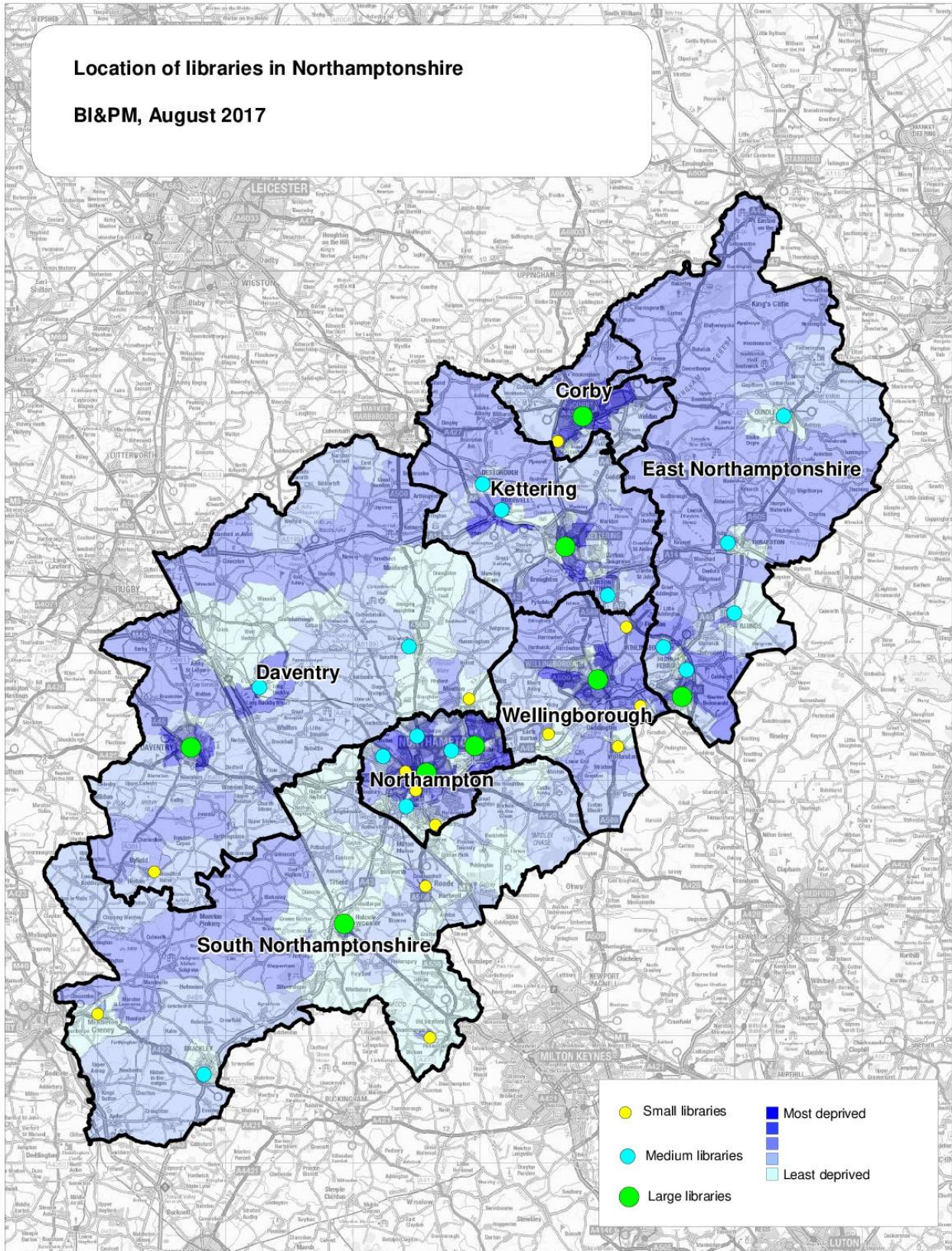
Like the IMD, the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index is constructed using national indicators with each LSOA geography given a 'deprivation score'. Since libraries are key in connecting people and potentially minimise the risk of social isolation of our older populations who may have had the longest association with their local library, it is pertinent to examine how libraries are placed relative to the levels of need of our older populations too.

In the maps that follow, the darker the area, the greater the levels of deprivation. This enables a view of where the current libraries are located in relation to the communities with the greatest needs.



Location of libraries in Northamptonshire

BI&PM, August 2017



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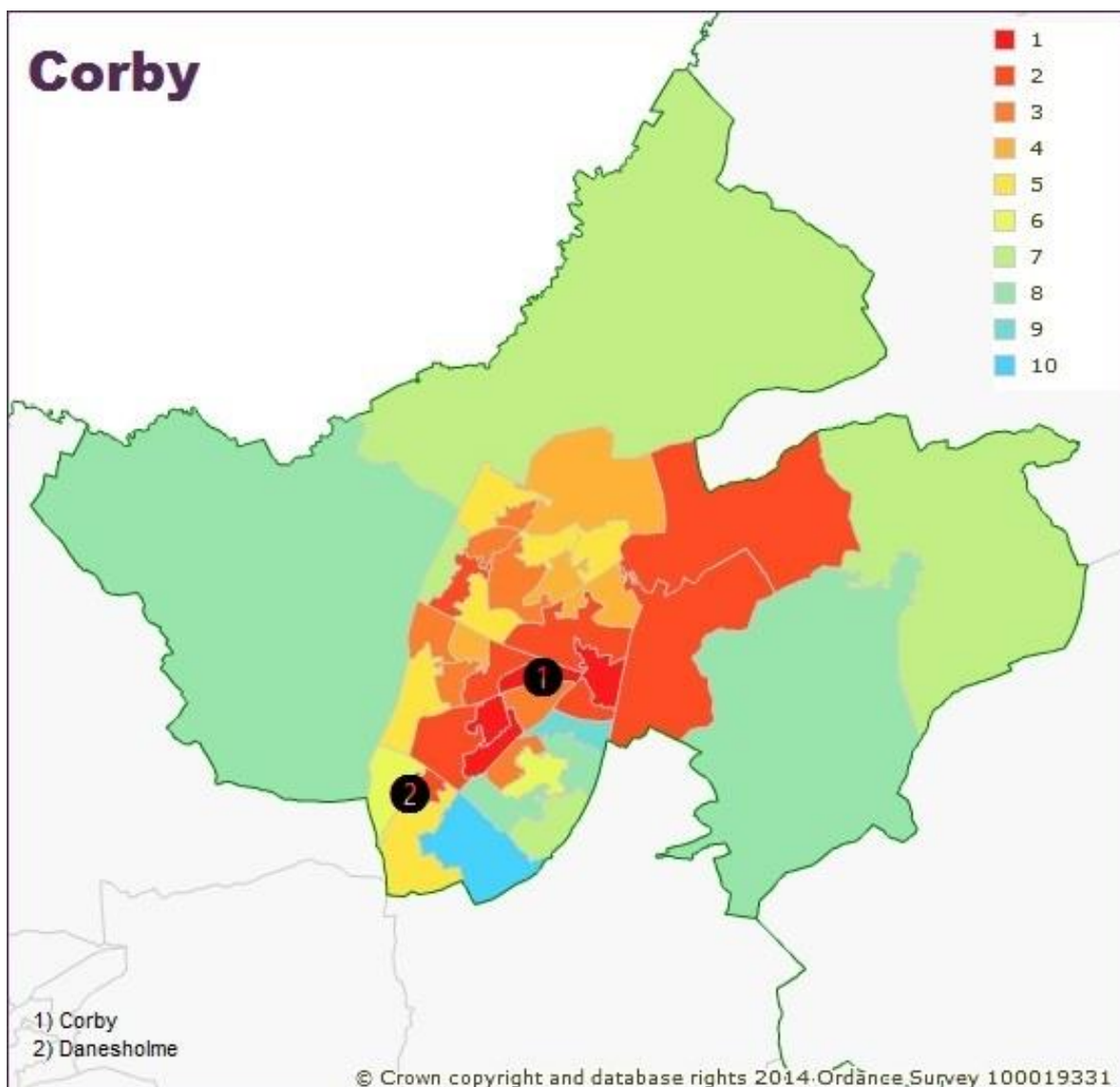


### 3.2.1 Corby Borough

There are 41 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Corby. Of these, 4 LSOAs are amongst the top 10% most deprived in England and 8 fall within the next 10% nationally. Thus, **29.3%** of the LSOAs in Corby are amongst the top 20% most deprived nationally.

For income affecting Older People, 1 LSOAs are amongst the top 10% most deprived in England and 3 fall within the next 10% nationally. Thus, **9.8%** of the LSOAs in Corby are amongst the top 20% most deprived nationally for income affecting Older People.

In the maps that follow, the lower the score, the more deprived the area is.

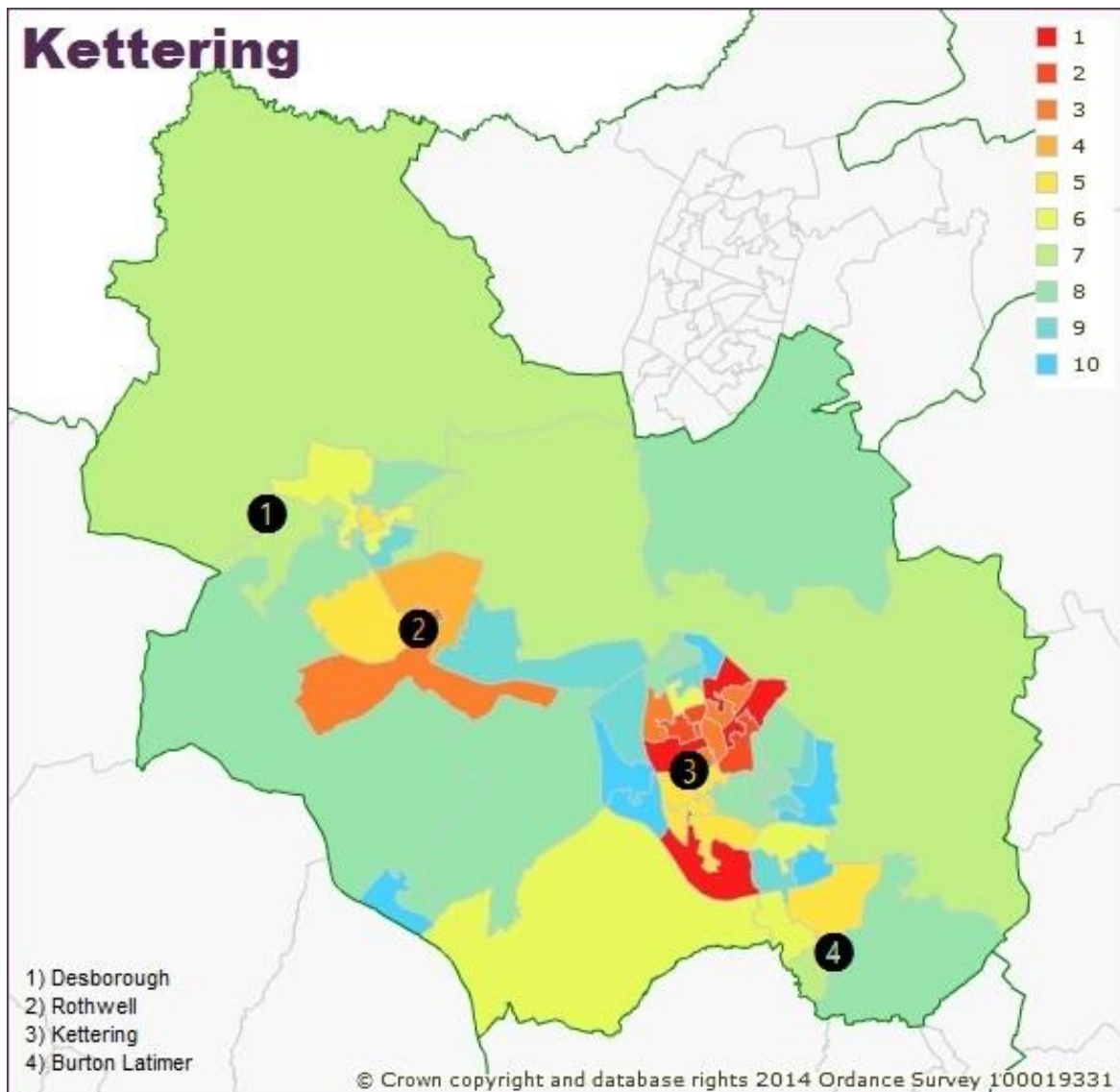




### 3.2.2 Kettering Borough

There are 57 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Kettering. Of these, 4 LSOAs are amongst the top 10% most deprived in England and 3 fall within the next 10% nationally. Therefore, 12.3% of the LSOAs in Kettering are amongst the top 20% most deprived nationally

For income affecting Older People, 2 LSOAs are amongst the top 10% most deprived in England and 2 fall within the next 10% nationally. Therefore, 7.0% of the LSOAs in Kettering are amongst the top 20% most deprived nationally for income affecting Older People.



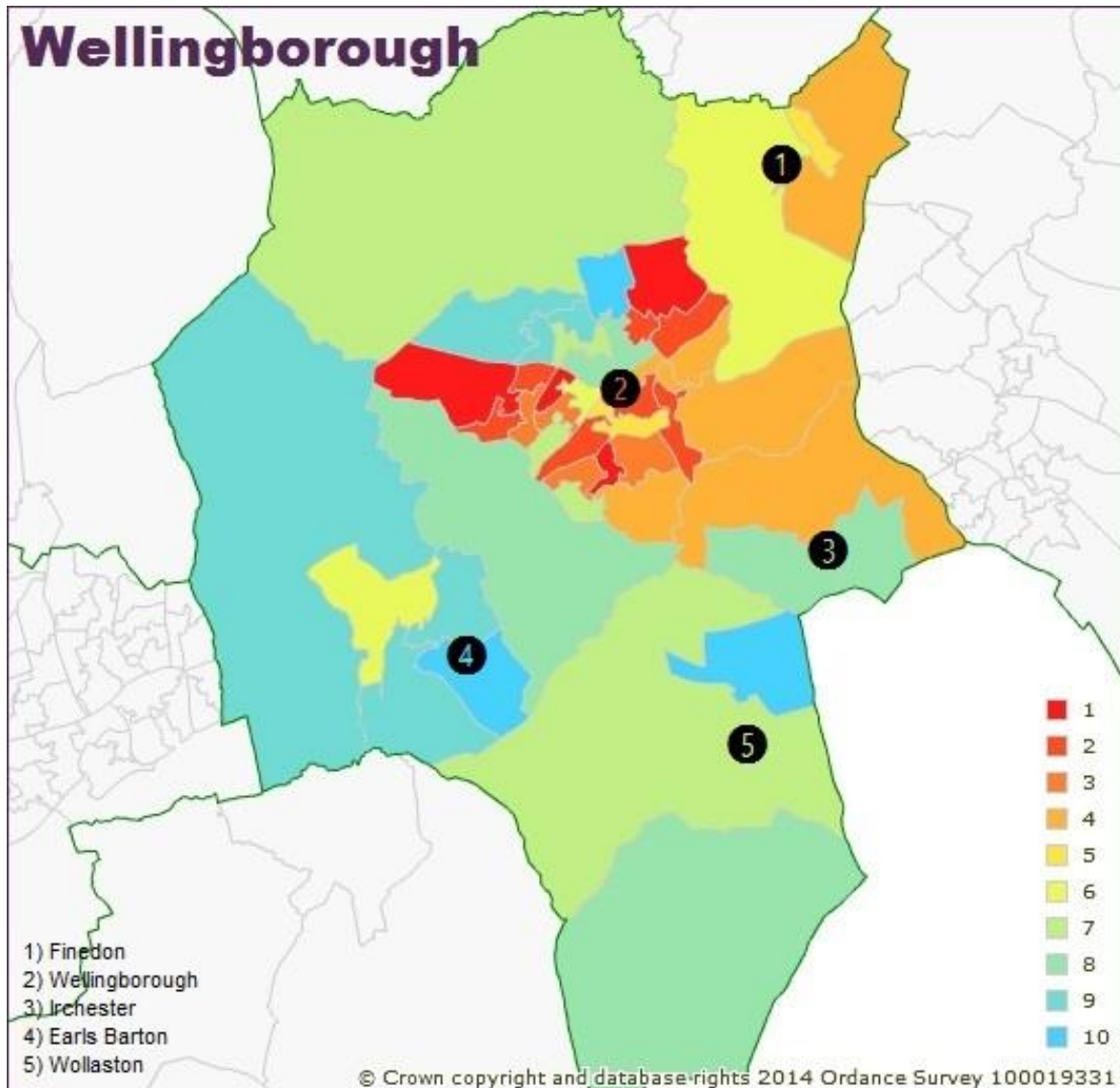




### 3.2.3 Wellingborough Borough

There are 47 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Wellingborough. Of these, 4 LSOAs are amongst the top 10% most deprived in England and 7 fall within the next 10% nationally. Therefore, 23.4% of the LSOAs in Wellingborough are amongst the top 20% most deprived nationally.

For income affecting Older People, 2 LSOAs are amongst the top 10% most deprived in England and 5 fall within the next 10% nationally. Therefore, 14.9% of the LSOAs in Wellingborough are amongst the top 20% most deprived nationally for income affecting Older People.

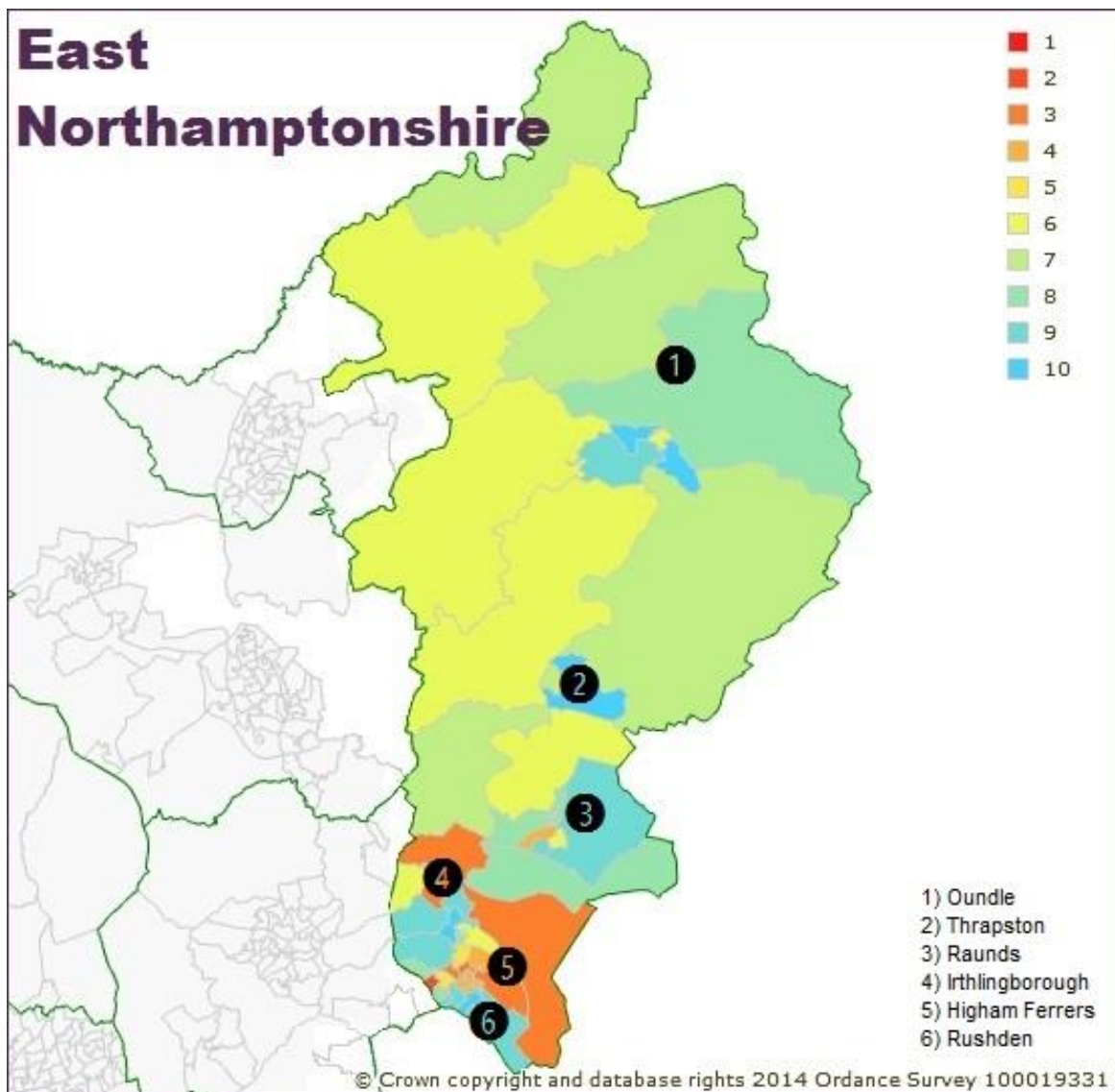




### 3.2.4 East Northants District

There are 49 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in East Northamptonshire. Of these, none are amongst the top 10% most deprived in England and 1 falls within the next 10% nationally. Therefore, 2.0% of the LSOAs in East Northamptonshire are amongst the top 20% most deprived nationally.

For income affecting Older People, 0.0% of the LSOAs in East Northamptonshire are amongst the top 20% most deprived nationally.

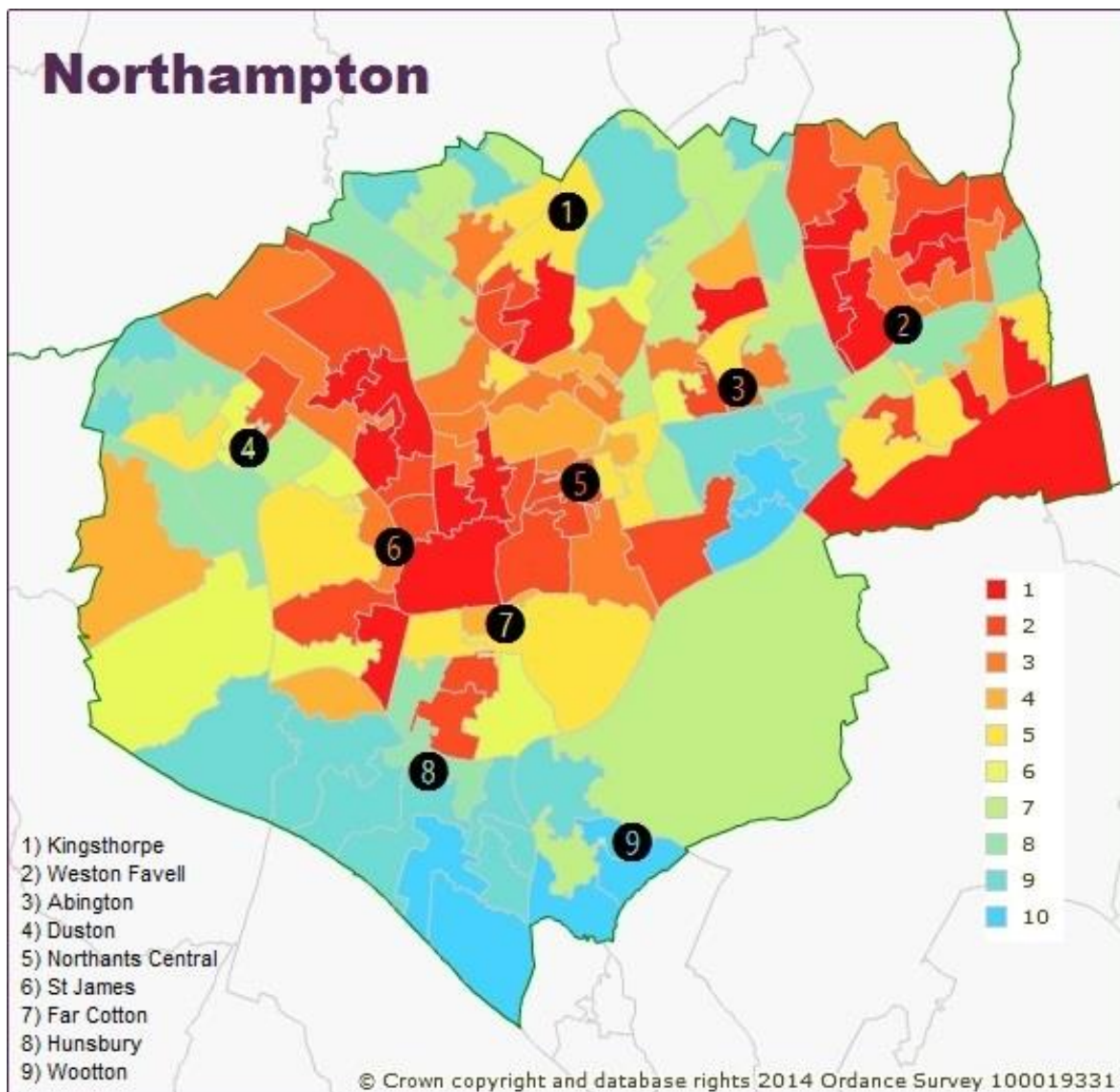




### 3.2.5 Northampton Borough

There are 133 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Northampton. Of these, 16 LSOAs are amongst the top 10% most deprived in England and 20 fall within the next 10% nationally. Therefore, 27.1% of the LSOAs in Northampton are amongst the top 20% most deprived nationally

For income affecting Older People, 9 LSOAs are amongst the top 10% most deprived in England and 22 fall within the next 10% nationally. Therefore, 23.3% of the LSOAs in Northampton are amongst the top 20% most deprived nationally for income affecting Older People.

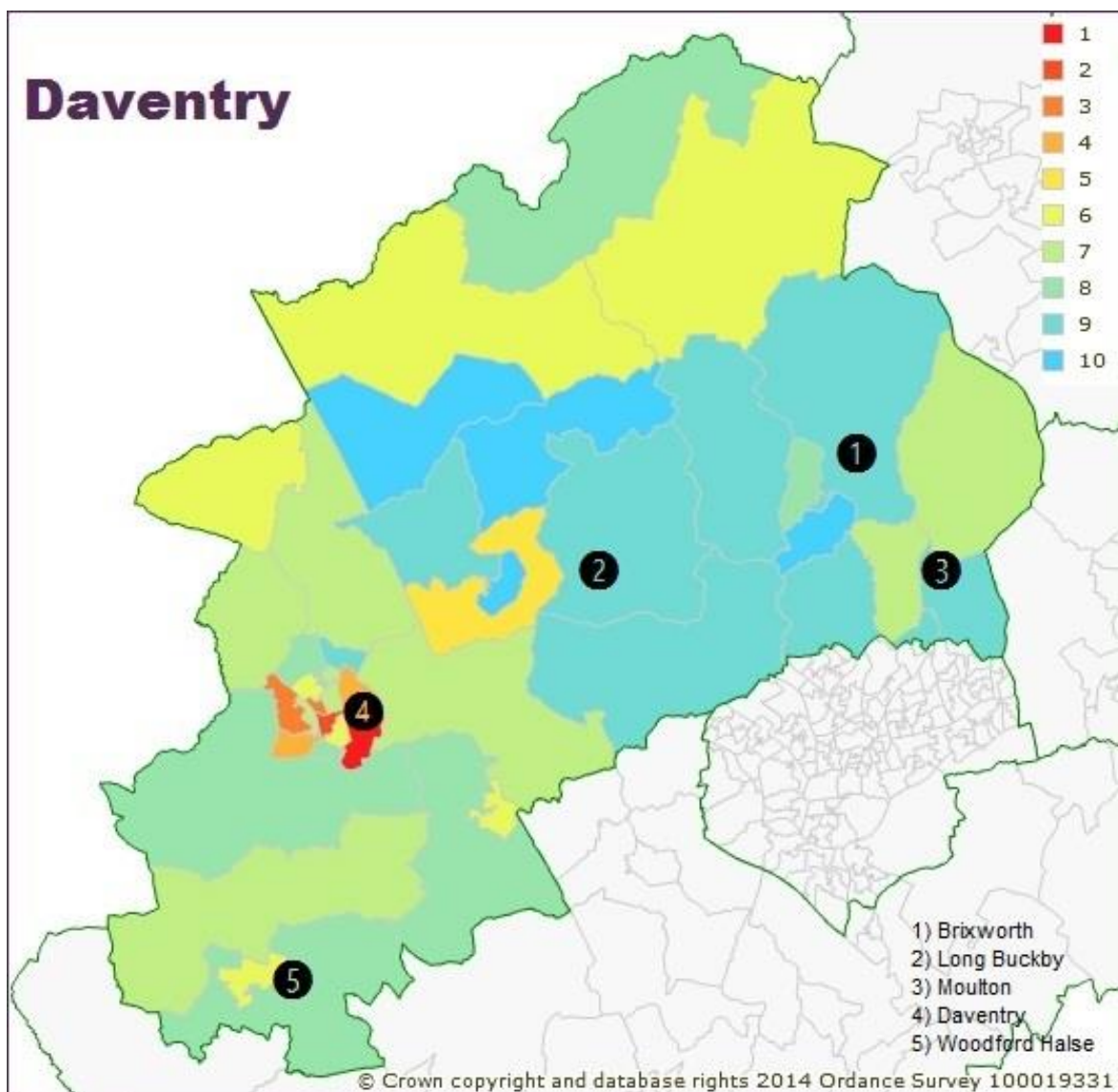




### 3.2.6 Daventry District

There are 44 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Daventry. Of these, 1 LSOA is amongst the top 10% most deprived in England and 1 falls within the next 10% nationally. Therefore, 4.5% of the LSOAs in Daventry are amongst the top 20% most deprived nationally

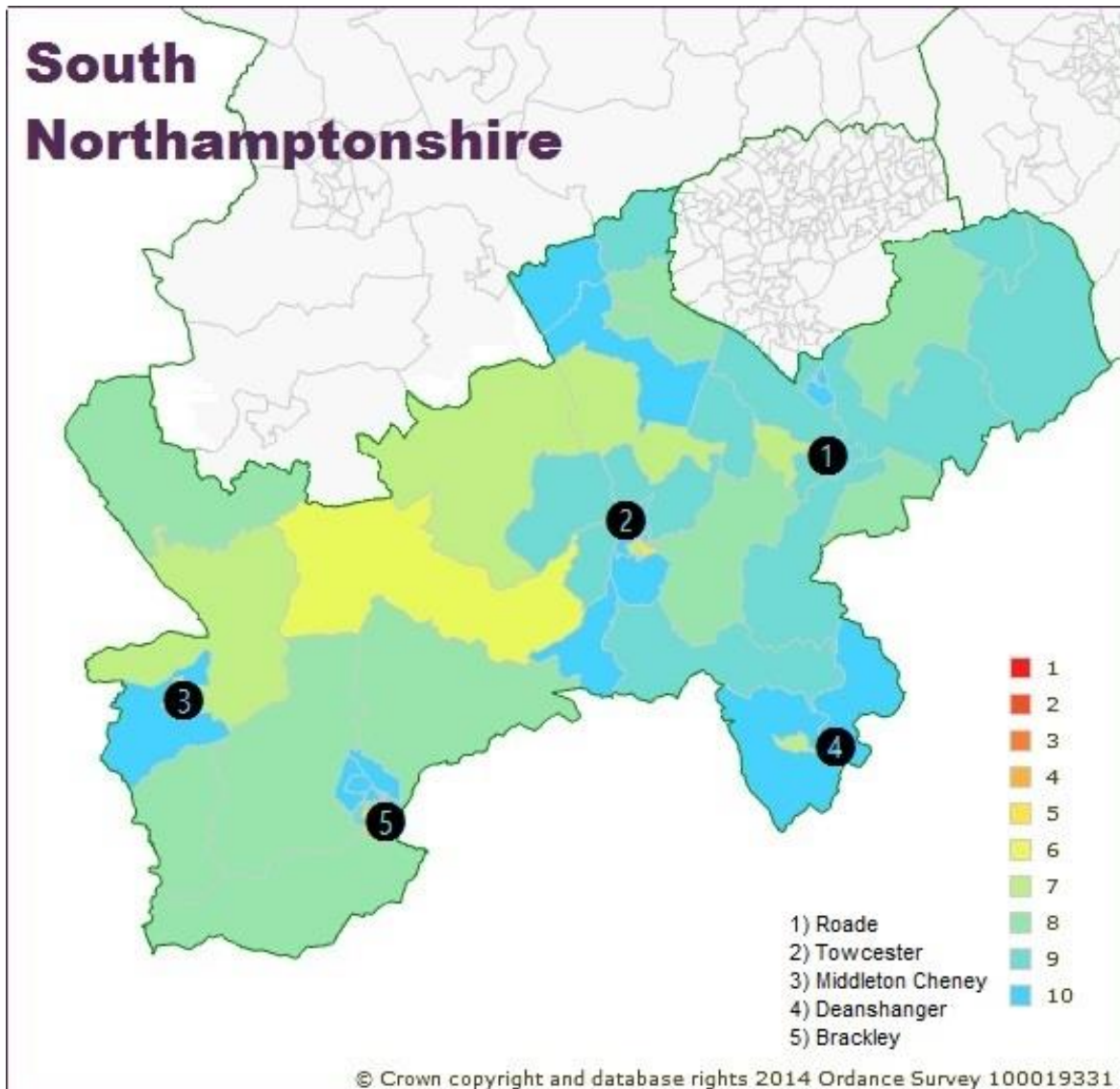
For income affecting Older People, no LSOA are amongst the top 10% most deprived and 1 falls within the next 10% nationally. Therefore, 2.3% of the LSOAs in Daventry are amongst the top 20% most deprived nationally for income affecting Older People.





### 3.2.7 South Northants District

There are 51 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in South Northamptonshire. None of the LSOAs in South Northamptonshire are amongst the top 20% most deprived nationally. Similarly, no LSOA falls in the top 20% nationally for income affecting Older People.





### **3.3 The virtual library offer**

The service does not operate solely out of its physical buildings but takes advantage of opportunities to make the LibraryPlus services more accessible, convenient and up-to-date by exploiting digital technology wherever possible. All libraries have self-service machines for the loaning and returning of items, freeing up staff to support customers with more complex enquiries. The online catalogue enables customers to search for items, reserve and renew them 24/7 and the library app allows this to be done remotely from mobile devices.

The online lending offer includes free e-books, e-audiobooks, e-magazines and newspapers and music downloads. Take up of these resources rose by 75% in 2016/7. The service also subscribes to a number of premium reference resources that customers can access with their library membership supporting a wide variety of subjects including business start-up, driving theory test, the National Citizenship test, Universal Credit and historical archives. The service's "Good Web Guide" offers access to a range of websites that have been carefully selected by our information professionals as the best sources of information online.

There has been ongoing investment in library connectivity and all libraries now have free Wi-Fi as well as computers for internet access with 283,861 individuals using these facilities to get online in 2016/7. Multifunctional devices provide high quality scanning and printing from library computers or customers' own devices. Staff and IT Buddy volunteers provide support for those with low digital literacy to carry out online transactions such as Blue Badge and bus pass applications. Customers can bring in their own devices to help build their digital confidence and structured IT courses, delivered by partners, provide opportunities to build IT skills. Coding clubs and Lego robotics groups provide opportunities for young people to learn computer coding.

The libraries proactively use social media channels including Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest and Instagram to engage with their customers. This is an increasingly important method of instant communication for libraries and also a way of gathering useful feedback for making improvements to services.

### **3.4 The Outreach Offer**

#### **3.4.1 The Mobile Library**

In 2011, the service reduced the mobile libraries from four to two vehicles focussed on people who completely rely on them. Since then, one of the mobile libraries has been taken out of service having become beyond economical repair. A single mobile library currently visits 98 villages and towns across the county with 20 routes and 127 stops, including Saturdays and Sundays. This current mobile library is also in very poor repair and is frequently off the road pending repairs. The mobile library is not a legal requirement.



### 3.4.2 Library to You

The service also provides the “Library to You” service to over 250 housebound customers around the county. Volunteers select books for these customers, but more importantly, visit them to deliver the books and have a chat. These are ideal interventions to check on their wellbeing and recommend other services to otherwise quite isolated people.

### 3.5 The Traded Offer

As part of the income generation strategy the service also runs a number of traded services including the Schools Library Service, libraries in 2 local prisons and a library service for St Andrews Hospital. These are not part of the statutory library service.

This year the service has piloted a new partnership with MyHermes. Two libraries are now MyHermes parcel shops giving customers a convenient location to drop off and collect parcels. This provides both a new income stream for libraries and a new set of customers who might not normally come into a library. This service is soon to be extended to three further libraries.

## 4 Quality

### 4.1 The Core Universal Offer

All library services are committed to providing a really good quality basic offer. This is called the “Core Universal Offer.” The Society of Chief Librarians and partners including The Arts Council and The Reading Agency are committed to keeping library services relevant and accessible. Together they have identified five key areas of service which today’s users regard as integral to public libraries and developed a shared strategy for the future. The Universal Offers cover the five key areas of service which customers and stakeholders see as essential to a 21<sup>st</sup> century library service.

#### 4.1.1 Reading Offer

In Northamptonshire Libraries we follow the strategic framework of the Reading Offer to ensure that we promote reading services across the county to maximize literacy and reading for pleasure. We support national reading campaigns including World Book Night, the Summer Reading Challenge, and the Six book Challenge. We run a pioneering countywide reading group via BBC Radio Northampton ensuring that even the socially isolated can take part in a reading group. We host several Sounds Good Reading Groups for those with visual impairments.

#### 4.1.2 Information Offer

The Universal Information Offer aims to bring together government and non-government sources of information, which have been researched by information professionals in public libraries, giving a level of quality assurance to the customer. To do this we ensure that our



staff and volunteers are continually developing their skills to provide the help some people need to access information and services online. We also offer information and support on job seeking and self-employment.

#### **4.1.3 Digital Offer**

As a baseline every public library service should provide free internet access (for a minimum period of time), clear and accessible online information about library services and staff trained to help customers access digital information. Last year we renewed both our public computers and our Wi-Fi provision to ensure that they were able to provide the level of online access that our customers need. We also introduced a new Library App to make it easier for customers to interact with us online. Our Information team select the best quality web resources and bring these together in our “Good web guide”, the first stop for our customers and staff for up to date and reliable information. They ensure staff are trained in enquiry, information and digital skills. Digital support is offered by staff and IT Buddy volunteers to assist customers to navigate the web and carry out digital transactions.

#### **4.1.4 Health Offer**

The Health Offer is a commitment to provide a range of services including public health information and promotion, sign posting and referrals as well as creative and social reading activity. We offer a program of health promotion and activity to encourage customers to engage with their own health improvement. We subscribe to the “Reading Well books on Prescription” scheme in partnership with GPs who are able to prescribe books selected by health professionals from library collections on mental health, Dementia, young people’s health and most recently, living with long term conditions.

#### **4.1.5 Learning Offer**

Northamptonshire libraries work closely with a range of partners to ensure that low-cost or free learning opportunities are available in libraries. Free resources for study and learning are provided physically and digitally in all libraries. We use “Study Happy” ideology to ensure libraries have environments which are conducive to learning. We offer a program of formal and informal learning opportunities from business start-up workshops, through language cafes to family craft activities and work closely with our Adult Learning colleagues to refer people to courses which may be beneficial.

### **4.2 The Five Ways to Wellbeing**

The library service is pivotal in supporting customers to improve their wellbeing. The Council has adopted a strong wellbeing narrative and has placed the library service at the centre of its community response to addressing the public health challenges faced by the county. The library service articulates its input to the wellbeing agenda by mapping its provision against the Five Ways to Wellbeing.





#### 4.2.1 Connect

The library service supports customers to connect by offering:

- Free Wi-Fi access and charging of electronic devices and equipment
- Free access to E-library portal to subscription reference and research resources on the web
- LibraryPlus App allowing customers to reserve and renew, access the e-library
- Sounds Good Reading Groups for the visually impaired
- Library to You service for customers unable to get to a library through age or disability
- Free activities in all libraries for under 5's and older children
- Bookable meeting pods and community meeting spaces
- The Keep safe scheme for those with a learning disability
- Baby Friendly facilities and safe places to breastfeed
- Language Cafés
- Health Visitor Drop in sessions
- Get Connected campaign week to showcase local organisations and charities
- National Libraries Day

#### 4.2.2 Give

The library service supports customers to give by offering:

- Library Friends Groups to raise the community profile of their library
- Volunteering Opportunities through the Get Involved Hub
- Opportunity to make Library Donations
- Opportunity to Sell Your Wares in library exhibition space and display cabinets

#### 4.2.3 Be Active

The library service supports customers to:

- Apply for a Concessionary Bus Pass
- Apply for a Disabled Parking Permit
- Access E-library health and wellbeing support
- Take part in the annual 20 Million Steps mass participation walking challenge
- Holding Health Walks departing from libraries
- Meet a wellbeing adviser and take a holistic wellbeing assessment

#### 4.2.4 Take Notice

The library service offers opportunities to:

- Register births, deaths and marriages/ civil partnerships
- Apply for assistance from Charity Link
- Access Debt Help and Money Management by specially trained library staff
- Access E-books, magazines, music, comics and newspapers
- Access Computers, Photocopying, Printing and Scanning



- Borrow books and DVDs
- Read newspapers and magazines
- Research your family history with free access to Ancestry and Find My Past
- Ask for information from the Answers Plus online and telephone information service.
- Research local history in the Discover area
- Support life's transitions in the Change Zone
- Collect Fuel Vouchers for eligible customers
- Access the Dementia Collection for those with Dementia and their carers
- Read themselves well with the Books on Prescription service
- Take part in the Summer Reading Challenge

#### 4.2.5 Keep Learning

The library service supports customers to:

- Learn basic computer and job search skills with Universal Skills
- Attend free workshops and find out information about starting and developing their own business with Business and Intellectual Property Northamptonshire
- Revise for their driving theory test with free access to Theory Test Pro
- Revise for their Life in the UK test with free access to Go Citizen
- Apply for a school place
- Apply for 2 year old nursery place funding
- Apply for adult learning courses
- Access free online courses
- Increase their IT skills with the volunteer IT buddies
- Attend library Job Clubs to support the search for employment
- Search for a job
- Access to Study Spaces
- Attend Code Clubs to learn about computer programming

#### 4.3 The Library Plus offer

Paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 outline the breadth of the core Library offer as well as an introduction to the wider LibraryPlus offer. The LibraryPlus offer is further complemented by the addition of the following services.

##### 4.3.1 Library Shop

Each library has a retail offer which supports the ongoing income generation requirement. Libraries are set income targets proportionate to their library footfall, and have some degree of autonomy to shape their retail offer to meet the needs of their library users. Generally, libraries will stock a range of greeting cards, stationery and giftware as well as seasonal items as appropriate.

Income from library shops	% of all libraries till income
£70,385	15%



### 4.3.2 Volunteering

Volunteers are not used to deliver core library services in Northamptonshire libraries but they do support non-statutory, additional LibraryPlus services. The Library Service values volunteers and offers a range of volunteering experiences helping people to gain skills and confidence and contribute to their local area. There are currently over 900 volunteers supporting the staff in libraries to deliver added-value activities to communities giving over 38,000 hours per year.

The service has a relatively buoyant turnover of volunteers and the promotion, recruitment, induction and training of volunteers is a continuous process which demands significant management capacity. The Library Service also hosts and manages the Council's Get Involved Hub – the online Portal which provides the infrastructure to advertise and recruit volunteers to numerous departments and organisations from the Council and partners across the public and community sector.

In 2016/7, the Library Service had 380 new starters and retained 551 volunteers. Of the 380 new starters:

- 34% (130) were for the Stock Assistant role.
- 16% (60) were for the Summer Reading Challenge Volunteer/Team Leader role.
- 8% (29) were for the IT Buddy role

The profile of volunteer roles is evolving with decreases in volunteer roles that support literacy or learning outcomes, and an increase in those that are more transactional or creative roles.

Active volunteers 2016/17	Volunteer hours 2016/17
922	38,355

### 4.3.3 Blue badges and concessionary bus passes

The Library Services provides face to face support for bus pass and blue badge applications. Blue Badge is a LibraryPlus Service delivered on behalf of NCC. Library staff check eligibility and documents for online applications and provide assisted self-service for online applications, generating photos for customers as required. In total, there were 3005 blue badge applications across all 36 libraries in the county in 2016/7, a 25% increase on 2015/6.

Customers can also come into libraries to order a new bus pass, order a replacement bus pass for damaged or stolen passes or renew existing bus passes. Again library staff will offer assisted self-service for both types of bus passes - disability passes and pensioner's bus passes. In total, 14,618 bus pass applications were made through libraries in Northamptonshire in 2016/7, a 3% increase on 2015/6.

Blue Badges 2016/17	Bus passes 2016/17
3005	14,618



#### 4.3.4 Activities for under 5's

We also deliver the Universal element of Children's Centre Services for Northamptonshire. There are 21 libraries that are designated Children's Centres that provide information and advice for families, supporting early communication and language skills and school-readiness as well as promoting breastfeeding. All frontline staff are also trained to deliver high quality Universal Children's Centre events including rhymetimes, play and learn sessions and creative activities.

In 2016/7, we ran 4810 of these events and activities for families with an attendance of 72,842 individuals.

Events for children and families 2016/17	Attendance at children and family events 2016/17
4,810	72,842

#### 4.3.5 Room hire

There are 15 private meeting spaces across the Library Service which are available to hire with differential rates for commercial and non-profit organisations. These range from large multi-purpose function rooms to smaller "pods" for more informal meetings. Room hire provides an important source of revenue to the libraries. Hireable spaces are located in the following libraries:

- Brixworth – Pod
- Burton Latimer – Meeting Room
- Higham Ferrers – Meeting Room
- Irthlingborough – Meeting Room
- Kettering – Pod
- Kingsthorpe – Pod
- Northamptonshire Central – Carnegie Hall and Pod
- Oundle – Meeting Room
- Raunds – Pod
- Rothwell – Meeting Room
- Rushden – Pod
- Towcester – Pod
- Wellingborough – Pod
- Weston Favell – Pod
- Wollaston – Meeting Room

Income from room hire	% of all libraries till income
£49,655	11%

#### 4.3.6 Computer use, internet, Wi-Fi and printing

Public access to computers remains an important part of the customer experience in libraries. However, computer use is changing and with free Wi-Fi available in every library, it is now used predominantly by those who don't have access to their own device or the facility to print.



In 2016/7 there were 143,071 computer sessions used equating to 84,056 hours across the 36 libraries. This was a 25% reduction on previous year's total of 191,189 sessions. Sessions were also shorter in 2016/7 equating to a 32% reduction on the previous year total of 122,741 hours.

In 2016/7, computers were in use in libraries for 19.5% of the time that libraries were open and computers were available.

Income from computer use	% of all libraries till income
£47,975	10%

#### 4.4 Co-location with other services

##### 4.4.1 Registration Service

The Registration Service meets the parents of nearly every baby that is born in the county. Since 2013, the Registration Service had been asking permission from parents when they are registering their baby's birth to share their contact details with the library service, so they could get in touch with the parents to offer library membership and advice about Children's Centres.

From Spring 2015, Corby, Towcester and Oundle Registration Office moved into their respective libraries and the initiative was scaled up such that at the end of the birth registration, with the parent's consent, the registrar introduced the parent to a library adviser who explained the benefits of library membership and of Children's Centres.

The Director of Public Health and Wellbeing approved using a Public Health Grant to fund construction work to move the four remaining Registration Offices, Northampton, Kettering, Wellingborough and Daventry into their geographically closest large library. This has enabled further development whereby registrars now also issue library cards for new babies and welcome packs to their parents to encourage reading with their baby.

While the principal benefit of this alignment between the Registration Service and Northamptonshire Libraries and Information Service is improving the county's wellbeing outcomes by increasing the number of citizens being introduced to wellbeing services, further benefits include:

- Increasing the viability of the library by increasing visitor numbers.
- Contributing to the NCC's Asset Utilisation Strategy by rationalising accommodation and reducing property costs.
- Increasing service income and customer choice by delivering services in a building with longer opening hours over seven days.
- Contributing to locality-based service provision.
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs in the Registration Service



#### 4.4.2 District and Borough Access Points

The service also has a number of arrangements with its District and Borough Partners to provide community access points for their residents. There are a variety of legacy agreements in place with these partners which provide for a small amount of income to the library service. In addition, three libraries are identified as NCC touch down points for its remote workers. Specifically, District and Borough access points are located:

- Burton Latimer – Kettering Borough Council desk
- Rothwell – Kettering Borough Council desk
- Desborough – Kettering Borough Council desk plus Desborough Town Council occupy former Children’s Centre space
  
- Oundle – East Northants Council Desk
- Raunds – East Northants Council Desk
- Irthlingborough – East Northants Council Desk
  
- Brackley – South Northants Council desk Property
  
- Duston – Designated touch down point for NCC workers
- Hunsbury – Designated touch down point for NCC workers
- Weston Favell – Designated touch down point for NCC workers

#### 4.4.3 Designated Childrens Centres

Northamptonshire County Council has 42 Children’s Centres and has conferred Children’s Centre designation on the following libraries:

##### **Kettering Borough**

- Rothwell Library
- Burton Latimer Library
- Desborough Library

##### **Wellingborough Borough**

- Wellingborough Library
- Earls Barton Library

##### **Daventry District**

- Woodford Halse Library
- Long Buckby Library
- Brixworth Library

##### **South Northamptonshire District**

- Brackley Library
- Roade Library



- Deanshangar Library
- Middleton Cheney Library

### **Northampton Borough**

- Duston Library
- Hunsbury Library
- Far Cotton Library
- Central Library
- Abington Library

### **East Northamptonshire District**

- Raunds Library
- Oundle Library
- Thrapston Library
- Higham Ferrers Library

There are currently 21 Libraries that are designated as Children's Centres.

## **4.5 Trends and attitudes towards library use nationally**

When reviewing Northamptonshire libraries, it is important to understand how the way people use and view their library is changing. In 2011, the Carnegie UK Trust conducted research into the use of public libraries and public attitudes towards libraries. It conducted the same survey five years later in 2016, to enable examination of whether attitudes and levels of use had changed since 2011. The sample sizes in the poll made it possible to make inferences about the population. Such population level insight into attitudes and usage is invaluable in shaping a service for Northamptonshire that has the widest possible relevance with the population.

The report noted an overall decline in usage since 2011, including in the number of people who use libraries, the frequency of use of libraries, and usage by gender, family or employment status.

It draws several broad conclusions about usage:

- Libraries used by around 1 in 2 people
- People with children in their households are more likely to use libraries
- Library use is high among 15-24 year olds but low among over 55s
- Those working part-time or not working are most likely to use the library
- Those not working are most likely to be frequent users
- Those in higher socio-economic groups (ABC1) more likely to use the library

It also draws conclusions about attitudes towards libraries:

- 74% of people think that libraries are important to the community
- 40% of people think that libraries are important to them personally
- 15-24 years olds least likely to say libraries important for the community
- Retirees are more likely to say libraries important for the community



- Age and working status have little impact on whether people say libraries are important to them personally
- Those in higher socio-economic groups are more likely to say libraries important to the community and to them personally

The survey asks respondents to choose between 11 potential changes and improvements for the library services. The most desired changes to encourage library use overall among all respondents are:

- Better information on what services libraries offer
- Providing other council services in library buildings
- Coffee shop or café on site
- More events

For those with children, the most desired change is more events.

By age, the most desired changes are:

15-24	Being able to look for or reserve books online
25-34	More events
35-54	More events
55+	Better information on what services libraries offer

For those not working, working full or part-time, the most desired change is more events whereas for those who are retired it is better information on what services libraries offer

For those who rarely read books, the most favourable change is providing other council services in the library building. Similarly, for those in the lower socio-economic groups, the most desired changes are access to council services in the same building and more events.

#### **4.6 Physical visits and trends in Northamptonshire**

Physical visits to libraries are in decline nationally and Northamptonshire libraries have not been immune from the same challenge. Visits to libraries in Northamptonshire between 2014/15 and 2016/17 have fallen by 3%.

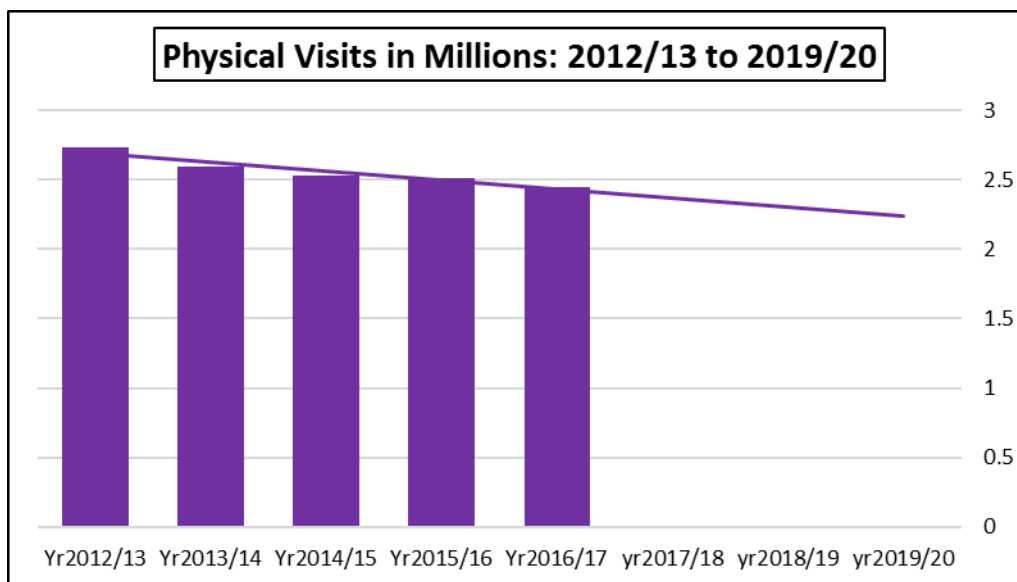
National and regional data is only currently available to 2015/6. Between 2014/5 and 2015/6 visits to the county's libraries fell by 1%. However visits in Northamptonshire fell at a significantly lower rate than library services regionally or nationally. The average decline in visits for East Midlands was 12% although changes to the library service in Leicestershire account for the majority of this decline and therefore it is perhaps not a representative annual picture. Nationally, however physical visits to libraries fell by 6%, six times the rate of decline as that in Northamptonshire.

Examining the five year trend for the county enables the downward trend to be extrapolated to broadly predict the levels of physical visits in the coming years.





Visits To Libraries in 2016/7	2,452,999
Change from 2015/16	↓ Down by -2%
Change from 2014/15 to 2015/16	↓ Down by -1% ☺ Better than East Midlands average of -12% ☺ Better than England average of -6%
Overall Change from 2014/15	↓ Down by -3%
Average number of Visits per head of population (2016/17)	3.4
Change per head of population from 2014/15 to 2015/16	↓ Down from 3.7 to 3.5 ☺ Better than CIPFA East Midlands average of 3.1 ↓ Below England average of 3.9
Overall Change from 2013/14	↓ Down by -6%
Overall Change from 2012/13	↓ Down by -10%



#### 4.7 Active Membership and trends

Whilst physical visits to libraries are holding up well in Northamptonshire, the number of active members – those who have used their library card for one or more transactions including borrowing in the library - is falling year on year, although the rate of decline seems to be slowing. Active membership of libraries in Northamptonshire between 2014/15 and 2016/7 has fallen by 14.1%.

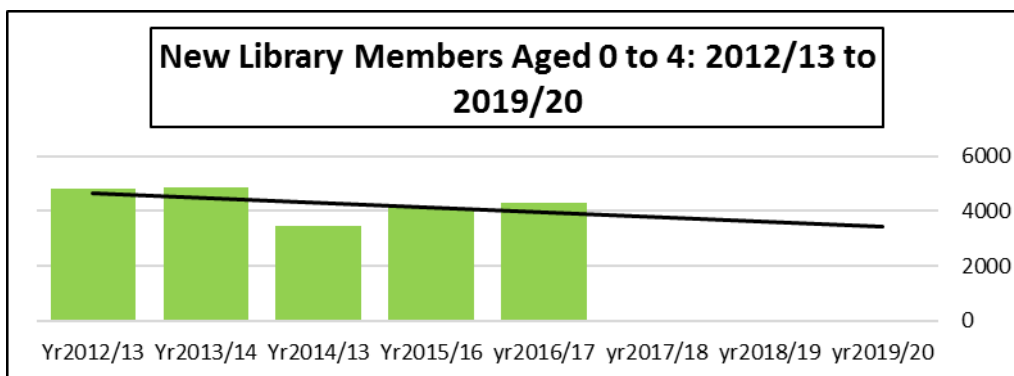
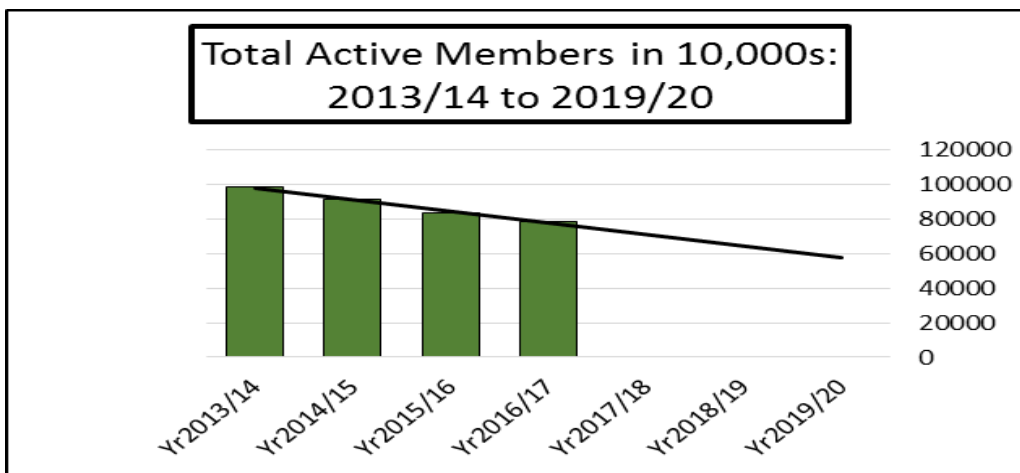
The total active membership of 78,481 represents 10.7% of the population of Northamptonshire.

Despite the overall fall in the number of active members, the trend is more stable for children aged 0-4 who after dipping three years ago are starting to increase again in



membership. This suggests that developments in offering universal children’s services from 2014 and in the Registration Service from 2015 have had an impact on engaging families with their local library.

Total Active Membership	78,481
Change from 2015/16	↓ Down by -6.5% ☺ Rate of decrease is slowing
Change from 2014/15 to 2015/16	↓ Down by -8.2%
Overall Change from 2014/15	↓ Down by -14.1%
Overall Change from 2013/14	↓ Down by -20.2%
Overall Change from 2012/13	Active user data not available



#### 4.8 Lending and trends

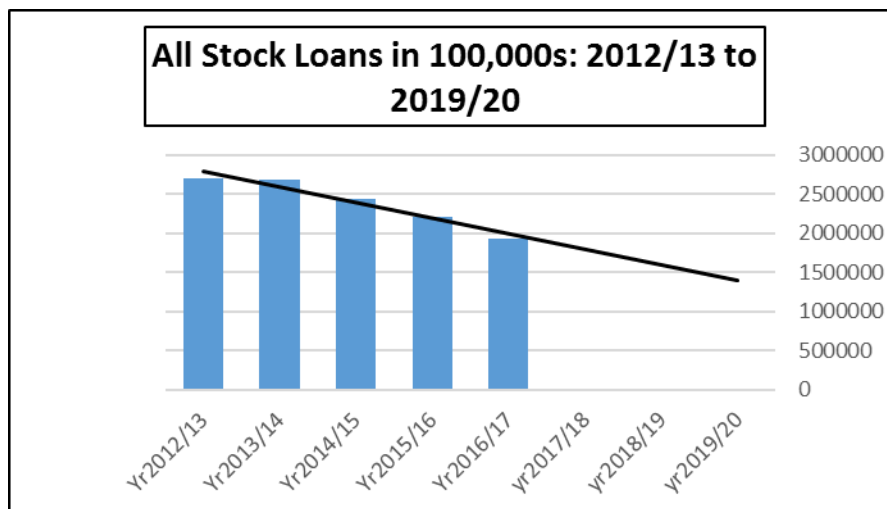
Loans of physical stock – books, DVDs, resources - from libraries are also in decline nationally and this has been particularly noteworthy in Northamptonshire. Loans of physical stock from libraries in Northamptonshire between 2014/15 and 2016/7 have fallen by 21%. The way people wish to borrow is evolving – by contrast, e-lending has risen by 75% in the same period.



National and regional data is only currently available to 2015/6. Between 2014/5 and 2015/6 loans from the county's libraries fell by 10%. Loans in Northamptonshire fell at a significantly faster rate than library services nationally. The average decline in loans for East Midlands was 11% although again changes to the library service in Leicestershire account for the majority of this decline regionally. Nationally, loans from libraries fell by 7%.

Similarly, examining the five year trend for the county enables the downward trend to be extrapolated to broadly predict the levels of loans of library stock in the coming years.

<b>Total Loans</b>	<b>1,937,858</b>
Change from 2015/16	↓ Down by -12%
Change from 2014/15 to 2015/16	↓ Down by -10% ☺ Better than East Midlands average of -11% ↓ Down compared to England average of -7%
Overall Change from 2014/15	↓ Down by -21%
Overall Change from 2013/14	↓ Down by -28%
Overall Change from 2012/13	↓ Down by -28%



#### 4.9 Performance compared to neighbouring library services

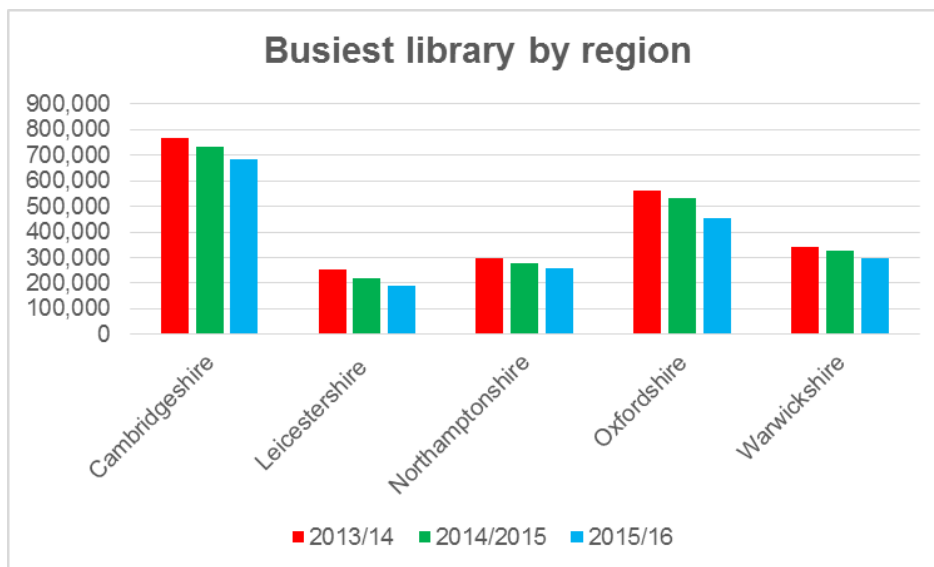
In Northamptonshire, physical visits are declining at a slower rate than borrowing. Active membership is also declining at a faster rate than physical visits. In short, more people are visiting for reasons other than borrowing, and more and more of these people are not members of the library.

Between 2013 and 2015, Leicestershire transformed 24 of its 58 libraries into community managed libraries, and with these now falling outside of the statutory library service for reporting purposes, this accounts for the steep decline in physical visits and lending.



Disregarding Leicestershire, Northamptonshire lending has declined at a faster rate than the neighbouring counties of Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and Cambridgeshire, but physical visits have held up well with only Cambridgeshire having fared better. Visits per head of population in Northamptonshire declined from 3.7 in 2013/4 to 3.5 in each of 2014/5 and 2015/6 despite having the largest population growth rate out of the neighbouring counties over this period. In the same period, the other counties had similar visit per head decline apart from Oxfordshire where it was markedly higher decline. However, this served to bring Oxfordshire more in line with other counties despite it still remaining the highest visit per head rate of these counties at 3.8 visits per head of population in 2015/6.

Another snapshot of Northamptonshire performance trend relative to its neighbours which can include Leicestershire can be obtained by examining the physical visits in the “Central” library in each county. The student populations in Cambridge and Oxford account for the higher usage in these cities.



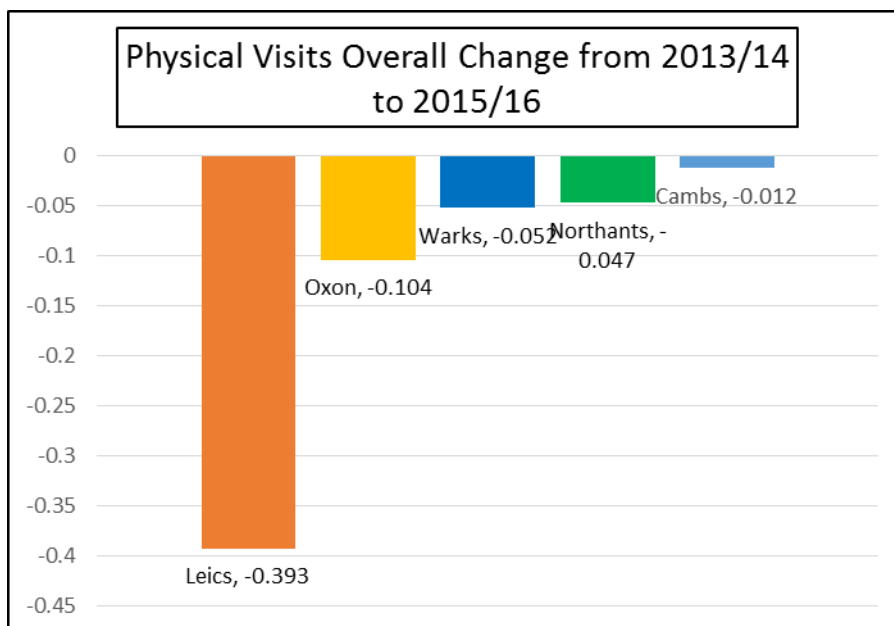
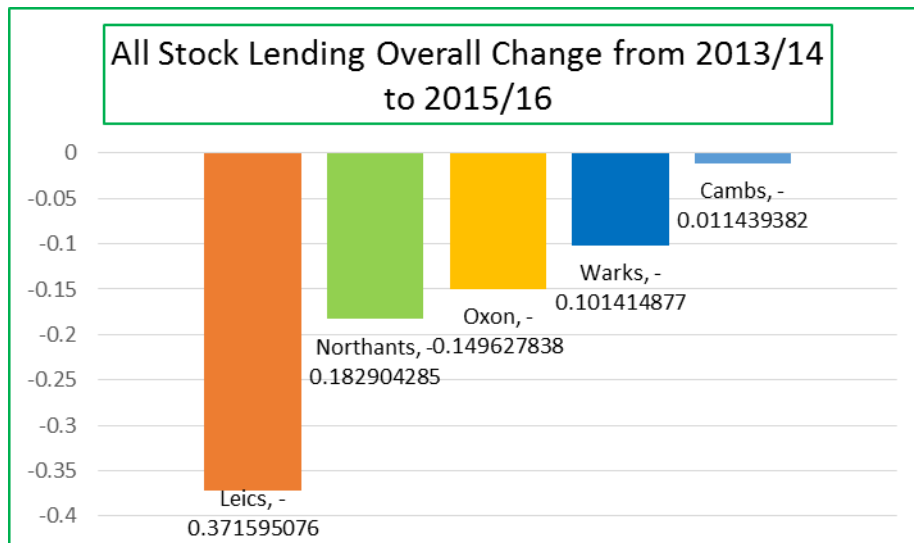
Whilst Northamptonshire fares relatively well against its neighbours in terms of service performance, it outstrips the other authorities by a significant margin when its financial performance is considered. Net expenditure here includes employees, premises, supplies and services (support costs) offset against revenue income.

Cost per visit based on CIPFA Net Expenditure (excluding Capital Charges)	2015/16	Diff per visit	2014/15	Diff per visit
Cambridgeshire	£2.58	£1.05	£2.96	£0.59
Leicestershire	£4.29	£2.76	£3.03	£0.66
Northamptonshire	£1.53		£2.37	
Oxfordshire	£3.58	£2.05	£3.72	£1.35
Warwickshire	£3.23	£1.70	£3.16	£0.79

Since the definition of “Support Costs” can be variable from authority to authority when entering data for CIPFA, this table demonstrates Northamptonshire’s relative position excluding support costs.



Cost per visit based on CIPFA Net Expenditure (excluding Capital Charges) minus Support Costs	2015/16	Diff per visit	2014/15	Diff per visit
Cambridgeshire	£2.33	£0.83	£2.62	£0.99
Leicestershire	£2.65	£1.15	£2.01	£0.38
Northamptonshire	£1.50		£1.63	
Oxfordshire	£2.51	£1.01	£2.44	£0.81
Warwickshire	£2.36	£0.86	£2.38	£0.75





## 5 Availability

### 5.1 Opening hours

Libraries in Northamptonshire each have individual opening hour patterns dependent on a number of factors. Larger libraries tend to have the longest opening hours and these are determined by usage and the restrictions or freedoms of the buildings in which the libraries are located.

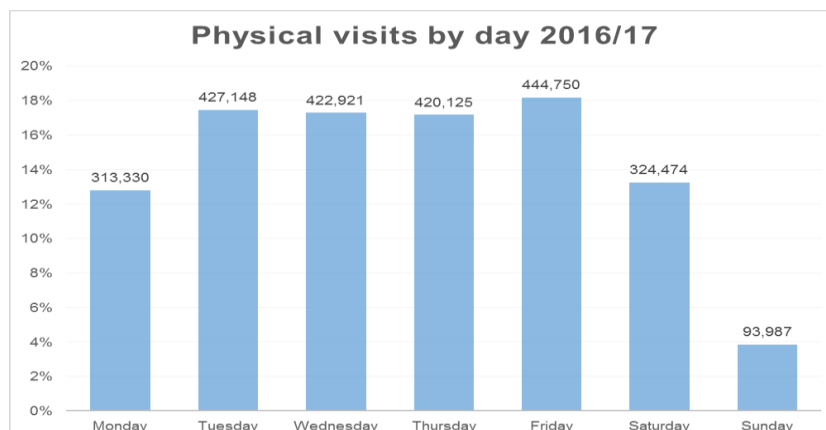
Medium and smaller libraries often have a day closure during the week and have a mixed pattern of opening at other times. This is determined by local circumstances – for example to coincide with market day where the footfall is likely to be higher. All libraries are currently open on Saturdays and Sunday afternoons to provide availability to customers not able to visit during the week.

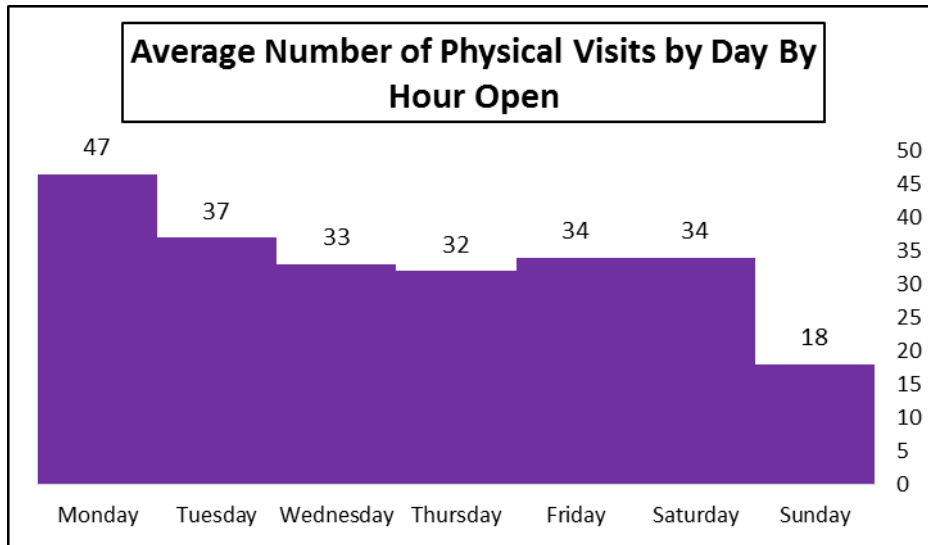
Opening hours are kept under review and subject to change depending on changes in usage – for example where a library has consistently had no or very few customers during morning opening, but has been busy in the afternoon, it makes sense to adjust the opening times accordingly.

Library weekly opening hours	Number of libraries	Average weekly visits per library
56-61	10	3,128.62
47-52	3	1,162.89
32-43	10	848.56
19-27	13	291.69

### 5.2 Physical visits by day

Many Northamptonshire libraries are open 7 days a week. Since 2011, all libraries have opened on a Sunday. However, even when the reduced number of hours on a Sunday is taken into account, it can be demonstrated that library usage is approximately half as much when compared to the other days in the week.

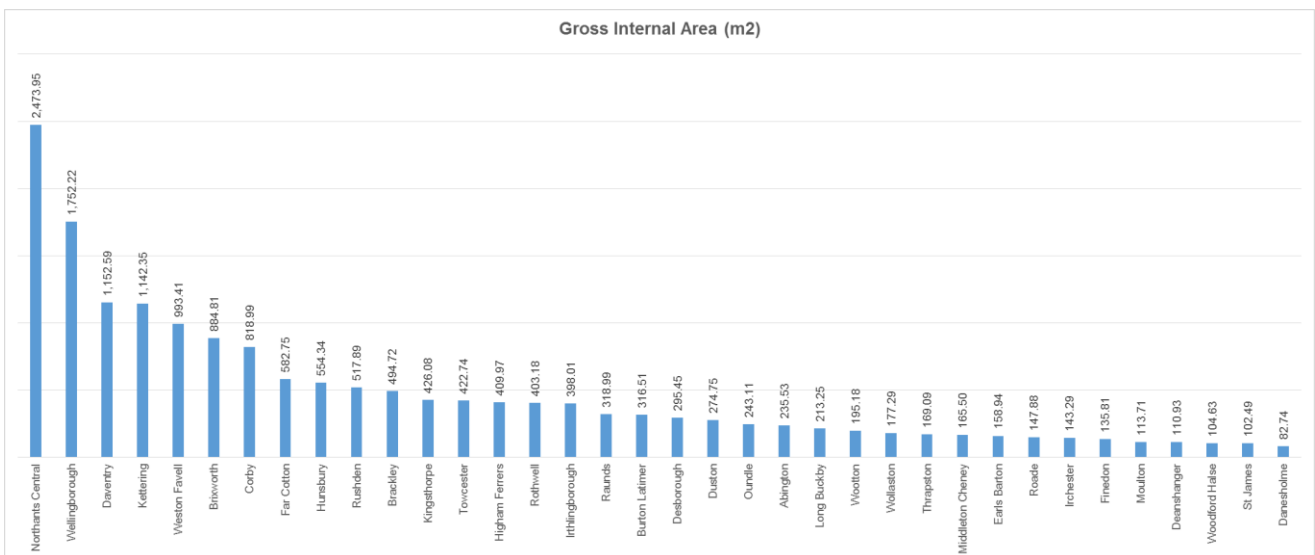




## 6 Sustainability

### 6.1 Gross Internal Area

Expressed simply, the bigger the library, the more potential for delivering a greater range of services to customers. This physical space in libraries is currently exploited to greater or lesser degrees.





## 6.2 Property costs

There are a variety of property tenure arrangements in place for the library service. The property portfolio is managed by LGSS, and with the exception of Moulton library, the service makes no contribution to the ongoing property costs for the library service.

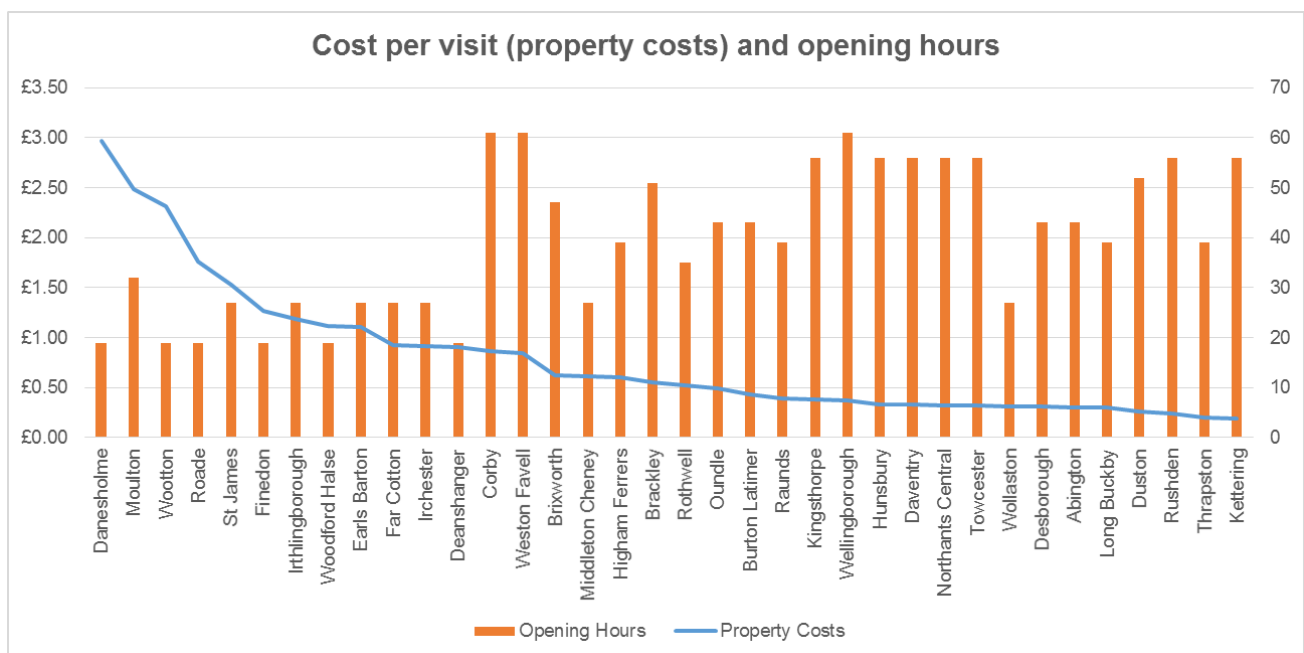
It is perhaps not surprising that the better value for money is obtained on the Council's freehold libraries, and the highest cost per visit when set against property costs is broadly speaking the leasehold properties.

The notable exceptions are Roade, Irchester and Irthlingborough where the lower freehold property costs do not give any advantage because of the relatively lower footfall to these libraries.

Conversely, Daventry and Kingsthorpe are leasehold properties where the higher property costs are offset by the proportionately higher levels of footfall.

Broadly speaking, the more hours that libraries are open, the more footfall there is and this translates into better value in cost per visit when set against property costs alone.

Property running costs 2016/17	Average cost per visit 2016/17
£1,508,189	£0.61







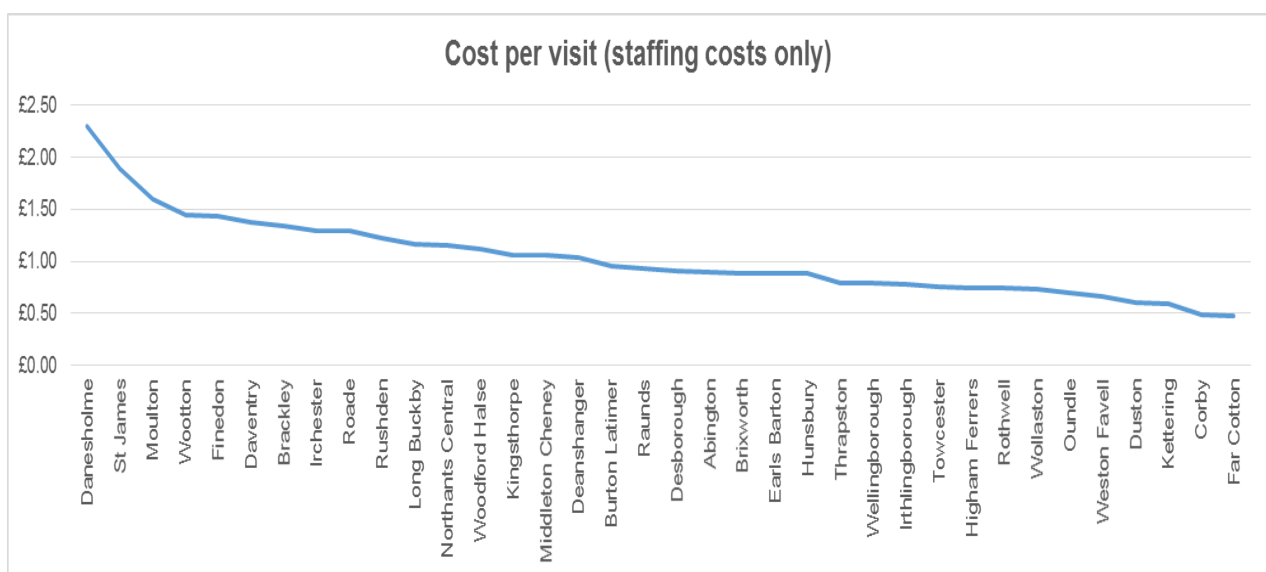
### 6.3 Library staffing costs

Staffing across the service has been designed to be as cost efficient as it can be. Allocation of staffing to libraries is not a simple calculation based on size of library or the number of opening hours. It factors in the location and access of the building as well as the levels of activity being delivered in the library for each session. The smaller libraries quite often operate on a single-staffed basis where the library supervisor undertakes all activities on offer and all the management of their library offer within the opening hours only of the library – there is no management time allowance built in over and above the directly accessible customer facing opening times. Recently, the service has had to double-staff some smaller libraries to ensure that the building can be opened safely since there has been significant increase in anti-social behaviour in libraries, and once inside the building it is for the library staffing team to manage this for their own and other customers' safety. Similarly, library staff are now subject to increasing levels of verbal abuse from customers.

Such has been the pressure on library service staffing that if there is unanticipated absence, this will lead to the library being closed due to insufficient staffing. Staffing is managed on a hub basis, and the manager of the large library will decide which of the local libraries to close based on likely impact to the customers.

In 2016/7 31 of the 36 libraries had unplanned closures due to staffing constraints. This amounted to 396 hours lost which equates to the equivalent of 92.5 library open days lost. This compares to only 31 hours lost over 9 libraries in 2014/5.

In the broadest terms, the largest libraries provide a more favourable cost per visit than the smaller libraries when staffing alone is considered.





## 6.4 Library Service Infrastructure costs

There are some costs over and above the individual library staffing costs. These include

- Senior management of the service
- Management of the digital and information offer
- Programme management of key elements of the service e.g. volunteering,
- Provision of a library management system
- Business and system support
- Wi-Fi across all sites
- Multi-function printers and copiers
- Data management
- New book stock

Cost of library service infrastructure excluding book fund 2016/17	Book fund 2016/17
£686,549	£1,227,000

## 6.5 The Mobile Library

The current mobile library was 11 years old in March 2017 and was out of lease. The lease has been extended for 6 months on a 'lease only' basis. This means that in addition to the lease costs, NCC are liable for the full cost of all regular inspections and all repairs. To continue on this basis leaves NCC at risk of incurring unbudgeted for expenses.

In quarter one of 2017/8 alone additional repairs costs have amounted to £3,000. The expiry date of the current lease is 11<sup>th</sup> November 2017. The lease can be extended again on the same terms for a further minimum 6 month period.

Approximate current monthly costs are just over £3,000 per month. The cost per visit to the mobile library is £6.80 which makes it the least cost effective way of engaging with the library service.

Estimated annual costs of one new vehicle (including driver costs) are £54,000, with a likely minimum lease commitment of 10 years.

Mobile library visits 2016/17	Cost per visit 2016/17
6,264	£6.30

## 6.6 Volunteer contribution

Volunteers supplement the staffing of the library service to allow the widest possible LibraryPlus offer. To maintain the same levels of service in libraries across the county replacing the volunteers with library customer advisers at £8.22 per hour would cost

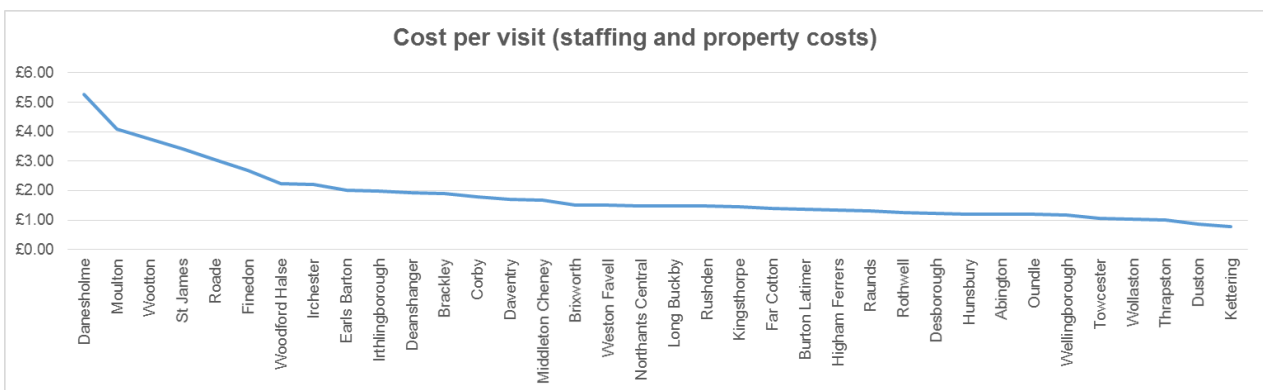


£315,282 or with on costs £409,867.

Expressed another way, this contribution is equal in value to the combined staffing costs of 22 of the county's smaller libraries.

Volunteering Hours 2016/17	Volunteering equivalent contribution
38,355	£409,867

## 6.7 Value for Money



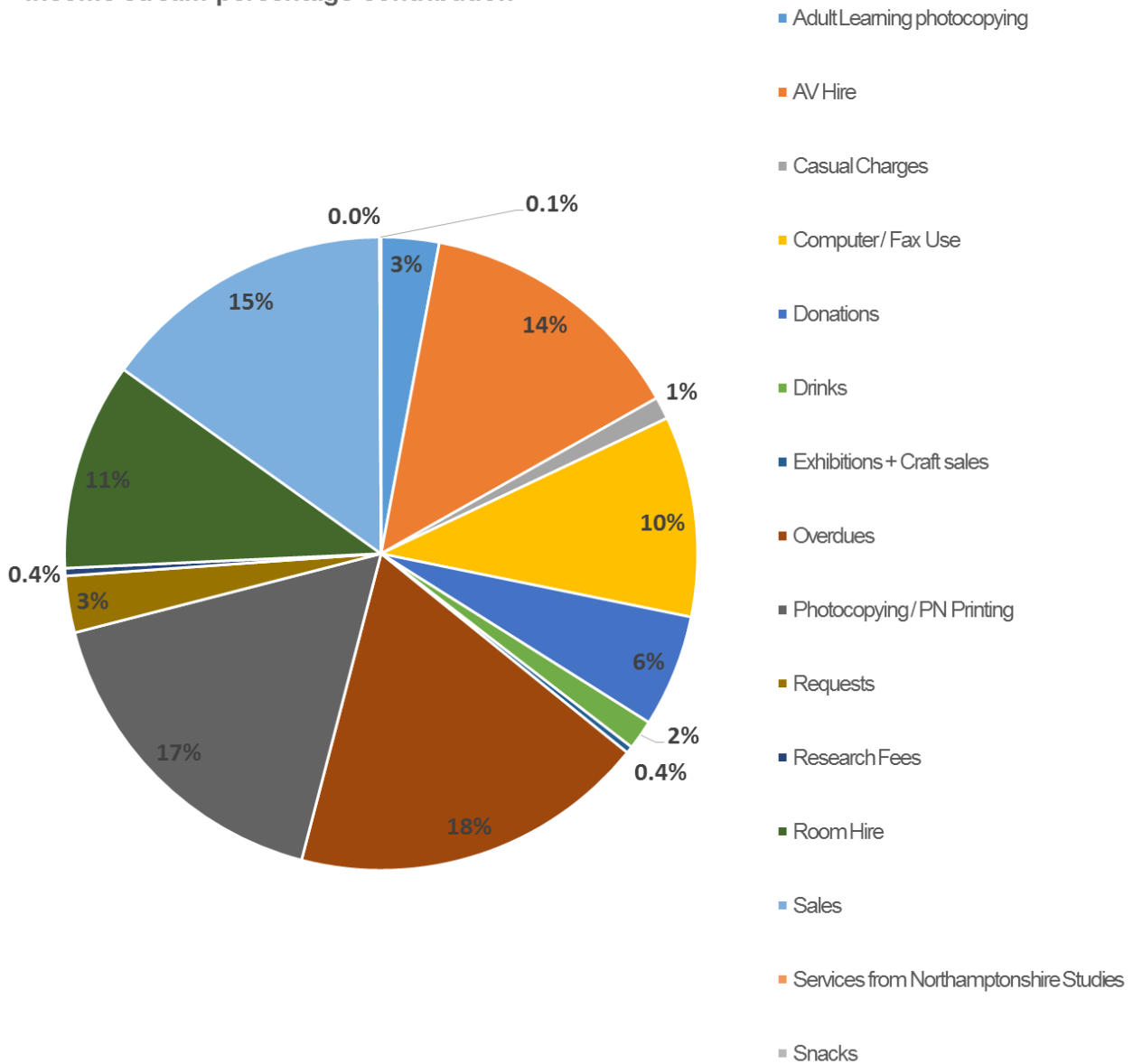
## 6.8 Income generation

Income generation remains a priority for the service with each library being set an income target which is relevant to the levels of visits in the library. With traditional income streams diminishing, the service relies on a diverse range of activity to meet their targets.

Income generated from libraries 2016/17	Income generated through traded services 2016/17
£477,845	£451,665



Income stream percentage contribution



## 7 Proposed options

### 7.1 Alternative Models of Delivery

In meeting the increasing demographic and financial challenges, the National Taskforce invites Councils to consider a range of different library service delivery models already being used across England. These include:



- local authority run
- commissioned libraries: local authority outsourced or commissioned to a third-party organisation or another local authority
- community run with local authority support: for example the council provides IT equipment and book stock; some funding; and some input from paid staff who visit (but on a limited basis), liaise and provide professional input.

Northamptonshire County Council provides a case study for the Taskforce in that it has chosen to commission a Community Interest Company to deliver its library and information service. However, NCC must now consider how it shapes that commission to ensure a sustainable library service that meets the needs of Northamptonshire communities.

It is timely therefore to explore the benefits of community managed libraries.

#### **Benefits in Northamptonshire may include:**

- Smaller communities enabled to retain a library where current library provision may have been withdrawn.
- Increased community involvement with community managed libraries shaping the service and additional events and activities to meet local needs.
- Professional library service support from the commissioned provider to support the community in managing its library.
- Being able to access the networked Library Management System (LMS) meaning the community can benefit from access to the whole of Northamptonshire's library book stock. People can also make and collect reservations, join the library online and use online resources, e-books and e-magazines.
- Core book stock, and arrangements for accessing new stock and circulating stock.
- Continued support with recruiting volunteers for the library
- Savings achieved can be reinvested into other Council services

#### **Considerations for this model:**

- Premises and ongoing premises costs will need to be met by an organisation, business or other partner within the community.
- The community organisation responsible for managing the library needs to have the capacity and the skills set to make this model work.
- Continuation of access to new book stock and a networked IT/ LMS infrastructure with upgrades are crucial in ensuring this model continues to play a part in the Northamptonshire network of libraries.
- There is a potential risk of volunteers not always being accessible for training and competing community demands for volunteers.
- The local authority needs to consider equalities issues such as the potential of attracting community organisations across all socio-economic sectors.

## **7.2 Proposed options for Northamptonshire**

Having considered a wide range of evidence about the effectiveness of the current provision, and examined evolving usage of libraries both nationally and locally, the



challenge is to design a radically transformed library service which continues to serve the most people who borrow, and the most people who don't borrow but who use the library as a resource in other ways.

It will be important to preserve the maximum amount of income generation potential whilst exploiting the maximum amount of space to co-locate services and host events. The new service must meet the most amount of need whilst preserving the broadest geographical spread, retaining libraries which are well situated to add value to multiple communities. It will be essential to preserve the part of the service that gives the best value for money so that tax payer can be assured that the service is as efficient as possible.

In short, these proposed options seek to achieve the greatest potential savings, the maximum potential for growth and enhancement of services for the minimum potential impact on customers of the library service .

All of these options meet the 7 common design principles set out in section 2.

### 7.2.1 Option 1

- Retain a reduced countywide digital, information and business offer
- Retain 15 libraries and further develop as community hubs – 8 large libraries, 7 medium libraries
- Develop community-managed library model to be offered to all other current library communities
- Investigate potential future library service provision to additional location in Corby
- Extend Library to You to replace Mobile Library

The 8 large libraries to be retained in this option are:

- Corby Cube
- Kettering Library
- Wellingborough Library
- Northamptonshire Central Library
- Weston Favell Library
- Rushden Library
- Daventry Library
- Towcester Library

The 7 medium libraries to be retained in this option are:

- Burton Latimer Library
- Irthlingborough Library
- Hunsbury Library
- Duston Library
- Oundle Library
- Brixworth Library
- Brackley Library

The mobile library would be withdrawn from service.

The remaining libraries would be closed. Expressions of interest from community groups, organisations or businesses wishing to establish a community-managed library would be invited. These community-managed libraries would sit outside of the statutory library service offered by the Council.

By agreement, this community offer would include such items as:

- Agreed levels of library book stock, new stock and stock rotation



- Agreed levels of access to the county’s Library Management System
- Agreed levels of professional support for the community organisation
- Agreed levels of support for the recruitment of volunteers as appropriate

This community offer would exclude such items as:

- The provision of premises including ongoing running costs
- The provision of staffing

This option draws from the National Library Taskforce suggestion that councils should explore opportunities to integrate and co-locate libraries with other government and partner services. This can help join up services for users, allow buildings to be opened for longer, and enable costs to be shared. Many libraries are already co-located with local colleges, job centres, post offices, Citizens Advice Bureaux, tourist information, health centres and many other services.

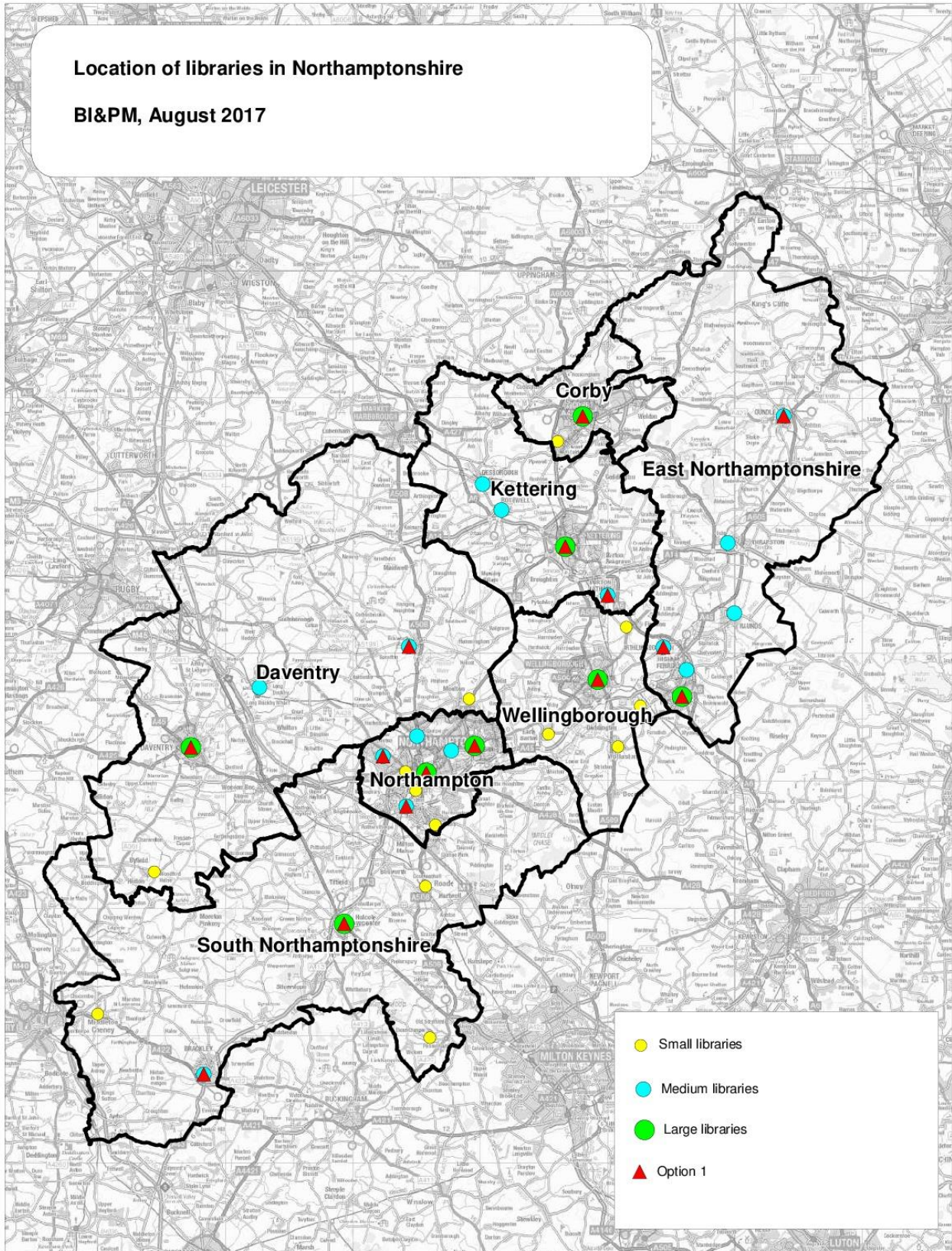
The Taskforce does not endorse the model of community managed libraries with no support from the local council. This Option includes professional support from the library service for the community library.

<b>Strengths of this option</b>	<b>Weaknesses of this option</b>
<p>Offers an opportunity to retain all libraries, especially those which are the most connected to their communities.</p> <p>A comprehensive range of services is preserved.</p> <p>All of the areas of need in the county are all well served, at least as well as at present.</p> <p>All of the infrastructure for the service is retained to support community libraries.</p>	<p>Requires public funds to support libraries which would sit outside the statutory library system.</p> <p>Long term sustainability of libraries will be entirely reliant on the ability of communities to self-organise.</p> <p>The universal offer for Children’s Centres Services will be affected with the proposed closure of up to 13 designated sites.</p>



Location of libraries in Northamptonshire

BI&PM, August 2017



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### 7.2.2 Option 2

- Retain a reduced countywide digital, information and business offer
- Retain 15 libraries and further develop as community hubs – 8 large libraries, 7 medium libraries
- Investigate potential future library service provision to additional location in Corby
- Extend Library to You to replace Mobile Library

The 8 large libraries to be retained in this option are:

- Corby Cube
- Kettering Library
- Wellingborough Library
- Northamptonshire Central Library
- Weston Favell Library
- Rushden Library
- Daventry Library
- Towcester Library

The 7 medium libraries to be retained in this option are:

- Burton Latimer Library
- Irthlingborough Library
- Hunsbury Library
- Duston Library
- Oundle Library
- Brixworth Library
- Brackley Library

The mobile library would be withdrawn from service. The remaining libraries would be closed.

<b>Strengths of this option</b>	<b>Weaknesses of this option</b>
<p>Retains a broad geographical coverage, with provision of a large and a medium library in district or borough.</p> <p>A comprehensive range of services is preserved.</p> <p>The most cost efficient libraries are retained. These libraries have hireable space which community partners can make use of.</p> <p>Libraries with greatest potential to offer wide range of additional services are retained.</p> <p>All of the areas of need in the county are all well served.</p> <p>A significant proportion of the income generation potential and volunteering potential of service is retained.</p>	<p>Some areas of the county will be better served by libraries in neighbouring counties rather than Northamptonshire.</p> <p>The universal offer for Children’s Centres Services will be affected with the proposed closure of up to 13 designated sites.</p>



### 7.2.3 Option 3

- Retain a reduced countywide digital, information and business offer
- Retain 8 libraries and further develop as community hubs
- Extend Library to You to replace Mobile Library

The 8 large libraries to be retained in this option are:

- Corby Cube
- Kettering Library
- Wellingborough Library
- Northamptonshire Central Library
- Weston Favell Library
- Rushden Library
- Daventry Library
- Towcester Library

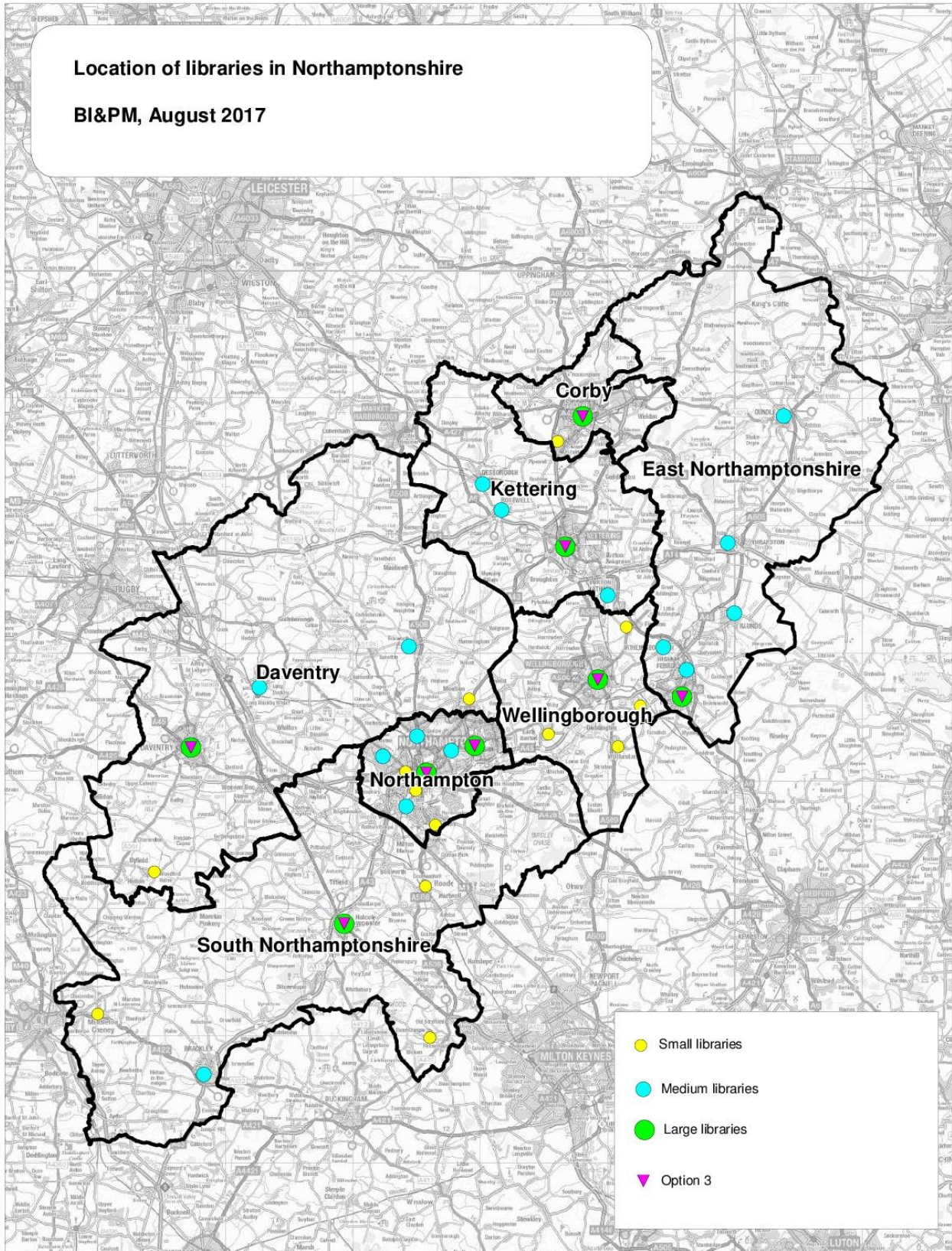
The mobile library would be withdrawn from service. The remaining libraries would be closed.

Strengths of this option	Weaknesses of this option
<p>The main administrative centre in each district and borough is served with a large library.</p> <p>These libraries are the most well used and open for the longest amount of time.</p> <p>All of the infrastructure for the service is retained.</p> <p>These libraries have the greatest potential for development and enhancement into community hubs.</p>	<p>There are large geographical areas with significant levels of need without any library service coverage within easy public transport commute.</p> <p>Whilst these libraries have the lowest cost per visit when staffing costs are considered, these properties have among the highest property costs.</p> <p>The universal offer for Children’s Centres Services will be affected with the proposed closure of up to 19 designated sites.</p>



Location of libraries in Northamptonshire

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## 8 Considering the impact of the Proposals

### 8.1 Equalities Impact Assessment

The full demographic data and EqIA for these options can be found in the Appendix which accompanies this review. However, the impact in broad terms is explored here.

**Option 1** – In this option, the impact on the statutory library service is the same as Option 2 below.

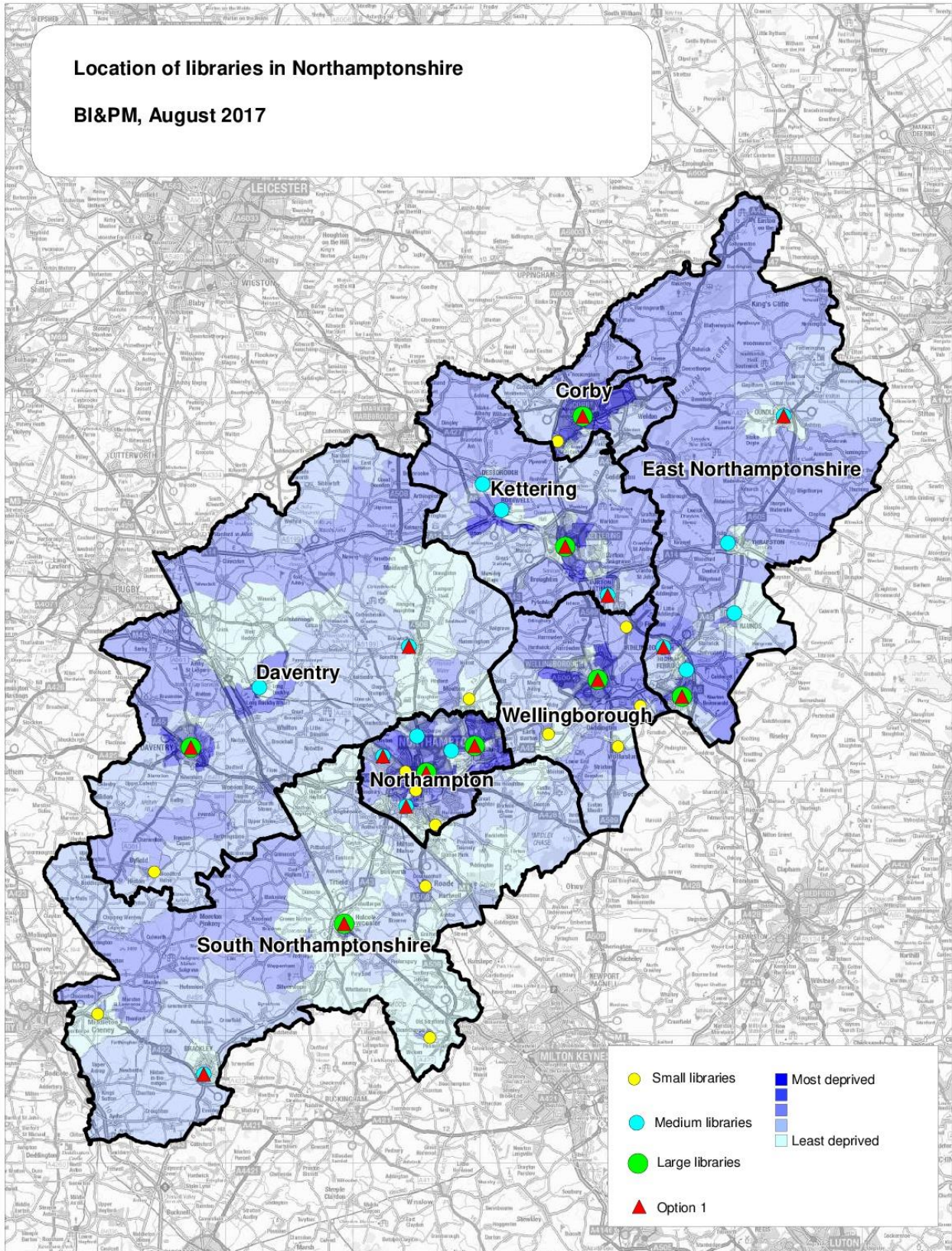
#### Option 2

Protected characteristic		All libraries	Libraries proposed for closures
Gender	Female	54%	55%
	Male	45%	43%
	Unknown	1%	2%
Gender Reassignment		No data collected	No data collected
Age	Children 0-10	32%	36%
	Young adults 11-17	9%	9%
	Adults 18+	59%	55%
	(of which aged 60+)	22%	23%
Disability	Disabled	4%	4%
	Not disabled/blank/ prefer not to state	96%	96%
Race & Ethnicity	Asian or Asian British	2.5%	1.5%
	Black or Black British	2.3%	1.2%
	Mixed	1.5%	1.9%
	White	56.5%	60%
	Blank/ prefer not to say/ other	37.2%	35.4%
Sexual Orientation		No data collected	No data collected
Religion Or Belief	Blank/ Prefer not to state/ no religion	84.3%	86.7%
	Christian	13.5%	11.8%
	Other religion	2.2%	1.5%
Pregnancy And Maternity		No data collected	No data collected



Location of libraries in Northamptonshire

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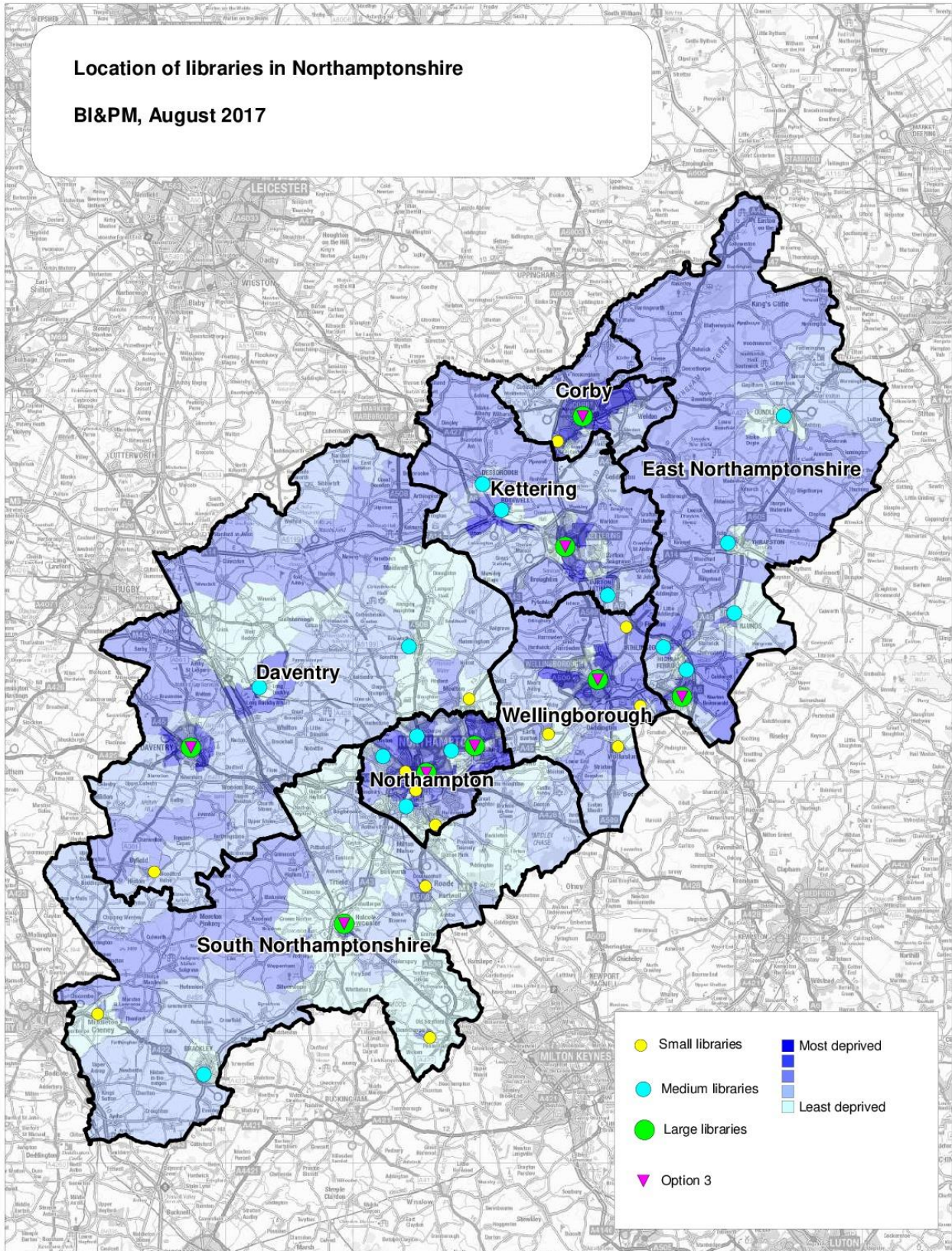
**Option 3**

Protected characteristic		All libraries	Libraries proposed for closures
Gender	Female	54%	56%
	Male	45%	42%
	Unknown	1%	2%
Gender Reassignment		No data collected	No data collected
Age	Children 0-10	32%	35%
	Young adults 11-17	9%	9%
	Adults 18+	59%	56%
	(of which aged 60+)	22%	23%
Disability	Disabled	4%	3%
	Not disabled/blank/ prefer not to state	96%	97%
Race & Ethnicity	Asian or Asian British	2.5%	1.4%
	Black or Black British	2.3%	1.1%
	Mixed	1.5%	1.2%
	White	56.5%	59.8%
	Blank/ prefer not to say/ other	37.2%	36.5%
Sexual Orientation		No data collected	No data collected
Religion Or Belief	Blank/ Prefer not to state/ no religion	84.3%	87.5%
	Christian	13.5%	11.1%
	Other religion	2.2%	1.4%
Pregnancy And Maternity		No data collected	No data collected



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## 8.2 Services maintained as percentage of existing services

**Option 1** – In this option, the percentage of the services retained within the statutory library service is the same as Option 2 below.

**Option 2** – In this option, the percentage of the services retained is:

Benefit	Percentage retained
Opening hours	45.82%
Total physical visits in the county	75.5%
Borrowing (physical stock)	72.6%
Universal children's services	63.5%
Income generated	77.9%
Blue badge applications	80.9%
Bus pass applications	80.9%
Computer use	81.58%
Volunteering hours	46.18%

**Option 3** – In this option, the percentage of the services retained is:

Benefit	Percentage retained
Opening hours	32.54%
Total physical visits in the county	58.7%
Borrowing (physical stock)	49.9%
Universal children's services	40.2%
Income generated	57.7%
Blue badge applications	66.4%
Bus pass applications	68.3%
Computer use	71.46%
Volunteering hours	36.96%

## 8.3 Unique users affected

The current library management system does not have the ability to report the number of library members at each individual library who only use their own library and who do not make use of another library. However, it is possible to examine individual library member transactions over the past 6 months to provide a very rough approximation of the number of library members affected by the proposals.

**Option 1 and 2:** In the period February to June 2017, there have been 10,060 library members who have only used libraries within the 21 proposed closures. This suggests that approximately 18.9% of active members have not made use of the 15 retained libraries.

**Option 3:** In the period February to June 2017, there have been 18,190 library members who have only used libraries within the 28 proposed closures. This suggests that approximately 34.1% of active members have not made use of the 8 retained libraries.





## 8.4 Distance to nearest library

Please see appendix for a full list of libraries and their nearest alternative library.

**Option 1** – The community offer will ensure that there could be minimal impact. However if the statutory library offer only is considered in this Option, there are 3 of the 21 proposed closures where there would be a journey of over 5 miles to the nearest alternative library.

Proposed Closure	Distance to nearest library
Desborough	5.05 miles to Kettering
Thrapston	6.37 miles to Burton Latimer
Woodford Halse	6.32 miles to Daventry
Deanshanger	6.93 miles to Towcester however 2.9 miles to Stony Stratford
Middleton Cheney	5.96 miles to Brackley however 3.7 miles to Banbury

**Option 2** – This option will have the same impact as above. There will be 3 of the 21 proposed closures where the nearest alternative library is over 5 miles away.

**Option 3** – In this option, there would be 5 of the 28 proposed closures where the distance to a library would be over 5 miles.

Proposed Closure	Nearest library
Desborough	5.05 miles to Kettering
Woodford Halse	6.32 miles to Daventry
Thrapston	7.83 miles to Rushden
Brackley	8.3 miles to Buckingham
Oundle	9.77 miles to Corby

## 8.5 Impact on the Registration Service continuity

**Option 1** – There is no impact on the Registration Service in this option

**Option 2** – There is no impact on the Registration Service in this option

**Option 3** – In this option, the Registration Office located within Oundle Library would need to be relocated or closed, which would be subject to separate consultation. However, the Oundle registration office offers very few appointments. Only 2.5% of all library based appointments are delivered in Oundle registration office, with many customers from this area preferring the registration office at Corby.



## 8.6 Impact on Designated Children's Centres

**Option 1** – Thirteen libraries with Children's Centre designation are proposed for closure.

**Option 2** – Thirteen libraries with Children's Centre designation are proposed for closure. There is a potential for clawback of a proportion of the capital investment made in developing these Children's Centres.

**Option 3** – Nineteen libraries with Children's Centre designation are proposed for closure. There is a potential for clawback of a proportion of the capital investment made in developing these Children's Centres

## 8.7 Impact on the workforce

**Option 1** – Closing 21 libraries would result in a 24.92 FTE reduction in staffing (47 staff).

**Option 2** – Closing 21 libraries would result in a 24.92 FTE reduction in staffing (47 staff). In addition, there would be a further reduction in management and programme management posts pending reorganisation.

**Option 3** – Closing 28 libraries would result in a 41.48 FTE reduction in staffing (81 staff). In addition, there would be a further reduction in management and programme posts pending reorganisation.