We know people value the city's library services but we also know that the way people are using them is changing. In addition, the council is having to make some very difficult decisions in order to balance its budget for 2015/16.

In August 2014 it was agreed that a review of the library service would take place which would include a public consultation seeking to understand how residents use, or would like to use, libraries. That consultation has concluded and the results are included further down this webpage.

This second consultation will now look to gather people's views on our preferred option for delivering library services in the future, in a way that meets people's needs and within the funding that we have available.

Reason for review

The way we use libraries is changing. Technology means we're doing a lot more things for ourselves. Ninety per cent of book loans are now done through self-service kiosks. Library staff now spend much more time supporting people to use computers, or supporting groups meeting in libraries, than they do dealing with 'traditional' library enquiries. The challenge we face is how to provide an excellent, modern library service, with less money.

Our continued vision for Peterborough's library services

Vivacity (http://www.vivacity-peterborough.com/), which runs the city's libraries on the council's behalf, will continue to serve the whole community through reading, education, digital information and access to information; responding to the city's needs and adapting to new technology. Libraries in Peterborough will be:

• welcome to everyone
• a place to find reading for pleasure and learning; both in a physical and virtual space
• a place for the community to get together
• somewhere to break down a sense of disconnect and isolation
• promoters of democracy by providing access to information and multiple points of view so that people can make knowledgeable
decisions on public policy
- a place for parents and their children by providing homework support, parenting collections, and early literacy programs
- a place to learn new things
- a quiet space.

What you told us in the first consultation

The city council and Vivacity asked people how they use the city’s libraries and how they want them to develop during the first consultation which ran during August and September 2014.

A total of 5,110 responses were received from local residents. The main findings included:

- libraries are important
- you want books on shelves
- you want some staff support
- you want access to information
- you want access to libraries outside of normal hours
- 82% of respondents indicated they currently use a Peterborough library
- 87% of respondents said they visit libraries to borrow books
- 75% of respondents stated that ‘accessing the library building outside normal hours’ would be either ‘extremely important’ (35%) or quite important (39%) in encouraging them to make more use of library services.

Why are we asking for your views now?

From your feedback, we know that libraries are an important and valued service. The city council will have to reduce its budget by a further £25.3 million next year and some of these reductions will come from the library service. It currently costs £1.5 million to provide library services in Peterborough which it is proposed will be reduced by £350,000. We simply can’t afford to continue to offer the same service we provide currently.

As a result of these financial pressures, and informed by your views, we have developed an option that protects as much as possible of what you value about our library services.

The option we are asking you to consider addresses the immediate, short-term financial pressures we are facing. It should also create a library service that continues to work well for Peterborough now and in the future.

Options the council considered but discounted

1. The council explored the option of putting all of the available staffing resource into Central Library to create an enhanced 7 day city centre service supplemented by the mobile library. We believe this would offer a high-quality city centre offer, but would leave too many people who use their local library disadvantaged.
2. The council also explored option of staffing the busiest libraries (Central, Werrington, Bretton, Orton and Dogsthorpe) only and to extend the opening hours in the five remaining libraries through the use of technology. In addition, Hampton library would have
become wholly self-service and the four remaining libraries (Eye, Stanground, Thorney and Woodston) would have closed. Again, whilst there are advantages in this approach for the users of some libraries, we felt it was important to offer something for the users of all libraries.

The option for consideration

The preferred option, which is the one we are asking for your views on, is for all the city’s libraries to remain open, through a combination of staffed and self-service hours, including Saturday opening hours. The city’s libraries are Central, Bretton, Dogsthorpe, Eye, Hampton, Orton, Stanground, Thorney, Werrington and Woodston. The existing mobile library and the (volunteer-run) books at home services will not be affected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Current opening hours</th>
<th>The preferred option</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Staffed hours</td>
<td>Self-service hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bretton</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogsthorpe</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orton</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanground</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorney</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Werrington</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodston</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>261</strong></td>
<td><strong>149</strong></td>
<td><strong>237.75</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the preferred option there will be a total increase of 125.75 hours of opening in all libraries with the introduction of self-service hours.

If, as a result of the trials at Central and Dogsthorpe libraries self-service does not appear to represent a viable way forward for either some or all libraries we will seek to protect the overall approach by asking volunteers to staff some additional hours on top of a continuing Vivacity presence. Libraries have committed user groups and Vivacity has an excellent track record in recruiting, training and deploying volunteers. If that is not possible then only more limited (staffed) opening hours would be possible if we are to keep all our libraries open.

The existing mobile library and the (volunteer-run) books at home services will not be affected.