

Vision King's Lynn:
Community Hub Consultation Findings
Executive Summary
March 2022



Executive Summary

Overview

The King's Lynn Community Hub consultation took place online and via hard copy surveys (available in the library and at drop-in sessions) from 1 December – 22 December 2021. Respondents were invited to give their views on a proposed new community hub in King's Lynn, and their ideas for the future use of the current library building. A robust overall sample of **379 respondents** took part in the survey. This was supplemented by three stakeholder workshops that took place in December 2021 and January 2022.

Key Themes

There are a number of key themes that emerged throughout the feedback:

- **Well-used amenity by respondents** – feedback indicates that the current library is well-used and its services valued by many respondents to this consultation.
- **Room for improvement** – however, feedback also suggests that there is room for improvement of what is currently on offer, such as satisfaction levels with the library (36.4% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; and 6.8% dissatisfied), and some mention of inconvenient location and parking difficulties.
- **Desire for a community space** – there appears to be a desire for a community space in the heart of the town, offering a variety of services and facilities; indeed, there is notable interest in many of the proposed services / facilities. And, over half of respondents say they are likely to use the proposed hub.
- **But, opposition to the proposal exists** – feedback shows that some respondents are opposed to the idea of a community hub and particularly the moving of the current library. In addition, a significant number say they are neither likely nor unlikely to use the proposed hub and are unconvinced of the benefits.
- **Concern about duplication of services / facilities** – there is some concern that the proposed hub might duplicate services / facilities in the town.
- **The Carnegie building** – the Carnegie building is clearly well loved by many respondents to this survey and, therefore, there is concern about what might happen to it as a result of the development of the proposed hub. Suggestions and ideas for the future use of building are wide-ranging and there are no clear themes emerging. The ideas will need sensitive consideration and thought. There is also an appetite from some respondents to retain the Carnegie building for the provision of library services. A question frequently posed throughout the feedback is why the Carnegie building cannot be developed to accommodate the proposed hub.
- **An 'engaged' community** – encouragingly, there is a clear desire in the community to be involved in the plans for the proposed hub and to help shape its offering. This is demonstrated by the high levels of engagement in this consultation.

Key Findings

A. CURRENT LIBRARY USE

How often respondents use services provided by the current library in King's Lynn

1. Around three quarters of respondents (73.9%) use services provided by the current library in King's Lynn in some capacity; hence, around a quarter (26.3%) of respondents never use the current library.

Rating of satisfaction with current library in King's Lynn

2. Over half of respondents (56.8%) are satisfied or very satisfied with the current library (30.7% are *very satisfied*).

3. However, 36.4% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; and 6.8% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the current offering.

Reasons for dissatisfaction with current library

4. Key themes emerging for dissatisfaction with the current library include poor choice / lack of books, lack of quiet areas / too noisy and parking difficulties. However, the number of respondents to this question is very small (*N.B. 25 respondents are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the current library, and 22 of these have responded to this question*).

Use of current library services and facilities

5. By far the most likely used service / facility offered by the current library is borrowing materials (e.g. books, DVDs, music etc.), by 72.8% of those who use the current library in King's Lynn. And reference (research assistance from librarians) is used by 35.4%.

6. 21.8% use online services (e.g. book renewal and access to online resources via library website).

7. By far the service / facility perceived by respondents to be the least useful is the Business & IP Centre (BIPC) (free business support) (1.2%).

Reasons for not using the current library

8. Key reasons for never using the current library are location-related – so, inconvenient location (not nearby) (31.6% of those who never use the current library) and poor parking provision (30.6%).

B. A NEW LEARNING AND COMMUNITY HUB

Facilities / services would like to see in King's Lynn

9. Of the suggested facilities / services, a community space for all to use in the heart of the town is the most popular (73.3% of those who responded to this question).

10. There is notable interest, however, in other options, such as a place for people to access learning and training opportunities (62.2%), to access career and employment support and advice (54.9%) and to get information and advice about a range of services and support (e.g. housing) (54.2%).

11. There is lowest interest in seeing somewhere for businesses to get support and advice in King's Lynn, albeit 33.7% think this would be useful.

Facilities respondents think would be useful to offer at proposed community hub

12. Access to IT facilities (e.g. computer usage, free WIFI, fast broadband) is thought to be most useful (63.6% of those who responded to this question).

13. There is notable interest in a space for studying (53.9%), meeting rooms and facilities for hire (53.2%) and a space to meet up with others (48.4%).

14. However, there are lowest levels of interest in facilities for young people (e.g. access to VR headsets, gaming consoles etc.) (29.5%) and business workspace (29.2%).

Career support services that would be useful to offer at proposed community hub

15. Training to gain skills for the workplace is considered most useful (by 68.9% of those who responded to this question); closely followed by CV writing workshops (67.5%), careers' advice (65.7%) and interview workshops (62.2%).

16. Least useful, and by some margin, is a work clothes facility (31.4%).

Business support services that would be useful to offer at proposed community hub

17. Business start-up advice is perceived to be most useful (69% of those who responded to this question), followed closely by information about business grants / loans (67.5%).

18. Business workspace (37.6%) is considered to be least useful by respondents to this question.

Learning and training services that would be useful to offer at proposed community hub

19. Life skills (e.g. accessing a mortgage) and literacy skills are deemed most useful, by 64.1% and 63.4% of those who responded to this question respectively.

20. Digital skills (59.9%), maths (56.1%), English (54.7%) and language support (e.g. conversational English lessons) (53.3%) are also notable mentions.

21. There is lowest interest in formal qualifications, albeit 40.1% think they would be useful to offer.

Formal qualifications respondents might like to study

22. Foundation degrees are most popular amongst those who think the proposed hub should offer formal qualifications (48.8%), closely followed by diplomas (46.5%) and NVQs (43%).

Resources and support that would be useful for proposed hub to offer

23. Volunteering and work experience opportunities are considered most useful (by 68.9% of those who responded to this question); followed closely by information about local support services (67.5%), and welfare rights and debt advice (65.7%).

24. There is lowest interest in charities (52.1%).

Activities that would be useful for proposed hub to offer

25. Most useful activities are those for adults (e.g. book club), and by 65.9% of those who responded to this question. Followed closely by activities for children and young people (e.g. film club, Lego building, street dance etc.) (61.4%) and activities for both children and families (e.g. coffee mornings, baby massage, Music Babies etc.) (57.9%).

26. Arts and crafts classes (56.9%) and activities and talks to learn about the history of where you live (54.5%) were also popular.

27. Lowest levels of interest were in story and poetry recitals (39.3%) and performing arts' activities (38.3%).

Other services / facilities respondents would like proposed hub to offer

28. There are a wide range of suggestions for other services / facilities respondents would like to see offered, and notable themes emerging include mental health support / drop-in service; meeting space / safe space; café, and toilet facilities.

Likelihood of using proposed community hub

29. Over half of respondents (53.2%) are quite or very likely to use the proposed community hub; with approximately 1 in 5 (21.5%) saying they are *very likely* to do so.

30. 21.2% say they are neither likely nor unlikely to use the proposed hub.

31. Around 1 in 4 (25.5%) say they are unlikely to use the proposed hub.

Reasons for *unlikelihood* of using proposed community hub

32. Reasons spontaneously cited for not being likely to use the proposed community hub are wide-ranging, with the following notable themes emerging: the library should stay where it is (concerns about the Carnegie building); proposed facilities / services already available locally (would duplicate existing offer); unnecessary expense / money better spent elsewhere, and concerns about cost of parking in the town centre.

C. THE CARNEGIE BUILDING

Ideas for how the Carnegie Building might be meaningfully and respectfully used for the community

33. As might be expected, ideas for how the Carnegie Building might be meaningfully and respectfully used for the community are varied and wide-ranging, with many different suggestions. Examples include a museum, space for local artists, local heritage / history centre, performing arts' centre, music venue, meeting space, a space for young people.

34. 32.3% of respondents to this question commented that they would like to see the Carnegie building retained to provide library services of some description. This included keeping as it is now, focusing services such as an educational library or resource library, or by enhancing services, such as making the tower into a viewing platform.

D. RESPONDENT PROFILE

Age

35. There is a good spread of respondents by age, although over half of those who provided details are aged 55+ (47%).

How would respondents describe themselves

36. Over half of those who responded to this optional question describe themselves as female (56.2%) and 38.4% as male. 2% prefer to self-describe. 3.4% prefer not to say.

Working status

37. Just over half of those who responded to this question are currently in employment (51.9%), and most likely working full-time (32.8%). 12.7% work part-time and 6.4% are self-employed.

38. Just over a quarter are retired (27.8%).

39. 7% are currently in education; and 5.7% are currently not in employment (although some are seeking work, some are unable to do so due to illness / injury / disability / caring or domestic commitments).

Postcode

40. As might be expected, nearly all of those who provided their postcode have a PE postcode, and over half (54.6%) a PE30 postcode specifically.

Being kept informed

41. Just over half of those who responded (56.8%, 162 respondents) are keen to be kept informed about the Community Hub plans, as well as opportunities to have their say and consultation findings (including this one), suggesting good levels of engagement and interest in the plans for the proposed hub.

Workshop participation

42. Around a quarter of those who responded (23.4%, 66 respondents) are keen to participate in a workshop to help shape the hub's name and offer; again, suggesting good levels of engagement and interest in the town and the plans for the proposed hub.

E. STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS

43. We hosted three workshops: for representatives of heritage and arts groups, for potential users (self-selected through the survey), and for representatives of community and voluntary groups. The workshops highlighted ideas, comments, and any concerns, as well as opportunities to work together.

44. There were some themes emerging from the workshops, which align with the findings of the survey. These were:

- Accessibility – ensure the space is accessible, welcoming, and inclusive for all;
- Flexible – offer flexible spaces for different uses;
- Books at the heart – books should continue to be at the heart of the offer;

- Quality – the standard and quality of the build is vital;
- Lack of duplication – don't duplicate services and facilities already available in King's Lynn;
- Future of the Carnegie – ensure that the building's future is secured and it is not abandoned.