



THE LIBRARY
OF BIRMINGHAM

Report on Community Engagement April – May 2009

Phil Burns
Community Engagement Manager
December 2009

Contents

Executive Summary

1	Background and Methodology	
1.1	Introduction	4
1.2	Previous consultation	5
1.3	Engagement Methods	7
1.4	Focus Groups	8
1.5	Foyer exhibition	9
1.6	Children, Young People and Family 'Fun Days'	9
1.7	Web Site	10
1.8	Staff Consultation	10
1.9	Collation of responses	10
2	Findings	
2.1	Public Focus Groups	11
2.2	Staff Focus Groups	21
2.3	Web Site	21
3	Breakdown of Responses	22
4	Review of Initial Community Engagement	28
5	Design response	
6	Conclusions and Recommendations for future Community Engagement	

Appendix 1: Guideline prompts for Focus Groups

Executive Summary

1. The Community Engagement period, April and May 2009, was a qualitative exercise to determine people's thoughts and feelings on how they would want to interact and engage with the Library of Birmingham. It built on previous extensive public consultation and engagement that informed the design brief for the Library of Birmingham.
2. The Community Engagement period was promoted through the Council's free 'Forward' newspaper (delivered to homes across the city), in the local media, on the Council's website, in Central Library and Community Libraries city-wide, Neighbourhood Offices and Leisure Centres, and by The REP to their customers. In response, a total of 1,264 members of the public became involved in the six week period from the 6th April to the 16th of May.
3. The most popular topic for discussion was the **facilities** that should be available in the Library of Birmingham (30% of all comments) with a prayer / wudhu room by far the biggest request. Provision of a café, a shop, and provision of toilets on each floor were also considered important by those taking part. **Children, young people and families** was the next most popular topic (24% of all comments). **Learning spaces** - how and where people want to study in the new library, and the type of study environment they would like – was also a popular (7% of all comments). Many of those taking part asked for different zones for quiet use, for where noise is permitted, and for eating areas. Comfy seating and being able to browse and interact with resources, including the collections, in a comfortable environment, was also considered important. **Accessibility** was another big issue for participants, with the main requests concerned with appropriate toilet facilities to meet the needs for people with disabilities and their carers.
4. **Staffing** was a popular topic with the majority of those who commented, saying that staff should be clearly identifiable and that each service area should have a help point run by knowledgeable staff. Friendly, welcoming staff should be available not just as way finders, but as guides and floor walkers.
5. The Council assessed the community engagement findings and briefed the design team to ensure that, as the detailed design work progressed over the summer, it reflected the comments received. The design was completed to RIBA Stage D (detailed design) in Autumn 2009. The table in section 5 of this report sets out the main community engagement findings and how the design for the new library responds.
6. Further community engagement will take place during 2010 to continue to inform the design of the interior spaces in the new development and the transformation of Library & Archive Services city-wide.

1

1.1 Introduction

Birmingham's existing Central Library is the busiest public library in Britain and the city's most visited public building. However there are major problems with the building, which was built in the early 1970s. The fabric is in very poor condition and the design unsuitable for modern-day needs. The storage capacity and environment, and level of public access for archives, photography and rare printed collections are unacceptably poor given their national and international significance. The Library of Birmingham will provide an exceptional solution to this.



Concept design for the Library of Birmingham by architects Mecanoo

“We aim to create a library like no other. Integrated with Birmingham Repertory Theatre, the Library of Birmingham will be a unique centre for learning, information and culture. An enduring beacon for Birmingham, it will raise the city’s international profile and deliver excellence to local communities. Accessible and welcoming to all, it will reach out to the most disadvantaged citizens. It will be a universal meeting place, a hub for the region, an engine for the knowledge economy. Through written, printed, audio, visual and interactive resources and technologies, the Library of Birmingham will link the people of Birmingham to the world. It will bring the world to Birmingham.”

Brian Gambles
Assistant Director of Culture
Birmingham City Council

To ensure that the Library of Birmingham meets the needs and aspirations of all the communities of the city, Birmingham Library and Archive Services began a Community Engagement process to provide everyone in the city with the opportunity to say how the new building and the services it provides develop.

1.2 Previous Consultation

During 2002 and 2003 two consultation surveys were undertaken on behalf of Birmingham City Council and Library and Archive Services to inform the brief for the Library of Birmingham. The first survey was carried out by Vector Research Ltd; the second piece of work was undertaken by an independent consultant, Clare Nankivell. The survey work sought to find out what citizens want from their new library. The findings from this early consultation work informed the brief for the design team, led by architects Mecanoo.

Throughout August and September 2003 Vector Research conducted on-street interviews with 776 adults at selected locations across Birmingham. The most popular responses for services to be included in the new library at that time were:

- Cafes and restaurants
- Quiet reading areas
- Computer rooms
- Exhibitions or galleries
- Children's play area

Between July 2002 and May 2003, the research undertaken by Clare Nankivell engaged 1665 adults through written surveys and questionnaires (593 participants) and workshops for members of the public and interested groups (1072 participants). The findings have a strong resonance with the Community Engagement of 2009, with respondents expressing the wish for:

- Communal space, meeting and discussion rooms
- Relaxation areas with comfortable seating
- Space for performance, readings, poetry, etc
- Exhibitions, photographic galleries
- Quiet study spaces
- An environmentally designed building
- Good accessibility, especially by bus
- Retention of the spiral staircase and Shakespeare Memorial Room
- More of the stock available and visible
- Easy to negotiate internally, with good stairs, escalators and lifts
- A feeling of space and spaciousness
- Up-to-date technology and computers
- Other activities and facilities in the area to make it a 'one stop' leisure destination

Prior to this (2001) a survey by Gurdeep Singh, a youth worker based in Central Library, consulted 117 young members of Black and Ethnic Minority communities to determine 'What are the perceived barriers preventing young people from Black and Asian communities accessing Central Library'. Workshops were held in youth clubs across the city, with those consulted raising a range of issues about Central Library including:

- Transport: a frequent bus service that served Central Library specifically would be beneficial to all, and young people in particular; a need for secure parking and bike racks.

- Opening hours: later opening and Sunday opening would help enormously, particularly at exam times when young people need to use the service most
- Image of Central Library: the image of the library is uninviting and they had difficulty in accessing information concerning what is on offer for them - the Library Service need more promotions and publicity in youth centres so young people can become more aware about what is on offer for them.
- Facilities & resources:
 - They requested that they should be able to borrow computer games, and that there should be an area in the library where young people can play these and other arcade games
 - A purpose built music studio providing tuition for young people
 - Supervision for learning to play a wide variety of musical instruments
 - An outdoor patio area where people could sit outside in the summer, read, study, etc, whilst being able to drink or eat
 - A room where young people could read, study, etc, in a much more informal, relaxed atmosphere and where they would not disturb other people if they made too much noise whilst doing group work or projects
 - Being able to buy good quality cheap food; the current library café was unsuitable for their needs. Vending machines where they could buy snacks and drinks, and a café selling fast food like chips and burgers at a reasonable price
 - A credit points system for library cards - more a person uses their card the more points they receive, which could then be used for free photocopying, printing or for free tickets to the cinema, theatres or clubs
- All staff and security would benefit from customer services training.

These reports provided the backdrop for Community Engagement in 2009 on the development of the Library of Birmingham on the chosen site in Centenary Square.

1.3 Engagement Methods

The next phase of Community Engagement for the Library of Birmingham was timed to follow the publication of images of the Stage 'C' concept design by the architects, Mecanoo in April 2009. The purpose was to explore how people want to experience and interact with the new building, in particular identifying any issues or requirements that needed to be taken into account during the next stage of the design work (Stage 'D'). This phase involved a programme of Community Engagement opportunities, led by Library and Archive Services in collaboration with The REP, over a six week period from 6 April (the start of the Easter holidays) to 16 May. The aim was to consult with as many library users, potential users, interested groups and organisations as possible.

The programme of Community Engagement ran alongside the statutory public consultation on the Stage 'C' concept design, required as part of the planning control process. This was led by GVA Grimley, Planning Consultants to the design team. This involved an exhibition for public display in the foyer area of Central Library from 20 April – 17 May. People were able to speak to a member of the project team at peak times, complete comment cards or find out information online. A leaflet about the concept design was produced supporting both Community Engagement and the statutory public consultation, which was made widely available.

The direction of Community Engagement was four-fold:

- I. A series of planned and advertised public focus groups
- II. A series of pre-arranged specific interest focus groups
- III. Face-to-face public engagement within the Central Library foyer
- IV. A web presence enabling members of the public to have an input online.

Each of these engagement methods were promoted and advertised in the local media, BBC Midlands Today, The Birmingham Evening Mail and Forward (the City Council's free newspaper), in Community Libraries across the city and in Leisure Centres and Neighbourhood Offices. The REP also promoted the Community Engagement opportunities to their customers.

The Community Engagement was intended to be a qualitative process, exploring participants' thoughts, feelings and ideas and focussing on individual usage and expectations of the service. We aimed to achieve this by meeting people face-to-face, individually or in focus groups, and to try to facilitate an open discussion. We produced a list of 'prompts' to be used to stimulate discussion (Appendix 1), prepared by the Library of Birmingham Project Team, but these were for guideline purposes only, rather than for strict adherence. These 'prompts' were used by all staff leading group or individual discussions.

Due to the importance and high value of the process, and need for equality throughout the groups, only library and REP staff with a knowledge, understanding and training on the Library of Birmingham and focus group facilitation were able to lead the groups. Members of Library Staff were invited to assist in focus groups by taking notes and by being present in the Central Library's foyer.

The first two weeks were focused on engaging with children, young people and families, through face-to-face conversations, focus groups and fun activities. To ensure we were prepared for increased interest due to the media coverage, drop-in focus groups for the wider public and a presence in the Central Library foyer were also arranged during this period.

1.4 Focus Groups

Six staff members with knowledge, understanding and training on the Library of Birmingham and focus group facilitation led the groups.

Throughout the six weeks we ran 31 focus groups at different times of the day, including Saturdays, to ensure equality and adequate opportunities for people to attend. The groups were aimed at a maximum of ten attendees and planned to run for one hour each, with two staff members present. Everyone who expressed an interest in attending a focus group was asked whether they had any access needs to ensure ease of participation. A portable loop system was available for each focus group should one be needed. Facilitators ensured an open discussion (using a prompt sheet where helpful to stimulate discussion) and took care to enable everyone to have their opinion heard and noted.

Of the 31 focus groups:

- 20 Public focus groups ran with 77 attendees
- 7 Targeted interest group sessions with 64 attendees
- 4 Community Library sessions with 22 attendees

A total of 163 members of the public attended averaging just over five people per session.

35 specific interest groups within the city were invited to participate in a focus group session with the proviso that the sessions could be held in a suitable venue. Whilst take up for these were low, the enthusiasm received from the participating groups was very positive and informative and many of the groups unable to attend the initial engagement period have expressed an interest in being involved in the future. Each of the 10 city constituencies was offered a focus group in one of their local libraries.

Attendees were invited to leave contact details if they wished to be involved in future engagement activities and each received a small gift to thank them for their time.

1.5 Foyer Exhibition

As advertised in the local media a member of staff was available in the foyer area of Central Library between 12.00 – 2.00 each day of the six week initial Community Engagement period to meet members of the public, hand out information leaflets, discuss and promote the development and to register people interested in participating in the focus groups.

During the four weeks of GVA Grimley's exhibition on the concept design, they too had a staff member on hand to discuss the planning application and encourage people to fill in comment cards.

Library staff members wore Library of Birmingham branded t-shirts to ensure they were noticeable.

The majority of focus group attendees took part as a result of an approach by staff in the foyer area and members of the public were generally pleased to

see Library & Archive Services engaging directly with the public in this way. We received 49 comments directly from the public in the foyer area.

1.6 Children, Young People and Family Fun Days

Throughout the initial Community Engagement period four drop in sessions targeting children, young people and families ran within the Centre for the Child, in which 119 children and young people participated. Within the engagement period there was also an annual 'Family Learning Day' and the 'Book Bash', a two day event aimed at children, young people and families as part of the Young Readers Birmingham Children's Book Festival. As well as targeted focus groups and user groups and school visits, a total of 429 comments were received about the services and facilities concerning what they would like to see in the new library. The activities ranged from asking people to write down on cut-out books their likes and dislikes of Library & Archive Services, to using cut-out feet to tell us what would make them leave home to go to the library. One of the highlights of the consultation was the production of an animated film, comprising ideas for creative activities for the new library, made by children aged 2 years to 12 years and their parents.

1.7 Web Site

As part of the City Council's web site, Library and Archive Services provided information on:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/libraryofbirmingham. People were invited to 'Get involved! – Join one of our focus groups' and book onto an advertised group. The web site gave information on the proposed development with links to:

- Progress update
- Why do we need a new library?
- What will the Library of Birmingham do?
- Archives and Heritage Collections
- Consultation and Involvement
- Central Library Success Story

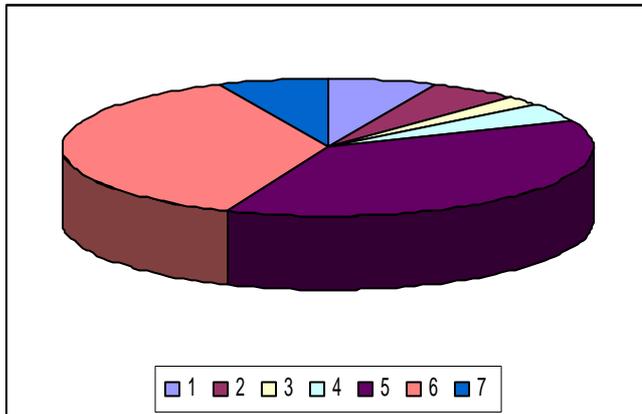
Through the 'Consultation and Involvement' link there was the opportunity for people to leave comments on the building design and the service provision. 427 comments were left on the website which were used as part of the Community Engagement findings as well as being shared with GVA Grimley to form part of their public consultation on the planning application.

1.8 Staff Consultation

Staff consultation sessions ran simultaneously with the public sessions. Staff from Central Library and Community Libraries were invited to attend planned focus groups and drop in sessions within Central Library. The opportunity to run sessions in constituencies was also offered. 77 staff participated in total, the majority from Central Library, 61 in focus groups and 16 in drop-in sessions, using the same prompts as the public groups.

1.9 Collation of responses

Comments noted from each of the focus groups, responses from individuals and comments received through the web site were collated onto feedback grids created for each of the sessions. Attendance levels are shown on the following table:



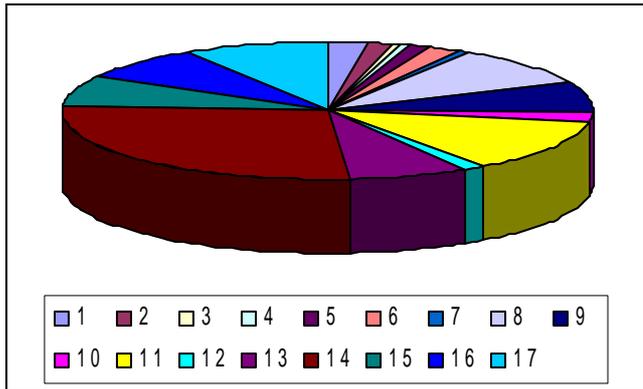
1:	Public focus group attendance	77
2:	Targeted focus group attendance	64
3:	Community Library attendance	22
4:	Foyer responses	49
5:	Fun Day responses	429
6:	Web site responses	427
7:	Staff focus group attendance	77
	Total responses:	1145

All of the feedback grids were forwarded to the Library of Birmingham Research and Development Officers to be assessed and to identify issues needing to be addressed during the next stage of the design work (Stage 'D') prior to briefing the Design Team.

2

2.1 Public Focus Groups

The responses received from the focus group were categorised into the following topics, with the total number of comments of each:



1. Accessibility	31
2. Landscape and Terraces	15
3. Access / Parking	9
4. Sustainability	5
5. The REP	17
6. Exterior	23
7. Amphitheatre	9
8. Foyer	113
9. Children and Young People	86
10. Lending Library	26
11. Learning Spaces	153
12. Music	16
13. ICT	89
14. Facilities	333
15. Way Finding	86
16. Staffing	97
17. Miscellaneous	107

Accessibility

Whilst the number of comments on accessibility was relatively low it is important to note that initial interest in participating from access/ disability groups did not translate into significant numbers. Disabled people who did attend were those contacted by staff in the Central Library foyer and from the REP disabled user group. Issues raised and comments received varied, including:

- Wheelchair hire / loan
- Tables with a section higher to accommodate wheelchairs
- Information and service counter at wheelchair height
- For Visually Impaired people it would be good if the door made a noise when opening
- Signs on the actual doors for places eg. don't put a sign saying "toilet" on the wall next to the toilet door as a blind/ visually impaired person will push the wall rather than the door
- Braille signage, hearing points, voices from the walls, 'you are now approaching...'
- Disabled toilet with a hoist. Doesn't have to be on the ground floor. Let people bring their own slings for health and safety reasons (don't provide). Flat bed for changing etc.
- Separate disabled toilets for men and women

- Better ways of getting around. Changing escalators is a problem, want route to be easy
- Sliding automatic doors that do not knock your legs when opening.

Landscape and Terraces

Landscape and Terraces focused on the external terrace space of the proposed building. The comments were mainly focused on its use, chiefly:

- Outdoor space with seating
- Roof garden different areas – eg for children or for study. Maybe have model dinosaurs
- Coffee shop by outdoor terraces

Access and Parking

In the previous consultations, transport access to the building and nearby parking were major issues, highlighted by the number of comments received. During this Community Engagement exercise these were not strong issues, although a number of comments were received about disabled parking and cycle parking, including:

- Disabled parking near the building - Cambridge Street multi-storey car park not suitable – ramps are too steep for wheelchairs – no lift
- Whether there is disabled parking or not is a determining factor to attendance. No parking - no attendance.
- Disabled parking spaces need to be big enough for a hoist
- Should be cycle storage for staff and visitors out of the rain.

Sustainability

Responses concerning sustainability tended to be more relevant to the planning application consultation (and were considered by the design team through this route), although some comments concerned how customers will experience the new building and the comfort of the internal environment.

Comments included:

- Concern over the balance between sunlight and artificial lighting
- Use as much natural daylight as possible
- Needs to be a low energy building. Financially sustainable. Take into account energy prices of 20 years hence
- Seasonal heat storage – store sun in summer for use in winter
- Glass box – needs shading – otherwise temperature control could be difficult.

The REP

There were 17 points raised regarding the partnership with The REP and the general feedback was very positive towards the proposed joint venture, examples of which are:

- Library could exhibit stock etc related to REP shows – services to promote each other
- The REP currently has a good range of programmes – keep it up!
- Discount scheme for joint use of REP and LoB
- REP bar to be accessible for all users

- New studio theatre – would still like lectures (as in current Library Theatre)

There were also concerns raised about how the two organisations could work together in a joint building:

- Concern about how the REP and the Library of Birmingham can work together
- Library should be quiet and calm with no music, peaceful but industrious (recognition that The REP tends to have more bustle and noise).

Exterior

Whilst the exterior design of the building was an issue for GVA Grimley's planning application consultation we recognised that it was an issue of considerable public interest and took note of any comments, which were passed to GVA Grimley for inclusion in their report. In total we noted 23 varied comments, some congratulating the Council on the bold design, others not liking it or expressing concerns.

Amphitheatre

The general feelings towards the amphitheatre were positive but there were concerns on how the front of the building should be used:

- Amphitheatre is good but concerns about what space is used for
- Removable roof on amphitheatre should be considered
- Street theatre / activities outside
- Outside areas need ongoing investment – how can we utilise them in all weathers to get maximum value from them?

Foyer

The purpose of community engagement was to seek qualitative feedback on the thoughts, feelings and ideas of citizens on how they would wish to engage, interact and be serviced by the building. We were interested in determining how people thought the Library of Birmingham could be made welcoming and inclusive, and meet their diverse needs. The foyer of the proposed building is an important aspect of achieving this and much time was spent in each focus group discussing it. The responses followed a common theme and many went hand-in-hand with comments on facilities (below).

Examples of the most common comments are:

- A welcome mat / signs at the entrance (virtual? different languages?)
- Clearly indicated reception desk / area with not too much "stuff" going on around
- Staffed information desk facing the public (not inwards like the current Central Library)
- Tourist and Community Information available
- Touch screens in foyer
- Machine in the foyer where you can look up which book you want and where it's situated
- Somewhere to sit that is welcoming and comfortable
- Foyer should be bright, spacious, no clutter and have plants

- Flat floor – no steps
- Large screen in foyer with large letters for information – general and library information
- Current security arrangements in Central Library are a barrier/ off-putting
- Large visual signage – screens with moving images
- Escalators, lifts and stairs to start and end in foyer
- Welcoming staff for information
- Foyer should be an informal, visual, vibrant, relaxed area
- Coffee shop in foyer area
- Large community centre to meet before using rest of building – with a range of events/activities
- Foyer needs a ‘hustle and bustle’ feel
- Crafts and exhibitions by local groups
- Needs to be representative of all communities – changing exhibitions

Children and Young People

Targeted focus groups were set up specifically for children, young people and families in Central Library, schools and community centres. The majority of responses from this target group were received during the planned ‘fun days’ including the Family Learning Day and the Book Bash. There were 429 responses received from these and 86 from the focus groups, mostly concerning how different ages use the service, and the facilities and ambience, the most common being:

- Crèche to be staffed by people who will encourage children to interact with books
- Teenage area near children’s library – but separate
- Many young people crave a quiet space because they don’t have one at home
- Teenage Area with: Comfy seats/bean bags/settees; No food/drink; Magazines; Computers; Quiet music; Writing competitions; GCSE/Homework advice
- Teenage Area must be managed by Youth Worker – advice on bullying, careers, homework, education – mediation and counselling
- Lecture rooms for speakers/experts to help with school work/studying/revision
- Maybe different floors for families / children then students
- A proper changing table for older children with a disability
- Groups of young people can be disruptive – need a place for youngsters to do their homework and for group study – these areas could be noisier / allow mobile phones
- Homework corners
- Puppet shows
- Multi-coloured walls and furniture
- IT gaming clubs
- Multi-sensory areas
- Plasma screens
- More toys and games

- Parent and baby room with changing facilities
- Larger meeting rooms
- Creative spaces for art, craft, writing, acting, singing and dancing
- Outdoor spaces to read and have activities
- Cosy spaces for babies
- Local history for children
- All of library to have interesting things for children to read and do
- Music and DVD's
- Milkshakes, chocolate cake and sweets

The responses received from children, young people and adults were very similar when discussing the need for and use of a bespoke youth space, a dedicated Children's Library and separate crèche facilities serving the whole building. Several respondents commented that crèche facilities need to be library focused whereby children would interact creatively with books and reading which could include fun story telling sessions and related activities.

Lending Library

The Lending Library is a core service and it was interesting that only 26 comments were received about lending throughout the focus group sessions. These included:

- More seating in the Lending library
- Recommend reads e.g. Amazon or iTunes (genius function) "you bought this you might like..." to create personalised reading lists – "like good old-fashioned record shops"; also library staff put reviews on cards by shelves (as in bookshops)
- Book reviews by readers left in books for others
- Preference for self service
- Longer lending periods, especially for disabled people
- Lending close to entrance

Learning Spaces

This topic related to the core use of the library, how and where in the building people want to study and in what kind of internal environment. It was a very popular topic, attracting 153 comments, and was the greatest cause of group debates. The most common comments received were:

- Revision areas for quiet study and separate areas for discussion type study
- Prefer 2 or 3 person desks rather than large group desks because large groups tend to chat
- Have nice comfy areas to encourage chat there instead
- Quieter areas on upper floors
- Ergonomics (desks) – the environment needs to fit with people – a poor example in Central Library is large, black study desks with central lights which don't illuminate where you want to read! But large desks can be useful for spreading out stuff. Black not a good colour for desks
- Lots of comfy seats e.g. armchairs, to go and sit with a book
- Should be different zones – to encourage community/group learning and discussion and private study
- More study space to be available

- More space for reflective thought
- Interactive areas and activities should be kept separate from main body of the library
- Different places to sit. At the moment there aren't defined places to sit so it looks like people are "hanging around" – possibly intimidating
- Reading lamps at desks with dimmer etc
- Private study carrels need to be available - small booths on each floor
- Quiet study areas clearly labelled and able to take in books from different floors

Again there was little difference between the responses received from children and young people and adults, each recognising the need to accommodate different learning styles.

Music

From the focus groups only 16 comments concerning the Music Library were received. However, many Music Library users do so independently of the rest of the service and to ensure their opinions were noted a member of staff spent a Saturday in the Music Library talking to service users about the proposals and soliciting their thoughts. They received 39 comments. From the combined 55 comments the most common were:

- Bar and performance space for local talent / bands in a cultural venue
- Need to attract young people into building through music
- Live local artists' events – acoustic sets, Q&A's
- Access to watch / listen to DVD's or have DVD 'showings' - Free showings of films
- Closer connection with Birmingham Musicians
- Software available on PC's to write music
- Lunchtime and evening performance sessions
- Better access to library catalogue, need to search for songs as well as artist or album
- Recording studio bookable with Library 'smart' Card
- Able to borrow instruments
- Lessons on how to play instruments
- More keyboards available
- More listening points available
- Able to download music
- Apple computers available

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

ICT provision when the Library of Birmingham opens in 2013 is likely to be radically different to what is available now because of the pace of technology advancement, and it too early to say with any certainty what will be available in four years time. This was evident in the focus groups where discussions around ICT tended to be based on the technologies familiar to customers in 2009. It was explained that Community Engagement on the development of ICT would be ongoing to ensure any new technology reflected the changing needs of the library user. There were 89 comments received regarding ICT, ranging from way finding to Internet access:

- Computer keyboards should be cleaned regularly

- It must work – no Terminal 5! Consider needs of blind/partially-sighted etc. Need lots of ICT and wi-fi. Have a few well trained staff to support computer users
- Computer use takes too much precedence over book use – non PC users made to feel like 3rd class citizens
- ICT should be integrated with other resources
- Online catalogue – very dull, need to make more interesting; more like Amazon. Use space to advertise services / what's coming up at library / REP
- Need more privacy on computers – booths possibly?
- Bookable laptops for self-study, wi-fi to use with books
- Desks with built in DVD/computers/talking books
- Interactive guide to library e.g. type in a book and it tells you which floor/shelf/is it in the library. Will be a big time saver
- Internet café for quick use near ground floor, PCs for different purposes in different areas
- Dedicated job search PCs – near to entrance and more obvious than at present
- Dedicated computers with career and training opportunities for young people
- Video conferencing for schools / virtual lessons
- Library cards with smart chips that recognise preferences and make suggestions
- Music Library with Apple computers
- Voice activated software in each department

Facilities

Facilities was the widest-ranging topic discussed, from toilets to lifts, from shelving to shopping. It crossed over with many other topics i.e. seating in Learning Spaces and the cost of refreshments for children, young people and families. There were a total of 333 comments made regarding the facilities of the building, the most common being:

- Toilets on each floor
- More than one toilet adapted for those with special needs - Separate from general ladies / gents toilets in case the carer is a different gender; Large toilets with big handle locks – easy to use; Everything at the right level; Easy to use taps
- Large lifts - Needs to be more than one (possibly 4)
- Wider escalators so people can 'overtake'
- Escalators, lifts and stairs in one area of the building to reduce noise
- Restaurant on top floor to 'draw people' up the building
- Café like a bookshop where you can read and have a cup of coffee – with comfy seats in which to relax
- Coffee shop with profits going to the library - not a Starbucks or commercial coffee shop. A Community focus / social enterprise coffee shop should be a destination point, selling really good, fresh food with newspapers available and book swapping service

- Need at least one decent café, and drinks vending machines on every floor
- Shop only if relevant to the library – prints of collections relevant to LoB; a book shop with Library of Birmingham focused materials inc. downloadable images of collection pieces; stationery
- An unthreatening shop where you can browse
- All additional facilities, café, shop, crèche etc to relate to the function of the building
- Mobile phones should only be used in certain areas e.g. café
- Obvious ways for customers to provide ideas/feedback on services
- Lockers to store personal property or to leave resources while taking a break
- Easily accessible shelving or support to access books that are unreachable
- Plants – even if they are artificial
- Different colours on different floors

Way Finding

Intuitive way finding and appropriate signage to enable people to easily find the resources they need is an important issue in the Library of Birmingham, especially due to its proposed size and range of services and resources. We asked people what would be the simplest way to find their way through the building and the following were the main comments given:

- Clear accessible routes through the building eg lines on the floor, different colours to guide you through
- Real people to help – need a desk / focal point and also people on hand to guide customers, who aren't behind a desk – people guides
- Guides / staff to help people through the building
- Electronic diagrams / touch screens like they have in the Bullring - multi-language, accessible, audio (e.g. via headphones)
- Improved and updated notices of where to go / what's on including touch screens and plasma screens
- Large scale floor plans
- Security should know what's going on and where things are if they are going to be near the front of the building as people will always ask them
- Colour coded maps – match colour theme on floors
- Clear navigation – visibility between floors, like a shopping mall
- Signs (general) – consider needs of visually impaired / dyslexic etc e.g. black on yellow
- Do not use 'A' boards – scruffy and unprofessional
- Leaflet of library plan / map also promoting exhibitions / collections

Staffing

How people want the new library to be staffed, how staff should be recognised and available is another key issue for the proposed Library of Birmingham. The comments we received were all similar, regardless of the age of the respondents. The staff in the present library service received very positive

feedback, with only a couple of exceptions, and their expectations of staff in the new library were:

- Security – can be a discreet presence but it's important to know they're around to deal with any trouble quickly and efficiently
- Staff need to have knowledge of resource areas – be representative of specialist resources
- Personal interaction between knowledge seekers and knowledge holders essential
- Greeted by a friendly, well trained person who wants to help and approaches you with courtesy and kindness
- Staff need to be seen and identifiable, a badge and possibly a t-shirt but no uniform
- Staff need to have expert knowledge in each department
- All staff to have customer service training
- People to help on each floor – sometimes it's quicker to ask staff!
- Request to put counters on every floor
- Staff-point on each floor
- Personal Shopper type staffing – staff helping customers
- All areas need to be visible to staff at a counter for safety and security, especially for women
- Staff behind a counter – but counter not to be a 'barrier' for staff to hide behind
- Staff need to be seen walking round areas

Miscellaneous

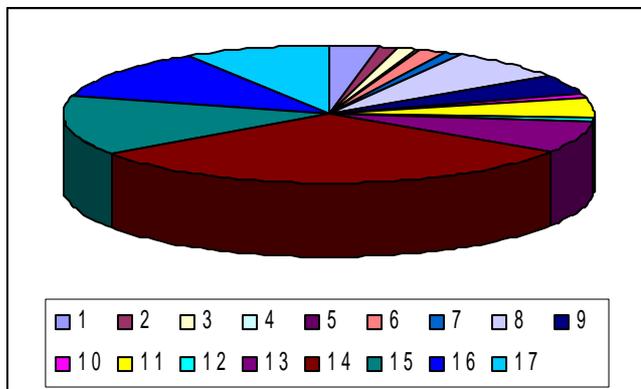
The miscellaneous section covered topics, comments and suggestions that did not fall into any of the other categories. They were mostly general perceptions on the service, marketing and promotions and ongoing development. 107 comments were placed in this category, examples of which are:

- Areas with most intensity of use should be on the ground floor
- 20% more space than current library – what will this be for? Have a tremendous archive – access to archive and correct storage important. In 10-20 years may need change in technology – possibility of building being extended if need for space increases
- The library should have an 'aura'
- The library should be a sanctuary
- Invites you to explore different areas of knowledge
- Library Cards to: Collect Nectar points; Discounts in shop and coffee shop; Collect points on number of visits and borrowing; Use points to play games
- Be proud of the service – current building doesn't feel loved! Need to shout about how great the library is!
- Would be good to have events; lectures etc in evenings and lunchtimes
- Need to constantly check with service users – "have we got it right?"
- Letting people know what library can offer i.e. Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery and The REP adverts on outside of building draw people in e.g. 20,000 books for loan! Also advertise more in Forward. "Shout about what there is"! (the resources are a "well kept secret")

- “Product is there, it just needs imaginative marketing”
- Discount scheme for joint use of REP and LoB
- Better advertisement of collections and tie-ins with other city events and better collaborative work with other organisations
- “The most important aspect of libraries are books and people”
- Better communications – an emailing list of users
- Resident Story Teller – for children and adults

2.2 Staff Focus Groups

The staff focus groups used the same format as the public groups, with the same prompts and categorised into the same topics. The number of comments received on each topic is as follows:

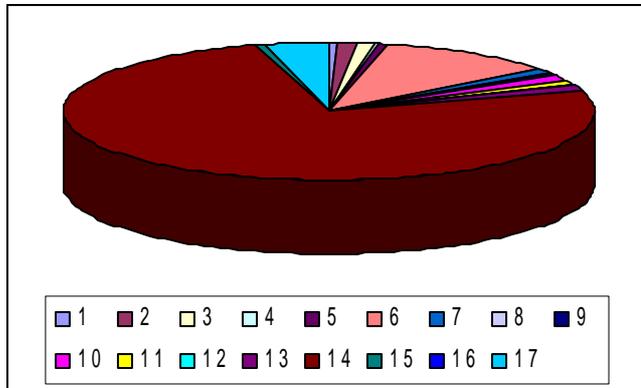


1 Accessibility	16
2 Landscape and Terraces	6
3 Access / Parking	5
4 Sustainability	2
5 The REP	0
6 Exterior	9
7 Ampitheatre / Patio	5
8 Foyer	37
9 Children and Young People	23
10 Lending Library	7
11 Learning Spaces	23
12 Music	7
13 ICT	36
14 Facilities	161
15 Way Finding	72
16 Staffing	62
17 Miscellaneous	46

As with the public focus groups, the staff who participated actively engaged with the process and discussions. Many common themes surfaced that were parallel to those expressed by the public, highlighting the importance of the key issues raised in ensuring the Library of Birmingham is accessible, welcoming and of importance to all within the city.

2.3 Web Site

The responses received through the website were split into the following topics, with the total number of comments of each:



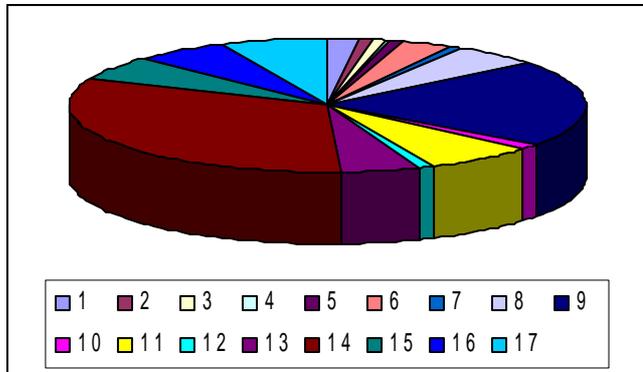
1 Accessibility	3
2 Landscape and Terraces	4
3 Access / Parking	5
4 Sustainability	2
5 The REP	2
6 Exterior	49
7 Ampitheatre / Patio	7
8 Foyer	0
9 Children and Young People	3
10 Lending Library	4
11 Learning Spaces	5
12 Music	2
13 ICT	6
14 Facilities	342
15 Way Finding	2
16 Staffing	0
17 Miscellaneous	18

There were a total of 427 responses received via the web site, the largest proportion of which was the facilities category. Out of the 342 comments concerning facilities 327 asked for a prayer room / wudhu area within the new building. There were 49 responses concerning the exterior, which were passed to GVA Grimley for inclusion in the statutory public consultation on the concept design.

3 Breakdown of Responses

The initial Community Engagement exercise raised no great surprises beyond common thinking garnered from previous consultations and from the initial thoughts and ideas discussed within the Library of Birmingham Development Team. It was apparent though that key themes ran throughout the responses received from each of the different consultative groups.

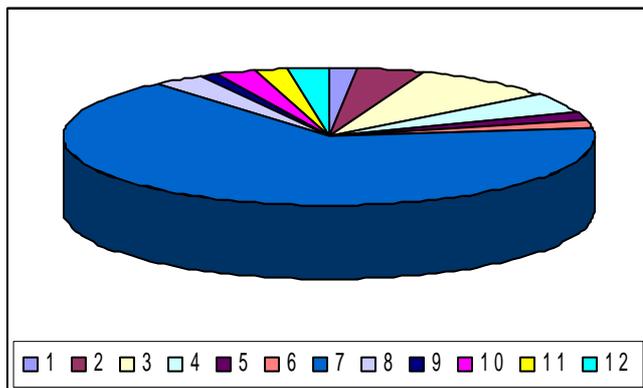
Comments regarding the facilities within the Library of Birmingham were the most common, followed by Children and Young People, Miscellaneous, Learning Spaces, Way finding, Staffing, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT):



1	Accessibility	50
2	Landscape and Terraces	25
3	Access / Parking	19
4	Sustainability	9
5	The REP	19
6	Exterior	81
7	Ampitheatre / Patio	21
8	Foyer	150
9	Children and Young People	541
10	Lending Library	37
11	Learning Spaces	181
12	Music	25
13	ICT	131
14	Facilities	836
15	Way Finding	160
16	Staffing	159
17	Miscellaneous	171

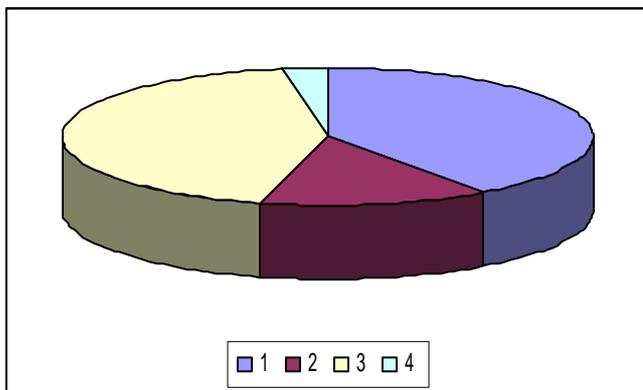
Facilities

The most prominent category showed the range of service delivery people expect from a new, state-of-the-art building, reflecting the 'vision' of the service for the 21st Century. The most common response for facilities were:



1	Different zoned areas	9
2	Shop	21
3	Café	47
4	Toilets on each floor	23
5	Disabled facilities	11
6	Comfy Seating	10
7	Prayer / wudhu room	345
8	Eating area for own food	17
9	Longer opening hours	6
10	Vending machines	12
11	Restaurant	11
12	Meeting Rooms	13

Responses to the shop were further split into what people wanted it to stock:



1	Birmingham specific materials	14
2	Books	5
3	Stationery	15
4	Sweets	1

Out of the 47 responses received concerning a café, 11 thought that there should be more than one café in the building, due to its size and the numbers of people accessing it. People were split between whether the café should be franchised out to a major company or run by a small social enterprise. Many did express the need for good quality and cheaper coffee and food to suit everyone using the service and the idea of having a café located near to an outside terrace with a book swapping scheme.

Disabled facilities expressed as a 'must' are single sex adapted toilets for those with a disability, each to have a 'hoist' system. As mentioned previously, the high number of comments concerning a prayer / wudhu room were predominantly received online.

Children and Young People

The majority of responses concerning Children and Young People were much more difficult to collate due to the diverse nature of comments received and the diverse way in which they were offered. The 541 responses received were on cut out paper books and feet and the ages of participants ranged from three to eighteen. The responses showed no discernable variance from the comments received from the public and staff focus groups and from the web site. The events were very enjoyable and children and young people

proved extremely knowledgeable about the service and their aspirations for its future.

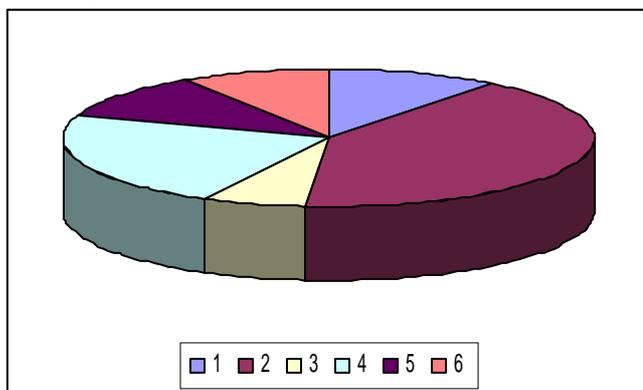
Miscellaneous

The section concerned comments that did not fall into any of the other categories and direct quotes. The most common responses received concerned the marketing and promotions of the service, with a general feeling that it is not done well at present and the need to be able to interact with the books. A snapshot of the comments:

- Areas with most intensity of use should be on the ground floor
- Floors below street level? Concerns about water table flooding
- A place where anybody can come – a beacon
- LoB should have an aura
- Discovery days for adults
- A theatre and a library not a shopping centre – fit for purpose
- Coffee mornings / activities – more like a community library
- Would be good to have events; lectures etc in evenings and lunchtimes
- Better advertisement of collections and tie-ins with other city events and better collaborative work with other organisations
- Library card to be a ‘Smart Card’ with user details to target promotions
- Better communications – an emailing list of users
- Resident Story Teller – for children and adults
- Better communications and promotions with community libraries
- “Product is there, it just needs imaginative marketing”
- Ensuring people know what is available e.g. online clips / DVD promoting stock
- Inside more important than exterior
- “Browsing books is very important”
- “The most important aspect of libraries are books and people”

Learning Spaces

Learning Spaces covered the core use of the library, how people wanted to study, in what environment and where. The most common responses from all of the groups were:

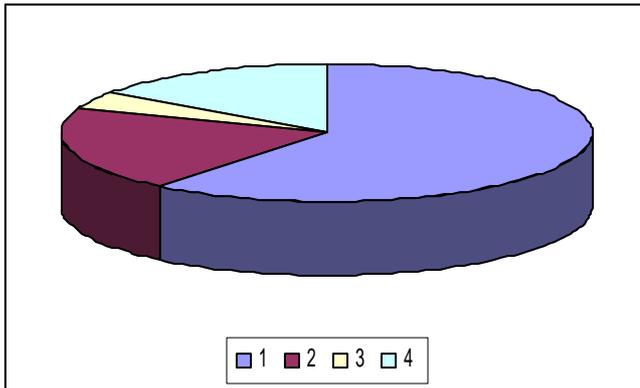


1	Access to stock	8
2	Zoned areas	31

3	Study carrels	5
4	Comfy seating	17
5	Desks	8
6	Interaction with resources	7

Access to stock links closely with interaction with resources, where people wanted time to browse all the stock openly, in their own time and comfortably.

The most popular, and often divisive subject within the learning areas was zoned areas.

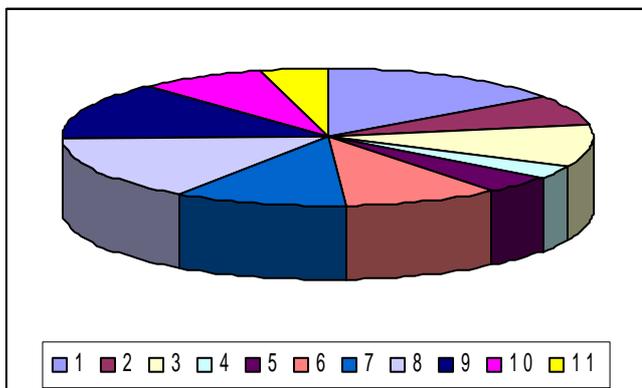


1	Silent study areas	28
2	Noisier / group study areas	9
3	Zoned for different learning styles	2
4	Zoned areas for ICT	9

The majority of responders wanted silent study areas, separated from the noisier group work areas, which they still acknowledged the need for.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

By 2013 the range of technologies available may be very different to what is available today but how people want to use ICT as part of their learning and information needs will have a direct effect on the types of technologies needed to be employed. The main responses concerning ICT were:



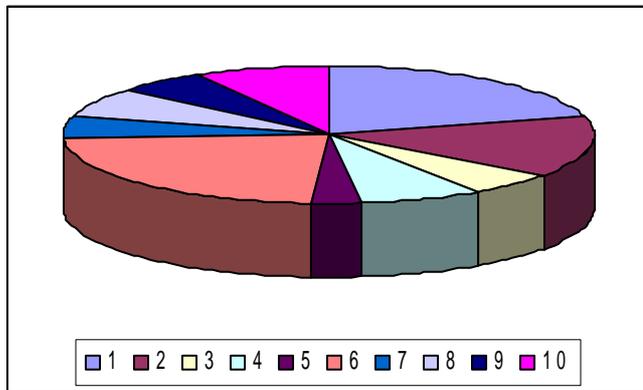
1	ICT directly linked to learning with other resources	14
2	Able to borrow / hire laptops for study	7
3	Separate ICT area	9
4	More scanning / printing / photocopying resources	3
5	ICT equipment suitable for people with access needs	4

6	Wi-fi technology	9
7	More and faster PCs	10
8	Better catalogue access	14
9	Smart card technology	7
10	Privacy when using PCs	4

All groups of people wanted to be able to use ICT as part of their learning, using books and laptops together for a more comprehensive studying experience. A better and easier to use cataloguing system should be made available, easily accessible to all ages and abilities and dispersed widely throughout the building.

Way finding

How people find their way around the Library of Birmingham will play an important role in their satisfaction of the service and in their repeated use. People thought of a variety of good experiences they had elsewhere and used them to determine their preferred options for guidance around the new library:

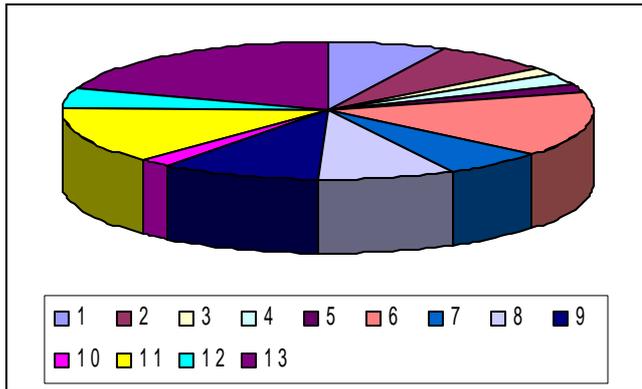


1	Friendly, welcoming staff	27
2	Touch screen technology	19
3	Maps	7
4	Plasma screens throughout	10
5	Leaflets	4
6	Good, clear signage	30
7	Guided tours	7
8	Adequate disabled signage	9
9	Footprints or lines on the floor	7
10	Colour coded floors	11

People were more concerned that there should be good clear signage for all, including users with special needs, and people who do not use English as their first language. Friendly, smiling and welcoming staff was considered most important, followed by technological solutions.

Staffing

The service provided by staff, and the visibility of and ease of finding staff, are very important factors in the satisfaction ratings of library users. The main responses were:



1	Staff to wear T-Shirts	8
2	Staff to wear badges	8
3	A staff uniform	2
4	A dress code for staff	3
5	Informal dress code	2
6	Staffed help desks / counters	17
7	Floor walkers	7
8	Staff to have Customer Service training	9
9	Discreet Security	11
10	Prominent Security	2
11	Knowledgeable staff in each area	15
12	Personal interaction with staff important	5
13	Friendly / welcoming staff	22

People preferred to see friendly, welcoming staff at a counter or help desk with knowledge of their service area. Staff should be recognisable by wearing either a T-shirt or badge, but a staff uniform is not widely wanted. It was commonly expressed that Security should wear a uniform but not be in such a prominent position as they are now. People wanted to feel safe but not watched.

4 Review of Community Engagement

The Community Engagement carried out in April and May 2009 was extremely interesting and enjoyable for all involved. Members of the public who participated were very positive about Library and Archive Services, the resources, staff and the opportunities it provides to all members of the community. The responses received gave the Library of Birmingham Design Team highly relevant data on how people wish to interact and engage with the new library and their aspirations for the service in the 21st Century, informing the design of the building. The findings will also inform the on-going transformation of the service and provide a strong base for the continued Community Engagement process in the future.

Much of the feedback corresponded with previous consultations, and served to revalidate the 'brief' for the new building. However the community engagement provided further insight into specifics of how people use, and want to use, the service in the future.

5 Design response

The results of the community engagement were received by the architects, enabling them to check that the ongoing design work was developing in line with the key findings. As explained above, many of the points raised during the community engagement reflected earlier consultation work and were therefore an integral part of the brief for the design of the new library. The table below indicates the key findings and how the detailed design for the Library of Birmingham reflects these findings. The design will continue to be refined and details of look and feel of the interior spaces will be the subject of continuing community engagement in 2010.

You told us you wanted....	The Library of Birmingham will give you...
FACILITIES	
Public toilets on every floor.	Public toilets on every public floor. They will be grouped to simplify access, cleaning and maintenance.
Disabled toilets to be separate from general ladies/ gents to accommodate different gender carers.	Disabled toilets to be separate from general ladies/ gents to accommodate different gender carers, with separate access.
Single sex disabled toilets with adult changing	Single sex disabled toilets with adult changing will be available on at least one floor
Large lifts to accommodate wheelchair and motorised wheelchair (EMV) users, preferably enabling turning facility to exit lift front-facing.	Large lifts to accommodate wheelchair and motorised wheelchair (EMV) users; it will be possible for wheelchairs to turn to exit the lift front facing. Motorised wheelchairs may need to reverse and a mirror will be installed to facilitate this.
Wider escalators to enable people to overtake.	Wider escalators to enable people to overtake.
ACCESS/ ACCESSIBILITY/ PARKING	
Disabled parking near the building large enough to take hoists	Disabled parking near the building on Cambridge Street. This will allow for the use of hoists.
STAFFING/ HELP POINTS	
Clearly identifiable staff/help point on each floor – counters must not act as a barrier	Clearly identifiable staff/help point on each floor – designed so as not to act as a barrier
Discreet security presence	Discreet security presence
Clearly indicated reception/ information desk in the foyer space, facing the entrance	Clearly indicated reception/ information point in the foyer space, facing the entrance
LEARNING SPACES/ ZONES	
Provision of different learning zones to encourage community/ group learning and discussion and the provision of quiet/ private study areas	Different learning zones to encourage community/ group learning and discussion and the provision of quiet/ private study areas

You told us you wanted....	The Library of Birmingham will give you...
Provision of private study/ study carrels or booths on each floor	Quiet and individual learning spaces on each public floor (except the ground floor) for private study.
WAYFINDING	
Clear accessible routes through the building – possible use of colour for guiding; clear navigation and visibility between floors.	Clear accessible routes through the building, with clear navigation and visibility between floors. This is an integral part of the design. In addition, ICT and customer service staff will help guide visitors.
Access to lifts, stairs, escalators etc from the foyer	Access to lifts, stairs, escalators etc from the foyer
LANDSCAPE & TERRACES/ AMPHITHEATRE/ EXTERNAL SPACES	
Provision of outdoor space with seating	Provision of outdoor space with seating
Outdoor space for eating	Outdoor space for eating on the terraces
Roof garden	Two garden terraces, on the 3 rd and 7 th floors.
Coffee shop by outdoor terrace	Coffee shop on the ground floor, capable of opening out onto the pavement on Centenary Square
Street/ theatre activities outside	Street/ theatre activities, including music, poetry, readings and other outdoor performance events, will take place in the amphitheatre in Centenary Square
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES	
Creche	Following a detailed feasibility study, a creche will be made available for special events.
Dedicated teenage/ youth space	Dedicated teenage/ youth space
LENDING LIBRARY	
Lending library close to entrance	Lending library close to entrance
Self-service	Self-service
Provision of more seating	Plenty of seating of different types throughout the building for the comfort and convenience of visitors – whether you want to study, relax comfortably with a good book, use IT or sit and chat with friends.
ICT	
Café with internet facilities for quick use near the ground floor	Throughout the building, including the ground floor, you will find multi-functional computer/ IT access points. Wifi will enable you to use your own computer/ IT devices anywhere in the building.
Dedicated job search PCs, clearly identified and near to the entrance	Multi-functional computer/ IT access points and support throughout the building.
PCs for different uses in different areas	Multi-functional computer/ IT access points for different uses in different areas throughout the building.

You told us you wanted....	The Library of Birmingham will give you...
MUSIC/ PERFORMANCE	
Bar and performance space for local talent/ bands in a cultural venue	Dedicated performance spaces in the music library and children's libraries, new studio theatre, outdoor amphitheatre, and informal performance spaces throughout the new building available for a wide range of performance events, including local talent/ bands.
Facilities for lunchtime/ evening performance sessions	The facilities above will enable a range of lunchtime and evening performance sessions.
Recording studio	Recording studio

6 Conclusions and future Community Engagement

The community engagement carried out during April-May 2009 was beneficial to the ongoing development of the Library of Birmingham, revalidating the design brief and informing the detailed design for the new building. Valuable data was collected from more than 1200 Birmingham citizens, representing a good range of the city's diverse communities. Further community engagement will continue to seek the views of more communities, seldom heard groups, users and potential users and will be used to inform the design of the interior spaces and the service transformation.

Everyone who attended a focus group expressed a desire to continue to be involved and will be invited to participate in further community engagement activities.

We aim to encourage those who did not take up the opportunity to participate this time around to get involved with the Library of Birmingham in the future. We are committed to involving and engaging with as wide a customer base as possible in new and creative ways, in particular targeting those who are seldom heard.

Ongoing engagement with our customers and potential users will help us to meet the Customer Service Excellence standard and Birmingham City Council's Council Plan for 2008-2013, setting out the Council's aims for the next five years. Through ongoing engagement the Library of Birmingham can be at the forefront of delivery of these promises, engaging people to enable us to tailor services to meet their learning, training, jobs and investment needs; to enjoy a high quality of life through a state of the art cultural and leisure development accessible to all; enabling them to directly contribute to a flagship council service for all the communities of the city.

Guideline prompts for Public and Staff consultations

- 1. What might make you feel welcome? It may be useful to reflect on your positive experiences of other buildings.** Prompts –
 - a. feel / ambience
 - b. easy access – café / food and drink
 - c. light / dark
 - d. spaces and furniture
 - e. sound
 - f. temperature
 - g. services for children / families

- 1.a What might be a barrier / hindrance to your enjoyment of your visit?**
Prompts–
 - a. rules
 - b. noise
 - c. other users
 - d. anything

- 2. What might help you find your way in & around the building?** Prompts –
 - a. Signage – external, internal
 - b. way finding – ICT, maps, visuals, touch, feel
 - c. guiding – staff, written guides, natural flow

- 3. What might you need easy access to?** Prompts –
 - a. stock, open/closed access
 - b. tourist information
 - c. ICT
 - d. Food and drink
 - e. toilets

- 4. What facilities might you like to see?** Prompts –
 - a. crèche
 - b. shop
 - c. cash point
 - d. buggy park
 - e. café

- 5. How might you actively use the whole building and what might keep you coming back?** Prompts –
 - a. exploring areas other than those you traditionally use
 - b. specialist services
 - c. exhibitions
 - d. stock
 - e. customer service
 - f. How services are presented
 - g. Key attractors

N.B The above questions are not a strict script but represent key themes that should be covered in each focus session.