

## **APPENDIX 2 – SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF MODERNISING LIBRARY OPENING HOURS**

The following is a summary of all the responses and how this has informed the revised proposals (Appendix 1).

- **Late night closing - supported 69%**

Young people in the focus groups were in favour of later opening hours during the week and at weekends. LUPs were in favour of late evening opening but concerned about the loss of later opening in smaller libraries. Staff agreed that the main libraries should be open until 8 but felt that 7 or 7.30 may be more suitable in some libraries. The implications of this for producing a revised proposal were straightforward, late closing would be retained/introduced wherever possible within existing resources.

- **Libraries open on more days of the week instead of fewer fuller days – supported by 66%**

This has been accommodated in the revised proposals. Many of the smaller libraries have a revised pattern, which opens them on five days of the week, but not for full days. There were comments (LUPs and staff also made the same observations) that opening should be co-ordinated so that all the libraries in the area were not closed at the same time, and that neighbouring libraries complemented each other, e.g. Goffs Oak and Cuffley. Again this has been achieved in the revised proposals.

- **Support for libraries to retain current Wednesday (60%) or Thursday (40%) closed day pattern**

Where there was a clear preference expressed this has been accommodated in the revised proposal e.g. Royston 77% supported retaining Thursday as closed day. The Wednesday or Thursday closure was often a response to market days i.e. open on market day because it is a busy day. LUPs and staff were also in favour of retaining market day opening as it was busy and more people visited.

- **Sunday opening at the expense of weekday closing - not supported by a definite majority 82%**

This question evoked the largest response, and the issue of Sunday opening (which has proved successful in surrounding library authorities) will therefore need to be addressed as a growth item. An interesting discrepancy can be seen between the response and comments on the website report. Respondents to the website are generally younger, and less likely to be frequent visitors. They mention the lack of opportunities for commuters to use the library, which Sunday opening would address. The response from the young people's focus groups was also interesting. They did generally support Sunday opening (especially if they had a Saturday job), but pointed out that in some areas public transport was poor on a Sunday and could be a disincentive to library use.

- **Later opening and closing time on Saturday - 51% supported 10 – 5, 44% preferred 9.30 – 4**

Although there was a small majority in favour of the later times, this could only be accommodated if the overall costs would not be increased. Website respondents were more in favour of later weekend hours of opening. Staff opinions were divided. In some libraries they felt that the extra hour was a good idea because they were still extremely busy at 4pm when they had to close. Others felt that the later start would inconvenience more people than the later closing time would benefit.

- **5pm early weekday closing - 43% agreed , 46% disagreed. However, 60% of those who disagreed wanted the later time of 5.30**

The response from staff and many of the LUPs was clear that 5pm was too early to close. In particular, it was felt that closing at this time would disadvantage schoolchildren.

10% of the comments on the questionnaire and much of the LUP and staff comment was about the proposal to standardise the opening time at 10am. This was not supported. Libraries are busy first thing in the mornings. Many elderly people prefer to visit at this time. Parents and carers also visit early after taking children to school. Comments on the website also reflected the view that this was more for the convenience of staff than users. The revised proposal therefore standardises opening time at 9.30.

The opening time is connected to the issue of closed for training sessions. Currently these are on different mornings of the week (one or two are in the afternoon). Closed for training (CFT) sessions are the most cost effective means of ensuring that all staff receive appropriate training e.g. customer care, Putting People First, ECDL, library procedures, enquiry skills, Copyright and other legislation with implications for frontline staff. In the Investors In People assessor's report (standard awarded January 2002) our closed for training programme was cited as an example of good practice.