

Sustainability plan for Libraries

People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday 10 November 2025



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Proposals – saving £210k 2026-27

- **Reduction in opening hours:**
- Jubilee – 2 hours Monday evening (5-7pm)
- 3 hours Sunday afternoon (2-5pm)
- Hove – 2 hours Wednesday evening (5-7pm)
- 3 hours Saturday afternoon (2-5pm)
- **Closure of:**
- Hollingbury Library
- Rottingdean Library
- Westdene Library

Process

- February 2025 - budget council decision to reduce public library services to achieve savings
- March 2025 – People Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- July 2025 - Cabinet decision to begin public consultation
- 18 July – 10 October – 12-week public consultation period
- Your Voice Survey - stakeholder engagement - 9 public meetings
- 10 November – People Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- 11 December - final Cabinet decision
- January 2026 – staff consultation if required (reduction of up to 5FTE)
- April - Any potential changes to public library provision implemented

Consultation

Hollingbury 10% survey respondents had used this library in the last 12 months
0 emails received
Drop in session

Hove 38% survey respondents had used this library in the last 12 months
3 emails received
Public meeting at Hove Town Hall
Group responses from book groups and writers' groups received by email

Jubilee 71% survey respondents had used this library in the last 12 months
3 emails received
Public meeting at Jubilee Library

Rottingdean 21% survey respondents had used this library in the last 12 months
80 emails received
Drop in session & public meeting

Westdene 16% survey respondents had used this library in the last 12 months
37 emails received
Group response from Westdene Primary School, including letters from over 100 children
Drop-in session & public meeting

- **2711 consultation survey responses**
- **164 emails sent to the consultation inbox**
- **Over 370 people attended 9 public meetings**

Key Themes

- Most respondents **did not agree** with proposals to reduce opening hours or close libraries
- Opposition to reduction in library **budgets**
- Concerns over impact on **children and literacy**
- Loss of a vital community resource, free **community spaces**, “third spaces”, “warm spaces”
- **Contact** with staff and other residents
- Difficulty **travelling** to alternatives, particularly for families, elderly and disabled
- **Digital** and **financial** exclusion

Key Themes

- **Hollingbury** - Impact on low-income families and financial implications of public transport to alternative library
- **Hove** - Impact on families, students and full-time workers
- **Jubilee** - Concern for vulnerable groups with emphasis on Jubilee Library as a 'safe space'; impact on families, students and full-time workers. Loss of study spaces for secondary, further and higher education students
- **Rottingdean** - Impact on children at neighbouring schools; impact on older people, particularly those digitally excluded or living with disabilities; lack of alternative community spaces in area
- **Westdene** - Impact on children at neighbouring school; impact on older people and those living with disabilities with barriers to using public transport; lack of alternative community spaces in area

Ideas & Alternative Options

Respondents were asked if they had any comments or suggestions for alternative ways to deliver library services or savings:

- Reduce **savings** targets for libraries and reallocate to other council services
- Increase use of **volunteers** or community-run models
- Seek alternative **funding** (sponsorships, donations, crowdfunding, charging and membership)
- Reduce or alter **hours** at larger libraries to maintain smaller branches and protect evenings and weekends
- Expand/alter library **services** (digital support and e-resources, mobile libraries, extending Libraries Extra hours at community libraries and consider at central libraries)
- Improve **publicity** and outreach to increase usage

Timeline

date	action
October – November 2025	Officers review and analyse data from consultation Prepare papers for Scrutiny Committee
Monday 10 November 2025	Special meeting of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
November 2025	Officers review and finalise proposals, update Needs & Use Analysis and prepare full Equality Impact Assessment Prepare papers for Cabinet
Thursday 11 December 2025	Final proposals put to Cabinet on changes to library provision Cabinet decision
January – March 2026	Staff consultation to reduce staffing in affected libraries if required
April 2026	Any potential changes to public library provision implemented