

Appendix 8
 COMMENTS FROM FOCUS GROUPS – REVIEW OF LIBRARY SERVICES
 FOR RURAL AREAS

<p>STOCK</p>	<p>1. <u>Less breadth and depth in favour of more popular stock</u> Group members felt that should continue to be a wide range of stock available, which they saw as central to the ethos of public libraries. Reservation service can be used to obtain popular stock.</p> <p>2. <u>Free requests as pay-off</u> Group felt that requests should be free whether from mobile or static libraries, in keeping with library ethos. <i>Reservations</i> - should only be charged for more obscure items, not those that are easily obtainable <i>Pre-publication reservation charges</i>- one member wasn't prepared to pay if libraries likely to get the item in any cases.</p> <p><i>Other comments</i>- one member would have preferred CD hire to be longer than a week, because of difficulties in returning them. <i>Fines for late returns</i> - a member thought late returns were due to lack of time and thought that a drop off point would be useful and would reduce charges.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumption that we provide stock according to customer profiles – responding to demand does not identify what customers may be looking for • People don't necessarily want current titles – may be searching for all a particular author's books or titles in a series – often can't find – how do we know what you've got? • Some search for popular titles, rarely reference books. Now use Internet – but not all “at internet stage” • Interest in paperbacks – but need balanced stock- don't reduce titles • Some books borrowed on impulse eg cookery, travel, crafts • Would expect to find coffee table books, biographies in library • Danger of emulating Waterstones • Some use Internet in library because broadband faster • Free requests if books not in stock or reduced number, “catch 22” situation – need to get children – and adults – hooked to books • Using computers has encouraged customer to start reading newspapers and magazines. Sometimes taking up reading develops when older • Importance of libraries being welcoming – bright and shiny, well –displayed books etc, longer opening hours, greetings cards seen as good value • Would like to see refreshments provided, possibly separate room/area – don't think spillage is an issue – could happen at home. Would help to make a visit to the library “an outing” • Interest in seeing other customers' reviews in library books • Interest in libraries' promoting new books, making information about books more visible – “book of the week”, a browsers' corner, links to Radio 4 Bookmark • Lack of awareness of catalogue on website - promote widely! Would also encourage

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	<p>more people to use libraries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usefulness of providing OS maps to borrow in local libraries (eg current series for walking, Midlands area)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing popular stock would bring more people in which would then generate more demand so end up offering wider service • Big 'no' to just having fiction • Probably wouldn't go to library if it only had fiction • NF is too small now • Should have free requests • Prefer breadth so can browse • Would have to rely on staff to help you know what to request • Couldn't browse if stock too small • Would be horrified if service restricted - the library is an access point for all sorts of information • Library stock is just a small % of total books published • Improve the catalogue so it looks more like amazon • Like the idea of a customer profile • Need to have the option to have a profile or not • Stock should be there to broaden reading • Need to use things like Who Else Writes Like • Out of print stock - queried availability • Could lose regular visitors if reduce stock • It's not fair for anyone to say 'the library never has.....' • Perception that service being free means it's no good • Visiting the library is part of family culture; start young with your family, drop off use but come back as a parent bringing young children. A section of society won't ever come in as not part of their culture. • Libraries were only books when I was little but now they have much more and people perhaps don't know if they stopped going. • Image - Nuneaton larger, brighter and inviting - Hinckley too dark • Do libraries advertise? Never see promotion. • Need to inform kids in schools about the library - get them young, they'll bring in their parents • I recently came back to the library after many years. Didn't have a clue what they offered any more. Fantastic service. • Community information point • Market Bosworth needs DVDs but told can't have. How do you know it wouldn't work? • If libraries open more people would use them • Use it for other reasons; no use if closed. • Could be open all hours in a village for other things. • Discussion on opening hours.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of group don't read fiction • Some appreciation for range ("don't need to read that bestseller now") • Lot of interest in access to good reference stock. General preference for books than

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	finding information on internet
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PREMIUM AND e SERVICES	<p>1. <u>Personal shopper</u> Group members would prefer better basic services and better customer services than new services such as personal shoppers. Also thought that priority should be given to improving current electronic systems rather than to introducing new ones including libraries subscribing to national systems.</p> <p>2. <u>On-line reference services and others e.g. homework support</u> 3. <u>Will people pay?</u> Group members supported on-line reference services. Would be prepared to pay if accessing at home, but felt should remain free when accessed at library. Group pointed out need to decide if cheaper to pay from home or to travel for free use in library. Group also pointed out that free library access encouraged people to visit library. New on-line homework support not needed as staff already direct children to relevant websites. Such help should not be viewed as a replacement to parents helping with homework.</p> <p>4. <u>Auto library/ Self-service.</u> Could be convenient for busy people It would reduce valuable social contact with both staff and other library users. One member would rather queue (even when this means more than once a visit) than have no contact with others and felt children benefited from observing/participating in library tasks It would be good if it freed up staff to improve all aspects of customer care, including the time they spend with library users If provided, should alongside traditional system, especially as older people may not wish to use it</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If e-subscription services were introduced, some would probably prefer to use for free in library, others may pay to access from home (but choice of free use in library should be available). Could be some interest in paying for access to “Memory Mapping” • “Staffless library” – concerns about security- especially for women, also implications for children (Children Act) and H&S. Prefer some staff presence, especially in rural situations – staff valued for information etc • No concerns over checking in/out procedures

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion for a “loyalty” scheme – customer provides reading profile – email customer at home when item in stock matches profile
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not in favour of concept of staffless library – staff are helpful, it’s quicker to ask (option for larger libraries, but not smaller ones?) • Group not convinced about subscription services (50/50 split on handout question) – but may be if marketed well, could be useful for students • Homework support via internet (difficulties of children travelling to libraries, other commitments etc) • Observation that pc in Old Dalby Post Office seems well used (Leics CC with BT). Link into these sort of initiatives, connect to LCC network – develop community facilities, possibly with parish council (ref made by one of group to Asfordby)

SHARING BUILDINGS	<p>Good idea if not in a school. Concerns about adults having access to school-based libs. Parent had particular concerns if a lib was based within a school especially during school hours.</p> <p>Sharing buildings was seen as a good use of resources</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collections in village halls: many problems envisaged. Conflicts with others using the hall eg events – may cause problems with opening times, security issues, lack of care of library if no staff present – insurance issues etc. Though point made that many village halls are underused • Village hall development in Long Clawson raised, could be space for a library • Combine school and community library – stops duplication of books, good way of familiarising children with public library. Seen as a better option than village halls • “Think about multi-use libraries – but get them through the door, tell them what you do!” • Social Security office in library could bring more people in

OTHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More publicity about libraries needed eg not aware that Blaby Library existed – tucked away, not aware that opening hours had been changed, not aware of courses soon enough – then they are full! Exhibition space good – helps to draw people in • Lack of awareness that libraries have pcs and provide learning sessions – need for more publicity!
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with colleges to provide evening classes • “Zone off” a section for computers Internet café – possibly in larger libraries • One participant amazed that East Goscote, very close to Syston, has a library – “an extravagance?” • Suggestion for extra services: laminators in libraries, photographic printing

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suggestion for local history to have higher profile, link more with museums, put records on Internet• Other comments/queries on staff satisfaction (some problems, “better than it was”), borrowing from one library, returning to another, homework clubs, libraries’ role in adult literacy
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