

Equality Impact Assessment – Stage One

We need to ensure that our strategies, policies, functions and services, current and proposed have given due regard to equality and diversity.

Name of policy, strategy or function:	Library Service Review
Version and release date of item (if applicable):	
Owner of item being assessed:	Mike Brook
Name of assessor:	Mike Brook
Date of assessment:	31.08.2016

Is this a:		Is this:	
Policy	No	New or proposed	No
Strategy	No	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes
Function	No	Is changing	Yes
Service	Yes		

1. What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the policy, strategy function or service and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	To achieve a saving of up to £690,000
Objectives:	To achieve the savings and retain a legally compliant library service that is comprehensive and efficient and which meets the public sector equality duty
Outcomes:	Transition library service to a hub and spoke structure with reduced staffing and increased use of volunteers
Benefits:	Financial saving

2. Which groups may be affected by the policy, strategy, function or service.

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Older people, children and families	Loss of service where a library fails would impact more on older people, who often rely on their library for social interaction, and on families, who source cheap and accessible activities at the library.	Library Drop-in sessions and previous consultations have found that local libraries contribute to health and wellbeing and combat social isolation and loneliness. Families with young children often rely on opportunities delivered by the service.
Households without IT	Loss of service would impact more on families reliant on their library for IT access, either for homework, access to government services and general information	In a generally wealthy area, West Berkshire has some small pockets of high need and deprivation. Lack of a PC at home is a disadvantage to children and families, and still often to older people who would suffer from the removal of a soft learning environment to learn about IT.

Further Comments relating to the item:

The proposal does not envisage closure of libraries, but the new model for the service includes a risk that libraries which no longer have staff may

- a) fail to deliver because a suitable community group does not come forward to run the service
- b) suffer interruptions to service if volunteer scheduling arrangements fail on specific days

3. Result	
Are there any aspects of the policy, strategy, function or service, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	Yes
<p>Please provide an explanation for your answer:</p> <p>Reliance on volunteers to provide the day to day service in the majority of libraries could lead to less fair treatment of some groups of customers. This would be mitigated by effective recruitment and training of volunteers</p>	
Will the policy, strategy, function or service have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	Yes
<p>Please provide an explanation for your answer:</p> <p>Employment opportunities will be greatly reduced by the removal of paid staff from the majority of libraries and the reduction in staffing levels at other libraries.</p> <p>Staff who retain a post should be energised by the new service, but it is also very possible they could become overworked and de-motivated if the process of culture change is not handled sympathetically.</p>	

4. Identify next steps as appropriate:	
Stage Two required	Yes
Owner of Stage Two assessment:	Mike Brook
Timescale for Stage Two assessment:	Following the close of the public consultation

Name: Mike Brook

Date: 31.08.2016
