

# Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit (January 2021)

## **Section 1: Your details**

**EIA lead Officer:** Tom Arthur

**Email address:** Tomarthur@wirral.gov.uk

**Head of Section:** Andrew McCartan

**Chief Officer:** Nicola Butterworth

**Directorate:** Neighbourhood Services

**Date:** 13/12/21

## **Section 2: What Council proposal is being assessed?**

Three options have been put forward for savings from the operating cost of the library service. The value of the savings to be achieved will depend on which options is chosen by Members as the way forward but it is anticipated to be in the region of £0.814m

The suggested option is to retain 13 sites (8 staffed- 5 self-service) plus ancillary services (Order and Collect, Home Reader Service, new mobile library).

Excludes £256k of efficiency savings already taken.

Staffed: Bebington Central, Birkenhead Central, Wallasey Central, West Kirby, Eastham, Heswall, Moreton, Upton

Self Service: Beechwood, Leasowe, Ridgeway, St James, Seacombe.

This is an initial assessment and will be reviewed appropriately should the proposal progress

## **Section 2a: Will this EIA be submitted to a Committee meeting?**

**Yes / No**

**If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date**

**Hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published on the Council's website**

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

**Section 3:** Does the proposal have the potential to affect..... (please tick relevant boxes)

- X **Services**
- X **The workforce**
- X **Communities**
- Other** (please state eg: Partners, Private Sector, Voluntary & Community Sector)

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

- None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to [engage@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:engage@wirral.gov.uk) for publishing)

**Section 4:**

Could the proposal have a positive or negative impact on any protected groups (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation)?

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any potential negative impact.

Which group(s) of people could be affected	Potential positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any potential negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications
All	Negative – Reduction in provision of library services results in less spaces open to the community	Co-location opportunities will be explored New mobile library service provided	Andrew McCartan	On Going	Capital expenditure on a new mobile van and recruitment of a driver
All	Negative – Self-service library services can be inaccessible and harder to use. If there are any faults or problems, residents may struggle without staff there to help them	Volunteers could be deployed and staff can be contacted during operational hours from other sites. A team of peripatetic support will also be planned.	Andrew McCartan	On Going	Staffing
All	Negative – ancillary services, like Order and Collect, can prove to be inaccessible for residents without access to internet	There will still be a “physical offer” at the sites listed above	Andrew McCartan	On Going	Book stock

<p><b>Disability –</b> physical, sensory &amp; mental impairments</p>	<p>It may be more difficult for customers with additional needs or disability (eg mobility issues) to access remaining libraries if the closest library is further away from their home than at present.</p>	<p>Provision of new Library Mobile van service – but will need to ensure that access to the vehicle is as easy as possible and that any special design features are considered to facilitate this</p>	<p>Andrew McCartan</p>	<p>On Going</p>	<p>New mobile van</p>
<p><b>Age Group -</b> specify eg; older, younger etc)</p>	<p>A reduction in number of libraries may make it more difficult for older customers to access the Service as they may need to travel further from their home to get to the next closest library</p> <p>Younger children might also be affected as their parents/carers would need to take them to the library and the increased distance could make this difficult</p> <p>Older and younger people may need assistance in using the services and assurances that the library will remain a safe and welcoming environment.</p>	<p>Provision of new Library Mobile van service</p> <p>Outreach sessions by Strategic Team in new community venues</p> <p>We will mitigate this by providing information guides, well trained staff and volunteers to support local people to use the technology.</p>	<p>Andrew McCartan</p>	<p>On Going</p>	<p>New mobile van</p>
	<p>It is not expected that the proposed changes will have a negative or positive impact upon any other equality target group.</p>				

<p><b>Workforce</b></p>	<p><b>Negative</b> Reduction in the number of libraries would impact employees working in them meaning their jobs may be at risk.</p> <p><b>Neutral</b> At this stage of the proposal, it is not possible to identify the potential implications this may have on employees. Once considerations have been further progressed, we will undertake an audit of employees directly affected and take account of any impact associated to protected characteristics.</p>	<p>Staff are not employed on a site-specific basis and are deployed to provide access across the Service. It is expected that the number of compulsory redundancies will be minimal particularly after EVR exercise completed</p> <p>Any adverse impact on employees protected characteristics is unintentional and employees will be supported through the consultation process.</p> <p>The Council's Redundancy and Redeployment Policy which sets out the Council's Policy and Procedures for organisational change, including redundancy and ring fence situations. The Council has a legal obligation to consult with affected employees, explore alternatives and seek to avoid/mitigate against compulsory redundancies.</p>			
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**Section 4a: Where and how will the above actions be monitored?**

The above actions will be continuously monitored by the lead officer

**Section 4b: If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?**

We have ensured that there continues to be library service coverage for all residents. The reduction in number of libraries has limited impact in all groups as 98% of residents will still live within a 2-mile radius of a staffed library. In addition, investment in the new mobile library ensure extended provision including to hard to reach groups and potential new communities have access to a library service.

In addition to the 13 libraries the Digital Library Service will continue to be developed; this gives 24/7 accessibility functionality to an e-library of 20,000 items; including large print, spoken word, access to online databases' family history and reference materials.

The Home Reader Service, delivering to housebound residents and those whose needs are greatest, will continue and opportunities to extend this service will be explored where resources allow.

The Library Service will continue to provide appropriate materials to all residents.

**Section 5: What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?**

Public consultation  
Needs Analysis  
Benchmarking data

**Section 6: Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council proposal?**

Yes / No – (please delete as appropriate)

If 'yes' please continue to section 7.

If 'no' please state your reason(s) why:

Yes

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to [engage@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:engage@wirral.gov.uk) for publishing)

## **Section 7: How will consultation take place and by when?**

Public consultation to be determined.

Before you complete your consultation, please email your preliminary EIA to [engage@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:engage@wirral.gov.uk) via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it's legal publishing requirements. The EIA will need to be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 4. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to [engage@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:engage@wirral.gov.uk) for publishing.

## **Section 8: Have you remembered to:**

- a) **Select appropriate directorate hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published** (section 2a)
- b) **Include any potential positive impacts as well as negative impacts?** (section 4)
- c) **Send this EIA to [engage@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:engage@wirral.gov.uk) via your Chief Officer?**
- d) **Review section 4 once consultation has taken place and sent your updated EIA to [engage@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:engage@wirral.gov.uk) via your Chief Officer for re-publishing?**