

Equality Impact Assessment



Name of the proposal : Framework for Future Library Provision - phase 4 of Library Restructure: Effect on Library Customers

Department : Culture Community and Business Services

Name of lead officer : Stephen Edwards

Publication date: 27/09/2011

Review date: 09/01/2012

Departmental Manager Approval by : Nicola Horsey

Departmental Manager Approval date : 22/09/2011

Updated Information

The responses from the public and staff consultation indicate that it would not be appropriate to close a library 1 day a week in all cases. Therefore alternative suggestions are recommended to reduce hours in a different way at some libraries. This includes a reduction in the number of evening closures - 14 have been reinstated out of 25. This change will be helpful to those customers and potential customers who are at work 9-5. Opening hour proposal alterations have taken into account the potential impact on school age children (eg need for afternoon opening) and on the working population (evenings). Overall, there has been majority support for changes to weekend hours including reduction in Sunday opening.

Originally, the reduction in hours was to be 7% but now the recommendation is 5.8% including 10 libraries retaining their current opening hours, thus reducing the impact on customers and potential customers. Savings will be made from efficiencies identified during the consultation.

The feedback received supports our original assessment that the impact on protected characteristic groups is low or no impact.

Main purpose and aims of the policy, plan or project

In April 2009 Hampshire's Library and Information Service published its first Vision and Strategy. In essence, the whole thrust of the Vision and Strategy is towards:-

- Improving access
- Widening participation
- Improved partnership working
- Improved understanding of local needs and greater community engagement
- Greater flexibility in responding to local needs

It stated:

"There may well be the need for some new libraries in the future and we may also need to change our mobile provision in some areas. Conversely we also need to take a rational look at

some of our existing libraries and ask ourselves if they are needed to meet future demand or if there are alternative ways to deliver library services”.

Since April 2009 the Library Service has:

- restructured the whole of the Library and Information Service, excluding front line staff in static libraries
- streamlined internal processes and ways of working to deliver improved efficiency and effectiveness
- improved customer service through regular training and the introduction of Hampshire library standards
- re-established the Book Fund to its original level £2.4 million
- refurbished 14 libraries, opened Basingstoke Discovery Centre and introduced self-service in 9 libraries

In total we have achieved savings of £2.48 million.

We now need to make a further saving of approximately £0.45 million in order to respond to reductions in budget in 2012/13 and beyond. The £2.48m already saved has come from cuts made at HQ, management and the Mobile Library Service. We cannot make any more savings in these areas which is why the next savings have to come from the current provision of static libraries.

Proposals are being put forward for public consultation which outline a potential future framework of provision based on 11 key libraries and the branches surrounding them. These key libraries will provide a central hub in each district council area, supporting the smaller local libraries in the district. Large, medium and small libraries will be closed at least one day per week and may have changes to opening hours on other days. However the nearby key library will stay open, ensuring access to all our services.

Main elements of the policy, plan or project

Proposed reductions and changes in opening hours have been put forward for consideration on the basis of analysis of current usage patterns with the aim of minimising the impact on all sections of the community.

There will be a 90 day consultation period starting 27 September 2011 with staff, Unions, Councillors, customers and public. Feedback from the consultation including equality issues will be considered when the proposed changes are reviewed in January 2012.

Implementation plans will take account of the need to minimise the effect on staff and the balance of the workforce in terms of age and gender.

Detailed Assessment

Age:	Impact : Low
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
Disability:	Impact : Low

Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
Faith:	Impact : No Impact
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
Gender:	Impact : Low
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
Transgender:	Impact : No Impact
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
Race:	Impact : No Impact
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
Sexual Orientation:	Impact : No Impact
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
Marriage / civil partnership:	Impact : No Impact
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
Pregnancy & maternity:	Impact : No Impact
Any specific issues identified:	

What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
Other factors:	Impact : No Impact
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	

Details of why some groups are low and/or no impact

Customer Surveys indicate that 25% of our customers consider they have some disability but only a proportion of those would have implications as regards accessing library services. For example, there may be some customers who have mobility or other issues which make visiting an alternative branch to their most local one when it is closed more of a problem. However, this is low impact as the overall reduction in opening is only just over 7%.

Hampshire's age profile is 0-19 year olds 24%, 20-64 year olds 58% and over 65s 18% - this compares with our active user profile from our Library Management System of 0-15 year olds 28%, adults 41% and over 60s 26%. The overall age impact has been graded low because the changes to opening hours will still mean that the service is readily available to older people and children. It is however possible that those of working age might find it more difficult to use the Library Service if there are less weekend and evening opening hours. To offset this possibility, it can be said that opening hour changes have been proposed in the light of current usage figures including people counts so that changes can be targeted to have least impact on existing customers. Therefore the relatively small percentage reduction in opening hours plus the framework of key libraries is intended to minimise impact. It should also be added that many services can be accessed online 24/7 (e-resources, e-books, catalogue searching and requests) so this will mitigate the effect of opening hour changes for those with internet access. The rationalisation of opening times to make them more easily remembered may also encourage more regular use of services.

Hampshire's population is made up of 51% female, 49% male while 65% of library customers are female. It could be said that opening hour changes will more heavily impact on women but the impact has been graded low because the level of opening hour changes are relatively small and have been targeted at current times of least use. The possible impact on the working population would affect men and women equally.

Changes to opening hours will have no specific implications that would impact on staff in the area of faith, transgender, race, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity.

NB STANMORE AND NORTH BADDESLEY HAVE SEPARATE EIAs.

Conclusion

Opening hour changes have been proposed in the light of current usage figures including people counts so that changes can be targeted to have least impact on existing customers. Therefore the relatively small percentage reduction in opening hours plus the framework of key libraries is intended to minimise impact. The impact on equality issues has therefore been graded as low.

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For more information please visit the [Hampshire County Council Equality & Diversity web page](#).