

# **Equality Impact Assessment**

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

### **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 response to the public and staff consultation indicates that it would not be appropriate in all cases to close a library for 1 day a week. Therefore, alternative suggestions have been recommended to reduce opening hours in a different way at some libraries.

Feedback has supported our assessment that the impact on staff will be mainly in the area of age and gender issues. The other protected characteristic groups will have low or no impact.

Gender: originally, the impact of the loss of (currently male) caretakers was thought to fall on female staff - however, in the majority of our 53 sites do not have caretakers and movement of stock is already undertaken by female staff. The impact will be upon 5 sites only. Steps have been taken to increase the number of manual handling trainers.

### **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. It is also proposed to close the least well used neighbourhood libraries in Stanmore and North Baddesley unless a local group or organisation takes over full responsibility for the running of either of them.

## 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. The viability of neighbourhood libraries has been assessed on the basis of evidence of current usage, catchment areas, areas of multiple deprivation and public transport to alternative libraries - this forming part of the equality impact assessment.

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

<b>Age:</b>	Impact : Medium
Any specific issues identified:	Decisions on changes to staff timetables and work locations plus voluntary redundancy decisions (caretaker posts and assistant posts at Stanmore).
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	Ensure that decisions on changes to staff timetables and work location are not solely based on age but on corresponding factors such as personal circumstances, geography and appropriate skills. The same applies to voluntary redundancy where decisions will not be based on age factors or the least costly options.

<b>Disability:</b>	Impact : Low
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
<b>Faith:</b>	Impact : No Impact
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
<b>Gender:</b>	Impact : Medium
Any specific issues identified:	<p>1) Movement of stock, boxes and equipment currently being done by male caretakers and its potential impact on other library staff</p> <p>2) Job opportunities for staff at risk</p>
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	<p>1) Manual Handling required by staff in branches where caretaker posts are being withdrawn will need to be reviewed to minimise the impact on health and safety. Manual handling procedures should be appropriate for both genders of staff, in any case.</p> <p>2) Redeployment opportunities will apply equally to both genders of staff</p>
<b>Transgender:</b>	Impact : No Impact
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
<b>Race:</b>	Impact : No Impact
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
<b>Sexual Orientation:</b>	Impact : No Impact
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
<b>Marriage / civil partnership:</b>	Impact : No Impact

Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
<b>Pregnancy &amp; maternity:</b>	Impact : No Impact
Any specific issues identified:	
What action will be taken to address any identified issues:	
<b>Other factors:</b>	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

There is some small possibility that changes to opening hours and therefore to staff timetables or changes to work location might impact on those with travel issues eg getting to another place of work.

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

## Conclusion

There is some small possibility that changes to opening hours and therefore to staff timetables or changes to work location might impact on those with travel issues eg getting to another place of work.

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

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