

Equality Impact Assessment



Hampshire
County Council

Library Service Consultation – Closure of Libraries - Staff Impacts

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Department: Culture, Communities and Business Services

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Description of current service/policy

The Library Service employs 486 staff (300 Full Time Equivalent), 77% of these are part-time and are supported by 1,266 trained volunteers across 48 council run libraries, open for a total of 1722.5 hours per week. The service has varying opening hours with Tier 1 Libraries (including Discovery Centres) open 50-62 hours per week, Tier 2 Libraries open 34-50 hours per week and Tier 3 Libraries open 11.5-35.5 hours per week. This consists of daytime opening, including lunchtimes, Saturdays and Sundays (two Libraries only), and some late-night opening until 7pm.

Geographical impact: All Hampshire

Description of proposed change

Proposal to close up to 10 council run Libraries, to support achieving a £1.040 million operational saving required due to budget reductions. If there is interest, the Libraries could be handed over to a community group to be used as an independent community-managed library. The level of support for closures will be determined in the Public Consultation but a reduction of up to 46 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff is expected through closures and/or opening hour reductions. FTE savings are being reviewed across the Library Service and are not directly linked with the closure of a specific Library; redeployment could be an option for those staff impacted by the closures.

Impacts of the proposed change

This impact assessment covers HCC Staff (and partners)

Engagement and consultation

Has engagement or consultation been carried out?

Planned

The Library Service will be undertaking a 10-week public consultation to seek customers', residents', staff and stakeholders' views on the emerging Libraries' Strategy to 2025, proposed changes to the Library Service and the impact of these changes, and any alternative options. Staff are encouraged to identify as 'staff' in the Public Consultation to give the overall staff view on the strategy.

Information on the previous Balancing the Budget Consultation (www.hants.gov.uk/balancingthebudget) is in paragraphs 19-22 of the Exec Member for Recreation and Heritage decision report, which can be accessed at <http://sites.digital/hants1>, with further details also available in paragraphs 55-60

Statutory considerations	Impact	Mitigation
<p>Age: Low</p>	<p>31% of Library Service staff are aged 55 and over, compared with 27% for Hampshire County Council. Staff could be required relocate to an alternative branch but the impact of this has been assessed as Low as they already work in clusters at up to 6 alternative Libraries to their base location. As further information is available more detailed Equality Impact Assessments will be completed.</p>	
<p>Disability: Low</p>	<p>7% of Library Service staff have disclosed having a disability, compared with 3% for Hampshire County Council. Staff could be required relocate to an alternative branch but the impact of this has been assessed as Low as they already work in clusters at up to 6 alternative Libraries to their base location. Reasonable adjustments will continue to be made where appropriate. As further information is available more detailed Equality Impact Assessments will be completed.</p>	
<p>Sexual Orientation: Neutral</p>		

<p>Race:</p> <p>Neutral</p>		
<p>Religion and Belief:</p> <p>Neutral</p>		
<p>Gender reassignment:</p> <p>Neutral</p>		
<p>Gender:</p> <p>Low</p>	<p>The Library Service employs 483 staff, 87% are female and 13% are male. Although this is a high ratio the service is unable to assess the specific impacts on these staff until the consultation is complete and decisions can be made based on the responses.</p> <p>As further information is available more detailed Equality Impact Assessments will be completed.</p>	
<p>Marriage and civil partnership:</p> <p>Neutral</p>		
<p>Pregnancy and maternity:</p> <p>Neutral</p>		

Other policy considerations	Impact	Mitigation
<p>Poverty:</p> <p>Neutral</p>		
<p>Rurality:</p> <p>Low</p>	<p>Some Library staff live and work in rural areas, they could be required relocate to an alternative branch but the impact of this has been assessed as Low as they already work in clusters at up to 6 alternative Libraries to their base location.</p>	

Neutrality statement (if all considerations have a neutral impact)

Any other information

In addition to the consultation, staff engagement sessions will take place where Senior Managers will engage with staff to discuss the proposed options and seek feedback.

Effort would always be made to reduce staff levels in a planned and sensitive way by: managing vacancies as they arise, to deliver savings through natural turnover and redeployment of staff; and exploring voluntary redundancy, with compulsory redundancy only considered as a last resort. The County Council would ensure consultation with staff and trade unions about workforce implications at the appropriate time and in accordance with its policies and procedures.

South Ham Library is a base for the School Library Service (SLS), how SLS services are delivered would be subject to a wider review and its own full impact assessment. This may mean a change

of work base for staff, currently the next nearest SLS base is at Farnborough Library.

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