

Equality Impact Assessment



Hampshire
County Council

Library Service Consultation – Lee-on-Solent Library Closure – Service User Impact

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Department: Culture, Communities and Business
Services

Date of
assessment: 08/01/2020

Description of current service/policy

Lee-on-the-Solent Library has a catchment population of 12,389, the Index of Multiple Deprivation score running from 1 (most deprived) to 10 (least deprived) is 8.2. The Library is open for 25.5 hours per week and has 1,723 borrowers of which 56% regularly use an alternative Library within Hampshire. Lee-on-the-Solent Library offers the public access to core services and offers a range of activities and events. Data shows it typically has an average of 32 visits and 27 book issues per hour open which ranks it amongst the lower performing Libraries in Hampshire.

Geographical impact: Gosport

Description of proposed change

Proposal to close Lee-on-the-Solent Library, to support achieving a £1.040 million operational saving required due to budget reductions. If there is interest, the Library could be handed over to a community group to be used as an independent community-managed library. Service users would have reasonable access to Gosport Discovery Centre, reasonable access is defined by the County Council as around 20 minutes by car or around 30 minutes by public transport. Service users may prefer to switch to digital library services. Vulnerable and isolated residents who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to apply for the Home Library Service.

Impacts of the proposed change

This impact assessment covers Service users

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. 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
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<p>Age: Low</p>	<p>Library services are traditionally accessed more by older people and by children and families and as such these groups would be affected more by the proposed changes than the population as a whole. Of the catchment population for Lee-on-the-Solent Library, 20% are aged 0-17 (below the Hampshire average of 21%) and 34% are over 60 (above the Hampshire average of 25%). Library customers in these groups would no longer be able to access the full range of services in Lee-on-the-Solent and would need to travel to a neighbouring Library. Service users would have reasonable access to Gosport Discovery Centre, reasonable access is defined by the County Council as around 20 minutes by car or around 30 minutes by public transport. Transport can be a barrier for some older people and for children and young people. The proportion of the population with no cars in the catchment is 6.1%, above the Hampshire average of 5.8%. Not all members of the catchment population access Lee-on-the-Solent Library, 1,723 borrowers would be impacted in total, but 56% of those already regularly use an alternative Library. The School Library Service supports the majority of our schools with high quality stock and this may be a viable alternative for children and young people who are unable to travel to an alternative library. Vulnerable and isolated residents, including older people, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to apply for the Home Library Service. As such, the impact has been assessed as low.</p>	
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<p>Disability: Low</p>	<p>Library customers with disabilities would no longer be able to access the full range of services in Lee-on-the-Solent and would need to travel to a neighbouring Library. Service users would have reasonable access to Gosport Discovery Centre, reasonable access is defined by the County Council as around 20 minutes by car or around 30 minutes by public transport. Transport can be a barrier for some people with disabilities. The proportion of the population with no cars in the catchment is 6.1%, above the Hampshire average of 5.8%. Vulnerable and isolated residents, including people with disabilities, who are unable to travel to an alternative library could choose to apply for the Home Library Service. As such, the impact has been assessed as low.</p>	
<p>Sexual orientation: Neutral</p>		
<p>Race: Low</p>	<p>BME communities are represented amongst library users generally. We do not yet have data as to the breakdown of the ethnicity make up of users of different libraries. We can only consider the diversity of the local communities in Hampshire. We have no reason to believe that these proposals will impact on BME communities more than library users generally.</p>	
<p>Religion and belief: Neutral</p>		

Gender reassignment: Neutral		
Gender: Neutral		
Marriage and civil partnership: Neutral		
Pregnancy and maternity: Neutral		
Other policy considerations	Impact	Mitigation
Poverty: Neutral		
Rurality: Neutral		

Neutrality statement (if all considerations have a neutral impact)

Any other information

Library Service customers can access a range of services online, without accessing a Library. This includes digital borrowing of eBooks and eAudio, online reservation of stock which can be delivered to a nearby Library and online payment of fines and charges.

The consultation information pack and response form are also available in Easy Read, large print and audio format. Copies in other languages or formats (such as British Sign Language or Braille) are available on request.