



## Library Service Consultation - Lowford (Bursledon) Community Library transition to Independent Community-Managed Library

Accountable officer: Emma Noyce

Email address: emma.noyce@hants.gov.uk

Department: Culture, Communities and Business  
Services

Date of  
assessment: 08/01/2020

### Description of current service/policy

Lowford Community Library is a Tier 4 volunteer-run community-managed library providing local access to core services (membership; book loans and reservations; payments via Self-Service Kiosk; public IT). It is part of the Hampshire Library Network and must adhere to its Policies and Procedures. A paid member of Library staff visits once a week. Stock remains the property of the Library Service. It serves a catchment population of 10,297, has 464 borrowers, of which 45% also use an alternative Library within Hampshire, is open 24 hours a week and averages 6 issues per open hour. The Index of Multiple Deprivation score running from 1 (most deprived) to 10 (least deprived) is 7.0.

Geographical impact: Eastleigh

### Description of proposed change

In the context of service budget reductions, it is proposed to withdraw Hampshire Library Service support and transition Lowford Community Library to an independent community-managed library. Impact on its 464 borrowers will depend which services it chooses to continue and it may choose to close altogether. Independent community-managed libraries operate outside the Hampshire Library Network, have autonomy over policies and procedures and may introduce their own fees and charges. There are independent community-managed libraries at The Mercury, Hamble and the Carroll Centre, Winchester, which received donated stock and start-up advice from the Library Service, but no ongoing support.

### Impacts of the proposed change

This impact assessment covers Service users

## Engagement and consultation

Has engagement or consultation been carried out?

Planned

Members of Lowford Community Library Management Committee will be invited to meet with senior leadership.

The Library Service will be undertaking a 10-week public consultation to seek customers', residents' 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](http://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.

<b>Statutory considerations</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
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<p><b>Age:</b> 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 Lowford Community Library, 20% are aged 0-17 (just below the Hampshire average of 21%) and 26% are over 60 (just above the Hampshire average of 25%). Library customers in these groups would no longer be able to access the full range of services in Lowford and would need to travel to a neighbouring Library. Existing service users would have reasonable access to Netley and Hedge End Libraries. Reasonable access is defined by the County Council as around 20 minutes by car or around 30 minutes by public transport. Hedge End Library is over this public transport journey time by less than ten minutes. 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 4.5%, below the Hampshire average of 5.8%. Not all members of the catchment population access Lowford Community Library, which has 464 borrowers across all age ranges, of which 45% also use an alternative Library within Hampshire. 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><b>Disability:</b></p> <p>Low</p>	<p>Library customers with disabilities will no longer be able to access the full range of services in Lowford and will need to travel to a neighbouring Library. Existing service users would have reasonable access to Netley and Hedge End Libraries. Reasonable access is defined by the County Council as around 20 minutes by car or around 30 minutes by public transport. Hedge End Library is over this public transport journey time by less than ten minutes. Transport can be a barrier for some people with disabilities. The proportion of the population with no cars in the catchment is 4.5%, below 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><b>Sexual orientation:</b></p> <p>Neutral</p>		
<p><b>Race:</b></p> <p>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><b>Religion and belief:</b></p> <p>Neutral</p>		

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

## **Neutrality statement (if all considerations have a neutral impact)**

### **Any other information**

Library Service customers can access a range of services online, without visiting 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.