



Library Service Consultation – Reduction in staffed hours - Service User Impacts

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Department: Culture, Communities and Business Services
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Description of current service/policy

The County Council's Library Service is one of the largest in the country, with over 5.1 million visits per year and over 5 million book issues per year. It employs 486 staff (300 Full Time Equivalent), 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 reduce staffed opening hours across all Tiers (including Discovery Centres), to support achieving a £1.040 million operational saving required due to budget reductions. The degree of change will be dependent on consultation outcomes, but it is expected be a reduction of at least 15-25% of hours. This could be a blanket reduction, reducing all Libraries by the same amount. Or through standardisation of hours, libraries within each tier would operate for broadly the same number of hours, although Library opening times may vary according to local need. Community volunteers could keep council-run libraries open outside the standard hours if they wished to.

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. A second local consultation will follow in Summer 2020, giving the opportunity to comment on specific opening hour 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
<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. The service is unable to assess the full impacts until the consultation is complete and decisions can be made based on the responses. 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> <p>A second local consultation will follow in Summer 2020, giving the opportunity to comment on specific opening hour options.</p> <p>As further information is available more detailed Equality Impact Assessments will be completed.</p>	

<p>Disability:</p> <p>Low</p>	<p>Library customers would have reduced access to Library Services, which may have a greater impact on customers with disabilities. The service is unable to assess the full impacts until the consultation is complete and decisions can be made based on the responses. 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. A second local consultation will follow in Summer 2020, giving the opportunity to comment on specific opening hour options.</p> <p>As further information is available more detailed Equality Impact Assessments will be completed.</p>	
<p>Sexual Orientation:</p> <p>Neutral</p>		
<p>Race:</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>Religion and belief:</p> <p>Neutral</p>		

Gender Reassignment: Neutral		
Gender: Neutral		
Marriage and civil partnership: Neutral		
Pregnancy and Maternity: Neutral		
Other policy considerations	Impact	Mitigation
Poverty: Neutral		
Rurality: Low	<p>Some customers live and work in rural areas and would have reduced access to Library Services. The service is unable to assess the full impacts until the consultation is complete and decisions can be made based on the responses. 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. A second local consultation will follow in Summer 2020, giving the opportunity to comment on specific opening hour options.</p> <p>As further information is available more detailed Equality Impact Assessments will be completed.</p>	

Neutrality statement (if all considerations have a neutral impact)

Any other information

As further information is available more detailed Equality Impact Assessments will be completed.

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.