

SP23 Equality Impact Assessment - Library Service income generation – service users and staff

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Section one – information about the service and service change

Service affected	Library Service
Please provide a short description of the service / policy/project/project phase	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. The Library Service currently generates income from a number of sources, including fines and charges; events and activities; plus room hire and long-term leases within its buildings. Around £1.1 million was generated during 2018/19 financial year from these sources (2020/21 figures have been impacted by COVID-19 therefore previous financial year figures have been used as a baseline). The Library Service believes there is potential to generate an additional income to offset costs from these sources and from other income generating opportunities.

	<p>A core Library book-lending service is offered free of charge at the point of delivery. Library Service customers can also access a range of services online, including digital borrowing of eBooks and eAudio; online reservations of stock; and online payment of fines and charges.</p>
<p>Please explain the new/changed service/policy/project</p>	<p>Alongside potential operational changes and efficiencies, the Library Service will continue to seek ways to generate new income to offset costs. The majority of income generation opportunities are business and partnership-focused, such as long-term leases, room hires and sponsorship. Other opportunities are focused on increasing income from events and activities.</p> <p>Proposed changes to increase income include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increasing the income generated through room hire and leases within council-run libraries; - reviewing current fees and charges (e.g. for printing and photocopying, learning activities and other events), and; - encouraging fundraising, sponsorship and donations, including piloting 'friends' groups' in local communities. <p>During 2020/21 in response to community needs while the library network was unable to open as normal, a Ready Reads service (we select, you collect) was introduced, initially this was a free service to enable our customers to access our services. Once the libraries are able to open normally it is anticipated that the Ready Reads Service will transition to a paid for service.</p> <p>For staff, this will be a new approach with a fresh commercial context. We will be supporting staff with training on commercial themes and working with a group that will allow us to build on existing processes and build new infrastructure to support this activity.</p>

The County Council's *Serving Hampshire Balancing the Budget* consultation (2021-2023) will seek residents' and stakeholders' views on strategic options for funding the Authority's budget gap. Where applicable, detailed proposals for making savings will be subject to further, more detailed 'stage two' consultation before any decisions on service specific changes are made.

Has any pre-consultation engagement been carried out?

(Delete as appropriate)

Yes

Describe the consultation or engagement you have performed or are intending to perform.

Describe who was engaged or consulted. What was the outcome of the activity and how have the results influenced what you are doing? If no consultation or engagement is planned, please explain why.

During the last 20 months significant work has been undertaken regarding the Library Service and how this can be remodelled in order to make necessary savings whilst still maintaining a full and effective service. In January 2020 a Public Consultation was launched from which around 28,000 responses were received through a variety of mediums including: email, letter, telephone, social media and face to face during Consultation drop-in sessions.

From these, 70% of respondents agreed that the Library Service needs to adapt to respond to the changing needs placed upon it. Further to this 83% of respondents agreed that the Library Service should investigate options to generate income. The Consultation demonstrated support from residents to: adapt to meet changing demands placed on the Library Service; explore different ways to deliver services in deprived communities; investigate options to generate income in order to contribute to the running of the Service and to identify ways of making delivery efficiencies.

In addition to the proposals for generating income outlined in the Consultation, respondents were given an opportunity to submit 'further comments' about the options proposed, 2,108 such comments were received. The two most frequently offered were those already proposed by the Library Service, hiring out spaces to organisations, groups and businesses or partnering with other services, such as the Post Office (30% of comments) and 29% of comments were regarding increasing the number of paid-for services.

Section two: Assessment

Table 1 Impact Assessment

Protected characteristic (see EIA Guidance for considerations)	Positive	Neutral	Negative - low	Negative - Medium	Negative - High	Affects staff, public or both?
Age		X				Both
Disability		X				Both
Gender reassignment		X				Both
Pregnancy and maternity		X				Both
Race		X				Both
Religion or belief		X				Both
Sex		X				Both
Sexual orientation		X				Both
Marriage & civil partnership		X				Both

Poverty		X	X			Staff: Neutral; Public: Low
Rurality		X				Both

Table 2 Geographical impact

Does the proposal impact on a specific area?

Area	Yes / no	Area	Yes / no	Area	Yes / no
All Hampshire	Yes	Fareham		New Forest	
Basingstoke and Deane		Gosport		Rushmoor	
East Hampshire		Hart		Test Valley	
Eastleigh		Havant		Winchester	

Section three: Equality Statement

Table 3 Consideration of and explanation for neutral or low negative impacts

Protected characteristic	Brief explanation of why this has been assessed as having neutral or low negative impact
Age	Library services are traditionally accessed more by children and families and by older people. 33% of borrowers are aged 0-17 (above the Hampshire average of 21%) and 32% are over 60 (above the Hampshire average of 25%). As such, these groups would be affected more by any changes than the population as a whole.

	<p>A core Library book-lending service will continue to be offered free of charge at the point of delivery as part of the statutory library offer.</p> <p>Income generation opportunities for the library service for library users will include suggested donations for certain activities such as reading challenges. Other income generating opportunities will include, but not be limited to, suggested donations, ticketing for events and course fees for selected courses.</p> <p>It is recognised that the older age group may consider costs in association with the library service to not be in line with their generation viewpoints. However, the service intend to ensure there is a narrative supplied to explain the nature of any income request as well as ensuring staff are well briefed and able to speak to customers about this.</p> <p>Families can enjoy accessing many elements of the library service without cost, including book lending and activities to support speech and language such as Storytime and Rhymetime.</p> <p>The majority of income generation opportunities are business- and partnership-focused, such as long-term leases, room hires and sponsorship. Other opportunities are focused on increasing income from events and activities. Any changes to charges would apply to all age groups.</p> <p>Any increase in fees and charges may have an impact on Service users, although this is deemed to be neutral, likewise any changes in the increase in room hire and events and activities may impact on staff, although this is also deemed to be neutral as it will be met within staff capacity and existing roles</p> <p>31% of Library Service staff are aged 55 and over, compared with 27% for Hampshire County Council so there is a slightly higher percentage of over 55s employed within the library service. There would be no expectation to change contracts or working patterns for the purpose of this work, however opportunities may arise for additional hours but on a voluntary basis.</p>
Disability	<p>A core Library book-lending service will continue to be offered free of charge at the point of delivery. The Library service is satisfied that there is a strong core offer that will not affect customers using the library that have a disability and indeed their carers are also considered in this. As a Library Service support in branch will continue to be offered to all those that require adjustments to access the service and this is not affected by the plans to strengthen the commercial outlook through income generation.</p> <p>For room hire, the service would be happy to build in additional time required for anyone who requests this in line with a recognised disability. Within the room hire policy the service have a set</p>

	<p>rate for room hire rates and also have a concessionary rate for organisations that are a registered charity.</p> <p>Opportunities to generate income through leases to support co-location or out-of-hours use by partner organisations may have a positive impact by increasing the availability of services for customers with this protected characteristic; such services would be positive prospective partners due to their fit with the Library Service Strategy to 2025.</p> <p>There would be no expectation to change staff contracts or working patterns for the purpose of this work, however opportunities may arise for additional hours but on a voluntary basis. Therefore, the impact on staff is also assessed as neutral.</p>
Gender Reassignment	<p>There is not considered to be any impact in regard to people, service users or staff, that are going through or have been through gender reassignment. Any and all parts of the library service are accessible with no limitation based on gender reassignment.</p>
Marriage and Civil Partnership	<p>There is not considered to be any impact in regard to people, service users or staff, that are married or in a civil partnership. Any and all parts of the library service are accessible with no limitation based on marital status.</p>
Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>Families can enjoy accessing many elements of the library service without cost including book lending and activities to support speech and language such as Storytime and Rhymetime.</p> <p>Consideration around access requirements is taken at a service wide level to ensure that all of customers can successfully use the library space.</p> <p>Opportunities to generate income through leases to support co-location or out-of-hours use by partner organisations may positively impact on pregnancy and maternity by increasing the availability of services to customers with these protected characteristics; such services would be positive prospective partners due to their fit with the Library Service Strategy to 2025.</p> <p>Any potential low-negative impact on staff with this protected characteristic, such as potential longer/less regular shift patterns to support out of hours use (which may impact on attendance of pre-natal appointments, or which may be more tiring, for example), would be taken into consideration in assessing the viability of such opportunities, so that individual staff are not negatively impacted.</p> <p>There would be no expectation to change staff contracts or working patterns for the purpose of this work, however opportunities may arise for additional hours but on a voluntary basis. Therefore the overall impact on staff is also assessed as neutral.</p>

Race	<p>There is not considered to be any impacts on individuals, service users or staff regardless of race or ethnic identity.</p> <p>Elements of support required for this, operates via the library service rather than as part of income generation. All activities and events are reviewed for their use of language and inclusive content.</p>
Religion or belief	<p>There is not considered to be any impacts on individuals, service users or staff regardless of religion or belief.</p> <p>Elements of support required for this, operates via the library service rather than as part of income generation. All activities and events are reviewed for their use of language and inclusive content. There is also a consideration in planning of such activities around significant days of celebration within a range of religions.</p>
Sex (gender)	<p>There is not considered to be any impacts on individuals, service users or staff regardless of gender. Operational considerations exist via the wider library service around toilet access etc, rather than as part of income generation. All activities and events are reviewed for their use of language and inclusive content.</p> <p>The Library Service employs 483 staff, of which 87% are female and 13% are male.</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>There is not considered to be any impacts on individuals, service users or staff regardless of sexual orientation. All activities and events are reviewed for their use of language and inclusive content.</p>
Poverty	<p>Library Service customers can access a range of services online for free as well as the Go Online computer terminals in branch for all requirements they may have for living such as food shopping, applying for Universal Credit and communicating with key services. Free online services include digital borrowing of eBooks and eAudio; online reservations of stock; and online payment of fines and charges.</p> <p>Efforts to increase income generation for the Library Service could disproportionately impact on communities or individuals that reside in areas of multiple deprivation. According to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), there are several areas of deprivation in Hampshire within which libraries are situated and could be affected.</p> <p>However, the paid Ready Reads offer will be optional, and a core Library book-lending service will continue to be offered free of charge at the point of delivery, therefore the overall impact is deemed to be low.</p>

	<p>The Ready Reads offer is being reviewed as to area take up and a consideration around metrics that set out socio-economic information, including areas of deprivation and where there are issues with low levels of literacy.</p> <p>Opportunities to generate income through leases to support co-location or out-of-hours use by partner organisations may positively impact on poverty by increasing the availability of targeted services in those communities; such services would be positive prospective partners due to their fit with the Library Service Strategy to 2025.</p> <p>There is not considered to be any impact to staff based on poverty.</p>
Rurality	<p>Some potential challenges for library users living in rural areas may include connectivity issues for online access as well issues with transport to get to a library location. However, in regard to income generation there should be a generally low impact here. A key consideration is around being able to return books. Should online renewal through Spydus not be an option, nor the option to travel to branch, books can be renewed by telephone and indeed fines and charges have the option to be paid this way too.</p> <p>The existing Home Library Service and Good Neighbour schemes are expected to expand to accommodate an increased number of people either unable or unwilling to leave their home, whilst the 'Ready Reads' service offers a way of obtaining physical books through a contactless collection offer and was a mitigating factor through covid, although this may transition into a paid for service.</p> <p>Opportunities to generate income through leases to support co-location or out-of-hours use by partner organisations may positively impact on rural locations by increasing the availability of services in those communities; services that meet community need would be positive prospective partners due to their fit with the Library Service Strategy to 2025.</p> <p>Balancing the noted impacts, the overall impact on customers is assessed as neutral.</p> <p>Any potential low-negative impact on staff in rural locations, such as infrequent public transport to support out of hours use, would be taken into consideration in assessing the viability of such opportunities in those locations, so that individual staff are not negatively impacted. There would be no expectation to change contracts or working patterns for the purpose of this work, however opportunities may arise for additional hours on a voluntary basis. Therefore, the impact on staff overall is assessed as neutral.</p>

Table 4 Explanation and mitigation for medium and high impacts

Protected characteristic	Brief explanation of why this has been assessed as having medium or high negative impact	Is there a Geographical impact? If so, please explain - use list below to identify geographical area(s)	Short explanation of mitigating actions
N/A			

Table 5 Consideration of and explanation for positive impacts

Protected characteristic	Brief explanation of why this has been assessed as having positive impact
N/A	

Box 1 Please set out any additional information which you think is relevant to this impact assessment:

A wide range of digital content has been made available through Hampshire Libraries' social media accounts and YouTube channel. This includes Rhymetime, Storytime, book reviews, learning, groups, clubs and other activities. From 23 March to 12 July, Hampshire Libraries' Facebook posts reached over a million users (up 211% on the same period last year); in that same period 281 videos were published and viewed over 100,000 times. Whilst this content does not fully replace the benefits of face-to-face activities taking place in libraries, it offers an alternative way for people to access and participate in library services. Contactless library services have been expanded and broadened. The existing Home Library Service and Good Neighbour schemes are expected to expand to accommodate an increased number of people either unable or unwilling to leave their home, whilst the 'Ready Reads' service offers a way of obtaining physical books through a contactless collection offer and was a mitigating factor through covid, although this may transition into a paid for service.

Box 2

If appropriate, (i.e., it is immediately evident that a full EIA is not necessary) please provide a short succinct assessment to show that due regard has been given and that there is no requirement for a full EIA:

N/A