

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – STAGE 1

CIRA Ref	C/14/67	
Lead Officer	Name	Jo Burrows
	Position	Workstream Project Officer
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SECTION 1 –Context & Background

1.0 What is the title of the policy / practice?

Halton Library Service

This is an Impact Assessment of proposed reductions in Library opening hours as part of the Efficiency Programme. Current and proposed opening times are detailed in the table below.

This assessment examines the effect of the proposals on any or all of the protected groups.

CURRENT OPENING HOURS

	HALTON LEA	WIDNES	DITTON	RUNCORN
MONDAY	9:00 – 17:30	9:00 – 19:00	9:30 – 17:00	9:30 – 17:00
TUESDAY	9:00 – 17:30	9:00 – 19:00	9:30 – 19:00	9:30 – 17:00
WEDNESDAY	9:00 – 17:30	9:00 – 19:00	9:30 – 17:00	CLOSED
THURSDAY	9:00 – 19:00	9:00 – 19:00	9:30 – 17:00	9:30 – 19:00
FRIDAY	9:00 – 19:00	9:00 – 17:30	9:30 – 17:00	9:30 – 17:00
SATURDAY	9:00 – 13:00	9:00 – 13:00	9:00 – 13:00	9:00 – 13:00

PROPOSED OPENING HOURS

	HALTON LEA	WIDNES	DITTON	RUNCORN
MONDAY	10:00 – 17:00	10:00 – 17:00	10:00 – 17:00	10:00 – 17:00
TUESDAY	9:00 – 19:00	9:00 – 19:00	10:00 – 18:00	10:00 – 18:00
WEDNESDAY	10:00 – 17:00	10:00 – 17:00	CLOSED	CLOSED
THURSDAY	9:00 – 19:00	9:00 – 19:00	9:30 – 17:00	9:30 – 17:00
FRIDAY	10:00 – 17:00	10:00 – 17:00	10:00 – 17:00	10:00 – 17:00
SATURDAY	10:00 – 14:30	10:00 – 14:30	10:00 – 14:30	10:00 – 14:30

1.1 What is the current status of the policy / practice?

Existing ☒

New ☐

1.2 Who are the main stakeholders and who has primary responsibility for delivering the policy / practice?

Halton residents, community groups, schools, businesses, visitors, other agencies
 Responsibility for Efficiency Review, Efficiency Programme Manager
 Responsibility for Library service delivery, Head of Service

1.3 Are there any other related policies / practices?

Mobile library service

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1.4 Who is the policy / practice intended to affect?

Residents ☒ Staff ☒ Specific Group(s) (add details below)

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1.5 What are the principal aims and the intended outcomes of the policy practice?

The overall aim of the Libraries Review is to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service within a reduced budget. This EIA addresses the static libraries' element of the proposals which have been consulted on (consultation ran from 14th July – 14th August 2014). The Mobile Library service proposals are subject to a separate EIA.

SECTION 2 – Consideration of Impact

2.1 Is there sufficient evidence to determine, on the balance of probability, that the policy / practice has, or could have, an impact upon each of the equality groups identified below?

Yes ☒ (proceed to question 2.4) No

2.2 Where further data / intelligence / consultation is required please provide details below.

Information Activity	Source / Planned	Timeframe	Lead Officer
N/A			

2.3 What were the principal findings / conclusions of this research / consultation?

N/A

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2.4.1 On the basis of evidence has the actual / potential impact of the policy / practice been judged to be positive (+), neutral (=), or negative (-) for each of the equality groups and is the level of impact considered to be high (H), Medium (M) or low (L)

Equality Impact Assessment

Halton Library Service

Key

R- Race/Ethnicity	D – Disability	- Negative Impact
A – Age	F – Faith/Religion	+ Positive Impact
G – Gender	PM – Pregnancy and Maternity	= Neutral Impact
SO – Sexual Orientation	MCP – Marriage/Civil Partnership	
GR – Gender Reassignment	C - Carers	
SE – Socio Economic	PSED – Public Sector Equality Duty*	

*** Does this service**

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

(√ or X – give evidence where appropriate)

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FUNCTION	R	A	G	SO	GR	D	F	PM	MCP	SE	C	PSED *	COMMENTS
Book lending Access to public PCs Access to the internet	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	√	Please see table below for consideration of the impact. In relation to each of the protected groups: Libraries are key resources in the community providing books, information and technology, promoting lifelong learning, digital inclusion and encouraging and celebrating reading. They are important community spaces which offer a welcoming neutral environment and host a range of cultural activities, events and opportunities for all sections of the community. This purpose and ethos is not affected by the proposals

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Areas of possible impact	Explanation and Evidence
Race	There is no available analysis of library membership by race. Analysis of the Halton population indicates that 97.5% are of a white British background, while 2.5% identify themselves as BME. During the Library public consultation, 950 (97%) respondents identified themselves as White British, with 11 (1.1%) people identifying themselves as belonging to other ethnic groups and 14 people preferring not to say. This reflects the general Halton population. The proposals are unlikely to lead to any disproportionate adverse impacts for this group.
Age	The age profile of active library users (ALUs) shows that the largest proportion comes from the 20 to 59 age group (39.28%). Under 20s make up 36.9% of ALUs and 23.82% of users are aged 60+. In terms of the consultation responses, younger age groups were under-represented with only 5% of responses coming from under 25s. This may be because parents/carers completed questionnaires on behalf of younger library users. 25% of responses were received from the 66+ age group. While proposals advocate a reduction in opening hours, care has been taken to consider the needs of various sections of the community in developing new opening hours. The proposals ensure that library services are available during the school day (for class visits etc), daytimes, evenings and Saturdays to accommodate workers/non-workers/young people/school age children/older people and families). The public consultation aimed to gather opinion on the suitability of the proposed opening hours, and have been slightly changed as a result of the consultation responses to accommodate those people who suggested opening the main libraries earlier than 10am. There are no disproportionate adverse impacts anticipated for ALUs by age as a result of the proposals.
Gender	Based on Library (Koha) statistics (as at 1 June 2014) relating to gender, the overall make up of active library users is predominantly female (57.6% female, 38.2% male¹). This pattern is reflected across all of the static libraries, with the difference being most pronounced at Runcorn Library (62.6% female, 35.8% male). This was also reflected in the response to the consultation, with 67% of the respondents being female. Castlefields is the only service point where there are more male active users than female, but the numbers are too low to carry significance. Reduction in opening hours of the library is unlikely to have a disproportionate impact on library users as a result of their gender.
Sexual Orientation	The Library Service does not carry out diversity monitoring of this group. However, there are no disproportionate adverse impacts anticipated as a result of the proposals.

¹ Percentages do not add up to 100%, some accounts were registered in the old system where gender was not recorded, others are accounts belonging to organisations.

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Gender Reassignment	The Library Service does not carry out diversity monitoring of this group. However, there are no disproportionate adverse impacts anticipated as a result of the proposals.
Disability	There is no diversity monitoring carried out in relation to library users and disability. The four static libraries currently operating will continue to do so. These are all accessible buildings for people with physical disabilities. The range of books available for people with hearing and/or visual impairment will not be affected by the proposals. The libraries will continue to deliver targeted activities such as those designed to support people with dementia (Memory Boxes, Pictures to Share), and those with mental health problems (books on prescription). 12% of those responding to the public consultation considered themselves to have a disability, while 5% described their current situation as 'permanently sick/disabled'. The proposals are unlikely to lead to any disproportionate adverse impacts for this group.
Faith/Religion	The Library Service does not carry out diversity monitoring of this group. However, there are no disproportionate adverse impacts anticipated for this group of library users.
Pregnancy/Maternity	The Library Service does not carry out diversity monitoring of this group. However, there are no disproportionate adverse impacts anticipated as a result of the proposals.
Marriage/Civil Partnership	The Library Service does not carry out diversity monitoring of this group. However, there are no disproportionate adverse impacts anticipated as a result of the proposals.
Socio-Economic Status	The Library Service does not carry out diversity monitoring of this group. However, there are no disproportionate adverse impacts anticipated as a result of the proposals.
Carers	The Library Service does not carry out diversity monitoring of this group. 2% of the respondents to the public consultation described their current situation as 'full-time carer'. There are no disproportionate adverse impacts anticipated as a result of the proposals.

While the table above indicates that there should be no disproportionate adverse impact on each of the protected characteristics, the proposals involve reducing the number of opening hours in each static library in the Borough. The Library Strategy includes a commitment to developing online technologies to enable access to library services outside of opening hours. These include an enquiry service, the ability to search for, reserve and renew items remotely and the development of a more comprehensive e-book offer.

Halton has been committed to maintaining all four of its libraries for the benefit of all its residents. Despite current financial constraints, implementation of these proposals will enable the Council to continue to deliver a substantial library service to residents within a reduced budget.

2.4.2

Does the policy / practice have any potential impact upon safeguarding vulnerable people?

None identified as part of the Efficiency Review proposals

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Advisory Notes:

- 2.5 What data and information has been used in determining the positive impact of the policy / procedure under review in relation to promoting equality or good relations or eliminating discrimination and is this justifiable and lawful in regards to any negative impacts for other groups?**

Equality Group(s)	N/A
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Baseline data and information
N/A

Nature of impact and where this is positive justification
N/A

- 2.6 How will the impact of the policy / practice be monitored?**

Better diversity monitoring should be adopted by the Library Service going forward. This is essential in order to better target library resources, particularly as resources are reducing.

- 2.7 Who will be responsible for monitoring and how will this be arranged?**

Library Service, new job descriptions for the service have been developed, with specific responsibility for equality monitoring included.

- 2.8 What actions, if any, has this review identified (that do not form part of a stage 2 assessment) to promote equality of opportunity or relations between groups and to support community cohesion? If no actions have been identified please insert 'no further action identified' within first column.**

Action & purpose / outcome	Priority	Timeframe	Lead Officer
Robust diversity monitoring of library users	Med	Post-implementation	TBC

- 2.9**

Job Title or Name	Organisation / representative of
Jo Burrows, Workstream Project Officer	HBC

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2.10 Public Sector Equality Duty

General Duty

Does this policy take into account the need to: -

- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conflict that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
Yes ✓
No
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
Yes ✓
No
- (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
Yes ✓
No

2.11 Completion Statement

**As the identified Lead Officer of this review I confirm that:-
(Please complete only one of the following sections)**

1. A negative impact has been identified for one or more equality groups and that a Stage 2 Assessment is required
2. There is sufficient information available to provide assurance that there will be a positive differential impact for one or more equality groups, and that this is justifiable and lawful OR a neutral impact has been determined, and that details of the review and the actions arising from it have been provided to the Directorate Equality Lead Officer for inclusion within the Directorate Register. ✓

Signed	Jo Burrows
Dated	June 2014

Completed CIRAs should be sent to Les Unsworth, Corporate and Organisational Policy, to be given a unique reference number and for inclusion on the central register.