Full Equality Impact Assessment
Library Services Review

1 Introduction

As a consequence of the Government's four-year financial settlement, Bracknell Forest Council is faced with a potential budget deficit of around £25m between now and 2019/20.

The new Council Plan provides a framework that sets out how the Council will address this challenge. This includes a comprehensive review of how all Council services are delivered over a four-year period, known as the Transformation Programme. The speedy delivery of savings through the effective transformation of services is critical to the achievement of a balanced and sustainable budget in each of the next three years.

The library service is one of the first service reviews in the Transformation Programme. The ambition is to provide the best library service possible within the reduced budget available, so the Council has to ask itself tough questions about how best to target resources. The borough's libraries will need to be worked harder, maximising the use of the buildings and the impact of their services.

The Authority is not prevented from making budget savings which may disproportionately affect people with protected characteristics but it must demonstrate that it has attempted to identify where this may occur and that it has taken all reasonable steps to remove or reduce these potential impacts.

Therefore an Equality Impact Screening tool was completed in November 2016; the outcome being to undertake a Full Impact Assessment.

This report evidences that a significant amount of consultation opportunities have been provided to staff and the public to assess the impact of the proposals for the future direction of the library service.

While 78% of those who responded to the consultation indicated support from the proposals, there was also some concern expressed. These were the potential for the loss of experienced library staff and the loss of their technical skills, increased social isolation if staff numbers or opening hours were reduced and some members of staff had concerns around personal safety and security if single staffing was to become normalised.

The majority however recognised the positive benefits of the following of increased volunteering opportunities for the Borough, no library closures, increased library access, improved technology and a continued and improved statutory provision.

This report sets out:

1   Introduction
2   Purpose of this report
3   Methodology and Sources of Data
4   Background
5   Consultation & Engagement
6   Assessment of Impact on Equality strands
7   Conclusions
8   Monitoring Arrangements
9   Publication of Equality Impact Assessment

2   Purpose of this report

This is a Full Equality Impact Assessment Report which reviews the impact of the Council's preferred options for the transformation of the Library Service on the key groups affected. It looks at issues identified, considerations and conclusions around the proposed improvements to the library service delivery.

The proposed savings of £400,000 are from the library service as a whole which incorporates all 9 libraries within the borough.

There are two key pieces of legislation to consider in relation to the provision of library services and any changes made to that provision. In very simple terms, authorities need to prove that all residents have equal access to library services, regardless of their circumstances, and that the library service is an adequate one to meet their needs.

Firstly, the Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964 requires first tier English local authorities to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' public library service. Local authorities must:

- Provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons in the area that want to make use of it;
- Promote the service; and
- Lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area.

The second important area of legislation for library services is equalities legislation, principally the Equality Act (2010) which brings together nine separate pieces of legislation into one single act simplifying the law and strengthening it in important ways to help tackle discrimination and inequality.

The need to assess the impact of the Council's decisions on protected groups is central to ensuring that decisions are made fairly.

A review of the proposals and consultation has indicated that the protected characteristics that may not benefit fully from the proposals are:

- Younger people
- Older people
- People with disabilities

Additionally, while females within the library service will not be disproportionately affected by the proposals, the fact that the vast majority of staff members are female means that numerically there is the potential for them to be impacted on more negatively compared with men.

3   Methodology and Sources of Data

The library review follows the standard four-stage cycle of strategic commissioning: *analyse, plan, do and review*.

1. **Analyse**: exploring what's needed and why and what you want to achieve.

2. **Plan**: working out how best to achieve the results that are needed.

3. **Do**: putting your plans into effect.

4. **Review**: making sure the plans are working and checking that the results are being delivered.

This is the largest and most fundamental review of Bracknell Forest's library service and its scope has included:

- Analysis of current performance and the services provided;

- An analysis of community needs;

- Extensive research into best practice elsewhere;

- Providing advice on the statutory obligation to provide a public library service;

- A comprehensive programme of consultation and engagement with public, staff and stakeholders over six months, using a variety of methods;

- Research into other possible means of delivering the library service;

- Detailed work on new technology, volunteering and stock management;

- Development of a vision and outcomes framework;

- The identification of savings and efficiencies alongside improvements to the service;

Members have been involved in the Analyse and Plan Phase stages of the review to:

- Elicit their views on key issues identified to date.

- Identify the issues that members are interested in and/or those that are controversial or difficult.

- Identify what council members may find controversial or difficult, to inform the approach to the next stage of the review.

- Ensure more effective decision-making in the final stages of the review.

4 Background

By the end of the analyse phase of the library review in July 2016, the Council had identified possible options to maintain a quality library service whilst making substantial savings. They arrived at a core option, which it was felt necessary to implement regardless of service model chosen. This option would bring substantial efficiencies through the introduction of Self-service Kiosks and Technology Enabled Opening (TEO), modernising processes and potentially sharing services with others.

Self-service kiosks will enable customers to issue and return books and pay library charges for themselves, without the need of staff intervention. Technology Enabled Opening (TEO) that enables eligible library members to access Library premises when the libraries are closed and to make use of the full range of facilities on offer.

In addition, the council identified three possible directions for the plan phase:

- Option 1 - closing some of the library buildings;

- Option 2 - moving towards increased community involvement and volunteering; or

- Option 3 - completely remodelling the service and invest in new facilities

Early engagement with public, staff, stakeholders and councillors during the analyse phase, showed a clear preference for keeping libraries open and increasing community involvement through volunteering. The Council decided that option 2 was therefore the preferred option to explore further in the plan phase of the review and consult the public on.

Option 2 – Preferred proposed option (in addition to core option)

- Retain current network of libraries, no closures.

- Find savings through reviewing internal processes, staffing levels, and investing in new self-service technology.

- Explore sharing services with other partners and council services and modernise the stock management processes. Retain current network of libraries.

- Invest in a volunteering programme.

- Work towards increased community involvement.

- Remodel individual libraries as required as new housing and redevelopment materialise.

Both the core option and option 2 are interdependent and together will achieve the £400k savings required. The new technology and volunteering programme will enable more efficient processes and better use of existing staff resources.

5   Consultation & Engagement

During May and June 2016 a programme of early engagement was conducted with residents, library staff and key stakeholders to gather their views on the library service in Bracknell Forest. Then a public consultation on the preferred option ran from mid-October to mid-December 2016. Both consultation programmes consisted of:

- An online survey (with paper copies);
- A staff survey;
- Four public meetings across the borough;
- Focus groups with young people;
- Provision of a dedicated email address for comments and questions; and
- A series of themed workshops with library staff.

Over 2000 responses were received to the survey completed in May and June 2016 which focussed on how, when and why respondents used existing service. And during public consultation in October to mid-December on the analyse report and the council's options to achieve savings, 927 people completed the survey and summary responses are shown below:

- 78% agreed that the council should implement Option 2, the Council's preferred option;

- Those who disagreed with option 2 were concerned about the quality of service, losing knowledgeable staff and the potential unreliability of volunteers;
- 21% saw no or little impact if the changes were made;
- 12% predicted a negative impact; concerns were focused around loss of knowledgeable staff;
- When asked about other ways of making savings, the most popular suggestion (12%) was sharing buildings with other organisations. This was closely followed by cutting councillors' expenses, charging for use of the library, introducing cafes in libraries to raise income, closing the least used libraries and introducing volunteers.
- The most popular type of sharing of buildings was with other community services, including health centres (59%), closely followed by sharing with other council services (52%);
- 68% had already used self-service in shops and supermarkets;
- 66% were likely to use self-service machines in libraries;
- Of the 24% who did not want to use self-service machines, the most popular reason by far (67%) was that they would prefer to speak to a person. There was also anxiety about ability to work the machines, reliability of the technology and potential job losses;
- 50% said they would use the swipe card technology to access the library. Concerns were around safety and security and needing staff to assist;
- 37% said they would be likely to volunteer in a library;
- When asked what kind of books they wanted the library service to buy, popular fiction was the most popular choice, followed by crime, bestsellers, children's books, biographies and travel.

A survey of library staff was undertaken in November/December 2016. All staff were invited to take part and 57.5% responded. Summary responses are shown below:

- 62% thought that the service was not buying the right stock;
- Many felt that different libraries needed different ranges of stock, to suit their different communities;
- More staff input into stock selection was asked for;
- 71% had never worked in a single staffed library;
- There were many concerns about staff safety and security in relation to single staffing and swipe card access;
- Volunteers need proper management and clear roles;
- Good staff training for the new self-service technology is essential to its success, especially in relation to customer uptake.

Four public meetings were held across the borough in November and December at Binfield Primary School, Great Hollands Primary School, The Parks Community Centre and Sandhurst Community Centre. Over 90 people attended the meetings.

The meetings heard presentations on the results of the analyse phase and the preferred option from Cllr Iain McCracken, Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services & Public Protection, Vincent Paliczka, Director of Environment, Culture and Communities and Sue McKenzie from Activist Group.

The meetings were broadly in agreement with the preferred option for making the savings. However, there were a number of questions, including:

- How a volunteer programme would work and whether it was sustainable;

- Whether increased volunteering would mean the loss of knowledgeable library staff;
- How safety and security would be addressed with the introduction of swipe card technology; and
- Whether the council would relocate Bracknell Library into the new shopping centre

Ten workshop sessions with staff were held in November and December 2016, around three key themes reflecting the proposed changes to the service:

- Reviewing the stock management process;
- Introduction of self-service technology; and
- A volunteer programme.

Speakers with expertise in each area met with groups of staff to discuss the practicalities of each of the three areas, their experience from elsewhere and (most importantly) to gather staff knowledge and try to address concerns. These discussions have given us valuable insight that now informs the future service planning.

6   Assessment of Impact on Protected Characteristics (Impact/Evidence/Mitigation)

6.1   **Disability Equality** – this can include physical, mental health, learning or sensory disabilities and includes conditions such as dementia as well as hearing or sight impairment.

Proposal	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Measures
Self-service Technology	Introduction of self-service technology could have potential adverse impact. Library users with disability/impairment may have difficulties using self-service technology unless existing support is maintained.	Source: Institute of Public Care - PANSI & POPPI databases + ONS **10.1%** of the Bracknell Forest population aged 18-64 have a moderate or serious physical disability. ***This data not include long-term illness.** Source: Library review public consultation results December 2016 Of the respondents who answered this question, **20%** have a long-term illness, moderate or serious physical disability.	Users who require the support of staff to access services during existing core hours will continue to be able to do so. Opening hours are being extended so the opportunity to access services will increase. Self service technology will increase the ability of staff to support library users. Digital enablement will be increased by providing users with the opportunity and guidance to be able to access information and complete processes for themselves.
Technology assisted opening (TAO)	Technology assisted opening will enable the Council to provide access to libraries outside of staffed opening hours. Using libraries outside of opening hours will be a new experience for all users but may not provide the same opportunities to some disabled users. Some disabled users	As above	People with disabilities will continue to be able to access library services during daytime opening hours when staff and volunteers will be in the library and able to support people to access the service. A very successful volunteering programme, along with

	may always require the assistance of staff or volunteers and they therefore may be unable to use the open access technologies outside of staffed opening hours.		improved technology, may result in staffed library hours extending.

Books can also be reserved online or over the phone.

Home library service will remain and with increased volunteer capacity could also increase services provided to older people and people with disabilities who may not be able to visit libraries.

However, it is accepted that some people with disabilities who require support may not be able to access the extended hours of service. Volunteers may be able to extend the time when support is available but this cannot be guaranteed. |
| Volunteering | The implementation of increased use of volunteers will require the support of staff. Volunteers will need to be provided with the necessary equality and diversity awareness training to be able to support those users who may require additional support. The staff supporting volunteers will also need to have up to date training and development | As above | Equality and diversity and volunteer management training for staff and equality and diversity training for volunteers will be provided and will be refreshed regularly.

Staff support will be put in place to ensure that people with disabilities are able to volunteer in the libraries if they are able to meet the role description |

	in managing volunteers and equality and diversity to be able to support both volunteers and library users. Implementation of volunteering programme could have positive impact. Volunteers will increase the number of people available to help customers if they are unable to use self-service technology. A very successful volunteering programme may result in staffed library hours extending. A volunteer co-ordinator will be recruited for two years. The coordinator will lead on the recruitment and retention of volunteers.		requirements. Library staff will be provided with training and support to work with volunteers with additional needs. The volunteer scheme could provide opportunities to support people with disabilities into employment or training,
Supplier Selection Stock Management Processes	No impact identified. Supplier selection is an electronic process by which stock will be purchased, monitored and issued to reflect the diversity of the borough. The stock purchased will continue to cover a broad range of interests and beliefs.		
Potential that insufficient volunteer numbers or ad-hoc volunteer absence may require single staffing	Staff with certain disabilities may be unable to work alone and may require staff support. This would mean that they would be unable to work if	Harman water library has a lift to access the library service	Operational objective is not to have single staffing but planned support from volunteers. In recognition that the intention

	single staffing was required.		is to maintain service provision even if insufficient volunteers are available are ad-hoc absences occur the following Single staffing risk assessments have been completed and will be carried out annually a*nd following actions required identified:* • *Staff should be inducted in and follow the guidelines for Lone Working in the Staff Manual.* • *Investigate cost/feasibility of improving CCTV coverage to all libraries and linking existing CCTV to Forestcare as part of RFID? In full Capital bid.* • *Install digilocks (or standard key locks) on staff office doors where required.* • *All staff will be provided with a Forestcare pendant. This enables staff to alert Forestcare services that there is an incident taking place. Forestcare can listen in to the situation and if required send emergency services.*

6.2   Racial equality

Proposal	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Measures

Self-service Technology • Technology assisted opening • Volunteering • Supplier Selection Stock Management Processes • Implementation of Single Staffing	No Impact identified at this time.		

6.3 Gender equality

Proposal	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Measures
• Self-service Technology • Technology assisted opening • Volunteering • Supplier Selection Stock Management Processes • Potential for Single Staffing	While the intent is to manage natural staff turnover to realise financial savings, ultimately there is the possibility of redundancy for some staff and this would numerically adversely impact women more than men although not disproportionately. Some staff may feel concerned by if single staffing was required although volunteer recruitment should mean that staff are not working alone. Some staff may not feel safe when working alone but this could impact men and women.	Women make up a large majority of library staff in the current library service. Of the 73 members of staff 69 are female. Source: Library review staff survey results December 2016 71% of staff who responded to the survey have never worked in single-staffing libraries before. The staff had varying concerns about working in this manner ranging from feeling isolated and being unable to go to the toilet to personal security safety on dark late nights and with difficult customers.	Any redundancies will follow the organisational change protocol and all staff will be treated fairly during the process irrelevant of gender. Single staffing risk assessments have been completed and will be carried out annually *and the following actions required identified:* • *Staff should be inducted in and follow the guidelines for Lone Working in the Staff Manual.* • *Investigate cost/feasibility of improving CCTV coverage to all libraries and linking existing CCTV to Forestcare as part of RFID*

			Capital bid. • *Install digilocks (or standard key locks) on staff office doors where required.* • *All staff will be provided with a Forestcare pendant. This enables staff to alert Forestcare services that there is an incident taking place. Forestcare can listen in to the situation and if required send emergency services.*

6.4 Sexual orientation equality

Proposal	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Measures
• Self-service Technology • Technology assisted opening • Volunteering • Supplier Selection Stock Management Processes • Implementation of Single Staffing	No impact identified at this time.	There is no evidence that sexual orientation impacts on working ability	

6.5 Gender re-assignment

Proposal	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Measures
• Self-service Technology • Technology assisted opening • Volunteering • Supplier Selection Stock Management Processes	No impact identified at this time.	There is no evidence that sexual orientation impacts on working ability	

• Implementation of Single Staffing			

6.6   Age equality

Proposal	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Measures
Self-service Technology	Introduction of self-service technology could have potential adverse impact. Older library users may have difficulties using self-service technology unless existing support is maintained.	Source: ONS Population Estimates Unit published tables. Crown copyright % of Bracknell population by age group. 16-24 = 12.8% 25-34 = 17% 35-44 = 19% 45-54 = 20% 55-64 = 14.2% 65-74 = 9.5% 75 over = 7.5% Source: Library review public consultation results December 2016 % of respondents to survey by age group. 16-24 = 13% 25-34 = 17% 35-44 = 19% 45-54 = 19% 55-64 = 14% 65-74 = 10% 75 over = 8%	Users who require the support of staff to access services during existing core hours will continue to be able to do so. Opening hours are being extended so the opportunity to access services will increase. Self service technology will increase the ability of staff to support library users. Staff and volunteers will be provided with full training on how to use new technologies but will also be trained and developed to be able to support library users should they require it. For the first month of implementation a promotional team will be in every library to welcome and introduce users to the new practices and support staff, volunteers and users. While it is recognised that older people may face more

			challenges with the use of new technology, the current core service is intended to be maintained with the support of volunteers. This means that during existing core hours there will be support for any customers who requires it as at present meaning there will be no adverse impact.

Volunteers will increase the number of staff available to help customers if they are unable to use self-service technology. A very successful volunteering programme may result in staffed library hours extending.

However, it is recognised that some older members of the community may not elect to use the extended services available |
| Technology assisted opening | Children, the elderly and people with certain disabilities may not be able to avail themselves of the extended, unstaffed, service hours made possible by technology assisted opening. | As above. | .

Children will be able to attend as usual during staffed core opening hours and these hours may increase. A policy on minimum age will be developed. Specific inductions will be developed for children who are allowed to access the library with their parent's |

			permission. The elderly and disabled will be supported to feel confident in the use of technology and efforts to build their confidence will be ongoing.
Volunteering	Use of volunteers and retention of current library network could have positive impact. Volunteering can be positive experience for community and give opportunities for valuable work experience for young people and/or help social isolation in older people.		
Supplier Selection Stock Management Processes	No impact identified. Supplier selection is an electronic process by which stock will be purchased, monitored and issued to reflect the diversity of the borough. The stock purchased will continue to cover a broad range of interests and beliefs.		
Potential for the implementation of single staffing	Older members of staff may feel less confident if required to work alone due to operational matters		Single staffing risk assessments have been completed and will be carried out annually a*nd the following actions required identified:* • *Staff should be inducted in and follow the guidelines for Lone Working in the Staff Manual.*

			• *Investigate cost/feasibility of improving CCTV coverage to all libraries and linking existing CCTV to Forestcare as part of RFID Capital bid.* • *Install digilocks (or standard key locks) on staff office doors where required.* *All staff will be provided with a Forestcare pendant. This enables staff to alert Forestcare services that there is an incident taking place.* *Forestcare can listen in to the situation and if required send emergency services.*

6.7 **Religion and belief equality**

Proposal	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Measures
• Self-service Technology • Technology assisted opening • Volunteering • Supplier Selection Stock Management Processes • Implementation of Single Staffing	No Impact identified at this time.	There is no evidence that religion or belief equality has any impact on the ability to access the library service	

6.8 Pregnancy and maternity equality

Proposal	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Measures
• Self-service Technology • Technology assisted opening • Volunteering • Supplier Selection Stock Management Processes • Implementation of Single Staffing	No Impact identified at this time.	There is no evidence that pregnant women or those with maternity responsibilities will be unable to access the service because of these factors.	

6.9   Marriage and civil partnership equality.

Proposal	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Measures
• Self-service Technology • Technology assisted opening • Volunteering • Supplier Selection Stock Management Processes • Implementation of Single Staffing	No Impact identified at this time.	There is no evidence that those in different partnership arrangement will be unable to access the service because of these factors.	

7 Conclusions

7.1 While there are some uncertainties expressed by the public about the ability for the council to maintain its core staffed library services through the increased use of volunteers, the plan is to at least maintain the existing core staffed service with the possibility of extending this if volunteering is incredibly successful and therefore these uncertainties are unlikely to materialise and, setting aside any short term implementation issues, no adverse impact is anticipated. It is recognised however that the extended service hours may be more difficult to access in people with certain disabilities, the elderly and children

7.2 78% of those surveyed in a recent public consultation indicated support for the proposed changes in the library service. Some concerns were expressed about the introduction of new technology but as indicated above those that require support during existing core hours will be able to receive it, and those that do not wish to take advantage of the extended service made possible by technology assisted opening need not use it. Self-service technology will increase digital enablement and ensure that staff maintain capacity to support library users.

7.3 The concerns raised from staff around single staffing and security will be addressed and monitored through risk assessments and the culture change required for this new way of working will addressed by supporting staff through the changes with development and training.

7.4 The proposal outlined will deliver an anticipated £400K savings which will contribute to the £25million budget saving requirement the Authority has to make in the years ahead.

8 Monitoring Arrangements

8.1 Monitoring the on going situation against our equalities commitment is of crucial importance. The Council's annual equality information report for the library service will play a key tool in monitoring, along with customer and staff feedback and satisfaction information and monitoring of any complaints received.

8.2 A project manager is in place to coordinate and support the changes, team leaders and staff throughout the implementation phase and any subsequent consultation periods.

8.3 Steps will be taken to ensure that any adverse impact is minimised through the mitigation measured identfied and resolved in the shortest possible timescale by carrying out consultation where required, producing clear and relevant technology procurement specifications, providing trainings and development to staff, volunteers and users and by following change management protocol in close communication with human resources.

8.4 Ongoing monitoring of usage statistics and the interpretation of that usage will be completed to further increase participation.

8.5 Benefits realisation plans have been devised to ensure that the benefits identified are implemented, monitored and realised.

8.6 Risk assessments for the implementation of technology, volunteering and single staffing have been or will be completed and will be reviewed and carried out on a regular basis (annually once project is completed).

8.7 The proposal will be presented to the Executive on the 14th March 2017 when a decision will be made whether to proceed with the proposal or not.

9 Publication of Equality Impact Assessment

9.1 The EIA will be part of the Executive report going to Executive Decision on the 14th March 2017. This will also be published on the Bracknell Forest Council website. For further queries or information please contact the project manager

10 Appendices

10.1 These are available electronically on request.

- Equalities Screening Record Form
- Final options presented for full consultation
- QA Consultation Report (full version)