

Introduction

Swindon Borough Council is considering how to develop a sustainable future for library services in the borough. The council has set out the level of funding which will be available for the service by 2020 and has led a process of engagement about the library service and its future delivery between February and April 2016. The council has considered the feedback from the engagement and has developed a proposed draft library strategy which aims to balance the council's financial context with the statutory duty of providing a comprehensive and efficient service for everyone who lives, works and studies in the borough.

Next steps

The draft proposed strategy will be discussed with local people, communities, groups, partners, schools and other stakeholders through a period of consultation and engagement. The consultation will be a process through which feedback will be gathered and the engagement will be in the form of meetings, information provision and discussion and other forms of discussion with users, non-users and partners to gather feedback about the draft proposed strategy.

Impact assessment

Central to the consultation and the engagement will be understanding how the proposed draft strategy would impact different groups and the consideration of mitigation measures which could be put in place to mitigate any adverse impacts on particular groups.

The draft proposed strategy (outlined in more detail below) sets out the proposed direct service delivery by Swindon Borough Council which will be a comprehensive and efficient provision to meet the council's statutory requirements and provide a service for everyone who lives, works and studies in the borough.

A key principle of the strategy is that it is an enabling model which supports users, communities and partners to develop supplementary services in their area, tailored to local needs. These services will be discussed and developed with local communities but as yet are undefined.

It is the SBC model of provision that will form the basis of this Diversity Impact Assessment and this document considers any adverse impacts this model may have on particular groups and actions which could be taken to mitigate these impacts and minimise negative impacts for users and communities.

The needs of and impacts on different groups with protected characteristics under the Equalities Act will be considered in relation to, as well as groups which are impacted because of their socio-economic status. Any supplementary services will not be considered in this DIA.

1 What's it about?

Refer to equality duties

What is the proposal? What outcomes/benefits are you hoping to achieve?

Across the borough of Swindon, libraries are used by a range of people with different needs and characteristics to access a range of services and facilities.

Proposed Strategy and Delivery Model

The Library Service strategy is to build communities through literacy and learning. By 2020, the service aims to be recognised nationally for the quality of its services, innovation in delivery, cost effectiveness and the outcomes it achieves for early years, for adult learners, for active citizens and for active ageing.

The proposed strategy would be delivered through a core provision comprising:

- A network of four Libraries of Central, West Swindon, Highworth, and North Swindon, supported by investment in self-service technology that would allow extended access to borrowers beyond staffed hours. Staffed hours will change to 47.5hrs per week in Central, to enable staffed hours of 15hrs per week to be available at West, Highworth and North Swindon Libraries.
- Professional Library services delivered by qualified Librarians and trained Library staff including service development, learning and outreach, local studies, information and digital literacy, stock management and volunteer co-ordination.
- Support with ward councillors to develop parish, school, or community-led local Library services, including a menu of optional free and paid-for services.

The Council's direct provision would include dedicated resources to support the expansion of volunteering including dedicated volunteer roles in Libraries, the Home Library Service, and any additional forms of volunteering that preserve and enhance access to Library Services,

As a consequence, as part of the Council's future direct provision, the strategy proposes that Libraries outreach and learning services are repurposed to deliver targeted literacy and learning programmes – designed in partnership with communities and partners - that meet local need and make a measurable difference to lives.

Council funding would not extend to maintaining book stock, building costs, public network IT, or paid staff in Libraries beyond the 4 Libraries proposed in this delivery model. Given the pressing need to reduce Library costs, it is envisaged that funded services will be withdrawn from all other Libraries with effect from June 2017. This includes the mobile library service and the deposit collection, which are collections of books in residential homes and sheltered housing sheltered housing.

Users of the library service will be impacted by this model to varying degrees - the degree of impact and disadvantage depends on a range of factors including;

- Proximity to and ability to travel to an SBC library
- Requirement for staff assistance to access different facilities and services such as books and resources, employment support and IT
- Ability to access alternative IT infrastructure, and skills to use IT infrastructure without staff support

The council has a duty to balance the financial constraints for the service as well as its statutory duties. The statutory duties in relation to library services are summarised below.

Statutory duties

Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964

The library strategy takes in to account Swindon Borough Council's duties under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 which details the Council as the Library Authority with the following duties;

General duty of library authorities.

- 1) It shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof
Provided that although a library authority shall have power to make facilities for the borrowing of books and other materials available to any persons it shall not by virtue of this subsection be under a duty to make such facilities available to persons other than those whose residence or place of work is within the library area of the authority or who are undergoing full-time education within that area.
- 2) In fulfilling its duty under the preceding subsection, a library authority shall in particular have

regard to the desirability—

- a) of securing, by the keeping of adequate stocks, by arrangements with other library authorities, and by any other appropriate means, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter, and pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children; and
- b) of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and of providing advice as to its use and of making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required by persons using it; and
- c) of securing, in relation to any matter concerning the functions both of the library authority as such and any other authority whose functions are exercisable within the library area, that there is full co-operation between the persons engaged in carrying out those functions.

Additional legislation

Swindon Borough Council will also need to be mindful of the following legislation:

- Race Relations (Amendment Act) (2000)
- Disability Discrimination Act (2005)
- Equality Act 2010
- The Equality Act 2010 is the most referenced of the above acts specifically Paragraph 149 which is detailed below:

149 Public sector equality duty.

- 1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
 - a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; .
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; .
 - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. .
- 2) A person who is not a public authority but who exercises public functions must, in the exercise of those functions, have due regard to the matters mentioned in subsection (1). .
- 3) (3) Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to
 - a. remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; .
 - b. take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; .
 - c. encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low. .

(4) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities. .

(5) Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—

- (a) tackle prejudice, and .
- (b) promote understanding. .

(6) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act. .

The relevant protected characteristics are.

age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

Other Acts or legal obligations on top of those previously mentioned that are included in the DCMS guidance issued on the 16 December 2015 – Library as a statutory service are:

- Best Value Duty 2011 guidance
- Localism Acts 2011

Outcomes and benefits

In the context of the Council's Vision for Swindon, and its Priorities and Pledges, the Swindon's Library Service vision is:

To build communities through literacy and learning, to encourage a love of reading, and to provide access to information that inspires enjoyment and learning, and that increases health, wellbeing and economic participation. We will connect communities by providing welcoming spaces to meet, socialise and learn through a core network of Libraries, and support a wider network of community-led provision and resources. By 2020, we aim for Swindon's Library services to be recognised nationally for the quality of its services, innovation in delivery, cost effectiveness and the outcomes it achieves for early years, for adult learners, for active citizens and for active ageing.

By 2020, the service aims to be recognised nationally for the quality of its services, innovation in delivery, cost effectiveness and the outcomes it achieves for early years, for adult learners, for active citizens and for active ageing.

The strategy and delivery model is founded on a principle of partnership in the design and delivery of Library services, and to secure their ongoing sustainability.

In developing this model, the Council has sought to balance competing criteria of (i) service reach and accessibility (ii) community need and (iii) affordability.

The Council is committed to sustaining and developing a network of Library services in Swindon, it is clear that with pressures on its resources, it cannot do it on its own. Achieving this requires a radically different delivery approach to that which exists today and depends on the active contribution of partners, communities and volunteers. This will require change both in the Council's approach, and in the role of the users and communities that Libraries serve.

The proposed library strategy sets out how the Council proposes to work with Library users, communities, partners and all stakeholders to bring wide resources and contributions to the service, and collaboratively develop Library services over the months and years ahead.

Who's it for?

Under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 the Library Authority must provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for everyone who lives, works and studies in the borough.

Therefore the Act details the extent of the target audience for the service. It must be noted that not all of the individuals that fall within the description in the 1964 Act are actually service users.

A Needs Assessment and profile of the users of the library service has been completed and the sections below detail look at the users and user groups of the Library Service in more detail.

Feedback has also been gathered through the engagement process in spring 2016. The engagement feedback has been used to develop the proposed draft strategy but it is noted that

whilst it provides important and useful insight and highlights key issues, the respondents are not a representative sample of library users, particularly across age ranges or across library sites. More detail about the potential impacts and mitigations highlighted through the feedback is discussed in each section below.

How will this proposal meet the equality duties?

The draft libraries strategy will meet the equality duties by consideration of the Needs Assessment in the development draft proposed strategy to provide a service as detailed in the 1964 Act whilst taking consideration of the funding envelope available for the service from Swindon Borough Council.

The proposed library strategy balances enabling everyone to access facilities and services via reasonable means, as well as targeting outreach service provision based on need. The draft proposed strategy sets out a key role for the service in helping to raise the skills and therefore employment opportunities of local people, in order that they are best able to benefit from and contribute towards a growing and strengthening local economy.

The expectation is that this will allow them to feel socially included by enabling them to be able to access services, training and education as required, whilst being able to follow routes to employment as well as normal lending services provided by a library service.

The proposal will look to advance equality of opportunity by consideration of specific interventions for individuals or groups residing in the areas of deprivation within the Borough and how best to provide the services they need from the library service or traditionally perceived as being delivered by the library service.

What are the barriers to meeting this potential?

The barriers to meeting this potential are:

- The perception of service users and stakeholder groups:
 - That a library service is only complete by a geographical spread of services provided by the Library Authority.
 - That no service user should have to travel further than a few miles to access a service provided by the Library Authority.
 - That library services or services / activity currently being delivered from libraries should all be delivered by Swindon Borough Council and not from other groups.
- That by changing service provision the perception is that there would be an adverse impact on one or more individuals or protected equality groups. Each protected equality group will be discussed later in this document.

To try to understand and minimise the barriers faced by specific groups there will be targeted consultation with various groups to better understand any adverse impacts of the draft proposed strategy and any proposed mitigations, which will be discussed later in this document.

2 Who's using it?

Refer to equality groups

What data/evidence do you have about who is or could be affected

(e.g. equality monitoring, customer feedback, current service use, national / regional / local trends)?

The Needs Assessment conducted in 2015 highlighted a range of information about current service delivery and current and future population characteristics and needs in the borough, as well as key characteristics about active borrowers in the library service.

The full Needs Assessment is attached for reference but key points particularly about the demographic structure of the borough include;

- The structure of Swindon's population is expected to change significantly over the coming years; with much greater growth in the older, than the younger populations.
- Swindon has eight LSOAs (small areas) amongst the 10% most deprived small areas, nationally.
- Swindon's relative deprivation is most severe in the education, skills and training domain – in particular one LSOA in Penhill and Upper Stratton is amongst the 0.1% most deprived small areas in the country.

The Needs Assessment also highlighted that whilst there are some common themes across the borough, libraries are used by a range of different users and the characteristics of those users, the activities and usage patterns vary from library to library.

As well as being used for a wide variety of services, facilities and activities related to library and literacy outcomes, library spaces are also used by a wide variety of groups and SBC Services for formal or informal use. Limited information is known about visitors to libraries and the consultation will aim to gather feedback from those who visit libraries and access services and facilities but do not necessarily borrow items.

The engagement process has provided additional data about users, who have provided the majority of the feedback during the engagement process. As noted, this feedback is not from a representative sample of library users, but the 2,688 responses represent approximately 7.4% of library borrowers.

The full report of the engagement feedback is available and attached for information, but key points from the feedback include the following insight about respondents;

- 94% of the respondents identify as being a library user
- There is a geographical spread of responses across the borough but concentrations of responses are especially marked in Highworth, and in Wroughton, while there are also high volumes of response from North Swindon and Covingham. In contrast, response is more patchy (but still present) from Penhill, Gorse Hill, Pinehurst, Walcot and Parks, and South Marston, and from Swindon town centre.
- Two thirds of respondents are aged 46 years of age or older – with a third of those taking part in the survey are aged 66 or over which are much higher proportions of these age groups than would be expected from the population of the borough.
- 25% of respondents noted a disability – proportionally higher than the 18% which would be expected from the borough population. This is reflective of the age profile of respondents being older, as older people are more likely to have a disability
- 66% of respondents are women - a disproportionate number of women compared to what would be expected from their presence in the population of the borough where the balance of women/men is 50/50.
- A large proportion of respondents have no children at home. Very few respondents are gay, lesbian or transgender; most are white, and speak English as a first language.

Feedback from the engagement is discussed in more detail below.

How can you involve your customers in developing the proposal?

Between February and April 2016, the council led an engagement process which looked at creating a sustainable service model for libraries in the borough. The engagement has provided important views and insights from the respondents, 94% of whom are library users.

The engagement process used an emerging model as a basis for discussion – the council was clear that it would use the engagement feedback to further develop and formulate a proposed libraries strategy, and so the emerging model was set out to provide a starting point for discussion.

Engagement information and events took places in each library and at key events across the borough as part of the Going Local engagement and consultation programme.

The engagement process also targeted information and requests for feedback to various groups detailed later in this document who may be impacted by changes to the service model, including schools, pre-schools, user groups of libraries and various representative groups or individuals with characteristics of an equality protected group.

The engagement feedback has been crucial to developing a proposed draft library strategy. The next phase of work will be to consult on this draft strategy. The consultation is a key opportunity to further engage and consult with users and non-users of the service. The consultation will particularly explore the impacts of the proposed strategy and any mitigation measures which could be considered and explored.

Who is missing? Do you need to fill any gaps in your data? (pause DIA if necessary)

From the data incorporated in to the Needs Assessment the following areas have been identified as areas where data about library users may not be complete or is difficult to interrogate:

- The ethnicity field in the user database is not usable /reliable as this field has not been completed for most of the service user records
- The disability field in the user database is complete for some users so can be used to indicate mobility impaired users who rely on the service – but it's not a whole picture of disability across all users.
- There is no data held in the user database on Religion, Marriage / Civil partnership, Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual or Transgender.

Information is also limited about IT users and whilst the numbers of visits to each library is monitored, the numbers of individual people who are visiting libraries cannot be tracked. For example, visitors to a library could be borrowing items or they could be visiting for other library events and activities.

Feedback from the 2016 engagement is has provided some key areas of information about respondents, who clearly had taken time and trouble to provide considered and thoughtful responses. The feedback does not represent the views of a fully representative sample of library users as almost all respondents are users of Swindon libraries and the libraries most often used by respondents are Central, Highworth, North and West (though all libraries are represented to some extent). Occasional visitors to Libraries, in particular those that might occasionally visit a Library for IT use, do not feature strongly in the responses, nor is broader public opinion strongly represented.

Further information is available in the accompanying report, but key data gathered from the engagement in 2016 includes;

Age

- A third of those taking part in the survey are aged 66 or over, and two-thirds are over 46 years of age. Comparison with the proportions of adults in Swindon's population indicates a disproportionate response from the older age-groups within the local community. The proportions of people in the survey aged over 55 are significantly higher than their presence in the community as a whole, and this is especially true among younger retired people, who are between two and three times more likely to be present in the survey database than their

presence in the population would suggest.

- Although there are participants from younger age-groups, including a small number of responses made from, or on behalf of, children, just 15% of those taking part are under 35 years of age. In contrast, the participation of under 35s is much lower than a representative figure would be, and this is especially the case among under 25s.

Race

- Non-white respondents are proportionately fewer than might have been expected from their presence in the local population with 95% of respondents noting a white ethnicity, compared to 91% of the Swindon population.
- A closer analysis of responses in this regard indicates a small but highly diverse BME population in the Borough, with people from a wide range of different backgrounds, cultures and languages. Although most ethnically white people are native British, there are also small population groups who identify as Irish, as well as people from elsewhere in Europe and from the former Commonwealth. Similarly, the Asian community includes both Indian and Pakistani elements alongside Goans and Bangladeshis. Most of the small black community response is from Caribbean or other black individuals, whilst the small group identifying as 'other' are primarily ethnic Chinese.

Disability

- 25% of respondents declared a disability, a higher proportion than would be expected as a proportion of the adult population in Swindon at 18%
- Several respondents have more than one area of disability or impairment. The most common aspect of disability among respondents is a physical disability, which affects around a third of all those who declare themselves as disabled.
- Just under a third report long-term health problems (which include diabetes), while a quarter have hearing issues and one in six struggle with eyesight.
- One in six are currently experiencing mental health problems including depression.
- Respondents also include smaller numbers of people with dyslexia, or with learning difficulties.
- Respondents to the paper questionnaire were asked to indicate how their disability affects their use of the library. The responses here vary widely and range from the obvious issues of mobility for those with physical impairment, and reading difficulties for those with visual impairment, to less obvious issues
- Alongside these issues, though, it must be noted that a large number of disabled people say their disability has no effect at all on their use of the library.

Sexual orientation

- The overwhelming majority of respondents are heterosexual in terms of their sexual identity; 97% of those willing to disclose this characteristic identify as heterosexual.
- Whilst there are no national data that would allow a precise assessment of the representativeness of this result, there is a strong suggestion that gay, lesbian and bisexual people are a relatively low proportion of the response to this survey compared to their presence in their population.

Religion

- Over half of all respondents to the survey have some religious affiliation, though it is clear that this is stronger for some than for others.
- The largest single group among these are those who espouse some form of Christianity, who account for 55% of all respondents; over half of these are adherents of the Church of England, while the rest spread across a range of Christian denominations that include Catholicism, Methodism, Evangelicalism and Baptists, as well as several who simply describe themselves as 'Christian'.

- There are adherents of other religions in the response, but their numbers are very small. Hinduism is the largest, but there are also small numbers of Muslims, and also some Buddhists, Pagans and Pantheists in the dataset. Three in seven people claim no religious affiliation at all.

It is recognised that there are gaps in the information across the library user database held on some of the Protected Equality Groups, where the information is either not held in the database or is not in a reliable format to be of use. The groups specifically identified under this are:

- Disability (this covers all types of disability i.e. mental ill health, learning difficulties, sensory loss etc.).
- Sexual orientation
- Transgender
- Race
- Religion

The consultation on the proposed draft strategy is a key opportunity to further engage and consult with users and non-users of the service. The consultation will particularly explore the impacts of the proposed strategy and any mitigation measures which could be considered and explored. The consultation will also seek Equality Data, therefore the expectation is that we will identify the Equality Groups that use the library service, as well as those who do not use the service through engagement with non-library users.

Targeted sessions with groups that we don't hold data on or we know are not using the service will be offered to key groups or representative groups during the consultation process.

3 Impact Refer to dimensions of equality and equality groups.

Show consideration of: age, disability, sex, transgender, marriage/civil partnership, maternity/pregnancy, race, religion/belief, sexual orientation and if appropriate: financial economic status, homelessness, political view. Using the information in parts 1 & 2:

a) Does the proposal create an adverse impact which may affect some groups or individuals? Is it clear what this is? How can this be mitigated or justified?

The Libraries Needs Assessment data highlights the information which is known about library users, and alongside the feedback from the engagement process which provides additional insight, information about users of particular age groups and users of particular library sites.

Whilst the impact for every user of the draft proposed strategy cannot be assessed, there are key groups who may be particularly impacted by the strategy which will be considered here. The exact and detailed impact for every user will be led by personal circumstance but some inferences and questions for further analysis can be drawn from what data and knowledge we do have.

Where information or data is unknown about users or user groups, this is noted below and additional information, as well as views about potential mitigations which could be considered will be sought through the consultation process. This will include consultation with library users, as well as engaging with specific groups or representative bodies.

What are the impacts?

Key groups where potential adverse impact of the draft proposed library strategy has been identified are outlined below.

Initial proposed mitigations are also set out and these groups will be specifically engaged with

during the consultation process to understand the potential impacts of the proposed draft strategy, and to explore what mitigations could be considered.

Age – There are several groups who use libraries who may be impacted by the proposed draft strategy as a result of their age – particularly children in nursery/pre-school or school, students and elderly people.

It is recognised that young people and schools regularly use library services with books classified as children's books making up 42% of book loans (Fiction - 36.3%, Non-fiction – 5.7%) based on CIPFA stats comparative profile 2013/14 Actuals and 2014/15 Estimates. There are also several libraries that are used by schools or pre-schools. Some children's groups regularly attend the library and others attend events such as storytime and other libraries host class visits at both pre-school and primary school level.

There is an ageing population in the Borough of Swindon which will bring with it issues related with older age i.e. mobility issues, sensory loss and possible social isolation.

Engagement feedback shows that the older a person is, the more likely they are to have visited the library in the past week; the proportion rises from 67% of under 18s in the survey to 80% of those aged 76 or over.

Accessibility - Travel time and affordability

The four sites which will form the SBC core library model are the most popular and well used libraries, but this may be deemed as increasing travel time and therefore accessibility to the library service for both ends of the age spectrum.

The cost of travel would impact the young retired who would not be eligible for a bus pass. Increased travel time and distance would also impact younger people, particularly children and young adults who may not be able to travel further unaccompanied, and who may not be able to afford alternative travel e.g. public transport.

There are practical considerations such as carrying books which may mean older people are more likely to visit a library more frequently, which would further exacerbate any impacts of increased travel time, and the ability of a user to access a bus stop is another practical consideration.

Accessibility – opening hours

Both older and younger users may be impacted by the changes to hours of opening in the proposed draft strategy. The engagement feedback has shown that there are different preferences expressed by different age groups for when library services would be most accessible to meet their needs.

Accessibility – IT

The engagement feedback highlights that older people are less likely to use IT to access library services online or to use IT access within libraries.

This is supported by research which shows that age is the biggest predictor of not using the Internet in the United Kingdom (UK). In 2011, only 33% of those aged 65 years and older used the Internet compared to 99% of those aged 14 to 17. The barriers to Internet uptake include attitudes towards technology, limited experience, lack of physical access, confidence or self-efficacy, knowledge, and social help¹.

¹ Choudrie J, Ghinea G, Songonuga VN. Silver surfers, e-government and the digital divide: An exploratory study of UK local authority websites and older citizens. *Interact Comput.* 2013;25(6):417–442. From <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4468603/#ref3>

However, other studies have shown that older adults are the fastest growing population of online users the world over². Other studies highlight encouraging data regarding the rate of Internet adoption among those over fifty in particular but raise questions regarding the effectiveness of use and online searching for example³ which could be affected by the changes to staffed hours of libraries.

Age - summary

Consequently we believe there may be an adverse impact on the basis of age for older library users, children and young adults and the consultation process will seek to understand this impact in more detail and explore potential mitigations. This is outlined in more detail below.

Disability

It is felt that the data held about library users is not sufficiently robust to understand the extent of the service users that consider they have a disability. Whilst the engagement feedback is not from a representative sample of users, a high proportion of respondents noted a disability, sometimes more than one, which provides useful insight in the impacts which users felt would be faced as a result of a disability.

Several respondents to the engagement feedback noted more than one area of disability or impairment, the most common aspect of disability among respondents is a physical disability, which affects around a third of all those who declare themselves as disabled.

The proportion of people with disabilities is also higher than would be expected from the general population data, but this is certainly influenced to some extent by the age profile of respondents, as older people are more likely to be experiencing disability.

Accessibility – travel and affordability

The four sites which will form the SBC core library model are the most popular and well used libraries, but this may be deemed as increasing travel time and therefore accessibility to the library service for those with a disability.

Increased travel time and distance would impact those with a disability both in terms of accessibility and for those who are unable to travel further unaccompanied or afford alternative travel e.g. public transport, as well as the ability to access bus stops.

Accessibility – opening hours

Those with a disability may be impacted by the changes to hours of opening in the new model. Some users may only be able to access services and facilities with support from staff e.g. accessing stock from higher shelves from a wheelchair, as well as users ability to access services outside of staffed hours.

Disabled users users may also be impacted by the loss of a local, safe, neutral space, which may be particularly valued by users with a disability. Even where a facility continues to exist, it is likely that a staff presence in a library would support and enhance its perception as a safe and neutral space.

Disabled users are more likely to face an impact from the changes to staffed hours for example, in terms of accessibility to physical things such as stock on high shelves which is difficult to reach from a wheel chair or mobility scooter so need staff support, as well as staff support and skills training e.g. IT skills development.

² Olson et al. *Ageing International*, 36(1), 123–145, [2011](#)

³ Hernandez-Encuentra et al. *Educational Gerontology*, 35(3), 226–245, [2009](#)

Accessibility – IT

As well as being more likely to have no qualifications, disabled people were less likely to have participated in learning activities and to have accessed the internet:

Research from 2013 shows⁴;

- Disabled people were less likely to have participated in other formal or informal learning activities in the last three months (21.8% compared with 37.4% of non-disabled people in Great Britain as a whole in 2013).
- Disabled people were less likely than non-disabled people to have accessed the internet within the past three months in 2013. In England and Scotland, over 60% of disabled people had accessed the internet by this measure, compared with almost 90% of non-disabled people.

Disability is one of the key indicators for living in poverty – with estimates of 40% of disabled children living in poverty and a third of disabled adults living in poverty⁵ which shows disabled users may be less likely to afford their own IT infrastructure.

Apart from the engagement feedback, there is limited information on how users with a physical disability interact with and access the library service. It is likely that the draft proposed library strategy will create an impact for service users with a physical disability.

The Needs Assessment identifies that Swindon has high incidents of mental ill health. There is limited information about how customers with mental ill health access the library service. It is likely that the draft proposed library strategy will create an impact for service users with a mental ill health condition.

There is limited information about how customers with learning disabilities access the library service. It is likely that the draft proposed library strategy will create an impact for service users with a mental ill health condition and or learning disabilities.

There is limited information about how customers with visual impairment access the library service other than the number of loans for large print stock detailed earlier in this document. However we do know from information supplied by Royal National Institute of Blind People that there are an estimated 5,300 people living in Swindon with sight loss of this there is a total of 620 with severe sight loss. It is likely that the draft proposed library strategy will create an impact for these service users.

Disability – summary

Consequently we believe there may be an adverse impact on the basis of disability, including physical disability, mental ill health, learning disabilities and visual impairment. The consultation process will seek to understand this impact in more detail and explore potential mitigations. This is outlined in more detail below.

Maternity/Pregnancy - There may be concern in relation to travel time and distance to and from SBC core library provision especially in the later stages of their pregnancy under the draft proposed library strategy. During the consultation, targeted feedback will be sought from these users to understand if there are any potential impacts of a new model and any mitigations which could be considered.

Race – In the library user database information about race is not complete and the engagement feedback shows non-white respondents are proportionately fewer than might have been expected from their presence in the local population, so there is limited information about how customers

⁴ <http://equalityhumanrights.com/IsBritainFairer> 2016. Page 30. Figures are provided from the ONS Opinions and Lifestyle survey (accessed 29-06-2016)

⁵ <http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/2013/june/risk-major-disability-poverty-rise> (accessed 29-06-2016)

with different backgrounds, cultures and languages access the library service. There may be some concern in relation to Traveller communities who seasonally access some library branches, in particular West Swindon. During the consultation, targeted feedback will be sought from these users to understand if there are any potential impacts of a new model and any mitigations which could be considered.

Sex – Although no data is held on gender the engagement results have indicated a higher proportion of females as service users, however Swindon Borough Council at present do not believe there is no adverse impact in the draft proposed library strategy due to gender. During the consultation, targeted feedback will be sought from these users to understand if there are any potential impacts of a new model and any mitigations which could be considered.

Transgender – Swindon Borough Council at present do not believe there is any adverse impact to service users due to transgender under the draft proposed library strategy as the current LGBT stock provision is proposed to be maintained. During the consultation, targeted feedback will be sought from these users to understand if there are any potential impacts of a new model and any mitigations which could be considered.

Marriage/Civil partnership - Swindon Borough Council at present do not believe there is any adverse impact under the draft proposed library strategy to service users due to marriage or civil partnership. During the consultation, targeted feedback will be sought from these users to understand if there are any potential impacts of a new model and any mitigations which could be considered.

Religion/Belief - Swindon Borough Council at present do not believe there is any adverse impact to service users due to religion and or belief under the draft proposed library strategy as it currently holds relevant stock on a range of religions and a range of language stock provision. During the consultation, targeted feedback will be sought from these users to understand if there are any potential impacts of a new model and any mitigations which could be considered.

Sexual Orientation - Swindon Borough Council at present do not believe there is any adverse impact under the draft proposed library strategy to service users due to Sexual Orientation because we are maintaining the current LGBT stock provision. During the consultation, targeted feedback will be sought from these users to understand if there are any potential impacts of a new model and any mitigations which could be considered.

Other impacted groups

In addition to the core protected characteristics, there are other groups of users who have been identified as potentially being impacted by the proposed library strategy. These groups are outlined below.

Borrowers using a single site

Further analysis of the data from the Needs Assessment has shown that whilst the majority of borrowers do use one or more sites (whether regularly or occasionally), there are a group of users who only borrow from a single site.

It is unknown how impacted these users will be by the proposed library strategy but within the one year of data, these users have shown no borrowing patterns from another library. Users of small and neighbourhood libraries and the mobile library who only access one site are 8% of the borrowers across the whole service.

This does not mean that users are necessarily unable to access other libraries or provision in other locations, but it does demonstrate the likely convenience of the library currently used.

It is not known which users are dedicated to borrowing from or using a single site and so would be impacted by the draft proposed strategy, or to what extent they would be impacted by the

proposed draft strategy. It is proposed to consult thoroughly with users to understand what these impacts might be and any mitigations which could be considered.

Borrowers using a single site - Mobile library

The mobile library is currently accessed by a very small number of borrowers. Almost 48% of users who borrow from the mobile use no other libraries, with the other 52% accessing the mobile library as well as using other libraries.

Consequently we believe there may be an adverse impact for borrowers who use a single site, and the consultation process will seek to understand this impact in more detail and explore potential mitigations. This is outlined in more detail below.

Financial Economic Status

The impact related to Financial Economic Status as part of the draft proposed library strategy is in relation to the cost of travelling to a core library from other areas of the Borough. Groups particularly impacted by this include single parents, disabled, and both older and younger people who may be less likely to have access to independent transport, and any cost impact to that group. This impact would be further exacerbated for users who need staff support to access services and facilities and who may be limited by the times of this support available in the proposed strategy.

Consequently we believe there may be an adverse impact for users in related to financial economic status and the consultation process will seek to understand this impact in more detail and explore potential mitigations. This is outlined in more detail below.

Deprivation – access to IT infrastructure and skills and training

The draft proposed library strategy incorporates core services which will include dedicated work to more effectively support literacy and learning in those communities with higher levels of deprivation, and lowest levels of education, skills and training.

As highlighted in the Needs Assessment data, IT connections in libraries are well used. The engagement feedback has highlighted that library computers and internet access are used for a range of purposes but that use for filling or job searching is much more limited – but likely important for the 15% of respondents who use the PCs regularly for this purpose..

The importance of access to IT infrastructure is likely to increase in the future as the roll out of Universal Credit to a much wider audience in 2016 mean that many more people need to process their applications online. Whilst claimants who meet certain criteria are eligible for 1:1 training and support from specially trained libraries staff, funded by the Department of Work and Pensions, there are other users often ask for library staff support during general opening hours.

Consequently we believe there may be an adverse impact for users in relation to high levels of deprivation and access to IT infrastructure and skills and training. The consultation process will seek to understand this impact in more detail and explore potential mitigations. This is outlined in more detail below.

What can be done to change this impact?

Below consideration is shown to the possible impacts on service users in the Equality Groups and other users who may be adversely impacted by the draft proposed library strategy, and outlines some initial mitigations which could be considered. During the consultation, user groups will be specifically targeted to understand the impact of the proposed draft strategy in more detail and to look at what mitigation measures could be considered.

General Provision and mitigations

Accessibility of provision

The core delivery sites of Central, North, West and Highworth library are the most well used libraries in the borough, accounting for 74% of visits each year.

The core libraries are also currently accessed, either regularly or occasionally by 73% of all borrowers, a total of 28,538 borrowers.

Accessibility – travel and cost

Library Services will be directly delivered from a core network of Libraries comprising Central, West Swindon, Highworth and North Swindon.

The proposed core network of Libraries meet 74% of current visits, and mean that 84.6% of Swindon's households live within 2 miles of a Library.

In addition to their popularity for borrowing and visits, the libraries in the core provision have good public transport accessibility, with several sites acting as a local transport hub.

There are multiple permutations of travel routes and approaches to access the libraries in the core model. Initial analysis (through Swindon Travel Choices website) of the travel times by public transport from different parts of the borough show that almost all communities can reach one of the 4 proposed core libraries within 30 minutes. However, travel time by public transport will be variable depending on a range of factors including time of day, the distance and walking/independent travel speeds users will have to bus stops from their house or place of work for example, as well as the variety of different bus routes which can be taken.

Users who will be particularly impacted by the proposed library strategy are those who are unable to afford to travel either by public transport or another means, and those who would be unable to travel unaccompanied. Feedback from the engagement noted that accessible routes to central library in particular were felt to be difficult for some users. These users will be particularly targeted during the consultation to understand what mitigations can be developed to best support their access to core libraries or other forms of service delivery.

Accessibility - Opening hours

The draft proposed strategy sets out an amount of staffed hours for each of the core libraries. Staffed hours have been costed at 47.5hrs per week for the Central Library, and the equivalent of 15 hours per week at West, Highworth and North.

The distribution of those staffed hours will be determined in partnership with local communities based on the analysis of when services are most accessed, local priorities and efficient staffing requirements

In addition, technology enabled opening hours would significantly extend the hours when customers would be able to access provision at the core libraries.

It is proposed during the consultation to seek the views of users on how best the staffed opening hours can be provided to meet their needs so that this can be considered in the scheduling provide a schedule to balance the needs of all users.

Users who also require support to travel to and to access to use services will be particularly targeted during the consultation to understand what mitigations can be developed to best support their access to core libraries or other forms of service delivery.

Services, stock and materials in different languages and formats

Services, stock and materials are developed and will continue to meet the needs of the whole range of service users, including provision and promotion of specific services, stock and materials for different groups, including specific materials for groups with protected characteristics.

As well as materials in different formats and in different languages, specific provision includes;

- LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) - This is a collection of relevant books and authors for this section of the community. These are in the general collection and are currently spread across all library sites but tagged in the catalogue under an LGBT Collection.
- Travellers – These are specifically aimed at the Traveller Community who either live or visit Swindon. These are generally placed in targeted libraries at certain times of year depending on activity for example travelling fares.
- New to Reading – These are aimed at emergent adult reader to support adult literacy. This is made up of books and audio books and is spread across all libraries and supported by campaigns like Reading Ahead which is a targeted literacy development programme for adults.
- Reading Well is a collection of materials and schemes to support users health and wellbeing, including;
 - Books on Prescription – is a scheme with an endorsed list of titles that GPs can recommend or prescribe to the patients. This was originally a local scheme but has now been launched as a national scheme. All libraries hold copies of the titles and if not available they can be reserved for free.
 - There is also a separate collection of titles on Autism and Dementia available.
 - A young person's mental health stand.
 - The Read and Write Group which meets at Central Library and uses a combination of reading and creative writing to provide mutual support to members of the group.
- For the visually impaired there are books in large print, free use of audio books, e-audio and e-books (where font size can be increase as required). There are also child Braille books available. There is also a reading group for the visually impaired that is run at Central Library.
- For people whose first language is not English there are:
 - Adult books in Polish, Chinese, Bengali, Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil, Urdu and Malayan.
 - Dual language children's books in European languages, Arabic, Farsi and Tagalog
- There are also books on Citizenship and an online subscription to GoCitizen.co.uk.
- Range of stock covering faith and religion.
- Stock in relation to disabilities issues.

Targeted outreach services

The core Library service will include dedicated work to more effectively support literacy and learning in those communities with higher levels of deprivation, and lowest levels of education, skills and training. The Library service will develop need-led, targeted literacy and learning programmes via repurposed learning and outreach services. These programmes will be developed in co-ordination with service users and partners and develop in ways that meet the needs of local communities

The Needs Assessment has highlighted that the current provision is not being accessed in all areas and particularly by groups who have lowest levels of skills and literacy, and most need support to contribute towards and benefit from a growing economy.

Literacy development programmes will be available from core sites for adults and children e.g. summer reading challenge and reading ahead.

Work will also be progressed with local communities, users and community and adult education partners to understand the reasons for low literacy levels and so the outreach provision will be targeted based on need, focusing on development of skills and literacy, using formats and delivery models to suit the needs of local communities.

IT skills and development

IT focused skills and development will be available from the central hub, providing training courses, and skills support.

In response to the issues identified above, some initial mitigations which could be considered are set out below. Some users are impacted by multiple factors

Age – older people

Next steps;

- Specific and focused work with older people and children and young people to understand their feedback and concerns, including older people who do not currently access the library service to understand what factors might enable them to access the library service in the future.
- Consult on the impact of the strategy, particularly important with users of at libraries where the age profile is older, and where average distance travelled is low – implying that it is a very local community accessing the service.
- The council will also work with local communities to develop community-led provision in local areas – more detail about this is below

Age and disability

- Develop and enhance the Home Library Service, promoting and expanding the service, working the users and volunteers to ensure the best offer is developed and maintained
- Reviews of the uptake of the service (likely to increase) will be monitored to ensure that the service is best supporting its users

Age - Children and young people

- Continued stock and services for children and young people – including literacy programmes such as the Summer Reading Challenge
- Specific and focused work with children, young people, schools and pre-schools to understand their feedback and concerns, including those who do not currently access the library service to understand what factors might enable them to access the library service in the future.
- Consult on the impact of the strategy, particularly important with users of at libraries where the age profile is younger, and where average distance travelled is low – implying that it is a very local community accessing the service.
- The council will also work with local communities to develop community-led provision in local areas – more detail about this is below

Disability

- Additional measures to support and encourage disabled users to access facilities at core libraries include; provision of or signposting to the nearest available facilities including disabled parking spaces accessible toilets, mobility scooter charging areas etc
- Providing information within libraries and maintaining appropriate signage within libraries and regularly monitoring to ensure information in libraries is accessible and easy to understand and use
- Completion and regular review of access statements for each library, making information about facilities online and locally available
- Consult on the impact of the strategy, particularly important with users of at libraries where engagement feedback has highlighted there are high numbers of disabled users – a key thing to understand is what information can best be provided and in which format to help users to access facilities and services
- The council will also work with local communities to develop community-led provision in local areas – more detail about this is below

Users of a single site

- Those who only borrow from a single small or neighbourhood library site account for 8% of all borrowers. It is not known which users are dedicated to using a single site and so would be impacted by the draft proposed strategy, or to what extent they would be impacted by the proposed draft strategy. It is proposed to consult thoroughly with users to understand what these impacts might be and any mitigations which could be considered.
- Extension of home library service for those who are housebound to enable access to books
- Consult on the impact of the strategy, particularly important with for users of at libraries where needs assessment has highlighted there are high numbers of users only using a single site– a key thing to understand is what information can best be provided and in which format to help users to access facilities and services
- The council will also work with local communities to develop community-led provision in local areas – more detail about this is below

Financial economic status

- Outreach services will focus on communities and users with highest levels of deprivation and lowest levels of skills, education and training
- Consult on the impact of the strategy, particularly important with users of at libraries in areas where there are high levels of deprivation and low levels of skills, education and training

Enabling model - Supplementary services

A key principle of the proposed draft library strategy is that it is an enabling model which will support users, communities and partners to develop local supplementary provision in their area.

Whilst not part of the core model of service delivery from SBC, the council will work with communities in local areas to develop community-led services and support, as well as local services tailored to local needs. More detail about the supplementary services which could be developed is incorporated within the strategy.

Where communities wish to develop community-led services, the council will also make available professional advice to support local developments to ensure the local offers are appropriate for and accessible to their local communities. This could include: having a stock of specific resources available, such as specific language or other format books if that met the community's needs; developing places and local networks to support and host national literacy initiatives such as book start bags for small children, and the summer reading challenge.

Additional support could be provided to enable local communities to best utilise their facilities to develop hubs of community activity and support- this could include a range of offers for different groups in their communities for example older people's lunch clubs, social community spaces, places for community information, providing a much wider offer than the current library service. Other work would also include supporting users of library buildings and social activities to access alternative provision in their local area. This could include developing or promoting lunch clubs and other socially based activities incl. work with schools and other key groups, working with groups who hire space to find alternative locations

Support will also be available for community-led services to ensure they understand the make-up of their local community and how to specifically engage different groups of people in their offer, and to ensure that services are as accessible and to ensure the offer was open all members of the community, including for example users with a learning disability or a mental health condition were able to access local services, for example through training.

Work will be needed with individual communities to understand how best to develop community-led services in their area, and transport will be a key factor in this. Support to access an alternative offer could include – promotion of health and well-being and safe walking routes,

community bus promotion, developing lift shares and voluntary transport.

Libraries are also used as both formal and informal community spaces and through the consultation, these groups will be identified and their requirements and future needs discussed.

b) Does the proposal create benefit for a particular group? Is it clear what this is? Can you maximise the benefits for other groups?

This proposal once developed may create a benefit for the following groups:

- Service users who are able to access services and facilities without libraries staff support so are fully able to utilise unstaffed hours provision
- Service users who have good IT skills and do not require or access staff support
- Those service users or residents of the Borough who benefit from the proposed more targeted approach to the areas of deprivation within the Borough
- Those who are more affluent and find travel to the town centre less prohibitive

There is also an indirect benefit that through the enabling model, the council is able to support opportunities for community development – bring people together and enabling community solutions to be developed.

Does further consultation need to be done? How will assumptions made in this assessment be tested?

If agreed at Cabinet in July 2016 the draft proposed library strategy will form the basis of consultation. In addition to gathering formal feedback through a survey, available in paper and online format, engagement sessions will also be planned with users and non-users and targeted conversations with specific groups and representative groups to better understand potential impacts and proposed mitigations which would be considered.

The findings of the consultation will then be used to inform any decision that is proposed on a future library strategy.

Swindon Borough Council has identified that specific engagement will need to be held with the following groups, both through users or representative groups, supported by Council's Equalities Advisory Forum. Theme workshops are proposed to incorporate representative groups from the different groups who will be impacted by the strategy, including;

- Age – older people and children and young people, including Schools, Colleges and Pre-schools.
- Disability
- Maternity/Pregnancy
- Race
- Sex
- Transgender
- Marriage/Civil partnership
- Religion/Belief
- Sexual Orientation

Other key groups

- All library Friends Groups will be contacted to discuss the impact on them of the proposal and how this can be minimised or how they can support the running of a community library service.
- Other key user groups to be engaged with include; borrowers using a single site. financial Economic Status, Deprivation – access to IT infrastructure and skills and training
- Groups who hire or use library spaces

4 So what?[Link to business planning process](#)

What changes have you made in the course of this DIA?

This DIA has been developed in conjunction with the Needs Assessment, engagement feedback and the development of the proposed library strategy.

As a result of this DIA,

Additional considerations have been given to how any mitigations can be developed for example, seeking the views of users on what would meet their needs in terms of access etc.

There have been lots of questions raised about how different groups will be affected by the proposed strategy which will be taken forward in to consultation and engagement.

What will you do now and what will be included in future planning?

We will consult on the draft proposed strategy if agreed by Cabinet in July 2016.

When will this be reviewed?

This DIA will be reviewed when the consultation period has closed and all of the information received has been collated and interrogated. The DIA will then be developed with any proposed strategy that is put to Cabinet for consideration.

How will success be measured?

Success will be measured by how the implementation of any proposal takes place and any adverse effect that is created for service users.

For the record

Name of person leading this DIA Rachel Watts	Date completed 4 th July 2016
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Names of people involved in consideration of impact Jim Catton, Andy Reeves, Mark Pritchard, Nick Stephenson, Allyson Jordan, Leon Bolton	
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Name of manager signing DIA Patrick Weir	Date signed 5 th July 2016
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Diversity Impact Assessment – an inclusive business planning tool

1. What's it about? refer to equality duties

- What is the proposal? What outcomes/benefits are you hoping to achieve
- Who's it for?
- How will this proposal meet the equality duties?
- What are the barriers to meeting this potential?

2. Who's using it? consider all equality groups

- What data/evidence do you have about who is or could be affected? (e.g. equality monitoring, customer feedback, current service use, national/regional/local trends)?
- How can you involve your customers in developing the proposal?
- Who is missing? Do you need to fill any gaps in your data?

3. Impact consider dimensions and equality groups

Using information in parts 1 & 2:

- a) Does the proposal create an adverse impact which may affect some groups or individuals? How can this be mitigated or justified?
> What can be done to change this impact?
- b) Does the proposal create benefit for particular groups or individuals. Is it clear what this is? Can you maximise the benefits for other groups?
 - Does further consultation need to be done? How will assumptions made in this assessment be tested?

4. So what?

- What changes have made in the course of this DIA?
- What will you do now and what will be included in future planning?
- When will this be reviewed?
- How will success be measured?

Considerations

Our equality duties

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
2. Advance equality of opportunity
3. Foster good relations

Equality groups

For the following equality groups: age, disability, sex, transgender, marriage/civil partnership, maternity/pregnancy, race, religion/belief and sexual orientation.

Extended by SBC policy to include: financial economic status, homelessness, political view.

Dimensions of equality

How will the proposal affect Human Rights and life chances of different groups? Consider how the proposal affects

1. Longevity.
2. Physical security.
3. Health.
4. Education.
5. Standard of living.
6. Productive and valued activities.
7. Individual, family and social life.
8. Participation, influence and voice.
9. Identity, expression and self-respect.
10. Legal security.