

Libraries Equality Impact Summary April 2018:

The EIA process for the libraries review is an ongoing and evolving one. The purpose of the EIA is to understand which diverse groups of people may be most affected by any proposals to alter provision within the library service, and to understand how those groups may be affected as a result.

The potential impact of the current proposals (i.e. to reduce opening hours) is not currently known but the intention is to use this consultation period to get a better understand of any likely impacts and to inform any subsequent decisions around alterations to the library provision (across the various libraries). The consultation process will seek to answer the following questions:

- Which groups and organisations use the library during periods which might be affected by revised opening hours?
- Of those groups and organisations, are there any particular equality, diversity and inclusion impacts we need to be aware of?
- Which customers are more likely to use the library during periods which might be affected by revised opening hours?
- Have we a representative response to the consultation from the diverse communities of Barnsley? Did their responses differ in any significant ways?

The analysis of impact will also take into account any knowledge of the local area which will be important when considering the level of likely impact.

The subsequent EIA review and cabinet report will;

- Include details of any likely impacts and the level of likely impact
- Outline any identified barriers or equality issues, linked to the proposals
- Include relevant data to support the understanding of the impact (i.e. library user and local demographic data, feedback from previous engagement activity).
- Details of the reach of the consultation and feedback received (i.e. are the responses representative)
- Advise of any mitigating actions to further minimise the likely impacts.
- Include any examples where issues have not been able to be resolved through the consultation process and where there are likely to be disproportionate impacts as a result.
- Detail any gaps in knowledge or gaps in understanding (in terms of the likely impact).

The above information will be used to produce individual impact summaries for each of the libraries. These summaries will be included within the report back to cabinet (for each individual library proposal) so that these can help to inform any decision making process.

It is anticipated however that the overall impact of the changes will be low to medium, however this will depend on; the outcome of this round of consultation, the likely impact on different groups of people and any mitigating actions or proposed alternatives.

Consultation approach and equality considerations

There are a number of actions to be undertaken as part of the consultation process to ensure that this is both accessible and inclusive activity. These can be categorised as follows;

Access and Participation:

As part of the consultation process consideration has been given to the accessibility of the chosen mechanism (i.e. the online survey). It is understood that online only engagement is a barrier to some groups of people (i.e. disabled people, BME people, older people etc).

The intention is therefore to support the online activity with face to face meetings and group sessions, particularly in instances where people, or groups of people, face barriers to contributing online. A detailed schedule of consultation activity can be requested from Omar Khan.

Where there are other barriers to engagement identified alternative solutions will be considered in all instances.

Profile of Library Users:

In 2015/16 there were 17,420 active users of the library service, that is people who have used their library card to borrow at least one item in the past 12 months. This equates to 7.3% of the Barnsley population. The demographic breakdown of these users is as follows;

Women are more likely to borrow books than men (5.1% of men and 8.7% of women are active users).

Younger people and **older people** are more likely to use library service than working age people (14% of those aged 0 to 15, 4.7% of 16 to 64 year olds and 9.2% of those aged 65 or over are active users).

People from **black and minority ethnic** groups are much more likely to be using the libraries than White British people (based on the overall % population). The proportion of the people that borrow books from the library varies significantly from one ethnic group to another (4.9% White British people are active borrowers, 11.0% White other, 10.4% Asian, 12.5% Black, 3.8% Mixed ethnic background, 17.9% Other ethnic group).

We currently don't have any data on the proportion of active borrowers who are disabled nor the access barriers they may face when using services such as the library.

We do however know that there are some groups of people who face significant barriers to accessing some library services, for example **disabled people** and **people with limited English**. Earlier engagement activity therefore sought to better understand these barriers and the findings of this will be used to inform the final EIA and recommendations.

Local data shows that whilst the number of active borrowers has declined by 23% in the last 4 years (in line with the national trends), **the number of people accessing the building has increased** by 14% over the same period. This could suggest that there are more people using the library facilities for other things i.e. groups, IT facilities, to access other services etc.

This summary has been produced in full consultation with the Equality and Inclusion Team. Specifically Faith Ridgwick (Equality and Inclusion Officer ext 2471) and Julian Horsler (Equality and Inclusion Manager ext 6638).