

Libraries and Cultural Services Transformation - Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

1. Explaining the matter being assessed

Purpose

This document summarises the potential equality impacts on individuals who live, work and/or study in Surrey, including Surrey County Council (SCC) library staff, arising from the transformation of SCC's library and cultural services. It includes mitigating actions to maximise any positive impacts and eliminate or minimise any adverse ones. To underpin this over-arching EIA, SCC have produced four individual EIAs that relate to key areas of the transformation programme where the work could or will involve a new service or change to an existing library service (these individual EIAs are included as Appendices 1 – 4):

- 1) Property
- 2) Workforce Development and Remodelling of Library Services
- 3) Co-design
- 4) Technology and Operations

These specific projects have been identified as having the potential to impact on one or more of the protected characteristics as well as there being potential implications for people based on geography or their socio-economic status. There are four additional projects within the programme where there are currently no equality implications. SCC will regularly review and update both the over-arching and individual EIAs to reflect the proposals that are developed and refined over the course of the programme. It is envisaged that further EIAs will be produced to support specific changes to the service once these decisions have been made.

The information contained within these assessments support the Council's Organisation Strategy 2021 - 2026 and its commitment to tackling inequality to ensure no-one is left behind. An important aim of the programme is to create a welcoming, inclusive and accessible library and cultural service for the benefit of all of Surrey's residents, workers and students. The EIAs will also support Council decision-makers to pay due regard to equality implications of the programme in line with the Council's legal duty under the [Equality Act 2010](#).

Background

Following a public engagement exercise in late 2018 and early 2019, SCC published its [Library and Cultural Services Strategy 2020-2025](#) on 26 November 2019. This included a clear commitment to maintaining 52 libraries across the county and to taking a local, co-design approach, that actively involves key stakeholders, residents and other services to shape the local library offer.

The strategy aligns with SCC's priorities and commitment to the county as detailed in [The Community Vision for Surrey 2030](#) and [Organisation Strategy 2021-2026](#).

To underpin the Library and Cultural Services Strategy, SCC commissioned Shared Intelligence to produce a Community Profile Analysis and a Library Service Data Analysis in relation to the county of Surrey.

The Community Profile Analysis identified the following four population groups as having the greatest social need and consequently the potential to benefit most from the transformation programme:

1. Children and young people
2. Older adults (aged 75+)
3. Working age hardship among adults relating to low skills
4. Health and wellbeing indicators including mental health

The transformation programme aims to address the needs of these particular groups whilst continuing to provide a universal service.

The Library Service Data Analysis on usage revealed that although many older adults use libraries, a larger proportion of children and young people use the service compared to the overall population. By understanding community needs and working with a wider range of partners, the programme aims to appeal to a larger and more diverse audience from across the county including teenagers, working age adults and individuals with disabilities and from different ethnic backgrounds.

The Library and Cultural Services Strategy 2020-2025 highlights the following key challenges:

- Patterns of use of library services has changed and customers are looking to use public services in different ways
- Visits to libraries and book borrowing has seen a downward trend over the last ten years, in Surrey and nationally
- Continued budget reductions over the last ten years is threatening financial sustainability; SCC must diversify their funding by generating additional income streams to help support existing services and to develop new ones
- Surrey County Council (SCC) has a statutory duty, contained in [Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964](#) 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desirous to make use thereof'

There are also external factors that are relevant to the future design and delivery of library services:

1. The Government have shared their vision and ambition for libraries nationally which is detailed in the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's report: [Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016 - 2021](#). One of the recommendations is for local authorities to "co-design and co-create their services with the active support, engagement and participation of their communities so services are accessible and available to all who need them."
2. Building on the government's objectives, the Carnegie UK Trust published a [diagram](#) setting out the range of ways in which public libraries impact on four policy areas – economy, education, culture and society – and how libraries contribute to the wellbeing of individuals and communities.

The approval of the strategy laid the foundations for a journey of modernisation and a transformation programme was set up to deliver this. This is a significant and complex programme of change for the county that will take a number of years.

Aims of the Transformation Programme

The ambition of the programme is to develop modern libraries. Modern libraries are bright, inviting, flexible spaces that provide valuable book collections and resources for learning, a social space for cultural activities and events, business support and a gateway to public services. Modern libraries are supported by improved digital platforms, effective IT and Wi-Fi infrastructure, extended opening hours using Open Access technology and a vibrant activity programme shaped to the needs of the local area. These modernised library spaces and services will contribute to creating greater places for residents to live, work and learn.

What constitutes a modern library was developed through extensive research and analysis, including analysis of responses received to a public consultation carried out between 30th October 2018 and 4th January 2019 on strategic principles that could shape the future of libraries and cultural services in Surrey. Feedback showed support for new technologies and highlighted the importance of computer and wi-fi provision, as well as the ability to use library spaces outside of opening hours. Responses also highlighted the importance of libraries still being about books and library spaces being about meeting people, combatting isolation, studying, accessing cultural activities and strengthening communities generally.

Through libraries and cultural service transformation we want to achieve:

- Improved user experience and a positive, welcoming and accessible service
- Increased and improved service offer and initiatives
- More inclusive and relevant service to meet the diverse needs of everyone who lives, works and studies in Surrey
- Increased partnership-working with residents, funders (e.g. Arts Council), local businesses/organisations, other SCC services and external providers
- “Greener” library model – sustainable buildings and design, procurement and operating practices
- Improved service efficiency and innovation (reduced cost and increased impact)
- Stronger workforce- agile, diverse and motivated to better serve our residents

The programme consists of a number of interconnected projects and workstreams, with the key ones focusing on Technology, Workforce, Property and Co-design. Although only four of the projects (Property; Workforce Development and Remodelling of Library Services; Co-design and Technology and Operations) have been identified as requiring an EIA; a brief summary of each has been included to provide context:

- **Technology & Operations** – investing in and promoting new technologies to improve access to services and provide more learning opportunities. This will support the SCC’s [Digital Strategy 2025](#).
- **Workforce Development & Remodelling Library Services** – delivering a new workforce structure and development strategy to empower frontline staff, enable leadership at every level, increase diversity and improve customer service
- **Property** – modernising buildings and providing more flexible, welcoming spaces that can accommodate a range of services and partnerships and deliver better value for money for residents

- **Co-design** – involving staff, residents, partners and organisations in the design, delivery and evaluation of their local library service to better meet their needs
- **Partnerships** – exploring how libraries and cultural services can work in partnership to improve the range and accessibility of services, extend learning opportunities for residents and contribute to a more financially sustainable operating model
- **Financial Sustainability** - developing current and future capabilities in generating income, making efficiencies and exploring commissioning, commercial and funding opportunities to provide greater value for money
- **Quality, Performance and Data** - developing robust programme management processes and systems to ensure the programme successfully deliver the aims of the Libraries and Cultural Services strategy and the benefits for residents. Improving the quality of data on our service users so we can better tailor services and provide an expanded offer for Surrey’s diverse communities.
- **Communications** - developing effective communication and engagement methods to enable engagement and involvement in the modernisation of libraries and cultural services

2. Cumulative Analysis of Impacts and Mitigations – Surrey Residents

Theme	Cumulative Impact	Cumulative Mitigation
PEOPLE WHO LIVE, WORK OR STUDY IN SURREY		
Service provision	<p><u>Positive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reduction in level of service offered • Improved access to a broader range of free-of-charge services that can improve learning and wellbeing, and support independence • Access to more inclusive and relevant services by involving local communities in the design and creation of services through a process of co-design • More opportunities to access quality support and services in one place by forming partnerships and co-locating with other service providers and organisations • Improved customer service by providing further development and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively communicating and promoting any changes to service provision, including new systems and processes both physically (e.g. posters in libraries) and virtually (e.g. social media or website) and providing comprehensive user guidance to support a smooth transition to the new library model • Delivering digital support targeted at those who most need it, including older people, users with a disability (e.g. visual impairment) and those in high-deprivation areas • Seeking advice from and using existing connections with internal and external organisations to reach minority demographic groups and individuals with the greatest need

	<p>training opportunities to the workforce and increasing diversity</p> <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for lower levels of participation in co-design amongst particular demographic groups, which could affect level and type of service provision developed for these groups • People without access to internet at home or those lacking digital skills and confidence may experience fewer benefits due to digital exclusion 	<p>so that services are inclusive and relevant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a robust equality monitoring and evaluation method throughout the co-design process to encourage a representative sample of participants (i.e. give everyone an “equal voice”)
Building design and internal layout	<p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconfiguring entrances and internal spaces may impact on service accessibility and user experience e.g. young children and users with disabilities may find it difficult to reach very high shelving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating well-designed spaces that are accessible, comfortable and welcoming to all users, e.g. providing suitable seating for breastfeeding mothers and users with mobility issues • Seeking specialist, expert advice and support to design accessible spaces; including partner organisations such as the NHS, an experienced library design company who will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and qualified Architects and Surveyors to comply with Building Regulations and accessibility standards
Travel to library provision	<p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocating library provision may affect service accessibility (in terms of public transport or vehicular access) and result in some users not being able to travel as easily to access services or incurring increased travel costs e.g. new mothers or heavily pregnant women who rely on public transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions on locations for relocated library provision will be made against a robust set of feasibility criteria, including public transport proximity and car parking options/availability. Particular consideration will be given to the most vulnerable groups e.g. the elderly.
New IT and technology	<p><u>Positive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding provision of free digital activities, resources and events may particularly benefit people on lower incomes, including students <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of new digital software and related processes may reduce service accessibility and affect user experience for people with lower digital competence, people without access to internet at home and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New digital software (e.g. new library website and catalogue) and processes (e.g. Open Access) will be designed with accessibility and user experience in mind • Advice will be sought from partner organisations such as the NHS and Surrey Coalition of Disabled People to increase the success of digital initiatives • Staff will receive further development to ensure they are

	people with disabilities including visual impairment	effectively listening and responding to different groups and situations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills development training and support will be offered to members of the public, in person and remotely
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3. Cumulative Analysis of Impacts and Mitigations – Surrey Library Workforce

Theme	Cumulative Impact	Cumulative Mitigation
LIBRARY WORKFORCE (STAFF & VOLUNTEERS)		
Organisational restructure	<p>The 45-day staff consultation period for the proposed staff restructure is currently underway, with the proposed structure yet to be agreed and finalised. The overarching EIA and individual EIA for the Workforce Development and Remodelling project will be updated with specific impacts if evidence and feedback from the consultation process shows a disproportionate effect on certain protected characteristics. Anticipated impacts may include changes to rota, work base, line management, promotional opportunities or not achieving preferred choice of role.</p> <p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for staff on maternity leave or on long-term sick to feel less connected with the process and related communications • Potential for older members of the workforce to be more affected by the restructure as more than half the workforce is over 50 and evidence suggests that older people are more likely to struggle to secure further employment following redundancy • Potential for female members of the workforce to be more affected by the restructure as over 87% of staff are female 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and sensitively timed communication will be planned • Staff will be offered support from their line manager and HR through the process. Staff will also be directed to other support services such as the Council’s Employee Assistance Programme. • The Council will follow its change management policy and adopt an open and transparent process to selecting staff for development opportunities • Staff preferences will be sought, and individual circumstances and the Council’s flexible working policy will be considered in decision-making. Reasonable adjustments will be made where possible when recruiting and filling new roles
Service design	<p><u>Negative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for under-representation of staff at physical co-design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A variety of communication channels and options to participate will be used, including online

	<p>events as they are at higher risk from COVID-19, including older people, people with health conditions and pregnant women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for under-representation of staff at physical co-design events due to barriers to attending such as the time or location of the event, which could make it more difficult for those who have mobility issues or caring responsibilities to attend 	<p>methods to enable people to attend</p>
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4. Amendments to the proposals

CHANGE	REASON FOR CHANGE
None	No fundamental changes have been made as a result of this EIA. The mitigations outlined in the assessments are appropriate and reduce discrimination, and any changes made to service provision as part of the transformation will not reduce inclusiveness or accessibility; rather, the programme aspires to enhance it. If fundamental changes do arise as the programme progresses and specific proposals are developed, this EIA will be updated accordingly

5. Recommendation

Outcome Number	Description	Tick
Outcome One	No major change to the policy/service/function required. This EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact, and all opportunities to promote equality have been undertaken	
Outcome Two	Adjust the policy/service/function to remove barriers identified by the EIA or better advance equality. Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers you identified?	✓
Outcome Three	Continue the policy/service/function despite potential for negative impact or missed opportunities to advance equality identified. You will need to make sure the EIA clearly sets out the justifications for continuing with it. You need to consider whether there are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient plans to stop or minimise the negative impact • Mitigating actions for any remaining negative impacts plans to monitor the actual impact.	

Outcome Four	Stop and rethink the policy when the EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination	
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6a. Version Control

Version Number	Purpose/Change	Author	Date
1.0	Document drafted	Suzanne Sumner	17 th February 2021

6b. Approval

	Name	Date approved
Approved by*	Assistant Director - Sue Wills	11/03/2021
	Information Governance - Grisilda Ponniah	Not required – no handling of personal data
	Legal – Deborah Chantler	26/03/2021
	Executive Director - Marie Snelling	01/05/2021
	Cabinet Member - Mark Nuti	20/05/2021

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT Author	Suzanne Sumner
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6c. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT Team

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