

Equality Impact Assessment Part 1: Screening Form

Title of report or proposal:
Six monthly review of the new library network

Department:	Chief Executive's Department
Section/SIAP unit:	Library, Museum and Archive Service
Date:	17 December 2012

This report is for decision and is therefore subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. The following questions have been completed to ensure that this proposal, procedure or working practice does not discriminate against any particular social group. Details of the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment have also been included in the main body of the report.

Equality Impact Assessment Questions

1. Describe in summary the aims, objectives and purpose of the proposal, including desired outcomes:

In 2011, as a result of the need for significant budget savings, the council agreed to review Bolton's library network. This decision was taken in the context of the council's philosophy towards the savings, in particular the need to protect the most vulnerable children and adults. As such, savings were to be sought from universal services, including the library network.

In October 2011, following two rounds of public consultation, the Council's Executive approved a new model for Bolton Library Service. This reduced the number of libraries within the borough from 15 to 10, to deliver a saving of £407,000 from a combination of staffing and building costs. The reconfigured service has Central Library as the hub of the network, with three tiers of community libraries.

In November 2011, a new operating structure for the Library and Museum Service was approved. It was agreed that the changes implemented to the Public Library Network would be reviewed at 6, 12 and 18 month intervals. This report of 13 December 2012 to the Executive Cabinet Member – Leader's Portfolio sets out the findings of the six month review (April to September 2012).

It should be stressed that detailed EIAs have previously been completed on the new service model, which were published alongside the reports of 12 October and 23 November 2011, referenced above. This EIA now looks at the equality impact following the first 6 months of implementation.

2. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the proposal?

The main stakeholders in relation to the implementation of the new library network are:

- The public – particularly those in the 5 areas where a library branch closed under the review
- Staff
- Partners – in particular, those who are involved in running Neighbourhood Book Collections

3. In summary, what are the anticipated (positive or negative) impacts of the proposal?

The report provides a review of performance of the library network during the first six months after implementation of the new service (April to September 2012). This is an opportunity to test the impact of the new service and the effect of the mitigating steps which were taken as a result of the review. However, it should be stressed that this remains an early point in the life of the new service, and that the new model will take time to fully embed. Performance will therefore be kept under review as described above.

The council's duties under national legislation underpinned the development of the new model of library service. This focused in particular on the duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient service under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act; and the 2010 Equality Act, which requires the council to have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups of people
- Foster good relations between different groups of people

In October 2011, following extensive public consultation, the council's preferred option was approved. This involved moving from 15 to 10 library branches, with the closure of five libraries – at Astley Bridge, Castle Hill, Heaton, Highfield and Oxford Grove. The following key concerns were raised during consultation:

- Concerns about the 'community impact' of the loss of library buildings
- Detriment of distance travelled for some people if a library is closed
- Concerns about the impact on education and learning, especially for children
- The needs of elderly and disabled people, who might find the extra distance or cost problematic

The following mitigating steps were identified following the public consultation, and have subsequently been implemented or further developed:

- Introduction of extra opening hours, namely at the Central Library and Museum building
- Development and continuation of specific service initiatives to children and young

people

- Promotion of Library Link (at home service)
- Providing better access to specialist services at Central Library
- Free requests for stock holdings in Bolton with delivery to nearest library or Neighbourhood Book Collection
- Increased use of technology and digital services
- Establishment of Neighbourhood Book Collections (NBC) in the proximity of a closed library with partners already operating in those communities

The report sets out a detailed analysis of performance against each of these aspects of the service. In headline terms, between April and September 2012 (when comparing the new network of 10 libraries with the previous network of 15 libraries):

- Visitors decreased by 14%, when compared to the same period last year
- Loans decreased by 19% when compared to the same period last year. It should be stressed that loans have been in decline nationally and locally for some years
- Annual data on active borrowers will not be available until 31 March 2013. However, the monitoring of borrowers registered at libraries which have closed indicates that 95% of active borrowers continue to use the library service in the first six months of the new network being implemented.
- Computer usage has decreased by 3%, when compared to the same period last year. However, when the neighbourhood book collections are taken into account, overall usage has increased by 12%

In terms of the implementation/development of the mitigating steps:

Additional opening at Central Library and Museum

- Opening hours at Central Library, as the hub of the network, have been extended to include Sundays and bank holidays. The opening hours of the Museum and Aquarium have also been extended to include Sundays and bank holidays
- In the first six months, there have been 17,771 Sunday visitors to the three facilities; and 7,887 bank holiday visitors. Feedback from an early visitor survey was positive about the change – for example, because it opens up family facilities for more time, provides more time for revision in the library, and links well to town centre shopping and events
- It is recognised that not all customers will find it suitable to use the service on a Sunday/Bank Holiday, and some members of the public have expressed their concern about the impact which the changes may have on those for whom these are days of religious observance. It should be stressed that the services remain open at other times of the week, for those who do not wish to use them on Sundays and bank holidays
- Staffing has been arranged using staff who are contracted to – and also those staff who volunteered to - work weekends and bank holidays, to mitigate the impact on staff

Services to schools, children and young people

- The Schools Library and Museum Service was not within the scope of the review, although it has benefitted from the redistribution of stock for children and young people from the five libraries which closed
- Education and learning opportunities for children and young people continue to be a priority, and events, activities and initiatives for children and young people continue to be run across the network, including at the NBC locations. Further information is set out in the body of the report

Library Link

- Library Link is an important part of the mitigation for people who may be unable to get to their nearest library as a result of the changes to the network, since it provides a fortnightly home delivery service for those who are unable to get to a library branch and do not have friends or relatives who can collect books for them
- An increase in take up of this service was expected following the implementation of the new service. However, only five new customers have joined the service following the changes (there are a total of 393 customers), suggesting that people are unaware of the service; or do not feel that they need the service
- Promotion of the service will continue via key partners such as the NHS, Age UK etc. to ensure that eligible people are aware of and able to access it

Requests, technology and digital services

- People can continue to request items at service points across the network, including at NBCs. Requests for locally held items continue to be free, and there continues to be a small administration charge for items borrowed through the inter-library lending scheme
- Self-service issue technology is being rolled out across the network, and is in place at each of the NBCs. From April to September, 63.4% of all issues across the network were transacted through self-service (up from 54.8% last year)
- An extensive digital offer continues to be in place, and can be accessed across the network. In addition, free ICT is available across the network, and library staff continue to support people to get online through digital inclusion initiatives. From April to September, computers across the network and NBCs were used for 81,129 hours – a 12% increase from the same period last year

Neighbourhood Book Collections (NBCs)

- The NBCs were established as important mitigation for the five areas whose library branches closed as a result of the review. While not replacement libraries, people can borrow and request items, make enquiries, and use ICT at NBCs
- This is likely to be particularly useful for people who may be unable or unwilling to travel long distances to access the services, for example because they have limited mobility as a result of ill health, disability or older age; because they have young children; because they do not have access to a car or the cost of public transport is prohibitive; or because they are a young person

- NBCs have been established in community buildings in each of the five areas where library buildings closed – Halliwell and Tonge UCANs, and Orchards, Oldhams and Heaton Children's Centres. The building which previously housed Heaton library has been retained for community use, to respond to concerns about a lack of community facilities in Heaton
- Resources have been put in place to ensure that the NBCs are appropriately stocked (based on the needs/interests of each area), and staffed. With the exception of Tonge, the NBCs are open for more hours each week than the previous library facility in each affected area. A range of activities and events have been developed at the NBC venues, often using the book collections to support this e.g. story time sessions, healthy living sessions
- Customer feedback has generally been positive, for example reflecting the convenience of the NBCs, and expressing that the service on offer was better than anticipated. However, some customers have been disappointed by the loss of their library branch
- The take up of services across the NBCs varied during the first six months. For example, the number of borrowers ranged from 50 at Orchard's Children's Centre, to 489 at Heaton Children's Centre. ICT use ranged from 122 hours at Orchards to 4,804 hours at Heaton
- The immediate priorities for the NBCs therefore include improving signage and promotion of the services on offer, to improve take up across the NBCs

The data and feedback available to date suggests that the infrastructure of the new service has been well developed and set up, and that this has been a time of adjustment for the service and its users. However, there is more to do in order to ensure that members of the public are aware of the services and service points which are available to them. Promoting and increasing take up of services across the network, including the NBCs, and Library Link for those who are eligible, is therefore a priority for the coming months.

4. With regard to the stakeholders identified above and the diversity groups set out below:

	Is there any potential for (positive or negative) differential impact?	Could this lead to adverse impact and if so what?	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason?	Please detail what measures or changes you will put in place to remedy any identified adverse impact
Race	The library network continues to provide books in alternative languages.	Should customers be unable to access stock in alternative languages, then there could be an adverse impact. However, these items continue to be available through the service.	The new model of library network has been implemented within the context of the council's need to achieve significant budget savings. As such, the new model has been designed to make savings while delivering a service which meets the needs of local people – including the provision of stock in alternative languages - and the council's statutory requirements.	The library network has been designed to offer a quality service which is both comprehensive and efficient, and meets the financial needs of the council. Customers can continue to access alternative language stock at service points across the network. No particular issues in relation to stock in alternative languages have been identified during the first six months. The implementation of the new service model will be reviewed again at 12 months.
Religion	The extended (Sunday and Bank Holiday) opening hours at Central Library, Museum and Aquarium have been put in place to enhance access to the hub of the network. However, some	It is recognised that the Sunday opening of Central Library may not be considered suitable for people for whom Sunday is a day of religious observance.	The extended opening hours have been put in place to increase the accessibility of the service for customers from across Bolton's communities. This may have particular benefits for those whose working arrangements	Library services can be accessed across the network throughout the week, with various opening hours in place across the tiers of the service. The implementation of the new service model will be reviewed again at 12 months.

	members of the public have expressed dissatisfaction with Sunday opening, due to this being a day of religious observance for those of Christian faith.		mean that they are unable to use the service during the week; or for those who wish to access the services as a family during the weekend. While it is recognised that not all customers will find these opening hours suitable, Sunday and bank holiday opening has so far proven popular, with 25,658 visits during the first six months.	
Disability	<p>Concerns were raised during the review of the service about access for customers who may be unwilling or unable to travel further/to an alternative branch following the closure of their local branch.</p> <p>The NBCs are now operational in accessible community buildings within each of the five areas where a library branch closed. With the exception of Tonge, the NBCs are</p>	<p>Of the five areas where a branch closed, considerations around disability are likely to be most relevant to Tonge, the Orchards, and Halliwell – where poor health and disability are in greater than average prevalence – and Heaton, which has an older than average population.</p> <p>Steps have been taken to mitigate the impact of the library branch closures, for example through the NBCs and the Library Link</p>	<p>The new model of library network has been implemented within the context of the council's need to achieve significant budget savings. As such, the new model has been designed to make savings while delivering a service which meets the needs of local people – in particular those who have a disability or infirmity which may affect their ability to access the service - and the council's statutory requirements.</p>	<p>The library network has been designed to offer a quality service which is comprehensive and efficient, and meets the financial needs of the council.</p> <p>NBCs are now operational in the five neighbourhoods where a library branch closed. With the exception of Tonge, the NBCs have longer opening hours than the previous branches.</p> <p>The library link home delivery service continues to be available for those who are housebound or unable to physically visit a library building. However, take up has not increased as expected as a result of the</p>

	open for more hours each week than the previous library facility.	service, as discussed in the right hand column.		<p>network review.</p> <p>The promotion of Library Link and the NBCs are priorities for the coming months.</p> <p>In addition, large print stock remains available across the network and, where requested, this has been increased at NBCs.</p> <p>At this stage it is not anticipated that there has been an adverse impact in relation to disability. However, the impact of the new service model will be kept under review at 12 and 18 months.</p>
Gender (including gender reassignment)	Traditionally, the library service is used more by women than by men. For this reason, women are more likely to have been affected by the changes to the service than men	Women are more likely to have been affected by the changes to the service than men, because they make up the majority of the customer base. However, significant steps have been taken to design a network which continues to be accessible to people from across Bolton	The new model of library network has been implemented within the context of the council's need to achieve significant budget savings. As such, the new model has been designed to make savings while delivering a service which meets the needs of local people and the council's statutory requirements.	The library network has been designed to offer a quality service which is comprehensive and efficient, and meets the financial needs of the council. No particular issues in relation to gender have arisen during implementation. The service model will be reviewed again at 12 months.

Age	The impact on children and young people; and on older people was of particular concern through the public consultation.	<p>Of the five areas where a library branch has closed, age is a particularly relevant consideration for Tonge and Halliwell, where the population is younger than the borough average; and Heaton, which has a higher than average older population.</p> <p>Steps have been taken to mitigate the impact of the library branch closures, as discussed in the right hand column. and at this stage it is not anticipated that there has been an adverse impact in relation to age.</p>	The new model of library network has been implemented within the context of the council's need to achieve significant budget savings. As such, the new model has been designed to make savings while delivering a service which meets the needs of local people – particularly children, young people and older people - and the council's statutory requirements.	<p>The library network has been designed to offer a quality service which is comprehensive and efficient, and meets the financial needs of the council.</p> <p>Mitigating steps have been taken to ensure that children and young people and older people are not excluded from service provision. Steps include increased opening hours at Central Library, Museum and Aquarium – which has proved particularly popular with families; the establishment of NBCs; and the ongoing use of Library Link. In addition, community activities continue to be held across the network.</p> <p>At this stage it is not anticipated that there has been an adverse impact in relation to age. However, the impact of the new service model will be kept under review at 12 and 18 months.</p>
Sexuality	While little information is available on sexual orientation within Bolton's communities, no particular concerns with regard to sexuality have been identified	No adverse impact has been identified in relation to sexuality to date.	The new model of library network has been implemented within the context of the council's need to achieve significant budget savings. As such, the new model has been designed to make savings	The library network has been designed to offer a quality service which is comprehensive and efficient, and meets the financial needs of the council. The service model will be reviewed again at 12 and 18 months.

	during implementation.		while delivering a service which meets the needs of local people and the council's statutory requirements.	
Caring status (including pregnancy & maternity)	<p>Considerations around caring status are closely linked to issues around disability and age – i.e. where a person provides care for a child or young person; or an adult who has a disability or infirmity. Issues relating to disability and age are set out in the respective sections of this table, above.</p>	<p>Of the five areas affected by library closures, Astley Bridge and Tonge have a higher than average proportion of people who care for someone who has a long-term illness or disability. Tonge and Halliwell have a younger than average population, meaning that there is likely to be a greater proportion of houses with dependent children.</p>	<p>The new model of library network has been implemented within the context of the council's need to achieve significant budget savings. As such, the new model has been designed to make savings while delivering a service which meets the needs of local people and the council's statutory requirements.</p>	<p>The library network has been designed to offer a quality service which is comprehensive and efficient, and meets the financial needs of the council.</p> <p>Steps have been taken to mitigate the impact of the library closures. The needs of older people, children and young people, and people who have a disability – and those who care for them - have been of particular concern, and mitigation such as NBCs and Library Link are particularly important.</p> <p>At this stage it is not anticipated that there has been an adverse impact in relation to caring status. However, the impact of the new service model will be kept under review at 12 and 18 months.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>No particular concerns with regard to marriage and civil partnership have been identified during implementation</p>	<p>No adverse impact has been identified in relation to marriage and civil partnership to date.</p>	<p>The new model of library network has been implemented within the context of the council's need to achieve significant budget savings. As such,</p>	<p>The library network has been designed to offer a quality service which is comprehensive and efficient, and meets the financial needs of the council. On the whole, customer feedback during the first</p>

			the new model has been designed to make savings while delivering a service which meets the needs of local people and the council's statutory requirements.	six months has been positive and constructive; and the service model will be reviewed again at 12 months.
Socio-economic	Concerns about geographical accessibility; accessibility for those who do not have a car or cannot afford to travel to a new library branch; and for those on low incomes who rely on free library services such as ICT, were key concerns through the public consultation.	Of the five areas where a library branch has closed Tonge, the Orchards and Halliwell serve areas with high socio-economic deprivation. Astley Bridge and Heaton serve some pockets of disadvantage.	The new model of library network has been implemented within the context of the council's need to achieve significant budget savings. As such, the new model has been designed to make savings while delivering a service which meets the needs of local people – particularly for those who are on low incomes and/or living in areas of socio-economic deprivation - and the council's statutory requirements.	<p>The library network has been designed to offer a quality service which is comprehensive and efficient, and meets the financial needs of the council.</p> <p>The NBCs – while not replacements libraries - were an important part of the mitigation for the areas of high socio-economic affected by the library closures, since they ensure that access to library services remains available in the affected neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Importantly, the NBCs include free ICT provision, and staff continue to support people to get online across the network as a whole. Furthermore, by basing the NBCs at community buildings, the library services have been brought together in one place with partner provision. The NBCs are each running community activities, based on the needs and interest of their</p>

				<p>communities.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that take up across the NBCs – and of the services within NBCs - varies, and promoting the services to improve take up will be a priority for the coming months.</p> <p>The service model will be reviewed again at 12 and 18 months.</p>
<p>Other comments or issues</p>	<p><i>General comments</i></p> <p>The first six months of implementation have been used to set up and develop the new library network. This infrastructure is now in place, and the new service fully operational. On the whole, visitor numbers and book loans have shown decline, in line with recent local and national trends. However, ICT take up (including at NBCs) has increased; and extended (Sunday and bank holiday opening) at Central Library, Museum and Aquarium has proven popular. Performance across the NBCs – which have been put in place to retain neighbourhood access to library services for those who cannot or do not want to travel to another branch – is mixed, and the promotion of these services (along with the Library Link service) will be a priority for the coming months.</p> <p><i>Staff</i></p> <p>The implementation of the new library model has had an impact on staff – both in reductions to overall staffing numbers and structures; and in relation to how, when and where staff work. Across the service as a whole, staffing numbers have reduced, and this has been managed through voluntary leavers and vacancy management. Care has been taken to work with staff as far as possible and practical, to manage the implementation of the changes and to keep staff informed.</p>			
<p>Please provide a list of the evidence used to inform this EIA, such as the results of consultation, service take-up, service monitoring, surveys, stakeholder comments and complaints where appropriate.</p> <p>If you have undertaken consultation as part of the proposal, the consultation manager will upload it on to the corporate database.</p>			<p><i>Evidence used:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service management information such as visitor numbers, loans data, ICT usage etc. • Information on events and activities across the network • Customer feedback 	

5.a Are there any gaps in your evidence or conclusions that make it difficult for you to quantify the potential adverse impact?

The analysis set out in the report and EIA has been based on detailed performance information from across the library network, and feedback from customers about the new model.

As agreed in 2011, the implementation of the new model of service delivery will be kept under review. Detailed performance data and customer feedback will continue to be captured, and performance will next be formally reviewed in a further six months (i.e. twelve months from the start of implementation).

5.b If so, please explain how you will explore the proposal in greater depth or please explain why no further action is required at this time.

Please see 5a, above.

You may wish to consider undertaking secondary data analysis, further consultation or research or investigating best practice. If you are planning to undertake further consultation or research as a result of this EIA, please contact the Consultation Manager on ext. 1083.

This EIA form and report has been checked and countersigned by the Departmental Equalities Officer before proceeding to Executive Member(s)

Please confirm the outcome of this EIA:

No major impact identified, therefore no major changes required – proceed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adjustments to remove barriers / promote equality (mitigate impact) have been identified – proceed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Continue despite having identified potential for adverse impact/missed opportunities for promoting equality – this requires a strong justification	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stop and rethink - the EIA identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination	<input type="checkbox"/>

Report Officer

Name: John Rowlands

Signature: JR

Date and Contact No: 13 December 2012

Departmental Equalities Lead Officer

Name: Sarah Griffiths

Signature: SG

Date and Contact No: 13 December 2012