

Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA)

Front Sheet:

Directorate and Service Area:

Environment and Economy, Customer Services

What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change):

Library Service Budget Savings

The budget proposal would mean:

Retention of all 43 libraries (22 core and 21 community libraries) but provide service redesign and changes internally to provide savings, including:

(A) Reduction of book fund.

(B) Closure of all mobile libraries; 4 general service library vehicles and 2 children's service vehicles.

(C) Library Service management and staffing reorganisation in conjunction with the Council's Customer Service Centre and ICT function over the next two years.

(D) Retendering of the Library Management Information system.

Responsible owner / senior officer:

Jillian Southwell, Library Service Manger

Vicky Field, Service Manager Cultural Services

Date of assessment:

12 January 2016

Summary of judgement:

The proposed redesign of the library service could have an impact on users, partners, libraries staff and other council services. Mitigation against this are, for users, use of the Home Library Service for those meeting the criteria for that, connections with community networks to alleviate isolation and exclusion, eBooks and eAudio as well as online information services to enable anytime access for those with internet access, and access to services available at the existing (static) library network. For OCC staff, mitigation includes help to redeployment.

Detail of Assessment:

Purpose of assessment:

This document is a full equality assessment of the impact of the proposed changes to service delivery required to achieve a Library Service saving of £1m on those residents who have one or more of the protected characteristics as defined by the Equalities Act 2010.

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 (“the 2010 Act”) imposes a duty on the Council to give due regard to three needs in exercising its functions. This proposal is such a function. The three needs are:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.

Complying with section 149 may involve treating some people more favourably than others, but only to the extent that that does not amount to conduct which is otherwise unlawful under the new Act.

The need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages which are connected to a relevant protected characteristic and which are suffered by persons who share that characteristic,
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and which are different from the needs other people, and
- encourage those who share a relevant characteristic to take part in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such people is disproportionately low.
- take steps to meet the needs of disabled people which are different from the needs of people who are not disabled and include steps to take account of a person’s disabilities.

The need to foster good relations between different groups involves having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

These protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity

- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership

Context / Background:

Local Authorities have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons in the area that want to make use of it, taking into account local needs and within available resources.

Library Service activities and resources promote reading and learning, support digital literacy and access to information and underpin health, social and economic wellbeing.

The overall budget for the Library Service is 6.6m (net expenditure). The staffing establishment is 192.75FTE across a network of 43 public library buildings, 6 mobile libraries, a Home Library Service and a support services function.

The Library Service has been asked to find £1m of savings as part of a wider council drive to identify £50m of additional savings.

Additional savings of around £50 million will have to be made over the next four years, as the government continues to reduce funding for councils and demand continues to rise. These savings are on top of savings already made and agreed in previous budgets, which total £292 million.

2% of OCC budget is currently spent on Libraries/Cultural Services; the Library Service has been asked to submit budget saving options to achieve a saving of £1m.

Proposals:

The council's focus in setting this saving option is on the retention of all 43 Oxfordshire libraries while still making financial savings in this area as it is hoped that there can be an increased focus on the role of libraries in helping local people access council services more generally. This would be integral to the delivery of the council's wider digital agenda. Specific service change proposals are:

Closure of all mobile libraries: 4 general service library vehicles and 2 children's library service vehicles

The service delivered by the mobile libraries was reviewed and consulted upon in 2014. The 6 mobile libraries visit 289 stops including 102 children focused locations: primary schools; pre-schools; nurseries; playgroups. This service is highly valued by its customers and makes a significant contribution to combating rural social isolation

(general service) and improving children's literacy (children's service). However, it is felt that realistic alternative library provision can be available to customers and where customers are housebound or unable to access alternative provision, the Home Library Service will be offered.

Reduction of the book fund

The book fund currently stands at £1.2m to provide resources for the network of 43 static libraries, 6 mobile libraries and a Home Library Service. This provision includes: print; online and e material; DVDs; music CDs; reference subscriptions. It is felt that the Service can manage this change to provision across the library network, particularly if the network is reduced by 6 (mobile) libraries. This proposal can be actioned quickly.

Review and restructure of the whole library service in conjunction with the council's customer service centre and ICT function

This will lead to a reduction in the current library staffing establishment coupled with changes to customer service centre function. This service change is integral to the delivery of customer self-serve access to council services and delivery of the assisted digital agenda.

This proposal will also explore the transfer of the support for the library management system to the council's central ICT service.

Retendering of the Library Management Information System

The existing contract will expire in March 2018. It is expected that implementation of a new agreement will deliver against both service requirements and a savings requirement.

Evidence / Intelligence:

Closure of all mobile libraries: 4 general service library vehicles and 2 children's library service vehicles

Customer feedback shows that this service is valued by users, however, evidence gathered and analysed for the review of the **general mobile library service** in 2014 showed that over the last 10 years, borrowing from Oxfordshire mobile libraries has fallen by an average of 49% and visits by an average of 31%. Although we have seen an increase in numbers of visits to mobile libraries since the review and the rationalisation of routes and stops was implemented in July 2015, it could be argued that these changes have not been in place long enough to establish a definite trend;

Visitors to mobile libraries can be users of multiple service points, including static libraries;

Withdrawal of mobile libraries is a national trend;

At 06/10/2015 there were 2342 active borrowers from our mobile libraries.

Children's mobile libraries were out of scope for the 2014 Review. However:

At 06/10/2015 there were 4932 active borrowers;

Some 15,000 visits are made to the children's mobile libraries every quarter;

Customer feedback shows that this service is valued by children who otherwise would not be able to access library services and that these services make a positive contribution to their literacy skills.

Reduction of the book fund

The Service has been fortunate in maintaining a very healthy book fund to date, resulting in a strong, relevant stock base that is in good condition. The Service is part of a book purchasing consortium which means it can purchase efficiently.

CIPFA Public Library Statistics 2014-1015 show that with the current level of book fund the Service acquired a total book stock acquisition of 117,768 volumes and a total stock of audio visual, electronic and other acquisitions of 14,448 items during the year.

The Service considers that a well-managed reduction in book fund, together with continued exploration of different ways to manage stock utilisation will ensure we can get best value for a reduced expenditure.

Alternatives considered / rejected:

The option of reducing the number of libraries within Oxfordshire was considered, but rejected as it was felt that the savings could be made elsewhere whilst allowing all these venues to remain open thus keeping the 'reach' of the service spread effectively across the County.

Impact Assessment:

Impact on Individuals and Communities:

Age

A sample analysis taken in January 2016 that showed that the breakdown of borrower categories of people using the **general mobile library service** included:

- 6.1% under 5s
- 36.7% aged 5-11 years
- 2.4% 12-14 years
- 0.8% 15-17 years
- 24.6% Adults
- 23.9% 60+

A sample analysis taken in January 2016 that showed that the breakdown of borrower categories of people using the **children's mobile library service** included:

5.7% under 5s
88.5% aged 5-11 years
3% 12-14 years
0.9% 15-17 years
1.3% Adults

The children's mobile library service visits 60 schools across Oxfordshire.

A sample analysis taken in January 2016 that showed that the breakdown of borrower categories of people using **static libraries** included:

9.4% under 5s
20.8% aged 5-11 years
2.9% 12-14 years
2.3% 15-17 years
50.6% Adults
11.3% 60+

MITIGATION

We provide a range of stock to meet the needs of different age groups and levels of interest, for leisure and study purposes. This includes board books, picture books, fiction, non-fiction, Large Print books, audio books, eBooks and eAudio books. Access to the full range of county stock is available via the reservations service for which a small charge is made. However, there are no reservation charges for books and audio books for those who are under 18 years, for people with a reading impairment or who are housebound.

Disability

MITIGATION

Users of the mobile library service with disabilities or mobility problems not able to access services at library buildings can be offered the Home Library Service.

All static libraries have access for wheelchair users and those with mobility problems and staff can help people to choose books and audio books.

Stock is provided in a range of formats and media. Libraries stock audio books and books in Large Print for adults and audio books for children.

Audio books are available free to people with disabilities or a visual impairment. Audio books and titles specifically aimed at children and young people who are dyslexic are available on request.

Access to a wider range of stock is available through the reservations service. There is no charge made for requested books and audio books for customers who are reading impaired and evidence of impairment is not required to qualify.

Gender reassignment: No impact anticipated

Pregnancy and maternity: No impact anticipated

Race: No impact anticipated

Religion or belief: No impact anticipated

Sex: No impact anticipated

Sexual orientation: No impact anticipated

Marriage and civil partnerships: No impact anticipated

Rural communities

Some individuals may have to travel further to access alternative library services, some may not be able to travel due to lack of mobility and some may be able to travel but be unable to access library services.

MITIGATION

We will discuss alternative library provision with all customers who may be affected by proposed changes to mobile library services: some stops are used by people who visit the stop by car or are otherwise mobile; some people will be better served by the Home Library Service. We will promote and demonstrate our eBook and online services.

Areas of deprivation

Oxfordshire has generally low overall levels of deprivation. However there are ten areas in Oxford City and 2 in Banbury which fall within the 20% most deprived areas in the country. These areas will continue to be served by static libraries.

Mobile libraries withdrawn: Risks	Mitigations
Children, in rural and disadvantaged households no longer able to access library services.	Explore alternative library provision with schools. Delivery of public library services via librarian outreach activity and class visits to libraries.
Impact on services to the elderly and vulnerable in rural and disadvantaged areas no longer able to access library services.	Home Library Service for those meeting criteria. Connections with community networks will alleviate isolation and exclusion. eBooks ,eAudio and online information services enable anytime access for those

	<p>with internet access.</p> <p>Access to services available at static library network.</p>
Rural communities no longer able to access library services.	<p>Home Library Service for those meeting criteria.</p> <p>Connections with community networks will alleviate isolation and exclusion.</p> <p>eBooks ,eAudio and online information services enable anytime access for those with internet access.</p> <p>Access to services available at static library network.</p>
Increase in rural social isolation	<p>Home Library Service for those meeting criteria.</p> <p>Connections with community networks will alleviate isolation and exclusion.</p>

Impact on partners:

Risks	Mitigation
Shortfall in volunteers to assist Home Library Service	<p>Work with partner agencies to recruit volunteers within communities.</p> <p>Work in localities to advertise volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>Connections with community networks will generate volunteers.</p> <p>Evidence gives confidence that volunteers will come forward: 2014/2015 831 people supported the library service as volunteers and 22,000 hours of volunteering was delivered.</p>

Impact on Staff:

A total of 13 employees (6 full time and 7 part time) are currently employed on the fleet of 6 mobile library service vehicles. All posts are permanent. If this proposal is accepted all staff will be at risk of redundancy.

315 people are currently employed in the library service establishment of 192.75 FTE. This savings proposal includes the proposal to review and restructure the whole library service and this will lead to a reduction in posts that are in addition to mobile library staff

Risks	Mitigations
Posts redundant	Work with employees and county council to identify alternative realistic redeployment.
No alternative employment opportunities exist	OCC redundancy policy applies

Impact on other Council services:

Risks	Mitigation
Home Library Service may be oversubscribed	Work with partner agencies to recruit volunteers within communities.

Impact on providers:

There is no direct impact on providers as OCC will continue to be responsible for delivering these services.

Action plan:

Action	By When	Person responsible
Consult with staff to withdraw mobile library service	March 2016	J Southwell
Budget setting for reduced book fund	February 2016	J Southwell
Service Review	March 2017	V Field
Retender LMS	March 2018	J Southwell

Monitoring and review:

Person responsible for assessment:

Version	Date	Notes (e.g. Initial draft, amended following consultation)
1	12/01/2016	J Southwell: Initial Draft

2	13/01/2016	V Field: amendments