

# Equality Impact Assessment Form

## 1. Persons responsible for this assessment:

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| <b>Name: Sue Laurence</b>                   | <b>Telephone: 01452 425040</b>                    |
| <b>Service: Libraries &amp; Information</b> | <b>E-Mail:sue.laurence@gloucestershire.gov.uk</b> |
| <b>Directorate: C&amp;ACD</b>               | <b>Date of Assessment: 09/11/10</b>               |

## 2. Name of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function:

**Is this new or an existing one? New Strategy**

New: - This Equality Impact Assessment addresses the likely impact of the Library Strategy in context of Council's Meeting the Challenge proposals

## 3. Briefly describe its aims and objectives

Over the next four years the County Council estimates it will need to find savings of up to £108m because of national debt, spending pressures and government cuts. The proposals for remodelling our library service seek to address these priorities and as a result save around £2.5m from our operational costs.

The proposals sit within the values of :

- Living within our means
- Providing the basics
- Helping communities to help themselves.

This reduction will have an impact on the level of service that can be provided and also on the staff team working in Libraries & Information. The action plan indicates how this can be reduced for both the community impact and the impact on staff.

## 4. Who is intended to benefit from it and in what way?

Anyone who wishes to use a library service in Gloucestershire may be affected by the proposed changes which will reduce the number of GCC provided libraries and reshape the library footprint in the county. There will also be a reduction in the opening hours of some libraries. Investment in developing the virtual library should improve access to library services for some people and open up new opportunities to use the library service to new audiences. Some local communities will also be able to benefit from having the opportunity to take over library buildings for community purposes as part of the Community Asset Transfer. The council will support these communities with establishing their own community run library tailored to their local needs in these cases.

## 5. What outcomes are expected?

- A reduction in council expenditure on library services
- A service that is financially sustainable
- A new approach to library service delivery that is modern, relevant to customers and consistently able to meet people's leisure reading, information and learning needs,

This will be achieved by:

1. Establishing a good basic network of libraries giving a geographical spread of traditional library provision across the county, accessible within reasonable travel time and delivered through three standardised tiers of libraries.
2. Improving access to library services through technology to encourage Gloucestershire people to carry out their own transactions with library, council and other services as part of 'digital citizenship'
3. To give local people and community groups the opportunity to run their own library service to suit local needs
4. To work with partners and volunteers to provide library services to those individuals who may want them but for specific reasons, such as disability or mobility issues, may be unable to access library services independently
5. To encourage volunteering across all tiers of library provision

## 6. Have you consulted on this policy, service, strategy, procedure or function?

Yes: The Meeting the Challenge conversation held with staff and the public in September asked people to prioritise council services and 50% of people said that libraries could be closed or hours reduced.

A programme of consultation on this service change is being carried out during the period from the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2010 up to 11<sup>th</sup> February 2011 and feedback is being monitored to assess how the proposed changes impact on people.

To ensure that the consultation is accessible and provides all interested parties with the opportunity to share their views a multi method approach has been adopted. This includes a self selecting online and paper questionnaire, county wide road shows and public meetings. Additionally letters inviting people for their responses were sent to some specific library users. This included mobile library users, Homelink library users, Share-A-Book mobile library users, music and drama service users and reading clubs. Additionally, feedback is being received by letters and email and petitions.

It is estimated that as of 20<sup>th</sup> January 3,000 responses from these various routes have been received. The demography breakdown from the questionnaire indicates that a higher proportion of females and people over 55 are responding. 13.8% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability. Of the respondents 64% thought that the changes would have a significant impact on them although 18.8% of this group stated they would still be able to access a main library or a Library Express.

The most common themes expressed in the feedback have been about accessing a library for those reliant on public transport; quality of service; reservations about community run libraries; concerns about the withdrawal of mobiles and that the proposals may have a disproportionate impact on vulnerable adults and children.

For staff the most common concern has been about the level of potential job losses and whether a smaller workforce would be able to respond to the needs of users.

**7. What evidence has been used for this assessment: eg Research, previous consultations, MAIDEN?**

Maiden data was analysed for each of the current libraries catchment areas with note of any 'hot spots' where the data significantly differed to the Gloucestershire 'norm'. Areas where multiple deprivation indices applied were assessed. Catchment populations and library usage figures were also considered as part of the criteria as was presence of children's centres. The prime consideration in developing the proposals for the new network of libraries was however to provide a consistent level of service from a main library in all parts of the county within a reasonable travel time. Travel distances and the catchment coverage of main libraries was calculated by 'Accession' software which produced maps illustrating the catchment and accessibility.

**8. Could a particular group be affected differently in either a negative or positive way?**

Please evidence that you have used the Consultation toolkit and planning template <http://staffnet/index.cfm?articleid=5203>

|                   | Negative                   | Positive | Neutral           | Evidence  |
|-------------------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|---|
| <b>Age</b>        | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> |          |                   | <p>Reducing the number of GCC provided libraries and the mobile libraries will impact on potential library users and the consultation has indicated that older people who may have mobility difficulties may be more affected by this.</p> <p>Some children may also be less able to access a library independently.</p> <p>As a high proportion of library staff are older women if they are made redundant it may be more difficult to find alternative employment.</p> |
| <b>Disability</b> | <p>✓</p>                   |          | <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> | <p>Although the number of GCC provided libraries may be reduced the ones that remain will still be accessible.</p> <p>The service for visually impaired people will continue so no adverse impact is expected.</p> <p>The removal of the Homelink service to older people's homes may have some impact as may the removal of the mobile library service.</p>  |
| <b>Gender</b>     | <p>✓</p>                   |          | <p>✓</p>          | <p>Reducing the number of GCC provided libraries may impact on all potential library users and this group is no more or less affected by it.</p> <p>A high proportion of library staff are women and they will be at risk of redundancy</p>   |

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| <b>Race including Gypsy &amp; Traveller</b>  |  |   | ✓ | <p>Reducing the number of GCC provided libraries may impact on all potential library users and this group is no more or less affected by it.</p> <p>Library stock and services for different ethnic groups will continue to be provided.</p>  |
| <b>Religion or Belief</b>  |  |   | ✓ | <p>Reducing the number of GCC provided libraries may impact on all potential library users and this group is no more or less affected by it.</p>  |
| <b>Sexual Orientation</b>  |  |   | ✓ | <p>Reducing the number of GCC provided libraries may impact on all potential library users and this group is no more or less affected by it.</p>  |
| <b>Transgender</b>   |  |   | ✓ | <p>Reducing the number of GCC provided libraries may impact on all potential library users and this group is no more or less affected by it.</p>  |
| <b>Other groups: eg Rural Isolation, Long term unemployed, Deprivation Health Inequality</b> | ✓  | ✓ | ✓ | <p>Reducing the number of GCC provided libraries may impact on all potential library users and some people in these groups may be more affected. Books on Prescription and Health books will still be provided</p> <p>Although there will be a better geographic dispersal of main libraries around the county the removal of the mobile library may disadvantage some people without access to transport.</p> <p>The reduction in the number of GCC provided libraries and the lower number of opening hours will reduce the time available for accessing libraries and the Internet PCs and this may have an adverse impact on those applying for jobs on line or those using 'Homeseekers'. There may also be less access to Your Circle advice and information.</p> |
| <b>Community Cohesion</b>  | <p><b>Describe how the proposed activity, policy, strategy, service, procedure or function will contribute to Community Cohesion.</b><br/> <b>You will need to consider;</b><br/> <b>Is there equality between those who will and won't benefit from the proposal?</b><br/> <b>Are there strong relationships between groups and communities in the area affected and will the proposed action promote positive relationships?</b><br/> <b>Does the proposal bring groups / communities into increased contact with each other</b></p> |   |   | <p>The proposals for community run libraries may bring about greater cohesion of communities working to a common aim. Communities that develop a community run library will still have access to the county library services through the virtual library.</p> <p>If a library is closed and a community run library is not developed there is potential for an adverse impact on the community generally but this would not necessarily translate into an adverse impact on impacting on community cohesion.</p>  |
| <b>Community Cohesion (Contd)</b>  |  |   |   |   |

**9. If you have identified a negative impact in question 8, what actions have you undertaken or do you plan to undertake to lessen or negate this impact?**

**Please indicate whether these actions will be carried forward into level 2 or level 3 business plans.**

| <b>Action(s):</b> | <b>How will this action be Monitored/Evaluated</b> | <b>When will policy / service / strategy /</b> | <b>Carried to Level 2?</b> | <b>Carried to Level 3?</b> |
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|  |   | procedure / function<br>be reviewed?                                 |                     |                     |
|--|---|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| Consultation process   | Responses considered & significant adverse impacts emerging evaluated prior to setting new policy for library service   | January 2011   | N                   | N                   |
| <b>Age:</b> <u>Older people:</u> For those individuals unable to access a library independently we will work with them and identify a suitable alternative means of providing a service via library club or housebound service<br><u>Children:</u> Services to children's centres and children in care will continue in order to support the most vulnerable<br><u>Staff:</u> Voluntary redundancy and retirement options will be provided and EAS support provided. | An audit of need will be drawn up and a quarterly assessment will check if a satisfactory outcome was achieved.<br><br>This will be monitored through partnership / close working with children's services practitioners<br><br>Monitored with support of HR reports & milestones in project management programme / VERTO | December 2011<br><br>Annually in February each year<br><br>Quarterly | N<br><br>Y<br><br>Y | Y<br><br>Y<br><br>Y |
| <b>Disability:</b> An alternative means of providing books to Homelink and for Mobile library users with mobility difficulties will be implemented   | An audit of need will be drawn up and a quarterly assessment will check if a satisfactory outcome was achieved.   | December 2011  |                     | Y                   |
| <b>Gender:</b> <u>Impact on staff</u><br>Voluntary redundancy and retirement options will be provided and EAS support provided.<br><br>Full and part time work will still be available in the new service structure and many staff will be redeployed in this way  | Monitored with support of HR reports & milestones in project management programme / VERTO   | Quarterly  | Y                   |                     |
| <b>Other:</b> <u>Rural Isolation</u><br>The dispersal of main libraries with greater opening hours may provide better access for   |   | Quarterly  |                     | Y                   |

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| some living in rural areas. The impact of the removal of the mobile library will be mitigated by addressing specific needs of individuals (as above) | Visitor figures will be monitored<br><br>An audit of need will be drawn up and a quarterly assessment will check if a satisfactory outcome was achieved. | December 2011 |   | Y |
| <u>Long term unemployed</u><br>Work with partners to provide job clubs / similar support   | Assessed as part of business plan  | Quarterly     |   | Y |
| Sustain library computers/ internet access in community run libraries  | Monitored as part of hand over process & milestones in project management programme / VERTO  | December 2011 | Y | Y |
| <u>Deprivation 1.</u> Continue to provide targeted outreach library activities to parts of Gloucester and Cheltenham identified as 'deprived'        | Identified and monitored as part of level 3 plans  | Quarterly     |   | Y |
| 2. Provide ongoing support to help with the development of community run libraries in Hester Way and Matson  | Monitored as part of hand over process & milestones in project management programme / VERTO  | Annually      | Y |   |
| <u>Health Inequality:</u> Books on Prescription – work with GP surgery to provide these where library withdrawn.                                     | Identified and monitored as part of level 3 plans  | Quarterly     |   | Y |
| Sustain access to Your Circle information via virtual library in community run libraries & train volunteers  | Monitored as part of hand over process   | Quarterly     |   | Y |

## Declaration

**We are satisfied that an Impact Assessment has been carried out on this service, strategy and where a negative impact has been identified, actions have been developed to lessen or negate this impact.**

**We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the County Council and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment**

**Completed by: Sue Laurence**

**Revision Date: 20/01/11**

**Role: Library Services Manager (Strategy)**

**Countersigned by Group Director:**

**Date:**

**Date for Review: July 2011**

**Please forward an electronic copy to the Equalities Team by emailing**

**equalities@gloucestershire.gov.uk**

**The original signed hard copy and electronic copy should be kept with your team for audit purposes.**