Bristol City Council Equality Impact Assessment Form

(Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this form)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of proposal</th>
<th>Reduce the number of library buildings and redesign the service</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This would focus our investment and efforts on a smaller but high quality library service in Bristol. This would include retaining the Central Library and a redesign of the service within the lower cash limit.</td>
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<td>Total to save = £1.4million</td>
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<td>Directorate and Service Area</td>
<td>Neighbourhoods, Libraries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of Lead Officer</td>
<td>Kate Murray</td>
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**Step 1: What is the proposal?**

Please explain your proposal in Plain English, avoiding acronyms and jargon. This section should explain how the proposal will impact service users, staff and/or the wider community.

**1.1 What is the proposal?**

Text from council budget consultation reads:

*Reduce the number of library buildings and redesign the service*

*This would focus our investment and efforts on a smaller but high quality library service in Bristol. This would include retaining the Central Library and a redesign of the service within the lower cash limit.*

Total to save = £1.4million

The proposed savings are spread over three years starting in April 2017 to March 2020. The budget is profiled at saving £300K, then £740K, then £360K.
Our total current budget is £4.6 million.

At this stage we do not know how many libraries will be reduced or the impact on citizens or staff but any reduction in the current number and location would have an impact. This would have a citywide affect.

**Step 2: What information do we have?**

Decisions must be evidence-based, and involve people with protected characteristics that could be affected. Please use this section to demonstrate understanding of who could be affected by the proposal.

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<th>2.1 What data or evidence is there which tells us who is, or could be affected?</th>
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<td>The Library service is a universal service and available to all; therefore everyone in every neighbourhood could be affected by the proposals. It is important for us to use comprehensive data about the protected characteristics of the whole population when considering and designing the future service.</td>
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We hold comprehensive information from the Neighbourhood Partnership Statistical Profiles about the Age, Gender, Disability, Race, and Religion & Belief of citizens living in each Neighbourhood Partnership area. The 2016 neighbourhood partnership profiles were compiled for the new Bristol City Council neighbourhood partnerships that came into place from May 2016.

There is also information available from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment in draft form for 2016, and Deprivation in Bristol 2015.

We also have information from previous consultations (two citywide consultations in 2015), including specific consultations with children and young people who use the libraries, at specific library level and broken down by age, gender and ethnicity.

We know that all current library users will be affected by any changes to the library service. The library service holds data about the Age, Gender, Disability and Race of its members, which was captured up to 2012 in the membership form (not compulsory).

Since October 2012 Library Member equalities data continues to be captured
on the membership sign-up form. However, this information is now detached from a person’s membership profile. This means that while data about protected characteristics is held of people who signed up to become a library member, we can no longer track library usage, by branch. We also do not know how many people have since ceased membership with Bristol’s library service.

Therefore most accurate data is from the Neighbourhood Profiles.

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<th>2.2 Who is missing? Are there any gaps in the data?</th>
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<td>Detailed library specific data is missing as the collecting of equality information is not compulsory and only relates to new members. We are in the process of agreeing a new method of collecting this information with the new library management system implemented in June 2016.</td>
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<th>2.3 How have we involved, or will we involve, communities and groups that could be affected?</th>
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Responses to the public consultation on the budget proposals
Black Southwest Network

If there are services for BME communities delivered from libraries, whether by the library service or by VCS orgs, for example, ESOL classes, what will happen to them in this proposal?

In the last review (finishing in September 2015) we held two wide ranging consultations with all the citizens of Bristol, with printed and online surveys and many public meetings. We also held specific equalities meetings with the support of Neighbourhoods. The information from this consultation is still very valuable, as the most successful consultation Bristol Council has run. Also we have very valuable feedback on the methods to reach citizens and library users.

It is likely that after February 2017, when the budget savings are confirmed, there will need to be consultation about how the service achieves the savings.

This is likely to be in conjunction with other services that are changing in the Neighbourhoods. This public consultation will happen after April 2017, and involve local communities and specific community groups as well as communities of interest across the city. We will also include staff of the library service in this consultation.
Step 3: Who might the proposal impact?

Analysis of impacts on people with protected characteristics must be rigorous. Please demonstrate your analysis of any impacts in this section, referring to all of the equalities groups as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

3.1 Does the proposal have any potentially adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics?

There will be significant change if the number of council run libraries is reduced. There may also be changes to the way that libraries are run, when they are open and levels and types of staffing. This means that there are potentially adverse impacts for some citizens of Bristol, including people with protected characteristics e.g. if a library changes location or is open at a different time, or the local library is closed. This may affect people in different ways. There may be cumulative impacts on citizens if other services are also changed e.g. citizen service points.

We already know from our membership data analysed in 2015, that across the city, % membership and usage of libraries by disabled people is significantly lower than the % of disabled people in the local population. There were a variety of reasons for this;
• poor physical access to the buildings (e.g. signage not suitable, old buildings with compliant but not convenient disabled access, poor transport access)
• need more accessibility equipment
• need to do more to make disabled people welcome; demonstrating that they don’t have to be quiet in the space (a lot of people mentioned that they avoided libraries as they would find it difficult not to make noise)
• need for more choice for disabled people – more influence over choice of large print stock, being consulted when accessibility equipment is purchased so it is suitable

We already know that in some libraries the membership/usage by BME people is low compared with the local population – for example in Henleaze Stoke Bishop and Westbury-on-Trym; Cabot, Clifton and Clifton East; Greater Brislington; and Knowle, Filwood and Windmill Hill areas; the % library usage by BME people is lower than the % BME population in the area. However, in other areas usage by BME people is higher than the local population. Consultation with equalities groups previously told us that a good library offer to BME people would include:
- Diverse stock in different languages (fiction / non-fiction) and stock which is culturally relevant.
- Libraries as central meeting point of community /a social space
- Libraries as a key place of learning for their children (placed higher importance on learning for their children than for themselves)

At this stage, we do not know the scale or detail of the changes but will be mindful of this feedback and will update the EQIA as more information is known.

Tony Hall – Chair Bristol Dementia Action Alliance

Can I also make a plea for libraries? We’ve already been through two recent consultation exercises on this and I believe the people have spoken on how they view the importance of libraries. As well as being a place to borrow books, go on the internet, complete CV’s, run mother and toddler groups, memory cafes, libraries are “places of safety” for people with Dementia. Rather than closing libraries can we look to move more services into libraries, making them more interesting and appealing places to visit - a community hub.

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<th>3.2 Can these impacts be mitigated or justified? If so, how?</th>
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<td>Creating a modern library service for the future which meets our ambition as a city but in the context of ongoing financial restrictions is extremely challenging and there will be impacts on all our citizens. We currently have 28 libraries. Many comparative core cities have fewer libraries than Bristol. We also acknowledge that the opening hours that were affected by a 25% reduction in April 2016, do not offer a full range of access to our citizens and need a comprehensive review. Maintaining the opening hours is a challenge with a stretched staff group over 28 sites.</td>
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<td>We also need to acknowledge areas of need and where there is little council or community support and the difference in areas where the community is stronger and more able to support libraries. We would also look at the digital resources we hold and what is available through our website direct to homes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>So, while there is an impact on all citizens, where possible the negative impact on citizens with the most need will be minimised.</td>
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<td>When the full proposals for change to achieve the budget savings are known, after consultation, we will update the EQIA to reflect the local and specific</td>
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3.3 Does the proposal create any benefits for people with protected characteristics?

At this stage, this is unknown as the details of the savings and actions to find the savings is unknown. This will be updated as more detail is known.

3.4 Can they be maximised? If so, how?

At this stage, this is unknown

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**Step 4: So what?**

The Equality Impact Assessment must be able to influence the proposal and decision. This section asks how your understanding of impacts on people with protected characteristics has influenced your proposal, and how the findings of your Equality Impact Assessment can be measured going forward.

4.1 How has the equality impact assessment informed or changed the proposal?

The proposal is still subject to consultation for the service. When the savings figure is known, we will embark on a service consultation from April 2017, with due regard to equalities and protected characteristics.

4.2 What actions have been identified going forward?

The EQIA is a living document which is regularly updated and full equalities information will be used to design and develop the proposals and the consultation methods going forward.

4.3 How will the impact of your proposal and actions be measured moving forward?

This will be assessed when the savings are known and this EQIA will be updated.

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Service Director Sign-Off:  

Equalities Officer Sign Off: Cherene Whitfield  
Please note: There will need to be a full EqIA once affected library services have been identified.

Date: 10th January 2017