

# Equality Impact Assessment

## EIA (Equalities Impact Assessment) Title (add in title for paper Proposed reduction to the Library Book Budget.

Did you use the EIA Screening Tool? (Delete as applicable)

No

### 1. Explaining the matter being assessed

Is this a:

(Delete the ones that don't apply)

- Other – Budget Reduction

**Summarise the strategy, policy, service(s), or function(s) being assessed. Describe current status followed by any changes that stakeholders would experience.**

*Describe the change being assessed in plain English. Give your rationale for writing the EIA. Identify the key stakeholders affected by this change, including residents and staff. Consider what evidence you have gathered on the impact of your proposals.*

Surrey County Council has a statutory requirement under the [Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964](#); to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. In providing this service, councils must, among other things:

- “encourage both adults and children to make full use of the library service (section 7(2)(b))”
- “lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area (in accordance with section 8(3))”

The library service in Surrey has [a network of 52 libraries](#), including 10 that are Community Partnered Libraries (CPLs). The service budget is currently, £6,482,000 and is made up of staffing and supplies and services which include the Library Book Budget.

As the library service is required to make budget reductions in order to contribute to the overall medium term financial plan of the council, the service is proposed to make £182,733 worth of savings from 2023/2024.

Since 2018, the library service has made £2.97m of savings from its controllable budgets therefore, opportunities to drive further savings in the current model are more limited than previously was the case. To allocate the £182,733 reductions equitably across the service it is proposed that £103,000 comes from the Library Book budget through its allocation of resources to the 42 libraries in the main Surrey Libraries network and the remaining £80,554 is proposed to come from the 10 Community Partnered Libraries.

This EIA describes the impact and changes of £103,000 reduction to the Library Book Budget. *(The proposed reduction of £80,554 to the CPLs is covered in a separate EIA.)*

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The library book budget is currently £962,000 and is used to purchase [a range of physical and electronic items](#) for adult, young people and children the items including:

- Books
- audiobooks, eBooks, eaudio
- newspapers/magazines/comics,
- DVDs,
- e-resources for use by residents e.g. Which? Magazine, Theory Test Pro, Go Citizen (citizenship practice tests).

In addition, the library book budget is used to subscribe to a range of library resources to organise and automate the purchase and processing stock, ensuring value for money and resident satisfaction.

To achieve savings of £103,000 it is proposed that there will be a reduction in key areas of resource provision including the cancelling of certain online reference resources, ceasing provision of certain categories of stock i.e., DVDS, and Newspapers. With this level of reduction, however, we will also need to decrease the spend on adult fiction, adult non-fiction, and children's non-fiction by limiting the amount of stock we buy for each category. The proposed reduction to the library book budget will reduce the amount of stock we are able to purchase by about 20,000 books.

Negative impacts for all residents include:

- Fewer items purchased.
- Increased number of requests on individual stock items leading to potentially longer waiting times for books.
- More reliance on fulfilment of requests from authorities in The Libraries Consortium leading to potentially increased waiting times.
- More limited ability to codesign the library service because the service will be unable to purchase all the titles suggested by other stakeholders and residents.
- More limited ability to respond to council initiatives and priorities with resources funded directly from the library book budget.

The change will affect all residents and users of the service, therefore the rationale for writing this Equality Impact Assessment is to identify impact amongst residents with protected characteristics likely to be affected by this change and key actions to mitigate impact.

Under the Equality Act 2010, public libraries have a duty to promote equality and diversity. The range of stock we purchase should both reflect and celebrate our diverse communities and promote good relations across all equality areas including race, disability, gender, religion and sexual orientation.

**How does your service proposal support the outcomes in [the Community Vision for Surrey 2030](#)?**

Specify which of the ten Vision outcomes this work is linked to.

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[Library and Cultural Services Strategy 2020-2025](#) identified five strategic objectives to underpin the development of services and ensure the link with Surrey 2030 and Surrey's Organisation strategy. These reflect the five strategic principles endorsed by the Libraries and Cultural services consultation undertaken in late 2018 and early 2019.

Ambitions for people are:

- Children and young people are safe and feel safe and confident.
- Everyone benefits from education, skills and employment opportunities that help them succeed in life.
- Everyone lives healthy, active and fulfilling lives, and makes good choices about their wellbeing.
- Everyone gets the health and social care support and information they need at the right time and place.
- Communities are welcoming and supportive, especially of those most in need, and people feel able to contribute to community life.

We want our county's economy to be strong, vibrant and successful and Surrey to be a great place to live, work and learn. A place that capitalises on its location and natural assets, and where communities feel supported, and people are able to support each other.

Our ambitions for our place are:

- Residents live in clean, safe and green communities, where people and organisations embrace their environmental responsibilities.
- Businesses in Surrey thrive.
- Well-connected communities, with effective infrastructure, that grow sustainably.

## **Are there any specific geographies in Surrey where this will make an impact?**

- County-wide

**Assessment team** – A key principle for completing impact assessments is that they should not be done in isolation. Consultation with affected groups and stakeholders needs to be built in from the start, to enrich the assessment and develop relevant mitigation.

## **Detail here who you have involved with completing this EIA. For each include:**

- Name (will be removed before publishing): Katie Kinnear
- Organisation: Surrey County Council, Library Service
- Role on the assessment team (for example, service user, manager of service, specialist):  
Strategic Manager: Development and Support Services and Chartered Librarian responsible for overseeing Resources and Reader Development team
  
- Name (will be removed before publishing): Elizabeth Beverley
- Organisation: Surrey County Council, Library Service

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- Role on the assessment team (for example, service user, manager of service, specialist):  
Resources and Reader Development Lead and Chartered Librarian responsible for leading the Resources and Reader Development team
  
- Name (will be removed before publishing): Simon Harding
- Organisation: Surrey County Council, Library Service
- Role on the assessment team (for example, service user, manager of service, specialist):  
Service Manager Libraries and Heritage
  
- Name (will be removed before publishing): Susan Wills
- Organisation: Surrey County Council, Cultural Services
- Role on the assessment team (for example, service user, manager of service, specialist):  
Chartered Librarian responsible for setting strategic direction of Cultural Services

## 2. Service Users / Residents

### Who may be affected by this activity?

There are 9 protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010) to consider in your proposal. These are:

1. Age including younger and older people \*
2. Disability \*
3. Gender reassignment \*
4. Pregnancy and maternity \*
5. Race including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality \*
6. Religion or belief including lack of belief \*
7. Sex \*
8. Sexual orientation \*
9. Marriage/civil partnerships \*

Though not included in the Equality Act 2010, Surrey County Council recognises that there are other vulnerable groups which significantly contribute to inequality across the county and therefore they should also be considered within EIAs (Equalities Impact Assessment). If relevant, you will need to include information on the following vulnerable groups (Please **refer to the EIA guidance** if you are unclear as to what this is).

- Members/Ex members of armed forces
- Adult and young carers\*
- Those experiencing digital exclusion\*
- Those experiencing domestic abuse\*
- Those with education/training (literacy) needs
- Those experiencing homelessness\*
- Looked after children/Care leavers\*
- Those living in rural/urban areas
- Those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage\*
- Out of work young people) \*
- Adults with learning disabilities and/or autism\*
- People with drug or alcohol use issues\*
- People on probation
- People in prison
- Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers
- Sex workers
- Children with Special educational needs and disabilities\*
- Adults with long term health conditions, disabilities (including SMI) and/or sensory impairment(s)\*
- Older People in care homes\*
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities\*
- Other (describe below)

(\*as identified in the Surrey COVID Community Impact Assessment and the Surrey Health and Well-being Strategy)

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**Age including younger and older people-** Replicate this page for each of the protected characteristic or vulnerable groups that are within the scope of this EIA [delete this sentence before publishing].

**Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.**

*Details on the service users/residents that could be affected. What information (data) do you have about them? How might they be impacted in a positive or negative way? (Try to be as specific as possible)*

The total population of Surrey can be broken down as below:

<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Aged 0-19</b>	<b>Working age population</b>	<b>Aged 65+</b>
1,203,100	286,000	690,000	227,100
48.8% male; 51.2% female	23.8% (Southeast average = 23.1%)	57.4% (Southeast average = 57.5%)	18.9% (Southeast average = 19.4%)

[Source: End-Year Estimates (ONS) 2021]

The largest 5-year cohort across Surrey are those aged 50-54 years, with a population of 87,300. The fastest growing cohort compared to previous Census are those aged 70-74, with a growth of 34% (an additional 14,834 persons). This group reflects the post-WWII baby boom. Other older age groups have also increased: those aged 75-79 by 18.2%, and those aged 80 or older by 14.5%. At a local authority level, the largest increases in older people are: 44.4% increase in the 70-74 age group in Reigate and Banstead; 28.3% increase in 75-79-year-olds in Tandridge; and 37.5% increase in those aged 80 or above in Surrey Heath.

The amount of the Surrey population aged 4 or below has decreased by 8.0% since the previous Census. A similar level decrease (-7.3%) was observed across England, indicating that birth rates have fallen since 2016/17. This age group has fallen in all areas other than Runnymede (where it remained unchanged), with the largest decrease observed in Guildford, which saw a 17.4% reduction in the number of preschool children across the past decade.

Current Library Membership – 323,694

Children (0-11) 63,743

Aged 65+ - 53,893

Aged 75+ - 27,135

Users are placed into certain categories when they join the service such as Child, Young Person, Adult, Concession and Open Ticket (our card for vulnerable users). This data is represented below. It is recognised that the reach of the service is far greater than the number of registered users as evidenced through the SCC (Surrey County Council) [Library and Cultural Services Strategy 2020-2025](#) and as a universal service any of the counties 1.2million residents are able to access library services as they are free at the point of access.

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Whilst this cannot be directly compared with population data due to the wide range of ages each library membership category covers, we are conscious that compared to the population both children and young people and over 65s are overrepresented as library members.

Negative impacts for this characteristic include:

- Older people – reduction of the library book budget will mean we buy less copies of each title and therefore residents may have to travel to a library outside their local area to access the books and resources they need. For older residents this may not be practical or possible due to their personal circumstances e.g., through lack of finance or health. Residents can request items to be delivered to their local library. With a reduced library book budget, they may have to do this more often with possible longer waiting times.
- Older residents can be more reliant on books in other formats such as large print and audio/eaudio. These cost on average 2-3 times a standard format book\* *Average prices are: Audiobook £41.50 and Large Print £17.89*
- With a reduced budget there will be less choice and availability. The last remaining supplier of large print books only supplies to library services; therefore, residents can only access this material from their local library.
- Children and Young People - In reducing the library book budget, this could directly affect the range of books we will be able to provide for children and young people. Library stock replacement of children's picture books and board books is very high due to the wear and tear that they received and the high rates of borrowing. Reductions to the library book budget could mean we are unable to replace all worn out or damaged items and this could lead to impacts on literacy levels and children's engagement in reading. As smaller libraries receive less stock overall than larger libraries, any reductions could be more significant for residents in these communities.

## **Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.**

*How will you maximise positive/minimise negative impacts (actions to mitigate or enhance impacts)? When will this be implemented by? Who is responsible for this? Include additional details in the "Actions & Decisions Tracker" (Section 5) and refer to the relevant item here.*

As a free universal statutory service accessible to all residents, we must carefully consider the countywide service and where to make reductions. Rather than a blanket approach to reducing stock purchasing for smaller branches and focusing on larger branches which could lead to geographic inequalities, we are instead planning reductions from each category of stock with an emphasis on lower reductions in specific areas to minimise the impact on certain protected characteristics. These specific areas include:

- Protection of the children's and young people's fiction book budget to minimise the impact on literacy levels.
- As part of our commitment to equalities diversity and inclusion there will be an emphasis on selecting and purchasing books by authors from diverse backgrounds, with diverse content.
- Less reduction on Large Print, Audiobooks and eAudio budgets relative to other categories which residents with visual impairments rely on.

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- Maintain spend on projects to ensure adequate provision of bookstock to support key council and national initiatives such as Reading Well/Self Help, LGBTQ+, Gypsy Roma Traveller, Children Looked After, Reading Friends, Summer Reading Challenge for children, the 'Warm Welcome' in libraries all of which contribute to the council's aim of 'No One Left Behind'.
- Expenditure on non-fiction books prioritised related to education, skills, employment, health and wellbeing.
- To minimise travel impacts the library service will increase promotion of its Access Ticket which is a special membership available to those that are unable to access the library service themselves due to a medical or age relation condition enabling free requests and a family member acting on their behalf to collect books.
- The service will also increase the promotion and reach of its Library Direct service by recruiting more volunteers to select books for house bound residents and delivering them direct to their door.

## **What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?**

*If so, please detail your awareness of whether this will exacerbate impacts for those with protected characteristics and the mitigating actions that will be taken to limit the cumulative impacts of these changes.*

This proposal is one of several linked to budget reductions required across the council in 2023/2024. Likely impacts from these yet to be confirmed. The current proposal would not exacerbate the other proposals as it currently stands.

The library service has been part of a transformation programme since 2019 with key objectives and benefit expectations. As part of this there is a programme of investment in library properties with up to 20 library refurbishments planned for the next 5 years. Reductions to the library book budget could have a knock-on effect to the amount of stock purchased for newly refurbished libraries potentially limiting their success, reach and impact.

## **Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

*Identify negative impacts that can't be mitigated and explain why, together with evidence*

- Not all impacts can be minimised, and negative impacts will remain for all residents with all libraries receiving fewer titles, and fewer copies of popular titles. This could lead to potentially longer waiting times for residents as the number of requests per available copy increases. With 20,000 fewer new books purchased each year waiting times for the latest popular title could increase to 8 months which is twice as long as the current waiting time of 4.5 months. It could also lead to financial disadvantage to all residents due to increased reliance on the libraries request service which incurs a fee of 75p-£1.75, or the need to travel to other library locations to borrow the book, and potential reduction in satisfaction with the library service.



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- Reductions to physical Audiobooks and Large Print book budgets which have high replacement costs\* will mean we may not be able to meet demand or offer breadth and depth of stock. \*Average prices are Audiobook £41.50 and Large Print £17.89
- Fewer ebook and eaudio titles purchased.
- Whilst we intend to maintain spend on projects and continue to promote diversity of authors and content, the reductions required across the stock categories will mean that the range and impact of these collections may be reduced if cannot afford to purchase the same level of stock we do now.
- The services ability to respond quickly to local need and emerging demands could be impacted and will require an increased reliance on external funding which is variable. When we do respond to new need, we will have to carefully consider how best to do this successfully.
- Surrey Library Service has the highest total book issues per 1,000 population of all its comparative neighbours (CIPFA 2019) and is one of the top 2 busiest library services in the country (CIPFA 2020) any reduction to our library book budget places this at risk.
- Less books, means less choice for residents and potential reduced satisfaction with the service leading to reduced income, book issues and visits.

## Disability

### **Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.**

*Details on the service users/residents that could be affected. What information (data) do you have about them? How might they be impacted in a positive or negative way? (Try to be as specific as possible)*

- The library service has 323,694 registered members and although the service does not directly monitor the number of people with disabilities amongst its membership, the library service offers Open Ticket membership categories for residents who have a 'short- or long-term medical condition that has a substantial and negative effect on their day-to-day life'. 181 of those customers use the Library Direct service which is for those residents who find it difficult or impossible to visit a library themselves because of illness, disability, mobility problems or caring responsibilities (including young carers).

Current library membership of these different categories is shown below:

- Open Ticket aged 0-4 - 9
- Open Ticket aged 5-15 - 169
- Open Ticket aged 16-17 - 48
- Open Ticket aged 18+ - 6,406

[Source: Library membership data as at 3 Nov 2020]

Negative impacts for this characteristic include:

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- Residents with disabilities may find it hard to access libraries relying on using local facilities or being physically unable to travel. Reduction of the library book budget will mean we buy less copies of each title and therefore residents may have to travel to a library outside their local area to access the books and resources they need. For residents with disabilities this may not be practical or possible due to availability of private and public transport and their personal ability to travel. Residents can request items from elsewhere to be delivered to their local library, however, with a reduced library book budget they may have to do this more often leaving which would incur extra cost.
- Residents with disabilities can be more reliant on books in other formats such as large print and audio/eaudio. These cost on average 2-3 times a standard format book\* *Average prices are: Audiobook £41.50 and Large Print £17.89*
- With a reduced budget there will be less choice and availability. The last remaining supplier of large print books only supplies to library services; therefore, residents can only access this material from their local library.
- Residents with disabilities can rely more on online resources utilising accessibility features and assistive technology on those platforms enabling equal access to libraries. Features include everything from a dyslexic font and customizable text size to controlling the speed of the audio and read to me function and translation services. As these resources are purchased as subscriptions and are expensive to provide, reductions to the budget means that we may not be able to afford to offer the full range that we do now.
- Potential reduction in Adult Non-fiction budgets may mean we are unable to buy as many of Reading well/ self-help books for customers which act as a key part of the prevention agenda and can support people with specific disabilities.
- Reductions to budgets may mean that we are less able to fund resources to support key council initiatives that are targeted at people with specific disabilities directly from the library book budget.
- Through the Libraries and Cultural Services transformation, we are developing partnerships with a wide range of health and mental health providers to support local initiatives such as the loaning of blood pressure monitors, a range of books to support a healthy lifestyle and the ability to live a full and healthy life. With a reduced budget our ability to support the key Surrey County Council objective of no one left behind directly from the library book budget may be limited.

## **Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.**

*How will you maximise positive/minimise negative impacts (actions to mitigate or enhance impacts)? When will this be implemented by? Who is responsible for this? Include additional details in the "Actions & Decisions Tracker" (Section 5) and refer to the relevant item here.*

As a free universal statutory service accessible to all residents, we must consider the library service countywide and carefully consider where to make reductions. Rather than a blanket approach reducing stock purchasing for smaller branches and focusing on larger branches which could lead to geographic inequalities we are instead planning reductions from each

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category of stock with an emphasis on lower reductions in specific areas to minimise the impact on certain protected characteristics. These specific areas related to disabilities include:

- Less reduction on Large Print, Audiobooks and eAudio book budgets relative to other book categories which residents with visual impairments rely on.
- Maintain spend on books to support project to ensure adequate provision of bookstock to support key council and national initiatives such as Reading Well/Self Help, LGBTQ+, Gypsy Roma Traveller, Children Looked After, Reading Friends, Summer Reading Challenge for children, the 'Warm Welcome' in libraries all of which contribute to the council's main aim of 'No One Left Behind'.
- Ensuring stock selectors prioritise spend of Non-Fiction books related to education, skills, employment, health and wellbeing.
- To minimise any increased travel or financial impacts for people with disabilities, the library service will increase promotion of its Access Ticket which is a special membership available to those that are unable to access the library service themselves due to a medical or age relation condition. This enables free requests and a family member acting on their behalf to collect books.
- The service will also increase the promotion and reach of its Library Direct service by recruiting more volunteers to select books for house bound residents and delivering them direct to their door.

## **What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?**

*If so, please detail your awareness of whether this will exacerbate impacts for those with protected characteristics and the mitigating actions that will be taken to limit the cumulative impacts of these changes.*

This proposal is one of several linked to budget reductions required across the council in 2023/2024. Likely impacts from these yet to be confirmed. The current proposal would not exacerbate the other proposals as it currently stands.

The library service has been part of a transformation programme since 2019 with key objectives and benefit expectations. As part of this there is a programme of investment in library properties with up to 20 library refurbishments planned for the next 5 years. Reductions to the library book budget could have a knock-on effect to the amount of stock purchased for newly refurbished libraries potentially limiting their success, reach and impact.

## **Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

*Identify negative impacts that can't be mitigated and explain why, together with evidence.*

- Not all impacts can be fully mitigated, and negative impacts will remain for all residents with all libraries receiving fewer titles, and fewer copies of popular titles. This could lead to potentially longer waiting times for residents with disabilities as the number of requests per available copy increases. With 20,000 fewer new books purchased each year waiting times

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for the latest popular title could increase to 8 months which is twice as long as the current waiting time of 4.5 months. It could also lead to financial disadvantage to all residents due to increased reliance on the libraries request service which incurs a fee of 75p-£1.75, or the need to travel to other library locations to borrow the book, and potential reduction in satisfaction with the library service.

- Reductions to physical Audiobooks and Large Print book budgets which have high replacement costs\* will mean we may not be able to meet demand or offer breadth and depth of stock. \*Average prices are Audiobook £41.50 and Large Print £17.89
- Fewer ebook and eaudio titles purchased.
- Whilst we intend to maintain spend on projects and continue to promote diversity of authors and content, the reductions required across the stock categories will mean that the range and impact of these collections may be reduced if cannot afford to purchase the same level of stock we do now.
- The services ability to respond quickly to local need and emerging demands could be impacted and will require an increased reliance on external funding which is variable. When we do respond to new need, we will have to carefully consider how best to do this successfully.
- Surrey Library Service has the highest total book issues per 1,000 population of all its comparative neighbours (CIPFA 2019) and is one of the top 2 busiest library services in the country (CIPFA 2020) any reduction to our library book budget places this at risk.
- Less books, means less choice for residents and potential reduced satisfaction with the service leading to reduced income, book issues and visits.

## Gender reassignment

**Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.**

*Details on the service users/residents that could be affected. What information (data) do you have about them? How might they be impacted in a positive or negative way? (Try to be as specific as possible)*

The library service does not currently collect data on Gender reassignment, and data is unavailable on this characteristic.

The library service plays an important role in being a trusted source of information and signposting to all residents in a safe and neutral space. As part of this remit, it provides a broad range of resources to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ users, or anyone who is interested in LGBTQ+ topics. All libraries support LGBTQ+ events and we ensure there are relevant book displays to support projects and national promotions such as Pride and LGBTQ+ history month.

Negative impacts for this characteristic include:

- Potential reductions in Adult Non-fiction budgets may mean we are unable to buy as many books in specific collections such as our LGBTQ+ collection.

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- Support for LGBTQ+ events and promotions such as pride, may be more limited if our ability to add new titles to collections for display is more limited.

## **Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.**

*How will you maximise positive/minimise negative impacts (actions to mitigate or enhance impacts)? When will this be implemented by? Who is responsible for this? Include additional details in the “Actions & Decisions Tracker” (Section 5) and refer to the relevant item here.*

As a free universal statutory service accessible to all residents, we must consider the library service countywide and carefully consider where to make reductions. Rather than a blanket approach reducing stock purchasing for smaller branches and focusing on larger branches which could lead to geographic inequalities we are instead planning reductions from each category of stock with an emphasis on lower reductions in specific areas to minimise the impact on certain protected characteristics. These specific areas related to gender include:

- As part of our commitment to equalities diversity and inclusion there will be an emphasis on selecting and purchasing a wide range of books by authors from diverse backgrounds, with diverse content
- Maintain spend on books to support project to ensure adequate provision of bookstock to support key council and national initiatives such as Reading Well/Self Help, LGBTQ+, Gypsy Roma Traveller, Children Looked After, Reading Friends, Summer Reading Challenge for children, the ‘Warm Welcome’ in libraries all of which contribute to the council’s main aim of ‘No One Left Behind’.
- Ensuring stock selectors prioritise spend of Non-Fiction books related to education, skills, employment, health and wellbeing.

## **What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?**

*If so, please detail your awareness of whether this will exacerbate impacts for those with protected characteristics and the mitigating actions that will be taken to limit the cumulative impacts of these changes.*

This proposal is one of several linked to budget reductions required across the council in 2023/2024. Likely impacts from these yet to be confirmed. The current proposal would not exacerbate the other proposals as it currently stands.

The library service has been part of a transformation programme since 2019 with key objectives and benefit expectations. As part of this there is a programme of investment in library properties with up to 20 library refurbishments planned for the next 5 years. Reductions to the library book budget could have a knock-on effect to the amount of stock purchased for newly refurbished libraries potentially limiting their success, reach and impact.

## **Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

*Identify negative impacts that can’t be mitigated and explain why, together with evidence.*

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- Not all impacts can be fully mitigated, and negative impacts will remain for all residents with all libraries receiving fewer titles, and fewer copies of popular titles. This could lead to potentially longer waiting times for residents interested in gender reassignment as the number of requests per available copy increases. With 20,000 fewer new books purchased each year waiting times for the latest popular title could increase to 8 months which is twice as long as the current waiting time of 4.5 months. It could also lead to financial disadvantage to all residents due to increased reliance on the libraries request service which incurs a fee of 75p-£1.75, or the need to travel to other library locations to borrow the book, and potential reduction in satisfaction with the library service.

## Pregnancy and maternity

Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.

*Details on the service users/residents that could be affected. What information (data) do you have about them? How might they be impacted in a positive or negative way? (Try to be as specific as possible)*

Surrey County Council does not currently collect data from its library users in relation to this protected characteristic. However, we do have the below information from [www.surreyi.gov.uk](http://www.surreyi.gov.uk) which gives us a baseline regarding those that might be impacted by this proposal.



The chart above shows the birth rate for Surrey since 2011. In recent years births in Surrey have declined from 13,542 births in 2015 to 11,880 in 2020.

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The library service plays an important role in being a trusted source of information and signposting to all residents in a safe and neutral space. This includes providing residents with a good range of books about pregnancy, childbirth and parenthood. Other Surrey service such as Family Information Services and Family Centres signpost and refer users to the library service to access this information.

All libraries support events such as Children's Mental Health Week, World Mental Health Day, and Breastfeeding Week and will ensure there are relevant book displays to support these campaigns and highlight the importance of these topics.

Negative impacts for this characteristic include:

- Potential reduction in Adult Non-fiction budgets may mean we are unable to buy as many books in specific collections such as our parenting collection which covers a range of important topics including post-natal depression, child development, discipline, nutrition and health, behaviour, emotions and communication.
- Support for national events and promotions related to pregnancy and parenting, may be more limited if our ability to add new titles to collections for display is more limited with a less comprehensive selection of materials.
- The library service offers access to a range of newspapers, emagazines and online resources. These include titles such as Which? magazine, Mother and Baby, Parenting and Your Pregnancy, titles are available in a range of different languages with translation services allowing free access to all including those for whom English is a second language. As these resources are purchased via subscriptions which are expensive to provide, reductions to the budget means that we may not be able to afford to offer the full range that we do now. This could also lead to increased waiting times for titles in demand.
- Through the Libraries and Cultural Services transformation, we are developing partnerships with a wide range of health and mental health providers to support local initiatives such as the loaning of blood pressure monitors, hosting baby weighing clinics and feeding support classes a range of books to support a healthy lifestyle and the ability to live a full and healthy life. With a reduced budget our ability to support the key Surrey County Council objective of no one left behind directly from the library book budget may be limited.

**Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.**

*How will you maximise positive/minimise negative impacts (actions to mitigate or enhance impacts)? When will this be implemented by? Who is responsible for this? Include additional details in the "Actions & Decisions Tracker" (Section 5) and refer to the relevant item here.*

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on certain protected characteristics. These specific areas related to pregnancy and maternity include:

- Protection of the children's and young people's fiction book budget to minimise the impact on literacy levels
- As part of our commitment to equalities diversity and inclusion there will be an emphasis on selecting and purchasing a wide range of books by authors from diverse backgrounds, with diverse content
- Maintain spend on books to support project to ensure adequate provision of bookstock to support key council and national initiatives such as Reading Well/Self Help, LGBTQ+, Gypsy Roma Traveller, Children Looked After, Reading Friends, Summer Reading Challenge for children, the 'Warm Welcome' in libraries all of which contribute to the council's main aim of 'No One Left Behind'.
- Ensuring stock selectors prioritise spend of Non-Fiction books related to education, skills, employment, health and wellbeing.

## **What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?**

*If so, please detail your awareness of whether this will exacerbate impacts for those with protected characteristics and the mitigating actions that will be taken to limit the cumulative impacts of these changes.*

This proposal is one of several linked to budget reductions required across the council in 2023/2024. Likely impacts from these yet to be confirmed. The current proposal would not exacerbate the other proposals as it currently stands.

The library service has been part of a transformation programme since 2019 with key objectives and benefit expectations. As part of this there is a programme of investment in library properties with up to 20 library refurbishments planned for the next 5 years. Reductions to the library book budget could have a knock-on effect to the amount of stock purchased for newly refurbished libraries potentially limiting their success, reach and impact.

## **Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

*Identify negative impacts that can't be mitigated and explain why, together with evidence.*

- Not all impacts can be fully mitigated, and negative impacts will remain for all residents with all libraries receiving fewer titles, and fewer copies of popular titles. This could lead to potentially longer waiting times for residents interested in pregnancy, maternity and parenting as the number of requests per available copy increases. With 20,000 fewer new books purchased each year waiting times for the latest popular title could increase to 8 months which is twice as long as the current waiting time of 4.5 months. It could also lead to financial disadvantage to all residents due to increased reliance on the libraries request service which incurs a fee of 75p-£1.75, or the need to travel to other library locations to borrow the book, and potential reduction in satisfaction with the library service.



# Equality Impact Assessment

- Whilst we intend to maintain spend on projects and continue to promote diversity of authors and content, the reductions required across the stock categories will mean that the range and impact of these collections may be reduced if cannot afford to purchase the same level of stock we do now.
- The services ability to respond quickly to local need relating to pregnancy and maternity and emerging demands could be impacted and will require an increased reliance on external funding which is variable. When we do respond to new need, we will have to carefully consider how best to do this successfully.

## Race including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality

### Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.

*Details on the service users/residents that could be affected. What information (data) do you have about them? How might they be impacted in a positive or negative way? (Try to be as specific as possible)*

Surrey County Council does not currently collect data from its library users in relation to this protected characteristic. However, we do have the below information from [www.surreyi.gov.uk](http://www.surreyi.gov.uk) which gives us a baseline regarding those that might be impacted by this proposal.

The most recent data on ethnicity uses 2011 Census data applied to the mid-year 2020 population to estimate ethnicity by area.

Surrey is less diverse than England as a whole with 83.5% of the population reporting their ethnic group as white British compared with 79.8% in England. In the Southeast, 85.2% were recorded as white British.

A further 78,000 (6.9%) of the population belonged to other white ethnic groups; 'Irish', 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' and 'other white'. A higher proportion of people in Surrey (6.9%) were recorded in other white ethnic groups than in England (5.7%) with fewer in all other ethnic groups (9.6% compared with 14.6%).

The next highest reported ethnicity group was Asian; 5.6% of the population reported their ethnicity as Asian, within which more detailed ethnicity was reported as 'Indian' (1.8%) followed by 'Pakistani' (1.0%). Two percent (2.1%) of the population reported mixed ethnicity and 1.1% reported their ethnicity as black. Surrey has the lowest proportion of black residents compared to the Southeast region and England.

Using 2011 Census estimates adjusted for the 2020 population, 115,118 (9.6%) of people in Surrey are from a minority ethnicity group that is not white.

Woking is the most ethnically diverse area in Surrey with 16.4% of its population from minority ethnic groups. Waverley is the least diverse with 90.6% reporting their ethnicity as white British.

Spelthorne has the highest proportion of people from Indian ethnic groups (4.2%) and Woking has the highest proportion of people from Pakistani ethnic groups (5.7%).

# Equality Impact Assessment

It is important that the library ensure its resources represent a wide range of views, beliefs, and cultures with authors from diverse background and content reflecting people with different ways of life, race and religion.

The library stock contains key collections in, Cantonese, Mandarin, Russian, Ukrainian, and Urdu. These books meet current need, but we are receiving more requests for books in other languages. These books are often difficult to source, requiring procurement from special suppliers at a higher cost. There are also a range of online and e-resources available in different languages including ebooks, newspapers and magazines.

All libraries support key national and international events and will ensure there are relevant book displays to support projects, national promotions, and celebrations such as Chinese New Year, Black History Month, Asian heritage month, and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month

Negative impacts for this characteristic include:

- In reducing the library book budget, we may not be able to afford to purchase the same level and range of stock that reflects our communities. This could make responding to emerging needs more difficult.
- Reduction in Adult Non-fiction budgets means we are unable to buy as many titles from a range of diverse authors.
- Potential reduction in Adult Non-fiction budgets may mean we are unable to buy as many books in specific collections such as foreign languages without support from other funding streams.
- Support for key national and international events may be more limited if our ability to add new titles to collections for display is reduced with a less comprehensive selection of materials.
- The library service offers access to a range of eBooks, eAudio, newspapers, emagazines and online resources. These include titles are available in a range of different languages with translation services allowing free access to all including those for whom English is a second language. As these resources are purchased via subscriptions which are expensive to provide, reductions to the budget means that we may not be able to afford to offer the full range that we do now. This could also lead to increased waiting times for titles in demand.
- Through the Libraries and Cultural Services transformation, we are developing partnerships with a wide range of health and mental health providers to support local initiatives such as the loaning of blood pressure monitors, hosting baby weighing clinics and feeding support classes a range of books to support a healthy lifestyle and the ability to live a full and healthy life. People from ethnic minority backgrounds have poorer health outcomes and are more likely to suffer health inequalities meaning the library plays an important role in proving access to trusted health information. With a reduced budget our ability to support the key Surrey County Council objective of no one left behind directly from the library book budget may be limited.

# Equality Impact Assessment

**Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.**

*How will you maximise positive/minimise negative impacts (actions to mitigate or enhance impacts)? When will this be implemented by? Who is responsible for this? Include additional details in the “Actions & Decisions Tracker” (Section 5) and refer to the relevant item here.*

As a free universal statutory service accessible to all residents, we must consider the library service countywide and carefully consider where to make reductions. Rather than a blanket approach reducing stock purchasing for smaller branches and focusing on larger branches which could lead to geographic inequalities we are instead planning reductions from each category of stock with an emphasis on lower reductions in specific areas to minimise the impact on certain protected characteristics. These specific areas related to race including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality include:

- As part of our commitment to equalities diversity and inclusion there will be an emphasis on selecting and purchasing a wide range of books by authors from diverse backgrounds, with diverse content
- Maintain spend on books to support project to ensure adequate provision of bookstock to support key council and national initiatives such as Reading Well/Self Help, LGBTQ+, Gypsy Roma Traveller, Children Looked After, Reading Friends, Summer Reading Challenge for children, the ‘Warm Welcome’ in libraries all of which contribute to the council’s main aim of ‘No One Left Behind’.
- Ensuring stock selectors prioritise spend of Non-Fiction books related to education, skills, employment, health and wellbeing.
- Actively engage in bidding for external funding to allow for increased purchasing of stock to support our diverse communities.

**What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?**

*If so, please detail your awareness of whether this will exacerbate impacts for those with protected characteristics and the mitigating actions that will be taken to limit the cumulative impacts of these changes.*

This proposal is one of several linked to budget reductions required across the council in 2023/2024. Likely impacts from these yet to be confirmed. The current proposal would not exacerbate the other proposals as it currently stands.

The library service has been part of a transformation programme since 2019 with key objectives and benefit expectations. As part of this there is a programme of investment in library properties with up to 20 library refurbishments planned for the next 5 years. Reductions to the library book budget could have a knock-on effect to the amount of stock purchased for newly refurbished libraries potentially limiting their success, reach and impact.

**Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

*Identify negative impacts that can’t be mitigated and explain why, together with evidence.*

# Equality Impact Assessment

- Not all impacts can be fully mitigated, and negative impacts will remain for all residents with all libraries receiving fewer titles, and fewer copies of popular titles. This could lead to potentially longer waiting times for residents from more diverse communities as the number of requests per available copy increases. With 20,000 fewer new books purchased each year waiting times for the latest popular title could increase to 8 months which is twice as long as the current waiting time of 4.5 months. It could also lead to financial disadvantage to all residents due to increased reliance on the libraries request service which incurs a fee of 75p-£1.75, or the need to travel to other library locations to borrow the book, and potential reduction in satisfaction with the library service.
- Whilst we intend to maintain spend on projects and continue to promote diversity of authors and content, the reductions required across the stock categories will mean that the range and impact of these collections may be reduced if cannot afford to purchase the same level of stock we do now.
- The services ability to respond quickly to local need relating to race and ethnicity and emerging demands could be impacted and will require an increased reliance on external funding which is variable. When we do respond to new need, we will have to carefully consider how best to do this successfully.

## Religion or belief including lack of belief

**Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.**

*Details on the service users/residents that could be affected. What information (data) do you have about them? How might they be impacted in a positive or negative way? (Try to be as specific as possible)*

Surrey County Council does not currently collect data from its library users in relation to this protected characteristic. However, [www.surreyi.gov.uk](http://www.surreyi.gov.uk) reports that the majority (almost two thirds (62.8%)) of the population in Surrey reported their religion as Christianity, which is higher than the proportion in England (59.4%). Almost a quarter of the population (24.8%) reported no religion, which is similar to the national picture. Islam (2.15%) and Hinduism (1.33%) were the next most common religions in Surrey. Younger people are more likely to have no religion than older people in Surrey.

It is important that the library ensure its resources represent a wide range of views, beliefs, and cultures with authors from diverse background and content reflecting people with different ways of life, race and religion.

All libraries support events and will ensure there are relevant book displays to support projects, national promotions and celebrations such as Chinese New Year, Black History Month, Asian heritage month, and Diwali.

Negative impacts for this characteristic include:

- In reducing the library book budget, we may not be able to afford to purchase the same level and range of stock that reflects our communities and their beliefs. This could make responding to emerging needs more difficult.

# Equality Impact Assessment

- Reduction in Adult Non-fiction budgets means we are unable to buy as many new titles from a range of diverse authors.
- Support for key national and international events and celebrations may be more limited if our ability to add new titles to collections for display is reduced with a less comprehensive selection of materials.
- The library service offers access to a range of eBooks, eAudio, newspapers, emagazines and online resources. These include titles available in a range of different languages with translation services allowing free access to all including those for whom English is a second language. As these resources are purchased via subscriptions which are expensive to provide, reductions to the budget means that we may not be able to afford to offer the full range that we do now. This could also lead to increased waiting times for titles in demand.

## **Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.**

*How will you maximise positive/minimise negative impacts (actions to mitigate or enhance impacts)? When will this be implemented by? Who is responsible for this? Include additional details in the “Actions & Decisions Tracker” (Section 5) and refer to the relevant item here.*

As a free universal statutory service accessible to all residents, we must consider the library service countywide and carefully consider where to make reductions. Rather than a blanket approach reducing stock purchasing for smaller branches and focusing on larger branches which could lead to geographic inequalities we are instead planning reductions from each category of stock with an emphasis on lower reductions in specific areas to minimise the impact on certain protected characteristics. These specific areas related to religion and belief

- As part of our commitment to equalities diversity and inclusion there will be an emphasis on selecting and purchasing a wide range of books by authors from diverse backgrounds, with diverse content
- 
- Maintain spend on books to support project to ensure adequate provision of bookstock to support community celebrations such as Chinese New Year, Black History Month, Asian heritage month, and Diwali in libraries all of which contribute to the council’s main aim of ‘No One Left Behind’.
- Ensuring stock selectors prioritise spend of Non-Fiction books related to celebrations and cultural festivities.
- Actively engage in bidding for external funding to allow for increased purchasing of stock to support our diverse communities.

**What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?**

# Equality Impact Assessment

*If so, please detail your awareness of whether this will exacerbate impacts for those with protected characteristics and the mitigating actions that will be taken to limit the cumulative impacts of these changes.*

This proposal is one of several linked to budget reductions required across the council in 2023/2024. Likely impacts from these yet to be confirmed. The current proposal would not exacerbate the other proposals as it currently stands.

The library service has been part of a transformation programme since 2019 with key objectives and benefit expectations. As part of this there is a programme of investment in library properties with up to 20 library refurbishments planned for the next 5 years. Reductions to the library book budget could have a knock-on effect to the amount of stock purchased for newly refurbished libraries potentially limiting their success, reach and impact.

## **Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

*Identify negative impacts that can't be mitigated and explain why, together with evidence.*

- Not all impacts can be fully mitigated, and negative impacts will remain for all residents with all libraries receiving fewer titles, and fewer copies of popular titles. This could lead to potentially longer waiting times for residents from more diverse communities as the number of requests per available copy increases. With 20,000 fewer new books purchased each year waiting times for the latest popular title could increase to 8 months which is twice as long as the current waiting time of 4.5 months. It could also lead to financial disadvantage to all residents due to increased reliance on the libraries request service which incurs a fee of 75p-£1.75, or the need to travel to other library locations to borrow the book, and potential reduction in satisfaction with the library service.
- Whilst we intend to maintain spend on projects and continue to promote diversity of authors and content, the reductions required across the stock categories will mean that the range and impact of these collections may be reduced if cannot afford to purchase the same level of stock we do now.
- The services ability to respond quickly to local need relating to race and ethnicity and emerging demands could be impacted and will require an increased reliance on external funding which is variable. When we do respond to new need, we will have to carefully consider how best to do this successfully.

## **Sex**

**Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.**

*Details on the service users/residents that could be affected. What information (data) do you have about them? How might they be impacted in a positive or negative way? (Try to be as specific as possible)*

Surrey County Council does not currently collect data from its library users in relation to this protected characteristic. However, [www.surreyi.gov.uk](http://www.surreyi.gov.uk) reports that in the 2011 census 51% identified as female and 49% as male.

# Equality Impact Assessment

The library service plays an important role in being a trusted source of information and signposting to all residents in a safe and neutral space. The library service should ensure that it provides a broad range of resources to meet the needs of residents at key moments in their life. Library resources include books in specific collections or on specific topics such as our parenting collection which covers a range of important topics, health and wellbeing including menopause, relationships, family information and mental health. Other local services such as NHS, GPs, and charities signpost and refer users to the library service to access this information.

All libraries support events and will ensure there are relevant book displays to support projects, national promotions and celebrations such as Men's Health Awareness Month and Women's History Month. The library also service offers access to a range of newspapers, emagazines and online resources. These include a range of women's and men's health and wellbeing titles are available in a range of different languages with translation services allowing free access to all including those for whom English is a second language.

Negative impacts for this protected characteristic include:

- Potential reductions in Adult Non-fiction budgets may mean we are unable to buy as many books in specific collections that support health and wellbeing as we do now.
- Support for key national events and promotions, may be more limited if our ability to add new titles to collections for display is more limited.
- Potential reductions in Adult Non-fiction budgets may mean that our ability to provide a full range and depth of stock will be impacted.
- Potential reduction in Adult Non-fiction budgets may mean we are unable to buy as many of Reading well/ Self Help books for customers which act as a key part of the prevention agenda.
- The library service offers access to a range of eBooks, eAudio, newspapers, emagazines and online resources. These include titles that support health and wellbeing. As these resources are purchased via subscriptions which are expensive to provide, reductions to the budget means that we may not be able to afford to offer the full range that we do now. This could also lead to increased waiting times for titles in demand.
- Through the Libraries and Cultural Services transformation, we are developing partnerships with a wide range of health and mental health providers to support local initiatives such as the loaning of blood pressure monitors, hosting baby weighing clinics and feeding support classes a range of books to support a healthy lifestyle and the ability to live a full and healthy life. With a reduced budget our ability to support the key Surrey County Council objective of no one left behind may be more limited without other sources of funding.

**Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.**

*How will you maximise positive/minimise negative impacts (actions to mitigate or enhance impacts)? When will this be implemented by? Who is responsible for this? Include additional details in the "Actions & Decisions Tracker" (Section 5) and refer to the relevant item here.*

# Equality Impact Assessment

As a free universal statutory service accessible to all residents, we must consider the library service countywide and carefully consider where to make reductions. Rather than a blanket approach reducing stock purchasing for smaller branches and focusing on larger branches which could lead to geographic inequalities we are instead planning reductions from each category of stock with an emphasis on lower reductions in specific areas to minimise the impact on certain protected characteristics. These specific areas related to sex are:

- As part of our commitment to equalities diversity and inclusion there will be an emphasis on selecting and purchasing a wide range of books by authors from diverse backgrounds, with diverse content
- Maintain spend on books to support project to ensure adequate provision of bookstock to support key council and national initiatives such as Reading Well/Self Help, LGBTQ+, Gypsy Roma Traveller, Children Looked After, Reading Friends, Summer Reading Challenge for children, the 'Warm Welcome' in libraries all of which contribute to the council's main aim of 'No One Left Behind'.
- Ensuring stock selectors prioritise spend of Non-Fiction books related to education, skills, employment, health and wellbeing.
- Actively engage in bidding for external funding to allow for increased purchasing of stock to support our diverse communities.

## **What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?**

*If so, please detail your awareness of whether this will exacerbate impacts for those with protected characteristics and the mitigating actions that will be taken to limit the cumulative impacts of these changes.*

This proposal is one of several linked to budget reductions required across the council in 2023/2024. Likely impacts from these yet to be confirmed. The current proposal would not exacerbate the other proposals as it currently stands.

The library service has been part of a transformation programme since 2019 with key objectives and benefit expectations. As part of this there is a programme of investment in library properties with up to 20 library refurbishments planned for the next 5 years. Reductions to the library book budget could have a knock-on effect to the amount of stock purchased for newly refurbished libraries potentially limiting their success, reach and impact.

## **Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

*Identify negative impacts that can't be mitigated and explain why, together with evidence.*

- Not all impacts can be fully mitigated, and negative impacts will remain for all residents with all libraries receiving fewer titles, and fewer copies of popular titles. This could lead to potentially longer waiting times for residents from more diverse communities as the number of requests per available copy increases. With 20,000 fewer new books purchased each year waiting times for the latest popular title could increase to 8 months which is twice as long as the current waiting time of 4.5 months. It could also lead to financial disadvantage to



# Equality Impact Assessment

all residents due to increased reliance on the libraries request service which incurs a fee of 75p-£1.75, or the need to travel to other library locations to borrow the book, and potential reduction in satisfaction with the library service.

- Whilst we intend to maintain spend on projects and continue to promote diversity of authors and content, the reductions required across the stock categories will mean that the range and impact of these collections may be reduced if cannot afford to purchase the same level of stock we do now.
- The services ability to respond quickly to local need relating to sex and health and wellbeing and emerging demands could be impacted and will require an increased reliance on external funding which is variable. When we do respond to new need, we will have to carefully consider how best to do this successfully.

## Sexual orientation

**Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.**

*Details on the service users/residents that could be affected. What information (data) do you have about them? How might they be impacted in a positive or negative way? (Try to be as specific as possible)*

The library service does not currently collect data on sexual orientation, and data is unavailable on this characteristic.

The library service provides a broad range of resources to meet the needs of both Heterosexual and LGBTQ+ users, or anyone who is interested in topics around sexual health, information or sex education whatever their orientation.

The library service plays an important role in being a trusted source of information and signposting to all residents in a safe and neutral space. The library service should ensure that it provides a broad range of resources to meet the needs of residents at key moments in their life.

All libraries support events and will ensure there are relevant book displays to support projects, national promotions and celebrations such as Pride and LGBTQ+ history month.

Negative impacts for this characteristic include:

- Potential reductions in Adult Non-fiction budgets may mean we are unable to buy as many books in specific collections such as LGBTQ+ as we do now.
- Support for key national events and promotions, may be more limited if our ability to add new titles to collections for display is more limited.
- Potential reduction in Adult Non-fiction budgets may mean we are unable to buy as many of Reading well/ Self Help books for customers which act as a key part of the prevention agenda.
- The library service offers access to a range of eBooks, eAudio, newspapers, emagazines and online resources. These include titles that support health and wellbeing. As these

# Equality Impact Assessment

resources are purchased via subscriptions which are expensive to provide, reductions to the budget means that we may not be able to afford to offer the full range that we do now. This could also lead to increased waiting times for titles in demand.

## **Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.**

*How will you maximise positive/minimise negative impacts (actions to mitigate or enhance impacts)? When will this be implemented by? Who is responsible for this? Include additional details in the “Actions & Decisions Tracker” (Section 5) and refer to the relevant item here.*

As a free universal statutory service accessible to all residents, we must consider the library service countywide and carefully consider where to make reductions. Rather than a blanket approach reducing stock purchasing for smaller branches and focusing on larger branches which could lead to geographic inequalities we are instead planning reductions from each category of stock with an emphasis on lower reductions in specific areas to minimise the impact on certain protected characteristics. These specific areas related to sex are:

- As part of our commitment to equalities diversity and inclusion there will be an emphasis on selecting and purchasing a wide range of books by authors from diverse backgrounds, with diverse content
- Maintain spend on books to support project to ensure adequate provision of bookstock to support key council and national initiatives such as Reading Well/Self Help, LGBTQ+, Gypsy Roma Traveller, the ‘Warm Welcome’ in libraries all of which contribute to the council’s main aim of ‘No One Left Behind’.
- Ensuring stock selectors prioritise spend of Non-Fiction books related to education, skills, employment, health and wellbeing.
- Actively engage in bidding for external funding to allow for increased purchasing of stock to support our diverse communities.

## **What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?**

*If so, please detail your awareness of whether this will exacerbate impacts for those with protected characteristics and the mitigating actions that will be taken to limit the cumulative impacts of these changes.*

This proposal is one of several linked to budget reductions required across the council in 2023/2024. Likely impacts from these yet to be confirmed. The current proposal would not exacerbate the other proposals as it currently stands.

The library service has been part of a transformation programme since 2019 with key objectives and benefit expectations. As part of this there is a programme of investment in library properties with up to 20 library refurbishments planned for the next 5 years. Reductions to the library book budget could have a knock-on effect to the amount of stock purchased for newly refurbished libraries potentially limiting their success, reach and impact.

# Equality Impact Assessment

## Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

*Identify negative impacts that can't be mitigated and explain why, together with evidence.*

- Not all impacts can be fully mitigated, and negative impacts will remain for all residents with all libraries receiving fewer titles, and fewer copies of popular titles. This could lead to potentially longer waiting times for residents from more diverse communities as the number of requests per available copy increases. With 20,000 fewer new books purchased each year waiting times for the latest popular title could increase to 8 months which is twice as long as the current waiting time of 4.5 months. It could also lead to financial disadvantage to all residents due to increased reliance on the libraries request service which incurs a fee of 75p-£1.75, or the need to travel to other library locations to borrow the book, and potential reduction in satisfaction with the library service.
- Whilst we intend to maintain spend on projects and continue to promote diversity of authors and content, the reductions required across the stock categories will mean that the range and impact of these collections may be reduced if cannot afford to purchase the same level of stock we do now.
- The services ability to respond quickly to local need relating to sexual orientation and emerging demands could be impacted and will require an increased reliance on external funding which is variable. When we do respond to new need, we will have to carefully consider how best to do this successfully.

## **Marriage/Civil Partnerships – not sure this is affected by this**

Our screening has identified that there is not specific risk to this protected characteristic.

# Equality Impact Assessment

## 3. Staff

Our screening suggests that there is no impact on staff as a result of this proposal.

## 4. Recommendation

Based your assessment, please indicate which course of action you are recommending to decision makers. You should explain your recommendation below.

- **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 would 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:
  - 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. (For guidance on what is unlawful discrimination, refer to the [Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance and Codes of Practice on the Equality Act](#) concerning employment, goods and services and equal pay).

### Recommended outcome:

Confirm which outcome you are recommending

Outcome Number 3

### Explanation:

Explain the reasons for your recommendation

Outcome 3 - the library services is required to make reductions and whilst there are some negative impacts for all resident's, suitable mitigations to minimise impact on those with protected characteristics have been identified.

# Equality Impact Assessment

## 5. Action plan and monitoring arrangements

Insert your action plan here, based on the mitigations recommended.

Involve you Assessment Team in monitoring progress against the actions above.

Item	Initiation Date	Action/Item	Person Actioning	Target Completion Date	Update/Notes	Open/Closed
1		<p>Allocate the spend of the library book budget as per below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of the children's and young people's fiction budget in order to minimise the impact on literacy</li> <li>• An emphasis on selecting and purchasing a wide range of authors from diverse backgrounds and books with diverse content</li> <li>• Lower reductions relative to other budgets on Large Print, Audiobooks and eAudio which are relied upon by residents with visual impairments.</li> <li>• Maintaining spend on projects to ensure adequate provision of book stock to support key council and national initiatives such as Reading Well, LGBTQ+, Gypsy Roma Traveller, Children Looked After, Reading Friends, Summer Reading Challenge, warm hubs – All of which contribute to the councils aim of 'No One Left Behind' .</li> <li>• Ensuring stock selectors prioritise spend of Non-Fiction budgets on books related to education, skills, employment, wellbeing and health.</li> <li>• Actively engage in bidding for external funding to allow for increased purchasing of stock to support our diverse communities.</li> </ul>	Elizabeth Beverley	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023		
2		<p>Increase promotion of Access Ticket which is a special membership available to those that are unable to access the library service themselves due to a medical or age relation condition enabling free requests and a family member acting on their behalf to collect books.</p>	Craig Jones	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023		

# Equality Impact Assessment

Item	Initiation Date	Action/Item	Person Actioning	Target Completion Date	Update/Notes	Open/Closed
3		The service will also increase its promotion of and the reach of its Library Direct service by recruiting more volunteers to select books for house bound residents and delivering them direct to their door.	Craig Jones	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023		

## 6a. Version control

Version Number	Purpose/Change	Author	Date
1	First Draft	Katie Kinnear	17/11/2022

The above provides historical data about each update made to the Equality Impact Assessment.

Please include the name of the author, date and notes about changes made – so that you can refer to what changes have been made throughout this iterative process.

For further information, please see the EIA Guidance document on version control.

# Equality Impact Assessment

## 6b. Approval

Secure approval from the appropriate level of management based on nature of issue and scale of change being assessed.

Approved by	Date approved
Head of Service	25/11/2022
Executive Director	29/11/2022
Cabinet Member	01/12/2022
Directorate Equality Group	

### **Publish:**

It is recommended that all EIAs are published on Surrey County Council's website.

Please send approved EIAs to: **INSERT SHARED EMAIL ACCOUNT ADDRESS**

**EIA author:**

## 6c. EIA Team

Name	Job Title	Organisation	Team Role

If you would like this information in large print, Braille, on CD or in another language please contact us on:

Tel: 03456 009 009

Textphone (via Text Relay): 18001 03456 009 009

SMS: 07860 053 465

Email: [contactcentre@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:contactcentre@surreycc.gov.uk)