

# 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

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:

erial free of charge for those who live, work or study in

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 sav5004490419] TJET0.0 Coq0.000008871 0 595.321.92term fe

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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 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 residents322.reW\* nBT/F2 12 Tf1 0 0 1





## 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, Romd Travell er communities\*  
Other (describe below)

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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







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Reductions to physical Audiobooks and Large Print book budgets which have high replacement costs

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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 anyoc1 o

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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, all of which contribute to the main aim

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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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.

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

impact on literacy levels

book budget to minimise the

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

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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?**



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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

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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, all of which contribute to the main aim

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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

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*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

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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. 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 History Month. The library also service offers access to a range of newspapers, emagazines

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

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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.

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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, all of which contribute to the main aim

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.

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Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

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## 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 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 , suitable mitigations to minimise impact on those with protected characteristics have been identified.

**5. Action plan and monitoring arrangements**



## 6b. Approval

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