

## Equality Impact Assessment - head of service review

Reference: EQIA155537938

Submitted: 07 November 2019 15:02 PM

### Executive summary

**Title of policy or decision:** Criteria for Community-Run Libraries

**Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision):** As part of delivery of the Future Library Services Strategy, this report seeks approval on the community-run libraries (CRLs) viability criteria, by which formal proposals to establish a community-run library (CRL) will be assessed for viability.

**What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?:** Help create great places to grow up, live and work

**Which strategic priorities does this support? - Help create great places to grow up, live and work:** Help to secure stronger, safer and more neighbourly communities

**Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?:** a new policy (or decision)

### Assessing the equality impact

**Use this section to record how you have assessed any potential impact on the communities likely to be affected by the policy (or decision):** On 23 July 2019, Cabinet approved The Future Library Services Strategy 2019-2024. The strategy sets out an initiative to work closely with and support community groups or partners, where there is interest, to transition libraries to Community-Run Libraries (CRLs) or support CRLs to set up in new locations. This will allow communities to develop the facilities in the way that suits the local community, where the Council is satisfied that the community will provide an inclusive and high-quality library service in a location.

A 12-week public consultation on the draft strategy took place between 29 November 2018 and 21 February 2019. The survey asked for respondents' views on the Draft Strategy's ambitions, proposed ways people could access library services in future, proposals for community libraries and proposals for outreach as well as their preferences for library opening hours. It also asked people to give information about themselves, in confidence and voluntarily, in relation to the nine protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010. This was requested because such detailed identity information is not being routinely collected by the library service. Without it, it would be difficult for the Council to assess the equality impacts on people with those protected characteristics. The results of the consultation, as well as other evidence such as active library card users, and community activities that take place within individual libraries across Essex, have been used to inform the EqIA that accompanied the Future Library Services Strategy 2019-2024.

As this decision relates to the implementation of the Future Library Services Strategy 2019-2024, this EQiA is underpinned by the same evidence (see attached original EqIA for details).

It should be noted that an individual EqIA will be undertaken for each community-run library proposal in order to assess specific impact for that community before any decision is taken.

**Does or will the policy or decision affect:**

**Service users:** Yes

**Employees:** No

**The wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities:** Yes

**Which geographical areas of Essex does or will the policy or decision affect?:** All Essex

**Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?:** Yes

**Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?:** No

**Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies?:** Yes

## Description of impact

**Description of Impact.** If there is an impact on a specific protected group tick box, otherwise leave blank. You will be given the opportunity to rate identified impacts as positive, negative or neutral on the next page: Age, Disability - physical impairment, Disability - sensory impairment, Gender / sex, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy / maternity, Race, Religion / belief, Sexual orientation

**I confirm that I have considered the potential impact on all of the protected characteristics:** I confirm that I have considered the potential impact on all of the protected characteristics

## Age

**Nature of impact:** Adverse

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** -There is a perceived risk that Community libraries may have shorter opening hours than council run libraries. This could impact on younger people if they cannot access the library at evenings/weekends.

-There is a perceived risk that there may be reduced stock in a community library compared with council run libraries. This could impact the choice of books for different age groups, e.g. children literature.

-There is a perceived risk that customer service levels may decline if community libraries are staffed by community groups rather than paid employee.

- Community libraries may potentially lose or have reduced digital access including the use of computers.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** All users (note that children, mothers, women, people from BME communities and older people are more likely to use libraries than the generality of the population), so any adverse impact on library services will have a greater impact on these groups.

## Disability - physical impairment

**Nature of impact:** Adverse

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** - There is a perceived risk that a community organisation may choose to run a community library from an inaccessible building. This would have an adverse impact on some people with a physical disability and may make it difficult or impossible for them to access the library

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** The proposed set of criteria removes adverse disproportionate impact through inclusion of a criteria for a community library to provide appropriate space and facilities for delivering the services to the people of the community in terms of access and accessibility.

## Disability - sensory impairment

**Nature of impact:** Adverse

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** -There is a perceived risk that a community organisation may choose to run a community library from an inaccessible building. This would have an adverse impact on some people with sensory disability and may make it difficult or impossible for them to access the library.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** The proposed set of criteria removes adverse disproportionate impact through inclusion of a criteria for a community library to provide appropriate space and facilities for delivering the services to the people of the community in terms of access and accessibility.

## Gender / sex

**Nature of impact:** Adverse

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** -There is a perceived risk that Community libraries may have shorter opening hours than council run libraries.

-There is a perceived risk that there may be reduced stock in a community library compared with council run libraries. This could impact the choice of books for LGBTQ+ groups.

-There is a perceived risk that customer service levels may decline if community libraries are staffed by community groups rather than paid employee.

-Community libraries may potentially lose or have reduced digital access including the use of computers.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** All users (note that children, mothers, women, people from BME communities and older people are more likely to use libraries than the generality of the population), so any adverse impact on library services will have a greater impact on these groups.

## Gender reassignment

**Nature of impact:** Adverse

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** There is a perceived risk that there may be reduced stock in a community library compared with council run libraries. This could impact the choice of books for LGBTQ+ groups.

**Extent of impact:** There is a perceived risk that there may be reduced stock in a community library compared with council run libraries. This could impact the choice of books for LGBTQ+ groups.

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** All users (note that children, mothers, women, people from BME communities and older people are more likely to use libraries than the generality of the population), so any adverse impact on library services will have a greater impact on these groups.

## Pregnancy / maternity

**Nature of impact:** Neutral

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** -There is a perceived risk that a community organisation may choose to run a community library from an inaccessible building. This would have an adverse

impact on customers with babies and young children in prams and may make it difficult or impossible for them to access the library.

- There is a perceived risk that Community libraries may have shorter opening hours than council run libraries.

- There is a perceived risk that there may be reduced stock in a community library compared with council run libraries. This could impact the choice of books specific to maternity/ children literature.

- There is a perceived risk that customer service levels may decline if community libraries are staffed by community groups rather than paid employee.

- Community libraries may potentially lose or have reduced digital access including the use of computers.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** Low impact on all users (note that children, mothers, women, people from BME communities and older people are more likely to use libraries than the generality of the population), so any adverse impact on library services will have a greater impact on these groups.

## Race

**Nature of impact:** Neutral

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** -There is a perceived risk that Community libraries may have shorter opening hours than council run libraries.

- There is a perceived risk that there may be reduced stock in a community library compared with council run libraries. This could impact the choice of books popular amongst certain race groups.

- There is a perceived risk that customer service levels may decline if community libraries are staffed by community groups rather than paid employee.

- Community libraries may potentially lose or have reduced digital access including the use of computers

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** Low impact on all users (note that children, mothers, women, people from BME communities and older people are more likely to use libraries than the generality of the population), so any adverse impact on library services will have a greater impact on these groups.

## Religion / belief

**Nature of impact:** Neutral

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** -There is a perceived risk that Community libraries may have shorter opening hours than council run libraries. This could impact on some faith groups if they cannot access a community library on a non-worship weekend day.

- There is a perceived risk that there may be reduced stock in a community library compared with council run libraries. This could impact the choice of books popular amongst certain faith groups.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** Medium impact on some faith groups if they cannot access a community library on a non-worship weekend day.

## Sexual orientation

**Nature of impact:** Adverse

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** There is a perceived risk that there may be reduced stock in a community library compared with council run libraries. This could impact the choice of books for LGBTQ+ groups.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** Low impact on all users (note that children, mothers, women, people from BME communities and older people are more likely to use libraries than the generality of the population), so any adverse impact on library services will have a greater impact on these groups

## Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

**Does your EqlA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?:** Yes

**What are the mitigating actions?:** The proposed set of criteria removes adverse disproportionate impact through inclusion of a criteria for a community library to ensure that there is a minimum number of opening hours in each community library (to be agreed on case by case basis). The opening hours should be long enough and scheduled at a time when the community want to use it.

**Date they will be achieved:** 31/08/2024

**Which characteristics do these mitigating actions apply to?:** Age, Gender / sex, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy / maternity, Race, Religion / belief, Sexual orientation

**What are the mitigating actions?:** Community organisations will be given a regular refresh of stock from the Council, and they will also be able to order specific books from the Essex Library Service. Moreover, proposed criteria require community-run libraries to have an appropriate policy to manage the stock in a way that reflects the diversity and needs/interests of the local community. All CRLs will be offered access to ECC's library management system (LMS) to issue and manage their stock effectively.

**Date they will be achieved:** 31/08/2024

**Which characteristics do these mitigating actions apply to?:** Age, Gender / sex, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy / maternity, Race, Religion / belief, Sexual orientation

**What are the mitigating actions?:** The proposed criteria require community libraries to have enough people with the appropriate knowledge and abilities to deliver the service to the community. This includes plans for appropriate recruitment and training as needed. The Council will ensure that volunteers in community libraries will be given customer service and equalities training.

**Date they will be achieved:** 31/08/2024

**Which characteristics do these mitigating actions apply to?:** Age, Gender / sex, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy / maternity, Race, Religion / belief, Sexual orientation

**What are the mitigating actions?:** Digital offer will be decided by the community library itself. The Council will provide grant funding to community libraries and the funding could be used to purchase or fund public computers and internet access.

For statutory CRLs which choose to provide public internet access, ECC will provide a safe public WIFI. This impact will be assessed on a case by case basis via subsequent EqlAs.

**Date they will be achieved:** 31/08/2024

**Which characteristics do these mitigating actions apply to?:** Age, Gender / sex, Pregnancy / maternity, Race

**What are the mitigating actions?:** The proposed set of criteria removes adverse disproportionate impact

through inclusion of a criteria for a community library to provide appropriate space and facilities for delivering the services to the people of the community in terms of access and accessibility.

**Date they will be achieved:** 31/08/2024

**Which characteristics do these mitigating actions apply to?:** Disability - physical impairment,Disability - sensory impairment,Pregnancy / maternity

## Details of person completing the form

**I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance:** I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

**Date EqlA completed:** 07/11/2019

**Name of person completing the EqlA:** Monika Gandy

**Email address of person completing the EqlA:** Monika.Gandy@essex.gov.uk

**Your function:** Corporate and Customer Services

**Your service area:** Transformation Delivery and Support

**Your team:** Transformation Delivery and Support

**Are you submitting this EqlA on behalf of another function, service area or team?:** Yes

**Name of person completing the EqlA:** Monika Gandy

**Function:** Corporate and Customer Services

**Service area:** Corporate and Customer Services Team

**Team:** Head of Libraries

**Email address of Head of Service:** Juliet.Pirez@essex.gov.uk