

Moray Council Equality Impact Assessment

Service: Libraries

Department: Education and Social Care

Title of policy/activity: Reduction in Library Service

1. What are the aims and objectives of the policy/activity?

Reduction in library service. Libraries to remain open: Aberlour, Buckie, Elgin, Fochabers, Forres, Keith, Lossiemouth, Tomintoul and one mobile unit. Accompanied by reductions in: management, learning centre staff, and the purchases of books and other materials. Libraries to close: Burghead, Findochty, Portknockie, Rothes, Hopeman, Cullen, Dufftown and one mobile unit.

2. List the evidence that has been used in this assessment

Internal data (customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints)	Library usage; age profiles; library vision,
Consultation with officers or partner organisations	Alistair Campbell, JobCentre Plus, Skills Development Scotland, Benefits Manager, Trading Standards Manager, Community Support Unit, Research and Information Officer, Officers within the Moray Council Public Transport Unit.
Consultation with community groups	A public consultation was held in June 2013 by the Moray Council's Community Support Unit. All identified stakeholder groups are listed in the report on the libraries. Petitions
External data (statistics, census, research)	SIMD, SLIC paper on libraries for the 21 st Century, NOMIS data on benefits,
Other	

3. Detail any gaps in the information that is currently available?

A full report on the impacts has been produced following the consultation.

4. What measures will be taken to fill the information gaps before the policy/ activity is implemented? These should be included in the action plan

Measure	Timescale

5. Are there potential impacts on protected groups? Tick as appropriate

	Positive	Negative	None	Unknown
Age – young		✓		
Age – elderly		✓		
Disability		✓		
Race			✓	
Religion or belief				
Sex		✓		
Pregnancy and maternity		✓		
Sexual orientation			✓	
Gender reassignment			✓	
Marriage and civil partnership			✓	

6. What are the potential negative impacts?

Note: page numbers refer to the report on the consultation about library closures. The biggest impact that came out of the consultation is the difficulty in accessing alternative libraries. This then leads to other impacts such as having no access to IT equipment and support with IT, educational attainment, impact on quality of life. The effect is exacerbated when, instead of removing one library in an area, a cluster of libraries is removed. Although the distance to the nearest remaining library may not seem that much, table 10 (p.21) shows that the cost of public transport become prohibitive, especially for those on low income or families with children.

Age young:

educational attainment (pp. 22-23). Age 0 – 3: research indicates the importance of early exposure to books to educational attainment later in life. Although this doesn't depend solely on libraries, they are an important link in the overall chain.

Age 3 – 5. As above. Access to story time.

Primary school age: Access to summer reading challenge. 45 responses were received from parents whose children taken part in the summer reading challenge.

Access to computers for homework.

Secondary school age: tables 6 and 8 (pp. 18-19) shows a significant drop in frequency of library visits for this group.

Age elderly:

Difficulties in accessing alternative libraries (p.20)

Access to ICT, with support from staff (p.22).

Rural isolation (p.23)

Losing their independence (p.23)

Impact on quality of life (p.22)

Disabled:

Difficulties in accessing alternative libraries (p.20)

Access to ICT, with support from staff (p.22).

Rural isolation (p.23)

Losing their independence (p.23)

Impact on quality of life (p.23)

Carers:

Difficulties in accessing alternative libraries (p.20)

Losing their independence (p.23)

Impact on quality of life (p.23). An important factor in this is that carers, if they get an opportunity to engage in social or cultural activities, can often do this for short periods at a time and need to be able to return home quickly.

Sex: (women with children)/Pregnancy and maternity:

Difficulties in accessing alternative libraries (p.20)

educational attainment (pp.22-23)

Pages 26 – 30 summarise the impacts per library. It is recommended that mitigating actions are developed per library cluster as follows:

1. Cullen, Portknockie, Findochty
2. Burghead, Hopeman
3. Rothes, Dufftown
4. Mobile library

7. Have any of the affected groups been consulted. If yes, please give details of how this was done and what the results were. If no, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating steps.

Details of the consultation exercise are given in the report on the consultation (pp.37-53).

8. What mitigating steps will be taken to remove those impacts? These should be included in the action plan.

Mitigating step	Timescale
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<p>Table 11 in the report on the consultation (pp 32-35) gives an overview of the mitigating actions for each library.</p> <p>Access to alternative library</p> <p>Rationalise use of mobile library targeting only those who need a mobile service. At present around 50% of people who use the mobile service also use one of more static libraries.</p> <p>Free access to transport is available for people with a disability and the elderly, but this doesn't help overcome issues regarding number of books people can carry and the difficulty in making transport arrangements. It also doesn't mitigate against the impact on people who are unemployed and or families with children. The dial-a-bus service in Moray is being extended and will be promoted more widely. The effect of this will need to be monitored.</p> <p>Encourage community groups to deliver some of the services and facilitate this through Community Asset Transfer. This could consist of book lending or exchange services. However, it must be stressed that this will not count towards establishing the statutory adequacy of the council's library provision.</p> <p>Strengthen housebound service.</p> <p>Promote online services</p> <p>Retain one library in each cluster.</p> <p>Access to ICT with support</p> <p>There will be a need for accessible ICT with support and supervision in the communities in the absence of the libraries. This need is likely to increase as the Digital by Default programme is rolled out. Currently, there are problems with access to broadband in the areas around Dufftown and Burghead. The investment project currently undertaken by Highlands and Islands Enterprise is likely to resolve the issues in the area around Burghead by 2016 but not in the Dufftown area. Support with benefit application in remaining libraries will be given through surgeries by JobCentre Plus staff and Moray Council</p>	<p>December 2013-08-28</p> <p>1 October 2013</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>October 2013</p> <p>October 2013</p> <p>December 2013</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
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welfare rights officers.	
Impact on educational attainment	December 2013
Those libraries attached to a school will continue to function as school libraries.	
Make more books available through playgroups and nurseries.	December 2013
This will leave a gap in provision for 0 – 3 years old which can be filled by retaining Dufftown, Cullen and Burghead libraries.	December 2013
Rural isolation/independence, impact on health	
As per access to alternative library	

9. What steps can be taken to promote good relations between various groups?
These should be included in the action plan.

The proposals are not explicitly designed to foster good relations between groups who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. However, extra care has been taken during the consultation process to gain a better understanding of the issues that elderly, people with a disability and families with young children face as a result of the proposed closures.

10. How does the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity?

The consultation on the proposed closures was undertaken in order to gain a better understanding of the issues that elderly, people with a disability and families with young children face as a result of the proposed closures. This is taken into account when considering whether or not the proposed closures should go ahead and, if so, what actions can be taken to minimise the effects on those groups in particular.

11. What monitoring arrangements will be put in place? These should be included in the action plan.

Monitor mobile library user profile
Monitor use of library computers
Monitor library use against capacity
Monitor use of dial-bus-service in relation to library visits

12. What is the outcome of the assessment? Tick as appropriate.

1	No impacts have been identified	
2	Impacts have been identified, these can be mitigated as outlined in question 8	
3	The activity will have negative impacts which cannot be mitigated fully	✓

13. Set out the justification that the activity can and should go ahead despite the negative impact?

It is recognised that a revised strategic network of libraries will lead to a loss of libraries in 4 communities in Moray. The mitigating actions outlined in section 8 will help minimise the impacts on the various protected groups identified in the impact assessment, particularly people with a disability, the elderly and families with children in the 0 – 3 age range. The revised network detailed in Appendix 5 is considered to represent a proportionate means of achieving the Council's legitimate aim of maximising efficiencies within the libraries service, measures having been identified to mitigate adverse impacts identified as far as is possible in the context of a strategic network which must be delivered with finite resources.

Sign off and authorisation

Department	Education and Social Care
Title of Policy/activity	Budget proposals on the libraries
We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Don Toonen Position: Equal Opportunities Officer Date: 28 August 2013
Authorisation by Director or Head of Service	Name: Graham Jarvis Position: Head of Lifelong Learning, Culture and Sport Date: 28 August 2013

The impact assessment should now be authorised by either the Director or Head of Service.

Please return this form, along with the completed screening process and full assessment forms, to the Equal Opportunities Officer, Chief Executive's Office.

Action plan

Action	Start	Complete	Lead Officer	Expected Outcome	Resource Implications
Rationalise use of mobile library	30.09.13	December 2013	L&MM	Greater use of mobile by those in need. Usage transferred to static libraries by those with transport.	Initial increased workload in planning timetables, identifying new clients and promoting alternative services.
Extended dial-a-bus and available free transport for elderly and disabled people	08.07.13	30.09.13	Chris Hall, PTU	Better mobility for elderly and disabled people in Cullen/ Findochty/ Portknockie area and Hopeman and Burghead area.	Resources have been allocated as per full council decision on 4 July 2013
Strengthen housebound services	October 2013	Ongoing	L&MM	Improved understanding of housebound needs. Greater uptake of services through volunteers.	Additional initial workload in liaising with agencies, recruiting volunteers & promoting service.

Promote online services	October 2013	Ongoing	L&MM	Greater uptake of online services. Greater uptake of learning opportunities.	Minimal.
Extend opening hours Aberlour	December 2013	Ongoing	L&MM	Increased usage of Aberlour Library.	May need further review of staffing levels.
Extend availability of books through nurseries and playgroups	December 2013	Ongoing	L&MM	Improved service to playgroups in liaison with them.	Increased workload for libraries staff.
Libraries currently located in schools will continue to operate as school libraries	December 2013	Ongoing	L&MM	Poorer provision of print resources.	None.
Retain Cullen library	Ongoing. New structure in place December 2013	Ongoing	L&MM	Increased usage of lending, information & learning provision. New management/supervision arrangements.	Minimal.
Retain Burghead library	Ongoing. New structure in place December 2013	Ongoing	L&MM	Increased usage of lending, information & learning provision. New management/supervision arrangements.	Minimal.

Retain Dufftown library, not extend opening hours for Aberlour	Ongoing. New structure in place December 2013	Ongoing	L&MM	Increased usage of lending, information & learning provision. New management/supervision arrangements.	Minimal.
Monitor mobile library user profile	30.09.13	Ongoing quarterly.	L&MM	Improved ongoing intelligence to better target provision.	Minimal.
Monitor use of library computers	Ongoing	Ongoing	L&MM	Improved planning of future replacement programmes.	Existing agreed provision should be adequate, other than Cullen where additional can be sourced from existing service provision.
Monitor library use against capacity	Ongoing	Ongoing	L&MM	Increased usage.	Minimal
Monitor use of dial-bus-service in relation to library visits	December 2013	Ongoing	L&MM	Measure effectiveness of Dial-a-bus in relation to library network	Minimal