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# Library Service Review – Supporting Information

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## 1. Introduction/Background

### The Legal Position

#### Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964

- 1.1 This places a duty on the Council as a local library authority to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient library service'. This states:

#### Section 7 — General duty of library authorities

(1) It shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof, Provided that although a library authority shall have power to make facilities for the borrowing of books and other materials available to any persons it shall not by virtue of this subsection be under a duty to make such facilities available to persons other than those whose residence or place of work is within the library area of the authority or who are undergoing full-time education within that area.

(2) In fulfilling its duty under the preceding subsection, a library authority shall in particular have regard to the desirability—

- (a) of securing, by the keeping of adequate stocks, by arrangements with other library authorities, and by any other appropriate means, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter, and pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children; and
- (b) of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and of providing advice as to its use and of making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required by persons using it; and
- (c) of securing, in relation to any matter concerning the functions both of the library authority as such and any other authority whose functions are exercisable within the library area, that there is full co-operation between the persons engaged in carrying out those functions.

- 1.2 In determining the extent of the duty imposed by this provision, Members are referred to the comments of Mr Justice Collins in the High Court case of *Draper v Lincolnshire County Council* in 2014 EWHC 2388 (Admin) where he noted:

*I should consider what is required to provide a comprehensive and efficient service within the meaning of s 7 of the 1964 Act. I can, I think, do no better than cite the following observations of Ouseley J in Bailey v London Borough of Brent [2011] EWHC 2572 (Admin):*

*A comprehensive service cannot mean that every resident lives close to a library. This has never been the case. Comprehensive has therefore been taken to mean delivering a service that is accessible to all residents using reasonable means, including digital technologies. An efficient service must make the best use of the assets available in order to meet its core objectives and vision, recognising the constraints on council resources. Decisions about the Service must be embedded within a clear strategic framework which draws upon evidence about needs and aspirations across the diverse communities of the borough.*

- 1.3 The High Court in R (Green) v Gloucestershire City Council [2011] EWHC 2687 (Admin) also noted that:

*availability of resources is highly material to the question of what constitutes a comprehensive and efficient library service. The section 7 duty cannot be exempt or divorced from resource issues and cannot in law escape the reductions which have been rendered inevitable in the light of the financial crisis engulfing the country.*

- 1.4 Having regard to the above, Members will note that the Council needs to be satisfied that the proposals will result in a Library Service which is accessible to all residents using reasonable means. The current proposal recommends the retention of 8 of the existing 9 libraries, albeit with some potential changes to the services available.
- 1.5 These proposals will result in a Service that will make the best use of available assets having regard to the Council's resources and these proposals will deliver the most comprehensive and efficient Service within the existing budget.
- 1.6 Members will note that a needs assessment has been undertaken which is detailed below and a full copy of the needs assessment is appended to the Report. A public consultation was also undertaken which indicates broad support for the recommendation. The needs assessment and public consultation provide robust evidence about needs and aspirations across the district to inform this decision.

#### Equality Act 2010

- 1.7 In considering any proposals that would result in changes to the existing Library Service, the Council must additionally consider the public sector equality duty in accordance with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.8 The fundamental requirement on Members imposed by s.149 is to take reasonable steps to inquire into the issues before them and to understand the impact, or likely impact of the decision they are being asked to make on those on the protected characteristics list who are potentially affected by the decision.

- 1.9 Members are referred to the detailed information on the stage 2 Equalities Impact Assessment attached to this Report. It is necessary for Members to feel confident that any reduction in the Library Service is proportionate and justified in the circumstances. In considering these issues, Members may have regard to the steps which are being taken to mitigate the impact of the recommended reductions in the Service, for example, by the increased engagement of communities and volunteers in the provision of the Library Service.
- 1.10 Members will also need to be satisfied that officers will properly monitor the impact of the proposals if implemented and report back, in particular if any unforeseen risks materialise. This is reflected in the recommendations before Council.

## 2. Needs Assessment

- 2.1 As noted above, the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 requires provision of a comprehensive and efficient library service by each local library authority. The District Council holds that statutory responsibility for West Berkshire, and is required to carry out a needs assessment to inform any significant changes to the service.
- 2.2 RedQuadrant consultancy produced a needs assessment for the service, analysing demographic data and performance statistics from the existing library service to determine the needs across the district. They also assisted officers in drafting three options for the future shape of the service, which were put out to public consultation from 24 October to 11 December 2016. A full copy of the needs assessment is appended to this report.
- 2.3 All three options proposed the closure of Wash Common library, reduction of the Mobile service from 2 vehicles to 1, retention of Newbury Library fully staffed by employees but within a significantly streamlined establishment, and that approximately £150k be raised by asking local councils to make an annual financial contribution to the libraries service. Further to these proposals;
- Option A proposed that staffing levels be halved at 7 branch libraries with volunteers recruited to help.
  - Option B proposed that staffing levels be halved at 2 branch libraries with volunteers recruited to help, and that 5 branches be run by volunteers.
  - Option C proposed that 7 branches be run by volunteers.
- 2.4 A Libraries Transformation Project Board oversees the consultation process and the plans for implementing new arrangements. The Board's priority is to introduce solutions which achieve savings whilst ensuring the provision of a legally compliant service thus reducing the risk to the Council of challenge.

## 3. Responses to the Public Consultation

### The Three Proposed Options

- 3.1 The table at Appendix C shows the levels of agreement and disagreement with the three proposals.

- 3.2 By far the best supported is Option A with 58.1% of respondents agreeing with it. 9.5% agreed with Option B, most of whom also agreed with A. 6.1% agreed with Option C, most of whom also agreed with A and B.
- 3.3 Many respondents stressed that they agreed with these Options to prevent closure of libraries. Many stated that A was the “least unacceptable” option, or similar. About 20% of respondents disagreed with all three options, many questioning the legality and viability of all three options. This feeling was particularly strong in feedback from parish councils.
- 3.4 The most common single point made was that each library needs a paid member of staff to ensure a proper library service. These comments related to such matters as health and safety, confidentiality, handling of cash, safeguarding and treating all users fairly, and the desirability of a recognised “face of the local library”.
- 3.5 Concern was expressed that a service without staff would impact more negatively on the confidence of more vulnerable users, and that a volunteer only branch would be very limited in its capacity to provide the full range of services currently enjoyed by customers.
- 3.6 Another commonly made point was that, given the level of savings achievable under Option A, the extra savings from Option B or C would be small in proportion to the extra risks incurred.
- 3.7 Respondents commented that libraries without staff would undermine the service’s ability to contribute to key Council objectives in areas such as health and wellbeing, education and community resilience, and be detrimental to one of the Council’s four primary Equalities Objectives to reduce the gap in educational attainment.

#### **4. Financial Contributions from Local Councils**

- 4.1 As part of the consultation, all 63 parishes were contacted with a proposal that they contribute annually to the library service on the basis of £1 per head. This simple formula would thus realise about £155k per year if all councils were willing and able to contribute. Several councils have responded to this, mostly accepting the principle and willing to work with West Berkshire to take this way of developing libraries forward. A few councils have expressed concerns about contributing, while one has stated they will only contribute to support Option A.
- 4.2 At the time of submission of this report, based on indications of support from most councils, we anticipate receipt of between £120k and £135k. In order to mitigate the shortfall we are considering further ideas to raise income from library activities and some minor reductions in opening hours across branches. It is reasonable to focus these reductions on branches where councils have not contributed.
- 4.3 Along with requesting parish and town council contributions, it is envisaged that these councils should work as partners in running and developing the library service, with regular contact with senior library management. Good will is evident in wanting to work creatively together to solve the financial and operational challenges in the library service.

## 5. Volunteering

- 5.1 Like other library authorities, West Berkshire has a long tradition of involving volunteers in adding value to its library service, most notably in delivering books to customers of the At Home library service. We have expanded the scope of volunteering since 2010 and now have 11 different volunteering roles within the service. The Library employs a Volunteer Coordinator, who has developed some excellent practice in volunteer management which may also benefit other parts of the Council.
- 5.2 Each option involves a reliance on a very large increase in the volunteer workforce, as volunteers would be required to work front line in all 7 branches. Added value volunteering would continue at Newbury Library.
- 5.3 The main comments from the consultation around volunteering were that
- (1) Volunteers cannot replace paid staff's expertise and it is not practical to run the larger branches with just one member of staff.
  - (2) Newbury Library should also use volunteers in the ways they are to be used in branches.
  - (3) A volunteer led service, especially as envisaged in Options B and C, would be unreliable, inconsistent and not likely to be trusted as much by the public as a service superintended by a locally based member of staff.
- 5.4 Respondents felt that a volunteer only library would become no more than a book borrowing service, and cited many ways in which the range and variety of library operations, including IT access, would not be possible without staff. The service would be degraded with a severe impact upon the whole local community, but especially on more vulnerable groups.
- 5.5 Several respondents with experience working as volunteers or as volunteer managers in shops and other services pointed out the importance of effective training, management and support for volunteers and for valuing them as a key part of the workforce.
- 5.6 From our total of over 1200 responses, there were over 120 offers from respondents to volunteer to support the library service, either frontline or to assist with fundraising and other specialist roles. Some volunteers said their willingness would depend on there being an adequate package of support and motivation, and in some cases specifically a paid supervisor on site.

## 6. Efficiency Savings

- 6.1 Some respondents were, perhaps understandably, not aware that efficiency savings at Newbury are already a key part of this savings strategy. Accordingly there were comments that Newbury seemed unaffected while all other libraries were being cut back, asking for efficiency savings at Newbury as an alternative to the proposed options.
- 6.2 It would be worth, nevertheless, taking note of the suggestion that some frontline volunteering could be introduced at Newbury just as at other branches.

- 6.3 Individual respondents and parish councils expressed concern at the reduction in the mobile fleet. The large reduction in demand for this service is a national trend, influenced not least by the wider range of leisure and information opportunities now open to many of the mobile library's traditional client groups in their homes and local communities. It is expected that the service will be able to continue to serve existing customers with a single vehicle and without any reduction in the standard three week visiting cycle.

## 7. Partnering with Councils and Friends Groups

- 7.1 As a step toward implementing the new service, the portfolio holder and officers have begun to meet with parish/town councils and *Friends of Libraries* groups, and will meet with others shortly.
- 7.2 Evidence from meetings, and from responses to the consultation, suggest strongly that if effective partnerships can be forged, flexibility will be needed in implementing a workable solution in each library location. One size does not fit all, and different solutions will be necessary, varying partly in regard to the physical size of the branch and the level of demand.
- 7.3 For example, *Hungerford Town Council* and *Friends of Hungerford Library*, representing one of the largest branches and communities, have suggested another option for taking forward the service with local fund raising allowing retention of much more paid staffing, and this is worth examining.

## 8. Wash Common Library

- 8.1 RedQuadrant advised that provision of a static library in Wash Common is surplus to the Council's statutory responsibility
- 8.2 Consultation included a dialogue between senior officers and district and town councillors from the Wash Common area. One meeting was arranged to take advice from the leader of Kingsclere library, which is community-run but continues to receive support from Hampshire County Council.
- 8.3 It is possible that the local community will present proposals for a community run library, which we will then consider on its merits.

## 9. Conclusion

- 9.1 It is considered that Option A is the most appropriate option identified, which is reflected in the recommendation. This proposal also received the most support during the public consultation exercise, with the other options considered receiving very little support at all.
- 9.2 By building on the partnerships with local communities which are beginning to blossom as a result of the recent dialogue, it is possible that opportunities may develop over time. Officers will continue to work closely with communities to explore opportunities that arise.

## 10. Consultation and Engagement

- 10.1 Full consultation was carried out with the public from 24 October to 11 December 2016, with a separate and parallel survey of library staff and volunteers.

- 10.2 The dates of the consultation were publicised at the third meeting of local council and friends group representatives at Shaw House in October. All parish councils were notified by email in advance of the consultation.
- 10.3 Cllr Boeck, Mike Brook (Library Service Manager) and Paul James (Culture Manager) have held meetings with parish/town council representatives and *Friends of Library* groups in Newbury, Thatcham, Theale, Mortimer, Lambourn, Hungerford, Pangbourne and Burghfield Common, covering all the communities with a static library. All these conversations have been creative and constructive. It is clear that each community is different, but there is no shortage of good will to support libraries and to work together with the Council to develop the identity of branch libraries.
- 10.4 Given the need to recruit volunteers to support the transformation of our libraries, the need for different solutions in different libraries, and the introduction of a new staff structure, full implementation of these changes cannot be achieved by April 2017. We are seeking transformation money to cover a shortfall of up to 25% of the planned savings.

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**Subject to Call-In:**

Yes:  No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only	<input type="checkbox"/>

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## Appendix B

### Equality Impact Assessment Template – Stage Two

Please complete this template if completion of the Stage 1 template has identified that a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is required.

Before proceeding with this EIA, you should discuss the scope of the analysis with service managers in your area and you will need to refer to the equality impact assessment guidance <http://intranet/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=38336&p=0>.

<b>Name of item being assessed:</b>	Library Service Review
<b>Version and release date of item (if applicable):</b>	29 December 2016
<b>Budget Holder for item being assessed:</b>	Mike Brook
<b>Name of assessor:</b>	Paul James / Culture Manager
<b>Name of Service &amp; Directorate</b>	Library Service / Culture & Environmental Protection
<b>Date of assessment:</b>	12-29 December 2016
<b>Date Stage 1 EIA completed:</b>	31 August 2016

#### STEP 1 – Scoping the Equality Impact Assessment

<b>1. What data, research and other evidence or information is available which will be relevant to this Equality Analysis? Please tick all that apply.</b>			
Service Targets	X	Performance Targets	X
User Satisfaction	X	Service Take-up	X
Workforce Monitoring		Press Coverage	
Complaints & Comments	X	Census Data	
Information from Trade Union		Community Intelligence	
Previous Equality Impact Analysis	X	Staff Survey	X
Public Consultation	X	Consultation meetings with Parish & Town Councils	X
Needs Assessment by Red Quadrant	X	Public Consultation – staff comments	X



**2. Please summarise the findings from the available evidence for the areas you have ticked above.**

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

The Council has a responsibility under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for the district.

Red Quadrant conducted a Needs Assessment on behalf of the Council between May and September 2016. The consultants had access to all the data about libraries and usage held by the Council and

- conducted interviews and meetings with staff, library users and volunteers
- considered needs in terms of user data, demography and location of services.

Location of libraries in West Berkshire



In summary, the assessment found that

- Our libraries are highly valued by users and are places where local people meet, access services and come together as a community.
- The current library network meets people's needs.
- The network is unaffordable given the savings the Council needs to make.
- Wash Common library is surplus to our statutory responsibility, which means that we do not need it to provide a comprehensive service.

The report by Red Quadrant proposed that the Council develop options for public consultation which utilise volunteering in order maintain 8 libraries and maintain a Mobile and At Home Service in order to meet our statutory responsibility to provide a comprehensive service.

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

Following on from the Needs Assessment, the Council conducted a Public Consultation between 31 October and 11 December 2016 which set out the Council’s proposals and asked for feedback on the 3 options for the future of the library service.

Summary of responders

Are you ...? **	N	Percent
Or anyone you care for, a user of this service	910	70.7%
A resident of West Berkshire	1103	85.7%
Employed by West Berkshire Council	60	4.7%
A Parish/Town Councillor	49	3.8%
A District Councillor	4	.3%
A service provider	9	.7%
A partner organisation	7	.5%
Other	98	7.6%

Responders by Gender, Age, Ethnicity and Disability

**Gender:**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	277	21.5	21.5	21.5
	Female	608	47.2	47.2	68.8
	Not answered	402	31.2	31.2	100.0
	Total	1287	100.0	100.0	

**Age:**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under 18	11	.9	.9	.9
	18 - 24	5	.4	.4	1.2
	25 - 34	37	2.9	2.9	4.1
	35 - 44	137	10.6	10.6	14.8
	45 - 54	133	10.3	10.3	25.1
	55 - 64	146	11.3	11.3	36.4
	65 - 74	261	20.3	20.3	56.7
	75 - 84	135	10.5	10.5	67.2
	85 and over	36	2.8	2.8	70.0
	Not answered	386	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	1287	100.0	100.0	

**Ethnicity:**

## Library Service Review – Supporting Information

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Other (please specify)	34	2.6	2.6	2.6
Asian or Asian British	6	.5	.5	3.1
Black or Black British	1	.1	.1	3.2
White or White British	821	63.8	63.8	67.0
Mixed	3	.2	.2	67.2
Not answered	422	32.8	32.8	100.0
Total	1287	100.0	100.0	

**Do you consider yourself to have a disability? A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	95	7.4	7.4	7.4
No	799	62.1	62.1	69.5
Not answered	393	30.5	30.5	100.0
Total	1287	100.0	100.0	

### Summary of responses to the 3 options

Option A	Frequency	Percent
Agree	748	58.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	91	7.1%
Disagree	276	21.4%
Don't know	23	1.8%
Not answered	149	11.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1287</b>	<b>100%</b>

Option B	Frequency	Percent
Agree	122	9.5%
Neither agree nor disagree	164	12.7%
Disagree	683	53.1%
Don't know	35	2.7%
Not answered	283	22.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1287</b>	<b>100%</b>

Option C	Frequency	Percent
Agree	78	6.1%

Neither agree nor disagree	91	7.1%
Disagree	787	61.1%
Don't know	38	3.0%
Not answered	293	22.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1287</b>	<b>100%</b>

Summary of consultation

In general, responders would prefer that the Library Service continues at its current level.

Because the Council must achieve a balanced budget in 2017-18 that has not been presented as an option for consultation and so the majority have indicated Option A as their preference over Option B or C (which are reliant on more volunteers and less staff).

Many responders, including staff, drew attention to the risks in terms of reduced access to the service for all groups caused by a service that is reliant on volunteers. Options B and C, which have an greater reliance on volunteers than option A, present a higher risk in this respect

Responders, including staff, also drew attention to the importance of maintaining library branches in areas which are experiencing reductions in levels of public transport – particularly Lambourn.

**CONSULTATION MEETINGS WITH TOWN & PARISH COUNCILS AND LIBRARY SUPPORT GROUPS**

The Executive member for Culture and Council managers met with parish councillors and members of library support groups in Newbury, Burghfield, Pangbourne, Lambourn and Hungerford to hear issues and proposals and answer questions. Further meetings are planned in January with Mortimer, Thatcham, Theale and with other parish and town councils.

The Council also conducted 3 public meetings (February, June and October 2016) for Town and Parish Councils and local library support groups.

Although there were many challenging issues to discuss, positive ideas were proposed by communities who welcomed the opportunity to have more say in how local libraries are run and what they can deliver in the future. The Council has received several forward looking proposals from those we have met so far.

While recognising the challenges – for example, the need to recruit, train and maintain a large number of volunteers – there is awareness of the opportunity to improve the service through increased local involvement (within the constraints of the available resources). This can have a potentially positive impact on equalities issues, for example:

- Shared and increased usage of library buildings with other community support activities.
- Opening hours being tuned to local community needs.
- Local volunteers supporting local people.
- Opportunities to generate some income for example from venue hire to help support community activities.

**SERVICE & PERFORMANCE TARGETS**

In order that the Council can agree a balanced budget for 2017-18, Service and Performance

Targets (Culture & Environmental Protection) have been set to reduce the Library Service budget by at least £690,000 in financial year 2017-2018.

**WEST BERKSHIRE LIBRARIES’ ADULT CUSTOMER SURVEY**

The West Berkshire Libraries’ Adult Customer Survey (September 2015) was responded to by 833 people. 13.6% considered themselves as having a disability. 42% were 65 years old or over. 19.8% were aged 36-45. 70% were female. 52% use only one library. 57% of Mobile Library users do not use another library. 93% used the library to borrow books. 11% used the IT for a range of purposes including job applications and study. 95% indicated they were “very satisfied” with the service.

2% indicated they were “very dissatisfied” with the service. The most significant cause of dissatisfaction was with opening times which were not always convenient for users.

**CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS**

Customer Complaints are considered through the Council’s [Complaints Policy and Procedure](#). Complaints were reviewed for any issues relating to equalities. There has been one complaint in the last 24 months which required review through our procedure (a dispute with a customer about lost property which was not upheld).

**STAGE 1 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The Stage 1 Equalities Impact Assessment concluded

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Older people, children and families	Loss of service where a library fails would impact more on older people, who often rely on their library for social interaction, and on families, who source cheap and accessible activities at the library.	Library Drop-in sessions and previous consultations have found that local libraries contribute to health and wellbeing and combat social isolation and loneliness. Families with young children often rely on opportunities delivered by the service.
Households without IT	Loss of service would impact more on families reliant on their library for IT access, either for homework, access to government services and general information	In a generally wealthy area, West Berkshire has some small pockets of high need and deprivation. Lack of a PC at home is a disadvantage to children and families, and still often to older people who would suffer from the removal of a soft learning environment to learn about IT.

Are there any aspects of the policy, strategy, function or	Reliance on volunteers to provide the day to day service in the majority of libraries could lead to less fair treatment of
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<p>service, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?</p>	<p>some groups of customers because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If volunteers are not available opening hours may reduce or fluctuate – reducing access to the service. This would be mitigated by effective recruitment and training of volunteers and a system whereby some volunteers may be willing to provide cover in other library branches.</li> <li>• Volunteers do not have the training of professional library staff and may not always be able to provide the same quality of advice to customers. This would be mitigated by ensuring that library staff are able to provide advice to customers – for example by phone from another library branch, if they are not available face to face.</li> </ul>
<p>Will the policy, strategy, function or service have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?</p>	<p>Employment opportunities will be greatly reduced by the removal of paid staff from the majority of libraries and the reduction in staffing levels at other libraries.</p> <p>Staff who retain a post should be energised by the new service, but it is also very possible they could become overworked and de-motivated if the process of culture change is not handled sympathetically. This would be mitigated by effective recruitment and training of volunteers and a system whereby some volunteers may be willing to provide cover in other library branches.</p>

**SERVICE TAKE UP**

Data is held by the Library Service about the usage of the service. For example, the number of issues (books etc) and borrowers at each library and which ward and parish those users live in.

This data was provided to Red Quadrant for consideration as part their Needs Assessment.

**TRADE UNIONS**

Trade Unions have been invited to submit comments on impacts on Library staff.

**3. If you have identified any gaps in the evidence provided above, please detail what additional research or data is required to fill these gaps? Have you considered commissioning new data or research eg a needs assessment?**

**If 'No' please proceed to Step 2.**

No.

**STEP 2 – Involvement and Consultation**

<p><b>1. Please outline below how the findings from the evidence summarised above when broken down, will affect people with the 9 protected characteristics. Where no evidence is available to suggest that there will be an impact on any specific group, please insert the following statement ‘<i>There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other.</i>’</b></p>	
<p><b>Target Groups</b></p>	<p><b>Describe the type of evidence used, with a brief summary of the responses gained and links to relevant documents</b></p>
<p><b>Age</b> – relates to all ages</p>	<p>The Public Consultation responses and Stage 1 EIA draw attention to the risk that any loss of service or reduced service would impact more on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• older people, who often rely on their library for social interaction,</li> <li>• on families and children, who source cheap and accessible activities at the library.</li> <li>• on those reliant on their library for IT access, either for homework, access to government services, jobs and general information.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disability</b> - applies to a range of people that have a condition (physical or mental) which has a significant and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out ‘normal’ day-to-day activities. This protection also applies to people that have been diagnosed with a progressive illness such as HIV or cancer.</p>	<p>The Public Consultation draws attention to the risk that any loss of service, or reduced service, could impact more on those with disabilities who require assistance to access services, as they are sometimes constrained in the times that they can access a library.</p>
<p><b>Gender reassignment</b> - definition has been expanded to include people who chose to live in the opposite gender to the gender assigned to them at birth by removing the previously legal requirement for them to undergo medical supervision.</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that there will be any greater impact on this group than on any other.</p>
<p><b>Marriage and Civil partnership</b> –.protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that there will be any greater impact on this group than on any other.</p>
<p><b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b> - protects against discrimination. With regard to employment, the woman is protected during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled. It is also unlawful to discriminate against women breastfeeding in a public place</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that there will be any greater impact on this group than on any other.</p>

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<b>Race</b> - includes colour, caste, ethnic / national origin or nationality.	It is not anticipated that there will be any greater impact on this group than on any other.
<b>Religion and Belief</b> - covers any religion, religious or non-religious beliefs. Also includes philosophical belief or non-belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.	It is not anticipated that there will be any greater impact on this group than on any other.
<b>Sex</b> - applies to male or female.	The Public Consultation and Customer Survey attracted a strong response from women (about 70% of responders were female) and draws attention to the risk that any loss of service, or reduced service, could impact more on females than males.
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> - protects lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and heterosexual people.	It is not anticipated that there will be any greater impact on this group than on any other.

### 2. Who are the main stakeholders (eg service users, staff etc) and what are their



**requirements?****The public and service users**

The Library Service is a universal service in that it is free to residents of all ages. Currently the number of “active borrowers” (members of all ages who have borrowed items in libraries within 12 months, it does not include those using other services e.g. use of pc’s and professional assistance) is about 21,000 out of a population of about 155,000.

**Active Borrowers by Registration Location****Active Borrowers**

<b>REGISTRATION LOCATION</b>	<b>Total</b>
Burghfield Common Library	994
Hungerford Library	1,545
Lambourn Library	639
Mortimer Library	865
Newbury Library	10,028
Pangbourne Library	1,142
Stock Management Unit	10
Thatcham Library	2,574
Theale Public Library	1,747
Wash Common Library	567
WB At Home	130
WB Mobile 1	438
WB Mobile 2	327
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>21,006</b>

Service users tell us that they value the service at the current level at which it is provided. They value the services and opportunities which libraries provide including book and other loans, access to IT, a place to get advice and as a community hub which involves local people in a range of cultural activities – for example the annual Reading Challenge and Library Fest.

In the 2015 West Berkshire Council Libraries’ Adult Customer Survey the 833 responders indicated their current requirements and likely future usage as follows:

	Current Activity	Future
Borrow books	93%	89%
Ask staff for information	22%	38%
Borrow DVDs	22%	35%
Find out what’s on locally	18%	29%
Borrow Books on CD	16%	34%
Read newspapers	16%	23%
Find information in print	15%	26%
Photocopy/scan	13%	21%
Take a child to an event	12%	16%
Use a PC	11%	17%
Hear an author or speaker	9%	29%
Attend a community event	7%	23%
Art or craft session	9%	21%

And use online services as follows:

Renew items online	58%
Reserve items online	49%
Request items from another library	38%
Check their account	28%
Receive the bi-monthly customers' email	19%

### **Volunteers**

The Library Service currently has about 150 volunteers.

Volunteers welcome the opportunity to choose from a range of roles and a level of responsibility that they are comfortable with and libraries often provide that. Volunteers are a diverse group. Some may volunteer for a short period – for example, to gain work experience between school and higher education, or to volunteer for a specific event – or for many years. Volunteers tell us that they value the professional staff in libraries. Some are willing to take on higher levels of responsibility, although in general they see their role as supporting staff while helping their community.

Volunteers value appropriate levels of training and understand the need for basic standards in terms of standards of customer care and ensuring people and buildings are welcoming and safe for all.

### **Library staff**

Library staff are highly committed to the service. Many staff choose to work in the service to help strengthen communities through access to information, learning and leisure opportunities for local people. Library staff are generally positive about the role of volunteers and most are experienced at working with, and supporting volunteers. However, many have concerns about the erosion of the role of the professional librarian and an over-reliance on volunteering which may diminish the effectiveness of the service in the long-term.

### **Parish and Town Councils**

Although they have concerns about the devolution of services pressuring their capacity and resources, many Parish and Town Councils appreciate that the proposals provide an opportunity for more say in how their local library is run. For example, ensuring opening times meet local needs, co-locating local services and community activities with libraries. There is recognition that this can only strengthen libraries.

From the conversations conducted so far, they require

- More say in the service – making better use of their local knowledge and community intelligence.
- Different delivery models in different communities that are more tuned to specific local needs – i.e. one size doesn't fit all. For example, moving the library into a new location shared with other local services, or developing activities and income streams.
- More time to investigate the possibilities for each library.

### **West Berkshire Council**

The Council has a responsibility under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for the district. The Council also has a responsibility to achieve a balanced budget each year. In order to do so the Council will make a saving in the Library Service of at least £690,000. The Council has invited Town and Parish Councils to contribute a total of £150,000 a year towards the cost of the service by making contributions from their precept based on the population of each parish. The Council intends to

work with Town and Parish Councils, local library support groups and with Volunteer Centre West Berkshire to develop the number and capacity of volunteers to support the Library Service.

### **3. How will this item affect the stakeholders identified above?**

#### **The public and Service Users**

The proposal is to close 1 branch library (Wash Common) and maintain the other 8 libraries in the network.

#### **Volunteers**

The proposal requires an increase in volunteers across the service. Depending on the option adopted by the Council this is likely to involve recruiting and maintaining a team of 30+ volunteers per branch Library in order to provide the necessary levels of cover - 250 to 500 volunteers in total.

Volunteers will be offered a range of roles, for example:

- Serving the public and helping them to find what they need including helping customers use self service kiosks where available.
- Helping people to access information via IT.
- Helping with reading and other activity groups and events.
- Keeping the place safe and tidy.
- Opening up and closing the library.
- Participating in the At Home service by choosing/delivering books to people who cannot get out to use a library.
- Other roles that emerge through consultation with volunteers and staff.

Volunteers will be expected to undertake training that is relevant to their roles, including the safeguarding of vulnerable people and helping to maintain a safe environment for all.

#### **Library staff**

The proposals include a reduction in staff of about 40% across the service.

#### **Parish and Town Councils**

Parish and Town Councils will require more say in the service and are being asked to make a contribution of about £1 per head of parish population each year.

#### **West Berkshire Council**

West Berkshire Council will reduce its budget to meet the savings target and work with town and Parish councils and library support groups to deliver the changes through an implementation plan.

### **STEP 3 – Assessing Impact and Strengthening the Policy**

**What are the measures you will take to improve access to this item or to mitigate against adverse impact and is there any opportunity to promote equality and good relations?**

The Needs Assessment identified that the current network of 9 libraries meets the requirement to provide a comprehensive and efficient service as required by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. It also found that Wash Common Library was surplus to requirements given that it shares its catchment area with Newbury Library. The 3 proposals under consideration all maintain the network of libraries, with the exception of Wash Common Library, and so will continue to meet the needs of users and not have an adverse or differential impact on specific groups or any discriminatory outcome.

The proposals require an increase in volunteering to assist in the delivery of the service. If volunteer capacity is not sufficient to meet the needs of the service, or fluctuates, there may be adverse impact on all groups at times – for example, by reducing opening times to reflect staff shortages. The proposals include:

- maintaining the Volunteer Co-ordinator post to work with communities to advertise volunteering opportunities and recruit, manage and train volunteers.
- developing a staff and volunteers structure that includes the ability to provide flexible cover at short notice – for example, to assist a branch which might otherwise have to curtail its opening hours due to a staff/volunteer shortage.

More local involvement in libraries increases the attractiveness of the volunteering offer as local people can participate directly in their local library.

**STEP 4 – Procurement and Partnerships**

**Is this item due to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?**

Yes/No (please delete)

**If 'yes', will there be any additional requirements placed on the contractor? Have you done any work already to include equality considerations into the contract? You should set out how you will make sure that any partner you work with complies with equality legislation.**

**No**

## STEP 5 – Making a Decision

**Summarise your findings and make a clear statement of the recommendation being made as a result of the assessment. This will need to take into account whether the Council will still meet its responsibilities under the Public sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act), which states:-**

***A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:-***

- (i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;***
- (ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, in particular the need to:-***
  - (a) Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;***
  - (b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;***
- (iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.***

The Needs Assessment identified that the current network of 9 libraries meets the requirement to provide a comprehensive and efficient service as required by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. It also found that Wash Common Library was surplus to requirements given that it shares its catchment area with Newbury Library. The 3 proposals under consideration all maintain the network of libraries, with the exception of Wash Common Library.

Public consultation on the 3 options for the library service, which was informed by the Needs Assessment, has revealed greatest support for Option A, which proposes retaining a reduced staff team at Newbury Library and one member of staff at 7 branch libraries, supported by volunteers. Support for options B and C, with greater levels of reliance on volunteers, received very little support.

If volunteer capacity is not sufficient to meet the needs of the service, or fluctuates, there may be adverse impact on all groups at times – for example, by reducing opening times to reflect staff shortages.

The proposals include:

- ensuring there is sufficient capacity and resources to recruit, manage and train volunteers.
- maintaining the Volunteer Co-ordinator post to work with communities to advertise volunteering opportunities and recruit, manage and train volunteers.
- developing a staff and volunteers structure that includes the ability to provide flexible cover at short notice where possible.

### **Conclusion**

If implemented successfully, including achieving the required level of volunteer support, the proposals will not have a significant adverse or differential impact on specific groups, and the service will continue to meet their needs and not have a discriminatory outcome. The needs of our most vulnerable users continue to be met by the At Home and Mobile Services.

**Recommendation**

That the proposals be monitored, evaluated and reviewed throughout their implementation to ensure that they do not have a discriminatory outcome and that remedial action is taken to mitigate any adverse or differential impacts on specific groups.

**STEP 6 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing**

**Once the change has taken place, how will you monitor the impact on the 9 protected characteristics?**

The proposals will be implemented by management staff who report to the Library Review Project Board.

The implementation plan includes actions and targets for monitoring equalities impacts – both adverse impacts and improvements to equalities outcomes.

Progress on equalities targets is also monitored by the Including Everyone Board (West Berkshire Council Equalities Group).

The Service Plan for Public Protection and Culture will include targets to deliver the implementation plan and monitor equalities impacts.

A Library and Cultural Services Customer Survey will be conducted in 2018 and will contain specific questions relating to equality impacts.

**STEP 7 – Action Plan**

Any actions identified as an outcome of going through Steps 1-6 should be mapped against the headings within the Action Plan. You should also summarise actions taken to mitigate against adverse impact.

	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Responsible Person</b>
<b>Involvement &amp; consultation</b>	Existing library volunteers and Volunteer Centre West Berkshire consulted on volunteer roles, training and support.	March 2017	Libraries Volunteer Co-ordinator
	Parish And Town Councils consulted on specific proposals for each library.	Ongoing until agreements are reached.	Culture Manager.
	Q & A about library proposals at the West Berkshire annual Parish Conference.	March 2017	Executive Member for Culture
	Local involvement. Branch Library management meetings with parish & town councils and volunteer support groups about ongoing management and development of libraries.	Quarterly	Culture Manager.
<b>Data collection</b>	The Library Service will continue to collect and report data for service and corporate reporting purposes.	Quarterly	Libraries Research & Information Officer
<b>Assessing impact</b>	The proposals will be implemented by management staff who report to the Library Review Project Board.	Library Review Project Board meets every 2 weeks to end of March 2017 and monthly thereafter.	Chair of Library Review Project Board
	The implementation plan includes actions and targets for monitoring equalities impacts.		
	The Service Plan for Public Protection and Culture will include targets to deliver the implementation plan and monitor equalities impacts.	Quarterly reporting	Head of public Protection and Culture
	A Library and Cultural Services Customer Survey will be conducted in 2018 and will contain specific questions relating to equality impacts.	Date to be confirmed.	Culture Manager.
<b>Procurement &amp; partnership</b>	n/a		

**Library Service Review – Supporting Information**

<b>Monitoring, evaluation and reviewing</b>	Evaluation and review of equalities targets.	Monthly	Culture Manager.
	Monitoring of equalities impacts and targets is conducted by the Library Review Project Board and Including Everyone Board (West Berkshire Council Equalities Group).	Quarterly reporting	Chair of Library Review Project Board  Chair Including Everyone Board

**STEP 8 – Sign Off**

<b>The policy, strategy or function has been fully assessed in relation to its potential effects on equality and all relevant concerns have been addressed.</b>		
<b>Contributors to the Assessment</b>		
<b>Name: Paul James</b>	<b>Job Title: Culture Manager</b>	<b>Date: 23rd December 2016</b>
<b>Head of Service (sign off)</b>		
<b>Name: Steve Broughton</b>	<b>Job Title: Head of Culture and Environmental Protection</b>	<b>Date: 29<sup>th</sup> December 2016</b>



# Appendix C

## Appendix C Public Responses to Options A, B and C

Option A	Frequency	Percent
Agree	748	58.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	91	7.1%
Disagree	276	21.4%
Don't know	23	1.8%
Not answered	149	11.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1287</b>	<b>100%</b>

Option B	Frequency	Percent
Agree	122	9.5%
Neither agree nor disagree	164	12.7%
Disagree	683	53.1%
Don't know	35	2.7%
Not answered	283	22.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1287</b>	<b>100%</b>

Option C	Frequency	Percent
Agree	78	6.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	91	7.1%
Disagree	787	61.1%
Don't know	38	3.0%
Not answered	293	22.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1287</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Library Service Review – Supporting Information

Are you ...? **	N	Percent
Or anyone you care for, a user of this service	910	70.7%
A resident of West Berkshire	1103	85.7%
Employed by West Berkshire Council	60	4.7%
A Parish/Town Councillor	49	3.8%
A District Councillor	4	.3%
A service provder	9	.7%
A partner organisation	7	.5%
Other	98	7.6%

\*\* respondents could tick more than one response