



## Tackle inequality so people have a fair chance

### INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

| <b>Title of proposal:</b><br><br><b>Public Health Wellbeing Offer – Review</b><br><br><b>Library transformation plan</b>   | Age | Race | Sex | Gender reassignment | Disability | Religion or Belief | Pregnancy and Maternity | Sexual Orientation | Marriage and Civil Partnership | <b>Description of potential mitigation</b>   |
|--|-----|------|-----|---------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <p><b>Equality impact:</b> (✓ all that apply. The assessment should also consider impact on council employees and carers where applicable)</p> <p>Description of impact:<br/>Long Term proposal to develop a transformative approach to Public Health and Wellbeing in supporting delivery of Thrive and the Health and Wellbeing strategy.</p> <p>The Council has identified possible ways to reduce service costs by changing the way some of its buildings are run and by changing the way it delivers library services across the borough. This is a part of a 3-year transformation plan.</p> <p>The idea of a library offer being part of a community space alongside other services is not a new one.</p> | x   |      |     |                     | x          |                    |                         |                    |                                | <p>Activities will be proportionately targeted to ‘vulnerable’ and ‘just coping’ communities to prevent inequality rather than ‘treat’ its symptoms.</p> <p>Propose a move away from dedicated building-based provision to the use of community and/or shared council facilities offering an ‘integrated wellbeing offer’ as part of the place-based working. We do not anticipate a negative impact on library users sharing protected characteristics. All library users could still access library services in local areas delivered in a different way. It is only the</p> |



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| <p>A community space is a place that is a focal point for local activities, services, and facilities, accessible to the local community. They are multi-purpose and reflect local needs in terms of what they provide.</p> <p>The arrangement of libraries and other services will vary considerably from place to place and will be driven by local circumstances – success rests on reflecting and responding to local need so every community space will be different.</p> <p>Gateshead Council is considering entering into partnership arrangements with local voluntary sector organisations. The aim will be to change some existing library buildings into community spaces, through which library functions will still be offered but there will also be wider use of the buildings by partners.</p> <p>This will involve the following libraries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crawcrook</li> <li>• Pelaw</li> <li>• Chopwell</li> <li>• Wrekenton</li> <li>• Leam Lane</li> </ul> <p>To inform our decision making we are conducting a 12-week public consultation. Our survey will inform us more about the protected characteristics of library users and those who do not currently use</p> |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <p>management of some of our library buildings which could be the responsibility of a VCS partner in the future.</p> |
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| <p>the existing building / service.</p> <p>In the future our libraries will be managed differently and involve voluntary sector partners but it is not our intention to close any libraries</p> <p>We know from our data on current library members from the Gateshead Library Needs Assessment that the age is a protected characteristic where there could be an equality impact. A greater proportion of our library members are children and young people of school age and over 65s compared to the wider Gateshead population.</p> <p>We anticipate disability is a protected characteristic shared by a number of our library members due to the age profile of service users, with approx 25% over 65, and therefore more likely to have a health limiting condition or age related frailty.</p> <p>Our existing data on library users does not inform us of other protected characteristics.</p> |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <p><b>Health impact: (eg physical, mental health, wellbeing, substance misuse)</b></p> <p>We know from our first phase of consultation –PHW survey Feb/Mar 2021 that many respondents feel libraries have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The transformation proposal doesn't mean the withdrawal or closure of library services. We are aiming to improve the range of things that are happening in the library buildings and to encourage local people to engage and steer the conversation about what they need locally.</p>  | <p>A wider health and wellbeing offer delivered at a community level through an integrated place based approach will ensure that equality and equity of access is preserved. This could result in a positive impact on local health and wellbeing.</p> |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |



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| <p>The voluntary sector partners will bring their own services into the library building which will increase the opportunities for local people. This could be in the form of social support, advice services, targeted session for different age groups or just access to the building space to meet friends, in a safe space.</p> <p>While paid library staff may not be working from the building all of the time, access to the library will continue to be supported and visitors will still be able to borrow a book or use a computer etc during opening hours.</p> <p>Some library staff may work in different ways in the future and they will be able to take their services and support out into the community. This may mean running reading groups in community settings, supporting schools or other organisations with literacy or digital needs.</p> |   |
| <p><b>Socio Economic impact: (eg neighbourhood, ward, area of deprivation, household group, income, wealth)</b></p> <p>The review will mean library staff working in deprived areas will be able to identify and develop extra service offers to target groups and communities of interest in most need. It is hoped that by bringing that offer out of the building and into the community, being more targeted in our approach, that more people will be able to gain confidence and skills which will enable them to be as well as they can be.</p>   | <p>A wider health and wellbeing offer delivered at a community level through an integrated place based approach will ensure that equality and equity of access is preserved.</p> <p>As the PHW review progresses and options are brought forward modelling will include analysis of intelligence of our service users and local neighbourhoods for any socio-economic impact.</p> |
| <p><b>Environmental impact: (does the proposal impact on climate change and the Council's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030?)</b></p> <p>All council buildings are monitored for their impact on the environment</p> <p>The building will be managed by the partner organisation but will still be owned by the council</p>  | <p>NA</p>   |



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**Cumulative impact: (consider impact based on successive budgetary decisions relating to the proposal or is the proposal part of wider budgetary considerations that may collectively have an impact on service users, and is potentially at odds with the Thrive agenda)**

As the PHW review progresses cumulative impact will be considered as options and proposals are brought forward for consultation. This impact assessment will continue to be reviewed and updated to reflect each stage of the review.

We do not believe a significant cumulative impact will result from the proposed different delivery model of library services.

**Summary of consultation/data/research undertaken to inform the assessment:**

**(eg feedback and engagement with service users, trade unions, employees, partners, public, benchmarking, case studies)**

**Describe plan for consultation and engagement to take place during review**

The initial proposal to review the Public Health and Wellbeing services was included in the Council Budget consultation survey which closed in Feb 2021. Feedback from the public indicated that the majority of respondents disagree with the proposals to reduce funding for libraries, leisure centres and the arts. Many talk about the positive physical and mental health benefits of libraries and leisure centres, and the added importance of these services post-pandemic. Some respondents were very supportive of the focus being on vulnerable and just coping, whilst others questioned this approach. Some respondents offered up alternative operating models e.g. privatisation, leisure trust. Some recognised opportunities to shift some forms of leisure centre activities 'outdoors'. Some respondents with disabilities emphasised the importance of swimming and other controlled exercise.

Phase 1 Wellbeing Survey. 1st February – 30th March 2021

Public Consultation – brought in a wide range of comments and views from local people and organisations about their health and wellbeing.

- Council online Consultation – 2442 responses
- Phone survey to tenants – 462 conversations
- Focus groups – 100+ local people participated in online discussions



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Detailed analysis of the results informed the Library Needs Assessments and development of the review proposals.

Leads from PH have taken part in several staff focus groups to gather thoughts, suggestions and ideas from staff about how services might be delivered in the future. Those staff who did not wish to participate in groups were offered confidential email and 1-1 sessions with review leads if they felt more comfortable.

The responses and themes identified in the public and staff consultations have been discussed with portfolio holders, cabinet members and the Council senior management team.

Phase 2: Public Consultation on Library will focus on proposals to changing the way some of the library buildings are run and on changing the way it delivers library services across the borough. The consultation period will be 12 weeks – 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021 – 14<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

#### Proposed Consultation timeline

|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Formal Libraries Public Consultation</b>   | 2021                             |
| Inform DCMS                                   | 16th September                   |
| Cabinet                                       | 21st October                     |
| Consultation launch                           | 22nd October - 14th January      |
| Digital consultation platform                 | 22nd October - 14th January      |
| Paper copies in all libraries                 | 22nd October - 14th January      |
| Public meetings in library buildings          | Dates tbc – Autumn / Winter 2021 |
| Commissioned focus groups - non library users | 22nd October - 14th January      |
| Consultation report                           | Feb-22                           |
| Key points published                          | 31.1.2022                        |

Service users, Gateshead residents, council employees and partner organisations will have the opportunity to contribute to the public consultation on these proposals. We will gather equalities monitoring data as part of the survey to understand the impact on and analyse protected characteristics of library users to increase our knowledge and understanding.



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Results of this consultation and engagement will be brought back to Cabinet in Spring 2022.

**Signed: (completing officer) Stephen Walters and Natalie Goodman (reviewed)**

**Date: 18 January 2021 (reviewed 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021)**

**Service Director: (approved) Andy Graham and Gerald Tompkins**

**Date: 18 January 2021 (reviewed 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021)**