# Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00343 (Version 1)

## SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

| Service & Division: | Transformation, Communities & Corporate Services Housing & Communities | Lead Officer Name: | Louise Graham |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Team: | Library Services |
| | | Tel: | 01324 503612 |
| | | Email: | louise.graham@falkirk.gov.uk |
| Proposal: | Library Services Re-design | Reference No: | |

| What is the Proposal? | Budget & Other Financial Decision | Policy (New or Change) | HR Policy & Practice | Change to Service Delivery / Service Design |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Yes | No | No | Yes |

| Who does the Proposal affect? | Service Users | Members of the Public | Employees | Job Applicants |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |

| Other, please specify: | |
| --- | --- |

### Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):

| 14/11/2022 | Review of current public library opening hours across the full estate and revised opening hours proposal. |
| --- | --- |
| 06/02/2023 | Review of public library service core offer, partnership activity and service delivery methods and draft Strategic Plan for Libraries 2023-27. |
| 07/03/2023 | Revised opening hours proposal v.2 supported by information and feedback collected on this question during the Libraries Community and Stakeholder Engagement exercise. |
| 14/03/2023 | Revised Strategic Plan for Libraries 2023-27 (Draft) v.2 supported by information and feedback collected during the Libraries Community and Stakeholder Engagement exercise. |
| 31/03/2023 | Organisational review including senior staffing re-structure (draft). |
| | |

## SECTION TWO: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

| For budget changes ONLY please include information below: | | | Benchmark, e.g. Scottish Average |
|---|---|---|---|
| Current spend on this service (£'0000s) | Total: | £2,712,500 | Falkirk public library service is a medium/small library service and the allocated budget reflects the size of the geographical area served and the number of library sites. In terms of Scottish average, Falkirk Libraries current allocated spend is almost exactly average in terms of national benchmarking. |
| Reduction to this service budget (£'0000s) | Per Annum: | £424,800 | The proposed reduction to this service budget is 4 times the annual national average reduction, however it is important to note that the savings are to be achieved over a period of 5 years. |
| Increase to this service budget (£'000s) | Per Annum: | N/A | |
| If this is a change to a charge or concession please complete. | Current Annual Income Total: | | |
| | Expected Annual Income Total: | | |
| If this is a budget decision, when will the saving be achieved? | Start Date: | 01/04/2023 | |
| | End Date (if any): | 31/03/2027 | |

| SECTION THREE: EVIDENCE | Please include any evidence or relevant information that has influenced the decisions contained in this EPIA. (This could include demographic profiles; audits; research; health needs assessments; national guidance or legislative requirements and how this relates to the protected characteristic groups.) |
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| A - Quantitative Evidence | This is evidence which is numerical and should include the number people who use the service and the number of people from the protected characteristic groups who might be affected by changes to the service. |
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20,149 active borrowers (members who have used libraries in the last 12 months.

19,123 to use physical resources;  1,026 to use e-resources (not physical borrowing).

**Survey responses:**

2,679 responses.

2671 answered if individuals (98%) or community organisations representatives (1.5%).

2676 responded to using a library:  95% in the last 4 years;  5% had not.

2539 responded to how often used library:  45% once a month;  25% once a week;  1.6% online services only.

2512 responded to time of day using a library:  56% afternoon;  42% morning;  26% evening.  Figures include where customers have used more than one time of the day.

2502 responded to using online services:  10% at least once a week;  11% at least once a month;  28% not very often;  38% never.

2664 responded to how far they travelled to local library:  81% between 0-2 miles.

2656 responded to how they travelled to library:  53% car;  37% foot;  2.4% online services only or home library service.

2652 responded to home location:  97% live in Falkirk.

2513 responded to employment status:  52% employed/self-employed;  31% retired;  4% unemployed and no seeking work;  1.5% unemployed and seeking work.

2637 responded to location of employment (those employed):  37% work in Falkirk area.

2608 responded to further and higher education:  5% students and 3.4% school students.

2547 responded to parent/guardian:  47% parent/guardian.

1117 responded to  ages of children:  15% pre-school;  21% primary school;  14.5 secondary school;  8% not at school (16-18 years).

2338 responded about being a carer:  14% identified as a carer.

2561 responded to sex:  71% female;  24% male;  5% no response.

2572 responded to age:  4% under 24;  31% 25-44 years;  34% 4-64 years;  27% 65 or over;  4% no response.

2393 responded to sexual orientation:  85% heterosexual or straight;  2% gay or lesbian;  2% bisexual and 2% other.  11% declined to answer.

2520 responded to marriage/legal status:  60% married;  13% single;  7% widowed;  7% co-habiting;  5% divorced;  1% separated;  6% declined to answer.

2429 responded to physical or mental health condition or illness, or a learning disability, which they expect to last for 12 months or more:  20% having condition or illness.  887 of those respondents responded to whether their condition or illness reduced their ability to carry out day-to-day activities:  5% yes a lot;  12% yes, a little.

2554 responded to British/United Kingdom citizenship:  93% British/UK;  2% non-British/UK;  5% declined to answer.

2454 responses to ethnicity:  69% White Scottish;  21% White British/Irish/other;  0.5% Polish.  Further breakdown is available in the Libraries Community Engagement survey results.

The results of the question on what version of reduced opening hours would have least negative impact for them or community group (including a no response option) are included in S4 of this EPIA.

| B - Qualitative Evidence | This is data which describes the effect or impact of a change on a group of people, e.g. some information provided as part of performance reporting. |
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**Social - case studies; personal / group feedback / other**

**Age:**

Of the 1778 people who answered the survey question asking why they did not use library online services, 6% said they were not confident with digital skills and 3% were worried about cybersecurity.

We asked people how to choose form a list of services and activities to show how they currently use Libraries. From the 2529 responses to this question 14% access libraries to get a bus pass or bus pass renewal;

We asked people to choose from a list of services and activities to show how they currently use Libraries. From the 2529 responses to this question 80% said choosing books for adults and 44% said choosing books for children and babies; 13% of respondents attend Bookbug Sessions (stories, songs and rhymes for babies and pre-school children) and 11% said they attend story-times; 18% of people access libraries to attend children's activities and events and 15.5% take part, or would like their children to be able to take part, in the annual Summer Reading Challenge.

We also asked how people thought they would use libraries over the next four years using the same checklist of services and activities. 2626 individuals

responded to this question: 85% said choosing books for adults and 44% said choosing books for children and babies; 12% of respondents plan to attend Bookbug Sessions and 14% said they would attend story-times; 25% of people plan to access libraries to attend children's activities and events and 18.3% would like to take part, or like their child to take part in the annual Summer Reading Challenge.

2544 responses were received to the question that asked what would encourage people to use their library more often: 25% said provision of jigsaws and board games around soft seating areas

Feedback from Denny Primary pupils focus group - P2: "we would like more craft sessions available at the library; we'd like to use the laptops to print pictures."

Feedback from Denny Primary pupils focus group - P4: "Events we'd like (more of): writing books, treasure hunt, planetarium, Lego group, art class/drawing."

Feedback from Denny Primary pupils focus group - P5: "We wonder if the children's section would be better being a bit bigger. More seats might be good."

Feedback from St Patrick's Primary pupils focus group: - Activities and events we'd like (more of): arts and crafts (making things), creative writing, Lego, homework clubs, author events/meet and greets

**Disability:**

Of the 1778 people who answered the survey question asking why they did not use library online services, 1.2% have a visual impairment which prevents them using these services.

We asked people to choose from a list of services and activities to show how they currently use Libraries. From the 2529 responses to this question 9% borrow large print books and 11% borrow audiobooks; 5.3% use the library to find out information about NHS or other health and wellbeing services; 8% access libraries to pick up replacement hearing aid batteries; 3% attend Words for Wellbeing book groups - often referred by GPs and/or case workers; 2.6% use the Home Library Service.

We also asked how people thought they would use libraries over the next four years using the same checklist of services and activities. 2626 individuals responded to this question: 11% would like to borrow large print books and 17% would like to borrow audiobooks; 7.5% would like to use the library to find out information about NHS or other health and wellbeing services; 9% want to access libraries to pick up replacement hearing aid batteries; 5% of respondents would like to attend Words for Wellbeing book groups; 3.7% are interested in using the Home Library Service.

Denny Primary P5 pupils - "Are there books that are accessible for everyone and things that might help people with additional support needs."

**Ethnicity:**

We asked people to choose from a list of services and activities to show how they currently use Libraries. From the 2529 responses to this question 2% use libraries to borrow books in other languages e.g. Arabic, Ukrainian etc.

We also asked how people thought they would use libraries over the next four years using the same checklist of services and activities. 2626 individuals responded to this question: 3.3% would like to be able to borrow books in other languages.

Denny Primary P5 pupils - "We would like to see more books that have other languages."

**Religion/Belief/Non-Belief:**

We asked people to choose from a list of services and activities to show how they currently use Libraries. From the 2529 responses to this question 25% stated they use their library as a place to sit peacefully and relax; 13% of people use libraries to be signposted to or access information about other Council services; 5.3% use the library to find out information about NHS or other health and wellbeing services.

We also asked how people thought they would use libraries over the next four years using the same checklist of services and activities. 2626 individuals responded to this question: 29% would like to use their library as a place to sit peacefully and relax; 15% would like to use libraries to be signposted to or access information about other Council services; 7.5% would like to access libraries to find out information about NHS or other health and wellbeing services.

2544 responses were received to the question that asked what would encourage people to use their library more often: 43% of people said increased support for sustainability e.g. food bank donation, clothes swaps, seed banks, smart device charging stations etc., 25% asked for provision of board games and jigsaws around soft seating areas and 59% said a cafe space was what would encourage them into the library more often.

**Sexual Orientation:**

We asked people to choose from a list of services and activities to show how they currently use Libraries. From the 2529 responses to this question 25% stated they use their library as a place to sit peacefully and relax; 20% of respondents identify libraries as venues to access pcs and internet for free and 14% use free library WiFi with their own device; 11% use libraries to read newspapers for free and 21% study or read in libraries.

We asked people to choose from a list of services and activities to show how they currently use Libraries. From the 2529 responses to this question 80% said choosing books for adults and 44% said choosing books for children and babies; we also asked how people thought they would use libraries over the next four years using the same checklist of services and activities. 2626 individuals responded to this question: 85% said choosing books for adults and 44% said choosing books for children and babies.

**Transgender:**

We asked people to choose from a list of services and activities to show how they currently use Libraries. From the 2529 responses to this question 25% stated they use their library as a place to sit peacefully and relax; 20% of respondents identify libraries as venues to access pcs and internet for free and 14% use free library WiFi with their own device; 11% use libraries to read newspapers for free and 21% study or read in libraries.

We asked people to choose from a list of services and activities to show how they currently use Libraries. From the 2529 responses to this question 80% said choosing books for adults and 44% said choosing books for children and babies; we also asked how people thought they would use libraries over the next four years using the same checklist of services and activities. 2626 individuals responded to this question: 85% said choosing books for adults and 44% said choosing books for children and babies.

**Pregnancy/Maternity:**

We asked people to choose from a list of services and activities to show how they currently use Libraries. From the 2529 responses to this question 80% said choosing books for adults and 44% said choosing books for children and babies; 13% of respondents attend Bookbug Sessions (stories, songs and rhymes for babies and pre-school children) and 11% said they attend story-times; 18% of people access libraries to attend children's activities and events and 15.5% take part, or would like their children to be able to take part, in the annual Summer Reading Challenge. We also asked how people thought they would use libraries over the next four years using the same checklist of services and activities. 2626 individuals responded to this question: 85% said choosing books for adults and 44% said choosing books for children and babies; 12% of respondents plan to attend Bookbug Sessions  and 14% said they would attend story-times; 25% of people plan to access libraries to attend children's activities and events and 18.3% would like to take part, or like their child to take part in the annual Summer Reading Challenge.

**Poverty:**

Of the 1778 people who answered the survey question asking why they did not use library online services, 8% do not have access to, or cannot afford a smart device or connectivity at home.

We asked people to choose from a list of services and activities to show how they currently use Libraries. From the 2529 responses to this question 25% stated they use their library as a place to sit peacefully and relax; 20% of respondents identify libraries as venues to access pcs and internet for free and 14% use free library WiFi with their own device; 11% use libraries to read newspapers for free and 21% study or read in libraries.

We also asked how people thought they would use libraries over the next four years using the same checklist of services and activities. 2626 individuals responded to this question: 29% would like to use their library as a place to sit peacefully and relax; 20% identify libraries as venues to access pcs and internet for

free and 17% want to use the free library WiFi with their own smart devices; 14% would like to read newspapers for free in libraries and 24.6% would like to read or study in libraries.

2544 responses were received to the question that asked what would encourage people to use their library more often: 32% of respondents said borrowing other things e.g. tools, baking equipment, craft equipment, musical instruments, laptops and digital equipment etc; 43% of people said increased support for sustainability e.g. food bank donation, clothes swaps, seed banks, smart device charging stations etc.

Feedback from Fairer Falkirk Partnership: "I'd like to investigate why some of the parents we support don't attend free Bookbug and story-time sessions"

**Other, health, community justice, carers etc.:**

We asked people to choose from a list of services and activities to show how they currently use Libraries. From the 2529 responses to this question 25% stated they use their library as a place to sit peacefully and relax; 13% of people use libraries to be signposted to or access information about other Council services; 5.3% use the library to find out information about NHS or other health and wellbeing services; 8% access libraries to pick up replacement hearing aid batteries; 3% attend Words for Wellbeing book groups - often referred by GPs and/or case workers; 3% of respondents access libraries as venues for community engagement sessions and 1.6% attend Councillor's surgeries in libraries.

We also asked how people thought they would use libraries over the next four years using the same checklist of services and activities. 2626 individuals responded to this question: 29% would like to use their library as a place to sit peacefully and relax; 15% would like to use libraries to be signposted to or access information about other Council services; 7.5% would like to access libraries to find out information about NHS or other health and wellbeing services; 9% would like to pick up replacement hearing aid batteries from libraries; 5% of respondents would like to attend Words for Wellbeing book groups; 8% of people answering would like to use libraries as venues for community engagement sessions and 6.4% would like to attend Councillor's surgeries in libraries.

| Best Judgement: | |
|---|---|
| **Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?** | No |
| **Who provided the best judgement and what was this based on?** | |
| **What gaps in data / information were identified?** | |
| **Is further research necessary?** | No |

| If NO, please state why. | We have used evidence from our Library Management System and other administrative systems to provide performance (quantitative) data and have undertaken an extensive programme of community and stakeholder engagement to provide qualitative data to inform the strategic plan and associated aims and outcomes. The process has not been carried out in local isolation - Falkirk Council Libraries are a part of the member organisation Scottish Library and Information Council who advocate on behalf of public libraries in Scotland to the Scottish Government. Our members of staff are represented by Chartered Institute of Library and information Professionals in Scotland (CILIPS) and the service is represented on the Association of Public Library Services (APLS) by their Team Leader. Additionally the public library service in Falkirk has recently joined the Scottish Consortium of Public Libraries which subscribes to one library management system and a unified approach to stock and catalogue management and control across several public library services, and provides a strong community of practice.<br>In addition to the quantitative and qualitative methods outlined above, close partnership and membership work with professional organisations has enabled us to benchmark against best practice and seek guidance and training on organisational change and community planning specifically for public library services. |
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## SECTION FOUR: ENGAGEMENT — Engagement with individuals or organisations affected by the policy or proposal must take place

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|---|---|
| **Has the proposal / policy / project been subject to engagement or consultation with service users taking into account their protected characteristics and socio-economic status?** | Yes |
| **If YES, please state who was engagement with.** | Library staff, library customers, lapsed library customers, communities, community organisations, faith groups, community councils, target community groups/organisations who are likely to represent individuals with specific protected characteristics, young people, school pupils. |
| **If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.** | |

| How was the engagement carried out? | What were the results from the engagement? Please list... |
|---|---|

| Focus Group | Yes | Qualitative feedback to be considered in strategic planning: |
|---|---|---|
| | | Denny Primary P2 pupils: we would like play areas for when the adults are looking at books – construction, craft and drawing; we would like to be able to borrow board games, stuffed toys, baby dolls, building stuff and crafts; we would like to volunteer to help out at the library. |
| | | Denny Primary P4 pupils: We'd like to borrow: phones, i-pads, laptops, computer games/consoles, comics, sports equipment; How we'd like the library building to be used: gaming tournaments, sell food, gymnastics, pantomime, cinema screenings, music gigs, archaeology. |
| | | St Patrick's Primary: We'd like to borrow: board games, video games, DVDs, bikes, magazines, art supplies, Lego; How we'd like the library building to be used: gym for all ages/gymnastics, cooking/baking club, disco/dancing, movies/drama, author events, snacks/vending machine area. |
| | | Teaching staff: It would be a great social and emotional support for parents in similar situations where they can meet like-minded / same situation people; with space and the struggle some parents have trying to get children to do homework at home, maybe a wee homework club?  It may help with engagement as it's not in school but also not at home … somewhere neutral? |
| | | Fairer Falkirk Partnership: What would you/your community group like to borrow from your library (as well as books): projectors and screens for meetings and AGMs; green screen equipment; cooking equipment linked to how to cook and nutrition sessions; DIY classes and tools; gardening tools and advice; Halloween costumes; Prom dresses; Christmas jumpers; be good to take libraries out to community events with pop-up gazebos - promote services, resources and activities. |
| | | Fairer Falkirk Partnership: How would you/your community group like the library building to be used: publicly accessible toilets; baby change; soundproof rooms for music practice/podcasts; storage space for regular community groups; sensory rooms/support for ASN; private rooms for NHS appointments/job interviews/homelessness support; health information library; fruit tasting sessions/nutrition advice; language lessons/conversational groups |

| Survey | Yes | We asked people to consider a number of revised opening hours models which all proposed a reduction in the number of opening hours. We explained that we were proposing this change in order to achieve efficiencies while still being able to deliver core services and meet the needs of communities as effectively as possible.

2504 individuals responded to the question in the survey asking about a full day closure. From the options, people chose to close each library on the same day of the week (41%) rather than close each library on a different day of the week (38%) or close each area on a different day in line with geographic boundaries (10%).
4% of respondents said they had no preference as they used the library mainly online and 7% chose not to answer.

The survey also asked about reducing either late night or weekend hours and asked individuals to vote for preferred options. 2439 people answered this question; 55% chose to reduce the late night opening to one late night per branch per week, 19% chose to close on a Saturday afternoon. 15% of respondents to this question said they had no preference as they never used the library at those times, and further 2% of people also had no preference as they used the library mainly online. 8% chose not to respond.

When asked what would encourage increased use of their library the top responses included a cafe space (59%), increased support for sustainability (43%), exhibitions for local artists to show and sell their work (42%), delivery of training courses (33%) and borrowing other kinds of things e.g. baking equipment, power tools, seed bank, gardening equipment etc (32%). |
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| **Display / Exhibitions** | Yes | The proposed opening hours models were also replicated at the in-person community engagement sessions with displays in each library encouraging visitors to vote for their preference and to leave a comment in the case where no reduction was the preferred option.<br><br>177 people attended 9 in-person community engagement events. There were 50 responses to the opening hours vote:<br><br>From the full day closure options, 28% people chose to close each library on the same day of the week; 50% chose to close each library on a different day of the week; and 16% chose to close each area on a different day in line with geographic boundaries. 6% of respondents had no preference as they used the library mainly online.<br><br>From the options in reducing either late night or weekend hours, 66% of people chose to reduce the late night opening to one late night per branch per week; 20% chose to close on a Saturday afternoon. Again, 6% had no preference as they used the library mainly online; 8% chose not to respond in this section. |
| **User Panels** | No | |
| **Public Event** | Yes | We held community engagement sessions in each of the libraries and online. We did not repeat the same questions as had been asked in the community engagement survey, but instead concentrated on gathering extra qualitative data around the following key questions to inform the new 5 year Strategic Plan for Libraries:<br><br>1. What activities/events do you want in your library:<br><br>Age: more promotion via a regular physical newsletter / flyer – not everyone is online; animals visit/Therapets to help children reading; more intergenerational activities; author events (kids and adult); book clubs / reading groups for all ages; adult learning (informal classes) e.g. book restoration, music reading, upholstery, gardening, DIY skills; writers club (children); book making/make your own book (children); craft group/art club (children); board games e.g. chess, backgammon, scrabble, dominos; more Lego clubs (adults and children); more school visits/school engagement; gaming tournaments; computer/tablet/phone classes (all levels, but especially beginners/older people, including using social media)<br><br>Disability: language classes including BSL, Makaton; |

Sex: adult learning (informal classes) e.g. book restoration, music reading, upholstery, gardening, DIY skills;

Ethnicity: language classes including Scots, English as second language, conversational foreign;

Religion/Belief/Non-belief: more promotion via a regular physical newsletter / flyer – not everyone is online; more intergenerational activities; author events (kids and adult); book clubs / reading groups for all ages; adult learning (informal classes) e.g. book restoration, music reading, upholstery, gardening, DIY skills; board games e.g. chess, backgammon, scrabble, dominos;

Poverty: adult learning (informal classes) e.g. money matters; CV club/more help for jobseekers; board games e.g. chess, backgammon, scrabble, dominos; film/movie nights or clubs; baking club;

Pregnancy/Maternity: support and wellbeing groups e.g. parents meditation;

Other, Health, Community Justice, Carers etc.; adult learning (informal classes) e.g. first aid; film/movie nights or clubs; board games e.g. chess, backgammon, scrabble, dominos; support and wellbeing groups e.g. AA, mental health, parents meditation, cancer/dementia support; baking club;


2. What would you like to borrow from your library (as well as books):

Age: toys/educational games – children can become bored with the familiar so changing /swapping or borrowing these items refreshes interest again and meets changing stages of development; games – computer; craft tools / equipment; sports equipment; musical instruments; bikes; magazines; jigsaws;

Disability:  IT equipment e.g. digital projector, laptop, tablet, microphone; games – computer;

Sex: craft tools / equipment; sports equipment; power tools and gardening equipment; bikes; seeds;

Ethnicity: IT equipment e.g. digital projector, laptop, tablet, microphone; toys/educational games – children can become bored with the familiar; sports equipment; musical instruments;

bikes; magazines; jigsaws;

Sexual Orientation: IT equipment e.g. digital projector, laptop, tablet, microphone; craft tools / equipment; sports equipment; musical instruments;

Transgender: IT equipment e.g. digital projector, laptop, tablet, microphone; craft tools / equipment; sports equipment; musical instruments;

Poverty: IT equipment e.g. digital projector, laptop, tablet, microphone; games – computer; craft tools / equipment; sports equipment; musical instruments; bikes; magazines; jigsaws; tool Library, including DIY, power tools and gardening equipment; seeds; clothes swap (e.g. Xmas jumpers, school uniforms)

Pregnancy/maternity: clothes swap (e.g. Xmas jumpers, school uniforms)

Other, Health , Community Justice, Carers: IT equipment e.g. digital projector, laptop, tablet, microphone; sports equipment; bikes; craft tools / equipment; musical instruments; tool Library, including DIY, power tools and gardening equipment; seeds; clothes swap (e.g. Xmas jumpers, school uniforms)

3. How would you like your library building to be used:

Age: continue as a library, doing the activities and providing the stock, IT, hearing aid batteries, bus timetables etc. already in libraries; study space (especially for pupils/students who find it hard at home); somewhere to sit and eat a packed lunch/food area; use for MSP, Community Council sessions, Councillor surgeries; warm space with free tea and coffee and hot chocolate; café space or Costa Express/coffee machine, snacks for sale, water dispenser;

Disability: continue as a library, doing the activities and providing the stock, IT, hearing aid batteries, bus timetables etc. already in libraries; Macmillan and NHS info; warm space with free tea and coffee and hot chocolate;  café space or Costa Express/coffee machine, snacks for sale, water dispenser; somewhere to sit and eat a packed lunch/food area;

Sex: hybrid meeting space/hot desking; craft hubs where people can socialise/Maker Space;

Ethnicity:  continue as a library, doing the activities and providing the stock, IT, hearing aid

batteries, bus timetables etc already in libraries; space for meetings/room hire (especially when library is closed);

Religion/Belief/Non-belief: continue as a library, doing the activities and providing the stock, IT, hearing aid batteries, bus timetables etc already in libraries; use for MSP, Community Council sessions, Councillor surgeries; warm space with free tea and coffee and hot chocolate; space for meetings/room hire (especially when library is closed); foodbank collection;

Sexual Orientation: continue as a library, doing the activities and providing the stock and IT already in libraries; Citizens Advice Bureau sessions; warm space with free tea and coffee and hot chocolate; somewhere to sit and eat a packed lunch/food area; café space or Costa Express/coffee machine, snacks for sale, water dispenser; hybrid meeting space/hot desking; craft hubs where people can socialise/Maker Space; use for MSP, Community Council sessions, Councillor surgeries;

Transgender: continue as a library, doing the activities and providing the stock and IT already in libraries; Citizens Advice Bureau sessions; warm space with free tea and coffee and hot chocolate; somewhere to sit and eat a packed lunch/food area; café space or Costa Express/coffee machine, snacks for sale, water dispenser; hybrid meeting space/hot desking; craft hubs where people can socialise/Maker Space; use for MSP, Community Council sessions, Councillor surgeries;

Poverty: continue as a library, doing the activities and providing the stock, IT, hearing aid batteries, bus timetables etc already in libraries; Citizens Advice Bureau sessions; foodbank collection; warm space with free tea and coffee and hot chocolate; somewhere to sit and eat a packed lunch/food area;

Pregnancy/Maternity: warm space with free tea and coffee and hot chocolate; somewhere to sit and eat a packed lunch/food area; café space or Costa Express/coffee machine, snacks for sale, water dispenser; hybrid meeting space/hot desking; craft hubs where people can socialise/Maker Space; use for MSP, Community Council sessions, Councillor surgeries;

Other, Health, Community Justice, Carers: continue as a library, doing the activities and providing the stock, IT, hearing aid batteries, bus timetables etc already in libraries; use for MSP, Community Council sessions, Councillor surgeries; Citizens Advice Bureau sessions; Macmillan and NHS info; craft hubs where people can socialise/Maker Space; space for meetings/room hire

| | | (especially when library is closed); foodbank collection; hybrid meeting space/hot desking; warm space with free tea and coffee and hot chocolate; |
|---|---|---|
| **Other: please specify** | | |
| **Has the proposal / policy/ project been reviewed / changed as a result of the engagement?** | | Yes |
| **Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?** | | No |
| **Is further engagement recommended?** | | No |

## SECTION FIVE: ASSESSING THE IMPACT

| Equality Protected Characteristics: | What will the impact of implementing this proposal be on people who share characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 or are likely to be affected by the proposal / policy / project? This section allows you to consider other impacts, e.g. poverty, health inequalities, community justice, carers etc. |
|---|---|

| Protected Characteristic | Neutral Impact | Positive Impact | Negative Impact | Please provide evidence of the impact on this protected characteristic. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | | | ✓ | Older and vulnerable: reduced availability of critical outreach programmes, activities and services, e.g. home library, Memories Scotland sessions, wellbeing, knit and natter groups etc. |
| **Disability** | | | ✓ | Reduced access of critical services, e.g. replacement of hearing aid batteries, large print books and audio books on CD. Only place to renew or apply for bus pass renewal or application, including disabled access bus passes. |
| **Sex** | | | | Unknown. |
| **Ethnicity** | | | ✓ | Reduced access to books in foreign language, free access to PCs, internet and Wifi for communication or learning purposes. |
| **Religion / Belief / non-Belief** | | | ✓ | Reduced opening hours reduces the use of libraries as safe, non-judgmental, welcoming space for all. Offers warm spaces, hot drinks and used by local faith groups. |
| **Sexual Orientation** | | | ✓ | Reduced opening hours reduces the use of libraries as safe, non-judgmental, welcoming space for all. Reduced access to newly released stock that reflects our diverse local and world communities. |
| **Transgender** | | | ✓ | Reduced opening hours reduces the use of libraries as safe, non-judgmental, welcoming space for all. Reduced access to newly released stock that reflects our diverse local and world communities. |
| **Pregnancy / Maternity** | | | ✓ | Reduced access to supported spaces for breastfeeding resources on behalf of NHS Forth Valley. Potential reduced access to The Scottish Book Trust Bookbug programmes. |
| **Marriage / Civil Partnership** | | | | Unknown. |

| Public Sector Equality Duty: Scottish Public Authorities must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance quality of opportunity and foster good relations. Scottish specific duties include: | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | learning, entertainment, communication, study and job-seeking/Universal Credit. Library staff are a trusted source of information and can signpost to appropriate agencies and organisations for further help and support. Reduced access to support with digital skills to access and register for benefits advice and payments. |
| Care Experienced | | | | |
| Other, health, community justice, carers  etc. | | | ✓ | Reduced opening hours reduces access to free period products.  Falkirk Council Libraries staff are trained in mental health awareness to support the Libraries for Wellbeing project to combat social isolation and mental ill-health. Library staff receive child protection and needlestick training as part of their initial induction which supports library customers and increases community health and safety. In partnership with The Alliance, the NHS and local health partners, Scottish public libraries are committed to implementing Scottish Library and Information Council's (SLIC) Health on the Shelf report findings which include supporting social inclusion, health and wellbeing through library services, activity and resource provision, and signposting customers to alternative local agencies or sources of information where appropriate. |
| Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change) | | | | |

| | Evidence of Due Regard |
|---|---|
| Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct): | Libraries are warm, safe, politically neutral spaces in communities that are free for everyone to access. Library staff are trained in mental health awareness , child protection principles and are Disclosure Scotland checked. Falkirk Council Libraries are involved in projects and have delivered training to staff to support individuals and their families living with dementia and autism. |
| Advance Equality of Opportunity: | Providing trained staff, resources and information free at the point of access in all eight libraries and a robust complementary online service, Libraries aim to offer opportunities for lifelong learning, job-seeking support, creative investigation and self-development for everyone. |

| Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice): | As part of a varied programme of events and activities, Falkirk Council Libraries is committed to creating an environment of understanding, engagement, learning and kindness. We promote and celebrate significant national and cultural anniversaries and movements e.g. Black History Month, LGBT History Month, Holocaust Memorial Day etc., through stock promotion, exhibitions and displays, author visits, talks, film shows, children's activities and events. |
| --- | --- |

## SECTION SIX: PARTNERS / OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

| Which sectors are likely to have an interest in or be affected by the proposal / policy / project? | | Describe the interest / affect. |
|---|---|---|
| Business | Yes | Investigation into the feasibility of a hotdesking space within public libraries: offers employees currently working from home an alternative location and encourages economic regeneration of the surrounding area when people begin to shop locally for e.g. lunch. |
| Councils | Yes | Development of co-location opportunities with Council partners where appropriate to improve service offer for communities and help deliver savings/increase income. |
| Education Sector | Yes | Migration of Libraries Wifi provided from external supplier Insight Media (ICAM) to internal Council Meraki solution enables all pupils with a Council-provided smart device to automatically log-in to Libraries WiFi on entering a library branch - no need for registration or speaking to any staff member. Opportunity to promote connected learning, family learning, homework clubs, creative learning etc. with pupils after school in public libraries. Closer working opportunities with partners in Education and School Library Service. |
| Fire | Yes | If libraries are to increase income generation and be utilised more heavily on "closed" days by partner and community organisations - albeit with a library staff member as keyholder -, refreshed robust health and safety and risk assessment measures must be put in place, monitored and reviewed. |
| NHS | Yes | The Books for Wellbeing groups which form part of the Libraries for Wellbeing project receive referrals from NHS and community case workers to help alleviate symptoms of social isolation and mental ill-health. A reduction in opening hours could potentially reduce the number of groups running and available for referrals. |
| Integration Joint Board | No | |
| Police | No | |
| Third Sector | Yes | The library service plans where possible to position library buildings as community-led hubs and make their spaces available to local groups, organisations and support agencies at a reasonable cost. |
| Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact. | | |

## SECTION SEVEN: ACTION PLANNING

| Mitigating Actions: | If you have identified impacts on protected characteristic groups in Section 5 please summarise these in the table below detailing the actions you are taking to mitigate or support this impact. If you are not taking any action to support or mitigate the impact you should complete the No Mitigating Actions section below instead. |
|---|---|

| Identified Impact | To Who | Action(s) | Lead Officer | Evaluation and Review Date | Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Increased risk of social isolation and digital exclusion due to reduced opening hours. | Age | All library staff achieve digital champion status to enable confidence in sharing and teaching digital awareness and skills. Library event and activities programme reflects increased intergenerational activity, board game provision and continued curation of warm spaces as per community engagement feedback. The reduction in hours is a model that has been consulted on through community engagement and the most popular model has been chosen. | Louise Graham | 31/05/2024 | |

| Identified Impact | To Who | Action(s) | Lead Officer | Evaluation and Review Date | Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reduced access to services due to reduced opening hours. | Disability | Installation of key-pad activated external lift to provide access to community rooms at Bo'ness Library. This will enable safer and easier access to the first floor community rooms and will enable the provision of access out-with library opening hours. Implementation of PressReader service which provides free access to library members to 100+ UK and international newspapers and magazines online and has a host of accessibility features e.g. text to speech. Refreshed approach to e-book, including e-audio, provision to improve collections. The reduction in hours is a model that has been consulted on through community engagement and the most popular model has been chosen. | Louise Graham | 31/05/2024 | |

| Identified Impact | To Who | Action(s) | Lead Officer | Evaluation and Review Date | Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reduced access to resources and support due to reduced opening hours. | Ethnicity | Implementation of PressReader service which provides free access to library members to 100+ UK and international newspapers and magazines online supports speakers of English as a second language as it offers access to newspapers in over 65 foreign languages.<br>The reduction in hours is a model that has been consulted on through community engagement and the most popular model has been chosen. | Louise Graham | 31/05/2024 | |
| Reduction in opening hours prevents reduces engagement with new and prospective mothers. | Pregnancy/Maternity | Promotion and launch of Scottish Government's Every Child A Library Member initiative to enrol all children as library members at birth - programme being rolled out in partnership with Falkirk Council Registrars. Promotion of Libraries and the services, activities and support available to new mothers and babies.<br>The reduction in hours is a model that has been consulted on through community engagement and the most popular model has been chosen. | Louise Graham | 31/05/2024 | |

| Identified Impact | To Who | Action(s) | Lead Officer | Evaluation and Review Date | Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reduction in opening hours reduces access to free resources and support with cost of living. | Poverty | Libraries have committed to supporting all staff in achieving Digital Champions status - this initial learning activity will be sustained by a programme of practical digital skills opportunities in libraries; we have secured funding for a Graduate Librarian to work exclusively with tenants and people struggling with the cost of living using digital skills and technology to access help and support; the Libraries  Strategic Plan has a commitment to retain a core service offer of access to information and resources which is free at the point of access for everyone.<br>The reduction in hours is a model that has been consulted on through community engagement and the most popular model has been chosen. | Louise Graham | 31/05/2024 | |

| Identified Impact | To Who | Action(s) | Lead Officer | Evaluation and Review Date | Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reduced access to support, resources and advice due to reduction in opening hours. | Health | Falkirk Council Libraries have received funding from Scottish Library Information Council (SLIC) to install a Near Me health appointment spot in Bo'ness Library. This will offer private, remote, online access to NHS appointments and will be accessible out-with library opening hours. This is a pilot but could be a model that is investigated for other library sites. The reduction in hours is a model that has been consulted on through community engagement and the most popular model has been chosen. | Louise Graham | 31/05/2024 | |
| | | | | | |

| No Mitigating Actions |
|---|

| Please explain why you do not need to take any action to mitigate or support the impact of your proposals. |
|---|
| |

| Are actions being reported to Members? | Yes |
|---|---|

| If yes when and how ? | A report will be presented to Council Executive Committee in May 2023 outlining the Library Service re-design with associated savings indicated by the Integrated Services Review (October 2022). The report will include as appendices the Library Services Strategic Plan 2023-27 (Draft) for approval along with the integral revised opening hours model and organisational re-structure. |
|---|---|

## SECTION EIGHT: ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

| Only one of following statements best matches your assessment of this proposal / policy / project. Please select one and provide your reasons. | | |
|---|---|---|
| **No major change required** | No | |
| **The proposal has to be adjusted to reduce impact on protected characteristic groups** | No | |
| **Continue with the proposal but it is not possible to remove all the risk to protected characteristic groups** | Yes | The proposed reduction in opening hours does pose a risk to protected characteristic groups, however this measure is necessary to deliver the efficiencies required and agreed by the Integrated Services Review (October 2022) and by reducing opening hours we can retain all eight libraries. In addition, several mitigating factors are being introduced to address the reduction in opening hours by redesigning the Library Service to best meet the needs of the community. Following an extensive community and stakeholder engagement exercise to inform the development, this redesign will be implemented through an organisational re-structure of senior library staff and the delivery of a 5 year strategic plan for Falkirk Council Libraries. |
| **Stop the proposal as it is potentially in breach of equality legislation** | No | |

## SECTION NINE: LEAD OFFICER SIGN OFF

| Lead Officer: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Signature:** | *Louise Graham* | **Date:** | 26/03/2023 |

## SECTION TEN: EPIA TASK GROUP ONLY

| OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EPIA: | Has the EPIA demonstrated the use of data, appropriate engagement, identified mitigating actions as well as ownership and appropriate review of actions to confidently demonstrate compliance with the general and public sector equality duties? | Yes |
|---|---|---|

| ASSESSMENT FINDINGS<br><br>If YES, use this box to highlight evidence in support of the assessment of the EPIA<br><br>If NO, use this box to highlight actions needed to improve the EPIA | Yes a wide range of groups were asked how they would like to use libraries , there was less focus on asking about impact of reducing hours . The most common answer in relation to this was chosen, However not clear the specific impact of this not clear other than there will be less opportunity for people to use the library | |
|---|---|---|
| Where adverse impact on diverse communities has been identified and it is intended to continue with the proposal / policy / project, has justification for continuing <u>without making changes</u> been made? | Yes | If YES, please describe:<br>This is a financial decision - it is recommended that impacts continue to be assessed and monitored |

**LEVEL OF IMPACT: The EPIA Task Group has agreed the following level of impact on the protected characteristic groups highlighted within the EPIA**

| LEVEL | | COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|
| HIGH | Yes / No | |
| MEDIUM | Yes | We have a lot of information on how people currently use libraries and would want to use them in future , however actual impact of reduced hours on populations is not clear. |
| LOW | Yes / No | |

## SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF

| Director / Head of Service: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Signature: | *Karen Algie* | Date: | 28/03/2023 |