




Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer or www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment

Organisation prepared for (mark as appropriate)						
Version	1.0		Date Completed	23/01/2023 1st Draft 20/7/2023 Review 15/12/2023 Review 15/02/2023 Review		
Description of what is being impact assessed						
<p>Potential closure of Petters House in Yeovil. Proposal to relocate customer service delivery to Yeovil Library and non-customer facing staff to Brympton Way, Yeovil.</p> <p>Petters House is an ex SSDC building that is occupied by a customer services team including front facing and telephony staff. Members of the Housing team also operate from the building, but it is significantly under-utilised with occupancy studies regularly showing less than 25% occupancy.</p> <p>Yeovil Library is xx m from Petters House and has recently benefited from a decarbonisation project that means the building meets our climate change objectives.</p> <p>Project plan is for implementation is anticipated to be towards the end of 2024 and effects circa 80 staff across both sites.</p>						

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

SAP data shows the following information;

Petters House

32 members of staff have Petters House listed as their contractual place of work

88% are female and 12% are male

19% are aged 55+

No disabilities identified, 28 answered 'prefer not to say'

Whilst footfall numbers are known for visitors to Petters House, they do not help to identify protected characteristics of customers, so are not felt relevant to this EIA.

Yeovil Library

51 members of staff have Yeovil Library listed as their contractual place of work

82% are female and 18% are male

37% are aged 55+

12% have disabilities

Library membership data shows a total of 10,770 customers registered at Yeovil Library. 67 people are registered as 'Access Adult' which is a concessionary category that gives concessions such as free reservations on large print. The category was originally created to support visually impaired customers. 2730 customers are under the age of 18. 1421 are online only customers who have access to electronic resources but not physical items. There are also 53 users registered as home library service customers and this category is additionally used where it is not appropriate for customers to be issued with fines (for example a customer with dementia). The data does not give specific details but provides an indication of the numbers of customers who may have protected characteristics.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups and what have they told you? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

Impacted staff, line managers, Cllr Adam Dance – Lead Member for Public Health, Equalities and Diversity, Customer Panel. Line Managers and impacted staff have made us aware of several disabilities and requirements for reasonable adjustments. These have been considered throughout the feasibility stages, and will continue to be as we move towards implementation to ensure mitigations and reasonable adjustments can be planned and put into place effectively and in a timely fashion. A questionnaire was issued to the customer panel and shared with 14,000 email addresses in Yeovil who have signed up to receive such information. An article was placed on Library social media pages and paper copies of the questionnaire made available in the library. Over 200 responses have been received. Concerns raised around the increased footfall and noise this could generate which may impact on people requiring quiet spaces, the differing customer types that would be using the building and any potential stock reduction of library books. Challenges could be experienced by neurodiverse customers and families with children who may be subjected to antisocial behaviour from some customers visiting the customer services/housing teams.

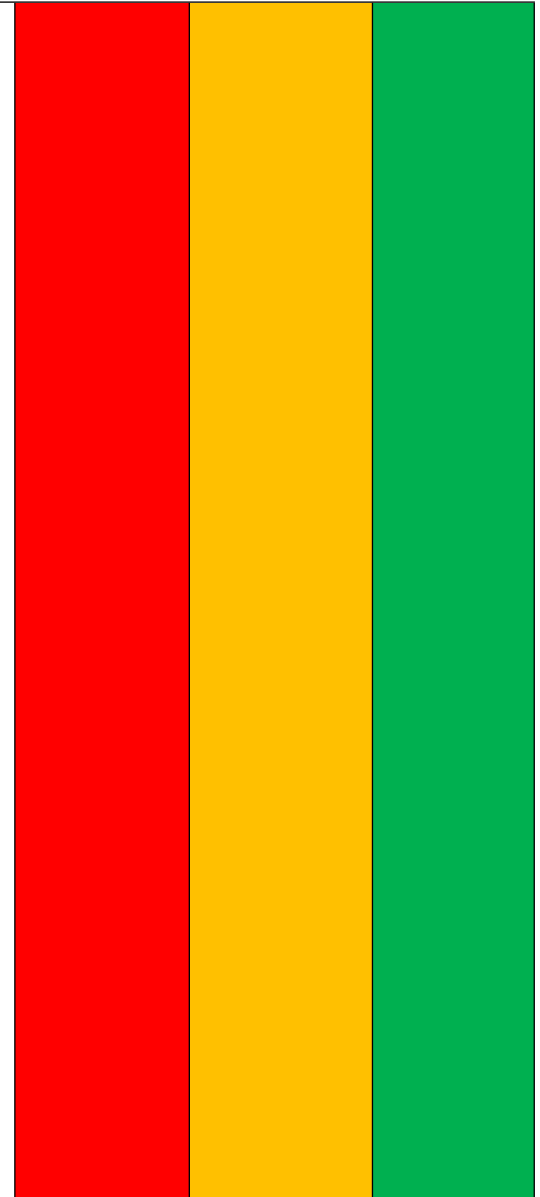
Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some sensory loss & musculoskeletal conditions are linked to age & these conditions can mean that reasonable adjustments are needed for certain staff and customers. If required, these will be provided at project implementation stage. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some staff have disabilities that are impacted by sensory environmental factors such as noise, visual disruption, smell, light etc. Employees may need time and require support to adapt to new 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

surroundings that are unfamiliar. Any reasonable adjustments to the working environment will be implemented before the move.

- Staff with specific requirements/adjustments in place will encounter a negative impact if equipment is not moved at the same time as the staff moves take place . Staff with reasonable adjustments often require different adjustments when their environment is changed. New DSE assessments and a review of reasonable adjustments will be made before the move.
- Staff or customers with neurodivergence are likely to find moving to a new building or increased people within a building challenging and may suffer increased anxiety as a result of the change. Any reasonable adjustments identified will need to be discussed before the services relocate.
- Staff or customers using wheelchairs or mobility aids will be impacted if the design of the space does not allow adequate space to move around, into and out of the building.
- Customers who have historically viewed the library as a quiet space may find a busier/noisier environment more challenging or be affected by any negative behaviour displayed by other customers. Communications will be sent before the changes take place.
- Visually impaired customers may encounter difficulties accessing large text section if this is moved to an unfamiliar area or above ground floor
- There is no change to the provision of Blue badge parking as it is available in the public carpark and is free for ex SSDC staff, but not ex SCC staff.



Gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protected characteristics of gender reassignment have been considered and no negative impacts have been identified 	□	⊗	□
Marriage and civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protected characteristics of marriage and civil partnership have been considered and no negative impacts have been identified 	□	⊗	□
Pregnancy and maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees with specific requirements/adjustments in place will encounter a negative impact if equipment is not moved at the same time as the staff moves take place. New DSE assessments and a review of reasonable adjustments will be required during project implementation. Pregnant women or those with prams/pushchairs may be impacted if the design of the space does not allow adequate room to move around the building. 	□	⊗	□
Race and ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protected characteristics of race and ethnicity have been considered and no negative impacts have been identified 	□	⊗	□
Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protected characteristics of religion or belief have been considered and no negative impacts have been identified 	□	⊗	□
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protected characteristics of sex have been considered and no negative impacts have been identified 	□	⊗	□
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protected characteristics of sexual orientation have been considered and no negative impacts have been identified 	□	⊗	□

<p>Armed Forces (including serving personnel, families and veterans)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The armed forces protected group has been considered and no negative impacts have been identified 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Other, e.g. carers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees with low income may experience difficulties with costs of travel to work if they are required to work from Brympton Way. Employees with caring responsibilities may be impacted if they are required to work from Brympton Way if this creates additional travel time There is no public transport to Brympton Way which will impact staff who do not have access to their own vehicle or are unable to walk/cycle 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
<p>Where a member of staff has DSE requirements that require specific equipment/desk set up, this will be enabled at point of move by FM/IT teams.</p> <p>Revised DSE assessments will be encouraged for staff who have moved to new locations.</p> <p>Reasonable adjustments will need to be reviewed to take account of the new work environment ahead of the move.</p>	Ongoing from April 2024	Sara Kelly, Programme Manager, Property Rationalisation Team	Floor walkers during moves	
<p>Should an employee who is not front facing have difficulties working from Brympton Way (for example if they do not have their own vehicle, are unable to walk/cycle or if they have local caring responsibilities) consideration will be given to making desk space available along with their team within Yeovil Library to meet their needs. The project team will need to monitor this with team leaders on a regular basis to avoid discrimination.</p>	Ongoing from April 2024	Line Managers	121s with staff and project team discussions when space planning	
<p>Review of parking arrangements to enable as much blue badge parking on site as possible. Staff with a need for accessible parking will have priority over staff without.</p>	Ongoing from April 2024	Sara Kelly/WOW team	Via project team meetings	
<p>Use of the ebb and flow model will be adopted by teams operating from the library to ensure that teams can have</p>	Ongoing from April 2024	Line Managers	Ongoing monitoring and	

<p>access to additional desk numbers on certain days to support collaborative working. This will aid employees who are unable to work from Brympton Way as they will still be able to work alongside colleagues.</p> <p>Note: There will be employees from every team on site in the library, every day but the numbers will vary.</p>			<p>review by line managers</p>	
<p>Use of flexible shelving and soft furnishings will be incorporated in the design to provide natural partitioning/screening of spaces and to help absorb noise</p>	<p>Ongoing from April 2024</p>	<p>Vicky Harvey, Project Officer - Libraries Improve Prog</p>	<p>Via project team meetings</p>	
<p>We will create quiet seating areas among library shelving to provide areas where staff or customers can sit if they wish to browse books or take some time away from the office/floor for wellbeing purposes.</p>	<p>Ongoing from April 2024</p>	<p>Vicky Harvey, Project Officer - Libraries Improve Prog</p>	<p>Via project team meetings</p>	
<p>Additional desk space to be created at ground floor level to allow staff to access 'back office' quiet space on this floor should they need a break from the public floor.</p>	<p>Ongoing from April 2024</p>	<p>Carrie Russell, Property Project Officer</p>	<p>Via project team meetings</p>	
<p>We will use a specialist library design company who are suitably qualified in planning and creating public libraries. They will ensure that appropriate circulation space is provided so layout designs comply with accessibility criteria. We will also use qualified architects and surveyors to ensure that the building is fully compliant to the Equalities Act.</p>	<p>Ongoing from April 2024</p>	<p>Sara Kelly, Programme Manager, Property Rationalisation Team</p>	<p>Via project team meetings and in consultation with colleagues through the key decision process</p>	
<p>A range of seating with and without arms provided throughout the library so that pregnant or breast-feeding</p>	<p>Ongoing from April 2024</p>	<p>Vicky Harvey, Project Officer</p>	<p>Via project team meetings</p>	

mothers have a good choice over the type of chair or area where they would like to nurse		- Libraries Improve Prog		
Consideration will be given to creating pram/buggy storage within the library building.	Ongoing from April 2024	Carrie Russell, Property Project Officer	Via project team meetings	
The internal library layout will be designed to ensure there will be ample space between units and items of furniture to allow for the manoeuvrability of wheelchairs, mobility aids, prams and buggies.	Ongoing from April 2024	TheDesign Concept/Vicky Harvey	Project team meetings	
Large print section to remain on the ground floor and non-fiction section to be split between ground and first floor.	Ongoing from April 2024	TheDesign Concept/Vicky Harvey	Via design process	
Locate seating in areas where older people are more likely to be able to make use of them e.g. near large print and audio stock. Offer a range of different types of seating with and without arms. Avoid chairs that are too low in the adult library and offer a range of high and low seating in the children's library to suit children and adults alike.	Ongoing from April 2024	Vicky Harvey, Project Officer - Libraries Improve Prog	Ongoing monitoring and review by staff teams to ensure seats are in the right place	
Customers will be able to access all Council services from one location rather than having to move between two sites.	Ongoing from April 2024	Sara Kelly, Programme Manager, Property Rationalisation Team	Implementation of project	

Services will still be accessible face to face or online to allow customer choice.	Ongoing from April 2024	Sara Kelly, Programme Manager, Property Rationalisation Team	Implementation of project	
Yeovil Library is closer to public transport routes than Petters House.	Ongoing from April 2024	Sara Kelly, Programme Manager, Property Rationalisation Team	Implementation of project	
Disabled parking bays are available a short distance from the main entrance of the Library.	Ongoing from April 2024	Sara Kelly, Programme Manager, Property Rationalisation Team	Implementation of project	
Any changes to flooring materials will be selected to ensure they do not present a hazard or challenge for disabled staff or customers.	Ongoing from April 2024	Vicky Harvey, Project Officer - Libraries Improve Prog	Ongoing monitoring	

Design of space has been done with consideration to quickest ejection routes for challenging customers to minimise disruption to other service users	Ongoing as part of design process	The Design Concept	Project team meetings	
Security presence on site during all opening hours to manage customer behaviours and help staff to feel supported	TBC (pending key decision outcome)	Sharon Jones, Strategic Manager Customer Access & Ops	Project team meetings	

If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

We have considered creating an accessible toilet on the ground floor for staff and public use, but the size of the space and constraints related to the positioning of the toilet in relation to the boiler room along with the impact this would have on floor space reduction has deemed it not feasible. There is a toilet on the ground floor that will remain in situ and public will continue to be granted access to this toilet in exceptional circumstances. An accessible toilet is available on the second floor.

Completed by:	Sara Kelly
Date	23/1/2023, 20/7/2023, 15/12/2023
Signed off by:	Ollie Woodhams
Date	
Equality Lead sign off name:	Michelle Anderson
Equality Lead sign off date:	
To be reviewed by: (officer name)	Sara Kelly
Review date:	1 July 2024

