

## Summary Fair Treatment Assessment (FTA)

<b>Area for Assessment:</b>	
<b>Name of service or function etc</b>	Review of opening hours in community libraries
<b>Which Service does this affect?</b>	Library and Information Services
<b>Is this a new, existing or revised function?</b>	Existing function – proposed saving
<b>Summary of findings:</b>	
<b>Main conclusions on the likely impact of the function on different equality groups (protected characteristics):</b>	
<p>In order to achieve the required savings agreed by members as part of the 3 year Medium Term Financial Strategy we have had to review and make proposals to reduce opening hours in community libraries. We have attempted to minimise the effect on access to library and information services by the full range of individuals and groups in the community.</p> <p>Revised opening hours have therefore been considered alongside the times of peak usage (informed by issue statistics, PC use, and hourly headcounts) as well as the results of the consultation survey.</p> <p>Visitors, transactions, and PC use are all very low indeed between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the community libraries concerned. Equally, proposed lunchtime reductions reflect natural dips in service take-up at those libraries at that time, while safeguarding whole mornings and whole afternoons for use by community groups and children and young people requiring a place for study and homework from 3.30 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.</p> <p>However, Solihull Libraries are part of the Enquire co-operative, staffing a service with other library authorities across the country on a rota basis, so that people from Solihull can ask questions for homework or other purposes via live online chat with a librarian at any time of day or night, and receive information sent directly to their PC, laptop or smartphone.</p> <p>The impacts identified in this assessment are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall the proposals are most likely to impact on people of working age who are in employment, education and training and require access to libraries at times that complement those commitments.</li> <li>• It is also clear that there are specific impacts on younger adults (19-24) of the proposed reduction in lunchtime opening as they prefer to access the libraries during the 12pm-2pm period.</li> <li>• In addition, concerns have been raised on the potential impact of residents who are reliant on public transport who may seek to use alternative provision (such as other local libraries or the flagship libraries) but are restricted from doing so because of the routes/times of public transport – there are correlations between disability, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic background and car ownership so this element is most likely to affect these groups.</li> <li>• There may be a specific impact for adults and young people in Castle Bromwich as there</li> </ul>	

will no longer be any opening past 5pm, which may make it difficult to use the library for homework purposes or after work for those in employment.

- It is clear that the impacts of the proposals will be felt differently by different local communities – partly down to proximity to alternatives, partly down to the specific proposals for that particular library and partly down to the isolation of that area.

To help minimise effects on different equality groups:

- The three flagship sites across the borough (Solihull Central Library, Chelmsley Wood and Shirley) which offer the full range of services to meet the needs of the widest range of groups, will continue to offer services at lunch times and evenings.
- All libraries will continue to provide a Saturday service as well as on weekdays.
- The home library service and mobile library service, which serve those with greatest access needs, will be unaffected by the proposal.
- Community libraries will be clustered under single managers to help provide balanced and cross-promoting services to local users.
- The range of online services through the 24-hour Virtual Library will continue to be developed to serve out-of-hours needs.

It should be noted that in any previous changes to opening hours there is evidence that users changed their patterns of use without a direct impact on visitor or issue figures.

## Actions:

### Actions identified to address negative impacts identified or to better promote equality, human rights, cohesive and sustainable communities and safeguarding issues

Action	Outcome	Timescale
Further publicity on self- service transactions which do not require a visit to the library	Further use of self-service	January – May 2013
Communication plan: to include advertising widely the revised opening hours and nearby alternative and online provision	All users and potential users informed of opening hours	12 weeks before implementation of revised opening hours and continuing publicity through website and all events and activities on a regular basis that may affect users
Consultation with all staff and in particular those staff whose hours of work will be affected (SMBC management of change policy )	All staff informed of potential changes	6 <sup>th</sup> September onwards
Monitor customer response to the	Understanding of the impact of the	Ongoing from

changes, particularly in relation to lunchtime closures and earlier finish times	decision, to be reviewed	implementation
Ensure that any future consultation in relation to libraries opening hours or similar allows for a robust equalities analysis	Understanding of the specific impacts and needs of different community groups	Ongoing
<b>Date Assessment Signed Off</b>	17 August 2012	