

Shropshire Council
Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)
Initial Screening Record 2021-2022

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change
<i>Draft Shropshire Library Service Strategy 2022- 27</i>

Name of lead officer carrying out the screening
Michael Lewis

Decision, review, and monitoring

Decision	Yes	No
Initial (part one) ESHIA Only?	Yes	
Proceed to Full ESHIA or HIA (part two) Report?		No

If completion of an initial or Part One assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes above. If a Full or Part Two report is required, please move on to full report stage once you have completed this initial screening assessment as a record of the considerations which you have given to this matter.

Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations
<p>Shropshire Libraries provide environments that allow people to feel safe, where families meet freely in a public space and where learning, discovery and innovation are encouraged.</p> <p>The Covid-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis has changed the way people and communities interact and along with local focus for market towns and villages. Shropshire Council is undergoing a transformation to develop new ways of working, which includes the development of a new operating model to serve local communities. The library service remained open for large periods during lockdown as well as providing book collection and home delivery services, putting events online, sustaining a core part of community resilience in partnership with other cultural services, health, social care and the voluntary sector.</p> <p>The draft Library Strategy 2022-2027 sets out a vision, priorities for the coming years and key milestones including the development of a new approach to performance management and actions to develop an implementation plan. To obtain feedback to inform the development of the draft strategy, an engagement plan was designed to include two periods of consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 (six weeks) - open questions to obtain feedback from local people concerning what they would like the strategy to focus on. • Stage 2 (twelve weeks) - a copy of the draft strategy to see if any amendments and changes are needed prior to final agreement and sign off.

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Shropshire Council asks key equality and diversity monitoring questions within its public consultations to help identify relevant groups within the community had been adequately included in the consultation and whether the respondents are representative of the wider community. 909 people completed the survey, with a significant number of paper surveys used to ensure that people had a choice of how to respond. The response from local communities during the 6-week period was good with 2,677 comments read and tagged against the main themes.

The overall outcome of this phase of public consultation is that it will be positive across groupings in the community. This is given its breadth of ambition and approach to social inclusion, and the recognition of the rurality of the county, opportunities for digital content to promote inclusion and access across the area, and the optimisation proposed of libraries as free, high-quality, local venues. Given that there are low numbers of under 30s using the service at present, efforts will need to be made to maximise the positive impacts of the proposed Library Strategy for this age grouping.

Stage 2 Consultation

Feedback for this phase was gathered through an online survey and stakeholder engagement. The engagement ran for twelve weeks from the 12th of May to the 3rd of August 2022, online, through local newsletters and networks.

Members of the public and stakeholders were encouraged to comment on the draft Library Strategy using an online survey, available paper copies, with optional email and postal addresses. In addition, engagement was undertaken with key stakeholders including community libraries and staff.

Combined, the feedback may be viewed as a meaningful exercise in terms of community engagement across groupings, given use of a range of different methods to accommodate differing needs in terms of accessing information and making responses. The responses to the draft strategy consultation were very helpful and despite some concerns, including fears over lack of library investment, most comments were supportive of the draft strategy. The comments from both staff and library stakeholders highlight commitment to reaching out to the wider community through marketing, the Shropshire Local service or through extending the library offer to support more people. There is recognition that some changes will not be easy to implement within current resources and that partnership working and sharing ideas and good practice will be important.

As a result, the overall outcomes from this two-phase approach towards engagement, in terms of the perceptions of the wider community and groupings within it, are that the likely impacts in terms of equality, social inclusion and health and well being will be neutral to positive across groupings. There is potential for a medium positive impact in terms of supporting early years numeracy, literacy and play, and therefore the groupings of Age and of Pregnancy and Maternity; in terms of social inclusion, notably for low income households, rural households and older people and others at risk of social isolation for whom libraries present a safe and warm space; and in terms of reaching out to diverse communities of Race and of Religion or Belief, notably with regard to refugees.

<p>Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations</p> <p>An Implementation Plan will be delivered as part of the strategy and Library Transformation, setting out actions for place-based delivery over the next five years. This will be monitored annually, with a report published as part of scrutiny that sets out the progress against the library’s strategic ambitions.</p> <p>The intention is that the Library Strategy and Transformation will be reviewed with a new 5-year strategic plan, published following a full evaluation in 2027. We will liaise with elected representatives and communities to seek collaborative feedback on an ongoing basis about impacts for people with Protected Characteristic and for those at risk of social exclusion. It is recognised that there will be ongoing engagement with people with Protected Characteristics including through community partnership.</p> <p>We will target specific groups such as children and young people, families, the displaced, refugees, asylum seekers, people with physical disabilities, people with experience of mental and emotional distress, people for whom loneliness and isolation, due to factors including rurality and limited access to facilities and services can lead to negative impacts upon their health and well-being. This will be through projects and partnerships already under way and through identification of comparator good practice. Actions may then be more readily identified from evidence gathered to enhance the positive impact of the strategy for these groupings, leading to better outcomes overall for communities in Shropshire.</p> <p>Efforts will also be made to reach out to and celebrate diverse communities with regard to Race and with regard to Religion or Belief.</p> <p>There will be ongoing review and feedback of service delivery utilizing customer feedback and critical stakeholders to create accessible digital and physical delivery, including managing and benchmarking performance against best practice.</p>
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<p>Associated ESHIAs</p> <p><i>Shropshire Library Strategy ESSIIA 2018 -2023, Cultural Strategy ESHIAs 2021-2031, Leisure ESHIAs 2018- 2023, the Shropshire Great Outdoors Strategy 2018- 2028, and the Shropshire Museums Strategy 2018 - 2023.</i></p>
<p>Actions to mitigate negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor overall impacts in terms of any other considerations. This includes climate change considerations</p> <p><i>This is the section in which to please outline any actions to mitigate negative or enhance positive impacts in terms of economic, environmental, or wider societal considerations, and actions to review and monitor the overall impact of the service change accordingly.</i></p> <p>Climate change</p> <p>The purpose of the corporate Climate Strategy & Action Plan is to generate a positive response to the urgent challenge of climate change and its likely adverse effects across Shropshire and its communities. The Strategy shows how the Council proposes to deliver its objective of becoming net carbon neutral by 2030 and make a positive contribution to the county’s change to a low carbon future through:</p>

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- Powering down energy and resource consumption and carbon emissions through energy efficiency measures and the adoption of low carbon technologies
- Powering up the production of renewable energy from Council property
- Capturing and storing carbon to offset residual emissions
- Working with others in our supply chain and the wider community and through our regulatory roles to highlight the challenge of climate change and foster positive responses, including opportunities for clean growth, across Shropshire, consistent with the Council's strategic vision and objectives

Libraries have an important role to play in translating climate change and carbon reduction objectives into action on the ground by local communities and businesses. Local libraries provide a trusted source of information about the Council's Climate Action Plan, signposting residents to helpful information and tools, to help them adopt practical solutions for low carbon lifestyles.

Health and well being

Library and public health partnerships are based on evidence and includes: Promotion of healthy lifestyles through public health campaigns and events with use of current data to understand the health conditions, lifestyles and patterns of disease that affect Shropshire people. This also helps to identify health inequalities across different areas.

Health and Wellbeing partnerships to promote healthy living provide support and engagement opportunities supported by inclusive spaces; signposting and information to reduce health, social and economic inequalities.


Strengthen our role in the co-delivery of health and wellbeing interventions for people living in the county. Explore opportunities for greater collaboration with Adult Social Care, Health, Children's Services and external partners, including the voluntary sector to deliver commissioned services.

Highlight the key role libraries play in building stronger, resilient and connected communities. We will utilise technological support to provide services events and pathways that help address health needs, contribute to tackling inequalities in individuals, families and groups across all ages.

Economic and societal/wider community

- Work with the business, education, culture and health sectors to facilitate economic growth with appropriate developments for communities
- Investment in commercial and community spaces with partners to ensure that they are flexible, inclusive and attractive vibrant multi-functional spaces.
- Training for staff in line with development strategies to ensure a flexible, confident work force equipped to respond to any future needs of our communities
- Sustained impact requires working with communities to understand their needs, strategically with partners to support outcomes. Library services will work more closely with other parts of the council and partner organisations, to help focus agendas.

Scrutiny at Part One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
Lead officer carrying out the screening Michael Lewis Library Service Manager		21.10.2022

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<i>Any internal service area support*</i>		
<i>Any external support**</i> Mrs Lois Dale Rurality and Equalities Specialist	<i>Lois Dale</i>	31 st October 2022

**This refers to other officers within the service area*

***This refers to support external to the service but within the Council, e.g., the Rurality and Equalities Specialist, the Feedback and Insight Team, performance data specialists, Climate Change specialists, and Public Health colleagues*

Sign off at Part One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer's name</i> Michael Lewis	<i>Michael Lewis</i>	21.10.2022
<i>Accountable officer's name</i> Clare Featherstone Head of Culture Leisure and Tourism	<i>Clare Featherstone</i>	05.11.2022

**This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer*

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description
<p>Libraries support us in an everyday way, throughout our lives. Walk into any library and see toddlers, mums and dads at Story Time, studious teenagers and the local job club. And while just about everybody is getting online, around a quarter of us don't have access at home. Whilst anything can happen in a library, something you rarely see is money changing hands. Perhaps the odd overdue charge, a small fee to attend a workshop or borrow a film but overwhelmingly library services are free for all at the point of use.</p> <p>This library strategy outlines our vision and strategic objectives, highlights the importance of libraries within the community, describes our core offer and provides a clear direction for the future of Shropshire Libraries. We will work together with our experienced staff, to build on our offer around Reading, Information, Digital, Health, Learning, Culture and Creativity and business support</p> <p>Shropshire Library services have identified clear Vision, Mission and strategic ambitions that express the way in which our services will develop over the next five years:</p>

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Our **Vision** is for library services in Shropshire to be at the heart of our communities making connections to improve people's lives.

Our **Mission** is to provide physical and digital library services and spaces that inspire people's learning, imagination and discovery, to connect and fulfil an individual's potential, health and well-being; and articulate the value of library services to our communities.

Our new Shropshire library service five-year strategy will: - Re-shape following a set of strategic ambitions based directly on Shropshire Councils Organisational Principles and Cultural Strategy. We will also build on the work developed as part of Library Transformation work highlighting the importance of targeting delivery to support the needs of communities and strengthen the capability of staff to aid in community development.

We will challenge established ways of working to position collaborative resources and services to deliver a provision that maximises impact and future sustainability.

Core community, economic and health and well-being challenges, especially loneliness and isolation in a rural context, coupled with skills out-migration, mean that the need for libraries' participatory role is ever more crucial. These are highlighted in our strategic ambitions to:

- **Improved opportunities for reading, literacy, culture and creativity**

Reading, Literacy, Culture and Creativity are increasingly important parts of library services, we will create relationships that ensure libraries enhance people's lives as a place of discovery, diversity, and interactivity.

- **Improved health and wellbeing of Communities**

We will strengthen our role in the co-delivery of health and wellbeing interventions for people living in the county. Explore opportunities for greater collaboration with Adult Social Care, Health, Children's Services and external partners, including the voluntary sector to deliver commissioned services.

- **Promote Economic Recovery and Growth of the County**

We will support the development of small, medium businesses and entrepreneurs. Deliver digital technology for internal and for loan, business information, free and low-cost access to business intelligence, market research, 1 to1 training innovative spaces and intellectual property support.

- **Communities that are resilient and inclusive**

We will highlight the key role we play in building stronger, resilient and connected communities. We will, with technological support provide services events and pathways that help address health needs, contribute to tackling inequalities in individuals, families and groups across all ages.

- **Library services that are more innovative and sustainable**

We will increase our contribution to Local and National cross cutting aims for reducing social isolation, living independently and addressing the challenges of rurality. Utilise technology to free up staff interventions to work creatively to support an improved quality of life and sustainable communities.

- **People are enabled to discover the digital world**

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We will provide a 21st century service that enables people of all ages to get online, and ensure they have the skills to engage with the digital world safely and effectively. Help to build digital confidence for day-to-day life as part of community and workforce development.

Cross-cutting Principles

- ❖ Articulate our value and develop services to meet community aspirations in line with council priorities, focusing on the most vulnerable and promoting independent living
- ❖ Proactive development and participation into a network of hubs that work best for service delivery, communities and council priorities.
- ❖ Grow our financial foundation by investigating income opportunities to enhance service excellence and supplement core services.
- ❖ Invest in digital technology that supports automation of transactions to offer a comprehensive blended physical and digital delivery.
- ❖ Illustrate professional specialisms and expertise to co-deliver developmental opportunities within the organisation.
- ❖ Coordinate up to date information, customer feedback processes and intelligence gathering to increase our market presence, support innovation and successful collaboration.
- ❖ Optimise our community partnerships to develop collaborative information intelligence gathering that enhances organisational ambitions.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

Shropshire Council have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' who live, work or study in the area (section 7). the intended audience is all those who live in, work in or study in Shropshire, to which we may add those who visit or travel through our county.

There will be additional interest in our strategy and outcomes at local, regional, national and central governmental level with a legal focus from parliamentary committees.

We also have interest from other local authorities, and library, information and cultural institutions, particularly the Arts Council, Libraries Connected, CILIP Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, the Department of Digital Culture Media and Sport as part of the Libraries Taskforce and the Local Government Association (LGA).

Evidence used for screening of the service change

In February 2014, Arts Council England undertook a review of how public libraries and their services contribute to the economy.

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The central challenge in placing a value on libraries contribution to the economy is that they are provided either entirely free at the point of use or for minimal cost. This means that the typical economic valuation such as Gross Value Added (GVA)) does not provide a realistic value.

As the traditional metrics for measuring the economic contribution of an industry are not appropriate in a public library context, researchers use three different hypotheses as to how public libraries contribute to the economy:

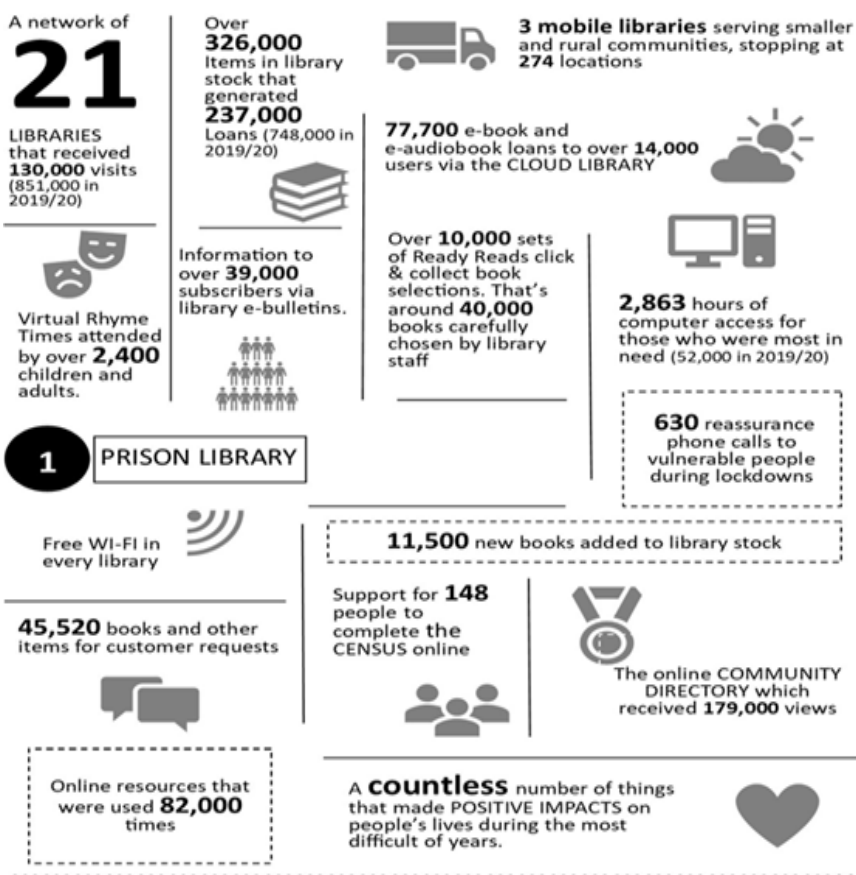
- as economic actors (economic impact)
- as institutions that facilitate the creation of economic value in the local economy (place-based economic development)
- as libraries' output consists overwhelmingly of non-market goods. All the economic valuation methods that have been applied to libraries start from this same challenge. But diverge in terms of:
 - the degree to which they try to compensate for the inability to use consumer spending as an accurate proxy of value
 - the assumptions on where (and how) economic value is created
 - the methods that they deploy to measure the economic contribution of libraries

Financial impact – a simple assertion that libraries are important actors in the local economy: they employ a significant number of people, they purchase goods and services and attract visitors who make other expenditures as part of visit.

Place-based impact – public library buildings can be catalysts for regeneration because of the visitors that they draw to the location and the enhancement to the image of the area.

Benefit-cost analyses and 'total economic value' approaches –are founded upon the premise that libraries deliver a variety of services to individuals that have value even though these are not paid-for (as they bring a range of social, educational and cultural benefits).

Despite services being severely restricted by Covid, in 2020/21 Shropshire Libraries provided.....



Shropshire Library Service will also be developing a new approach to Performance Management, which will be developed over the next 12 months. Building on existing monitoring, the key aim should be to find indicators of impact. These will be aligned with delivery partners and their priorities. This could include measures such as:

- Usage of the Library Services by adults in most deprived areas.
- Usage of the Library Services by young people entitled to free school meals.
- Percentage of Library Service users who have been supported by library staff to access/use library IT services or equipment in the last 12 months and agree/strongly agree that their ability to access and use online resources/services has improved due to support provided by library staff.

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

The draft Library Strategy 2022-2027 sets out a vision, priorities for the coming years and key milestones including the development of a new approach to performance management and actions to develop an implementation plan. To obtain feedback to inform the development of the draft strategy, an engagement plan was designed to include two periods of consultation:

- Stage 1 (six weeks) - open questions to obtain feedback from local people concerning what they would like the strategy to focus on.

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- Stage 2 (twelve weeks) - a copy of the draft strategy to see if any amendments and changes are needed prior to final agreement and sign off.

The Stage 1 consultation survey was designed to find out:

- How libraries are currently being used (to support existing data held by the service)
- Why people use libraries and which library services people most
- What prevents people using library services
- How satisfied library users are with current services
- Whether there are any areas of dissatisfaction and requested improvements
- Changes people would like to see in the future
- What people would like to see included in the next library strategy

Shropshire Council asks key equality and diversity monitoring questions within its public consultations to help identify relevant groups within the community had been adequately included in the consultation and whether the respondents are representative of the wider community. 909 people completed the survey, with a significant number of paper surveys used to ensure that people had a choice of how to respond. The response from local communities during the 6-week period was good with 2,677 comments read and tagged against the main themes.

The overall outcome of the public consultation is that it will be positive across groupings in the community. This is given its breadth of ambition and approach to social inclusion, and the recognition of the rurality of the county, opportunities for digital content to promote inclusion and access across the area, and the optimisation proposed of libraries as free, high-quality, local venues. Given that there are low numbers of under 30s using the service at present, efforts will need to be made to maximise the positive impacts of the proposed Library Strategy for this age grouping.

Stage 2 Consultation

Feedback was gathered through an online survey and stakeholder engagement. The engagement ran for twelve weeks from the 12th of May to the 3rd of August 2022, online, through local newsletters and networks. The survey was designed to better form a vision for a modern library service designed to meet customer needs.

Questions covered:

- What people value most and main priorities.
- Consideration of how libraries need to plan and prepare for the next 5 years.
- Service themes including mobile services, technology and self-service options, partnerships, access and cost effectiveness.

Members of the public and stakeholders were encouraged to comment on the draft Library Strategy using an online survey, available paper copies, with optional email and postal addresses. In addition, engagement was undertaken with key stakeholders including community libraries and staff.

Information was posted on Shropshire Council's Get Involved consultation pages, via the Council's newsroom and the engagement opportunity was advertised very widely through local stakeholder newsletters such as the Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC) and Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly (VCSA). Library staff members also worked hard to raise awareness of the opportunity to provide feedback and local libraries offered paper copies of the survey and support for those

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less confident with online response methods. Information was also shared widely through local networks and partnership meetings.

176 people responded to the online survey. In addition, there were a small number of written responses to consider and some more detailed feedback from group sessions (e.g., workshop notes). Combined, the feedback has produced a valuable insight into the views of local people and stakeholders concerning library services and the Shropshire Library Strategy 2022 to 2027.

The responses to the draft strategy consultation were very helpful and despite some concerns, including fears over lack of library investment, most comments were supportive of the draft strategy. The comments from both staff and library stakeholders highlight commitment to reaching out to the wider community through marketing, the Shropshire Local service or through extending the library offer to support more people. There is recognition that some changes will not be easy to implement within current resources and that partnership working and sharing ideas and good practice will be important.

The Shropshire Libraries Consultation can be found at: [Shropshire Library Strategy 2022 to 2027 | Shropshire Council](#)

Initial equality impact assessment by grouping (Initial health impact assessment is included below)

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through stating this in the relevant column.

Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two ESIIA required</i>	High positive impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Medium positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify) <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>
<u>Age</u> (please include children, young people, young people leaving care, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group e.g., a child or young person for whom there are safeguarding concerns e.g., an older person with disability)			Targeting children and young people, older people who are socially isolated, and volunteering opportunities	
<u>Disability</u> (Please include mental health conditions and syndromes; hidden disabilities including autism and Crohn's disease; physical and sensory disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; and HIV)			Social Prescribing, clinical spaces and health initiatives with physical and	

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			digital accessibility	
<u>Gender re-assignment</u> (Please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact expected to be neutral or positive
<u>Marriage and Civil Partnership</u> (Please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact expected to be neutral or positive
<u>Pregnancy and Maternity</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)			Target carers and Child development in relation to numeracy literacy and play	
<u>Race</u> (Please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, Gypsy, Traveller)		Identify and reach out to our range of diverse communities		
<u>Religion and belief</u> (Please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				Impact expected to be neutral or positive
<u>Sex</u> (This can also be viewed as relating to gender. Please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact expected to be neutral or positive
<u>Sexual Orientation</u> (Please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact expected to be neutral or positive
<u>Other: Social Inclusion</u> (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; households in poverty; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable; people with health inequalities; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families)			Targeting children and young people, older people, those who are socially isolated, job seekers and communities that do not engage with	

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			local authority services or opportunities	
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Initial health and wellbeing impact assessment by category

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have with regard to health and wellbeing, through stating this in the relevant column.

Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Health and wellbeing: individuals and communities in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two HIA required</i>	High positive impact	Medium positive or negative impact	Low positive negative or neutral impact (please specify)
<p>Will the proposal have a <i>direct impact</i> on an individual's health, mental health and wellbeing?</p> <p>For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?</p> <p>.</p>				Impact expected to be neutral or positive
<p>Will the proposal <i>indirectly impact</i> an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?</p> <p>For example, will it affect their ability to be physically active, choose healthy food, reduce drinking and smoking?</p> <p>.</p>			Social Prescribing, clinical spaces and health initiatives with physical and digital accessibility	
<p>Will the policy have a <i>direct impact</i> on the community - social, economic and environmental living conditions that would impact health?</p> <p>For example, would it affect housing, transport, child development, education, employment opportunities, availability of green space or climate change mitigation?</p> <p>.</p>				Impact expected to be neutral or positive
<p>Will there be a likely change in <i>demand</i> for or</p>			Impact expected	

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<p>access to health and social care services?</p> <p>For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health, Local Authority services including Social Services?</p>			<p>to have a long-term positive contribution to the information provision and spaces available for consultation at a community level.</p>	
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Identification of likely impact of the service change in terms of other considerations including climate change and economic or societal impacts

The public sector has seen significant change since the last Library Strategy was produced in 2018; in particular, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, current economic climate and associated budget pressures, economic growth aspirations aiming to significantly increase the population and business base of Shropshire, and the growing need for library information and clinical spaces with activities for health and wellbeing. This is having an impact on the voluntary and private sectors with a greater need to have a clear, evidence-based, plan to target limited resources whilst giving the greatest public benefit. A new approach as part of the organisational principles is being developed with a focus on delivering across multiple agencies and integrating activity across local authority services, partner organisations and business.

Cabinet gave approval in February 2020 to the use of health impact assessments. This proposed Strategy provides an opportunity for utilising the guidance that has been developed for use in this regard, to more fully capture the health and wellbeing benefits expected. It is timely that such approval was sought and given, as the decision was made just before the Covid-19 pandemic reached Shropshire, and as the Council is now seeking to focus and shape local outcomes to improve health and wellbeing across groupings through joint efforts across sectors, utilising emerging national evidence and national learning points. This is particularly so for people in ethnic minority groupings, for men, for people who are obese, and for older people, and for people who whom loneliness and isolation can lead to mental ill health.

Maximising the positive equality impacts in terms of economic benefits includes is-upon joint efforts to influence national policy around social inclusion, including through the Rural Services Network, and joint work through the Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). This has involved collating and submitting evidence to parliamentary select committee inquiries around digital and social inclusion issues, the rural economy, and regional disparities.

Guidance Notes

1. Legal Context

It is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services. It is up to us as an authority to decide what form our equality impact assessment may take. By way of illustration, some local authorities focus more overtly upon human rights; some include safeguarding. It is about what is needed in a local authority's area, in line with local factors such as demography and strategic objectives as well as with the national legislative imperatives.

Carrying out these impact assessments helps us as a public authority to ensure that, as far as possible, we are taking actions to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, and to thus demonstrate that the three equality aims are integral to our decision making processes.

These are: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

These screening assessments for any proposed service change go to Cabinet as part of the committee report, or occasionally direct to Full Council, unless they are ones to do with Licensing, in which case they go to Strategic Licensing Committee.

Service areas would ordinarily carry out a screening assessment, or Part One equality impact assessment. This enables energies to be focussed on review and monitoring and ongoing evidence collection about the positive or negative impacts of a service change upon groupings in the community, and for any adjustments to be considered and made accordingly.

These screening assessments are recommended to be undertaken at timely points in the development and implementation of the proposed service change.

For example, an ESHIA would be a recommended course of action before a consultation. This would draw upon the evidence available at that time, and identify the target audiences, and assess at that initial stage what the likely impact of the service change could be across the Protected Characteristic groupings and our tenth category of Social Inclusion. This ESHIA would set out intended actions to engage with the groupings, particularly those who are historically less likely to engage in public consultation e.g., young people, as otherwise we would not know their specific needs.

A second ESHIA would then be carried out after the consultation, to say what the feedback was, to set out changes proposed because of the feedback, and to say where responses were low and what the plans are to engage with groupings who did not really respond. This ESHIA would also draw more upon actions to review impacts to mitigate the negative and accentuate the positive. Examples of this approach include the Great Outdoors Strategy, and the Economic Growth Strategy 2017-2021

Meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty through carrying out these ESHIAs is very much about using them as an opportunity to demonstrate ongoing engagement across groupings and to show we thus visibly are taking what is called due regard of the needs of people in protected characteristic groupings

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If the screening indicates that there are likely to be significant negative impacts for groupings within the community, the service area would need to carry out a full report, or Part Two assessment. This will enable more evidence to be collected that will help the service area to reach an informed opinion.

In practice, Part Two or Full Screening Assessments have only been recommended twice since 2014, as the ongoing mitigation of negative equality impacts should serve to keep them below the threshold for triggering a Full Screening Assessment. The expectation is that Full Screening Assessments about Health Impacts may occasionally need to be undertaken, but this would be very much the exception rather than the rule.

2. Council Wide and Service Area Policy and Practice on Equality, Social Inclusion and Health

This involves taking an equality and social inclusion approach in planning changes to services, policies, or procedures, including those that may be required by Government.

The decisions that you make when you are planning a service change need to be recorded, to demonstrate that you have thought about the possible equality impacts on communities and to show openness and transparency in your decision-making processes.

This is where Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessments (ESHIA) come in. Where you carry out an ESHIA in your service area, this provides an opportunity to show:

- What evidence you have drawn upon to help you to recommend a strategy or policy or a course of action to Cabinet.
- What target groups and audiences you have worked with to date.
- What actions you will take to mitigate any likely negative impact upon a group or groupings, and enhance any positive effects for a group or groupings; and
- What actions you are planning to review the impact of your planned service change.

The formal template is there not only to help the service area but also to act as a stand-alone for a member of the public to read. The approach helps to identify whether any new or significant changes to services, including policies, procedures, functions, or projects, may have an adverse impact on a particular group of people, and whether the human rights of individuals may be affected.

This assessment encompasses consideration of social inclusion. This is so that we are thinking as carefully and completely as possible about all Shropshire groups and communities, including people in rural areas and people or households that we may describe as vulnerable.

Examples could be households on low incomes or people for whom there are safeguarding concerns, as well as people in what are described as the nine 'protected characteristics' of groups of people in our population, e.g., Age. Another specific vulnerable grouping is veterans and serving members of the Armed Forces, who face challenges about access to Health, to Education, and to Housing.

We demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in these groups and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing

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and implementing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging, or delivering services.

When you are not carrying out an ESHIA, you still need to demonstrate and record that you have considered equality in your decision-making processes. It is up to you what format you choose. You could use a checklist, an explanatory note, or a document setting out our expectations of standards of behaviour, for contractors to read and sign. It may well not be in the public domain like an ESHIA, but you should still be ready for it to be made available.

Both the approaches sit with a manager, and the manager must make the call, and record the decision made on behalf of the Council. Help and guidance is also available via the Commissioning Support Team, either for data, or for policy advice from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist. Here are some examples to get you thinking.

Carry out an ESHIA:

- If you are building or reconfiguring a building.
- If you are planning to reduce or remove a service.
- If you are consulting on a policy or a strategy.
- If you are bringing in a change to a process or procedure that involves other stakeholders and the wider community as well as particular groupings

For example, there may be a planned change to a leisure facility. This gives you the chance to look at things like flexible changing room provision, which will maximise positive impacts for everyone. A specific grouping that would benefit would be people undergoing gender reassignment

Carry out an equality and social inclusion approach:

- If you are setting out how you expect a contractor to behave with regard to equality, where you are commissioning a service or product from them.
- If you are setting out the standards of behaviour that we expect from people who work with vulnerable groupings, such as taxi drivers that we license.
- If you are planning consultation and engagement activity, where we need to collect equality data in ways that will be proportionate and non-intrusive as well as meaningful for the purposes of the consultation itself.
- If you are looking at services provided by others that help the community, where we need to demonstrate a community leadership approach

For example, you may be involved in commissioning a production to tour schools or appear at a local venue, whether a community hall or somewhere like Theatre Severn. The production company should be made aware of our equality policies and our expectation that they will seek to avoid promotion of potentially negative stereotypes. Specific groupings that could be affected include: Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, and Sexual Orientation. There is positive impact to be gained from positive portrayals and use of appropriate and respectful language in regard to these groupings in particular.

3. Council wide and service area policy and practice on health and wellbeing

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This is a relatively new area to record within our overall assessments of impacts, for individual and for communities, and as such we are asking service area leads to consider health and wellbeing impacts, much as they have been doing during 2020-2021, and to look at these in the context of direct and indirect impacts for individuals and for communities. A better understanding across the Council of these impacts will also better enable the Public Health colleagues to prioritise activities to reduce health inequalities in ways that are evidence based and that link effectively with equality impact considerations and climate change mitigation.

Health in All Policies – Health Impact Assessment

Health in All Policies is an upstream approach for health and wellbeing promotion and prevention, and to reduce health inequalities. The Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is the supporting mechanism

- Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is the technical name for a common-sense idea. It is a process that considers the wider effects of local policies, strategies and initiatives and how they, in turn, may affect people's health and wellbeing.
- Health Impact Assessment is a means of assessing both the positive and negative health impacts of a policy. It is also a means of developing good evidence-based policy and strategy using a structured process to review the impact.
- A Health Impact Assessment seeks to determine how to maximise health benefits and reduce health inequalities. It identifies any unintended health consequences. These consequences may support policy and strategy or may lead to suggestions for improvements.
- An agreed framework will set out a clear pathway through which a policy or strategy can be assessed and impacts with outcomes identified. It also sets out the support mechanisms for maximising health benefits.

The embedding of a Health in All Policies approach will support Shropshire Council through evidence-based practice and a whole systems approach, in achieving our corporate and partnership strategic priorities. This will assist the Council and partners in promoting, enabling and sustaining the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities whilst reducing health inequalities.

Individuals

Will the proposal have a *direct impact* on health, mental health and wellbeing?

For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?

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Will the proposal directly affect an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?

This could include the following: their ability to be physically active e.g., being able to use a cycle route; to access food more easily; to change lifestyle in ways that are of positive impact for their health.

An example of this could be that you may be involved in proposals for the establishment of safer walking and cycling routes (e.g., green highways), and changes to public transport that could encourage people away from car usage. and increase the number of journeys that they make on public transport, by foot or on bicycle or scooter. This could improve lives.

Will the proposal *indirectly impact* an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?

This could include the following: their ability to access local facilities e.g., to access food more easily, or to access a means of mobility to local services and amenities? (e.g. change to bus route)

Similarly, to the above, an example of this could be that you may be involved in proposals for the establishment of safer walking and cycling routes (e.g., pedestrianisation of town centres), and changes to public transport that could encourage people away from car usage and increase the number of journeys that they make on public transport, by foot or on bicycle or scooter. This could improve their health and wellbeing.

Communities

Will the proposal directly or indirectly affect the physical health, mental health, and wellbeing of the wider community?

A *direct impact* could include either the causing of ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation, or the promotion of better health.

An example of this could be that safer walking and cycling routes could help the wider community, as more people across groupings may be encouraged to walk more, and as there will be reductions in emission leading to better air quality.

An *indirect impact* could mean that a service change could indirectly affect living and working conditions and therefore the health and wellbeing of the wider community.

An example of this could be an increase in the availability of warm homes would improve the quality of the housing offer in Shropshire and reduce the costs for households of having a warm home in Shropshire. Often a health promoting approach also supports our agenda to reduce the level of Carbon Dioxide emissions and to reduce the impact of climate change.

Please record whether at this stage you consider the proposed service change to have a direct or an indirect impact upon communities.

Demand

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Will there be a change in demand for or access to health, local authority and social care services?

For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health and Social Services?

An example of this could be a new housing development in an area would affect demand for primary care and local authority facilities and services in that location and surrounding areas. If the housing development does not factor in consideration of availability of green space and safety within the public realm, further down the line there could be an increased demand upon health and social care services because of the lack of opportunities for physical recreation, and reluctance of some groupings to venture outside if they do not perceive it to be safe.

For further information on the use of ESHIAs: please contact your head of service or contact Mrs Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist and Council policy support on equality, via telephone 01743 258528, or email lois.dale@shropshire.gov.uk.

For further guidance on public health policy considerations: please contact Amanda Cheeseman Development Officer in Public Health, via telephone 01743 253164 or email amanda.cheeseman@shropshire.gov.uk