

Shropshire Council
Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)
Stage One Screening Record 2024

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change
<i>Future Options for Shropshire Schools Library Service</i>

Name of the officer carrying out the screening
<i>Dr Sarah Browne</i>

Decision, review, and monitoring

Decision	Yes	No
Initial (Stage One) ESHIA Only?	YES	
Proceed to Stage Two Full ESHIA or HIA (part two) Report?		NO

If completion of a Stage One screening assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes above, and complete both part A and part B of of this template. If a Full or Stage 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 likely negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations

In restructuring and relaunching the Schools Library Service offer (Option 2), the Council is focused on ensuring the service retains the elements most valued by schools. The results of the school and public consultations conducted in May and June 2024 indicate that topic collections, artefact collections and group reading sets were of most value to staff and children. These elements have all been retained. The school consultation indicated that a proposed increase of 40% would be unaffordable: the service has taken this into consideration and propose to offer a range of fixed-fee packages that will allow schools to choose their level of engagement in-line with affordability. The public consultation response illustrated a desire for the library service to continue to serve isolated, rural communities in particular: the service has kept free delivery of resources as part of its core offer in recognition that this is a key element to improve inclusion for rurally isolated schools.

The restructuring of the core offer has allowed for the service to consider how it promotes and markets its topic collections and artefacts. Topic collections have been regrouped by key stage and topics are now more inclusive, for example collections relating to Black history now include resources on the African diasporic

experience. In reconsidering the artefact collections, adding an artefact plus experience to the service's offer focuses on fostering a broader understanding and appreciation of culture by allowing children and young people to experience a more diverse approach to a curriculum topic. This offer aligns appropriately to topics directly related to some protected characteristics (e.g. race and religion or belief) and packages will be useful tools to foster appreciation of – for example – Black history month, Holocaust Memorial Day.

The pricing structure has been considered in detail, particularly mindful of the budget pressures on schools, allowing all schools to engage with the service based on affordability. Removal of the subscription fee allows for more schools to engage on a 'pay-as-you-go' basis: it is anticipated that this will help schools purchase single packages that will enhance curriculum delivery for children.

Overall, therefore, if Option 2 for relaunching and restructure of the service is adopted, there is an anticipated medium positive impact for children and young people, their parents and carers and family members, and all those with whom they come into contact in educational settings. Whilst the focus will be upon the Protected Characteristic grouping of Age as defined in the Equality Act 2010, there will be positive anticipated equality impacts across other groupings due to intersectionality between these. E.g., children with Social Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH), who may be in the Disability grouping, children of different religions or beliefs, learning about different cultures and heritage, and those we may regard as vulnerable, such as children and young people either in care or leaving care.

In terms of the additional grouping of Social Inclusion, where the Council seeks to give due regard to household circumstances, positive impact is anticipated for children and young people in rural communities, low-income households, and children for whom English is not their first language including refugee families.

Actions to mitigate likely negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of health and wellbeing considerations

The proposed restructure is likely to have a neutral impact on the direct health and wellbeing of individuals. However, the library service offers a range of resources which are focused on learning more about the body, mental and physical health, and healthy eating. These will be promoted accordingly and are likely to have a medium positive impact on children's understanding of how they can live a healthy life. Similarly, the artefact plus offer includes physical activities which promote collaboration, creativity, imagination, and team working.

There are [recorded health benefits to reading](#) - including reducing stress, improving memory and concentration, developing empathy, and in the instance of book or reading groups – opportunities to reduce social isolation. Promotion of pre-existing resources can be utilised in this instance, including membership to local libraries to encourage these outcomes.

Whilst the delivery service has been retained in order to continue to serve rural communities, it has been reduced to three days per week which will reduce carbon emissions.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations

Following the public consultations, initial conversations with a small group of school leaders have taken place. Their feedback has informed much of the new offer. In the winter term of 2024, the service will continue to engage with these stakeholders in order to ensure that when the new offer is launched (1st January 2025), it meets the needs of children in those respective communities.

Furthermore, on relaunch, the service will continue these conversations in order to respond to specific need and assist schools in transitioning to a model that can benefit all children and young people. This will help to mitigate any potential negative impact schools may perceive in moving to a different pricing structure.

Given the potential positive equality and health and wellbeing impact identified by head teachers, and through public consultation, if Option 2 for restructure and relaunch is adopted efforts may usefully be directed at achieving such impacts and at keeping these under review in order to maximise them wherever possible.

The service will implement a culture of listening to – and working with – stakeholders. This will be done through the conversations outlined above alongside requesting more formal feedback via surveys, particularly following a school purchasing a new package.

A formal review of the service will take place in late autumn term 2024/spring term 2025 with a view to planning for 2025/26. At this point, a further reduction in operating hours for the service may be required and a review of the impact of this will be completed, if necessary, based on school buy-in.

Associated ESHIAs

There are no associated ESHIAs related to these proposals.

This assessment aligns with all four corporate priorities of the Shropshire Plan, particularly Health People. It also aligns with the Vibrant Shropshire Cultural Compact ESHIA.

Actions to mitigate likely negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor the overall impacts with regard to climate change impacts and with regard to economic and societal impacts

Climate change



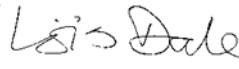
Reduction of the delivery service to three days per week will contribute positively to climate and sustainability targets. Moving to alternative premises will also impact positively on the service's carbon footprint.

Economic and societal/wider community

The restructure of the schools library service has maintained valued elements of its offer in order to continue to serve the wider community. Ongoing conversations with stakeholders will ensure that the new offer is commensurate with the affordability of school budgets. The new offer also allows for internal cost savings to be made whilst maintaining current staffing levels and moving to self-sustainability. The service will market its relaunch appropriately so that schools and the wider community can see the benefits of the enhanced educational and cultural offer.

There are no immediate impacts for the workforce although this will be considered, and a further impact assessment completed should a reduction in service need to be considered in preparation for the 25/26 financial year.


Scrutiny at Stage One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer for the proposed service change</i>		08/08/2024
<i>Officer carrying out the screening</i>		08/08/2024
<i>Any other internal service area support*</i>		
<i>Any external support**</i> Mrs Lois Dale Rurality and Equalities Specialist		02/09/2024

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

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

Sign off at Stage One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer's name</i>		08/08/2024
<i>Service manager's name</i>		08/08/2024

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

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description
<p>The aim of the service change is to ensure financial stability for the schools library service. A number of options have been explored, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Closure of the service- Restructure/relaunch of the service- Reduction in service- Outsourcing/subsuming elements of the service <p>The recommendation is to restructure and relaunch the service (option 2) with a view to continuing to monitor its financial stability and – if required – making reductions in the next financial year.</p> <p>In restructuring its offer, the service is endeavouring to work more closely with schools, providing them with the option to buy into the service in a way that is affordable and adaptable, but ever mindful of the need for internal fiscal responsibility. The service change will allow for promotion of some of the most valued assets of the library service, enhancing their use and purpose further to provide improved cultural opportunities for children and young people.</p> <p>The new offer responds to the outcomes of the school and public consultations by retaining the service and specifically retaining the most valued aspects of the service as outlined in both consultations. The service change seeks to retain and increase school buy-in by offering more affordable, pay-as-you-go packages in the</p>

hope that more children and young people throughout Shropshire can access these valuable resources.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

Children and Young People in Shropshire, teachers, governors, and parents. The service is also offered to schools in Telford and Wrekin and independent schools.

Evidence used for screening of the service change

At the Cabinet meeting on the 17th April 2024, it was decided to launch a consultation regarding the future of the Service, in a follow-on action arising from adoption of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and for this to then be reported back to a subsequent Cabinet meeting.

Public and school Consultations sought feedback on a range of factors impacting the viability of the service, alongside outlining potential increased costs and requesting views on the impact of closure of the service. These closed on 7th June 2024. The surveys received 151 public responses and 57 schools responded. Full reports are attached in appendices A and B respectively.

Of the 57 schools that responded, 79% were current subscribers to the service. The survey highlighted that the most valued resources offered by the service were topic loans, artefact loans and reading set loans.

69% of the schools that responded to specific questions regarding proposed increased costs indicated they would be willing to pay more to keep the service. Illustrative subscription increases were proposed. The consultation report attached to 11 September 2024 Cabinet report summarises the budgetary pressures experienced by schools and responses indicate an acceptable price rise would be in the region of 10-20%.

The public response to the consultation highlighted the value of the service to schools and communities. As with the school responses, most respondents felt that a blanket 40% increase on subscription costs would be unacceptable.

Research was also carried out into comparator practice elsewhere, e.g. Nottinghamshire Music Hub, with consideration also given to learning from the operation of Shropshire Music Service.

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

As above in addition to informal consultations with a group of headteachers.

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

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 locally identified in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Stage Two ESHIA required</i>	High positive impact <i>Stage One ESHIA required</i>	Medium positive or negative impact <i>Stage One ESHIA required</i>	Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify) <i>Stage One ESHIA 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 a disability)			Medium positive impact for children and young people.	
<u>Disability</u> (please include cancer; HIV/AIDS; learning disabilities; mental health conditions and syndromes; multiple sclerosis; neurodiverse conditions such as autism; hidden disabilities such as Crohn's disease; physical and/or sensory disabilities or impairments)			Medium positive impact for children with additional learning needs.	
<u>Gender re-assignment</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Low positive impact.
<u>Marriage and Civil Partnership</u> (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Neutral
<u>Pregnancy and Maternity</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Neutral

<u>Race</u> (please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller)			Medium positive impact through introduction of artefact plus offer.	
<u>Religion or Belief</u> (please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Veganism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)			Medium positive impact through introduction of artefact plus offer.	
<u>Sex</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Low positive impact.
<u>Sexual Orientation</u> (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				Low positive impact.
<u>Other: Social Inclusion</u> (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; households in poverty or on low incomes; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable; people with health inequalities; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities)			Medium positive impact for rural communities, low-income households, children for whom English is not their first language.	
<u>Other: Veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families</u>			Medium positive impact.	
<u>Other: Young people leaving care</u>			Medium positive impact.	

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>				Neutral.
<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>				Low positive impact. Enhanced opportunities for education, including individual health and wellbeing.
<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>			Medium positive impact. Reduction of carbon footprint and enhanced opportunities for education.	
<p>Will there be a likely change in <i>demand</i> for or access to health and social care services?</p> <p>For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health,</p>				Neutral.

Local Authority services including Social Services?				
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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 considered to be 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 Stage 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, a Stage One 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 national Protected Characteristic groupings and our additional local categories. This ESHIA would set out intended actions to engage with the groupings, particularly those who are historically less likely to engage in public consultation eg young people, as otherwise we would not know their specific needs.

A second Stage One ESHIA would then be carried out after the consultation, to say what the feedback was, to set out changes proposed as a result 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 in order to mitigate the negative and accentuate the positive.

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 thus visibly show we are taking what is called 'due regard' of the needs of people in Protected Characteristic groupings.

If the screening indicates that there are likely to be high negative impacts for groupings within the community, the service area would need to take advice on whether or not to carry out a full report, or Stage Two assessment. This is resource intensive but will enable more evidence to be collected that will help the service area to reach an informed opinion.

In practice, Stage 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 in regard to 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 or to Strategic Licensing Committee.
- What target groups and audiences you have worked with to date.
- What actions you will take in order to mitigate any likely negative impact upon a group or groupings, and enhance any likely positive effects for a group or groupings; and
- What actions you are planning to monitor and 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 or not 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.

There are nine Protected Characteristic groupings defined in the Equality Act 2010. The full list of groupings is: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion or Belief; Sex; and Sexual Orientation.

There is also intersectionality between these. Eg a young person with a disability would be in the groupings of Age and Disability, and if they described themselves as having a faith they would then also be in the grouping of Religion or Belief. 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 and implementing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging, or delivering services.

For the individuals and groupings who may be affected, ask yourself what impact do you think is likely and what actions will you currently anticipate taking, to mitigate or enhance likely impact of the service change? If you are reducing a service, for example, there may be further use you could make of awareness raising through social media and other channels to reach more people who may be affected.

Social inclusion is then a wider additional local category we use in Shropshire, in order to help us to go beyond the equality legislation in also considering impacts for individuals and households with regard to the circumstances in which they may find themselves across their life stages. This could be households on low incomes, or households facing challenges in accessing services, such as households in rural areas, and veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families, or people that we might consider to be vulnerable, such as young people leaving care or refugee families.

Please note that the armed forces are now a grouping to whom we are required to give due regard under recent Armed Forces legislation, although in practice we have been doing so for a number of years now.

We are now also identifying care leavers as a distinct separate local grouping due to their circumstances as vulnerable individuals.

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 something that is 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 has to make the call, and record the decision made on behalf of the Council.

Carry out an ESHIA:

- If you are building or reconfiguring a building.
- If you are planning to reduce or remove or reconfigure 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

Carry out and record your 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

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

This is a relatively new area to record within our overall assessments of impacts, for which we are asking service area leads to consider health and wellbeing impacts, 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 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?

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 well being.

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 well being 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

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 as a result 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 advice: please contact
Lois Dale via email lois.dale@shropshire.gov.uk, or
Phil Northfield via email Phillip.Northfield@shropshire.gov.uk***