

Shropshire Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA)

Contextual Notes 2014

The What and the Why:

The Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) tool replaces the Equality Impact Needs Assessment (EINA) tool previously in use by Shropshire Council. It is a tool to help us 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.

What we are now doing is broadening out such assessments to consider social inclusion. This is so that we are thinking as carefully and completely as possible about all groups and communities in Shropshire, including people in rural areas and people we may describe as vulnerable, as well as people in what are described as the nine 'protected characteristics' of groups of people in our population, eg Age, Gender Reassignment. 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.

It is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services, such as through a new policy or a change in procedure. Carrying out ESIIAs 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 to have what is called *due regard* to the three equality aims in our decision making processes. These are: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

The How:

The assessment comprised the screening part – Part One. The screening indicated that a full report was not required.

Screening (Part One) enables energies to be focussed on the service changes for which there are potentially important equalities and human rights implications. The screening indicated that the impact is likely to be positive overall, have a positive impact on certain groups of people and therefore a full report is not required. Energies instead will focus on review and monitoring and ongoing evidence collection, enabling incremental improvements and adjustments that will lead to overall positive impacts for all groups in Shropshire.

A **full report (Part Two)** needs to be carried out where screening indicates that there are considered to be or likely to be significant negative impacts for certain groups of people, and/or

APPENDIX 3

where there are human rights implications. The initial screening showed that a full report was not required in this case.

Shropshire Council Part 1 ESIIA: initial screening and assessment

Please note: prompt questions and guidance within boxes are in italics. You are welcome to type over them when completing this form. Please extend the boxes if you need more space for your commentary.

Name of service change

The redesign of Shifnal Library, Customer Service Point and library car park

Aims of the service change and description

Please use this box to describe the aims and purpose of the service change. Include any background that you think is helpful for someone reading this ESIIA, eg if there is a new policy, why is it being introduced? If there is a change to an existing service, what are the reasons for this? For example, a redesign and rationalisation of Customer Service Points may seek to concentrate provision strategically on areas where there is a mix of population density and customer need. Further details giving context could also be helpful here.

The library and customer service point redesign proposes to provide a service that embraces different customer delivery models; through face to face contact, digital and virtually, individual interviews and conversations through activities and events and through an outreach programme targeted to meet council outcomes for specific groups. Shropshire Council is aiming to deliver library and customer service point services by working in partnership with communities so that tailored services can be developed to support the needs of people in their communities and also those who may have specific needs that affect their access to library services.

Within our Customer Service Points we understand the importance of a face to face support to many of our customers who may not be able to use alternative means of doing business such as over the telephone or online or who need help to use these alternatives. We want to make sure that people are still able to get the direct help they need, when they need it and we therefore propose working in partnership with other providers of help and advice in localities, specifically for Shifnal, the Town Council and the Library Service. By doing this, people will be able to access a much wider range of help and services than the Council currently offers.

In addition to direct face to face help, we will install a telephone and a computer both of which will be free to use so that our customers have an extended range of ways to contact us and conduct business with Shropshire Council.

In Shifnal the proposal is for the services to remain at the present location in Broadway, Shifnal and to transfer the day to day management of the services to Shifnal Town Council with on-going professional support from Shropshire Libraries and Customer Service Point staff. Within the proposals the opening hours for the Library and Customer Service Point will remain unchanged, with the potential for some increase in opening hours in the future.

This approach is part of a Shropshire wide strategy to provide library and customer services in smaller towns and villages in partnership with parish and town councils, voluntary and community groups.

All proposed changes will be subject to full formal public consultation.

The Council's 22 libraries, 4 mobile services and the virtual library and library outreach service is the means by which the council aims to meet its duties under the Public Libraries & Museums Act and its equality duty.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

This box relates to stakeholders, people concerned, interested parties, etc. For example, if the change will affect people receiving adult social care services and their families and carers, please say so here. If the change will affect the whole population, please say so here. If the change will affect cross-border working, for example by the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), please mention such partnerships as well.

The proposals are likely to have a positive impact on people who want to use Shifnal Library, Customer Service Point and Town Council services. The Library remains in the same physical location, providing the same services as its current model. Access to customer Services will be extended and physical access to Parish Council services will be improved due to its move to a more visible and accessible location. There is an advantage for people to have access to several services under one roof.

Based on the evidence we have to date, we think that the particular groups most likely to be affected by the proposed approach for library service provision are:-

Older people with mobility difficulties may benefit from having several services under one roof and to some degree those with learning disabilities and mental health related issues. These factors become significant when accessibility factors are added to this. This may apply for those living in isolated rural areas or those without access to a car or unable to travel easily on public transport.

Children will be positively affected by the proposals which retains the Library in the same central location in the town. This is particularly relevant for families without access to a car or convenient public transport. This may be the case for families with lone parents. Without easy access to the Library in the town, there may be issues relating to costs of getting to other libraries, particularly for children from low-income families for whom libraries may be vital source of reading.

Library services that will be retained in Shifnal have been developed to ensure inclusion and access for those who may in some way may find access difficult. They are intended to help people participate fully and to assist in the provision of equality of opportunity.

For people with visual impairment, we subscribe to RNIB library services which provides audio books directly to people on subscription paid for by Shropshire Council. Large print books and audio books on CD are also available in our libraries. Access software also makes it easier for people with visual impairments to use our computers. Concessionary membership

APPENDIX 3

for people with disabilities means that they don't pay to request books or borrow DVDs or audio books.

For people with mental health related issues: in partnership with the health service we provide 'Books on Prescription', which are self-help books prescribed by GPs for free loan from libraries.

For people with mobility disabilities who prefer to stay at home but still want library books we have a pool of volunteers to take books to them as part of our housebound library service. Residents in care homes can also borrow items for their residents.

For BME communities and people speaking other languages, we provide books, in languages other than English as well as European languages.

For the LGBT community, the Library Stock Policy ensures that books reflecting the experiences of the LGBT community are available.

For young children and families, we provide rhyme time sessions, story times and facilitate the delivery of the national Bookstart programme locally. We work with family learning tutors to provide Quick Read books for individuals and groups. The Library helps to support children's school work whether this is for internet access or help with finding information. The Summer Reading Challenge for 4-11 year olds helps to sustain children's reading ages.

For parents and carers, the library offers books and internet access to enable them to find help and advice, apply for jobs, housing and school places. We provide books on parenting and health, some of which are selected in partnership with the local NHS and works closely to tailor family support for lone parents and others.

Physical access to the Shifnal library building is good with single storey access and wide doorways for wheelchairs and pushchairs and automatic doors.

Staff undertake training around disability awareness.

The development of digital library services such as e-books, e-magazines and e-audio may make it easier for some people to use library services, for example those who are not physically able to access Shifnal Library or cannot because of caring responsibilities.

In the proposal Shifnal Library will improve its role in acting as a 'front door' or portal to put people in connection with other public services and information and this may have a positive effect on people who share protected characteristics providing another avenue of access to information or other services.

In this respect support will be provided over extended opening hours for Customer Services (compared to the existing restricted Customer Service Point opening hours) for local residents to access Shropshire Council services via a freephone facility or to do their business on-line via dedicated public computer. Library staff will be on hand to for anyone who needs help.

In developing its proposals the council has had regard to the public sector equality duty and will undertake research based analysis of need, assessed library and customer service point use data and consider existing consultation and feedback from library users and communities.

Evidence used for screening of the service change

This box relates to use made of evidence in developing the change to the service. This could be Census 2011 analyses, community demographic profiles, results of surveys, or previously collected evidence material. For example, if the change relates to a stage of county-wide Site Allocation and Management of Development consultation process, the evidence used would include data collected at previous stages and in development and adoption of the Local Plan. If the evidence is on the Council website, hyperlinks could usefully be inserted here. Please comment on the use of evidence, and whether as a consequence there were any adjustments to what was originally proposed.

The Shropshire Library and Customer Service Point services holds data on all of the existing users, including their geographical location and range of services they use. On a countywide basis this allows assessments to be made on where and how users access services.

In Shifnal the catchment area for users is mainly from within the Town of Shifnal, but also has significant spread into the rural hinterland within an 8 mile radius of the town.

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

This box relates to use made of any specific consultation with the audiences for the service. This could be online surveys, use of social media, one off focus groups, events, drop-in sessions, etc. Please comment on the headline results, and whether as a consequence there were any adjustments to what was originally proposed.

As part of this process a 6 week public consultation took place outlining the proposed changes to the library and other services delivered at Shifnal Library. This was available online via the Shropshire Council website, and paper copies were available to complete within the library. The consultation ran from 14th September to 26th October.

Existing users of the library with an email address were contacted directly to comment on the proposals.

Press releases featured in the local press to make people aware of the consultation and ask them to give their views.

A library drop in event took place on 14th October from 5pm-7pm.

The neighbouring Parish Council at Sheriffhales was notified.

The results have been collated and will be evaluated by Shropshire Council and Shifnal Town Council. Should any equality issues be identified in this consultation these can be assessed and acted on ahead of any further work on the transfer taking place.

Potential impact on Protected Characteristic groups and on social inclusion

Guidance notes on how to carry out the initial assessment

Using the results of evidence gathering and specific consultation and engagement, please consider how the service change as proposed may affect people within the nine Protected Characteristic groups and people at risk of social exclusion.

1. Have the intended audiences and target groups been consulted about:
 - their current needs and aspirations and what is important to them;
 - the potential impact of this service change on them, whether positive or negative, intended or unintended;
 - the potential barriers they may face.
2. If the intended audience and target groups have not been consulted directly, have representatives been consulted, or people with specialist knowledge, or research explored?
3. Have other stakeholder groups and secondary groups, for example carers of service users, been explored in terms of potential unintended impacts?
4. Are there systems set up to:
 - monitor the impact, positive or negative, intended or intended, for all the different groups;
 - enable open feedback and suggestions from a variety of audiences through a variety of methods.
5. Are there any Human Rights implications? For example, is there a breach of one or more of the human rights of an individual or group?
6. Will the service change as proposed have a positive or negative impact on fostering good relations?
7. Will the service change as proposed have a positive or negative impact on social inclusion?

Guidance on what a negative impact might look like

High Negative	Significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place or no evidence available: urgent need for consultation with customers, general public, workforce
Medium Negative	Some potential impact, some mitigating measures in place but no evidence available how effective they are: would be beneficial to consult with customers, general public, workforce
Low Negative	Almost bordering on non-relevance to the ESIIA process (heavily legislation led, very little discretion can be exercised, limited public facing aspect, national policy affecting degree of local impact possible)

Initial assessment for each group

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

Protected Characteristic groups and other groups 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 or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>
Age (please include children, young people, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group eg young person with disability)				√
Disability (please include: mental health conditions and syndromes including autism; physical disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; HIV)				√
Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				√
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				√
Pregnancy & Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				√
Race (please include: ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, gypsy, traveller)				√
Religion and belief (please include: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Non conformists; Rastafarianism; Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				√
Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				√
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				√
Other: Social Inclusion (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers;				√

APPENDIX 3

rural communities; people you consider to be vulnerable)				
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Decision, review and monitoring

Decision	Yes	No
Part One ESIIA Only?	√	
Proceed to Part Two Full Report?		√

If Part One, please now use the boxes below and sign off at the foot of the page. If Part Two, please move on to the full report stage.

Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change
<p><i>Check: for the groups affected, what actions will you now take to mitigate or enhance impact of the service change? For example, if you are reducing a service there may be further use you could make of publicity and awareness raising through social media and other channels to reach more people who may be affected.</i></p> <p>New and existing customers will be kept up to date with library and Customer Service Point developments.</p>

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change
<p><i>Check: what arrangements will you have in place to continue to collect evidence and data and to continue to engage with all groups who may be affected by the service change, including the intended audiences? For example, customer feedback and wider community engagement opportunities, including involvement of elected Shropshire Council councillors for a locality.</i></p> <p>A three year SLA will be regularly monitored to ensure that Shifnal Town Council fulfil their obligations in the running of the library service. Shifnal Town Council will ensure that data is collected to feed into the Library Service and Customer Services performance measures; for example about the number of visits to the library, book loans, active borrowers, attendance at events and computer use.</p> <p>The Library will continue to take part in any customer surveys undertaken by the Library and Customer Service Point Service.</p> <p>Customers will continue to be encouraged to make comments and give feedback about the service through Shifnal Town Council and Shropshire Council’s Comments and Complaints system.</p>

Scrutiny at Part One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer carrying out the screening</i>		
<i>Any internal support</i>		
<i>Any external support</i>		
<i>Head of service</i>		

Sign off at Part One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer's name</i>		
<i>Head of service's name</i>		

