



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) of Budget Proposals

Name of Budget Saving	Libraries Service – Digitally led transformation.
Department and service area	Customer and Housing Services
Completion Date	4 January, 2018
Lead officer	Kevin Anderson

Aims and Objectives

1. Does the proposed budget saving affect people? Yes ☒ No ☐

2. What is/are the reason(s) for your proposed budget saving?

As a result of government funding cuts, the Midlothian Council budget gap will increase in future years and the Council needs to cut costs and change our service design and delivery model to make sure that we are able to deal with the future demands of a growing and ageing population.

The current review of libraries and customer services has already saved £120,000 and needs to deliver further savings to meet a target of £350,000 by 2018.

In the current Customer Services Review we are considering changes to library opening hours, introducing more electronic 'self-service' facilities and customer service hubs and continuing the channel shift to online services.

There is a need to focus driving more customer activity onto the digital platform. This will entail developing new models by working in close partnership with local communities, referred to as “co-production”, which will be critical to achieving successful and sustainable transformation.

There may be a potential in some localities to operate as community hubs in partnership with voluntary services and at lower costs as a result of the current Customer Services Review or make further savings to address areas of viable, alternative models for the Library Service.

3. Impact

Which of the protected characteristics* will the proposed budget saving have an impact upon?

Equality Target Group*	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Relevant evidence/ information
Age			No current evidence from the customer contact data gathered.
Disability			No current evidence from the customer contact data gathered.
Gender Reassignment			No current evidence from the customer contact data gathered.
Marriage & Civil Partnership			No current evidence from the customer contact data gathered.
Pregnancy and maternity			No current evidence from the customer contact data gathered.
Race		Hate crime is monitored	

Religion or Belief		Hate crime is monitored	
Sex		Gender based violence is monitored	
Sexual Orientation		Hate crime is monitored	

4. How will the implementation of the proposed budget saving be communicated to those affected by any changes?

The *Shaping our Future* public consultation exercise in 2016 detailed the reshaping service delivery by working with customers and partners to provide essential services to those communities in greatest need by making best use of customer insight to improve opportunities for customers to access public services, guidance and support.

This proposal is a substantial withdrawal to a core statutory obligation in the service.

The Library Service has been changing to a proposed hub model of local services, digital access and creativity in the current 9 libraries while making these efficiencies, but in making any extra saving target the service could rationalise instead from the present universal service to core centres, as the proposed savings are currently based on providing only 1 Midlothian Central Library and to withdraw from 1 x mobile library (a shared service with ELC) and 9 branch libraries.

There has been a significant response against the proposals in a number of submissions and in the public engagement sessions for the budget review in 2018/19, *“Addressing the Financial Challenge to 2021/22”*.

Information published by Midlothian Council can be provided on request in many of the community languages and also in large print, Braille, audio tape or BSL. For more information, please contact the Equality , Diversity & Human Rights Officer on 0131 271 3658 or equalities@midlothian.gov.uk

5. How will you monitor the impact of the changes proposed? When is the budget due to be reviewed?

The budget review in 2018/19 is *“Addressing the Financial Challenge to 2021/22”*.

Opposition to the proposal to shut libraries is reflected in the number of comments (121),

strength of feeling expressed in comments; and number of signatories to external petitions (2000+ signatories as at 8 December 2017). Also a number of concerns and questions on library closures were raised at all 5 of the community consultation meetings and was a key concern at the meetings held with local school students. There have also been responses from national bodies against the proposals. Submissions have been received from the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland and the Scottish Library & Information Council.

EQIA outcomes for Race, Sex, Sexual Orientation and Religion/Belief are monitored.

6. Please use the space below to detail any other matters arising from the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process.

Any staffing review would be conducted through the Organisational Change Policy and procedure to consult with employees scoped into the service and management reviews. Informal briefings and staff meetings have been held to discuss the budget proposals.

Further formal consultation with affected staff and representative unions would take place.