

Equality & Health Impact Assessment (EHIA)

Title of activity:	Library Consultation
Lead officer:	Guy Selfe, Head of Culture, Leisure, Heritage and Libraries, living Well, People
Approved by:	Patrick Odling-Smee, Director of Living Well, People
Version Number	V0.1
Date and Key Changes Made	13 December 2024
Scheduled date for next review:	30 April 2025

Did you seek advice from the Corporate Policy & Legal?	Yes
Did you seek advice from the Public Health team?	Yes
Does the EHIA contain any confidential or exempt information that would prevent you publishing it on the Council's website? See Publishing Checklist.	No

**Please submit the completed form via e-mail to READI@havering.gov.uk
Thank you.**

1. Equality Health Impact Assessment Checklist

Please complete the following checklist to determine whether or not you will need to complete an EHIA and ensure you keep this section for your audit trail. If you have any questions, please contact READI@havering.gov.uk for advice from either the Corporate Diversity or Public Health teams. Please refer to [this Guidance](#) on how to complete this form.

About your activity

1	Title of activity	Library Consultation – Proposed closure of three branch libraries		
2	Type of activity	Change in service provision		
3	Scope of activity	The recent Library consultation held over a period of 12 weeks from 10 May 2024 to 2 August 2024 included proposals to close up to four branch libraries in order to make a financial saving of £300,000.		
4a	Are you changing, introducing a new, or removing a service, policy, strategy or function?	Yes	<p>If the answer to <u>either</u> of these questions is 'YES' Continue to question 5.</p> <p>If the answer to <u>all</u> of the questions (4a, 4b & 4c) is 'NO' Go to question 6.</p>	
4b	Does this activity have the potential to impact (either positively or negatively) upon people from different backgrounds?	Yes		
4c	Does the activity have the potential to impact (either positively or negatively) upon any factors which determine people's health and wellbeing?	Yes / No		
5	If you answered YES:	Please complete the EHIA in Section 2 of this document. Please see Appendix 1 for Guidance.		
6	If you answered NO:	N/A		

Completed by:	Guy Selfe, Head of Culture. Leisure, Heritage and Libraries, Living Well, People
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Date:	13/12/2024
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2. The EHIA – How will the strategy, policy, plan, procedure and/or service impact on people?

Background/context:

1. The Council has a statutory responsibility (a duty set out by law) to provide a local library service in accordance with the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. The Act requires each local authority to provide a library service that is “comprehensive and efficient for those that live, work or study in the area”. It is for local decision how the library service best meets this requirement practically, including how many libraries there are, where they are, when they are open and what each one offers.

2. The Libraries Taskforce definition is ‘A comprehensive service cannot mean that every resident lives close to a library. This has never been the case. Comprehensive has therefore been taken to mean delivering a service that is accessible to all residents using reasonable means, including digital technologies. An efficient service must make the best use of the assets available in order to meet its core objectives and vision, recognising the constraints on council resources. Decisions about the Service must be embedded within a clear strategic framework which draws upon evidence about needs and aspirations across the diverse communities of the borough.’

3. The Council’s current statutory library provision consists of ten library sites, together with the Home Library service, the local studies library and the online library.

4. Against a backdrop of continuing significant financial pressures for the Council, which included the need to request exceptional financial support from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in order to set a balanced budget for the financial year 2024/25. The budget included proposals to reduce the revenue budget of the Council’s library service by £300,000 over two years. The library service accordingly developed a draft library strategy which included a set of proposals to close a number of libraries in order to deliver that saving.

5. The draft strategy comprised:

- The proposals to reduce the revenue budget of the service by means to closing four of the five “branch” libraries (Collier Row, Elm Park, Gidea Park, Harold Wood, South Hornchurch);
- Proposals to reduce the service’s book stock budget by 61% (£161,000) in 2024/25 only and £30,000 (from the 2023/24 base) in both 2025/26 and 2026/27.
- A detailed needs and usage assessment which was used to develop the proposals;
- A refreshed vision and strategic priorities to underpin the statutory service in coming years;
- Proposals to develop an investment business case seeking capital funding to improve the quality of the library estate;
- Proposals seeking views on whether a purpose-designed children’s library – either at a fixed site or as a mobile provision – could better meet library need in the future.

6. An extensive consultation on the draft library strategy began on 10 May 2024 and ended on 2 August 2024. Details of which are set out in section 2 below.

7. As part of any consultation on library closures, the Council is obliged to consider any implications arising from the Equality Act 2010. The Council has an equality duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to achieve objectives set in the Act to:

- a. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- b. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Havering Library Strategy 2024-2029 Consultation

8. The consultation included:

- Online consultation on the draft strategy via the Council's *CitizenSpace* portal;
- Hard copy paper version of the above, copies of which were made available at all libraries in the borough (hard copy consultations were subsequently manually entered on to the electronic portal);
- A series of 15 public meetings that were well attended were held across the entire library estate;
- "SHOUT about Libraries", a version of the consultation designed for children and young people. The SHOUT consultation commenced in mid-July 2024 and closed in September 2024.

9. A few petitions pertaining to individual libraries were received during and after the consultation. Petitions were received on behalf of each of the five branch libraries proposed for closure.

10. The Havering Council Libraries Consultation gathered insights from 3,399 respondents, and the SHOUT survey aimed at primary and secondary pupils gathered insights from 1,214 residents regarding the usage, importance, and impact of potential closure of libraries within the borough.

11. There were fifteen public consultation events with at least one being held at each library in Havering.

Recommendations

12. Following careful consideration of the consultation it is recommended that instead of four branch libraries being closed, this is reduced to three. The three branches recommended to close are:

- Gidea Park

- Harold Wood
- South Hornchurch

13. Whilst this will not achieve the full saving required, it is recommended to not close a fourth branch that would over achieve the identified saving required.

14. Factors considered when recommending the branches to close has included:

- Visitor numbers
- Proximity to a remaining branch library
- Distance travelled to existing branches for some residents
- Building condition of branches

Who will be affected by the activity?

Residents, library users, library colleagues, schools, community groups

**Expand box as required*

Protected Characteristic - Age: Consider the full range of age groups

If there is an impact on under 18s, how have you / will you ensure their views are gained to inform decision making?

Please tick (✓) the relevant box:

Positive	
Neutral	
Negative	X

Overall impact:

Older people and young people might be negatively impacted due to the proposed closure of three branch libraries. Older people might be less inclined to travel to an alternative branch library even though there are options available within a reasonable distance.
Young people might be reliant on an adult to take them to an alternative branch library.

**Expand box as required*

Evidence:**Gidea Park Library:**

- This branch has a higher than England average population catchment of residents aged over 65. The England average is 18.4% - Marshalls and Rise Park areas are 23%, whilst Emerson Park is 24.9%.
- There are over 500 library members aged over 60 at Gidea Park library
- Children (% of population made up of children aged 0-15) – England average 18.6% - St Edwards 19.4%, Squirrels Heath 19.1%, St Albans 21.3%,
- The second highest membership age group is 5-15 years with just on 1000 library members at Gidea Park library.

Harold Wood Library:

- This branch has a higher than England average population catchment of residents aged over 65. The England average is 18.4% - Cranham is 22.9%
- There are just under 500 library members aged over 60 at Harold Wood library
- The second highest membership age group is 5-15 years with approximately 800 library members.

South Hornchurch Library

- Children (% of population made up of children aged 0-15) – England average 18.6% - South Hornchurch 20.7%, Beam Park 24.1%, Rainham and Wennington 20.2%
- There are approximately 700 library members aged 5-15 at South Hornchurch Library.

Expand box as required*Sources used:**

Library membership data

Consultation responses including the SHOUT survey of children and young people of primary or secondary school age.

**Expand box as required*

Protected Characteristic - Disability: Consider the full range of disabilities; including physical, mental, sensory, progressive conditions and learning difficulties. Also consider neurodivergent conditions e.g. dyslexia and autism.

Please tick (✓) the relevant box:

Positive

Neutral

Negative X

Overall impact:

People with a disability might be negatively impacted due to having to travel further to an alternative branch from the branches proposed to be closed. This might be more likely if a disabled person relies on public transport.

**Expand box as required*

Evidence:

.Harold Wood Library:

- Disability (disabled under Equality Act) – England Average 17.3% - Gooshays 17%, Heaton 17.8%

South Hornchurch Library:

- Disability (disabled under Equality Act) – England Average 17.3% - Beam Park 15.6%

**Expand box as required*

Sources used:

Consultation responses including the SHOUT survey of children and young people of primary or secondary school age

**Expand box as required*

Protected Characteristic – Sex / gender: Consider both men and women

Please tick (✓)
the relevant box:

Positive

Neutral

Negative

Overall impact:

Women and girls are likely to be negatively impacted more than men and boys as the majority of library members at each of the branch libraries proposed for closure are female.

**Expand box as required*

Evidence:

Women and girls account for just over 60% of library members at each of the branches – Gidea Park, Harold Wood and South Hornchurch.

**Expand box as required*

Sources used:

Library membership data.

**Expand box as required*

Protected Characteristic – Ethnicity / race / nationalities: Consider the impact on different minority ethnic groups and nationalities

<i>Please tick (✓) the relevant box:</i>		Overall impact: Households where no English as main language is above the England average. This could have a negative impact as libraries provide a point of contact for information and advice.
Positive		
Neutral		
Negative	X	

**Expand box as required*

Evidence:
Gidea Park Library

- Households where no member has English as main language – England average is 5% - St Edwards 8.3%, St Albans 11.1%

Harold Wood Library

- Households where no member has English as main language – England average is 5% - Gooshays 5.1%, Heaton 6.3%

South Hornchurch Library

- Households where no member has English as main language – England average is 5% - Beam Park 5.8%, Rainham and Wennington 5.5%

**Expand box as required*

Sources used:

Census data

**Expand box as required*

Protected Characteristic – Religion / faith: Consider people from different religions or beliefs, including those with no religion or belief

<i>Please tick (✓) the relevant box:</i>		Overall impact: If the decision is taken to close the three branch libraries – Gidea Park, Harold Wood and South Hornchurch, it would affect all users in the same way irrespective of religion/faith.
Positive		
Neutral	X	
Negative		

**Expand box as required*

Evidence:

**Expand box as required*

Sources used:

**Expand box as required*

Protected Characteristic - Sexual orientation: Consider people who are heterosexual, lesbian, gay or bisexual

<i>Please tick (✓) the relevant box:</i>		Overall impact: If the decision is taken to close the three branch libraries – Gidea Park, Harold Wood and South Hornchurch, it would affect all users in the same way irrespective of sexual orientation.
Positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Neutral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Negative	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**Expand box as required*

Evidence:

**Expand box as required*

Sources used:

**Expand box as required*

Protected Characteristic - Gender reassignment: Consider people who are seeking, undergoing or have received gender reassignment surgery, as well as people whose gender identity is different from their gender at birth

<i>Please tick (✓) the relevant box:</i>		Overall impact: If the decision is taken to close the three branch libraries – Gidea Park, Harold Wood and South Hornchurch, it would affect all users in the same way irrespective of gender reassignment..
Positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Neutral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Negative			<i>*Expand box as required</i>
Evidence:			
<i>*Expand box as required</i>			
Sources used:			
<i>*Expand box as required</i>			

Protected Characteristic – Marriage / civil partnership: Consider people in a marriage or civil partnership			
<i>Please tick (✓) the relevant box:</i>		Overall impact:	
Positive		If the decision is taken to close the three branch libraries – Gidea Park, Harold Wood and South Hornchurch, it would affect all users in the same way irrespective of marriage/civil partnership status.	
Neutral	X		
Negative			
		<i>*Expand box as required</i>	
Evidence:			
<i>*Expand box as required</i>			
Sources used:			
<i>*Expand box as required</i>			

Protected Characteristic - Pregnancy, maternity and paternity: Consider those who are pregnant and those who are taking maternity or paternity leave

<i>Please tick (✓) the relevant box:</i>		Overall impact: If the decision is taken to close the three branch libraries – Gidea Park, Harold Wood and South Hornchurch, it would affect all users in the same way irrespective of pregnancy, maternity or paternity leave.
Positive		
Neutral	X	
Negative		
<i>*Expand box as required</i>		
Evidence:		
<i>*Expand box as required</i>		
Sources used:		
<i>*Expand box as required</i>		

Socio-economic status: Consider those who are from low income or financially excluded backgrounds		
<i>Please tick (✓) the relevant box:</i>		Overall impact: People from low income or financially excluded backgrounds could be negatively impacted due to the proposed closure of three branch libraries. Additional travel costs could prevent accessing an alternative branch library. Using one of the three branch libraries as a warm space during their opening hours could also be impacted.
Positive		
Neutral		
Negative	X	
<i>*Expand box as required</i>		
Evidence:		
<p>Gidea Park Library:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment (% of residents claiming JSA/UC) – England average 3.8% - St Edwards 4.8%, • Access to car (% of residents who do not own a car or van) – England average 23.5% - St Edwards 35.9%, St Albans 31.9% • Deprivation (% of households with 2 indices of deprivation) – England average 14.2% – St Albans 15.2% 		

Harold Wood Library:

- Unemployment (% of residents claiming JSA/UC) – England average 3.8% - Gooshays 6.1%, Heaton 6.3%
- Access to car (% of residents who do not own a car or van) – England average 23.5% - Gooshays 26.9%, Heaton 29.6%
- Deprivation (% of households with 2 indices of deprivation) – England average 14.2% – Gooshays 20.1%, Heaton 20.3%
- Children – number of households with children living in relative poverty – England average 19.5% - Gooshays 20.5%, Heaton 21.4%

South Hornchurch Library:

- Unemployment (% of residents claiming JSA/UC) – England average 3.8% - South Hornchurch 5.2%, Beam Park 7.5%, Rainham and Wennington 4.7%
- Access to car (% of residents who do not own a car or van) – England average 23.5% - Beam Park 27.3%
- Deprivation (% of households with 2 indices of deprivation) – England average 14.2% – South Hornchurch 15.4%, Beam Park 18.1%, Rainham and Wennington 16.4%
- Children – number of households with children living in relative poverty – England average 19.5% - Beam Park 22.5%

**Expand box as required*

Sources used:

Census data

**Expand box as required*

Health & Wellbeing Impact: Please use the Health and Wellbeing Impact Tool on the next page to help you answer this question.

Consider both short and long-term impacts of the activity on a person’s physical and mental health, particularly for disadvantaged, vulnerable or at-risk groups. Can health and wellbeing be positively promoted through this activity?

Please tick (✓) all the relevant boxes that apply:

Overall impact:

Positive	
Neutral	X
Negative	

Do you consider that a more in-depth HIA is required as a result of this brief assessment? Please tick (✓) the relevant box

**Expand box as required*

Yes No

Evidence:

**Expand box as required*

Sources used:

**Expand box as required*

3. Health & Wellbeing Screening Tool

Will the activity / service / policy / procedure affect any of the following characteristics? Please tick/check the boxes below




The following are a range of considerations that might help you to complete the assessment.

Lifestyle YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Personal circumstances YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Access to services/facilities/amenities YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Diet <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise and physical activity <input type="checkbox"/> Smoking <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to passive smoking <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol intake <input type="checkbox"/> Dependency on prescription drugs <input type="checkbox"/> Illicit drug and substance use <input type="checkbox"/> Risky Sexual behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Other health-related behaviours, such as tooth-brushing, bathing, and wound care	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure and cohesion of family unit <input type="checkbox"/> Parenting <input type="checkbox"/> Childhood development <input type="checkbox"/> Life skills <input type="checkbox"/> Personal safety <input type="checkbox"/> Employment status <input type="checkbox"/> Working conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Level of income, including benefits <input type="checkbox"/> Level of disposable income <input type="checkbox"/> Housing tenure <input type="checkbox"/> Housing conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Educational attainment <input type="checkbox"/> Skills levels including literacy and numeracy	<input type="checkbox"/> to Employment opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> to Workplaces <input type="checkbox"/> to Housing <input type="checkbox"/> to Shops (to supply basic needs) <input type="checkbox"/> to Community facilities <input type="checkbox"/> to Public transport <input type="checkbox"/> to Education <input type="checkbox"/> to Training and skills development <input type="checkbox"/> to Healthcare <input type="checkbox"/> to Social services <input type="checkbox"/> to Childcare <input type="checkbox"/> to Respite care <input type="checkbox"/> to Leisure and recreation services and facilities
Social Factors YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Economic Factors YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Environmental Factors YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Social contact <input type="checkbox"/> Social support <input type="checkbox"/> Neighbourliness <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in the community <input type="checkbox"/> Membership of community groups <input type="checkbox"/> Reputation of community/area <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in public affairs <input type="checkbox"/> Level of crime and disorder <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of crime and disorder <input type="checkbox"/> Level of antisocial behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of antisocial behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Public safety measures <input type="checkbox"/> Road safety measures	<input type="checkbox"/> Creation of wealth <input type="checkbox"/> Distribution of wealth <input type="checkbox"/> Retention of wealth in local area/economy <input type="checkbox"/> Distribution of income <input type="checkbox"/> Business activity <input type="checkbox"/> Job creation <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of employment opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of employment opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of education opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of education opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of training and skills development opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of training and skills development opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Technological development <input type="checkbox"/> Amount of traffic congestion	<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality <input type="checkbox"/> Water quality <input type="checkbox"/> Soil quality/Level of contamination/Odour <input type="checkbox"/> Noise levels <input type="checkbox"/> Vibration <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards <input type="checkbox"/> Land use <input type="checkbox"/> Natural habitats <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape, including green and open spaces <input type="checkbox"/> Townscape, including civic areas and public realm <input type="checkbox"/> Use/consumption of natural resources <input type="checkbox"/> Energy use: CO2/other greenhouse gas emissions <input type="checkbox"/> Solid waste management <input type="checkbox"/> Public transport infrastructure

4. Outcome of the Assessment

The EHIA assessment is intended to be used as an improvement tool to make sure the activity maximises the positive impacts and eliminates or minimises the negative impacts. The possible outcomes of the assessment are listed below and what the next steps to take are:

Please tick (✓) what the overall outcome of your assessment was:

	<p>1. The initial screening exercise showed a strong indication that there will be no impacts on people and need to carry out an EHIA.</p> <p>2. The EHIA identified <u>no significant concerns</u> OR the identified <u>negative concerns</u> have already been <u>addressed</u></p>		<p>Proceed with implementation of your activity</p>
X	<p>3. The EHIA identified some <u>negative impact</u> which still needs <u>to be addressed</u></p>		<p>COMPLETE SECTION 5: Complete action plan with measures to mitigate the and finalise the EHIA</p>
	<p>4. The EHIA identified some <u>major concerns</u> and showed that it is <u>impossible to diminish negative impacts</u> from the activity to an acceptable or even lawful level</p>		<p>Stop and remove the activity or revise the activity thoroughly. Complete an EHIA on the revised proposal.</p>

5. Action Plan

The real value of completing an EHIA comes from identifying the actions that can be taken to eliminate/minimise **negative** impacts and enhance/optimize positive impacts. In this section you should list the specific actions that set out how you will mitigate or reduce any **negative** equality and/or health & wellbeing impacts, identified in this assessment. Please ensure that your action plan is: more than just a list of proposals and good intentions; if required, will amend the scope and direction of the change; sets ambitious yet achievable outcomes and timescales; and is clear about resource implications.

Protected characteristic / health & wellbeing impact	Identified Negative or Positive impact	Recommended actions to mitigate Negative impact* or further promote Positive impact	Outcomes and monitoring**	Timescale	Lead officer
Age, disability, sex/gender, ethnicity/race, socio-economic status	Negative	The library website will be updated with bus and train information, as well as information for nearby car parks and disabled car parking spaces. Available car parking at libraries will be assessed to ensure that parking is available for those that need it most.	Library website updated.	By 28 February 2025	Alexis Wainwright
Age, disability, sex/gender, ethnicity/race, socio-economic	Negative	We will work with partners to support provision of information on active and alternative travel.	Alternative and active travel information provided both on the library website and in the	By 28 February 2025	Alexis Wainwright

status			branches proposed to close.		
Age, disability, sex/gender, ethnicity/race, socio-economic status	Negative	Digital support: this will be targeted at those who most need it, including older people, users with a disability	Digital support offered both online and in branch libraries proposed for closure.	Ongoing	Alexis Wainwright
Age, disability, sex/gender, ethnicity/race, socio-economic status	Negative	Better marketing and promotion of the e-library service offer is needed	Marketing and promotion of the e-library service offer is part of an initial campaign, and then promoted at regular intervals of at least every 6 months.	Ongoing	Alexis Wainwright
Age, disability, sex/gender, ethnicity/race, socio-economic status	Negative	Familiarisation visits to other libraries will be offered to older people and families with young children	Familiarisation visits to nearest branch/es arranged and offered to branch members visitors whose branch is proposed for closure	By 31 May 2025	Alexis Wainwright
Age, disability, sex/gender, ethnicity/race, socio-economic status	Negative	Further work will be carried out to expand the number of library volunteers able to meet increased housebound delivery demand	Proactive recruitment of volunteers	Ongoing	Alexis Wainwright
Age, disability, sex/gender, ethnicity/race, socio-economic status	Negative	Provide an outreach offer targeting schools and community settings which serve communities affected by library closures	Outreach offer made to schools and community settings	Ongoing	Alexis Wainwright

Age, disability, sex/gender, ethnicity/race, socio-economic status	Negative	Seek locations for a book swap service for communities where branch libraries have closed	Potential partners and venues contacted to establish if there is an appetite for hosting a book swap service close to the branches proposed for closure.	By 31 May 2025	Alexis Wainwright
Age, disability, sex/gender, ethnicity/race, socio-economic status	Negative	Consider ways of providing more flexible space in libraries, such as using unbooked meeting room space as study space in busy periods such as examination season	Review of available space in conjunction with a timetabling review	Ongoing	Alexis Wainwright

Add further rows as necessary

* You should include details of any future consultations and any actions to be undertaken to mitigate negative impacts.

** Monitoring: You should state how the impact (positive or negative) will be monitored; what outcome measures will be used; the known (or likely) data source for outcome measurements; how regularly it will be monitored; and who will be monitoring it (if this is different from the lead officer).

6. Review

In this section you should identify how frequently the EHIA will be reviewed; the date for next review; and who will be reviewing it.

Review:

Initially, and up until 31 May 2025, review the EHIA monthly. After 31 May review the EHIA six monthly.

Scheduled date of review: 31 January 2025

Lead Officer conducting the review: Alexis Wainwright

**Expand box as required*

**Please submit the completed form via e-mail to READI@haverling.gov.uk
Thank you.**