

Equality and Public Health Full Impact Assessment

Impact Assessment Id: #480

Date printed: 10/05/2023

Date assessment submitted: 10/05/2023

Requester: Emily Morrall

1.0 Screening Information

Project Name

Relocation of Redditch Library - Cabinet Decision on Move

Name of Project Sponsor

Hannah Perrott

Name of Project Manager

Emily Morrall

Name of Project Lead

Rob Elmes

Please give a brief description of the project

In June 2021 Redditch secured a historic investment of £15.6 million Town Deal which will help fund ambitious new projects for the town.

Plans involve the re-development of the current Redditch Library site which includes the demolition of the existing library building and the delivery of a new public square and associated commercial development. Worcestershire County Council is actively supporting the regeneration of Redditch within its Town Plan and wants to work collaboratively with the Borough Council on the re-location of the existing Library into other suitable premises. In October 2022, WCC Cabinet approved the high level plans and set of requirements for the proposed newly located Library and authorised the commencement of public consultation. The project purely involves relocation of the existing library services from their current location into a shared Community Hub space in Redditch Town Hall, a distance of 100m from the current library building. A new JIA is now being completed post-Public Consultation to inform the Cabinet Decision on the move.

Data Protection screening result

Will require a full impact assessment

Equality and Public Health screening result

Will require a full impact assessment

Environmental Sustainability screening result

Will require a full impact assessment

1.1 Background and Purpose

Background and Purpose of Project?

To support your answer to this question, you can upload a copy of the project's Business Case or similar document.

Cabinet report to be uploaded when finalised. Redditch Borough Council have been successful in their bid for funding as part of the Towns Fund to redevelop Redditch Town Centre. One of the projects proposed to be funded by the Towns Fund is the redevelopment of Redditch Library, to create a new Town Plaza and commercial space. In order to progress this, Redditch have approached Worcestershire County Council with a proposal to relocate library services from the current building in Redditch Town Centre into a new Community

Hub at Redditch Town Hall. The town development including building works and demolition are being led by Redditch Borough Council and as such will be subject to separate governance and impact assessments. This impact assessment focuses on the impact of relocation of library services only, though it is also important to consider the possible impact of the areas of the project which will be the responsibility of RBC, even though these impacts may be outside of WCC control, they should still be noted.

Upload Business Case or Support documents

No files uploaded

Project Outputs

Briefly summarise the activities needed to achieve the project outcomes.

The project involves the transfer of Library and DWP services from their current location in the dedicated Redditch Library building to a new space to be created within Redditch Town Hall. Worcestershire County Council are asked to approve the relocation of services, from a service delivery and financial perspective, and support the physical move from building to building. Building works and demolition of the current library building will be led by Redditch Borough Council, along with further improvements to the Public Realm as a part of the Town Investment Plan.

Project Outcomes

Briefly summarise what the project will achieve.

The key outcomes of the wider Town Development are captured in the RBC Town Investment Plan. The core deliverable of the WCC output (move of library service) is to support this wider investment plan. There are no specific outcomes for WCC in this project, however, the Cabinet report supporting the decision will outline a set of core requirements that must be met in order for WCC to support the move, such as ensuring there is no impact on service delivery and that commercial and financial conditions are met.

Is the project a new function/service or does it relate to an existing Council function/service?
Existing

Was consultation carried out on this project?

Yes

1.2 Responsibility

Directorate/Organisation

People

Service Area

Communities

1.3 Specifics

Project Reference (if known)

Not Recorded

Intended Project Close Date *

September 2024

1.4 Project Part of a Strategic Programme

Is this project part of a strategic programme?

No

2. Organisations Involved

Please identify the organisation(s) involved: Worcestershire County Council

Other: Redditch Borough Council

Details of contributors to this assessment:

Name	Natalie Ahmed
Job title	Senior Change Manager
Email address	NAhmed1@worcestershire.gov.uk

3. Who will be affected by the development and implementation

Please identify group(s) involved: Service User

Visitors Staff Communities

3.1 Information and evidence reviewed

What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? *

Age and ACORN definition of Library users (demographic information) have been reviewed alongside survey responses. Census data, school census data and National Insurance Number Registrations data was reviewed to assess the potential requirement for translation of the survey into other language

3.2 Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken

Who and how have you engaged, or why do you believe engagement is not required? *

*

Worcestershire County Council carried out a public consultation to understand local residents' and library users' opinions, and the impact of a possible relocation of the library service in Redditch. The consultation was open from 7th November 2022 to 24th February 2023.

The consultation consisted of, provision of background information to the proposals, a survey (available online and on paper including Library Services at Home customers), and two public face-to-face meetings held at Redditch Library. Additional comments received via email and Library feedback cards were also included in the consultation analysis report.

The survey was available to complete in English, Polish and Urdu, large print and Braille. Census data, school census data and National Insurance Number Registrations data was reviewed to assess the potential requirement for translation of the survey into other languages. The data indicated the most commonly spoken languages, other than English, were Urdu and Polish. The survey was translated into those languages, and a process was established to ensure translation into other languages could be completed upon request.

3.3 Summary of relevant findings

Please summarise your relevant findings. *

The full analysis report of survey findings will be published with the Cabinet report, and all comments provided within the survey will be made publicly available subject to being redacted to remove information which could lead to the identity of individuals.

Headline findings include:

There were a total of 1467 responses to the survey. This represents 2.2% of the Redditch population aged over 19.

There was good engagement and response to the survey for people aged 30 or over. There were fewer responses received for younger people aged under 30.

Respondents are asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the new location for Redditch library being the Town Hall. 72.3% of respondents said that they disagree to some extent.

There is little difference by age group about whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with the proposal to move the library to the town hall for anyone aged 20 or over. (Note: There are much smaller numbers of responses in the Under 13 and 13-19 age groups than in other age groups.)

The three most common themes given by respondents in relation to the proposed new location for the library were:

1. The proposed location for the new library is not as good

This includes comments about how it is further from the town centre, further from the bus and railway station, further from car parks and involves walking down and up a hill to get to.

“The Town Hall is quite a bit further away from public transport than the library is now and crucially it is downhill meaning that people with restricted mobility have to climb a hill to get back to their bus.”

“It is too far away from the bus station and car parks and would invoke a lot of extra walking which is difficult for the elderly and disabled especially in winter as there is no covered walkway.”

2. Concern that there will be a reduction in the facilities offered by the new location

Respondents were concerned that the move to a new location might lead to the degradation of facilities and services offered by the library. Some comments state that the information provided at the consultation stage is not sufficient to reassure them that facilities will not be lost.

This theme included concerns about the relocation of some of the archives to Worcester so they will no longer be available in Redditch, but also about some other facilities in the new library such as the provision of meeting rooms.

“Have not yet seen any specific plans regarding the library. Concerned it may lead to a reduction in what is available in the library.”

“I believe the consolidation of three library meeting rooms and two council meetings rooms into three shared meeting rooms represents a degradation to the library service.”

3. Concern that the relocation will result in a reduction in the size of the new library
This theme included a range of comments from respondents that the new library within the Town Hall would result in the reduction in the size of the library, having an impact on how they use the building to read, relax, work, or attend with children.

“The proposal move for the library is to move into the town hall is downsizing and downgrading the library. The proposal shows that the space is not anywhere near what we currently have as a library, especially for a town with a bustling college.”

“I'm not sure the Town Hall will have the right amount of space for books, desks, computers etc.”

There were also several common themes as to why respondents agree that the Town Hall would be an appropriate location for the library, such as:

- The new location is only a very short distance away
- It is a good use of buildings
- They are happy to have the library as part of a hub with services all in one place
- The idea that a move to a new location could include new, modern facilities
- The new location could be more accessible

“It's only few yards away from the current location, therefore I have got no objections.”

“It makes sense to co-locate and share services across public sector. A lot of the activity that people go to the Town Hall to undertake may increase library footfall, usage and raise awareness of what other services are on offer there.”

“I don't like that in the current library I have to use a lift to get the pushchair to the children's books. Moving the library gives the opportunity for this to change.”

4. Protected characteristics – Equality

Please consider the potential impact of this activity (during development & implementation) on each of the equality groups outlined below. Please select one or more impact box(es) below for each equality group and explain your rationale. Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative for the same equality group and this should be recorded. Remember to consider the impact on e.g. staff, public, patients, carers etc. who are part of these equality groups.

Age

Potential positive impact selected. Potential negative impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. Feedback from survey indicates public concern regarding the possible move as the new location is further from transport hubs and some car parks, and down / up a slope compared to current location. The impact for older people and children of this additional distance has been noted in terms of ease of access to services. The proposed new location would offer services spread largely over a single floor (with some 1 floor above) which compared to the current building with 4 main floors plus smaller mezzanine floors, could have a positive impact from an accessibility perspective, making it easier for service users to move around the building and access services.

Additionally for younger age groups, there are currently several groups which run from the Redditch Library for younger children, such as "bounce and rhyme" sessions. Groups for parents and babies are popular within the library and therefore suitable space to hold groups attended by up to 30 parents with pushchairs is essential. The proposed new location would offer a Children's Library area in a large open space on the ground floor to ensure ease of evacuation if required - this is a positive impact as the current Children's area is accessed on the first mezzanine floor requiring use of a lift or going up 4 steps.

Disability

Potential positive impact selected. Potential negative impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. Feedback from survey indicates public concern regarding the possible move as the new location is further from transport hubs and some car parks, and down / up a slope compared to current location. The impact for disabled people who are wheelchair or mobility aid users, or who cannot comfortably move this additional distance has been noted in terms of ease of access to services. The proposed new location would offer services spread largely over a single floor (with some 1 floor above) which compared to the current building with 4 main floors plus smaller mezzanine floors, could have a positive impact from an accessibility perspective, making it easier for service users to move around the building and access services.

Gender reassignment

Potential neutral impact selected

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. If there are any groups which use the current library meeting rooms with members who are going through or have completed gender reassignment, the impact will be neutral as the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available in the new space should the move go ahead

Marriage and civil partnerships

Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. If there are any specific groups with members who are married or in civil partnerships which use meeting rooms at the library, the impact will be neutral as the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available in the new space should the move go ahead

Pregnancy and maternity

Potential positive impact selected. Potential negative impact selected

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. There are several groups which run from the Redditch Library at present which can be accessed by those on maternity, such as "bounce and rhyme" sessions. Groups for parents and babies are popular within the library and therefore suitable space to hold groups attended by up to 30 parents with pushchairs is essential. The location move could impact on these groups as the new location is further from transport hubs and some car parks, and down / up a slope compared to current location which could have a negative impact on accessibility for those with pushchairs. The proposed new location would offer a Children's Library area in a large open space, accessed on one level (no stairs) and on the ground floor to ensure ease of evacuation if required - this is a positive impact as the current Children's area is accessed on the first mezzanine floor requiring use of a lift or going up 4 steps.

Race including travelling communities

Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. The impact will be neutral as the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available in the new space should the move go ahead. If there are additionally people in this group who have English as a second language, there may be additional neutral impact as the same facilities will be available

Religion and belief

Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. The impact will be neutral as the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available in the new space should the move go ahead. For example, the library currently runs Easter and Christmas specific activities. There may also be further opportunity to engage more effectively across communities and invite other groups for events based on religious beliefs

Sex

Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. The impact will be neutral as the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available in the new space should the move go ahead

Sexual orientation

Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. The impact will be neutral as the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available in the new space should the move go ahead

5. Characteristics - Public health

Other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups

Potential positive impact selected. Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. If there are any groups which use the current library meeting rooms with members from vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, the impact will be neutral as the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available in the new space should the move go ahead. There may also be a positive impact with an increase in services available in the Town Hall Community Hub which may benefit vulnerable groups by enabling them to access more services from one building.

Health inequalities

Potential positive impact selected. Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. If there are any groups which use the current library meeting rooms with members experiencing health inequalities, the impact will be neutral as the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available in the new space should the move go ahead. There may also be a positive impact with an increase in services available in the Town Hall Community Hub, including NHS services, which may positively impact on health inequalities through enabling people to access more services from one building.

Social and economic

Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

The library service already provides meeting space and facilities for social support groups and the Job Centre Plus is located within the library building. In the proposed new space, the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available, and it is anticipated that the Job Centre Plus will continue to be co-located with the library service, therefore the impact for this group is anticipated to be neutral.

Physical health

Potential positive impact selected. Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Libraries are welcoming spaces, open to all, providing a safe and inclusive environment. This is a core part of library service delivery and would be an essential requirement in any new location. The current library space, for example, is used as a meeting place for health walks (open to all) and for developmental health checks. The impact for these groups, and any others which provide activities to improve physical health, will be neutral as the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available in the new space should the move go ahead. There may also be a positive impact with an increase in services available in the Town Hall Community Hub, including NHS services, which may positively impact on physical health through enabling people to access more services from one building.

Mental health and wellbeing

Potential positive impact selected. Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

The library service already provides meeting space and facilities for many community groups including those promoting mental health and wellbeing, for example groups for people facing loneliness and isolation. In the proposed new space, the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available, therefore the impact for this group is anticipated to be neutral. There may also be a positive impact with an increase in services available in the Town Hall Community Hub, including NHS services, which may positively impact on mental health and wellbeing through enabling people to access more services from one building.

Access to services

Potential positive impact selected. Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

The library service already provides meeting space and facilities for many community groups including those promoting health care and other services, for example Developmental Health Checks. In the proposed new space, the same meeting room capacity and facilities will be available, therefore the impact for this group is anticipated to be neutral. There may also be a positive impact with an increase in services available in the Town Hall Community Hub, including NHS services, which may positively impact on access to services through enabling people to access more services from one building.

6. Actions to mitigate potential negative impacts

Risk identified	Risk of negative impact for those with reduced mobility from the move of service, accessibility at the new location included walking up / down a slope, further from transport hubs and some car parks
Actions required to reduce/eliminate negative impact	Proposed mitigations include: - promotion of available shop mobility equipment which can be accessed in the Kingfisher centre and used to support the journey from Kingfisher Centre car parks to the library - promotion of shorter walking routes from car parks such as the car park by the Palace Theatre and closer exits from

	Kingfisher centre which shortens the journey from the car park to the Town Hall. Work to ensure these routes are accessible and maintained - provision of blue badge parking capacity in the Town Hall car park, immediately adjacent to the proposed new location - working with RBC on their planned Public Realm improvements to enhance the route from the current library location down to the Town Hall, to provide a clear trail with access to seating along the route
Who will lead this action	Redditch Borough Council working in close partnership with Worcestershire County Council
Timeframe	By September 2024 (proposed move of service date)
Risk identified	There is a risk that, as a town centre location in a built up area, green space will not be available near to the new library location for use by those with assistance dogs. (note this risk would be similar for both the current and proposed new location)
Actions required to reduce/eliminate negative impact	WCC officers to work with RBC on the wider public realm improvements within Redditch Town Centre to identify opportunities to access green space for those with assistance dogs. Ensure there is provision within a reasonable distance. It is noted that there is a green space (grassed area) outside the back of the Town Hall, near to the underpass under the ring road which minimises this risk.
Who will lead this action	Rbc (working Closely With Wcc)
Timeframe	By September 2024

How will you monitor these actions?

Not recorded

7. When will you review this equality and public health estimate (EPHIA)?

The EPHIA will be reviewed at key milestone gateways in the wider implementation plan (led by RBC). Example milestones include sign off of detailed plans, signing of lease agreement, go / no go decision for final move of services (exact dates TBC).

8. Declaration

The following statement has been read and agreed:

All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to set out arrangements to assess and consult on how their policies and functions impact on the 9 protected characteristics: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage & Civil Partnership; Pregnancy & Maternity; Race; Religion & Belief; Sex; Sexual Orientation

Our Organisation will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and aims to design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our service, and population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others

All staff are expected to deliver and provide services and care in a manner which respects the individuality of service users, patients, carers etc, and as such treat them and members of the workforce respectfully, paying due regard to the 9 protected characteristics

I confirm to the best of my knowledge that the information I have provided is true, complete and accurate

I confirm that I will make sure that Equality and Public Health have been and continue to be considered throughout the project life cycle and that, if circumstances change in the project, a further Equality and Public Health Impact Assessment Screening will be carried out.

9. Application Details

Last Updated Date Time
10/05/2023 10:19:26

Screening Submitted Date Time
14/03/2023 11:37:46

Last Reopened Date Time
10/05/2023 09:28:37

Full Impact Submitted Date Time
10/05/2023 10:19:26

Approved/Rejected Date Time
No Date Recorded

Current User Dashboard Request Status
Submitted

10. People with access to the original screening

Emily Morrall (EMorrall@worcestershire.gov.uk)
Natalie Ahmed (NAhmed1@worcestershire.gov.uk)

11. People with access to this equality and public health assessment

Emily Morrall (EMorrall@worcestershire.gov.uk)
Natalie Ahmed (NAhmed1@worcestershire.gov.uk)

12. Direct Questions

Question:

Hello, please can you revisit the 'disability' section and amend accordingly prior to sign off.
Thanks, Maddy

Asked by Maddy Cameron (MCameron@worcestershire.gov.uk) at 09/05/2023 10:43:07
Emily Morrall (EMorrall@worcestershire.gov.uk), and Natalie Ahmed
(NAhmed1@worcestershire.gov.uk) have been asked this question.