

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Budget Saving Proposal

Essential Information
Name of Officer(s) completing this Template: Sarah Christie
Designation(s): Cultural Services Manager
Directorate/Service: Education, Communities and Organisational Development/Culture, Communities and Educational Resources
Date of Impact Assessment: 12/10/23
Name of Budget Saving Proposal (BSP) ¹ : Reduction in Library Timetable - 25% reduction in branch library opening hours

1. Does the BSP impact on:		
	Yes	No
a. Protected Characteristics under The Equality Act 2010: Age; Care experienced; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion and Belief; Sex; Sexual Orientation (see Section 3)	X	
b. Reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage – Fairer Scotland Duty ² (see Section 6)	X	
c. Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33 ³ (see Section 7)	X	

¹ Please attach the BSP to this Template

² [Fairer Scotland Duty: guidance for public bodies](#)

³ [Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33](#)

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d. Council Plan 2023/28 ⁴ (see Section 8)	X	
2. If 'yes' is selected for any part of Section 1, please populate the other relevant Sections of this Template.		

3. Impact – Protected Characteristics			
Which of the Protected Characteristics will the BSP have an impact upon?			
Equality Target Group	Positive impact +	Neutral impact =	Negative impact -
Age			X
Care experienced			X
Disability			X
Gender Reassignment		X	
Marriage and Civil Partnership		X	
Pregnancy and Maternity			X
Race		X	

⁴ [Council Plan 2023/28](#)

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Religion and Belief		X	
Sex			X
Sexual Orientation		X	
Other groups to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers • The Armed Forces Covenant Duty 		X	X

4. Which parts of the Equality Duty will the BSP impact on?	
X	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by The Equality Act 2010
X	Advance equality of opportunity between people of different groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Foster good relations between from different groups

5. Impact - Groups	
From the information you have highlighted above, describe the positive and negative impacts and the groups affected under The Equality Act 2010.	
Positive impact + <i>(Describe groups affected.)</i>	Negative impact - <i>(Describe groups affected.)</i> Age – Library services are used more by children and young people, and by older people. Therefore reductions in service will affect these groups disproportionately.

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	<p>Young people, and particularly those from families on low incomes, have a greater need for library services and are therefore disproportionately affected by service reduction.</p> <p><u>Disability</u> – A reduction in technological support will impact on disabled people who require support to use devices.</p> <p><u>Pregnancy and Maternity</u> – Library services are well used by new mums on maternity leave. A reduction in <i>Bookbug</i> provision may impact on this group.</p> <p><u>Sex</u> – Library services are used more by women than men. Therefore service reduction will affect women disproportionately.</p> <p><u>Staff</u> – 22 across the library service.</p> <p>In addition</p> <p><u>People on low incomes</u> – This group has greater need for library services and is therefore disproportionately affected by service reduction.</p> <p><u>Universal Credit claimants</u> – Welfare payments now have to be claimed using an online system. People in this group are less likely than average to have access to the internet at home. Reduced opportunity for technological support in libraries will disproportionately affect this group.</p> <p><u>Other groups</u> – There would be a reduction in partnership working with other organisations to deliver services in libraries. There would be a reduction in digital support and access, which is a service often used by care experienced young people.</p> <p><u>Carers</u> - Reduced opportunity for targeted support in libraries will disproportionately affect this group.</p> <p>Libraries are committed to delivering for Scotland's communities - Health and Social</p>
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	Care Alliance Scotland (alliance-scotland.org.uk)
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6. Impact – Fairer Scotland Duty

What impact will this BSP have on reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage? *Please tick.*

Positive impact +	Neutral impact =	Negative impact -
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Briefly describe how the BSP will impact on reducing inequalities of outcome.

Research shows that libraries not only tackle the key indicators of social exclusion (health, crime, unemployment and education) but can also play a wider role in tackling disadvantage, inequality and discrimination. They make an acknowledged contribution to wellbeing (social, cultural, economic and health) in our communities, as outlined in [The Wellbeing and Public Libraries Toolkit](#) (2021).

Libraries provide free access to books and reading including special collections promoting inclusion such as large print, audio, dyslexia friendly etc; free access to PCs, the internet, hardware and software; IT classes, job clubs and other forms of support for Universal Credit claimants; a partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support improving access to information for local people living with cancer; events and activities for both adults and young people, including some specifically aimed at reducing inequalities for excluded groups including people with autism, and people at risk of social isolation.

Inverclyde Libraries Service is an active participant in the [A Collective Force for Health and Wellbeing partnership](#) – an initiative that seeks to establish libraries as the go-to place in their communities to access trusted health and wellbeing literature. The [Action Plan](#) underpinning this initiative lays the foundations for a cross-sectoral national network that will enable more resilient, healthier communities to emerge following the Covid pandemic.

This BSP will see a reduction in overall library service delivery and therefore its implementation is likely to impact on the ability of the public library service to tackle the key indicators of social exclusion.

According to the Scottish Government’s Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020, Greenock Town Centre (within which Greenock Central Library is situated) is the most deprived data zone in both Inverclyde and Scotland.

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7. Impact – Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33	
Which Themes from the Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33 will this BSP impact on?	
X	<p>Theme 1: Empowered people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities can have their voices heard, and influence the places and services that affect them • Gaps in outcomes linked to poverty are reduced
X	<p>Theme 2: Working people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people will be in sustained employment, with fair pay and conditions • Poverty related gaps are addressed, so young people can have the skills for learning, life and work • Businesses are supported and encouraged to reduce their carbon footprint and develop green jobs
X	<p>Theme 3: Healthy people and places</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People live longer and healthier lives • Supportive systems are in place to prevent alcohol and drug misuse • Our natural capital is looked after, and we are effectively adapting and mitigating the effects of climate change
X	<p>Theme 4: A supportive place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable adults and children are protected and supported, ensuring they can live safely and independently • We recognise where people are affected by trauma, and respond in ways that prevent further harm and support recovery • Public protection and community safety are improved through targeting our resources to reduce the risk of offending and harm
X	<p>Theme 5: A thriving place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth in our working age population by encouraging people to stay here, and attracting new people to settle here • Development of strong community-based services that respond to local need • Homes are energy efficient and fuel poverty is reduced • Increased use of active travel and sustainable transport options • Easy access to attractive and safe public spaces, and high-quality arts and cultural opportunities

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Briefly describe how the BSP will impact on the Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33 Themes.

Theme 1: Libraries support engagement with the communities they serve, often facilitating data gathering/survey responses, etc. This offer will be diminished. Activities libraries undertake to engage harder to reach groups and individuals will reduce, impacting efforts to tackle poverty and associated social determinants of health.

Theme 2: Libraries offer free learning programmes, access to which will reduce should the service contract; access to digital support/devices will reduce, impacting opportunities for skills development in our communities.

Theme 3: Inverclyde Libraries are an active participant in the *A Collective Force for Health and Wellbeing* initiative, providing trusted health literature and signposting services via branch libraires. A reduction in service will limit access to these important health and wellbeing resources.

Theme 4: Inverclyde Libraries are safe spaces within our communities, and are a trusted source of information and support. Reduction in services will limit access to these important community resources.

Theme 5: Inverclyde Libraries are active participants in the Inverclyde Cultural Partnership, designing, delivering and participating in cultural activities and opportunities that benefit the communities they serve. Reducing the service overall will diminish opportunities for participation.

8. Impact – Council Plan 2023/28

Which Themes from the Council Plan 2023/28 will the BSP impact on?

X	<p>Theme 1: People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our young people have the best start in life through high quality support and education • Gaps in outcomes linked to poverty are reduced • People are supported to improve their health and wellbeing • More people will be in employment, with fair pay and conditions • Our most vulnerable families and residents are safeguarded and supported
X	<p>Theme 2: Place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities are thriving, growing and sustainable • Our strategic housing function is robust • Our economy and skills base are developed • We have a sufficient supply of business premises

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our natural environment is protected
X	<p>Theme 3: Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money • Our employees are supported and developed
<p>Briefly describe how the BSP will impact on the Council Plan 2023/28 Themes.</p> <p><u>Theme 1:</u> early years activity; skills development opportunities; digital support/access to devices; access to trusted health literature; and targeted support for excluded groups will reduce in line with timetable reduction.</p> <p><u>Theme 2:</u> libraries as community hubs are a central element of our towns and neighbourhoods. In line with timetable reductions, opportunities to use libraries as meeting places for social, cultural and/or learning activities will reduce. The Inverclyde Libraries service is an active partner in the <i>Inverclyde Climate Beacon</i> project – legacy activity from this important partnership may also be impacted.</p> <p><u>Theme 3:</u> libraries are a natural and active partner across various community and cultural projects; they achieve substantial external funding to extend the reach of these projects and ensure legacy outcomes. Reducing the service overall will reduce opportunities for libraries to continue current levels of partnership working and enhanced service delivery.</p>	

<p>9. Evidence</p> <p>What evidence do you have to help identify any potential impacts of the BSP?</p> <p>Note: Evidence could include consultations, surveys, focus groups, interviews, projects, user feedback, complaints, Officers’ knowledge and experience, equalities monitoring data, publications, research, reports, local, national groups.</p>	
Evidence	Details
Consultation/engagement	Budget Consultation 2024/26 Phase 1: This BSP was one of 4 included in the <i>Community</i> section of the survey ⁵ . It was ranked number 3 by respondents.

⁵ Respondents were asked to rank the BSPs in order of importance: 1 = Most important and 5 = Least important

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	<p>Budget Consultation 2024/26 Phase 2: This BSP was one of 16 included in the Budget Consultation 2024/26 Phase 2⁶. It was ranked number 16 by respondents.</p> <p>Budget Consultation 2022: the majority of respondents disagreed with proposals that impacted library services (i.e. Review of Library Services; Closure of Greenock Central Library).</p> <p>According to Clyde Conversations respondents, 84% were supportive of reducing the library timetable by 25%.</p> <p>The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland (CILIPS) commented that public libraries are essential to improving literacy, tackling social isolation, and supporting mental health and wellbeing. They are also the most popular service local government provides and play a key role in digital inclusion by providing free access for people unable to get online at home, delivering substantial democratic, social and economic benefits to citizens and communities, as well as helping people to search and apply for jobs and welfare services.</p> <p>The Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) commented that libraries improve quality of life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing the attainment gap by supporting children’s development, education and improving literacy through adulthood. • Combatting social isolation and helping those struggling with mental health. • Bridging the digital divide through free e-learning opportunities. • Connecting rural and remote communities through mobile library provision. • Providing free IT equipment, employability sessions and activities to alleviate the impact of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. <p>A focus group of Pupil Council members was consulted and felt that library services could potentially be delivered in different ways.</p>
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⁶ Respondents were asked to rank the BSPs in the order they most agreed with. 1 = BSP respondents supported most. 16 = BSP respondents supported the least

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<p>Research</p>	<p>Relevant hyperlinks included in text above.</p> <p>In addition, overarching sector information is available here.</p>
<p>Officers' knowledge and experience (including feedback from frontline staff)</p>	
<p>Equalities monitoring data</p>	<p>Equal opportunities forms; membership data from library management system. The data available tells us that 57% of library users are female, 43% are male. Around 12-13% of library users have a disability, and just over 5% come from an ethnic minority group.</p>
<p>User feedback (including complaints)</p>	<p>Yes. The Service has a Consultation and Engagement Strategy. Library visitors are encouraged to feed back in a number of ways and this is held by the service and taken into account when decisions are made.</p> <p>There is a reputational risk to any reduction in services linked to libraries – national agencies continue to state their concern in this regard.</p>
<p>Stakeholders</p> <p>Other</p>	
<p>Are there information gaps and, if so, what are these?</p>	

10. Please use the space below to detail any other matters arising from the Equality Impact Assessment process, including what action could be taken to mitigate the impact of the BSP.

Should the BSP go ahead, every effort will be made to signpost current users to alternative services.

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Kilmacolm New Community Centre and the Inverkip Community Hub - There would be a reduction in access and service affecting all service users and partners.

Details of the Person(s) who completed the Assessment:	Name: Sarah Christie
	Position: Cultural Services Manager
	Date: 21/02/24
Authorised by:	Name: Ruth Binks
	Position: Corporate Director – Education, Communities and Organisational Development
	Date: 21/02/24

Thank you for your assistance with the completion of this task.

Please send a copy of the completed Template to Karen Barclay, Corporate Policy and Performance Officer: karen.barclay@inverclyde.gov.uk.