

Equality Impact Assessment: Template

Stage 1: The proposed change that is being assessed and responsibility for the EQIA

Name of the proposed change	<p>Croydon Library Services Review: Remodelling the library service model for Croydon residents, proposing closure of 4 libraries, increased opening hours and activities in 9 libraries and development of new dedicated outreach service, and resource to improve marketing of the library offer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extending staffed opening hours in 9 libraries: Ashburton, Central, Coulsdon, New Addington, Norbury, Purley, Selsdon, South Norwood and Thornton Heath Libraries - Developing a joint offer between the library, Family Hub and Youth Services at South Norwood Library and Samuel Coleridge Taylor Centre - Working with Croydon Adult Learning & Training (CALAT) and the Voluntary & Community Frontline Sector (VCFS) to develop and improve the offer at Purley and New Addington - Closure of 4 library buildings: Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Sanderstead and Shirley - Introduction of an outreach offer to provide library service provision from other community spaces and better reach people <p>See Cabinet paper – 25th September 2024 for full proposal details,</p>
Purpose of proposed change	Improvement of library services for people who live, work and study in Croydon
Is this a change to a policy, practice or service?	Change to Croydon’s library services
Who has senior level responsibility for the proposed change?	Nick Hibberd, Corporate Director of Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery
Who is completing this assessment?	Joan Redding, Library & Archives Services Manager/Stephanie Wilson, Head of Culture, Leisure & Libraries

Indicate where your EQIA will be submitted to including date where known:	Cabinet, 25 September 2024
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Stage 2: Deciding what relevance the proposed change has for equality

<p>Is the proposed change likely to impact on any of the following ? <i>If there is no equality relevance for either go to Stage 7 and get sign off</i></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communities <input type="checkbox"/> Employees</p>
<p>Is the impact on equality low, medium or high?</p>	<p>The Libraries Review has been undertaken to consider the impact of the last change to the library service model in 2022 and to consider how the service could be improved to reach more residents. This EQIA reports on all 13 libraries and should be considered along with 4 regional EQIAs.</p> <p>From the analysis of the data and responses to the consultation on libraries we have found that there are negative equalities impacts from the current service model which provides part time opening hours over thirteen buildings. Whilst the model retains a wider geographic spread of library buildings, the limited opening hours prevent many people being able to access services, particularly working age people and families. The limited resource for marketing, engagement and outreach also prevents the service reaching more people in the local area and only a small proportion of the population use the library service.</p>

The equalities impact of the proposed new model is mixed:

Potential negative impact of proposal on residents who are local to a library proposed to close

High: Age, Disability and Sex

Medium: Pregnancy & Maternity and Race

No Impact, Unknown: Gender reassignment, Sexual Orientation, Marriage or Civil Partnership, Religion

Proposals without mitigations in place would have a potential negative/high impact on the 3,513 Croydon active library users* who use the 4 libraries proposed to close: Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Sanderstead and Shirley Libraries. This represents 9.1% of all Croydon library average active users. From the Library Review consultation, there was feedback opposing closures from over 1,000 residents at local public meetings and drop ins, from a number of petitions and from 1,324 survey respondents, from residents who primarily use the library proposed to close. Of those, 583 respondents said “I would not be able to use another library service.” The extent of that impact across the 4 libraries:

Potential positive impact for Croydon population

High: Age, Disability and Sex

Medium: Pregnancy & Maternity and Race

No Impact, Unknown: Gender reassignment, Sexual Orientation, Marriage or Civil Partnership, Religion

The proposals are designed to have a potential positive/high impact for all Croydon residents, both active users and nonusers, addressing feedback from residents who want to see additional opening hours, better marketing, improved online library services, and a dedicated outreach offer to include regular visits to schools and community centres, expansion of home library service and volunteering programme, and regular activities in local venues to reach a wider area of Croydon, especially those identified within each of the protected characteristics who cannot currently access services that are provided to benefit them. The library review proposals for outreach would prioritise activities to mitigate the closure of 4 libraries, and have a potential positive impact on Croydon residents, allowing the library service more flexibility to engage nonusers where they meet, especially those from underserved and marginalised communities identified in the Equalities Impact Assessment.

**active library users have used their library card to borrow books or use internet services in the last year.*

Summary of EQIA outcome:

This Equality Impact Assessment reviews the impact of the library review proposals for 13 Croydon libraries, including proposals to close 4 library buildings: Bradmore Green, Broad Green Sanderstead and Shirley. Closing 4 library buildings will release funds to invest in a full time service, including Saturday openings, at all the remaining 9 libraries, improve marketing, enhance the digital offer, and provide a dedicated local outreach offer across Croydon.

The Equality Impact Assessments to date have considered the potential impacts of the changes on Croydon residents of each of the protected characteristics based on desk-based analysis of the data and the review of the 2021 consultation responses, considering all the libraries as a network. This Equalities Impact Assessment focuses in more detail on each of the communities around the 13 libraries, reviewing the library active users data, and the findings and feedback from local engagement and public consultation between 8 February – 19 April 2024. These are considered in the context of the Local Layer Super Output (LSOA) data for each area, to scope the impact of the changes on each of the protected characteristics within the context of the local community.

This EQIA for all 13 libraries should be considered as the overview summary for the 4 EQIAs which consider each area in more detail: North Area (Broad Green, Thornton Heath, Norbury & South Norwood Libraries), Central Area (Shirley, Ashburton, New Addington and Central Libraries), South 1 (Sanderstead, Selsdon and Purley Libraries), and South 2 (Bradmore Green and Coulsdon Libraries). These Equality Impact Assessments form part of the wider report and assessment of the service with recommendations for the proposed new service model in the Cabinet report and appendices.

The Proposals

The impact of the 2022 reduction in opening hours is very negative based on the consultation feedback and poor service performance, and there need to be improvements.

In order to make improvements to the library service overall without additional funding for libraries, the review proposes closing some library buildings to enable building and staff costs from those sites to be reinvested in improving the rest of the service. Staff hours will be reallocated to increase opening hours at other libraries in the network.

The new model is proposed to provide an increase in the staffed opening hours in the service as at present but delivered from fewer buildings. This would enable the service to operate sustainably and for staff teams to deliver a more responsive local service. All sites would be open on Saturdays, and the overall opening hours are proposed to increase through further use of self-service access and co-location with other services.

Criteria used to determine closure proposals were: service performance including usage, location, building suitability and adaptability, impact of change, including population serviced, extent of deprivation, and other public facilities and existing community group use.

Following this review, four library buildings were proposed to close: Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Sanderstead and Shirley.

The proposals are designed to enable the Council to meet its statutory obligations to deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service through:

- Maintaining nine library buildings open full time across the borough with three libraries in each geographic area (North, Central, South)
- Creating the capacity for a more targeted, localised approach to better respond to local areas of need
- Increasing the library opening hours overall and the number of days of library opening, especially Saturday openings
- Improving the service to enable residents to access more services through their local library, in line with the national library Universal Offers (<https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/page/universal-library-offers>)
- Developing the libraries as cultural venues to deliver the legacy of the London Borough of Culture
- Making more efficient use of library buildings

Whilst the decision to close libraries is a difficult one, the findings of the review indicate that Croydon residents can be better served overall by a full-time service and a wider offer delivered from fewer buildings with a balance of universal and targeted services to reach those with greatest need. Through the data research and consultation process, we identify residents with the following protected characteristics who are experiencing a negative impact due to 2022 introduction of the parttime service hours, and could experience either potential positive or negative impact of the proposals based on their location:

Active Library Users

The EQIA reports have used Active Library User data as a metric to understand the demographic characteristics of library users. Most Croydon library members are Croydon residents, and those who are not residents work or study in Croydon.

Active users are library members who have used their membership cards to interact with the library system within the last 12 months, either through book loans or PC use, and this data is reviewed monthly. The library service looks for regular growth in this figure to measure the effectiveness of the service to reach different groups. In order to more comprehensively measure the demographic and equalities impacts of the proposals, this report looks at 2 years of active users from the date of the last significant changes in opening hours (April 2022 – May 2024).

It should be noted that Active User data does not capture library usage which does not involve a card – such as study space, wifi or events attendance. However, it does give a good indication of library usage and the potential impact of changes to the service as the library service does not routinely collect demographic data for users of services which do not involve a library card. An analysis of the full set of library performance indicators has been undertaken in the Appendix C – Review of Closure Options report.

1. Age:

Croydon Context:

Croydon has 390,719 residents (ONS Census 2021, Croydon Observatory), the largest of all London Boroughs, and is expected to increase to nearly 500,000 population by 2050.

Active Library Users: The service reports on annual Active Users, which for 2023-24 was 38,667 (9.9% of Croydon population).

Consultation: Most of the demographic data is taken from the online consultation survey 8 February – 19 April 2024 completed by 3,614 respondents, including 200 who completed paper forms. Most respondents were aged 16+ so information for children was collected and reported differently as outlined below. Comments reported in all EQIAs come from both the survey and the public meetings, school visits and drop in engagements which took place during the consultation period.

Ages 0-19

Nearly a quarter of Croydon’s population (23.1%) are aged 17 years and under compared to the average for London (21.6%). The number of looked after children is the highest in London. There were 4.8% of young NEET teenagers compared to the London average of 3.4%. **Croydon Borough Profile June 2024**

Comparative LSOA data used below is based on ages 0-19 which represent 25.1% of all Croydon’s population.

Active users: 39% of all active library users are aged 0-19, higher than the 25.1% Croydon population profile. The largest group of active users are aged 5-15 (26.3%). Both Broad Green and Ashburton libraries have over 50% active users aged 0-19, and Croydon Central Library has 42.5% of all active users aged 0-19.

Ages 0-19	Number of Active users 0-19 (2 years)	% Active users aged 0-19 compared to older users in each Library	% Active users aged 0-19 in all libraries	LSOA data (1 mile radius) for active users aged 0-19 in each area (25.1% all Croydon population)
Ashburton	976	50.7%	5.9%	23.4%
Bradmore Green	288	44.4%	1.7%	26.0%
Broad Green	723	56.9%	4.4%	27.8%
Coulsdon	674	41.0%	4.1%	24.5%

Central	7030	33.7%	42.5%	25.1%
New Addington	482	41.4%	2.9%	31.8%
Norbury	1143	42.3%	6.9%	24.8%
Purley	792	46.7%	4.8%	23.1%
Sanderstead	545	44.7%	3.3%	22.9%
Selsdon	1113	36.2%	6.7%	22.9%
Shirley	330	34.6%	2.0%	23.0%
South Norwood	913	49.5%	5.5%	25.4%
Thornton Heath	1510	46.2%	9.1%	26.4%
Total	16519	39.0%		

Consultation: Children’s feedback was captured during drop in sessions, at school visits, and from the Bradmore Green “Young Voices” petition from 243 children: *These children cannot run the library themselves; they are reliant on adults making the right decisions for them. We urge you to make the right decision and keep Bradmore Green library open,* and from their parents. The feedback and data could not be compared statistically with the feedback from adults and older residents in the Equalities Impact assessment, but was fundamental to the review.

There would be a potential negative impact on the 11% children and young people aged 0-19 who are active users at the 4 libraries proposed to close, and this age group make up 35 - 57% of active users at these 4 libraries. Of the 49 young people aged 16-19 who responded to the survey (1.5% of all respondents), 4 said they could not use another library service.

Ages 20-64

In Croydon 63.3% of its residents are in the 20-64 age band compared to 66.6% across London ***Croydon Borough Profile June 2024***

Active users: 49.5% of all active library users are adults aged 20-64, less than the 61.4% local area profile. The largest group of adult active users are aged 30-44 (22%). Both New Addington and Central Library Libraries have a profile over 50% adult active users, and Croydon Central Library has 56.8% of all active users aged 20-64. Whereas library active users aged 0-19 were a higher proportion of overall active users than the borough profile, for adults aged 20-64 the proportion is much less.

Ages 20-64	Number of Active users 20-64 (2 years)	% Active users aged 20-64 compared to older users in each Library	% Active users aged 20-64 in all libraries	LSOA data (1 mile radius) for active users aged 20-64 in each area (25.1% all Croydon population)
Ashburton	744	38.6%	3.5%	62.0%
Bradmore Green	194	29.9%	0.9%	56.6%
Broad Green	512	40.3%	2.4%	63.7%
Coulsdon	670	40.7%	3.2%	66.6%
Central	11843	56.8%	56.5%	57.6%
New Addington	611	52.4%	2.9%	56.1%
Norbury	1322	49.0%	6.3%	61.9%
Purley	639	37.7%	3.0%	59.0%
Sanderstead	457	37.5%	2.2%	55.5%
Selsdon	1204	39.2%	5.7%	54.7%
Shirley	338	35.4%	1.6%	56.4%
South Norwood	828	44.9%	4.0%	64.2%
Thornton Heath	1571	48.1%	7.5%	62.7%
Total	20933	49.5%		

Consultation: 72.5% of survey responses were from adults aged 20-64, and the largest group was aged 35-44 (174 responses, 35.6%). The consultation findings suggest many are parents who bring their children to library events. Consultation feedback from local residents suggests the current reduced opening hours and closure in evenings and on Saturdays limits access, and prevents working adults from using the library. 16.2% of this age group said that they would not be able to use another library service if one of the 4 libraries closed.

Ages 65+

Croydon has a higher proportion (13.6%) of residents 65+ compared to the average for London which is 11.9%. Over the last 5 years, the estimated dementia diagnosis rate for 65+ years has been increasing and has been higher than the rate in London and England for the past 2 years.

Both New Addington and Central Libraries have a profile over 50% adult active users, and Croydon Central Library has 56.8% of all active users aged 20-64. Whereas library active users aged 0-19 were a higher proportion of overall active users than the borough profile, for adults aged 20-64 the proportion is much less.

Active Users: 11.5% of all library active users are older adults aged 65+, slightly lower than 13.6% local area population. Six libraries have active users 65+ over the 13.6% local area percentage. Of those, Shirley and Bradmore Green Libraries have 25%+ active users aged 65+, which is 9.3% of all 65+ active users in Croydon Libraries. Central Library has 40.9% of all active users aged 65+.

Ages 65+ Libraries	Number of Active users 65+ (2 years)	% Active users aged 65+ compared to older users in each Library	% Active users aged 65+ in all libraries	LSOA data (1 mile radius) for active users aged 65+ in each area (13.6% all Croydon population)
Ashburton	206	10.7%	4.2%	14.6%
Bradmore Green	167	25.7%	3.4%	17.4%
Broad Green	36	2.8%	0.7%	8.5%
Coulsdon	301	18.3%	6.2%	8.9%
Central	1995	9.6%	40.9%	17.2%
New Addington	72	6.2%	1.5%	12.1%
Norbury	235	8.7%	4.8%	13.4%
Purley	265	15.6%	5.4%	17.9%
Sanderstead	216	17.7%	4.4%	21.5%
Selsdon	754	24.6%	15.5%	22.6%
Shirley	287	30.1%	5.9%	20.6%

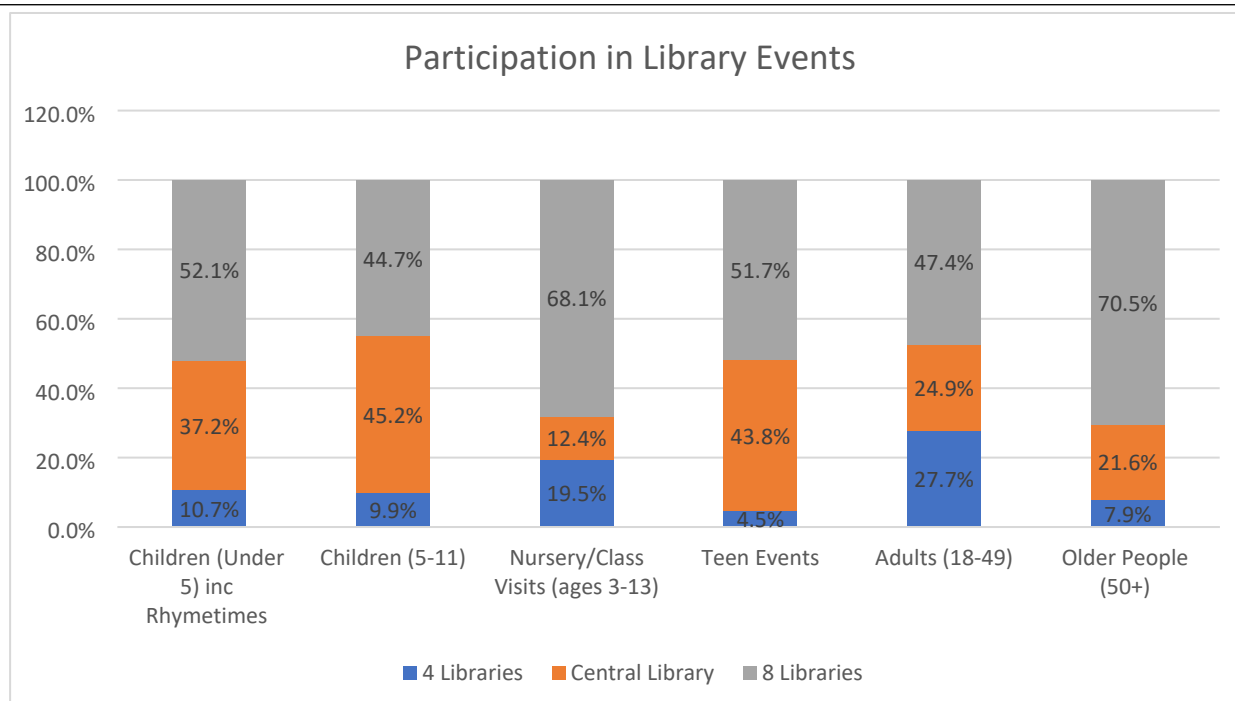
South Norwood	103	5.6%	2.1%	10.4%
Thornton Heath	185	5.7%	3.8%	11%
Total	4822	11.5%		

Consultation: Respondents 65+ provided 26% of consultation responses, and 105 (12.5%) of this age group said they could not travel to another library service.

Regular Library Activities specific to age groups:

The library service collects participation figures by age group for regular activities and these should be reported in addition to membership and active user data, because not all participants are library members. There is no data available to identify unique or regular participants. Last year across Croydon Libraries, there were 2,962 regular events & activities with attendance of 38,046 recorded, including 822 rhymetimes for under 5s, engaging 18,013, 206 attendees, and class visits engaging 4,063 school children, and the annual Summer Reading Challenge engaging 1,404 local school children. For adults, there are a range of activities including reading groups, knitting and craft groups and sessions such as U3A, health classes and IT support.

DRAFT



From the consultation feedback:

Q23 If the six proposed Library hubs (Ashburton, Central, Coulsdon, Norbury, Selsdon, Thornton Heath) are open for more days and longer hours, what new activities would you most like to be available? Please select your top three activities.

- 49.5% Children & Young People's activities
- 48.7% Arts & Culture events
- 40.8% Adult learning and education
- 39.8% Family activities
- 34.7% Health & Wellbeing
- 32.7% Information & advice from staff

Feedback about future activities from consultation survey:

Bradmore Green	1	0.6%	128	76.6%	38	22.8%	167	86.1%
Broad Green	0	0.0%	43	95.6%	2	4.4%	45	84.9%
Sanderstead	3	1.5%	159	81.1%	34	17.3%	196	81.7%
Shirley	0	0.0%	50	61.7%	31	38.3%	81	84.4%
Totals/%	4	0.8%	380	77.7%	105	21.5%	489	83.9%

Mitigations for these age groups are outlined below.

The increase in opening hours at 9 libraries would have a positive impact on people of all ages who use those libraries and a potential positive impact on the wider catchment area. The additional service offer would increase the number of children and family activities and school visits and create more capacity for study space by opening the larger libraries for longer. Working adults would also have a better opportunity to access services through longer hours and more Saturday opening.

The development of the outreach service will enable the library service to work more closely with schools and children's centres, sheltered accommodation and community partners to deliver a local offer which is accessible to different age groups who may not be in close proximity to a library at present and better reach nonusers.

Developing partnerships with Croydon Adult Learning & Training (CALAT) and the Voluntary & Community Frontline Sector (VCFS) to co-locate in libraries and improve the service offer could also strengthen services which support people of different ages, for example developing the elders exercise programme run by partners at Purley Library and the Family Hub offer at South Norwood and Thornton Heath.

Mitigation Actions:

1.1 Maintaining nine library buildings open full time across the borough with three libraries in each geographic area (North, Central, South), increasing opening hours in a phased approach from January and April and offering additional activities in nearest libraries to serve additional demand such as rhymetimes

1.2. Provision of a scheduled weekly accessible bus shuttle service for residents with access needs to visit their nearest library

1.3 Home Library Service provision (free of charge) is available now, especially for older residents or those with a disability, who cannot travel to another location and would like a regular delivery of books to their home. Residents in the areas served by the 4

libraries proposed to close already access this service, including those in sheltered accommodation and care homes, and we would extend this free service to anyone of any age who cannot visit their local library.

1.4 Free 24/7 digital library of 60,000 ebooks/audiobooks, hundreds of online magazines, and thousands of newspapers. In the consultation feedback, nearly 15% said it was one of their top 3 services, and some survey respondents from the 4 libraries proposed to close said they would use this service as an alternative. Because digital access and skills are often a barrier to accessing the digital services, a programme of promotion and training would be required, and the service is already delivering a grant funded digital skills programme in partnership with voluntary partner Clear Community Web.

1.5 Communicate alternative routes to access library services with local residents and groups to support residents of all ages with their choices during the transition of the service, including publicity and information regarding changes, alternative venues for existing activities and groups, change of registered local library, potential use of Home Library Service, support using the digital library. Engagement to be undertaken with existing groups running in libraries proposed to close to make alternative arrangements for their offer

2. Library outreach

2.1 Establish library outreach activities in local venues. This is a key element of the overall library review proposals, not just a mitigation for closure, but essential to reach a wider community with library services. For those 4 libraries proposed to close, staff would facilitate moving existing community activities to local venues to ensure continuity. From April the outreach offer will include a number of venues with community book collections and regular outreach activities that align with the offer at the local venue.

2.2 Take into account consultation survey feedback on alternative venues suggested by local residents:

- Bradmore Green: School/Nursery 109 (30.9%), Local Café 98 (27.8%), College 39 (11%)
- Broad Green: School/Nursery 20 (25%) Family Hub 19 (23.8%) Local Café 14 (17.5%)
- Sanderstead: School/Nursery 131 (30.8%) Local Café 126 (29.6%) Family Hub 59 (13.9%)
- Shirley: Local Café 191 (32.6%) School/Nursery 170 (29.1%) Family Hub 73 (12.5%)

2.3 The library service will pilot regular outreach activity in communities impacted by closures during the transitional phase between November and March with a full schedule launched in April.

2.4 The Council will seek alternative operators within the voluntary, community and faith sectors for any buildings no longer managed by the library service using a Community Asset Transfer process. Should viable options be forthcoming, the library service will seek to work with any new operators to offer outreach activities from the site.

3. Further Engagement

3.1 Develop library forums of local residents and community partners to act as a reference group and inform future development and improvement of the library service

3.2 Ongoing review of library services with community groups and library users to ensure all ages are represented and served by new model:

- Children & families who attend regular library events
- Schools, nurseries, children's centres and other local groups that cater for parents and babies
- Health & wellbeing organisations
- Voluntary, Community & Faith groups attended by both women and men, especially to engage with those who do not use the library service
- Local Community Partnerships network engagement

The mitigation actions will be further updated and reviewed as opportunities emerge and develop.

2. Disability

In Croydon 7% of residents say their day-to-day activities are limited a lot, 8.8% are limited a little, and 84.2% are not limited; and 7.9% said they are Carers. **ONS Data 2021 reported in Croydon Borough Profile June 2024**

Croydon residents with a disability under the Equality Act represents 14% of the population (54,852 of 390,719 residents) including residents for whom day-to-day activities are limited a little: 5.62% (21,978) and limited a lot: 6.1% (23,716)

Source: <https://www.croydonobservatory.org/2-disability/>

From 2011 to 2021, there has only been a slight increase in the proportions of people in Croydon whose day to day activities are limited a lot or a little. Source: ONS Census 2021, data released 19. Jan. 2023.

Data from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities estimates the prevalence of common mental disorders to be 18.4% for those aged 18 and over and 10.4% for those aged 65 and over (2017). For depression alone the rate is 9.1% of the over 18 population (2022). The impacts of Covid-19 continue to cause adverse mental health outcomes for people in the borough, particularly those from already marginalised or disadvantaged groups. (DPH report 2022). Over the last 5 years, the estimated

dementia diagnosis rate for 65+ years has been increasing and has been higher than the rate in London and England for the past 2 years. **Source: Croydon Borough Profile June 2024**

Library Active Users:

There is no meaningful data available to profile Active Users with disability because this information is not mandatory and is therefore not held in statistically meaningful quantities. Looking at the data for all members, approximately 5% have disclosed a disability, and the largest groups are those with a Mobility (19%) or Mental Health (18%) disability. This represents a significant change from previous Disability profiles (2021) for which the largest groups were Visual impairment (30%) and Mobility (27.6%), and Mental Health was 7%.

Library Review Consultation feedback: 500 (14.3%) said yes they had a disability and 490 provided further details:

Libraries	Responses	% No	% Yes	% Prefer not to say	490 provided details	Mobility	Vision	Hearing	Hidden (Diabetes, Asthma)	Hidden (Autism, Anxiety, Mental Health)
Ashburton	103	73.6	17.9	8.6		26.1	8.7	4.3	0	43.4
Bradmore Green	430	72.6	15.6	11.9		46.2	10.8	13.8	15.3	33.8
Broad Green	87	74.7	14.9	10.3		30.8	0	0	38.5	53.9
Croydon Central	406	76.8	16.5	6.7		30.3	3	16.7	35.7	69.6
Coulsdon	214	77.6	12.6	9.8		48.1	7.4	18.5	7.4	18.5
New Addington	53	67.9	26.4	5.7		35.7	14.3	7.1	35.7	49.9
Norbury	124	83.1	8.1	8.9		40	10	10	20	20
Purley	167	74.3	18%	7.8		56.7	10	9	19.9	50
Sanderstead	544	75.9	9.9	14.2		32.1	7.5	20.8	11.3	43.4
Selsdon	224	76.3	11.6	12.1		36	4	24	16	40
Shirley	215	79.1	11.2	9.8		41.7	8.3	37.5	12.5	29.1
South Norwood	359	79.4	13.1	7.5	40.4	2.1	8.5	21.3	30	

Thornton Heath	117	70.9	17.9	11.1		45	15	35	20	45
Grand Total	3043									

Disability	%
Mobility	39.6
Vision	7.6
Hearing	19
Asthma	8.6
Epilepsy	2.2
Diabetes	7.6
Sickle Cell	0.6
Learning disability	8.4
Communication difficult	3.7
Autism	10.2
ADHD	8
Other	19.4

The impact overall is mixed for people with disabilities:

Full time library opening hours will provide a positive high impact for those library users with a disability who live in the catchment areas of the nine libraries to be retained as those sites would be more accessible and available for use.

The development of the outreach service could also have a positive impact on residents with a disability who are not in proximity to a library building but would be able to access a library offer at a local community venue.

The closure of the four libraries without mitigations would have a negative impact on local users with a disability who may find it more difficult to visit their next nearest library. We heard about the impact on those with physical disabilities from residents during the consultation

Of the consultation respondents who said that they would not be able to travel to another library the disability profile:

Consultation responses on disability (583 responses "I could not use another library service," on disability: 21 Skipped, 99 Prefer not to say)

Libraries	Yes	%	No	%	Totals	% all responses
Bradmore Green	41	25.3%	121	74.7%	162	83.5%
Broad Green	8	18.2%	36	81.8%	44	83.0%
Sanderstead	28	15.6%	152	84.4%	180	75.0%
Shirley	15	19.5%	62	80.5%	77	80.2%
Totals/%	92	19.9%	371	80.1%	463	79.4%

Reviewing the feedback from those whose library is proposed to close, especially those who said they would not be able to use another library service, there is a higher proportion of residents with disabilities identified. Mitigations to support these residents are outlined below and in the Appendices Di-Div.

Mitigation Actions:

1.1 Maintaining nine library buildings open full time across the borough with three libraries in each geographic area (North, Central, South), increasing opening hours in a phased approach from January and April and offering additional activities in nearest libraries to serve additional demand such as rhymetimes

1.2. Provision of a scheduled weekly accessible bus shuttle service for residents with access needs to visit their nearest library

1.3 Home Library Service provision (free of charge) is available now, especially for older residents or those with a disability, who cannot travel to another location and would like a regular delivery of books to their home. Residents in the areas served by the 4 libraries proposed to close already access this service, including those in sheltered accommodation and care homes, and we would extend this free service to anyone of any age who cannot visit their local library.

1.4 Free 24/7 digital library of 60,000 ebooks/audiobooks, hundreds of online magazines, and thousands of newspapers. In the consultation feedback, nearly 15% said it was one of their top 3 services, and some survey respondents from the 4 libraries proposed to close said they would use this service as an alternative. Because digital access and skills are often a barrier to accessing the digital services, a programme of promotion and training would be required, and the service is already delivering a grant funded digital skills programme in partnership with voluntary partner Clear Community Web.

1.5 Communicate alternative routes to access library services with local residents and groups to support residents of all ages with their choices during the transition of the service, including publicity and information regarding changes, alternative venues for existing activities and groups, change of registered local library, potential use of Home Library Service, support using the digital library. Engagement to be undertaken with existing groups running in libraries proposed to close to make alternative arrangements for their offer

2. Library outreach

2.1 Establish library outreach activities in local venues. This is a key element of the overall library review proposals, not just a mitigation for closure, but essential to reach a wider community with library services. For those 4 libraries proposed to close, staff would facilitate moving existing community activities to local venues to ensure continuity. From April the outreach offer will include a number of venues with community book collections and regular outreach activities that align with the offer at the local venue.

2.2 Take into account consultation survey feedback on alternative venues suggested by local residents:

- Bradmore Green: School/Nursery 109 (30.9%), Local Café 98 (27.8%), College 39 (11%)
- Broad Green: School/Nursery 20 (25%) Family Hub 19 (23.8%) Local Café 14 (17.5%)
- Sanderstead: School/Nursery 131 (30.8%) Local Café 126 (29.6%) Family Hub 59 (13.9%)
- Shirley: Local Café 191 (32.6%) School/Nursery 170 (29.1%) Family Hub 73 (12.5%)

2.3 The library service will pilot regular outreach activity in communities impacted by closures during the transitional phase between November and March with a full schedule launched in April.

2.4 The Council will seek alternative operators within the voluntary, community and faith sectors for any buildings no longer managed by the library service using a Community Asset Transfer process. Should viable options be forthcoming, the library service will seek to work with any new operators to offer outreach activities from the site.

3. Further Engagement

3.1 Develop library forums of local residents and community partners to act as a reference group and inform future development and improvement of the library service

3.2 Ongoing review of library services with community groups and library users to ensure all ages are represented and served by new model:

- Children and families who attend regular library events, who might not be able to travel to another library because of a disability
- Schools, nurseries, children's centres and other local groups that support children with disabilities
- Adults who attend regular library events who might have physical or hidden disabilities
- Health & wellbeing organisations
- Voluntary, Community & Faith groups who provide services for those with a disability, especially to engage with those who do not use the library service
- Local Community Partnerships network engagement

The mitigation actions will be further updated and reviewed as opportunities emerge and develop.

3. Gender Reassignment

ONS Census Data from 2021 suggests Croydon's transgender population is 1% of the overall population

Croydon Borough Profile June 2024

The Library service does not collect information regarding gender reassignment because it is not required for the service and would exceed GDPR limits for collecting data.

The library review consultation and engagement did not provide significant data for this protected characteristic and did not indicate that the proposed changes to libraries would have a positive or negative impact, and therefore there are no mitigations identified.

4. Marriage or Civil Partnership

The 2021 Census is the latest data source for marital status. Just over 4 in 10 people (41.6%) said they were married or in a registered civil partnership, compared with 43.2% in 2011. The percentage of adults in Croydon that had divorced or dissolved a civil partnership decreased from 8.2% to 8.1%.

The increase in the percentage of people aged 16 years and over who had never been married or in a civil partnership was greater in Croydon (3.2 percentage points) than across London (2.1 percentage points, from 44.1% to 46.2%). Across England, the percentage increased by 3.3 percentage points, from 34.6% to 37.9%.

These figures include same-sex marriages and opposite-sex civil partnerships in 2021, neither of which were legally recognised in England and Wales in 2011. Same-sex marriages have been legally recognised in England and Wales since 2014 and opposite-sex civil partnerships have been recognised since 2019.

Library Active Users:

The library service does not collect information regarding marriage and civil partnership because it is not required for the service and would exceed GDPR limits for collecting data.

Library review consultation feedback – survey data (3474 responses):

Overall, of those who provided this information, 50.9% are married or in a civil partnership, 21.2% never married, 6.3% divorced or separated, and 4.1% widowed, with a breakdown by primary library below:

Marriage	Responses	Married / Civil partnership %	Never Married %	Separated / Divorced %	Widowed %	Prefer not to say %
Ashburton	147	45.7	23.6	7.9	1.4	21.4
Bradmore Green	428	59.8	10	3.5	6.1	20.6
Broad Green	87	54	20.7	6.9	0	18.4
Central	418	31.6	35.8	9.3	6.5	16.8
Coulsdon	213	62	5.2	15	3.7	14.1
New Addington	54	38.6	36.5	13.4	1.9	9.6
Norbury	123	48.7	2.4	23.6	4.1	21.1
Purley	160	54.4	7.5	20	5	13.1
Sanderstead	545	61.7	11.9	3.5	2.9	20
Selsdon	222	49.6	7.7	14.4	8.6	19.8
Shirley	214	56.5	10.7	7	7.9	17.8
South Norwood	363	42.2	5.8	32.5	1.4	18.2

Thornton Heath	115	37.4	10.4	36.5	0	15.7
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There was no specific feedback during the consultation to suggest that the proposals had a positive or negative impact on the protected characteristic of Marriage or Civil Partnership, and no mitigations were identified. The library service would work in partnership with all groups to improve access to the library service offer and ensure the service was inclusive to all.

5. Pregnancy & Maternity

According to ONS records, over a 10 year period to 2022, the number of births has averaged around 5,498 a year, and the numbers have been declining since 2017.

Croydon Borough Profile June 2024

Active Users: The Library service does not collect information regarding pregnancy and maternity because it is not required for the service and would exceed GDPR limits for collecting data.

However, all libraries host free weekly rhymetime activities, babies can have a library card, and parents can borrow books for their babies as well as books on pregnancy and parenting from all libraries.

During the consultation we heard about the value of the libraries to parents, who come with their children, particularly in the early years, and the negative impact of the decline in provision from other services (such as children's centres) and from the reduction in library opening times and events.

The equalities impact of the proposed change is mixed:

Closure of four libraries without mitigations would have a negative impact on the parents and young children who use those libraries and a potential negative impact in the wider community through the loss of the local service from the site.

Extension of the offer in nine libraries would have a positive impact on parents and young children who use those libraries, and a potential positive impact for the wider community by extending the opening hours, including Saturdays, and introducing more family events and activities, which scored highly in the consultation response as a service residents want more of.

Development of the outreach offer could have a positive impact on pregnant women and parents by enabling a library service offer to be delivered locally alongside wider maternal support service through work with children's centres.

Developing the library offer with Family Hub services at South Norwood and Thornton Heath libraries will also provide a more cohesive offer for pregnant women and parents.

Mitigation Actions:

1.1 Maintaining nine library buildings open full time across the borough with three libraries in each geographic area (North, Central, South), increasing opening hours in a phased approach from January and April and offering additional activities in nearest libraries to serve additional demand such as rhymetimes

1.2. Provision of a scheduled weekly accessible bus shuttle service for residents with access needs to visit their nearest library

1.3 Home Library Service provision (free of charge) is available now, especially for older residents or those with a disability, who cannot travel to another location and would like a regular delivery of books to their home. Residents in the areas served by the 4 libraries proposed to close already access this service, including those in sheltered accommodation and care homes, and we would extend this free service to anyone of any age who cannot visit their local library.

1.4 Free 24/7 digital library of 60,000 ebooks/audiobooks, hundreds of online magazines, and thousands of newspapers. In the consultation feedback, nearly 15% said it was one of their top 3 services, and some survey respondents from the 4 libraries proposed to close said they would use this service as an alternative. Because digital access and skills are often a barrier to accessing the digital services, a programme of promotion and training would be required, and the service is already delivering a grant funded digital skills programme in partnership with voluntary partner Clear Community Web.

1.5 Communicate alternative routes to access library services with local residents and groups to support residents of all ages with their choices during the transition of the service, including publicity and information regarding changes, alternative venues for existing activities and groups, change of registered local library, potential use of Home Library Service, support using the digital library. Engagement to be undertaken with existing groups running in libraries proposed to close to make alternative arrangements for their offer

2. Library outreach

2.1 Establish library outreach activities in local venues. This is a key element of the overall library review proposals, not just a mitigation for closure, but essential to reach a wider community with library services. For those 4 libraries proposed to close, staff

would facilitate moving existing community activities to local venues to ensure continuity. From April the outreach offer will include a number of venues with community book collections and regular outreach activities that align with the offer at the local venue.

2.2 Take into account consultation survey feedback on alternative venues suggested by local residents:

- Bradmore Green: School/Nursery 109 (30.9%), Local Café 98 (27.8%), College 39 (11%)
- Broad Green: School/Nursery 20 (25%) Family Hub 19 (23.8%) Local Café 14 (17.5%)
- Sanderstead: School/Nursery 131 (30.8%) Local Café 126 (29.6%) Family Hub 59 (13.9%)
- Shirley: Local Café 191 (32.6%) School/Nursery 170 (29.1%) Family Hub 73 (12.5%)

2.3 The library service will pilot regular outreach activity in communities impacted by closures during the transitional phase between November and March with a full schedule launched in April.

2.4 The Council will seek alternative operators within the voluntary, community and faith sectors for any buildings no longer managed by the library service using a Community Asset Transfer process. Should viable options be forthcoming, the library service will seek to work with any new operators to offer outreach activities from the site.

3. Further Engagement

3.1 Develop library forums of local residents and community partners to act as a reference group and inform future development and improvement of the library service

3.2 Ongoing review of library services with community groups and library users to ensure all ages are represented and served by new model:

- Children and families who attend regular library events, who might not be able to travel to another library
- Schools, nurseries, children's centres and other local groups that support families
- Adults who attend regular library events
- Health & wellbeing organisations
- Voluntary, Community & Faith groups who provide services, especially to engage with those who do not use the library service
- Local Community Partnerships network engagement

The mitigation actions will be further updated and reviewed as opportunities emerge and develop.

6. Race

Croydon is an ethnically diverse borough with 51.6% of the population from a global majority background with the largest groups being people of Black ethnicities (22.6%) and people of Asian ethnicities (17.5%). Croydon overall has seen a shift in race profile over the last 10 years with an increase in global majority populations and decrease in white population. The Census 2021 data shows that there was more diversity in the younger age group population in Croydon.

Croydon Borough Profile June 2024

Active Users: There is an indicative profile of race/ethnicity for library active users below. Only 38% of library active users provided ethnicity information when joining the library, and this figure does not include everyone who participates in library activities because library membership is not required for participating in rhymetimes, joining knitting clubs or studying in a library. The data available suggests the profile of library active users is more diverse than the overall Croydon Borough Profile. Data from the 4 libraries proposed to close, which is based on the 33% of all active users who provided this data, suggests a disproportionate impact on those who are White and Asian:

Croydon Libraries: Ethnicity for 13 Libraries compared to 4 libraries proposed to close: Active Users x 2 years:

Libraries	Library Active Users by ethnicity*	% Active Users - Ethnicity	4 Libraries proposed to close % Active Users by Ethnicity (33% provided data)	Croydon Borough ethnicity
WHITE	7031	43.7%	60.1%	48.40%
ASIAN	3997	24.9%	24.5%	17.5%
BLACK	3744	23.3%	9.6%	22.6%
MIXED	935	5.8%	4.2%	7.6%
OTHER	374	2.3%	1.5%	3.9%
TOTAL	16081	100.0%		

***Only 38% of active users provided ethnicity data**

The indicative ethnicity data suggests the four libraries proposed to close have different ethnicity profiles which have been reviewed in more detail below. The impact is outlined in more detail in the local EQIA documents (Appendix Di-DIv). Two libraries in the South of Croydon (Bradmore Green & Sanderstead) indicate a disproportionate impact on the white residents, in the Central area the impact is more aligned to the Croydon borough profile, with an impact on 58% white but also 24.5% Asian and 14.8% Black residents. In the North (Broad Green Library) there is a disproportionate impact on the Asian and Black residents, especially the Tamil community who use the library regularly for English and parenting classes, yoga and social

activities. These 4 libraries serve 13% of all white residents and 10% of all Asian residents who are registered as Croydon Library Active Users, based on the available data.

Race: Four Libraries Proposed to Close: Ethnicity data of Active Users x 2 years:

Libraries	WHITE	ASIAN	BLACK	MIXED	OTHER	% active users who provided ethnicity data - by library
Bradmore Green	84.2%	7.3%	2.8%	4.1%	1.6%	49%
Broad Green	14.0%	58.1%	23.3%	2.3%	2.3%	24%
Sanderstead	71.2%	17.6%	3.7%	6.1%	1.3%	51%
Shirley	58.4%	23.3%	14.8%	2.5%	0.9%	33%
<i>All 4 % by Ethnicity</i>	60.1%	24.5%	9.6%	4.2%	1.5%	Highlighted above
<i>% all 13 libraries</i>	13%	10%	4%	7%	6%	

Consultation: The race of residents attending consultation public meetings and drop in engagement reflects the online survey responses, with a majority White response for Bradmore Green, Sanderstead and Shirley Libraries, and a majority Asian (Tamil community) response at Broad Green Library.

The table below outlines the breakdown by race of users of the four libraries proposed to close and the breakdown by race of users from those libraries who reported they would be unable to use another library.

The first column for each library indicates the response rate to the question on ethnicity and the second column for each library includes the response rate and demographic profile of those who said they would be unable to access another library.

The ethnic profiles of the two groups are broadly similar suggesting that within the library user group, of those who are unable to visit another library, no particular ethnicity is disproportionately impacted.

4 Libraries proposed to close by race – compared to all consultation responses

Race	Bradmore Green	Bradmore Green*	Broad Green	Broad Green*	Sanderstead	Sanderstead*	Shirley	Shirley*	All Responses
% of responses**	84.9%	83.5%	84.6%	84.9%	80.9%	76.3%	84.4%	80.2%	85.5%
White	84.6	83.3	28.6	24.4	77	73.8	79.5	83.1	73.5

Asian	6.4	6.8	44.2	44.4	12.9	14.2	12.1	13	10.9
Black	2.1	1.2	10.4	8.9	3.5	2.7	3.2	1.3	7.3
Mixed	5.1	6.8	11.7	15.6	5.7	8.2	4.2	2.6	6.5
Other	1.9	1.9	5.2	6.7	0.9	1.1	1.1	0	1.8

**I cannot use another library service*

***% of all those who responded by primary library*

The equality impact of the proposed changes is mixed:

Closure of four libraries without mitigations would have a negative impact on the ethnic groups who most use those libraries – particularly the white community at Bradmore Green, Shirley and Sanderstead and the Asian community at Broad Green.

Mitigations to support these users are outlined below.

However the data also suggests that the current offer fails to serve key local communities proportionately, including the Black community around Broad Green. In these areas, the proposed new model would enable more targeted work to be undertaken through the outreach offer to engage communities in other venues with a library service offer.

Mitigation Actions:

1.1 Maintaining nine library buildings open full time across the borough with three libraries in each geographic area (North, Central, South), increasing opening hours in a phased approach from January and April and offering additional activities in nearest libraries to serve additional demand such as rhymetimes

1.2. Provision of a scheduled weekly accessible bus shuttle service for residents with access needs to visit their nearest library

1.3 Home Library Service provision (free of charge) is available now, especially for older residents or those with a disability, who cannot travel to another location and would like a regular delivery of books to their home. Residents in the areas served by the 4 libraries proposed to close already access this service, including those in sheltered accommodation and care homes, and we would extend this free service to anyone of any age who cannot visit their local library.

1.4 Free 24/7 digital library of 60,000 ebooks/audiobooks, hundreds of online magazines, and thousands of newspapers. In the consultation feedback, nearly 15% said it was one of their top 3 services, and some survey respondents from the 4 libraries proposed to close said they would use this service as an alternative. Because digital access and skills are often a barrier to accessing the digital services, a programme of promotion and training would be required, and the service is already delivering a grant funded digital skills programme in partnership with voluntary partner Clear Community Web.

1.5 Communicate alternative routes to access library services with local residents and groups to support residents of all ages with their choices during the transition of the service, including publicity and information regarding changes, alternative venues for existing activities and groups, change of registered local library, potential use of Home Library Service, support using the digital library. Engagement to be undertaken with existing groups running in libraries proposed to close to make alternative arrangements for their offer

2. Library outreach

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2.2 Take into account consultation survey feedback on alternative venues suggested by local residents:

- Bradmore Green: School/Nursery 109 (30.9%), Local Café 98 (27.8%), College 39 (11%)
- Broad Green: School/Nursery 20 (25%) Family Hub 19 (23.8%) Local Café 14 (17.5%)
- Sanderstead: School/Nursery 131 (30.8%) Local Café 126 (29.6%) Family Hub 59 (13.9%)
- Shirley: Local Café 191 (32.6%) School/Nursery 170 (29.1%) Family Hub 73 (12.5%)

2.3 The library service will pilot regular outreach activity in communities impacted by closures during the transitional phase between November and March with a full schedule launched in April.

2.4 The Council will seek alternative operators within the voluntary, community and faith sectors for any buildings no longer managed by the library service using a Community Asset Transfer process. Should viable options be forthcoming, the library service will seek to work with any new operators to offer outreach activities from the site.

3. Further Engagement

3.1 Develop library forums of local residents and community partners to act as a reference group and inform future development and improvement of the library service

3.2 Ongoing review of library services with community groups and library users to ensure all ages are represented and served by new model:

- Focussed engagement with partners representing impacted ethnic communities
- Children & families who attend regular library events
- Schools, nurseries, children's centres and other local groups
- Health & wellbeing organisations
- Voluntary, Community & Faith groups attended by diverse communities, especially to engage with those who do not use the library service
- Local Community Partnerships network engagement

The mitigation actions will be further updated and reviewed as opportunities emerge and develop.

7. Religion or Belief

Just under half (48.9%) of Croydon respondents for the Census 2021 stated they were "Christian" compared to 56.4% for the Census 2011. About 1 in 4 (25.9%) stated that they had no religion compared to 1 in 5 (20.0%) for Census 2011. Croydon people following the Muslim religion are the second biggest religious group, after Christians, increasing from 8.1% to 10.4% over the 10 years to March 2021

Croydon Borough Profile June 2024

Active Users: The Library service does not collect information regarding Religion & Belief because it is not required for the service and would exceed GDPR limits for collecting data. Libraries do provide books on world religions and space for information displays.

Consultation:

There was no feedback from the consultation to suggest a negative or positive impact of the proposals on the basis of the protected characteristic of Religion and Belief.

The table below outlines the Consultation feedback from respondents on their religion. For libraries proposed to close we also indicated the religion of survey respondents who said that they would not be able to visit another library. The religious profiles of

the two groups are broadly similar suggesting that within the library user group, no particular religion is disproportionately impacted. The exception to this is the Muslim community at Broad Green who are more likely to be unable to visit another library.

Further local analysis is included in Appendices Di-Div.

The equality impact of the proposed changes is potential negative impact for Muslims and Hindus around Broad Green Library and specific engagement is needed with these communities to design the outreach service for that area and promote mitigation measures

Religion	Number of responses	%	Christian%	Hindu%	Muslim%	Other%	No religion%	Prefer not to say%
Ashburton	143 of 147	97.3%	39.9	1.4	2.1	6.8	30.8	18.9
Bradmore Green	421 of 443	95.0%	51.1	1.4	0	3.9	20	22.6
Bradmore Green*	182 of 194	93.8%	47.3	1.6	1.6	2.8	20.9	25.8
Broad Green	85 of 91	93.4%	31.8	14.1	8.0	12.0	12.9	21.2
Broad Green*	49 of 53	92.5%	24.5	8.2	24.5	0	14.3	28.6
Central Library	402 of 418	96.1%	40.3	4.7	3.2	4	33.6	14.2
Coulsdon	212 of 220	96.4%	42	2.8	3.3	3.8	31.6	16.5
New Addington	53 of 54	98.1%	52.8	0	5.7	3.8	28.3	9.4
Norbury	125 of 126	99.2%	24	1.6	11.2	3.2	37.6	22.4
Purley	165 of 172	95.9%	47.3	4.2	3.0	3.7	23.6	18.2
Sanderstead	540 of 565	95.6%	39.8	5.7	2.8	2.4	24.1	25.2
Sanderstead*	229 of 240	95.4%	37.1	7.4	2.6	15.0	20.5	30.6
Selsdon	222 of 231	96.1%	50.0	2.7	2.7	0.4	23.9	20.3
Shirley	214 of 225	95.11%	53.3	4.7	1.4	3.2	20.6	16.8
Shirley*	91 of 96	94.8%	50.5	4.4	2.2	3.3	17.6	22

South Norwood	360 of 366	98.4%	29.4	0.8	4.2	2.9	45.8	16.9
Thornton Heath	117 of 119	98.3%	47	1.7	8.5	2.7	22.2	17.9

**If 4 libraries closed I could not use another library service*

Mitigation Actions:

Engagement to continue with local community groups, including faith groups, to ensure the service development and programming will engage with underserved or marginalised groups, seeking to ensure the library services are welcoming to all. Specific engagement to be undertaken with Hindu and Muslim faith and community groups around Broad Green to develop the outreach offer to meet the needs of those who aren't able to access another library.

In developing an outreach plan, there have been opportunities identified with faith organisations, as well as other community groups, to identify a local venue to establish library outreach activities for all ages. The outreach proposals are key to reaching a wider community, not just a mitigation for closure, and faith organisations offer universal community support and activities across Croydon. We would seek to work in partnership to deliver library services alongside an existing offer, providing a community book collection and library activities.

8. Sex:

There is a higher proportion of females to males in the 18-64 years age band. The 65 years plus age group makes up 13.6% of the total population in Croydon compared to the average for London of 11.9%. Figure 5 – Croydon Age and Gender Profile Source: ONS, Census 2021, November 2022

Croydon Borough Profile June 2024

Active Users: Traditionally, a higher proportion of women use libraries and will experience more impact from the proposed changes – both positive and negative. Women are more likely to attend library events, and mothers are more likely to bring small children to library activities.

Consultation: a higher proportion of women (+10%) responded to the survey, compared to library active users.

Sex	Active Users	%	Consultation survey*	%
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Female	25317	59.7%	2359	68.0%
Male	16754	39.5%	911	26.2%
Other	26	0.1%		
Prefer not to say	279	0.7%	201	5.8%
	42376		3471*	

Of 3615 survey responses, 143 skipped this question

Of the consultation respondents who said that they would not be able to use another library service

Consultation responses on sex

(583 responses "I could not use another library service", on sex: 23 Skipped, 53 Prefer not to say)

Libraries	Female	%	Male	%	Totals	% all responses
Bradmore Green	126	73.7%	45	26.3%	171	88.1%
Broad Green	35	77.8%	10	22.2%	45	84.9%
Sanderstead	138	67.3%	67	32.7%	205	85.4%
Shirley	67	77.9%	19	22.1%	86	89.6%
Totals/%	366	72.2%	141	27.8%	507	87.0%

The equality impact of the proposed changes is mixed:

Women are more frequent library users across the library network. Those who use the four libraries proposed to close may experience a negative impact without mitigations.

Women who use the libraries proposed to be retained and extended are more likely to experience a positive impact from the improved offer. The proposal to provide more evening and Saturday opening could have a potential positive impact for male residents who may be more likely to be in full time work and therefore excluded from the current limited opening hours.

The development of the outreach service could help the library service to attract more men and women through engagement with nonusers in non library settings and through improved promotion of the offer.

Mitigation Actions:

1.1 Maintaining nine library buildings open full time across the borough with three libraries in each geographic area (North, Central, South), increasing opening hours in a phased approach from January and April and offering additional activities in nearest libraries to serve additional demand such as rhymetimes

1.2. Provision of a scheduled weekly accessible bus shuttle service for residents with access needs to visit their nearest library

1.3 Home Library Service provision (free of charge) is available now, especially for older residents or those with a disability, who cannot travel to another location and would like a regular delivery of books to their home. Residents in the areas served by the 4 libraries proposed to close already access this service, including those in sheltered accommodation and care homes, and we would extend this free service to anyone of any age who cannot visit their local library.

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2.4 The Council will seek alternative operators within the voluntary, community and faith sectors for any buildings no longer managed by the library service using a Community Asset Transfer process. Should viable options be forthcoming, the library service will seek to work with any new operators to offer outreach activities from the site.

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3.1 Develop library forums of local residents and community partners to act as a reference group and inform future development and improvement of the library service

3.2 Ongoing review of library services with community groups and library users to ensure all ages are represented and served by new model:

- Children & families who attend regular library events, including women and mothers in particular
- Schools, nurseries, children's centres and other local groups that cater for parents and babies
- Health & wellbeing organisations
- Voluntary, Community & Faith groups attended by both women and men, especially to engage with those who do not use the library service
- Local Community Partnerships network engagement

The mitigation actions will be further updated and reviewed as opportunities emerge and develop.

9. Sexual Orientation: No Impact/Unknown:

ONS Census Data from 2021 indicates Croydon's heterosexual population is 87.8% with 1.51% gay/lesbian and 1.18% bisexual overall. ***Croydon Borough Profile June 2024***

Active Users: The Library service does not collect information regarding sexual orientation because it is not required for the service and would exceed GDPR limits for collecting data

Consultation: Consultation survey responses from those who provided details, by the primary library indicated in the survey responses, suggests majority are heterosexual.

Sexual Orientation	Ashburton	Bradmore Green	Broad Green	Central	Coulsdon	New Addington	Norbury	Purley	Sanderstead	Selsdon	Shirley	South Norwood	Thornton Heath
Heterosexual	72	76.4	69.4	72.8	75.5	83.3	73.1	79.1	71.4	77.5	77.8	76.5	73.7
Gay/Lesbian	3.5	1.2	2	5.7	2.3	1.8	2.5	1.2	0.9	0.5	1.1	1.9	1.8
Bisexual	2.8	0	4.1	3.7	0	1.9	0.8	3.1	0.9	2.3	1.1	3.6	3.5
Other	2.1	3.1	2	2.5	1.4	0	3.4	1.8	1.3	1.8	0	1.6	0.9
Prefer not to say	19.6	19.6	22.4	15.2	20.8	13	20.2	14.7	25.5	17.9	20	16.3	20.2

Of the consultation respondents who said that they would not be able to travel to another library the sex profile was 70%+ heterosexual.

There is no indication from the statistical data and consultation feedback that a specific mitigation is required for this protected characteristic, but the library service would continue to engage with local community groups to ensure the service development, book collection, and calendar programming planned will be inclusive of all groups regardless of their sexual orientation. The service will identify underserved or marginalised groups, to ensure libraries serve all communities and increase activities and resources that are inclusive of LGBTQ+ communities, including provision of a safe space.

Stage 3: Describe how the proposed change might impact on the council’s ability to undertake the Public Sector Equality Duty and commitment to anti-racism (N.B. this can be both positive or negative):

<p>Eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation</p>	<p>Libraries are universal community spaces where users report feeling welcomed without any need to purchase anything or hold any particular faith or other characteristic. The library service seeks to provide local safe spaces and deliver a service offer which supports all users people to develop confidence, social connections and live healthier, independent lives.</p> <p>The parttime library service hours have limited the capacity of the service to provide the cultural programmes that highlight diverse cultures and information campaigns that work to eliminate discrimination and victimisation.</p> <p>The closure of 4 library buildings would allow additional staffed days at 9 libraries, including Saturdays, allowing a more extensive programme to be delivered full time from larger district centres, including making Central Library full time again, and more accessible to residents. An outreach programme would be put in place to engage the wider community.</p> <p>Closure of the library buildings will potentially remove this local facility from community use, and this report has reviewed the potential negative impact on those within each protected characteristic, in order to develop local mitigation actions which can be put in place as soon as possible, to ensure the local residents have an alternative safe space for continuity of activities. Resident feedback during the consultation expressed how important these activities were locally, to help make social connections and feel safe from discrimination, harassment or victimisation.</p>
<p>Advancing equality of opportunity</p>	<p>Public libraries originated from movements to advance equality of opportunity and this remains at the core of their mission including provision of free access to books and information, events and programmes to encourage reading, literacy and learning and support for health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The proposals would reinvest funds from the closure of 4 libraries to improve the offer at 9 libraries, increase open days and improve marketing and engagement to reach more residents with the wider library offer.</p> <p>The closure of the 4 libraries would reduce the range of services available in each of those local areas, and this report has reviewed the impact on those within each protected characteristic to ensure opportunities available through library services continue to be available through local mitigations such as outreach. These libraries currently host regular activities for children under 5 and their parents/carers, learning activities for school children</p>

	<p>including class visits, space for children and young people after school, reading groups and clubs for adults, and in Broad Green space for learning and community activities provided for the local Tamil community. Continuity of these activities in the local area is a specific focus of the mitigation actions.</p> <p>The library service will develop a dedicated local library outreach offer from local community venues, starting in these areas most affected by change, and have already followed up suggestions for venues and partnerships suggested by local residents during the consultation. The outreach programme will be developed more widely after that, in response to local need, with a particular focus on engaging local families, those with disabilities, and older residents at risk of isolation, developing regular visits to local schools, and seeking out underrepresented groups identified as part of this equalities review, and engaging with the local sheltered accommodation and care homes.</p>
<p>Fostering good relations</p>	<p>Library buildings are important focal points for their communities, as places where people of different ages and backgrounds share the same space, where people can find local information and connect with others and where everyone is welcome. Local residents tell us that library activities such as Rhymetimes bring young children and their parents into a social community setting, sometimes for the first time. Activities for adults, especially for older adults and those with disabilities, improve social connection and reduce isolation, something which residents have commented on in the feedback, describing their local library as a lifeline.</p> <p>Across Croydon, local residents have urged the Council to increase opening hours to offer a full time library service, because working people and their families cannot access their local library. Currently all libraries are operated parttime and usage is poor. Through these proposals, which include the closure of 4 libraries, it would be possible to increase opening hours, including Saturdays, at the other 9 libraries, improving the offer for these areas. A programme of outreach would be developed first in venues local to each of the libraries proposed to close, especially to provide access to books and regular activities at local venues suggested by residents to ensure there is continuity of service locally.</p> <p>The library service will continue to engage with communities across Croydon to develop other outreach opportunities, and improved outreach and marketing would provide capacity to foster good relations in the wider area, especially engaging with nonusers of the library.</p>
<p>Embedding anti-racism</p>	<p>Maintaining a local library building ensures that there is a local Council building, operated on principles of anti-racism. Closure of this facility could limit the awareness and scope for proactive anti-racism in the locality.</p>

The current opening hours of 2-3 days a week for most Croydon Libraries, and 4 days at Central Library, already limits the scope and scale of service development, and as a result, membership of these libraries does not reflect the area's ethnicity. Reducing the number of library buildings by four across the borough, will allow the service to deliver a more effective and impactful service from fewer buildings operating full time, with capacity to develop a localised programme of outreach and engagement. The proposed outreach programme can better embed the Council's anti-racism principles across the borough by delivering cultural programmes and a range of books and materials from local venues, in partnership with local community groups, which promote learning and embed anti-racism.

Stage 4: What evidence has been considered and what consultation has been carried out?

<p>Data collection</p>	<p>The following sources of data have been collected and reviewed to consider the impact of the proposals:</p> <p>Ordnance Survey (HMSO 2023) – see maps at end of template LSOA data 2021- local and 1-mile radius CIPFA data for 2023-24 – included in Cabinet paper Croydon Observatory data using ONS Census 2021 Croydon Borough Profile June 2024 DPH Research 2022 Library usage and membership data - The Libraries Consortium (TLC) library management system (23 boroughs): Active Users demographics data x 2 years from April 2022 to May 2024. Library Performance data for visits, event attendance, issues, use of PCs, new members, active users (1 year) reported monthly by branch library Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Adult Social Care and Health Strategy Mayor's Business Plan 2022-2026 Chief Executives London Committee's (CELC) Tackling Racial Inequality Standard</p> <p>The service engaged consultants Activist to undertake additional research and needs analysis in developing the proposals, as detailed in the following papers from Croydon's Cabinet on 31st Jan 24: https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s53446/Final%20Cabinet%20paper%20-%20Libraries%20Service%20Review.pdf This included:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary research: Staff engagement and workshop sessions, external partner meetings held with active groups from the last libraries consultation, internal Council colleague meetings including education, health, communities, adults and assets • Secondary research – Analysis of libraries usage and membership data, demographic data and need, health inequalities, educational attainment, deprivation, case studies from other library services, insight from previous staff engagement, formal consultation responses and equality impact assessments from the last change process in 2021 <p>The data has been used to understand the current reach and impact of the library service locally for 13 Croydon Libraries: the needs and demographics of the local population, the impact of the proposed closure of 4 library buildings, and the opportunity through a remodelled service to better respond to local need reviewed in respect to each of the protected characteristics.</p> <p>This analysis has been reviewed and updated following the public consultation on the proposals which can be found in the Cabinet report back for 25th September 2024.</p>
<p>Consultation</p>	<p>Formal public consultation must take place in advance of implementing proposals which make significant changes to how local services are delivered. Furthermore, the provision of a ‘comprehensive and efficient’ public library service is a statutory requirement under the 1964 Public Libraries Act. Councils must also ensure that proposals are consistent with equalities duties.</p> <p>Please refer to Appendix B - Library Service Review Phase 3 consultation findings report which analyses the consultation findings from Phases 1-2 as well as Phase 3 feedback in detail.</p> <p>Online consultation survey 8 February – 19 April 2024 completed by 3,614 respondents, including 200 who completed paper forms.</p> <p>Petitions: Broad Green – Petition_15042024111547: 169 signatories Broad Green – Petition2_18042024164910: 214 signatories Petition to save Bradmore Green 240412: 421 signatories “Young Voices” Petition April 2024: 259 signatories Petition “Save Sanderstead Library 240417: 1,411 signatories</p>

Shirley Library Petition: 500+ signatories
Norbury Library Petition: signatories

Online meetings:

07/02/2024 Webinar for all libraries <https://www.getinvolved.croydon.gov.uk/libraries-services-consultation>

26/03/2024 Introduction to community run libraries attended by a wide range of residents
<https://communitylibrariesnetwork.org/case-study/2881/>

In person engagement

North Area:

Broad Green Library:

17/02/2024 Drop in at Broad Green Library (Saturday): 30 attending

11/03/2024 Public Meeting at Broad Green Library (evening): 4 attending

15/04/2024 Drop in at Broad Green Library AM during rhymetime and Tamil community classes: 22 attending

Thornton Heath Library:

05/03/2024 Drop in at Thornton Heath Library: 25 attending

03/04/2024 Outreach outside: 22 engagements

Norbury Library:

12/03/2024 Drop in at Norbury Library: 3 attending

13/03/2024 Local Community Outreach Partnership regular meeting: 51 attending

05/04/2024 Outreach along high street: 34 engagements

South Norwood Library:

04/03/2024 SE25 meeting: 20 attending

08/03/2024 Drop in at South Norwood Library: 20 attending

06/04/2024 Workshop with local stakeholders: 6 attending

19/04/2024 Drop in at South Norwood Library: 48 attending

03/04/2024 Engagement with young people attending Holiday camps at Samuel Coleridge Taylor Centre: 12 attending

Central Area

Shirley Library:

15/02/2024 Public Meeting (Evening) – 50 attending
16/02/2024 Drop In at Shirley Library (Afternoon) – 30 attending
10/04/2024 Drop in at Shirley Library (Morning) – 32 attending
02/04/2024 Shrublands Estate Youth Bus outreach – 16 conversations

Ashburton Library:

19/03/2024 Drop In: 2 attending

Central Library:

10/02/2024 Drop In: 29 attending
11/04/2024 Clocktower outreach on Central closed day: 23 engagements
13/04/2024 Saturday outreach: 112 engagements

New Addington:

23/02/2024 Drop In: 8 attending
12/04/2024 Drop In : 10 attending
11/04/2024 Drop In Fieldway Community Centre HAF camps: 20 engagements
18/03/2024 ReNA (Renewing New Addington) Meeting: 30 attending
15/04/2024 ReNA Meeting: 30 attending

South Area

Sanderstead Library:

20/02/2024 Public Meeting at Sanderstead United Reform Church (evening): 100+ attending
21/02/2024 Drop In at Library: 25 attending
08/04/2024 Drop In at Library: 35 attending

Selsdon Library:

20/03/2024 Drop in at Selsdon Library during Open+ hours: 6 engagements

Purley Library:

07/03/2024 Drop in at Purley Library: 26 attending

27/03/2024 Workshop with local stakeholders: 6 attended led by Activist

09/04/2024 Drop in at Purley Library: 46 attended

Bradmore Green Library/Old Coulsdon:

19/02/2024 Public Meeting at Congregational Church in Old Coulsdon: 150 attending

20/02/2024 Drop in at library AM: 60 attending

05/04/2024 Drop in at library PM (after school): 200 attending

02/04/2024 Tollers Estate outreach – Youth Bus (8 attending)

18/04/2024 Visit to Coulsdon CofE School next door to library (approximately 100)

Coulsdon Library:

18/03/2024 Drop In at Coulsdon Library: 10 attending

Other In Person Engagement:

02/04/2024 Learning Disability Alliance Network Meeting: 50 attending

16/04/2024 Learning Disability Coffee Morning: 16 attending

08/04/2024 Layton Crescent Sheltered Housing: 4 attending

08/04/2024 Central Library: Adults with Learning Difficulty learners: 4 attending

17/04/2024 Local Community Partnership (Central): 43 attending

Equalities feedback received during the consultation (See Appendix B- Library Service Review Phase 3 consultation findings report for further detail)

Page 78: Needs of groups are not currently being served

There is a widely-held view among both individuals but also community partners that the reduced opening hours are preventing many people from accessing the library service, particularly working families and children and young people, as well as an awareness that the library service currently isn't reaching many vulnerable people in the community who could benefit. Typical feedback:

- 'I never know when it is going to be open - it is rarely open and times seem to change frequently.'
- 'I work full time and libraries are closed at weekends and after 5pm.'

Page 79: The specific impacts on people with protected characteristics

Among those living in the catchment area of the four libraries proposed for closure who took part in the consultation, there was almost universal opposition to closures and a number of key concerns expressed about using other libraries, including accessibility without a car, parking, safety in Central Croydon and Coulsdon, and the impact on particular groups who would not be able to travel.

The main groups cited: older people; children and young families; disabled people; those facing mental health or physical health challenges, and global majority communities. For each library these were the groups most identified as at risk from the closure proposals:

Feedback on Mitigations:

A number of people shared their thoughts about the possible ideas that could be put in place to mitigate the effects of the proposed closures, which have all been considered in the context of mitigating the impact on those with protected characteristics. These included

- identifying new partners to take over the building or a community managed model; more use of self-service access with support for users to become more comfortable with it; exploring alternative opening hours; the use of volunteers; providing toilet facilities elsewhere
- A large number of participants shared ideas about reaching more people not currently using the library service. These included transport and travel support; provide replacement services, and or opening hours, elsewhere; better service promotion and marketing; improving safety.

NB: Alternative proposals for service improvements have been analysed in section 6 of the Cabinet report 25th Sept.

The overall benefits of the proposals: A significant number of participants were enthusiastic about weekend opening, particularly on Saturdays and evenings, although a repeated concern among these responses was the extent to which these additional hours would be staffed as opposed to enabled with Open+. Comments linked to proposals including equalities:

Please refer to the detailed report in Appendix B and additional details in the individual EQIA reports in Appendix D

Stage 5: Identify any adverse or positive impact and mitigation steps that can be or have been taken

Guidance on Impact Scores: Consider the impact of your proposal by giving a numerical score to both the likelihood of an impact and the severity of an impact against each characteristic. This should draw upon the evidence you cited at Stage 3.

Use the key below to score the likelihood of the proposed change impacting each of the protected groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against each protected group.	1 = Unlikely to impact 2 = Likely to impact 3 = Certain to impact
Use the key below to score the severity of impact of the proposed change on each of the protected groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against each protected group.	1 = Low 2 = Medium 3 = High
The score for likelihood and severity are then multiplied.	e.g. Unlikely to impact =1, Low impact =1, total score =1

Characteristics		Likelihood of impact	Severity of impact	Impact score	Summary of impact (positive, negative, no impact or unknown)*	If negative or unknown, what can be or has been done to mitigate this? Please provide clear actions and timelines.**
Protected Characteristics (Equality Act 2010)	Age	3	2	6	Potential Negative/Positive	As outlined above
	Disability	3	2	6	Potential Negative/Positive	As outlined above
	Gender Reassignment	1	1	1	No impact identified / Unknown	Engagement with any emerging local community groups to ensure the service development, book collection, and cultural calendar programming will be inclusive of all groups with or without regard to gender reassignment; libraries will continue to welcome all residents and provide a safe space regardless of gender

Characteristics	Likelihood of impact	Severity of impact	Impact score	Summary of impact (positive, negative, no impact or unknown)*	If negative or unknown, what can be or has been done to mitigate this? Please provide clear actions and timelines.**
Marriage or Civil Partnership	1	1	1	No impact identified / Unknown	Libraries will continue to welcome all residents regardless of marital status
Pregnancy and Maternity	2	2	4	Potential Negative/Positive	As outlined above
Race	2	2	4	Potential Negative/Positive	As outlined above
Religion or Belief	1	1	1	No impact identified / Unknown	Libraries will continue to welcome all residents regardless of faith and will work with partners in the faith sector to provide inclusive services including through outreach
Sex	3	2	6	Potential Negative/Positive	As outlined above
Sexual Orientation	1	1	1	No impact identified / Unknown	Continuing engagement with local community groups to ensure the service development, book collection, and cultural calendar programming will be inclusive of all groups with or without regard to sexual orientation; libraries will continue to welcome all residents and provide a safe space regardless of sexual orientation

Stage 6: What is the outcome of your assessment? Select one of these four options:

Decision	Definition	Conclusion - Mark 'X' below
No major change	Our analysis demonstrates that the proposed change is robust. The evidence shows no potential for discrimination and we have taken all opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitoring and review. If you reach this conclusion, state your reasons and briefly outline the evidence used to support your decision.	
Adjust the proposed change	We will take steps to lessen the impact of the proposed change should it adversely impact the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties, remove barriers or better promote equality. We are going to take action to ensure these opportunities are realised. If you reach this conclusion, ensure you have completed Section 5 above.	
Continue the proposed change despite potential for adverse impact	We will adopt or continue with the change, despite potential for adverse impact or opportunities to lessen the impact of discrimination, harassment or victimisation and better advance equality and foster good relations between groups through the change. However, there are justifiable reasons to continue as planned. If you reach this conclusion, ensure you have completed Section 4 above, clearly setting out your justifications.	X
Stop or amend the proposed change	Our change would have adverse effects on one or more protected groups that are not justified and cannot be mitigated. Our proposed change must be stopped or amended.	

Stage 7: EQIA Monitoring and Sign Off

How will the EQIA be reviewed and monitored, including timescales?	The EQIA will be reviewed annually to assess the impact of the library service operating model and identify areas for further improvement.		
Equalities advice received from:	Ken Orlukwu; Senior Equalities Officer Helen Reeves; Head of Strategy and Policy	Date:	
EQIA approved by:	Kristian Aspinall; Director of Culture and Community Safety	Date:	02/09/2024

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