

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

1. Name of the strategy being assessed:

INSPIRE: Dorset Council Library Strategy 2022 - 2033

N.B. The strategy and this accompanying EqIA remain in draft, as both documents will be subject to a 12-week public consultation, during the autumn months. Strategy development timeline [available here](#). The strategy and the EqIA will be refined and updated in light of the feedback received during the consultation process.

An updated EqIA will form part of the report brought back to Joint Overview Committee following the autumn consultation. The report will also present: phase two consultation feedback, recommended refinements to the library strategy, implementation plans and associated financial implications. All supporting implementation plans will consider protected characteristics and the impact on different groups of people, so the impacts on protected groups can be refined.

2. Aims and objectives of the strategy:

Dorset Council, as a library authority, has a statutory duty¹ to provide a “comprehensive and efficient” library service for all those who live work or study in the authority area. A new Dorset Council Library Strategy will guide how we develop and deliver our library services over the next 10 years, delivering services in line with the needs of our residents and Dorset Council’s strategic priorities.

The draft library strategy sets a clear mission for the library service: To Inspire, Connect and Enable our communities through our services.

The mission comprises three key themes and the strategic aims of the strategy are to:

- **Inspire:**
 - To enrich lives through universal access to information, knowledge, learning and literacy
- **Connect:**
 - To connect with and meet the needs of our communities
- **Enable:**
 - **our communities** To create accessible, inclusive spaces for our communities to share and use

¹ DCMS, 2022 [Libraries as a statutory service - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-as-a-statutory-service)

- **our library teams** To invest in the development of our workforce and volunteers to deliver services that meet future community needs and exceed customer expectations.

Each of these strategic aims are supported by a set of outcome-based aims within the strategy.

Development of this library strategy will enable the repositioning of the library service as a strategic delivery partner for a range of council priorities. Libraries can work within strategic partnerships to deliver outcomes which help to: close the education attainment gap, help break the cycle of poverty and reduce inequality, tackle the mental health crisis, close the digital divide, tackle social isolation, improve wellbeing and promote environmental awareness. Activity in these areas are all part of our core library offer², but we can amplify our impact by delivering in closer partnership with others.

Read the draft of the INSPIRE: Dorset Council Library Strategy here, as presented to [the Joint Overview Committee meeting on 29th June 2022](#).

3. Background to the proposal:

The current library strategy was created under a predecessor authority and is over 10 years old. Since then, there has been societal change and transformation including significant digital transformation and public behaviour change following two years of a pandemic. We want the new library strategy to meet the needs of our communities now and in the future.

We are developing the library strategy based on two phases of public consultation and a strategic needs assessment.

Phase one of the consultation took place in October 2021 to January 2022 and we ran three #LetsTalkLibraries surveys:

- Ages 5-15 public survey
- 16years+ (Main) public survey
- Employee, partner and business survey

External consultants, Shared Intelligence (SI), were commissioned to support and undertake further survey analysis and deliver independent workshops and research that would inform the development of the new library strategy for Dorset.

The analysis of the survey responses, brought together with the findings from the engagement workshops and evidence around local need, have all helped to inform and shape a draft library strategy.

The draft library strategy will be subject to a second phase of public consultation this autumn gathering feedback on the draft strategy.

² Libraries Connect, 2018 [Universal Library Offers | Libraries Connected](#).

4. Evidence gathering and engagement

Development of the library strategy has been evidence based. We have drawn on a range of data to develop and shape the draft library strategy:

- ages 5-15 public survey results
- 16 years+ (main) public survey results
- employee, partner and business survey results
- range of engagement workshops
 - workshop with library employees
 - workshop with Dorset Councillors
 - focus group with existing library users
 - interviews with parent/carers at two pre-school nurseries
 - outreach workshop in area of socio-economic deprivation
 - business network meeting
 - street intercept interviews with 30 non-library users
 - ethnographic research³ with 10 non-library users
 - equalities focused workshop
 - 'Speaking Up' session with People First Dorset and Dorset Abilities
 - three primary school workshops
 - three secondary school workshops
 - Dorset Council services and external partner 3-part workshop series
 - three library service led strategy development Task and Finish Groups
- Shared Intelligence Report: Research to inform a new library strategy for Dorset Council [available here](#) and its [accompanying ethnographic research appendix here](#).
- the Strategic Needs Assessment which uses a broad range of national data sets as proxy indicators for societal need. It also uses Census data and library membership data. A full list of data used along with its source is provided in Appendix 1 of the Strategic Needs Assessment, which can be viewed as a supporting paper for [the Joint Overview Committee meeting on 29th June 2022](#).

5. What did this tell you?

Phase One Survey Analysis

The phase one survey analysis reports are available in full here:

- [ages 5-15 public survey analysis report](#)
- [16 years+ \(main\) public survey analysis report](#)
- [employee, partner and business survey analysis report](#)

³ Ethnography is a type of research that gathers rich, detailed data from individuals in their everyday environment. This normally involves the researcher meeting the research participant in a place that is natural for them, but this research can also be undertaken virtually. The research involves observing the participant's behaviour as they interact with their environment and the researcher asking questions to understand the participant's thoughts, feelings and experiences.

Over 7,500 responses were received from the public consultation surveys. Individual respondents to the survey were asked for diversity information about themselves, as well as their feedback on libraries. Completion of the diversity section of the survey was optional. Anonymised demographic data for respondents to each survey is available within the individual survey analysis reports.

The consultation sought the views of our library users and non-users to understand how the service could better meet the needs of residents now and in the future. The council needed to understand what people valued from the existing service, and what they would change. They also wanted to know what would encourage them to use the library more. Questions for non-users were focussed on what would encourage them to use the library at all, or again, if they had previously. Intersectional analysis of the survey data allowed us to highlight the different views and needs of those by age and disability, these are highlighted within the 16years+ (main) public survey analysis report.

The employee, partner and business survey analysis report gathered the views of our employees, volunteers, councillors, our voluntary and community sector partners, businesses and our public sector partners. We asked for ways we can join up and complement delivery across services and sectors, utilising libraries to maximise our reach and impact in communities. We sought to hear from organisations about opportunities to collaborate in the future, or ways in which libraries can support the different sectors.

Engagement workshops

Themes that emerged from these workshops included:

- a requirement for safe, face-to-face spaces for children, families, and older and vulnerable people
- libraries should be a source of vitality and culture enrichment, through inspiring programmes and partnerships
- libraries could promote and enable sustainable (climate positive) practices
- supporting people to improve their digital skills and how this can empower them in their daily lives
- libraries can provide space for enterprise and economic growth
- an inclusive user experience should be available for all

Shared Intelligence Report

To complement the surveys and to help add depth to the consultation, we ran a range of targeted workshops and research interviews with those groups who are traditionally underrepresented during library consultations, i.e. Dorset residents who do not currently access library services or individuals and communities with protected characteristics. The conclusions of this engagement work, in terms of identified need and recommended action, is presented in a research [report available here](#) and its [accompanying appendix here](#).

The Shared Intelligence report identified three main areas of need within the council area:

- increasing the reach of services to ensure they are accessible to residents who need them or could benefit most from them
- improved communication to increase public awareness of available support and to accelerate service-to-service collaboration around shared priorities
- access to space and resources to allow partners to deliver outreach services in Dorset's communities

Opportunities for more impact that were identified included:

- a network of locations to host support for mild/moderate mental health needs
- social prescribing via libraries – signposting, providing, hosting
- inclusive and adaptive community spaces in libraries for autism and other needs
- hubs for vulnerable adults, their carers, and support networks
- culture and creativity offer for audiences and creators
- skills and knowledge to reduce, reuse, recycle, lend and share
- access to information and tackling digital exclusion
- supporting local inclusive growth

In the medium term, the coronavirus pandemic is the most influential driver of change affecting library services. Many library users have not visited since before the pandemic, and changing opening times over the various lockdowns and easings means the risk of a wasted trip is a further deterrent. Many survey respondents said that the pandemic ending would encourage them to use libraries more frequently.

The pandemic has encouraged many more people to use online services for ordering physical goods. This has in turn meant many people are more familiar and confident using digital services. This has revealed digital inequalities not just between those with and without the skills to access online services, but those with and without the financial means to. It has also shown that digital access can be a lifeline and provide independence for those who are vulnerable and or housebound.

Four areas of action were recommended to realise the potential of the library service:

- communication – create a strategy to enable the service to reach a far larger proportion of those residents who stand to benefit from the library service offer, and in ways which help other local services meet and manage demand
- customer support- prioritise user interactions which are relational and add value (events, activities, human help, support for community groups, advice, guidance) over those which are transactional (borrowing and returning items, making payments or bookings), and encourage more people to complete these transactional tasks digitally.
- collaboration - formalise relationships with other service partners through regular discussions with clear remits
- clarity - decide which opportunities best contributes to the purpose and vision of the council

Strategic Needs Assessment

The Strategic Needs Assessment looked at a series of measures to determine where local need is greatest. In recognition of the broad range of interventions which a library service can help support, we have taken a range of measures which indicate need across the breadth of society and an individual's life course. These include:

- demographic information (including population growth)
- education
- deprivation indicators
- health (including mental health and loneliness)
- digital exclusion
- local economy
- crime

These themes of need have been mapped geographically producing heat maps of need across Dorset. These heat maps have the libraries network overlaid which helps to highlight how effective our library buildings can be at delivering targeted outreach to our communities in need. The areas of need vary depending on what theme of need you consider. When you combine all themes of need together the five LSOAs⁴ with the greatest combined need are:

- Melcombe Regis Town Centre
- Rodwell and Chapelhay
- Melcombe Regis Carlton Road
- Fortuneswell North
- Littlemoor West

Full list available in Annex 1 of the Strategic Needs Assessment.

Library catchments were also ranked on need combined with library demand data and the library catchments with the highest combined overall need were:

- Weymouth Library & Learning Centre
- Bridport Library
- Portland Library
- Littlemoor Library
- Dorchester Library & Learning Centre

The Strategic Needs Assessment also looks at Dorset Council library demand data which highlights that behaviours and trends have changed significantly over the past five years which will have been impacted by the pandemic but also in terms of customer preferences.

Physical library use has declined since 2016 by between 25 – 30 per cent, when we consider active users and physical items borrowed. Comparatively online resources

⁴ LSOAs (lower-layer super output areas) Each of these areas are designed to be of a similar population size, with an average of approximately 1,500 residents or 650 households.

for e-books and audio books has increased by over 350 per cent and continues to increase as we come out of the pandemic.

We have seen new trends in accessing content, events and activities online and although people are returning to preferred “in-person” activities and events, we remain aware that the online library requirement must be embedded in our future thinking. This was demonstrated within the 16 years+ (main) public survey where 69 per cent of consultation respondents indicated they would use both online library services and visit library buildings, becoming hybrid library customers when the impacts of COVID-19 have reduced.

6. Who have you engaged and consulted with as part of this assessment?

The public who participated in phase one Let’s Talk Libraries consultation survey and workshops have shared valuable insight into their lived experience of a protected characteristics, what they value about the service and how the service could better meet their needs in the future. The new draft strategy seeks to address these needs and prioritises the inclusiveness and accessibility of the service.

In addition to the public we have engaged and consulted with:

- Libraries Service Manager
- Head of Customer Services Libraries and Archives
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer

This draft EqIA will be refined and updated flowing the next phase of public consultation in the autumn.

7. Is further information needed to help inform decision making?

Yes. We will carry out further equalities focussed engagement during the phase two public consultation on the draft library strategy. Consultation and engagement plans will be developed in collaboration with the Dorset Council Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Officer. The plan will look to address any engagement gaps from phase one consultation and will look to build upon the relationships developed during phase one consultation to continue conversations and broker new connections through community networks.

We will engage with the Council’s Employee Networks as well as engage with the newly established Equality Reference Group. Through this work we will continue to build a detailed understanding of EDI considerations, which may result in amendments to the INSPIRE: Dorset Council Library Strategy and will influence strategy implementation plans.

Is an EQIA required? Yes

Assessing the impact on different groups of people

For each of the protected characteristics groups below we explain whether proposals could have a positive, negative, unclear or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, we explain what it is and if unclear or negative we explain what mitigating actions will be taken.

Key to impacts

Positive Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.
Negative Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against
Neutral Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">no change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups
Unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none">not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.

Please note: The INSPIRE: Dorset Council Library Strategy is a working document, that will undergo further consultation and development. The strategy's strategic aims and opportunities will evolve during the second phase of consultation. The impacts described below have been assessed contingent on the current draft version of the strategy and the opportunities it contains. They may be subject to change during the strategy development process. We are committed to giving due regard to the protected characteristics and vulnerable groups within strategy development and strategy implementation plans and expect the impacts on protected groups to be clarified and refined during further strategy development and implementation.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Age: 0-16 years	Positive Impact	<p>The Strategic Needs Assessment indicates areas where young residents on average have the highest rates of education need, enabling us to set up the appropriate support services and educational programmes in the most relevant locations.</p> <p>We will partner with Dorset's speech and language service to support early years language and literacy programmes and deliver shared priorities.</p>
Age: 18+ years	Positive Impact	<p>We will promote the range of free adult education provision available within Dorset and host targeted events which improve literacy levels and builds confidence for adults with low literacy skills.</p> <p>We aim to pursue opportunities under the “Multiply” programme⁵ in collaboration with Skills and Learning, offering libraries as venues for “Maths Cafes”.</p>
Age: 65+ years	Positive Impact	<p>Libraries will host assistive tech “care lounges” and adult social care road shows to help people to live at home for longer.</p>

⁵ The Education Hub, 2021 [https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2021/10/27/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-new-multiply-programme/u_need_to_know_about_the_new_Multiply_programme_-_The_Education_Hub_\(blog.gov.uk\)](https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2021/10/27/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-new-multiply-programme/u_need_to_know_about_the_new_Multiply_programme_-_The_Education_Hub_(blog.gov.uk))

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Disability: People with Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND)	Positive Impact	<p>The Needs Assessment indicates areas where young residents on average have the highest rates of education need, enabling us to set up the appropriate support services and educational programmes in the most relevant locations.</p> <p>We will partner with Dorset's speech and language service to support early years language and literacy programmes and deliver shared outcomes.</p> <p>We will promote the range of free adult education provision available within Dorset and host targeted events which improve literacy levels and builds confidence for adults with low literacy skills.</p> <p>We aim to pursue opportunities under the “Multiply” programme⁶ in collaboration with Skills and Learning, offering libraries as venues for “Maths Cafes”.</p> <p>We plan to develop a SEND offer for children and their families e.g. hosting stay and explore sessions at the libraries.</p> <p>We will expand access to autism friendly rooms and sensory equipment.</p>

⁶ The Education Hub, 2021 [https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2021/10/27/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-new-multiply-programme/u_need_to_know_about_the_new_Multiply_programme_-_The_Education_Hub_\(blog.gov.uk\)](https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2021/10/27/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-new-multiply-programme/u_need_to_know_about_the_new_Multiply_programme_-_The_Education_Hub_(blog.gov.uk))

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Disability: Neurodivergent people and people with disabilities	Positive Impact	<p>We will carry out an accessibility audit of our buildings, looking at internal library layouts as well as buildings.</p> <p>Library signs will be redesigned to meet all accessibility & design standards and we'll invest in accessible technology so that our services can be accessed more easily by residents who are neurodiverse or have special learning or physical needs.</p> <p>We will work closely with the Dorset Council equality and inclusion group network and Equality Reference Group to remove barriers for customers accessing our services.</p>
Disability: People with long-term health conditions	Positive Impact	<p>The Strategic Needs Assessment provides geographical analysis of a range of poor health indicators.</p> <p>This enables the library service to strategical place services in locations where need is greatest.</p> <p>Libraries will provide a central link to health visitors to deliver co-ordinated and complimentary sessions while engaging the same cohort.</p> <p>A stakeholder network of those working on health and wellbeing in Dorset will be developed, with the view to signposting to key partner's services.</p> <p>We plan to explore opportunities for libraries to provide community-based non-clinical setting for health-related service delivery. We'll use connections with Dorset's primary care networks and promote library's social prescribing offer and work with Patient Participation groups to develop services which meet their needs.</p>

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Disability: People with debilitating disabilities or health conditions	Positive Impact	We are committed to finding new ways to promote our home library service and online library service, to ensure those eligible for the service are made aware and are encouraged to sign up. This will allow people who struggle to leave their home to access our services from anywhere.
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity:	Unclear Impact	<p>People with gender reassignments in the UK face huge levels of abuse and inequality.⁷ Libraries aim to explore the role libraries can play in offering refuge, safe spaces and supporting vulnerable members of our communities.</p> <p>Further consultation and the consequent strategy implementation plan, may result in a change to the impact on this demographic.</p>
Marriage or civil partnership: ALL	Neutral Impact	<p>Marriage or civil partnership status have no effect on the services delivered, at this stage of the strategy development.</p> <p>Phase two of the consultation and the consequent development of a strategy implementation plan, may result in an improved understanding of the impact on this demographic.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity: Young mothers	Positive Impact	The Strategic Needs Assessment indicates areas where there are higher conception rates in women under 18, enabling us to set up the appropriate support services. Child/Parent activities delivered for free at the libraries can also help tackle social isolation and create social connections.
Pregnancy and maternity: Pregnant and new parents	Positive Impact	<p>Libraries will provide a space where pregnant and new parents can connect with health and wellbeing opportunities. They will do this by collaborating with multi-agency Family Hubs (currently under development), in close partnership with colleagues from other services and organisations.</p> <p>Child/Parent activities delivered for free at the libraries can also help tackle social isolation and create social connections.</p>

⁷ Stonewall, The Truth about Trans, 2022 <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/truth-about-trans#trans-people-uk>

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Race and Ethnicity: Refugees and Asylum seekers	Unclear Impact	<p>We will look to establish a role for libraries within the refugee resettlement programmes, welcoming refugees/asylum seekers into the community and providing relevant resources in their language.</p> <p>Phase two of the consultation and the consequent development of a strategy implementation plan, may result in an improved understanding of the impact on this demographic.</p>
Race and Ethnicity: Ethnic Minorities	Unclear Impact	<p>The Strategic Needs Assessment indicates that the ethnicity of library membership is not representative of the authority area it serves.</p> <p>The strategy commits to deliver outreach activities and events outside of our buildings, taking the library to new places to engage with new customers who don't currently use the library, to include: underrepresented groups and protected groups under the Equalities Act.</p> <p>Ethnic minorities receive a disproportionate amount of discrimination, particularly in employment.⁸ Libraries aim to explore the role libraries can play in offering refuge and supporting vulnerable members of our communities. There will also be careers promotions for priority areas of employment in Dorset Council's Economic Growth Strategy including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) especially in underrepresented groups.</p> <p>Phase two of the consultation and the consequent development of a strategy implementation plan, may result in an improved understanding of the impact on this demographic.</p>
Race and Ethnicity: Non-English speakers	Positive Impact	<p>We aim to host targeted events which improve literacy levels and builds confidence for English language learners.</p>

⁸ EHRC, Race report statistics, [Race report statistics | Equality and Human Rights Commission \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](https://equalityhumanrights.com/race-report-statistics/)

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Religion and belief: ALL	Neutral Impact	<p>The Strategic Needs Assessment highlight the predominate religions of our library members is Christianity and those with no religion, or no response, or prefer not to say.</p> <p>Religion and belief currently have no effect on the services delivered, at this stage of the strategy development.</p> <p>Phase two of the consultation and the consequent development of a strategy implementation plan, may result in an improved understanding of the impact on this demographic.</p>
Sex (consider men and women): Men	Unclear Impact	<p>The Strategic Needs Assessment highlights that the sex of library membership is not representative of the authority area it serves. There is an underrepresentation of men and overrepresentation of women within each of the library catchment areas.</p> <p>The strategy commits to deliver outreach activities and events outside of our buildings, taking the library to new places to engage with new customers who don't currently use the library, to include: underrepresented groups and protected groups under the Equalities Act.</p> <p>Phase two of the consultation and the consequent development of a strategy implementation plan, may result in an improved understanding of the impact on this demographic.</p>

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Sexual orientation	Unclear Impact	<p>Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people receive a disproportionate amount of discrimination and less than half feel comfortable being open about their sexuality, with every member of their family.⁹ Libraries aim to explore the role libraries can play in offering refuge and supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our communities.</p> <p>Phase two of the consultation and the consequent development of a strategy implementation plan, may result in an improved understanding of the impact on this demographic.</p>
People with caring responsibilities: Carers	Positive Impact	<p>Carers have increased risk of mental health issues, long-term illness and disabilities.¹⁰</p> <p>We will create connections with Dorset's primary care networks, to promote the service's social prescribing offer.</p> <p>Carers are also at increased risk of having disruption to their education or having special educational needs.¹¹</p> <p>We aim to promote learning opportunities for all residents and to facilitate the development of new skills, which will have a positive impact on carers who may have greater educational need.</p>

⁹ Stonewall, LGBTQ+ facts and figures, 2022 <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/cy/node/24594>

¹⁰ LGA, Supporting carers: guidance and case studies, 2022, <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/supporting-carers-guidance-and-case-studies>

¹¹ LGA, Supporting carers: guidance and case studies, 2022, <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/supporting-carers-guidance-and-case-studies>

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Rural isolation: People living in isolated areas	Positive Impact	<p>We are committed to finding new ways to promote our online library service and will ensure those eligible for the home library service are made aware and are encouraged to sign up.</p> <p>We will support our residents to improve their digital skills by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hosting digitally engaging events and activities for all ages • increasing the digital champion support available at our libraries • lending digital tablets to residents • upgrading to superfast internet connection at all library sites, utilising our library network to help spur on the roll out in local neighbourhoods • working with partners to support them in signposting their clients / customers into our digital champion sessions for digital champion support <p>This will empower our residents to access our online services from home.</p>
Socio-economic deprivation: Lower socio-economically deprived	Positive Impact	<p>The Strategic Needs Analysis indicates areas where residents on average have the highest rates of economic deprivation, crime and digital exclusion, enabling us to set up the appropriate support services in the most relevant location. Service can include educational support, access to free technology, career support, support to access Housing, Revenue and Benefits, and signposting to partner support services, e.g. Citizen Advice, Public Health Dorset etc.</p>

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
<p>Armed forces communities: Armed forces personnel and their families</p>	<p>Positive Impact</p>	<p>Service families often face additional pressures on family life resulting from separation from loved ones due to deployment on exercises and operations. They also tend to be more mobile than families in the general population, moving every two years, with moves sometimes unplanned and at short notice.¹² The library service will work with the Armed Forces Covenant programme to develop our role in supporting members of the Armed Forces and their families in Dorset.</p> <p>We will partner with Public Health Dorset and LiveWell Dorset to deliver outreach sessions at libraries connecting with communities in most need, guided by Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Health and Wellbeing Strategy outcomes.</p> <p>A stakeholder network of those working on health and wellbeing in Dorset will be developed, with the view to signposting to key partner's services. This may help family members struggling with worries over illness, injury, and death during deployments.</p>

8. Summary of the impacts:

At this point in the strategy development, some positive impacts have been identified for certain demographics including a variety of age groups, people with disabilities, neurodiversity or health conditions, young mothers, pregnant and new parents, carers, people living in isolated areas, lower socio-economically deprived, and armed forces communities. These positive impacts include:

- providing a safe, inclusive space
- supporting everyone in accessing our services
- enabling people to improve their literacy, mathematical and digital skills

¹² LGA, Armed Forces Act 2021: background, implications for councils and practical steps to get ready for the Act, 2022 [Armed Forces Act 2021: background, implications for councils and practical steps to get ready for the Act | Local Government Association](#)

- connecting with their community and tackling social isolation through library activities and events
- enabling people to overcome barriers in their social and professional lives through education, access to technology, career support and signposting to support services

The impact on certain groups including, men, refugees and asylum-seekers and non-heterosexuals is unclear. We plan to explore opportunities which may result in an impact on people with these characteristics, but those opportunities are not defined at this time.

The INSPIRE: Dorset Council Library Strategy will undergo a second phase of consultation and accompanying strategy implementation plans will be developed. This may result in the actions identified above being further developed and the expected impacts may change. Failure to implement any actions fully or without consideration to protected characteristics could potentially result in a negative impact on the demographics concerned.

9. Action Plan

Summary of actions required as a result of this EqIA.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
Strategy development and draft strategy feedback from protected groups	We will carry out further equalities focussed engagement during the phase two public consultation on the draft library strategy. Consultation and engagement plans will be developed in collaboration with the Dorset Council Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Officer.	Liz Crocker, Service Manager for Libraries	Launch of phase two public consultation. Autumn 2022.