

North Ayrshire Council Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment Summary Form

This form provides a summary of the equality impact assessment conducted in the title heading under item 1. The full assessment form is available on request by emailing the main contact below.

This impact assessment process includes the requirements under Equality Legislation to assess the main activities of the Council against the nine protected characteristics and socio-economic inequalities under the Fairer Scotland Duty; the assessment covers the Rights of Children as per the United Nations Rights of the Child and ask us to consider the implications for our island communities under the Island Proofing section.

1. Policy/Strategy or Programme Details

1.a Policy Title – The Review of Halls, Centres and Libraries (Budget savings)

1.b Policy Lead Officer – Lesley Forsyth, Senior Manager, Information and Culture

1.c. Contact Telephone – 01294 310090

1.d Contact Email – lesleyforsyth@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

1.e Others Involved – Laurence Cree.

2. Summary of Policy Aims

The closure of Springside and Bourtreehill Libraries

After an extensive community consultation, the review of Libraries, Halls and Centres agreed to close Springside and Bourtreehill Libraries. The proposal outlines alternative methods of delivering the library service in the two areas through partnerships with local groups and organisations. In doing so, the space in Springside Community Centre will be freed up for wider community use and maximising income opportunities for the Community Association. Bourtreehill Library is in the process of a Community Asset Transfer, freeing the building from PMI costs whilst allowing use by a national organisation delivering vital support to families in

the area. A library service will be an integral part of the what the organisation will deliver from the venue through close working with the NAC library service.

3. Key Equality Related issues arising from the assessment

3.a Summary of Impacts on Equality Protected Groups

Age (positive and negative aspects)

Children and Young People will have a reduced choice for accessing library programmes such as Bookbug, Digi Dabble
Adults of all ages will have reduced access to a range of library services and related activities.

Disability (positive and negative aspects)

There is a wide cross section of the community who access the library - some of them have a disability and may be affected by not having local access to library services in their local area.

Pregnancy and Maternity (positive and negative aspects)

Although not impacted directly by the closures, the overall reduction in services and access to activities may impact on them, however the change in use to Bourtreehill Library will benefit those who are pregnant or new parents with specific advice and support on offer in the heart of the community.

Other (Positive and Negative Aspects)

The removal of a public library from an area affected by poverty will have an impact on the community. The local communities of Springside and Bourtreehill will have reduced access to the wide range of information that may assist those experiencing poverty to mitigate against the effects.

The closure of the libraries will affect all members of the community that use this service to some degree, but not necessarily due to a protected characteristic.

3.b Summary of Children's Rights and Wellbeing indicators

The closure of the libraries touches upon the following GIRFEC wellbeing indicators, these are, Safe, Nurtured, Healthy, Achieving, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.

The following UNCRC articles are relevant to this proposal

Article 31 - leisure, play and culture

'Children and Young People have the right to' rest, play and have the chance to join a wide range of activities. It is really important to remember to have a balance in their life.

Article 4 – 'Children and Young People have the right to' have their rights are protected and an environment where they can grow up safe.

Article 6 – life, survival and development

'Children and Young People have the right to' be kept safe from harm, they have the right to be alive, survive and develop through life.

Article 29 - goals of education

'Children and Young People have the right to' learn and develop their skills and personality fully, teach them about their own and other people's rights and prepare them for adult life.

Article 27 - adequate standard of living

'Children and Young People have the right to' a safe place to live, food, clothing and to take part in things they enjoy.

Article 17 - access to information; mass media

'Children and Young People have the right to' access information which is important to their wellbeing. Adults should help them find information they are looking for and make sure it is not harmful.

Article 15 - freedom of association

'Children and Young People have the right to' join and form groups and make friends – as long as this does not harm other people

3.c Summary of Fairer Scotland Duty

The initial planning of Irvine as a New Town saw the creation of local neighbourhood centres. Bourtreehill Village was one of these centres and was populated with a variety of resources that were deemed appropriate to the principles of a thriving and community supporting, local neighbourhood. The removal of the library from this mix of resources does cause a negative impact on the feeling of community / place and easy access to services.

The overall approach taken during the review of Libraries Halls and Centres was to seek the views of the community, take on board the learning from the pandemic and balance these needs alongside the principals of community empowerment and

community wealth building. The proposal to close the buildings were set against the many areas of development that were already in place in the communities and that would continue regardless.

The removal of the library service facilitates the arrival of Children 1st to deliver their services.

The various teams that operate in Bourtreehill are actively designing and co creating a range of community led developments to enhance the environment and build up the sense of belonging, civic pride and sense of belonging. Many of these are as a result of the local Chit Chat sessions held in the community.

The local Community Association (BABCA) is a strong community anchor organisation and are delivering several projects that impact on the local community including running the local larder offering access to food with dignity and a strong partnership with Input that facilitates digital access and training. The Association is based in the local community centre and is an excellent example of an active Community Hub that supports the local community in a variety of ways. All this work will continue unaffected by the closure and indeed will be enhanced through partnership working with the library service.

3.d Summary of Island Proofing

No impacts for Island Communities

4. Impacts on the Three Key Needs of the Equality Duty

Which aspects eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation?

None

Which aspects Advance Equality of Opportunity?

The change in use of the library in Bourtreehill will benefit those who are pregnant or new parents with specific advice and support on offer in the heart of the community.

Which aspects Foster Good Relations for people with protected characteristics?

None

5. Mitigation of any identified Impacts

Both libraries were closed because of lockdown and some measures, such as Call, Click and Collect, Home Library and digital services have been implemented to help readdress the closure or ongoing limited access. These have worked well and with no negative feedback from the local community. This set of unfortunate circumstances has set a plan in place that has helped ease the community through the transition of the closure as well as allow time for partnerships to be developed to allow an alternative library service model to be implemented.

In Bourtreehill, the use of the property by Children 1st will enhance services to some specific groupings and better address needs that were previously delivered by the library. The national organisation will deliver targeted, capacity building services for children and families to help address the many issues facing the local community. This includes support with parenting, maximising income and budgeting, cost of the school day, access to food with dignity as well as delivering a wide range of events and activities. Their close working with HSCP and other partners to support families to access a wide range of support to assist them in building capacity and working through issues facing them such as child protection, housing, health related matters etc. 'Children 1st' will retain a book collection in the facility with a focus on children's reading and family / practical support such as craft ideas, play activities, cookery, DIY etc. Library Staff will visit on a regular basis to renew the stock and offer support through advice or delivering activities.

There are two libraries (Dreghorn and Irvine) within a 2-mile radius of Bourtreehill. Dreghorn Library is located 1.3 miles from Springside library and Irvines main Library is 4.3 miles. All sit on direct bus routes. The Home Library service will be available to assist those with mobility issues to access reading materials. Access to library services will remain in the place in Springside and Bourtreehill with local partnerships developed. This includes access to reading materials via the Call Click and Collect service which has become popular during lockdown.

Digital access to a range of reading resources is available 24/7. This resource has been enhanced and developed during lockdown and offers a wide range of books, magazines, newspapers and audio books.

The two libraries located closest to Springside and Bourtreehill are both accessible to those with a physical disability. Targeted activities such as book groups, Bookbug, etc will be arranged in both villages as library staff visit other venues to deliver events and activities. Staff will also visit established groups to deliver sessions as part of their regular programmes and in turn enhance existing services and reach new people.

6. Summary of any engagement or consultation processes where applicable

Extensive engagement has taken place regarding the proposal. The work started in 2018 when Cabinet and the North Ayrshire Federation of Community Organisations (NAFCO) set up a short life working group to review community and library facilities by locality. This led to the initial, extensive engagement process across the communities of North Ayrshire.

Locality-based Community Engagement sessions were held in Spring 2019 to establish what was important to the community for the future of community halls, community centres and library services. Options for each community facility and library were developed, and the public asked for their views in the Autumn of 2019. Further action was paused due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Summaries of the feedback gathered during both these engagements were published the North Ayrshire Community Planning website.

In line with The Consultation Institute's best practice recommendations, a stakeholder reference group was identified to represent key interests, and the methodology was agreed. The mixed methodology was developed with the Stakeholder Reference Group and offered both online and telephone access to log views, as well as mailing alerts with Council Tax bills and adding information and links to electronic bills. The consultation process was conducted on the Consul platform, supported by CoSLA. The Connected Communities team hosted locality stakeholder discussion meetings, received email and petition submissions and provided the telephone call-back service, which enabled those without digital access to make their views known. Support was offered to New Scots to encourage participation, Specific events and activities were held for children and young people to effectively gather their views and opinions. This consultation process ran from 5th March 2021 until 5th May 2021 offering nine weeks for the community to get involved and have their say.

In June 2021, a report on the consultation and future proposals was agreed at a Council Meeting. This included the proposed closure of Springside and Bourtreehill Libraries which was agreed.

The full report can be accessed [here](#)

7. Recommendations and Outcome from the assessment

No major alterations to the proposal

8. Head of Service

Rhona Arthur

9. Date of Assessment

11/02/2022 (for budget on 2/3/22)