



Meeting:	Executive
Meeting date:	15/07/2025
Report of:	Pauline Stuchfield - Director of Housing & Communities
Portfolio of:	Cllr Pete Kilbane – Executive Member for Economy and Culture

Annex C

City of York Council Equalities Impact Assessment

Who is submitting the proposal?

Directorate:	Housing and Communities		
Service Area:	Customer and Communities		
Name of the proposal:	Future Libraries Investment Programme – Acomb Library Enhancements		
Lead officer:	Andrew Laslett – Strategic Services Manager		
Date assessment completed:	13/06/2025		
Names of those who contributed to the assessment:			
Name	Job title	Organisation	Area of expertise
Andrew Laslett	Strategic Services Manager	CYC	
Sarah Knott	Programme Manager	CYC	

Step 1 - Aims and intended outcomes

1.1	<p>What is the purpose of the proposal? Please explain your proposal in Plain English avoiding acronyms and jargon.</p>
	<p>This assessment covers the improvements due to be made to Acomb Library as part of the overall Future Libraries Investment Programme (FLIP) and to address some of the outputs of the York Acomb Library disability access audit which was conducted in August 2023. The improvements include structural build works and aesthetic enhancements consisting of furnishings as well as practical improvements to audio and visual kit.</p> <p>The proposal addresses feedback from a public survey conducted by Explore York and from an access audit carried out in 2023.</p>
1.2	<p>Are there any external considerations? (Legislation/government directive/codes of practice etc.)</p>
	<p>Yes. This project is subject to funding conditions from the Arts Council (Library Investment Fund) and the Mayoral Renewables Fund (Renewable energy project).</p> <p>City of York Council has a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' for all those who live, work or study in the area (section 7). In providing this service, councils must, among other things:</p> <p>Encourage both adults and children to make full use of the library services (Section 7(2)(b))</p> <p>Lend books and other printed materials free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area (in accordance with section 8 (3))</p> <p>City of York Council must also comply with other legal obligations including the Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty.</p>
1.3	<p>Who are the stakeholders and what are their interests?</p>
	<p>Stakeholders include residents, Acomb and Westfield ward councillors, Explore York staff, Explore customers and funding</p>

	bodies. Their interests range from ensuring that the Future Library Investment Funds are spent on improving some elements noted in the public feedback, the access audit and the Arts Council/ Mayoral Renewables Fund agreement. People will also be keen to understanding what disruption the works may cause so alternative service arrangements can be made during the closure period.
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1.4	What results/outcomes do we want to achieve and for whom? This section should explain what outcomes you want to achieve for service users, staff and/or the wider community. Demonstrate how the proposal links to the Council Plan (2019-2023) and other corporate strategies and plans.
	<p>Outcomes include</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investing in new furniture and shelving to create a larger children's library which can encourage engagement in learning and literacy from an early age. New furniture may be more accessible to children of all physical abilities and can support inclusive family use. 2. A better layout for the indoor café area which could support equality for people with mobility impairments, visual impairments, older adults, and families. The Acomb café is well used and can get very busy so the improved layout will allow for easier navigation for wheelchair users and those with guide dogs or prams. We hope it will enhance social inclusion and provide a more welcoming and comfortable environment for all. 3. Quiet spaces for work and study which will also support neurodivergent individuals, people with mental health conditions, students, and remote workers. A quiet space hopes to provide a calm environment for people who need low-stimulation areas to focus or who may find busy spaces overwhelming. Including a quiet space will also help address one of the environment recommendations in the access audit 2023. 4. Improved toilet facilities including an additional accessible toilet which is much needed at this busy library and was a recommendation picked up on the disability access audit in 2023. The additional accessible toilet will support disabled people, older adults, and families with young children. The new facilities will support with increasing customers dignity,

	<p>and comfort, particularly for those with mobility or continence issues. It will also reduce waiting times for accessible facilities at this well used library.</p> <p>5. Improved meeting rooms including a refurbished and improved IT suite which could support equality for job seekers, community groups, disabled users, and those experiencing digital exclusion and low income. The room improvements will enable inclusive community activities, workshops, and support groups which the library already provide well.</p> <p>6. Flexible shelving on wheels for onsite performances both inside and outside of library opening hours will allow the main library space to adapt for diverse community use (e.g. cultural events, disability support groups, youth programs). It will also improve physical accessibility by allowing space reconfiguration and encourage participation of people who originally may not engage with such events.</p> <p>7. Improved lighting, PA and blackout blinds will support library users by creating sensory-friendly environments. It will also go a long way to make presentations and events more inclusive through accessible audio-visual features.</p>
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Step 2 - Gathering the information and feedback

2.1	<p>What sources of data, evidence and consultation feedback do we have to help us understand the impact of the proposal on equality rights and human rights? Please consider a range of sources, including: consultation exercises, surveys, feedback from staff, stakeholders, participants, research reports, the views of equality groups, as well your own experience of working in this area etc.</p>	
	Source of data/supporting evidence	Reason for using
	Public Consultation (2023) for Acomb Library Learning Centre. Explore led the survey and asked people to tell us what they liked and didn't like about the current service. It also allowed respondents to tell us their top	Listening to customers feedback is really important. The results offered representation of users with disabilities and accessibility needs.

three priorities for improving the library.	
Acomb Library Disability Access Audit 2023	A professional audit carried out by Access Included documenting a set of recommendations.
Analysis of key performance indicators that provides insights into which services are being used.	Indicators include: visits, active borrowers, use of computers, attendance at events.

Step 3 – Gaps in data and knowledge

3.1	What are the main gaps in information and understanding of the impact of your proposal? Please indicate how any gaps will be dealt with.
Gaps in data or knowledge	Action to deal with this

Step 4 - Analysing the impacts or effects.

4.1	Please consider what the evidence tells you about the likely impact (positive or negative) on people sharing a protected characteristic, i.e., how significant could the impacts be if we did not make any adjustments? Remember the duty is also positive – so please identify where the proposal offers opportunities to promote equality and/or foster good relations.		
Equality Groups and Human Rights.	Key Findings/Impacts	Positive (+) Negative (-) Neutral (0)	High (H) Medium (M) Low (L)
Age	A better layout for the indoor café area which could support equality for older people.	+	H
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible toilet • A better layout for the indoor café area which could support equality for people with mobility 	+	H

	impairments, visual impairments.		
Gender	Neutral impact expected; project benefits are universally accessible.	0	L
Gender Reassignment	No differential impact identified.	0	L
Marriage and civil partnership	No differential impact identified.	0	L
Pregnancy and maternity		+	M
Race	No evidence of differential impact, but further monitoring recommended.	0	M
Religion and belief	No differential impact identified.	0	L
Sexual orientation	No differential impact identified.	0	L
Other Socio-economic groups including :	Could other socio-economic groups be affected e.g., carers, ex-offenders, low incomes?		
Carer	Improved facilities to benefit carers supporting individuals with mobility issues.	+	M
Low income groups	Improved meeting rooms including a refurbished and improved IT suite which could support equality for job seekers, those experiencing digital exclusion and low income. Possible indirect benefit.	+	H
Veterans, Armed Forces Community	Neutral impact; potential for improved access to support services via better connectivity.	0	L
Human Rights	Projects promote the right to mobility, decent standard of living, and health by improving access and air quality.	+	H
Other			

Impact on human rights:			
List any human rights impacted.		0	L

Use the following guidance to inform your responses:

Indicate:

- Where you think that the proposal could have a **POSITIVE** impact on any of the equality groups like promoting equality and equal opportunities or improving relations within equality groups
- Where you think that the proposal could have a **NEGATIVE** impact on any of the equality groups, i.e., it could disadvantage them
- Where you think that this proposal has a **NEUTRAL** effect on any of the equality groups listed below i.e., it has no effect currently on equality groups.

It is important to remember that a proposal may be highly relevant to one aspect of equality and not relevant to another.

High impact (The proposal or process is very equality relevant)	<p>There is significant potential for or evidence of adverse impact</p> <p>The proposal is institution wide or public facing</p> <p>The proposal has consequences for or affects significant numbers of people</p> <p>The proposal has the potential to make a significant contribution to promoting equality and the exercise of human rights.</p>
Medium impact (The proposal or process is somewhat equality relevant)	<p>There is some evidence to suggest potential for or evidence of adverse impact</p> <p>The proposal is institution wide or across services, but mainly internal</p> <p>The proposal has consequences for or affects some people</p> <p>The proposal has the potential to make a contribution to promoting equality and the exercise of human rights</p>

Low impact (The proposal or process might be equality relevant)	There is little evidence to suggest that the proposal could result in adverse impact The proposal operates in a limited way The proposal has consequences for or affects few people The proposal may have the potential to contribute to promoting equality and the exercise of human rights
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Step 5 - Mitigating adverse impacts and maximising positive impacts

5.1	Based on your findings, explain ways you plan to mitigate any unlawful prohibited conduct or unwanted adverse impact. Where positive impacts have been identified, what is been done to optimise opportunities to advance equality or foster good relations?

Step 6 - Recommendations and conclusions of the assessment

6.1	Having considered the potential or actual impacts you should be in a position to make an informed judgement on what should be done. In all cases, document your reasoning that justifies your decision. There are four main options you can take:
<p>No major change to the proposal – the EIA demonstrates the proposal is robust. There is no potential for unlawful discrimination or adverse impact and you have taken all opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitor and review.</p> <p>Adjust the proposal – the EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. This involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality or to foster good relations.</p> <p>Continue with the proposal (despite the potential for adverse impact) – you should clearly set out the justifications for doing this and how you believe the decision is compatible with our obligations under the duty</p>	

Stop and remove the proposal – if there are adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated, you should consider stopping the proposal altogether. If a proposal leads to unlawful discrimination, it should be removed or changed.

- **Important:** If there are any adverse impacts you cannot mitigate, please provide a compelling reason in the justification column.

Option selected	Conclusions/justification
No major change to the proposal	The Acomb Library enhancements collectively promote physical accessibility, inclusive design, and equal participation across age, disability, race, income level, and more. They help eliminate barriers, foster inclusion, and enhance equity in public service delivery.

Step 7 - Summary of agreed actions resulting from the assessment

7.1	What action, by whom, will be undertaken as a result of the impact assessment.		
Impact/issue	Action to be taken	Person responsible	Timescale
Closure of library for up to 12 weeks	To communicate with library users early and seek to understand any additional needs to providing alternative provision of services that doesn't discriminate.	Acomb Explore Library Manager & Project Manager	2 months prior to closure

Step 8 - Monitor, review and improve

8. 1	How will the impact of your proposal be monitored and improved upon going forward? Consider how will you identify the impact of activities on protected characteristics and other marginalised groups going forward? How will any learning and enhancements be capitalised on and embedded?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The impact of the Acomb Library enhancement proposals will be monitored through regular project review meetings and formal monthly working group meetings between project officers and Explore staff.• Equality metrics will be tracked, including accessibility audits, user satisfaction surveys, and consultation feedback analysis.• Issues raised during construction works or post-implementation will be logged and addressed through established project governance.• Learning will be documented and shared across council infrastructure programmes to ensure continuous improvement in inclusive planning and delivery.