

EQUALITY ANALYSIS-RELOCATION OF BROMLEY CENTRAL LIBRARY AUGUST 2024

Assessor name: Paula Young-Head of Culture

Contact details: paula.young@bromley.gov.uk

1. What is the Proposal?

The proposal relates to the relocation of Bromley Central Library which is the borough's primary library and in 2022/23 issued 242,213 books and multimedia items and received 355,512 visits. In 2022/23 Central Library registered 17,208 new users. It is used extensively by a range of residents of all ages, from students studying for exams, to older people attending reading groups. Central Library hosts a broader range of services than the other 13 libraries in the borough, including Local Studies, business start-up space, exhibition spaces, a book stack and an archive storeroom. There is also community hire hall space which is used by the NHS and a range of local groups including Magpie Dance and U3A who have the largest number of attendees with up to 160 people attending two of their monthly meetings. Bromley Libraries are currently operated by our Contractor Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) on a ten-year contract with a five-year extension which commenced on 1st November 2017. GLL will be operating the new Central Library on behalf of the Council as part of the existing contract.

As part of the Council's Operational Property Review (OPR), in November 2022, a review of all Council properties was undertaken. This review included the Churchill Theatre and Central Library building which confirmed that due to poor condition the building is at the end of its life and the site now requires redevelopment. Consequently, officers have been considering options for the relocation of the Central Library as a large town Centre premises is required if the library is to be successfully relocated with services replicated and improved. Two buildings were first identified as suitable for the Central Library. The first was Churchill Quarter building three, and the second was the old Topshop site on the High Street.

Churchill Quarter building three is a large space opposite Bromley South Station and is the site of the new Bromley Civic Centre. The site is larger than required and could host all the existing library front facing and back-office storage and services, as well as the museum and art store currently located in Orpington at the Priory depot site. However, its location at the far end of the high street is not ideal, given that it is further away from the main public car parks and other amenities which could have a negative impact on those with protected characteristics. Additionally, the only way of creating public access to this building is to create a new opening down the side of the building past Wetherspoons, this is away from the main street and would reduce the visibility of the library, as well as causing issues for evening events at the library.

The former Topshop building is also a large space, located in the pedestrianized area of Bromley High Street very close to the current library site. It is smaller than the current site and would not have space to replicate all the current storage provision, specifically the archive store. However, it can host all the customer facing services. Additionally, it has a very strong visible frontage that could be greatly improved, creating a very accessible site. Therefore, the Topshop site is considered the preferable location, with a suitable space to be provided for the archive store at another off-site location. The archive store requires a specialist space that is protected from fire and is environmentally controlled to ensure that the documents are not damaged by humidity. Ideally if the archive store is moved the opportunity would also be taken to move the museum and art store to the same site. The site should ideally be in or easily accessible to Bromley Town Centre. This would create easier access to the whole of the Bromley Historic Collection together and enable easier management. Currently residents who want to access items from the archive and museum collection have to wait for items to be retrieved so there would be no change to this system as long as a site is found within easy access to the town Centre.

The decant of the current library and Bromley Historic Collections (including archive store) will take place at the appropriate points in the programme. The Archive is expected to move temporarily into deep storage in 2025 and there will be a period of complete closure for the library whilst the library move takes place. The library relocation will require a closure of approximately four months, most likely between March and June 2026. During this period a click and collect service would be offered in the town Centre and library users would be signposted to the branch libraries, many of which have been improved and updated. To date officers have engaged with residents, staff and other stakeholders on the proposals to relocate Bromley central library and the proposals are being supported by a detailed Needs Assessment and this Equality Impact Assessment the purpose of which is to mitigate against any negative impact and to demonstrate positive impact of the relocation of the Central Library.

2. What are the recommendations?

The recommendations for the relocation of Central Library are set out below.

To develop the proposals At the October 2023 Executive it was agreed to proceed with the consultancy procurement to progress proposals for the relocation of the Central Library into the former Topshop unit on the High Street in Bromley. An initial budget was added to the Capital Programme to develop the proposals to RIBA Stage 3, with a commitment to a report back to the Executive with detailed costs and recommendations for next steps in September 2024 which include proceeding to procurement for the design and build works contract for the fit out of the new library and archive, via a restricted tender process.

To ensure that the relocation satisfies statutory duty in its permanent provision and temporary service: Libraries are a statutory service, the Council has a duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' service. The legal case law benchmark for meeting statutory provision is that 95% of residents should be within 1.5 miles of a library. If the relocation of the Central Library goes ahead this will require a temporary closure of

approximately four months, most likely between March and June 2026 for the decant of the current building and move to take place as set out in section one. During this period service users will be signposted to alternative libraries, two of which are within 1.5 miles of the Central Library as the crow flies. This closure will have the most significant impact on people who use the library to study, work and hire space, particularly as it will coincide with the exam period. Consideration will be given to other quiet spaces that can be set up temporarily in the town Centre for this purpose. To further reduce impact on Hall Users they will be signposted to the new Community Space at West Wickham Library along with local Church Halls e.g. United Reformed Church in Bromley. The new John Lewis development will also include space for community use albeit this may not have come forward in time.

In addition, the existing archive store is also reaching the end of its life and is not effectively maintaining temperature and humidity control, and if it is not relocated as part of this project then significant investment would need to be made in the current facilities. The Council has a legal statutory duty in relation to the archive and officers have met with National Archives to discuss the emerging options and plans. The Council is legally required on the move of the archive store to provide a space 25% larger than the existing. This is to future proof the space for future collecting. There are specialist fire safety measures required as well as environmental controls.

Re-provision of non-public facilities: The designs for the re-provision of the archives, bookstack and museum store have been progressed in tandem with the main library proposals, with options developed for off-site and on-site provision. The archives, bookstack/store and art/museum store are non-public, specialist back of house areas, and as such they can function off-site or on-site. The museum store is currently located off-site in Orpington. However, it is proposed to consolidate these functions in order to free up land and improve operational efficiency. The back of house bookstore is expected to reduce by half. The bookstore is not a legal requirement and the move to the old Topshop will offer an opportunity to review what stock is held in the store based on borrowing data. Staff space will be provided at the same levels.

Improved Facilities /Spatial Planning: Concerns have been expressed during consultation about moving to a smaller building. Initial spatial planning has shown that whilst the old Topshop site is smaller than the existing library, as acknowledged in the previous committee report, due to the current library having over provision of circulation space, and the ability to design more flexible use space, there is no significant impact on space for the variety of services offered by the library. Appendix C provides spatial diagrams for the site. In response to public engagement the children's library is proposed to increase in size by 50% with 16% more book space, which will allow more children's activities to take place. Whilst the amount of floor space for the adult fiction and non-fiction stock will decrease to 72% the book space will hold at 93%. This means that whilst there will be a shift in balance between adult and children's book stock there will be no material reduction. Seating and study space will be altered, however overall there will be an increase in floor space. Local studies will reduce slightly in size, again due to current significant circulation space, but will crucially have the same amount of book space.

Provision of event hire space: The designs for the new library show several flexible enclosed meeting spaces which will meet the needs of the majority of library users, including a meeting room that will seat up to 45 people. However, the largest event space, which is estimated to seat up to 140 people is not enclosed but open in the main library space. This will enable more exciting public programming in the library, and for the site to be used for more creative activity after hours as a private venue. As there will no longer be a private event space for that number during library opening hours, officers are working to mitigate this by providing details of other nearby large hall spaces and determining whether any small investments can be made to these halls to overcome any barriers to them being used.

Engagement strategy: Following a competitive tender process the architect-led multi-disciplinary contract was won by Ellis Williams Architects Ltd, with Stace LLP winning the quantity surveying and employer's agent contract. The project team have developed the design options and a first round of engagement with the public, library staff, user groups, DCMS and The National Archives was undertaken.

Three surveys targeted at children/young people, adults, and library staff, to collect feedback on the current and future library provision ran from June 16th to July 22nd, 2024. The surveys for the general public also collected feedback on why people didn't use the library and what would encourage them to do so. In total 1,387 survey responses were received for the main public survey, along with 142 responses for the school survey and 23 responses to the staff survey. The facilities that people wanted to see in the new library were toilets, more/new stock, events/activities, study space and better accessibility. In response to the question which asked people what would encourage them to use the library more, the most popular answer was 'more children's activities for all ages', followed by 'better study space' and 'more events'.

A second round of engagement on the designs is currently underway with the designs currently being displayed in the Top Shop window and also at the Central Library. Two rounds of staff consultation have taken place to date with a third at the planning stage. Engagement has also taken place with groups using the main groups hiring the halls including U3A.

3. Who is affected by the Proposal? Identify the main groups most likely to be directly or indirectly affected by the recommendations.

- Library Service Users including students
- Hall Hirers
- Community stakeholders
- Residents who are non-library users
- Central Library staff

The engagement conducted in June 2024 captured the views of all the groups listed above -see summary in section 2.

Library Service Users: Bromley Central Library is open 55 hours per week with an estimated average of 103 issues per hour issuing a total of 294,051 items in 2022/23. The total number of active borrowers at all libraries fell during the pandemic but is growing again and stood at 27,449 in March 2022. The number of active borrowers at Central Library was 3,488 the highest number in the Borough. There were 355,512 visits to Bromley Central Library to borrow books, use study spaces, use IT, access warm spaces and to attend a wide range of activities take place including Storytime, Books aloud, Rhyme time, Code Club, three adult reading groups, two children’s reading groups, and teenage reading group.

Visits to Central Library	2018-19	2019-20	2022-23	% change from 2019-20 to 2022-23
Central Library	384,646	398,340	355,512	-10.8%
All Libraries Total	1,523,583	1,341,834	1,083,332	-19.3%
Items Issued	2018-19	2019-20	2022-23	% change from 2019-20 to 2022-23
Central Library	331,702	288,708	294,051	+1.9%
All Libraries Total	1,454,806	1,408,236	1,647,326	+17.0%

Residents and non-library users

Residents and non-library users were also included in the engagement and were asked what facilities would make them more likely to use the Central Library. The top three responses were more children’s activities, better study space and more events.

Hall Hirers and stakeholders

Bromley Libraries work closely with partners and stakeholders to provide a wide range of activities and services. The table below sets out the groups who regularly hire the meeting room space on the 4th and 5th floors at Central Library. These include NHS clinics including blood donation services. U3A and Magpie dance and Bromley Friendship Group Central Library are amongst the community groups hiring the halls most regularly with U3A having the largest attendance with two groups meeting monthly having 160 Members attending. Stakeholder groups clearly value the library as a meeting facility using the library meeting rooms to host local meetings and events Many libraries host Community Group meetings. Local tutors also use library space valuing the library space and facilities. As part of the engagement strategy, the consultants have engaged with Hall Hirers to capture their views about their requirements in the new Library and during the period of closure which will continue.

Regular Hall Hire Groups and numbers attending		
Hall hirer	Activity	Group size
NHS Blood Service	Blood donation	100
XMS Marks & Spencer Retirement Club	Talks and social events	75
Bromley Friendship	Talks and social events	60
Start Up Bromley business panel event	Talk	60
Homes for Ukraine	Social event	50
Start Up Bromley networking	Networking event	50
Magpie Dance	Dance	40
Secondary school author visit	Talk	40
U3A General Studies Group	Meeting	160
USA Local Studies Group	Meeting	160
U3A Science & Technology	Meeting	30
U3A Social Studies	Meeting	30
U3A Watercolours Group	Meeting	8
Bromley Civic Society	Meeting	15
Visually Impaired people reading group	Meeting	12
HeadStart speech	Meeting	11
Piano tuner	Music	3
Music	Music	3

Staff

All staff working at Bromley Central Library and GLL Management have been given the opportunity to participate in the engagement and to give their views on facilities they would like to be included both in back office and public spaces. 23 staff provided survey responses with a series of workshops having taken place for staff including current designs.

AGE- IMPACT IDENTIFIEDCHECK BOX IF NOT APPLICABLE **AGE: Additional Equalities Data (Service level or Corporate) Include data analysis of the impact of the proposals**

Type response here: The impact on older people was further considered based on Bromley being identified as a Borough with an aging population and from the findings of the statistics provided in the guidance templates and updated 2021 Census data and have been checked and analysed to inform this assessment. Bromley Central Library is located in Bromley Town ward. Data for the whole Borough and ward data has been considered as part of this analysis.

- JSNA 2021 data showed the proportion of older people in Bromley (aged 65 and over) is expected to increase gradually from 17.8% of the population in 2021 to 18.7% by 2025 and 20.2% by 2031. 13% of Bromley Town ward residents where the Central Library is located were aged 65+ compared to 21% aged 0-17.
- The pattern of population change in the different age groups is variable between wards, with some wards, such as Bromley Town where Central Library is located, experiencing a large rise in the proportion of young people which is evidenced by the popularity of the Central Library during study periods. Trends at others wards such as Bickley which is also in close proximity to Central Library experiencing a large rise in the proportion of over 75s.
- In line with this, a 2023 survey of Library Users conducted by GLL showed that 34% of respondents using all libraries were 65 and over compared to 30% Central Library Users. which was the highest response rate of all the age groups.
- 25% of those responding were in the 35-44 age group across all libraries showing this to be the next most [popular user group. This trend varies at Central Library where 20% of users were aged 55-64 compared to 16% in the 33-44 age group.
- University of the Third Age (U3A) hire the large hall at Central library for their five groups and at 160 have the largest number attending. U3A is open to people of all ages who are no longer in full-time employment, but there is no lower age limit. The U3A is aimed at retired or semi-retired people, and many members are aged 50 and over.

What is the proposal's impact on the equalities aims? Look for *direct impact* but also evidence of *disproportionate impact* i.e. where a decision affects a protected group more than the general population, including *indirect impact*.

- Bromley Central Library is particularly popular with students. The proposal will have a temporary direct impact on young people who are studying during the four-month closure period as they will have further to travel to access quiet study space.

What actions can be taken to avoid or mitigate any negative impact or to better advance equality and foster good relations?

- Service improvements-once opened the new library will offer improved provision or all .The change in location is minimal with the buildings being 469ft apart and a two-minute walk away through a pedestrianized area and will result in better

- The proposal will have a temporary direct impact on older adults during the four-month closure period as they will have to travel further to access Library spaces including Hall Hire
- The proposal will impact larger groups hiring the Hall Space as the community spaces in the new Library will be smaller. They will be able to house most of the current bookings but will not be able to accommodate bookings over 140 which includes 2 U3A groups.

facilities including toilets, ground floor access to facilities (the existing site has no ground floor provision), and full lift access to all areas of the library and improved study and meeting space.

- Engagement undertaken to date has included local schools. Further engagement with schools and colleges and youth groups in the borough will take place to communicate the temporary service changes to students. Pop up study provision to be provided for students in the pre-exam period in other Bromley spaces.
- Engagement will also cover all elements of the project including the period of closure of up to four months to allow the move to take place. During this period Service Users of all ages will be signposted to other libraries within the Borough, many of which will have been improved as part of the Council's Library repair programme. Additionally, the Home Library Service, and digital access, will be promoted to those not able to travel further to access library provision.
- We will carry out regular engagement activities with older age groups to ensure they are fully informed of the changes and supported in the transition and made aware that there will be better facilities within the new library including toilet facilities and full lift access along with spaces for events to combat loneliness and isolation.

- Groups who hire the meeting space including U3A have been included in consultation since commencement to consider their needs during the move and within the new building. During closure space will be available at the new West Wickham Library and Local Church Halls. To accommodate larger groups a directory of hall spaces is being compiled by the project team. LBB are also working with existing spaces to improve their facilities E.G sound system at URC church.

DISABILITY: IMPACT IDENTIFIED

CHECK BOX IF NOT APPLICABLE

DISABILITY: Additional Equalities Data (Service level or Corporate) Include data analysis of the impact of the proposals

Type response here: The EA template data contains 2011 census data showing 85% residents have no limitations in their activities with 8% stating they had a disability that limited their day-to-day activities a little and 7% limited a lot. Further research identified that the top five causes of years lived with disability in Bromley has remained the same over the last ten years. This includes musculoskeletal disorders, mental disorders, other non-communicable diseases, neurological disorders, and diabetes & CKD. There has been an increased impact to years lived with disability caused by unintentional injury, digestive diseases, and nutritional deficiencies. There has been a decrease in the impact caused by chronic respiratory diseases, cardiovascular diseases and maternal & neonatal diseases. One of the main burdens of disability in Bromley is mental health disorders. The estimated prevalence of common mental health disorders in Bromley is 15.1% for 16+ years and 9.1% for 65+ years (PHE: Fingertips, 2017)

- 2021 Census data for Bromley Town ward where the Central Library is located showed 88% had very good/good health, 9% fair health and 2.8% very bad or bad health.
- 81% stated in the Census data that they were not disabled under the Equality Act with no long term physical or mental health conditions.
- 7% declared they were not disabled under the Equality Act but has a long term physical or mental health condition, but day-to-day activities are not limited.
- 4% said they were disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a lot with a further 8% saying their activities were limited a little

— The GLL 2023 Library Survey data shows that 76% of respondents across the Borough did not have a disability which limited their activities, 2.7% said their activities were limited a lot and 8.4% limited a lot with the remainder preferring not to say. At 83% a higher number of Central Users did not have a disability, 2.7% limiting a lot and 6% limiting a little

What is the proposal's impact on the equalities aims? Look for *direct impact* but also evidence of *disproportionate impact* i.e. where a decision affects a protected group more than the general population, including *indirect impact*

- The change to location could have a potentially negative impact on people with disabilities as it could interrupt their routines and travel plans particularly during the period of closure.
- The temporary closure and smaller meeting room space at the new Library could have a negative impact on disability groups hiring the Hall Hire space at Bromley Central Library

What actions can be taken to avoid or mitigate any negative impact or to better advance equality and foster good relations?

- See positive impacts set out in age category above.
- The new permanent location at Central Library will better advance equality outcomes for those with disabilities including a fully accessible space with meeting space, toilet facilities and lift access.
- Consultation has already commenced which includes those with disabilities to ensure that all impacted groups are fully informed of the changes and supported in the transition.
- Council officers will support and assist disability groups in booking alternative hire space in Bromley Town.
- To accommodate larger groups a directory of hall spaces is being compiled by the project team. LBB are also working with existing spaces to improve their facilities E.G sound system at URC Church.

PREGNANCY & MATERNITY:

CHECK BOX IF NOT APPLICABLE

PREGNANCY & MATERNITY: Additional Equalities Data (Service level or Corporate) Include data analysis of the impact of the proposals.

Type response here: The data in the EA template has been updated due to the availability of 2021 Census data. The number of live births in Bromley has been decreasing over the last few years.

- In 2008 there were 4,000 births in Bromley, which rose to 4,300 in 2016 but fell to 3,600 in 2020. In 2022, there were 3,431 live births in Bromley, England and Wales. This is fewer than other London boroughs, including Newham (5,598), Croydon (4,872), and Barnet (4,621). Birth rates vary between wards.
- The highest rate is in Clock House and the lowest in Farnborough and Crofton, Bromley Town ward where the Central Library is located is below the borough average.
- In 2021, 22.4% of households in Bromley included a couple with dependent children, which is an increase from 20.7% in 2011 but fell across England.
- In 2020, Bromley's rate of multiple births was 15.6 per 1,000 births, which is similar to London's 15.2 per 1,000 and slightly higher than England's 14.4 per 1,000.
- The population projections for children aged 0-4 years in Bromley are currently fairly static but are projected to fall in the mid-2020s before recovering again.
- Total fertility rate (TFR) by local authority district, England and Wales, 2022 is 1.52% in Bromley compared to 1.62% in Bexley and 1.63% in Croydon

What is the proposal's impact on the equalities aims? Look for *direct impact* but also evidence of *disproportionate impact* i.e. where a decision affects a protected group more than the general population, including *indirect impact*

- *No impact identified on this equality group.*

What actions can be taken to avoid or mitigate any negative impact or to better advance equality and foster good relations?

- N/A -The new Central Library will offer improved facilities for all equality groups and service users. The children's library will be on the ground floor improving access with buggies.

RACE:

CHECK BOX IF NOT APPLICABLE

RACE: Additional Equalities Data (Service level or Corporate) Include data analysis of the impact of the proposals

The 2011 and 2016 data set out in the EA template has been updated due to the publication of the 2021 Census data. Key changes are set out below.

- Major changes show 8.3% of Bromley residents identified their ethnic group within the "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh" category, up from 5.2% in 2011. The 3.1 percentage-point change was the largest increase among high-level ethnic groups in this area.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — In 2021, 76.5% of people in Bromley identified their ethnic group within the "White" category (compared with 84.3% in 2011), while 7.6% identified their ethnic group within the "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African" category (compared with 6.0% the previous decade). — The percentage of people who identified their ethnic group within the "Mixed or Multiple" category increased from 3.5% in 2011 to 5.4% in 2021. — Central Library 2023 Library Survey data showed 71% of respondents identified as White; 23% Asian/ Asian British; 14% Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African; 13% Mixed; 9% Other. All library data showed a slight variation with 79% White; 16.1% Asian/Asian British; 9.5% Black (all groups); 9% Mixed, 6.2% Other. 	
<p>What is the proposal's impact on the equalities aims? Look for <i>direct impact</i> but also evidence of <i>disproportionate impact</i> i.e. where a decision affects a protected group more than the general population, including <i>indirect impact</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No impact identified on this equality group. 	<p>What actions can be taken to avoid or mitigate any negative impact or to better advance equality and foster good relations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A The Central Library will offer improved facilities for all equality groups and service users
<p>RELIGION & BELIEF: CHECK BOX IF NOT APPLICABLE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>RELIGION AND BELIEF: Additional Equalities Data (Service level or Corporate) Include data analysis of the impact of the proposals.</p> <p>The data provided in the EA template from the 2011 Census, the most up to date 2021 Census data has been analysed along which shows an increase on the number of residents having no religion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — In 2021, 37.3% of Bromley residents reported having "No religion", up from 26.0% in 2011. The rise of 11.3 percentage points was the largest increase of all broad religious groups in Bromley. — In 2021, 48.3% of people in Bromley described themselves as Christian (down from 60.7%), while 6.4% did not state their religion (down from 7.8% the decade before). 	
<p>What is the proposal's impact on the equalities aims? Look for <i>direct impact</i> but also evidence of <i>disproportionate impact</i> i.e. where a decision affects a protected group more than the general population, including <i>indirect impact</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No negative impact on this equality group 	<p>What actions can be taken to avoid or mitigate any negative impact or to better advance equality and foster good relations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A -The Central Library will offer improved facilities for all equality groups and service users
<p>GENDER/SEX: IMPACT IDENTIFIED CHECK BOX IF NOT APPLICABLE <input type="checkbox"/></p>	

GENDER/SEX: Additional Equalities Data (Service level or Corporate) Include data analysis of the impact of the proposals.

The Data set out in the EA template has been considered along with the latest 2021 Census data which shows Bromley has 13,500 more females than males, with a population split of 52% female and 48% male. Refer also to the gender re-assignment section.

- The 2021 census also found that 2.7% of people aged 16 and over in Bromley identify as LGB+, which stands for gay or lesbian, bisexual, or other sexual orientation. In terms of gender identity, the 2021 census found that 0.07% of people in Bromley identify as trans women, which is the lowest percentage in London.
- The 2023 GLL Library service satisfaction survey showed there to be 67.6 % identifying as female higher than the Census average, 25.7% male and 0.4% non-binary with the remainder not specifying across all libraries.
- Central Library survey data was in line with Census data as 52% of respondents were female, 41% as male, 1% non-binary and 7% prefer not to say and did not provide a response

What is the proposal’s impact on the equalities aims? Look for direct impact but also evidence of disproportionate impact i.e. where a decision affects a protected group more than the general population, including indirect impact.

- There are more female library members than other genders, The re-location of the service will affect females more due to the fact they represent a higher number of people using the service provided at Bromley Central Library

What actions can be taken to avoid or mitigate any negative impact or to better advance equality and foster good relations?

- Across all age ranges, there are more female library members than other genders. They will be consulted during the engagement and made aware of the temporary closure and their views and opinions captured.
- There will be improved facilities at the Central Library which will be fully accessible and better advance equality and foster good relations for all equalities groups.
- See also mitigation for Disability and Age which will also be applied

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

CHECK BOX IF NOT APPLICABLE

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: Additional Equalities Data (Service level or Corporate) Include data analysis of the impact of the proposals.

The 2018 data in the EA template has been considered along with newer 2021 Census data and APS data which shows the sexual identities of residents in the 2021 census, Data in this section are only available at local authority level. For smaller areas, such as wards or super output areas, data for the corresponding local authority is shown. 2.7% of people aged 16 and over in Bromley identified as LGB+, gay or lesbian,

bisexual, or other sexual orientation. This is lower than the percentages in other South East London boroughs, such as Lewisham (6.1%) and Greenwich (4.5%). 5.1% of those aged under 35 in Bromley said they identified with an LGB+ sexuality.

Sexual Orientation Percentage

- Heterosexual or straight 90%
- Gay or lesbian 1.5%
- Bisexual 0.9%
- Pansexual 0.1%
- Asexual 0.1%
- Queer 0.0%
- All Other orientations 0.1%
- Not answered 7.3%

What is the proposal’s impact on the equalities aims? Look for *direct impact* but also evidence of *disproportionate impact* i.e. where a decision affects a protected group more than the general population, including *indirect impact*

- The data in the template has been considered along with service data which concluded there was no impact on this equality group.

What actions can be taken to avoid or mitigate any negative impact or to better advance equality and foster good relations?

- N/A-The Central Library will offer improved facilities for all equality groups and service users which will foster good relations and better advance equality.

GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT:

CHECK BOX IF NOT APPLICABLE

Gender Re-Assignment: Additional Equalities Data (Service level or Corporate) Include data analysis of the impact of the proposals.

The EA template gives limited data for this category. The 2021 Census provides a detailed breakdown for the first time-see Bromley data below which sets out the gender preferences of residents with 94% stating they were the same gender as at birth.

- Gender identity same as at birth- 94%
- Gender different from birth-0.2%
- Identifying as Trans women 0.1%
- Identifying as Trans man 0.1%
- Non binary 0.1%
- Other 0.0%
- Not answered 5.6%

<p>What is the proposal’s impact on the equalities aims? Look for <i>direct impact</i> but also evidence of <i>disproportionate impact</i> i.e. where a decision affects a protected group more than the general population, including <i>indirect impact</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data in the template has been considered along with service data which concluded there was no impact on this equality group. 	<p>What actions can be taken to avoid or mitigate any negative impact or to better advance equality and foster good relations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A -The Central Library will offer improved facilities for all equality groups and service users which will foster good relations and better advance equality.
<p>MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP: CHECK BOX IF NOT APPLICABLE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Marriage and Civil Partnership: Additional Equalities Data (Service level or Corporate) Include data analysis of the impact of the proposals.</p> <p>The data in the EA template has been considered along with the latest 2021 Census data and service data. The latest data shows of Bromley residents aged 16 years and over, 36.5% said they had never been married or in a civil partnership in 2021, up from 33.6% in 2011.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — In 2021, just under one in two people (47.8%) said they were married or in a registered civil partnership, compared with 48.5% in 2011. The percentage of adults in Bromley that had divorced or dissolved a civil partnership decreased from 8.3% to 8.0%. — 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 Bromley (2.9 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. 	
<p>What is the proposal’s impact on the equalities aims? Look for <i>direct impact</i> but also evidence of <i>disproportionate impact</i> i.e. where a decision affects a protected group more than the general population, including <i>indirect impact</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data in the template has been considered along with service data which concluded there was no impact on this equality group. 	<p>What actions can be taken to avoid or mitigate any negative impact or to better advance equality and foster good relations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A The Central Library will offer improved facilities for all equality groups and service users to foster good relations and better advance equality

OTHER GROUPS AFFECTED:	CHECK BOX IF NOT APPLICABLE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Additional Equalities Data (Service level or Corporate) Include data analysis of the impact of the proposals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> THE EA template highlights the need for consideration to be given to other user group who may be affected by this proposal which includes who do not readily fall within the protected characteristics, such as children in care, people who are affected by socio-economic disadvantage or who experience significant exclusion or isolation because of poverty or income, education, locality, social class or poor health, ex-offenders, asylum seekers, people who are unemployed, homeless or on a low income. The needs of those who categories have been considered alongside the listed equalities groups and no further negative impacts were identified. Libraries are self-welcoming spaces available to all and provision will continue to be available during the closed period. There are no barriers to Library membership, there are procedures in place to allow those without a fixed address to join the library. Libraries are warm spaces to those experiencing fuel poverty. Bromley Libraries work with Children Looked After and Refugees and Asylum seekers. These user groups will be supported to take part in the Engagement process. 	
<p>What is the proposal's impact on the equalities aims? Look for <i>direct impact</i> but also evidence of <i>disproportionate impact</i> i.e. where a decision affects a protected group more than the general population, including <i>indirect impact</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No negative impact on this equality group 	<p>What actions can be taken to avoid or mitigate any negative impact or to better advance equality and foster good relations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A The Central Library will offer improved facilities for all equality groups and service users and will foster good relations and better advance equality

CONCLUSION AND REPORTING GUIDANCE

Set out your conclusions below using the EA of the protected characteristics and submit to your Director for approval.

If you have identified any negative impacts, please attach your action plan to the EA which addresses any negative impacts identified when submitting for approval.

If you have identified any positive impacts for any equality groups, please explain how these are in line with the equality aims.

Review your EA and action plan as necessary through the development and at the end of your proposal/project and beyond.

Retain your EA as it may be requested by Members or as an FOI request. As a minimum, refer to any completed EA in background papers on reports, but also include any appropriate references to the EA in the body of the report or as an appendix.

4. Conclusion:

Impact: Except for Hall Hire which has a slightly reduced capacity, the Topshop site is expected to be large enough to include all existing public facing services once extended. This analysis had concluded that there is a potential negative impact on larger groups wishing to hold meetings in Central Bromley, including those in the **age, sex and disability** groups which will be mitigated as follows.

HALL HIRE FACILITIES

There will be modern re-purposed meeting facilities within the new Bromley Central Library. Our data shows that the U3A currently use space within the Central Library for 5 groups –see Table in section 2. The Local Studies Group and the General Studies Group are large groups of 160 people, and otherwise all other U3A groups using the library halls are smaller with less than 45 people so will easily be accommodated in the largest enclosed/private meeting room in the new library which is able to accommodate between 25-25 45 depending on the layout . There is also a medium sized meeting room for 20 people, and other smaller enclosed meeting spaces for up to 10. A main library auditorium events space provides seating up to 140.

To accommodate larger groups Bromley Council are compiling a list of other venues in Bromley that could be suitable to meet their needs. This will be circulated to all Community Groups and Hall Hirers. Consultation with U3A has shown that the United Reformed Church in Bromley has suitable facilities that meet their needs, but an upgraded sound system is required which the Council is looking to provide to make this a fit for purpose alternative replicating the current library hall hire space.

OVERALL IMPROVED FACILITIES & PROVISION

As demonstrated throughout this assessment, the new library will offer improved facilities including accessible toilets, lift access and ground

floor circulation space. This will be an improvement on current facilities as despite its Central location, the current library suffers from having a minimal ground floor presence, with no toilets, a lack of high street frontage, and no adjacent parking even for disabled users. Therefore, the move will have a positive impact on all the equality groups and the Community. except for Hall Hire which has a slightly reduced capacity, the Topshop site is expected to be large enough to include all existing public facing services once extended. There is a potential negative impact on larger groups wishing to hold meetings in Central Bromley, which has been mitigated within this EIA.

Temporary Impact identified: The assessment shows that there will be a temporary impact on the following equality groups, **age, sex and disability** during the four-month temporary closure of the Central Library. The EA sets out in the relevant sections the mitigation that will be applied as follows. Students using the library to study will be most impacted by the temporary closure.

ALTERNATIVE LIBRARY PROVISION DURING CLOSURE

The needs of residents in relation to the statutory library service can continue to be met if Central Library moves to the Top Shop site on Bromley High Street. During the Library repair programme, when a library closes for works, users are signposted to other nearby libraries where resources are strengthened along with the Home Library Service and the digital offer. In addition to Central Library, there are 13 branch libraries in Bromley, an online library (library without walls) a business support service and a home library service. All Bromley Libraries offer a varied range of books, DVDS and newspapers, together with excellent IT facilities, including fixed PCs with internet access, free Wi-Fi access, high quality printing from library PCs, from customer devices and from home, and, in some locations, tablets to be used within the library. Libraries offer space, for customers to relax and read, or to study, either in a group with others, or alone. Libraries are staffed by a well-trained professional team and offer a range of events and activity programmes appropriate to the interests of local residents.

Alternative Libraries: The libraries closest in distance to Central Library are Burnt Ash, Shortlands, Southborough and Hayes libraries which are all within 2 miles of the Central Library site. Alternatively West Wickham library is within 3 miles of Central Library

- **Burnt Ash Library**-Currently closed for refurbishment on Friday 6th September, when it re-opens this year Burnt Ash will offer improved facilities. Open for 3 days per week Burnt Ash is 2 miles away via from Central Library and is well served by bus routes.
- **Hayes Library**- Open 3 days per week, Hayes Library is 1.9 miles away from Central Library and well served by bus routes.
- **Southborough**-Recently re-opened after refurbishment Southborough is open 4 days per week. 1.7 miles away from Central Library and well served by bus routes.
- **Shortlands Library** -open 3 days per week. 1.6 miles away from Central Library, car parking available, and served by several bus routes.
- **West Wickham Library**-Due to re-open March 2025 the refurbished and extended library will include study space and meeting space. Open 5 days per week the library is 2.7 miles away from Central Library and easily reached by several bus routes which stop nearby.

All are well served by public transport. Buses are a popular method of travel and a highly accessible way to travel around Bromley. All of London's buses on normal routes are now low-floor, wheelchair and buggy accessible vehicles. The ramps on all buses must always be in full working order. Any bus with a defective ramp is taken out of service, so passengers are assured of full accessibility at all times.

Wheelchair users are entitled to free travel on buses, as are Freedom Pass holders. Children under 5 and young people aged 5-18 in full-time education are also entitled to free travel on buses if they meet certain criteria (the school is more than 2 miles away and the child is under 8, the school is more than 3 miles away and the child is 8 or over, there's no safe walking route between their home and school or they cannot walk there because of their special educational needs, disability or a mobility problem).

Study Space-The period of closure is likely to be from March - June 2026 which will cover the exam period. To mitigate the impact on students, this group will be signposted to other libraries with study space as part of the engagement process to ensure they are aware of the facilities available across the borough. The engagement will include schools and colleges who will be asked to promote their study spaces to their students. We will work with partners and stakeholders in Bromley Town to find additional quiet space for students to minimize impact.

Home Library Service (HLS) -Bromley libraries offer a Home Library Service for Bromley residents who are unable to access a physical library due to being housebound for mobility or other health reasons. This service is delivered in partnership with the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) by a team of volunteers. The Service has been rebranded as Books and More to your Door to make it more appealing for new users. People who had not previously thought of having books delivered to their home may now consider doing so. The HLS supports the Council's loneliness strategy.

Other provision- During various stages of the COVID pandemic GLL offered click and collect services and Library Without Walls an online Library service. These services can be provided during the period of closure. We will work with partners including Glades and My-time active to seek space to provide a pop-up service including click and collect.

Hall Hire-During the 4-month period of temporary closure those wishing to use community space will be signposted towards other provision in partnership with local organisations. Officers are compiling a directory of Hall Hire and Community spaces which will be made available to Hall Hirers and community groups

5. ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Engagement- As discussed within the EA, Libraries are a statutory service which is superintended by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) who recommend that authorities should engage with the community when designing the library service to meet local needs within the available resources. In line with this, all those who could be impacted by the proposal have been part of the engagement. The project team have developed the design options and undertaken a first round of engagement with the public, library staff, user groups, DCMS and The National Archives on the design options – see section two for the analysis. Second stage engagement on the design process is currently underway, engagement will continue and will highlight alternative services during the temporary closure.

In addition to the public and staff engagement, officers met with DCMS in regard to the Council's legal statutory duty. DCMS provided contacts at other Local Authorities which have recently moved their primary libraries so that Bromley could benefit from their lessons learnt. DCMS have no objection to the move to the old Topshop site. They have advised that an up-to-date Needs Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment are required to be undertaken as part of the Council's procedures for the move. The Needs Assessment will include this EIA as an appendix.

Except for Hall Hire which has a slightly reduced capacity, the Topshop site is expected to be large enough to include all existing public facing services once extended. There is a potential negative impact on larger groups wishing to hold meetings in Central Bromley, which has been mitigated within this EIA.

The project team have incorporated the design feedback into the emerging library design concepts. These designs include a larger children's library than is at the existing Central Library, improved accessibility throughout and greater flexibility to utilise the library for events. It is also proposed to make improvements to the frontage of the former Topshop building, which will benefit the wider High Street and Conservation Area context, as well as making the new library more welcoming and energy efficient. The next round of engagement relating to design is currently underway.

The action plan sets out how the negative impacts relating to the stage of this project relating to the temporary closure and reduced capacity of spaces for hire will be mitigated and monitored at all stages until the relocation to the new building takes place.

6. Outcome of analysis

Outcome 1

No change required where the assessment has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to advance equality have been taken.

Outcome 2

Adjustments to remove barriers identified by the assessment or to better advance equality. Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers identified?

Outcome 3

Continue despite having identified some potential adverse impacts or missed opportunities to advance equality. In this case, the justification should be included in the assessment and should in line with the duty have 'due regard'. For the most important relevant policies, compelling reasons will be needed. You should consider whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact.

Outcome 4

Stop and rethink when an assessment shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination.

Sign off by Director:

Name: Sara Bowrey

Date:

Appendix 1 - EQUALITY ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN -RELOCATION OF CENTRAL LIBRARY (Version 3)

Please list actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment, continuing on a separate sheet if necessary. If appropriate these actions should be added to any business/service plan for the function.

Impact	Action to be undertaken	Desired outcome	Action owner	Target date
<p><u>Engagement</u> As Libraries are a statutory service which is superintended by the DCMS, engagement is required to ensure compliance.</p>	Engagement with Library service users residents, staff and other stakeholders to provide communication of proposed service change. This will take include surveys and face to face sessions with targeted groups in three phases.	Bromley residents and service users of to be fully engaged in plans for the re-location of Central Library including BHC and given opportunity to put forward their views on the designs. Impacted equalities groups to be targeted for consultation	Project Team	May-Nov 24
<p><u>Temporary Service Provision: Library Users</u> The move of the Central Library will include a closure period during 2026. During this time users to be signposted to other Libraries and services</p>	To ensure that those with age, gender, disability characteristics are made aware of the services available to them in the four-month closure period. This will include students and those using Hall Hire space	To provide and communicate to residents and service users the range of facilities available during temporary closure	Project Team	TBC
<p><u>Meeting space for larger groups</u> To signpost large groups towards alternative provision in the local area.</p>	To ensure that those with age, gender, disability characteristics requiring large hall hire facilities are made aware of the options available to them.	To produce a directory of spaces in Central Bromley and the surrounding areas which can be hired by large groups who exceed the capacity of the new meeting rooms.	Project Team	Ongoing
<p><u>Monitoring Impact during closure</u> To monitor service use during the period of closure to ensure that all users especially those in impacted equality group have access to the services they currently use.</p>	To monitor the use of the other libraries and temporary service to ensure that the needs of service users with age gender and disability characteristics are being met, including providing assistance to Hall Hirers and students requiring alternative provision.	For all library users, hall hirers to have their needs met during the period of closure.	Client Team	TBC
<p><u>Publishing</u> There is a requirement for EIA documents to be published for viewing so available for residents.</p>	Arrange for this EIA to be published on the Council's website where it can be viewed by all.	That the EIA documents are available on the Council's website.	Paula Young	Sep 2024