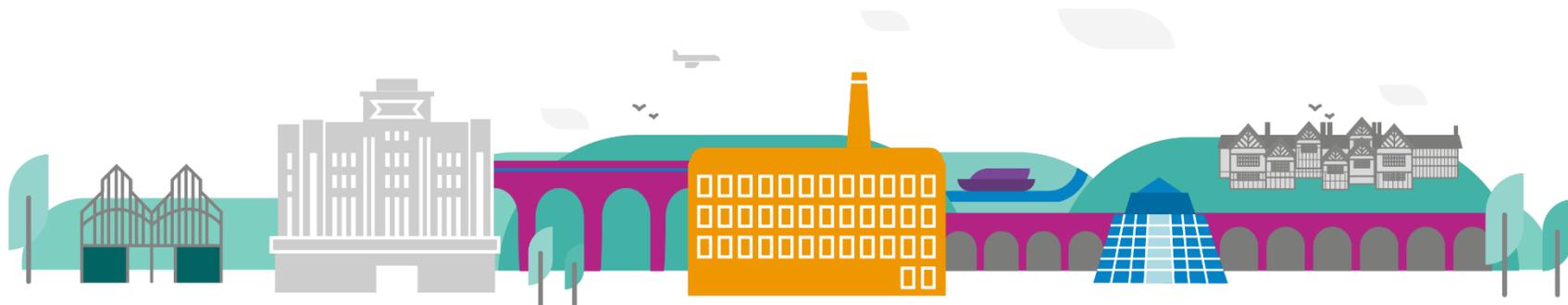




**Equality Impact Assessment
Future High Streets Fund – Stockroom
October 2021**



Equality Impact Assessment

Title of report or proposal	Future High Streets Fund – Stockroom		
Lead officer(s)	Kirsteen Roe	Date	Updated 27/10/2021
Aims and desired outcomes of the proposal			
<p>The aim of the proposal is to create a transformational visitor experience for Stockport Town Centre by repurposing vacant retail space to create a new social, community and cultural hub including a 21st Century library offer. It is anticipated that the diversification of the library offer, location in Merseyway Shopping centre, and the bringing together a range of public services and community facilities in one space would widen access to library and cultural services among groups of people who are less likely to access these offers currently and improve the offer for existing users.</p> <p>The engagement and consultation process is allowing communities to help shape the use and design of Stockroom, ensuring we keep the people of Stockport at the heart of the facility.</p> <p>This equality impact assessment is a live document and will include evidence gathered from engagement and consultation as the project progresses.</p>			
Scope of the proposal			
Include the teams or service areas from the Council and outward-facing services or initiatives			
<p>The proposal is focused on Stockroom (Working Title) – a future-focussed community hub. This would incorporate a learning and knowledge store which could include a 21st century library offer, a new cultural and museum experience, multi-functional space for use by communities and schools and access to a variety of public services.</p> <p>This EqIA covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the design and facilities of Stockroom; - the proposal to permanently move the library service from Central Library building to the space in Adlington Walk; - the approach to the engagement and consultation programme for these proposals. 			
What are the possible solutions you have been / will be exploring?			
You should refer to any business cases, issues papers or options appraisals			

The council has secured £14.5m for the Future High Streets Fund for this proposal. The geographical area in which this funding can be spent is limited and therefore no alternative locations for this proposal are being explored.

An expression of interest and then an outline business case were presented to the MHCLG in order to secure the funding. These set out the proposal at a high level for Stockroom.

However, the council now wishes to shape the full proposal with input from the community and is doing so through a phased engagement and consultation plan which was set out in the paper presented to Cabinet on 29th June. <http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1015&MId=27525> (item 10)

Other published papers relating to the Future High Streets Funding and Stockroom can be found at:

<http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1010&MId=28192> Extraordinary, Economy & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – 30th June 2021

<http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1010&MId=28272> Extraordinary, Economy & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – 17th August 2021

Who has been involved in the solution exploration?

Please list any internal and external stakeholders

- Residents
- Stockport Council teams, including representatives from all council directorates
- DCMS
- Stockport VCSE groups
- Businesses
- Members

What evidence have you gathered as a part of this EqIA? Which groups have you consulted or engaged with as part of this EqIA?

Sources can include but are not limited to: Statistics, JSNAs, stakeholder feedback, equality monitoring data, existing briefings, comparative data from local, regional or national sources.

Groups could include but are not limited to: equality / disadvantaged groups, VCSFE organisations, user groups, GM Equality panels, employee networks, focus groups, consultations.

- Consultations
 - Adlington Walk proposals Spring/Summer 2019
 - One Stockport Hub – Autumn 2020
 - Proposed relocation of Central Library – 23rd Aug – 18th Oct 2021
 - Online survey, with paper copies in libraries (1752 responses)
 - Young people’s online survey (150 responses)
 - On-street interviews (566 responses)
 - Stockport resident focus groups (4 groups)
- Engagement
 - Survey on Stockroom uses and design
 - Engagement sessions with VCFSE groups:
 - Age Friendly Network

- Disability Stockport (including representatives from: Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB))
- Forward (Stockport LGBT+ Centre)
- Parents and Carers Together Stockport (PACTS)
- Pure Innovations
- SEND Inclusion Community Group (including representatives from: Life Leisure, Space Stockport, Seashell Trust, Great Minds Manchester, Pennine Care NHS Trust, Together Trust)
- Stockport Race Equality Partnership (including representatives from: Parents Against Racism, ST4ND, Ebony and Ivory Community Organisation, Rising Starts NW)
- The Proud Trust youth group
- VCFSE Forum (including representatives from: Age UK, Healthwatch, Sector 3, Talk Listen Change, NHS CCG, Ebony and Ivory Community Organisation, Disability Stockport, Make A Difference GM, The Prevention Alliance, Stockport Advocacy, Supportability, Seashell Trust)
- Stockport Family Partnership Board (including representatives from: Stockport Council, NHS, schools and colleges)
- Autism Ambassadors
- Stockport Youth Council
- Children in Care Council
- Stockport Action Youth Speakers (SAYS)

- Data and Information

- Library user data
- Relevant local data such as educational attainment, literacy, digital inclusion, etc
- Insight from other local authorities (Chester Storyhouse, The Idea Store, London, and Lightbox, Barnsley)
- National data in relation to library usage and trends
- Local travel data

Are there any evidence gaps that make it difficult or impossible to form an opinion on how the proposed activity might affect different groups of people?

Responses to engagement and consultation surveys are typically lower from ethnically diverse residents and people who identify as LGBT+, although the in-person interviews for the Central Library consultation had minimum quotas applied based on age bands, gender and ethnicity.

Particular focus has been made through all stages of engagement and consultation to engage with local groups, forums and organisations that represent these groups, as well as groups that are representative of other protected characteristics, to ensure that their perspectives are considered.

Step 1: Establishing and developing the baseline

To assess the impacts of your proposal, you first need to understand how things are now. This will vary depending on your proposal, but consider who will be affected by the proposed changes: for example, who currently accesses a service or lives in an area? What works well for them? Are you aware of any issues? Are there any groups that are underrepresented?

Characteristic	Demographic of residents / service users	What works well How does the current provision or service meet the needs of people in different protected characteristics?	Current problems / issues This could include low levels of access or participation from certain demographic groups in current service or scheme; or disadvantages or barriers for particular groups
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The population of Stockport as a whole is slightly older than the national average, with the median age of Stockport at 41 compared to England of 39. 21.3% residents are aged under 18 (21.4% in England), 60.5 are aged 18-64 (62.3% in England), and 18.1% are aged 65 and over (16.4% in England). In the year 2020-21, 21% of book borrowers in Stockport were aged under 20, 66% were aged 20-64, and 13% were aged 65+. In the year 2016-17, book borrowing figures were: 10% for under 20s, 73% for 20-64 age group and 17% for over 65s. Respondents to the Stockroom survey were 5% under 24, 73% aged 25-64, and 18% 65+. 24% of respondents to the in-person Central Library consultation were under 35; 50% were aged 35-64 and 26% were 65+. Respondents to the online Central Library consultation were: 12% aged under 35, 54% aged 35-64 and 28% were aged 65+. 150 children responded to the Children's Central Library survey: 3% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library usage data shows that in 2020-21, adults aged 20 to 64 accessed more books than young people (below 20) and older people (65+). People in the 30-34 age group borrowed the most books in this time frame. This suggests that the access to libraries is working well for this group of people. Over recent years, the proportion of books borrowed has increased for children and young people. In 2016-17, only 10% of books were borrowed by residents under 20. In 2020-21, the same age group accessed 21% of all books, which is proportionate to their population size (21% of the population of Stockport is under 18). This suggests that the libraries offer to children and young people has improved in recent years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From January 2020 to March 2021, residents over the age of 64 were proportionally less likely to borrow a book, as this group represents 16.4% of the population but borrowed only 13% of the books. This represents a decrease in borrowing from 2016-17, where this age group borrowed 17% of books. Although as a whole, children and young people access a proportionate amount of books, the data shows that older children (9-19) access more books than young children (0-9), perhaps suggesting the offer could be made more appealing to families with young children. The children's Central Library survey revealed that 82% of those responding never used Central Library. Of those that didn't use Central Library, 56% said they were not interested in using it and 29% said they used a library nearer their house instead. 8% said it was too difficult to access. Engagement with young people revealed that there are very few free-to-access public spaces where young people can meet friends.

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	<p>of these were under 10, 6% 11-14, and 82% 15-17.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the Central Library consultation process, those aged 65+ were significantly more likely to disagree with the proposal to move Central Library services to Stockroom (41% disagree in the face to face survey and 57% disagree in the online survey). • Those with children under 18 in the household were significantly more likely to agree with the proposal to move Central Library services to Stockroom. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some respondents to the online survey said that opening hours in local libraries can be a deterrent to families with young children who often have to fit in library time around work etc. • There were some concerns raised in the survey that Central Library is inaccessible to older people and families with young children: <p><i>“As beautiful as the Central Library building is, it’s so out of the way that it is difficult for elderly people and people out with young children to make the walk up the A6 from the town centre to use it.”</i></p>
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34% of Stockport households have at least one member with a disability. • 19% of the Stockroom online survey respondents identified as having a disability or a long-term health condition, whereas 76% did not and 5% ‘preferred not to say’ • 18% of respondents to the in-person Central Libraries consultation had a long-term health condition or disability; 80% did not. • 21% of respondents to the open access Central Libraries survey had a long-term health condition or disability; 70% did not. • Those with a disability or long-term health condition were more likely to disagree with the proposal to move Central Library services to Stockroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of disability groups use libraries across the borough including Central Library. • The Central Library Building has been adapted for accessibility over the years. • There were many comments in the Central Libraries consultation that noted that Central Library is calm and quiet, which may serve those with some disabilities well. <p><i>“Stockroom [...] will attract a lot of visitors and this may lead to occasions when it is busy and quite noisy and I think that some people will tolerate situations like those better and for longer periods than others.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Central Library building was not originally designed with modern accessibility standards in mind and further modernisation would be prohibitive due to both cost and practical considerations. For example, the lift can be quite small for some mobility scooters and whilst access to the ground floor from street level is possible without using the lift, this is only achievable with staff assistance. • There are known barriers for some disabled people visiting the town centre due to the limited number of wheelchair accessible venues, the requirement to spend money in many venues that are wheelchair accessible, and the absence of Changing Rooms accessible toilet facilities.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The biggest benefit to the proposal to move Central Library services to Stockroom was better accessibility of Stockroom (52% of those who agreed with proposals), followed by a better location (34%) and improved or modern facilities (33%), all which would likely benefit residents with disabilities. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insight from the Stockroom engagement and Central Libraries consultation has confirmed this understanding and has also further highlighted the issue of disabled residents and their carers having to travel to other boroughs in Greater Manchester to access facilities: <i>“I enjoy meeting up with members of my family in a cafe setting, but there is a lack of venues which are fully wheelchair accessible. Commercial cafes don’t really want you to stay too long. It is difficult to meet up as a family group (6 people) in any of our houses as the wheelchair can’t get in / there is no space for visitors in the home of my disabled niece”.</i> <i>“There is a massive need for a bookable sensory room for families. The only one that I’ve known available outside of the Seashell Trust and other schools, is the one in Wythenshawe, not huge and not easy to access. Making it bookable will ensure that it’s safe and quiet, but also ensure that people do show up when they say they will.”</i> <i>“Hoists and beds for disabled people to get changed. There’s only 1 and that’s at the Trafford Centre.”</i> <i>“The current library is difficult the access both in terms of location and disability access, with an old lift, many stairs and heavy doors. It has been adapted as well</i>

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			<p><i>as it can be, but a purpose built space will be more accessible.”</i></p> <p><i>“The Central Library building is incredibly inaccessible. Having a library half way up a steep hill with difficult access arrangements makes it hard to fully use.”</i></p>
Gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not known how many transgender people live in Stockport, but UK-wide estimates believe this to be around 1% of the population. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Libraries can provide a safe space for this group of people and provide services, groups and events specific to transgender residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a limited number of gender-neutral toilets and LGBT+ specific safe spaces in the town centre.
Maternity and pregnancy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Libraries can provide a safe space for this group of people and provide services, groups and events specific to expecting or new parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a limited number of dedicated breastfeeding rooms in the town centre. Central Library Building is breastfeeding friendly but does not provide a dedicated breastfeeding room
Marriage and Civil Partnership			
Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From 2011 data, 92% of Stockport residents are White and 8% are from a Black, Asian or Ethnic Minority background. Of this 8%, the largest non-White British / Irish groups are Pakistani (24%), people with mixed or multiple ethnicities (19%), other White (18%) and Indian (10%). This data is from 2011 and it is expected that these groups have changed since then. 93% of respondents to the in-person Central Libraries consultation were White; 4% were Black; 1% were from 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were low levels of response rates to the Stockroom survey and to the Central Library survey from people who identify as belonging to ethnic groups other than White British. Nationally, educational attainment is disproportionately lower among children from Black African and Black Caribbean ethnic backgrounds than from children from other ethnic groups. This has been exacerbated by the pandemic. Frustration among some representatives of ethnically diverse

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	<p>Mixed ethnic groups and 1% were Asian.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 88% of respondents to the open access Central Libraries survey were White; 1% were from Mixed ethnic groups; 1% were Asian; 1% were from another ethnic background. Those from a BAME ethnic background were significantly more likely to agree with the proposal to move Central Library services to Stockroom; whereas those from a White ethnic background were significantly more likely to disagree. 		<p>communities that felt they were at “the fringes of service provision for too long” in Stockport and that they “wanted to feel a sense of belonging and inclusion”.</p>
Religion or Belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census data from 2011 shows that the religious make up of Stockport is 63% Christian, 25% no religion, 3.3% Muslim, 0.6% Hindu, 0.5% Jewish, 0.3% Buddhist, and 0.1% Sikh. Respondents to the in-person Central Libraries consultation were 49% Christian; 46% had no religion; 1% were Muslim and 1% had another religion. Respondents to the open access Central Libraries survey were 46% Christian; 40% had no religion; 1% were Muslim, 1% were Buddhist and 1% had another religion. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were low levels of participation in consultation and engagement exercises from people whose religion or belief is not Christianity or Atheism. A lack of prayer rooms in the town centre and space for faith groups to meet was highlighted by Muslim participants in particular during engagement, as well as people from other / unknown religions.
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 51% of Stockport residents are female and 49% are male, in line with the national average. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were some comments in the Stockroom online survey from women that expressed safety concerns

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents to the Stockroom survey were 67.5% female, 28.5% male, and 0.3% non-binary. • Respondents to the in-person Central Libraries consultation were 52% female, 48% male and 0% non-binary. • Respondents to the open access Central Libraries survey were 58% female, 37% male and 0% non-binary. 		<p>walking through Stockport town centre or the shopping centre at night.</p> <p><i>“If open in the evening, there are no other shops open, this could possibly lead to it feeling unsafe for certain groups, such as people visiting on their own.”</i></p>
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not known how many lesbian, gay or bisexual people live in Stockport, but UK-wide estimates believe this to be around 5-7% of the population. • Of the online survey respondents, 81% identified as straight, 3.5% as bisexual, and 2.6% as gay or lesbian. • 93% of respondents to the in-person Central Libraries consultation were heterosexual; 1% were Gay or Lesbian; 1% Bisexual. • 77% of respondents to the open access Central Libraries consultation were heterosexual; 4% were Gay or Lesbian; 2% Bisexual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries can provide a safe space for this group of people and provide services, groups and events specific to LGBT+ residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with LGBT+ groups revealed there is a lack of spaces, particularly in the town centre, where LGBT+ groups can meet that doesn't require spending money or in alcohol-free venues. • There is also a limited number of gender-neutral toilets and LGBT+ specific safe spaces.
Socioeconomic status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6% of residents in Stockport claim Job Seekers' Allowance / Universal Credit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries are a free resource for all residents and visitors to the borough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some responses to the Stockroom survey suggested that the cost of parking puts residents off visiting the town centre. • Opening hours of some libraries in Stockport present a barrier for people who work (for example who cannot visit a library after 17:00), and especially shift workers who find it difficult to visit at all.

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Other Please add in here any additional relevant comments or feedback where the protected characteristic is not known	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usage of Central Library has slightly declined in the four years prior to the 2020 lockdown in March. In 2016 there were on average 11,700 visits per month, whereas in 2019 this had decreased to 10,000 visits per month. However, membership of libraries across Stockport has increased over a similar time period, from 296,000 members in 2016 to 315,000 in 2021. Those who are existing Central Library users were significantly more likely to disagree with the move of Central Library services to Stockroom. Those who agreed with the proposal to move Central Library services to Stockroom agreed because it would have better accessibility (42%), and would be more central (27%). 		
<p>You are encouraged to consider the below characteristics where you have relevant data, especially if your proposal is predicted to disproportionately impact one or more of these groups.</p>			
Carers			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lack of social spaces in the Town Centre with accessible facilities
Those experiencing homelessness			
Veterans			
Asylum seekers and refugees			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likely to face social isolation, and limited finances means due to having no recourse to public funds

Step 2: Identifying impacts the proposal will have compared with the baseline

To explore the impacts of your proposal, you should use your baseline as a comparison with how things would be after your proposal. Think about how this would differ from the baseline for people with each protected characteristic. Include any sources of data you have used (including desktop research and engagement activity).

Impact no.	Characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Impact source	Impact details and rationale	Additional information
<i>Add more rows where needed</i>		<i>Is the impact positive or negative?</i>	<i>How have you become aware of an impact or inequality? Is it from research, have you been advised by another party, has a member of the public or a stakeholder made you aware, did someone from this or another characteristic make the claim?</i>	<i>What is the impact or inequality that has been identified? What is the frequency of claim for it? What is the rationale behind the issue, inequality or impact claimed?</i>	<i>Is there any evidence to support or deny the claim? Provide full details. Has the inequality or impact claimed been tested with people from the relevant characteristic? Have you researched the claimed issue? If yes, what has been learned and from what source(s)?</i>
1	Age – older people	Positive	Consultation	<p>The range of facilities and space at Stockroom supports connecting with others which is key to combating loneliness and isolation, something which older people are more at risk of experiencing than those of other age groups.</p> <p>The facilities are more likely to attract younger people than those at Central Library, which provides more opportunities for intergenerational activities, which has known mental health benefits.</p>	<i>“Provision of services needs to be modernised and updated to bring it in to the 21st Century and meet the requirements of all generations in a digital era whilst facilitating social inclusion and reducing loneliness/social isolation.”</i>

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2	Age – older people	Positive	Engagement with residents and community / representative groups	<p>Baseline data shows that proportionally fewer older people are borrowing books from libraries than other age groups. Taking into account conditions and access needs that affect older people more (such as dementia) will make the space more inclusive to older residents, which therefore may widen access.</p> <p>VCFSE groups for older people liked the idea of using the Stockroom space to run stalls and host events catering for this group which may also increase participation from this group.</p>	<p>Proposals for use of Stockroom space are in development and being informed by resident feedback.</p> <p><i>“I think the improved access to books for all ages is the key element [...] Being able to visit a library is often the highlight of the week for the elderly and a reason to leave the house. Combining a visit with being in the town centre would make the ability to borrow books independently more practical for the less mobile.”</i></p>
3	Age – older people, Disability	Negative	Consultation	<p>Results of the Central Library consultation revealed that older people and disabled people were groups with protected characteristics that were more likely to disagree with the proposal to move Central Library services to Stockroom. Going forward with this proposal will likely cause a degree of upset and anger amongst residents across Stockport but in particular with the groups listed above, especially due to the strength of feeling from people opposed to the proposals. Loss of access to the heritage and history of the building was a particular area of focus. There is a risk that people who feel very negatively about the proposals will avoid the services in Stockroom as a protest and so participation from these groups may decrease.</p>	

Impact no.	Characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Impact source	Impact details and rationale	Additional information
4	Age – younger people	Positive	Survey results, engagement with VCFSE groups	<p>66% of children and young people from the children’s survey supported the proposal to move Central Library services to Stockroom, citing 'easier access in a central location' (22%), a 'modern facility' (19%), and 'sounds like a better facility for people to use' (18%). 37% of respondents said they would be more likely to use the library if this was in Stockroom, and 55% said they would be interested in visiting.</p> <p>In the Stockroom engagement, there were suggestions of specific children’s and young persons’ areas to improve offer available to this group of people including the potential to include a digital children’s library.</p> <p>Young people and teenagers stated that there was a lack of free-to-access places for them to meet friends. Stockroom would offer this and so would improve the offer for young people in the town centre.</p> <p>The additional space in the site on Adlington Walk would allow for more creative and inventive educational facilities such as coding clubs and a makers’ space.</p>	<p>Proposals for what could be included to appeal to young people are in development and being informed by resident feedback.</p> <p><i>“More up-to-date facilities attract younger people.”</i></p> <p><i>“I like using the college library because it’s so modern, so would like using the modern experience in town”</i></p>
5	Age – younger people	Negative	Survey responses	<p>There were several comments made in the responses to the online survey from people of a variety of ages who were concerned that Stockroom, as a free-to-access space, could result in antisocial behaviour from young people. Whilst young people who were engaged with as part of this proposal expressed the need for free public spaces to meet up with friends, there is no evidence that this would result in antisocial behaviour. However, these opposing viewpoints could cause a degree of tension between young people and older people, as well as the potential for negative attitudes towards young people using the space.</p>	<p><i>“Open to abuse by those with nowhere to go or those seeking to cause trouble. Could be off putting to families or nervous people in need of real support.”</i></p> <p><i>“Free access to IT and Internet might attract kids who just want to mess about.”</i></p> <p><i>“It needs to be a space for teenagers to hang out</i></p>

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					<p><i>safely [...] there is nothing for them to do in the area but at the same time it needs to be respected otherwise people won't take their families."</i></p>
6	<p>Disability</p> <p>Consider people with physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities and mental health issues</p>	Positive	Resident Engagement	<p>The Changing Places facility would improve access to the services at Stockroom and to the town centre as a whole; currently there are no Changing Places facilities in the town centre which is a barrier to the disabled residents who require these facilities to accessing the town centre.</p>	<p>Responses to the Merseyway, Adlington Walk proposal consultation:</p> <p><i>"A Changing Places toilet is going to be absolutely brilliant and that is all we need. I can't tell you what a difference it will make to us and lots of families. Plans look ideal."</i></p> <p><i>"Having a disabled grandchild, a changing space toilet would be invaluable for our shopping trips into Stockport."</i></p> <p>Responses to the Stockroom engagement survey:</p> <p><i>"The Changing Places facility will be amazing, it will make a huge difference for lots of profoundly disabled people. Thank you so much for including this in the plans"</i></p>

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					Responses to the Central Library consultation: <i>“More accessible to people especially disabled people.”</i>
7	Disability	Positive	Engagement with VCFSE groups and residents	<p>The proposal to include sensory room would provide dedicated space for people with sensory conditions such as Autism. This would widen access for these groups.</p> <p>There was also support for a quiet room from many different residents but in particular for people with conditions such as Autism. This room would serve as a “chill out” space for people using Stockroom facilities or out in Merseyway to take a break and recharge, which would increase participation from disabled people.</p> <p>There was a need for these spaces to maintain privacy of the users with doors.</p>	Suggestions for use of Stockroom space are in development and being informed by resident feedback.
8	Disability	Positive	Engagement with VCFSE groups, results from consultations	<p>A new facility designed to be fully accessible to those with disabilities in a centralised location was generally seen as a benefit, and will likely widen participation for disabled people. Of those that agreed with the proposal to move Central Library services to Stockroom, 52% said that this would provide better accessibility than the current offer.</p> <p>Additionally, co-location of services and facilities was seen as another benefit for disabled people, especially families and carers of children with SEND, and this would mean that the offer would reach more people.</p> <p>Having a centralised location for multiple services such as council, health and VCFSE services was seen as the second biggest benefit. Some thought that this would provide a sense of security to residents and the groups using the services.</p>	<p><i>“We need to bring people into the town centre and the proposal makes services more accessible.”</i></p> <p><i>“I have a daughter age 7. I would like to have better access to the library so I can take her more often (I am disabled).”</i></p> <p><i>“It is going to be easier to get to [...] Hope that everything will be in one place and no need travel all over for info or services.”</i></p>

Impact no.	Characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Impact source	Impact details and rationale	Additional information
9	Disability	Positive and negative	Local travel data, engagement with residents	<p>Stockroom would be located around Adlington Walk, in the Merseyway shopping centre. 34% of people who agreed with the proposal listed the central location as a reason they agreed and 33% suggested that the proposed location would result in a higher footfall, which suggests the location may be more accessible to those travelling in to the town centre to visit.</p> <p>This location is closer to bus stops for a number of bus routes and nearer to accessible car parking. Of the respondents to the Central Library survey who said they visit Central Library, the most frequent methods of getting there are by bus (46%) and by car or motorbike (44%).</p> <p>Several disabled survey respondents stated that this location is more accessible to them and that more facilities for disabled people in the town centre would have a positive impact in their lives. 72% of survey respondents said that a benefit of Stockroom would be “having community facilities in an accessible/central location”. Of those that agreed with the proposal to move Central Library services to Stockroom, 52% said that this would provide better accessibility than the current offer.</p> <p>However, some respondents to the survey felt that the Merseyway location was not that accessible because of the lack of accessible parking, drop-off points and the price of parking etc. This was exacerbated by the removal of the temporary disabled car parking bays in the Merseyway Redrock car parking facility.</p>	<p><i>“The Stockroom seems likely to be inaccessible to people with disabilities as there is no nearby parking.”</i></p> <p><i>“With the new proposed location, I would see myself accessing it more as I often go into Stockport town centre to visit the gym, cinema and shops. It also seems it would be more accessible for those who have accessibility issues.”</i></p> <p><i>“There is nowhere to park free and [Merseyway] is long walk from NCP area for me.”</i></p>
10	Disability	Negative	Engagement with VCFSE groups	There were concerns that some groups of people do not find coming into the town centre safe at night, in particular those with learning disabilities.	
See 3	Disability	Negative	Results from central Library consultation	People with disabilities, impairments or long-term health conditions were more likely to disagree with the proposals to move central Library services to Stockroom. See impact 3 for more details.	

Impact no.	Characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Impact source	Impact details and rationale	Additional information
11	Gender reassignment A person whose individual experience of gender may not correspond to the sex assigned to them at birth.	Positive	Engagement sessions with VCFSE groups	Feedback from LGBT+ groups in Stockport has been that Stockroom provides more opportunities to hold more inclusive social events in alcohol-free venues and without the pressure to spend money.	Attendees at the engagement session with Forward (Stockport LGBT+ Centre) and those at the session with the Proud Trust highlighted that gender neutral toilets would create a more inclusive and safe environment for transgender and non-binary people who do not feel comfortable using either men's or women's facilities.
12	Gender reassignment	Negative	Engagement sessions with VCFSE groups	Some members from Forward and the Proud trust youth group said gender neutral toilets would be required for themselves or others in their community to access the venue, as some transgender and non-binary people will not feel comfortable using either men's or women's facilities.	
13	Maternity and pregnancy	Positive		The proposal to locate registrars service and Council Help and Advice networks within Stockroom would enable parents of new-born children to access a number of different services in one place, and encourage uptake of library and cultural and community offers. The additional space in Merseyway could facilitate more services and spaces for those who are pregnant or breastfeeding.	
	Marriage and Civil Partnership			There are no known impacts that are specific or unique to this protected characteristic.	
14	Race	Positive	Stockroom – Stakeholder engagement	The diversification of the library offer and location of a range of public services and community facilities in one modern location is likely to support community	There were some concerns about belonging and the inclusion of the group in the

Impact no.	Characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Impact source	Impact details and rationale	Additional information
	Not all ethnic groups will have the same experiences so if possible specify whether the impact is likely to be different for different ethnic groups e.g. Indian people, people of Black Caribbean heritage. This also includes Gypsy and Traveller populations			collaboration, widen access to library, educational and cultural facilities among groups of people who are less likely to access these offers currently. The additional space on offer at Stockroom support community activities by providing social space and enabling community groups to have a physical presence and hire space for events and activities.	development process and stressed that if diverse communities are not a collaborative part of the process, including development, staffing, ideas input, engagement, they will not feel like they belong. <i>"[Stockroom] could attract people from a wide variety of backgrounds and with a wide variety of protected characteristics to the town centre."</i>
15	Race	Negative	Stockroom Engagement with VCFSE groups	Concerns that some groups of people do not find coming into the town centre safe at night, in particular including those from black and ethnic minority backgrounds.	
16	Religion or Belief	Positive	Stockroom Engagement with VCFSE groups	The diversification of the library offer and location of a range of public services and community facilities in one space will support community connectedness and widen access to library, educational and cultural services among groups of people who are less likely to access these offers currently. A dedicated multi-faith prayer room in Adlington walk would provide a space for people from different faiths to use and help to foster inclusion and belonging.	

Impact no.	Characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Impact source	Impact details and rationale	Additional information
17	Sex	Negative	Stockroom engagement-survey	A handful of responses from women expressed concern about being in the town centre in the evening, or when it is dark in the winter months.	<i>"What's going to happen when the shops are shut? And the library is open until seven o'clock? Is it a safe space? Is it a safe space for women? Is it safe space for anybody? Safe space for children? How do you make it safe space in the evening?"</i>
18	Sexual orientation Consider how the proposed policy may differently impact people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual	Positive	Members of LGBT+ groups	The diversification of the library offer and location of a range of public services and community facilities in one space is intended to support community connectedness and widen access to library, educational and cultural services among groups of people who are less likely to access these offers currently. Feedback from LGBT+ groups in Stockport has been that Stockroom provides more opportunities to hold more inclusive social events in alcohol-free venues and without the pressure to spend money.	
19	Socioeconomic status	Positive	Service data, Stockroom survey	Locating access points to Council Help Networks such as Housing, Financial Advice and Benefits, Employment and Skills Advice and Citizens' Advice Bureau Health Services such as vaccination, blood donation, screening and general health advice clinics will widen access to events, community spaces and library and educational facilities to groups of people who may be less likely to access these facilities currently. Co-located facilities means that trips to access multiple services are combined which saves time and makes participating in activity more convenient. It also reduces the need to make multiple trips or take multiple journeys and any costs associated with doing so. Responses to the Stockroom survey have highlighted opportunities to offer educational facilities and employment	

Impact no.	Characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Impact source	Impact details and rationale	Additional information
				skills in an innovative and less traditional setup that could widen access to learning and educational opportunities. This includes skills swaps, demonstrations and workshops from local business and interactive learning and discovery spaces for children and young people.	
20	Socioeconomic status	Positive	Online survey responses	There were some comments about the positive impact of access to help for the digitally excluded who need to access Government or council services but currently struggle to do so as these are accessed online.	
21	Socioeconomic status	Negative	Stockroom engagement	A small number of respondents have suggested that relocating council services and health and wellbeing advice services could dilute and undermine services available around the borough. Further, there is a worry than any consolidation of services may mean future community services may be removed.	<i>“It is really important that a development like this does not conflict with existing facilities. The districts have their own libraries, meeting places, computer access, study facilities etc.”</i>
22	Socioeconomic status	Negative	Survey respondents	A number of survey respondents highlighted the fact that although Stockroom will be in a central location, the price of parking can be a barrier to visiting the town centre, and for those that rely on public transport the location may still be difficult to get to, especially for more deprived communities and neighbourhoods.	
23	Other	Positive	Engagement with VCFSE groups	Several groups that took part in targeted engagement sessions highlighted the importance of co-production and VCFSE involvement in the design and development of this proposal. Some people with protected characteristics feel like they have been “left behind” (such as ethnically diverse communities) and there are concerns that without the involvement of some groups during the proposal’s development, there will be further alienation felt by these groups.	<i>“Lack of diversity (age, race gender, disability etc...) in running, informing, getting Stockroom up and running successfully.”</i>

Impact no.	Characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Impact source	Impact details and rationale	Additional information
<p>You are encouraged to consider the below characteristics where you have relevant data, especially if your proposal is predicted to disproportionately impact one or more of these groups.</p>					
24	Carers	Positive	Engagement with VCFSE groups and residents	Carers of children and adults would be able to access some of the facilities such as sensory room and Changing places facilities that they are currently having to access outside of the borough. Having co-located services and facilities would also make them more accessible as this would reduce the amount of travelling / visiting.	
25	Those experiencing homelessness	Positive	Council services	Housing support services alongside library services and access to educational and careers services provides a more joined-up offer of support for those who are more likely to experience multiple barriers in securing permanent accommodation, work, access to education, or support with improving their health and wellbeing.	
	Veterans			There are no known impacts that are specific or unique to this group.	
	Asylum seekers and refugees			There are no known impacts that are specific or unique to this group.	

Step 3: Identifying mitigating factors to minimise negative impacts

Step 2 identified potential impacts your proposal may have on people with different protected characteristics. If there are negative impacts, then you must consider how you could mitigate against (lessen) these negative impacts.

Impact no.	Impact summary	Suggested mitigation and rationale	Source of suggestion	Evidence for solution	Feasibility
3	<p>Groups with protected characteristics such as over 65s and people with disabilities were generally not in favour of the proposal to move Central Library services to Stockroom. This may cause a degree of upset and anger</p>	<p>For those who were very opposed to any change to the Central Library offer, there is a risk that these groups may refuse to participate in the Stockroom offer and therefore rule themselves out and narrow participation for these groups (especially older people). Including these groups in the development of Stockroom so they can contribute to the design of the new space may promote feelings of belonging and ownership. In future, effort to include these communities into the Stockroom space may alleviate some of the negative impacts, such as dedicated spaces or sessions for older people and highlighting the increased accessibility of Stockroom for those with disabilities.</p> <p>The primary reason for many people's opposition to the proposals is a concern about what might happen to the Central Library building if the current library within is relocated. A clearer plan for the building's future and wide communication of this plan may alleviate these concerns for some.</p>		<p>Responses to both the Stockroom and the Central Library consultations highlighted the accessibility of plans for Stockroom as one of the main benefits of the plans</p>	<p>The use of Stockroom and Central Library space is still in development and further work will consider mitigating negative impacts</p>
5	<p>Tension between older users of the space and young people / teenagers</p>	<p>There are several potential ways to mitigate against potential community tension between older residents and younger users (teenagers) of the space.</p> <p>Creating spaces and opportunities exclusive for teenagers, such as a youth lounge or specific events targeted at this age group, would create a sense of belonging for this group. A study about anti-social behaviour in parks showed that good-quality parks which are well staffed and provide a range of facilities for the local community can be a far</p>		<p>“Decent Parks, Decent Behaviour” https://forestry.gov.scot/image/s/corporate/pdf/CABEDecentparksDecentBehaviour.pdf</p> <p>“Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour” https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/</p>	<p>The design for Stockroom will consider how areas may be ‘partitioned’ and a full acoustic strategy will be implemented to manage and mitigate against background noise through the whole development.</p>

Impact no.	Impact summary	Suggested mitigation and rationale	Source of suggestion	Evidence for solution	Feasibility
		<p>more effective use of resources in tackling unwanted behaviour than, for instance, the blanket use of CCTV cameras. This could be a good opportunity to promote cross-generational activities to foster positive relations between residents of different ages.</p> <p>Putting up notices of how residents can report antisocial behaviour if they witness it could increase feelings of safety in the space.</p> <p>Often, young people who engage in anti-social behaviour are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Providing educational experiences and courses for this group may decrease this behaviour in the long-term. Similarly investing in and providing classes for the whole family has been shown to reduce anti-social behaviour.</p>		<p>system/uploads/attachment_data/file/14873/1460701.pdf</p> <p>“Reducing anti-social behaviour in the community”</p> <p>https://www.estyn.gov.wales/efective-practice/reducing-anti-social-behaviour-community</p>	<p>Further work will be done with stakeholders to determine the final design and use for the space.</p>
9, 22	Accessibility of Merseyway	<p>Due to the geographical spread of residents across the borough, the Merseyway location will inevitably be more accessible for some residents than others. However, the location in Adlington walk will be a more accessible location for a larger number of residents due to the fact that it is nearer to Mersey Square bus stop (serving the 192, 199, 23, 330, and 42 routes), whilst being the same distance from Stockport bus station as the Central Library building.</p> <p>In addition, the Merseyway location is closer to accessible and more affordable car parking than that near to central library (NCP Merseyway Redrock car park is currently £0.90 per hour compared to £1.50 per hour at the NCP Stockport Exchange).</p> <p>There were suggestions in the survey responses to offer free parking for the first 2</p>	Responses to survey and engagement groups	The disabled parking bays will be relocated rather than removed and will be near to the new lift core to allow for access to the town centre.	<p>Further work will be done with stakeholders to ensure that the designs for Stockroom make it fully accessible for all people.</p> <p>Stockroom will provide additional and enhanced facilities for people with a disability and their carers, which will include designated car parking on each floor, close to the lifts.</p>

Impact no.	Impact summary	Suggested mitigation and rationale	Source of suggestion	Evidence for solution	Feasibility
		<p>hours to reduce barriers to participation for those on low incomes.</p> <p>The temporary disabled parking bays at Redrock that are due to move will be relocated to a suitable location elsewhere in the car park. There should be engagement with representatives from disability groups on the relocation of these spaces.</p>			
10, 15, 17	Safety in town centre in evening	<p>There is no known evidence that shows that the town centre around Merseyway is less safe than the area surrounding Central Library.</p> <p>It is suggested that this issue is raised with representative groups during any future engagement relating to Stockroom or Central Library. It is also suggested that the Safer Stockport Partnership Board are engaged with on this proposal and the issues raised by representative groups are provided to the board for consideration for inclusion in Safer streets initiatives.</p>		<p>Crime data</p> <p>This suggestion will allow for more understanding of the issues and exploration of any solutions.</p>	
12	Lack of gender-neutral toilets	Include gender neutral toilets in Stockroom and sanitary disposal bins in men's toilets.	Stockport LGBT+ representative groups	Those with lived experience of being trans and non-binary have said this will create a safer and more inclusive space. Several attendees at the session at the Proud Trust said that the space would have to include gender neutral toilets for them to feel safe and comfortable visiting.	There are no plans for gender neutral toilets in Stockroom at present. Work will be done to look at how and where this model has worked elsewhere and engagement with the relevant stakeholders will be done prior to the designs being finalised.
21	Potential removal of library and IAG	The facilities and library service at Stockroom are intended to complement the existing	Responses to engagement		N/A

Impact no.	Impact summary	Suggested mitigation and rationale	Source of suggestion	Evidence for solution	Feasibility
	offer in districts of the borough	<p>library offers at other locations in the borough.</p> <p>It could be highlighted in communications about the proposals that this is a government award which has been given to Stockport Council and this investment will not mean less Council investment in any of our community libraries or other buildings across the borough.</p>			
23	Inclusion in development of Stockroom	<p>A number of the groups have emphasised the need to work with groups and families to ensure the facilities are accessible and meet the needs of different groups of people particularly those who are more likely to experience disadvantage, include disabled people, LGBT+ people and ethnically diverse communities.</p> <p>There were also the following suggestions for how to make the venue more accessible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Colour and décor in quieter areas to be more muted as bright and colourful colours can be overwhelming - Quiet spaces to have doors to provide privacy and limit noise - Signs in appropriate font style, size and colour for those who are dyslexic or partially sighted - Have signs in braille - Staff to have training in working with LGBT+ and neurodivergent people 	Respondents to engagement	This will ensure that Stockroom meets the needs of as many people as possible and is inclusive.	Further work will be done with stakeholders to determine the final design and use for the space.
N/A	Loss of access to heritage building is a potential impact of this proposal	Use Libraries Improvement fund or future high street fund to refurbish Central Library	Respondents to Stockroom survey and Central Library survey	None provided	Central Government set out conditions on how the fund can be used. Future High

Impact no.	Impact summary	Suggested mitigation and rationale	Source of suggestion	Evidence for solution	Feasibility
	however, to date there have been no negative impacts identified of moving the library service from the Central Library building that are relevant to equality		Comments on social media		Street Funding is for the repurposing of empty retail units on high streets. The grants available from the Libraries Improvement Fund are not sufficient to carry out any significant maintenance works or refurbishment to the Central Library Building

Step 4: Conclusions and outcome

It is strongly recommended to engage with people with protected characteristics to sense-check your conclusions before you indicate an outcome in this EqIA. Including feedback from this engagement activity will ensure your baseline assessment and your impacts are accurate, and that your mitigating actions are helpful and the best use of resources. It ensures that the proposal has been designed so that it is fair as possible to everybody.

If you have not undertaken any community engagement for this EqIA, please indicate this and explain why.

Multiple routes of community engagement have been undertaken as part of this proposal.

If there are impacts identified that cannot be mitigated against, are there any justifications for not taking any action to improve the negative impacts that have been identified?

Several mitigating actions require more final plans for the design and use for the space, which will be determined after further work with stakeholders. We will look into the effectiveness of several suggested mitigating actions.

Whilst there is notable strength of feeling about the Central Library as a heritage building, to date there have been few negative impacts identified in relation to the Stockroom proposal, and no negative impacts of moving the library service from the Central Library building that are relevant to equality. Some groups of people with protected characteristics were more likely to disagree with the proposals, such as disabled people and over 65s, but the reasons for this were largely based on affection for the Central Library building rather than on issues such as accessibility or discrimination. However, any emerging negative impacts will continue to be explored and reviewed.

Whilst it has been highlighted in the Stockroom survey that some of the facilities and services that would be offered at Stockroom can be, or currently are, offered at Central Library, it is not feasible to offer the full range of services and facilities that Stockroom could offer. This is due to the limitations of physical space and the financial investment required to refurbish the building to improve accessibility.

Are there any adverse impacts that can be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason? Please state why.

Whilst the Central Libraries consultation revealed that in general, older people and those with a disability or long-term health condition opposed the plans to move central Library services to Stockroom, it was widely acknowledged that the proposals for Stockroom would likely make the library services more accessible to not just disabled people but other groups such as families with young children, people from ethnically diverse communities and LGBTQ+ people. The opportunity to widen participation from underrepresented groups that comes with modernising a space and offering wider-ranging facilities that would not be possible in the Central Library building should be given weight when considering the proposals.

Are there any other proposals or policies that you are aware of that could create a cumulative impact?

This is an impact that appears when you consider services or activities together. A change or activity in one area may create an impact somewhere else.

None known.

Based on your equality impact analysis, please indicate the outcome of this EqIA.

Please indicate the outcome of the EqIA and provide justification and / or changes planned as required.		
A.	No major barriers identified, and there are no major changes required – proceed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
B.	Adjustments to remove barriers, promote equality and / or mitigate impact have been identified and are required – proceed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
C.	Positive impact for one or more of the groups justified on the grounds of equality – proceed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
D.	Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice – proceed with caution, knowing that this policy or practice may favour some people less than others. Strong justification for this decision is required.	<input type="checkbox"/>
E.	This policy identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination – stop and rethink.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please describe briefly how this EqIA will be monitored. When will this be reviewed? What mitigating actions need to be implemented and when?		

This EqIA will be monitored and updated as the Stockroom concept develops.