

## Initial Equality Impact Assessment - Hereford Library Cabinet Report December 2015

### Herefordshire Libraries Service

This report gives an overview of equality impacts in relation to the options for Hereford Library and Museum. The findings also reflect on the wider use of libraries across Herefordshire as the Hereford facilities is a key component of the county library offer. As a decision on options and location has not been made this assessment is an initial overview. However, the report does give some equality impacts mitigations to consider.

Based on the findings these include:

- A temporary library is established to support people's continued access to services
- That alternative venues for free use of PCs / the internet are promoted
- Promotion of the on-line services
- Additional drop-off points are arranged
- Non reduction of services in the market town and Belmont whilst Hereford Library is closed
- Any new venue will be fully accessible and will incorporate a range of accessibility aids that support people with particular impairments and take into consideration the needs of visitors of different ages
- That a public health element is included in any new development which would aid people of different ages and with different access needs
- Public consultation to take place on wider changes to the Herefordshire Library Service
- Public access PCs an important feature of a new library development
- If the closure is prolonged explore specific and targeted scheme for younger children and older adults.

The report does not reflect on the users of the museum and art gallery as profiles are not retain and the impact considerably less considering the numbers of visits involved. However it can be presumed that impact will be on age, specifically children as part of their learning and knowledge about Herefordshire would be gained from the visit to the museum and art gallery. Consequently the above mitigating impacts can also apply to the museum and art gallery functions.

### Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 established a positive obligation on local authorities to promote equality and to reduce discrimination in relation to any of the nine 'protected characteristics' (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). In particular, the council must have 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty when taking any decisions on service changes.

Where a decision is likely to result in detrimental impact on any group with a protected characteristic it must be justified objectively. This means that attempts to mitigate the harm need to be explored. If the harm cannot be avoided, the decision maker must balance this detrimental impact against the strength of legitimate public need to pursue the service remodelling to deliver savings.

Details of user's age is collected and their purpose to visit the centre, but not details of other protected characteristics.

### The demographic profile of Herefordshire

Herefordshire population and demography (taken from Herefordshire Council Facts and Figures)

The current (mid-2014) estimate of the county's resident population is 187,200. Herefordshire is a predominantly rural county, with the fourth lowest population density in England. The city of Hereford, in the middle of the county, is the centre for most facilities; other principal locations are the five market towns of Leominster, Ross-on-Wye, Ledbury, Bromyard and Kington.

Unlike other rural counties, which have large areas with no residents, Herefordshire's 82,700 homes and 184,900 residents are scattered across its 842 square miles. Almost all its land area falls within the 25% most deprived in England in terms of geographical barriers to services; the Golden Valley in the south-west and the Mortimer locality in the north-west are particularly affected. Compounding the physical access issue, access to broadband, mobile phone services and other service infrastructure is an issue for some residents and businesses in rural areas.

The county has an older age structure than nationally, with 22% of the population aged 65 years or above (40,800 people), compared to 17% nationally. This includes 5,500 residents aged 85 and over.

The numbers of children living in the county have been increasing for the last three years but are still 7% lower than in 2001. However, within this, the number of under-fives has been rising over the last nine years and the numbers of births has largely been rising throughout the last decade.

### **Herefordshire Library Service**

In Herefordshire over 23% of local residents are active library members (have had a library transaction within the last two years). This includes customers who join to access the public computers, borrow inter-library loans, use online resources or access other library services, as well as those who borrow library resources. In 2014-15 over 17% of people in the county had at least one item on loan.

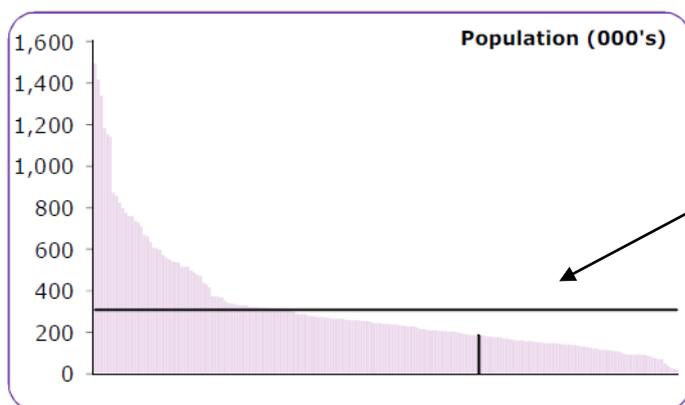
Herefordshire Council runs eleven libraries across the county. The central library in Hereford is the largest site which holds 30% of the county's active library stock and also houses the county's local studies and special collections. Housed in a Victorian building in Broad Street opposite Hereford Cathedral, it shares the building with Hereford Museum and Art Gallery. The libraries in the market towns also include Herefordshire Council Customer Services and other services.

Smaller branch libraries and book schemes are run in partnership with the community. Leintwardine, Peterchurch and Weobley libraries are community libraries staffed by volunteers with ongoing support and training from professional library staff, including the provision of book stock and public computers. Belmont and Colwall are Partnership Libraries where the parish council contributes to the running costs of the site.

Also Delivered Services provides a regular supply of books and talking books to people who are housebound and unable to access a library. The service delivers to over 200 individuals and 30 residential homes and sheltered housing centres and is often described as a lifeline for people who are at risk of feeling isolated and lonely. The Schools Library Service supports local schools by providing books and project material - last year over 90 primary and high schools bought in to the Schools Library Service. The Schools Library Service is effectively cost neutral with the subscribed schools paying for the service they receive.

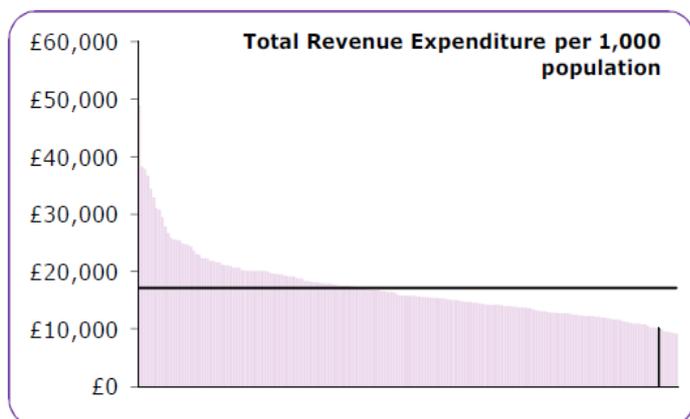
The following tables are taken from the CIPFA report for 2013-14. These tables show where Herefordshire comes in comparison with all other library authorities in the UK.

n.b. The 2013-14 annual report is the latest one currently available. When the 2014-15 report is released later this year these charts will be updated.



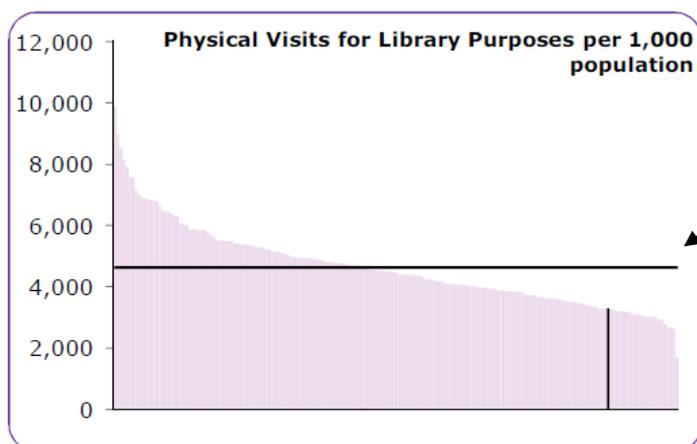
**Population**

Herefordshire is the 65th smallest of the 189 UK authorities compared in terms of population.



**Expenditure**

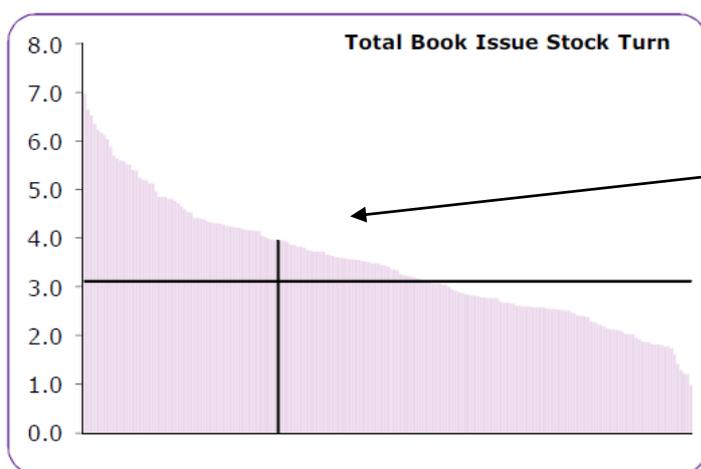
This chart shows revenue expenditure per 1,000 population as a key cost indicator. Herefordshire is shown at the lower end of the spectrum compared to other local authorities.



**Physical Visits**

The number of visits per 1,000 population is another measure of engagement and offers a more complete picture as it will include other reasons for visiting the library as well as borrowing.

n.b. this includes other library usage, e.g. using public computers, but it doesn't include visits for other purposes, e.g. Customer services, DWP, Halo, Registrars, etc.



### Stock Turnover

The average number of times each book was issued during the year.

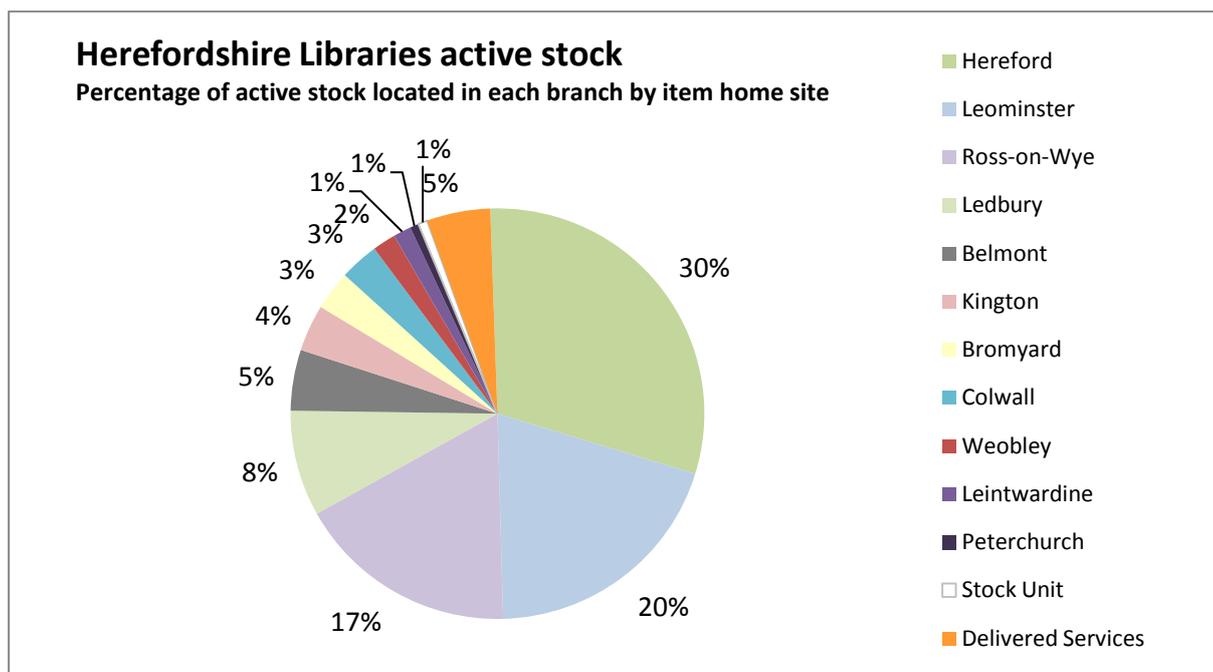
This is an indication of how hard the library stock is working. It may also be also an indication of stock quality and whether the titles provided meet local demand.

The following statistics are taken from Herefordshire Libraries Alto Library Management System. In 2014-15 (March-April) libraries in Herefordshire received over 540,000 physical visits and loaned out over 570,000 items. There were nearly 60,000 computer sessions on library public access computers. Over 50,000 items were requested; 64% of these were reserved online.

| Library              | Hours open per week | Visits per year | Visits per hour | Loans per year | Items reserved per year | No. of public computers | Computer sessions per year | Computer hours per year |
|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Hereford             | 37.0                | 184,434         | 96              | 175,638        | 11,840                  | 18                      | 25,359                     | 15,555                  |
| Leominster           | 35.5                | 109,082         | 59              | 114,507        | 7,526                   | 12                      | 11,890                     | 8,924                   |
| Ross-on-Wye          | 35.5                | 116,789         | 63              | 106,134        | 7,331                   | 11                      | 10,269                     | 5,913                   |
| Ledbury              | 24.7                | 48,308          | 37              | 50,202         | 4,264                   | 5                       | 3,074                      | 1,328                   |
| Belmont              | 22.5                | 22,527          | 19              | 26,100         | 2,390                   | 2                       | 1,028                      | 849                     |
| Kington              | 18.0                | 22,082          | 24              | 22,967         | 2,299                   | 7                       | 2,518                      | 1,776                   |
| Bromyard             | 24.0                | 18,669          | 15              | 20,582         | 1,585                   | 7                       | 3,855                      | 1,941                   |
| Colwall              | 13.5                | 11,362          | 16              | 13,950         | 1,393                   | 5                       | 1,498                      | 890                     |
| Leintwardine         | 6.0                 | 2,897           | 9               | 4,706          | 587                     | 1                       | 86                         | 122                     |
| Weobley              | 6.0                 | 2,210           | 7               | 4,114          | 349                     | 3                       | 123                        | 78                      |
| Peterchurch          | 10.0                | 1,940           | 4               | 3,586          | 368                     | 0                       | n/a                        | n/a                     |
| Delivered Services   | n/a                 | 1,707           | n/a             | 23,155         | 1,148                   | 0                       | n/a                        | n/a                     |
| Stock Unit           | n/a                 | n/a             | n/a             | 11,265         | 10,665                  | 0                       | n/a                        | n/a                     |
| <b>Herefordshire</b> | <b>232.7</b>        | <b>542,007</b>  | <b>349</b>      | <b>576,906</b> | <b>51,745</b>           | <b>71</b>               | <b>59,700</b>              | <b>37,376</b>           |

Table 1: Opening hours, visits, items loaned and reserved, and computer usage for 2014-15

Library stock is used as a countywide resource which circulates around all sites. Customers can reserve any lending item on the library catalogue free of charge and have it delivered to any Herefordshire Library. The following table shows where most of the active library stock is located. Active stock means it has been issued in the past two years.

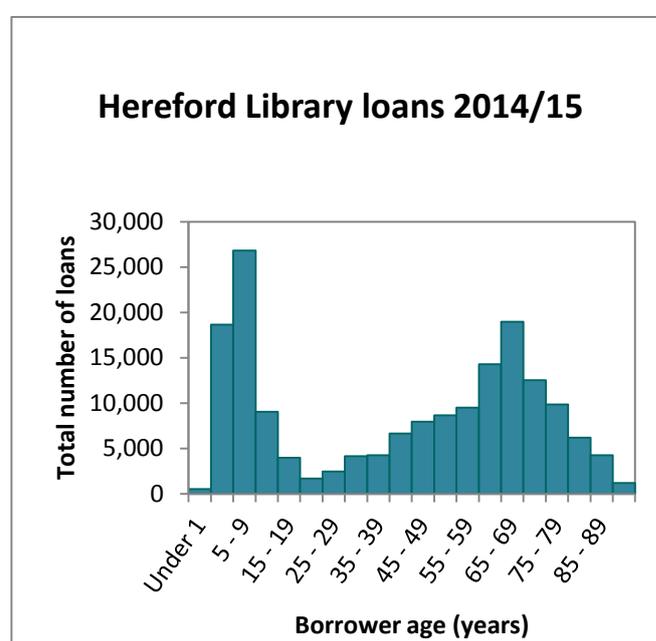
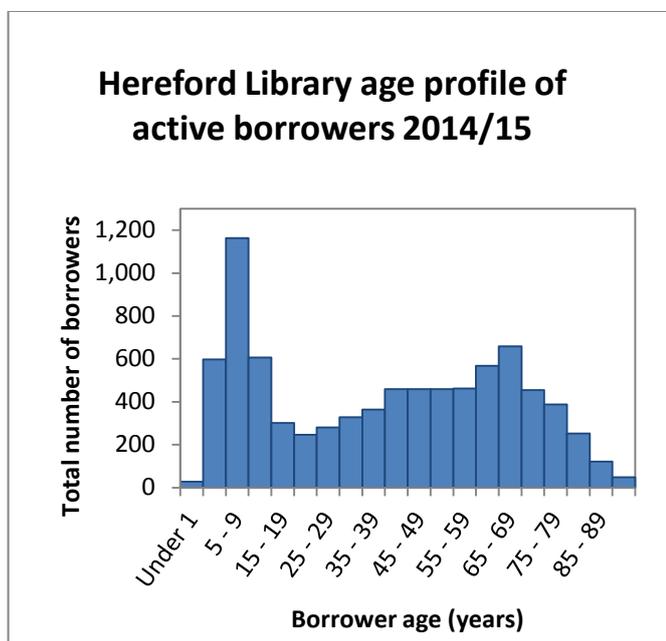
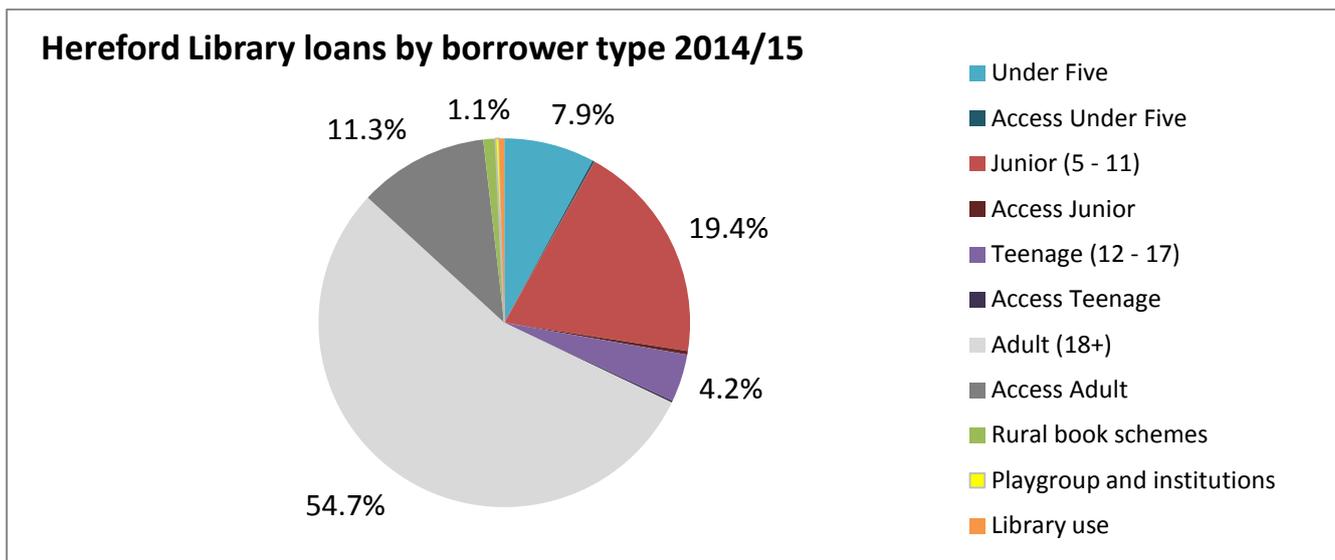


Most regular library users are first introduced to libraries as children: by parents, grandparents or schools. Research has shown that under-fives who regularly visit libraries have a significant advantage when they start school, and this advantage can continue right through primary and into High School. Though a significant number of teenagers do use libraries, but many drift away at this point. They come back when they need the library again: studying, applying for jobs, looking for information or advice, gaining new skills, or most commonly when they have children of their own. As adults, people drop in and out of library usage depending on their needs and available time. They may only come in once or twice a year for particular purposes until they have more time or greater need for the services the libraries provide.

**Hereford Library** is the largest library in the county. It holds 30% of the active library stock and houses the main reference and local studies collections. There is heavy use by all groups, including a large number of Junior, Under-fives and Access borrowers and a significant number of teenagers relative to the population. Hereford library also supports local Playgroups and Rural Book Schemes.

Hereford has a younger age profile than the county as a whole. This may reflect the heavy usage of public computers and parents who bring young children to the library, but don't necessarily have library cards of their own. As the largest library in the county, it is heavily used by all age groups, but particularly children.

| Library  | Hours open per week | Visits per year | Visits per hour | Loans per year | Items reserved per year | No. of public computers | Computer sessions per year | Computer hours per year |
|----------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Hereford | 37.0                | 184,434         | 96              | 175,638        | 11,840                  | 18                      | 25,359                     | 15,555                  |



**Summary**

Based on the information provided, a key consideration in terms of equalities is recognising the impact on younger children and older adults who are frequent users of the Library in Hereford and therefore linked to an important part of their education and well-being.