

Dear Ms Chapman AM

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST X01- 2744

We refer to your email dated 26 March 2014 which contained a request for information as set out in italics below. Following consideration of your request, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I respond to each point as follows:

-Has your local authority undertaken equality impact assessments when considering the potential closure of libraries in your area, and if so, please can you provide details;

The Authority has not closed any libraries over the past two years.

However; the Authority recently responded to CyMAL as part of the Ministerial review into libraries and issued the following on consultation and EIA:

Please find below a link to the consultation on the relocation of Bridgend Library. It was not associated with a savings plan but may give a feel for the issues, concerns and opportunities expressed by users and non-users.

The consultation allowed the Authority to develop a full Equality Impact Assessment as well as influence the physical and service design of the new library. As significant as what people did say, was the real lack of response on the subject matter when considering the library would serve a population of c. 40, 000. This highlighted the need to make the library service more visible and encourage younger generations and families to start a relationship with their library.

<http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/web/groups/public/documents/report/104357.doc>
<http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/web/groups/public/documents/report/104359.pdf>

The Scrutiny report highlighted below has, as an Appendix, the Equalities Impact Assessment on the re-location of Bridgend Library along with an update on the mitigating actions carried out.

<http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/web/groups/public/documents/report/111045.doc>

- Has your local authority consulted with local representatives of vulnerable users when considering the potential closure of libraries in your area, and if so, please can you provide details; and

The Authority has not closed any libraries over the past two years; however please see response to question 1 in respect of the re-location of Bridgend Library.

- What links are there between education services and public libraries in your local authority.

The library service in Bridgend fully recognises its role against the need to improve literacy levels amongst young people and is diverting its development resources into this. It is clearly set out against the Corporate Plan 2013-17 and within the Directorate Business Plan for 2014-15. The Authority has developed specific PIs to monitor the library service's performance in this area of work e.g. the % population of under-5s that are library members.

The library service's links with education are mainly directly co-ordinated through individual schools. Individual branch managers and/or the Children's Development Librarian are proactive and will work with schools on projects and events such as the Summer Reading

Challenge, story times, story cafes in schools, using e-magazines, the 'Reading for Fun' programme and other similar activities.

Colleagues across leisure services are currently working on a joint offer that can be presented to all schools, primary and secondary, which will set out our services, their benefits and how schools can get involved. The recent launch of the pilot of the 'Every Child a Library Member' scheme – assuming it is subsequently rolled out to all Welsh authorities - will involve working more closely with education departments.

I hope this response satisfies your request. If you are dissatisfied with the handling of the request, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 you have the right to request a review of the Council's response to your request for information.

Bridgend County Borough Council