

Report to:	Place Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	27 November 2025
By:	Deputy Chief Executive
Title:	Call-in: decision made by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment regarding the proposed relocation of Hastings Register Office
Purpose:	To allow the committee to consider the call-in in relation to the decision by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment regarding the proposed relocation of Hastings Register Office.

RECOMMENDATION: The Place Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider the call-in in relation to the decision taken by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment on 10 November 2025 regarding the proposed relocation of Hastings Register Office and decide what action, if any, to take.

1 Background

1.1 The decision made by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment on 10 November 2025 in relation to the proposed relocation of Hastings Register Office was called in by four Members of the Place Scrutiny Committee - Councillors Julia Hilton, Steve Murphy, David Tutt and Brett Wright - on 14 November 2025. A copy of the call-in request, specifying the grounds of concern requiring consideration by scrutiny, is at Appendix 1.

1.2 The Monitoring Officer and Scrutiny Manager reviewed the call-in request and considered that it was in accordance with the requirements of the call-in process set out in the East Sussex County Council Constitution.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The report regarding proposed relocation of Hastings Register Office, considered by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment on 10 November 2025, is attached at Appendix 2.

2.2 The draft minute outlining the Lead Member's decision is contained in Appendix 3.

2.3 In summary, the call-in request was based on the following areas of concern in relation to the decision:

- the accessibility of the proposed new location, and that an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) was not presented to the Lead Member at their meeting;
- the level of public and staff consultation and the reasons given for why these had not taken place;
- the capacity of the proposed new location to adequately provide the same level of service as is delivered at the current location; and
- whether the impact of the decision on Hastings Borough Council and the future unitary council had been sufficiently considered.

2.4 The Place Scrutiny Committee has therefore been requested to consider these issues through the call-in process before a final decision is taken.

2.5 The Director of Communities, Economy and Transport (CET) has provided information to the committee in relation to the points raised in the call-in request (Appendix 4). This includes the Equality Impact Assessment that was completed for the proposal (Appendix 5).

2.6 The role of the Place Scrutiny Committee is to consider the call-in in relation to the decision taken by the Lead Member, and the additional information provided in response to the concerns raised, and decide whether to:

- take no further action – in which case the original decision will take effect; or
- refer the decision back to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment setting out in writing the nature of its concerns. On receipt of a response from scrutiny, the Lead Member may then decide to proceed with the original decision or make an amended decision; or
- refer the matter to Full Council setting out in writing the reasons for the referral. On receipt of a referral, Council may decide to take no further action, in which case the original decision will take effect, or to refer the matter back to the Lead Member, setting out its views. The Lead Member may then decide to proceed with the original decision or make an amended decision.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The scrutiny committee cannot change the decision which, as an executive decision, rests with the Lead Member. The committee's role is to consider the points raised in the call-in request and decide what action, if any, it wishes to take.

PHILIP BAKER
Deputy Chief Executive

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Godfrey Daniel

Call-in Request: Hastings Register Office

I have the support of Cllr Steve Murphy and Cllr Brett Wright to request a call in of the decision made by Cllr Dowling on Monday 10 November to relocate the registry office from Hastings Town Hall to Hastings Library for the following reasons.

1. No equalities impact assessment was presented at the meeting. The office is proposed to be moved from a ground floor level location to a second floor up 64 steps with a lift that has a record of breaking down. Also the impact on residents of removing these more affordable venues for wedding ceremonies. Mention was made of 34 other venues but many of these are likely to be hotels and private venues which will be more expensive. While HBC could of course continue to promote the use of the town hall as a wedding venue, there is currently no capacity to do so and therefore no guarantee that this can be continued.
2. At the meeting on Monday the reason given for the lack of public consultation was that the office was moving less than 500 meters. Where is the public information that consultation is only needed for relocations greater than 500 meters?
3. 407 letters as of this morning have been sent to the lead member protesting this decision and the lack of any public consultation. The main issues raised were much more restricted parking access, harder access for older and disabled people, loss of civic pride, impact on town centre businesses and the lack of a fair and open decision making process. The current venue is adjacent to Priory Meadow with plentiful parking. The library has limited on street parking.
4. No mention was made of where citizenship ceremonies will be held. These can be for up to 50 people.
5. No mention made that people registering deaths need a dedicated, quiet and reflective space not a busy library to come into at a difficult moment in their lives.
6. No assessment has been made to reflect the future impact of LGR. The registry office provides an income to sustain the town hall as a civic building. Removing this income will affect the long term sustainability of this historic building. While cllr Daniel referred to a future potential use by a town council, that town council (if one is agreed) would also need a sustainable income stream to maintain this building. This building will then become a liability for the future unitary council. There is no evidence that this impact was assessed as part of the decision making.

7. No consultation with staff prior to making the decision. While officers at the meeting stated that they had been informed, HBC staff have had direct communication with the staff on the ground who confirmed that they had not been informed before the papers were made public.
8. More generally, given LGR, there needs to be much closer collaboration with affected related councils on any decisions that also impact them financially. While this has been established as a principle it doesn't seem to be being carried out in practice. A clear and transparent process needs to be established for this collaboration over the next two years as part of budget setting processes and agreed with scrutiny committees.

Kind regards

Julia

Report to: Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Date of meeting: 10 November 2025

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Proposed relocation of Hastings Register Office

Purpose: This report proposes the relocation of Hastings Register Office for births, deaths, and marriages to the Hastings library building. The move aims to enhance service delivery, optimise use of Council assets, and improve accessibility for residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to:

- (1) Approve the proposal to move Hastings Register Office (“the Service”) to Hastings Library, subject to planning permission, to facilitate service delivery improvements and deliver revenue savings of £100K. The savings that would be delivered through the relocation of the Service would contribute to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings in 2026/2027 and 2027/2028;**
 - (2) Note that the Service would refocus the current Council ceremony venues offer to meet customer demands and continue to provide a ceremony room at Hastings Library. In addition, the Register Office would continue to support the local economy through the licensing of approved marriage premises in Hastings; and**
 - (3) Delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to approve the detailed scheme of works for the proposal.**
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1 Background Information

1.1 The cessation of formal Adult Learning by the Library Service which was part of service changes that delivered savings of £192k during 2024/2025, has created an opportunity to relocate Registration Services to Hastings Library. Currently the Registration Service is located in the Town Hall, which is owned by Hastings Borough Council. The proposal is to move the Registration Service to the former learning space in the library. Relocation to this former learning space would ensure that public library space is not impacted.

1.2 While the current Register Office has served the community for a number of years, there are several challenges which include outdated facilities and accessibility.

2 Supporting Information

Legal requirements

2.1 The County Council provides registration services for births, deaths, and marriages, ensuring that these significant life events are accurately recorded and managed. This

responsibility is not only a statutory duty but also a vital service to the community, providing essential documentation that supports individuals throughout their lives. Currently the County Council provides registration services in Eastbourne, Hastings, Crowborough and Lewes.

2.2 There is no legal requirement for the exact number of registration offices a County Council must provide. However, the General Register Office (GRO) mandates that councils ensure their registration services are accessible and meet the needs of their communities. This typically means having enough offices to cover the geographical area effectively and to provide timely and convenient access for residents.

2.3 Councils are expected to assess local demand and ensure that their services are available within reasonable travel distances for all residents. The number of offices can vary based on the size and population of the county, as well as the specific needs of the community.

2.4 In addition, the County Council is required to provide at least one approved venue for civil ceremonies. Currently East Sussex County Council offers a wide range of ceremony venues to cater to a variety of preferences and needs.

Ceremonies

2.5 Responsibilities for ceremonies include:

- Conducting Marriage and Civil Partnership Ceremonies: Ensuring that all legal requirements are met and that ceremonies are conducted in accordance with the law
- Providing Non-Statutory Ceremonies: Offering services such as naming ceremonies and renewal of vows
- Managing Approved Venues: Overseeing the licensing and regulation of venues approved for civil ceremonies

2.6 Ceremonies are an important service offered by a Register Office. The proposed change would continue to offer customers a wide selection of venues across the county in which to hold a ceremony.

2.7 The current venue offers for ceremonies include:

- Register Offices: Located in Crowborough, Eastbourne, Hastings, and Lewes, these offices provide official settings for ceremonies
- Licensed Venues: Over 85 licensed venues are available across the county, including historic buildings, hotels, and unique locations

Hastings Town Hall ceremony usage

2.8 Currently the Register Office in Hastings Town Hall has 3 ceremony rooms and overall has the capacity to hold 15 ceremonies every day, if used to maximum capacity the service has space to hold up to 5,475 a year. This is based on each room holding 5 ceremonies per day, 365 days per year.

2.9 In the year 2022/2023 the Service conducted 273 ceremonies. In the year 2023/2024 216 ceremonies were conducted and in the following year (2024/2025) 219 ceremonies were held at Hastings Town Hall.

2.10 The usage figures demonstrate that the current provision of ceremony rooms at Hastings Town Hall are underutilised for ceremonies and identifies a potential opportunity to revise the

offer. The proposal moving forward, should the service relocate to Hastings Library, would be to have 1 ceremony room that can accommodate 10 people (10 to include 2 ceremony registrars) with a larger option on the ground floor that would be available when the library is closed.

2.11 With the proposed offer in Hastings library of one main ceremony room the service has the potential of holding up to 5 ceremonies per day in this room and has the maximum capacity to offer up to 1460 slots per year.

2.12 In addition, the library closes on a Wednesday from 1pm for the afternoon and does not open on a Sunday. The Registration Service could use the space at the front of the library on the ground floor during this time, offering a large attractive space to customers within the town. This space could accommodate up to 60 people and the service has the potential to offer 416 additional slots during these times.

Approved Marriage Premises

2.13 Currently within Hastings Borough there are 34 approved marriage premises, and these offer a wide range of venues, at a variety of price points. Should the service relocate to the library building, there would remain in Hastings a wide range of alternative options for customers to consider as venues for their ceremonies. The licensing of Approved Marriage Premises by the Registration Service is an important part of supporting the local economy.

Service integration

2.14 The integration of the Registration Office into the library space offers wide-ranging advantages across all age groups. For young families and new parents, the convenience of registering births in a familiar, community-focused setting reduces stress and supports engagement.

2.15 Older adults would benefit from the welcoming environment of the library, which offers seating, assistance, and accessible facilities. Libraries also play a vital role in supporting older and socially isolated residents through difficult times, for example bereavement. Feedback from other County Councils where Registration and the Library Service are collocated has been that older residents have found it a comforting and supportive environment.

2.16 Integrating registration offices within libraries offers several benefits, enhancing both the accessibility and efficiency of public services. Some additional advantages include:

- Co-location: Libraries serve as community information centres where people gather for various activities. Having registration services in the same location could increase community engagement and awareness of available services
- Cost Efficiency: Sharing facilities and resources between libraries and registration services would reduce operational costs for the council, making better use of public funds
- Enhanced Service Delivery: Libraries are equipped with trained staff who can assist with a variety of inquiries, providing a seamless and supportive environment for individuals accessing registration services
- Promotion of other services: Visitors to the library for registration purposes may become aware of and utilise other library services, digital literacy training, and cultural events

2.17 Integrating the Registration Service and Hastings Library within the current library building would deliver revenue savings of £100K. The savings that would be delivered through the relocation of the Service would contribute to the MTFP savings in 2026/2027 and 2027/2028.

2.18 A draft programme has been developed and costed and the estimated costs associated with the relocation of the Hastings Register Office, based on pre-tender estimates, are £125K. Should the Lead Member endorse the recommendations in this report, the Registration Service would be operational from Hastings Library in September 2026. This programme would ensure service continuity and a smooth coordinated relocation with minimal disruption to users.

2.19 Overall, the integration of registration offices within libraries fosters a more connected and resourceful community, enhancing the delivery of essential public services. It is proposed that, should the relocation be approved, the library building is renamed to incorporate the dual use.

Lease arrangements

2.20 Currently the lease for Hastings Town Hall will expire in January 2026 and if the Lead Member endorses the recommendations of this report, a new flexible lease will be put in place, subject to Hastings Borough Council's agreement.

2.21 It is proposed that East Sussex County Council liaise with Hastings Borough Council to minimise the financial impact on them by exploring opportunities for Hastings Borough Council to continue to use the existing town hall venues as Approved Marriage Premises as a potential income generator for the Borough Council.

Planning applications

2.22 Following consideration, and subject to agreement of the proposal, a planning application would need to be submitted for change of use of the library space in Hastings to facilitate the relocation. In addition, an application for listed building consent may also be submitted, if required.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 This proposal offers value for money and would deliver an improved and enhanced library and Registration Office. The proposal can be delivered within the existing budget, due to forecast additional ceremony and citizenship income for this financial year and will achieve on-going revenue saving. The proposals will make the best use of library buildings.

3.2. The proposal allows the Service to refocus the current Council ceremony venues offer to meet customer demands and establish a ceremony room at Hastings Library. In addition, the Service would continue to support the local economy through the current 34 approved marriage premises in Hastings.

3.3 It is, therefore, recommended that the Lead Member for Transport and Environment approve the proposal for the Register Office to relocate to Hastings Library. It is further recommended that authority is delegated to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to approve the detailed scheme of works for the proposals.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Cllr Godfrey Daniel

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

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LEAD MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment, Councillor Claire Dowling, on 10 November 2025 at Committee Room, County Hall, Lewes

Councillors Cross, Daniel and Hilton spoke on item 4 (see minute 26)

Councillors Daniel and Hilton spoke on item 5 (see minute 27)

Councillors Daniel, Galley, Maples and Murphy spoke on item 6 (see minute 28)

22. DECISIONS MADE BY THE LEAD MEMBER ON 20 OCTOBER 2025

22.1 The Lead Member approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2025.

23. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

23.1 Councillor Daniel declared an interest in items 4, 5 and 6 as a member of the County Council's Planning Committee and noted that his views on these items demonstrate a predisposition but not a predetermination having regard to the possibility that the proposals under each of these items may be considered by the Planning Committee at a future date.

23.2 Councillor Hilton declared a personal interest in item 4 as the Shaping Places and Local Government Reorganisation cabinet portfolio holder at Hastings Borough Council which includes assets within the portfolio. She did not consider this to be prejudicial.

23.3 Councillor Maples declared a personal interest in item 5 as the Neighbourhood Wellbeing cabinet portfolio holder at Lewes District Council which includes recycling and waste within the portfolio. She did not consider this to be prejudicial.

23.4 Councillor Maples declared a personal interest in item 5 as the deputy chair of the LGA Fire and Rescue Authority Committee. She did not consider this to be prejudicial.

24. URGENT ITEMS

24.1 There were none.

25. REPORTS

25.1 Reports referred to in the minutes below are contained in the minute book.

26. PROPOSED RELOCATION OF HASTINGS REGISTER OFFICE

26.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

DECISIONS

26.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to:

(1) approve the proposal to move Hastings Register Office (“the Service”) to Hastings Library, subject to planning permission, to facilitate service delivery improvements and deliver revenue savings of £100K. The savings that would be delivered through the relocation of the Service would contribute to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings in 2026/2027 and 2027/2028;

(2) note that the Service would refocus the current Council ceremony venues offer to meet customer demands and continue to provide a ceremony room at Hastings Library. In addition, the Register Office would continue to support the local economy through the licensing of approved marriage premises in Hastings; and

(3) delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to approve the detailed scheme of works for the proposal.

REASONS

26.3 This proposal offers value for money and will deliver an improved and enhanced library and Registration Office. The proposal can be delivered within the existing budget, due to forecast additional ceremony and citizenship income for this financial year and will achieve on-going revenue saving. The proposals will make the best use of library buildings.

26.4 The proposal allows the Service to refocus the current Council ceremony venues offer to meet customer demands and establish a ceremony room at Hastings Library. In addition, the Service will continue to support the local economy through the current 34 approved marriage premises in Hastings.

27. HASTINGS GREEN CONNECTIONS EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS

27.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

DECISIONS

27.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to:

(1) note the previous development work that has been undertaken in relation to Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections project;

(2) note that Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) will be advertised prior to construction in relation to cycle access to Hastings Town Centre and speed limitation on Havelock Road and Harold Place;

(3) note that Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETROs) will be advertised post construction in relation to vehicular access and timings on Havelock Road, Harold Place and Wellington Place, Hastings; and

(4) delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport, to take any actions necessary to progress the scheme to the construction phase including but not limited to the award of any construction contract required.

REASONS

27.3 Since November 2023, the County Council, as the project deliverer for the Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections project, has been moving forward with the development and detailed design phases of the delivery programme.

27.4 Based on continued stakeholder engagement and feedback received and to ensure the County Council meet its statutory duties for consultation on Traffic Orders, Traffic Regulation Orders will be advertised for the project from November 2025 in relation to cycle access to Hastings Town Centre and speed limitation on Havelock Road and Harold Place, along with Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders being advertised on completion of construction in relation to vehicular access on Havelock Road, Harold Place and Wellington Place, Hastings to seek a view on the proposed timings and access restrictions.

27.5 Delegation of authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport, to take any actions necessary to progress the scheme to the construction phase including but not limited to the award of any construction contract required will allow for delivery timescales for the project to be met.

28. INSTALLATION OF FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS AT WASTE TRANSFER STATIONS

28.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport together with exempt information in a later agenda item.

DECISIONS

28.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the heightened increasing risk of fires at the Council's household waste transfer stations and the proposal to install fire suppression systems;
- (2) subject to approval by Council to the variation of the Capital Programme to include this proposal, agree a 50% contribution towards the installation of fire suppression systems at Maresfield and Pebsham waste transfer stations; and
- (3) delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to finalise the written agreement relating to fire suppression systems between the Councils and Veolia.

REASONS

28.3 The proposal to install fire suppression systems is supported by the East Sussex Fire Service, the Environment Agency and insurers, and is considered industry good practice. It will help mitigate the risk of a major business continuity event impacting waste collection services across the county and increase the resilience of East Sussex County Council (ESCC) waste management facilities through the current waste PFI contract and beyond.

28.4 There is an ongoing risk of a qualifying change in the law and tipping away claims against the County Council, should there be a major fire at one of the transfer stations. This proactive approach will align mitigations consistently across sites and stabilise the ongoing risk.

28.5 Veolia has agreed to a contribution towards infrastructure which could otherwise be an ESCC cost. This provides ESCC with reduced financial liability and supports wider commercial contract arrangements.

28.6 The Council's waste team will continue efforts to support residents in safe recycling; however, the increasing risk of fires is likely to remain as demand for electronic products grows. The Council must therefore protect its assets and service operations effectively to mitigate both service and financial risks.

29. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

29.1 It was RESOLVED to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the remaining agenda items on the grounds that if the public and press were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as specified in paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

30. INSTALLATION OF FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS AT WASTE TRANSFER STATIONS - EXEMPT INFORMATION

30.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport which provided exempt information in support of an earlier item on the agenda.

DECISIONS

30.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to note the exempt information which supports an earlier agenda item.

REASONS

30.3 The report contained exempt information in relation to an earlier item on the agenda.

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Call-in Request: Hastings Register Office – additional information provided by Communities, Economy and Transport

Introduction

The proposed relocation is prompted by the lease ending at the Town Hall in January 2026, after 10 years, and the availability of space at the library. This move offers several advantages, particularly through the integration of two key services within one location which will create a more streamlined experience for residents. Although the Town Hall has served the community well, its facilities are outdated, damp, and deteriorating. Hastings Library, housed in the historic Brassey Institute, a Grade II listed Gothic Revival building dating back to 1878, offers a beautiful setting for ceremonies. The building was refurbished between 2016 and 2018 to modernise facilities while preserving its heritage. We are committed to providing a layout and facilities that meet the needs of all, and we are confident that the new environment will offer an enhanced experience for our customers.

Responses to specific points raised in the call-in

1. No equalities impact assessment was presented at the meeting. The office is proposed to be moved from a ground floor level location to a second floor up 64 steps with a lift that has a record of breaking down. Also the impact on residents of removing these more affordable venues for wedding ceremonies. Mention was made of 34 other venues but many of these are likely to be hotels and private venues which will be more expensive. While HBC could of course continue to promote the use of the town hall as a wedding venue, there is currently no capacity to do so and therefore no guarantee that this can be continued.

Departmental Response

EQIA - An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was prepared by the Service and reviewed by the Equalities Manager in September 2025. The EqIA did not raise any material equalities concerns that could not be mitigated. This considered the potential impact of the proposed relocation of Hastings Registration Service to Hastings library building against each of the protected characteristics. The EqIA proposed an action plan to mitigate negative impacts on accessibility of the relocated Registration Service on older people, disabled people and parents. These have been included as actions in the Co-Location Project. The EqIA is attached to this response for reference.

The significant refurbishment works in Hastings library between 2016 and 2018, included the installation of a new lift and accessible toilets. In addition, consideration was given to the carpet and lighting, creating sensory-friendly environments to reduce sensory overload and ensure suitability for customers with visual impairments.

In relation to age, the EqIA noted that:

- Hastings library is central in the town with good public transport links
- Hastings library is 0.3 miles from the train station, 0.06 miles from the nearest bus stop, and 0.1 miles from a multi-storey car park.
- almost a third of registration and almost a half of library customers are aged 65+

In relation to disability, the EQIA noted that:

- Hastings library has disabled access with accessible public toilets. We will continue to design spaces and support customers with disabilities and with long-term health conditions.
- In 2022 all libraries were fitted with hearing loops at the counter to support those with hearing impairments as part of on-going work to improve accessibility.
- In Hastings library there is a lift for customers and staff to access all floors of the building.
- Hastings library has ground level access on the ground floor; however, consideration and planning will be given for circumstances for if the lift is out of service. Contingency plans will include emergency alternative provision on the ground floor for if the occasion occurred where the lift was broken and the customer was unable to climb the flights of stairs.
- The registration office area will be designed to reduce barriers for customers that may use a wheelchair or be using walking aids. We will support disabled children and adults with disabilities and with long-term health conditions.

The lift - The lift in Hastings Library is serviced on a regular basis. A lift audit has been undertaken and it is our intention that the recommended upgrades will be implemented prior to the proposed move in August 2026. In addition, a new platform stair lift which has an automatic safety arm and mechanical wheel stop will be installed during Spring 2026. The platform stair lift is a mitigation measure and will provide step free access to the ground floor if there is a need for unplanned maintenance to the main lift.

Consultation rooms - Our plans for the space that the Registration Service will utilise within the library building, include 4 new purpose built consultation rooms on the second floor and 1 on the ground floor. Similar to all of our Registration offices, it is the consultation rooms that will be used for the registration of births and deaths. If there is a need for unplanned maintenance to the lift, customers unable to access the second floor will be able to register births and deaths in the consultation room on the ground floor.

Access Audit - In addition, as per normal County Council practice, once the design of the new registration space within the library building has been finalised,

an access audit will be undertaken and any required amendments to the design made.

Departmental response regarding concerns raised about affordable venues for wedding ceremonies

As was set out in the report to LMTE, the proposal does mean fewer dedicated ceremony rooms, moving from three rooms at the Town Hall, one of which can hold up to 60 guests, to 2 ceremony spaces in the library. One space which will be available 7 days a week and one that will be available on Wednesday afternoons and all day Sunday. The smaller ceremony room at the library could host around 10 seated, more if standing, similar to the current Mayor's parlour in the Town Hall. However, the library also offers flexibility and will allow us to accommodate up to 60 people on the ground floor for ceremonies, just like the Town Hall.

As outlined in the LMTE report, usage of the current rooms in the Town Hall has been modest. In 2024/25, there were 219 bookings, averaging four per week. Based on current demand, the proposed arrangements in the library will meet these requirements. There is no evidence to suggest demand will increase.

Currently within Hastings Borough there are 34 approved marriage premises, and these offer a wide range of venues, at a variety of price points. Should the service relocate to the library building, there would remain in Hastings a wide range of alternative options for customers to consider as venues for their ceremonies.

The price for the new ceremony spaces in the library would be in keeping with all other Council ceremony venues and set in the same way as all fees and charges for East Sussex County Council.

Departmental response regarding Hastings Town Hall becoming an Approved Marriage Premises

ESCC will liaise with HBC to explore opportunities for the Borough Council to continue to use the existing town hall venues as Approved Marriage Premises which would be a potential income generator for the Borough Council. Hasting Borough Council already operate a venue as an Approved Marriage Premises at the Dunbar Hall within Hastings Museum and Art Gallery.

2. At the meeting on Monday the reason given for the lack of public consultation was that the office was moving less than 500 meters. Where is the public information that consultation is only needed for relocations greater than 500 meters?

Departmental response

As there are no proposals to withdraw any of the current registration or library services provided in Hastings following the relocation to the library building

there is no statutory requirement to conduct a consultation. The proximity of the two buildings (0.2 miles) means that the signposting to the new location will be relatively easy. We will put in place a robust communication strategy which will ensure people will have advance notice of the change in location of the registration office.

3. 407 letters as of this morning have been sent to the lead member protesting this decision and the lack of any public consultation. The main issues raised were much more restricted parking access, harder access for older and disabled people, loss of civic pride, impact on town centre businesses and the lack of a fair and open decision making process. The current venue is adjacent to Priory Meadow with plentiful parking. The library has limited on street parking.

Departmental response

Of the 361 letters that were received by the LMTE regarding the proposed relocation of the Hastings Register Office to the Hastings Library building , 358 were based on a draft provided by the Hastings and Rye Green party on the actionnetwork.org website. Unfortunately, we have been unable to respond to these letters as they were sent from a no reply actionnetwork.org email address. In addition, we do not know whether these have been sent by local residents as no address information was provided.

With regard to the concerns raised:

- *Lack of public consultation* – Please see response to point 2 above.
- *Harder access for older and disabled people* – Hastings Library is accessible and currently has customers with a wide variety of needs. As set out in the EqlA, mitigations have been proposed in the action plan for any negative impact and included in the proposed relocation plan.
- *Loss of civic pride* – The Registration Service has operated from the Town Hall for the last 10 years, and prior to this was based at the Summerfields Civic Centre in Hastings. As stated in the report that was considered by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment (LMTE) at the LMTE meeting on the 10 November, HBC could retain the current ceremony rooms, continuing to offer these spaces and generate income for the Borough Council. Alternatively, the Borough Council could utilise the space for other civic ceremonies, office space for HBC or seek to rent out. Once the lease to the County Council ends, the decision on how the space is used is solely a matter for HBC.
- *Impact on town centre businesses* – Hastings library is approximately 0.2 miles from the Town Hall and there are a number of independent cafes, restaurants and other local businesses very close to the library building that may benefit from increased footfall.

- *Lack of a fair and open decision making process* – This proposal was considered through the appropriate decision making process. The proposal was considered by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment at the LMTE meeting on the 10 November 2025
- *Parking* – There is on street parking available on numerous roads close to the library. Blue Badge holders can park for free in the pay and display bays and on single/double yellow lines as long as there are no pavement markings. There is a disabled bay approximately 150 yards from the library on Trinty street. There is a multi-story car park 0.1 miles from the library

The lead in time for the implementation of the decision made by the LMTE to relocate Hastings Register Office to the library is 9 months and we will work to review our EqIA to ensure the feedback and the concerns raised are considered and any required mitigations built into the planned implementation of this decision.

4. No mention was made of where citizenship ceremonies will be held. These can be for up to 50 people.

Departmental Response

As part of the relocation appraisal process consideration was given to all the activities and functions undertaken by the Registration Service and how they would be accommodated in the new space within the library building, including citizenship ceremonies.

Citizenship ceremonies are a vital part of the Registration Service's work and they represent a significant milestone in an individual's civic journey, one that should be widely celebrated. For many participants, the ceremony marks the successful conclusion of a long and often challenging process. As a Service it is important that we offer a space which matches the importance of the occasion, and our assessment of the library building concluded that it would be an excellent venue to mark this important milestone.

Citizenship ceremonies can be conducted either in groups or individually, based on personal preference. Currently, for group ceremonies in Hastings the Registration Service schedules up to 20 participants per ceremony, each of whom may bring two guests. Our assessment of the ground floor room within the library building that the Registration Service would use for group ceremonies is that it could comfortably accommodate these events.

5. No mention made that people registering deaths need a dedicated, quiet and reflective space not a busy library to come into at a difficult moment in their lives.

Departmental response

We understand there is concern about the Registration Service being located within a library. However, experience from other areas shows that combining libraries and registration services has been highly effective. Feedback from these co-located sites consistently highlights the convenience and added benefits of bringing these services together.

Research shows that libraries play an important role in supporting people who are bereaved. They provide welcoming spaces, access to resources on grief, and help connect individuals to local support services.

In addition, libraries offer invaluable benefits to new parents and their babies. Currently the two services, Registration and Libraries, work together through the library team automatically registering all new babies for a library card. The proposed relocation will further this service offer through welcoming parents into a safe, welcoming space. Families will see firsthand how they can access free resources, from baby-friendly books to parenting guides and rhymetimes.

Our plans for the space that the Registration Service will utilise within the library building, include 4 new purpose built consultation rooms on the second floor and 1 on the ground floor. Similar to all of our Registration offices, it is the consultation rooms that are used for the registration of births and deaths.

6. No assessment has been made to reflect the future impact of LGR. The registry office provides an income to sustain the town hall as a civic building. Removing this income will affect the long term sustainability of this historic building. While Cllr Daniel referred to a future potential use by a town council, that town council (if one is agreed) would also need a sustainable income stream to maintain this building. This building will then become a liability for the future unitary council. There is no evidence that this impact was assessed as part of the decision making.

Departmental response

At the Cabinet meeting on the 24th September, Cabinet resolved to approve the submission of the business case setting out the proposal for a single unitary council for East Sussex, based on a Continuing Authority model. This proposal was jointly submitted with Hastings Borough Council.

The East Sussex District, Borough and County Council Leaders and Chief Executives meet regularly to oversee the LGR process, provide strategic direction, and ensure that work is co-ordinated. With regard to how the councils across East Sussex work together a key principle is that 'decisions made by all sovereign bodies until vesting day will have the interests of the future Council as an explicit consideration'

In discussions with the Boroughs and Districts it has also been recognised that each council remains sovereign and has legal responsibility to balance its budget until vesting day for a new unitary. Whilst all councils are committed to strong partnership working to fully consider impacts on other councils and/or the new unitary, the principle cannot be the only factor considered.

The LMTE considered all material considerations relevant to the proposal to relocate the Hastings Register Office to Hastings Library. As stated in the LMTE report integrating the Registration Service and Hastings Library within the current library building would deliver revenue savings of £100K. The savings that would be delivered through the relocation of the Service would contribute to the MTFP savings in 2026/2027 and 2027/2028. In addition, that ESCC would liaise with HBC to explore opportunities for the Borough Council to continue to use the existing town hall venues as Approved Marriage Premises which would be a potential income generator for the Borough Council.

Should the One East Sussex proposal be accepted by Government, both Hastings Town Hall and Hastings Library would be part of the unitary council's estate. There is therefore no negative impact on the potential new unitary. The proposal would allow the Town Hall the opportunity to also hold ceremonies which could develop a separate and additional income stream ahead of the new unitary coming into being, as well as providing an additional facility for the area.

When making the decision, it is evident that the LMTE did have regard to the impact on any potential new unitary authority, and put such weight as they considered appropriate on this consideration.

7. No consultation with staff prior to making the decision. While officers at the meeting stated that they had been informed, HBC staff have had direct communication with the staff on the ground who confirmed that they had not been informed before the papers were made public.

Departmental response

Prior to the publication of LMTE report, the Registration Team Manager met with the Hastings Registration Office team that currently work from the Town Hall and informed them of the proposal to relocate to the Hastings Library building. In addition, prior to the publication of the LMTE Report staff that work in Hastings Register Office and Hastings Library were informed by an email from their Team Manager of the proposed relocation. On the day that the LMTE report was published, an email was sent to all registration and library staff to inform them of the plan to relocate.

8. More generally, given LGR, there needs to be much closer collaboration with affected related councils on any decisions that also impact them financially.

While this has been established as a principle it doesn't seem to be being carried out in practice. A clear and transparent process needs to be established for this collaboration over the next two years as part of budget setting processes and agreed with scrutiny committees.

Departmental response

Please see the response to point 6 above. In addition, it is important to highlight that ESCC and HBC Officers work together closely across a range of functions including Community Safety, Gypsy and Travellers, Emergency Planning and Property.

The current lease that HBC granted falls outside the provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954. Consequently, ESCC has no security of tenure and would be required to vacate the premises at the end of January 2026. ESCC Officers on the 8th October 2025 informed colleagues from HBC that we were considering relocating the Registration Service to the Hastings Library building and that a report recommending this would be considered by the LMTE on the 10 November 2025. Following this initial discussion, ESCC and HBC officers have corresponded a number of times about this matter.

Equality Impact Assessment

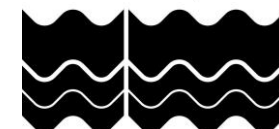
Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) makes services better for everyone. It supports value for money by getting council services right the first time. It helps us make good decisions and evidence how we have met our legal duties¹.

EqIAs need to be done whenever a service, project, policy, strategy, activity or proposal is being started, needs to change, or is being reviewed. If there is potential for an impact on people, then do an EqIA. We use EqIAs to review information, consider possible disproportionate or specific impacts on different people, and then plan actions to reduce or avoid negative impacts and create positive outcomes². Embed any actions you identify into the relevant action plan to get the best outcomes for the Council, people who access services and our staff³.

Our legal duties to identify equality impacts don't stop us taking decisions or introducing changes that are needed. They do require us to take decisions and make changes conscientiously, and to deliberately confront the anticipated impacts on people.

This template sets out how to complete an EqIA. Guidance for sections is in *italics* in each section and in the end-notes. If you have any questions about your EqIA and/or how to complete this form, please use the contact details at the end of this form.

Title of Project / Service / Policy	Proposed co-location of the Registration Service and the Library and Information Service in Hastings
Teams	Registration Service and Library and Information Service
Department	Communities, Economy and Transport
Provide a comprehensive description of your project (or service/policy, etc.) including its purpose and scope	<p>Alternative office locations are being considered for the Hastings registration office. The end of term lease on the building is upcoming, and with all leases and contracts held by East Sussex County Council under review, looking to make best use of resources and reduce ongoing costs, the option to co-locate the Hastings registration office into the Hastings library, is being explored.</p> <p>The “It All Adds Up” campaign is running across East Sussex County Council. It encourages everyone in the organisation to help save money and work more efficiently. It is our collective effort to tackle the unprecedented financial challenges we face at East Sussex County Council and to identify areas where we might be able to make a reduction in costs.</p>



	<p>Nationally there is a move towards multi-use buildings that house not just libraries but other local services as well. There are examples in neighbouring authorities where co-location of the registration and libraries have already taken place, including West Sussex County Council where Registration Services co-locate in Haywards Heath, Worthing and Littlehampton libraries, and Surrey County Council in Leatherhead and Reigate libraries. Co-location of services has benefits including reduced costs, increased building usage, and potential for attracting new users.</p> <p>The Registration Service and the Library and Information Service already work in partnership. Newborns recorded with East Sussex Registration are also automatically enrolled with a Library membership. It would be beneficial for these customers to be familiar with the space and offer available to them. East Sussex Parking Teams also work in partnership with the Library and Information Service by leasing spaces, including in Hastings library. Providing parking offices and facilities within libraries has proved convenient for customers as well as making a good use of space available in the buildings.</p> <p>Space within Hastings library is being scoped to provide high quality spaces for customers of both the Registration Service and the Library and Information Service. The proposed co-location in Hastings library would include part of the 2nd floor being converted into registration staff offices, consultation rooms, waiting area, and a small ceremony room.</p> <p>The relocation in Hastings would be a difference of 0.2 miles in distance for customers and staff, from the current registration office location to the potential library location. A continuation of all services currently offered by the Registration Service is essential. To enable this co-location to take place, changes to the current library internal layout would need to occur in advance of the move. It is expected work in the library would take place in early 2026/27 with a change in office location taking place in mid to late 2026/27. Minimal reduction to library floor space would be enabled by utilising the space previously occupied by the Learning Service team, this service ceased in 2024/25.</p>
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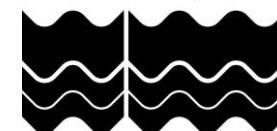
1. Update on previous EqlAs and outcomes of previous actions (if applicable)

What actions did you plan last time? (List them from the previous EqlA)	What improved as a result? What outcomes have these actions achieved?	What <u>further</u> actions do you need to take? (add these to the Action Plan below)
<i>Not applicable: no previous EqlA</i>		

2. Review of information, equality assessment and potential actions

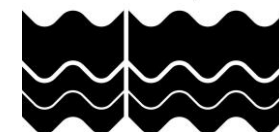
Consider the actual or potential impact of your project (service or policy) against each of the equality characteristics.

<p>Age - people of all ages are protected under the Equality Act. Consider: older adults, under 5s, transition-aged young people (16-24), working age adults etc.</p>	
<p>(Age) What do you know? Summary of recent data, census information, research and insight about people who access your services and/or staff</p>	<p>Data from the latest East Sussex Registration Survey 2024 providing the demographic of customers in 2024/25 states: 1% are under 25 years 14% are 25 - 34 years 16% are 35 - 44 years 14% are 45 - 54 years 25% are 55 - 64 years 30% are 65+ years</p> <p>This compares to the latest Census 2021 results for the East Sussex: 25% are under 25 years 10% are 25 - 34 years 11% are 35 - 44 years 13% are 45 - 54 years 14% are 55 - 64 years 26% are 65+ years</p> <p>We also have the results of the October 2024 Public Library User Survey (PLUS), undertaken every 3 years. Of customers that took part in during the surveying period: 3% are under 25 years 8% are 25 - 34 years 15% are 35 - 44 years 11% are 45 - 54 years 16% are 55 - 64 years 48% are 65+ years</p> <p>Focusing on the results from Hastings library:</p>



	<p>3% are under 25 years 9% are 25 - 34 years 16% are 35 - 44 years 15% are 45 - 54 years 19% are 55 - 64 years 39% are 65+ years</p>
<p>(Age) What do people tell you? Summary of feedback from people who access your service and/or staff feedback</p>	<p>The proposed location is central in the town with good public transport links. The location means that even with a large proportion of library customers being 65 years and over, the majority of library customers visit the library on foot as their primary method of travel, with 55% visiting Hastings library and providing this feedback as part of the PLUS 2024.</p> <p>Hastings library is 0.3 miles from the train station, 0.06 miles from the nearest bus stop, and 0.1 miles from a multi-storey car park.</p>
<p>(Age) What does this mean? Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)</p>	<p>Given that almost a third of registration and almost a half of library customers are aged 65 and over, those in this age category have the potential to be disproportionately affected by the changes to the building as a result of co-location. Changes to the internal layout, and access into the library buildings must take this into account when planning and designing the space.</p> <p>Those aged 75+ are also known to be less likely to use the internet, and therefore the eLibrary, due to a lack of skills. Age is a key factor in people's level of digital skills and therefore use of the internet. The buildings must therefore continue to provide access to public computers as well as facilitate space for training (e.g. IT for You) to enable older residents to access resources provided within the building.</p>
<p>(Age) What can you do? All potential actions to remove or reduce barriers and increase equality.</p>	<p>Access audit will be undertaken as part of assessing the proposed works. This will include a review of physical accessibility to the registration and library spaces. Corporate Property teams will review in conjunction with the Library and Information Service to ascertain what works can be brought into scope.</p> <p>A lift audit will be undertaken as part of assessing the proposed works. Due to where the proposed co-location of the registration offices would be within the building it is imperative that the lift condition is evaluated, and recommendations implemented. Contingency plans will</p>

	<p>include emergency alternative provision on the ground floor for if the occasion occurred where the lift was broken and the customer was unable to climb the flights of stairs.</p> <p>Short term and long term contingency plans will be considered to ensure customers of both East Sussex Registration and the Library and Information Service are still able to access the services they require. Options for a ramp for the six steps just inside the main entrance of Hastings library will be evaluated to ensure the building is accessible to all customers.</p>
<p>Disability - A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Consider: sensory and mobility impairments; fluctuating, recurring or developmental conditions; learning difficulties; mental health; and people with cancer, multiple sclerosis or HIV. Neurodivergence and effects of menopause can also apply.</p>	
<p>(Disability) What do you know? Summary of data</p>	<p>Data from the latest East Sussex Registration Survey 2024 providing the demographic of customers in 2024/25 states: 81% don't have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more 11% have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses but that it does not reduce their ability to carry out day-to-day activities 8% have conditions or illnesses which reduce their ability to carry out day-to-day activities</p> <p>This compares to the latest Census 2021 results for the East Sussex area: 81% Not disabled under the Equality Act 11% Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a little 8% Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a lot</p> <p>We also have the results of the October 2024 Public Library User Survey (PLUS), undertaken every 3 years. Of customers that took part in during the surveying period: 72% of customers do not consider themselves to have a disability or condition.</p>
<p>(Disability) What do people tell you? Summary of feedback</p>	<p>2.97% of registration customers county wide reported that they felt there was a barrier accessing the registration service due to a recognised characteristic. Feedback from registration customers who also left a comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lift / stairlift if there isn't one. If there is and we missed it, a clear sign in the entrance! (regarding Hastings) •



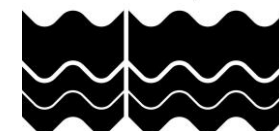
<p>(Disability) What does this mean? Impacts identified</p>	<p>Changes to the internal layout, and access into the library building, must take accessibility for disabled customers into account when planning and designing the space.</p> <p>Hastings library has disabled access with accessible public toilets. We will continue to design spaces and support customers with disabilities and with long-term health conditions.</p> <p>Clear signage is available throughout the library building, along with a virtual tour available to view on the website ahead of visiting in person, to help reduce potential anxiety of unknown spaces.</p>
<p>(Disability) What can you do? All potential actions</p>	<p>We will continue to work with Property Services to consider and/or address any building amendments required to provide or ease access to our buildings to ensure that the proposed co-location is compliant, where possible, and making reasonable adjustments to support customers accessing the service, where possible.</p> <p>Hastings library has ground level access on the ground floor; however, consideration and planning will be given for circumstances for if the lift is out of service. Contingency plans will include emergency alternative provision on the ground floor for if the occasion occurred where the lift was broken and the customer was unable to climb the flights of stairs.</p> <p>Refurbishments took place at Hastings library in 2017/18 which included considerations to the carpet and lighting, creating sensory-friendly environments to reduce sensory overload. Spaces will continue to be designed with flooring that includes colour and patterns which are suitable for customers with visual impairments.</p> <p>In Hastings library there is a lift for customers and staff to access all floors of the building. There is an accessible toilet located on the ground floor, and as part of scoping works toilets will be reviewed to understand if works could be included to change a cubicle to a Changing Places toilet to improve access.</p> <p>The registration office area will be designed to reduce barriers for customers that may use a wheelchair or be using walking aids. We will support disabled children and adults with disabilities and with long-term health conditions.</p>

	In 2022 all libraries were fitted with hearing loops at the counter to support those with hearing impairments as part of on-going work to improve accessibility.
Gender reassignment - In the Act a transgender person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender. A person does not need to be under medical supervision to be protected	
(Gender reassignment) What do you know? Summary of data	<p>Data from the latest East Sussex Registration Survey 2024 providing the demographic of customers in 2024/25 states: 99.6% identify as the same sex as registered at birth 0.4% identify as a different sex as registered at birth</p> <p>This mirrors to the latest Census 2021 results for the East Sussex area: 99.6% identify as the same sex as registered at birth 0.4% identify as a different sex as registered at birth</p> <p>We also have the results of the October 2024 Public Library User Survey (PLUS), undertaken every 3 years. Customers were asked to describe their gender identity: 70.46% Female 29.23% Male 0.18% Non-binary 0.07% Transgender 0.04% Gender fluid 0.04% Genderqueer</p>
(Gender reassignment) What do people tell you? Summary of feedback	TheRegistration Service and the Library Information Service are open to all individuals, but we recognise that accessing services can be challenging. Our teams support inclusive practice and with a commitment to equality. Virtual tours of our library locations are available online to view ahead of visiting to help reduce the risk of anxiety and get a feel for the space and layout.
(Gender reassignment) What does this mean? Impacts identified	TheRegistration Service and the Library Information Service are committed to making trans-inclusive spaces.
(Gender reassignment) What can you do? • All potential actions	We will continue to work with local and national partners to ensure we provide a welcoming environment for transgender and non-binary people. East Sussex Registration and the Library Information Service will continue to explore this characteristic further and take this into account with any proposed works going forward.

	All toilets in Hastings library are unisex for customers, with fully enclosed units with a toilet, washbasin, and hand-drying facilities. Privacy and dignity for all customers is essential. There is clear signage to inform customers the toilets are for universal use. There is limited space in Hastings however consideration during planning will be given to the current provision to whether it can be extended, with a unisex toilet for staff in the building.
Pregnancy and maternity - Protection is during pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave.	
(Pregnancy & maternity) What do you know? Summary of data	The latest Office for National Statistics 2022 edition of conception rates for the East Sussex area per 1,000 women: Hastings 74.0 Eastbourne 67.2 Rother 72.5 Wealden 70.3 Lewes 67.6
(Pregnancy & maternity) What do people tell you? Summary of feedback	For individuals in this category, the access and use of lifts within library buildings is critical. We will retain an open plan floor to support easy access with buggies/ pushchairs. Hastings library has baby changing facilities.
(Pregnancy & maternity) What does this mean? Impacts identified	Lifts, easy access to seating to rest/ feed babies is important to provide throughout library buildings. Additionally, any mother/ parent or carer can feed their baby in a library at any time.
(Pregnancy & maternity) What can you do? All potential actions	We will continue to design our spaces so that pregnant/ new mothers have adequate spaces to sit/ stay/ feed within the library. We will continue to work with colleagues in Property to ensure that the lift is serviced in accordance with the term maintenance program and endeavour to fix issues promptly as and when they arise. We will retain an open plan floor to support easy access with buggies/ pushchairs.
Race (ethnicity) - This includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality, and includes refugees and migrants ⁵ , and Gypsies and Travellers.	
(Race / ethnicity) What do you know?	Data from the latest East Sussex Registration Survey 2024 providing the demographic of customers in 2024/25 states:

Summary of data	<p>92.8% White 2.9% Asian 2.1% Mixed 1.9% Black 0.4% Other ethnic group</p> <p>With the top 5 main languages being: 96.3% English (English or Welsh in Wales) 0.4% Polish 0.4% Romanian 0.3% Portuguese 0.2% Spanish</p> <p>This compares to the latest Census 2021 results for the East Sussex area: 93.9% White with 0.2% White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller (There is likely to be under-recording as people may be reluctant to self-identify for fear of discrimination and mistrust of organisations and authorities) 2.1% Asian 2.3% Mixed 0.8% Black 0.9% Other ethnic group</p> <p>With the top 5 main languages in Hastings being: 94.8% English (English or Welsh in Wales) 0.8% Romanian 0.5% Polish 0.3% Russian 0.3% Kurdish</p> <p>We also have the results of the October 2024 Public Library User Survey (PLUS): 95.5% White with 0.1% White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller 1.5% Asian 2.1% Mixed 0.7% Black</p>
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	0.2% Other ethnic group
(Race / ethnicity) What do people tell you? Summary of feedback	Hastings has higher pockets of residents with English as an Additional Language (EAL). We will continually endeavour to facilitate sessions in our building for this cohort. Feedback from schemes the Library and Information Service have initiated, including refugee support and the work based at Hastings library, has been overwhelmingly positive.
(Race / ethnicity) What does this mean? Impacts identified	The potential co-location is not considered to have an impact for registration or library users from different ethnic backgrounds as the building will continue to offer flexibility of space for any planned library initiatives.
(Race / ethnicity) What can you do? All potential actions	Consider future possible activities in the delivery of the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy and ensure that buildings are fit for purpose. Ensure any marketing campaigns and promotions are representative of diversity across the county. Co-locating services in this way may provide an opportunity to for ESCC to foster good relationships between people with different characteristics. All residents in East Sussex will at some point use the Registration Service for a birth, marriage or death registration. This gives the Libraries and Information Service an opportunity to foster relations between different types and groups of people, as service users who may not previously have been customers of the Library and Information service come into the library building for perhaps the first time. The Library and Information Service could consider curating displays/holding events that are relevant to Registration customers, such as information about different marriage/death customs within different ethnicities and races.
Religion or belief - Religion includes any religion with a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief. The Act also covers lack of religion or belief.	
(Religion /& Belief) What do you know? Summary of data	Data from the latest East Sussex Registration Survey 2024 providing the demographic of customers in 2024/25 states: 49.8% No religion



45.4% Christian
1.1% Muslim
0.6% Buddhist
0.4% Hindu
2.7% Other religion or philosophical belief

This compares to the latest Census 2021 results for the East Sussex area:

47.8% No religion
49% Christian
1.2% Muslim
0.5% Buddhist
0.4% Hindu
0.2% Jewish
0.04% Sikh
0.8% Other religion or philosophical belief

For the Hastings area:

55% No religion
40.5% Christian
2.1% Muslim
0.7% Buddhist
0.6% Hindu
0.2% Jewish
0.04% Sikh
1% Other religion or philosophical belief

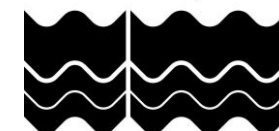
We also have the results of the October 2024 Public Library User Survey (PLUS):

47.7% No religion
48.5% Christian
0.5% Muslim
1.1% Buddhist
0.2% Hindu
0.6% Jewish

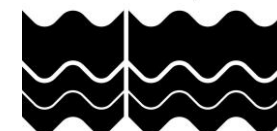
	1.5% Other religion or philosophical belief
(Religion /& Belief) What do people tell you? Summary of feedback	Some feedback was received from one customer in response to the April eNewsletter: April is also the month of Easter and Easter Eggs, however disappointingly NO mention of this in your email.
(Religion /& Belief) What does this mean? Impacts identified	The potential co-location is not considered to have an impact for registration or library users with different religions as the building will continue to be an inclusive space.
(Religion /& Belief) What can you do? All potential actions	Staff will continue to promote an inclusive environment for people of all faiths and beliefs. Co-locating services in this way may provide an opportunity to for ESCC to foster good relationships between people with different characteristics. All residents in East Sussex will at some point use the Registration Service for a birth, marriage or death registration. This gives the Libraries and Information Service an opportunity to foster relations between different types and groups of people, as service users who may not previously have been customers of the Library service come into the library building for perhaps the first time. The Library and Information Service could consider curating displays/holding events that are relevant to Registration customers, such as information about different marriage/death customs within different religions/beliefs.
Sex - Women and men are protected under the Act.	
(Sex) What do you know? Summary of data	Data from the latest East Sussex Registration Survey 2024 providing the demographic of customers in 2024/25 states: 63% Female 37% Male This compares to the latest Census 2021 results for the East Sussex area: 52% Female 48% Male
(Sex) What do people tell you? Summary of feedback	Library customers that completed equalities monitoring questions as part of feedback surveys in 2024/25: 76% Female 24% Male

(Sex) What does this mean? Impacts identified	Women have the potential to be disproportionately affected by changes as they represent a higher number of our customers; however, the potential changes are not considered to have an impact for registration or library users of different sex.
(Sex) What can you do? All potential actions	We will continue to support an inclusive environment for people of all sex.
Sexual orientation - The Act protects bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people.	
(Sexual orientation) What do you know? Summary of data	<p>Data from the latest East Sussex Registration Survey 2024 providing the demographic of customers in 2024/25 states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 91% Straight or heterosexual 5% Gay or lesbian 3% Bisexual 1% Other sexual orientation <p>This compares to the latest Census 2021 results for the East Sussex area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 96.4% Straight or heterosexual 2% Gay or lesbian 1.3% Bisexual 0.3% Other sexual orientation <p>For the Hastings area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 94.9% Straight or heterosexual 2.5% Gay or lesbian 2% Bisexual 0.5% Other sexual orientation
(Sexual orientation) What do people tell you? Summary of feedback	No feedback received from service users or staff.

(Sexual orientation) What does this mean? Impacts identified	The potential co-location is not considered to have an impact for registration or library users of different sexual orientations.
(Sexual orientation) What can you do? All potential actions	<p>East Sussex Registration and the Library and Information Service strive for inclusivity of the LGBTQ+ community. The building will be maintained to an acceptable standard and will continue to operate as a safe space which can host events and activities. We will continue to work with corporate, local and national partners to ensure safe and accessible environments to the LGBTQ+ community.</p> <p>Co-locating services in this way may provide an opportunity to for ESCC to foster good relationships between people with different characteristics. All residents in East Sussex will at some point use the Registration Service for a birth, marriage or death registration. This gives the Libraries and Information Service an opportunity to foster relations between different types and groups of people, as service users who may not previously have been customers of the Library an Information Service come into the library building for perhaps the first time. The Library and Information Service could consider curating displays/holding events that are relevant to Registration customers, such as books that are relevant or speak to the experiences of those with different sexual orientations.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership - Only in relation to due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.	
(Marriage & civil partnership) What do you know? Summary of data	<p>This latest Census 2021 results for the East Sussex area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 46% Married 11% Divorced 8% Widowed 2% Separated, but still married 0.4% In registered civil partnership 0.05% Formally in a civil partnership now legally dissolved 0.02% Surviving partner from civil partnership 0.03% Separated, but still in a registered civil partnership 32% Never married and never registered a civil partnership <p>For the Hastings area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 38% Married



	13% Divorced 6% Widowed 3% Separated, but still married 0.4% In registered civil partnership 0.05% Formally in a civil partnership now legally dissolved 0.03% Surviving partner from civil partnership 0.04% Separated, but still in a registered civil partnership 40% Never married and never registered a civil partnership
(Marriage & civil partnership) What do people tell you? Summary of feedback	No feedback received from service users or staff.
(Marriage & civil partnership) What does this mean? Impacts identified	The potential co-location is not considered to have an impact for registration or library users of different relationship statuses including those married or in a civil partnership.
(Marriage & civil partnership) What can you do? All potential actions	No actions have been identified as necessary at this stage.
Armed Forces - protected by the Armed Forces Act 2021 which aims to help prevent service personnel, veterans and their families being disadvantaged when accessing public services. The duty applies to specifically housing, education or healthcare functions, but check whether any impacts may apply in your case.	
(Armed forces) What do you know? Summary of data	There are no disproportionate impacts upon people sharing this characteristic.
(Armed forces) What do people tell you? Summary of feedback	No feedback received from service users or staff.
(Armed forces) What does this mean?	The proposed co-location is not considered to have an impact for registration or library users of Armed Forces.



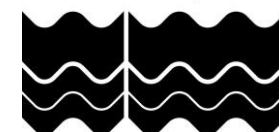
Impacts identified	
(Armed forces) What can you do? All potential actions	No actions have been identified as necessary at this stage.
Impacts on community cohesion - Consider impacts on how groups see one another or how the council's resources are seen to be allocated. Include opportunities to positively impact on good relations between groups.	
(Community cohesion) What do you know? Summary of data	The Library and Information Service has been recognised with a library of sanctuary award in 2023. This is in recognition to commitment to creating a culture of welcome for people seeking sanctuary, providing safe spaces for refugees, working alongside key partners and community groups.
(Community cohesion) What do people tell you? Summary of feedback	Customers were also asked what they visited the library for, this included 7% attending for an event or activity 5% attending to socialise / relax 3% to study / do homework 2% to read, including newspapers 1% use print and photocopying facilities 1% for IT for You support sessions 1% jigsaw / games 1% parking permits / bus passes / NHS / community flyer / general information
(Community cohesion) What does this mean? Impacts identified	The maintenance and upkeep of library buildings provides the physical safe environment for the activities for local community groups to access.
(Community cohesion) What can you do? All potential actions	Undertake annual maintenance of Hasting library, and ensure the co-location is delivered in a timely manner with minimal disruption. The Libraries and Information Service will continue to promote community cohesion by using the building to bring together groups of people and individuals with different characteristics. The service can also foster good community relations by providing a safe space where people can explore books and information about different communities, and where they can meet those with different characteristics in a neutral space.

Additional categories

(identified locally as potentially causing or worsening people's experience of inequality)

Rurality - issues can include isolation, access to services (e.g.: GPs, pharmacies, libraries, schools), low income / part-time work, infrequent public transport, higher transport and fuel costs and lack of affordable housing. Deprivation can be more dispersed and less visible.	
(Rurality) What do you know? Summary of data	There are no disproportionate impacts upon people sharing this characteristic.
(Rurality) What do people tell you? Summary of feedback	No feedback received from service users or staff.
(Rurality) What does this mean? Impacts identified	The proposed co-location is not considered to have an impact for registration customers and library users from rural areas.
(Rurality) What can you do? All potential actions	No actions have been identified as necessary at this stage.
Carers - A carer is anyone, of any age, who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid.	
(Carers) What do you know? Summary of data	There are no disproportionate impacts upon people sharing this characteristic.
(Carers) What do people tell you? Summary of feedback	No feedback received from service users or staff.
(Carers) What does this mean? Impacts identified	The proposed co-location is not considered to have an impact for registration customers and library users who are also carers.
(Carers) What can you do? All potential actions	No actions have been identified as necessary at this stage.

<p>People with care experience: the term ‘care experienced’ refers to anyone who has been, or is currently, in care or from a looked after background at any stage in their life, no matter how short.</p> <p>Consider financial impacts for things like travel or access to projects; maintaining continuity of care and support (including mental and physical health and wellbeing, community and social connections), and access to opportunities.</p>	
<p>(Care experience) What do you know? Summary of data</p>	There are no disproportionate impacts upon people sharing this characteristic.
<p>(Care experience) What do people tell you? Summary of feedback</p>	No feedback received from service users or staff.
<p>(Care experience) What does this mean? Impacts identified</p>	The proposed co-location is not considered to have an impact for registration customers and library users who have care experience.
<p>(Care experience) What can you do? All potential actions</p>	No actions have been identified as necessary at this stage.
<p>Other people that may be differently affected and/or whose views are seldom heard - this will vary by service, but includes people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are homeless or in insecure housing, • in prison, • with low levels of literacy, • are digitally excluded, • experiencing severe loneliness (a feeling of lack or loss of companionship) • experiencing or in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction (and their families), • have or are experiencing domestic or sexual abuse 	
<p>(Other impacts) What do you know? Summary of data</p>	<p>Questions about loneliness and isolation were added to the Public Library User Survey following the Covid 19 and numerous lockdowns. Results of the October 2024 Public Library User Survey (PLUS), undertaken every 3 years:</p> <p>42% of customer feel isolated often, some of the time, or occasionally</p> <p>40% of customers feel lonely often, some of the time, or occasionally</p>
<p>(Other impacts) What do people tell you? Summary of feedback</p>	Partners in health care and social services have identified the library buildings as important spaces for the wellbeing of clients. Support, access to resources, and training is available for library users if needed in a warm, safe and welcoming space.



(Other impacts) What does this mean? Impacts identified	The Hastings Library building is a centrally located, warm, safe and welcoming space. Individuals to have as much or as little interaction as they choose.
(Other impacts) What can you do? All potential actions	<p>As above, the maintenance of library buildings is key to delivering a high-quality registration and library service. We will continue to work with in supporting these groups within the wider community, working with both internal and external stakeholder to promote the service offer which is available for all to access.</p> <p>The facilities offered within a library help combat loneliness by providing a meeting point, events, and activities to take part and meet people. The Library and Information Service also offers a safe space to connect with others via the public computers with friends/ relatives or a meeting opportunity within the library itself. We are keen to promote resources and to combat isolation and loneliness within the community.</p>
Staff impacts: if your proposal affects staff, have you consulted with the Staff Networks? (contact details are on the equality pages of the intranet: search for 'staff networks')	
<p>The proposed co-location is in the planning and scoping stage and therefore has not been shared with staff networks for consultation, however, the proposal is not considered to have a disproportionate impact on staff.</p> <p>Staff in the Libraries and Information Service are used to dealing with different types of customers and already provide a service to parking customers. It is likely that they will need to provide some signposting to ensure Registration customers are directed to the correct place within the library building. A small number of Registration customers will be using the service at a very distressing time in their lives. Ensuring that the library staff are well trained to handle these situations will help to support them in this work.</p>	

Assessment of overall impacts, summary of actions and any further recommendations

Comments received as part of the PLUS 2024 survey have been reviewed as part of this EqlA and the potential co-location for the Hastings registration office into Hastings library. This survey takes place every three years and allows the Library and Information Service to review operational activity and make changes where possible. This data has been analysed and is available for review here: [PLUS 2024 Report](#) and [PLUS Review 2021 - 2024](#)

There are some negative potential impacts that have been identified for those with a protected characteristic of: age; disability; and maternity/pregnancy.

These relate to:

The siting of the Registration service on the upper floor of the library, which necessitates the need for constant lift access for some groups. The Libraries and Information service will run an Access Survey to ensure accessibility requirements are properly understood and designed into the new floor plan, as well as ensuring regular maintenance of the lift and building is undertaken.

There are some positive potential impacts that have been identified for those with a protected characteristic of: race/ethnicity; religion/belief; sexual orientation; and for community cohesion.

The potential for Registration services to attract new users to the library who share characteristics, or have different characteristics, provides an opportunity for the Libraries and Information Service to foster good relations between different groups by promoting relevant reading material on different cultures, beliefs, faiths and sexual orientations. It also promotes the mixing of different people in a neutral and safe space, where there is the potential to explore different ideas and meet others with different characteristics.

3. List detailed data and/or community feedback that informed your EqlA

Source and type of data (e.g. research, or direct engagement (interviews), responses to questionnaires, etc.)	Date	Gaps in data (were there any people you didn't hear from? Does research include information on all characteristics?)	Actions to fill these gaps: who else do you need to engage with? (add these to the Action Plan below, with a timeframe)
ONS Census	2021	Individuals may be unwilling or unable to participate in the census, or limitations in data collection methods	Used along with ESR survey, and LIS PLUS survey to help inform decisions
East Sussex Registration Survey	2024/25	This survey did not ask questions about all protected characteristics	This has been a helpful comparison to the 2021 Census. Review and comparison when the results of the next Census are available
Public Libraries User Survey (PLUS)	2024	This survey did not ask questions about all protected characteristics	The questions will be reviewed ahead of next survey run, due in 2027

4. Prioritised Action Plan

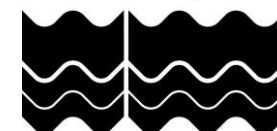
NB: The Council's duties are ongoing: actions must be completed and further equality assessment made if needed.

Review the actions identified above and prioritise by considering actions that will have benefits for multiple characteristics, actions that remove the biggest barriers or have greatest impact, and actions that are possible within current resources.

Transfer these actions to service or business plans and monitor to ensure they achieve the outcomes identified.

Your departmental equality lead will follow up at an agreed time to ensure actions are being implemented.

Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Timeframe
<i>To jump back to potential actions identified above, click on the relevant hyperlink: Actions from previous EqlA, Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage & Civil Partnership, Pregnancy & Maternity, Race, Religion & Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Armed Forces, Community Cohesion, Rural, Carers, Care Experience, Other Impacts, Staff Impacts</i>				
Age and Disability Older people and certain disabilities may find changes to the library layout difficult to navigate	Ensure that access audit considers age of customer and disability.	Building is compliant with required standards where possible.	Completed access audit.	As part of the co-location project.
Age and Disability Older people and certain disabilities may find changes to the library layout difficult to navigate	Ensure lift audit and contingency plans to include emergency alternative provision on the ground floor.	Building is compliant with required standards where possible.	Completed lift audit and contingency option available.	As part of the co-location project.
Age, Disability and Pregnancy & maternity Older people are more likely to have medical conditions, such as incontinence, that necessitate easy access to toilets.	Ensure sufficient toilet provision is available to registration and library users. Changing Places toilet, where possible, to improve access.	Accessible toilets in Hastings library with baby changing facilities for use of both registration and library users.	Completion of review and CAD drawings for proposed layouts.	As part of the co-location project.



<p>People with certain disabilities may have mobility issues which could limit their access to toilets. They may need to use the toilet more often.</p> <p>Parents, especially those with babies and young children, may require public toilets with baby-changing facilities.</p>	Explore the option to expand current toilet provision.			
<p>Pregnancy and maternity: Access and breastfeeding.</p>	Design spaces so that pregnant/ new mothers / families have adequate spaces to sit/ stay/ feed.	Better support and spaces for feeding and seating.	Spaces reviewed/ improved and installed.	As part of the co-location project.
<p>All: Users of East Sussex Registration and the Library and Information Service have full access and continued service to facilities and offer.</p>	Keep users of the ESR and LIS updated on any changes in layout and location.	Better use of spaces for staff and customers.	Continued use of East Sussex Registration and the Library and Information Service by customers.	As part of the co-location project.

EqlA sign-off: (for the EqlA to be final the following people must review and agree it)

Staff member completing Equality Impact Assessment: Katie Upton

Date: 02/09/2025

Equality lead: Sarah Tighe-Ford

Date: 02/09/2025

Directorate Head of Service:

Natalie Anderson

Date: 03/10/2025

¹ Our duties in the Equality Act 2010

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a legal duty to demonstrate that we have identified and considered the actual and potential impact of our activities on people who share any of the legally ‘protected characteristics’: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership. This applies to policies, services (including commissioned services), and our employees. This template provides evidence of this consideration.

In the Act we must give ‘due regard’ (pay conscious attention) to the need to:

- **avoid, reduce, minimise or eliminate any negative impact** (if you identify unlawful discrimination, you must stop the action and take advice immediately).
- **promote equality of opportunity** by removing or minimising disadvantages; taking extra steps to meet people’s needs; encouraging participation; and treating disabled people differently, including more favourably where necessary.
- **foster good relations** by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

² **EqlAs are always proportionate.** The greater the potential adverse impact on a protected group (e.g. disabled people), the more thorough our process must be. Consider:

- The nature of the service, or scope of the policy/strategy
- The resources involved
- The number of people affected
- The size of the likely impact
- The vulnerability of the people affected

³ The following principles, drawn from case law, explain what we must do to fulfil our duties under the Equality Act:

- **Knowledge:** all Council employees must be aware of our legal duties and comply with them appropriately in our daily work.
- **Timeliness:** assessment must be completed and considered at the time a decision is taken - not afterwards.
- **Real Consideration:** the duty must be an integral, rigorous part of your decision-making process and influence the process.
- **Sufficient Information:** you must assess what information you have and what more is needed to give proper consideration.
- **No delegation:** the Council is responsible for ensuring that any contracted services, which are provided on its behalf, can and do comply with these legal duties.

-
- **Review:** this continuing duty applies when you develop/agree a policy or service and when it is implemented and reviewed.
 - **Proper Record Keeping:** you must keep records of the process, the impacts and the actions that you will implement.

⁴ Your EqIA must get to grips fully and properly with actual and potential impacts. Our legal duties to identify equality impacts don't stop us taking decisions, or introducing changes that are needed. They do require us to take decisions and make changes conscientiously and deliberately confront the anticipated impacts on people.

⁵ **Refugees and migrants** means people whose intention is to stay in the UK for at least one year (excluding visitors, short term students or tourists). This definition includes asylum seekers; voluntary and involuntary migrants; people who are undocumented; and the children of migrants, even if they were born in the UK.

Report to: Place Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 27 November 2025

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Notice of Motion: 20mph Speed Limits in new developments

Purpose: To consider a Notice of Motion to implement a maximum speed limit of 20mph when adopting roads in new developments

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Place Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note that the matter of implementing 20mph speed limits at new development was considered by Place Scrutiny Committee during the 2024/25 Scrutiny Review of Local Speed Limit Policy;**
 - (2) Note that the Council's approach to setting local speed limits is still in line with current Department for Transport guidance and will be reviewed when there are changes to national guidance or policy; and**
 - (3) Note that, whilst the County Council's guidance recommends a 'design speed' of 20mph for residential roads at new development, there is currently no legal mechanism through which we can implement 20mph limits when adopting new roads**
 - (4) Recommend to Full Council that it supports an amended motion as set out in paragraph 3.5.**
-

1 Background Information

- 1.1. Councillor Field has submitted the following Notice of Motion to the Chairman:

"Evidence shows that 20mph limits:

- increases a pedestrian's chance of survival if hit by a car*
- improves the quality of life for those living in a 20mph zone*
- leads to calmer streets and improved community cohesion*
- reduces pollution*

This Council requests the Cabinet to:

Consider implementing a maximum speed limit of 20mph when adopting roads in new developments."

- 1.2 The Chairman has agreed that this Notice of Motion should be considered by the Place Scrutiny Committee, prior to it being reported to the Full Council.

- 1.3 In 2024 the Place Scrutiny Committee undertook a Scrutiny Review of Local Speed Limit Policy. The final Scrutiny Review report and Cabinet's agreed response to the recommendations were presented to Full Council on 11 February 2025).
- 1.4 The review considered the matter of speed limits at new development. The review concluded that the Council's approach to setting local speed limits was in line with the Department for Transport guidance, although some Members involved with the review noted that they disagreed with some of the report findings, which was reflected in the final report to Full Council.

2 Supporting information

Consideration of lower speed environments as part of new development

- 2.1 East Sussex County Council (ESCC) is a consultee in the planning process and ultimately planning applications are determined by the districts and borough councils in East Sussex. When new roads are constructed, developers may offer them to ESCC for adoption. This occurs after planning permission is granted. Whether a road is to be adopted would be considered after permission and during detailed design / construction, most commonly via a Section 38 Agreement under the Highways Act and only at the landowners request or with their permission. The Act allows new and existing roads to be adopted by highway authorities so that they become maintainable at public expense, subject to being built to the correct specification and securing commuted sums for future maintenance. Not all new roads will be offered for adoption and we cannot insist upon it. This is achieved if the necessary technical parameters, construction specifications and checks have been met. Adoptions are a separate process to the granting of planning permission.
- 2.2 The County Council's Transport Development Planning Team input to the planning application process to ensure that new estate roads are designed appropriately to a 20mph design speed and in accordance with ESCC and national guidance, Manual for Streets (MfS). A design speed is the planned, safe speed determined by physical features such as road widths, curves and sight distances, this is considered as part of the design and planning process and is not the same as a speed limit.
- Speed limits are a separate matter using signage, road markings and other such measures to legally enforce a limit. Speed limits require Police support and enforcement, and wherever possible, design speeds should be self-enforcing.
- 2.3 ESCC's design guidance follows the Department for Transport (DfT) MfS and has been in place since 2007. The Transport Development Planning Team seek to ensure the design of new residential developments supports lower speeds. Whilst comments are made to the respective planning authorities on a development's layout in relation to Manual for Streets, ESCC does not have any authority over the final development design. The Transport Development Planning Team's guidance states that: ***"The design speed for new streets is a key principle to their success in achieving a sense of place. All residential roads should therefore be designed to achieve an 85th percentile speed of 20mph."***

- 2.4 There is therefore no mechanism to provide a 20mph limit at the planning or road adoption stage. Speed limits can only be put in place at a time when evidence is presented identifying actual speed measurements at a given location. The required evidence will only be available once a development is fully occupied, travel patterns are well established, surveys have been undertaken and there is a clear need for a limit which can be appropriately delivered and has the required support of Sussex Police.

Place making and safe speeds

- 2.5 Design of new road layouts and local environment should lead to drivers naturally adopting lower speeds. MfS encourages a move away from the dominance of the motor vehicle and achieving a sense of place, which is consistent with the approach the County Council has taken in its adopted Local Transport Plan 4.
- 2.6 Safe speeds are achieved through a range of measures; speed limits themselves are not effective in isolation, as drivers will often drive at a speed that they think is appropriate to the environment they are in. Good design is, therefore, important in encouraging personal responsibility for safe and appropriate behaviour. It is important to stress that the Transport Development Planning Team, through its representations to the district and borough councils as part of the planning process, is limited to commenting on design speeds only and cannot, therefore, implement a 20mph speed limit on new roads which may be subsequently adopted.
- 2.7 MfS sets out detailed design considerations inclusive of, but not limited to, reducing forward visibility, road layouts and widths, reduced junction radii and other measures. Such measures and good place making should negate the need for speed limits.

Speed limit policy

- 2.8 National and local policies and guidance support 20mph speed limits where appropriate. National legislation imposes a default 30mph speed limit on roads provided with a system of street lighting which covers most residential and urban roads and no speed limit reminder signs are required to give effect to the speed limit.
- 2.9 Drivers may not automatically comply with a limit if it is set unrealistically low for a particular road function and condition. The principal aim in determining appropriate speed limits is to provide a consistent message between the speed limit and what the road looks like, and for changes in the limit to be reflective of changes in the road layout and characteristics.
- 2.10 ESCC policy (PS05/02) sets out criteria for appropriate application of 20mph speed limits. This is based on average speeds, road environment, the character of the road and traffic composition.
- 2.11 With reference to the previous scrutiny report on Local Speed Limit Policy that was agreed at Full Council on 11 February 2025, the committee's recommendation that "the County Council regularly reviews Policy PS05/02 Local Speed Limits when there is a change in national guidance" was agreed. There have been no significant updates to the national guidance on the setting of local speed limits (DfT circular 01/2013) since this date.

- 2.12 It is noted that 01/2013 was updated in March 2024 to emphasise the fundamentals of appropriate speed limits to reinforce driver understanding, saying “Traffic Authorities should use the right speed limits in the right places. They should keep their speed limits under review and only introduce 20mph limits and zones in the right places”.
- 2.13 Alongside ESCC’s adopted speed limit policy PS05/02, the committee considered other measures the Council takes to implement low speed environments inclusive of those implemented through the planning system. Overall, the committee found that the Council’s local speed limit policy and approach new development is in line with current national guidance.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Place making and design speeds will continue to be considered as part of planning application and road adoption processes. When making representations to local planning authorities on applications, we will continue to recommend a design speed of 20mph for residential streets.
- 3.2 Whilst 20mph speed limits will continue to be supported where appropriate in accordance with approved national and local policies and guidance, the County Council cannot implement 20mph limits on residential roads at new development through the planning process as there is currently no mechanism to deliver them. This is also true of the road adoption process.
- 3.3 ESCC policies and guidance will be reviewed as and when there is a change to national policy or legislation, as recommended by the previous Place Scrutiny Review on setting local speed limits.
- 3.4 The County Council guidance supports the principle of the motion in that it states that residential roads at new development should be designed to achieve maximum speeds of 20mph. However, in the absence of a mechanism to achieve it we cannot currently implement 20 mph limits when adopting residential roads.
- 3.5 It is recommended that the Committee recommend that Council supports the following amended motion:

“This Council supports the principle that residential roads in new developments should have maximum speeds of 20mph and agrees to make representations to Government to review and update the national speed limit policy to better reflect the Council’s aspiration of achieving 20mph speed limits in new developments.”

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

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Tel. No. 01273 482254

Email: michelle.edser@eastsussex.gov.uk / claire.scriven@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

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