

Appendix C

Equality Impact Assessment of the proposals for a shared Revenues and Benefits Service with East Herts Council (staff)

Lead Assessor	M Simpson	Assessment team	M Sheriff
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Start date	13/05/11	End date	14/06/11	Review date	01/08/11
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Stevenage Borough Council as a service provider, employer and community leader is committed to achieving equal opportunity, being wholly inclusive and ensuring fair access for everyone, no matter what their race, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, disability, age, sex, sexuality, marital status or income. Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) are an important part of the process in ensuring that our intention is translated into action.

Carrying out EqIAs helps to ensure that decisions taken by Stevenage Borough Council are made in a fair, transparent and accountable way, considering the needs and the rights of different people in the community. An EqIA is essentially a tool for service improvement - to ensure we focus on the needs of our customers, the people of Stevenage.

EqIAs take the user through the process of considering available evidence of the impact of a policy, service or function on equality groups with the aim of identifying actions to eliminate any identified discrimination and take opportunities to promote equality and diversity. EqIAs will be carried out on Stevenage Borough Council services, policies and functions that are relevant to equality and are new or under review.

Based on the 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010, the EqIA considers the impact on the following groups when reviewing, developing or making decisions about new or existing policies, services or functions:

- Disability
- Race
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Age
- Religion and belief
- Pregnancy and maternity

In addition, socio-economic factors are also considered in EqIAs, as directed by the Executive of Stevenage Borough Council. Note however that, as this factor is non-statutory, decision makers should use their discretion when considering the analysis of socio-economic impact.

EqIAs are a demonstration of our compliance with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty as described below.

The Public Sector Equality Duty – Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Step 1: Collecting evidence

This step involves identifying the aims of the policy, service or function and collects evidence relating to the impact on service users and particular groups.

<p>What is being assessed?</p>	<p>The proposed transfer of employment of Revenues and Benefits and Anti-Fraud staff to East Herts Council, following the principles of TUPE. The proposed transfer will be followed by a staff re-structure, where some transferring staff may move to East Herts terms and conditions of employment, which include homeworking, flexible working and remote working policies. It is proposed that the shared service be based in Hertford, with no residual service activities in Stevenage.</p> <p>In terms of customers and residents in Stevenage, the current proposals will not make any change to the way in which the services are provided, or to the ways in which service users access the services. In light of that, at this stage, the impact on Stevenage customers and residents is neutral, in that no discernable equalities impacts have been identified.</p>
<p>What are the aims?</p>	<p>The aims of the proposals are to produce budget savings, strengthen service resilience and to improve service performance.</p>
<p>Who may be impacted?</p>	<p>SBC staff in scope, who work in Local Taxation, Benefits and Anti-Fraud, of which there are approximately 40.</p>
<p>What measures are already in place?</p>	<p>Initial staff consultation has taken place in the form of briefings, and with the issuing of written material associated with proposed changes. Staff were able to ask questions and provide feedback through one to one meetings, email, in writing, using a questionnaire, through union representatives and through 'Change Champions'.</p> <p>Further staff consultation is planned to take place after a decision is made on proceeding with implementation of the proposals.</p> <p>Consultation with unions is ongoing. To date, comments from union representatives have been positive, but no formal response to the proposals has been received.</p>

<p>What is the evidence of impact?</p> <p>What do we know about the people who may be impacted?</p>	<p>Some basic, general information about the staff group has been provided by SBC HR. It does not identify any individual or any particular needs within the staff group.</p> <p>The information from HR allowed an initial consideration of some profile characteristics of the staff group. This includes age, gender, part-time / full time working, ethnicity, disability, pay grade and length of service.</p> <p>In addition, most staff have completed consultation questionnaires, from which summary findings have been provide by HR.</p> <p>It does not appear that there will be any DDA issues that will need to be addressed, as the information provided by SBC HR does not indicate whether any of the staff in scope are disabled.</p> <p>However, there is a possibility of an unequal impact if appropriate policies and procedures are not carried through and implemented correctly, such as the recruitment and selection procedure and flexible working policies. This issue will be addressed during further consultation and through the proposed staff transfer process.</p> <p>The transfer creates some potential benefits for staff, including flexible working, home working and career development.</p> <p>As staff would be transferring on SBC terms and conditions of employment, these will not change. However, there may be differences in non-contractual employment practices or staff benefits differences between SBC and EHC, which may give rise to an impact.</p>
<p>What do we still need to find out?</p>	<p>Specific information needs to be collected about all individual members of staff and how they believe the proposals will impact on them. This will be done during a second consultation period, which will include a review of the staff questionnaires with each member of staff, at one to one meetings.</p>

Step 2: Assessing the impact

This step involves using the evidence we have gathered to analyse the impact of a policy, service or function on people with protected characteristics. The table below provides details of the potential negative and positive impacts as well as information about what can be done to mitigate negative impact or further the aims of the equality duty.

Assessing the Impact Table

Does the policy/service/function have a potential positive or negative impact in relation to...		1. Negative or disproportionate impact	2. Positive impact	3. Actions to mitigate negative impact (or comment on impact)	4. Actions to further promote equality (or comment on impact)
	Black or Black British (including Caribbean and African)	<p>The SBC staff in scope are predominantly female, largely falling into the older age bands. There is a high incidence of part-time workers, with more than two thirds of the staff employed on the lowest four grades of the current salary scales.</p> <p>As the proposals currently stand, there may be impacts in terms of caring responsibilities, increased expense and greater time spent travelling to and from work. It is believed that the application of home working and flexible working policies at EHC will mitigate the impacts for most transferring staff.</p> <p>Significant numbers of staff have comparatively long terms of service, which may give rise to impacts from the proposed recruitment and selection process. The current plan is to address those impacts by offering advice and training on applying for jobs and to develop interviewing skills.</p> <p>Staff have been consulted on an individual basis. The feedback from staff includes concerns in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of workplace and associated travel costs and commuting time • The impact that change of workplace may have on caring responsibilities • Whether staff will be compensated for the additional costs. • Suitability for home working • The impact home working may have on staff morale • Concerns about the new structure and selection process <p>These concerns will be addressed on an individual basis, with each member of staff during one to one meetings, should Executives decide to proceed with the proposals.</p> <p>In considering the groups listed to the left, it is not possible at this stage to document potential impacts in detail, as the information provided about the staff in scope does not enable them to be matched closely enough with most of those groups.</p>			
	Mixed Race				
	White (including British/Irish/Scottish/Eastern European)				
	Travellers or Gypsies				
	People who don't speak English				
Gender	Women				
	Men				
	Transgender and Transsexual				
Disability People with...	Physical or mobility impairments including wheelchair users				
	Hearing impaired/deaf				
	Visually impaired/blind				
	Mental health problems				
	Learning disabilities				
	Long standing illness or non-visible conditions such as epilepsy or diabetes				
Age	0-5				
	6-12				
	13-19				
	20-29				
	30-44				
	45-59				
	60-64				

	65-74	
	75 or over	
Sexuality	Bisexual	
	Gay	
	Heterosexual	
	Lesbian	
Religion/ belief	Christian	
	Buddhist	
	Hindu	
	Jewish	
	Muslim	
	Sikh	
	Other	
	No religion or belief	
Pregnanc y and maternity	Pregnancy	
	Maternity (including breast feeding mothers)	
*Socio- economic	Low income	
	Homeless	
	Unemployed	
	Part time workers	
	People who don't have the internet	
	People who need to use public transport	
	Other	
*Other Insert relevant groups	Marriage/civil partnership	
	Parents/single parent	
	Carers	
	Children in contact with staff (see Safeguarding Children policy)	

* Consideration of these factors is non-statutory so decision makers should use their discretion when considering the analysis of impact. Note that socio-economic factors must be considered at the direction of the Executive of Stevenage Borough Council.

Step 3: Planning for improvement

With potential impact identified, this step involves setting out what we will do to mitigate negative impact or further promote equality.

Goal	Actions	Person responsible	Resources needed and source	Time frame to implement	How actions are integrated into planning
Review EIA following staff consultation after executive decision in June.	Consider the information collected following staff consultation scheduled to take place after the June Executive meeting.	S Tarran	Staff time	August 2011	Part of project management arrangements
Continue staff engagement and communication.	Develop a consultation plan.	C Horsnail M Simpson S Tarran	Staff time	Now to August 2011	Part of project planning arrangements
Ensure that staff are able to express details of any impact that may give rise to an equalities issue.	Monitor the results of staff consultation Hold structured one to one, meetings with all staff in scope. The purpose of those meetings will be to find out more about individual concerns and to resolve them, wherever it is reasonable to do so.	C Horsnail S Tarran	Staff time	July/ August 2011	Part of project planning arrangements

Step 4: Outcome of assessment

In this step the outcome of the EqIA is identified. An EqIA has four possible outcomes; more than one may apply to a single policy, service or function

Outcome		Tick
1. No major change needed (unlikely outcome).	The EIA demonstrates the policy, service or function is robust and there is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. All opportunities to promote equality have been taken.	Tick √
2. The Policy has been adjusted.	The EIA identified potential problems or missed opportunities and adjustments were made to remove barriers or better promote equality. Details of the actions taken and planned are in the Action Plan table above.	
3. Continue the policy without adjustment.	The EIA has identified the potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality but the policy, service or function will be continued without change. See the box below for the reason for this outcome.	
4. Discrimination identified – stop and rethink.	The EqIA has shown actual or potential unlawful discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 and will be removed	

Reasons for continuing with service, policy or function un-amended despite identifying the potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality:

The potential equalities impacts will be monitored throughout the planned consultation period – this document will be reviewed and finalised following an review of the outcomes from that consultation.

SIGN OFF BY LEAD ASSESSOR

Name:

Position:

Date approved:

SIGN OFF BY HEAD OF SERVICE

Name:

Position:

Date approved:

Completing the EqIA

The EqIA will be published on the Council's website; therefore as the author of the document, it is your responsibility to ensure that it is written in an understandable way, free from jargon.

In order for the EqlA form to be published it must be reviewed by Michelle Sheriff (Programme Co-ordinator, Equality and Diversity, Michelle.Sheriff@stevenage.gov.uk, extension 2363) and approved by the relevant Head of Service. It is the service manager's responsibility to ensure that this is done.

Once this form has been completed, the approved EqlA should be sent to Michelle for placement on the intranet and internet.

Completion Checklist

Action	Check
EqlA Actions integrated into service/team/individual work plans.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completed EqlA checked by Michelle Sheriff.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sign off from Head of Service sought and achieved.	<input type="checkbox"/>
EqlA summarised in 'equality implications' section of Executive and/or SMB reports.	<input type="checkbox"/>
EqlA appended to Executive and/or SMB reports to inform decision making.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final approved EqlA sent to Michelle Sheriff to upload to intranet/internet.	<input type="checkbox"/>

When you have completed this form, ensure you have deleted all green guidance text.