

# Equality Impact Assessment

1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Epping District Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, ie have due regard to:
  - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
  - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
  - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
  - age
  - disability
  - gender reassignment
  - marriage/civil partnership
  - pregnancy/maternity
  - race
  - religion/belief
  - gender and sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. All **Cabinet Member Actions, Chief Officer Actions, Key Decisions and Cabinet Reports** **must be** accompanied by an EqIA.
8. To assist you in completing this report, please ensure you read the guidance notes in the Equality Analysis Toolkit and refer to the following Factsheets:
  - Factsheet 1: Equality Profile of the Epping Forest District
  - Factsheet 2: Sources of information about equality protected characteristics
  - Factsheet 3: Glossary of equality related terms
  - Factsheet 4: Common misunderstandings about the Equality Duty
  - Factsheet 5: Frequently asked questions
  - Factsheet 6: Reporting equality analysis to a committee or other decision making body

## Section 1: Identifying details

Your function, service area and team: Transformation

If you are submitting this EqIA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team:

Title of policy or decision: Review of the Council's Accommodation

Officer completing the EqIA: Tel: 01992 564080 Email: gchipp@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Date of completing the assessment: 16<sup>th</sup> February 2017

## Section 2: Policy to be analysed

2.1	Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project? Yes
2.2	<p>Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision):</p> <p>To explore options to maximise the beneficial usage of the Council's land and buildings, provide a catalyst for transformational change in working practices and improve accommodated provision whilst realising savings in costs.</p> <p>What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)?</p> <p>Lower accommodation costs More customer focussed services More efficient use of office accommodation</p>
2.3	<p>Does or will the policy or decision affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• service users Yes</li><li>• employees Yes</li><li>• the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities? Yes</li></ul> <p>Will the decision influence how organisations operate? Yes</p>
2.4	Will the decision involve substantial changes in resources? Yes
2.5	<p>Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes?</p> <p>The decision will support corporate policy aims.</p>

## **Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation<sup>1</sup>**

As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, eg service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).

### **Section 3 – Evidence / data about user population and consultation.**

At this stage Council is being asked to make a strategic, in principle, decision about the future direction for the Council's Accommodation Strategy. Further reviews are recommended to provide detailed plans and business cases to inform the final decision which will be the subject of future reports. This Equalities Impact Assessment focuses on the issues arising from the current strategic decision and further assessments will be undertaken as more detailed options are considered.

Three main groups are likely to be affected.

#### **i. Customers**

Customers wishing to access services by visiting the Council's offices will be potentially impacted by the relocation of staff and associated building works. It is envisaged customer contact points will be maintained on the reduced footprint at the Civic Offices and in the existing branch offices so there should be no reduction in accessibility. The refurbishment at the Civic Offices would concentrate customer contact points in one location on the ground floor and would be designed to be DDA compliant, thus improving accessibility. No consultation has been undertaken at this point but as detailed proposals are developed consultation will be undertaken.

#### **ii. Staff**

Whilst it is intended to work as flexibly as possible, some staff will be relocated to new accommodation at North Weald or Oakwood Hill. This could potentially impact those who use public transport to travel to work. Currently 43% of staff live in the district and 80% drive to work.

North Weald is a 10 minute drive from the Civic Offices and a regular bus service runs between Epping High Street and Hurricane Way which is a 10 minute walk from North Weald Airfield.

Oakwood Hill is well served by public transport being within walking distance of a Central Line station.

Numerous staff briefings have already been held to engage staff in the process early and further detailed consultation will be needed as detailed proposals emerge.

#### **iii. Epping Traders**

Currently 500 council staff are based at the Civic Offices and potentially shop in Epping town centre. Roughly half of those staff would be based at other locations when the site is redeveloped and this could potentially impact traders in Epping. Other locations such as North Weald and Debden could potentially see an upturn in trade. Any negative impact in Epping is likely to be short term as it is proposed to redevelop the vacated part of the site. Public consultation would be undertaken as the scheme proposals are developed. The Council's Local Plan consultation document has sought public feedback on the redevelopment proposal and any scheme will need to secure planning permission.

## Section 4: Impact of policy or decision

Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know.

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
1. Centralisation of Customer Service Contact Points in Epping	Bringing together all of the customer service contact points currently in various part of the Civic Offices should have a positive impact on accessibility as all customers will enter the offices on the ground floor. Providing the whole range of services in one place should also make services easier to access, especially for older and disabled customers.	High
	Satellite offices in other parts of the district with customer contact points will be retained so there should be no reduction in accountability and there is the potential to provide customer contact points in those locations.	Neutral
	Staff working in customer facing roles at the Civic Offices may be moved from their current location to the centralised contact centre.	Neutral
2. Redesign of customer contact processes	Changing working practices and using modern technology should enable the Council to design more customer friendly services. Managing the change will need particular attention to be paid to those customers who find technology challenging (some older people and some of those with disabilities). Staff will need training to adjust to new ways of working.	Medium

<p>3. Relocation of offices</p>	<p>Whilst the intention is to maximise flexible working, some staff will be expected to spend most of their time at offices which are different to their current location. This particularly impacts those using public transport to travel to work more than the 80% of staff who drive to work.</p> <p>Traders in Epping may experience some reduction in business when staff are relocated to other offices. However the intention is to redevelop the site which should compensate for any loss in trade. Other locations in the district will potentially benefit from Council staff being relocated.</p>	<p>High (for those using public transport for travel to work)</p> <p>Low</p>
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## Section 5: Conclusion

		Tick Yes/No as appropriate	
5.1	Does the EqlA in Section 4 indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	Yes	If ' <b>YES</b> ', use the action plan at <b>Section 6</b> to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.

## Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

What are the potential adverse impacts?	What are the mitigating actions?	Date they will be achieved.
More difficult for staff to travel to work on public transport	<p>Flexible working where possible to accommodate those most affected</p> <p>Detailed review and travel to work plan prepared before emerging proposals are finalised</p>	Prior to relocation of staff
Customers finding it more difficult to access services	<p>Customer contact reception designed to be DDA compliant on the ground floor of the Civic Offices</p> <p>Other customer contact locations across the district maintained</p> <p>Redesigned process tested with customers particularly those groups with protected characteristics</p>	Prior to changes being implemented
Detailed proposals arising out of the reviews recommended in the report could create as yet unidentified impacts	Further EqIAs completed once the reviews are completed and final proposals emerge	Prior to changes being implemented
Loss of business to Epping traders when staff relocate to other sites.	<p>Phased relocation of staff over a 2 year period to lessen the impact.</p> <p>Maximise the efficient usage of the Civic Offices footprint that is retained in Epping</p> <p>Redevelop the remaining footprint as quickly as possible</p>	Prior to relocation
Disruption of services caused by changed processes	<p>Pilot proposals on a small scale before full adoption</p> <p>Train staff thoroughly</p> <p>Test systems / technology for robustness</p>	Prior to changes being adopted

## Section 7: Sign off

**I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately.  
(A typed signature is sufficient.)**

Signature of Head of Service: Glen Chipp	Date: 16.02.17
Signature of person completing the EqIA: Glen Chipp	Date: 16.02.17
Date signed copy and electronic copy forwarded to PIU <a href="mailto:equality@eppingforestdc.gov.uk">equality@eppingforestdc.gov.uk</a>	Date:

### Advice

Keep your director informed of all equality & diversity issues. We recommend that you forward a copy of every EqIA you undertake to the director responsible for the service area. Retain a copy of this EqIA for your records. If this EqIA relates to a continuing project, ensure this document is kept under review and updated, eg after a consultation has been undertaken.