

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Person responsible for this assessment:

<p>Name: Mike Clark</p> <p>Service: Corporate Planning, Cotswold and West Oxfordshire District Councils</p>	<p>Telephone: 01285 623565</p> <p>E-Mail: mike.clark@cotswold.gov.uk</p> <p>Period over which analysis carried out: July 2015</p>
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2. Name of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function:

<p>2020 Vision for Joint Working</p>

3. Briefly describe its aims and objectives

<p>Cheltenham Borough and Cotswold, Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire District Councils agreed, in June 2014, a Vision statement for the 2020 Vision for Joint Working, as follows:</p> <p><i>“a number of councils, retaining their independence and identity, but working together and sharing resources to maximise mutual benefit leading to more efficient, effective delivery of local services”.</i></p> <p>This was described as four Independent Councils determining their own policies, priorities and decisions supported by a small number of expert advisors who commission and monitor services either from the private and voluntary sectors or from local authority owned service delivery companies.</p> <p>Work is in progress on developing models and approaches to achieve this vision. The objectives currently are to:</p> <p>Respect and retain the political independence of each council. Deliver annual savings of £5.5m after 5 years. Create new employment arrangements for staff across the four member authorities.</p>
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Move to interim shared management arrangements

Posts relating to the management of the project have been established (eg Managing Director, Lead Commissioner, Programme Director and others).

Consultation on the proposal has started, as described below, and the Cabinets of the four councils will be asked to agree principles and an organisational model, including those services which will be shared and retained by each council, at their meetings in September 2015.

4. Who is intended to benefit from it and in what way?

The benefits are considered to be as follows:

- Financial: there is a need to respond to long-term financial pressures on the four councils. This proposal is expected to achieve annual savings for the four partner authorities of £5.5m after five years.
- Efficiency: there is a need to continue to find ways of delivering value for money (even without the current financial pressures).
- Resilience: each authority needs a wider pool of expertise and greater capacity to respond to events.
- Impact: more depth in strategic capacity is needed to support the drive towards service improvement and wider social and economic benefits in each locality.
- Democracy: each authority needs to have sufficient resources to be able to exercise choice and community leadership so that it can champion local needs and priorities.

In summary, whilst the benefits as stated in the proposal are organisational, this will be reflected as a benefit to the public in the level of Council Tax and the efficient operation of services.

For staff, the proposal may result in career development and better ways of working. One of the challenges of shared working is the accessibility of managers. Whilst technology will enable managers to be available when they are not on the same site as their staff, it is envisaged that the proposal will lead to greater empowerment of those in management positions and non - management staff being more empowered to make their own decisions. Training will be provided to allow this to happen.

5. What outcomes are expected?

The proposal relates to the way in which services are provided, not to the type or level of service provided to the public. It is the councils' intention that the public will not notice any adverse effect on services and that each council will retain its own identity and branding, and determine their own policies, priorities and decisions.

The proposals will, however, impact on staff. Whilst some services are proposed to be retained by the councils, at least in the short term, others will be shared across the councils. This will result in some staff in the shared services working for a larger number of councils than at present (some are already shared

across two or all four councils). It is likely that the proposal will create career development opportunities for staff. It is too early to assess whether the proposals will result in the relocation of staff or any compulsory redundancies.

The proposals also include the standardisation of Human Resources policies and procedures, including job evaluation, grading and benefits packages across the partner authorities.

6. Please describe how you have engaged with others, including staff, on this policy, service, strategy, procedure or function? In particular please describe your engagement with Protected Groups.

Details of engagement:

Staff have been engaged in the proposal as it has developed through briefing sessions, team briefing arrangements in each council and information on the Connect shared service portal. An engagement team has been created, charged with keeping staff informed and gathering feedback.

A 10-week public consultation has started, seeking views about the Programme and the shared services that are being considered. This will run until 15 September 2015.

Consultation has also started with the Trade Union and also consideration is being given to engaging councillors who have not been involved so far.

There is also a proposal to recruit 30 engagement champions across the partner councils, to discuss issues with their colleagues and pick up issues. All staff will have an opportunity to become an engagement champion and it is hoped that this will be a further means of picking up equalities issues.

7. Please outline the evidence you have used for this analysis

e.g. Results of recent consultations, surveys or other engagement

Demographic data and other statistics

Feedback from engagement with protected groups

This is an initial Equality Impact Assessment and is based on the feedback received so far. This Assessment will be updated as the proposal develops and in the light of the results of consultations with staff and the public.

8. What effect could your policy, service, strategy, procedure or function have on different groups ?

	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Please explain the effect	If there is an adverse effect, what mitigating actions are in place or could be taken ? What additional actions can be taken to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations?
Age		x		It is not considered that the 2020 Vision proposals will result in any changes in services received by the public. It is too early to assess the effect on staff at present.	
Disability		x		As above	
Gender Re-assignment		x		As above	
Marriage and Civil Partnership <i>(Note: analysis only required for elimination of discrimination)</i>		x		As above	
Pregnancy and Maternity		x		As above	

Race including Gypsy & Traveller		x		As above	
Religion or Belief		x		As above	
Sex		x		As above	
Sexual Orientation		x		As above	
Other groups/issues <i>(eg Long term unemployed, Rural Isolation)</i>		x		As above	

9. Where actions have been identified, please complete the table below.

Future Action	Timescale	Who will deliver?	Resource implications	Comments
None identified as a result of this Assessment. This Assessment will, however, be updated as the proposal develops and in the light of the results of consultations with staff and public.				

Declaration

We are satisfied that an Equality Impact Assessment has been properly carried out on this policy, service, strategy, procedure or function. We understand that the Analysis is required by the Council and we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this analysis.

Completed by: Mike Clark

Date: 20th July 2015

Role: Corporate Planning Manager, Cotswold and West Oxfordshire District Councils

Date for Review: To be determined