



**WATFORD  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

# Equality Impact Analysis

<b>Service and section / team</b>	Leisure & Environmental Services
<b>Title of policy, function or service</b>	Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework 2019 - 2023
<b>Lead officer</b>	Chris Fennell
<b>Person completing the EIA</b>	Kathryn Robson & Chris Fennell
<b>Type of policy, function or service:</b>	Existing (reviewed) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New/Proposed <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Version</b>	V.2 - 9 January 2019

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## **Background to the Equality Impact Analysis**

### **Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework (2019 - 2023)**

This Equality Impact Analysis considers the potential impacts, both positive and negative, of Watford Borough Council's new Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework (2019 - 2023). The Commissioning Framework is the council's strategic approach that sets out the priorities for a range of leisure and community services, which are delivered by voluntary and third sector organisations on behalf of Watford Borough Council (WBC).

Watford Borough Council is committed to supporting a vibrant and engaged voluntary sector which can deliver high quality and value for money services that benefit those who live, work and visit Watford.

#### **Benefits that third sector organisations can give commissioners**

The voluntary sector is a key contributor to making Watford a better place to live for its residents and is recognised as being best placed to deliver some services at a local level supporting excluded, vulnerable or new and emerging communities. The council can benefit considerably from working closely with third sector organisations, some of the common themes are:

- **Understanding the needs of service users and local communities** that the council needs to address
- **Closeness to the people** that the council wants to reach
- **Ability to deliver outcomes** that the council finds it hard to deliver on its own
- **Innovation** in developing solutions and
- **Performance** in delivering services

#### **Why adopt a Commissioning Framework approach?**

This is the fourth Commissioning Framework approved by WBC. The purpose of this Framework is to ensure that there is a transparent and a robust approach to how the council commissions the voluntary sector to deliver services that are considered a district council responsibility and address evidenced, current or emerging need(s) within the town.

The council has five priority areas of work. Our priorities are critical to the council achieving successful outcomes for its ambitions for the town. The specific priorities are intended to support the delivery of the council's corporate vision detailed in the Corporate Plan 2016 - 2020 in particular:

- Champion smart growth and economic prosperity
- Provide for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities
- Deliver a digital Watford to empower our community
- Secure our own financial future

#### **Future funding of the Framework 2019 - 2023**

The current economic climate means that all organisations, whether they are public, private or third sector, have to look at the way they do things and consider what will best ensure long term sustainability for those services and activities that are important to local people and the community.

What is clear is, given the current and future pressures, the council cannot be all things to all people or provide the answers to, or solve, all issues. By working together in a collaborative way, including the statutory, non-statutory and commercial sectors, new and different ways of working can be explored to ensure a healthy local voluntary sector continues to exist.

## What are the proposed commissioning priorities for 2019 - 2023 and how were they identified?

The development of the new Commissioning Framework has provided an opportunity for the council to review its current priorities and assess:

- what services it should continue to promote, support and fund
- whether the current priorities are still right for Watford in the context of being appropriate for a district council to grant aid within a limited budget and resources

The Elector Mayor, Portfolio Holders, council officers and elected members have considered a range of evidence relating to Watford including:

- Review of the existing service level agreements and key performance indicators of the commissioned organisations over the previous three years
- Demographic information including census and public health ward information, deprivation data and other information that paints a portrait of our current and future communities
- Aspirations of the council's economic growth programme and how the voluntary sector can contribute to achieving this
- Impacts and outcomes of the council's Community Asset Review (CAR Project) including which groups are using the council's leisure and community properties
- Discussions with voluntary and third sector organisations in the borough
- Findings from the previous and new Equality Impact Analysis on the Commissioning Framework

### Commissioned organisations and priorities for 2019 - 2023

This assessment of the borough and /or communities has identified authority that the following existing priorities and organisations are commissioned, with the addition of the Watford Pump House Theatre, for a new four year funding cycle. All of these organisations are considered to be important to WBC as they continue to align with the council's current and future aspirations.

The commissioning priorities are:

- **Infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector**

It is proposed that Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT) be commissioned to deliver this service given their extensive networks across the voluntary, statutory and business sectors.

The focus of service delivery will be to strengthen the voluntary sector in Watford and enable it to thrive, ensuring that it has the best possible opportunity of delivering high quality, effective and value for money services to residents and service users.

- **Advice and support services**

It is proposed that Watford Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) be commissioned to deliver a generic advice service provision. The CAB currently has a proven track record in the sector and has the capacity and capability to deliver a comprehensive advice service to the diverse and changing communities of Watford, working with the council to address and respond to any national agendas, legislative or policy changes that may impact on service users.

- **Mobility services**

It is proposed that Shopmobility Watford be commissioned to deliver a mobility service that allows those with mobility problems to access businesses and services in the town centre. Shopmobility Watford has the necessary experience and infrastructure in place to deliver this service.

- **Arts and culture**

The cultural offer for Watford is a key council ambition to build Watford’s reputation as a great place to live and to stimulate economic growth. It is proposed that Watford Palace Theatre and the Pump House Theatres be commissioned to deliver arts and culture services through a range of theatre activities/programmes. Watford Palace Theatre is a key contributor to delivering to the council’s cultural vision through their work on high quality theatre productions, projects and outreach programmes. The Pump House Theatre plays a key role in supporting and providing community and grassroots arts and cultural opportunities for local residents and Watford communities.

- **Community centre provision**

It is recommended that community centre provision remains a commissioning priority on the basis that all the currently commissioned community centres are located in areas of multiple-deprivation.

The community centres which form part of the new framework are:

<b>Community Centre</b>	<b>Commissioned organisation</b>
Holywell Community Centre	Watford & Three Rivers Trust (W3RT)
Orbital Community Centre	One YMCA
Meriden Community Centre	Watford Football Club Community Sports and Education Trust
West Watford Community Centre	West Watford Community Association

The centres should be commissioned to support the needs of their individual communities, fostering a sense of community spirit and cohesion. It is proposed that facilities provide a range of centre activities that address evidenced need in their ward in one or more the following areas:

- Public health focusing on mental health and wellbeing
- Youth and young people focused activities
- Activities for older adults
- Activities for people with disabilities

- **The Mayor’s Small Grants Fund**

It is proposed that the council continues to administer the Mayor’s Small Grants Fund to provide grants to a maximum of £2,000 for equipment and/or one off projects.

## **Focus of the Equality Impact Analysis**

This EIA, therefore, considers the potential equality related impacts, both positive and negative of Club accumulated debt on the people in the groups or with the characteristics protected in the Equalities Act 2010

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender Reassignment
4. Pregnancy and maternity
5. Race
6. Religion or belief
7. Sex (gender)
8. Sexual Orientation
9. Marriage and Civil Partnership

## **What we know about the Watford population**

Understanding our local population helps ensure the needs of people are taken into account during the development of the Commissioning Framework.

Watford is an extremely diverse borough. The voluntary sector in Watford is a key contributor to making Watford a better place to live for its residents and is recognised as being best placed to deliver some services at a local level supporting excluded, new, emerging or vulnerable communities.

## **Overall population**

The current population of Watford is 96,600 (mid 2017 estimate revised) and is estimated to grow by 16% by 2026. Population growth estimates stated that they expected Watford to reach 100,000 by the end of 2017. In terms of gender breakdown, there are estimated to be fractionally more female than male residents but the difference is not significant

## **Population projections**

The ONS interim 2014-based subnational population projections are an indication of the future trends in population to 2024.

- Watford's population is projected to be 109,600 by 2022 with the population reaching 100,000 in 2017 (we will know if this was accurate with the release of 2018 population estimates (released mid 2019))
- The bulk of the estimated 14.8% increase for Watford over the ten years from 2014 to 2024 is expected to stem from natural change of 8.8% (more births than deaths), net migration within the UK of 5.2% and net international migration of 0.7%. The level of natural change can be attributed to the relatively young age structure of the current population, with a high proportion of child bearing age.

## Households and housing

The average household size in Watford is currently 2.45. This is average for the region.

## Number of households

The ONS data, based on the census, says that there were 36,681 households in Watford at the time of the Census; as of 31 January 2017 the figure was 39,052.

Watford faces a substantial challenge in terms of finding sufficient land to meet all its housing needs. Through its Local Plan, the council is seeking to balance the many demands for land within the borough (housing, employment, retail, social infrastructure, open spaces) and recognises that previously developed sites (brownfield land) provide one opportunity for future development, where the case can be made for better use of the land in the interests of the community as a whole. This includes where it is currently the landowner.

## Current housing needs

As of end of September 2018, there were 149 households in temporary accommodation in Watford of which 109 had children or were expecting a child.

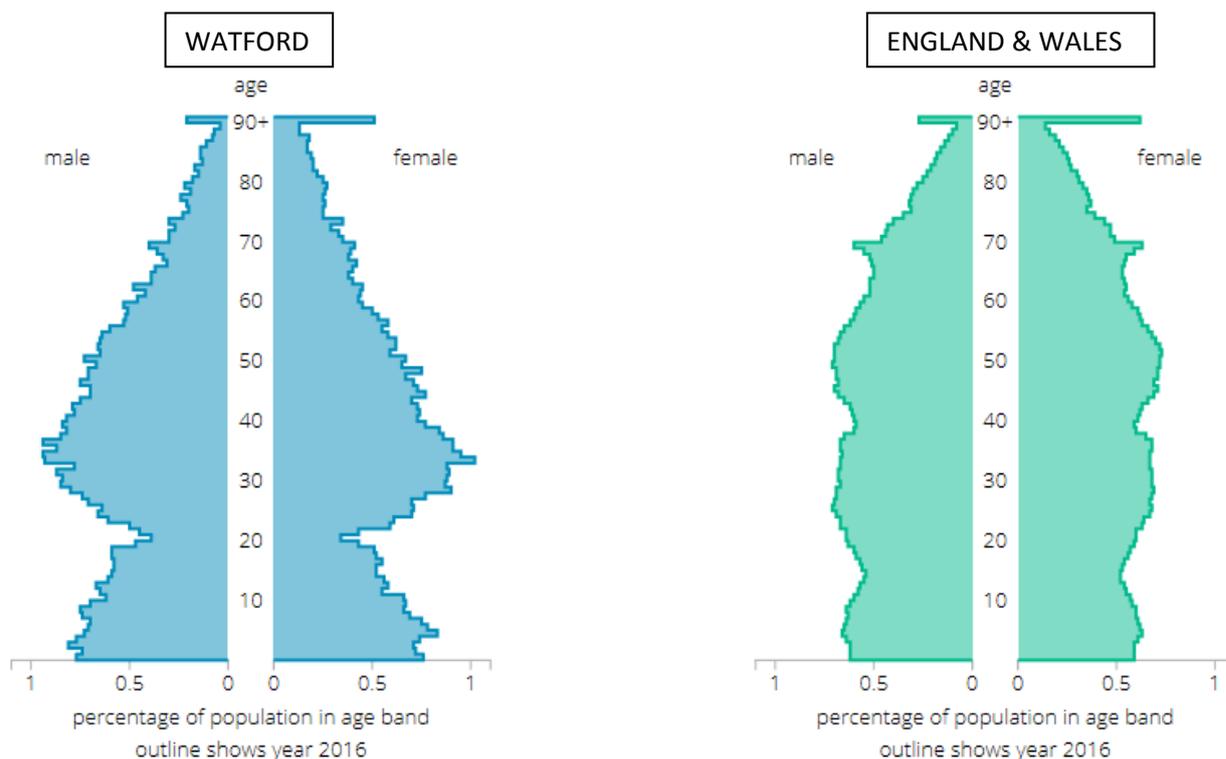
The council also knows that the demand for housing is predominantly for two three and four bedroom properties, suitable for families.

## Age

The largest populations by age band in Watford are:

- 25-44 (31,700)
- 45-59 (18,100)

The numbers in each successive age-band fall progressively until there are estimated to be 6,000 who are 75+. We know that around 74,000 residents are of voting age in Watford and that the borough has a younger profile than the rest of England and Wales.



The average age of Watford residents is 36.8 years, which puts it amongst the youngest cities and towns in England.

## **Ethnicity**

Watford has a very diverse population, more so than the rest of Hertfordshire.

For Watford, the Census 2011 shows the following breakdown in terms of ethnicity: White British (61.9%), White other (7.7%), Pakistani (6.7%), British Indian (5.5%) and British other Asian 4.4%). Census information is now nearly 10 years old and it is likely that the ethnic profile of the borough has changed during this time. For example, it would not have captured the more recent EU arrivals to the borough (EU2 countries – Romania and Bulgaria, who were given residency rights in 2014). We know from other data such as National Insurance Registration that Watford has experienced a relatively high increase in nationals from the EU2 countries applying for National Insurance registrations as Watford residents. This follows a period of a high number from EU8 countries (including Poland, Latvia, Lithuania) who were given freedom of movement to the UK from 2004. Throughout the period the arrival of new residents from south Asia (e.g. Pakistan / India) has remained relatively constant.

Other data sources, including a school language survey on the languages spoken by Watford school children at home, endorse the National Insurance findings with English still the predominant language (at around 60%) followed by (in order of selection): Urdu, Polish, Tamil, Punjabi, Gujarati, Portuguese, Romanian and Hindi.

## **Religion**

In Watford overall, the religious breakdown in the Census 2011 - top five religions was: Christian (54.1%), Muslim (9.8%), and Hindu (4.8%), with no religion stated at 21.4%.

## **Disability and Health**

The 2016 NHS Health Profile's summary conclusion is that the health of people in Watford is 'varied' compared with the England average. About 13% (2,500) of children live in low income families. Life expectancy for men is lower than the England average.

The profile also shows that there has been a drop in physically active adults from 56.6% to 54.4%, although compared as not significantly different from the England average of 57%. There has been an increase from 57.8% to 58.9% in the percentage of adults classified as overweight or obese in Watford, although significantly better than the England average of 64.6% (the indicator for adults classified as obese has been removed). An improvement has been seen in the percentage of obese children in Year 6 (aged 10-11) from 18.5% to 16% and is now recorded as significantly better than the England average, which remains at 19.1%.

In the Census 2011, 86% of Watford residents said their day to day activities were not impacted by a long term health issue or disability, 8% said they were impacted a little and 6% a lot. Around a fifth of disabled people report having difficulties related to their impairment or disability in accessing transport.

## **Does what we know about the Watford population indicate if there are areas which need to be addressed**

The overview of the Watford community indicates potential emerging areas for Watford beyond those already identified within the Framework. These are

1. Homelessness / Housing needs
2. Impact of welfare reform
3. Increased diversity of the local population

Applying the principles of the Framework, the issue for the council is whether these areas need to be addressed through the Framework's priorities or can the council be confident that they are being met through other services / agencies.

### **1. Homelessness and housing needs**

This is the responsibility of the council's housing service in partnership with social housing providers. It is a priority area for the council and resources are being allocated accordingly. In addition the council works with other local partner organisations (such as New Hope / Herts Young Homeless) to deliver solutions around those within the borough most vulnerable to homelessness or lack of housing options. In view of this, this area is not identified as a priority for the Framework.

### **2. Impact of welfare reform**

Since 2010, there have been a number of significant changes to the UK's benefits system which include the freeze on local housing allowance and the expansion of the Universal Credit system during 2019-2020

Any further change to the benefit system is likely to require additional guidance and advice and Watford BC believes that the commissioning of the CAB to provide a comprehensive advice service to the diverse and changing communities of Watford responds to this emerging area.

As of August 2018, 1,816 Watford residents were in receipt of Universal Credit. This was the second highest in Hertfordshire (after Welwyn Hatfield). Liaison with Job Centre Plus indicates that the transition in Watford has been relatively smooth but the council is continuing discussions to understand the impact on our residents as it continues to roll out.

Consideration needs to be given to the SLA developed with the CAB to ensure advice on welfare / benefits is adequately resourced and that robust management information is collected as a means of providing good intelligence on the impact of welfare changes on the local community and residents.

### **3. Increased diversity of the local population**

There is no data that shows specific impacts of the increasing diversity of the Watford community, although on a positive front, Watford benefits from good community cohesion and very limited community tensions. Impacts could arise across a number of areas within the community but issues potentially affected (housing, language in schools, health) are picked up through existing council services or, in the majority of cases, through lead organisations such as Hertfordshire County Council (schools, Public Health lead).

Commissioning W3RT to provide infrastructure for the voluntary and community sector means that advice and support is available for new community groups, which might be set up for emerging communities within the borough.

## How will the council ensure equality is promoted by the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework 2019 - 2023?

Under the Equality Act 2010, three areas need to be considered when analysing the equality impact of the potential relocation of Farm Terrace allotments:

1. **eliminate** discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
2. **advance** equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it
3. **foster** good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not

### Positive impacts of the Framework

The Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework 2019 -2023 supports people in the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010. For example, within the proposed priorities people in the protected characteristics are supported in the following ways:

#### Infrastructure support to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

Watford has a thriving VCS sector with currently around 400 organisations. A previous analysis of the voluntary sector in Watford shows that there is a complex range of organisations operating within the sector, from those with over £1million turnover to those with little or no funding. This complexity means that those within the sector have very different experiences, face very different issues and have varying degrees of organisational structure and governance.

A commissioned infrastructure organisation will help to build future resilience and sustainability for VCS organisations through provision of funding support; training; office resources; volunteer support; quality accreditation; supporting alternative delivery models and business planning

Continuing to support an infrastructure organisation to deliver the range of services outlined above will help to strengthen effective and efficient service delivery which will contribute in turn to better outcomes for service users particularly for those in the protected characteristics.

#### Enabling people with physical mobility problems to access services in the town centre

Around 20% of the population in Britain has a disability of some sort: this figure increases to 33% in the age range 50-64 and 44% above the state pension age. The percentage of people with mobility difficulties in the general population is 14%. Mobility difficulties tend to affect older people more than younger people. 45% of those aged 70 or over have problems walking or using a bus, compared with 5% of those aged 16 to 49.

Additionally disabled people drive cars a lot less and are less likely to have one in their household. 60% of disabled people have no car available to their households, compared to 27% of the overall population. Mobility equipment, including daily living aids, wheelchairs and scooters, was the largest sector in the market for equipment for people with a disability, accounting for around 32% of the market total by value

The support provided by this priority is the provision of motorised scooters which will enable physically disabled people and those with mobility problems to have improved access and equality of opportunity to participate in shopping, business and leisure services within Watford.

### **Advice and Support Services**

Although since the economic downturn has been reversed and, across a range of measures, the economy is now experiencing an upturn, the improved prosperity is not necessarily being experienced by all sections of the community. With changes in welfare the wider introduction of universal credit, as well as increasing issues being experienced by those living in the private rented sector, there is a continuing need for people, including those with protected characteristics, to be able to seek quality accredited advice. Evidence from the national Citizens Advice Bureau, which collates statistics on the demand for advice/information, indicates that as of 2018/19 debt and money advice is the main enquiry area with welfare enquiries, the second largest area.

The commissioned service will require the advice service to provide a service that is accessible, is culturally sensitive and does not discriminate against anyone with a protected characteristic for example by ensuring that premises and services have adequate disability access and language requirements are catered for. This will be specified within the Service Level Agreement

### **Arts and Culture**

The new Watford Cultural Strategy and Destination Management Plan identifies that Watford has a considerable asset base in terms of its arts and culture offer. This proposed priority aims to build on and widen the cultural offer in order to meet the council's vision of a successful town where people are proud to live, work, study and visit. Areas of activity include town centre events and a local and regional theatre scene to provide a range of cutting edge performances and supporting local community involvement including those from the protected characteristics.

A key aspect of the commissioned service would be to ensure that there is the ability for full participation in arts and cultural activities from those in the protected characteristics by ensuring that premises and services are fully accessible and culturally sensitive and that appropriate programming is developed to meet the needs of those from the protected characteristics. Additionally the council will be expecting the commissioned services to deliver outreach work in suitably identified areas.

## **Community Centres**

We aim to support a range of community centres in council owned buildings close to areas of identified multiple deprivation. Through a range of activities and services, the centres are expected to work with key community representatives to meet the needs of the local community. Activities and programmes will be culturally sensitive, accessible to all including those within the protected characteristics.

## **Negative impacts of the Framework**

The Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework does not identify the complete removal of any funding for organisations currently funded.

Whilst areas have been identified through this EIA which could impact on the local community and potentially those with protected characteristics, mitigations for the negative impacts have been identified within the principles set out within the Framework.

## **Monitoring and evaluating of the Commissioning Framework 2019 - 2023 - Performance against the Service Level Agreement (SLA) and Key Performance Indicators (KPI)**

The equality impacts identified through this EIA will be evaluated through regular monitoring by the Leisure and Environmental Services Team.

Each of the commissioned organisations will have an SLA and bespoke service specification which details the KPIs required by the council.

A rolling programme of reports and presentations to Portfolio Holders and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be developed and agreed to ensure that the Elected Mayor, Portfolio Holders, elected members and leadership team are kept informed regarding the progress and performance of the new commissioning framework regarding the EIA.

## **Overall conclusions**

The Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework 2019 - 2023 includes a number of proposed priorities, which if not taken forward would have a negative impact on local residents, customers and service users.

**This EIA has been approved by the Head of Corporate Strategy & Communications**

## Summary of potential positive and negative impacts on protected characteristic

Positive Impact	Protected Characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
Providing support to people with mobility issues to gain access to services in the town centre	Disability Age	Commission shopmobility to provide this service and monitor effectiveness through a robust SLA including monitoring across protected characteristics
Ensuring that there is good quality, culturally sensitive arts and entertainment that reflect Watford's diverse community	Ethnicity	Commission Watford Palace and Pump House Theatres to provide this service and monitor effectiveness through a robust SLA including monitoring across protected characteristics
Providing high quality advice and support services for those in need of support across a range of issues but including debt, housing and welfare advice	All	Commission Watford CAB to provide this service and monitor effectiveness through a robust SLA including monitoring across protected characteristics
Providing voluntary and community sector infrastructure that enables the setting up of new groups and existing ones to survive and thrive including those that support protected characteristics	All (there are established groups in Watford that support protected characteristics such as disability)	Commission Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT) to provide this service and monitor effectiveness through a robust SLA including monitoring across protected characteristics