

# **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

## **SHARED SERVICES**

**2008-09**

**DRAFT  
Version 0.5**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sep 2008**

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA): Stage 1: Initial Screening Form for New/Revised Policies or Functions

**n.b. This is a working document; as such, it is subject to change**

### A: Summary Details

Directorate: **Corporate Services**

Section: Finance, HR, ICT and Revenues & Benefits

Person responsible for the assessment: Chrissie Cassidy-Wilms, Project Management Support Officer, Shared Services Programme. This responsibility will pass to the Change Manager (for the implementation phase of Shared Services) once appointed.

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Name of Policy to be assessed: **Shared Services Programme**

Is this a new or revised policy: **New**

Date policy scheduled for: Sept 2008 Shared Services Member Panel (as part of the Detailed Business Case for Shared Services)

### B: Preparation

1. Do you have monitoring data available on the number of people (from different target groups) who are using or are potentially impacted upon by your policy?

Each of the two councils (Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council) has data available concerning their staff re age, gender, ethnicity and disability (See Appendix A).

- Council tax customers represent the households in each district and reflect the diversity of the local population. (Please see appendix B for population data.) Fraud also deal with external customers
  - Some monitoring data is kept by discrete services. Some work is needed to ensure that data collected is consistent and relevant across the services
2. If monitoring has NOT been undertaken, will it be done in the future or do you have access to relevant monitoring data for this area? If not, specify the arrangement you intend to make; if not please give a reason for your decision.
- Shared Services will ensure that robust systems will continue to be in place to monitor the age, gender, ethnicity and disability of staff and customers. Furthermore, the organisation will address any legislative requirements and best practice guidance as agreed within the Service Level Agreements that are specified for each council e.g. the requirements of the Equality Standard for Local Government, relevant equalities legislation guidance, monitoring of service user demographics for benefits service access, providing reasonable adjustments to services to increase service uptake.
3. Please list any consultations that you may have had and/or local/national consultations, research or practical guidance that will assist you in completing this EIA

#### General consultation

The union has been consulted on a regular basis on the potential impact of Shared Services and representatives of the team have met with non-union staff representatives at Three Rivers District Council.

The officer responsible for the Equalities Impact Assessment has consulted with the Equalities Officers from both councils and taken advice from the programme's Change Management officer, who in turn has consulted with legal advisers from the councils.

The officer responsible for the Equalities Impact Assessment has been present at some of the staff briefings and is aware of the issues that members of staff have raised with the programme team.

Other members of the programme team have been consulted regarding the likely service-specific impact on staff and customers.

A Joint Unison Negotiation and Consultation Forum and Staff Consultation Forum. This EIA and any other proposals that require formal consultation will be taken to these forums for input.

#### Individual consultation

The team recognise that as Shared Services will require relocation and change to structures and roles, staff consultation will take place and any personal impact will be managed as part of the change management element of the programme.

## Management and Customer Consultation

Internal customers and stakeholders for the services in scope will be consulted on any changes to operational or strategic policies at both councils.

### **C: Your Policy or Function**

1. What is the main purpose of the policy or function?

The objectives of the Shared Services Programme are:

- **Efficiency:** To achieve efficiencies and cost saving through economies of scale and moving towards common processes and systems that are more effective and efficient than those that currently exist
- **Performance:** To achieve a step change in improved performance of these services which will be recognised by our customers and in each council's performance indicators and external ratings
- **Resilience:** To strengthen the capacity and flexibility of the service teams to improve the reliability and quality of services to our customers

2 Are there any other objectives of the policy or function, if so what are they?

Objectives of the four service areas in scope:

#### Finance

The overall objective is to provide a high quality, efficient, robust and resilient financial support service to the Section 151 officers, members, budget holders and employees of the two councils.

#### HR

The overall objective is to enable service managers to fulfil their service objectives by:

- Effective resourcing
- Facilitating good employee relations

- Providing a performance management framework to ensure employees are properly trained, developed and motivated to undertake their roles
- Undertaking the administrative support to the HR function efficiently and effectively

### ICT

The overall objective of the ICT shared service will be to provide high quality and reliable information technology and telephony services to its users.

### Revenues and Benefits

To provide a Revenues service covering:

- Council tax administration, collection and enforcement
- Sundry debt administration, collection and enforcement
- Housing benefit overpayment, collection and enforcement

To provide a Benefits service covering:

- Housing benefit and council tax benefit payment and administration
- Housing benefit overpayments administration

3 Do any written procedures exist to enable delivery of this policy or function?

- High level processes have been designed and incorporated in operational models (which include proposed structures and size) for the 4 services in scope.
- Equalities impact assessments for the services in scope have been completed, as follows:
  - TRDC Housing benefit (due to be completed March2008)
  - TRDC Accountancy (June 2007)
  - Benefit Fraud (2007)
  - TRDC Recruitment and Selection (due April 2009)

4 Are there elements of common practice in the service area or function that are not clearly defined within the written procedures?

- Pre-existing targets re equality in employment and service delivery, (including explicit customer targets laid out for each service area in terms of equality) will need to be aligned. Please see the EIA action plan in part g).

5 Who are the main stakeholders of the policy?

- Members, management boards, managers and staff in the scope of Shared Services at Three Rivers and Watford councils.
- External customers of Revenues and Benefits within each council's boundary
- External customers of website based services that may have special service access requirements e.g. disabled residents
- Internal customers of support services at each council e.g. staff, line managers, budget holders

6 Is the policy associated with any other Council policy (s)?

- The Shared Services programme will include the harmonisation of some strategic and operational policies across all services in scope across the 2 districts. These will be agreed via the Joint Committee for Shared Services. (These appear in Appendix C)

7 Are there any areas of the service that are governed by discretionary powers? If so, is there clear guidance as to how to exercise these?

- Most HR policies and procedures have discretionary elements. All the harmonised policies will have guidance incorporated in them to set out how any discretion is exercised. At TRDC (as part of the Council's Equalities Action Plan) HR has been undertaking a review of all policies and procedures to ensure that there are criteria within them that are free of bias, etc.
- Where there is discretion in any of these services areas our approach will be for the two councils to adopt common policies.

8 Is the responsibility for the proposed policy or function shared with another department or authority or organisation? If so, what responsibility, and which bodies?

- Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council will share responsibility for Shared Services through a Joint Committee (The Delegation and Joint Committee Agreement approved by both councils is available on request). The shared services programme is part of the wider Hertfordshire improved two tier working pathfinder programme, and our aim is to create a shared services model which other councils can join or replicate.

## D: The Potential Impact

Assess the potential impact that the policy could have on each of the target groups. The potential impact could be negative, positive or neutral. If you have assessed negative potential impact for any of the target groups you will need to also assess whether that negative potential impact is high, medium or low – see glossary in the attached guidance notes for definitions.

Three Rivers District and Watford Borough Councils will share the following services: Finance, Human Resources, Information and Communication Technology and Revenues & Benefits. This will involve the following changes:

- Restructures – changes to the management team and governance, reduction in the number of full time equivalent staff required, orientation required with new employment terms and conditions within the shared service, new reporting lines
- Terms and conditions – the scope of roles within the shared service will change; greater emphasis on competencies and achieving results; broader responsibility across councils, multi-skilling
- Relocation – for some staff shared services will involve moving to a new office location; this may increase requirements for staff to travel; home and mobile working may also feature

Changes	Overall impact	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Disability	Religion	Sexual orientation
<b>Impact on staff</b>							
Restructures	✓ potentially negative				✓ potentially negative		
Terms and conditions	✓ not known	Terms and conditions will recognise the need for reasonable adjustments for specific groups of staff e.g. disabled, parents, carers, pregnant – as outlined in the table below indicating mitigating actions.					
Relocation	✓ potentially negative	✓ potentially negative			✓ potentially negative	✓ potentially negative	

<b>Impact on customers accessing Revs &amp; Bens</b>							
Relocation	✓ potentially positive		✓ potentially positive	✓ Language access?	✓ potentially positive		

n.b. Where the cell has been left blank, it is anticipated that the impact is neutral.

The impact of relocation on staff has been initially assessed:

	Location	Three Rivers staff	Watford staff
ICT	Three Rivers	4	13
Finance	Three Rivers	12	20
HR	Watford	4	14
R&B	Watford	30	46

     = proposed that staff will change office

We have assessed that:

- i. Relocation is likely to affect approximately 65 members of staff
- ii. The distance between the two sites is 4 miles, although not every member of staff who relocates will need to travel 4 miles further
- iii. There is public transport (by train and by bus) available between the two council sites
- iv. The impact on members of staff will differ according to their personal circumstances.



## Potential impacts identified + mitigating actions

The table below provides an analysis of the potential impact of relocation on certain staff. A proposal for addressing any issues arising from relocation has been developed and is due to be issued for consultation in Sep 08 (See Appendix D).

Change	Group impacted	Impact	Mitigating action
Relocation	Some of staff in scope	Adverse impact for those who have to travel further	Compensation will be offered to those who have to travel further
	Carers (assumed that this is more likely to be women)	Adverse impact for those with caring responsibilities who also have to travel further	*Consideration will be given to hours of work/flexible working. Homeworking may be possible for staff in suitable positions. Consideration will be given to retraining those who don't want to relocate if there is an appropriate position elsewhere in Shared Services. There will be an openness to consider alternative ideas to make it easier for those who relocate e.g. bus service/bus passes.
	Staff with disabilities	Potentially adverse impact	It is assumed that all existing Council accommodation will be DDA compliant, but transport access to different sites may not be accessible. Homeworking may be possible for staff in suitable positions. Consideration will be given to retraining those who don't want to relocate if there is an appropriate position elsewhere in Shared Services. There will be an openness to consider alternative ideas to make it easier for those who relocate e.g. bus service, if appropriate.
		Adverse impact if have to travel further	See above*
		Possible adverse impact associated with using different furniture & equipment	Every reasonable adjustment will be made to accommodate the needs of staff with disabilities e.g. suitable screens, chairs.
	Staff with religious beliefs	Potential for adverse impact	All reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate religious practice.
Access to Revs and Bens	Elderly customers	Positive	It is proposed that customers of Revenues and Benefits would have the choice of paying their council tax/making enquiries at either of the

Change	Group impacted	Impact	Mitigating action
			Customer Service Centres, potentially making access easier. All existing channels to access the service would be available. In addition, it is proposed that benefit processing could be taken to customers in their homes.
	Disabled customers	Positive	See above

g) As a result of completing Question 1 a-f above what is the potential impact of your policy?

**Shared Services has a potentially high impact for staff and low impact for customers of Revenues and Benefits.**

Action plan

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Key Activity</u>	<u>Milestones</u> (To be confirmed)	<u>Officer responsible</u>	<u>Progress</u>
Staffing profile after implementation of Shared Service considered for trends re equalities	Compare with staffing profiles before implementation of Shared Services	ICT, HR, Fin – Mar 09 R&B: Aug 09	Head of HR	<u>Ethnicity current staffing profile produced (See Appendix A)</u>
Manage workforce trends emerging from analysis	Plan actions to address staff equalities profile if appropriate	TBC	Head of HR in consultation with other HoS	

Staff impacted by relocation will be consulted to see what mitigating action might be appropriate	Consultation with individuals to consider whether any of the following apply: Impact re caring responsibility Impact re disability Impact re religious observance/practice	Oct – Dec 08	Change Management Lead	
Align equalities targets	Pre-existing equalities targets in employment and service delivery will be aligned	April 09 (as part of service planning)	Heads of Service	
Align monitoring procedures	Pre-existing procedures for monitoring equalities in employment and service delivery will be aligned	April 09 (as part of service planning)	Heads of Service	

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<p>Assessment of information re equalities groups</p>	<p>Pre-existing information about equalities groups e.g. monitoring data, customer satisfaction, will be considered and appropriate action planned.          Assess existing information;          Plan action to address gaps;          Plan action to address issues, if appropriate          Monitoring of equalities categories will include monitoring trends in terms of growth/decline of target groups, take up of the service.          Customer satisfaction surveys will include (anonymous) equalities data, so that satisfaction can be cross-referenced to specific equalities groups.          Complaints received will include equalities data, so that the incidence of complaints can be analysed by equalities groups.</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>Heads of Service</p>	
<p>Shared Services managers and staff training re Equalities</p>	<p>Managers and staff to receive training on equalities pertinent to the merger of the services (and the change to staffing profile/s)</p>	<p><u>Jan 09</u></p>	<p>Change Manager in consultation with Equalities officers at both councils</p>	

**Appendix A Combined staffing data (attached separately)**

**Appendix B Combined population data**

<b>Combined Population Data</b>						
Data source: Census information (2001) for Three Rivers and Watford						
<b>Ethnic group</b>	<b>Three Rivers nos.</b>	<b>Three Rivers %</b>	<b>Watford nos.</b>	<b>Watford %</b>	<b>Combined numbers</b>	<b>Combined %</b>
White British	72174	87.12	63082	79.12	135256	83.20%
White Irish	1650	1.99	2304	2.89	3954	2.43%
White other	2686	3.24	3140	3.94	5826	3.58%
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	245	0.3	551	0.69	796	0.49%
Mixed: White and Black African	89	0.11	184	0.23	273	0.17%
Mixed: White and Asian	414	0.5	562	0.7	976	0.60%
Mixed: Other mixed	293	0.35	376	0.47	669	0.41%
Asian or Asian British: Indian	2912	3.51	1884	2.36	4796	2.95%
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	347	0.42	3709	4.65	4056	2.49%
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	88	0.11	211	0.26	299	0.18%
Asian or Asian British: Other Asian	512	0.62	738	0.93	1250	0.77%

Black or Black British: Caribbean	447	0.54	1165	1.46	1612	0.99%
Black or Black British: African	330	0.4	784	0.98	1114	0.69%
Black or Black British: Other Black	53	0.06	175	0.22	228	0.14%
Chinese or other ethnic group: Chinese	396	0.48	459	0.58	855	0.53%
Chinese or other ethnic group: Other ethnic group	212	0.26	402	0.5	614	0.38%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>82848</b>		<b>79726</b>		<b>162574</b>	
Combined White Irish and White other					9780	6.02%

## Appendix C Policy Harmonisation

### Human Resources

It is proposed that a harmonised approach is taken to managing aspects of this change to ensure that staff in Shared Services experience the same transition process and to create as much of a level playing field as possible. The following processes and policies that relate to the transition to the new organisation will be harmonised across both councils

- Appointments of Heads of Service
- Consultation and Negotiation
- Evaluation, Pay and Grading

- Redeployment of staff to new structures
- Relocation
- Reimbursement of expenses, mileage
- Essential Car approach

It is proposed that the remaining employment policies and processes are harmonised later as they will take longer. This will be done with full consultation with staff affected by shared services at both councils.

- Managing performance/ capability
- Managing absence
- Disciplinary policy
- Grievance policy
- Whistle blowing policy
- Bullying and Harassment
- Employment probationary period
- Use of ICT/ Internet policy
- Code of conduct
- Equal Opportunities
- Recruitment
- Leave policy – all leave types
- Lone working
- Child care vouchers
- Learning and Development policy
- Performance Appraisal/ pay review
- Health and Safety at Work
- Drugs and Alcohol
- No smoking policy
- Violence at work
- DSE and eye tests
- Employee Assistance programme

## **Finance**

The following policies will be reviewed and considered for harmonisation.

- Financial regulations
- Anti fraud and corruption
- Capital strategy
- Risk strategy
- Medium term financial strategy
- Treasury Management

There are aspects relating to detailed operating finance policies that could provide opportunities for establishing common approaches and levels including:

- Capitalisation policy and amounts
- Schedules of authority and level of expenditure approval
- Expenses policy
- Chart of accounts

## **ICT**

The following policies will be reviewed and considered for harmonisation.

- Information Security Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Computer Usage Policy
- E-mail Policy
- Internet Usage Policy
- Internet Usage Procedure
- Home Working Policy
- Asset Management Policy
- Asset Management Procedure



- Malicious Code Policy
- E-mail procedure
- Asset Disposal Procedure
- Change Control Procedure
- Malicious code procedure
- Disaster Recovery Procedure
- Computer Usage Procedure
- Phone / Fax Procedure
- Laptop Procedure
- Access Control Procedure

The only policy proposed to be harmonised prior to implementation of the Shared Service is the Information Security Policy as this provides a sound security foundation for users to adhere to.

### **Revenues & Benefits**

The following policies will be reviewed and considered for harmonisation.

- Debt Management policy
- Write off procedure
- Second home policy %
- Discretionary housing payments
- Local discounts

**Appendix D      Relocation Proposal (attached separately)**

## Document Version Control

<b>Version No</b>	<b>Dated</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments/Key changes since last version</b>
0.1		Draft	
0.2		Draft	
0.3			
0.4			
0.5	15.08.08		
0.6		Draft	Comments from Andy S and LC incorporated

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