**Equality Impact Assessment / Equality Analysis**

**(updated May 2020)**

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| **Title of service or policy** | Preparing for the Future Programme |
| Name of directorate and service | Business Recovery Board |
| **Name and role of officers completing the EIA** | Amanda George, Louise Murphy |
| Date of assessment | August 2020 |

Equality Impact Assessment (or ‘Equality Analysis’) is a process of systematically analysing a new or existing policy or service to identify what impact or likely impact it will have on different groups within the community.  The main aim is to identify any discriminatory or negative consequences for a particular group or sector of the community, and also to identify areas where equality can be better promoted.  Equality impact Assessments (EIAs) can be carried out in relation to services provided to customers and residents as well as employment policies/strategies that relate to staffing matters.

NB This EIA will be added to as new information and data becomes available

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| **1.** | | **Identify the aims of the policy or service and how it is implemented.** | | | | |
|  | | **Key questions** | | **Answers / Notes** | | |
| **1.1** | | Briefly describe purpose of the service/policy e.g.   * How the service/policy is delivered and by whom * If responsibility for its implementation is shared with other departments or organisations * Intended outcomes | | The Preparing for the Future Programme will deliver changes to how we work which will streamline our use of office buildings and provide a more flexible workforce that reflects the changes in how we now work and will deliver services in the future. The aim is to equip all staff to have a good day’s work by providing them with the right technology, being flexible in our approach to promote wellbeing and ensuring an effective work/life balance.  The overarching principle will be *work is what you do not a place you go*.  The streamlining of our office buildings and reducing the need to travel by encouraging flexible working is driven by our corporate strategy as it both supports our principle of preparing for the future and contributes to the core policy of addressing the climate emergency.  The aim of the project is to change the way we work so the Council is fit for the future. The project outline is to:   * Reduce the number of office buildings we use in Bath * Vacate St Martin’s Hospital * Re-develop the majority of Lewis House to generate revenue * Temporarily re-design the office space in Keynsham and the Guildhall to meet the necessary social distancing rules * Re-design office space for new business as usual in Keynsham to increase capacity and change the way we work * Review the digital strategy and enable responsive, safe and secure remote working and agility across the Council   The work will involve changing the way we use our office buildings. It will mean that most staff whose current workbase is St Martin’s, Lewis House or the Guildhall will have their workbase changed. | | |
| **1.2** | | Provide brief details of the scope of the policy or service being reviewed, for example:   * Is it a new service/policy or review of an existing one? * Is it a national requirement?). * How much room for review is there? | | Whist this is a new programme of work, flexible working, and working from home is not a new policy. The global impact of Covid-19 has forced people all over the world to change the way they live and work, effectively establishing a new norm for everyday life. Within the Council the majority of office based staff are now successfully working from home for most of the time and this allows us the opportunity to review the way that we work and move forward at pace by implementing a new IT / digital strategy and exploring how we operate in our buildings in the future, reducing operating costs and generating revenue from the Council’s estate. Going forward we would expect everyone who has a job that can be delivered remotely, to work from home at least 2 or 3 days a week (or a minimum of 3 days). For some this is just an adjustment to what they were doing pre-Covid and for others its completely different.  We have always had a default “flexible working” workstyle – and that has always included working from home. | | |
| **1.3** | | Do the aims of this policy link to or conflict with any other policies of the Council? | | Flexible Working Policy; IT Strategy; Digital Projects; Commercial Estate Property Review. | | |
| **2. Consideration of available data, research and information** | | | | | | |
| Monitoring data and other information should be used to help you analyse whether you are delivering a fair and equal service. Please consider the availability of the following as potential sources:   * **Demographic** data and other statistics, including census findings * Recent **research** findings (local and national) * Results from **consultation or engagement** you have undertaken * Service user **monitoring data** (including ethnicity, sex, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation and age) * Information from **relevant groups** or agencies, for example trade unions and voluntary/community organisations * Analysis of records of enquiries about your service, or **complaints** or **compliments** about them * Recommendations of **external inspections** or audit reports | | | | | | |
|  | | **Key questions** | | | **Data, research and information that you can refer to** | |
| **2.1** | | What equalities training have staff received to enable them to understand the needs of our diverse community? | | | All staff including HR staff have had access to online equalities modules; and an equalities section on Corporate Induction. In 2019 a large group of HR staff attended a one day Unconscious Bias training course delivered by the Equality Academy. The council’s equality officer has been invited to be part of this particular workstream.  Data relating to reasonable adjustments will be added here when it is available. | |
| **2.2** | | What is the equalities profile of service users? | | | Data on the workforce profile is available here [B&NES employee profile.](https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/your-council-and-democracy/equality-and-diversity/workforce-profile) | |
| **2.4** | | Are there any recent customer satisfaction surveys to refer to? What were the results? Are there any gaps? Or differences in experience/outcomes? | | | Recent Wellbeing survey (June 2020) revealed that 85% of staff said they would be happy to work at home for some of their week in future. | |
| **2.5** | | What engagement or consultation has been undertaken as part of this EIA and with whom?  What were the results? | | | All staff are being consulted on how the proposals will affect them, via a template they will discuss in a 121 with their managers. | |
| **2.6** | | If you are planning to undertake any consultation in the future regarding this service or policy, how will you include equalities considerations within this? | | | Due to the unprecedented context presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, the decisions have had to be taken swiftly. However, staff are being consulted about the processes that are being put in place to implement these changes. There will be an opportunity for staff to raise issues relating to equality impacts and barriers they might face which will be addressed wherever possible. The EIA will be updated to include the range of equality issues raised and mitigations put in place (where this can be done in a way that preserves anonymity). | |
| **3. Assessment of impact: ‘Equality analysis’** | | | | | | | |
|  | Based upon any data you have considered, or the results of consultation or research, use the spaces below to demonstrate you have analysed how the service or policy:   * Meets any particular needs of equalities groups or could help promote equality in some way. * Could have a negative or adverse impact for any of the equalities groups | | | | | | |
|  |  | | **Examples of what the service has done to promote equality** | | | **Examples of actual or potential negative or adverse impact and what steps have been or could be taken to address this** | |
| **3.1** | **Sex** – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on women and men. | | Data from ITrent on 31st March 2020 reveals that 58% of our staff are female and 42% are male. | | | Those with caring responsibilities (who could be male or female – but more likely to be women), may face difficulties if their new work base is located further away than their existing one (e.g. issues with drop off and pick up at pre-school and school, or issues with relatives who need care). This may result in increased care costs.  **Mitigating actions** There should be flexibility in homeworking – managers are being asked to discuss any issues arising in 1-2-1s, and to consider ways of overcoming any issues in relation to care arrangements.  We also have a Childcare Voucher Scheme which can be promoted to staff. | |
| **3.2** | **Pregnancy and maternity** | | The Council has a flexible working policy, and staff who are pregnant or on maternity leave can request a change to their working hours/patterns etc. | | | Staff may need to discuss any issues with their manager that could arise due to the changes being brought in (e.g. access to anti-natal appointments).  We are looking at the design of the newly configured offices which will take into account the need for private spaces (which could be used for someone to express milk).  All expectant mothers are required to undertake a risk assessment and keep this under review with their line manager | |
| **3.3** | **Gender reassignment** – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on transgender people | | There are gender neutral toilet facilities in our office accommodation. | | | No issues yet identified. However we will share the EIA with the LGBT+ staff group. | |
| **3.4** | **Disability** - identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on disabled people (ensure consideration both physical, sensory and mental impairments and mental health) | | The aim is to ensure that all disabled staff with reasonable adjustments in place have these considered and replicated in new working arrangements. There may also be the need for additional adjustments. This may include adjustments to an individual’s working arrangements (e.g. the balance between home working and office working; flexible start/finish times). Or additional equipment/resources (e.g. dedicated desks; other appropriate equipment such as computer software; office chairs; etc) and also changes to the physical features of the working environment to remove any potential barriers (e.g. ensuring clear access routes in newly configured office spaces; provision of quiet areas for staff who, because of disability, may not be able to operate effectively in busy/noisy working environments).  There is an opportunity to reconfigure office spaces in a way that creates a better/more accessible working environment for disabled members of staff. (E.g. improved signage; colour coding to assist in orientation)  There is an opportunity to create working environments that are flexible and encourage co-operation, co-production and collaborative working.  Office protocols/ways of working are being developed as guiding principles rather than rules. These will need to include clear desk policy; private space for confidential discussions and phone calls; touchdown areas, informal meeting areas; breakout space; formal meeting rooms; quiet zones. Also guidelines on recycling; eating away from desks etc. | | | 1. **Reasonable adjustments for existing disabled staff.** It will be important to ensure that there is a consistent and thorough approach to the consideration of reasonable adjustments.   **Action: Individual adjustments**  Managers will be holding 1-2-1 meetings with their staff to consider each person’s individual circumstances. At the meetings managers will also be establishing whether any adverse impacts or issues are likely to arise for their staff due to their disability and what mitigation if any, that can be put in place. Access to Work may need to be contacted for reassessment of disabled staff member needs in their new workbase.  We have added information about disabled staff and reasonable adjustments to the list of FAQs, and that reasonable adjustments will be considered in new working locations, and that support is available via the RAP (Reasonable Adjustment Panel) and the Disabled Workers Group.  Managers will be required to identify and review all working arrangements (eg dedicated desks) and to confirm where an existing “reasonable adjustment” is in place that needs to continue. This information will be recorded through the individual 121s.  We will ensure that any queries about individual reasonable adjustments are dealt with in accordance with Council policy and HR will work with managers to ensure that current working arrangements are highlighted.  Most reasonable adjustments where they relate to individual work station set ups (eg “dedicated desks” ) are for 1 of 3 reasons:  1. the employee has an access or adjustment reason related to a disability (or other requirement)  2. they are in a post which is either a centralised coordinator or resource for a team of flexible workers – or they perhaps have a “meet and greet” role at a defined location  3. they have specialised software on their machine eg CAD and a computer that is set up for this  Through the 121 process, there is an opportunity for any member of staff who needs support to clear their current locker/personal items to request it. HR are also able to give additional support.  Through the 121 process, consideration will be given to the most suitable workplaces for teams if they have a disabled member/disabled members.  We will continue to provide specialist desks and equipment for those who need them where DSE and OH advice has been taken.  We will offer orientation visits to new offices for disabled employees.  We will update building evacuation plans to take into account disabled people’s needs.  When laptops are rolled out, we will monitor any difficulties that a disabled member of staff may have in carrying their laptop around, and look to make arrangements to assist with any difficulties. For example, we may be able to allocate some storage space for disabled employees who may find it more difficult to carry belongings with them on every visit to the office.  **Anticipatory adjustments for all**  We plan to consult with the relaunched Employee Equality Groups in respect of how we plan the new office layouts (e.g. quiet spaces; medical/rest rooms, rise & fall desks).  We will ensure that our new IT strategy/new devices will be compatible with assistive technologies. As an alternative we have some desktop computers available. Or could offer alternative laptops to the standard ones we will role out. We will need to consider specialist equipment if required.   1. **Mental Health and wellbeing**: It is acknowledged that times of uncertainty, create additional stress and anxiety, particularly for those with pre-existing mental health conditions. The changes to ways of working and workbases could have a potential negative impact, along with the move to a more open plan working environment which may be more noisy than people have been used to.   The changes could impact on individual stress levels, given the change and logistical planning that will be involved in the weeks ahead. New ways of working will mean ongoing working from home for some staff for some of their working week for the foreseeable future. This could have a negative effect on the amount of contact people have within their current work place network.  **Mitigating actions:**  Clear and transparent communication is vital. Information regarding the changes is being distributed via regular bulletins to all staff, and more specific emails to staff in different workplaces (e.g. Lewis House). Managers are also being asked to discuss the changes on a 121 basis with their team members.  Livestreams have taken place allowing staff to ask questions and there is a dedicated intranet page containing a large number of FAQs  We are promoting the use of Wellness Action Plans and conversations between staff and their line managers  We have a buddy system in place (<http://intranet/well-work-buddy-scheme>)  32 of our staff members are about to be trained as MH First Aiders.  We will republicize the EAP;  We are relaunching and re- publicising Disabled Workers Group | |
| **3.5** | **Age** – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on different age groups | | Health, Safety and Wellbeing are exploring setting up a carer group. If this goes ahead we will ask the group to highlight any additional issues relating to caring responsibilities that have not yet been identified.. | | | Need to take into account staff with caring responsibilities (e.g. for a relative) may face difficulties if they have additional travel time to reach new office bases. However research shows that flexible working has a positive impact on caring responsibilities as it provides staff with the opportunity of organising work around their personal requirements or needs.  Mitigations: There is flexibility in the approach – and unless there is a strong business case against it, staff may be able to negotiate office hours and working from home with their manager to fit around care giving commitments. | |
| **3.6** | **Race** – identify the impact/potential impact on across different ethnic groups | | No issues identified. | | | Employees who don’t have fixed place of abode (e.g. Boaters, travellers) may find it difficult to claim excess travel payments. Managers should take a flexible approach to ensure that life aboard boaters do not miss out on this compensatory payment. The Council’s Travel Policy is clear that staff should be reimbursed for any additional costs associated with a forced change of work base. | |
| **3.7** | **Sexual orientation –** identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on  lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual people | | No issues identified | | | No issues yet identified. However we will share the EIA with the LGBT+ staff group. | |
| **3.8** | **Marriage and civil partnership –** does the policy/strategy treat married and civil partnered people equally? | | No issues identified | | | No issues identified | |
| **3.9** | **Religion/belief** – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on people of different religious/faith groups and also upon those with no religion. | | Consideration of contemplation spaces for people of faith/no faith in design | | | Staff being relocated from bath to Keynsham may face difficulties in religious observance (e.g. Muslim staff attending Friday prayers at the mosque close to Lewis House). Where work pressures allow, manager can be flexible in allowing employees to take extended breaks to attend and make hours. We understand that some staff in the Guildhall use the medical room for religious observance at times. We will look to replicate similar arrangements in KCC. | |
| **3.10** | **Socio-economically disadvantaged\*** – identify the impact on people who are disadvantaged due to factors like family background, educational attainment, neighbourhood, employment status can influence life chances  **(this is not a legal requirement, but is a local priority).** | | It may be less costly for staff to travel to their new workbase if it is closer to their home. It may also be cheaper to park in the new workplace in Midsomer Norton/Keynsham rather than in Bath.  Staff will be travelling less regularly to their workbase and so commute costs will be lower for many. | | | There may be increased travel costs for some (offset for 3 years by excess travel allowance)  Increased utility costs  Increased cost of using personal telephones - softphones are being installed for staff needing to use an office phone regularly.  Outlay on appropriate furniture – chairs are available for staff to take home.  Outlay to install broadband  Some staff may be unable to work at home due to lack of suitable space/potential over-crowding. We are working to find alternatives like sharing office accommodation with our partners. | |
| **3.11** | **Rural communities\*** – identify the impact / potential impact on people living in rural communities | | Some staff may have the option of working at a location closer to their rural home (e.g the Hollies). | | | Staff relocating to a new building may experience changes to their home to work journeys. If travelling by public transport there may be an adverse impact if the public transport services available to the new location are not adequate – and this may be especially the case in rural areas. Public transport from some rural areas to Keynsham may be less easily accessible than transport to Bath  Mitigations: There is flexibility in approach and where journey times are lengthy it may be possible for staff to negotiate more home working or consider other options than office based working. | |

There is no requirement within the public sector duty of the Equality Act to consider groups who may be disadvantaged due to socio economic status, or because of living in a rural area. However, these are significant issues within B&NES and haver therefore been included here.

1. **Bath and North East Somerset Council & NHS B&NES**

**Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan**

Please list actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment/analysis. These actions should be based upon the analysis of data and engagement, any gaps in the data you have identified, and any steps you will be taking to address any negative impacts or remove barriers. The actions need to be built into your service planning framework. Actions/targets should be measurable, achievable, realistic and time framed.

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| **Issues identified** | **Actions required** | **Progress milestones** | **Officer responsible** | **By when** |
| Support for all staff | 1-2-1 meetings  Re-publicise Employee Assistance Programme  Re-publicise the Wellness Action Plans  Buddy system – publicise | Ongoing | JV | Autumn 2020 |
| Support for BAME, Disabled and LGBT+ staff | Relaunch and re-publicise staff groups | Ongoing | JV/TP | Autumn 2020 |
| Support for staff with childcare responsibilities | Re-publicise Childcare Voucher Scheme, carers leave and parental leave policy | Staff Matters | TP | Autumn 2020 |
| Need to ensure there are mechanisms for staff to raise issues as the changes are implemented. workstream is implemented. | BUG (Building User Group) | Meetings set up | TC | Autumn 2020 |

**5. Sign off and publishing**

Once you have completed this form, it needs to be ‘approved’ by your Divisional Director or their nominated officer. Following this sign off, send a copy to the Equalities Team ([equality@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:equality@bathnes.gov.uk)), who will publish it on the Council’s and/or NHS B&NES’ website. Keep a copy for your own records.

**Signed off by**: Amanda George/Cherry Bennett (Divisional Director or nominated senior officer)

**Date: 28/09/2020**