

Equality Impact Assessment Template – Stage Two

Please complete this template if completion of the Stage 1 template has identified that a full Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Name of item being assessed:	Ceasing to provide the Visitor Information Service.
Version and release date of item (if applicable):	
Owner of item being assessed:	Paul James
Name of assessor:	Paul James
Date of assessment:	31 December 2015
Date Stage 1 EIA completed:	7 September 2015

STEP 1 – Scoping the Equality Impact Assessment

1. What data, research and other evidence or information is available which will be relevant to this Equality Analysis? Please tick all that apply.

Service Targets	<input type="checkbox"/>	Performance Targets	<input type="checkbox"/>
User Satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	Service Take-up	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workforce Monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	Press Coverage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complaints & Comments	<input type="checkbox"/>	Census Data	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information from Trade Union	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Intelligence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Previous Equality Impact Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify) Public Consultation.			X

2. Please provide details on how you have used the available evidence, information you have selected as part of your Impact Assessment?

The Council's consultation on savings proposals produced 142 responses in total. 3 from town / parish councils (Newbury Town Council, Pangbourne and Compton Parish Councils). The Newbury Business Innovation District (BID), West Berkshire Green Party, West Berkshire Ramblers and the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust (Enterprise) Ltd also responded.

3. If you have identified any gaps in relation to the above question, please detail what additional research or data is required to fill these gaps? Have you considered commissioning new data or research? If 'No' please proceed to Step 2.

No

STEP 2 – Involvement and Consultation

1. Please use the table below to outline any previous involvement or consultation with the appropriate target groups of people who are most likely to be affected or interested in this policy, strategy, function or service	
Target Groups	Describe what you did, with a brief summary of the responses gained and links to relevant documents, as well as any actions
Age – relates to all ages	<p>The public consultation on Council savings provided 142 responses in total, 3 from town / parish councils (Newbury Town Council, Pangbourne and Compton Parish Councils) and 4 from local organisations (Newbury Business Innovation District (BID), West Berkshire Green Party, West Berkshire Ramblers and the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust (Enterprise) Ltd.).</p> <p>Key issues from consultation respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of friendly and knowledgeable face to face information services that benefit visitors – particularly the elderly, vulnerable people, people without access to IT, and overseas visitors and others with limited English language skills. • Loss of face to face ticket sales service for coach travel and tickets for local events.
<p>Disability - applies to a range of people that have a condition (physical or mental) which has a significant and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out 'normal' day-to-day activities. This protection also applies to people that have been diagnosed with a progressive illness such as HIV or cancer.</p>	<p>The public consultation on Council savings provided 142 responses in total, 3 from town / parish councils (Newbury Town Council, Pangbourne and Compton Parish Councils) and 4 from local organisations (Newbury Business Innovation District (BID), West Berkshire Green Party, West Berkshire Ramblers and the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust (Enterprise) Ltd.).</p> <p>Key issues from consultation respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of friendly and knowledgeable face to face information services that benefit visitors – particularly the elderly, vulnerable people, people without access to IT, and overseas visitors and others with limited English language skills. • Loss of face to face ticket sales service for coach travel and tickets for local events.
<p>Gender reassignment - definition has been expanded to include people who chose to live in the opposite gender to the gender assigned to them at birth by removing the previously legal requirement for them to undergo medical supervision.</p>	<p>The public consultation responses raised no issues with regard to gender reassignment.</p>

<p>Marriage and Civil partnership –.protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.</p>	<p>The public consultation responses raised no issues with regard to Marriage and Civil partnership.</p>
<p>Pregnancy and Maternity - protects against discrimination. With regard to employment, the woman is protected during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled. It is also unlawful to discriminate against women breastfeeding in a public place</p>	<p>The public consultation responses raised no issues with regard to pregnancy and maternity.</p>
<p>Race - includes colour, caste, ethnic / national origin or nationality.</p>	<p>The public consultation responses raised no issues with regard to race.</p>
<p>Religion and Belief - covers any religion, religious or non-religious beliefs. Also includes philosophical belief or non-belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.</p>	<p>The public consultation responses raised no issues with regard to Marriage and Civil partnership.</p>
<p>Sex - applies to male or female.</p>	<p>The public consultation responses raised no issues with regard to sex.</p>
<p>Sexual Orientation - protects lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and heterosexual people.</p>	<p>The public consultation responses raised no issues with regard to sexual orientation.</p>

2. Who are the main stakeholders and what are their requirements?

The main stakeholder is West Berkshire Council. The Council set up the VIC in the mid-1980s to support the development of the visitor economy by providing information, advice and guidance to visitors about the district.

3. Amongst the identified groups in the previous question, what does your information tell you about the potential take-up of resulting services?

Most users are local people. Most local users are older people. Local families use the service at weekends and during holiday periods as it is a trusted source of information about family friendly events and activities. Visitors from elsewhere in the UK and abroad are of all ages. Feedback from users indicates that the face to face service is appreciated by all customers but particularly the elderly, vulnerable people, people without access to IT, and overseas visitors and others with limited English language skills.

The growing use of online information and booking services continues to move business away from location-based/face to face customer services such as VICs. There is some evidence to suggest that this trend is affecting the VIC. For example, the total number of users of the VIC in 2009/10 was 31,000 and that has since declined slightly (27,000 in 2012/13, 30,000 in 2014/15). Some types of coach and event ticket sales are decreasing as people get used to booking online, or event organisers have started offering online booking services. To put this into a wider context the Newbury BID measure footfall in Newbury Town centre which is about 180,000 a week. VIC usage is about 580 users a week.

STEP 3 – Assessing Impact and Strengthening the Policy

What will be done to improve access to and take-up of, or understanding of the policy, strategy, function or service? (these are the measures you will take to mitigate against adverse impact)

We have conducted meetings with Newbury Town Council and the Newbury BID about how visitor information services may be maintained. The conclusion was that neither organisation can fund the continuation of this service.

STEP 4 – Procurement and Partnerships

Is this project due to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors? No (please delete)

If 'yes', have you done any work to include equality considerations into the contract already? Specifically you should set out how you will make sure that any partner you work with complies with equality legislation.

N/A

STEP 5 – Making a Decision

Summarise your findings and give an overview of whether the policy, strategy, function or service will meet the authority's responsibilities in relation to equality and support the Council's strategic outcomes?

Consultation has not uncovered any issues which would prevent the council from proceeding with this proposal.

- Local people (particularly older and vulnerable people and those who do not have access to IT), as well as visitors, highly value the service provided by the VIC staff. Many have commented that the staff are well trained, knowledgeable and regarded as a friendly "public face" for Newbury. There is also evidence that some vulnerable people know and trust the staff and value the VIC as a haven if they feel unsafe in the town centre. However that is also true of Newbury Library and the West Berkshire Museum and their staff – which are

both nearby.

- 94% of the net cost of the VIC service is in staffing. Reducing the small staff team (2.14FTE) will reduce accessibility to the service and so the number of users is likely to decrease. Replacing staff with volunteers requires staff supervision at all times so there is no significant saving to be made there. Volunteers are unable to provide the sort of regular commitment to guarantee regular/reliable opening hours. Experience in other services shows that the recruitment, care, organisation of rotas and general management of volunteers is often more time consuming than the management of paid staff.
- The growing use of online information and booking services continues to move business away from location-based/face to face customer services which have some notable disadvantages – for example, the VIC is not open 24/7, does not offer online booking facilities and does not have a presence elsewhere in the district – for example, Hungerford, Thatcham or Pangbourne. The public take-up of all kinds of online services is on the increase, due to increased availability of affordable and easy to use web-enabled devices, ‘apps’ and services, with the advantage that people can access information and services from wherever they are, at any time of the day.
- There is some evidence to suggest that this trend is affecting the VIC. For example, the total number of users of the VIC in 2009/10 was 31,000 and that has since declined slightly (27,000 in 2012/13, 30,000 in 2014/15). Some types of coach and event ticket sales are decreasing as people get used to booking online, or event organisers have started offering online booking services. To put this into a wider context the Newbury BID measure footfall in Newbury Town centre which is about 180,000 a week. VIC usage is about 580 users a week.
- Newbury Library and the West Berkshire Museum can hold more information about events and activities and there are other ticket sales services in the town centre – for example the Corn Exchange sells tickets for a wide range of events and activities on behalf of other organisations

STEP 6 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

Before finalising your action plan, you must identify how you will monitor the policy/function or the proposals following the Equality Impact Assessment and include any changes of proposals you are making.

What structures are in place to monitor and review the impact and effectiveness of the new policy, strategy, function or service?

The Newbury BID monitor Newbury town centre issues related to the visitor economy. The Council maintains regular liaison with the BID to monitor any issues arising.

STEP 7 – Action Plan

Any actions identified as an outcome of going through Steps 1-6 should be mapped against the headings within the Action Plan. You should also summarise actions taken to mitigate against adverse impact.

	Actions	Target Date	Responsible post holder & directorate
Involvement & consultation	Consult with Newbury BID about providing more visitor information on the VISIT NEWBURY	Quarterly BID meetings	Head of Strategic Support (liaison officer with the BID)

	website.		
Data collection	Monitor BID data about visitor economy.	Quarterly data collection for economic development	Economic Development Officer, Strategic Support
Assessing impact	Consult with Newbury BID and Newbury Town Council about any issues arising for visitors in Newbury.	Quarterly BID meetings	Head of Strategic Support (liaison officer with the BID)
Procurement & partnership	N/A		
Monitoring, evaluation and reviewing	Consult with Newbury BID and Newbury Town Council about any issues arising for visitors in Newbury.	Annually	Head of Strategic Support (liaison officer with the BID)

STEP 8 – Sign Off

The policy, strategy or function has been fully assessed in relation to its potential effects on equality and all relevant concerns have been addressed.

Assessor		
Name: Paul James	Job Title: Culture manager	Date: 7 th January 2016

Service Director or Senior Officer (sign off)		
Name:	Job Title:	Date:

Please email a copy of the EIA to Rachel Craggs, Principal Policy Officer (Equality & Diversity): Rachel.craggs@westberks.gov.uk