

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form: Initial impact assessment

If an officer is undertaking a project, policy change or service change, then an initial impact assessment must be completed and attached alongside the Project initiation document.

EqIA Titular information:

Date:	14 December 2020
Service:	Democratic Services
Project, policy or service EQIA relates to:	IRP Report
Completed by:	Callum Wernham
Has the EQIA been discussed at services team meeting:	Yes
Signed off by:	
Sign off date:	

55

1. Policy, Project or service information:

This section should be used to identify the main purpose of the project, policy or service change, the method of delivery, including who key stakeholders are, main beneficiaries and any associated aims.

What is the purpose of the project, policy change or service change , its expected outcomes and how does it relate to your services corporate plan:

An independent review of the Members’ Allowances scheme is carried out on a biennial basis. This is a statutory function. Volunteers, who either live or work in the Borough make up the Independent Review Panel (IRP). The aim of the Panel is to review the scheme, and identify any potential changes based on evidence and statistical analysis.

Outline how you are delivering your project, policy change or service change. What governance arrangements are in place, which internal stakeholders (Service managers, Assistant Directors, Members ect) have/will be consulted and informed about the project or changes:

Panel members are sought via local press and WBC media streams. Candidates are interviewed by the Lead Specialist for Democratic & Electoral Services, and the Assistant Director for Governance. Panel Members are given support and guidance from Democratic Services officers. Panel members have discussions with a range of Members, in addition to offering a survey to all Members asking for their views on the Members' Allowances scheme. The public are informed of recommendations in the local press, as dictated by statutory legislation.

Outline who are the main beneficiaries of the Project, policy change or service change?

Any increase to financial elements of the Members Allowance would mean that Members could financially gain as a result. As stated before, recommendations are made to Council by an Independent Panel.

Outline any associated aims attached to the project, policy change or service change:

The aim of the review is to make recommendations to the Members' Allowances scheme based on feedback from Members, statistical analysis of data from other Local Authorities, and a range of other factors. One of the main changes proposed by the Panel aims to add a second tier to the Dependent & Carers allowance, for those with direct caring responsibilities which require specialist care. In addition, it is proposed that the first, or current tier, be increased in line with the national living wage when this value overtakes the current £10 per hour rate. The aim of these changes are to allow Members with direct caring responsibilities to attend their assigned duties, and be reimbursed (up to the maximum proposed value of £20 per hour) for the caring responsibilities during these times.

2. Protected characteristics:

There are 9 protected characteristics as defined by the legislation:

- Race
- Gender
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Age
- Religious belief

- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership:

To find out more about the protected groups, please consult the EQIA guidance.

3. Initial Impact review:

In the table below, please indicate whether your project, Policy change or service change will have a positive or negative impact on one of the protected characteristics. To assess the level of impact, please assign each group a Positive, No, Low or High impact score:

For information on how to define No, low or high impact, please consult the EQIA guidance document.

If your project is to have a positive impact on one of the protected groups, please outline this in the table below.

For details on what constitutes a positive impact, please consult the EQIA guidance.

Protected characteristics	Impact score	Please detail what impact will be felt by the protected group:
Race:	No	None of the recommendations would affect persons with this protected characteristic specifically.
Gender:	Positive	75.1% of women were in work, compared to 92.6% of men according to the ONS in 2019. The recommendation to add a second tier to the Dependent & Carers allowance would be of benefit to those individuals with multiple young children. According to the ONS statistics, this would be a particular positive impact for women.
Disabilities:	Positive	The recommendation to add a second tier to the Dependent & Carers allowance would be of benefit to those Members who have direct caring responsibilities for a person with any form of disability who required specialist care. It would

		have no specific impact for Members who themselves had a disability.
Age:	Positive	The recommendation to add a second tier to the Dependent & Carers allowance would be of benefit to those Members who may have an older partner or parent who required specialist care.
Sexual orientation:	No	None of the recommendations would affect persons with this protected characteristic specifically.
Religion/belief:	No	None of the recommendations would affect persons with this protected characteristic specifically.
Gender re-assignment:	No	None of the recommendations would affect persons with this protected characteristic specifically.
Pregnancy and Maternity:	Positive	The recommendation to increase the first tier of the Dependent & Carers allowance in line with the national living wage would be of benefit to those Members who have recently had children. It could allow them to attend assigned duties and claim back associated childcare costs.
Marriage and civil partnership:	No	None of the recommendations would affect persons with this protected characteristic specifically.

Based on your findings from your initial impact assessment, you must complete a full impact assessment for any groups you have identified as having a low of high negative impact. If No impact, or a positive impact has been identified, you do not need to complete a full assessment. However, you must report on this initial assessment and it must receive formal approval from the Assistant Director responsible for the project, policy or service change.

Initial impact assessment approved by Anne Hunter

Date: 16 December 2020