



Shropshire Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA)

Discretionary Housing Payments

Shropshire Council Part 1 ESIIA: initial screening and assessment

Please note: prompt questions and guidance within boxes are in italics. You are welcome to type over them when completing this form. Please extend the boxes if you need more space for your commentary.

Name of service change

Commissioning Community Hub services.

Aims of the service change and description

The Hub concept is a different way of supporting people to meet their needs particularly through use of telephone and online transactions, whilst concentrating help on those customers who would be unable to use new methods of doing business or who require more specialist assistance.

Shropshire Council's face to face contact with customers in respect of council business has been declining over time.

The number of customers using our services in September 2014 was 5873, roughly half of those who used services in the same month in 2012 and the nature of their enquiries is also changing, becoming more focussed around specialist help and advice.

Face to Face provision also represents the most expensive type of transactional provision, with Society of Information Technology Management figures suggesting that it can cost as much as £8.15 for one Face to Face transaction, compared with 15p for a web transaction.

Ambition now exists to redesign services in ways that reduces long term need and remove, where possible, future dependency. Many of our partners are also sharing this ambition and are undertaking similar work in this area.

Working in partnership with delivery partners which could include Housing Associations, the Voluntary and Community Sector, Parish and Town Councils, other public service providers and from other appropriate Shropshire Council services, including the Library Service, and commissioning client consultation space and other activities through community venues has the potential to create more resilient communities and support the retention of local community facilities.

The delivery of more joined up and holistic services around a range of needs, significantly the support needs that the implementation of the Care Act and roll out of the Universal Credit will bring, assistance in using alternative methods of doing business and direct help for those customers genuinely unable to self-serve, gives the opportunity to enhance local services delivered from recognised community venues.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

- members of the public
- elected members
- Advice agencies and representative groups

There is the potential that some customers will perceive these changes as having a negative impact on the level of service provided.

There is the potential for some customers falling in those groups with protected characteristics to be impacted by this change on grounds of accessibility when combined with the ability to access an alternative means of provision such as another Community Hub, telephony services or online provision.

Evidence used for screening of the service change

The hub model is part of a wider strategy for digital inclusion across the County, with particular emphasis on digital transactions with Shropshire Council and with central government departments notably with the Department for Work and Pensions around its welfare reform strategy.

Digital exclusion affects some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society:

Those in social housing - 37% of those who are digitally excluded are social housing tenants

Those on lower wages, or unemployed - 17% of people earning less than £20,000 never use the internet, as opposed to 2% of people earning more than £40,000. 44% of people without basic digital skills are on lower wages or are unemployed

Those with disabilities - 33% of people with registered disabilities have never used the internet. This is 54% of the total number of people who have never used the internet

Older people - over 53% of people who lack basic digital skills are aged over 65, and 69% are over 55

Young people - 6% of people who lack digital skills are between 15 and 24 years. Only 27% of young people who are offline are in full-time employment.

(Source: HM Government Digital Inclusion Strategy Policy Paper, December 2014)

Adult literacy in an increasingly digital world remains a cause for concern.

"Around 16 per cent, or 5.2 million adults in England, can be described as "functionally illiterate". They would not pass an English GCSE and have literacy levels at or below those expected of an 11-year-old. They can understand short straightforward texts on familiar topics accurately and independently, and obtain information from everyday sources, but reading information from unfamiliar sources, or on unfamiliar topics, could cause problems."

(Source: The National Literacy Trust)

The hub model as a preventative service encompasses the expected needs that will arise from the introduction of the Universal Credit in Shropshire and is ideally placed to provide the supportive framework required by Jobcentre Plus to aid delivery. The following statistics give some idea of the eventual impact on Shropshire citizens as the rollout of UC continues.

There are 7,260 benefit claims in total from people/families either receiving Jobseeker's Allowance, in the work-related activity group or receiving Employment & Support Allowance or lone parents receiving Income Support. (Source, Jobcentre Plus)

There are 18,700 families receiving tax credits in Shropshire, the majority, 14,400 are in work and 4,300 are not in work. There are just over 30,000 children in these families. 22,200 are in families who work and 8,300 are in non-working families. (Source HMRC statistics 2012/2013)

There are 17,200 claims to Housing Benefit in the Shropshire area; these include people over pension age. All will eventually transfer over to UC or the new Housing Credit.

Gender Reassignment

We do not envisage an adverse impact on these grounds.

Sexual orientation

We do not envisage an adverse impact on these grounds.

Religion or belief

We do not envisage an adverse impact on these grounds.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

We do not envisage an adverse impact on these grounds.

Pregnancy and maternity

We do not envisage an adverse impact on these grounds.

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

Potential impact on Protected Characteristic groups and on social inclusion

High Negative	Significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place or no evidence available: urgent need for consultation with customers, general public, workforce
Medium Negative	Some potential impact, some mitigating measures in place but no evidence available how effective they are: would be beneficial to consult with customers, general public, workforce
Low Negative	Almost bordering on non-relevance to the ESIIA process (heavily legislation led, very little discretion can be exercised, limited public facing aspect, national policy affecting degree of local impact possible)

Initial assessment for each group

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through inserting a tick in the relevant column.

Protected Characteristic groups and other groups in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two ESIIA required</i>	High positive impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Medium positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Low positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>
Age (please include children, young people, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group eg young person with disability)			✓	

Disability (please include: mental health conditions and syndromes including autism; physical disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; HIV)			✓	
Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				No evidence to suggest either positive or negative impact
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				No evidence to suggest either positive or negative impact
Pregnancy & Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				No evidence to suggest either positive or negative impact
Race (please include: ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, gypsy, traveller)				No evidence to suggest either positive or negative impact
Religion and belief (please include: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Non conformists; Rastafarianism; Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				No evidence to suggest either positive or negative impact
Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				No evidence to suggest either positive or negative impact
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				No evidence to suggest either positive or negative impact
Other: Social Inclusion (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; people you consider to be vulnerable)			✓	

Decision, review and monitoring

Decision	Yes	No
Part One ESIIA Only?	✓	


Proceed to Part Two Full Report?		✓

If Part One, please now use the boxes below and sign off at the foot of the page. If Part Two, please move on to the full report stage.

Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change
The delivery of DHP's will continue to be subject to scrutiny and in accordance with any future changes published via the DWP guidance manuals.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change
Shropshire Council will continue to utilise the good practice guidance issued by the Department for Work & Pensions as the basis for continuing delivery of this service and will compare our delivery against that of other Local Authorities. System statistics will continue to be collated and analysed for impact upon protected characteristic groupings.

Scrutiny at Part One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer carrying out the screening</i>		
<i>Any internal support</i>	 Mrs Lois Dale, Principal Rural Policy Officer; ext 5684	
<i>Any external support</i>		
<i>Head of service</i>		

Sign off at Part One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer's name</i>		
<i>Head of service's name</i>		

Shropshire Council Part 2 ESIIA: full report

Guidance notes on how to carry out the full report

The decision that you are seeking to make, as a result of carrying out this full report, will take one of four routes:

1. To make changes to satisfy any concerns raised through the specific consultation and engagement process and through your further analysis of the evidence to hand;
2. To make changes that will remove or reduce the potential of the service change to adversely affect any of the Protected Characteristic groups and those who may be at risk of social exclusion;
3. To adopt the service change as it stands, with evidence to justify your decision even though it could adversely affect some groups;
4. To find alternative means to achieve the aims of the service change.

The Part Two Full Report therefore starts with a forensic scrutiny of the evidence and consultation results considered during Part One Screening, and identification of gaps in data for people in any of the nine Protected Characteristic groups and people who may be at risk of social exclusion, eg rural communities. There may also be gaps identified to you independently of this process, from sources including the intended audiences and target groups themselves.

The forensic scrutiny stage enables you to assess:

- **Which gaps need to be filled right now, to help you to make a decision about the likely impact of the proposed service change?**

This could involve methods such as: one off service area focus groups; use of customer records; examination of data held elsewhere in the organisation, such as corporate customer complaints; and reference to data held by similar authorities or at national level from which reliable comparisons might be drawn, including via the Rural Services Network. Quantitative evidence could include data from NHS Foundation Trusts, community and voluntary sector bodies, and partnerships including the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Health and Well Being Board. Qualitative evidence could include commentary from stakeholders.

- **Which gaps could be filled within a timeframe that will enable you to monitor potential barriers and any positive or negative impacts on groups and individuals further along into the process?**

This could potentially be as part of wider corporate and partnership efforts to strengthen the evidence base on equalities. Examples would be: joint information sharing protocols about victims of hate crime incidents; the collection of data that will fill gaps across a number of service areas, eg needs of young people with learning disabilities as they progress through into independent living; and publicity awareness campaigns that encourage open feedback and suggestions from a variety of audiences.

Once you have identified your evidence gaps, and decided on the actions you will take right now and further into the process, please record your activity in the following boxes. Please extend the boxes as needed.

Evidence used for assessment of the service change: activity record

How did you carry out further research into the nine Protected Characteristic groups and those who may be at risk of social exclusion, about their current needs and aspirations and about the likely impacts and barriers that they face in day to day living?

And what did it tell you?

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change: activity record

How did you carry out further specific consultation and engagement activity with the intended audiences and with other stakeholders who may be affected by the service change?

And what did it tell you?

Further and ongoing research and consultation with intended audiences and target groups for the service change: activity record

What further research, consultation and engagement activity do you think is required to help fill gaps in our understanding about the potential or known affect that this proposed service change may have on any of the ten groupings and on the intended audiences and target groups? This could be by your service area and/or at corporate and partnership level.

Full report assessment for each group

Please rate the impact as you now perceive it, by inserting a tick. Please give brief comments for each group, to give context to your decision, including what barriers these groups or individual may face.

Protected Characteristic groups and other groups in Shropshire	High negative impact	High positive impact	Medium positive or negative impact	Low positive or negative impact
Age (please include children, young people, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group eg young person with disability)				
Disability (please include: mental health conditions and syndromes including autism; physical disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; HIV)				
Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				
Pregnancy & Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				
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Religion and belief (please include: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Non conformists; Rastafarianism; Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				
Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				
Other: Social Inclusion (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; people you consider to be vulnerable)				

ESIIA Full Report decision, review and monitoring

Summary of findings and analysis - ESIIA decision

You should now be in a position to record your decision. Please highlight in bold the route that you have decided to take.

1. To make changes to satisfy any concerns raised through the specific consultation and engagement process and through your further analysis of the evidence to hand;
2. To make changes that will remove or reduce the potential of the service change to adversely affect any of the Protected Characteristic groups and those who may be at risk of social exclusion;
3. To adopt the service change as it stands, with evidence to justify your decision even though it could adversely affect some groups;
4. To find alternative means to achieve the aims of the service change.

Please add any brief overall comments to explain your choice.

You will then need to create an action plan and attach it to this report, to set out what further activity is taking place or is programmed that will:

- *mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change,*
- AND*
- *review and monitor the impact of the service change*

Please try to ensure that:

- *Your decision is based on the aims of the service change, the evidence collected, consultation and engagement results, relative merits of alternative approaches and compliance with legislation, and that records are kept;*
- *The action plan shows clear links to corporate actions the Council is taking to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, to have due regard to the three equality aims in our decision making processes.*

Scrutiny at Part Two full report stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer</i>		
<i>Any internal support</i>		
<i>Any external support</i>		
<i>Head of service</i>		

Sign off at Part Two full report stage

Signature (Lead Officer)	Signature (Head of Service)
Date:	Date:

Appendix: ESIIA Part Two Full Report: Guidance Notes on Action Plan

Please base your action plan on the evidence you find to support your decisions, and the challenges and opportunities you have identified. It could include arrangements for:

- continuing engagement and involvement with intended audiences, target groups and stakeholders;
- monitoring and evaluating the service change for its impact on different groups throughout the process and as the service change is carried out;
- ensuring that any pilot projects are evaluated and take account of issues described in the assessment, and that they are assessed to make sure they are having intended impact;
- ensuring that relevant colleagues are made aware of the assessment;
- disseminating information about the assessment to all relevant stakeholders who will be implementing the service change;
- strengthening the evidence base on equalities.

Please also consider:

- resource implications for in-house and external delivery of the service;
- arrangements for ensuring that external providers of the service are monitored for compliance with the Council's commitments to equality, diversity and social inclusion, and legal requirements including duties under the Equality Act 2010.

And finally, please also ensure that the action plan shows clear links to corporate actions the Council is taking to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, to have due regard to the three equality aims in our decision making processes.

These are:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations

Note for 2014 refresh of our corporate equality impact assessment approach: Shropshire Council has referred to good practice elsewhere in refreshing the EINA material and replacing it with this ESIIA material. The Council is grateful in particular to Leicestershire County Council, for graciously allowing use to be made of their Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments (EHRIAs) material and associated documentation.

For further information on the use of ESIIAs: please contact your head of service or contact Mrs Lois Dale, Principal Rural Policy Officer and internal policy support on equality, via telephone 01743 255667, or email lois.dale@shropshire.gov.uk.