

Draft Equality Impact Assessment – Borough News

1. Introduction

1.1 Service:	Communications and Customer Contact
1.2 Name of proposal, policy, strategy or project:	Reduction of print & distribution of resident magazine Borough News to one edition a year.
1.3 This is:	A change to an existing activity (including ceasing that activity)
1.4 Completing officer's name:	Carys Jones
1.5 Date initially completed:	19/11/2021

2. About the proposal

*** Note that the term 'proposal' is used here to include any new services proposed for introduction, changes to an existing service, withdrawal of an existing service, any new policy or strategy or change to an existing policy or strategy, and any project ***

<p>2.1 What is the main purpose of the proposal? <i>Please explain in one or two short paragraphs</i></p>
<p>To reduce the design, print and distribution of the council's resident magazine, Borough News, from two editions a year to one a year. This is to contribute to the Council's financially responsible approach to managing the 2022/23 budget and deliver cost savings required, whilst still retaining one edition of the printed publication, to cater for non-digital audiences.</p>

<p>2.2 Why is it being introduced / reviewed / changed now? <i>This could be, for example, because of new government legislation or guidance, because of changing service user needs, or for financial reasons.</i></p>
<p>To contribute to the council's responsible financial management. By reducing the frequency of Borough News (currently twice yearly), it enables some financial saving whilst retaining the availability of a printed publication for non-digital audiences once a year.</p>

<p>2.3 Who is the intended audience or target group(s) for the proposal?</p>
<p>Internal audience or group: Choose an item.</p>
<p>External audience or group: All residents</p>
<p><i>If other, please specify. Please also use the section below to provide more details about the audience or target group(s):</i> The publication is delivered to every home in the borough, to reach all residents.</p>

3. Assessment of potential impact

Information about the protected characteristic groups as defined by the Equality Act is available [here](#). You should also use this assessment to consider impacts on other vulnerable groups such as those on low incomes.

In undertaking your assessment, please think about every stage of your process, including the design phase, any consultation, the delivery phase and once the proposal is up and running.

Who could be affected by your proposal?

3.1 Will the proposal affect people - service users, employees or the wider community?	Yes	<i>If yes, please identify which group(s):</i> Wider community
3.2 Will the proposal introduce a change which will significantly affect how services or functions are delivered?	No	<i>Please briefly explain your answer:</i> The proposed change will see a reduction in frequency of the production and delivery of the council's resident magazine, which is the Council's primary channel for communicating with non-digital audiences in particular. However, the resident magazine will continue to be produced and distributed, albeit once rather than twice a year.

Data and evidence

In undertaking this assessment, you will need to consider relevant data and evidence, depending on the people the proposal will affect, for example:

- Relevant information about service users held by your service
- Relevant information about staff (eg, the workforce equality information published on the [website](#), staff surveys etc)
- Relevant information about borough residents (eg the borough equality information published on the [website](#), service user surveys etc)
- Relevant information published by third party organisations (eg data, research studies etc)
- Feedback or information from organisations representing target equality groups

3.3 Please list the evidence / data sources you have considered in assessing the likely impact of your proposal	Residents Survey (2020-21) wave 2 results relating to ‘communication with the council’ plus Borough News readers survey (2019)
3.4 Are there any significant gaps in the evidence base that mean it is difficult to assess the likely impact of your proposal?	No <i>If yes, please explain what the gaps are and suggest how those gaps could be filled in the future</i>

Potential impact

3.5 Does your proposal relate to a service or function which information indicates is important to those with protected characteristics?	Yes	<i>If yes, please outline the issues – these could include (for example) access to information or ability to use or access a service.</i> Access to information. In the Residents Survey (wave 2) residents aged 65+ (68%) were most likely to prefer the residents’ magazine delivered through the door. ▪ Residents with a long-term health problem or disability (64%) were more likely to prefer this method of being kept informed. This compares to around a half (52%) of those without a long-term health problem or disability preferring to be kept informed by the residents’ magazine (Borough News)
3.6 Will the proposal intentionally target any particular protected characteristic group?	No	<i>If yes, please identify the group and explain the reason for this and what the intended impact is.</i>
3.7 Will the proposal intentionally exclude any particular protected characteristic group?	No	<i>If yes, please identify the group and explain the reason for this and any direct or indirect impact on that group.</i>
3.8 Will the proposal be able to be equally accessed by all at every stage of the process? Or are there barriers that might inhibit access for some people?	May be barriers that could inhibit access	<i>Please identify any barriers. These could be physical, digital, social or cultural:</i>

		The proposal will see a reduction in council information made available in print format – non-digital audiences have limited alternate means of accessing this information.
3.9 Does the proposal have the potential to reduce inequalities or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups?	No	<i>Please briefly explain your answer.</i> The proposal will see a reduction in information available in printed form for residents. As such it will not reduce inequalities or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups.

3.10 Considering the above information, please summarise the likely impact on protected characteristic groups (within the organisation, outside the organisation or both) This may be direct, indirect or differential impact. Use the above link for definitions, and consider issues such as physical access to services, different cultural or social practices and how people are able to access information.

	Nature of impact	Please briefly explain your answer
Age including children, young people or older people	Negative	The proposal will impact most on our non-digital residents, for whom Borough News provides printed information on the council and its services. Although non-digital audiences are largely assumed to be older people, sometimes low income can be a barrier for those unable to afford Broadband or mobile phone data connectivity.
Disability including physical, sensory or learning disability or long-term health impairment	Negative	Access to information. In the Residents Survey (wave 2) residents with a long-term health problem or disability (64%) were more likely to prefer this method of being kept informed. This compares to around a half (52%) of those without a long-term health problem or disability preferring to be kept informed by the residents' magazine (Borough News). However, Borough News is available in a range of accessible formats on request. There are no plans to change this.
Gender reassignment	Neutral	
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	
Race or ethnicity	Neutral	

Religion or belief	Neutral	
Sex	Neutral	
Sexual orientation	Neutral	
Deprivation	Negative	The proposal will impact most on our non-digital residents, for whom Borough News provides printed information on the council and its services. Although non-digital audiences are largely assumed to be older people, sometimes low income can be a barrier for those unable to afford Broadband or mobile phone data connectivity.
Other vulnerable group	Neutral	

<p>3.11 Has there been any consultation with relevant interested parties or is any consultation planned? <i>This could include consultation, further evidence gathering or changing or amended the proposed approach. Give consideration to both consultation within the Council (eg staff) and outside the Council (eg residents).</i></p>
<p>Yes, planned</p>
<p><i>If yes, please explain the nature of the consultation that has been undertaken or is planned. If no, please explain why consultation is not considered necessary. How were protected characteristic groups consulted or how will they be consulted?</i></p> <p>Consultation on the propped budget will be taking place for 8 weeks ahead from 18 November. The survey underpinning this consultation allows free text comments to be made on any aspect of the proposed changes including those relating to Borough News publication frequency.</p>

<p>3.12 What actions have been, or could be, taken to increase the positive impacts for people with protected characteristic(s) or other vulnerabilities? <i>This could include changing or amending the proposed approach.</i></p>
<p>N/A</p>

<p>3.13 What actions have been, or could be, taken to reduce potential negative impacts on people with protected characteristic(s) or other vulnerabilities? <i>This could include changing or amended the proposed approach, or allowing the proposal to be tailored to fit different individual circumstances</i></p>
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The Council's communications team will explore external funding opportunities which could be utilised to make additional printed communications materials available to residents e.g. availability of any government grants, sponsorship opportunities etc.

3.15 Are there any remaining negative impacts for people with protected characteristic(s) or other vulnerabilities? For example, physical, cultural or information access issues that cannot be resolved.

This question will be considered taking into account the outcomes of the consultation when this equalities impact assessment is finalised

3.16 Is any remaining negative impact legal or intended? The Equality Act says discrimination can be justified if it can be demonstrated that this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim (for example, see [here](#)). However, this should always be a last resort.

This question will be considered taking into account the outcomes of the consultation when this equalities impact assessment is finalised

IMPORTANT:

Any remaining negative unintended impacts must be drawn to the attention of the decision-maker (for example, the relevant Board or Committee).

The following must be considered by decision-makers before any final decision is made:

- **Does the assessment indicate any direct discrimination? If yes, the proposal would be unlawful and must be rejected.**
- **Does the assessment indicate any indirect discrimination? If yes, the proposal should be rejected unless it can be justified under legislation, for example:**
 - It is necessary to the Council effectively carrying out its function
 - The Council has been unable to find an alternative method of achieving its aims and objectives with a decreased discriminatory effect
 - The decision-maker considers that the means employed to achieve its aims and objectives are proportionate, necessary and appropriate.

In the event that there are negative impacts remaining and it is concluded that the proposal should still be agreed/implemented, it is highly recommended that consultation is carried out (including with representatives of the affected group) before the final proposal is agreed.

4. Monitoring and review

4.1 How do you proposed to monitor and review the impact of your proposal? *Please outline how you will monitor the impact of your proposal, once implemented, on protected characteristic groups, and what the mechanisms for review are (for example if any negative impact is found to be occurring)*

As part of updating our Council communications strategy we will be reviewing the available data and resident insight to assess whether the communications channels remain fit for purpose and/or to identify any gaps/areas for improvement within available budget/resource. Recommendations would be forthcoming as part of that process.

Additionally our Customer Contact Team will be asked to keep a note of callers requesting printed communications materials, to identify any increasing trend that could be linked to the [proposed] change if implemented. This insight can be fed into the review of the Council communications strategy (as above).