

## Stage 1 Equality Impact Assessment – Initial Screening

<b>Assessor(s) Name(s):</b>	Paul Littler
<b>Directorate:</b>	Resources
<b>Date of Completion:</b>	9 March 2012

### Name of Policy/Strategy/Service/Function Proposal

**Council Equality Groups Consultation**

### The Aims, Objectives and Expected Outcomes:

**The aims of the consultation are to establish if, staff desire, a single group or series of groups to represent issues faced by the 9 protected characteristics.**

**Directors had initially agreed that groups that had previously existed be resurrected, so the purpose of the consultation is to determine what the appetite for these groups may be, and then for HR to lead on the initial establishment of any groups that staff can then take responsibility for.**

Please delete as appropriate:

- This is a proposal for a new, changed or removed policy/strategy/service/council function  
(*check whether the original decision was equality impact assessed*)

<b>Key Questions to Consider in Assessing Potential Impact</b>	
Will the policy, strategy, service or council function proposal have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics or other reasons that are relevant issues for the local community and/or staff?	Yes/ <b>No</b>
Has previous consultation identified this issue as important or highlighted negative impact and/or we have created a “legitimate expectation” for consultation to take place? A legitimate expectation may be created when we have consulted on similar issues in the past or if we have ever given an indication that we would consult in such situations	Yes/ <b>No</b>
Do different groups of people within the local community have different needs or experiences in the area this issue relates to?	Yes/ <b>No</b>
Could the aims of these proposals be in conflict with the council’s general duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not?	Yes/ <b>No</b>
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how services or a council function/s is/are delivered?	Yes/ <b>No</b>
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate?	Yes/ <b>No</b>
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment of resources?	Yes/ <b>No</b>
Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities?	Yes/ <b>No</b>
<p>If you answer <b>Yes</b> to any of these questions, it will be necessary for you to proceed to a full Equality Impact Assessment after you have completed the rest of this initial screening form.</p> <p>If you answer <b>No</b> to all of these questions, please provide appropriate evidence using the table below and complete the evidence considerations box and obtain sign off from your Head of Service.</p>	

Protected Characteristics	Positive	Negative	No impact	Reasons
Age	x			The council's age profile is predominately between 35 and 54, so groups aimed at raising the issues of younger workers may be valuable, as may a group representing older workers and their needs in the workplace.
Disability	x			The council has just over 1% of its workforce declaring that it has a disability (according to the council's HR database). This compares to 6% of staff who responded through the staff survey questionnaires. The range of disabilities declared differ from physical factors, to mental health issues and chronic medical conditions. The ability of groups to influence policy development and offer support to colleagues is strong as there is a not insignificant number of people affected, including the potential to provide support and advice for any carers within the council's workforce.
Gender Reassignment	x			We are not aware of anyone declaring their gender reassignment status. This doesn't mean that this characteristic doesn't exist and the confidential consultation may reveal a hidden need for peer support or strategic input.
Marriage & Civil Partnership	x			Over 50% of the council staff are married, and 0.7% of staff are in a civil partnership. This figure represents a significant number of people and there may be potential for this group to consider policies and procedures in terms of how they receive information and support.
Pregnancy & Maternity	x			2.5% of recipients to the staff survey were either pregnant or on maternity leave when completing the form. This

			group has specific requirements and protection within Health and Safety law as well as the Equality Act 2010. With this in mind it is possible that their input towards consultation activity may enrich the council's processes and provide a valuable perspective.
Race	x		Over 96% of council staff declared that they were white British in the staff survey results. This leaves 4% currently unrepresented by any formal support or consultation group. Providing an opportunity to engage with and learn from this staff group has the potential to address work place issues as well as add a valuable contribution to policy and process design.
Religion / Belief	x		Nearly 70% of staff stated that they had no religious belief, with the remaining respondents declaring that they had a faith or belief. The majority faith group was Christian. It is important that all protected characteristics have a voice and provide input into the council's management processes given the significant numbers of people involved, both with a faith and those without any faith.
Sex (male / female)	x		Data on the workforce shows that women make up 74% of council employments and occupy over 82% of part-time positions. Women only occupy 45.69% of senior positions within the council in spite of making up nearly three quarters of the workforce. Unison has an active Women's group within the council but women outside of trade unions may feel that a corporate women's group may offer support and input into decision making.
Sexual Orientation	x		The former Lesbian Gay and Bisexual group within Unison has now been disbanded. Based on the latest Office of

				National Statistics data, approximately 1.74% of people may be gay, lesbian or bisexual, which would equate to around 89 people within the council, but Stonewall's figures suggest nearer 7% or 357 members of staff. An active group has the potential to offer support and input into corporate activity.
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<b>Are there aspects of the proposal that contribute to or improve the opportunity for equality?</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<p><i>If answered Yes, describe what these are and how they may be promoted or enhanced</i></p> <p>The establishment of groups will allow issues – whether they are work related, social or personal – to be addressed within a peer led network. This allows the promotion of any issues to be escalated and addressed leading to them being considered at a senior level.</p> <p>Based upon staff data and information collected through the 2011 staff survey it is clear that the 9 characteristics are embedded throughout the council, and undoubtedly will cross over between groups of individuals. Staff groups offer an opportunity to integrate and address issues through peers.</p>	

<b>Evidence Considered During Screening</b>
<p>One of the key areas of evidence considered related to the Stonewall top 100 employers. The top 100 employers were required to satisfy essential criteria, one of which included a thriving and supportive network of staff groups. Research evidence from Stonewall has shown that network groups offer support, challenge and a review of strategic decisions and policies that affect the groups involved. This is seen to be a healthy demonstration of a forward thinking consultative employer.</p> <p>The council staff diversity figures have been derived from two sources. The HR database that collects information from people as they join the council (and update it via a self service online facility) and from the staff survey. The staff survey was completed by 780 people, and of that number 534 people or 68% responded to the questions on the protected characteristics. Additional data has come from the Office for National Statistics, particularly for regional information. The combined data provides the following information:</p> <p>Our gender distinctions are split between men and women as follows:</p>

1357 men – 26.54%  
3756 women – 73.46%

The council consistently receives higher applications for jobs from women as opposed to men, but 33.1% of applications are made by men. On the Isle of Wight, women are most economically active, and looking for work, aged between 24 and 35 (ONS data). ONS data also suggests that it is within this age group that women on the Island are most likely to have children.

The ethnicity of the council is predominately classified as white UK. Only 39 employees, or 0.86% of the workforce, identify themselves with other ethnicities. What is concerning is that 587 are classified as 'ethnicity unknown', which means that nearly 8% of the workforce do not have their ethnicity captured on the HR system. 2.59% of all applications received by the council come from people declaring their ethnicity as other than white UK.

The council's age profile shows that the majority of workers are aged between 35 and 54. 6.2% of the workforce is aged under 25, as opposed to 18.7% of workers being aged 55 or over.

47 workers have declared that they have a registered disability, making 1.04%. Again caution must be applied as 592 employments have no disability status declared, so the figures potentially may be greater. Applications from people declaring a disability are around 1.25% of those received.

The captured figures for marital status and sexuality of applicants are not particularly useful as out of 907 applications received in 2010/11 only 3.4% of applicants declared that they were married or in a civil partnership, and only 0.1% of applicants declared bisexuality whilst 95% failed to answer the question at all. We have no corporate data (that is, in the SAP system) on the workforce at all in these areas, nor on gender reassignment or religion or belief. Details provided in the staff survey suggest that around 1.4% of staff identify themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual and although ONS data suggests that this is probably reflective of the population as a whole, and their figures suggest that the gay, lesbian and bisexual population ranges from between 6 to 10%.

Of 907 applicants 96% didn't answer the question about religion, but the highest response was for Christianity at 2.9% with other religions only being declared at 2.8% of all applications.

This doesn't give us a clear picture of the total makeup of the workforce, so therefore the consultation provides an opportunity for hidden 'pockets' within the workforce to find a voice.

Head of Service Sign off:	
Advice sought from Legal Services (Name)	Kate Hill

Date	
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A signed version is to be kept by your team and also an electronic version should be published on the council's website (follow the link from the EIA page on the intranet)

