

# Swindon Borough Council Diversity Impact Assessment – Transfer of Services to Parish Councils 2016

## 1 What's it about?

Refer to equality duties

What is the proposal? What outcomes/benefits are you hoping to achieve?

The financial context of the Borough Council is that by 2020, we expect 80% of our Budget to be spent supporting vulnerable people compared to 48% in 2017-18. This means that the money left to pay for services like grounds maintenance and street cleaning is rapidly reducing and the Borough Council is worried that the appearance of the Borough will continue to get worse with some services having to be stopped due to lack of funding

In response to requests from some parish councils, during the last two years, there has been a steady transfer of these types of services from the Borough Council to Parish Council which have been funded by parish councils either reprioritising their existing funds or raising small amounts of new council tax.

These service transfers have worked really well and residents have noticed the improvements to the appearance of the Borough and have made a direct link between paying a few extra pounds in Council Tax to their parish council and seeing improved service standards.

This has led to a proposal from the Borough Council to establish parish councils in the current unparished areas of the Borough and to replicate this parish-led delivery model across the whole Borough.

The impact of establishing new parish councils will be an extra council tax charge for residents in the non-parished area and the impact of transferring more services to parish councils is that parish council tax charges will increase. On average, we expect council tax bills to increase by around £75 per annum on average phased over the next three to four years as a direct result of this proposal. This is in addition to normal annual inflationary increases of 2% for the Police, Parish and Fire elements and 4% for the Swindon Borough Council element. In total average bills at present are around £1,460 per annum. The £75 increase as a result of this specific proposal represents a 5% which is likely to be phased in over three to four years.

Who's it for?

All residents of households within the borough of Swindon irrespective of their equality groupings

How will this proposal meet the equality duties?

The proposal will impact all residents but will impact those residents in the non-parished areas more heavily as they will be paying for the infrastructure of a new parish council as well as the services being transferred to it. The increases here could be as much as double the average level referred to above.

What are the barriers to meeting this potential?

The proposal is subject to agreement by Council. If agreed, the changes are likely to take place and the resulting increases in charges will happen starting in April 2017.

## 2 Who's using it?

Refer to equality groups

What data/evidence do you have about who is or could be affected (e.g. equality monitoring, customer feedback, current service use, national/regional/local trends)?

The increase in Council tax is likely to impact those households that are just above the benefit thresholds. Households with very low income levels will have their Council Tax funded wholly by Council Tax support and will therefore not be directly impacted. Households with higher levels of income are unlikely to be materially impacted as the increase is likely to be less than £5 per month.

How can you involve your customers in developing the proposal?

Please see 3b below

Who is missing? Do you need to fill any gaps in your data? (pause DIA if necessary)

Targeted engagement events are being held during June and July 2016 followed by more widespread communication targeted at every household.

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### 3 Impact

Refer to dimensions of equality and equality groups

Show consideration of: age, disability, sex, transgender, marriage/civil partnership, maternity/pregnancy, race, religion/belief, sexual orientation and if appropriate: financial economic status, homelessness, political view

See section 2 above.

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**a) Does the proposal create an adverse impact which may affect some groups or individuals? Is it clear what this is? How can this be mitigated or justified?**

There is a potential for an adverse impact based on those falling within the following equality groups:

- Financial economic status – noticeable impact on monthly out-goings for those above the benefit threshold.

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What can be done to change this impact?

Whilst there is recognition that a number of residents may be detrimentally affected by the change, this is deemed to be reasonable when balanced against the sustainability of services valued by residents across the Borough.

Swindon's Council Tax levels are below the national average and this change will bring them more in line with average bill levels nationwide.

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**b) Does the proposal create benefit for a particular group? Is it clear what this is? Can you maximise the benefits for other groups?**

There is no indication that there is any benefit to a particular equality group.

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**Does further consultation need to be done? How will assumptions made in this assessment be tested?**

Formal consultation on the proposal is planned to for September 2016.

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### 4 So what?

Link to business planning process

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What changes have you made in the course of this DIA?

None

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What will you do now and what will be included in future planning?

Consultation will be undertaken with feedback and comments returned to Cabinet. A communication strategy will be developed to ensure that all residents are aware of the changes. The implementation of the change will be undertaken once consultation has been undertaken.

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When will this be reviewed?

The impact on benefit take-up and council tax collection levels will be monitored monthly as part of the normal monitoring processes already in place.

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How will success be measured?

Success will be measured by the following factors

- Minimal impact on Council Tax collection levels
- Sustained and improved services

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### For the record

Name of person leading this DIA	Kirsty Cole	Date completed	20.5.16
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Names of people involved in consideration of impact – Kirsty Cole			
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Name of manager signing DIA	Date signed
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# Diversity Impact Assessment – an inclusive business planning tool

## 1. What's it about? refer to equality duties

- What is the proposal? What outcomes/benefits are you hoping to achieve
- Who's it for?
- How will this proposal meet the equality duties?
- What are the barriers to meeting this potential?

## 2. Who's using it? consider all equality groups

- What data/evidence do you have about who is or could be affected? (e.g. equality monitoring, customer feedback, current service use, national/regional/local trends)?
- How can you involve your customers in developing the proposal?
- Who is missing? Do you need to fill any gaps in your data?

## 3. Impact consider dimensions and equality groups

Using information in parts 1 & 2:

- a) Does the proposal create an adverse impact which may affect some groups or individuals? How can this be mitigated or justified?  
> What can be done to change this impact?
- b) Does the proposal create benefit for particular groups or individuals. Is it clear what this is? Can you maximise the benefits for other groups?
  - Does further consultation need to be done? How will assumptions made in this assessment be tested?

## 4. So what?

- What changes have made in the course of this DIA?
- What will you do now and what will be included in future planning?
- When will this be reviewed?
- How will success be measured?

## Considerations

### Our equality duties

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
2. Advance equality of opportunity
3. Foster good relations

### Equality groups

For the following equality groups: age, disability, sex, transgender, marriage/civil partnership, maternity/pregnancy, race, religion/belief and sexual orientation.

Extended by SBC policy to include: financial economic status, homelessness, political view.

## Dimensions of equality

How will the proposal affect Human Rights and life chances of different groups? Consider how the proposal affects

1. Longevity.
2. Physical security.
3. Health.
4. Education.
5. Standard of living.
6. Productive and valued activities.
7. Individual, family and social life.
8. Participation, influence and voice.
9. Identity, expression and self-respect.
10. Legal security.