

Equality Impact Assessment

Why do I need to consider equality issues?

Under the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, we have a duty to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

“As a public body, it is important that everyone who needs to can access our services.”

The term ‘protected characteristic’ covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. If we fail to consider how a proposal could affect different groups in different ways, it is unlikely to have the intended effect. This can contribute to greater inequality and poor outcomes.

The Equality Duty applies to all the decisions made in the course of exercising the Council’s public functions. It applies to service provision and also internal operations and is a legal obligation.

In addition to this, the Council has specific Equality Objectives for 2020 to 2024 relating to:

- Using data and local intelligence better
- Supporting good community relations
- Accessible information and services
- Working for the Council

When formulating, reviewing, planning or providing services or policies, the Council needs to demonstrate that it has assessed the impact of any changes on people who are protected under the Equality Act, and that it has taken steps to remove or minimise any harm that it has identified.

More information about our objectives, and the Equality Act, can be found at www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/equality.

When should I do an Equality Impact Assessment?

“Do not leave the Equality Impact Assessment to the last minute!”

If you are considering changes to a service, a new or updated strategy or policy, or starting a new project, and people will be impacted by those changes in any way, you need to think about equality issues as part of the process.

The Equality Impact Assessment is one part of this ongoing process and will help ensure that all proposals contribute to improvements in equality and promoting good relations.

This template has been prepared to assist you. You will need to complete the template and make it available to inform the decision as to whether to implement your proposal (for example, agree your strategy or policy, or sign off your project for implementation). The decision maker may be your Head of Service, a Director, the Place and People Board, or the Council’s Executive.

Please contact [Cath Rose, Head of Corporate Policy](#), if you have any questions about the Equality Impact Assessment process, and suggestions about how it could be improved, or would like any assistance in completing the template.

1. Introduction

1.1 Service:	Community Partnerships
1.2 Name of proposal, policy, strategy or project:	Community Centres Transformation
1.3 This is:	A change to an existing policy or strategy <i>If other, please specify:</i> Click or tap here to enter text.
1.4 Completing officer's name:	Isabel Wootton
1.5 Date initially completed:	20/05/2021

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 ****

2.1 What is the main purpose of the proposal? <i>Please explain in one or two short paragraphs</i>
To expand the reach of the community centres in Banstead, Woodhatch and Horley to further meet community needs.

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>
The community centres were run by an external service provider under contract between 2016 and 2020. They offered an over 50s club as well as room hire and a food service. In 2019 a project was established to a) transfer the operation of the centres to the Council as of April 2020 and to b) consider the potential to transform the centres to further meet community needs. The project has established, through survey and engagement work, that there are a range of ways in which the service can be expanded to better meet community needs. In particular using a volunteer and resident led model to widen the activities offered in the centres to ensure the programme of activities reflects a wider range of community needs.

2.3 Who is the intended audience or target group(s) for the proposal?
Internal audience or group: Staff and councillors
External audience or group: All residents
<i>If other, please specify. Please also use the section below to provide more details about the audience or target group(s):</i> Click or tap here to enter text.

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> More than one of the above
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 change will retain community centres in a largely recognisable delivery model however the focus will expand to multi-use community centres and meeting the needs of a wider range of residents.

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	<p>The survey results from work completed Feb – Mar 2021 on community centres. See the separate full report – the response table is at Annex A. As well as the wider the discussion groups and interviews which enabled the team to hear from community representatives with insight on some of the groups we were less likely to hear from through the survey. E.g. RBBC's comm development workers, learning difficulties organisation (Horley), YMCA Sovereign Centre (younger families and youth work). The membership list of the centres – in light of data transferred from the previous provider. See the summary data at Annex B. It is noted that as well as the members of the centres the centres are all hired by a wide range of community groups of all ages and with a wide range of interests and representatives were invited to the discussion groups.</p>	
3.4 Are there any significant gaps in the evidence base that mean it is difficult to assess the likely impact of your proposal?	<p>Yes</p>	<p><i>If yes, please explain what the gaps are and suggest how those gaps could be filled in the future</i></p> <p>The survey results (see separate evaluation report – the response table is set out below at Annex A) identifies that some groups are under-represented in the responses. It proposed that more work be completed to consider the needs of men, younger people and minority ethnic groups and how these needs could be met. This will be taken forward with the data and insight team in 2021, and will involve partner engagement.</p>

Potential impact

3.5 Does your proposal relate to a service or function which information indicates is important to those with protected characteristics?	<p>Yes</p>	<p><i>If yes, please outline the issues – these could include (for example) access to information or ability to use or access a service.</i></p> <p>The proposal involves expanding an existing community centre service that is currently regularly used by users whose average age is 82. (see member data breakdown at Annex B).</p>
3.6 Will the proposal intentionally target any particular protected characteristic group?	<p>No</p>	<p><i>If yes, please identify the group and explain the reason for this and what the intended impact is.</i></p> <p>The proposal is to expand the reach of the community centres to reach broader community needs. The intention is to increase the inclusivity of the centres. The centres will continue to meet the</p>

		needs of older residents. The broader reach will seek to address issues such as loneliness, identified through the survey, rather than intentionally target a particular protected characteristic group. The centres will continue to hire rooms to groups with a wide range of interests from across the community.
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> Click or tap here to enter text.
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 intention is to have centres that are available to all residents. However, we need to explore further with partner groups whether there are social or cultural barriers that may inhibit access or discourage residents from attending and how these might be addressed. The project includes a workstream to consider transport options and to review the geographic offer for older residents across the borough with the intention of ensuring an offer that all residents can reach.
3.9 Does the proposal have the potential to reduce inequalities or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups?	Yes, Improve outcomes	<i>Please briefly explain your answer.</i> The intention is to provide activities and community spaces that enable volunteers and community groups from across the borough to offer services which improve the quality of life for residents.

3.10 Considering the above information, please summarise the likely impact on protected characteristic groups (within the organisation, outside the organisation or both) <i>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.</i>		
	Nature of impact	Please briefly explain your answer
Age including children, young people or older people	Positive	The proposal seeks to build on the services for older residents that work well and revitalise the offer building from best practice which focuses on user led service design and volunteer led engagement.

		<p>The proposal seeks to test the potential for a younger people's offer being offered at centres in collaboration with partners.</p> <p>It should be noted here and in all the sections of 3.10 below that the centres offer room hire to a wide range of community groups with a wide range of ages and diverse interests. This will continue and we will seek to further expand the room hire in support of diversity.</p>
Disability <i>including physical, sensory or learning disability or long-term health impairment</i>	Positive	<p>The resident survey highlighted dementia support as something that the centres should explore. Whilst the centre staff themselves are not experts in dementia services, and it is not the intention that they are trained to be, the project proposal includes exploring work with partners about what could be offered in this space.</p> <p>The discussion groups also drew out a few groups that were keen to use the centres – the Horley group included a service provider for adults with learning disabilities which was keen to use the centre more, the Banstead group had several mentions of a Parkinson's group. All centres have existing hirers from groups that support those with differing disabilities e.g. deaf group; carers group for those with disabilities. There was also reference in the discussion groups to the accessibility of the buildings being very good (which we understood to mean the disabled access) – so an opportunity to enable more people with disabilities to use these important resources.</p>
Gender reassignment	Neutral	
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	<p>The transformation plans will have a positive impact by way of the centres being venues where there will be more opportunities for local groups to support pregnant women and parents with young children.</p>
Race or ethnicity	Positive	<p>Based on the limited ethnicity data available for the current centre users (this was not a well populated field in the data transferred to us) the current centre user base is largely white. The proposal, in seeking to expand the reach of the centres, will seek to engage partners, volunteers and residents to test the attractiveness of activities and groups that may expand the users of the centres to better reflect the ethnic profile of the borough. In particular working with groups to identify any gaps in activities that could be addressed.</p>

Religion or belief	Neutral	
Sex	Positive	The current centre user base is largely female. The proposal, in seeking to expand the reach of the centres, will seek to engage partners, volunteers and residents to test the attractiveness of activities and groups that may engage men.
Sexual orientation	Neutral	
Deprivation	Positive	The centres in Woodhatch and Horley have recently become the locations for Food Clubs co-ordinated through the RBBC community development team. These clubs provide food support to those on a low income. This activity, alongside the support services highlighted in the survey, demonstrate the potential for the centres to continue to grow the offer for those on low incomes.
Other vulnerable group	Choose an item.	

3.11 Has there been any consultation with relevant interested parties or is any consultation planned?

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).

Yes, already undertaken

RBBC has carried out three strands of research to support the project and consider how best to develop the centres to further meet needs whilst continuing to support existing users:

- Demographic and geodemographic data analysis of each locality
- Exploratory qualitative discussion groups and interviews with centre stakeholders, including hirers
- Quantitative surveys with centre users and residents.

These activities followed previous engagement with community centre staff and complement other research, for example, into alternative models used elsewhere in Surrey and beyond.

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

Conversations with partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors have begun to establish how the centres can best have positive impacts on those with protected characteristics. The intention is that these partner conversations should continue, utilising the community development partner networks as well as wider borough wide partner fora to seek a wide range of views and develop specific centre based plans that reflect this.

3.13 What actions have been, or could be, taken to reduce potential negative impacts on people with protected characteristic(s) or other vulnerabilities? *This could include changing or amended the proposed approach, or allowing the proposal to be tailored to fit different individual circumstances*

The measures outlined in 3.12 will also help identify and address any potential negative impacts as proposals are further developed.

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.*

No

If yes, please summarise which groups could be impacted and how.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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.*

Choose an item.

If yes, please explain further.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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)*

The centres will have a range of KPIs to assess their reach which will include age and ethnicity. Qualitative review will also be undertaken through feedback to assess the impact and any potential negative impacts. These will be reported to the Head of Service and Council Portfolio Holder responsible for Community Centres in order that actions can be taken accordingly. If negative impacts do arise the team will quickly and proactively revisit the nature and type of activities provided, the way they are provided and how we promote and communicate them and take actions to address the negative impacts.

Annex A – Community centre survey responses demographics

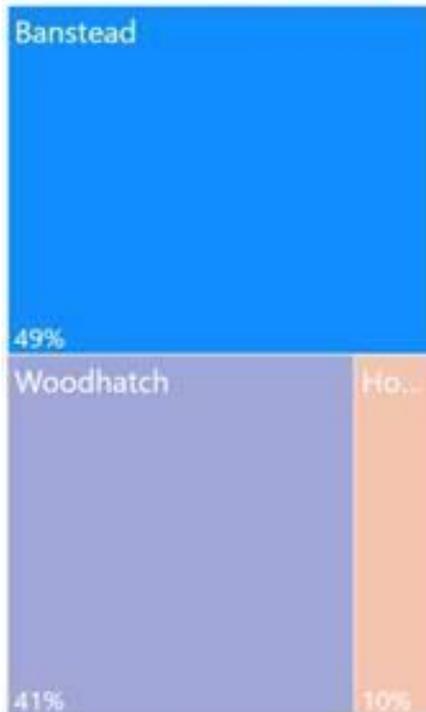
Based on mid-year ONS estimates for 2018, this table shows that some groups are under-represented in the responses.

	General public survey participants	Borough
Gender: males are under-represented	Male: 27% Female: 71% Prefer not to say: 1%	Male: 49% Female: 51%
Age: Young people are under-represented	18-24: 0% 25-34: 5% 35-44: 15% 45-54: 17% 55-64: 20% 65-74: 21% 75-84: 14% 85+: 6% Prefer not to say: 1%	18-24: 8% 25-34: 15% 35-44: 19% 45-54: 19% 55-64: 15% 65-74: 12% 75-84: 7% 85+: 4%
Ethnicity: Black and minority ethnic groups are slightly under-represented.	White: 90% Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: 0% Asian/Asian British: 3% Black: African, Caribbean, Black British: 1% Other: 0% Prefer not to say 4%	White: 90% Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: 2% Asian/Asian British: 5% Black: African, Caribbean, Black British: 2% Other: 1%

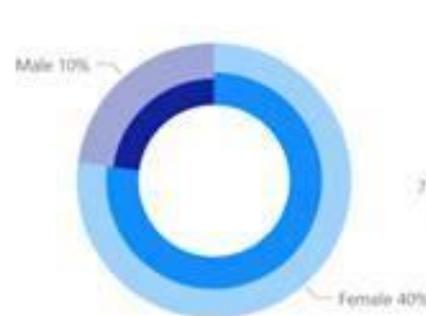
Annex B

Community Centres' Clients

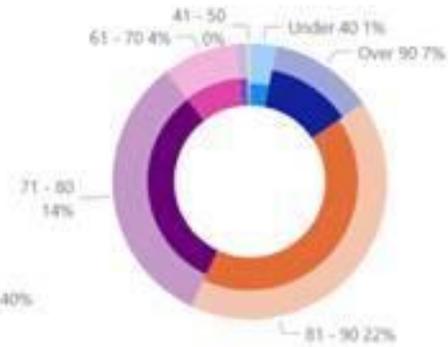
Data from March 2020



573

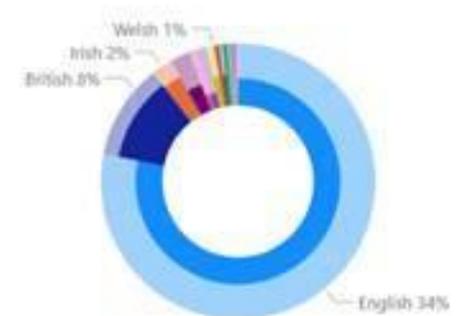


Gender	Count
Female	458
Male	110
Total	568



Age Band	Count
81 - 90	257
71 - 80	165
Over 90	86
61 - 70	46
Under 40	13
51 - 60	6
Total	573

Average age
82.3



Ethnicity	Count
English	134
British	33
Irish	7
Any other white Background	4
Any other Asian Background	2
Welsh	2
White and Black Caribbean	2
Bangladeshi	1
Caribbean	1
Chinese	1
Indian	1
Total	190