

Appendix 3 - Equalities Impact Assessment

1. Within the aims and objectives of the policy or strategy which group (s) of people has been identified as being potentially disadvantaged by your proposals? What are the equality impacts?

The aims and objectives of the Strategy are intended to reduce the level of financial exclusion experienced by various sectors of the population of Oxford. As such the overall impact of this Strategy should be to reduce the disadvantage experienced by those on low incomes or unable to access financial services. There are those that are more vulnerable to this issue than others and the aim of this strategy will be to target those who perhaps have the highest need and are in danger of suffering some form of financial exclusion. These groups can include but are not necessarily limited to;

- Young adults
- City Council tenants
- People on low or insecure incomes
- Benefit recipients
- Those suffering from fuel poverty or deprivation

Although the aim of the strategy is to reduce disadvantage, there are some groups of people who may not be able to take advantage of the support that the Strategy intends to provide. These are those groups of people that already find it hard to access Council Services and would include the elderly, people with disabilities that prevent them leaving their home and people whose first language is not English. As many of these people would be at a risk of financial exclusion, it is important to ensure they do not experience such disadvantage.

2. In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your current or proposed new or changed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts?

Please provide further details of the proposed actions, timetable for making the changes and the person(s) responsible for making the changes on the resultant action plan

To minimise the impact described above, the Strategy will be implemented jointly with partners in the City to maximise the number of people who can be reached. The various initiatives in the Strategy will be communicated to a wide range of voluntary groups and organisations which provide Housing support. These groups will be able to act as advocates for the work of this Strategy and identify those customers in need of support. In respect of the work to alleviate fuel poverty, specific funding has been made available for third party organisations to provide support to “hard to reach” customers.

3. Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

Please note that you are required to involve disabled people in decisions that impact on them

This Strategy will be subject to public consultation. The partners referenced above will be invited to respond to the consultation, and to distribute copies to their clients.

Forms will be made available in customer facing areas in St Aldates Chambers and Templars Square to capture responses. Members of the public will also be able to complete the consultation online.

4. Can the adverse impacts you identified during the initial screening be justified without making any adjustments to the existing or new policy, strategy, procedure, project or service?

Please set out the basis on which you justify making no adjustments

The impacts identified require adjustments to be made to avoid excluding a section of the population that the Strategy is specifically designed to support. The actions outlined in Section 2 above are intended to mitigate this impact.

5. You are legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts.

Please provide details of how you will monitor/evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place

A working group will be established to oversee implementation of the Strategy, which will report to the Welfare Reform City Officer Group, which in turn reports to the Customer First Board. The working group will monitor and report on the impacts identified in this assessment.

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA: Helen Bishop

Role: Head of Customer Services

Date: 11 February 2014