



Uttlesford  
District Council



**Steria Limited**

Report for

**Harlow District Council and Uttlesford District Council Revenues and Benefits  
Shared Service Equality Impact  
Assessment**

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# 1 Introduction

A workshop was held with representatives from Harlow District Council (HDC) and Uttlesford District Council (UDC) Revenues & Benefits services, on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2011, to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment (Screening) for the proposed Shared Revenues and Benefits service.

As the proposed future shared service model is unknown at this stage of the project, the focus of the meeting was based on the **potential** impact the shared service would have on the Revenues and Benefits staff of both organisations. Section 2 of this document details the discussions in terms of:

- the changes identified as potentially impacting staff,
- how these can be addressed or mitigated,
- if these changes impact Equality and
- future actions to monitor the impact on Equality

Using the information from the workshop an Equality Impact Assessment (Screening) template has been completed and is provided in Section 3 of this document. A full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), identifying the impact on all stakeholders will need to be carried out once the proposed Shared Revenues and Benefits Service model has been agreed and is being implemented.

## 2 Workshop Output

Staff Concerns	Potential Impact	Solution	Potential EIA Impact Category (Negative)	Action
Travel to work	Possible requirement for some staff to purchase vehicle in order to cover geographical area.	Create flexible partnership policies to ensure equality regarding these impacts.	Gender (predominantly female part time staff)	One to ones in Phase 2 and staff surveys.
	Travel time (not predictable)	Enable Home working.	Disabilities	Monitoring and measuring schemes.
	Use of public transport and mobility in general.	A pragmatic approach to service delivery based on staff locations.	Belief & Religion	Clear communication strategy to include staff suggestions and concerns. (Individually and in meetings)
Geographic coverage	Child care/family care commitments and costs.	Additional expenses to be built into the Business Case.	Pregnancy & maternity	
Work Life Balance	Increased mileage and costs	Core times of service provision, including Saturdays	Age	
	Increased sickness levels			
Car parking	Work performance reduced	Compare costs of UDC staff staying at the current office to moving into one office to free up office space for potential rental income.		
	Uttlesford provides free car parking as well as disabled parking next door to the Council building.			

	<p>Harlow has allocated disabled parking spaces, apart from that staff have to pay.</p> <p>Safety issues.</p> <p>Increased mileage and costs</p> <p>Additional costs relating to petrol and wear and tear insurance.</p> <p>Child care/family care commitments and costs.</p> <p>Number of properties and if possible demographic split in area.</p>	<p>It would be more 'equal' if only the IT services join from HDC and UDC.</p>		
<p>Face to face service quality</p> <p>Customer accessibility to the service</p> <p>Being forced to carry out a customer facing role or a non-customer facing role.</p>	<p>Staff morale</p> <p>Impact on Chinese/Asian/elderly/disabled/vulnerable customers</p> <p>Staff morale</p>	<p>Demographic model to be taken into account.</p> <p>Involve and listen to staff in the process</p> <p>Create a joint clear joint customer service charter.</p> <p>Enable customer access to trained Revenues and Benefits staff at all locations with staff</p>	<p>Race</p> <p>Age</p> <p>Disability</p> <p>Social Inclusion</p> <p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>Monitoring and measuring schemes for staff and customers.</p>

<p>Gender reassignment employees may prefer not to work in a customer facing environment.</p>		<p>access to management support.</p> <p>Carry out a skills audit.</p> <p>Ensure relevant HR policies are put into place.</p> <p>Staff development and training opportunities.</p> <p>Support and training for staff on transgender issues to prevent bullying and harassment.</p> <p>A joint HR policy would need to be developed to support transgender staff in the workplace</p>	<p>Gender Reassignment</p>	
<p>Physical environment of the workplace</p>	<p>Noise levels</p> <p>Light levels</p> <p>Toilet and changing facilities – are unisex toilets are available</p>	<p>Environmental Impact Assessment</p> <p>Workplace assessments</p> <p>Breast feeding provision (refrigerators)</p>	<p>All categories</p>	<p>Environmental Impact Assessment</p>
<p>Part time workers (mainly women, single parents)</p>	<p>Child care commitments and costs.</p>	<p>Offer suitable working arrangements.</p> <p>Flexible working policies.</p>	<p>All categories</p>	<p>Monitoring and measuring schemes.</p>

		Joint policy on communicating with staff on maternity/paternity leave.		
Potential changes in job grades and pay  Different terms and conditions	Staff morale, efficiencies and performance.  Increased levels of staff going on sick leave.  Inequalities between staff  Alignment of flexitime and hours of work, e.g. HDC work 37.5 hours and UDC work 37 hours. HDC staff accrue this extra half hour for Christmas leave.	HR policies and terms and conditions.  Agreed protocol/joint sickness policy for disability leave, attendance at specialist appointments etc.	All categories	Monitoring and measuring schemes during phase 2.
Speed of delivery of change	Longer time scales will enable staff to engage with the change more easily.	Communicate programme plan to staff.	All categories dependent on speed of change	On going review of programme plan.
Shared/New ICT	Training requirements  Staff morale	Training Needs Assessment  Provide quality training and support to staff.	Disability  Pregnancy & Maternity	Ensure all staff are trained

		Specialist ICT support for disabled staff, especially those with sight/hearing impairments and learning difficulties		
Local discretionary policies	Impact on customers	Joint board	No impact	N/A
Project failure	Worries over next steps	Open transparent plan B.	No impact	Open transparent plan B.
Staff control and empowerment	Service delivery  Morale  Delivering to individual Customer needs.  Front Office/Back Office split.  The impact on staff where UDC support services may lose work and the Harlow support service may need to be resourced to take more work on.	Empower staff; keep positive levels of customer facing service and quality.  Maintain professional contact.	No impact	Review during phase 2
Home working	Face to face service delivery  Training	Manager to ensure staff are invited to team meetings and maintain communication levels with home workers.	No impact (providing this is optional)	Review during phase 2 Consultations with staff



	<p>Customer contact</p> <p>Team feeling' (Isolation)</p> <p>Home environment</p> <p>Fair policies to be put in place.</p> <p>The potential positive impact encompassing a home working element, which covers a number of protected characteristics, needs to be clearly defined. For example, will staff be dedicated home workers or will this be on a rota system to all staff.</p>	<p>Compromise between office and home working.</p> <p>Enable flexible working around time and location.</p> <p>Support culture change and manage home working expectations and perceptions.</p>		
<p>Administering localised Council Tax &amp; Universal Credits</p>	<p>Impact on customers and staff</p>	<p>Monitor welfare reforms and gage impact on project.</p>	<p>Unknown</p>	<p>Risk assessment on partnership.</p>
<p>Redundancy</p>	<p>Potential catastrophic consequences for staff and their families as the job market is flat.</p>	<p>Ring fence all Harlow and UDC vacancies to staff working within the 2 authorities in the first instance.</p> <p>Offer voluntary retirement so those that may be able to afford early retirement may consider giving up their jobs (at the appropriate time) in favour of</p>	<p>Gender (predominantly female part time staff)</p> <p>Disabilities</p> <p>Belief &amp; Religion</p>	<p>Consultations with staff and unions</p>

		those that cannot afford to be made redundant.	Pregnancy & maternity Age	
Changes to Terms and Conditions after TUPE transfer (e.g. subsequently all posts made redundant and jobs only offered on Harlow terms and conditions)	Loss of mileage costs, parking costs and relocation allowance, making continued employment unsustainable.	Resolution of partnership to continue to pay allowances for full period regardless of any changes to terms and conditions, or any new post taken within the partnership unless an increase in pay outweighs the loss of allowances.	Gender (predominantly female part time staff) Disabilities Belief & Religion Pregnancy & maternity Age	Consultations with staff and unions
Home working, or working at the Saffron Walden office not offered.	Some staff with children, or disabled adults for which care for are in local establishments and the staff will be unable to travel to Harlow, making continued employment unsustainable.	Ensure impacted staff are identified and arrangements are made to give them the best chance of continued employment.	Gender (predominantly female part time staff) Disabilities Belief & Religion Pregnancy & maternity Age	Consultations with staff and unions

### 3 Shared Service Equality Impact Assessment (Screening)

Name of strategy, policy, protocol or project to be assessed		Is the strategy, policy, protocol, or project:	
Revenues and Benefits Shared Service – Uttlesford District Council (UDC) and Harlow District Council (HDC)		Project	
Name / Signature of Lead Officer completing assessment	Job title	Date Completed	
Donna Mason	Revenues and Benefits Manager Harlow District Council	8th June 2011	
Sue Ellis	Principle Council Tax Officer Uttlesford District Council		

**1. What is the main purpose of the strategy, policy, protocol or project?**

To enter into a partnership between UDC and HDC; in order to fully integrate their respective Revenues & Benefits Services into a single, shared partnership. This will build resilience and result in an enhanced service, leading to cost effectiveness and increased opportunities for staff in terms for career progression and satisfaction.

**2. List the main activities of the project, protocol or policy (for strategies list the main policy areas):**

The main activities will include:

- Standardisation of core processes
- Increasing consistency of policies and procedures
- Consistent terms and conditions for staff working within the shared service
- Clear career progression and role expectations
- Operational autonomy for the shared service operation
- Automation and standardisation of business reporting
- Shared investment in supporting ICT
- Investment in training and development

**3. Who are the main stakeholders?**

The main stakeholders for the shared service in respect to this EIA (Screening) are the Revenues and Benefits staff of Uttlesford and Harlow District Councils

**4. What outcomes are required from the strategy, policy, protocol or project?**

To achieve an improved customer service, with stronger and more resilient services leading to savings and efficiencies to both Councils in the partnership.

To create a flexible and innovative culture, along with improved job satisfaction as well as greater job opportunities for staff development.

**5. Are there any concerns that the strategy, policy, protocol or project could have a differential impact in terms of equality?**

*Use the table below to indicate:*

- a. Where you think that the strategy, project or policy could have a negative impact on any of the equality target group i.e. it could disadvantage them.*
- b. Where you think that the strategy, project or policy could have a positive impact on any of the groups or contribute to promoting equality, equal opportunities or improving relations within equality target groups.*

Please provide an explanation as to why you think there is a positive or negative or no impact.

The following table has been completed using the contents of Section 2 of this document 'Uttlesford and Harlow EIA 0.3.doc'. Please refer to Section 2 for further details relating to the staff concerns and impact on the EIA categories, including the possible solutions and actions for a successful shared Revenues & Benefits service.

	<b>Potential Positive Impact</b> – it could benefit	<b>Potential Negative Impact</b> – it could disadvantage	<b>No Impact</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<p>Safety concerns by female and male colleagues using public transport (especially during winter months and having to wait for lengthy periods at bus stops, stations etc)</p> <p>Introduction of home working can introduce an improved work life balance</p>
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>		<b>X</b>		<p>Gender reassignment employees may prefer not to work in a customer facing environment.</p>

	Potential Positive Impact – it could benefit	Potential Negative Impact – it could disadvantage	No Impact	Explanation
<b>Race</b>		<b>X</b>		<p>Cultural awareness and an appreciation of the respective customer demographic profiles needs to be communicated to staff bearing in mind that the customer base will be very different for each authority.</p> <p>Race cultural awareness with regards to policy on dress and acceptance in the workplace.</p> <p>Dealing with customers whose first language is not English. Interpretation and translation provision needs to be developed with a framework established, along with appropriate staff training.</p>

	<b>Potential Positive Impact</b> – it could benefit	<b>Potential Negative Impact</b> – it could disadvantage	<b>No Impact</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Disability</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<p>Having to learn new ICT systems may impact staff with learning difficulties.</p> <p>Ensuring there is enough provision for disabled parking spaces, along with a contingency if all spaces are taken.</p> <p>Access requirements to respective offices, especially if not on the ground floor.</p> <p>Increased flexible working may benefit staff with disabilities.</p>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>		<b>X</b>		<p>Appreciation that Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual staff may not have the confidence to be 'out' in a new organisational environment, which may impact on performance etc.</p> <p>Need shared protocol for specific incidents of Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual harassment/bullying.</p>



	<b>Potential Positive Impact</b> – it could benefit	<b>Potential Negative Impact</b> – it could disadvantage	<b>No Impact</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Age</b>		X		<p>Work life balance and flexible working practices currently experienced by individuals of all ages could be distorted due to the need to travel for longer distances and periods of time.</p> <p>A joint protocol on staff working after a specific age will need to be established.</p>
<b>Belief &amp; Religion</b>	X	X		<p>Having possible increased travel times to work may impact on certain staff with religious commitments. Although flexible working may help to accommodate this.</p> <p>Protocol needs to be in place for religious clothing/dress, prayer facilities, catering provision and religions holiday/festivals.</p>
<b>Social Inclusion</b>		X		<p>The impact of vulnerable customers who may not be able to speak English fluently could be affected by the possible changes in the face-to-face customer service structure of the shared service.</p>

	Potential Positive Impact – it could benefit	Potential Negative Impact – it could disadvantage	No Impact	Explanation
<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>		X		<p>Potential increased childcare costs for parents associated with longer working days due to travel necessities.</p> <p>Civil partnerships to be treated equally compared to married colleagues and not subject to unfair treatment.</p> <p>Staff benefits also need to be fair between those staff that are married and in a civil partnership.</p>
<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b>	X	X		<p>Work life balance of staff with child care needs maybe affected in a positive or negative way depending on individual situations.</p> <p>Women that are pregnant and possibly faced with having to park their car further away from the Council buildings may be impacted negatively. Support would need to be provided during later stages of pregnancy.</p> <p>Contingencies for covering maternity-related sickness Provision for breastfeeding mothers</p>

**Summary of initial Screening Process:**

Is this now progressing to a Full Equality Impact Assessment?	<b>Yes / No</b>
If no further action, file with appropriate strategy, policy, protocol or project assessed	