

Appendix 4 - Equality Analysis



What are the proposals being assessed?	The launch of the Council's redesigned Strategic Partner Funding Programme in October 2018.
Which Department/ Division has the responsibility for this?	Lead for delivery: Corporate Services, Customers, Policy and Improvement Division

Stage 1: Overview	
Name and job title of lead officer	John Dimmer, Head of Policy, Strategy and Partnerships
1. What are the aims, objectives and desired outcomes of your proposal? (Also explain proposals e.g. reduction/removal of service, deletion of posts, changing criteria etc)	The Council will be launching the redesigned Strategic Partner Programme in October 2018, with new voluntary and community sector strategic partners funded from April 2019. We are transitioning to an outcomes-focused commissioned grants approach and are aligning several council budgets for the first time, with the aim of ensuring the most targeted use of the council's limited resources and to make it easier for organisations to seek and apply for funding. The Programme now comprises five separate elements: information and advice, voluntary sector infrastructure support, wellbeing services, a carers service, and Healthwatch Merton.
2. How does this contribute to the council's corporate priorities?	The Council's overarching policy priority is to bridge the gap in terms of outcomes between the east and west of the borough and between different communities. Funded organisations will be required to 'Support the delivery of Merton's Community Plan, actively contributing to 'bridging the gap' between the east and the west of the borough.' The proposal also contributes to the Healthy and Fulfilling Life and Contributing to your Community priorities in the Community Plan as specific programmes in particular will help to promote wellbeing and independence and volunteering support.
3. Who will be affected by this proposal? For example who are the external/internal customers, communities, partners, stakeholders, the workforce etc.	Key identified customers: existing and potential voluntary and community sector service providers; existing and potential service users; other internal/external commissioners. Who will the proposal benefit: by aligning funding programmes it is intended that we will simplify the application process for the voluntary sector, prevent duplication, and that funding will ultimately have a greater impact. It has been identified that the goal of provision under the Strategic Partner Programme should be to develop clients' resilience and enable them to see an improvement in their circumstances. How the proposal will benefit the council: The redesigned programme aims to ensure more targeted use of the council's limited resources. In the current financial climate, we will be looking to support services that prevent, reduce or delay the need for more expensive interventions.

4. Is the responsibility shared with another department, authority or organisation? If so, who are the partners and who has overall responsibility?

Programme Sponsor: Director of Community and Housing, LB Merton

Responsibility for co-ordinating the engagement work, development of the funding prospectus and administration of the front end of the funding process sits within Corporate Services. Divisions within Community and Housing have responsibility for the wellbeing services and carers' service strands of the programme and the direct commissioning of these services.

Stage 2: Collecting evidence/ data

5. What evidence have you considered as part of this assessment?

Provide details of the information you have reviewed to determine the impact your proposal would have on the protected characteristics (equality groups).

Evidence gathered:

The recommissioning process was launched with a workshop at Vestry Hall on 30 November 2017, attended by approximately 50 voluntary and public sector representatives. Outputs from the workshop formed the basis of a number of working papers to inform discussions. A task and finish 'Collaborative Working Group' set up with membership drawn from workshop attendees, including representatives from across the Council, UCG, and voluntary sector. The group met five times and was co-chaired by the Council Management Team lead for the voluntary sector and the Chief Executive of Citizens Advice Merton and Lambeth. The group had nominated leads for data/needs analysis, engagement/consultation, and best practice.

To support this work, the council undertook mapping of the voluntary sector, including analysis of demand data and borough profile information.

The following two surveys were also run from 9 April until 7 May 2018 in order to gain information from the voluntary sector:

Voluntary Sector Survey: This survey targeted voluntary sector organisations and received 78 responses, from over 70 unique organisations. The intention of this survey was to gain an understanding of the current issues being faced by their clients, how they see this changing in the future, and what support services the organisations themselves require.

Service User Survey: This survey was directed at those who have approached a voluntary sector organisation for information or advice in the past two years. There were 67 unique responses to this survey, which aimed to find out the key issues facing people, and the demographic profile of those interacting with the voluntary sector. Notably, the largest percentage of survey respondents were from the more deprived wards in the east of the borough, in particular Mitcham. In addition, approximately 62% of respondents described themselves as having a disability.

The formal consultation on the draft funding prospectus opened on 16 July and ended on 27 August (six weeks). The launch event for this draft prospectus took place at MVSC's INVOLVE meeting on 17 July, with over 40 individuals attending and a drop in session for voluntary and community sector organisations was held on 14 August. Presentations and discussions have also taken place with the Merton Compact Board and Merton Partnership Executive Board.

Impact of evidence on proposals:

The intention of the extensive research into needs and demand in the borough is that the services which are commissioned will be equally accessible to all members of the community, and can be targeted at those people and areas with the highest levels of need.

The evidence to date has indicated the largest issues facing the most voluntary sector providers and residents as benefits, debt and housing. These findings have been reflected in the information and advice section of the draft prospectus. It is also recognised in the Prospectus that

certain groups will have a more specialised need for information and advice services (e.g. for community care advice) which must be addressed and that services should be effectively targeted and accessible.

The detail of the prospectus have reflected many of the discussions in the Collaborative Working Group; in particular, the need to set up an Advice Forum to bring organisations together to discuss issues, problem solve and share information. One of the intended aims of this forum is to improve understanding around the needs of Merton to enable Forum organisations to develop services to address unmet need.

The prospectus has also been updated in line with the feedback received from the voluntary sector over the six week consultation period.

No gaps in data have been identified, but it is acknowledged that there is potentially a negative impact for voluntary and community sector organisations as they may not be able to meet the more detailed criteria we will use to decide who our Strategic Partners will be. These services are likely to support individuals with a range of protected characteristics.

Stage 3: Assessing impact and analysis

6. From the evidence you have considered, what areas of concern have you identified regarding the potential negative and positive impact on one or more protected characteristics (equality groups)?

Protected characteristic (equality group)	Tick which applies		Tick which applies		Reason Briefly explain what positive or negative impact has been identified
	Positive impact		Potential negative impact		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Age	✓		✓		Generally a positive impact identified; however, there is potentially a negative impact for voluntary and community sector organisations that may not be able to meet the more detailed criteria we will use to decide who our Strategic Partners will be.
Disability	✓		✓		Generally a positive impact identified; however, there is potentially a negative impact for voluntary and community sector organisations that may not be able to meet the more detailed criteria we will use to decide who our Strategic Partners will be.
Gender Reassignment	✓		✓		Generally a positive impact identified; however, there is potentially a negative impact for voluntary and community sector organisations that may not be able to meet the more detailed criteria we will use to decide who our Strategic Partners will be.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	✓		✓		Generally a positive impact identified; however, there is potentially a negative impact for voluntary and community sector organisations that may not be able to meet the more detailed criteria we will use to decide who our Strategic Partners will be.
Pregnancy and Maternity	✓		✓		Generally a positive impact identified; however, there is potentially a negative impact for voluntary and community sector organisations that may not be able to meet the more detailed criteria we will use to decide

				who our Strategic Partners will be.
Race	✓		✓	Generally a positive impact identified; however, there is potentially a negative impact for voluntary and community sector organisations that may not be able to meet the more detailed criteria we will use to decide who our Strategic Partners will be.
Religion/ belief	✓		✓	Generally a positive impact identified; however, there is potentially a negative impact for voluntary and community sector organisations that may not be able to meet the more detailed criteria we will use to decide who our Strategic Partners will be.
Sex (Gender)	✓		✓	Generally a positive impact identified; however, there is potentially a negative impact for voluntary and community sector organisations that may not be able to meet the more detailed criteria we will use to decide who our Strategic Partners will be.
Sexual orientation	✓		✓	Generally a positive impact identified; however, there is potentially a negative impact for voluntary and community sector organisations that may not be able to meet the more detailed criteria we will use to decide who our Strategic Partners will be.
Socio-economic status	✓		✓	Generally a positive impact identified; however, there is potentially a negative impact for voluntary and community sector organisations that may not be able to meet the more detailed criteria we will use to decide who our Strategic Partners will be.

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6. If you have identified a negative impact, how do you plan to mitigate it?

One of the key changes to the programme is the move to a commissioning model with our commissioning requirements clearly articulated in a Funding Prospectus. The key benefit of this approach is that our requirements have been co-produced with the voluntary sector and a great deal of detailed thought has gone in to designing the key outcomes we want to achieve for Merton residents. Previously, we've had a much looser and less detailed approach to what we are looking for. This allows a greater range of providers to come forward because the criteria is so broad but the risk is that the outcomes and impact is less clear.

A potential negative impact is therefore that some voluntary and community sector organisations may not be able to meet the more detailed and specific criteria we will use to decide who our Strategic Partners will be. To mitigate this, we have undertaken consultation with the sector on the detail contained within the draft prospectus and have ensured that this consultation was widely publicised.

We have held a consultation event and advice session to answer queries from voluntary and community sector organisations on the draft funding prospectus. We have also produced a question and answer document to address queries from the consultation event.

Support is available from Merton Voluntary Service Council for organisations who wish to submit collaborative bids and these are encouraged for specific funding streams. The application period will be six weeks, as in previous rounds.

In addition, as stated in the draft prospectus, when we assess applications received we will make judgements on the spread geographically and on the basis of needs.

Stage 4: Conclusion of the Equality Analysis

8. Which of the following statements best describe the outcome of the EA (Tick one box only)

Please refer to the guidance for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments is available on the intranet for further information about these outcomes and what they mean for your proposal

- Outcome 1** – The EA has not identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact and all opportunities to promote equality are being addressed.
- Outcome 2** – The EA has identified adjustments to remove negative impact or to better promote equality.
- Outcome 3** – The EA has identified some potential for negative impact or some missed opportunities to promote equality and it may not be possible to mitigate this fully.
- Outcome 4** – The EA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. Stop and rethink your proposals.

Stage 5: Improvement Action Pan

9. Equality Analysis Improvement Action Plan template – Making adjustments for negative impact

This action plan should be completed after the analysis and should outline action(s) to be taken to mitigate the potential negative impact identified (expanding on information provided in Section 7 above).

Negative impact/ gap in information identified in the Equality Analysis	Action required to mitigate	How will you know this is achieved? e.g. performance measure/ target)	By when	Existing or additional resources?	Lead Officer	Action added to divisional/ team plan?
Potentially a negative impact for voluntary and community sector organisations that may not be able to meet the more detailed criteria we will use to decide who our Strategic Partners will be.	Undertake consultation with the sector on the detail contained in the draft prospectus. Ensure that this consultation is widely publicised.	A range of organisations submit applications for funding	Nov 2018	Existing	John Dimmer	Not required
Potentially a negative impact for voluntary and community sector organisations that may not be able to meet the more detailed criteria we will use to decide who our Strategic Partners will be.	Advice session to answer queries from voluntary and community sector organisations on the draft funding prospectus	A range of organisations submit applications for funding	Aug 2018	Existing	John Dimmer	Not required
Potentially a negative impact for voluntary and community sector organisations that may not be able to meet the more detailed criteria we will use to decide who our Strategic Partners will be.	Support available from Merton Voluntary Service Council for organisations who wish to submit collaborative bids	Collaborative funding bids are submitted	Nov 2018	Existing	John Dimmer	Not required

Note that the full impact of the decision may only be known after the proposals have been implemented; therefore it is important the effective monitoring is in place to assess the impact.

Stage 6: Reporting outcomes

10. Summary of the equality analysis

This section can also be used in your decision making reports (CMT/Cabinet/etc) but you must also attach the assessment to the report, or provide a hyperlink

This Equality Analysis has resulted in an Outcome 2 Assessment

Key impacts:

Positive: drawing on the findings from the consultation and research to date, the draft prospectus has been designed to ensure that the services which are commissioned will be equally accessible to all members of the community, and can be targeted at those people and areas with the highest levels of need.

Negative: there is potentially a negative impact for voluntary and community sector organisations that may not be able to meet the more detailed criteria we will use to decide who our Strategic Partners will be. These services are likely to support individuals with a range of protected characteristics. No particular equality groups have been identified that would be affected more than others.

To mitigate the negative impact, we are undertaking consultation with the sector on the detail contained within the draft prospectus and have ensured that this consultation is widely publicised. We have held a consultation event and advice session to answer queries from voluntary and community sector organisations on the draft funding prospectus. We have also produced a question and answer document to address queries from the consultation event. Support is available from Merton Voluntary Service Council for organisations who wish to submit collaborative bids and these are encouraged for specific funding streams. The application period will be six weeks, as in previous rounds. In addition, when we assess applications received we will make judgements on the spread geographically and on the basis of needs.

Stage 7: Sign off by Director/ Head of Service

Assessment completed by	Amanda Roberts, Policy Strategy and Partnerships Officer.	Signature: <i>Amanda Roberts</i>	Date: 20/08/2018
Improvement action plan signed off by Director/ Head of Service	Sophie Ellis, Assistant Director of Customers, Policy & Improvement	Signature: <i>Sophie Ellis</i>	Date: 06/09/2018