

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

<b>Name of Policy/Service/Function</b> Access 2 Services Programme, Channels E-booking	
<b>Date of Assessment</b> November 2007	
<b>Directorate</b> Environment and Regeneration	
<b>Head of Service</b> David Wilde	
<b>Names and Roles of the people carrying out the EIA</b> Usha Parmar, Customer Services Manager Environment and Regeneration David Drury, Directorate Information and Customer Services Manager	
<b>Why is the Equality Impact Assessment being done?</b>	Management Board Report Cabinet Report <b>New Policy</b> Change to existing policy Minor decision with potentially major impact on equality <b>On Current EIA Schedule</b>

### 1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Summary of proposal and specify whether this is a universal or targeted service

The Access 2 Services Programme is one of the 5 strategic programmes currently in progress across the Council, along with the Efficiency Review, Towards Excellence, Building Schools for the Future and the 2012 Strategic Programme. The Access 2 Services Programme follows on from the "Improving Access to Services" inspection in 2006 and the main objective is to enable residents, businesses and visitors to be able to access the services they want, the way they want, when they want.

The initiative is to introduce a corporate e-booking system and e-diary system to replace the present arrangements within Register Office and Halls Bookings, creating new business processes for using the new system, and training users in both. This will incorporate best practice and cover the above objectives. It should also cover the process for automating the publication of up-to-date resource diaries to the council's website.

#### **Benefits include:**

The Registration Service has expanded its range of services considerably over the past few years and the demands for the services are such that the paper-based system is not just inefficient but also risky. Access to the diary is only with the individual physically holding it. As a result, it is possible to overlook bookings, which could lead to poor service to customers, complaints, loss of income and corporate embarrassment.

The current diary system within the Register Office makes checking future bookings for advanced payments very time consuming and inefficient.

Waltham Forest has a number of halls for hire and some are reserved several years in advance. It is therefore looking to use the e-bookings system to manage this area.

Also allows both services to have initial stages of phone-calls handled by WFD thereby providing 24/7 service to customers for general queries and contacts, and releasing back office resources to focus on delivering the service.

This is a targeted service for phase I and universal for phase II

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### 2. Profile of groups affected as customers and/or staff

#### 2.1.1 Age Equality

##### Staff

Neutral

##### Customers

Neutral, this provision is an additional channel.

#### 2.1.2 Disability equality

##### Staff

Web tools has benefits for staff with visual or mobility disability, providing more flexibility with system settings for the individual based on their needs.

##### Customers

Web tools has benefits for staff with visual or mobility disability, providing more flexibility with system settings for the individual based on their needs.

#### 2.1.3 Gender equality

##### Staff

Neutral, this provision is an additional channel.

##### Customers

Neutral, this provision is an additional channel.

#### 2.1.4 Race equality

##### Staff

This provision is an additional channel.

##### Customers

This provision is an additional channel.

There is a positive impact for people requiring community languages services once there is the integration of this function to WFD from Registrars. There is recognition that Waltham Forest borough has a high number of people that do not have bank accounts and are cash users, they are predominantly from BAME communities and newly arrived communities. It is therefore necessary enable cash payments for Council services.

#### 2.1.5 Religion/Beliefs

##### Staff

Neutral, this provision is an additional channel.

##### Customers

There may be cultural sensitivity around the use of credits cards however using debit cards would be permissible. The Registrars Service would deal with culturally specific packages beyond the ebooking process.

#### 2.1.6 Sexual Orientation

##### Staff

Neutral, this provision is an additional channel.

##### Customers

Neutral, this provision is an additional channel.

### 3. Questions this assessment addresses

#### 3.1 What kind of equality impact may there be?

Ebooking is an addition to current channels and has positive impact for people with disabilities.

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### 3.2 How significant is it in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?

The number of people likely to be affected is small and localised to staff in phase I and large, borough wide for phase II.

### 3.3 Is the impact positive or negative (or is there a potential for both)?

Positive

### 3.4 On what aspects of the Equality Duties will this impact be?

Disability and Race

### 3.5 Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination?

No

### 3.6 What further information is required to gauge the probability and extent of the impact?

NA

### 3.7 Where and how can that information be obtained?

NA

## 4. Action Planning Questions

### 4.1 What action do we need to take to reduce negative impact?

To be mindful of the prevalent cash culture amongst BAME and newly arrived communities, and that some faiths do not permit individuals to go into debt.

### 4.2 If the action proposed will not fully mitigate adverse consequences for equality, or if the decision is to take no action, why is this, and can we justify it?

Pending discussion with BT.

### 4.3 Can any further action be taken to promote equality of opportunity in relation to any of the equality strands?

See action plan in pint 6 below.

### 4.4 Do we need to undertake any further consultation or research?

No

## 5. Conclusions and Next Steps

There is positive impact overall with caveats for race and religion equality aspects.

The inclusion of voluntary groups as service intermediaries also offers significant scope to break down traditional barriers to service provision through use of trusted sources, support and an understanding of the needs to specific groups.

### 5.1 The key areas, which were improved as a result of this assessment, were:

Communications plan for Access 2 Services and informing the scoping of the tender exercise.

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### 6. Action Plan

Item	Action required	Lead Officer	Time Scale	Comments/Outcomes	Status
1.	Channels: electronic, call centre and face to face channels will be consistent and more interactive.	David Wilde	2009	A wider range of services will be accessible from each channel, reducing the need to deal with the council many times	
2.	Take-up: Ensure the design of the self service channel is inclusive in respect of disability equality and that its implementation supports customers who are disabled, older and who speak community languages.	David Wilde	2009	This will free up resources for front line services. Better use will be made of the most appropriate channels for relevant services	
3.	Equality impact assessments will be built into the work programmes for the delivery of each of the "Channels" work-stream	David Drury	Nov 2007	ebooking	✓ Completed Nov 2007
4.	Enable cash collection for race equality and religion and faith.	David Wilde		Retaining channels for vulnerable communities	