

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Name of Policy/Service/Function Access 2 Services Programme, Channels One Card Phase II	
Date of Assessment November 2007	
Directorate Environment and Regeneration	
Head of Service David Wilde	
Names and Roles of the people carrying out the EIA Usha Parmar, Customer Services Manager Environment and Regeneration Hannah Rawlings-Smith, Emerging Technologies & ICT Strategy Officer	
Why is the Equality Impact Assessment being done?	Management Board Report Cabinet Report New Policy Change to existing policy Minor decision with potentially major impact on equality On Current EIA Schedule

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 aim of the OneCard Phase II is to enable the Council to provide residents of the Borough with a single Citizen Card that will give them access to Council facilities at various outlets across the borough. The OneCard, will also act as an ID card for staff, giving them access to buildings and equipment.

A communications plan has been developed to support the introduction and phases of the OneCard for key stakeholders groups. Any target groups identified through this assessment will be incorporated into the plan to ensure people understand the benefits.

The benefits of carrying out the project include:

- Faster access to cash from transactions made via Rent and Council Tax card payments
- Increased interest earned by reducing the transaction processing time
- Reduced card costs due to the elimination of the need to replace the Rent card each time the citizen moves home
- Additional reduction in card cost due to one card fulfilling a number of functions where previously several cards were required
- More transactional data to use within CRM

This is a universal service

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

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2.1.1 Age Equality

Staff

Neutral

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Younger people are more likely to adapt to the changes, however older people are more likely to be cash users and some may not have bank accounts, therefore there may be resistance to this change.

Council Tax

There may be possible confusion with the multi-scheme and OneCard for older people.

Library

There is likely impact on young people with the Proof Of Age scheme. Older people are generally the biggest users of libraries, and will need added support to adapt to the change.

Schools

There is positive impact for children and young people through the schools and BSF initiative.

2.1.2 Disability equality

Staff

There is positive impact for staff with disability as this card enables them to get around easily, with increased flexibility for hotdesking.

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There is positive impact for people with visual disabilities as the OneCard will be easier to use, however the charging up of cards is potentially problematic.

Council Tax

There is positive impact as the OneCard is easier to use than the peel-out card, however there may be possible confusion with the multi-scheme.

Library

There is capacity for the OneCard to hold information about the individual's needs and requirements if it was decided to develop this option at a later stage.

Schools

There is capacity for the OneCard to hold information about the child's needs and requirements if it was decided to develop this option at a later stage. This would give the child anonymity if they were entitled to free schools meals.

2.1.3 Gender equality

Staff

Neutral

epurse

Women are more likely to be cash carriers and may not have bank accounts, particularly if they are within low-income households or if their culture has gender specific roles and restrictions.

Council Tax

Neutral

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Library

neutral

Schools

Neutral

2.1.4 Race equality

Staff

It was previously identified that photographs taken of people with dark skin had poor definition and this posed an issue. A subsequent decision taken is that staff can submit their own photos for identity OneCard.

epurse

Newly arrived communities and ethnic communities in low-socio economic groups are more likely to be cash users and there would need to be targeted communications when introducing the change.

Council Tax

There is negative impact here for people where there are language barriers to explaining which service they wish to make payment for, and additional awareness and signposting to language line is required.

Library

It is necessary for resources to be targeted on helping understanding of how the OneCard works as a self-service process. This is particularly so where there are language barriers and community groups would need to be involved in this process as a key communications link to singular ethnic groups.

Schools

There is positive impact for newly arrived communities and ethnic communities as the OneCard would give the child anonymity if they were entitled to free schools meals.

2.1.5 Religion/Beliefs

Staff

Current procedures for identity passes continue to apply. Any cultural sensitivity for having photos taken would need to be considered as part of HR policy Equality Impact Assessment.

epurse

There is positive impact as the OneCard does not allow the individual to go into debt.

Council Tax

Neutral

Library

Consideration will need to be given to the use of photo identification for OneCard and some clear guidance developed for staff and customers. One idea is to embed the photo onto the card so that it is only visible when triggered electronically by staff. Advice should be sought from the Diversity team and consultation with the Faith forum.

Diversity Team advice:

If a photo is required as part of the id card then this would apply to everyone regardless. In practice when the identity of the person needs to be verified by photo, eg library user wearing a Niqab (referred to as niqabi or munaqqaba), as long as there is a female member of staff present this should be fine as the main issue is the munaqqaba would not be willing to reveal her face in the presence of men.

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There was recommendation to consult with faith forum on this as they meet regularly and could provide a view through the Muslim representatives. WF Faith Coordinator is Marion Waruguru, Faith Communities Project Manager CE Office Diversity Team x4127.

Schools

There is positive impact for newly arrived communities and ethnic communities as the OneCard would give the child anonymity if they were entitled to free schools meals. There is capacity and scope for information on culturally specific food restrictions or diet requirements to be held for food tracking.

2.1.6 Sexual Orientation

Staff

There is positive impact for all genders as the OneCard is absent of salutations (Mr, Mrs, Ms).

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Neutral

Council Tax

Residents during phase I were critical that their relationship was not recognised through salutations. There is no relevance to the OneCard as this is issued to individuals where previously there were joint cards.

Library

Neutral

Schools

Neutral

3. Questions this assessment addresses

3.1 What kind of equality impact may there be?

Overall this is positive providing there is adequate resourcing of targeted communications for awareness raising and increasing understanding.

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 large as this could potentially involve all people living in the borough and all staff of Waltham Forest Council.

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

As in point 2, there is both positive and negative impact.

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?

Information of new and BAME community groups to target communications according to their needs.

3.7 Where and how can that information be obtained?

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From library services existing channels and in liaison with the Consultation and Engagement Team, and Voluntary Action Waltham Forest.

4. Action Planning Questions

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

To ensure there is targeted communications with identified groups to explain how the OneCard works and how it benefits the user.

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?

NA

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 point 6 below.

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

No

5. Conclusions and Next Steps

The Access to services Equality Impact Assessment identified that the Channels theme within the programme is both critical to enhancing service provision for residents, businesses and visitors and is highly relevant to the promotion of equality. The OneCard initiative is part of the channel theme.

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:

OneCard communications plan for identified groups.

6. Action Plan

Item	Action required	Lead Officer	Time Scale	Comments/Outcomes	Status
1.	Equality impact assessments will be built into the work programmes for the delivery of each of the "Channels" work-stream	Max carter	March 2008	OneCard Ebooking Merchant Services	01/11/07
2.	A2S action identified: 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. costs will be reduced overall across the Council.	David Wilde	2 years	This will free up resources for front line services. Better use will be made of the most appropriate channels for relevant services.	

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3.	<p>There is targeted communications through Voluntary Action Waltham Forest with relevant voluntary sector groups.</p> <p>Target audience includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people (Help the Aged) • Newly arrived communities (Polish, other). • BAME women groups (Asian, Somali, Polish). • Schools re proof of age requirement. <p>Voluntary Action Waltham Forest http://www.frontlineonline.org.uk</p> <p>Unit 21 Alpha Business Centre South Grove Walthamstow London E17 7NX Tel: 0208 521 0377 Fax: 0208 521 1672 email: info@voluntaryaction-wf.org.uk</p>	Fernan Rodriguez	June 2008		
4.	<p>Review communications plan to include briefing for WFD on increased support for language line, and CSA's briefed on difference between multi scheme and OneCard.</p>	Fernan Rodriguez	June 2008		
5.	<p>Develop clear policy on faith sensitivity around photo ID and Cultural sensitivities for munaqqaba, and consult with Faith Forum on the policy.</p> <p>Contact: WF Faith Coordinator is Marion Waruguru, Faith Communities Project Manager CE Office Diversity Team x4127.</p>	Fernan Rodriguez	February 2008		