

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) was introduced as part of the Equality Act 2010, which protects people from discrimination in the workplace, in the provision of services and in wider society.

The duty requires all public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people

Public bodies demonstrate this due regard in different ways, including producing robust equality impact assessments when considering changes to policies and services.

An EqIA enables us to check the potential impacts on residents and employees of our policies, services and projects. It's an opportunity to challenge how we currently do things.

Carrying out an EqIA should not create extra work; it should be part of your normal service planning process. Most of the information required should already be available to you through other work already undertaken e.g. service user monitoring, analysis of complaints and national research.

The purpose of an EqIA is to *take account* of equality as plans develop, to promote and assist the consideration of equalities issues arising in plans and proposals and to ensure that where possible adverse or disproportionate impacts are minimised and positive impacts are maximised. As such where possible an EqIA should be started at the outset of a project/proposal and continually be developed and reviewed until a final proposal is adopted. An EqIA should be used to ensure decision makers have all the information they need regarding potential impacts to ensure they have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making judgements.

Carrying out EqIAs should be an integral part of policy or service development/change and larger projects may need more than one EqIA if different areas are impacted by the change.

Any project that requires consultation will automatically require an EqIA.

All approved and signed EqIAs are recorded in a central register. Please email your completed draft EqIA to equalities@buckinghamshire.gov.uk. Previous EqIAs can be made available for information upon request. For any questions or if you require support in completing your EqIA please contact Maria Damigos and Natalie Donhou Morley directly.

Part A (Initial assessment) - Section 1 - Background

Proposal/Brief Title: Estates Strategy

OneDrive link to report/policy:

Related policies: Work Smart Business Case
Customer Service Strategy
ONE IT Programme
Better Buckinghamshire

Date: 30 November 2022

Type of strategy, policy, project or service: Office estates linked to culture change programme and hybrid working

Please tick one of the following:

- Existing
- New or proposed
- Changing, update or revision
- Other (please explain)

This assessment was created by:

Name: Kim Tucker

Job Title: Snr. Business Assurance Officer Service Improvement Team

Email address: Kim.tucker@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the proposal below:

This is a strategy which proposes a reduction in operational estate footprint of Buckinghamshire Council based on organisational need. This EqIA considers the Strategy as a whole and does not focus on particular sites or locations.

What outcomes do we want to achieve?

- *will deliver potential £2.4m revenue savings and £4m capital receipts savings from the operational estate as set out in the Unitary Business Case.*
- *Release land and assets for development as market, affordable and key worker housing or commercial /community/ stakeholder or partner use*
- *Improved recruitment and retention of employees*
- *Fit for purpose arrangements for elected members*

- *Reduced carbon emissions from travel and buildings*
- *Reduced revenue cost of the office estate and increased revenue generation*

Does this proposal plan to withdraw a service, activity or presence? Yes

All services and activities will continue to be delivered. There will be a reduced presence across some sites.

Does this proposal plan to introduce, review or change a policy, strategy or procedure? Yes

The establishment of the unitary council created opportunities to rationalise the office accommodation inherited from legacy councils. Furthermore, in common with other parts of the public and private sector, the organisational use of office accommodation has changed significantly post-Covid.

Our offices will change both in terms of location as well as configuration focussing more on collaboration and meeting spaces rather than banks of desks to support flexible working arrangements.

Does this proposal affect service users and/or customers, or the wider community? No

Although there may be a reduced presence in some area's services will not be impacted for customers or service users.

Does this proposal affect employees? Yes

Some Officers may be required to relocate to other council sites following the closure of offices. Staff relocation mileage costs will apply.

Will employees require training to deliver this proposal? No

Only impact is relocation of workplace there are no training implications.

Has any engagement /consultation been carried out, or is planned in the future? Yes

Engagement has happened with:

- *Accommodation Member Support Group,*
- *Heads of Service*
- *CMT*
- *Cabinet*
- *All Groups*
- *Local Members and Community Boards*

Future engagement will be carried out with the above and in addition

- *Group briefings when requested*
- *Finance and Resources Select Committee*
- *Local Members*

- *Member Steering Group*
- *Cabinet*

Regular references groups for both managers and employees have been established with nominated representatives across services, to allow the programme to provide updates and encourage feedback. Specific focus groups have also been created for employee groups or topics

There are regular communications through the all staff briefings and a newsletter provide updates.

Consultation takes place with the Trade Unions and Employee Reps and will continue to be consulted where required as the programme develops.

Where any changes are planned for changing staffs working locations, consultation will take place with staff as well as with the Trade Unions.

Section 2 - Impacts

Please highlight potential impacts (including unintended impacts or consequences) for each protected characteristic*/equality groups below. Where there are negative or positive impacts please give more details of the impact. Where the impacts are unclear please explain why.

Age*

Positive	Negative	Unclear✓	None
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Details: it is possible some staff may be impacted by a change of office space and potential additional travel distance/method – particularly those under 25 who may earn less or not have their own method of travel. As proposals are not yet detailed or confirmed exact impacts are hard to anticipate.

Disability*

Positive	Negative	Unclear✓	None
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Details: Although all sites will have disabled access and equipment & H&S processes in place it is possible some staff may be impacted by a change of office space and potential additional travel distance/method. As proposals are not yet detailed or confirmed exact impacts are hard to anticipate.

Pregnancy & maternity*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None✓
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Race & Ethnicity*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None✓
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Marriage & Civil Partnership*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None✓
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Religion & Belief*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None✓
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Sex*

Positive	Negative	Unclear✓	None
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Details: The change is unclear, however, childcare tends to fall on female parents. This may be a positive or a negative, depending on the staff member and their working/home location and current working pattern.

Sexual Orientation*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None✓
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Gender Reassignment*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None✓
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Gender identity

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None✓
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Carers

Positive	Negative	Unclear✓	None
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Details: This may be a positive or a negative, depending on the staff member and their working location/current working pattern. As proposals are not yet detailed or confirmed exact impacts are hard to anticipate.

Rural isolation

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None✓
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Single parent families

Positive	Negative	Unclear✓	None
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Details: is the potential for impact is currently unclear. This may be a positive or a negative, depending on the staff member and their working location. As proposals are not yet detailed or confirmed exact impacts are hard to anticipate.

Poverty (social & economic deprivation)

Positive	Negative	Unclear✓	None
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Details: The change is unclear however it is possible that additional travel costs are not fully met by staff relocation mileage allowances. As proposals are not yet detailed or confirmed exact impacts are hard to anticipate.

Military families / veterans

Positive

Negative

Unclear

None ✓

Section 3 – Is a full assessment required?

If you have answered yes to any of the initial assessment questions in section 1 of this EqIA, or have indicated a negative or unclear impact in section 2, it is likely you will need to complete part B of the EqIA form. Should you need guidance as to whether a full EqIA is needed at this time please contact Maria Damigos or Natalie Donhou Morley before continuing.

Following completion of part A, is part B completion required?

Yes

No

 Not required at this time

Explain your answer:

At this stage the amount of office space remaining in legacy sites is unclear as such it is not possible to predict full impact on staff. This will be assessed and monitored as the programme progresses and EQIA updated accordingly.

This will have an impact on contractual working locations for some staff when they are working in an office location. If staff are impacted and must relocate offices a contractual mileage allowance is available for additional travel costs incurred.

As part of the Work Smart Strategy workstyles have been developed to determine what the future working arrangements will be for each workstyle and align the different roles across the organisation. While there are four workstyle categories, employees can discuss their personal circumstances and suitable alternative working arrangements made.

Full EqIA's will be developed for each site/proposal of change, starting with Phase 1 (HW) to look at specific impacts and potential mitigations at these locations, both for staff and the wider community.

All HR policies and procedures will be followed as part of the delivery of the strategy and associated delivery/implementation plans.

Have you completed an DPIA for this project/change? No N/A

(As you are completing an EqIA, you may also require a DPIA - for more information please contact dataprotection@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

Section 4 – Sign off (Only complete when NOT completing Part B)

Officer completing this assessment: Kim Tucker Date: 01/12/2022

Equality advice sought from: Natalie Donhou Morley Date: 01/12/2022

Service Director sign off: John Reed Date:01/12/2022

CMT sign off (*if deemed necessary by Service Director*) sign off: John Reed Date: 08/12/2022

Next review Date: On delivery of the next Cabinet report.