

## MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Equality Impact Assessment

**Title of Policy/Service/Contract: Accountancy / Finance Systems**

**Division: Finance**

**Lead Officer: Cathy Craigen**

**Date Assessment completed: 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2012**

#### 1. SCOPING

##### 1.1 What are the aims of the policy, service/service change or contract?

To provide advice to customers on financial matters of the Council

To deliver a balanced budget and on-target outturn in conjunction with Business Unit Leaders

To pay customer invoices in a timely fashion

To manage the level of Council's sundry debtors through raising invoices, debt recovery and write offs in a timely fashion.

To collect and bank the income for the Council

To provide system support and development for the Financial Management System (FMS) used by employees

##### 1.2 Who does the service/policy/contract affect? Who are the main customers (internal or external)?

The internal customers of the service are staff (e.g. budget holders, Business Unit Leaders, Senior management team, FMS users).

The external customers of the service are Members, residents of Mid Sussex, MSDC creditors such as suppliers, debtors to the Council including council tax payers, and non-domestic rate payers, Internal and External Audit, HMRC, and partners e.g., Freedom Leisure / Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL), and other Local authorities (such as Horsham DC, Adur / Worthing DC and Crawley Borough Council).

Information is published on the Council's website, such as the Statement of Accounts and analysis of payment to suppliers. We make our publications available in accessible formats.

**1.3 What equality information is available, including any evidence from engagement and analysis of use of services?**

Evidence used in this assessment comes from the experience of Finance staff in dealing with customers. There are a small number of queries from the public about the financial information that we publish on the website and a Statement of Accounts. There is a web survey asking for comments on how easy to understand that they are.

**1.4 What does this information tell us about the equality issues associated with the service and implications for the protected groups?**

The response to the finance information that we publish does not suggest that there are any specific access issues for the protected groups.

**1.5 Are contractors or partnerships used to deliver the service? No**

If No go to section 2.

If yes, please refer to the guidance notes, particularly Appendix One of the MSDC Guidance "Integrating Equality and Diversity into Procurement", and complete the next three questions.

**Identify the contractors/partnerships used to deliver the service.**

**What is their contribution to equality in service delivery and the promotion of equality?**

**How are equality issues addressed through contractual arrangements and service level agreements?**

## 2. Assessment of Impact; Analysis and Action Planning

Any gaps in information or provision, opportunities to promote equalities and good relations identified above need to be translated into SMART actions and recorded here. These actions need to be delivered and monitored through the service planning process.

Opportunity to promote equality, good relations and/or address barriers to service/differential impact	Current action taken to address these	Further actions required and timescales	Lead Officer	How will impact be measured
The needs of different ethnic groups including white minorities, but also established white communities				
As all financial information / reports are produced in English, there are possible language barriers	Monitor levels of requests and use interpreting service available if needed. This is promoted on website and publications.	None	Cathy Craigen	
The needs of men and women. Including taking account of pregnancy and maternity.				
No barriers identified	None necessary	n/a		
The needs of disabled people				
Sight-impaired	Braille and large print versions can be made available. Can produce information in CD Rom format on request. Web site information accessible in different formats and font size. Avoidance of using glossy (reflective) paper.	None	Cathy Craigen	
The needs of people with a religion or belief				
No barriers identified	None necessary	n/a		

Opportunity to promote equality and/or barriers to service/differential impact	Current action taken to address these	Further actions required and timescales	Lead Officer	How will impact be measured
The needs of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and heterosexual people				
No barriers identified	None necessary	n/a		
Issues from marriage and civil partnership				
No barriers identified	None necessary	n/a		
The needs of different age groups, for example older and younger people				
Lack of internet access for older people in order to view information online.	Able to provide information in hard copy if requested.	None		
The needs of transgender communities				
No barriers identified	None necessary	n/a		
The needs of people who are disadvantaged by socio-economic factors such as low incomes, skill or living in a deprived area				
<p>Difficulty paying debts for those on low incomes.</p> <p>Potential literacy issues affecting accessibility of publications. Potential inability to understand financial information.</p>	<p>Housing and / or Council Tax Benefit available for those on low incomes.</p> <p>Business rates deferral scheme available to help struggling businesses. Payment plans available in certain circumstances.</p> <p>Plain English used in Finance Publications. Financial data is clearly set out to minimize difficulty in interpretation.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p>		

The needs of people who live in a rural area

Location of office for payment of debts	We try to ensure people don't have to visit our offices. Web-based payments available. Also, Telephone based payments (ATP) and Giro-payment facility available.	None		
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### 3. Mid Sussex District Council Equality Impact Assessment Summary

Key Findings	Future Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most of the customers for this service are internal. Key outward focused services involve the debtors and creditors service and the financial information that the Council publishes such as the Annual Accounts</li><li>• Financial information is made available in accessible formats and written in Plain English. The Debtors team are able to make payment arrangements for some customers who have severe financial difficulties.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are no new specific new actions identified for the service.</li></ul>

### 4. Signing off this assessment and action plan

Signature .....  .....  
Person undertaking the assessment

Date .....28<sup>th</sup> November 2012.....

Signature .....  .....  
Head of Service

Date .....28<sup>th</sup> November 2012.....

Please send your completed impact assessment to Neal Barton for publication on the website.