

**MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Equality Impact Assessment**

**Title of Service:** Member Services  
**Division:** Legal and Property Services- Member Support  
**Lead Officer:** Tom Clark- Solicitor to the Council  
Daniel Kington- Senior Member Services Officer

**Date Assessment completed: April 2013**

**1. SCOPING**

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

To provide support to Members of the Council and information to the public.

**1.2 Who does the service affect? Who are the main customers (internal or external)?**

Members of the Council, Officers, the public.

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

Member Services Survey (June 2012). Gender balance of Councillors is 18 women and 36 men. Equality training has been made available to all Members in 2012.

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

There is a need to provide equality and diversity training to ensure that Members are aware of the issues that may impact on protected groups.

**1.5 Are contractors or partnerships used to deliver the service?**

No

## 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				
<p>Need for Member cultural awareness of ethnicity issues and of groups such as Gypsies and Travellers.</p> <p>There may be difficulties for those whose first language is not English in accessing Council meeting information.</p>	<p>Member Equality and Diversity training provided and covered in induction. Committee reports include equalities and customer services implications.</p> <p>Interpreting service available and external companies able to translate documents (for a fee). MSDC website provides Google Translate.</p>	<p>Further equality training considered in the Member Development Plan.</p>	<p>Daniel Kington</p>	<p>Member take up of equality training</p>
The needs of men and women. Including taking account of pregnancy and maternity.				
<p>There may be issues for Members with childcare requirements.</p>	<p>Childcare Allowance for Members.</p>	<p>None identified.</p>		
The needs of disabled people				
<p>Disabled access is available to the Council Chamber.</p> <p>There is no DDA compliant access to the Public Gallery at Oaklands.</p> <p>Microphones required to be used when speaking at Council meetings.</p>	<p>Members of the public unable to access the public gallery are accommodated at the back of the Council Chamber, via the stair lift.</p> <p>Audio-description and large print copies of Committee papers are available and accessible to <i>Read Aloud</i> software.</p> <p>Disabled parking spaces available close to Council Chamber entrance.</p> <p>Equality implications of Council meeting format considered by Constitutional Review Working Party.</p>	<p>N/A</p>		

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 people with a religion or belief				
A Christian Prayer is said at the start of Council meetings.	Councillors have the right to leave the chamber for the prayer at the start of the Council meeting. The Constitutional Review Working Group considers the format of Council meetings and equality issues.	Opportunity to review policy on the prayer with the new Council Chairman.	Tom Clark	Member views
The needs of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and heterosexual people				
None identified.	N/A	N/A		
Issues from marriage and civil partnership				
None identified.	N/A	N/A		
The needs of different age groups, for example older and younger people				
<p>Older Members may be less familiar with ICT</p> <p>The public may have limited ability to reach meeting locations and access to ICT.</p> <p>Young people may be less likely to participate in the democratic process.</p>	<p>Member IT Strategy to address assisting all Members to improve IT access.</p> <p>Meeting dates and contact information included in Mid Sussex Matters.</p> <p>Free ICT in local libraries.</p> <p>Cabinet Grants Panel has included young people working with Members in the consideration of Spotlight grants.</p>	None identified.		

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 transgender communities				
None identified.	N/A	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>Lower income may be a barrier to Members being able to become or function as a serving Member.</p> <p>Limited ability to reach meeting locations and access to ICT.</p>	<p>Members Allowances provided and reviewed annually.</p> <p>Centrally located campus with public interface.</p> <p>Free ICT in local libraries to access Council papers/reports.</p>	Continued monitoring of Member Allowances through the Independent Panel.	Tom Clark	
The needs of people who live in a rural area				
All meetings are held at the Oaklands campus in Haywards Heath.	<p>Ward Member available.</p> <p>Meeting dates and contact information included in Mid Sussex Matters.</p> <p>Committee meetings agendas and minutes available on the Council's website. New IT system installed to improve arrangements for updating the website and its accessibility.</p> <p>Planning information available at Parish Councils.</p>	None identified.		

### 3. Mid Sussex District Council Equality Impact Assessment Summary

Key Findings	Future Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors are generally not representative of the Mid Sussex population, with regard to age, gender and ethnicity.</li> <li>• Equality training is provided to Members and included in their induction. Equality and customer services implications section included in Committee reports.</li> <li>• Council meeting agendas and minutes are made accessible to the public through the website and publicised in Mid Sussex Matters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Members to receive equality training at least every electoral cycle.</li> <li>• Annual monitoring of Member Allowances by Independent Panel.</li> <li>• Review the prayer at Council meetings with each incoming Chairman.</li> </ul>

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



Signature

Person undertaking the assessment

Date.....April 2013.....

Signature .....Tom Clark.....  
Head of Service

Date .....23 May 2013.....

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