

Equality Impact Assessment

ANNEX 1

Details of the assessment	
Name of Function/Policy/ Service being assessed:	Consideration to discontinue Here & Now
Is the activity...?	New decision
Date of assessment	July – August 2013
Directorate & Service	Executive Services
Policy Owner	Management Team
Lead Officer	Corporate Services Manager

	Key Questions	Answers/Notes										
Step 2	Scoping the assessment											
1.	What is the overall aim, or purpose of the decision?	To discontinue the production of Here & Now.										
2.	What outcomes do you want to achieve with this decision and for whom?	As a result of the limitations associated with the long lead in time, staff resource required and the cost of production and distribution, Here & Now is unsustainable and no longer the best method to communicate messages to residents. By discontinuing Here & Now, these resources will be released to be better used on corporate communications, including more timely and proactive communication methods both direct to residents and through the media. The intended outcomes, therefore, are a reduction in service cost, and improved use of new technology and alternative communication media in a more proactive and targeted way.										
3.	Who is intended to benefit from the decision?	The improved communications will benefit all residents and local businesses.										
4.	Who defines or defined the decision?	The recommendation has been considered by Management Team and initial consideration to the proposal given by an Overview & Scrutiny Review Group.										
5.	Who implements the decision?	Members are asked to make the final decision, which will then be implemented by Officers.										
6.	How do the outcomes of the function/service/policy meet or conflict other policies, values or objectives of the public authority (if applicable)?	<p>Please indicate which of the Council's Key Priorities these outcomes relate to:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width: 90%;">A clean, smart, well maintained and sustainable Borough</td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Healthy living opportunities and community well-being</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Children and young people who are safe, involved and able to access positive activities</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Low levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>A continuing supply of homes, including affordable housing to buy and rent,</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	A clean, smart, well maintained and sustainable Borough		Healthy living opportunities and community well-being		Children and young people who are safe, involved and able to access positive activities		Low levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime.		A continuing supply of homes, including affordable housing to buy and rent,	
A clean, smart, well maintained and sustainable Borough												
Healthy living opportunities and community well-being												
Children and young people who are safe, involved and able to access positive activities												
Low levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime.												
A continuing supply of homes, including affordable housing to buy and rent,												

Equality Impact Assessment

	Key Questions	Answers/Notes
		<p>and prevention of homelessness.</p> <p>Continued delivery of priority services and a financially viable Council.</p> <p>Sustainable regeneration of Tonbridge town centre and economic development in communities across the Borough.</p> <p>Any other comments: Discontinuing Here & Now would release capacity and resource to help deliver a more proactive corporate communications resource.</p>
7.	Are there any factors that could contribute or detract from the outcomes identified earlier?	Current insufficient capacity within the media and communications team restricts their ability to more proactively work with the media or to enhance corporate communications activity. Sufficient training on new technology will be required, if these are incorporated into the team, to ensure smooth transition to these new opportunities.
Step 3	Consideration of data and information	
8.	What do you already know about who uses this function/service/ policy?	All households receive Here & Now, as do staff and borough councillors. In addition, 5 large print, 1 braille and 1 audio version are produced for specific customers (down from 9, 1 and 4 respectively in 2010).
9.	Has any consultation with service users already taken place on the function/service/ policy and if so what were the key findings?	Yes. A residents panel survey identified that around a quarter of all respondents (residents within the Borough) did not recall seeing Here & Now at all. No consultation concerning the relative cost of Here & Now, or the redistribution of limited resources to other communications activities, has taken place with residents.
10.	What, if any, additional information is needed to assess the impact of the function/service/policy?	None
11.	How do you propose to gather the additional information?	n/a
Step 4	Assessing the Impact	
12.	Based on what information you already know, in relation to each of the following groups consider whether a) there is anything in the function/service/policy that could discriminate or put anyone at a disadvantage b) for an existing function/service/policy, how it is actually working in practice for each group	

Equality Impact Assessment

	Key Questions		Answers/Notes
a.	Equality groups	Age	With the discontinuation of Here & Now, there will be an emphasis on other media channels, primarily electronic (web, TMBC news app, My Council etc.) It is possible that some older people may be less familiar with some of these technologies. However, these issues can be mitigated by providing alternative arrangements to keep them informed of some specific issues, such as through local radio, direct contact, Tonbridge and Malling Seniors Forum, Parish magazines and notice boards, leaflets, posters and other advertising media
b.		Disability	The discontinuation of Here & Now will remove the large print, Braille and audio versions of the newspaper as well as the printed version delivered to all households. However, the alternative communications channels proposed will be available to all residents and do not adversely impact people with disabilities. In fact, alternative media options may be of benefit by allowing people to access the information they want in a format that they want, at a time that they want, without needing to either wait for or locate Here & Now, and without the need to make special requests. These alternatives include features that allow computers to read text from the website, easy-to-use apps that require less manual dexterity to operate than traditional keyboard and mouse computers.
c.		Carers	Carers will not be impacted differently to other readers of Here & Now.
d.		Gender	There is no difference in experience of Here & Now amongst male and females, and no difference in outcome anticipated.
e.		Race	There is no difference in experience of Here & Now amongst people of different races or ethnicities. Where English is not a first language, the use of web-based communications channels may improve communication as on-line translation can be used by residents to check details; this is not available in the printed version of Here & Now.
f.		Religion/Belief	There is no difference in experience of Here & Now amongst people of different groups, and no difference in outcome anticipated.
g.		Sexual Orientation	
g.		Marital or Civil Partnership Status	
h.		Pregnancy & Maternity	
i.		Gender reassignment	
j.	General/other		

Equality Impact Assessment

	Key Questions	Answers/Notes
Step 5	Reviewing and Scrutinising the Impact	
13.	What conclusions can you draw about any differential impact and how people are adversely or positively affected?	There may be some residents for whom the change from printed copy of Here & Now is a challenge as the proposed alternatives are less immediately accessible to them. However, there is no intention to move all communication to the internet, but to use a range of communication methods to best suit the audience. People with disabilities, and people for whom English is not a first language, should find the changes to the way in which TMBC communicates provides some benefits to them.
14.	What actions can you take to address any impacts identified?	Improved targeting of communications, and use of a range of communication media as set out above.
15.	If no changes can be made, what reasons are there to justify this?	Not applicable.
16.	How might any of the changes, in relation to the adverse impact, have a further adverse affect on any other group?	The improved communications set out in paragraph 14 above will benefit all residents.

Equality Impact Assessment

Step 5 continued...		Actions to be inserted into Equality Action Plans		
Based on your answers in Step 5, please finalise your actions here. These actions will then be incorporated into our equality action plans.				
Action	Outcome/monitoring information and targets	WK Equality Aims and Commitments	Date for Completion	Responsible Officer
If an adverse impact was found or unmet needs identified, which actions will you put in place to address this:				
If the impact is still unclear, list the actions you will put in place to gather the information you need:				
If you did not find any evidence of unmet needs or adverse impact, list the actions you will put in place to maintain good practice:				

Step 6	Decision making and future monitoring	
17.	Which decision making process do these changes need to go through i.e. do they need to be approved by a committee/Council?	Overview & Scrutiny, September 2013 Cabinet, October 2013
18.	How will you continue to monitor the impact of the function/service/ policy on diverse groups?	Monitor on-going requests for alternative communications options.
19.	When will you review this equality impact assessment?	During 2014 to ensure communication channels used are accessible.
Final steps		
For an existing function/service/policy: Send your assessment to the West Kent Equalities Officer		
For a new function/service/ policy: Summarise your findings in the committee report. Ensure planned consultations address the findings of this impact assessment.		