

Equality Impact Assessment DE1010BP – Executive Summary

Development Directorate Business Plan 2011/14

The Development Directorate's Business Plan aims to achieve the strategic aim of ensuring that the Directorate is focused on securing Birmingham's economic success, global competitiveness and delivering a safe and sustainable environment for residents, visitors, businesses and investors whilst responding to the requirement to reduce the budget by £11.5m by 2014/15. The Directorate must achieve efficiencies and remodel the way its services are delivered if it is to remain viable.

Most of the Directorate's services benefit the wider community in the delivery of infrastructure projects and facilitation of development and regeneration. Individual services and projects are subject to specific assessments of their equality impacts. However, the Directorate's regeneration, employment development and disability services are targeted to people disadvantaged by their economic position or disability. The necessary reductions in service required to meet the budget challenge will have an impact on these groups and individuals.

A high level assessment of the potential impact of reduced funding in key service areas has been used to inform both corporate decisions and this equality impact assessment. Individual equality impact assessments of budget proposals affecting each service area have informed this assessment of the Directorate's Business Plan.

The Directorate's policies, programmes, projects and services have the explicit objective of increasing equality of opportunity for all of those who live and work in Birmingham.

The required budget and staffing reductions will result in a re-focussing of the Directorate's activities to maximise economic benefits to the people of Birmingham.

The potential equality impacts on different communities and groups are being assessed in relation to the specific service changes proposed. Reduced funding is likely to result in slower progress in certain areas yet to be identified.

Potential impact on service users and staff

Businesses participating in business development and support programmes may see a reduction in service due if our efforts to secure replacement funding are unsuccessful. In applying for external funding the Directorate will prioritise funding for groups in greatest need or where the most benefit for the widest client group can be achieved.

Residents of areas with short-term external funding for regeneration activity will see a reduction in activity. However, this funding is time-limited and therefore reductions will have been anticipated.

Vulnerable users who rely on public transport and sustainable modes of travel could be disproportionately affected if reduced budgets mean that local safety and remediation works have to be more selectively targeted.

Disabled users of Disability Employment Services and their carers will be affected. As these are dedicated services for people with disabilities and those with long term health conditions, the likely reduction in staffing and activities will result in a disproportionately higher impact on this group.

The **wider community** will continue to benefit from the Directorate's strategic activities and projects attracting and retaining investment in the city to increase economic activity and create employment for Birmingham residents. This is dependent upon the City Council retaining the skills and expertise to facilitate private sector partnerships and deliver key economic and regeneration activities. Less resource will be available for schemes and projects which do not have a high overall economic benefit to the city and its residents.

The Directorate is aware of the community profile, census and deprivation information and uses this information to target activity. This information will continue to be taken into account by service areas where any specific targeting is taking place.

Employees will be directly affected by the reduction of jobs in revised structures responding to budget reductions. Those likely to be affected will be identified during the individual service redesign activities across the directorate. The impact on employees is being minimised through appropriate mitigating actions including:

- Voluntary redundancies as a part of the corporate VR trawl.
- "Bumping" opportunities to redeploy displaced staff into posts vacant following VR, and career transition support.
- Termination of consultancy contracts and release of agency staff
- Additional savings taken from non-staffing budgets
- Exploration of a wholly owned company structure to enable trading services to operate more successfully, and exploration of income generation and external funding opportunities.
- Staff and TU consultation, and assimilation and selection processes in accordance with corporate guidelines.

The ethnicity and age profile of the workforce is likely to change. This will be monitored. It is anticipated that the VR trawl will be particularly attractive to employees over 55 who are able to access their pension. This will affect the age profile of the workforce and will create succession issues for the Directorate. This will be monitored through the action plan.

The criteria for agreement to VR requests ensure that there is no discrimination in the decision making process. Directorate and Corporate Moderation Panels review service-level and Directorate-level decision making processes to ensure these criteria have been followed.

The redesign of Shelforce to enable it to be successful in new commercial markets and at nil cost to the City Council will have a significant impact on staff with disabilities because over 76% of Shelforce staff have disabilities.

Future Service Delivery Models

Rationale and Repositioning papers are being produced for the following business areas:

- Be Birmingham
- Building Consultancy
- Business Improvement & Innovation
- Development Strategy
- Digital Birmingham
- Disability Employment Services (DES)
- Marketing Birmingham
- Planning and Regeneration
- Shelforce

These papers set out the drivers for change, rationale for future service delivery and processes that will be followed in line with corporate protocols and procedures.

Employee and Stakeholder consultation

Extensive consultation with the Directorate's staff and stakeholders has already been undertaken. This will continue during the decision making period according to the agreed Action Plan.

The consultation on the City Council Business Plan through www.birmingham.gov.uk from December 2010 included proposals for the Development Directorate. All comments received were reviewed initially by the Strategic Director of Development, categorised into Divisional questions and reviewed by Divisional Directors/Assistant Directors and Heads of Service as appropriate.

Developers and investors expressed support for the rationalisation of the client facing service to create a single entry point into the Directorate bringing together Development, planning and regeneration expertise into multi skilled teams. This will improve Birmingham's ability to compete nationally and internationally for investment to improve the economic position of all residents.

Staff, carers, service users, suppliers, Health PCTs, Housing & Constituency Directorate, Adults and Communities Directorate and third sector partners are being consulted on the proposals for **Shelforce**. It is anticipated that there will be a negative effect on people with disabilities as employees, service users and carers due to the profile of employees and service users. There will therefore be an ongoing plan of consultation and involvement on these issues.

Trade Union discussions have been held at Directorate Joint Consultation Committee (DJCC) quarterly meetings, at specially arranged regular meetings with Trade Union representatives chaired by Mark Barrow – Strategic Director Development, and at service area meetings chaired by the appropriate member of the Development Management Team. Trade Union representatives will have independent discussions with other organisations that have followed the wholly owned company model. These are being arranged at the request of the Strategic Director.

To facilitate active engagement a **dedicated email facility** has been created where staff and stakeholders can send both generic and specific questions. Answers are periodically published on the website.

A dedicated page has been created on the **Be Heard** consultation website.

Document libraries have been created on Lotus Notes to give staff access to all relevant information.

No questions have been raised during consultations relating to:

- Age
- Gender
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

Each service area will continue to consult with relevant groups and assess feedback as new operating and service delivery models are developed.

Approval, implementation and review of actions

The equality impact assessment of the Development Directorate's 2011+ Business Plan was approved by the Service Redesign Project Board on 24th February 2011, and by the Directorate's management Team on 8th march 2011. this executive summary has been approved for publication by the Directorate's Service Redesign Project Sponsor, David Bull, Assistant director, Development Strategy.

The Directorate's Equalities, Consultation and Engagement Steering Group will review the implementation of actions resulting from this assessment of equality impacts, and make further recommendations for appropriate actions to be implemented as part of the 2011+ Business Plan.