

**Community impact assessments – for services, policies and projects**

**What is a community impact assessment?**

A community impact assessment is an important part of our commitment to delivering better services for our communities. The form will help us find out what impact or consequences our functions, policies, procedures and projects have on our communities, as well as employees and potential employees.

By undertaking an impact assessment, we are able to:

- Take into account the needs, experiences and circumstances of those groups of people who use (or don't / can't use) our services.
- Identify any inequalities people may experience.
- Think about the other ways in which we can deliver our services which will not lead to inequalities.
- Develop better policy-making, procedures and services.

**Background**

<b>Name of service / policy / project and date</b>	<b>Relocation of Housing Options office (CBH)</b>
<b>Lead officer</b>	<b>Martin Stacy Lead Commissioner – Housing Services</b>
<b>Other people involved in completing this form</b>	<b>Matt Ward (CBH)</b>

## Step 1 - About the service / policy / project

<p><b>What is the aim of the service / policy / project and what outcomes is it contributing to</b></p>	<p>The proposed relocation of the Housing Options service from Cheltenham First Stop to the Municipal Offices is in response to the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which places additional duties on local authorities regarding the provision of homelessness advice and prevention services. These new duties require more staffing (funded from the MHCLG's Additional Burdens Funding) and the current office space does not lend itself to this. Nor does it lend itself well to managing the additional demand expected on the Housing Options Service as a result of the new statutory duties.</p> <p>The relocation of the Housing Options Team, and Service, to the Municipal Offices will help to ensure that the team can have more suitable back office space to better meet their requirements. It will also ensure that a good quality service can be provided to households in need, as the Municipal Offices will provide a larger waiting area and more confidentiality, particularly following the proposed conversion of the urban design room into two extra interview rooms.</p>
<p><b>Who are the primary customers of the service / policy / project and how do they / will they benefit</b></p>	<p>Customers of the service are borough wide. The service sits within the Housing Services team at Cheltenham Borough Homes and serves both Council tenants and the general public: anyone who may need housing and homelessness advice. .</p>
<p><b>How and where is the service / policy / project implemented</b></p>	<p>The service currently operates out of First Stop on the Lower High Street.</p>
<p><b>What potential barriers might already exist to achieving these outcomes</b></p>	<p>There may be operational challenges in managing the increase in demand for services from the Municipal Offices. These challenges have been captured as risks in the risk register (Appendix 1) with mitigating actions to support them.</p>

## Step 2 – What do you know already about your existing / potential customers

<p><b>What existing information and data do you have about your existing / potential customers e.g. Statistics, customer feedback, performance information</b></p>	<p>Consultation has been undertaken with tenants at a Shaping Services meeting in January 2017, and by the Tenant Scrutiny Improvement Panel, also in January 2017. This was followed by a Customer survey at Cheltenham First Stop in February 2017, over a 6 week period involving 286 customers. Feedback from this consultation supported the relocation of the service to be administered from alternative accommodation. Opportunities for greater privacy were welcomed, with more private interview space available at the municipal offices.</p>
<p><b>What does it tell you about who uses your service / policy and those that don't?</b></p>	<p>As above.</p>



<p><b>What have you learnt about real barriers to your service from any consultation with customers and any stakeholder groups?</b></p>	<p>A number of consultative activities have taken place including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shaping services meeting in January 2017.</li><li>• Tenant Scrutiny Improvement Panel in January 2017.</li><li>• Customer survey at First Stop in February 2017.</li></ul> <p>These have been undertaken with a diverse group of tenants and applicants who possess a range of protected characteristics including: disability, age, sex, different race or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p>The comments, suggestions and feedback are summarised below:</p> <p><b>Increased accessibility</b></p> <p>The consultation supported a strong presence in the town centre continuing for this service.</p> <p>Lift availability within the municipal offices will also improve accessibility. Suggestions to further increase accessibility to the service included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• consideration of home visits for some applicants and in particular those with mobility issues</li><li>• consideration of phone appointments</li><li>• enhanced on line accessibility</li></ul> <p><b>Customer Service</b></p> <p>Concerns were raised by 64% of customers about the lack of private areas for sensitive or confidential conversations to take place in the main reception on the ground floor at First Stop. The availability of interview rooms at the muni, plus two further interview rooms following the proposed conversion of the urban design room, will help to alleviate these issues.</p>
<p><b>If not, who do you have plans to consult with about the service / policy / project?</b></p>	<p>n/a</p>

### Step 3 - Assessing community impact

How does your service / policy / project impact on different groups in the community?

#### Access & Privacy

Currently there is no access to the first floor (where the service is located) within First Stop for any customer or staff member with a mobility issue or disability. There will be more opportunities for privacy through the use of the municipal office's interview rooms, taking account also of the increased interview space that will be created following the proposed conversion of the current urban design room into two interview rooms (as detailed above). The municipal office also has a lift available in order to access the reception area and back office accommodation for staff.

#### Reasonable adjustments

Currently the ability to make reasonable adjustments for staff at First Stop is very difficult due to the location, size and layout of the office.

The availability of more space at the muni would allow for reasonable adjustments to be made more easily.

Group	What are you already doing to benefit this group	What are you doing that might disadvantage this group	What could you do differently to benefit this group	No impact on this group
People from black and minority ethnic groups				X
Gender				X
Gender Reassignment				X
Older people / children and young people				X
People with disabilities and mental health challenges	Any customer with a mobility disability can be more suitably accommodated at the Municipal Offices due to improved access			
Religion or belief				X
Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual people				X
Marriage and Civil Partnership				X

<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b>				X
<b>Other groups or communities</b>				X

#### **Step 4 - what are the differences**

<b>Are any groups affected in different ways to others as a result of the service / policy / project?</b>	No
<b>Does your service / policy / project either directly or indirectly discriminate?</b>	No
<b>If yes, what can be done to improve this?</b>	n/a
<b>Are there any other ways in which the service / project can help support priority communities in Cheltenham?</b>	No

#### **Step 5 – taking things forward**

<b>What are the key actions to be carried out and how will they be resourced and monitored?</b>	<p>Relocate Housing Options team, and service, to the Municipal Offices. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversion of the urban design room into additional interview space (2 rooms)</li> <li>• Termination of licence with CCP (3 months' notice)</li> <li>• Office logistics and IT works (telephony, data links, network equipment, etc.).</li> <li>• Taking into account any Health &amp; Safety considerations</li> <li>• Implementation of activities to mitigate against risks identified in Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet, including the provision of an increased number of home visits, and encouraging increased telephone and on line contact when appropriate.</li> <li>• Promotion/awareness-raising of new location to customers and partner agencies, and preference for initial contact to be by phone or on line, which will enable more efficient customer handling and increased customer satisfaction with less waiting time. .</li> </ul>
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**CHEL TENHAM**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Who will play a role in the decision-making process?</b>	Agreement in principle from Cabinet Member – Housing, followed by a Cabinet decision for Approval.
<b>What are your / the project's learning and development needs?</b>	None
<b>How will you capture these actions in your service / project planning?</b>	A project team has been set up to manage the relocation of the Housing Options Service from First Stop to the Municipal Offices. All relevant actions and risks have been identified by the group. The project team will remain in place until after implementation of the project.