

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – INITIAL SCREENING TEMPLATE (IST)

Initial screening needs to take place for all new/revised Council policies. The word ‘policy’, in this context, includes the different things that the Council does. It includes any policy, procedure or practice - both in employment and service delivery. It also includes proposals for restructuring, redundancies and changes to service provision. This stage must be completed at the earliest opportunity to determine whether it is necessary to undertake an EIA for this activity.

Name of Policy:	Grants to Voluntary Organisations
Lead Officer (responsible for assessment):	Lewis Bage, Communities and Partnerships Manager
Department:	Communities and Partnerships
Others Involved in the Assessment (i.e. peer review, external challenge):	
Date Initial Screening Completed:	24/02/2017

- (a) **What is the policy trying to achieve?** i.e. What is the aim/purpose of the policy? Is it affected by external drivers for change? What outcomes do we want to achieve from the policy? How will the policy be put into practice?

The paper seeks approval for an annual grant contribution as part of the 2016-17 Service Level Agreements with the Cambs Citizens Advice Rural Cambs, Citizens Advice Newmarket and Voluntary and Community Action East Cambs (VCAEC).

The District Council recognises that the voluntary and community sector (VCS) plays a crucial role in meeting a wide variety of community needs, including supporting the vulnerable and improving community cohesion. The Council has historically supported the VCS through the provision of funding linked to Service Level Agreements with Voluntary and Community Action East Cambs, and to the Citizens Advice services that support clients living within East Cambridgeshire.

- (b) **Who are its main beneficiaries?** i.e. who will be affected by the policy?

The main beneficiaries are the residents, community and voluntary groups who access the services provided by the three organisations. Typically those accessing the Citizens Advice services are some of the most vulnerable in the community – those in debt, often with mental health issues.

VCAEC provides support to voluntary groups and also runs two of its own discrete projects which support older people, those without their own transport, people with disabilities and with mental health issues.

- (c) **Is this assessment informed by any information or background data?** i.e. consultations, complaints, applications received, allocations/take-up, satisfaction rates, performance indicators, access audits, census data, benchmarking, workforce profile etc.

The demand on the Citizens Advice services has increased in recent years and is continuing to rise as the impact of welfare reform becomes evident. The District Council financial contribution to these community support organisations is essential to their sustainability and ability to deliver the services that support the most vulnerable.

The core funding provided to VCAEC is critical in helping to build capacity in communities. As public services retreat, communities are under increasing pressure to meet their own needs. The focus of this work is likely to be on supporting an aging population and reducing rural isolation through initiatives such as the Helping Hands and Social Car Schemes.

(d) Does this policy have the potential to cause a positive or negative impact on different groups in the community, on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics (please tick all that apply):

Ethnicity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion or Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender Reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caring Responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain any impact identified: i.e. What do you already know about equality impact or need? Is there any evidence that there is a higher or lower take-up by particular groups? Have there been any demographic changes or trends locally? Are there any barriers to accessing the policy or service?

The Citizens Advice services and VCAEC rely on core funding from the District Council (and other local authority partners) to continue to operate. If the grant was not awarded there is a high probability that some - if not all - of the services would cease to exist in East Cambs.

(e) Does the policy affect service users or the wider community?	YES/NO/Na
(f) Does the policy have a significant effect on how services are delivered?	YES/NO/Na
(g) Will it have a significant effect on how other organisations operate?	YES/NO/Na
(h) Does it involve a significant commitment of resources?	YES/NO/Na
(i) Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities, e.g. disabled people's access to public transport etc?	YES/NO/Na

If you have answered **YES** to any of the questions above, then it is necessary to proceed with a full equality impact assessment (EIA). If the answer is **NO**, then this judgement and your response to the above questions will need to be countersigned by your Head of Service and then referred to the Council's Equal Opportunities Working Group (EOWG) for scrutiny and verification. Please forward completed and signed forms to the Principal HR Officer.

Signatures:

Completing Officer: _____ **Date:** _____

Head of Service: _____ **Date:** _____