

# Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit

## **Section 1: Your details**

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**Head of section:** David Hughes, Director of Regeneration and Place, Marcus Shaw, BCD Programme Senior Responsible Officer

**Chief Officer:** Paul Satoor

**Directorate:** Regeneration and Place

**Date:** 22/09/2023

## **Section 2: What Council proposal is being assessed?**

### **2.1 Birkenhead Commercial District (BCD) New Council Office Space – Mallory and Irvine Buildings**

The Birkenhead Commercial District new Council offices Mallory and Irvine will be a significant town centre development incorporating Grade A office space. Mallory Building will house Council staff across floors 1, 2 and 3. The Council will sub-let the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor in Mallory and all floors in Irvine.

### **2.2 Consolidation of Assets and Relocation of Staff**

- Relocation of 1, 949 Wirral Council employees from various locations to one site in central Birkenhead.
- Disposal or termination of leases on 14 existing buildings occupied by council staff.

## **Section 2a: Will this EIA be submitted to a Committee meeting?**

Yes - Policy & Resources Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Hyperlink to the published EIA on the Council's website**

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

**Section 3:      The proposal has the potential to affect:**

- ✓      **Services**
- ✓      **The workforce**
- ✓      **Communities**
- ✓      **Other** (Public Sector Partners, Private Sector)

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

**Section 4:**

**Could the proposal have a positive or negative impact on any protected groups (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation)?**

**You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals. We encourage services to consider the impact on those who serve and who have served in the armed forces and their families, in accordance with the Armed Forces Covenant**

**Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any potential negative impact.**

Which group(s) of people could be affected	Potential positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any potential negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications
Council Employees - working with the Council twelve employee groups / networks and the wider workforce. The project team assessed and mitigated the potential impact on the following protected characteristics:					
<p><b>Age:</b> Neutral</p>	<p>The relocation of 1,949 Wirral Council employees from various locations to one site in central Birkenhead.</p> <p>The Council’s workforce’s ways of working have radically changed since Covid-19. The organisation has taken what it’s learned to provide tools that support hybrid working, along with this new office location working together will enhance productivity, deliver better service and outcomes for the residents of Wirral.</p> <p>To date the Council has extensively</p>	<p>The Council delivers a wide range of services, to residents. Therefore, needs a diverse workforce, a wide range of job roles and various operating models to meet the needs of our services. The Council has a Hybrid Working Policy, along with a comprehensive programme of support, to support hybrid working - based on the needs of service delivery, outcomes for residents and teams.</p>	<p>Assistant Director Human Resources &amp; Organisational Development</p>	<p>Delivered and on-going as hybrid working evolves.</p>	<p>Yes and needs met</p>

	<p>engaged its twelve employee groups / networks (covering the protected characteristics) and the wider workforce so they feel at the heart of our new workplace design.</p>	<p>A communication and Engagement plan and approach that is supporting people to feel at the heart of the workplace design.</p>			
<p><b>Disability:</b> With the mitigation outlined positive.</p>	<p>This approach has demonstrated transparency, built a sense of ownership, excitement and fostered a sense of inclusion. Something that will continue especially throughout the preparation and move, to address and mitigate any concerns, and ensure a sense of excitement and readiness for the move and change.</p>	<p>Workspaces have a range of inclusive features that acknowledge diversity and inclusion and offer dignity, autonomy and choice. Enabling flexibility through environments that are convenient and enjoyable for all employees to use.</p> <p>A key part of the engagement approach was to understand the individual specialist requirements that needed to be incorporated within the plans. In addition to, raising awareness with employees about the range of inclusive approaches available within the workspaces. As workspaces have been designed to meet inclusive standards e.g. appropriate turning spaces in floor plans, accessible toilets on every floor, automatic door opening systems, assessable kitchens etc.</p>	<p>Health &amp; Safety Manager</p>	<p>2022 – September 2024</p>	<p>Yes and needs met</p>

		<p>There will always be a need to be able to adapt work settings to accommodate new or changing individual needs. This will continue to be done through our existing approach with individuals supported by our Occupational Health service and any other additional specialist support services.</p> <p>Working with our Neurodiversity Group the workspace design reflects the needs of this group including focused and quiet areas.</p> <p>The Council is introducing a parking policy for the new building which take account and provides 14 disabled parking bays next to the building. In addition, blue badge holders we will continue to be able to park for free in any council car park and applicable on-street parking. This includes parking in The Grange and the Asda car park (upper level which is adjacent to the Mallory building).</p>			
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<p><b>Gender reassignment:</b> With the mitigation outlined positive.</p>		<p>The Council has a Gender Identity policy to help meet the needs of transgender people and to remove barriers that may exist.</p>	<p>Assistant Director HR &amp; OD</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Yes and needs met</p>
<p><b>Marriage and civil partnership:</b> Neutral</p>		<p>The Council has a Family Friendly Policy to support all employees in achieving good balance between work and family life.</p>	<p>Assistant Director HR &amp; OD</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Yes and needs met</p>
<p><b>Pregnancy and maternity:</b> With the mitigation outlined positive.</p>		<p>Working with the Women's and Working Parents Networks the workspace meets their needs including features such as a breastfeeding room.</p>	<p>Assistant Director HR &amp; OD</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Yes and needs met</p>
<p><b>Race; religion or belief:</b> With the mitigation outlined positive.</p>		<p>Working with the Race, Religion &amp; Belief Group the workspace meets their needs including features like a male and female prayer rooms.</p>	<p>Assistant Director HR &amp; OD</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Yes and needs met</p>
<p><b>Sex; sexual orientation:</b> Neutral</p>		<p>Working with the employee LGBTQ+ Group the workspace meets their needs including features like gender neutral changing areas and gender-neutral toilets on every floor.</p>	<p>Assistant Director HR &amp; OD</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Yes and needs met</p>
<p><b>Socio-economic status:</b> With the mitigation outlined neutral.</p>		<p>Workstation and facilities have also been designed to reduce the need to carry equipment. Lockers are also being made available should staff work in the office</p>	<p>Assistant Director HR &amp; OD</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Yes and needs met</p>

		<p>consecutively to reduce the need to transport items back and too the office.</p> <p>The building is adjacent to Birkenhead's central bus depot and a short stroll from Conway Park train station. The Council is developing a Sustainable Transport Policy with measures to reduce reliance on cars needed to travel to work and for the purposes of work. In addition, to our approach to hybrid working reducing the need for people to pay for travel to work and the need to have a car for the purposes of work.</p>			
Public	<p>BCD is not a publicly operational building and was designed as a corporate office building. However, there may be occasions where members of the public enter the building for meetings.</p> <p>BCD is well served by public transport with both rail and bus stations located in the immediate vicinity.</p>	<p>No public consultation has been undertaken as the building was not designed for public.</p> <p>If members of the public need access, then this will be the responsibility of their host to accommodate any reasonable adjustments.</p>	TBC	Completed	Communication Officer
Partners	<p>Partners working collaboratively with Council Services will be impacted by the relocation of staff and services. The development of the Birkenhead</p>	<p>Develop an effective Communication and Engagement Plan</p>	TBC	Dec 2018 : on-going	TBC

	<p>Commercial District (BCD) would potentially provide further collaborative and service integration opportunities between partner and council services, either in a single location or a reduced One Public Estate (OPE) footprint.</p> <p>BCD is well served by public transport with both rail and bus stations located in the immediate vicinity.</p>	<p>Regular engagement through Wirral Partnership Board/one to one meetings.</p> <p>Develop a series of workshops that will help shape and inform future design proposals.</p>			
Local Businesses	<p>Loss of business to Wirral traders when Council staff relocate to BCD from across the borough.</p> <p>Traders across the borough may experience some reduction in business when staff are relocated from other offices.</p> <p>Other locations in the district will potentially benefit from Council staff being relocated.</p>	<p>Phased relocation of staff over a period of time to lessen the impact.</p> <p>Redevelop the remaining footprint as quickly as possible.</p>	TBC	Prior to relocation	TBC Communication Officer
Disruption of services caused by relocation and changed processes	<p>The project recognises it is a busy time in the Council's yearly business cycle and has started to prepare for the move early to significantly benefit the move.</p> <p>Planning is taking place to minimize the chances of unexpected disruptions.</p>	<p>Moving inherently involves risks, therefore in addition to the mitigations in place services are updating their contingency plans to better navigate any unforeseen challenges that arise.</p> <p>Move Champions have been identified from all services (middle to senior</p>	Service Leads  Move Manager	Ongoing  Ongoing	Yes  Yes



		<p>managers) who will help services / teams prepare for the move, meet with the Move Manager regularly to convey information in both directions and ensure that key dates and targets are met, identify potential challenges ahead of time, working with the project team to proactively have solutions in place to address them, ensuring a smooth and efficient relocation.</p> <p>A range of support is available to services, managers and individuals to prepare for the move including the Hybrid hub, regular communications, tours, staff etiquette guide, progress updates, team time sessions, direct communication with teams on their transition plans, 'Moving to Mallory Toolkit' etc.</p>	<p>Head of OD, Learning, Inclusion and Talent</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Yes and needs met.</p>
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**Section 4a: Where and how will the above actions be monitored?**

EIA has formed and will continue to play a part in the BCD Programme workstream 'New Ways of Working'. This work stream is led by Tony Williams, Assistant Director of HR and attended, when necessary, by Frank O'Sullivan Head of Organisational Development. EIA actions as outlined in this paper will be discussed and mitigated at weekly sessions. Records of such resolutions are kept on the workstream Risk, Actions, Issues, Decisions (RAID) log.

**Section 4b: If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?**

Workforce:

Age, marriage and civil partnership and sex; sexual orientation we assessed as neutral following extensive engagement with our twelve employee groups / networks and the wider workforce and design sessions with our workspace architects.

In addition, the nature of the design and mitigations outlined in this EIA also support this wider workforce.

The buildings will be BREEAM (Building Research Establishments Environmental Assessment methodology) rated Excellent. They will be built sustainably, A rated energy efficiency and built to respond to all user's needs. BREEAM is an assessment undertaken by independent licensed assessors using scientifically-based sustainability metrics and indices which cover a range of environmental issues. Its categories evaluate energy and water use, health and wellbeing, pollution, transport, materials, waste, ecology and management processes.

**Section 5: What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?**

A 'Proposed Approach: Public Consultation, Outreach and Engagement' was developed and was included as Appendix 4 to the BCD Cabinet report dated 26/11/18.

The approach acknowledged that to be successful in our ambitions we must generate awareness, interest and support with residents, businesses and other key stakeholders.

Many of the findings and conclusions identified through this approach:

- Help inform and shape the future plans of developers by painting a clearer picture of what residents and others aspire to for Birkenhead.
- Contribute to the strategic plans and spatial frameworks the Council and others must produce.
- Provide evidence and opinion which creates a single and focussed ambition for the town centre amongst its residents, businesses and key stakeholders.

The approach was tailored to the area, the community and their social, economic and environmental circumstances. It informed an ambitious set of projects which identified many challenges and opportunities.

There were some existing rules which were adhered to as we shaped our conversations. We respected and enhanced the physical space, character and heritage of the place and provided solutions which improve residents' liveability and experience.

Given the scale of the regeneration proposed, it was proposed that this programme had two key work streams:

1. Produce Evidence Base: Develop and deliver primary research to provide qualitative and quantitative evidence from a significant sample of residents, businesses and communities on key topics and issues. This evidence base would confirm what local people and visitors to Birkenhead think of the town and how its offer could be improved. It is proposed to review the methodologies used in previous surveys so where possible 2019 comparisons can be drawn to illustrate trends and shifting perceptions.

2. Generate Awareness, Excitement and Support: Host a range of events and activities across Birkenhead to understand the ambitions and aspirations of local people for Birkenhead. Capitalising on events already planned, such as the Borough of Culture schedule and other activities, this work would enhance and build upon the outreach already undertaken by 'Wirral Well Made' engagement programmes to generate awareness, excitement and support for the regeneration and transformation of Birkenhead Town Centre. In addition to engaging local residents and visitors, there also needs to be bespoke engagement with other key stakeholders including politicians, investors, developer/construction organisations and opinion leaders.

A detailed advertising and media strategy was produced using online and offline channels, WirralWellMade and other digital properties, Merseytravel and other OOH opportunities and through local media and business/trade titles to communicate and promote the Consultation, Outreach and Engagement events and programmes.

To ensure the Consultation, Outreach and Engagement was open and encouraged meaningful exchanges of opinions, it was suggested early work was themed and framed by key issues already identified via previous consultations, including:

- Public Realm - Quality, Identity and Place
- Resident/Visitor Experience - Safety and Security, Access, Amenities
- Traffic and Transport Options - Bus, Taxi, Train, Cycling, Car Parking, Servicing, Loading and Kerbside Activity
- Economy and Employment – Job Creation, Training, Protecting Retail and Commercial Employment Numbers
- Mix of Use - Residential, Retail, Commercial, Industrial, Leisure and Evening Economy
- Culture - Youth, Art, Leisure, Play
- Sustainability - Landscape, Trees, Green Space, Air Quality, Waste and Ecology
- Management and Enforcement – Litter, Waste Management, Trader's Associations, Community Patrols, Policing

Early engagement with services, our workforce, our staff groups and our trade union colleagues regarding the design has resulted in workspaces being inclusive and flexible so it

meets the needs for effective service delivery and our workforce. A full engagement plan has been developed to support this programme.

The Council will also receive a Waste Minimisation Plan from our fit-out contractor (Overbury PLC) to support with Wirral Net Zero by 2030 target.

The Council has worked with its supply chain contractors to ensure they provide social value back to local people.

**Section 6: Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council proposal?**

**Yes**

**If 'yes' please continue to section 7.**

**If 'no' please state your reason(s) why:**

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to [engage@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:engage@wirral.gov.uk) for publishing)

**Section 7: How will consultation take place and by when?**

To date the Council has extensively engaged with its unions so our employees feel at the heart of our new workplace design.

Before you complete your consultation, please email your preliminary EIA to [engage@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:engage@wirral.gov.uk) via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it's legal publishing requirements. The EIA will need to be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 4. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to [engage@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:engage@wirral.gov.uk) for publishing.

**Section 8: Have you remembered to:**

- a) Select appropriate directorate hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published (section 2a)**
- b) Include any potential positive impacts as well as negative impacts? (section 4)**
- c) Send this EIA to [engage@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:engage@wirral.gov.uk) via your Chief Officer?**
- d) Review section 4 once consultation has taken place and sent your updated EIA to [engage@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:engage@wirral.gov.uk) via your Chief Officer for re-publishing?**