



Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

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|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Organisation prepared for | MDC; SDC; SW&T and SSSC | | |
| Version | V3.0 | Date Completed | 13th November 2020 |

Description of what is being impact assessed

The Stronger Somerset Proposal for a two unitary model of local government, built on a strong reform agenda, is the subject of this Equality Impact Assessment.

Unitary local government is the model of governance in place throughout much of England, all metropolitan areas, many non-metropolitan areas and counties and all of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. As such, there are no equalities issues inherent in the unitary model or the decision to move from a two-tier system to a unitary system of Local Government.

Subsequent policy decisions made and implemented by any future unitary Shadow Executives or District Councils will be subject to detailed EIA's to assess the impact of those decisions on residents, businesses and staff in line with all equalities legislation.

It has been agreed by all the councils in Somerset that the existing model of local government cannot continue in its existing form.

Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West & Taunton and South Somerset District Councils believe that a two unitary model based on a reform agenda will deliver a whole-system approach to the major challenges that the County faces. The Stronger Somerset Proposal provides a platform from which to address some of the challenges specific to Somerset, drive improvements in outcomes for vulnerable children and adults, level up Somerset so that it becomes a net contributor to the UK government and deliver a far more local approach to service delivery. .

The District Councils believe that new and radical approaches are needed to help people live better lives, whilst reducing demand, creating a greater sense of community whilst helping to reduce social isolation. A two unitary model that enables engagement with excluded people and groups will support and maximise community resilience and prosperity. At this stage of the programme, we have been invited by the Secretary of State to submit a full proposal for the creation of two unitary authorities to serve Somerset.

If the Secretary of State approves the District Council Stronger Somerset proposal, work would then begin to implement a two unitary model with a Vesting date of April 2023.

This assessment is concerned with the impacts of the Stronger Somerset proposal on Somerset's communities only, and not at this stage at the impacts as they might affect staff and elected members. However, it is recognised that should the Secretary of State approve the District Council Stronger Somerset proposal, the ongoing design of the two council model will require further EIA's to be undertaken that will address the needs of staff and elected members in addition to the communities of Somerset.

This EIA will be used to inform the deliberations of the District Council CEOs and Leaders as they review the final Stronger Somerset Business Case.

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

Data on Somerset has been sourced from the 2011 census <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/equality-and-diversity/> and from the summary of key data covering all Protected Characteristics identified through the Equality Act 2010, compiled from the Somerset JSNA.

<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/files/MTFP%202018%20JSNA%20summary%20of%20Somerset%20key%20data.pdf>

Highlight reports from the census data can be found at the following links

Age

<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/age-group-profiles-for-somerset.pdf>

Disability

<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/disability-and-health-profiles-for-somerset.pdf>

Race/ Ethnicity

<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/ethnicity-profiles-for-somerset.pdf>

Religion/Belief

<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/religion-and-belief-profiles-for-somerset.pdf>

Sexual Orientation

<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/lgbt/>

Marriage & Civil Partnership

| Marital Status | All persons | Males | Females |
|--|-------------|---------|---------|
| All categories: Marital and civil partnership status | 435,382 | 210,003 | 225,379 |
| Single (never married or never registered a same-sex civil partnership) | 120,825 | 65,730 | 55,095 |
| Married | 224,255 | 112,246 | 112,009 |
| In a registered same-sex civil partnership | 699 | 317 | 382 |
| Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a same-sex civil partnership) | 10,322 | 4,615 | 5,707 |
| Divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved | 44,329 | 19,232 | 25,097 |
| Widowed or surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership | 34,952 | 7,863 | 27,089 |

JSNA Equalities Summary

<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/files/MTFP%202018%20JSNA%20summary%20of%20Somerset%20key%20data.pdf>

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

A detailed consultation and engagement plan is being drawn up which will include targeted consultation with representative groups of the Equality Act Protected Characteristics. For example, engagement sessions that have been scheduled concerning the future of both Adults' and Children's Services will secure the involvement of people from the Protected Characteristics of Age (older people), Disability and Carers.

Issues that will be covered in these engagement sessions are:-

1. Strengthening prevention and early intervention services
2. Developing re-ablement and rehabilitation services
3. Safeguarding adults
4. Strengths based, integrated and local social work practice
5. Accommodation
6. Care at home
7. Learning disability and mental health services

In relation to Children's' Services, parent/carer groups (including parents/carers of SEND children and young people) have been invited to two engagement sessions. These sessions are:-

1. 'Aspire and achieve' – focus on education outcomes from 5-18+, and
2. 'Inclusion: No child is left behind' - focusing on SEN, CAMHS, transitions to adult services and support.

In addition, there will be sessions dedicated specifically to children and young people and children looked after. Other sessions are being planned with the involvement of relevant professionals regarding co-designing services that will ensure no child is left behind e.g.

1. The first 1000 days – focus on providing the best start in life for young children
2. Early help and prevention – focus on statutory (including schools) and voluntary/community sector organisations working with parents and families to provide additional support at a local community level
3. Safe and Protected – focus on keeping children and young people safe from harm

4. Corporate Parenting– focussing on delivering the best outcomes and start in life to children in care and care leavers

All of these sessions will secure the involvement of service users covering the Protected Characteristics of Age (children and young people), Disability, Race and Ethnicity.

A further five engagement sessions are being planned for localities, to ensure that older people are able to live where they choose for longer, they are supported locally and have access to services and leisure activities.

As the Stronger Somerset proposal is an iterative process, engagement will continue beyond submission of the final proposal into the design and implementation phases.

To ensure that the views of people sharing the Protected Characteristics of Disability and Race/ are captured as part of the consultation/engagement work use will be made of specialist agencies such as the new Somerset Disability Engagement and Consultation Service provided by AJM Healthcare and the Somerset Diverse Communities project.

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

As stated earlier, this EIA is concerned only with the impacts on Somerset’s communities as users and beneficiaries of Council services, and not at this stage on staff or elected members. This is reflected, therefore, in the following Impact Analysis.

| Protected group | Summary of impact | Negative outcome | Neutral outcome | Positive outcome |
|-----------------|---|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Age | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Stronger Somerset Proposal has as three of its ambitions - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Every child starts well ○ Every young person believes they can live well ○ Our older population ages well <p>As the Stronger Somerset Proposal is built on a strong reform agenda that will tackle the key challenges facing Somerset, people both young and old who share this Protected Characteristic will experience positive outcomes.</p> <p>For example, measures in the Stronger Somerset Proposal will address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high numbers of Children experiencing poverty and deprivation • Some of the poorest levels of Social Mobility in the UK affecting young people • An ageing population that is increasing poor health and wellbeing, isolation and loneliness, inappropriate housing and poor digital and social connectivity. | □ | □ | ☒ |

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|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| | <p>With the existing SEND service been judged as having significant areas of weakness in its practice by Ofsted, and Children's Services rated as inadequate and requiring improvement since 2015, the Stronger Somerset reform agenda will deliver a fresh start for children. Planned changes in both Children's and Adult Social Care include –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whole system commissioning with an alliance agreement • Leading practice solutions to improve independence, restore preventative services and enable multi-disciplinary teams working in localities. • A fresh start for Children's Services, establishing an Alternative Delivery Model | | | |
| Disability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As indicated in the Consultation and Summary of Impact for the Age Characteristic sections above, the Stronger Somerset Proposal will pursue an agenda in the areas of older people and Children that will impact positively on the lives of those who are disabled, whether through physical or mental impairments. | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| Gender reassignment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this Proposal stage, it is not possible to evidence or assess any impacts to individuals of this protected characteristic. | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| Marriage and civil partnership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this Proposal stage, it is not possible to evidence or assess any impacts to individuals of this protected characteristic. | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| Pregnancy and maternity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this Proposal stage, it is not possible to evidence or assess any impacts to individuals of this protected characteristic. | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |

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|---|--|---|---|---|
| Race and ethnicity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At this Proposal stage, it is not possible to evidence or assess any impacts to individuals of this protected characteristic. | □ | ⊗ | □ |
| Religion or belief | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At this Proposal stage, it is not possible to evidence or assess any impacts to individuals of this protected characteristic. | □ | ⊗ | □ |
| Sex | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At this Proposal stage, it is not possible to evidence or assess any impacts to individuals of this protected characteristic. | □ | ⊗ | □ |
| Sexual orientation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At this Proposal stage, it is not possible to evidence or assess any impacts to individuals of this protected characteristic. | □ | ⊗ | □ |
| Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As indicated in the Consultation section above the Stronger Somerset Proposal will pursue and agenda in the areas of Adult and Children’s service that will impact positively on the lives of Carers. The Stronger Somerset Proposal also sets out an agenda that will tackle the problems of poverty, poor social mobility, rural isolation (digital and social) and a low wage economy. In these respects, the Proposal will deliver positive outcomes for these additional locally identified Characteristics. | □ | □ | ⊗ |

Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

| Action taken/to be taken | Date | Person responsible | How will it be monitored? | Action complete |
|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Select date | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

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| Completed by: | Jan Gamon – Programme Director Stronger Somerset |
| Date | 13/11/2020 |
| Signed off by: | Jan Gamon – Programme Director Stronger Somerset |

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| Date | 13/11/2020 |
| Equality Lead/Manager sign off date: | Dave Crisfield (on behalf of MDC; SDC, SW&T and SSDC Equality Officers) – 13/11/2020 |
| To be reviewed by: (officer name) | Jan Gamon |
| Review date: | June 2021 |