

Bristol City Council Equality Impact Assessment Form



(Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this form)

Name of proposal	Procurement of Revenues and Benefits back office system
Directorate and Service Area	Resources, Finance, Revenues and Benefits
Name of Lead Officer	Kevin Smith

Step 1: What is the proposal?

Please explain your proposal in Plain English, avoiding acronyms and jargon. This section should explain how the proposal will impact service users, staff and/or the wider community.

1.1 What is the proposal?

This proposal is about the procurement of the main back office processing system for Revenues and Benefits as well as supporting systems such as a document management system to store all citizen correspondence

The existing system has been in place since 1992 and is used for the billing, collection and enforcement of Council Tax, Business Rates and Business Improvement District Levy.

It is also used for the assessment and payment of Housing Benefit (HB), Council Tax Reduction (CTR) and also Discretionary Housing Payments.

The full scope of the project is not yet decided but may also include an on-line citizen and business account portal to enable citizens to self-serve and view their information and also intelligent automated web forms, such as benefit claim form or council tax move forms. These would integrate with the back office processing system to reduce the need to re-key information and speed up processing time and also a document management system for the storage of all correspondence and evidence required to process the back office processing.

Step 2: What information do we have?

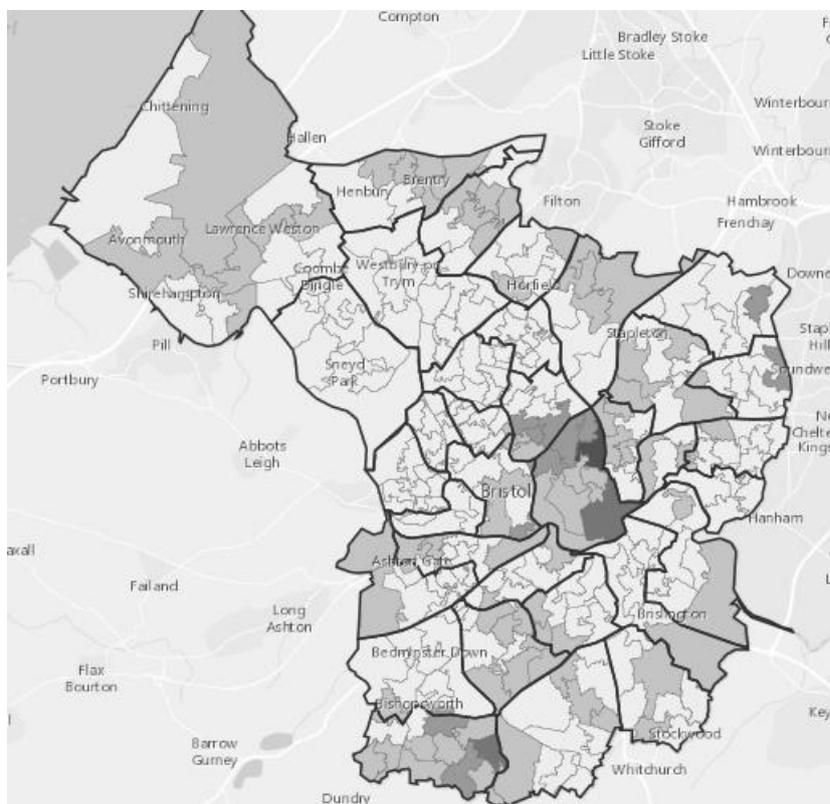
Decisions must be evidence-based and involve people with protected characteristics that could be affected. Please use this section to demonstrate understanding of who could be affected by the proposal.

2.1 What data or evidence is there which tells us who is, or could be affected?

Our existing HB/CTR claim database provides accurate data on the geographical location, household income, age, disability (if specific benefits such as Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) are in payment), and sex of the claimant, partner and dependants.

However in respect of Council Tax, Business Rates and Business Improvement Districts there only exists accurate data on the geographical location, as the other data regarding equalities information of households is not required, nor is there any legal obligation to request this, in order to make relevant households and businesses liable.

Map 1: This map shows the distribution of our current working age HB/CTR caseload – the darker the shade of grey, the more working age recipients (ward boundaries shown in black).



The areas most impacted by the proposal are generally more deprived areas of the city and are mainly located in the centre or on the periphery.

2.2 Who is missing? Are there any gaps in the data?

Our existing HB/CTR claim database does not hold data on religious belief/lack of belief, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnerships, pregnancy/maternity, gender reassignment or disability (unless a disability related benefit is in payment).

Some limited data is held on ethnicity but this is of poor quality due to the low response rates to equality questions asked on the HB/CTR application form.

For Council Tax, Business Rates and Business Improvement District Levy liabilities there is no information held.

2.3 How have we involved, or will we involve, communities and groups that could be affected?

There is no community involvement planned as the proposed changes are internal only and will not be visible to citizens.

Step 3: Who might the proposal impact?

Analysis of impacts on people with protected characteristics must be rigorous. Please demonstrate your analysis of any impacts in this section, referring to all of the equalities groups as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

3.1 Does the proposal have any potentially adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics?

This project deals with the procurement of the revenues and benefits back office processing system. The proposed solution, i.e. to retain the existing supplier with no loss of functionality means there are no negative impacts, however any adverse impact caused by loss of functionality would be universally experienced. We will, wherever possible, look to add additional modules, wherever possible, in an effort to minimise any impact on people on the basis of their protected characteristics.

As a core line of business system which contains personal information, access to data is restricted to authorised users and in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018. User access is reviewed regularly. We are adhering to Information Governance's requirements and will implement any recommendations from the Privacy Impact Assessment.

3.3 Does the proposal create any benefits for people with protected characteristics?

It is possible that as part of the procurement process, new functionality or streamlining of processes could take place which could improve the speed of processing or quality of information / documentation available to citizens and / or businesses.

3.4 Can they be maximised? If so, how?

We will consider accessibility requirements as part of service specification development

Step 4: So what?

The Equality Impact Assessment must be able to influence the proposal and decision. This section asks how your understanding of impacts on people with protected characteristics has influenced your proposal, and how the findings of your Equality Impact Assessment can be measured going forward.

4.1 How has the equality impact assessment informed or changed the proposal?

The EqIA has provided an opportunity to review opportunities to minimise impact and provide improved outcomes.

The respective services already have a Privacy Impact Assessment and Record of Processing Activity and will ensure that any recommendations from the Information Governance team are implemented.

4.2 What actions have been identified going forward?

Soft market testing has been undertaken which has indicated that remaining with the current supplier appears to be the most cost effective option. However, due to the size and value of this contract, it will be a key decision and will follow the correct pathway as well as a briefing with Cllr Cheney.

4.3 How will the impact of your proposal and actions be measured moving forward?

Continuing with the current supplier – maintaining a status quo - minimises any potential for new risks which could impact on those with protected characteristics.

Director Sign-Off: Denise Murray	Equalities Officer Sign Off: <i>Reviewed by Equalities and Community Cohesion Team</i>
Date:	Date: 22/11/2019