

Bristol City Council Equality Impact Assessment Form

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



Name of proposal	Bristol Heat Networks - Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)
Directorate and Service Area	Growth and Regeneration, Energy Services
Name of Lead Officer	Paul Barker

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?

Bristol City Council are constructing heat networks to enable decarbonisation of heat across the city in support of the Council's Carbon neutrality aims. These work by installing pipes underground to transport heated water to buildings that then use this for heating and hot water. In order to heat the water energy centres are required where a combination of technologies are used with low/zero carbon being of highest importance.

In order to fund the construction of the heat networks, Bristol City Council applied for Heat Network Investment Project government grant funding for the Redcliffe and Old Market networks. Bristol City Council has been awarded funding and a condition is that the money be held off National Accounts. Therefore, this cabinet request is specifically related to the set-up and structure of Special Purpose Vehicles.

The Special Purpose Vehicles will be set up under Bristol Holdings Ltd utilising existing governance structures.

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?

Two of the key aims of our Business Plan 2019-20 are: ‘Reducing our environmental impact by using clean energy, improving air quality and reducing waste and pollution’; and ‘Tackling food and fuel poverty’.

Climate change and the risk it poses for the future resilience of our city (for example in terms of increased flood risk) affect all citizens and in particular people living in poverty and those experiencing multiple sources of inequality because of their protected characteristics.

The Bristol Quality of Life Survey indicates that young people, carers and people of White minority ethnicity are less likely to be satisfied with the cost of heating their home than average residents.

There is also a marked difference in the extent to which Tenants of Private Landlords (41.9%) compared to Council Tenants (49.4%) and Housing Association Tenants (49.3%) are satisfied with the cost of heating their home.

% satisfied with the cost of heating their home

Equalities Group	Percentage
16 to 24 years	42.4%
50 years and older	50.4%
65 years and older	58.3%
Female	46.7%
Male	46.8%
BME (Black and Minority Ethnicity)	45.8%
WME (White Minority Ethnicity)	36.9%
Carer	43.5%
Disabled	43.3%
LGB (Lesbian Gay Bisexual)	51.4%
No religion or faith	45.4%
Religion or faith	51.0%
Bristol Average	46.8%

source: Quality of Life in Bristol survey 2018-19

Type of Tenancy	Percentage
Council Tenants	49.4%
Housing Association Tenants	49.3%
Owner Occupiers	48.7%
Tenants of Private Landlords	41.9%
Bristol Average	46.8%

*source: Quality of Life in Bristol survey
2018-19*

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

We know that there are gaps in our diversity data for some protected characteristics citywide, especially where this has not historically been included in census and statutory reporting e.g. for sexual orientation.

Bristol City Council workforce diversity monitoring is limited to: Age Group, Disabled Employees, Ethnicity, Gender, Religion/Belief and Sexual Orientation – we do not have reportable diversity statistics at a service area level for Pregnancy/Maternity or Gender Reassignment.

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

We have consulted with internal subject-matter experts. We will involve and consult with any affected staff in Energy Services about subsequent changes in processes.

Separately from this proposal there has been / will be wider public engagement and consultation about the City Leap Prospectus and Bristol Heat Networks.

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?

No significant negative impacts of setting up Special Purpose Vehicles have been identified at this stage. However we need to ensure that the Heat Network expansion meets the different needs of Bristol's diverse population and that works are not disruptive to citizen's access to affected areas.

The set-up of the Special Purpose Vehicles is unlikely to have an impact on citizens of Bristol. However, there may be an impact on existing Council staff due to different reporting structures (a Director will need to be appointed). There will be no significant change to anyone's job role as the structure is intended to continue 'business as usual' with all existing risks sitting within the Energy Services. In addition, the Special Purpose Vehicle will be set-up with no employees therefore no impact to staff contracts.

3.2 Can these impacts be mitigated or justified? If so, how?

We will continue to work with building designers and developers to ensure that equality impacts are considered throughout the process and minimise any disruption from Heat Network Expansion works.

Although we do not anticipate any significant changes to job roles within Energy Services, we will ensure that staff are informed and consulted on any changes in processes, and where appropriate any reasonable adjustments are implemented.

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

Developments connected to the network will have lower energy costs for the provision of heat, therefore supporting people in fuel poverty. The set-up of the Special Purpose Vehicles will facilitate this.

3.4 Can they be maximised? If so, how?

The Special Purpose Vehicles allows Bristol City Council to continue to provide a wider positive impact to reduce the effects of climate change.

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 identified that even though the proposed structure of the Special Purpose Vehicles are to continue "business as usual" there will be changes to existing Energy Services staff current way of working which will need to be identified and communicated prior.

4.2 What actions have been identified going forward?

Managers will ensure that Council staff are informed and consulted on any changes in processes.

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

- Reduction in the percentage of the population living in fuel poverty
- Reduction in the total CO2 emissions in Bristol

Service Director Sign-Off:

Patsy Mellor

Equalities Officer Sign Off:

Reviewed by Equality and Inclusion Team

Date: 16/01/2020

Date: 15/1/2020