Thurrock Council

Community Equality Impact Assessment

Service area and lead officer

Name of service	Communications – Chief Executive's Office
CEIA Lead Officer	Mary Patricia Flynn
CEIA Lead Officer job title	Interim Director of Communications
CEIA Lead Officer email address	mpflynn@thurrock.gov.uk

Subject of this assessment

What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?
Reduction in Central Communications Budget

Borough-wide or location-specific?
☒ Borough-wide ☐ Location-specific – please state locations below.
Click or tap here to enter text.

Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development or review needed?
The Communications Team delivers traditional and digital communications for the whole organisation. This involves proactive campaigns, reputation enhancing, and support for council priorities. Most of the communications annual budget is allocated to salary for the communications specialists employed by the council. The remainder of the budget is mostly allocated to campaign promotion and necessary subscriptions for the essential communications tools. A move to digital will reduce costs associated with expensive print costs. A review of the service is also underway.   The proposed savings have been identified by the Head of Communications as being achievable by reducing the campaigns budgets. There are alternative ways to promote messaging that are separate from the traditional campaigns budget. Services will be engaged with about the potential changes in the campaigns budget and will have an opportunity to input and review proposals arising.

1. Engagement, consultation and supporting information

1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to engage or consult (where applicable) the whole community or specific groups affected by this development or review? **This is a vital step.**

Steps you have taken, or plan to take, to engage or consult
The communications service is about to enter a full review which will include looking at the use of all communications tools to improve the way we share information. The focus will be a proactive and modern communications function with increased engagement.

1.2. What data or intelligence sources have you used to inform your assessment of the impact? How have these helped you understand who will be affected by the development or review?

Sources of data or intelligence, and how they have been used
A new communications strategy approach has been agreed at Improvement and Recovery Board and will be developed in line with the main corporate strategy that is emerging. This will enable a different approach and way of promoting the council's core priorities.

2. Community and workforce impact

2.1. What impacts will this development or review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents?

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general	☐	☒	☐	Reducing the spend on communications reduces the potential impact of council communications at a time when communications has been identified by commissioners as key to the council's recovery. This has the potential to impact all groups. A reliance on digital communications has a risk of providing a lesser service to those without digital access.	There is less reliance on costly print materials than in previous budget years. Targeted social media advertising has advanced in effectiveness and is less expensive than universal print solutions. Print and location advertising is still relevant and used for non-digital members of the community in a more targeted and analysed way.
Age	☐	☒	☐	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A
Disability	☐	☒	☐	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A
Gender reassignment	☐	☒	☐	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Marriage and civil partnership	☐	☒	☐	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	☐	☒	☐	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A
Race	☐	☒	☐	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A
Religion or belief	☐	☒	☐	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A
Sex	☐	☒	☐	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A
Sexual orientation	☐	☒	☐	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A
Location-specific impact, if any	☐	☒	☐	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Workforce	☐	☒	☐	No anticipated impact.	N/A
Health and wellbeing of residents	☐	☒	☐	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A
Socio-economic outcomes	☐	☒	☐	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces	☐	☒	☐	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A

3.   Monitoring and review

3.1.   How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? These actions should be developed using the information gathered in sections 1 and 2 and included in your service area's business plans.

Action	By when	By who
As part of the production of the new Communications Strategy, an annual campaigns plan will need to be created and agreed by services. The annual campaigns plan has a cycle of checks and reviews, each quarter being assessed for whether it is meeting objectives	To follow quarterly calendar year cycle	Alix Macfarlane
Review any additional feedback from engagement and update this CEIA accordingly	January 2024	Alix Macfarlane

4. Next steps

4.1. The information gathered must be used to inform reports presented to Cabinet or overview and scrutiny committees. This will give members a necessary understanding of the impact their decisions will have on different groups and the whole community.

Summarise the implications and customer impact below. This summary should be added to the committee reports template in the Diversity and Equality Implications section for review and sign-off at the consultation stage of the report preparation cycle.

Summary of implications and customer impact
The new Communications Strategy will set out a different approach and way of promoting the council's core priorities. There are no fundamental impacts for the community or members of the workforce as resources will be used more effectively.

5. Sign off

5.1. This Community Equality Impact Assessment must be authorised by the relevant project sponsor, strategic lead, or assistant director. This should not be the CEIA Lead Officer. Officers authorising this assessment are responsible for:

- the accuracy of the information
- making sure actions are undertaken

Name	Role	Date
Alix Macfarlane	Interim Director of Communications	14/11/2023
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