

Community Impact Assessment

(Incorporating equality analysis and health considerations)

V2.0

Name of Matter Assessed:

Overview and Scrutiny Review - Impact of the Welfare Reform Act

Who will make the decision:
(e.g. Cabinet/Board etc.)

Overview and Scrutiny will produce a report with its evidence, findings and recommendations and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will present this report to Cabinet for its consideration.

Who has been involved in developing the matter:

Director: Julie Seddon , Director, Customers and Communities
Lead Officer: Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer
Chair of the Scrutiny Panel: Councillor Lee Mason

What is it:

A Community Impact Assessment (CIA) is a document that summarises how the council has had due regard to the public sector equality duty (Equality Act 2010) in decision-making. This document can also be used to consider health and narrowing health inequalities (Health and Care Act 2012)

When to assess:

A CIA should be carried out when you are changing, removing or introducing a new service, policy or function. The assessment should be proportionate; a major financial decision will need to be assessed more closely than a minor policy change.

Due Regard:

To 'have due regard' means that in making decisions and in its other day-to-day activities the council must consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the general equality duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

In relation to health, we need to consider the potential short term and long term implication of for decisions that we take to support the Health and Wellbeing agendas.

How much regard is 'due' will depend on the circumstances and in particular on the relevance of the aims in the general equality duty to the decision or function in question. The greater the relevance and potential impact, the higher the regard required by the duty. We need to make sure that we understand the potential impact of decisions on people with different protected characteristics and also need to consider this information before and as decisions are being made. This will help us to reduce or remove unhelpful impacts and inequalities

Proposal Name:

Overview and Scrutiny Review - Impact of the Welfare Reform Act

Aims/Objectives and purpose of the policy/service/function

Aims and objectives:

Purpose/Objectives of the Review

To evaluate the effect of the Welfare Reform Act on the public and Council employees.

Key actions:

Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) is a means of providing non-Executive Councillors the opportunity to inform policy development and critical friend challenge to the Council's Executive policy makers and decision makers (Cabinet). It also has a strong role in promoting the engagement of non-Executive Councillors in a diverse range of policy development activities, including performance improvement at the Council. Scrutiny aims to engage the community in its work either by attendance at meetings, public addresses to meetings, witness evidence, or co-optees to Scrutiny Reviews.

This Review will hear from a number of key stakeholders to ensure that a wide range of evidence is obtained to inform the Panel's information base.

The projected outcome of this Scrutiny Review is:

- To make informed recommendations to all relevant parties on the most appropriate approaches to take to mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform in Northampton.

All Scrutiny Reviews link to the Council's Corporate Plan. Details of which are evidenced within the final report. In particular, this Scrutiny Review links to corporate priority 5 - Better homes for the future, corporate priority 8 – responding to your needs.

Expected outcomes:

To make informed recommendations to all relevant parties on the most appropriate approaches to take to mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform in Northampton.

Who will be affected and how:

Overview and Scrutiny ensures that it adheres to the Council's statutory duty to provide the public with access to Scrutiny reports/agendas/minutes and other such documents. Meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee/Scrutiny Panels are widely publicised, i.e.: on the Council's website, copies issues to the local media and paper copies available in the Council's One Stop Shop and local libraries.

Overview and Scrutiny is currently operating paperless meetings. A paperless meeting is a move away from the traditional format for Councillor meetings,

which usually involves the printing and distribution of a significant amount of paperwork. Instead, Overview and Scrutiny is operating electronically and Councillors view all the documents for the meeting on their laptop or ICT device. The agenda items will be displayed upon the large screens in the meeting room.

All information relating to meetings of the Council's Committees is published in both PDF and RTF format to allow for accessibility by Councillors, Co-Optees, Officers and the general public. Should individuals not have the provision of a personal PC they will be able to view the data on a PC located in the Council's One Stop Shop and local libraries.

Approximately how many people will be affected:

The impact of the Scrutiny report cannot be assessed until, at the earliest, an outline of a report has been developed. Therefore, within the Scrutiny Panel's report it could suggest that any impact on the eight protected characteristics be taken into account.

However, any potential recommendations could have an effect on the community of the borough of Northampton, including:

- All residents
- User Groups
- Councillor staff
- Councillors
- Key Partners

Expected date of decision:

It is anticipated that the report of the Scrutiny Panel will be concluded in July 2014, presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2014 and to Cabinet in October/November 2014. Cabinet will then become responsible for delivering the recommendations that it accepts.

Scope/focus of the assessment:

Please outline the scope and focus of the assessment:

The Scrutiny Panel is mindful of the eight protected characteristics when undertaking scrutiny activity so that any recommendations that it makes can identify potential positive and negative impacts on any particular sector of the community. This will be borne in mind as the Scrutiny Review progresses and evidence is gathered. The final report of the Scrutiny Panel has a standard section entitled Community Impact Assessment and details the findings

Any potential recommendations proposed by the Scrutiny Panel may have perceived adverse and beneficial effects for all diversity groups.

The public's lack of understanding of either the Overview and Scrutiny function or the issues under review could lead to poorly attended and little public participation in the process.

The more public participation in the Overview and Scrutiny function will increase further participation; for example, should individuals be aware that individuals and representatives from community groups are attending such meeting and are involved in the Scrutiny process as a co-optee, and notice the difference that they can make; they too could become involved.

A comprehensive [Overview and Scrutiny webpage](#) has been developed and a leaflet promoting the work of Overview and Scrutiny and detailing how members of the public can become involved in the process has been issued to the Council's One Stop Shop and the town's main libraries. This leaflet is also distributed to attendees at all Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panel meetings.

So that the Scrutiny Panel obtains a variety of views, the Chair of Scrutiny Panel 1 will contact a wide range of key witnesses, including

- Cabinet Member for Housing, Northampton Borough Council (NBC)
- Housing Advice Service, NBC
- Head of Benefits and Revenues, NBC
- Cabinet Member for Finance, NBC
- Head of Customer and Cultural Services, NBC
- Community Law
- Citizen's Advice Bureau, Northampton
- Northamptonshire Credit Union Ltd
- Home-Start, Northampton
- Thorplands Sure Start Centre, Northampton
- Blackthorn Good Neighbours, Northampton
- SIL Officers, Northamptonshire County Council/Charity Link
- Northampton Food Banks via Community Foundation
- Oasis House, Northampton, including organisations: Midland Heart, NASH
- Northampton Salvation Army
- St Vincent de Paul Society
- A number of local residents

Evidence gathered from the key witnesses will be analysed and contained within the

Scrutiny Panel's final report. The comments of the key witnesses will be minuted and published publicly within the [Council's meeting management system](#).

Should the Scrutiny Panel conclude the need for recommendations for change; the expected impact of these changes will be detailed within the Scrutiny Panel's final report.

The Scrutiny Panel's report, after it has been endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, will be forwarded to the Council's Cabinet for consideration; Cabinet will then become responsible for delivering the recommendations that it accepts.

Meetings of this Scrutiny Panel are held in easily accessible locations (wheel chair accessible), with the provision of a hearing loop and start at 6pm; so aiming to enable those with working commitments to attend. It could be found that the timing of Overview and meetings (evenings) may not be suitable to all, for example those who are required to work during the evenings.

There is a standing agenda item on all Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panel meetings enabling members of the public to address the Committee/Panel. The public does not have to register their intention to speak in advance but is advised to arrive a few minutes prior to the start of the meeting and notify the Scrutiny Officer of their intention to speak. A Scrutiny Public Speaking Protocol has been produced and advice and assistance is offered and available to members of the public wishing to attend and address an Overview and Scrutiny Committee/Panel meeting.

The Council has access to an interpretative service and therefore such documents can be supplied in formats other than English if required.

Provision has been made for members of public who have a disability, e.g. the agenda will be displayed on a large screen in the Committee room. For those who may suffer from a visual impairment, the blind have access to 'talking' documents, those whose first language is not English have access to translation services and the building in which the meetings will occur contain hearing loops and are accessible by those with severe mobility issues, such as wheel chair users.

Community Screening Outcome

Will the proposal:	Yes/No
Eliminate discrimination, harassment or victimisation	Yes
Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes
Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes
Contribute towards health improvements or inequalities	Yes

Relevant data and/or research

Outline the information and research that has informed the decision:

The number of public attending the Scrutiny Panel meetings is recorded.

Any feedback received from the above is taken into consideration and used to formulate recommendations to improve the Service.

Background data will be provided to the Panel including:

- Background reports such as:
 - Centre for Public Scrutiny's Policy Briefing 19– Welfare Reform (September 2012)
 - Centre for Public Scrutiny's briefing Paper - The local impacts of the introduction of Universal Credit and the wider welfare reforms (August 2013)
 - Kensington and Chelsea Social Council's report – Change for Children - A study of local families in Kensington and Chelsea (2013)
 - Various relevant published papers from organisations such as, Rowntree Trust, Child Poverty Action Group, SHELTER

Details of best practice, external to Northampton, will also be presented to the Scrutiny Panel, which will help to inform the evidence base.

Sources and key findings:

Sources of information are detailed above and key findings will be fully known when the Scrutiny Panel has completed its Review.

How will the decision affect people with different protected characteristics:

The impact of the Scrutiny report cannot be assessed until, at the earliest, an outline of a report has been developed. Therefore, within the Scrutiny Panel's report it could suggest that any impact on the eight protected characteristics be taken into account.

However any potential recommendations could have an effect on the community of the borough of Northampton, including:

- All residents
- User Groups
- Councillor staff
- Councillors
- Key Partners

Rationale for change

What will you do if/when changes are agreed/introduced:

The purpose of this Scrutiny Review is to evaluate the effect of the Welfare Reform Act on the public and Council employees.

Identification of affected groups/individuals

List the groups/individuals that may be affected by the proposal:

Any potential recommendations could have an effect on the community of the borough of Northampton, including:

- All residents
- User Groups
- Councillor staff
- Councillors
- Key Partners

Assess and/or undertake Consultation

Has there been specific consultation on this decision (if not, state why not and/or when this may happen):

As part of the evidence gathering for this Scrutiny, a number of expert advisers will be consulted, including:

- Cabinet Member for Housing, Northampton Borough Council (NBC)
- Housing Advice Service, NBC
- Head of Benefits and Revenues, NBC
- Cabinet Member for Finance, NBC
- Head of Customer and Cultural Services, NBC
- Community Law
- Citizen's Advice Bureau, Northampton
- Northamptonshire Credit Union Ltd
- Home-Start, Northampton
- Thorplands Sure Start Centre, Northampton
- Blackthorn Good Neighbours, Northampton
- SIL Officers, Northamptonshire County Council/Charity Link
- Northampton Food Banks via Community Foundation
- Oasis House, Northampton, including organisations: Midland Heart, NASH
- Northampton Salvation Army
- St Vincent de Paul Society
- A number of local residents

What were the results of the consultation:

Consultation with various expert advisers will take place over a series of scheduled meetings, the outcomes of which will inform the evidence base of the Scrutiny Review which will inform the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel.

Across the protected characteristics, what difference in views did analysis of the consultation reveal:

Evidence gathered from all sources will be analysed and contained within the Scrutiny Panel's final report.

The selection of witnesses to participate in the Review has specifically and deliberately included representatives of Groups working with and for people with protected characteristics.

Overview and Scrutiny will continue to offer facilities, such as language translation.

What conclusions have been drawn from the analysis on how the decision will affect people with different protected characteristics:

The Scrutiny Panel will, after completion of its evidence gathering, formulate conclusions and recommendations as appropriate, which will have the intended purpose of recommending a system of community participation and involvement with other Agencies and interested parties. Recommendations will link to SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time) objectives. Should the recommendations be accepted by the Council's Cabinet, they will then be implemented and necessary actions drawn up.

Assessment of impact on staff

Please give details of impact on staff, including staffing profile if/as appropriate:

The Scrutiny Panel will, after completion of its evidence gathering, formulate conclusions and recommendations as appropriate, which will have the intended purpose of recommending a system of community participation and involvement with other Agencies and interested parties. Recommendations will link to SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time) objectives. Should the recommendations be accepted by the Council's Cabinet, they will then be implemented and necessary actions drawn up.

Assessment of impact on wider community

Please give details of any impacts to the community as a whole:

The Scrutiny Panel will, after completion of its evidence gathering, formulate conclusions and recommendations as appropriate, which will have the intended purpose of recommending a system of community participation and involvement with other Agencies and interested parties. Recommendations will link to SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time) objectives. Should the recommendations be accepted by the Council's Cabinet, they will then be implemented and necessary actions drawn up.

Analysis of impact by protected characteristics

Please summarise the results of the analysis:

	Risks (Negative)	Opportunities (Positive)	
Race	No impact anticipated but there is the need to ensure appropriate access to interpreting services as necessary.		
Disability	No impact anticipated. However, there are no arrangements in place such as sign language interpreters at meetings.	Meetings of this Scrutiny Panel are held in accessible meeting rooms, normally with the provision of a hearing loop.	
Gender or Gender Identity/Gender Assignment		Staff training addresses Equality and Diversity. Meetings of The Scrutiny Panel are attended by all genders.	
Pregnancy and Maternity (including breastfeeding)	Initially no impact anticipated but there is the need to ensure equitable access for all attendees and Councillors at meetings of this Scrutiny Panel.		
Sexual Orientation		No impact anticipated.	
Age (including children, youth, midlife and older people)		No impact anticipated. Meetings of this Scrutiny	

		Panel are normally held during the evening with the aim that they are accessible to all.	
Religion, Faith and Belief		No impact anticipated.	
Human Rights		No impact anticipated	

Assess the relevance and impact of the decision to people with different characteristics

Relevance = High/Low/None

Impact = High/Low/Neutral

Please refer to the table above for more information

Characteristic	Relevance	Impact
Age	None	Neutral
Disability	None	Neutral
Gender reassignment	None	Neutral
Marriage and civil partnership	None	Neutral
Pregnancy and maternity	None	Low
Race	None	Low
Religion or belief	None	Neutral
Sex	None	Neutral
Sexual orientation	None	Neutral
Other socially excluded groups (include health inequalities)	None	Neutral

**when assessing relevance and impact, make it clear who the assessment applies to within the characteristic category. For example, a decision may have high relevance for young people, but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men*

Please provide details:

Please refer to table of analysis as above.

Mitigation of adverse impact on staff/service/people

Where any negative impact has been identified, please outline the measures taken to mitigate against it:

N/A

Publication of results

This Impact Assessment will be published on the Council's website

Monitoring and review

Please give details of how the changes will be monitored, and when the next review is due:

Recommendations contained within the report of the Scrutiny Panel will link to SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time) objectives. Should the recommendations be accepted by the Council's Cabinet, they will then be implemented and necessary actions drawn up.

The Scrutiny Panel's report, after it has been endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, will be forwarded to the Council's Cabinet for consideration; Cabinet will then become responsible for delivering the recommendations that it accepts.

The impact of the accepted recommendations contained with the final report of the Scrutiny Panel will be monitored six months after they have been accepted by Cabinet.

Conclusion

There should be no unlawful discrimination arising from the decision.

Please state how "Due regard" has been taken to the equality duty, and public health considerations:

The impact of the Scrutiny report cannot be assessed until, at the earliest, an outline of a report has been developed. Therefore, with the report of the Scrutiny Panel it could suggest that any impact on the eight protected characteristics be taken into account.

Please advise on the overall equality implications that should be taken into account in the final decision, considering relevance and impact:

The impact of the Scrutiny report cannot be assessed until, at the earliest, an outline of a report has been developed. Therefore, with the report of the Scrutiny Panel it could suggest that any impact on the eight protected characteristics be taken into account.

Signed:

Date: