

Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening



As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provides a record of both the **process** and **decision**. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.
- whether or not equality, diversity, cohesion and integration is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an impact assessment.

Directorate: Council wide	Changing The Workplace programme
Lead person: Lorraine Ritchie	Contact number: (07891) 271815

1. Title: Taxi Framework Contract for staff, clients and others engaged on Council business

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

Service / Function

Other

This is a framework contract for the provision of taxis when required by staff, clients and others engaged on Council business.

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

This framework contract enables a number of providers (seven in total) to supply taxis when these are required and when taxis have been deemed the most appropriate method of travel for a journey as specified within the Business Travel Guidance, published in June 2011.

The only similar contract in place is one for the supply of Passenger Transport Services, which provides transport *specifically* to vulnerable adults and children. This framework also utilises the provision of taxis and because of this, all the providers have already been through a robust vetting procedure in relation to vehicle licensing, quality and standard of vehicles etc.

Initially this framework for staff, clients and others engaged on Council business is for a period of four months and tenders have been restricted to those providers currently in the Passenger Transport framework contract.

The purpose of putting a framework contract in place for staff, clients and others engaged on council business is to achieve efficiency gains within this category of spend by using cheaper rates, to control spend in this area by using specific providers and to comply with the public contracts regulations 2006. Therefore the providers were selected, based on cost effectiveness, to ensure the cheapest rates and best value for money.

A further contract will be put in place from February 2012. This will not be restricted to providers within the Passenger Transport Services framework and will be open to all providers for tender. Due regard to equality is being/ will be given during the development and implementation of the long term framework. This assessment will inform this further due regard.

3. Relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

All the council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – city wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, carers, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and any other relevant characteristics (for example socio-economic status, social class, income, unemployment, residential location or family background and education or skills levels).

Questions	Yes	No
Is there an existing or likely differential impact for the different equality characteristics?		√
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?		√
Could the proposal affect how our services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?	√	
Could the proposal affect our workforce or employment practices?		√
Does the proposal involve or will it have an impact on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment • Advancing equality of opportunity • Fostering good relations 		√

If you have answered **no** to the questions above please complete **sections 6 and 7**

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above and;

- Believe you have already considered the impact on equality, diversity; cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 4**.
- Are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 5**.

4. Considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

If you can demonstrate you have considered how your proposals impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you have carried out an impact assessment.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below (use the prompts for guidance).

• **How have you considered equality, diversity, cohesion and integration?** (think about the scope of the proposal, who is likely to be affected, equality related information, gaps in information and plans to address, consultation and engagement activities (taken place or planned) with those likely to be affected)

A Directorate Support Unit/Administration group, with representatives from each directorate, was involved in the creation of the Business Travel Guidance and in analysing taxi spend across the council, looking at when, why and how we use taxis. This same group were involved in the creation of the hubs to co-ordinate the ordering of Office Supplies and Stationery and Travel within each of the directorates and at St George's House.

The Business Travel Guidance itself, which helps staff and managers to determine the best method of travel for a specific journey, adds value to this assessment as it specifically asks for consideration to be given to the particular circumstances of the traveller. Examples of this are when someone fears for their personal safety or when they need to transport bulky equipment, or when any disability, mobility issues or time factors need to be considered. Due regard to equality and diversity was given within the development and implementation of this guide and will be included as a consideration for monitoring its use.

Other people or groups who have been consulted, and have provided information and contributory facts, are:

- Julie Hatton and colleagues from Passenger Transport Services
- Iain Dunn and Julie Brennen from the Procurement Unit
- Alex Watson and colleagues from Human Resources who represent different directorates.
- Chief Officer Resources and Strategy Group.
- Service Managers.
- Corporate Negotiating Group (meeting of 28th April 2011), involving Human Resources and Union reps.

Some of the useful information coming from this consultation from the various groups as mentioned above include:

- Business and service requirements, including the types of journeys and reasons people need to travel
- Some information about Access To Work arrangements where taxis are used to and from work and the Department of Work and Pensions pay for a proportion of the costs.
- Detail required for the contract specification
- The process requirements for the contract and tendering activity

A detailed analysis of taxi spend, which does not include amounts that are claimed back through expenses or any arrangements within Passenger Transport, was undertaken. Regrettably this analysis could not provide equality data to give any indication about which journeys or types of journeys were taken by specific equality groups, nor did it provide full information about the journeys arranged as part of Access To Work.

The analysis showed spending overall (Leeds City Council) of £600k per year currently. A quarter of this spend was further analysed to identify specific journeys and the split between service and staffing requirements. This has helped to inform contract requirements but as information was stored in different formats, some complete and some incomplete, there was no specific data available from this about the equality groups affected or a true analysis of activity across the council.

In addition to this, work was undertaken with Corporate Communications Team so that information was provided to all staff once the contract was awarded. This included: Staff News, the intranet, the portal, In Brief and a Frequently Asked Questions document. This information includes the procedures for booking taxis, which providers were successful and a calculator is also available so that the best provider can be selected, based on mileage rates and cost for a specific journey.

- **Key findings**

(**think about** any potential positive and negative impact on different equality characteristics, potential to promote strong and positive relationships between groups, potential to bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other, perception that the proposal could benefit one group at the expense of another)

Prior to this contract being awarded, there were no arrangements in place and staff, clients and others engaged on Council business used a wide range of providers for taxi services, with a wide range of charges being paid.

Previously each service set up their own accounts with taxi providers and there were no consistent procedures, no management of activity as a council and no management information available that helped us to understand the business need or activity taking place in relation to taxi travel.

For this short term contract, the selected providers are already providing a similar service to our vulnerable adults and children, as part of a framework contract with Passenger Transport. Therefore they have already been rigorously vetted to ensure that they meet a range of standards around quality, customer care and access. This same approach will be applied to the longer term arrangements to ensure that anyone using the service can be sure that customer care, access arrangements and their own personal safety is paramount to the provider and that no individual will be exposed to discriminatory language or behaviours.

The consultation and fact finding has confirmed that there is a need to have a framework contract in place and people travel around the city in taxis for many different reasons. All of this information helps to understand what is required from a taxi contract and how the Business Travel Guidance will influence and ensure that taxis are only used when it is deemed the most appropriate method of transport for a journey.

The analysis also showed that the rates which were previously paid across such a wide range of providers, was not the most efficient use of the Council's money and there are better rates available.

It is clear from this analysis that an element of travel, although this cannot be quantifiable, is specifically related to meet the needs of disabled staff. Therefore it is essential that suppliers must be able to provide specialist vehicles when these are required for disabled staff.

It is essential that staff and managers across the council are aware of the framework contract now that this is awarded and understand why it has been introduced and what the process is when the need to book a taxi arises. The consultation around this area has ensured that a communications plan was in place both prior to and after the contract was awarded.

- **Actions**

(think about how you will promote positive impact and remove/ reduce negative impact)

The Business Travel Guidance will be promoted so that it is used when considering all business travel to ensure that taxi journeys are booked for the right reasons and when this is deemed the most appropriate method of travel.

The framework contract and tender specification have been written so that providers charge the best rates, offering value for money, whilst being able to meet the business requirements for staff, clients and others travelling on council business. The suppliers are also able to provide wheelchair accessible vehicles when these are required for disabled staff, clients or others.

The framework contract and arrangements will be monitored to help inform the longer term contract or any future arrangements. Information will be collected about Access To Work related journeys to ensure that payments are administered accurately in accordance with Job Centre Plus (part of the Department for Work and Pensions) policies and procedures.

Whilst there are seven successful providers for this short term contract, who all provide reasonable rates, a calculator is available online which enables staff to find the cheapest provider for their specific journey, based on the mileage. This calculator presents all seven providers in the order of price, cheapest first.

Feedback is being encouraged on how this framework contract operates, so that changes can be made to procedures as required and any further communication put in place. Meetings are continuing with the service representatives so that this feedback and further ideas for improvement can be shared and used for future arrangements.

Now that arrangements are in place with seven providers and procedures are in place across the council in relation to booking journeys, invoicing, information collected and provided by supplier and records held, management information will be available in the future in relation to this area of spend. This means that future arrangements will be better informed about specific activity and business requirements.

5. If you are **not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you **will need to carry out an impact assessment.****

Date to scope and plan your impact assessment:	
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Date to complete your impact assessment	
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Lead person for your impact assessment (Include name and job title)	
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6. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening

Name	Job title	Date
Lorraine Ritchie	Project Manager	13th October 2011

7. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given. If you are not carrying out an independent impact assessment the screening document will need to be published.

Please send a copy to the Equality Team for publishing

Date screening completed	
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13 th October 2011

Date sent to Equality Team	
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13 th October 2011

Date published	
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13 th October 2011
