

Appendix 5

Shropshire Council Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA)

Part One Screening Record 2021

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Part One Screening Record 2021

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change

“Vibrant Shropshire; Independent by Nature”. Cultural Strategy for Shropshire 2021-31.

Name of lead officer carrying out the screening

Clare Featherstone
Culture, Leisure and Tourism Manager

Decision, review and monitoring

Decision	Yes	No
Part One ESIIA Only?	Yes	
Proceed to Part Two Full Report?		No

If completion of a Part One assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes below and sign off as indicated. If a Part Two report is required, please move on to full report stage.

Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations

In 10 years, our ambition is to create a place where extraordinary and everyday cultural experiences are a source of inspiration for all, where the importance of culture to quality of life, health and wellbeing and the economy is reflected in happier and healthier communities and groupings within communities, whether these are in rural areas or in market towns, and where cultural venues and activities lead the way for climate and environmental change mitigation.

The Strategy thus sets out to have a positive impact across all the Protected Characteristic groupings, particularly the groupings for Age, with regard to children and young people, and Disability, with regard to all ages and with regard to seen and unseen disabilities. This will itself then include older people, given the ageing demographic profile of the county.

A positive impact is also anticipated for groupings including people with caring responsibilities, as well as those at risk of social exclusion, whether people are participants or audiences/customers.

The Strategy includes:

“Cultural diversity will be supported and encouraged. We’ll embrace the ‘creative case for diversity’, ensuring the cultural offer in the county is diverse and inclusive, reflecting a wide range of influences and practices. This will not only help enrich our programmes, but also address challenges and opportunities in audience development, public engagement, workforce and leadership, and collections development in museums. We’ll also work collaboratively to make cultural activities more accessible to people with special needs.”

Efforts were made during consultation on the draft Strategy to seek views from communities as well as from stakeholders. Specific engagement was carried out with children and young people, SEMA (Shropshire Ethnic Minority Alliance), OMEGA, Shropshire Supports Refugees, DASH (Disability Arts Shropshire) and Age UK.

Actions set out in the draft Strategy that set out to help ensure a positive outcome for people in the Protected Characteristic groupings include:

- Promote opportunities for volunteering, work placements and apprenticeships
- Continue support for existing health and wellbeing projects
- Collaborate with youth providers to ensure countywide inclusion in culture for young people
- Continue to ensure that schools and young people engage with and learn from the natural environment
- Continue to develop families and school’s programmes at key cultural venues and sites to foster an active love of culture from an early age
- Invest in and support cultural hubs to increase the opportunity to take part in culture across the county
- Better understand and respond to the aspirations of under-represented groups in Shropshire and help address cultural diversity, including through schools.
- Encourage cultural diversity through providing opportunities for more communities and communities-of-interest
- Develop ‘Taster’ sessions, so people can have a go before having to commit.
- Create a network of community cultural hubs and help ensure good transportation, access and facilities
- Utilise technology to make sites more accessible to encourage greater use by those with specific needs.
- Present culture in a way that is relevant and exciting for new audiences by making better use of digital media
- Develop a Community Forum for grass roots cultural organisations to network and share practice – and connect this to the work of the Cultural Partnership

The final strategy will be available on-line or as a downloadable pdf. Design and web access have been developed in line with Shropshire Council’s accessibility standards.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations

Efforts will need to be made to ensure that ongoing engagement will continue across all groupings, particularly those where low or no responses were received during the consultation itself. The Council is mindful, as a large and sparsely populated rural county, of the continued need to seek views from across the county as well as across groupings, particularly around physical and digital access to services and cultural opportunities, and to utilise these in informing and developing the Implementation Plan.

The public consultation was over a twelve week period and garnered 99 responses, 47 of which were from members of the public; whilst there was a good gender balance from those who answered a question on this, views were articulated that the Strategy needed to better serve women and young women. It will be important to keep the gender profile of participants and audiences under review and assess where further positive action may usefully be taken in this regard.

The age profile of respondents was that 77% were 45 or older, meaning that further ongoing engagement with younger age groups is desirable to complement the work that has been carried out with stakeholder representatives. The spread of the responses was good, and serves to indicate that, alongside the extensive stakeholder consultation work, the views may be taken as indicative of views across the county as a whole

The comments and feedback have been incorporated into the final version of the strategy.

From an equality and diversity perspective, changes have included:

- Adding a section on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has been disproportionate in equality terms across groupings;
- Expanding the definition to include play;
- Changing some of the language to make it more easily understandable, for example changing 'Cross-Cutting Themes' to 'Overarching Themes';
- Diversity and inequality better addressed;
- Innovation priority broadened.

An overt inclusion of play, and its importance in the emotional, social and educational development and wellbeing of children and young people, will enhance positive impacts of the strategy not only for the Age grouping but also for the grouping of Pregnancy and Maternity, and for our tenth category of social inclusion. Here, we set out to enhance positive impacts for vulnerable children and young people including those who are in care or leaving care, those where households are on low incomes, and families of veteran and serving members of the armed forces.

There is an aspiration for a new, independent Cultural Partnership, which should include representatives of groupings underrepresented in the survey responses i.e. the 15-19 year olds and the over 85's. This will help pick up on any equality related matters, which would

assist positive outcomes for these age groups as well as for people in the Disability groupings. The Strategy prioritises work with children and young people and with older age groups, so communication and engagement with these groupings is of particular importance.

An Implementation Plan will be prioritised once the Strategy is published, setting out the actions across a range of partners for the next three years. This will be monitored annually, and a report will be published that sets out the progress against the priorities set out in this document.

The policy intention is that the Strategy will be reviewed after 5 years, with a new 10-year plan being published following a full evaluation of the Strategy in 2031.

We will liaise with the elected members of the Council as community leaders and with communities to seek feedback on an ongoing basis about impacts for people in Protected Characteristic groupings and for those at risk of social exclusion.

It is recognised that there will need to be ongoing efforts to engage with people in the Protected Characteristic groupings through the Cultural Partnership. Links may usefully also be made with specific target groups such as children and families, people with mental health problems, and people with physical disabilities, through projects and partnership initiatives already under way. Actions may then be more readily identified from evidence gathered to enhance the positive impact of the Strategy for these groupings, leading to better outcomes overall for communities in Shropshire.

Associated ESIIAs

Libraries ESIIAs, Leisure ESIIAs, the Shropshire Great Outdoors Strategy, and the Shropshire Museums Strategy.

Actions to mitigate negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor overall impacts in terms of any other considerations. This includes climate change and health and wellbeing considerations

The impacts in relation to the economy across sectors and to health and wellbeing across demographics are anticipated to be positive.

The strategy sets out to raise the profile of the exceptional cultural assets that we have in Shropshire, identifying gaps, clarifying the opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and community cohesion, the local economy and the environment, and bringing together partner organisations with similar goals. In so doing, it will encourage more co-ordinated, cost-effective approaches and a maximisation of the opportunities.

Overall, in relation to economic and environmental impact considerations, the Strategy sets out to help to meet the Council organisation objectives to “consider the impact of our activity on the climate”, “operate as a single organisation” and “put Shropshire back into the community” .

The public consultation feedback indicated concern from respondents around the need for meaningful actions, and the Implementation Plan will therefore need to address this in order to also then meet the organisation objective to “focus on outcomes for customers”.

Feedback has been used to revise the draft Strategy so that it now:

- Emphasises the need for an Implementation Plan, which sets out the actions to deliver the strategic priorities;
- Emphasises the development of a new, independent Cultural Partnership to develop the Implementation Plan;
- Adds a new section on the key metrics, taken from the Evidence Base, and key considerations for future development.

There are a number of overarching themes that have been developed to help ensure that the priorities address Shropshire’s core challenges. These include:

“Climate and environmental change mitigation – Everyone needs to do their bit to address the climate and environment emergency to ensure a happier and healthier future for all. Culture can help us engage with these challenges creatively together”.



Scrutiny at Part One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
<p><i>Lead officer carrying out the screening</i></p> <p>Clare Featherstone Culture, Leisure and Tourism Manager</p>		27 th April 2021
<p><i>Any internal support*</i></p>		
<p><i>Any external support**</i></p> <p>Mrs Lois Dale Rurality and Equalities Specialist</p>		20 th May 2021

**This refers to other officers within the service area*

***This refers either to support external to the service but within the Council, eg from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist, or support external to the Council, eg from a peer authority*

Sign off at Part One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer's name</i> Clare Featherstone Culture, Leisure and Tourism Manager		20 th May 2021
<i>Accountable officer's name</i> Sue Finnigan Head of Culture, Leisure and Tourism		20 th May 2021

**This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer*

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description
<p>Vibrant Shropshire is a partnership document that sets out the ambition and strategic priorities for the cultural sector in Shropshire unitary area for the next 10 years.</p> <p>Our Vision</p> <p>By 2030, Shropshire's vibrant culture will be inspiring more people – both local communities and visitors alike - to explore, create, be active and enjoy themselves. It will enhance lives and nurture the environment for all our futures.</p> <p>Our Ambition</p> <p>In 10 years, our ambition is to create a place where extraordinary and everyday cultural experiences are a source of inspiration for all. The importance of culture to quality of life, health and wellbeing and the economy is reflected in happier and healthier communities and cultural venues and activities lead the way for climate and environmental change mitigation.</p> <p>Our Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enjoy Using culture to support people to be active, happy, healthy and connected• Create Culture better supports the growth of the local economy and creates more opportunities to earn a living• Explore Delighting and surprising visitors and residents with independent, authentic experiences• Live Harnessing 'ownership' and pride in local places for the benefit of all• Nurture Shropshire's high-quality natural landscapes are valued and enhanced for future generations• Innovate Driving innovation, including digital development, to enhance cultural experiences, improve physical and intellectual access and tackle social isolation• Connect Forge strong partnerships to drive forward our shared cultural ambition

Overarching themes

- Climate and environmental change mitigation – Everyone needs to do their bit to address the climate and environment emergency to ensure a happier and healthier future for all. Culture can help us engage with these challenges creatively together
- Developing volunteers – Supporting volunteers by promoting good practice, providing opportunities for training and development and recognising their achievements
- Young people’s skills and learning – Engaging young people in all of our priority areas and providing clear pathways into all of the cultural sector
- Marketing and communication – Ensuring that there’s a joined-up marketing and communication strategy to promote greater joint working and reach new audiences

This is a new strategy. The last cultural strategy was in 2010 and is no longer relevant.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

The intended audience for the cultural strategy, once adopted, is everyone who lives in, works in or visits Shropshire and therefore all groupings within the community, as well as those who serve them. By this we mean the Council, town and parish councils, the wider business sector, the voluntary and community sector, the health and social care sector, and organisations and bodies involved in the development and delivery of cultural services.

There will be additional interest in the Strategy and outcomes at regional and national level from Government and from parliamentary committees, as well as from other local authorities, and further target groups will therefore usefully be: local MPs; Government departments, particularly BEIS, DCMS, Defra and its agencies, and MHCLG; neighbouring local authorities in England and in Wales; and the County Councils Network and Rural Services Network.

Evidence used for screening of the service change

A full evidence base for the strategy has been compiled by the Information, Insights and Intelligence Team at the Council (appendix 1).

Importance to the creative industries and tourism economies:

The cultural sector is important to Shropshire not just because it enriches the quality of life for its residents and visitors, it is also a vital contributor to the County’s economy.

- According to forecasts prepared by Oxford Economics, the value of the creatives sector in terms of GVA generation was £114.5 million in 2012, projected to reach £176.4 million in 2018.
- This is the equivalent of around 3% of the value of the Shropshire economy.
- Between 2012 and 2018, GVA generated by the creatives sector rose by 54% compared with growth of 14% within the total economy across all sectors.
- The value of the creatives sector is forecast to rise almost three times more quickly than the value of the total Shropshire economy between 2012 and 2036.
- According to forecasts prepared by Oxford Economics, the value of the tourism sector in terms of GVA generation was £210.7 million in 2012, projected to reach **£256.0 million** in 2018.
- This is the equivalent of around 4% of the value of the Shropshire economy.
- Between 2012 and 2018, GVA generated by the creatives sector rose by 21% compared with growth of 14% within the total economy across all sectors

Engagement with the natural environment:

The Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment Survey (MENE) is funded by Natural England, with support from DEFRA and the Forestry Commission. The survey collects information about the ways people engage with the countryside and green spaces in towns and cities. The survey shows that 69.9% of Shropshire residents visited the natural environment at least once a week in 2018/19. The proportion has fluctuated in recent years but is consistently above the national average (65% in 2018/19).

Participation in Cultural Activities:

- More than half of Shropshire residents have attended an event, performance or festival within the last 12 months. This is in line with the national average.
- Almost four out of 10 residents had spent time doing creative, artistic, theatrical or musical activities – this is higher than the average for England
- 46% have visited a museum or gallery, very marginally lower than the national average
- 36% have used a public library service, slightly more than the national average
- 16% have participated in some form of dance, although for only a small minority of the population was this creative or artistic dance.

Number of Visits to Shropshire Council Owned Cultural Facilities:

- There were 2,346,896 visits to council facilities over 2018/19
- There were 918,755 Library visits
- There were 182,728 Museums visits, with the largest number in Shrewsbury MAG (104,183)
- There were 977,522 Outdoor Recreation visits
- There were 199,362 visits to Theatre Seven
- There were 68,529 visits to The Old Market Hall

Volunteer hours:

- Over 2018/2019, 71,989 volunteer hours were provided over 8 key Council cultural sites

Participation in Sporting Activities:

- 61.2% of adults in Shropshire are physically active, achieving the recommended 150 minute or more per week.
- This is slightly lower than the national average (63.3%), which is due to Shropshire's older demographic.
- Notwithstanding the ageing population the proportion of the population which is inactive (less than 30 minutes physical activity per week) is comparable with the national average.

Wellbeing and Life Satisfaction:

In 2018/19:

- 63.9% of Shropshire residents rated their levels of anxiety as either good or very good (40.1% very good)
- 77.0% of Shropshire residents rated their levels of happiness as either good or very good (40.9% very good)
- 82.3% of Shropshire residents rated their levels of life satisfaction as either good or very good (33.4% very good)
- 84.5% of Shropshire residents rated their levels of feeling that things are worthwhile as either good or very good (38.4% very good)

Public Health England: Health Profile for Shropshire:

Focus on preventing diabetes, cancer, falls and obesity.

A strategic review has been undertaken and is shown in appendix 4. This includes consideration of:

Local Strategies:

- Shropshire Council Corporate Plan 'Innovate to Thrive' 2019/20 to 2021/22
- Economic Growth Strategy for Shropshire 2017 – 2021
- Building an economic vision for Shropshire: a research report by IPPR North for Shropshire Council (November 2016)
- Shropshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2016 – 2021
- The Social Value Charter for Shropshire
- Shropshire Museums Service Strategy 2018 – 2023
- Shropshire's Great Outdoors 2018 – 2028
- Actively Improving Lives – Energize Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin County Schools Partnership

Regional Strategy

- The Marches LEP Strategic Economic Plan 2019
- The Marches SEP Evidence Base
- Visitor Economy Strategy for the Marches (June 2019)
- Midlands Engine – Vision for Growth

National Policy and Strategy

- Arts Council 10-year plan Shaping the Next 10 years (draft summer 2019)
- Industrial Strategy (2017)
- Culture White Paper (2016)
- Industrial Strategy: Creative Sector Deal/ Bazalgette Review (2017/ 2018)
- DCMS Culture is Digital (2018)
- Healthy Lives Healthy People (2010)
- Creative Health: All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing
- Inquiry Report (July 2017)
- DEFRA 25 Year Environment Plan

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

The strategy was developed in partnership with a range of stakeholders, through the Cultural Strategy Working Group. It follows one to one engagement with sector leaders, on-line surveys and three workshops with individuals representing the wider cultural sector, along with workshops with the VCSA, Cultural Consortium Shropshire (working with children and young people) and with independent musicians. The details of this are available in appendix 2 and summarised below:

One to one consultation:

- Marion Blockley – Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Steering Group
- Lezley Picton – Portfolio Holder Culture & Leisure
- Sue Finnigan – Culture & Leisure Specialist
- Richard Parkes – Shropshire Youth Association
- Diane Walton – Upstart Projects

- Michael Lewis – Head, Shropshire Libraries
- Tim Jenkins – University of Chester (Head of Humanities)
- Marcus Halliwell – National Trust
- Jessica Kent – Arts for Health Lead, South Staffordshire & Shropshire Health Trust
- Beth Heath – Shropshire Festivals
- Laura Penman – Shropshire Tourism
- Alex Carson Taylor – Chair, Shropshire’s Great Outdoors Strategy Board
- Seb Slater - Executive Director, Shrewsbury BID
- Chris Child - Chief Executive, Energize Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin
- Gemma Davies - Head of Economic Growth, Shropshire Council
- Mandy Thorn - Chair, Marches LEP

Three ‘World-Café’ workshops were organised by consultants, FEI at different locations across the county, targeted at the cultural sector:

Workshop 1 - Craven Arms Community Centre, 21 November 2019, 10.15 - 13.15

Workshop 2 - Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery, 21 November 2019, 17.30 - 20.30

Workshop 3 - Wem Town Hall, 22 November 2019, 10.00 - 13.00

A total of 70 people attended.

Online stakeholder survey targeted at cultural sector- 39 responses

Online survey follow-up with workshop attendees - 10 responses

Other workshops:

- Cultural Strategy workshop with the Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly (VCSA)- 6 December 2019
- Culture, Leisure and Tourism Services Away Day workshop notes
- Music Independents Workshop 29.01.2020
- Cultural Consortium workshop, representing children and young people, the results were included in the on-line survey
- Protected Characteristics workshops and discussions with SEMA (Shropshire Ethnic Minority Alliance), OMEGA, Shropshire Supports Refugees, DASH (Disability Arts Shropshire) and Age UK- January and February 2021
- Conversations with Children and Young People on Shropshire’s Culture- January and February 2021

Public consultation and consultation with specific groups took place between October 2020 and January 2021. There were 99 responses in total. A full report from this consultation is attached (appendix 3).

Stakeholders and members of the public will be given a choice of ways in which to comment on the strategy, including:

- complete an online survey
- complete a paper version of the survey
- comment by email

The consultation results suggest there is overall support for the draft Cultural Strategy ‘Vibrant Shropshire, Independent by Nature’. Of the 87 survey respondents 63% strongly agree or agree with the draft strategy, with higher proportions agreeing with the priorities (66%) and

ambition (67%). The 12 written consultation responses also highlight overall agreement with the development of the strategy and contain suggestions for further development. It is also important to note the considerable engagement work carried out alongside the consultation survey.

There were some common issues highlighted by consultation respondents and these have been highlighted as themes for further attention. These themes include support for an approach that focuses on diversity and inclusion, engagement, consideration of sustainability and climate change and a recognition of Shropshire’s environmental and historical assets and heritage.

Suggestions include a request to consider the inclusion of play, the role of libraries and education, the needs of different cultural sub sectors, and a more robust consideration of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and opportunities for innovation.

There are also calls for the needs of the whole county (all market towns and rural areas) to be considered and a strong emphasis on the importance of action planning and investment in order to implement the ambitions set out within the draft document.

The comments and feedback have been incorporated into the final version of the strategy.

Changes have included:

- Adding a section on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic
- Emphasising the need for an Implementation Plan, which sets out the actions to deliver the strategic priorities
- Emphasising the development of a new, independent Cultural Partnership to develop the Implementation Plan
- Adding a new section on the key metrics, taken from the Evidence Base, and key considerations for future development
- Expanding the definition to include archaeology, play, geology
- Changing some of the language to make it more easily understandable, for example changing ‘Cross-Cutting Themes’ to ‘Overarching Themes’
- Diversity and inequality better addressed
- Innovation priority broadened

This final version will be formally approved by decision makers (elected representatives) and made public.

Initial assessment for each group

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through inserting a tick in the relevant column. Please add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Protected Characteristic groups and other groups in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two ESIIA required</i>	High positive impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Medium positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Low positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>

Age (please include children, young people, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group eg child for whom there are safeguarding concerns eg older person with disability)			Prioritises outreach, children and young people, older people who are socially isolated, and volunteering	
Disability (please include: mental health conditions and syndromes including autism; physical disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; HIV)			Prioritises Social Prescribing and other health initiatives and physical and digital access	
Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact likely to be neutral or positive
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact likely to be neutral or positive
Pregnancy & Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)			Prioritises children in relation to play	
Race (please include: ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, gypsy, traveller)			Prioritises cultural diversity	
Religion and belief (please include: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Non conformists; Rastafarianism; Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				Impact likely to be neutral or positive
Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact likely to be neutral or positive
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact likely to be neutral or positive
Other: Social Inclusion (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable, and veterans and serving members of the armed forces)			Prioritises outreach, children and young people, older people who are socially isolated, easier access and volunteering	

Identification of likely impact of the service change in terms of other considerations including climate change and health and well being

The public sector has seen significant change since the last Cultural Strategy was produced in 2010; in particular, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, current economic climate and associated budget pressures, economic growth aspirations aiming to significantly increase the population and business base of Shropshire, and the growing need for cultural activities for health and wellbeing. This is also having an impact on the voluntary and private sectors and there is now even greater need to have a clear, evidence-based, prioritised plan to target limited resources whilst giving the greatest public benefit. A new approach is needed, delivering across multiple policy areas and integrating activity across local authority services, partner organisations and businesses.

Cabinet gave approval in February 2020 to the use of health impact assessments. This proposal provides an opportunity for utilising the guidance that has been developed for use in this regard, in order to more fully capture the health and wellbeing benefits anticipated. It is timely that such approval was sought and given, as the decision was made just before the Covid-19 pandemic reached Shropshire, and as the Council is now seeking to focus and shape local outcomes to improve health and wellbeing across groupings through joint efforts across sectors, utilising emerging national evidence and national learning points. This is particularly so for people in ethnic minority groupings, for men, for people who are obese, and for older people.

Maximising the positive equality impacts in terms of economic benefits is focussed upon joint efforts to influence national policy around social inclusion, including through the Rural Services Network, and joint work through the Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). This has involved collating and submitting evidence to parliamentary select committee inquiries around digital and social inclusion issues, the rural economy, and regional disparities. We also engage directly with Government Departments on such issues, for example with the Department of Health on the Industrial Strategy Grand Challenge of an Ageing Society. We will continue to do so.

Guidance Notes

1. Corporate and Service Area Policy and Practice on Equality and Social inclusion

This involves taking an equality and social inclusion approach in planning changes to services, policies or procedures, including those that may be required by Government.

The decisions that you make when you are planning a service change need to be recorded, to demonstrate that you have thought about the possible equality impacts on communities and to show openness and transparency in your decision making processes.

This is where Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessments (ESIAs) come in. Where you carry out an ESIA in your service area, this provides an opportunity to show:

- What evidence you have drawn upon to help you to recommend a strategy or policy or a course of action to Cabinet;

- What target groups and audiences you have worked with to date;
- What actions you will take in order to mitigate any likely negative impact upon a group or groupings, and enhance any positive effects for a group or groupings; and
- What actions you are planning to review the impact of your planned service change.

The formal template is there not only to help the service area but also to act as a standalone for a member of the public to read.

The approach helps to identify whether or not any new or significant changes to services, including policies, procedures, functions or projects, may have an adverse impact on a particular group of people, and whether the human rights of individuals may be affected.

This assessment encompasses consideration of social inclusion. This is so that we are thinking as carefully and completely as possible about all Shropshire groups and communities, including people in rural areas and people we may describe as vulnerable, for example due to low income or to safeguarding concerns, as well as people in what are described as the nine 'protected characteristics' of groups of people in our population, eg Age. We demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in these groups and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing and implementing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging or delivering services.

When you are not carrying out an ESIIA, you still need to demonstrate that you have considered equality in your decision-making processes. It is up to you what format you choose.-You could use a checklist, an explanatory note, or a document setting out our expectations of standards of behaviour, for contractors to read and sign. It may well not be something that is in the public domain like an ESIIA, but you should still be ready for it to be made available.

Both the approaches sit with a manager, and the manager has to make the call, and record the decision made on behalf of the Council. Help and guidance is also available via the Commissioning Support Team, either for data, or for policy advice from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist. Here are some examples to get you thinking.

Carry out an ESIIA:

- If you are building or reconfiguring a building;
- If you are planning to reduce or remove a service;
- If you are consulting on a policy or a strategy;
- If you are bringing in a change to a process or procedure that involves other stakeholders and the wider community as well as particular groupings

For example, there may be a planned change to a leisure facility. This gives you the chance to look at things like flexible changing room provision, which will maximise positive impacts for everyone. A specific grouping that would benefit would be people undergoing gender reassignment

Carry out an equality and social inclusion approach:

- If you are setting out how you expect a contractor to behave with regard to equality, where you are commissioning a service or product from them;
- If you are setting out the standards of behaviour we expect from people who work with vulnerable groupings, such as taxi drivers that we license;
- If you are planning consultation and engagement activity, where we need to collect equality data in ways that will be proportionate and non-intrusive as well as meaningful for the purposes of the consultation itself;
- If you are looking at services provided by others that help the community, where we need to demonstrate a community leadership approach

For example, you may be involved in commissioning a production to tour schools or appear at a local venue, whether a community hall or somewhere like Theatre Severn. The production company should be made aware of our equality policies and our expectation that they will seek to avoid promotion of potentially negative stereotypes. Specific groupings that could be affected include: Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, and Sexual Orientation. There is positive impact to be gained from positive portrayals and use of appropriate and respectful language in regard to these groupings in particular.

2. Legal Context

It is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services. It is up to us as an authority to decide what form our equality impact assessment may take. Carrying out ESIIAs helps us as a public authority to ensure that, as far as possible, we are taking actions to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, and to thus demonstrate that the three equality aims are integral to our decision making processes. These are: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

Service areas would ordinarily carry out a screening assessment, or Part One equality impact assessment. This enables energies to be focussed on review and monitoring and ongoing evidence collection about the positive or negative impacts of a service change upon groupings in the community, and for any adjustments to be considered and made accordingly.

If the screening indicates that there are likely to be significant negative impacts for groupings within the community, the service area would need to carry out a full report, or Part Two assessment. This will enable more evidence to be collected that will help the service area to reach an informed opinion. Please contact the equality policy lead within the Council for more advice and guidance in this regard, as per details below.

For further information on the use of ESIIAs: please contact your head of service or contact Mrs Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist and Council policy support on equality, via telephone 01743 258528, or email lois.dale@shropshire.gov.uk.