

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer or www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment

This Equality Impact assessment is for development of the future operating model for Enterprise Centre Network and local authority workspace.

The Somerset Enterprise Centre Network (SECN) is a network of 9 enterprise centres located across the county. The SECN provides modern workspace and business support to SMEs to enable small business growth in market towns and rural communities across the county. The network has been developed to provide both economic and environmental benefits. The network supports locally based employment and business opportunities in rural areas, as well as the environmental benefits and impact of helping to keep business activity "local" in more rural areas. This decision proposes that when the current contract ends the future management and operation of the Enterprise Centre network should be managed in-house, using council services to manage the network supplemented where necessary by some outsourcing of functions such as business support.

The proposed in-house model will provide an opportunity to transform the business support component of the current model. Consultations with stakeholders suggest that businesses would benefit from better signposting of existing business support services. There is an opportunity to provide more flexible business support across county as well as integrating with other existing provision. Rationalising the business support will enable more efficient use of existing funding through the Shared Prosperity Fund to provide a more effective business support offer across the county. This will benefit tenant businesses and the wider business community.

Use this opportunity to review improvements to service delivery. We would like to review:

- Improvements to accessibility at centres. Review with both property services and equalities team.
- How to engage with protected groups.
- How the space can be used to support different groups in rural communities.

It should be noted that this decision is bringing in house the provision of existing services. The change in delivery method is not expected to have impacts on equality and diversity and due regard considerations. The provision of these services takes into account the need to ensure equal access. The proposed change delivery method will not affect the existing provision.

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

- Somerset Intelligence's economic data [English Indices of Deprivation 2019 - Somerset summary.pdf \(somersetintelligence.org.uk\)](#) - Nine Somerset LSOAs are amongst the most deprived 10% nationally

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

SCC Equalities services – the team are aware of the proposals for the network and have provided feedback on areas to review so far.

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have considered this protected group in relation to this decision and have concluded that there is no impact. • 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	Enterprise Centre: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The future model proposed that the network is managed internally and will operate using SCC Equalities and Diversity policies. This includes addressing inappropriate behaviour towards any person, including those who have a disability. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This change bringing delivery of the service in house offers an opportunity to review accessibility and other issues to ensure that premises remain open to all. <p>Business support offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business support will be delivered as a separate programme. We have considered that the business support offer may impact a range of disabilities. The support can be flexibly delivered anywhere. Advice will always be delivered in location that are accessible. Documents produced by the business advisors can be adapted for disabled use. Any contracted services will need to adhere to SCC equalities and diversity policies and their own policies will be reviewed internally before approval. This change offers an opportunity to review how the services are advertised or how groups are engaged by the appointed contractor. This will be reviewed as part of the process to move towards a new model of operation. 			
Gender reassignment	<p>Enterprise Centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process signing agreements and forms will be up to date to reflect potential impacts to this protected group, giving the option to use the preferred pronoun and name. We have recognised that issues of harassment regarding this protected group may occur, given that some centres include shared and collaborative spaces. Our internal facilities management will manage the centres in accordance with SCC Equalities and Diversity policies. They are required to have a proper process to deal with any incidents; an action has been made to confirm this with our operator and ensure that this is properly explained in the leases. Enterprise Centres offer non-gendered toilets. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage and civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have considered this protected group in relation to this decision and have concluded that there is no impact. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have considered this protected group in relation to this decision and have concluded that there is no impact. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race and ethnicity	<p>Enterprise Centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have considered that there could be some impacts or confusion in conduct between tenants, given that the centre will include shared and collaborative spaces. • Further to the above, we have considered the possibility of discrimination occurring between tenants at the centre. • The internal facilities management team will manage the centres in accordance with SCC Equalities and Diversity policies. Measures will be in place to deal with discrimination appropriately in the centres. <p>Business support offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have considered that a business support offer raises some concerns in regard to compatibility with different ethnicities. For example, the language that business support materials and events are communicated in or how business support services are advertised. • Any contracted services will need to adhere to SCC equalities and diversity policies and their own policies will be reviewed internally before approval. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Religion or belief	<p>Enterprise Centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The internal management team will manage the centres in accordance with SCC Equalities and Diversity policies. Internal management team will recognise that enterprise centre includes bookable communal space and space that can be utilised for private prayer. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	<p>Enterprise Centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The internal management team will manage the centres in accordance with SCC Equalities and Diversity policies. We have considered that there could be some impacts or confusion in conduct between tenants, given that the centre will include shared and collaborative spaces, include incidents like sexual harassment. The facilities management will manage the centres in accordance with SCC Equalities and Diversity policies and will be required to have a proper process to deal with any incidents. <p>Business support offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any contracted services will need to adhere to SCC equalities and diversity policies and their own policies will be reviewed internally before approval. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<p>Enterprise Centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have considered that there could be some impacts or confusion in conduct between tenants, given that the centre will include shared and collaborative spaces. Internal management team will manage the centres in accordance with SCC Equalities and Diversity policies. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This decision supports the continued delivery of business space and support services across rural Somerset, including in areas of identified deprivation. - Somerset Intelligence's economic data English Indices of Deprivation 2019 - Somerset summary.pdf (somersetintelligence.org.uk) - Nine Somerset LSOAs are amongst the most deprived 10% nationally - Centre space is required to be at the market rate to comply with state aid requirements – we acknowledge that this may impact some groups who cannot afford the market level. However, our own studies and research suggests that the flexible terms on which accommodation will be provided are suited to eligible SME's • The business support offer supports businesses in rural areas and offers a free service. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other, e.g. carers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Negative outcomes action plan				
Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.				
Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
Use this opportunity to review improvements to service delivery. We would like to review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvements to accessibility at centres - Review how to engage with protected groups. How the space can be used to support different groups in rural communities.	Annually		Steering group reviewing elements of project	<input type="checkbox"/>

Following the decision, ensure that that the internal team providing the management services are aware of SCC policies and how to use them in the context of managing the network of space.	01/09/2023		Project team confirmation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review any business support services contract's equality and diversity policy and ensure that any provider can deliver in accordance with SCC policy.	01/10/2023		Project team confirmation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creation of an equality and diversity plan for the network that focuses on outcomes and actions for the future of the network.	01/12/2023		Management team confirmation	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>

If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

Completed by:	Harry Morris
Date	07.03.23
Signed off by:	Katrina Lovelock
Date	07.03.23
Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:	Tom Rutland 06.04.23

To be reviewed by: (officer name)	Harry Morris
Review date:	06.04.24