

## MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Equality Impact Assessment

**Title of Policy/Service/Contract: Communications Service**

**Division: Corporate Improvement**

**Lead Officer: Diane Talbot**

**Date Assessment completed: March 2013**

#### 1. SCOPING

##### **1.1 What are the aims of the policy, service/service change or contract?**

The communications service aims to ensure the consistent communication of all information relating to council policies, strategies, decisions, events and services to Mid Sussex Residents and Businesses through a variety of communications channels.

##### **1.2 Who does the service/policy/contract affect? Who are the main customers (internal or external)?**

Everybody – both external – residents, partners, businesses and internal – officers and members.

##### **1.3 What equality information is available, including any evidence from engagement and analysis of use of services?**

General profiling information about the Mid Sussex population tells us the following from Community Profiling Report (Experian) 2010:

- The local population is growing, and ageing.
- By 2030 there will be an additional 17,500 residents in Mid Sussex with the 75+ age group will grow at the fastest rate.
- Whilst most residents are of British origin, there are a number of minority groups (9%)
- Skills levels and earnings are, for the most part, high
- The workforce is highly qualified and as a result there are a high concentration of managers, senior officials and professionals in Mid Sussex. The most affluent groups are located in the suburbs of urban areas and across some of the more rural areas of the local authority district.
- There are small concentrations of deprived groups living in the urban centres of Mid Sussex.
- There are a number of vulnerable groups, spread across Mid Sussex
- Sexual identity in the South East is similar to that of the UK. There was a higher proportion of people identified themselves as gay/lesbian/bisexual in the South East – 1.5 per cent compared to 1.0 per cent across the UK as a whole

- A high proportion of the population (54.1 per cent) of Mid Sussex is concentrated in three Mosaic Public Sector Groups. These are; Group D- Successful professionals living in suburban or semi-rural homes; Group E – Middle income families living in moderate suburban semis; and Group F – Couples with young children in comfortable modern housing.
- It is in the urban areas of Mid Sussex where we see the only real concentrations of the more deprived groups
- Within Mid Sussex, a number of wards have particularly high concentrations of 80+ residents. Hassocks, Lindfield, Haywards Heath Heath, Haywards Heath Lucastes and East Grinstead Baldwins have the highest concentrations of adults aged 80 and above

#### **1.4 What does this information tell us about the equality issues associated with the service and implications for the protected groups?**

General profile information tells us about the make-up of the Mid Sussex population and the likely effectiveness of different communications channels. Also, the diversity of the community that our communications will seek to reflect.

There is not as much communications specific data as we would like it to. We do not have any specific data relating to, for example, internet usage, levels of literacy, access to computers or smart phones or for social media usage. We can make some assumptions based on the information we do have about what is typical for those groups.

Mosaic data tells us that our three main groups have the following preferences when it comes to communications channels:

- Group D- successful professionals living in suburban or semi-rural homes – internet , some TV
- Group E – Middle income families living in moderate suburban semis – the Guardian, The Times and Internet
- Group F – Couples with young children in comfortable modern housing – Sky Tv and internet.

The survey of protected groups in Mid Sussex carried out in 2012 by Participate showed a general low awareness of the Council's magazine Mid Sussex Matters delivered to every household 3 times per year and the A-Z of services sent annually.

#### **1.5 Are contractors or partnerships used to deliver the service? Yes, for MSM but we have complete control over content.**

If No go to section 2.

If yes, please refer to the guidance notes, particularly Appendix One of the MSDC Guidance "Integrating Equality and Diversity into Procurement", and complete the next three questions.

**Identify the contractors/partnerships used to deliver the service.**

**What is their contribution to equality in service delivery and the promotion of equality?**

**How are equality issues addressed through contractual arrangements and service level agreements?**

## 2. Assessment of Impact; Analysis and Action Planning

Any gaps in information or provision, opportunities to promote equalities and good relations identified above need to be translated into SMART actions and recorded here. These actions need to be delivered and monitored through the service planning process.

Opportunity to promote equality, good relations and/or address barriers to service/differential impact	Current action taken to address these	Further actions required and timescales	Lead Officer	How will impact be measured
The needs of different ethnic groups including white minorities, but also established white communities				
<p>MSM/ website /social media– positive images of those from BME communities used in magazine and on website, not just in stories relating to BME communities</p> <p>Media relations – promotion of activity in our communities that promotes cohesion and multiculturalism</p>	<p>Team are aware of the need to promote a diverse community and will maximise any promotional opportunities through the media available to us.</p> <p>Events such as Local Global run by the Mid Sussex Diversity Forum are publicised and attended by Communications staff.</p>	<p>Set up an ideas panel for MSM with members from across the District to help identify stories that we may not otherwise hear about</p> <p>Establish links with a wider number of organisations across the District and work with them to identify stories that promote inclusion</p> <p>Through regular meetings with the Town and Parish Councils identify stories for all media that promote inclusion</p> <p>More bespoke photography for MSM and press releases to reflect demographics of District in communications material</p>	<p>JB</p> <p>JB</p> <p>JB</p> <p>JB/MF</p>	<p>Feedback from residents</p> <p>Attendance at events</p> <p>Re-tweets/posts on social media</p> <p>Links to partner websites</p>
The needs of men and women. Including taking account of pregnancy and maternity.				
<p>Social media/website - there is no need for people to identify themselves so gender/pregnancy not an issue and they can engage with us via social media on council issues.</p> <p>MSM is delivered door to door and all homes in the District get a copy.</p>	<p>Social media policy</p> <p>Social media strategy for MSDC</p> <p>Both drafted with a view to implementing in the New Year latest</p>	<p>Promotion to encourage followers and friends on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter</p>	<p>DT</p>	<p>Re-tweets/posts on social media</p> <p>Numbers of followers/likes on social media pages</p> <p>Balance of photos in comms to be 50/50</p>

The internet is not predominantly used by one sex				Links to partner websites
The needs of disabled people				
<p>Images of people with disabilities to be used and not just to promote articles about disabled</p> <p>Social media/website can help people to feel included as barriers to disability can be overcome by technology in many cases</p>	As above	As above	DT	As above
The needs of people with a religion or belief				
Nothing in our communications practices excludes those with a specific religion or belief	Communications are always checked to ensure that they are truthful and would not offend	Establish links with groups that represent different religions or belief to achieve a better understanding of what can cause offence by initially finding out where they are through contacts in parish councils, our own members and community groups.	DT	Knowledge sharing amongst staff of issues relating to different religions

Opportunity to promote equality and/or barriers to service/differential impact	Current action taken to address these	Further actions required and timescales	Lead Officer	How will impact be measured
The needs of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and heterosexual people				
Social media/website - there is no need for people to identify themselves so sexuality not an issue and they can engage with us via social media on council issues.	None needed	None needed		
Issues from marriage and civil partnership				
No issues				
The needs of different age groups, for example older and younger people				
<p>Social media/website - there is no need for people to identify themselves so age not an issue and they can engage with us via social media on council issues.</p> <p>Opportunity to make MSM more attractive to young people.</p> <p>MSM/ website /social media– positive images of all ages used in magazine and on website</p>	<p>Social media policy drafted and plans to introduce in new Year latest.</p> <p>Images in MSM are representative of community</p> <p>Events such as the Life Show for the over 50s are publicised and attended by Communications staff.</p>	Recruit Youth correspondent for MSM by end 2013	DT	<p>Followers/likes on social media sites</p> <p>Regular articles in MSM written by young people</p> <p>Links to partner websites</p>
The needs of transgender communities				
No issues for reasons above				
The needs of people who are disadvantaged by socio-economic factors such as low incomes, skill or living in a deprived area				
There is evidence that those on low incomes and in social housing, for example, communicate via social media rather than by websites so the emerging social media strategy will encourage the engagement of those not normally engaged with their council.	None needed	<p>Implementation of social media policy and working with agencies, housing associations and those likely to work with those of this demographic to increase likes and followers on social media.</p> <p>Work with Housing Association and</p>	JB/MF	<p>Followers/likes on social media sites</p> <p>Article in MSM targeted at this demographic</p> <p>Articles from MSDC in</p>

<p>Because the council offers online information, delivers MSM free to their door and many of the papers in the district are distributed free of charge there are no barriers to residents receiving our communications.</p>		<p>other agencies to include key information in their communications and their info in MSM</p>		<p>partner publications and on their websites Links to partner websites</p>
<p>The needs of people who live in a rural area</p>				
<p>As above: Social media, MSM, local media</p>	<p>Working with Parish and Town Councils  Social media policy</p>		<p>All</p>	<p>Spread of articles in MSM  Balance of press releases – equal number of stories from all areas</p>

### 3. Mid Sussex District Council Equality Impact Assessment Summary

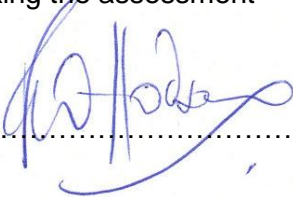
Key Findings	Future Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is already a lot of good practice in place that ensures that exclusion of any particular group is very unlikely. The emerging social media policy will complement our efforts and help to engage with those that may have previously been hard to reach.</li> <li>• Our contact with partner organisations that target some of these groups is limited and we could work better with them to promote positive images and stories of those from these groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish better links with groups that represent those in the protected groups</li> <li>• Implement social media strategy by April 2013</li> <li>• Use images of local people for all communications activity and promote positive images of those from these groups</li> <li>• Recruit a youth correspondent by end 2013</li> <li>• Set up a ideas panel of Councillors for Mid Sussex Matters by April 2013</li> </ul>

### 4. Signing off this assessment and action plan

Signature .....Diane Talbot.....  
 Person undertaking the assessment

Date 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013

Signature .....  
 Head of Service



Date 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013

Please send your completed impact assessment to Neal Barton for publication on the website.