

**Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)**

**Before starting the first section, please give some details about the activity/policy**

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| This EqIA is for: | Change of Governance Arrangements |

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| Details are set out: | Full Council consideration of change to the Council’s governance arrangements from a committee system of governance to the executive system (Leader and Cabinet model) with a view to implementation of any approved change at the Council’s Annual General meeting in May 2022. |

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| Officers undertaking the assessment: | Avneet Nahal, Senior Executive Officer |

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| Assessment approved by: | Marjorie Toward, Service Director and Monitoring Officer | Date: 22nd March 2022 |

What are the aims of your

[Report to Full Council on 23 September 2021](https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/DMS/Document.ashx?czJKcaeAi5tUFL1DTL2UE4zNRBcoShgo=4OJkD%2bLWf90Dsd41b6IbTBL0VRaXIm4zwzfJLczvCXcn2gHEddeJCQ%3d%3d&rUzwRPf%2bZ3zd4E7Ikn8Lyw%3d%3d=pwRE6AGJFLDNlh225F5QMaQWCtPHwdhUfCZ%2fLUQzgA2uL5jNRG4jdQ%3d%3d&mCTIbCubSFfXsDGW9IXnlg%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&kCx1AnS9%2fpWZQ40DXFvdEw%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&uJovDxwdjMPoYv%2bAJvYtyA%3d%3d=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&FgPlIEJYlotS%2bYGoBi5olA%3d%3d=NHdURQburHA%3d&d9Qjj0ag1Pd993jsyOJqFvmyB7X0CSQK=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNR9xqBux0r1Q8Za60lavYmz=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNQ16B2MHuCpMRKZMwaG1PaO=ctNJFf55vVA%3d) approved in principle the Council’s move from a committee system to a leader and cabinet system, subject to detailed arrangements being developed under the oversight of a cross-party members working group Chaired by the Chairman of Governance and Ethics Committee.

Executive arrangements would facilitate the Council to respond to the fast-moving pace of change by more effective, efficient, decisive, and quicker decision making. Clearer accountabilities and responsibilities would better enable delivery of the vision and ambitions set out in the 10-year Nottinghamshire Plan approved by Full Council in November 2021.

The new governance arrangements will provide maximum flexibility and ensure that the Council is best prepared for any form of devolution deal as set out in the Levelling Up White Paper. An executive system of governance will allow the Council to continue to work with partners to negotiate a Level 3 deal with government, which maximises the potential opportunities and benefits for all local people, whilst leaving other devolution options open to the Council.

It is also expected that an executive system of governance would bring the County Council into line with all other councils across Nottinghamshire who already operate or are moving to executive arrangements thereby creating greater consistency and ease of operation. It would also bring the Council more into line with the national picture for other upper tier authorities.

Benefits of the executive system are considered to be swifter and more decisive decision making, allocation of clear lines of responsibility and accountability to identified lead Cabinet members and collectively to an executive Cabinet, balanced by appropriate mechanisms to ensure transparency and to scrutinise decisions through Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Changes to the Council’s governance arrangements are considered to have a broadly neutral effect and that they would not give rise to a disproportionate impact on any individuals or groups with protected characteristics. Accessibility arrangements for information about Council decision making would be largely the same as under current arrangements.

proposed activity/policy/background to decision?

Residents, businesses, public bodies, key partners, other local councils, government agencies and trade unions.

A survey was undertaken to seek feedback from residents, businesses, and public bodies on Nottinghamshire’s potential change of system to a Leader and Cabinet model. This will be considered by Full Council in reaching a decision.

As well as undertaking public engagement regarding the changes, the Chief Executive also wrote to key partners and other local government agencies in late September notifying them of the Council’s intention to change governance systems and has received no responses to date.

Union consultation has also taken place through the Joint Consultative and Negotiating Panel regarding the change.

Who are the main internal

and external stakeholders?

Who is in best place to monitor

Democratic Services

the impact of this proposed

activity/policy?

Who has responsibility for

Keith Ford, Team Manager, Democratic Services is responsible for the operation of the governance arrangements.

managing this activity/policy?

Does this activity/policy interact with any other policies, activities, or business

The Council’s governance arrangements work across all aspects of the Council’s activities and functions as this is the means for formal decision making by the Council. Due regard will be given to public sector equality duties in designing and considering the model and in making decisions under the new system.

areas. If yes, please list them.

**Part A: Impact**

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|  | **Here you will identify any potential negative impact in conjunction with the protected characteristics groups:**  *If this EqIA is accompanying a report for a decision, the report should have a description of the proposal, change to service or policy; therefore, there is no need to duplicate the information.*  Add link to Full Council Report  **What are we trying to do in this section?**  In this section, this form will help you to identify whether the activity or policy could lead to any potential discrimination. Discrimination is where someone is treated less favourably or put at a disadvantage because of their protected characteristic. The different groups are covered by the Equality Act and are referred to as protected characteristic groups. They are, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, sex (gender), and age.   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Column 1** | **Column 2** | **Column 3** | **Column 4** | **Column 4** | | **Protected Characteristic Group** | **Negative or positive impact on our people (major/minor/none)**  **E.g., minor negative or major positive** | **Impact on colleagues if this is a HR/employee related activity or policy. (major/minor/none)** | **Please give very brief examples of how you will mitigate any negative minor or major impact. (as you will expand on these in the next section). If you would like to include any consultations here please do - keeping it brief** | **Do we have any opportunities to promote equality?** | | **Age** | None | None | - | - | | **Disability** | None | None | - | - | | **Gender Reassignment** | None | None | - | - | | **Pregnancy and maternity** | None | None | - | - | | **Race (including origin, colour or nationality)** | None | None | - | - | | **Religion** | None | None | - | - | | **Sex** | None | None |  | - | | **Sexual Orientation** | None | None | - | - | | **Marriage or Civil Partnership** | None | None | - | - | | **People who use different languages and have different accessibility requirements** | None | None | The Council already has provisions in place. Documents and reports are available on-line and hard copies can be accessed through libraries across the County.  Public meetings are live streamed.  Documents may be requested in other languages, formats, and large print through the Customer Service Centre.  Sign video service is available for use by those who are deaf or hearing impaired. | Work is underway, in line with revised national accessibility requirements, to review and promote access to the website, documents, decision-making, information, advice, and guidance for all residents, including those with particular requirements. | | **People with dependants or people who are carers** | None | None | - | - | | **Any other information you may wish to add?**  **…………………..** | The proposed change in model of governance will not have a disproportionate impact on any particular group. Due regard will be given to the public sector equality duties in determining the detailed model of governance. Decisions made under the new governance arrangements will have due regard to the Council’s public sector equality duties as set out in the Equality Act. | None | - | - | |

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| **Part B: Proposed Mitigation**  *Using the details, you have entered in column 4 above, you will need to expand on how you will deal with any potential impacts.*  **Where there are potential impacts for specific groups or communities these should be detailed including consideration of the equality duty, proposals for how they could be mitigated (where possible) and meaningfully consulted on:** |

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| **Please indicate the protected characteristic group?** | **From column 4, please give your example of how you will mitigate any potential impacts** | **Please indicate who you might consult with?** |
| People who use different languages and have different accessibility requirements | To further improve accessibility for people with different requirements the Council has:   * Undertaken an independent external audit of the Council’s website to identify ways to improve accessibility and developed an action plan to address specific issues. * Joined the Business Disability Forum to advise on a range of different accessibility requirements for individuals and particular communities. * Signed and adopted the British Sign Language Charter in Partnership with the British Deaf Association and Nottinghamshire Deaf Wellbeing Action Group. We are working together on actions to improve accessibility for the deaf community. * The Council’s Member Equalities Champion and Corporate Equalities Officer have met with members of the deaf community to identify priority actions. * Extended the contract for Sign Video with a view to promoting its use amongst the deaf community. * Worked with the Disabled Employee Support Network to test website changes to improve accessibility – particularly for people who are visually impaired and have other disabilities including neurodiversity. | Business Disability Forum  British Deaf Association  Nottinghamshire Deaf Wellbeing Action group  Disabled Employee Support Network and other specific staff support groups  Recognised Trades Unions |
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**Part C: Co****nsultation, feedback, and any further actions**

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|  | **Summary of consultation feedback and further amendments to proposal / mitigation** |
| Use this section to record the results of the analysis of the consultation described above and whether any further actions will be undertaken  The proposed changes to the Council’s governance arrangements are considered to have a broadly neutral effect. It is not considered that they would give rise to a disproportionate impact on any particular individuals or communities as:   * The proposed system is legally compliant and has been developed in line with statutory guidance and best practice to ensure the relevant checks and balances within the system are in place. Many other Councils operate executive arrangements. * Full Council will have due regard to the public sector equality duties in determining the future governance arrangements. * The structures of scrutiny exist to hold the executive to account by those Councillors who do not form part of the Executive (or Cabinet).   It ensures that decisions taken either individually or collectively by Cabinet Members are open to relevant scrutiny and in some cases may be called-in and examined for compliance. Decisions made using the new governance model will also reflect Equality Act requirements.   * Accessibility arrangements for information about Council decision making would be largely the same as under current arrangements. Work is underway, working with particular groups and communities, to review these arrangements. * The Cabinet member for personnel has been allocated responsibilities for oversight of Equalities across the Council and compliance with Equalities legislation is covered as one of the Council’s decision-making principles. * Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings would continue to be held in public and broadcasting of public meetings will continue under the proposed system of governance to ensure continued transparency in decision making. * The proposed system will continue to put the people the Council serves at its heart. The services which service users receive should be unaffected by any change in governance model, and all decisions would be required to be taken in accordance with the law, including the Equality Act, and requirements set out in the Constitution. Service Users will continue to have the same rights in respect of service delivery and to complain to the Council under the Council’s complaints procedures. They will remain able to raise issues with their local divisional County Councillor as currently. * A programme of training and development will be rolled out for both members and officers involved in the decision-making process to ensure understanding of and compliance with the relevant legal requirements. * The Member Working Group, under the leadership of the Chairman of Governance and Ethics Committee, has committed to keeping the operational effectiveness of the new structure under a process of review for the first 12 months of operation. Any concerns can be raised and discussed in a cross- party environment and the members Working Group will consider those issues and recommend any potential changes to address them. | |

**Part D: Evaluation decision**

**You now need to indicate the overall assessment decision:**

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| **Overall decision** | **Please mark with X** |
| No barriers or impact identified in implementing the change of the Council’s governance arrangements from a committee system of governance to the executive system (Leader and Cabinet model), therefore activity will proceed. | **X** |
| We have decided to stop the policy or practice at some point because the evidence shows bias towards one or more groups |  |
| We have adapted or changed the policy in a way which we think will eliminate the bias, |  |
| Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g., in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore, we are going to proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision. |  |

**Who will be responsible for signing this form off?**

Depending on the nature of the policy, event or funding activity, the responsibility of who should complete the assessment, who should be consulted, and who should sign off the EIA will vary. Ultimate responsibility on whether an EIA is required, and the evaluation decision(s) made after completing the EIA lies with the senior officer responsible for implementing the policy or the head of team/department. Completed EqIAs should be sent to [equalities@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@nottscc.gov.uk) and will be published on the Council’s website before a decision is made.