

# Equality Impact Assessment

## VCFS Infrastructure

Did you use the EIA Screening Tool? (Delete as applicable)

Yes

### 1. Explaining the matter being assessed

Is this a:

- Other

**Summarise the strategy, policy, service(s), or function(s) being assessed. Describe current status followed by any changes that stakeholders would experience.**

The VCFS Infrastructure Grant is provided to key VCFS organisations on yearly basis to help sustain a strong third sector across Surrey. This efficiency will reduce the total base budget held by the council from which this grant is provided, which in turn - once some other reductions in one off discretionary spend are factored in - will result in these organisations each receiving a cash reduction in this grant of approximately 5% (and no inflationary uplift). This amounts to a total cash reduction of £23k spread proportionately across the nine VCFS infrastructure organisations.

An EIA is being completed because these infrastructure organisations provide support to many Charities across the county so there are potential impacts on residents. We are engaging directly with all the VCFS infrastructure organisations (Surrey Faith Links to connect faith – SMEF, Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum, Voluntary Action Reigate Banstead, Surrey Community Action, Tandridge Voluntary Action, Central Surrey Voluntary Action, Voluntary Action South West Surrey, Voluntary Support North Surrey) to discuss and understand the impact of a reduction in this specific grant, in the context of other developments and funding streams. This has included conversations about how the organisations will continue to evolve and develop arrangements that are more sustainable than a reliance on a year-on year increase in grant from the county council. Because any new arrangements will take time to develop over the next 6-12 months, we plan to put in place a package of funding provisions and support next year (2024/25) so any potential equality impacts are mitigated.

Describe the change being assessed in plain English. Give your rationale for writing the EIA. Identify the key stakeholders affected by this change, including residents and staff. Consider what evidence you have gathered on the impact of your proposals.

How does your service proposal support the outcomes in [the Community Vision for Surrey 2030](#)?

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Specify which of the ten Vision outcomes this work is linked to.

**Are there any specific geographies in Surrey where this will make an impact?**

(Delete the ones that don't apply)

- County-wide

**Assessment team** – A key principle for completing impact assessments is that they should not be done in isolation. Consultation with affected groups and stakeholders needs to be built in from the start, to enrich the assessment and develop relevant mitigation.

**Detail here who you have involved with completing this EIA. For each include:**

- Saba Hussain – SCC – VCFS Strategic Lead
- Jean-Pierre Moore – SCC – Head of Service
- Louis Perry – SCC – EIA specialist
- Chief Officers of VCFS Organisations

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## 2. Service Users / Residents

### Who may be affected by this activity?

There are 9 protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010) to consider in your proposal. These are:

1. Age including younger and older people
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Pregnancy and maternity
5. Race including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
6. Religion or belief including lack of belief
7. Sex
8. Sexual orientation
9. Marriage/civil partnerships

Though not included in the Equality Act 2010, Surrey County Council recognises that there are other vulnerable groups which significantly contribute to inequality across the county and therefore they should also be considered within EIAs. If relevant, you will need to include information on the following vulnerable groups (Please **refer to the EIA guidance** if you are unclear as to what this is).

- Members/Ex members of armed forces and relevant family members (in line with the Armed Forces Act 2021 and [Statutory Guidance on the Armed Forces Covenant Duty](#))
- Adult and young carers\*
- Those experiencing digital exclusion\*
- Those experiencing domestic abuse\*
- Those with education/training (literacy) needs
- Those experiencing homelessness\*
- Looked after children/Care leavers\*
- Those living in rural/urban areas
- Those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage\*
- Out of work young people)\*
- Adults with learning disabilities and/or autism\*
- People with drug or alcohol use issues\*
- People on probation
- People in prison
- Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers
- Sex workers
- Children with Special educational needs and disabilities\*
- Adults with long term health conditions, disabilities (including SMI) and/or sensory impairment(s)\*
- Older People in care homes\*
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities\*
- Other (describe below)

(\*as identified in the Surrey COVID Community Impact Assessment and the Surrey Health and Well-being Strategy)

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## All Characteristics

Replicate this page for each of the protected characteristic or vulnerable groups that are within the scope of this EIA [delete this sentence before publishing].

**Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.**

VCFS Infrastructure Organisations are essential enablers for the wider VCFS sector in Surrey and support organisations that work with all the protected characteristics and vulnerable groups in some form. A 5% grant reduction (and no inflationary uplift) will impact these organisations in different ways and each organisation will manage this impact differently. Identifying the exact details relating to the characteristics that could be affected is challenging as these organisations support various aspects of the wider sector. The direct work of a few specific VCFS infrastructure organisations, such as Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum which supports people from diverse ethnic communities could affect these particular characteristics directly. These organisations offer direct services to residents, including rural communities, Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities, and those with specific religious or non-religious beliefs. The organisations have stated that the types of impact could include a reduction in the number of networking events for the sector such as setting up a place-based interfaith forum.

**Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.**

We have been in ongoing conversations with the VCFS infrastructure organisations about how they continue to evolve and develop arrangements that are more sustainable than a reliance on a year-on-year increase in grant from the county council – recognising that our financial position is increasingly constrained.

We are working in partnership with them and the VCSE Alliance and Community Foundation for Surrey (CFS) to develop new strategic ways of working that can reduce this reliance and help to increase match funding from other sources. Recognising these new arrangements will take some time to develop through 2024/25 there are also some direct mitigations that will be in place to support a managed transition.

Firstly, we are investing £100k into the CFS Strategic Transformation Fund, (with their match-funding making it circa £230k) available to all Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) organizations. The main objective of this fund is to offer assistance to VCFS organisations, including those that have undergone a 5% reduction, to apply for transformation funding. We will raise awareness about this fund with the infrastructure organisations and understand that they are intending to apply for this funding.

Secondly, we will use some separate one-off funding to directly offset the core grant reductions next year (2024/25) as part of a managed transition.

Some of these infrastructure organisations are tripartite funded, so they receive funding from the borough council and health partners and SCC is working with them to ensure they are aware of any changes and support the organisations too.

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The infrastructure organisations in the East of Surrey are also being supported to potentially merge through funding from the Strategic Transformation Fund, a small grant from Reigate Borough Council and Surrey County Council.

Furthermore, SCC will monitor the delivery of work with the organisations to gauge and keep oversight on any impact on performance. The VCFS organisations submit quarterly reports and have periodic review meetings and will be offered an opportunity to speak with the Head of Communities Partnership and Prevention as needed in a more flexible way. This EIA will be updated overtime as these organisations start to implement potential changes and see the impact of the efficiency.

In addition we will also be providing the VCFS Infrastructure organisations with the second tranche of one-off “Sparks Funding” (£180k from Covid impact funding) which will enable them to offer direct easy access small grants for community led activity across the 21 key neighbourhoods (as defined in the Health & Wellbeing Strategy); we know from the first tranche that this enables the VCFS infrastructure organisations to support community groups with small seed funding that will benefit these neighbourhoods directly. It also supports the infrastructure organisations themselves to develop new connections at community level in key neighbourhoods, so they can diversify the groups they support and draw on in terms of local capacity, skills and contributions.

## **What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?**

If so, please detail your awareness of whether this will exacerbate impacts for those with protected characteristics and the mitigating actions that will be taken to limit the cumulative impacts of these changes.

N/A

## **Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?**

Identify negative impacts that can't be mitigated and explain why, together with evidence.

Currently all mitigations that have been identified have got mitigations, however the service has put in place a EIA review mechanism to keep the document up-to-date.

## 4. Recommendation

Based your assessment, please indicate which course of action you are recommending to decision makers. You should explain your recommendation below.

- **Outcome One: No major change to the policy/service/function required.** This EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact, and all opportunities to promote equality have been undertaken
- **Outcome Two: Adjust the policy/service/function** to remove barriers identified by the EIA or better advance equality. Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers you identified?
- **Outcome Three: Continue the policy/service/function** despite potential for negative impact or missed opportunities to advance equality identified. You will need to make sure the EIA clearly sets out the justifications for continuing with it. You need to consider whether there are:
  - Sufficient plans to stop or minimise the negative impact
  - Mitigating actions for any remaining negative impacts plans to monitor the actual impact.
- **Outcome Four: Stop and rethink the policy** when the EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. (For guidance on what is unlawful discrimination, refer to the [Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance and Codes of Practice on the Equality Act](#) concerning employment, goods and services and equal pay).

### Recommended outcome:

Confirm which outcome you are recommending

Option 2

### Explanation:

Explain the reasons for your recommendation

Since starting the EIA process and discussing potential impacts with the organisations impacted mitigations have been developed for 2024/25 that will address the barriers identified over this period. Meanwhile there will be further work with the sector to develop new arrangements recognising the medium-term constraints on funding.

These plans and any impacts will continue to be monitored (at least quarterly) with our VCFS partners and this EIA will be updated accordingly.

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## 5. Action plan and monitoring arrangements

Insert your action plan here, based on the mitigations recommended.

Involve you Assessment Team in monitoring progress against the actions above.

Item	Initiation Date	Action/Item	Person Actioning	Target Completion Date	Update/Notes	Open/Closed
1	18/12/2023	Monitor quarterly reports and update EIA as necessary	Jean-Pierre & Louis Perry	Ongoing		Open
2						
3						

## 6a. Version control

Version Number	Purpose/Change	Author	Date
1	Final Version	Louis Perry	15/12/2023

The above provides historical data about each update made to the Equality Impact Assessment.

Please include the name of the author, date and notes about changes made – so that you can refer to what changes have been made throughout this iterative process.

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For further information, please see the EIA Guidance document on version control.



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## 6b. Approval

Secure approval from the appropriate level of management based on nature of issue and scale of change being assessed.

Approved by	Date approved
Head of Service	05/12/2023
Executive Director	08/12/2023
Cabinet Member	15/12/2023
Directorate Equality Group/ EDI Group (If Applicable) (arrangements will differ depending on your Directorate. Please enquire with your Head of Service or the CSP Team if unsure)	

### Publish:

It is recommended that all EIAs are published on Surrey County Council's website.

Please send approved EIAs to: [equalityimpactassessments@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:equalityimpactassessments@surreycc.gov.uk)

### EIA author:

## 6c. EIA Team

Name	Job Title	Organisation	Team Role

If you would like this information in large print, Braille, on CD or in another language please contact us on:

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