

Equality Impact Assessment – Future Governance

Assessor(s) Name and job title:

Claire Shand – Director of Corporate Services

Directorate and Team:

Strategy Directorate – Future Governance programme

Name, aim, objective and expected outcome of the programme/ activity:

Name: Future Governance (proposed change from a cabinet to committee system for the governance of the Isle of Wight Council)

Aims and objectives:

- 1.1. To bring to a full council meeting, by 1 May 2024 at the latest, a report outlining the options for the future governance model for the Isle of Wight Council. This would fulfil the requirement of the Full Council resolution of [June 2023](#), which set out an intention to receive a report with a recommendation to bring about a change in governance with effect on and from the Annual Council 2024.
- 1.2. This report will include the option of a politically proportionate committee system which could be implemented from its annual meeting on 15th May 2024. This aim was agreed by Full Council on 17 January 2024 on the recommendation of the member led Future Governance Working Group. (see section 57 [link](#)).
- 1.3. To have a plan to implement an alternative governance system should a recommendation for a change from the current cabinet system be agreed. This would form a Phase 2 of the project.

Expected outcome:

- 1.4. There will be an evidenced based report that outlines the potential options for future council governance and which will allow Full Council to make a lawful decision on whether to change its governance arrangements.
- 1.5. There will be a plan that covers the implementation, if a change in governance model is agreed, to allow a timely and smooth transition to new arrangements for staff, councillors and the public.
- 1.6. The public, councillors and staff will be kept informed of any potential changes and its impact on them and be given the opportunity to informally contribute feedback on proposals.

Background:

- 1.7. The Council currently operates executive arrangements, meaning there is a leader and cabinet with responsibility for making certain decisions. The executive can comprise of up to ten councillors including the leader but currently comprises of eight councillors including the Leader and each Cabinet member has an individual portfolio.
- 1.8. A politically proportionate councillor led working group chaired by Councillor Geoff Brodie met in September and October 2023 to review the future governance structure and the options open to the council should it wish to make a change. It's report was taken to the 17 January 2024 meeting of Full Council with the proposal to bring to a future Full Council meeting, by 1 May 2024 at the latest a report considering options including recommending a politically proportionate Committee system to be implemented by 15 May 2024. It was resolved that:
- Full Council note the framework recommendations made to the Audit and Governance Committee
 - the Future Governance Working Group work with the Monitoring Officer and Senior officers on constitutional changes
 - a progress report be provided to Full Council in March 2024
- 1.9. Section 9B of the Local Government Act 2000 (LGA 2000) sets out that a local authority in England must operate one of three forms of governance arrangement: executive, committee or hybrid. These are the options the extraordinary meeting report will need to consider in order to change its model of governance. Section 9L(4) LGA 2000 limits the relevant time when a governance change can take effect to a local authorities annual meeting. For the Isle of Wight Council this is at the annual council in May each year. This constraint means if a different model of governance is agreed in at the annual council at the annual council in May 2024, then implementation would have to be at that council meeting or a later annual council meeting.

Reason for Equality Impact Assessment

This is a proposal for a **change** to the governance system functions and is based on the assumption that the council agrees to move to a new form of governance.

The proposed change in the council's model of governance to a committee system is not considered to have a disproportionate impact on any particular protected characteristic group.

Due regard will be given to the public sector equality duties in determining the operational and practical arrangements of the new system from implementation and on an ongoing basis

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC – AGE (restrictions / difficulties both younger/older)

<p>Negative, positive or no impact (before mitigation/ intervention) and why?</p>	<p>We do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct or clear impact on or discriminates against any age groups. It is not proposed to change the operational timings of committee meetings. There may be additional evening/daytime meetings which will need to take into account any potential impacts on those participating in them. Overall, it is expected that there will be a comparable number of meetings and no change to the methods of communication for scheduling, publication of reports etc.</p>
<p>Does the proposal have the potential to cause unlawful discrimination (is it possible that the proposal may exclude/ restrict this group from obtaining services or limit their participation in any aspect of public life?)</p>	<p>We do not have any clear evidence to demonstrate any age group would be less able to participate in evening or daytime meetings. We can safely assume that younger age groups may have conflicts with schooling/learning hours during the daytime, those of working age may work a multitude of hours in various shifts and those who are retired may not be keen for evening meetings while they have the day free. Public meetings are now able to be accessed via video link to either watch as the proceedings take place or as recordings after the event at a convenient time.</p>
<p>How will you advance the equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not</p>	<p>Consideration of all protected characteristics is an intrinsic part of the decision-making process of the council, with any potential impacts and their mitigation being an integral element of the decision-making considerations. Consideration of age will be given at all opportunities and appropriate decisions or actions will be taken if any age-related risk and/or need is identified. The council has actively sought to engage with members of the public through communication and engagement activities to ensure that citizens of all ages are aware of the new committee system and how to get involved digitally abled or not.</p>
<p>What concerns have been raised to date during consultation (or early discussions) and what action taken to date?</p>	<p>There has been a range of engagement activity undertaken, via press releases, information leaflets, a dedicated information page on the council's website and a number of briefing sessions for the public, staff, elected members, town, parish and community councils to keep everyone informed. There has also been a dedicated email address/opportunity for written submissions to be made. There</p>

	has been no negative feedback to date from public, staff, councillors or the Members Working Group on age related impacts.
What evidence, analysis or data has been used to substantiate your answer?	Engagement feedback from public, staff, councillors. Young people (aged 0 to 19 years) make up 19.1% of the population of the Island compared to 23.6% in England as a whole. The Island has fewer young working-age people (aged 20 to 44 years) compared to England; 23.6% compared to 32.3%. Older people, aged 70 years and over, make up 21.4% of the population of the Island compared to 13.6% nationally. 1.4% are in the 'oldest old' over 90 years population age group compared to 0.9% in England.
Are there any gaps in evidence to properly assess the impact? How will this be addressed?	We will monitor the success of these arrangements and review as part of the post-implantation review period.
How will you make communication accessible for this group?	There will be no change to the communication methods which are already inclusive and take into account accessibility requirements.
What adjustments have been put in place to reduce/ advance the inequality? (Where it cannot be diminished, can this be legally justified?)	The current proposal is for committee meetings to take place on weekdays in the evenings and we will monitor the success of these arrangements and review as part of the post-implementation review period. The current recommendations for the length of committee meetings includes a guillotine clause at 3 hours. This may help councillors, staff and members of the public who are limited in time due to home commitments, learning, school, work, childcare etc.
PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC – DISABILITY (a) Physical, b) Mental health - must respond to both a & b)	
Negative, positive or no impact (before mitigation/ intervention) and why?	We do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct or clear impact on or discriminates against people with disabilities. It is not proposed to change the operational timings of committee meetings. There may be additional evening/daytime meetings which will need to take into account any potential impacts on those participating in them. Overall, it is expected that there will be a comparable number of meetings and no change to the methods of communication for scheduling, publication of reports etc.

<p>Does the proposal have the potential to cause unlawful discrimination (is it possible that the proposal may exclude/restrict this group from obtaining services or limit their participation in any aspect of public life?)</p>	<p>No, the proposals will have no discernible impact on any individuals with disabilities. However, this will be monitored on an ongoing basis.</p>
<p>How will you advance the equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not</p>	<p>Consideration of all protected characteristics is an intrinsic part of the decision-making process of the council, with any potential impacts and their mitigation being an integral element of the decision-making considerations. Consideration of disability will be given at all opportunities and appropriate decisions or actions will be taken if any related risk and/or need is identified. The council has actively sought to engage with members of the public through communication and engagement activities to ensure that citizens of all ages are aware of the new committee system and how to get involved digitally abled or not.</p>
<p>What concerns have been raised to date during consultation (or early discussions) and what action taken to date?</p>	<p>There has been a range of engagement activity undertaken, via press releases, information leaflets, a dedicated information page on the council's website and a number of briefing sessions for the public, staff, elected members, town, parish and community councils to keep everyone informed. There has also been a dedicated email address/opportunity for written submissions to be made. There has been no negative feedback to date from public, staff, councillors or the Members Working Group on disability related impacts.</p>
<p>What evidence, analysis or data has been used to substantiate your answer?</p>	<p>Engagement feedback from public, staff, councillors. Responses from the 2021 Census question: "Do you have any long-term illness, health problems or disability which limits your daily activities or work you can do?" - Across the Island, 78.7% of people reported that they did not have any long-term illnesses which limited their daily activities or work. This is lower than the national average of 82.3%. - The percentage of people who said they had a long-term health problem or disability which limited their day-to-day activities a lot was 8.8%, compared to 7.5% nationally. This varied across the Island from its lowest at 5.0% in Carisbrooke East to the highest at 14.7% in Sandown North.</p>
<p>Are there any gaps in evidence to properly assess the impact? How will this be addressed?</p>	<p>We will monitor the success of these arrangements and review as part of the post-implantation review period.</p>

<p>How will you make communication accessible for this group?</p>	<p>There will be no change to the communication methods which are already inclusive and take into account accessibility requirements.</p>
<p>What adjustments have been put in place to reduce/ advance the inequality? (Where it cannot be diminished, can this be legally justified?)</p>	<p>The council already has some provisions in place. Documents and reports are available on-line and printed copies can be supplied. Documents may be requested in other languages, formats, and large print. Public meetings are live streamed.</p>
<p>PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC – RACE (including ethnicity and nationality)</p>	
<p>Negative, positive or no impact (before mitigation/ intervention) and why?</p>	<p>We do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct or clear impact on or discriminates against people of different races. It is not proposed to change the operational timings of committee meetings. There may be additional evening/daytime meetings which will need to take into account any potential impacts on those participating in them. Overall, it is expected that there will be a comparable number of meetings and no change to the methods of communication for scheduling, publication of reports etc.</p>
<p>Does the proposal have the potential to cause unlawful discrimination (is it possible that the proposal may exclude/ restrict this group from obtaining services or limit their participation in any aspect of public life?)</p>	<p>No, the proposals have no discernible impact on the race protected characteristic.</p>
<p>How will you advance the equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not</p>	<p>Consideration will be given at all opportunities and appropriate decisions or actions will be taken if any needs are identified.</p>
<p>What concerns have been raised to date during consultation (or early discussions) and what action taken to date?</p>	<p>There has been a range of engagement activity undertaken, via press releases, information leaflets, a dedicated information page on the council's website and a number of briefing sessions for the public, staff, elected members, town, parish and community councils to keep everyone informed. There has also been a dedicated email address/opportunity for written submissions to be made. There has been no direct feedback to date from public, staff, councillors or the Members Working Group on race related impacts.</p>

<p>What evidence, analysis or data has been used to substantiate your answer?</p>	<p>Engagement feedback from public, staff, councillors. The Island's population is less diverse than England as a whole, with 97.0% of residents describing themselves as belonging to White ethnic groups compared to the national average of 81.0%. The diversity of the area's population is increasing. In 2021, 3.0% of the population described themselves as belonging to an ethnic minority group, up from 2.7% in the previous Census.</p>
<p>Are there any gaps in evidence to properly assess the impact? How will this be addressed?</p>	<p>We will monitor the success of these arrangements and review as part of the post-implantation review period.</p>
<p>How will you make communication accessible for this group?</p>	<p>There will be no change to the communication methods which are already inclusive and take into account accessibility requirements.</p>
<p>What adjustments have been put in place to reduce/ advance the inequality? (Where it cannot be diminished, can this be legally justified?)</p>	<p>We do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct or clear impact on the race protected characteristic.</p>
<p>PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC – Religion or belief (different faith groups/ those without a faith)</p>	
<p>Negative, positive or no impact (before mitigation/ intervention) and why?</p>	<p>We do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct or clear impact on the religion or belief characteristic. It is not proposed to change the operational timings of committee meetings. There may be additional evening/daytime meetings which will need to take into account any potential impacts on those participating in them. Overall, it is expected that there will be a comparable number of meetings and no change to the methods of communication for scheduling, publication of reports etc.</p>
<p>Does the proposal have the potential to cause unlawful discrimination (is it possible that the proposal may exclude/ restrict this group from obtaining services or limit their participation in any aspect of public life?)</p>	<p>No the proposals have no discernible impact on this protected characteristic.</p>
<p>How will you advance the equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not</p>	<p>Consideration will be given at all opportunities and appropriate decisions or actions will be taken if any needs are identified.</p>

<p>What concerns have been raised to date during consultation (or early discussions) and what action taken to date?</p>	<p>There has been a range of engagement activity undertaken, via press releases, information leaflets, a dedicated information page on the council's website and a number of briefing sessions for the public, staff, elected members, town, parish and community councils to keep everyone informed. There has also been a dedicated email address/opportunity for written submissions to be made. There has been no direct feedback on this subject to date from public, staff, councillors or the Members Working Group.</p>
<p>What evidence, analysis or data has been used to substantiate your answer?</p>	<p>Engagement feedback from public, staff, councillors. The 2021 Census reports that slightly under half of Isle of Wight residents (49.6%) stated they had a religion, down from 62.2% in 2011; 43.9% no religion (up from 29.6% in 2011) and 6.5% did not say. Of those who stated they had a religion; Christianity was the dominant religion with 47.7% of Island residents reporting to be Christian. 0.4% reported Muslim as their religion; 0.4% Buddhist; 0.2% Hindu; and 0.1% Jewish.</p>
<p>Are there any gaps in evidence to properly assess the impact? How will this be addressed?</p>	<p>We will monitor the success of these arrangements and review as part of the post-implantation review period.</p>
<p>How will you make communication accessible for this group?</p>	<p>There will be no change to the communication methods which are already inclusive and take into account accessibility requirements.</p>
<p>What adjustments have been put in place to reduce/ advance the inequality? (Where it cannot be diminished, can this be legally justified?)</p>	<p>We do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct or clear impact on the religion or belief protected characteristic.</p>
<p>PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC – Sex (Including Trans and non-binary – is your language inclusive of trans and non-binary people?)</p>	
<p>Negative, positive or no impact (before mitigation/ intervention) and why?</p>	<p>We do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct or clear impact on or discriminates.</p>
<p>Does the proposal have the potential to cause unlawful discrimination (is it possible that the proposal may exclude/ restrict this group from obtaining services or limit their participation in any aspect of public life?)</p>	<p>No the proposals have no discernible impact on this protected characteristic.</p>

How will you advance the equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not	Consideration will be given at all opportunities and appropriate decisions or actions will be taken if any needs are identified.
What concerns have been raised to date during consultation (or early discussions) and what action taken to date?	There has been a range of engagement activity undertaken, via press releases, information leaflets, a dedicated information page on the council's website and a number of briefing sessions for the public, staff, elected members, town, parish and community councils to keep everyone informed. There has also been a dedicated email address/opportunity for written submissions to be made. There has been no direct feedback on this subject to date from public, staff, councillors or the Members Working Group.
What evidence, analysis or data has been used to substantiate your answer?	Engagement feedback from public, staff, councillors.
Are there any gaps in evidence to properly assess the impact? How will this be addressed?	We will monitor the success of these arrangements and review as part of the post-implantation review period.
How will you make communication accessible for this group?	There will be no change to the communication methods which are already inclusive and take into account accessibility requirements.
What adjustments have been put in place to reduce/ advance the inequality? (Where it cannot be diminished, can this be legally justified?)	We do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct or clear impact on the religion or belief protected characteristic.
PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC – Sexual orientation (is your language inclusive of LGB groups?)	
Negative, positive or no impact (before mitigation/ intervention) and why?	We do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct or clear impact on or discriminates.
Does the proposal have the potential to cause unlawful discrimination (is it possible that the proposal may exclude/ restrict this group from obtaining services or limit their participation in any aspect of public life?)	No the proposals have no discernible impact on this protected characteristic.

<p>How will you advance the equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not</p>	<p>Consideration will be given at all opportunities and appropriate decisions or actions will be taken if any needs are identified.</p>
<p>What concerns have been raised to date during consultation (or early discussions) and what action taken to date?</p>	<p>There has been a range of engagement activity undertaken, via press releases, information leaflets, a dedicated information page on the council's website and a number of briefing sessions for the public, staff, elected members, town, parish and community councils to keep everyone informed. There has also been a dedicated email address/opportunity for written submissions to be made. There has been no direct feedback on this subject to date from public, staff, councillors or the Members Working Group.</p>
<p>What evidence, analysis or data has been used to substantiate your answer?</p>	<p>Engagement feedback from public, staff, councillors.</p>
<p>Are there any gaps in evidence to properly assess the impact? How will this be addressed?</p>	<p>We will monitor the success of these arrangements and review as part of the post-implantation review period.</p>
<p>How will you make communication accessible for this group?</p>	<p>There will be no change to the communication methods which are already inclusive and take into account accessibility requirements.</p>
<p>What adjustments have been put in place to reduce/ advance the inequality? (Where it cannot be diminished, can this be legally justified?)</p>	<p>We do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct or clear impact on the religion or belief protected characteristic.</p>
<p>PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC – Pregnancy and maternity</p>	
<p>Negative, positive or no impact (before mitigation/ intervention) and why?</p>	<p>We do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct or clear impact on or discriminates.</p>

<p>Does the proposal have the potential to cause unlawful discrimination (is it possible that the proposal may exclude/ restrict this group from obtaining services or limit their participation in any aspect of public life?)</p>	<p>No the proposals have no discernible impact on this protected characteristic.</p>
<p>How will you advance the equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not</p>	<p>Consideration will be given at all opportunities and appropriate decisions or actions will be taken if any needs are identified.</p>
<p>What concerns have been raised to date during consultation (or early discussions) and what action taken to date?</p>	<p>There has been a range of engagement activity undertaken, via press releases, information leaflets, a dedicated information page on the council's website and a number of briefing sessions for the public, staff, elected members, town, parish and community councils to keep everyone informed. There has also been a dedicated email address/opportunity for written submissions to be made. There has been no direct feedback on this subject to date from public, staff, councillors or the Members Working Group.</p>
<p>What evidence, analysis or data has been used to substantiate your answer?</p>	<p>Engagement feedback from public, staff, councillors.</p>
<p>Are there any gaps in evidence to properly assess the impact? How will this be addressed?</p>	<p>We will monitor the success of these arrangements and review as part of the post-implantation review period.</p>
<p>How will you make communication accessible for this group?</p>	<p>There will be no change to the communication methods which are already inclusive and take into account accessibility requirements.</p>
<p>What adjustments have been put in place to reduce/ advance the inequality? (Where it cannot be diminished, can this be legally justified?)</p>	<p>We do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct or clear impact on the religion or belief protected characteristic.</p>

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC – Marriage and Civil Partnership

<p>Negative, positive or no impact (before mitigation/ intervention) and why?</p>	<p>We do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct or clear impact on or discriminates.</p>
<p>Does the proposal have the potential to cause unlawful discrimination (is it possible that the proposal may exclude/ restrict this group from obtaining services or limit their participation in any aspect of public life?)</p>	<p>No the proposals have no discernible impact on this protected characteristic.</p>
<p>How will you advance the equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not</p>	<p>Consideration will be given at all opportunities and appropriate decisions or actions will be taken if any needs are identified.</p>
<p>What concerns have been raised to date during consultation (or early discussions) and what action taken to date?</p>	<p>There has been a range of engagement activity undertaken, via press releases, information leaflets, a dedicated information page on the council's website and a number of briefing sessions for the public, staff, elected members, town, parish and community councils to keep everyone informed. There has also been a dedicated email address/opportunity for written submissions to be made. There has been no direct feedback on this subject to date from public, staff, councillors or the Members Working Group.</p>
<p>What evidence, analysis or data has been used to substantiate your answer?</p>	<p>Engagement feedback from public, staff, councillors.</p>
<p>Are there any gaps in evidence to properly assess the impact? How will this be addressed?</p>	<p>We will monitor the success of these arrangements and review as part of the post-implantation review period.</p>
<p>How will you make communication accessible for this group?</p>	<p>There will be no change to the communication methods which are already inclusive and take into account accessibility requirements.</p>
<p>What adjustments have been put in place to reduce/ advance the inequality? (Where it cannot be diminished, can this be legally justified?)</p>	<p>We do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct or clear impact on the religion or belief protected characteristic.</p>

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC – Gender reassignment

<p>Negative, positive or no impact (before mitigation/ intervention) and why?</p>	<p>We do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct or clear impact on or discriminates.</p>
<p>Does the proposal have the potential to cause unlawful discrimination (is it possible that the proposal may exclude/ restrict this group from obtaining services or limit their participation in any aspect of public life?)</p>	<p>No the proposals have no discernible impact on this protected characteristic.</p>
<p>How will you advance the equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not</p>	<p>Consideration will be given at all opportunities and appropriate decisions or actions will be taken if any needs are identified.</p>
<p>What concerns have been raised to date during consultation (or early discussions) and what action taken to date?</p>	<p>There has been a range of engagement activity undertaken, via press releases, information leaflets, a dedicated information page on the council's website and a number of briefing sessions for the public, staff, elected members, town, parish and community councils to keep everyone informed. There has also been a dedicated email address/opportunity for written submissions to be made. There has been no direct feedback on this subject to date from public, staff, councillors or the Members Working Group.</p>
<p>What evidence, analysis or data has been used to substantiate your answer?</p>	<p>Engagement feedback from public, staff, councillors.</p>
<p>Are there any gaps in evidence to properly assess the impact? How will this be addressed?</p>	<p>We will monitor the success of these arrangements and review as part of the post-implantation review period.</p>
<p>How will you make communication accessible for this group?</p>	<p>There will be no change to the communication methods which are already inclusive and take into account accessibility requirements.</p>
<p>What adjustments have been put in place to reduce/ advance the inequality? (Where it cannot be diminished, can this be legally justified?)</p>	<p>We do not currently believe that the implementation of this programme has a direct or clear impact on the religion or belief protected characteristic.</p>

In order to identify the needs of the groups, you will need to review data, statistics, user feedback, population data, complaints data, staffing data (SAPHRreports@iow.gov.uk), community/client data, feedback from focus groups etc. When assessing the impact, the assessment should come from an evidence base and not through opinion or self-knowledge.

H. Review

How are you engaging people with a wide range of protected characteristics in the development, review and/or monitoring of the programme/activity?

- There has been public engagement on these proposals including press and social media releases with a dedicated email address (future.governance@iow.gov.uk) for feedback and an engagement session to provide information on the proposals.
- The work has been led by a politically proportionate councillor working group who have engaged with and reported back from their groups.
- There have been two Town, Parish and Community Council briefings (27 March 2024 and 4 April 2024) to engage with representatives from these groups and hear feedback on the proposals.
- The wider staff group have been asked for their feedback via the Chief Executive's messages in the Vine and also direct "all staff" emails. Staff have also been invited to briefing sessions on 23 April and 25 April to provide information on the proposals.
- There have been three briefing sessions (24, 25 and 26 April) for elected members prior to their extraordinary Full Council meeting to afford opportunity to clarify and discuss queries on any matters contained within the report.
- There is an officer working group comprising senior managers from Democratic Services and Legal Services as well as other senior leads who may be impacted by the changes.

H. Sign-off

Head of Service sign off & date:

Name: Claire Shand – Director of Corporate Services
Date: 18/04/2024

Legal sign off & date:

Name: Judy Mason - Strategic Manager of Human Resources
Date: 18/04/2024