

Shropshire Council Workforce Diversity Impact Assessment

Name of proposed service change
Voluntary Redundancy Programme – workforce reductions

Name of the officer carrying out the screening
Sam Williams, Assistant Director Workforce & Improvement

Scrutiny at screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer for the proposed service change</i>	Sam Williams Assistant Director Workforce & Improvement	28.06.2024
<i>Officer carrying out the screening</i>	Sam Collins-Lafferty HR & OD Manager	28.06.2024
<i>Any other internal service area support*</i>	N/A	

<i>Any external support**</i>	Lois Dale Performance and Research Specialist: Rurality and Equalities	28.06.2024

**This refers to other officers within the service area*

***This refers to support external to the service but within the Council, e.g, the Performance and Research Specialist for Rurality and Equalities, Public Health colleagues, the Feedback and Insight Team, performance data specialists, Climate Change specialists, etc.*

Sign off at Stage One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
<i>Sam Williams, Assistant Director Workforce & Improvement</i>	Sam Williams	28.06.2024

Aims of the service change and description
<p><i>Please use this box to describe the aims and purpose of the service change. This will also help to demonstrate objectivity of the approach and show that, even where difficult decisions might be being planned or made, they are being made in the light of careful consideration of the negative or positive consequences for all groupings. It is not about changing the decision, it is about showing the thought given to the anticipated impact, and also showing that data will continue to be collected about our workforce and about actual impacts to help develop and deliver any mitigating actions.</i></p> <p>The Voluntary Redundancy Programme and associated workforce reductions proposed through the Medium Term Financial Strategy aims to support and enable the delivery of the overall Council vision, mission, values and strategic goals through the Shropshire Plan, assist in delivery of savings, and serve as a key enabler to support quality service delivery and transformation.</p>

In so doing, it links with update and publication of a new Workforce Equality and Diversity Policy, which sets out to:

- provide written guidance for employees and managers on how to handle a range of employment issues;
- provide consistency and transparency for employees and managers;
- help to create a positive organisational culture;
- ensure compliance with legislation, terms and conditions and best practice;
- complement efforts to advance the three national equality aims through our service delivery to our diverse communities, in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty placed upon us by the Equality Act 2010..

The VR programme aims to contribute to the financial sustainability of the Council and enable an organisation that is a smaller size and shape (rightsized) as part of the Target Operating Model (TOM).

HR policies are consistently applied whilst taking into account individual needs and circumstances, as well as ensuring compliance with current employment legislation and strengthening liaison with trade unions/staff side representatives.

Evidence used for screening of the service change

Annual Workforce Diversity Reports
Annual Service User Diversity Reports
Strategic Equality Objectives Action Plan 2020-2024
ERP data
Gender Pay Gap Reports
Staff surveys
Draft revised workforce equality and diversity policy 2024
Comparator approaches by local authorities and NHS organisations

Associated ESHIAs for service changes

Please use this section to note any associated ESHIAs and timelines

Appendix 12 of the MTFS: [appendix-1-mtfs-2024-25-2028-29-cabinet-20240221.pdf \(shropshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/2024/02/appendix-1-mtfs-2024-25-2028-29-cabinet-20240221.pdf)

Protected Characteristics groupings

Protected Characteristic groupings	Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Review and monitoring
<p><u>Age</u> (please include commentary in regard to age bandings)</p>	<p>There is a potential positive impact for younger people if an opportunity arises earlier than they may have anticipated to take on a leadership role or develop new skills. This would include opportunities for young people leaving local authority care.</p>	<p>There is a positive and negative impact in relation to pay protection, redundancy, annual leave, retirement benefits and sickness pay entitlements as these are linked to the length of service</p>	<p>There is a potential negative impact for the organisation if younger people either leave the organisation or do not apply to join the organisation; there is also a potential negative impact of loss of skills and expertise if older people leave, as they are more likely to apply for redundancy given their service and salary, and there is a resultant skills gap There is a potential negative impact for older employees if the costs of redundancy are unaffordable.</p>	<p>See actions below to mitigate negative/enhance positive impacts.</p>

Protected Characteristic groupings	Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Review and monitoring
<u>Disability</u>	Employees with long-term health conditions/disabilities may view VR as an opportunity if considering their future.	The HR Policies and procedures ensure that all necessary work place risk assessments are undertaken and any reasonable adjustments made.	<p>In relation to redundancy selection criteria, attendance records may be taken into consideration. Due account will need to be taken for any absences linked to disability. Some employees with disabilities may be reluctant to apply for VR due to increased anxiety about seeking work elsewhere.</p> <p>If there is a lack of clear process and timeline neurodivergent employees may find it challenging to engage with & understand. A lack of clarity or non-adherence to timescales is likely to increase anxiety levels in this group of employees.</p>	As above.
<u>Gender re-assignment</u>		HR policies are consistent in their approach regardless of gender identity		As above.

Protected Characteristic groupings	Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Review and monitoring
<u>Marriage and Civil Partnership</u>		HR policies are consistent in their approach regardless of marital status		As above.
<u>Pregnancy and Maternity</u>			<p>The Change Management and Management of Sickness Absence policies offer further protection for employees in these categories. However the Annual Leave policy allows only statutory carry over provisions into a new financial year which will have a negative impact on employees who are pregnant or on maternity leave. This is however, in line with current employment legislation.</p> <p>Employees on maternity leave or long-term pregnancy-related absence may not receive timely communications and information to allow them to apply and/or have the full amount of time to consider their options.</p>	As above.

Protected Characteristic groupings	Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Review and monitoring
<u>Race</u>		HR policies are consistent in their approach regardless of race or ethnicity		As above.
<u>Religion or Belief</u>	Positive impacts for the existing and future workforce could include provision of prayer facilities wherever practicable, and engagement with colleagues on what their most basic requirements would/could be		<p>In respect of the Annual Leave policy, where a request is made to attend a religious event the manager should consider how they are best able to meet the request.</p> <p>Deviation from the Dress Code Policy due to religious considerations must be agreed with the relevant parties.</p> <p>If the window to submit expressions of interest/applications for VR includes a significant period of religious observance groups that observe this period may be at a disadvantage as will have less time to consider their options.</p>	As above.

Protected Characteristic groupings	Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Review and monitoring
<u>Sex</u>		HR policies are consistent in their approach regardless of gender	<p>Part time roles are more often held by women, who have also had breaks in service due to maternity etc. For those in the LGPS, this will have resulted in lesser benefits being built up, therefore these employees are less likely to be able to afford to take VR.</p> <p>Term-time only roles are more often held by women. If the window to submit expressions of interest/ applications for VR includes school holidays, these employees may be at a disadvantage as will have less time to consider their options.</p>	As above.
<u>Sexual Orientation</u>		HR policies are consistent in their approach regardless of sexual orientation		As above.

Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change.

1. Ensure clear and timely communications of any VR process to all staff who are not currently in the workplace. This should include those on family friendly leave (i.e. maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, surrogacy etc), long-term sickness, reservist duties, extended unpaid and compassionate leave.
2. Ensure all communications will be accessible to those employees via an external webpage so that information can be viewed on a personal device. These will be updated regularly as new questions or queries arise.
3. Ensure all communications are accessible to neurodivergent employees and provide support where required.
4. Ensure consideration of impacts for young people leaving care, as they are not only vulnerable but also recognised by the Council as a local protected characteristic grouping with whom we continue our corporate parent role into their adult life.
5. Through monitoring of applications, identify any areas that are not represented to ensure that there are no blockers put in place, either through information, technology or line manager resistance.
6. Regular dialogue with Trade Unions to ensure that any concerns are being addressed.
7. Promote existing Financial Wellbeing support to help ensure employees make informed decisions.
8. Give consideration to the timing of any programme launch and ensure window of opportunity enables all employees to apply if they wish.
9. Ensure employees who do not have English as a first language not only understand but also are able to access support to apply for VR.
10. Line Managers are supported to review the implications of a VR application and how work will be covered with the loss of post, encouraging plans to be put into place for knowledge and skills transfer as part of workforce and succession planning.