

Budget Savings Proposals Full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

Section 1: General Information

1a) Name of the savings proposal

Pest Control

Item Ref. No: CLC/3

1b) Service area

Environmental Control

1c) Service manager

Bryan Jones

1d) Name and role of the officer/s completing the EQIA

Paulette Samuels

Assistant Head of Environmental Health, Environmental Protection (Acting)

Section 2: Information about changes to services

2a) In brief please explain the savings proposals and the reasons for this change

This proposal relates to the introduction of Pest Control charging for treatment services provided to private dwellings, extending service delivery to the commercial sector e.g. shops and restaurants and a service development initiative to reduce demands on the service.

The Pest Control Service will move closer to being cost neutral by introducing charging to the carrying out of treatments to private properties. At the moment only those who live in THH and RSL managed properties are charged for the service, and this is perceived as being unfair.

The service undertakes 30,000 inspections a year but about 10% of these are no shows. Benchmarking has indicated that IT can be used to significantly reduce this problem. Service development of this efficiency would reduce service demand by the equivalent of 1.5FTE posts.

Service standards and the high levels of customer satisfaction with this service will not be affected by these savings. The service will continue to seek to win new business from other RSLs, extend service provision into the commercial sector and develop a strategy to provide shared services.

Currently Pest Control provides treatments for the following Pests:

- Mice
- Rats
- Ants
- Cockroaches
- Bedbugs
- Fleas

- Wasps
- Pigeons

b) What are the equality implications of your proposal?

All savings proposals have been screened for equalities relevance using the test of relevance questionnaire attached at Appendix A. Please go back to each of the test of relevance questions and **using evidence** please provide a more detailed analysis of the equality impact of your proposal.

The proposal to introduce fees for treatment for Pest Control in private dwellings. In relation to the test of tolerance questions, we know that this will:

- Alter or change access to the service
- Access to the Pest Control service should not be any more difficult than it is presently as all the varied contact options remain available to everyone wishing to contact the service.
- Undoubtedly, private landlords and residents of private dwellings will experience increased costs for pest control as prior to this proposal, services were free. Although this may have, an adverse affect on these residents, this brings LBTH in line with other London authorities that operate their pest control service on a 'charged for' basis.

The proposed fees and charges will apply to all sectors of the population of Tower Hamlets, though we will be looking at a concessions policy to ensure that this does not impact negatively on vulnerable households as soon as is practicably possible There are currently no proposals to consider any other exemptions.

As the charges have been composed based on the materials and costs of providing the service in this Borough they remain very competitive and should be affordable to all groupings.

6000 visits were carried out for Owner Occupiers, tenants of landlords and lease holders, whilst other visits were delivered under the existing SLAs.

It is also worth noting that 'the experience of other local authorities that have introduced charges is that demand for the service has fallen by 50% initially, but recovered to previous levels over the course of 2 – 3 years.'

Data retrieved for the three months October 2010 to December 2010 show trends in access to the service for pest control intervention to varying degrees. Notably the top four were HARCA (415), East End Homes (273), Old Ford Housing (154) and Toynbee Island Homes (102). Whilst this period is within the Winter months and represents the quietest times in terms of the numbers of request for service being made, this number of requests indicates a significant potential source of income on the introduction of the recommended fees and charges and these can be anticipated to at least double at peak times during the Summer months.

The break down of requests for service from ALMO's, RSL's and private dwellings in this last quarter is 327, 1240 and 1188 respectively. This gives a total of 2755 which represents a significant earning potential.

Section 3: Equality Impact Assessment

With reference to the analysis above, for each of the equality strands in the table below please record and evidence your conclusions around equality impact in relation to the savings proposal.

<p>Race</p> <p><i>Identify the effect of the policy on different racial groups.</i></p>	<p>Will the change in your policy/service have an adverse impact on specific ethnic groups? yes/no NO Please describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion.</p> <p>In the absence of recent data demonstrating service users by ethnicity/race it can only be concluded from the last customer satisfaction survey (2008) where there were 96% that were satisfied with the service they received, that that would have included all groupings.</p> <p>It is envisaged that a key aspect of the Action Plan would be to focus on collating data on service users that can properly measure and monitor usage against this key strand.</p>
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<p>Disability</p> <p><i>Identify the effect of the policy on different disability groups</i></p>	<p>Will the change in your policy/service have an adverse impact on disabled people? yes/no NO Please describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion.</p> <p>In the absence of recent data demonstrating service users by disability it can only be concluded from the last customer satisfaction survey (2008) where there were 96% that were satisfied with the service they received, that that would have included all groupings.</p> <p>It is envisaged that a key aspect of the Action Plan would be to focus on collating data on service users that can properly measure and monitor usage against this key strand.</p>
<p>Gender</p> <p><i>Identify the effect of the policy on different gender groups (inc Trans) groups</i></p>	<p>Will the change in your policy/service have an adverse impact on men or women? yes/no NO Please describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion.</p> <p>In the absence of recent data demonstrating service users by gender it can only be concluded from the last customer satisfaction survey (2008) where there were 96% that were satisfied with the service they received, that that would have included all groupings.</p> <p>It is envisaged that a key aspect of the Action Plan would be to focus on collating data on service users that can properly measure and monitor usage against this key strand.</p>

<p>Sexual Orientation</p> <p><i>Identify the effect of the policy on members of the LGB community</i></p>	<p>Will the change in your policy/service have an adverse impact on lesbian, gay or bisexual people? yes/no NO Please describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion.</p> <p>In the absence of recent data demonstrating service users by sexual orientation it can only be concluded from the last customer satisfaction survey (2008) where there were 96% that were satisfied with the service they received, that that would have included all groupings.</p> <p>It is envisaged that a key aspect of the Action Plan would be to focus on collating data on service users that can properly measure and monitor usage against this key strand.</p>
<p>Religion and Belief</p> <p><i>Identify the effect of the policy on different religious and faith groups</i></p>	<p>Will the change in your policy/service have an adverse impact on people who practice a religion or belief? yes/no NO Please describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion.</p> <p>In the absence of recent data demonstrating service users by religion and belief and it can only be concluded from the last customer satisfaction survey (2008) where there were 96% that were satisfied with the service they received, that that would have included all groupings.</p> <p>It is envisaged that a key aspect of the Action Plan would be to focus on collating data on service users that can properly measure and monitor usage against this key strand.</p>

<p>Age</p> <p><i>Identify the effect of the policy on different age groups using the prompts above</i></p>	<p>Will the change in your policy/service have an adverse impact on specific age groups? yes/no NO Please describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion.</p> <p>In the absence of recent data demonstrating service users by age it can only be concluded from the last customer satisfaction survey (2008) where there were 96% that were satisfied with the service they received, that that would have included all groupings.</p> <p>It is envisaged that a key aspect of the Action Plan would be to focus on collating data on service users that can properly measure and monitor usage against this key strand.</p>
<p>Socio-economic</p> <p><i>Identify the effect of the policy in relation to socio-economic inequalities</i></p>	<p>Will the change in your policy/service have an adverse impact on people with low incomes? yes/no YES Please describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion.</p> <p>Since this represents the first time charges will be made universally for pest control services in Tower Hamlets, there is the potential for charging to make the service less accessible for vulnerable, low income households. We will therefore be looking at a concessions policy as soon as is practicably possible</p>

Other

Identify if there are groups, other than those already considered, that may be adversely affected by the policy?

Will the change in your policy/service have an adverse impact on any other people (e.g. carers)? yes/no NO
Please describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion.

<p>Staff</p> <p><i>Identify if there are any staff groups, , that may be adversely affected by the policy?</i></p>	<p>Will the change in your policy/service have an adverse impact on staff? yes/no YES Please describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion.</p> <p>Away from the staff/officers providing the service there may be an adverse impact on the call centre staff who would be responsible for requesting payment upfront for services and perhaps the effects of 'displacement' may also need to be considered. If residents decide not to access the service when they ordinarily would due to an identified infestation, they may leave such situations unattended which may deteriorate into public health concerns that then re-appear to other Teams within Environmental Health, Environmental Protection, who may then have to serve formal notices to clear sites affected by such infestations.</p> <p>Thought could be given to training for the call centre staff handling the calls and perhaps to authorizing the Pest Control Supervisors to issue relevant notices or training them to make accurate and timely referrals to Area Team Officers.</p>
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Section 4: Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan

Please list in the table below any adverse impact identified and, where appropriate, steps that could be taken to mitigate this impact.

If you consider it likely that your proposal will have an adverse impact on a particular group (s) and you cannot identify steps which would mitigate or reduce this impact, you will need to demonstrate that you have considered at least one alternative way of delivering the change which has less of an adverse impact.

Adverse impact	Please describe the actions that will be taken to mitigate this impact
Socio – economic	Publicise the introduction of the charges as widely as possible prior to their launch and then monitor access to the service every 6 months with a revised survey containing the relevant equality strands.
Staff	Provide adequate training and support for call centre staff and Pest Control supervisors prior to the launch.

If an adverse impact cannot be mitigated please describe an alternative option, its costs and the equality impact.

Section 5: Future Review and Monitoring

Please explain how and when the actual equality impact of these changes will be reviewed and monitored.

The impact of these changes will be reviewed every 6 months and monitored monthly via Siebel.

APPENDIX A: Equality Impact Assessment Test of Relevance

TRIGGER QUESTIONS	YES / NO	IF YES PLEASE BRIEFLY EXPLAIN.....
<p>Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What outcome did the previous intervention seek to achieve? • What evidence do you have about how effective the previous intervention was?
CHANGES TO A SERVICE		
<p>Does the change alter access to the service?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there evidence that access will be more difficult or costly for some people?
<p>Does the change involve revenue raising?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence do we have about who will pay? • What impact will this have on the income available for these people?
<p>Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence do we have about who will no longer be eligible for the service? • Is this likely to lead to poorer outcomes for those who cannot access the service?

<p>Does the change involve a reduction or removal of income transfers to service users?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence do we have on who has benefits from these transfers? • What is the likely impact of the removal of the income to current beneficiaries?
<p>Does the change involve a contracting out of a service currently provided in house?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a need to include promotion of equality in the new contract arrangements?
<p>CHANGES TO STAFFING</p>		
<p>Does the change involve a reduction in staff?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence do we have about the composition of the current workforce? • Are there some groups who are likely to be disproportionately affected by the proposed reduction?
<p>Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence is there that this could have an impact on equal pay? • Does the change reduce the ability of staff to work flexibly?