

PROPOSED MERGER OF CORONER AREAS

REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

AGENDA ITEM: 4

**PORTFOLIO: CORPORATE SERVICES & PERFORMANCE (COUNCILLOR
GRAHAM HINCHEY)**

Reason for this Report

1. To consider the Rhondda Cynon Taf Council proposal to merge the existing Cardiff and Vale Coroner Area with the Powys, Bridgend and Glamorgan Valleys Coroner Area.

Background

2. It is a statutory requirement that Local Authorities appoint a Coroner and reimburses the cost of providing the Coroner Service under the provisions of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009. A coroner is an independent judicial office holder, appointed and paid by the relevant local authority. A coroner must be a lawyer or a doctor, and in some cases is both. Each coroner has a deputy and usually one or more assistant deputies, and either personally or through a deputy he or she must be available at all times. The costs of the coroners' service are generally met by local authorities, not by central Government. In some districts the local police force may also contribute towards a coroner's resources, usually by providing and paying the costs of coroner's officers.
3. The Coroners role is to inquire into violent or unnatural deaths, sudden deaths of unknown cause, and deaths which have occurred in prison. A coroner's authority to inquire flows from the report of a body being within the coroner's district and not from where the death occurred. The coroner's inquiries may take one of several forms and may result in the holding of an inquest.
4. The current position affecting Cardiff is that of a shared Coroners service with the Vale of Glamorgan who act as the host Authority at present.
5. As host Authority the Vale of Glamorgan is currently responsible for the appointment of the Coroner and their officers. They are also responsible for negotiating all associated cost and fees with the Coroner and management of the budget and premises. Due primarily to available

funding from both Authorities the combined area currently only provides a Part Time Coroner.

6. Cardiff's only role is that of an annual financial contribution based on population census figures (2001), currently this cost is £555,250 but due to the population increase recorded in the 2011 census is set to rise to around £565,000. The proposals in this report however seek to provide both an improved service and at a slightly reduced cost of the current service.
7. Upon Local Government re-organisation in 1996, the Bridgend and The Glamorgan Valleys jurisdiction was created (excluding the Rhymney Valleys) with Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) assuming the Lead role. Similarly, the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan (VGC) area was created with The Vale of Glamorgan as the Lead Authority.
8. In July 2014, Judge Peter Thornton QC in his first annual report to Lord Chancellor Chris Grayling quoted that the '99 coroner areas should be reduced further, to around 75 or fewer. At present, 60% of coroner areas have fewer than 2,000 reported deaths a year and Judge Peter Thornton said most senior coroners should deal with between 3,000 and 3,500 deaths to make the service viable. The Lord Chancellor has the power to combine, or merge, coroner areas after consultation.
9. At the beginning of 2012, the Coroner for both Powys and Bridgend and The Glamorgan Valleys resigned and a Coroner was appointed as his successor. The post was subject to a joint appointment between Powys, Bridgend and The Glamorgan Valleys (PB&GV), albeit these remained as separate areas prior to their amalgamation in July 2013. The Coroner resigned from this post in November 2013 and a further appointment assumed the role of Acting Senior Coroner.
10. Similarly, following the resignation of the Coroner for Cardiff and the Vale (C&V) in July 2013 the post has until recently been covered by two Part-time Assistant Coroners. One of the Part-time Coroners has subsequently stepped down and consequently further interim arrangements have been put in place. This has meant that PB&GV's acting Senior Coroner, supported by RCT, has assumed, in addition to his current role, the Acting Senior Coroner for C&V. An Assistant Coroner for PB&GV is also assisting in this arrangement. The Acting Senior Coroner is confident that whilst he has only been assisting C&V for a short period of time, he will be able to introduce some savings with further savings if a formal merger were to be agreed.
11. Appendices A1 and A2 show the current structures of both the PB&GV area and the C&V area and Appendix C the current financial position for C&VG.

Issues

12. A review process has been undertaken involving officers which have resulted in a merger proposal from Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) whereby

they would act as the relevant authority for a merged Coroner Area of C&V and PB&GV. Details of the merger proposal and other Options considered are contained in this Report.

13. The merger proposal for the RCT option relies on achieving £70k efficiency savings and will ensure
 - Continuity of service delivery across the merged area;
 - be cost neutral to existing authorities;
 - potential future savings resulting from inter alia economies of scale, rationalisation of back office support and SLA's with Local Health Boards.
14. The scope of the merger proposal relates to the two coroner jurisdictions PB&GV and C&V and sets out the rationale and benefits for a single area to cover the six local authorities. Also included is the proposal to recruit a whole time Senior Coroner and part time Area Coroner ensuring a resilient service whilst maintaining current service provision.
15. Drivers for change include direct correspondence from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and the Chief Coroner who are very keen to explore the potential for amalgamating the two Coroner Areas particularly as both are covered by part time provision and also advocates the post of a Whole Time Coroner as set down in the Coroners and Justice Act. This is supported by the Coroner's Society for England and Wales who appear to also prefer this arrangement. This has been the case in a recent review with the appointment of a Whole Time Coroner for North East Wales and North Central Wales which have recently merged into one jurisdiction; this took effect from 1st January 2013.
16. RCT has previously attempted to recruit a whole time Coroner for the PB&GV Coroner Area but the Chief Coroner's Office has advised that a merger should be considered prior to initiating any recruitment processes. Whilst a merger is unlikely to be forced, participating Local Authorities must demonstrate valid reasons against such an amalgamation. In the short term mergers of Coroner areas are only likely to take place with the agreement of all local authorities, amongst others. There is, however, no reason in principle, why the Lord Chancellor should not in due course combine areas after consultation but without agreement if there is a clear case for merger.
17. The MOJ and Chief Coroner are aware that the Acting Senior Coroner and Assistant Coroner for PB&GV are providing cover in the absence of a Coroner presence in C&V and will question how effective this assistance is proving to be. They may well determine that the next natural step would be to merge the two Coroner Areas.
18. The introduction of medical examiners, expected to be introduced following the UK General Election in May 2015 will also impact on the number of cases investigated and the number of inquests held in the future. This will have a positive impact as it will decrease the number of cases going to Inquest and thus result in a reduction in expenditure.

19. As the proposed option RCT have agreed the terms on which it is prepared to act as relevant authority for the merged Coroner Areas. As constituent authorities for the C&V Area, both Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils must also agree in order for the proposed merger business plan to be submitted to the Chief Coroner and Lord Chancellor for approval.
20. RCT have agreed to take on the Relevant Authority role on the following basis. To merge the two Coroner Areas with one whole-time Senior Coroner, one part time Area Coroner, shared administration and potentially achieve £70k efficiency savings in year 1. This proposes that the PB&GV and C&V Areas merge to form a single entity. One whole-time Senior Coroner would be employed to manage the new Area which will be supported by a shared administration. This proposal is supported by both the Ministry of Justice and the Coroner's Society. Whilst it would mean a slight increase in the Coroner's salary costs, these would be negated in part by the cessation of Long Inquest payments.
21. The reconfiguration of the administration structure could result in redundancies, the costs of which would fall to those Councils of the existing coroner areas, should the redundancy occur prior to any merger and 12 months thereafter, note that as the VoG currently hosts the service covering Cardiff then these costs will be shared. The current proportion for the contribution to the C&V area is 72% Cardiff 28% VoG.
22. Appendix B sets out the structure for the proposed merger and Appendix D the financial case (assuming £70k efficiency savings).
23. As discussed this would see the two Coroner Areas merge, with one permanent Senior Coroner, a permanent part-time Area Coroner, introducing a new restructured administration service headed by a Service Manager. This would relieve some of the existing cost pressures as it also factors in potential service savings of £70,000.

Examples of how these savings could be made include;

- Development of beneficial service level agreements.
 - Increased options to undertake competitive tenders from Area Health Boards
 - A reduction in Long Inquests realised through employing a full time Senior Coroner.
24. In addition the work of the Service Manager should realise additional savings through more efficient procurement of services and reducing unnecessary expenses where possible. There would also be a part -time Area Coroner which would result in all current service provision being maintained and added resilience in event of leave and sickness. This would significantly reduce the risk of future service cost increases and would result in the following small savings against current contributions for Cardiff & the Vale of Glamorgan Local Authorities - A detailed breakdown is included as Appendix D to this report:

Cardiff £ 6.2k saving
Vale of Glamorgan £ 2.3k saving

25. It should emphasize that this is the preferred proposed option with RCT as the Relevant Authority.
26. The current Acting Senior Coroner for the PB&GV has worked with Rhondda Cynon Taf on the following initiatives which could be replicated for C&V and the proposed wider area;
 - Introduction of a Service Level Agreement with Cwm Taf Local Health Board for the provision of an autopsy service – this will allow more efficient payment of invoices and effective budget monitoring. It will also enable the Coroner to closely monitor the number of Post Mortems performed with a view to reducing the numbers actually required and thus decrease future costs.
 - Introduction of a Service Level Agreement with Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board for the provision of an autopsy service – again this will see the same benefits as above.
 - Initiated a pilot scheme with a Consultant Pathologist with a view to reducing the number of invasive Post Mortems required, which will see considerable savings in the future.
 - The Coroner is also working closely with GPs to establish Causes of Death, in order to avoid the requirement for unnecessary Post Mortems. In April 2014, a total of ten Post Mortems were avoided which resulted in a saving of £4,000, thus potential savings of £48,000 per annum.
 - A pilot is also underway in PB&GV with an Assistant Coroner who as well as being legally qualified, has a medical background. The purpose of this pilot scheme is to utilise the Assistant Coroner's skills and experience to further reduce the number of required Post Mortems by determining the Cause of Death through the medical records. This initiative will further complement the point above in making future savings.
27. Under this proposal regular budget reports will be circulated to all partner authorities for consideration and Client Officers will have the ability to meet when necessary. A number of performance management reports and procedures will be put in place to ensure that all partner authorities are being informed of service performance and achievements. A Service Level Agreement will be negotiated between the authorities to ensure that all relevant information is communicated in agreed time frames. Quarterly financial updates and invoices are examples of information that could be shared with all partner authorities. This group will operate at Officer Level and report back to the relative Local Authorities as required.
28. A Relevant Authority is the local authority that is responsible for the delivery of a Coroners service on behalf of its partnering authorities. It is

proposed in this case that that RCT will be the Relevant Authority as the Council has the specialist knowledge, experience and expertise to effectively deliver the service and the anticipated savings.

29. It would however be a requirement that RCT as the Relevant Authority produce a Service level Agreement in consultation with all of the partner Authorities to ensure a robust system of Governance and financial management is put in place. This SLA should be reviewed in 3 years' time to include a review of the future of the agreement being based on a population basis.
30. Other options considered for the future of the Coroner Service include;
 - Do Nothing with Merger and retain current Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan structures and increase apportioned costs to Cardiff in line with latest Census figures. This would realise a short term saving for the Vale of Glamorgan of £9k and additional cost to Cardiff of £9k. This would not put the service in a position to find possible long term savings and could actually cost more as we would only be able to appoint a Part Time Area Coroner who would be entitled to long term Inquest payments as has been the issue previously. Also this option may not be acceptable to the Chief Coroner and Ministry of Justice who may intervene to enforce a merger at their terms.
 - Merge with Powys Bridgend and the Glamorgan Valleys in relation to Rhondda Cynon Taf becoming the 'Relevant Authority' for both areas. In this option both services would be run separately which would be £10k increase in cost for the Vale of Glamorgan and £27k increase for Cardiff as the pool of costs is higher without management & admin changes. Again this would miss opportunities to save on other back office costs and lose the benefit of economies of scale in tendering for services. RCT have identified that this option is not acceptable to them and that they would not be prepared to be involved if this was put forward.
31. It is therefore proposed that the option put forward by RCT to undertake a full merger between PB&GV and C&V Coroner areas is implemented at the earliest opportunity to adopt and drive forward the efficiency initiatives. Whilst this Option is dependent on achieving £70k efficiency savings it should be achievable through a restructured administration and management arrangement plus the added benefit of bargaining power within a much larger area and enable the new merged area to drive through further economies of scale.
32. If there is a decision not to proceed with the proposed merger, the current interim support will be at risk in the medium and long term. RCT would look to ensure a Senior Coroner is fully employed in their area and would fill their vacancy for a Coroner in the PB&GV Area which has been on hold for some considerable time whilst merger options have been investigated and proposals drawn up. RCT would give notice for the withdrawal of the interim arrangements to support the C&V Area.

33. The Vale of Glamorgan as relevant authority for their C&V Area would also need to take appropriate steps to fill the vacancy for C&V in light of the instruction from RCT above and overspends from previous years are likely to continue due to long inquests payments. This service is also out of scope of the Regulatory Services Collaboration.
34. There is of course the added fact to consider that the Ministry of Justice and Chief Coroner could force a restructured area in the future. It is currently unknown how large an area would be considered and whether a Coroner for the whole of Wales could eventually be appointed however given the geographic size of the area this is unlikely. Further mergers could occur in Wales which would result in larger areas and this current proposal may well be seen as a future operating model for other areas.
35. The proposed merger will ensure that there is a full time Coroner presence in Cardiff which is an improvement on the current part time arrangements. Assurances have been given that the merger will not require families to travel out of the area to attend inquest hearings as local facilities will continue to be used and an administrative base will be retained in Cardiff.

Reason for Recommendations

36. The Vale of Glamorgan is the relevant authority for the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Coroner Area (C&V). RCT is the relevant authority for the Powys, Bridgend and Glamorgan Valleys Coroner Area (PB&GV) (comprising the unitary authorities of Powys, Merthyr, RCT and Bridgend). At present there are Coroner vacancies in the two adjacent Coroner Areas of C&V and PB&GV.
37. RCT as relevant authority for PB&GV had prepared an advertisement to fill their vacancy but were requested by the Chief Coroner's Office to defer placing the advert until merger with the adjoining vacant Area of C&V was explored.
38. There is currently an Acting Coroner for PB&GV until a successor can be appointed. In addition to this role he is also supporting the C&V Coroner Area until a decision is taken on the proposed merger of the two Coroner Areas. Clearly these temporary measures cannot continue indefinitely.
39. The merger proposal offers an improved service to the City of Cardiff through a full time presence and adequate cover arrangements for the whole area.
40. There is also a small financial saving with the opportunity for this to improve in the future through more streamlined processes and greater bargaining power of the larger area to reduce necessary costs such as post mortem charges with the local health boards.
41. Cardiff will retain a position on the service board at officer level overseeing the new arrangements as a stakeholder and ensure that the

City still receives value for money, a high standard of service and that annual costs are effectively managed.

Financial Implications

42. The total annual budget for Coroners in the Coroner Area of PB&GV is £1,005,190 and in the Coroner Area of C&V is £771,180 giving a combined total budget of £1,776,370. Within both Coroner Areas, a budget is allocated for Local Authority administration. Consideration has been given to a restructure of the staff that are currently based in Rock Grounds, Aberdare (PB&GV) and Cathays Police Station (C&V) with a view to consolidating the support provided for the Coroner's Service, albeit there would still be a requirement to run the service across the aforementioned sites. Appendix C details the current financial position for the Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan Coroner Area.
43. Table 1 below states the budgets set by Cardiff & Vale for the last three financial years against the actual spend. Cardiff & Vale have exceeded their budget in all three financial years. The main reason for this is the substantial costs of Long Inquest payments. Table 2 shows the same period for Bridgend & Glamorgan Valleys

• Table 1 – Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan

| Financial year | Budget | Actual Spend | (Under)/Overspend | (Under)/Overspend % |
|----------------|----------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 2011/2012 | £626,000 | £656,693 | £30,693 | 5% |
| 2012/2013 | £664,000 | £743,714 | £79,714 | 12% |
| 2013/2014 | £722,000 | £765,646 | £43,646 | 6% |

Table 2 – Bridgend & Glamorgan Valleys

| Financial year | Budget | Actual Spend | (Under)/Overspend | (Under)/Overspend % |
|----------------|----------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 2011/2012 | £824,630 | £812,900 | £(11,730) | (1)% |
| 2012/2013 | £824,630 | £795,510 | £(29,120) | (3.5)% |
| 2013/2014 | £826,572 | £746,000 | £(80,572) | (9.75)% |

44. Cost Apportionment - As per the recommendations of the Ministry of Justice, the cost of the service for both Coroner Areas is apportioned amongst the participating Local Authorities on a population basis (as per the current Census). Recent discussions have resulted in a review of the contributions that Cardiff and The Vale of Glamorgan local authorities make towards the service provision for their Coroner Area. Previous contributions have been based on the 2001 Census figures. As a result of this review, future contributions will be made according to the most recent Census. A budget position for the existing Coroners service for C&VG is attached as Appendix C.
45. For the proposed merger it is proposed that the most appropriate commonly used cost apportionment method is on the basis of population as supported by the Ministry of Justice. The reasoning for this is that it is

readily available, is updated regularly and is a fair and stable basis which enables accurate financial planning for the service and the authorities. Implementation and operational costs will be apportioned on this basis. Redundancy costs are the exception to this, which will be met by the local authorities that contributed to the coroner area from where the member of staff originated from. The financial case for the proposed new structure is in Appendix D.

| Jurisdiction | Population* | % |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-----|
| Glamorgan Valleys, Bridgend & Powys | 565,366 | 54 |
| Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan | 472,426 | 46 |
| Total | 1,037,792 | 100 |

*Source: Census 2011

Legal Implications

46. Legal Services are instructed that Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council (“RCT”), on behalf of six local authorities, including Cardiff Council, is proposing to submit an application to the Lord Chancellor to consider a request to merge the existing coroner areas into one new merged coroner area covering the whole of the six local authority areas. If, following consultation, the Lord Chancellor is agreeable to the same, he will make a legal order to merge the existing coroner areas to one coroner area. Legal Services are instructed that the consent of all six councils is required prior to RCT submitting the application to the Lord Chancellor, hence the purpose of this report.
47. Statutory Powers in relation to the Coroners Service
48. The provision of a Coroner’s Service is a legal and statutory function of the Council. Put simply, the Council has a duty to appoint a Coroner and to provide appropriate resources, funding and support to enable the Coroner to carry out his/her statutory role and responsibilities. The Coroner is an independent judicial officer holder and is not employed by the local authority.
49. The relevant legislation is set out in the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 (“the 2009 Act”). Schedule 2 of the 2009 Act makes provision for England and Wales to be divided into areas known as coroner areas and gives the Lord Chancellor the power to set and alter the boundaries of these areas by order after consultation with the relevant local authorities, the Welsh Ministers, and any other persons the Lord Chancellor thinks appropriate. A coroner area may cover either the whole of one local authority area or the whole of two or more local authority areas. Where the area includes two or more local authorities one of them will be the lead authority for the area, known as the “relevant authority”.
50. Pursuant to Part 1 of Schedule 3 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 (“the 2009 Act”) appointments of coroners are to be made by the relevant authority for each coroner area. The relevant authority for a coroner area

must provide appropriate staffing levels and accommodation to enable the Coroner to carry out its functions (Section 24 of the 2009 Act).

51. It is noted from the body of the report that if the Lord Chancellor consents to the proposal and makes an order to create a newly merged coroner area, RCT will take the role of the “relevant authority”. That is, in relation to the merged coroner area, RCT will undertake the statutory functions of appointing the Coroner and providing the appropriate resources to enable the Coroner to carry out his/her statutory duties.
52. At this stage Legal Services do not know the content of the proposed order but it is assumed that it will be based on the business case which is to be developed and submitted in support of the proposal.
53. The Council will need to be satisfied that:
 - the proposals for merger of the budgets and apportionment between the Authorities is appropriate and represents value for money;
 - roles and responsibilities are agreed with clear accountability; and
 - the Council has appropriate controls/oversight concerning the continued improvement of the services and delivery of future financial savings.
54. Accordingly a service level/funding/collaboration agreement should be negotiated with the Authorities as part of any consent to a submission being made to the Lord Chancellor relating to a merger of the two Coroner’s jurisdictions. Negotiation of such an agreement should finalise the arrangements to ensure the above issues are satisfactorily addressed.
55. The agreement should include a provision to enable each of the Authorities to call for a review of the arrangements to determine whether the contributions each Authority is required to make are appropriate to reflect the costs of the Coroner’s Service which are properly attributable to each local authority administrative area at that time. The review should be capable of ensuring that the arrangements are not prejudicial to any Authority.

Equalities Duties

56. In considering this matter the decision maker must have regard to the Council’s duties under the Equality Act 2010. Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must, in making decisions, have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics. Protected characteristics are: (a) Age,(b) Gender reassignment(c) Sex (d) Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality, (e) Disability, (f) Pregnancy and maternity, (g) Marriage and civil partnership, (h)Sexual orientation (i)Religion or belief – including lack of belief.

57. The report identifies that an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is appended at Appendix E. The purpose of the Equality Impact Assessment is to ensure that the Council has understood the potential impacts of the proposal in terms of equality so that it can ensure that it is making proportionate and rational decisions having due regard to its public sector equality duty. The decision maker must have due regard to the Equality Impact Assessment in making its decision.

HR Implications

58. As the Vale of Glamorgan acts as the current Relevant Authority there are no staffing issues within the proposal that affect any Cardiff Council staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to recommend that Council:

1. delegate authority to the Director with responsibility for this matter in consultation with the Portfolio Cabinet Member, the County Solicitor and the Section 151 Officer, to deal with all matters required in order to facilitate the proposed merger of the Coroner's areas referred to in the body of the report including:
 - finalisation of the proposals to ensure they are appropriate and represent value for money, provide clarity on roles and responsibilities and facilitate appropriate controls/oversight concerning the continued improvement of the services and delivery of future financial savings;
 - entry into a service level/funding/collaboration agreement with all of the partner Authorities to reflect the finalised proposals including setting out controls for management and governance of the new arrangements subject to a provision that the agreement (and the roles and responsibilities of each of the Authorities) will be reviewed every 3 years (to include a review of the basis of apportionment of the costs to ensure that the arrangements are equally advantageous to each of the Authorities and equitable)
2. subject to finalisation of the details of the business case to be submitted in support of the application to reflect the finalisation of the proposals referred to in the above recommendation, consent to an application being submitted by Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council to the Lord Chancellor in respect of the proposed merger of the Coroners areas referred to in the body of the report

PAUL ORDERS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
5 June 2015

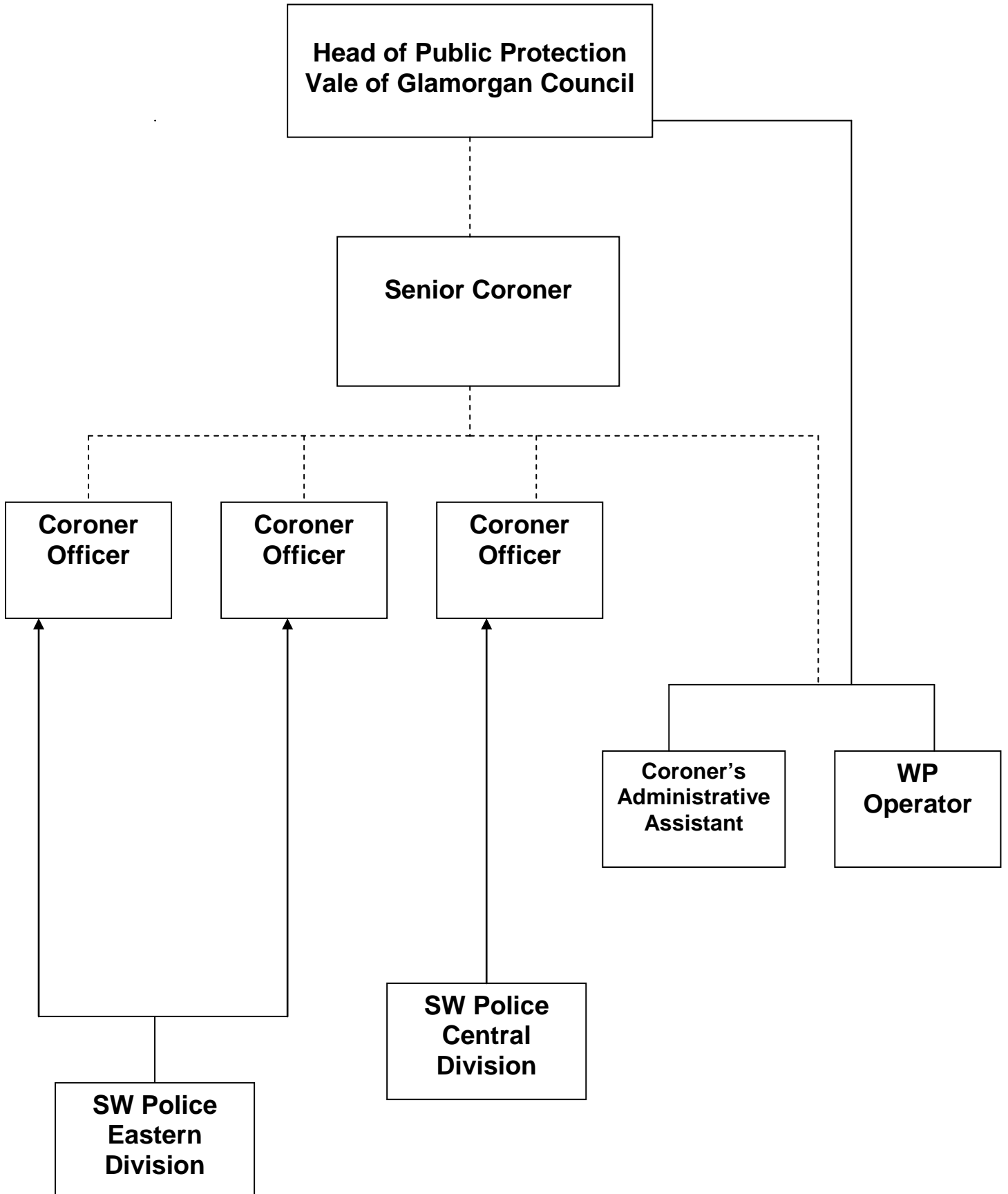
The following appendices are attached:

Appendix A1 – Current Cardiff and Vale Coroners Service Structure

- Appendix A2 – Current Powys, Bridgend and Glamorgan Valleys Coroners Service Structure
- Appendix B - Proposed Merged Cardiff & the Vale and Powys, Bridgend and the Glamorgan Valleys Coroner Structure
- Appendix C - Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan Current Coroner and Administration Costs
- Appendix D - RCT Proposed Coroner and Administration Costs (after merger)
- Appendix E – Equality Impact Assessment

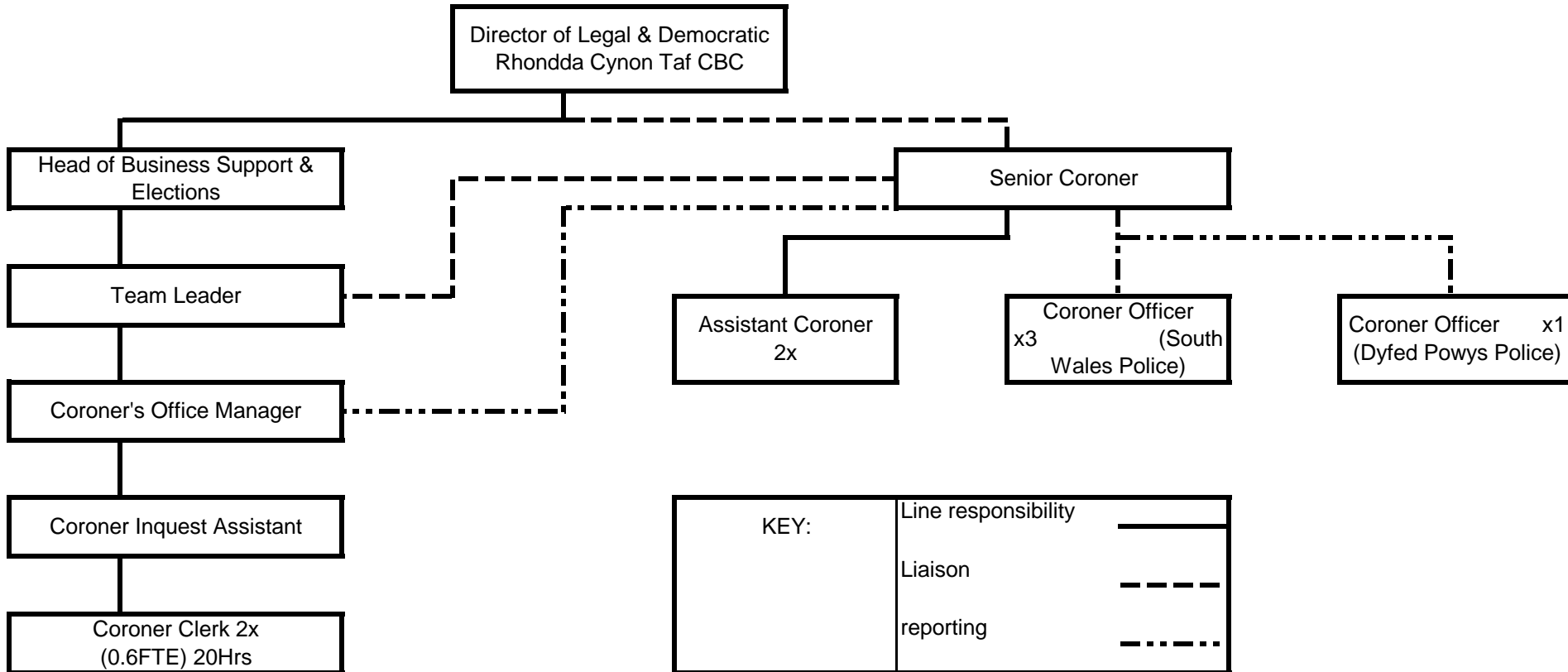
Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Coroner Service

Existing 2014 Structure



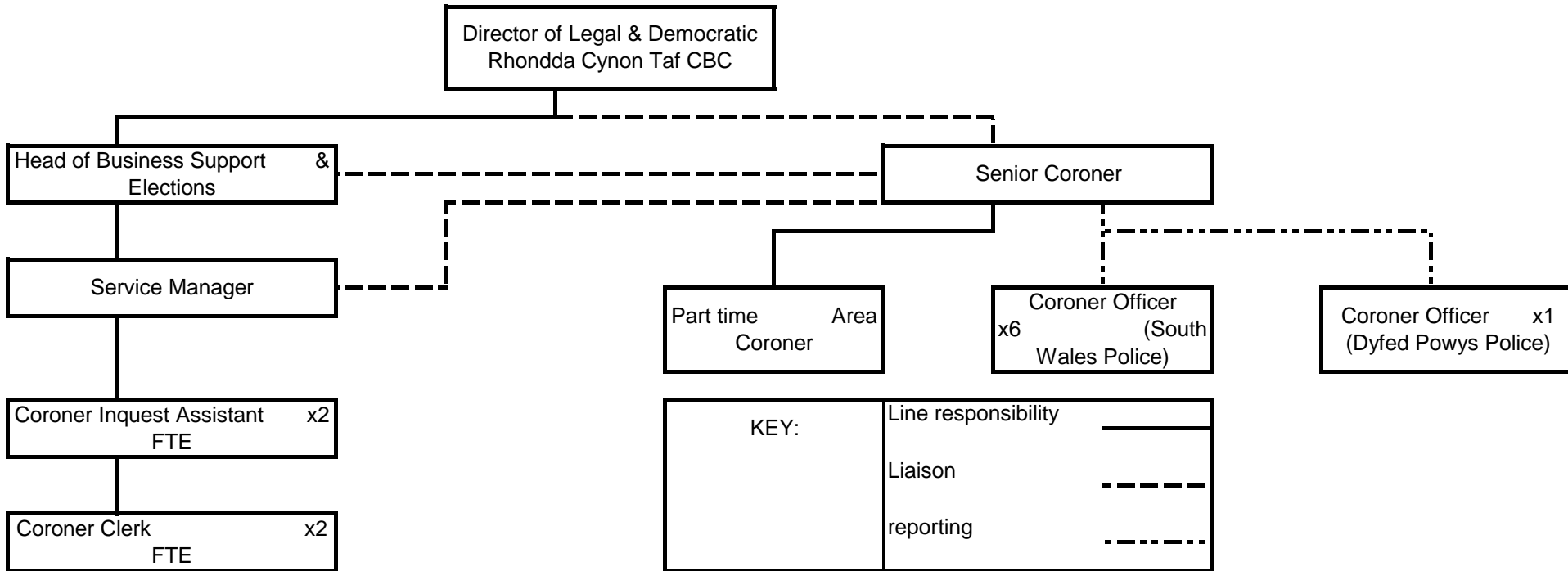
Current Powys, Bridgend and Glamorgan Valleys

Appendix A. 2



Proposed Merged Cardiff & The Vale and Powys, Bridgend and the Glamorgan Valleys Coroner Structure

Appendix B



Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan Current Coroner and Administration Costs

| Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff only (existing) | | 2014/15 Budget |
|---|--|----------------|
| | | £ |
| Employees | | 144,282 |
| Premises | | 10,500 |
| Transport | | 200 |
| Supplies & Services | | 581,198 |
| Support | | 39,000 |
| Income Charges | | -4,000 |
| Efficiency Target | | 0 |
| New Jurisdiction Budget | | 771,180 |

Current Cost Allocation

| | Based Upon 2001 census | Apportioned cost |
|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Authority | % | £ |
| The Vale of Glamorgan | 28.00% | 215930 |
| Cardiff | 72.00% | 555250 |
| | 100% | 771180 |

| Based Upon 2011 census | Apportioned cost | Impact of upgrading to 2011 census cost / (Saving) |
|------------------------|------------------|--|
| % | £ | £ |
| 26.74% | 206214 | (9,717) |
| 73.26% | 564966 | 9,717 |
| 100% | 771180 | 0 |

RCT Proposed Coroner and Administration Costs

| Merged Coroner Jurisdiction | | 2014/15 Budget |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| | | £ |
| Employees | | 339,194 |
| Premises | | 71,900 |
| Transport | | 5,300 |
| Supplies & Services | | 1,283,658 |
| Support | | 49,300 |
| Income Charges | | -4,000 |
| Efficiency Target | | -70,000 |
| New Merged Jurisdiction Budget | | 1,675,352 |

| Population | % | Authority | Existing Contributions - Without Merger (using 2011 census) | Estimated Future Contributions Post Merger (based on 2011 Census) | Effect of Merger - cost/(Saving) |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------------------|--|--|---|
| | | | | £ | £ |
| 132,976 | 12.81% | Powys | 236,424 | 214,613 | (21,811) |
| 139,178 | 13.41% | Bridgend | 247,451 | 224,665 | (22,786) |
| 234,410 | 22.59% | Rhondda Cynon Taf | 416,768 | 378,462 | (38,306) |
| 58,802 | 5.67% | Merthyr Tydfil | 104,547 | 94,992 | (9,555) |
| 126,336 | 12.17% | The Vale of Glamorgan | 206,214 | 203,890 | (2,324) |
| 346,090 | 33.35% | Cardiff | 564,966 | 558,730 | (6,236) |
| 1,037,792 | 100% | | 1,776,370 | 1,675,352 | 0 |

| 14/15 Powys & Glam Valleys - pre-merger allocation basis | | | |
|---|-------------|--|-------------------|
| Population | % | | Authority |
| 132,976 | 23.52% | | Powys |
| 139,178 | 24.62% | | Bridgend |
| 234,410 | 41.46% | | Rhondda Cynon Taf |
| 58,802 | 10.40% | | Merthyr Tydfil |
| 565,366 | 100% | | |

| The Vale of Glamorgan & Cardiff - pre-merger allocation basis | | | |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| | 2011 census | 2001 census | |
| Population | % | % | Authority |
| 126,336 | 26.74% | 28.00% | The Vale of Glamorgan |
| 346,090 | 73.26% | 72.00% | Cardiff |
| 472,426 | 100% | 100% | |

Equality Impact Assessment
Corporate Assessment Template

Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function Title: Proposed Merger of Coroners Areas

New/Existing/Updating/Amending: New

Who is responsible for developing and implementing the Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function?

Name: Martin Birch

Job Title: OM Bereavement & Registration

Service Team: Bereavement & Registration

Service Area: Sport, leisure & Culture

Assessment Date: 16th March 2015

1. What are the objectives of the Policy/Strategy/Project/ Procedure/ Service/Function?

The merger proposal offers an improved service to the City of Cardiff through a full time Coroner presence and adequate cover arrangements for the whole area. There is also a small financial saving with the opportunity for this to improve in the future through more streamlined processes and greater bargaining power of the larger area to reduce necessary costs such as post mortem charges with the local health boards.

Cardiff will retain a position on the service board at officer level overseeing the new arrangements as a stakeholder and ensure that the City still receives value for money, a high standard of service and that annual costs are effectively managed.

2. Please provide background information on the Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function and any research done [e.g. service users data against demographic statistics, similar EIAs done etc.]

It is a statutory requirement that Local Authorities appoint a Coroner and reimburses the cost of providing the Coroner Service under the provisions of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009. A coroner is an independent judicial office holder, appointed and paid by the relevant local authority. A coroner must be a lawyer or a doctor, and in some cases is both. Each coroner has a deputy and usually one or more assistant deputies, and either personally or through a deputy he or she must be available at all times. The costs of the coroners' service are generally met by local authorities, not by central Government. In some districts the local police force may also contribute towards a coroner's resources, usually by providing and paying the costs of coroner's officers.

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The Coroners role is to inquire into violent or unnatural deaths, sudden deaths of unknown cause, and deaths which have occurred in prison. A coroner's authority to inquire flows from the report of a body being within the coroner's district and not from where the death occurred. The coroner's inquiries may take one of several forms and may result in the holding of an inquest.

The current position affecting Cardiff is that of a shared Coroners service with the Vale of Glamorgan who act as the host Authority at present.

As host Authority the Vale of Glamorgan is currently responsible for the appointment of the Coroner and their officers. They are also responsible for negotiating all associated cost and fees with the Coroner and management of the budget and premises. Due primarily to available funding from both Authorities the combined area currently only provides a Part Time Coroner. This obviously causes some issues affecting bereaved families as the Coroner must be satisfied of a cause of death before a body is released for a funeral.

The scope of the merger proposal relates to the two coroner jurisdictions of Powys, Bridgend & Glamorgan Valleys and Cardiff & the Vale and sets out the rationale and benefits for a single area to cover the six local authorities

The proposal is to consent to an application being submitted by Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council to the Lord Chancellor in respect of the proposed merger of the Coroners areas as detailed in the body of the Coroners Merger report.

3 Assess Impact on the Protected Characteristics

3.1 Age

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative/]** on younger/older people?

| | Yes | No | N/A |
|----------------|-----|----|-----|
| Up to 18 years | | N | |
| 18 - 65 years | | N | |
| Over 65 years | | N | |

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

No differential Impact – Improved service expected through the full time availability of a Coroner.

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| What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact? |
| |

3.2 Disability

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on disabled people?

| | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| Hearing Impairment | | N | |
| Physical Impairment | | N | |
| Visual Impairment | | N | |
| Learning Disability | | N | |
| Long-Standing Illness or Health Condition | | N | |
| Mental Health | | N | |
| Substance Misuse | | N | |
| Other | | N | |

| |
|--|
| Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any. |
| |
| What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact? |
| |

3.3 Gender Reassignment

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on transgender people?

| | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| Transgender People (People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process [or part of a process] to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex) | | N | |

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| Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any. |
| |
| What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact? |
| |

3.4. Marriage and Civil Partnership

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on marriage and civil partnership?

| | Yes | No | N/A |
|-------------------|-----|----|-----|
| Marriage | | N | |
| Civil Partnership | | N | |

| |
|--|
| Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any. |
| |
| What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact? |
| |

3.5 Pregnancy and Maternity

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on pregnancy and maternity?

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| | Yes | No | N/A |
|-----------|-----|----|-----|
| Pregnancy | | N | |
| Maternity | | N | |

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

3.6 Race

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project//Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on the following groups?

| | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| White | | N | |
| Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups | | N | |
| Asian / Asian British | | N | |
| Black / African / Caribbean / Black British | | N | |
| Other Ethnic Groups | | N | |

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

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3.7 Religion, Belief or Non-Belief

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on people with different religions, beliefs or non-beliefs?

| | Yes | No | N/A |
|-----------|-----|----|-----|
| Buddhist | | N | |
| Christian | | N | |
| Hindu | Y | | |
| Humanist | | N | |
| Jewish | Y | | |
| Muslim | Y | | |
| Sikh | Y | | |
| Other | | N | |

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Some Religious Groups require a funeral to be undertaken as soon as possible after death due to cultural and religious requirements. If a death is required to be reported to the Coroner this can cause delays to the body being released for a funeral.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

The proposed merger will allow for a Full Time Coroner presence in Cardiff rather than the current Part Time arrangement. This should therefore have a positive impact on those requiring an immediate decision by the Coroner to release a body for a funeral.

3.8 Sex

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on men and/or women?

| | Yes | No | N/A |
|-------|-----|----|-----|
| Men | | N | |
| Women | | N | |

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

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| |
| What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact? |
| |

3.9 Sexual Orientation

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on the following groups?

| | Yes | No | N/A |
|-----------------------|-----|----|-----|
| Bisexual | | N | |
| Gay Men | | N | |
| Gay Women/Lesbians | | N | |
| Heterosexual/Straight | | N | |

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

| |
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| |
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What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

| |
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3.10 Welsh Language

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on Welsh Language?

| | Yes | No | N/A |
|----------------|-----|----|-----|
| Welsh Language | | | X |

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

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| |
| What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact? |
| |

4. Consultation and Engagement

What arrangements have been made to consult/engage with the various Equalities Groups?

| |
|--|
| <p>Engagement has been ongoing with the Authorities considering the Merger.</p> <p>Cardiff has a higher ethnic population than the other Authorities and has discussed the role of the Coroner with affected cultural groups in the City previously through our regular stakeholder meetings.</p> <p>Once the SLA is being negotiated the Cardiff representative will look to try and establish an improved response for those with a cultural need for a short notice funeral, the decision however will ultimately rest with the Coroner themselves.</p> |
|--|

5. Summary of Actions [Listed in the Sections above]

| Groups | Actions |
|------------------------------|---|
| Age | |
| Disability | |
| Gender Reassignment | |
| Marriage & Civil Partnership | |
| Pregnancy & Maternity | |
| Race | |
| Religion/Belief | Consultation with Coroner as part of SLA development to recognise the needs of certain religious groups. |

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|---|--|
| | Consult with identified local religious groups as part of the SLA negotiations. |
| Sex | |
| Sexual Orientation | |
| Welsh Language | |
| Generic Over-Arching [applicable to all the above groups] | |

6. Further Action

Any recommendations for action that you plan to take as a result of this Equality Impact Assessment (listed in Summary of Actions) should be included as part of your Service Area's Business Plan to be monitored on a regular basis.

7. Authorisation

The Template should be completed by the Lead Officer of the identified Policy/Strategy/Project/Function and approved by the appropriate Manager in each Service Area.

| | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Completed By : Martin Birch | Date: 16 th March 2015 |
| Designation: Operational Manager Bereavement & Registration Services | |
| Approved By: Chris Hesper | |
| Designation: Director | |
| Service Area: Sport, Leisure & Culture | |

- 7.1 On completion of this Assessment, please ensure that the Form is posted on your Directorate's Page on CIS - *Council Wide/Management Systems/Equality Impact Assessments* - so that there is a record of all assessments undertaken in the Council.

For further information or assistance, please contact the Citizen Focus Team on 029 2087 3059 or email citizenfocus@cardiff.gov.uk