

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
AND SCRUTINY SUB-
COMMITTEES**

Date of Meeting:	9 th December 2014
Subject:	Programme Minerva
Responsible Officer:	Tom Whiting Corporate Director of Resources
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Cllr Stephen Wright – Policy Cllr Adam Swersky – Performance
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out progress to date on Programme Minerva (“Minerva”) since it was last presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in April 2014. Members may be aware that the programme encompasses a range of work streams which include:

- The project to tender for a new ICT contract;
- The project to review and transform the HRD service;
- A range of work streams focussed on identifying and delivering savings in a number of Council departments by 1st April 2015 (Revenues & Benefits, Payroll & Shared Services, Human Resources (HR) and Finance & Assurance;
- Further investigation of potential shared service opportunities, including the development of potential relationships with other Local Authorities.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- I. Note current progress on Minerva to date;
- II. Offer comment on the project activities completed to date; and
- iii. Advise on future involvement of Overview and Scrutiny Members in relation to Minerva.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

The Council launched Minerva in March 2013 in response to three key challenges that the Council was expecting to face and plan for, namely:

1. Future pressures for cost reductions anticipated from 2015/16 and beyond.
2. The break clause provisions within the Council's existing IT Service contract with Capita that could be exercised subject to one year's prior written notice.
3. The future requirement and use of the existing SAP IT system.

In considering the above, a range of possible options were researched and evaluated including internal cost reduction proposals, SAP replacement, relocation of services, shared services, outsourcing and a retender of the IT service. A summary of the work undertaken and the key findings that emerged are set out below:

Internal Cost Reductions

Services in scope within the Resources Directorate developed cost reduction options including but not limited to internal change projects, service transformation and increased self service through channel migration. Internal options were developed with an input from managers and employees across the Resources Directorate. Options were also received from Trade Unions (i.e. Unison) in relation to some service areas.

Internal options identified a potential for 17% savings across Finance and Assurance, Human Resources and Shared Services and Collections and Benefits. These accounted for potential annual savings of £2.0m based upon an initial investment of £1.3M and an annual cost base of approximately £11.6m. The overall payback period for these was less than two years.

SAP Replacement

Harrow Council was actively involved in Programme Athena running across London Authorities with the objective of promoting sharing and commonality for back office systems run by London Boroughs. Through this programme, Harrow had the opportunity for discussions with other Boroughs using SAP to consider convergence opportunities.

The potential for replacing the Council's SAP system (a top range solution in use across a range of commercial and public sector organisations worldwide) with a mid-range solution was considered with input from two current market leaders (i.e. Agresso and Integra) for mid-range solutions in use by Local Authorities.

Research indicated that there was a potential for reduced annual revenue costs from a system migration due to the lower maintenance fees and less complex upgrades involved. However, the cost of procuring and implementing a new system together with the upheaval and disruption that

this would undoubtedly have caused during a period of significant change within the Council, led officers to conclude that this was not a viable option to pursue at that point in time. The financial payback period for the two systems mentioned above was 4 years and 6 years respectively.

Relocation of Services

Research was undertaken to investigate the potential benefits of “wage arbitrage” through the relocation of “back-office” services to cheaper alternative locations. In this model, Harrow Council would have continued to run the services in question but from a different location.

Research indicated that salary savings could be achieved in most areas outside of London. However, the greatest savings could be found in the North East region of the UK with average salaries being 30% lower than Harrow Council. Research also included investigating and obtaining the costs of operating a remote office and the provision of IT and telephony connectivity costs to Harrow Council.

In evaluating the financial feasibility for relocating operations to another part of the country, an assumption was made that the initial operations to be transferred would include transactional “back-office” activities for Revenues and Benefits and Accounts Payable/Receivable services.

The annual saving in salary costs under the above assumptions amounted to approximately £1.0m per annum. However, ongoing rental and operating costs effectively reduced this potential benefit to approximately £200K per annum. With the significant one-off costs involved in establishment of the offices, related infrastructure costs, and potential redundancy costs totalling approximately £3.0m, the outline business case indicated a payback period in excess of ten years.

The relocation of “back-office” services outside of Harrow increased the potential risk of service disruption arising particularly if resourcing requirements could not be met as anticipated. It was therefore considered that a relocation of services would not represent the most cost efficient or effective way of achieving service cost reductions.

Shared Services

Harrow Council approached 22 London Local Authorities to discuss their current back-office service arrangements and their willingness to consider sharing services. This included Local Authorities already operating an SAP system to determine whether there was any potential for sharing resources through the combination of either systems or services.

Existing shared service arrangements, such as the Tri-Borough arrangement (i.e. Westminster City Council, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham), Elevate East (i.e. a joint venture arrangement comprising Barking and Dagenham and Agilysys) and One Oracle, were also approached.

Research indicated that there was no current appetite amongst the Local Authorities contacted within London to share services with Harrow Council at that point. Local Authorities operating SAP systems were already following

their own strategic paths which did not include an option to share services with Harrow and the existing shared service organisations were either not seeking to increase their current client base or there were legal barriers preventing Harrow Council from joining their shared service arrangement.

Local Authority shared service providers outside of London were also approached but there was no current desire from the providers contacted to provide services to London boroughs.

County Councils were also contacted to assess their appetite for a shared service. In particular, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Surrey and Hampshire County Councils were approached and of these, both Surrey and Hampshire County Councils met with officers to discuss the potential for sharing services.

Surrey County Council were unable to progress with a shared service option at the time of meeting and although Hampshire County Council had further discussions with officers, they were engaged in a major transition programme including the Fire and Rescue and Police Authorities. They have also since announced plans to share services with Oxfordshire County Council.

Outsourcing

Consideration was given to the potential for savings by outsourcing services to an external service provider. Five suppliers took part in a “soft” market test with three giving sufficiently detailed responses to enable a comparison to be made with the other options under consideration.

Whilst each supplier proposed slightly differing solutions, they were consistent in the following main points:

- All preferred to migrate from Harrow Council’s existing SAP system onto another system as they were using alternative systems in their existing service centres,
- All proposed solutions would have potentially involved the transfer of activities on a large scale to lower cost areas of the UK (e.g. the North East and South Wales); and
- All would have incurred significant transformation costs, mainly through the implementation of new systems and processes and redundancy.

The results indicated that whilst a marginal financial benefit may have existed from an outsourcing solution (average annual savings of 16% were suggested), there were some significant risks associated with pursuing such an option. In particular;

- The potential for disruption to services where a relocation of activities was involved,
- A migration of systems,
- A loss of experienced personnel,
- The payback period on the investment would have been greater than 2 years.

The payback period was significant for this option because of the scale and complexity of change the Council was likely to experience over the next 2 years in the prevailing economic climate. Additionally, significant one-off costs in people, processes and technology would have been required.

External suppliers indicated additional costs would need to be recovered through the contract price or paid up front by the Council. Initial investment costs of between £6.8M and £8.5M were indicated by suppliers.

IT Re-tender

The existing partnership agreement with Capita was to expire on 3rd November 2015 but could be extended by up to five years subject to at least 12 months written notice. The variation to that agreement for the provision of IT Services was also to expire on 24th November 2020 but contained a break clause provision that could be exercised subject to giving at least 12 months prior written notice.

The contracted services provided by Capita include Business Transformation and had an initial focus on SAP implementation for Finance, Payroll, CRM (Customer Relationship Management) and the delivery of Procurement savings.

In 2010, the IT Service was incorporated within the existing partnership agreement as a contract variation with one of the key contractual requirements being a major IT upgrade programme. The ability to transfer risk to the supplier was a key factor in this decision.

In general terms under existing arrangements, key performance targets and risk transfer have been achieved.

As the option existed to re-tender the IT Service contract, it was considered that the opportunity for securing greater value from the contract should be taken especially as the market had fundamentally changed since the contract was originally awarded. Additionally, further changes in the delivery of IT services were anticipated for which the existing contractual arrangement provided little “headroom” to accommodate. The added need for the Council to achieve significant savings targets between 2015 and 2020 was also a material consideration in this decision.

Based upon the above key factors, at the Cabinet meeting on the 15th January 2014 it was therefore agreed:

1. To exercise the early break clause within the Incremental Partnership Agreement variation for the provision of IT Services.
2. To refrain from extending the initial period of the Incremental Partnership Agreement.
3. To approve the re-tender of the IT Service contract under EU Procurement rules and in accordance with contract standing orders and delegate authority to proceed with the procurement to the Corporate Director of Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communications, Performance and Resources and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and to bring a contract award recommendation to Cabinet for commencement of the IT Service contract.
4. To approve a process to appoint a Legal and Commercial provider for the re-tender of the IT Service.
5. To authorise the Corporate Director of Resources to continue exploring the potential for a shared service arrangement with suitable partners.
6. To approve the launch of a two-year cost reduction programme aimed at achieving a savings target of 17% (i.e. £2.0m per annum).

Current Situation

Cost Reduction

The Council budget that was agreed in February 2014 projected a funding gap of £24.75m in 2015/16 and £20.765m in 2016/17. Based upon this projected gap, it was apparent that savings of the magnitude required could only be realised through significant changes to service delivery models. Grant settlement figures subsequently published indicated an estimated £75M budget gap for the four year period 2015/16 to 2018/19.

The annual value of the services in scope under Minerva (please see “Services in Scope” below) was approximately £11.6M (excluding the ICT service element). The savings identified from progressing with the internal options recommended to Cabinet in January 2014 through Minerva totalled £2.0M.

Services in Scope

Services in scope for Minerva are as follows:

1. ICT Service re-tender
2. HRD Review and Transformation (including Shared Services, Payroll and Health and Safety)
3. Revenues & Benefits
4. Finance & Assurance

Approach Taken

Following the Cabinet decision in January 2014, plans to implement the 5 key projects for the services in scope were commenced focussing on cost savings, transformation, potential shared service arrangements and the Procurement of ICT services. A summary of progress relating to these is set out below:

1. ICT Procurement

Following the Cabinet decision in January 2014 when it was agreed not to extend the current IT Outsource (ITO) (with Capita) and the Minerva update report to this Committee in April 2014, a range of activities have since progressed and been completed enabling the procurement process to commence. Legal and technical support for the procurement is being provided through Eversheds and New Networks respectively following a selection process.

Procurement for the ITO is being conducted applying the EU Competitive Dialogue procedure following advice from Eversheds. This process enables the Council to engage with the market to establish how the service can be delivered to meet objectives through an iterative dialogue with suppliers. This approach also allows solutions to be proposed, discussed and amended throughout the process until the optimum solution is submitted.

Consideration was given to procuring a “Service Integration and Management” model (SIAM) through the retender process. This is a “tower” based delivery model that has previously been applied by Government departments and within some private sector organisations. It enables organisations to procure services, products and technologies via a more

controlled and structured approach and is a departure from the more traditional procurement of end to end service selection.

This approach reduces the potential for vendor “lock-ins” and facilitates procurement from smaller suppliers who often offer niche but market-leading products and services.

However, as a result of feedback received through market engagement with suppliers conducted prior to the procurement, and following advice received from the Council’s legal and technical advisers, a decision was taken not to procure a full SIAM / Tower model. There were a number of reasons for this, principally as follows:

- The complexity of the current IT estate and in particular the level of integration across systems, making disaggregation high risk and difficult to achieve in the timescale available.
- The risk of attempting to disaggregate the service within the 6 month transition period prior to “go live” given that there would be less than one year between the completion of the current IT transformation programme and the retender leaving limited time for stabilisation before the next set of changes.
- Uncertainty around the level of savings likely to be delivered and the overhead of the service management layer
- Lack of scale making it less attractive to the market
- The immaturity of the market meaning that there is little hard evidence that the SIAM / Tower model would deliver the required service

In order to retain future options for moving to a SIAM / Tower approach, a modified version of the approach appropriate to the Council’s existing scale and situation has been applied. This essentially splits the IT service into 3 ‘towers’ comprising infrastructure, applications and projects.

In progressing the procurement, due regard has been given to lessons learned from the experiences under the existing contractual arrangement to minimise the potential for recurrence in the future.

In particular, the following key issues have been identified and addressed within the procurement as set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1

	Existing Issue	Approach to Avoid Repetition
1.	The existing contract provides for the withdrawal of milestone payments in the event of non-delivery but no further recourse beyond that.	In the event of non-delivery, the Service Provider will be required to make a “delay” payment to the Council.
2.	The existing service credit framework does not facilitate the desired performance improvement where critical service failures occur.	The service credit framework in the proposed new contract has a more significant financial impact in the event that critical service failures should occur.

	Existing Issue	Approach to Avoid Repetition
3.	Whilst the unitary charge is flexible for changes in the number of service users, any other changes to the scope of the services require complex and lengthy change control.	Flexible and transparent pricing is one of the evaluation criteria for the new contractual arrangements to ensure greater flexibility to changes in business demand.
4.	Remedies for persistent non-performance are often unenforceable as they create risks and potential costs that are not proportional to the poor performance concerned.	The proposed new contract has a provision for an independent third party to review the service and make mandatory recommendations in the event of persistent non-performance.

The ITO procurement incorporates a staged approach as defined below:

- Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ)
- Invitation to Submit Outline Solutions (ISOS)
- Invitation to Submit Detailed Solutions (ISDS)
- Invitation to Submit for Final Tenders (ISFT)

The ITO procurement was advertised through the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). An initial “bidders day” was held that was attended by 47 suppliers and PQQ’s together with Invitations to Submit Outline Solutions (ISOS) were submitted by 12 organisations. ISOS responses remained unseen until the PQQ evaluations were complete. The top 8 bidders had their ISOS submissions opened.

ISOS submissions were then evaluated for the 8 bidders shortlisted and 4 bidders were then invited to participate in competitive dialogue. A further evaluation of submissions was undertaken at the Invitation to Submit Detailed Solutions (ISDS) stage whereby the number of bidders was reduced from 4 to 3.

Competitive dialogue is currently continuing with three bidders (HCL, Fujitsu and Steria) and is scheduled to continue into early 2015. Invitations to Submit Final Tenders are currently on track and scheduled for 9th January 2015 although there is a possibility that this date may be deferred by up to one month to enable “due diligence” to be undertaken on behalf of the suppliers prior to the submission of their final tenders.

Evaluation of final tenders will be undertaken applying a weighting for “Quality” of 60% and for “Price” 40%.

Quality

A minimum 50% score is required for this section of the evaluation comprising the following headings and associated weightings:

- Architecture and Design of Solution – 30%
- Managing Service Delivery – 30%
- Change, Innovation and Transformation – 30%
- Community Impact – 10%

Price

- Value for Money – 60%
- Variability incorporating certainty and flexibility – 30%
- Performance and Risk – 10%

The level of savings will ultimately be dependent upon industry costs and the qualitative delivery objectives required. Savings associated with the procurement will not be known until the contract award stage which is currently scheduled for March 2015.

Key milestones currently scheduled for the project are summarised in Table 2 below although they may be subject to change by up to one month to enable “due diligence” to be conducted as previously indicated.

Table 2

Activity	Scheduled Due Date
Competitive Dialogue Stage Ends	19 th December 2014
Call for Final Tenders	19 th December 2014
Submission of Final Tenders	9 th January 2015
Evaluation of Final Tenders	30 th January 2015
Contract Award	31 st March 2015
Contract Commencement	1 st April 2015
Full Service Start Date	1 st November 2015

2. HRD Review and Transformation

As part of the cost reduction exercise it was identified that the current service did not meet the needs of the organisation and that a transformation of the HR service was required to achieve the level of savings and meet the organisation’s needs. A review was commissioned and jointly undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) and the Institute of Employment Studies (IES) culminating in a report proposing changes to the service model and roles performed within it.

Based upon the above, the primary aims and objectives of the HR Transformation project are to achieve financial savings through:

- Developing an improved HR service delivery model;
- Realising full year savings of £494k by 1st April 2015;
- Delivering the transformation on time, to agreed quality standards and within budget;
- Ensuring smooth transition to the new delivery model;
- Effectively managing the impact and transition for affected staff: and
- Acting as a platform for delivering further savings in the future (2016/17 and beyond).

To facilitate the achievement of the above, a Project Team was established and a new Target Operating Model (TOM) was developed. The main features of the TOM are outlined below:

Human Resources (HR)

- Improved and standardised processes delivering operational efficiencies.
- A redesign of the HR intranet to improve front-end usability and making it easier for users to navigate and to access HR information.
- An integrated Case Management System (CMS) and workflow system for entering, administering and tracking requests for HR support and transactions providing a single source of records.
- Deployment of a new telephony system to effectively manage and handle HR requests and transactions received by telephone.
- A new, cost effective model that builds upon the high-level functional structure proposed by the CIPD and the IES for HR and Organisational Development activities in their final report dated May 2014.

Organisational Development (including Learning and Development)

- Enhanced HR and line management skills and capability aligned to the new service delivery model.
- A new, cost effective model that builds upon the high-level functional structure proposed by the CIPD and the IES for HR and Organisational Development activities in their final report dated May 2014.

Shared Services (including Pensions, Payroll & SAP Support)

- Improved HR Information system (HRIS) configuration and functionality to enable effective HR operations and self service.

The new service delivery model will be provided to all Council directorates and the schools service will operate in a different way to currently, as there will be a single “golden number” for telephone access and an extranet developed for access to policies and procedures.

Employee consultation for the revised service delivery model proposals have recently commenced and are currently scheduled to conclude on the 8th December.

Key milestones scheduled for the HRD project are set out in Table 3 below and are currently on track with financial savings of £494,000 anticipated to be realised by the planned date of 1st April 2015.

Table 3

Activity	Scheduled Due Date
Employee consultation completed	9 th December 2014
Posts for the new organisation structure are filled	30 th January 2015
The reactive Equalities Impact Assessment is completed and agreed	27 th February 2015
The new HR service goes live	1 st April 2015

Health and Safety

Savings within the Corporate Health & Safety team were related predominantly to changes in the organisational structure resulting from transferring the service to the Environment and Enterprise Directorate, thereby merging the Health & Safety team with the Environmental Health team. A reduction in full time equivalent posts as well as the cost base for the service was anticipated as a consequence. Additionally, increased income was anticipated from external sources.

The new arrangements have already been implemented resulting in an advance realisation of savings totalling £41K for 2013/14 and a full year's saving of £101K for 14/15 onwards.

3. Revenues & Benefits

Cost reductions identified through Minerva for the Revenues and Benefits services related to reductions in staffing achieved through increased customer self service and the automation of processes, combining of roles to achieve synergies, and a resilience and support service currently provided by Capita through the existing partnership agreement.

Implementation plans for delivering these savings are already at an advanced stage. A restructure of the service has commenced following the conclusion of a 4 week consultation period. Integration of e-forms with back office systems to enhance the customer experience and create additional capacity is progressing. In particular, an online Housing Benefit application form is currently undergoing user acceptance testing and applications for Single Persons Discount, arranging payment by Direct Debit and processing changes of address can now be made by customers using the Harrow Council website. Resilience and support for the services will be retained through the existing incremental partnership agreement with Capita and permission to procure a supplier to facilitate seamless provision of this support from 1st November 2015 when the existing partnership agreement ends is being sought from Cabinet at the December meeting.

The annual savings of £459K identified through Minerva are anticipated to be realised by the planned date of 1st April 2015 and achievement of the activities underpinning the savings are currently on track.

4. Finance & Assurance

Just under a third of the savings proposed for 2015/16 will be employee cost savings arising from a reduced headcount. A third of the savings target will be achieved through increased investment income generated as a result of recent loan activity. Savings of £200k will be achieved through reducing contributions to the Insurance Fund following a review of claims activity and the balance of £110k will be achieved through charging activity to other income sources such as the Pension Fund.

Implementation plans for delivering the savings identified are already in progress with employee consultation for the proposed organisational structure change concluded on 14th November. A final decision regarding the revised arrangements is scheduled for week commencing 24th November.

The new arrangements are on track and will be implemented by 1st April 2015 in order to yield a full year's equivalent of savings amounting to £964k. Additionally, £80k has been realised early in 2014/15.

External Shared Service Arrangements

The Council is continuing to identify shared service opportunities with other Local Authorities, particularly County Councils, and explore potential options. County Councils generally offer a greater potential for achieving economies of scale and are more likely to use SAP as their enterprise resource planning software thus minimising the costs and risks associated with a system migration.

Options previously being explored with Hampshire County Council have ceased following notification of their intent to progress with a shared service arrangement with another county council.

Any potential savings that may be achieved from such an arrangement shall be tracked through Minerva.

Programme Governance

Minerva is now operated as an internal Resources Directorate project with governance in accordance with departmental reporting arrangements.

The Resources Departmental Management Team oversees progress and delivery of the milestones and activities comprised within Minerva and each of the workstreams in scope is tracked accordingly.

Regular updates are provided to Trade Union representatives and Portfolio Holders are briefed on progress by the Corporate Director of Resources on a routine basis.

Benefits realised are validated by the Director of Finance and Assurance.

Approach & Timescales

The intention is for projects to yield full year equivalent savings from 2015/16. Wherever reasonably practicable, savings opportunities will be realised in advance.

Key dates:

March 2015	The implementation of savings projects where they are required for full year impact in 2015/16
April 2015	The award of a new ICT Outsource Contract
November 2015	The handover from the incumbent ICT provider to the new provider

Financial Implications

The Council budget agreed in February 2014 projected a funding gap of £24.75M in 2015/16 and £20.765M in 2016/17. However, the grant settlement figures subsequently published indicated an estimated £75M budget gap for the four year period 2015/16 to 2018/19.

The annual value of the services in scope under Minerva (excluding ICT) was approximately £11.6M. The original savings identified under the internal option from Project Minerva totalled £2.0M.

Minerva was originally established to facilitate and support the identification of savings within the Resources Directorate. It continues to assist in planning and delivering savings previously identified as well as supporting services in finding additional levels of savings needed to bridge the increased funding gap.

Performance Issues

Proposed changes to service delivery models are likely to result in services being delivered in a different way. There will be an increased emphasis on self service particularly in HRD and for customers accessing Revenues and Benefits services through Access Harrow. In some areas, support will be provided through a different approach to the present day (e.g. via the Intranet and online policies and procedures). Changes to the access of services by Revenues and Benefits customers will be planned and implemented in a controlled manner to allow for evaluation and changes to be made where appropriate prior to full roll-out.

Environmental Impact

There are no direct environmental impacts anticipated from this report.

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? Yes. There is a Risk Register for the major projects (e.g. ICT and HRD).

Project risks are documented on the project risk register and proactively managed through the Project Reporting arrangements.

Equalities implications

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? Yes

Decision makers should have due regard to the public sector equality duty in making their decisions. The equalities duties are continuing duties. They are not duties to secure a particular outcome. The equalities impact will be revisited for each of the proposals as they are developed. Consideration of the duties should precede the decision. It is important that the Council has regard to the statutory grounds in the light of all available material such as consultation responses. The statutory grounds of the public sector equality duty are found at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and are as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- (a) Tackle prejudice, and
- (b) Promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act. The relevant protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race,
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil partnership

It is important that robust equalities impact assessments are completed and that consultation is undertaken whilst the project is in a formative stage.

An overview Equalities Impact Assessment was completed for Project Minerva and considered by the Equalities Impact Assessment Quality Assurance Group at their meeting of 16th December 2013. Specific EqIA's for the individual projects or areas are being established and completed, as required.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Simon George

Chief Financial Officer

Date: 26th November 2014

Name: Linda Cohen

on behalf of the*
Monitoring Officer

Date: 26th November 2014

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Tom Whiting, Corporate Director of Resources X5484

Background Papers: