



Equality Impact Assessment

Name of project/strategy/service being assessed	Setting of commercial fee rates for planning services	Cabinet meeting date <i>If applicable</i>	
Service area	Planning and Sustainability	Date EIA created	11/09/18
Name of Completing Officer	Anna Shah / Peter Forest		
Approved by Head of Service	Penelope Tollitt	Date approved	14/09/18

Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) are designed to ensure that Wycombe District Council complies with all relevant legislation and fulfils its duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This comprises of three limbs which are set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. This requires that all public bodies, in the exercise of its functions, to have '**due regard**' to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Each service area has an Equality Champion (see the Equalities tab on WySpace for an up to date list). Please ensure that the relevant Champion is aware that an EIA is being undertaken as, if needed, your Equality Champion can provide advice and guidance on completing the EIA. Guidance on the completion of an EIA, along with information on the PSED and protected characteristics can be found in the documents section of the Equality page on WySpace (via the Corporate tab), along with a quick reference guide located here as Appendix 1.



Stage 1 – Initial Scope of the Equality Impact Assessment

Please answer the five questions below to determine whether a full EIA needs to be conducted.

Will the service/policy/strategy affect any people or groups of people directly (including staff/members of the public)?	Yes	✓	No	
Will it affect how other services are provided?	Yes	✓	No	
Will it have employment implications?	Yes		No	✓
Do you have information suggesting that this service/policy/strategy will affect particular groups of people?	Yes	✓	No	
Do you need further information or to undertake further research to answer any of the above questions?	Yes		No	✓

If the answer to any of the above is ‘yes’, then a full EIA will need to be carried out and Sections 2- 4 will need to be completed.

If the answer to all of the above is ‘no’ then a full EIA does not need to be carried out, but to ensure consistency in approach, the EIA will need to go through the Challenge Process. Please e-mail the EIA to Catherine Herries-Smith, Principal Solicitor and Policy Officer at Catherine.herries-smith@wycombe.gov.uk who will review and discuss as necessary. Then, if following the Challenge Process:

- a) it is agreed with the Policy Officer that no further stages need to be completed the Head of Service needs to approve the assessment and return a Word electronic copy to the Policy Officer for publication.

OR

- b) it is agreed with the Policy Officer that Stages 2 - 4 need to be completed, then the Head of Service will need to approve only once the full EIA is completed at which point a Word electronic copy should be returned to the Policy Officer for publication.



WDC Equality Assessment form

people ● place ● pounds



Stage 2 – Information Gathering/Data Collection

<p>What are the aims of the strategy/policy/procedure? Why is it necessary? What is it trying to achieve?</p>	<p>Increasing revenue streams through implementing new fees on existing non-fee earning activities. Reducing the cost of service delivery through efficiencies.</p>
<p>Which aspects of the policy/strategy/procedure are relevant to equalities? NB A list of impacts is NOT required at this stage, just identify areas – can be a bullet point list.</p>	<p>This project does not affect statutory fees and services, which remain available to all. Only discretionary services are being considered here.</p> <p>The proposed commercial fee rates will directly impact people including low income groups who will be disproportionality affected by the rates increase.</p> <p>Whilst low income is not a protected characteristic, it can have an impact on many of those falling under a protected characteristic. For example, older or younger people may well have a lower income than the middle aged population, and people with disabilities are more likely to be out of work or paid less than the general population, as are those from an ethnic minority background. And, currently, there are more single mothers than single fathers and this may mean a lower income.</p> <p>To ensure efficient service delivery, many services are offered online only and this may impact certain groups with limited internet access or computer skills.</p>
<p>Identify the main data sources/information gathered e.g. Workforce reports, census data, staff survey etc.</p>	<p>The project has been assessed for EQIA using the combined experience of several planning staff and the informally known demographics of agents and service users.</p>
<p>How have you engaged with service users/members of the public/staff? e.g. staff forums, consultations, questionnaires etc.</p>	<p>Consultations were held with agents who represent the end users. Discussions were had with cabinet members who again represent others constituents).</p>
<p>Is the responsibility for this strategy/policy/procedure shared with another service/organisation/agency?</p>	<p>No. The responsibility for this activity sits entirely within WDC.</p>



WDC Equality Assessment form

people ● place ● pounds

<p>Is further consultation/research or data collection planned or required? Is so, what is the aim of the research? Why is it needed?</p>	<p>Client and Customer satisfaction surveys are planned for 2019.</p>
--	---



Stage 3 – Impact Assessment & Analysis

Areas to consider	Impact Identified Y/N	Description of impact and likelihood of occurrence (positive, negative, no impact; high/medium/low likelihood)
Protected Characteristics (i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion & belief, sex and sexual orientation)	Y	Some groups with less access to internet or computers could be negatively affected. The likelihood is that where the cost / means of accessing the service becomes a consideration, the person would not be in a position to afford the works being applied for.
Other relevant groups (e.g. low income, ex-armed forces personnel, homeless people etc.)	Y	The setting of fees for planning services will impact low-income groups negatively. Likelihood of occurrence: low as few people from these groups can afford to undertake development works.

NB. Please note that when considering impacts in relation to marriage & civil partnership - the duty is solely to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against this protected characteristic.



Stage 4 - Equalities Improvement Plan

Protected Characteristic/Other relevant groups	Impact Identified Y/N	Measures identified to reduce/mitigate impact (Also include all positive actions included in your proposals)	Review date	Review update/ monitoring comments	Officer/Service Responsible
Low income and those with restricted computer use	Y	On a case by case basis, the services could be delivered over the phone with a WDC staff member completing the online form for the person affected.	Aug 2019	Review customer feedback	Peter Forest

Area of Consideration	How are/will we work to: (Also include all positive actions included in your proposals)	Review date	Review update/ monitoring comments	Officer/Service Responsible
Eliminate discrimination, harassment & victimisation	New requirements could be indirectly discriminatory to individuals from certain protected characteristics who may face greater hardship complying than other individuals and groups. However, at present it is envisaged that the likelihood of such a differential impact is low.	Impacts will be reviewed following Client and Customer satisfaction surveys are planned for 2019.		
Advance equality of opportunity	See above			



WDC Equality Assessment form

people ● place ● pounds

Promote good relations between groups (including community cohesion)	Not applicable			
--	-----------------------	--	--	--

NB. Please note that when considering impacts in relation to marriage & civil partnership - the duty is solely to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against this protected characteristic.



Appendix 1 – Quick Reference Guide

For full guidance and further suggested reading please refer to documents located under the Corporate Equalities tab on WySpace. Documents include ‘Completing an Equality Impact Assessment.’ Below are a list of the key terms and definitions:

Protected Characteristics

There are 9 specified Protected Characteristics as listed below:

Age – to include all age groups.

Disability – a person is considered to have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People with progressive illnesses such as cancer, multiple sclerosis (MS) and HIV are considered to be disabled from the point of diagnosis.

Gender Reassignment – any person, who has undergone, is undergoing or is considering gender reassignment. A person does not need to be seeing a doctor or under medical supervision to be covered by the Act.

Sex – both men and women are covered.

Maternity & pregnancy – the Act applies during a woman’s pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave.

Marriage & civil partnership – for both marriage and civil partnerships, the PSED only extends to ensuring that due regard is given in relation to eliminating discrimination.

Race - this includes all ethnicities, races, colours, national origins as well as nationalities. This includes Roma & Traveller communities as well as refugees/migrants.

Religion and belief (including no belief) – Religion refers to any religion with a defined structure and belief system. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief. The Act also provides protection for those with no belief (e.g. agnostic/atheist).

Sexual Orientation - the Act protects heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual people.



Types of Discrimination

Direct Discrimination occurs when a person in the same situation as others is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic they have (or are thought to have – perceptive discrimination) e.g. their age, race, sex etc.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a condition or requirement, although applied equally, excludes, penalises or treats a person less favourably because of their race, disability etc.

Institutional Discrimination is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin (taken from the *MacPherson Report, 1999*).

Harassment is defined in the Equality Act as ‘unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating and intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.’ In deciding whether harassment has occurred the following must be considered; the perception of the person; the other circumstances of the case and whether it reasonable for the conduct to have that effect.

Victimisation is defined in the Equality Act as treating someone badly because they have done (or you believe they are going to do) a protected act. These include making a complaint of discrimination and helping someone else make a claim. NB The less favourable treatment does not need to be linked to a protected characteristic.

Associative Discrimination - This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.



Quick Guide to the Stages

Stage 1

The questions in this section are there to help you decide whether a full EIA should be undertaken. The questions should also help you to decide whether you have all the relevant information needed and if not, what further data/research is required to continue with the EIA.

Stage 2

Stage 2 is to help you consider the policy/strategy/service under assessment, analyse the data available, highlight areas requiring further research as well as encourage you to consider how equalities (across all strands and including community cohesion) is, in broad terms, relevant and/or impacted by this policy.

Stage 3

Within Stage 3, all protected characteristics should be considered and the Officer should consider each group individually to see if the policy/strategy/service will have an impact. Additionally, the Officer must consider the impact in relation to advancing equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between groups (including community cohesion). It is important that **active consideration and thought** are given to ensure that all possible impacts (negative, positive and no impact) are considered and thought is given to the likelihood of these impacts occurring.

Stage 4

Stage 4 comprises of two action plan tables. In the first table any impacts identified in Stage 3, need to be considered and the steps/actions that are to be taken to mitigate or reduce these impacts, or if positive impacts are required and necessary how these are to be sustained, are to be documented. In addition, the second table requires Officers to consider how the policy/strategy/service under assessment will impact on any of the three main PSED duties and what positive steps could be taken.

These steps need to be concise, measureable and have a realistic timeframe for completion alongside the name of the Officer and service responsible for the action plans. Additionally, there is a requirement for a review date and space for updates to be input into this table to show continuous monitoring and action planning in relation to the required steps.

Continuous monitoring and improvement can include consideration of how actions implemented will be measured, how any results will be analysed and over what time period will the actions/results be reviewed.