

# Charnwood Borough Council

## Equality Impact Assessment 'Knowing the needs of your customers and employees'

### ■ Background

An Equality Impact Assessment is an improvement tool. It will assist you in ensuring that you have thought about the needs and impacts of your service/policy/function in relation to the protected characteristics. It enables a systematic approach to identifying and recording gaps and actions.

### ■ Legislation- Equality Duty

As a local authority that provides services to the public, Charnwood Borough Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that we can demonstrate having paid due regard to the need to:

- ✓ Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ✓ Advance Equality of Opportunity
- ✓ Foster good relations

For the following protected characteristics:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion and belief
8. Sex (Gender)
9. Sexual orientation

What is prohibited?

1. Direct Discrimination
2. Indirect Discrimination
3. Harassment
4. Victimisation
5. Discrimination by association
6. Discrimination by perception
7. Pregnancy and maternity discrimination
8. Discrimination arising from disability
9. Failing to make reasonable adjustments

**Note: Complete the action plan as you go through the questions**

■ **Step 1 – Introductory information**

Title of the policy	Communications Strategy
Name of lead officer and others undertaking this assessment	Helen Gretton Mike Roberts
Date EIA started	August 2017
Date EIA completed	August 2017

■ **Step 2 – Overview of policy/function being assessed:**

Outline: What is the purpose of this policy? (Specify aims and objectives)
<p>It is imperative that the Council has strategically planned communications Council to ensure we are engaging fully with our customers, partners, businesses, Members and staff.</p> <p>Communications need to be fit for 2017 and beyond. The Council needs to embrace digital channels to help get our key messages and information to the right people, at the right time and in the right way.</p> <p>The Communication Strategy sets out how we will develop the Council's external and internal communications to meet the needs and demands of our customers, staff, members and partners over the next four years.</p>
What specific group/s is the policy designed to affect/impact and what is the intended change or outcome for them?
<p>The primary areas of focus will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing more digital channels, in particular social media and e-newsletters</li> <li>• Empowering staff and members to use social media and other digital channels to engage with customers and develop networks</li> <li>• Developing campaigns to support the aim of the Corporate Plan and ensure they are fully evaluated.</li> </ul>
Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy?
<p>Analysis has taken place and considered responses from the Residents Survey 2015; communication via social media; web feedback and general communication/ feedback. This was from a whole range of customers, staff, members and partners.</p>

■ **Step 3 – What we already know and where there are gaps**

<p>List any existing information/data do you have/monitor about different diverse groups in relation to this policy? Such as in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy &amp; maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation etc.</p> <p>Data/information such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consultation</li> <li>▪ Previous Equality Impact Assessments</li> <li>▪ Demographic information</li> <li>▪ Anecdotal and other evidence</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demographic Information</li> <li>▪ Equalities Monitoring Information</li> <li>▪ Staff/ workforce profiling</li> </ul>

What does this information / data tell you about diverse groups? If you do not hold or have access to any data/information on diverse groups, what do you need to begin collating / monitoring? (Please list)

The data confirms that Charnwood is a diverse borough with a range of differing needs from individuals and community group, which will need to be considered and addressed as part of the Communication Strategy.

■ **Step 4 – Do we need to seek the views of others? If so, who?**

In light of the answers you have given in Step 2, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs / issues? If not please explain why.

The Communications Strategy is an overarching strategy and therefore further consultation with specific groups is not required at this stage. However, further consultation with specific groups will take place, as appropriate.

■ **Step 5 – Assessing the impact**

In light of any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge and awareness, please identify whether the policy has a positive or negative impact on the individuals or community groups (including what barriers these individuals or groups may face) who identify with any 'protected characteristics' and provide an explanation for your decision (please refer to the general duties on the front page).

	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Age</b>	<p>There is a potential negative impact upon some older people as they are a likely set of individuals who may not be confident in using the internet or accessing information online.</p> <p>There is a potential negative impact upon some younger people as they are a likely set of individuals who may not engage with traditional forms of media and communication.</p> <p>Overall the Communication Strategy will aim to provide a number of mediums in which the Council communicates across all age ranges to ensure that people of all ages are able to access the information they require and engage with the Council.</p> <p>The Communications Strategy will promote the requirement for diverse publications, including images which showcase the wide range of people that live, visit and work in the Borough, including age.</p>
<b>Disability (Physical, visual, hearing, learning disabilities, mental health)</b>	<p>There is a potential negative impact upon certain individuals who have disabilities.</p> <p>Individuals with particular learning disabilities and/ or visual disabilities may be adversely impacted if they are unable to fully engage with the methods of communication used by the Council.</p> <p>Individuals with hearing disabilities may also be adversely impacted with some forms of media used by the Council i.e. web videos that do not include text.</p> <p>Overall the Communication Strategy will aim to provide information in a range of ways so that no individuals are discriminated against. The Communication Strategy stipulates that Plain English should be used at all times, in all</p>

	<p>communication. Additionally, the Council is able to provide Easy Read documents, braille documents, audio tape, BSL and large print either when requested or as appropriate. SOCITM feedback in terms of the accessibility of the website will also be evaluated and actions to address any areas of inequality will be implemented.</p> <p>The Communications Strategy will promote the requirement for diverse publications, including images which showcase the wide range of people that live, visit and work in the Borough, including disability.</p>
<b>Gender Reassignment (Transgender)</b>	<p>Neutral impact upon the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.</p> <p>The Communications Strategy will promote the requirement for diverse publications, including images which showcase the wide range of people that live, visit and work in the Borough, including gender reassignment.</p>
<b>Race</b>	<p>There is a potential negative impact upon certain individuals/ community groups whose first language is not English. They may be adversely impacted if they are unable to fully engage with the methods of communication used by the Council.</p> <p>Overall the Communication Strategy will aim to provide information in a range of ways so that no individuals are discriminated against. The Communication Strategy stipulates that Plain English should be used at all times, in all communication. Additionally, the Council is able to provide interpretation and translation when requested.</p> <p>The Communications Strategy will promote the requirement for diverse publications, including images which showcase the wide range of people that live, visit and work in the Borough, including race.</p>
<b>Religion or Belief (Includes no belief)</b>	<p>Neutral impact upon the protected characteristic of religion or belief.</p> <p>The Communications Strategy will promote the requirement for diverse publications, including images which showcase the wide range of people that live, visit and work in the Borough, including religion or belief.</p>
<b>Sex (Gender)</b>	<p>Neutral impact upon the protected characteristic of sex.</p> <p>The Communications Strategy will promote the requirement for diverse publications, including images which showcase the wide range of people that live, visit and work in the Borough, including different genders.</p>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<p>Neutral impact upon the protected characteristic of sexual orientation.</p> <p>The Communications Strategy will promote the requirement for diverse publications, including images which showcase the wide range of people that live, visit and work in the Borough, including different sexual orientations.</p>
<b>Other protected groups (Pregnancy &amp; maternity, marriage &amp; civil partnership)</b>	<p>Neutral impact.</p>

	The Communications Strategy will promote the requirement for diverse publications, including images which showcase the wide range of people that live, visit and work in the Borough.
<b>Other socially excluded groups</b> (Carers, low literacy, priority neighbourhoods, health inequalities, rural isolation, asylum seeker and refugee communities etc.)	There is a potential negative impact upon certain individuals with low literacy levels or digital isolation.  Overall the Communication Strategy will aim to provide a number of mediums in which the Council communicates to people. Additionally, it will also aim to provide information in a range of ways so that no individuals are discriminated against. This will include communication in Plain English

Where there are potential barriers, negative impacts identified and/ or barriers or impacts are unknown, please outline how you propose to minimise all negative impact or discrimination.  Please note: a) If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately. b) Additionally, if you have identified adverse impact that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people.
Overall the Communication Strategy will aim to provide/ promote a number of mediums in which the Council communicates to people in order to mitigate any adverse impact upon individuals or community groups.  The Communications Strategy will promote the requirement for diverse publications, including images which showcase the wide range of people that live, visit and work in the Borough, inclusive of all of the protected characteristics.  The Communication Strategy stipulates that Plain English should be used at all times, in all communication. Additionally, the Council is able to provide Easy Read documents, braille documents, audio tape, BSL, large print document plus interpretation and translation of either when requested or as appropriate.
Summarise your findings and give an overview as to whether the policy will meet Charnwood Borough Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity (please refer to the general duties on the front page).
It is found that the Communication Strategy will meet Charnwood Borough Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity. Furthermore it will provide additional support as a policy instrument to further embed and progress the equalities agenda in lien with Equality Act 2010.

**Step 6- Monitoring, evaluation and review**

Are there processes in place to review the findings of this Assessment and make appropriate changes? In particular, how will you monitor potential barriers and any positive/ negative impact?
Monitoring will primarily take place via complaints and comments received by staff, customers, service users, members and partners received. Barriers will be removed as appropriate.  Monitoring of interpretation and translation requests will ensure that any potential barriers or negative impact is mitigated.  SOCITM feedback in terms of the accessibility of our website will also be evaluated and actions to address any areas of inequality will be implemented.
How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes? e.g. policy reviews, annual plans and use of performance management systems?
Any recommendations will be included within the associated action plan to the Communication Strategy

and all associated policies, practices, functions and procedures (i.e. interpretations and translation policy).

■ **Step 7- Action Plan**

Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan: <b>The issues identified should inform your Service Plan and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan</b>			
Reference Number	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date
001	Monitor complaints and comments received by staff, customers, service users, members and partners to remove any identified barriers.	Communication Manager	Ongoing
002	Evaluate SOCITM feedback in terms of the accessibility of our website and address any areas of inequality.	Communication Manager	Ongoing

■ **Step 8- Who needs to know about the outcomes of this assessment and how will they be informed?**

	Who needs to know (Please tick)	How they will be informed (we have a legal duty to publish EIA's)
Employees	✓	The EIA will be published on the Council's webpage as will the Communications Strategy & the associated Cabinet Report.
Service users	✓	
Partners and stakeholders	✓	
Others		
To ensure ease of access, what other communication needs/concerns are there?		

■ **Step 9- Conclusion (to be completed and signed by the [Service Head](#))**

Please delete as appropriate
I agree with this assessment / action plan
If <i>disagree</i> , state action/s required, reasons and details of who is to carry them out with timescales: N/A
Signed (Service Head): Adrian Ward
Date: 24/8/17

[Please send completed & signed assessment to Suzanne Kinder for publishing.](#)