

Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening



As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provides a record of both the **process** and **decision**. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.
- whether or not equality, diversity, cohesion and integration is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an impact assessment.

Directorate: Environment and Neighbourhoods	Service area: Environmental Action Services (EAS)
Lead person: Graham Wilson	Contact number: x51501

1. Title:

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

 Service / Function

 Other

If other, please specify

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

The EAS Transformation Project will be focusing on;

- a) the introduction of additional access channels (over and above those currently offered via the telephone and face-to-face) to enable customers to make a request for an EAS-related service. The new access channels will be geared towards self-service, i.e. web-based e-forms, Interactive Voice Response (IVR), mobile phone 'apps', etc.
- b) streamlining the processes followed in receiving and expediting a request for a service by reducing duplication of effort and making better use of ICT to automate routine processes.

This project is being delivered through the Customer Access Programme which is part of the wider Business Improvement agenda. It will deliver a portfolio of projects aimed at transforming the way in which the council delivers services and interfaces with customers, to ensure they receive excellent services which are efficient and effective and meet their needs.

The vision of the new Customer Access Strategy is:

'To ensure that services are designed, managed and delivered to meet customer need. The strategy brings together how we will tailor our services around the customer by delivering a programme of change focussed on creating a customer centric culture within the organisation and providing services to customers first time on time'.

The Customer Access Strategy has already undergone an EIA of its own, This screening document only focuses on the EAS Transformation Project although it should be read in conjunction with the Customer Access Strategy's EIA.

3. Relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

All the council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – city wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, carers, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and any other relevant characteristics (for example socio-economic status, social class, income, unemployment, residential location or family background and education or skills levels).

Questions	Yes	No
Is there an existing or likely differential impact for the different equality characteristics?		✓
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?		✓
Could the proposal affect how our services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?	✓	
Could the proposal affect our workforce or employment practices?	✓	
Does the proposal involve or will it have an impact on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment • Advancing equality of opportunity • Fostering good relations 		✓

If you have answered **no** to the questions above please complete **sections 6 and 7**

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above and;

- Believe you have already considered the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 4**.
- Are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 5**.

4. Considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

If you can demonstrate you have considered how your proposals impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you have carried out an impact assessment.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below (use the prompts for guidance).

How have you considered equality, diversity, cohesion and integration?

The project will;

- ensure the development of customer services is in line with the needs of the customer rather than the organisation.
- recognise the need to better understand who the customer is and the requirements of different communities.
- realise the opportunities to make better use of technology in order to meet the needs of growing customer expectations and their favoured channel approach.

In addition, the project deliverables will reflect and address;

- evidence found from the Delivering Efficient, Corporate And Transactional Services assessment work (DECATS) undertaken by Leeds City Council and which supports the proposals of the Customer Strategy.
- the findings of a recent business process review exercise.

It is important to note that the scope of the project will not remove any of the existing contact channels for customers, and therefore, will not result in a degradation of service in any way. To the contrary, it will improve the availability of self-service options for customers, managers and staff. This will encourage channel shifting, through the enhanced transactional functionality of the Leeds City Council Website, making it more customer friendly, effective and improve service delivery. The appropriateness of channel development will be informed by customer insight. By creating greater access to services, we will reduce any existing barriers for customers who have been identified across key protected groups.

Key findings

- Customers contact us via telephone, face to face or email. These service channels are open between 8 – 6pm Mon – Friday. E-mails are responded to within 10 working days.
- Customers sometimes have to wait in a queue and/or wait for a response to their enquiry. Due to the limitation on opening hours, the customer is often forced to contact us when it is convenient to the business and not themselves.
- Providing more access channels will help us tailor our services to meet the customers needs.
- Poor advice to customers, i.e. timescales are not always realistic and/or achievable which often causes further service failure and results in customers having to contact us again.

Actions

Positive impact

- Provide customers with an additional range of access channels through which to make a request for service. This will mean that customers can chose how and when they contact us, thereby increasing choice and removing barriers to services.
- Providing customers with easy access to cancel/amend or rearrange appointments will reduce costs to the service and will provide more flexibility to customers.
- Self service channels will be available 24/7 (subject to system availability) allowing the customer to contact the service when convenient to themselves.
- Reduction in volume of traffic through traditional, mediated channels, potentially leading to improved answer rates.
- Deliver a better customer experience by managing customer expectations and keeping the customer informed of service interruptions through a range of channels i.e. SMS texting, Internet, telephone messages.
- Provide a robust, streamlined process for receiving and managing service requests, that will enable both front and back office staff to operate more efficiently.
- Existing channels will remain available to customers wishing to contact the council via telephone or face to face.

It is clear that any changes to access channels, albeit the addition of new channels, will have different implications for different types of people for example:

- A most likely barrier in terms of e-forms/communication will be language. As the telephone and face to face channels are not being removed, customers will continue to have the option of the interpretation and the translation service.
- Customers from deprived areas that may not have access to computers can continue to use existing channels (which will be enhanced) and/or can utilise the self serve facilities in the on-stop centres.

Detailed customer insight will be used to ensure the appropriateness of new access channels.

5. If you are **not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you **will need to carry out an impact assessment.****

Date to scope and plan your impact assessment:	N/A
Date to complete your impact assessment	N/A
Lead person for your impact assessment	N/A

6. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening

Name	Job title	Date
Graham Wilson	Environmental Health Manager	9/1/12
Adam Quesne	Head of Customer Access Business Support	9/1/12

7. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given. If you are not carrying out an independent impact assessment the screening document will need to be published.

Please send a copy to the Equality Team for publishing

Date screening completed	10/1/12
Date sent to Equality Team	10/1/12
Date published	10 th January 2012