

Scrutiny

Evidence based equality analysis

Main aims, purpose and outcomes and how does it fit in with the wider aims of the organisation:

The purpose of the analysis is to increase participation and inclusion, to change the culture of public decision-making and to place a more proactive approach to the promotion of equality and fairness at the heart of public policy.

Lead officer: Penny Housley

Stakeholders: Patrick Sebastian / David Jones / Andrea Thwaite and Elected Members

Equality analysis is a valuable tool to help embed equality into everything we do

While process is important, equality analysis is essentially about outcomes.

Lack of evidence of discrimination is not evidence of a lack of discrimination.

It is not acceptable to say that a policy is applied uniformly to all groups and is therefore fair and equal. Applying a policy or procedure consistently may result in differential outcomes for different groups.

For each of the areas overleaf, an assessment needs to be made on whether the policy has a **positive, negative or neutral impact**, and brief details of why this decision was made and notes of any mitigation should be included. Where the impact is negative, this needs to be given a **high, medium or low assessment**. It is important to rate the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact – some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

Target group / area	Neutral	Positive	Negative
Race and Ethnicity (including Gypsy and Travellers; migrant workers, asylum seekers etc.)		Translation service available for school appeals and for documents on website, agendas, minutes etc. Monitoring forms used at public meetings.	Language difficulties leading to inability to participate in meetings open to the public. Cultural issues (low level of engagement from some ethnic minority communities).
Disability (as defined by the Equality Act - a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities)		Wheelchair access ensured at all public meetings. Hearing loop in place where possible and turned on. Mobile hearing loop acquired. High proportion of meetings are webcast live (and archived online). All documents on website and people able to submit questions in advance of meetings and written response given.	Awareness that meeting rooms accessible to all, and that hearing loop is in place.
Gender/Gender Reassignment	No impact		
Religion and belief	Staff awareness of prayer room facilities	Timetable of public meetings checked against religious holidays. Meetings avoided on Friday evenings. Meetings on Saturdays carefully considered to balance the needs of the community affected.	
Sexual orientation (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual)	No impact		

<p>Age (children and young people aged 0 – 24, adults aged 25 – 50, younger older people aged 51 – 75/80; older older people 81+. The age categories are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs).</p>	<p>Varying times of meetings and venues, staff available to assist and advise at meetings.</p>	<p>Wherever appropriate, agenda order is varied to take into account anticipated attendance / participation by young people / older people. High proportion of meetings are webcast live (and archived online) and some use interactive media to allow contributions. Public question time. Use of Twitter Two Youth Parliament co-optees on Scrutiny</p>	<p>Timings may not always assist working people /those with children – mitigation measures taken wherever appropriate. Public / personal transport issues for some. Evening meetings not always preferred by older people</p>
<p>Rural communities</p>		<p>Venue of meeting considered if limited public transport available. If local issue meeting held at a local venue if possible.</p>	<p>Access to meetings difficult</p>
<p>Areas of deprivation</p>		<p>Encourage use of plain English in reports. Visitors welcomed, procedures explained and helped to feel at ease.</p>	<p>Low expectation of being able to contribute – uncomfortable with public speaking.</p>
<p>Human rights</p>	<p>Covered by legislation - Human Rights Act 1998. Right to free speech.</p>	<p>Constitution sets out rights of citizens to participate – varied methods</p>	

Evidence:

- Council website and leaflet for members of the public attending meetings
- Video/webcast of meetings – thereby promoting public attendance
- Timetable of meetings for 2013/14 – reviewed in January 2013
- Monitoring questionnaires for public attendance at meetings – ongoing / quarterly
- Webcasting of all public Council committee meetings
- Use of Twitter and other social media sites – including the Cheshire West and Chester's Newsdesk website.
- Hearing loops provided at main Council venues
- Varying times and venues of meetings - Standards Board continuing to do this, started by Standards Committee.
- Promotion of the use of other Council and partner venues - using the Unity Centre, Chester, for example, promoting their services whilst still delivering ours.
- Varied methodology for the capturing of information.
- Co-option of members and Youth Parliament Members on Scrutiny Committees.
- Involvement of groups in reviews

Action plan:

Actions required / key activity	Priority	Outcomes required	Officer responsible	Review date
Provision of access to democratic service information, councillor details, decision making process and meeting agendas and minutes.	Medium	Increased number of people having exposure to Council meetings and paperwork via the Council website, and actual viewing of meetings via webcast meetings and social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, etc)	Penny Housley / Andrea Thwaite / David Jones	February 2015
Engagement of under-represented groups eg under 18s through scrutiny reviews and	Medium	Broader engagement across the age range	Penny Housley / Andrea Thwaite / David Jones	February 2015

planned re-run of the successful 'Mock Council' events undertaken as part of 'Local Democracy Week'		through use of electronic access to Council documentation / information / meetings.		
Corporate Scrutiny sign-off	Medium		Penny Housley / Andrea Thwaite / David Jones	February 2015

Sign off	
Lead Officer:	Penny Housley
Approved by Head of Service:	Simon Goacher, 14 January 2013
Moderation and/or Scrutiny	
Date:	Moderated at directorate equality group 23 July 2013
Date analysis to be reviewed based on rating (high impact – review in one year, medium impact - review in two years, low impact in three years)	

Please forward the completed Equality Analysis to the Equality and Diversity Managers for publishing on the Council's website