

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Epping District Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, ie have due regard to:
 - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
 - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
 - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage/civil partnership
 - pregnancy/maternity
 - race
 - religion/belief
 - sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy or change.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. All **Cabinet, Council, and Portfolio Holder reports must be accompanied by an EqIA**. An EqIA should also be completed/reviewed at key stages of projects.
8. To assist you in completing this report, please ensure you read the guidance notes in the Equality Analysis Toolkit and refer to the following Factsheets:
 - Factsheet 1: Equality Profile of the Epping Forest District
 - Factsheet 2: Sources of information about equality protected characteristics
 - Factsheet 3: Glossary of equality related terms
 - Factsheet 4: Common misunderstandings about the Equality Duty
 - Factsheet 5: Frequently asked questions
 - Factsheet 6: Reporting equality analysis to a committee or other decision making body

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Section 1: Identifying details

Your function, service area and team: Planning Services

If you are submitting this EqlA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team: N/A

Title of policy or decision: **Waive of Procurement Rules to secure the ongoing consultancy services of two Development Management planning officers, one conservation officer and Peyto Law as Local Plan Planning Solicitor.**

Officer completing the EqlA: Tel: 4110 Email: nrichardson@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Date of completing the assessment: 29 July 2019

Section 2: Policy to be analysed

2.1	Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project? No
2.2	<p>Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision): Appointment of Agency Planning Consultants and temporary Local Plan Solicitor Consultant</p> <p>What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)? Continue the provision of priority planning services currently at risk due a number of vacancies across Development Management and specific planning law advice for the Local Plan examination and post modifications.</p>
2.3	<p>Does or will the policy or decision affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• service users• employees• the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities? <p>All of the above, implementation of this report will support service users and the wider community as it will enable us to make timely transparent planning decisions. This is very important for those groups with protected characteristics who may be anxiously awaiting a planning decision that is very important or alternatively there may be a development that they are not happy about and wish to be able to raise concerns and the timely processing of planning applications with consultation processes built in will assist this.</p> <p>Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?</p> <p>Yes as the effective provision of Planning Services is a council strategic priority. Planning Services are going through a period of change and need to be able to appoint Agency Planning Consultants for extended periods. This is due to the significant increase</p>

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	<p>in Planning Activity both due to the substantial upturn in planning applications but also due to the development identified and supported by the Local Plan, which is currently undergoing examination.</p> <p>A key element is to ensure the provision of timely, efficient and effective planning decisions across the district.</p>
2.4	<p>Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources? No part of the costs will be offset by CSB funding for existing posts. The additional costs will be managed carefully within the context of the whole provision of planning services for the council and planning income.</p>
2.5	<p>Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes?</p> <p>A key element of this request is to ensure that increased levels of Planning Applications due to the development identified and supported by the emerging Local Plan are processed in a timely, efficient and effective planning manner across the district, the policy advice of which will be provided by the Local Plan Planning Solicitor (Peyto Law).</p>

Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation¹

As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, eg service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).

3.1	<p>What does the information tell you about those groups identified?</p> <p>What we know is that all disadvantaged groups have been able to take advantage of the improved ways of processing planning application where information regarding this is displayed in a transparent manner on our website. This report supports and underpins this as it seeks to maintain timely targets in the processing of planning applications.</p>
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3.2	<p>Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision?</p> <p>We have previously consulted informally with residents groups and councillors and the feedback has highlighted the need to provide timely and transparent planning decisions. We also know that the a range of formal consultations have taken placed with residents across the district as part of the Local Plan process and feedback received has been the same as the informal feedback received.</p>
3.3	<p>If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary:</p> <p>As part of the Common Operating Model that will deliver improved Customer Services we expect that further detailed consultations will take place. We also expect to change and improve our business processes which we feel will further assist and support disadvantaged groups.</p>

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Section 4: Impact of policy or decision

Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know.

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Age	<p>Maintaining suitable staffing levels for Planning Services will have a positive impact for all protected characteristics as it is focused on ensuring the effective and efficient processing of planning applications. A key element of Planning's role is to support development across the district in line with the Local Plan and to issue timely, efficient and effective planning decisions in a fair and transparent manner.</p> <p>All persons within the protected characteristics are already benefitting from the Planning's Electronic Records programme they are able to view online 24/7 planning information about their district, neighbourhood and road.</p> <p>This report seeks to ensure that the processing of planning applications continues uninterrupted to maintain service consistency and reliability which is helpful to protected characteristics across the board.</p>	L
Disability		
Gender		
Gender reassignment		
Marriage/civil partnership		
Pregnancy/maternity		
Race		
Religion/belief		
Sexual orientation		

Section 5: Conclusion

		Tick Yes/No as appropriate	
5.1	Does the EqIA in Section 4 indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	If 'YES', use the action plan at Section 6 to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.

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Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

What are the potential adverse impacts?	What are the mitigating actions?	Date they will be achieved.

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Section 7: Sign off

**I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately.
(A typed signature is sufficient.)**

Signature of Head of Service: Nigel Richardson

Date: 29/07/2019

Signature of person completing the EqIA: Nigel Richardson

Date: 29/07/2019

Advice

Keep your director informed of all equality & diversity issues. We recommend that you forward a copy of every EqIA you undertake to the director responsible for the service area. Retain a copy of this EqIA for your records. If this EqIA relates to a continuing project, ensure this document is kept under review and updated, eg after a consultation has been undertaken.

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