Equality impact assessments – for services, policies and projects

What is an equality impact assessment?

An equality impact assessment is an important part of our commitment to improving equality practice. The form will help us find out what impact or consequences our functions, policies, procedures and projects have on our citizens, employees and potential employees.

By undertaking an impact assessment, we are able to:
- Take into account the needs, experiences and circumstances of those groups of people who use (or don't / can't use) our services.
- Identify any inequalities people may experience.
- Think about the other ways in which we can deliver our services which will not lead to inequalities.
- Develop better policy-making, procedures and services.

Impact assessment are required by law; The Race Relations Amendment Act, The Disability Discrimination Act and the amended Sex Discrimination Act all require local authorities to assess the impact of their functions, policies, projects and services, or the likely impact of any that are proposed, on equality.

However, our view is that we should be using the results of impact assessment to improve service delivery so that we become more accountable to the people that we serve.

Background

Name of service / policy / project and date	**Roll out of Members' iPads**
Lead officer	**Rosalind Reeves, Democratic Services Manager**
Other people involved in completing this form	**Councillor Jon Walklett, Cabinet Member Corporate Services**

Step 1 - About the service / policy / project

What is the aim of the service / policy / project and what outcomes is it contributing to	Improve communications with members, making it easier for them to access emails and committee papers and in doing so reduce print costs at the council.
Who are the primary customers of the service / policy / project and how do they / will they benefit	Elected members.
How and where is the service / policy / project implemented	iPads have been offered to all elected members. User guides have been produced and training sessions have been arranged.
What potential barriers might already exist to achieving these outcomes	Some members feel that they would prefer to continue receiving hard copies of committee papers and do not feel that the iPad is an acceptable alternative.

Step 2 – What do you know already about your existing / potential customers

What existing information and data do you have about your existing / potential customers e.g. Statistics, customer feedback, performance information	The printing of committee papers was costing the council in the order of £100 per member per year. Print savings have already been achieved. Some members have expressed concerns that the iPad does not fully meet their needs whilst others have embraced the transition to going paperless. Members have been able to opt out of receiving an iPad or use their own.
What does it tell you about who uses your service / policy and those that don't?	Some dual hatted Members would prefer to be able to do all their work on one set of equipment. Another member felt they did not want to learn a new technology and preferred to stick with paper copies.
What have you learnt about real barriers to your service from any consultation with customers and any stakeholder groups?	Training has been raised as an issue. Group training sessions were arranged and a user guide was produced.
If not, who do you have plans to consult with about the service / policy / project?	n/a

Step 3 - Assessing Impact

How does your service / policy / project impact on different groups in the community?

Group	What are you already doing to benefit this group	What are you doing that might disadvantage this group	What could you do differently to benefit this group	No impact on this group
Ethnicity / Race				✓
Sex				✓
Gender Reassignment				✓
Age				✓
Disability	Committee papers are available in large print and braille for those with a visual impairment.	We could still print committee papers in large print or braille and members are permitted to opt out of receiving an iPad.	ICT have indicated that there is software available which would allow a member with a visual impairment to go paperless if they wished.	
Religion or belief				✓
Sexual orientation				✓
Marriage and Civil Partnership				✓
Pregnancy & Maternity				✓
Other socially excluded groups or communities				✓

Step 4 - what are the differences

Are any groups affected in different ways to others as a result of the service / policy / project?	No
Does your service / policy / project either directly or indirectly discriminate?	No
If yes, what can be done to improve this?	
Are there any other ways in which the service / project can help support priority communities in Cheltenham?	n/a

Step 5 – taking things forward

What are the key actions to be carried out and how will they be resourced and monitored?	Further training can be arranged but success would be reliant on the commitment of elected members to attend such training. ICT can investigate whether there are any forms of resolution to concerns raised by members. Members can opt out of an iPad.
Who will play a role in the decision-making process?	Cabinet members
What are your / the project's learning and development needs?	We need to better understand the issues that some members are experiencing in order to be able to develop solutions
How will you capture these actions in your service / project	This could be covered within the report that will be taken to Cabinet