

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	Municipal Office relocation
Lead officer	Mark Sheldon
Other people involved in completing this form	Jeremy Williamson

Step 1 - About the service / policy / project

What is the aim of the service / policy / project and what outcomes is it contributing to	The council has had a long term aspiration ' <i>to relocate to modern, more flexible office accommodation which meets both existing and future needs, improves customer experience and provides better value for money for the tax payers of Cheltenham</i> '.
Who are the primary customers of the service / policy / project and how do they / will they benefit	People within Cheltenham Borough Council district
How and where is the service / policy / project implemented	2017 at the earliest
What potential barriers might already exist to achieving these outcomes	The existing site (Municipal Offices) has significant barriers and poor access for several groups but major interventions to improve access have been thwarted by the listed status of the building. Relocation of services to a DDA compliant building will significantly improve this situation but can only be delivered with the agreement of all the commercial parties involved (with whom we are negotiating)

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	Customer feedback, observation and a 2005 Access Audit
What does it tell you about who uses your service / policy and those that don't?	The relocated offices will be open to all residents of Cheltenham and other visitors
What have you learnt about real barriers to your service from any consultation with customers and any stakeholder groups?	The Access Audit of 2005 for the Municipal Offices clearly identified the barriers
If not, who do you have plans to consult with about the service / policy / project?	Further consultation with an established group representing a range of end users will take place should the relocation be approved. This is the same group that is consulted for public realm projects and reflects a wide range of recognised difficulties – site impairment, ambulatory problems

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	There has been investment to improve access to the Municipal Offices; most notably the use of the Royal Well entrance and provision of platform lift to the reception area.	But access is still challenging, visitors who are unable to get up the stairs at the front of the building need to use the rear entrance and the platform lift. If they are visiting planning services, they then need to use a separate lift to the second floor.	Relocate to a town centre site that has much improved site access.	
Disability	There has been investment to improve access to the Municipal Offices; most notably the use of the Royal Well entrance and provision of platform lift to the reception area.	But access is still challenging, visitors who are unable to get up the stairs at the front of the building need to use the rear entrance and the platform lift. If they are visiting planning services, they then need to use a separate lift to the second floor.	Relocate to a town centre site that has much improved site access.	



Religion or belief				✓
Sexual orientation				✓
Marriage and Civil Partnership				✓
Pregnancy & Maternity	There has been investment to improve access to the Municipal Offices; most notably the use of the Royal Well entrance and provision of platform lift to the reception area.	But access is still challenging, visitors who are unable to get up the stairs at the front of the building need to use the rear entrance and the platform lift. If they are visiting planning services, they then need to use a separate lift to the second floor.	Relocate to a town centre site that has much improved site access.	
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?	At the moment, the current Municipal Offices have access challenges for people who are using wheelchairs, infirm or who have children in prams.
Does your service / policy / project either directly or indirectly discriminate?	Existing provision indirectly discriminates against certain key groups by hampering access to the building.
If yes, what can be done to improve this?	Despite efforts to date to improve the situation, the only real solution would be to relocate to more suitable premises that are in the town centre but do not suffer from these access barriers.
Are there any other ways in which the service / project can help support priority communities in Cheltenham?	The provision of an accessible site will improve inclusivity and allow groups with defined needs the ability to better access facilities & partake in meetings.

Step 5 – taking things forward

What are the key actions to be carried out and how will they be resourced and monitored?	Key actions will be (i) Decision to acquire a new building (ii) Relocation programme (iii) Engagement with representative groups to ensure best practice in terms of access is pursued
Who will play a role in the decision-making process?	Council
What are your / the project's learning and development needs?	None
How will you capture these actions in your service / project planning?	These needs have identified the need to relocate to a suitably accessible town centre building. Any future needs will be integrated into the project plan