EQUALITY ANALYSIS (EA) - SCREENING TEMPLATE

GUIDANCE TOOL This Tool assists services in determining whether their plans and decisions will require a full Equalities Analysis. EAs help the Council comply with its duty under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have “due regard” to specified equality matters. They are required in most cases but, in some cases, an EA is not necessary or is only necessary for certain aspects of a decision. Full guidance on the Council’s duties and EAs and the full EA template is available at http://forestnet.lbwf.gov.uk/index/residents-first/equalities/equality-analysis.htm

The Council understands that whilst its equalities duty applies to all services, it is going to be more relevant to some decisions than others. We need to be pragmatic and ensure that the detail of Equality Analyses (EAs) are proportionate to the impact of decisions on the equality duty. In some cases a full EA is not necessary and/or the equalities duties do not apply. In other cases, only part of a decision will require an EA to ensure the Council has due regard to its equality duties. The following examples are intended to assist:

Where might an EA not be required?

- Where it can be proven that the decision has no equalities impact-- with particular focus on negative impacts on service users and residents
- Where it can be proven that the decision has a minimal or theoretical equalities impact (and so does not need to be considered)
- Where the decision is mandatory and there is no element of discretion (e.g. to adopt a member’s code of conduct or similar)
- In rare cases, where a previous EA exists and a review shows that it is still relevant at the time of the final decision, i.e. the facts have not changed

Important:

- The EA screening tool should not be used to mask over any equality impacts or as a “get out”.
- There can be a negative equality impact even if you think that overall, you are proposing changes that will make services better. If there is an adverse or negative impact, you must complete a full EA.
- Negative impacts are often indirect, i.e. a rule that is on its face of universal impact but has greater impact on some groups in practice e.g. due to the ethnic makeup of an area.
- In most cases, the screening process requires a degree of collation and analysis of evidence. If this requires a lot of work, consider whether it is actually simpler to omit the screening process and undertake a full EA.
- The equality duty continues up to and after the final decision. If proposals or facts change before the final decision, any screening tool will need to be reviewed and evidenced.
- Any consultation undertaken should also inform the screening process, e.g. issues raised by those affected. Monitoring should take place after a decision as part of service delivery.
- The completed screening template will be attached to Cabinet or other decision making report and so it must include sufficient detail to justify the decision not to carry out a full EA.

What to do?

- The screening process should be used on ALL new proposals, policies, projects, functions, saving proposals, major developments or planning applications, or when revising them, if there is no negative equality impact or there is uncertainty about whether there is a negative equality impact. However, If your proposal is of a significant nature and it is apparent from the outset that a full EA will be required, then you do not need to complete this screening template and can progress directly to a full EA. If a negative/adverse impact has been identified during completion of the screening tool, a full EA MUST be undertaken. If you have not identified any negative/ adverse impacts arising from your proposal you do not need to undertake a full EA. However, make sure you have explained clearly why the proposal does not have any negative/adverse impact. If your proposal is going to Cabinet or Committee (e.g. Planning or Licensing) and you are not undertaking a full EA, you must:
  a. share your report and completed screening tool with Shahid Mallam, Performance & Improvement Team, who will check and challenge your findings and
  b. use the following wording under the Equality & Diversity paragraph in the Cabinet report: “An initial screening exercise of the equality impact of this decision was undertaken and determined there was no / minimal impact (delete as appropriate) on the Council’s equality duty.” Attach the completed template as an appendix to your report.
1. **Proposal / Project Title:** Neighborhoods Scrutiny Report on Customer Services

2. **Brief summary of the above: (include main aims, proposed outcomes, recommendations / decisions sought)**

   **Main aims**
   As part of their 2016/17 work programme, the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee undertook a review of the Council’s customer services. The findings and recommendations of the report were agreed in the 19th April 2017 meeting of the Committee and are set out in full in Appendix 1.

   The primary concern of the review was how successfully the Council was introducing its digital agenda in enhancing its customer service offer, whether local residents felt confident in using these new tools and the results of customer feedback in terms of evidence which demonstrated recent innovations were leading to improved customer satisfaction.

   **Proposed outcomes**
   It is hoped that the adoption of the recommendations will lead to improved services and outcomes for all residents.

   **Recommendations**
   - Consider if a digital helpdesk should be established, if this can be achieved The Committee recommends that the new Leader of the Council retains a Portfolio Lead Member explicitly responsible for customer care.
   - Directorates should develop their own KPIs incorporating the GovMetrics data to ensure continual improvement in customer service across the Council is effectively measured. These KPIs should be included in performance reporting that is sent to scrutiny, as well as the Council’s overall performance.
   - That mystery shopping exercises are carried out, where the budget is available, on a regular basis; and that Council contractors are requested to contribute, so the cost is reduced.
   - The staff directory and staff structure chart should be updated on a more frequent basis than at present and a named manager should be responsible for ensuring the accuracy of this information.
   - Consider if a digital helpdesk should be established, if this can be achieved within existing budgets, to help residents solve problems themselves by using digital tools.
   - The Council should counter any misconception that in promoting greater use of My Account, access to sensitive data will be compromised. The message needs to be reinforced that resident’s data will be protected and only shared with their consent.
   - All staff should have “customer service” as a core competency included in their job description and specification.
   - If a budget can be found, Mary Gober International-or a similar training company-should be asked to provide a training session at the Council, which all officers across the Council should be encouraged to attend.

   **Decisions sought:**
Note the content of this report
That the Cabinet Members and their senior teams consider the recommendations set out in the report and feedback from officers, and that Cabinet note and endorse the response of the Cabinet Member which will be given in the meeting.

3. Considering the equality aims (eliminate unlawful discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; foster good relations) indicate for each protected group whether there may be a positive impact, negative (adverse) impact, or no impact arising from the proposal.

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5. There are no negative/adverse impact(s)
If you have not identified any negative/adverse impacts please briefly explain your answer, providing evidence to support decision.

These recommendations are designed to improve services for all residents. The recommendations are aimed at improving current provision of services and do not propose new services or fundamental changes to existing services that will alter the way they are delivered or who they are expected to benefit.

These recommendations are likely to be positive across all of the protected characteristics.

6. Describe how opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations for any of the protected characteristics has been taken up (where relevant).

N/A

7. As a result of this screening is a full EA necessary (Please check ☒ appropriate box)

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Briefly explain your answer.

These recommendations are designed to improve services. The recommendations are aimed at improving current provision of services and do not propose new services or fundamental changes to existing services that will alter the way they are delivered or who they are expected to benefit.

8. Name of Lead Officer: James Holden
Job title: Policy & Public Affairs Officer
Date screening tool completed: 3 August 2017