

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Before completing this EqIA please ensure you have read the guidance on the intranet.

Initial Information

Name:	Tracy McGregor
Job Title:	Service Manager for Libraries
Email address:	Tracy.mcgregor@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Members of the assessment team:	Bridget Downton, Head of Business Intelligence and Corporate Communications Tracy McGregor, Service Manager for Libraries
Date assessment started:	10 November 2020
Date of completion:	2 February 2021
Version Number:	V0.1 17 November 2020 V0.2 Revised on 20 January 2021 with consultation response information V0.2 2 February 2021 Revised following EDAG review

Part 1: Background Information

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Existing	
Changing, updating or revision	Yes – review of current Tourist Information Centre service provided by Dorset Council
New or proposed	
Other	

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Internal (employees only)	
External (residents, communities, partners)	
Both of the above	X

What is the name of your policy, strategy, project or service being assessed?

To review the council's current tourist information centre service. Dorset Council currently funds and manages three Tourist Information Centres (TICs) in Dorchester, Sherborne and Wareham.

During 2020/21, the future arrangements for the council managed TIC at Lyme Regis has been discussed with the local town council and this is being progressed separately and has been subject to a separate EQIA.

What is the policy, strategy, project or service designed to do? (include the aims, purpose and intended outcomes of the policy)

The review will consider the role of visitor information and how it can be delivered and funded. It is essential that future arrangements are sustainable, affordable and fit for the future.

Continuing to deliver the service in the same way will not do this.

Possible options could be:

- work with town councils and the voluntary and community sector to provide a local tourist information service
- cease providing Dorset Council TICs
- provide a local and tourist information service in a different way

The consultation results will inform the way forward. A report on the review of the TICs will be considered by the council's Cabinet; the report will include recommendations on the future for the TICs based on the review and consultation results. The Cabinet will receive this report at its meeting on 2 March 2021 and it is expected that a decision will be taken about the council's provision of TICs at this meeting.

What is the background or context to the proposal?

Tourist Information Centres are not a statutory service for the council to provide. In addition to the three TICs managed by Dorset Council, there are five other TICs which are run by other organisations such as the local Town Council or a volunteer group. These are in Blandford, Bridport, Shaftesbury, Swanage and Wimborne. There are also some areas in the county which no longer have a TIC such as Weymouth. This means that there is disparity in the offer across the council area.

The council is reviewing the service for the following reasons:

- The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way in which some public sector services are being used and delivered with increased reliance on digital only access. More people are looking to find further local information and advice about public sector and community services and activities within their local area as well as visitors to Dorset looking for tourist information.
- TICs are a traditional way of providing face to face service but their use has dropped with developments in technology over recent years.
- Dorset Council provides the Visit Dorset service and website (<https://www.visit-dorset.com>) as an important access channel for visitors and tourism businesses. It is a way of encouraging people both in the UK and abroad to visit the area and support the local economy. Promoting the whole Dorset area as a destination is seen as important by Dorset Council whereas promoting local towns and attractions may better fit with local town or parish councils.

- Dorset Council is facing on-going financial challenges and must prioritise the services on which it spends its money.

The TICs provides the following services:

- Free information about the local area and wider Dorset including maps, local attractions, bus/transport provision and information about accessibility
- Ticket sales for local theatre and local events/festivals
- Accommodation information and booking

It is noted that the majority of these services (in some way) are available from other sources or online.

Two of the TICs also have a small retail offering. Dorchester TIC no longer offers retail goods – this ceased when the former West Dorset District Council made the decision to re-locate the TIC from its town centre premises to the shared space in the town’s library.

Following the review and consultation, recommendations will be considered by the council’s Cabinet and a decision taken on the future for the council’s TIC provision. This may impact on the TIC workforce and the general public which includes tourists to the local area and local people. The TIC provides a universal service to visitors and local community. We have data about the number of visitors who use the TIC and method of enquiry

The TICs generate small income to help with operating costs although the service still requires funding from the council. It costs the council approximately £200,000 per annum to support the service. This funding contributes to the primary costs of staffing and premises for the service.

Part 2: Gathering information

What sources of data, information, evidence and research was used to inform you about the people your proposal will have an impact on?

- Number of visitors/enquirers to TICs

In 2019/20, the 3 TICs had 93,631 people visit/enquiries in person (see Appendix 1 for breakdown per TIC) together with enquiries by phone, email or letter. We know that the TICs are used by local people as well as visitors for finding out information such as local events and activities, council services and public transport. In Dorchester, use by local residents is approx. 50% of overall use, in Sherborne it is 70% and in Wareham it is 50%.

- Equality data re employees. Information about employees is taken from council collected information which the employee self-declare.
- Equality data re Dorset population found on [Dorset Insight](#)

This has limited value as the use by the local population is only a percentage of the overall use.

- Former West Dorset District Council [Committee Reports](#) in relation to TIC service review commenced in 2014/15. This involved Sherborne and Dorchester TICs. The WDDC Executive Committee established a Scrutiny Working Group as part of

the service review programme. There was the [recommendation](#) that the TICs should be cost neutral and if they cannot reach that target they should be closed. However given the proximity to the councils' re-organisation, the negotiations and discussions were not concluded.

There were over 30 million visitors to Dorset in 2019 (staying and day visitors). Source: Dorset Council's Visit Dorset team. Less than 1% of these tourist visitors used the TIC on a face to face basis.

There is information produced by the council's Visit Dorset team in 2017 which shows a summary about the tourism sector in Dorchester and Sherborne. There is no similar information available about Wareham. This shows the number of tourist visitors to town (by day visit or staying), information about the expenditure related to tourism and tourism related employment. There is no information in relation to protected characteristics.

- [summary of tourism sector in Dorchester](#)
- [summary of tourism sector in Sherborne](#)

There is information about the [market characteristics of holiday visitors to Dorset](#). This research includes some data about the key group segments (Mosaic marketing segments) that visit the Dorset area as a holiday destination.

The research does show that many of the visitors when classified by Mosaic (a consumer classification tool which segments the population into groups/types to help understand an individual's likely customer behaviour) segments comprises the relatively affluent groups. Whilst this research does not include information about the protected characteristics, it does illustrate that a significant sector of the visitors are classified as 'Senior Security' group which are elderly singles and couples, with 90% aged over 65 years and retired. This Mosaic category are characterised by the following most common behaviours/traits:

- are unlikely to invest in digital technology and
- tend to use information from destination organisations.

Another group, 'Rural reality' group, also provide a segment of visitors and this group are typically aged between 46 -55 living in inexpensive homes in rural locations and in lower cost housing. They tend to be cost conscious and like to use traditional information sources.

Advice has also been sought from the council's Head of Legal Services and HR Business Partner and the council's consultation team.

January 2021 update following consultation:

There were 990 respondents to the consultation survey; 85% were Dorset residents and 11% visitors to Dorset. 75 businesses and organisations and 11 Town and Parish Councillors took part, as did 25 Dorset Council employees including some who work in the TICs. Just over 60 respondents reported themselves as disabled. The response size was good for a council consultation of this type and reasonably representative of the Dorset population with a heavier weighting towards the older population (48% over 65 years old). The consultation results will be published on the Dorset Council website during February 2021.

What did this data, information, evidence and research tell you?

The TICs are also used by local residents to find out information and to buy tickets, permits etc as well as providing information to visitors to the area.

The workforce is mainly female, work part time and are aged 50 years +.

Is further information needed to help inform this proposal?

We do not have information about the protected characteristics of these visitors as this information is not currently collected. The public engagement consultation that is taking place (October 2020 – end of November 2020) will include questions so that diversity data can be collected.

Update – January 2021

The consultation responses are now available and have been used to update this EQIA. The consultation results will be published on the Dorset Council website during February 2021.

Part 3: Engagement and Consultation

What engagement or consultation has taken place as part of this proposal?

- Engagement with TIC employees via Microsoft Teams virtual meetings as well as by email and manager updates. Involvement of Trade Union colleagues will be included as any proposed changes to staffing structures are known.
- Engagement with lead Portfolio Member
- Engagement with three Town Councils in affected areas
- Engagement with Priests House Museum Trustees.
- Engagement with Service Manager for Economic Growth and Visit Dorset service team
- Public consultation undertaken for 6 week period – survey online and hard copy available on demand (by post) and via 23 libraries
- Information sent to key external and internal stakeholders to make them aware of the consultation.
- Promotion of consultation through local media.
- Promotion of consultation via social media platforms and e-newsletters

How will the outcome of consultation be fed back to those who you consulted with?

Through employee briefings and emails.
Information via local media
Briefing to local Town Councils
Email update to identified key stakeholders
Consultation results published on Dorset Council website during February 2021

Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment Guidance before completing this section.

Not every proposal will require an EqIA. If you decide that your proposal does **not** require an EqIA, it is important to show that you have given this adequate consideration. The data and research that you have used to inform you about the

people who will be affected by the policy should enable you to make this decision and whether you need to continue with the EqIA.

Please tick the appropriate option:

An EqIA is required (please continue to Part 4 of this document)	Yes
An EqIA is not required (please complete the box below)	

This policy, strategy, project or service does not require an EqIA because:

Name:

Job Title:

Date:

Part 4: Analysing the impact

Who does the service, strategy, policy, project or change impact?

- If your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option. Please cut and paste the template accordingly.

For each protected characteristic please choose from the following options:

- Please note in some cases more than one impact may apply – in this case please state all relevant options and explain in the ‘Please provide details’ box.

Positive Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.
Negative Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against
Neutral Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups
Unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.

Age:	Negative
What age bracket does this affect?	Older people 50+
Please provide details:	<p>We do not have exact data relating to people using the TICs. However there is Mosaic segment data about the visitors to Dorset which shows that 11.2% can be categorised as Senior Security (11.2%) with a median age of 75 years and according to the Mosaic interpretation of typical behaviour, they are less likely to use digital technology.</p> <p>The consultation survey asks people for their age – further information about this sample group will be available when the consultation results are analysed.</p> <p>Update – January 2021 The consultation responses totalled 990 responses. 48% of the responses came from people aged 65 years+ (compared with 29% in this age band in Dorset population). Less than 10% of</p>

	<p>respondents were aged under 44 which is likely to be illustrative of the age profile of the users of the TICs.</p> <p>The data relating to the TIC workforce shows a disproportionate impact on the age groups with 11 of the 12 members of the workforce being aged 50 years or over. Of these, 6 are aged 65 years or over. However, to avoid the risk of identifying the employees affected, we have not included the number affected.</p>
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Disability: (including physical, mental, sensory and progressive conditions)	<i>Unclear</i>
Does this affect a specific disability group?	Unclear
Please provide details:	<p>Data about users is not known. Nationally we know that approx. 18% of the population has a disability. Some people with disabilities may not be able to easily use or access online services and consideration should be given to meeting their needs with any potential alternative arrangement of the face to face service.</p> <p>January 21 update: There was above average response (6.5%) to the consultation by people with disabilities compared to the % of people in Dorset population who claim Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments or Attendance Allowance (5%). The analysis of the consultation responses included reviewing the responses from people with disabilities separately and this showed that the responses were similar to people without disabilities including use of the TICs and support for running the TIC in a different way.</p> <p>No employees have declared any disabilities at this time but there will be opportunities for employees to share any updates especially as part of any change management process that may be implemented.</p>

Gender Reassignment & Gender Identity:	Unclear
Please provide details:	<p>Data about users is not known.</p> <p>Dorset Council does not currently collect this data.</p>

Pregnancy and maternity:	Unclear
Please provide details:	Data about users is not known.

	No employees have currently stated that they are pregnant nor on maternity leave. Employees have the opportunity to share any updates at any time.
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Race and Ethnicity:	Unclear
Please provide details:	<p>Data about users is not known. We do know that approx. 19% of the national population identifies as non White British and in addition there are visitors from other countries/overseas who are likely to use a local TIC facility. The consultation survey asks people on an optional basis for information so further information will be available at this point.</p> <p>January 2021 – update: 88% of the respondents identified as White British which is in line with the Dorset population profile.</p> <p>All employees are White British with one team member not declaring this information.</p>

Religion or belief:	Unclear
Please provide details:	<p>Data about users is not known.</p> <p>We have insufficient data at this present time to analyse this, however, all employees will be treated equally regardless of their religion or belief .</p>

Sexual orientation:	Unclear
Please provide details:	<p>Data about users is not known.</p> <p>We have insufficient data at this present time to analyse this, however, all employees will be treated equally regardless of their sexual orientation.</p>

Sex (consider both men and women):	<p>Unclear impact on users</p> <p>Negative impact – employees</p>
Please provide details:	<p>Data about users is not known. The consultation survey asks for people for this information.</p> <p>January 2021 update: The number of females completing the survey was higher (57%) to males (37%).</p> <p>The majority of the workforce are female (10) with 2 others being male.</p>

	11 of the workforce work part time and only one post is full time.
Marriage or civil partnership:	Unclear
Please provide details:	Data about users is not known. Dorset Council does not collect this information about employees.
Carers:	Unclear
Please provide details:	Data about users is not known. Dorset Council does not collect this information about employees.
Rural isolation:	Unclear
Please provide details:	We do not have exact data relating to visitors to the TICs. However there is Mosaic segment data about the visitors to Dorset which shows that 11.2% can be categorised as Rural Reality (7.8%) which includes people likely to live in rural locations and not be significant users of the internet and favour traditional information sources. Dorset Council does not directly collect this information about employees.
Single parent families:	Unclear
Please provide details:	Data about users and employees is not known
Social & economic deprivation:	Unclear
Please provide details:	Data about users and employees is not known
Armed Forces communities	Unclear
Please provide details:	Data about users and employees is not known

Part 5: Action Plan

Provide actions for **positive**, **negative** and **unclear** impacts.

If you have identified any **negative** or **unclear** impacts, describe what adjustments will be made to remove or reduce the impacts, or if this is not possible provide justification for continuing with the proposal.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
<p>Consultation with local communities and visitors being undertaken during Covid-19 pandemic and ensuring that the consultation is representative</p>	<p>Advice from Council's consultation and legal teams. Survey available online and in hard copies in 3 TICs and 23 council managed libraries. Promotion of survey via Dorset Council magazine (locals) and social media. Consultation running for 2.5 weeks before second lockdown closed face to face service points. Decision taken to extend the consultation period for a further period until 3 January 2021 to allow more time for consultation responses once service points re-opened. During period of second lockdown, continued promotion via social media. Hard copies available by post on request (poster on doors of TICs)</p>	<p>Tracy McGregor</p>	<p>By close of consultation – 29 November 2020</p>
<p>Unclear impacts</p>	<p>Consultation survey asks people for information relating to equalities so that impact can be better understood.</p> <p>Targeted communication to stakeholders based on stakeholder mapping by local team.</p> <p>Monitoring of responses at mid point to check if any targeted promotion is required.</p>	<p>Dorset Council's Consultation team with Tracy McGregor</p>	<p>By start of consultation – 19 October 2020</p> <p>Mid point – w/c 9 November 2020</p>

Protected characteristics of employees	<p>All employees will be treated equally regardless of any protected characteristic. Dorset Council's policies will be applied consistently regardless of age or gender or any other protected characteristic. Given that the data about the workforce identifies a large percentage of older people (aged over 55 years), employees will be provided with information and support from the council's pension service as well as HR colleagues.</p> <p>There are a range of learning and development opportunities and well-being activities designed to support employees who may be impacted by any changes.</p> <p>Employees and trade unions will be asked to come forward with any suggestions on adjustments that may need to be applied to ensure protected groups are not put at a disadvantage at any stage in the process.</p>	Tracy McGregor	At start and during Change Management procedure – no timescales known yet
Disabilities – users	<p>We know that some people with disabilities may not be able to easily use or access online information. Hard copy surveys available in libraries and TICs. Consideration of their needs should be included in the development of any proposal and decision-making process.</p>	Tracy McGregor	By start of consultation 19 October 2020
Disabilities - employees	<p>Any affected employees will be invited to make HR aware of any factor that may affect the change process, which could include a disability, and consultation with the staff will check the specific requirements for reasonable adjustments for individuals at all stages of the process.</p> <p>The nature of the process and proposal may have a negative impact on staff wellbeing and mental health. All employees will have access to support through discussions with managers and HR as well as through other services such as Trade Union support, counselling and the council's wellbeing resources. This will be promoted to employees at briefings and by email.</p>	Tracy McGregor	At start and during Change Management procedure – no timescales known yet

Mitigation of financial hardship	If it is necessary to serve notice of redundancy all employees will have a 13 week notice period to allow additional time to help find an alternative position.	Tracy McGregor	When any changes to staffing is implemented.
Ensure equalities impact issues are managed as part of any change implementation plans	Review EQIA action plan and update if necessary following any decisions made by Dorset Council's Cabinet	Tracy McGregor	Post Cabinet meeting (expected 2 March 2021)

EqIA Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA:	Tracy McGregor	Date:	17 November 2020 Revised 20 January 2021 Revised 2 February 2021
Equality Lead:	Susan Ward-Rice	Date:	05 February 2021
Equality & Diversity Action Group Chair:	Pete Bartlett	Date:	05 February 2021