Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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

Initial Information

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Part 1: Background Information

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

Existing	
Changing, updating or revision	
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	✓

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

Dorset Digital Vision

https://moderngov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=651&MId=4999

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

Our vision is to become a digital council in a digital place, putting people and their needs first using design and modern technology to improve people's lives. We will do this by focusing on the two themes:

1. **Becoming a digital council**
   - design end to end services based on understanding people's needs and involving them throughout
   - deliver online services that are so good people prefer to use them, enabling us to deal with those people who need more support

- use technology to become more efficient and productive, automating processes and using assistive technology
- use data and intelligence to support decision making, understand need, target our efforts, and to manage and prevent demand
- change how we think and behave, to become more creative, innovative adaptable and inclusive
- demonstrate digital leadership across the organisation, wider local public sector and Dorset

2. **Enable Dorset to be a digital place**
   - raise digital skills across businesses and residents to allow them to interact digitally and businesses to have access to people with the digital skills they need
   - facilitate a digital infrastructure in the county to connect people and places, where and when they need it, enabling economic growth, and for people and communities to help themselves
   - demonstrate digital leadership by setting community aspirations and expectation, creating culture and building capability
   - stimulate investment from the private sector
   - increase transparency and citizen participation in policy development and decision making
   - supporting businesses, the public sector and residents to use technology to make a real difference to people's lives

The vision provides a framework for a broad range of activity that will enable us to improve our digital maturity. This EQIA is intended to act as an umbrella with further supplementary EQIA's for the different pieces of work, building on this EQIA with specific elements rather than duplicating it.

For example, we will deliver work to:
- increase connectivity across Dorset
- develop people's digital skills
- implement a digital platform
- develop business intelligence capabilities
- redesign services
- facilitate internet access – e.g. virtual day centres

What is the background or context to the proposal?

Dorset Council is a relatively new council, formed in April 2019, when a local government reorganisation created a new council area. In the work towards creating Dorset Council a Local Government Reorganisation Case for Change document was produced and a key element to this included the need to embrace digital in the new council to:

- Support 21st century councillors, helping them to be more strategic, more digitally aware, and better able to connect with a broader cross-section of society.

- Develop a culture of empowerment and innovation in which staff are encouraged to work with more entrepreneurial spirit, to achieve financial efficiencies and improve services.
- Optimise their use of digital to improve service delivery and reach out into the community – using cloud-based platforms and channel shift to automate processes, improve transactions, empower service users, and build collaborative relationships with Dorset's rapidly expanding digital sector.
- Build capacity and capability around data and analytics so that they can use data to understand how demand for services is changing to improve planning and manage demand more effectively.
- Redesign their approach to customer services so that they can rely to a far greater extent on multi-disciplinary teams and generically trained staff to resolve requests for service quickly and efficiently.
- Standardise, simplify and share 'back office' services to maximise the achievement of benefits.

In 2018 the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) initiated the Local Digital Declaration which contains 5 principles for Councils to embed which Dorset Council was co-signatories of:

- We will go even further to redesign our services around the needs of the people using them. This means continuing to prioritise citizen and user needs above professional, organisational and technological silos.
- We will 'fix our plumbing' to break our dependence on inflexible and expensive technology that doesn't join up effectively. This means insisting on modular building blocks for the IT we rely on, and open standards to give a common structure to the data we create.
- We will design safe, secure and useful ways of sharing information to build trust among our partners and citizens, to better support the most vulnerable members of our communities, and to target our resources more effectively.
- We will demonstrate digital leadership, creating the conditions for genuine organisational transformation to happen, and challenging all those we work with to embrace this Local Digital Declaration.
- We will embed an open culture that values, incentivises and expects digital ways of working from every member of our workforce. This means working in the open wherever we can, sharing our plans and experience, working collaboratively with other organisations, and reusing good practice.

In addition, our learning from the COVID19 pandemic has shown the value digital can bring to our lives:

- the importance of data to target resources where most needed
- working with communities using collaboration tools to deliver services together
- providing alternative and digital ways to access services and deliver them efficiently such as library click and collect and business grants
- increased democratic engagement using virtual meetings
- provision of devices to young people and adults to keep people connected

- reduction in travel and carbon emissions using technology to work from home

But also highlighted digital inequalities. Whether there is lack of access for home schooling, ability to access public services online, or just connect with others to support wellbeing.

Many of the projects/pieces of work in the digital vision delivery plan are specifically intended to support 'inclusion' of specific groups whether that's young people who haven't got access to devices, residents who don't have skills to get online, or the provision of access to good connectivity.

It is worth highlighting that the digital vision isn't about making every one use council services online, using the efficiency gained from digital service delivery means that we can invest more time in supporting those who are vulnerable or in need to ensure they get the services they require.

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?

As this strategy is both internal and external the following data has been used:

Employees
- Dorset Council workforce profile data (August 2019 & November 2020)
- Employee feedback surveys (HIVE)

Residents of Dorset
- Census and Office for National Statistics (2011-2018) taken from Dorset Insight State of Dorset 2019
- EqIA - How well Dorset Council responded to meeting the needs of vulnerable groups during lockdown
- Councillor roundtable discussions - COVID-19 and community vulnerability - Summary of Councillor discussions
- 2020 Dorset Council & Citizens Advice - Hearing and Visual impairments survey
- Help & Kindness Report on pilot project looking at the local print & assets in Dorset communities
- User research by Helen Timms in the Digital team with community and voluntary organisations in Dorset to understand barriers to getting online
- 2020 Dorset Council residents survey which included new specific questions around digital
- Government Digital Inclusion Strategy

Visitors to Dorset
There were over 30 million visitors to Dorset 2019 (staying and day visitors) (source: Dorset Council's Visit Dorset Team). Less than 1% of these tourist visitors used the Tourist Information Centre's on a face to face basis.

- COVID-19 impact on tourism report

Businesses (large, SME and sole traders)
- During business breakfasts to develop the Economic Growth Strategy
- Economic Growth Strategy equality impact assessment - Dorset Council

Children and Young people in Dorset
- The "what would make Dorset the best place in the world to grow up?", a competition that ran in 2020 asking children and young people up to the age of 18 to submit ideas in a variety of formats
- Young researchers post-COVID 19 barriers to education 2020 to 2021 research
- Equality impact assessment for children not in education, employment or training (not currently published)

Also factored in has been the outcome of stakeholder engagement such as Future Dorset and Dorset Reloaded events including partners like the NHS, representatives from the community, members of the public, the voluntary sector, and the business community.

National sources/research
- Lloyds Bank UK Digital Consumer Index 2020
  Office of National Statistics 2019 – digital inclusion
- University of Liverpool – Hesseltine Institute Policy Briefing
- Carnegie UK trust – notwithoutme report
- Skills for life survey
- Thinkbroadband speed and coverage information
- House of Commons December 2020 research briefing on full fibre broadband in the uk report
- Ofcom 2020 Online Nation report
- Ofcom 2020 UK home broadband performance report
- Ofcom 2020 Communication Market report
- BT impact of high speed broadband
- Study undertaken by Tsatsou (2019) - Digital Inclusion of people with disabilities
- Research involving 50 people from Gypsy and Traveller communities across the UK by Friends, Families & Travellers (FFT) in 2018

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

What we know about the Dorset Council workforce
The following data relates to all employees at Dorset Council but not school employees, as the Digital vision does not include schools or academies.

Employees are encouraged to provide diversity monitoring data, but they are not obliged to do so. It should also be noted that for some protected characteristics we are unable to provide data, due to it not being collected or it being so small there is a risk of identifying.

The data below was collected at two different times. The data for age, disability, ethnicity and sex were collected on the 1 November 2020. The data for sexual orientation and religion and belief were collected as part of an EqIA undertaken in August 2019.

Sex	Overall workforce (Amount/%)
Male	1,654 (36.88%)
Female	2,831 (63.12%)

Race and Ethnicity	Overall workforce (%)
White British	68.03%
White Other	2.52%
Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic	1.25%
Prefer not to say	8.18%
Not declared	20.02%

Disability	Overall workforce (%)
Disabled	2.70%
Not disabled	58.73%
Prefer not to say	6.62%
Not declared	31.95%

Age	Overall workforce (Amount/%)
14 – 24*	220 (4.91%)
25 – 39	1,069 (23.8%)
40 – 49	1,071 (23.8%)
50 – 59	1,427 (31.8%)
60 – 64	444 (9.90%)
65+	254 (5.66%)

* Employees aged between 14-16 are 'Casual Swim Helpers'

Sexual Orientation	Overall workforce (%)
Heterosexual	37.13
Lesbian / Gay	0.58
Bisexual	0.16
Other	0.27
Prefer not to say	7.04
Not declared	54.82

Religion and Belief	Overall workforce (%)
Christian	15.14
Buddhist	0.14
Hindu	0.02
Jewish	0.02
Muslim	0.02
Other	0.72
No religion	10.99
Prefer not to say	4.02
Not declared	68.93

There are approximately 1000 members of the workforce that do not have access to a corporately supplied device or ICT network account to access systems such as the intranet where employee news, policies and other corporate information is stored and feel excluded.

Analysis of the employee survey results show that 90% of respondents would want to work flexibly for one day a week or more (53% said a few days a week, 29% said every day). Furthermore, 72% of respondents felt that 80-100% of their role can be effectively carried out away from their 'traditional' workplace environment. Respondents were asked to identify what the biggest benefits to working in a different way had been for them.

The three highest responses were:
• Less time travelling (61% of respondents)
• More flexibility (49% of respondents)
• Better work life balance (48% of respondents)

The employee survey also sought feedback on what challenges employees have faced over recent months. The three highest responses were:
• Feeling isolated from colleagues (55% of respondents)
• Getting access to resources/information to work from home (27%)
• Internet connectivity (22%)

We have feedback from members of the workforce who have a disability that working from home has had a positive impact on them. Making them feel included and able to participate in the workplace on an equal footing using the technology and accessibility features in Microsoft tools.

Employees have identified they need time and support to develop digital skills and improve their confidence using technology (employee forum consultation).

What we know about the Dorset Council population
Data on the population of Dorset can be found on Dorset Insight. However, some of the key headlines are:
- Population total of 376,480 of which:
    - 51.1% is female (192,380)
    - 48.9% is male (184,100)
    - 28.6% is aged 65+ years (107,810)
    - 55.4% is aged between 16-64 years (208,740)
- 95.6% identify as White British
    - 4.4% identify as Black and minority ethnic
    - 1.7% main language is not English
    - in 2018 1,045 NINos (National Insurance numbers) were all allocated to adult overseas nationals this is a decline of 7.5% on the allocated in 2017
- 65.1% of the population identify as Christian
- 25.4% have no religion
- 80.9% of residents report having very good or good health
- 11.9% of residents provide unpaid care
- 182,677 residential properties in Dorset
    - 72.4% are owner occupied
    - 13.7% are privately rented

- - 40.5% of dwellings are detached and 15.6% are flats/maisonettes
- 15.2% have no car or van in the household
- 170,602 residents aged 16-74 in employment
- 4,491 households include an Armed forces person
- 12,110 parents identify as being a lone parent

It should be noted that for some of the protected characteristics listed in Part 4 of this EqIA, statistical data does not exist at a local authority area.

Information from the 2020 resident's survey suggests 37% prefer to contact the council via phone. However, 33% are happy to use email and of those that had internet 86% of residents are shopping online, and 82% doing online banking showing that there is opportunity to develop our online offer for people to use.

There were significant differences by age in the method respondents would prefer to use if they wanted to contact the council. Respondents aged 75 and over were more likely to prefer to contact the council by telephone. Respondents aged 16 to 34 were more likely to prefer to contact the council by email and by using social media. Respondents aged 35 to 54 were more likely to prefer to contact the council via their website

There were significant differences by deprivation in the method respondents would prefer to use if they wanted to contact the council. Respondents from the most deprived Indices of Multiple Deprivations (IMD) quintile (group) were more likely to prefer to contact the council in person.

Women and respondents aged 75 and over are less likely to use the internet. Respondents who do not use the internet were ask what was preventing them. The most common reason for not using the internet was not being interested, with 72% giving this reason. 22% were prevented from using the internet due to not having equipment and 16% due to lack of skill. 13% did not use the internet due to another reason, including age and not having a reason to use the internet.

There were significant differences by age in where respondents use the internet. Respondents aged 16 to 34 were more likely to use the internet using public wi-fi when out and about, at someone else's house, in other community facilities, in the library and at school, college or university.

There were significant differences by ethnicity in where respondents use the internet. Respondents from ethnic groups other that White British were more likely to use the internet at work and in other community facilities.

There were significant differences by deprivation in where respondents use the internet. Respondents from the most deprived IMD quintile were more likely to use the internet at work, using public wi-fi when out and about, at someone else's house and in the library. Respondents from the most deprived and the second most deprived IMD quintiles were more likely to use the internet in other community facilities.

Of the respondents who use the internet, 88% have a smartphone or mobile phone that connects to the internet. 76% have a laptop at home and 69% have a tablet or an iPad at home.

A survey was also undertaken by Dorset Council and Citizens Advice in September-October 2020 on how people with visual and hearing impairments coped during lockdown (March-May 2020). 228 people responded to the survey, 164 primarily had a hearing impairment and 88 primarily had a visual impairment, some had both. In addition, as part of the survey 4 people who described themselves as profoundly deaf participated in British Sign Language (BSL) conversations.

The consultation asked participants whether they could access a digital device, 32% of those respondents with a visual impairment did not have access, whilst 18% of those with a hearing impairment did not have access. 84% of the 65+ group and 100% of the 75% group with visual impairment did not have access to a device.

Of those people with a visual impairment who do not have access to a digital device, 21% responded that it was because they needed support to use one compared to 15% who were hearing impaired. 56% of people with a hearing impairment said they could not use one and a slightly lower proportion of respondents (54%) with a visual impairment could not use one.

The survey also asked respondents where they found information or advice about COVID-19. The vast majority of respondents with a visual impairment (86%) found information or advice through the television, with family and friends being the next highest at 66%, followed by national radio at 44%. The highest sources for those with hearing impairment were television (74%), followed by family and friends (53%) and internet searches (49%).

What we know about the Dorset Council area

The Heseltine Institute analysis of OFCOM data suggests 40% of people in the south-west are non-users of the internet or limited users. It is well accepted that digital deprivation is closely associated with social deprivation. Weymouth and Portland contain communities with nationally very high levels of deprivation including employment and income. Using MOSAIC data, Westham ward in Radipole has the highest level of digital exclusion.

Children and young people have identified the following themes as important to living in Dorset in the 2020 competition:
- Renewable/green energy sources e.g. wind, water and solar
- Solar powered busses/cars
- Electric cars
- Recycling and reuse – sustainability
- How we manage litter/refuse
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) – developing skills and jobs
- Healthy/active

The young researchers post COVID report identified young people have been negatively affected by COVID-19. The biggest barrier that young people faced in planning their education was not knowing what opportunities were available (61%) followed by cost (41%). 50% of young people didn't have opportunities to speak about future choices in their place of learning.

The EQIA for children not in education, employment or training quotes the number of 16 to 24 year olds claiming out of work benefits has doubled in the Dorset Council area since January 2020 from 670 to 1,765 in December 2020[1]. As a proportion of all 16 to 64 yr olds claiming in December 2020, 16 to 24 year olds represented 19% a small rise from January 2020 of 18%.

The economic growth strategy cites the proportion of workers in Dorset with Level 4+ skills (e.g. Higher National Certificate - HNC) is lower than the south west average despite demand increasing for higher skills to fill jobs. The proportion of businesses finding it hard to find skilled employees is rising.

45% of Visit Dorset area businesses are planning to rethink their product or marketing strategy to aid business recovery post COVID-19, including:
• International Education – online courses new markets and move to more digital
• Greater online content – either virtual tours, live feeds, moving events online and recognising the importance of digital activity going forward.

Current (February 2021) superfast broadband, defined as 30 Megabits per second, coverage in Dorset is: 95.4% (nationally 97.2%). At the conclusion of the Superfast Dorset contract with Openreach at the end of 2021 we will still have many thousands of homes and businesses with poor, unreliable broadband.

Gigabit capable networks (usually described as full fibre) are the next generation of connectivity. Dorset's current gigabit coverage is 7.2%, compared with a national figure of 38.5%.

Mobile coverage in Dorset is poor, only 42.6% of A and B roads in Dorset have what Ofcom deem to be an acceptable signal on all the 2G mobile networks. Less than 66% of premises in Dorset have 4G coverage from all four mobile operators.

What national research and sources tell us

The BT report on the impact of highspeed broadband highlights the opportunity for increased business productivity due to flexible working reducing premise overheads, lower travel costs and carbon emissions, healthier work-life balance, increased access to skills with a wider skills pool available. Investing in infrastructure enables improvement in productivity and clean growth, but government research suggests that consumers will still need to be persuaded to take up connectivity and understand the opportunities it can provide.

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[1] Source for 3 points: Claimant Count, Office for National Statistics via NOMIS

Recent research by the University of Liverpool suggests that the digitally excluded number could be even greater considering there are very narrow users of digital systems (facebook/tiktok) and changes in life circumstances that impact on access. It is very difficult to exactly state the number in Dorset.

The skills for life survey highlights 45% of people aged 16-65 read at literacy level 1 or below, this could impact ability to enter contracts for broadband and mobile phones.

The Carnegie report challenges the assumption that all young people are frequent, confident, able users of the internet and digital technology. Those who are vulnerable, particularly those at points of transition in their life (unemployed, homeless, in care, in secure accommodation) are most at risk of falling outside of the digital mainstream.

We know from the Office of National Statistics that people who are connected and have digital skills will benefit from greater earnings, employment chances, retail savings, communication, and wellbeing.

The Lloyds consumer index detail the barriers to being online are complex, motivation is still a factor. Behavioural data shows that only 7% of over 70s are likely to have the capability to shop and manage their money online. In fact, 77% of this age group have Very Low digital engagement. It is not just the elderly who are under-equipped though; 52% of those offline are between 60 and 70 years old, and 44% of those offline are under the age of 60. Often, it is the most vulnerable and disadvantaged who are the most likely to be digitally excluded.

- People with an impairment are 25% less likely to have the skills to access devices and get online by themselves
- People with an annual household income of £50,000 or more are 40% more likely to have Foundation digital skills, than those earning less than £17,499
- 4-in-10 benefit claimants have Very Low digital engagement.

The Government Digital Service have published guidance on how to make content particularly on websites accessible. For example, writing for age 9 as half the UK workforce have a reading age of 11 and below, using the right type of colour and images, including video voice overs and subtitles, avoiding jargon and acronyms.

Conclusion
There are multiple complex reasons why people may not be online, and we need to develop a variety of ways to encourage people to get online to gain opportunities around employment, financial and wellbeing. There is a need to focus on areas of deprivation, groups where there may be low literacy, that we have a higher than average older population but be aware this also affects young people.

The impact of Covid-19 has demonstrated the absolute necessity to have reliable, resilient, and up-to-date digital infrastructure to support economic activity and

provide community services. Internet connectivity isn't available consistently across the county – particularly mobile phone coverage.

There are positive impacts on the environment and peoples work/life balance by using technology to work from home, but people's digital confidence and skills need to be developed to enable this. Access to main Council systems is vital to the workforce feeling included and there is a significant group who are unable to do this.

We are not maximising the potential of people who are shopping and banking online already to use online council services and still prefer to use the phone, this will require education and behavioural change in the way they contact the council to free up council resources for those who need more support.

We need to ensure our online services are accessible to all and work well when accessed on mobile devices as these are the most used devices.

Digital, connectivity & skills will be important to aid Dorset's economic recovery from COVID-19 and there will likely be new opportunities and jobs as a result, however, young people are interested in STEM jobs but are not receiving the information they need to make learning and career decisions that will help us develop and retain talent locally.

Is further information needed to help inform this proposal?

No

Part 3: Engagement and Consultation
What engagement or consultation has taken place as part of this proposal?

Stakeholder engagement and consultation through events including partners like the NHS, representatives from the community, members of the public, the voluntary sector and the business community. During business breakfasts, Future Dorset and Dorset Reloaded events, officers have sought and listened to views that have fed into the work.

There has also been extensive input from councillors through initially the Digital and ICT Executive Advisory Panel (EAP) and subsequently the Place and Resources Overview Committee, an event with the Employee Forum, and Digital Business Partners talking to Directorate colleagues to help shape the vision and understand priority areas.

We also ran some focus groups with staff, a cohort of our Digital Champions, ICT operations managers (with representatives from across the Council) and our Digital Team.

Digital Vision has also been shared with the unions for comments and feedback.

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

Following publication of the digital vision, using our Digital Dorset brand we have a communications plan to ensure that stakeholders (workforce, residents, businesses) continue to have the opportunity to engage.

All methods of communication (social media, newsletters, press release, Dorset newspaper etc) will be used to ensure maximum reach to our stakeholders.

Feedback from completed consultations has been incorporated in the Digital Vision and this EqIA document, both of which will be publicly available and shared with stakeholders.

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)	✔
An EqIA is **not** required (please complete the box below)	

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	• the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.
Negative Impact	• Protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against
Neutral Impact	• No change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups
Unclear	• Not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.

Age:	Communities: positive & negative Employees: positive
What age bracket does this affect?	
Please provide details:	Dorset communities: Negative impact - people over the age of 60 are more likely to be offline, and this is greater for the over 70s. Young people particularly those who are vulnerable are more likely to be offline. Positive impact - having a more connected Dorset would enable us to use advances in technology and proactive monitoring to help keep people independent that are older. Younger people may find it easier to access education/learning and employment opportunities. Employees: The recent pandemic has accelerated our digital skills with remote working and the use of technology. All employees have access to learning and development opportunities through the Learning Hub.

Disability: (including physical, mental, sensory and progressive conditions)	Communities: Positive & negative Employees: Positive
Does this affect a specific disability group?	
Please provide details:	Dorset communities: Negative impact - people with some sensory disabilities are less likely to be able to get online on their own. People with some disabilities will never be able to access digital services on their own. Positive impact - digital access to services can enable people with some disabilities to remain independent as people will be able to access more council services from home without the need to travel. Greater use of assistive tech and monitoring apps to help keep people independent and enable early intervention. Digital services can, with appropriate authentication, support carers or guardians to access digital services on behalf of those who cannot so they are not excluded or experience a different level of service as a result of their disability.

	In a study undertaken by Tsatsou (2019) - Digital Inclusion of people with disabilities, digital inclusion made disability affected everyday tasks easier e.g. • downloading supermarket apps to find suitable food for specific diets, • ordering online prescriptions, • online shopping, • using digital readers (audio books, e-books) enabled visually impaired people to read more • booking tickets online, instead of using a phone service was something of value for people with speech difficulties. • using online videos (You Tube) for practical guidance was helpful for intellectual or cognitive difficulties In addition, some participants of the research felt more socially included (escape from the stigma) and participated in more activities using online forums, events etc. This was a small study carried out and research concludes that research is required across a broad range of disabilities and socio-economic and diverse groups. The introduction of the customer platform will ensure the website is easier to use and compliant with accessibility legislation, along with ongoing independent assessment such as the ShawTrust. The hearing and visual impairments survey undertaken by Dorset Council identified that 82% with a hearing impairment were able to access a digital device, and 68% with a visual impairment were able to access a digital device. Employees: Only 2.75% of our workforce have identified themselves as disabled, this fits with many organisations (nationally) who have similar declared rates of disability. This figure is significantly lower than the Dorset and national average (19%)[2]. Projects that are developed under this umbrella will undertake EqIAs to understand impacts including if accessibility audits need to be undertaken, Access to

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[2] Disability facts and figures, Scope; 2019

| | work can be used for new or employees changing roles to ensure they have the right kit and software.

The pandemic has highlighted that the use of technology and virtual working can have a positive impact and help feel to participate and feel included, particularly with the use of Microsoft accessibility features now available. |
|---|---|

Gender Reassignment & Gender Identity:	*Dorset Communities: Neutral / unclear* *Employees: Neutral / unclear*
Please provide details:	Dorset Communities: This project aimed at all Dorset communities irrespective of gender identity. Projects being created under this vision include the Customer Platform, currently data around gender identity is not collected, there is an opportunity to review what data we ask and collect, this information will help to inform future services. Employees: Dorset Council does not currently collect data on employees for this category, however, we do not anticipate that at this present time, that there will be an impact on this protected group.

Pregnancy and maternity:	*Dorset Communities: Positive* *Employees: Positive*
Please provide details:	Dorset Communities: The development of digital projects could mean that this protected characteristic group could benefit from being able to do more at times that suit them when engaging with the council to suit their routines. Employees: Using technology allows employees to work more flexibly and remotely, so reducing travel times but also encouraging a better work/life balance. Employees on maternity, paternity and parental leave can be up to date (if they wish) through keeping touch days.

Race and Ethnicity:	*Communities: Unclear* *Employees: Unclear*
Please provide details:	Dorset Communities:

	We will ensure that communication and publicity materials illustrate diversity in a positive way and promote participation across all ethnic groups.
	Groups that have higher rates of literacy issues such as Gypsies and Travellers, may be less confident in securing connectivity contracts affecting the ability to get online. Research involving 50 people from Gypsy and Traveller communities across the UK by Friends, Families & Travellers (FFT) in 2018 found that: • one in five Gypsy and Traveller participants had never used the internet, compared to one in ten of the general population • over half of Gypsy & Traveller participants did not feel confident using digital technology • only 38% of Gypsies and Travellers (33% if housed) had a household internet connection, compared to 86% of the general population. In Dorset, 3% of our population identify as Gypsy & Traveller, we have 4 authorised (council managed) Gypsy & Traveller sites with a population of approximately 130 adults and children. In addition, there is a significant number of Gypsies and Travellers living on tolerated, unauthorised or private sites and in housing across the Dorset Council area. Dorset Council co-ordinates the Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Group, a partnership forum to address issues of social exclusion amongst Gypsy & Traveller communities, initial discussions have been held with this group about digital inclusion and there is an opportunity to explore this further. Dorset has much lower levels (4.4%) of ethnically diverse residents than the country as a whole (19.5%). The highest proportion (41%) of Dorset's ethnically diverse communities are classified as 'White other'. This classification includes people who identify as white but who do not have UK national identity, an example would be Polish. Employees: We do not envisage any impact on this protected group.

Religion or belief:	*Communities: Neutral* *Employees: Neutral*
Please provide details:	Dorset Communities:

	We do not envisage any impact on this protected group. Employees: We do not envisage any impact on this protected group.

Sexual orientation:	*Communities: Neutral* *Employees: Neutral*
Please provide details:	Dorset Communities: We do not envisage any impact on this protected group. Employees: We do not envisage any impact on this protected group.

Sex (consider both men and women):	*Communities: Neutral* *Employees: Neutral*
Please provide details:	Dorset Communities: We do not envisage any impact on this protected group. Employees: We do not envisage any impact on this protected group.

Marriage or civil partnership:	*Communities: Neutral* *Employees: Neutral*
Please provide details:	Dorset Communities: We do not envisage any impact on this protected group. Employees: We do not envisage any impact on this protected group.

Carers:	*Communities: Positive* *Employees: Positive*
Please provide details:	Dorset Communities: There could be a positive impact on this group as connectivity can help to support wellbeing, and the use of online council services at times that are convenient to individuals. Employees: There could be a positive impact on this group as connectivity can help to support wellbeing, and the use of

	online council services at times that are convenient to individuals.

Rural isolation:	*Communities: Positive* *Employees: Positive*
Please provide details:	Dorset Communities: Those in rural areas are more likely to be impacted by poor connectivity/lack of infrastructure to get online which can reduce social isolation and improve wellbeing. People are more likely to be a distance away from digital support such as libraries and council offices. There will be a positive impact through continuing to improve access across Dorset. Employees: Those in rural areas are more likely to be impacted by poor connectivity/lack of infrastructure to get online. There will be a positive impact through continuing to improve access across Dorset.

Single parent families:	*Communities: Positive* *Employees: Positive*
Please provide details:	Dorset Communities: There could be a positive impact on this group as connectivity can help to support wellbeing and social inclusion, and the use of online council services at times that are convenient to individuals. Employees: There could be a positive impact on this group as connectivity can help to support wellbeing and social inclusion, and the use of online council services at times that are convenient to individuals.

Social & economic deprivation:	*Communities: Positive* *Employees: Positive*
Please provide details:	Dorset Communities: Those facing social and economic deprivation are more likely to be unable to obtain the benefits of being online and risk being digitally excluded. The focus on developing digital skills across Dorset and providing ways to get online will have a positive impact. Employees:

	Those facing social and economic deprivation are more likely to be unable to obtain the benefits of being online and risk being digital excluded. The focus on developing digital skills across Dorset and providing ways to get online will have a positive impact.

Armed Forces communities	*Communities: Neutral* *Employees: Neutral*
Please provide details:	Dorset Communities: We do not envisage any impact on this protected group. Employees: We do not envisage any impact on this protected group.

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
Race/Ethnicity	New advocacy worker is being appointed to work with Traveller/Gypsy communities to explore what support may be needed particularly to enable children's virtual education/learning in these communities.	Susan Ward-Rice – Corporate Policy & Performance Officer	December 2021
Workforce	A pilot to understand the best way to provide access to council systems for mobile staff without corporate issued devices.	Tamsyn Harwood – Organisational Development Coordinator	September 2021
Disability	Work with internal disabled groups to understand and provide the right support to use technology.	Sarah Battisby – Wellbeing Lead	April 2022
Rural Isolation	Use the digital place board to take a strategic approach, working with partners to influence the consistent availability of infrastructure/connectivity across the county to enable everyone to benefit equally.	Deborah Smart – Corporate Director Digital & Change	Long term
Digital Exclusion	The Digital Skills and Adoption programme are exploring different ways to support access through and is contained within the delivery plan of the digital vision, this will target protected groups.	Penny Syddall – Programme Manager	Long term

EqIA Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA:	Lisa Trickey	Date:	21.2.2021
Equality Lead:	Pete Bartlett	Date:	
Equality & Diversity Action Group Chair:		Date:	

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