

Dorset Councils Partnership

EqlA - Full Equality Impact Assessment

Policy or Service to be assessed:

Dorset Councils Partnership - Digital Strategy

Service and lead officer:

Ann-Marie Barlow, Project Manager, Business Improvement

Officers involved in the EqlA:

Ann-Marie Barlow	Project Manager (Digital)
Carina Cameron-Clarke	Customer Services Supervisor & Digital Access Champion
David Franks	Project Manager
Jane Nicklen	Community Planning and Development Manager
Julia Willoughby	Programme Manager (Smart Working)
Laura Hall	Digital Manager (Dorsetforyou)
Lisa Trickey	Digital ICT Business Partners (DCC)
Matt Ryan	Programme & Portfolio Manager
Penny Mell	Head of Business Improvement
Penny Sydall	Communications Team Leader (Superfast Dorset, DCC)
Susan Ward-Rice	Community Development Team Leader

What are you impact assessing?

Existing

New/proposed

Changing/Update/ revision

Other, please list:**Step 2: Scoping – what are you assessing?****Q1: What is the title of your service/strategy/policy/project?**

Dorset Councils Partnership – Digital Strategy

Q2: What is the aim of your service/strategy/policy/project?

- To make use of and maximise the potential of digital transformation, making more

services and processes available online to those who prefer, whilst freeing up officer time to support those customers who are most in need.

- To harness a 'digital culture' which provides a focus on innovation, using customer insight, reviewing the way we handle data and investigating the potential of tools like automation to improve processes.

Q3: Who does/will it have an impact on? e.g. public, visitors, staff, members, partners?

Internal

- Employees
- Members (Councillors)

External

- Residents
- Visitors / Tourists
- Businesses
- Partners
- Organisations that support vulnerable people

Q4: Are there any potential barriers to implementing changes to your service/strategy/policy/project?

None known in relation to development and adoption of the strategy.

There may be potential financial limitations in the delivery of the strategy.

Q5: Who else will be involved in implementing this service/policy service/strategy/policy/project?

Employees of Dorset Councils Partnership.

This project is governed by the Stronger Together Transformation Plan and will be influenced by other transformation initiatives taking place over the next 12 months.

Project Manager is also working with colleagues from across Dorset councils regarding Digital transformation and Digital inclusion. Due to the positive decision received regarding Local Government Reorganisation in Dorset there will also be increased partnership working in the future.

Step 3: Information gathering – what do you need to know about your customers?

Q6: What data do you already have about your service users, or the people your policy or strategy will have an impact on, that is broken down by equality strand?

Ofcom statistics from 2016 show the availability of internet access to premises as follows:

UK	North Dorset	West Dorset	Weymouth & Portland
93%	91%	91%	98%

Research undertaken by Ofcom in June 2017¹ identifies several characteristics that strongly correlate with digital exclusion.

The characteristics identified are:

- Residents aged 75 years and over
- Disadvantaged residents
- Residents who left school without qualifications
- Residents who are chronically ill (poor health)
- Residents on a low income
- Residents with socio-economic characteristics class D and E

Age, Gender and Population:²

North Dorset has a population of 71,060, which consists of:

	Total	%	Dorset
All males	35,510	50.0%	48.8%
All females	35,560	50.0%	51.2%
0-15 years	12,070	17.0%	15.9%
16- 64 years	41,330	58.2%	55.8%
65+ years	17,760	24.9%	28.3%

West Dorset has a population of 101,380, which consists of:

	Total	%	Dorset
All males	48,830	48.2%	48.8%
All females	52,560	51.8%	51.2%
0-15 years	15,690	15.5%	15.9%
16- 64 years	55,450	54.7%	55.8%
65+ years	30,250	29.8%	28.3%

Weymouth and Portland has a population of 65,170, which consists of:

	Total	%	Dorset
All males	32,210	49.4%	48.8%
All females	32,950	50.6%	51.2%
0-15 years	10,730	16.5%	16.0%
16-64 years	38,700	59.4%	56.1%
65+ years	15,730	24.1%	28.0%

¹ The real digital divide? Understanding the demographics of non-users and limited users of the internet: an analysis of Ofcom data. Good Things Foundation, Professor Simeon Yates

² Source: 2016 Mid Year Estimates, Office for National Statistics

Marital Status³

There are 28,670 households in the North Dorset area

- 38.3% are married with / without dependents
- 9.1% are cohabiting with/ without dependents
- 7% are lone parents

There are 44,386 households in the West Dorset area

- 34.3% are married with / without dependents
- 8.2 % are cohabiting with / without dependents
- 7% are lone parents

There are 28,535 households in the Weymouth and Portland area

- 31.4% are married with / without dependants
- 10.1% are co-habiting with / without dependants
- 9.8% are lone parents

Race and Ethnicity⁴

North Dorset has a population of 71,060

- 94.7% are White British
- 5.3% are BME (black and minority ethnic population)
- 2.5% main language is not English

West Dorset has a population of 101,380

- 95.7% are White British
- 4.3% are BME (black and minority ethnic population)
- 1.5% main language is not English

Weymouth & Portland has a population of 65,370

- 94.9% are White British
- 5.1% are BME (black and minority ethnic population)
- 2.1% main language is not English

Employee Data

Employee data as at **Q2 reporting period 2017/2018⁵**:

Age	Number
16-24	29
25-39	158
40-49	166

³ Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics

⁴ Source: Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics

⁵ Source: Main workforce profile table, North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council, Weymouth & Portland Borough Council: <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/workforceprofile/north-west-weymouth>

50-59	200
60-64	55
65+	16

28 employees have declared a disability⁶

Disability

- The 2011 Census showed that 17.52% of people in NDDC had a disability which affected their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. Based on the 2016 population statistics, this would indicate translate to 12,453 residents out of 71,060.
- The 2011 Census showed that 20.26% of people in WDDC had a disability which affected their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. Based on the 2016 population statistics, this would indicate translate to 20,541 residents out of 101,380
- The 2011 Census showed that 21.64% of people in WPBC had a disability which affected their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. Based on the 2016 population statistics, this would indicate translate to 14,101 residents out of 65,170

Information gathering: other

Whilst these are not protected characteristics under equalities legislation, these are two thing we considered under our policy making:

Rural Isolation

- 41% of Dorset's population live in rural areas⁷

Economic Disadvantage

- There are twelve areas (out of a total of 249) in Dorset within the top 20% most deprived nationally for multiple deprivation, down from 13 in 2010⁸
- Nine of these are within the urban borough of Weymouth & Portland

12 neighbourhoods in Dorset are in the most deprived 20% nationally for employment – 9 of these are in Weymouth & Portland⁹

Q7: Do you need any further information broken down by equality strand to inform this EqIA?

⁶ Source: Q2 reporting period, main workforce profile table, North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council, Weymouth & Portland Borough Council: <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/workforceprofile/north-west-weymouth>

⁷ Census of population, 2011

⁸ English Indices of Deprivation (2015), DCLG

⁹ English Indices of Deprivation (2015), DCLG

Yes No

If yes, list here and add actions to gather this data to your action plan at Step 5:

No further information required for this assessment but as actions emanating from this progress, further equality information will be obtained.

Q8: Is there any potential for direct or indirect discrimination?

Yes No Don't know

If yes, please explain how you are going to change this?

Dorset Councils Partnership's Digital Strategy provides a focus on what can be achieved within the next 12 – 18 months as in April 2019 two new unitary authorities will replace the 9 councils in Dorset.

This strategy does not focus on reducing or removing any customer contact channels, it instead provides a focus on making the best possible online processes for those who wish to use it to free up precious officer time - to provide the best possible services for those who need extra support.

This EqIA has been drafted to highlight the need for Dorset Councils Partnership to work in partnership with other public service providers to ensure that our residents are not left behind as digital transformation increases.

Step 4: Making a judgement about impacts

Age:

Positive impact

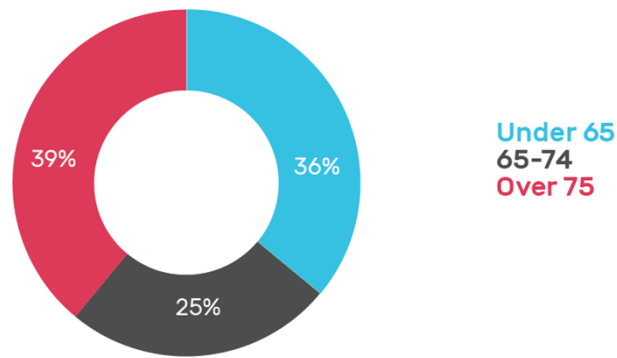
- With more council services and consultation taking place online, younger people who may not have previously interacted with the council may find it easier to do so. This is also supported by the increase in social media engagements relating to community projects and how public services are provided.
- As more people access services online, frontline staff will have more time to support those that need it. An example of this, is older people that are not online.

Negative impact

National internet non-user population split by age groups¹⁰

¹⁰ Source: https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/research-publications/ofcom_report_v4_links.pdf

The non user population split by age groups



- Older people are less likely to use the internet, this can be linked to factors like not having used a computer at work and not learning about IT in school either.

The Digital Strategy does not include any plans to make any services available online only. Our availability through traditional contact methods for example telephone and face-to-face has not changed, by providing alternative channels for those that wish to use them provides us with more time to spend with those that need to contact us face to face and through telephone.

Disability:

Positive impact

For many people, examples include:

- Digital access to services can enable people with disabilities to remain independent as people will be able to access more council services from home without the need to travel, particularly those with mobility and hearing impairments.
- Social contact can be increased through digital technologies, especially for people with conditions like Agoraphobia. Although it is worth noting that physical social contact may reduce through increased digital contact, which may impact on mental health conditions.
- People with conditions like Alzheimer's can benefit from using technology to support memory loss, for example, calendar reminders for appointments.

It is also worth noting that although the council does not currently provide social care services, there are developments nationally to use technology to help support people to live independently. An example of this is the project Hampshire County Council are trialling regarding artificial intelligence.

You can read more about this here: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/news/aug25amazonecho>

There is also a video from a resident who has benefited from this project here: <https://youtu.be/dEx8NJJUwoQ0>

Negative impact

- ONS data states that nationally, 22% of disabled adults do not use the internet¹¹
- There are some complex conditions that mean that some disabled people may never use the internet, (for example people with severe learning disabilities)

The Digital Strategy does not include any plans to make any services available online only. Our availability through traditional contact methods for example telephone and face-to-face has not changed, by providing alternative channels for those that wish to use them provides us with more time to spend with those that need to contact us face to face and through telephone.

Gender re-assignment:

No identifiable impact.

Race:

Positive impact

- Providing information digitally enables people to use online translation services. Our current arrangements are through a telephone support service, by customers being able to access this information at their home, in their preferred language is a positive solution.
- Although there is no local data available, there is some research¹² to support the fact that digitisation has added a new layer to the interaction between Gypsy-Travellers and the settled society.

Religion or belief:

No adverse impact.

Sex:

No identifiable impact.

Sexual Orientation:

No adverse impact.

Pregnancy and Maternity:

Positive impact

By making services available online, the council can support women who may have lower

¹¹ Source: https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/research-publications/ofcom_report_v4_links.pdf

¹² Source: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0308518X16636639>

mobility due to pregnancy related health problems.

Marriage and Civil Partnerships:

Positive impact

Single parents may find accessing services online a benefit to them whilst managing busy lives juggling childcare, work, etc.

Other: Rural Isolation:

Positive impact

- Dorset Councils Partnership serves 235,000 people over 669 square miles of Dorset. By providing services online for those that wish to use them, we can reduce the need for residents to travel to our office locations to interact with the council.
- Digital channels can support social interaction, especially in rural areas. The 2011 census found that 30,000 over 65's were living at home alone in Dorset.
- Research suggests that improved connectivity can positively impact rural businesses greatly, allowing them to function more competitively, reach wider markets, collaborate with remote colleagues and stay informed of developments in their sectors.
- Broadband rollout across Dorset is enabling greater access to online services.

Negative impact

- The cost of maintaining internet access, particularly the need for superfast broadband in rural communities can prevent some groups such as families on low incomes accessing services online.
- People that lack basic digital skills are more likely to be in areas of high deprivation, Weymouth & Portland and Bridport are within the top 20% most deprived nationally for multiple deprivation.¹³

Conclusion:

This assessment has been undertaken whilst also consulting with a number of local access groups. These groups were supportive of the approach the Partnership is taking, in making services available online to those who wish to use them and not removing any traditional channels.

¹³ Source: English Indices of Deprivation (2015), DCLG

It is also worth noting that anecdotal feedback received from consulting with these groups brought forward a number of suggestions about how we can use technology to become more inclusive.

Furthermore, the increased partnership working that has taken place whilst drafting the Digital Strategy has helped to provide support and encourage active partnership working towards inclusion initiatives. An example of this is the joint Universal Credit support project between the South Dorset Revenues and Benefits Partnership and the Digital Champions Network, which will help to support Universal Credit customers to manage their claims online.

In order for Digital to work for everyone, partnership working must continue.

Step 5: Action planning

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Step 5: Improvement plan – what are you going to change?

Expand boxes as necessary

Issue	Action	Performance Target (what difference will it make)	Lead Officer	Achieved
<p>Digital Skills</p> <p>Develop digital skills and confidence within the workforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a series of learning opportunities to develop digital skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve digital confidence within the workforce and community (as most employees live within the LA areas) Through increased employee confidence and digital awareness, digital services can be confidently promoted. Our employees will also be able to support our residents to access our digital services. 	<p>Ann-Marie Barlow & Alison Wright</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government Digital Service training offered to employees. First event took place in February 2018, there is potential for further training through GDS. Digital accessibility awareness event for employees and members for spring / summer 2018.
<p>Metrics</p> <p>Customer Contact Channels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to monitor take up of our digital, telephony and face to face services Maintain telephony and face to face channels as appropriate to be reviewed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued data and metrics to evidence our customers contact preferences 	<p>Emma Parry & Ann-Marie Barlow</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

	as take up of digital channels increase			
Metrics Confidence in Digital Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record, analyse and work on customer feedback to make sure that our customers are confident in the services we provide online Continue to work with equalities groups to monitor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline data and measured improvements upon this 	Emma Parry, Laura Hall & Ann-Marie Barlow	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

EqIA approved by:

Date:

Review date:

Check with your equality officer for the EqIA signing-off process and for posting the EqIA on the web