

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Before completing this EqIA please ensure you have read the EqIA Guidance Notes

Title	Dorset Council Plan		
Date assessment started:	August 2019	Version No:	V4
		Date of completion:	16 January 2020

Type of Strategy, Policy, Project or Service:

Is this Equality Impact Assessment (please put a cross in the relevant box)

Existing:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Changing, update or revision:	<input type="checkbox"/>
New or proposed:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other (please explain):	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is this Equality Impact Assessment (please put a cross in the relevant box)

Internal:	<input type="checkbox"/>	External:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
-----------	--------------------------	-----------	--------------------------	-------	-------------------------------------

Report Created By:

Name:	Becky Forrester
Job Title:	Business Partner, Policy, Research and Performance
Email address:	Rebecca.Forrester@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Members of the assessment team:	Corporate Policy & Performance Officer (Equalities) Service Manager for Communication and Engagement Consultation and Engagement Business Partner

Step 1: Aims

What are the aims of your strategy, policy, project or service?
The aim of the project is to draft, consult on and agree a new Dorset Council (corporate) Plan (2020-24). The draft will be going to full council on 18 February 2020 following discussion at Cabinet on 28 January.
What is the background or context to the proposal?
This will be Dorset Council's first ever corporate council plan. It was drafted by councillors in the summer of 2019, informed by a public conversation from October-December, and has been further developed as a result of the research and discussions prompted by this EqIA.
This assessment started in August and was designed to ensure the public conversation was evidence-based and inclusive, and that officers and councillors made a concerted effort to engage with equality groups and potentially vulnerable communities in developing the plan.

Step 2: Intelligence and Communication

What data, information, evidence and research was used in this EqlA and how has it been used to inform the decision-making process?

What data, information, evidence and research was used in this EqlA?

The Council Plan will potentially have an impact on every resident, business, visitor and community in Dorset, so research has focussed on county-level data taken primarily from the Dorset Insight website (<https://apps.geowessex.com/insights/>) and the State of Dorset report 2019. Information has also been obtained from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

The Equality Act 2010 introduced the term 'protected characteristics' to refer to specific aspects of a person's identity. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment and identity
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

As a council we recognise that there are some additional local characteristics that impact on people and their ability to access services and /or participate in public life, and we also consider these when making decisions. They include:

- Carers
- Rural isolation
- Single parent families
- Poverty (social and economic deprivation)
- Military families/veterans

The significant headlines from the evidence are that:

- The current population of Dorset Council is estimated to be 376,480 (an increase of 1,430 since 2017) with an above average proportion of those 65 years and older (28% compared with 18% in England and Wales)
- In the former East Dorset district council area, this rises to over 33% aged 65 and older
- By 2025, more than 10,000 residents aged 65 and over will be living with dementia. It is likely that an additional 3,000 carers will be needed to support them
- The gap in life expectancy between the most deprived and least deprived areas in Dorset is 6 years for men, and 5.2 for women
- One in five residents consider that they have a long-term health problem or disability and is highest in Weymouth & Portland
- 2,800 children live in workless households
- In 2017 lower end house prices were more than ten times higher than lower end earnings, higher in east Dorset and Purbeck
- 66 areas are in the most deprived nationally for access to housing and services

- 4.4% of residents are Black and Minority Ethnic (BME). The highest proportion of Dorset's BME population are classified as 'White Other' who make up approximately 41%. This classification includes people who identify as white but do not have UK national identity
- 3% of our BME residents are Gypsy and Traveller communities. Gypsies and Travellers have long been an important part of Dorset's historical and cultural landscape (Dorset opened a 'Gypsy school' in 1847) but evidence suggests educational and life expectancy are particularly poor for these residents. Data obtained by the EHRC shows that:
 - Life expectancy for Gypsies and Travellers is 10 years lower than the national average.
 - Gypsy and Traveller mothers are 20 times more likely than the rest of the population to have experienced the death of a child.
 - In 2003, less than a quarter of Gypsy and Traveller children obtained five GCSEs and A*-C grades, compared to a national average of over half.

How has this information been used to inform the decision-making process?

Although the EqIA did not identify any adverse impacts on vulnerable people, the conversation raised a number of issues which will be addressed in the Plan:

- The need to focus on areas of greatest deprivation where possible (ie strengthen the current commitment under *strong, healthy communities* to 'provide additional support to communities with the greatest challenges')
- The plan needs to make more explicit reference to supporting people aged 65 and over
- The plan needs to be explicit about the increase in investment in youth support happening as a result of organisational restructuring
- The plan needs to be more specific about what the council will do to improve public and rural transport (lobby government regarding train services and working with local bus companies for example)
- A performance framework needs to be built around the plan and must include equality and inclusion metrics where possible
- The plan needs to specifically reference the council's equality objectives (which are:
 - To foster good relations with and within the community; and
 - To develop and support a diverse workforce)

The conversation also highlighted a number of service specific comments and suggestions that will be provided to Heads of Service for consideration as part of the service planning process, and which will be fed back to groups as requested.

What data do you already have about your service users, or the people your proposal will have an impact on?

As above – the plan will have an impact on all Dorset's residents.

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

The conversation was advertised in the Dorset Council magazine, which is sent to every household in the county.

As a result of this impact assessment, officers also engaged with the following groups:

Dorset Communities Forum (a network of 30+ voluntary and community groups, many of which are umbrella organisations)
 People First Dorset (a support organisation for people with learning disabilities)
 Bridport Access group
 Weymouth and Portland Access group (support organisations for people with physical disabilities and sensory impairments)
 Gypsy and Traveller liaison group
 3 x resident panels (held in Sturminster Newton, Ferndown and Dorchester)
 Our Dorset Public Engagement Group Workshop (a joint health and local authority resident engagement panel)

Information was also widely circulated to specific groups, including Dorset Blind Association and Bridport Deaf Society, and via umbrella organisations including Dorset Communities Forum, Dorset Youth Association and Dorset Race Equality Council, with a request to forward the details to other members and networks. As a result, we do not know exactly how many groups this information reached, but 49 voluntary and community organisations responded to the online survey.

Is further information needed to help inform this proposal?

Not at this stage.

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

A number of the groups we spoke to asked for specific feedback, which will be provided.

Step 3: Assessment

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"> • Positive impact on a large proportion of protected characteristic groups • Significant positive impact on a small proportion of protect characteristics group
Negative Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disproportionate impact on a large proportion of protected characteristic groups • Significant disproportionate impact on a small proportion of protected characteristic groups.
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:	<i>Positive</i>
What age bracket does this affect?	Older people and children and young people

Please provide details:	<p>The conversation sought views from people of all ages.</p> <p>As a result of the comments received during the conversation, the Plan will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make more specific reference to supporting older people • Clarify the increase in youth support that will be provided through Children’s Services
-------------------------	--

Disability:	<i>Neutral or positive</i>
Does this affect a specific disability group?	No
Please provide details:	<p>In addition to general media coverage, officers engaged with two local access groups (supporting people with physical disabilities and sensory impairments) and Dorset People First (which supports people with learning disabilities).</p> <p>One in five of Dorset’s residents consider that they have a long-term health problem or disability. Rates are significantly higher than average in Weymouth than in Dorset as a whole.</p> <p>One of the key messages from the consultation was that the council consider investing more in deprived areas to reduce inequalities. If this is agreed, the overall impact should be neutral or positive.</p> <p>7.8% of those who responded to the survey considered themselves to have a disability under the Equality Act 2010.</p>

Gender Reassignment & Gender Identity:	<i>Neutral</i>
Please provide details:	No negative impact identified.

Pregnancy and maternity:	<i>Neutral or positive impact</i>
Please provide details:	<p>The Dorset CCG’s Pan-Dorset Maternity Strategy 2014-2019 states that ‘Maternity and related services are arguably unique in health care in their potential to improve both the health of women using them now and, through their children, the health of wider society for generations to come. Vulnerable people and those in poorer communities have babies with the same inherent potential as those that are from richer backgrounds, but children from these backgrounds often fare worse in life than those from richer areas’.</p> <p>One of the key messages from the consultation was that the council consider investing more in deprived areas to reduce inequalities.</p>

Race and Ethnicity:	<i>Neutral</i>
---------------------	----------------

Please provide details:	Information was shared with Dorset Race Equality Council, and a specific discussion was held with the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Group. The loss of the Traveller Education Team was highlighted as having had a significant impact on Gypsies and Travellers. Heads of Service are working together to provide specific feedback to this group.
-------------------------	--

Religion or belief:	<i>Neutral</i>
Please provide details:	No adverse impacts have been identified.

Sexual orientation:	<i>Neutral</i>
Please provide details:	Officers sought to work with one of the Trades Unions to advertise the conversation during the LGBT history tour, but the union was not supportive.

Sex:	<i>Neutral</i>
Please provide details:	The split between men and women is broadly the same (51% women and 49% men), so this wasn't specifically addressed (beyond the resident focus groups and public engagement group)

Marriage or civil partnership:	<i>Neutral</i>
Please provide details:	No issues identified

Carers:	<i>Neutral or positive</i>
Please provide details:	Residents in Dorset are more likely to be unpaid carers (12% of residents compared to 10% in England). There are now around 3,000 registered carers in Dorset. A number of comments were made about care through the conversation (eg 'need to encourage more people to work in the care sector at all levels'). Dorset Council recognises the enormous social and economic value that carers bring, and provide information, advice and support to carers, including respite care on the www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk website.

Rural isolation:	<i>Neutral</i>
Please provide details:	46% of the population live in rural areas, and diminishing public transport means that for those without private transport (young people and low income families for example), this aspect of social deprivation can be significant. The article in Dorset Council news about the conversation was delivered to every household, and officers sought to get a range of views in the residents people panels, but it is unclear how successful this engagement was.

	<p>Better public and rural transport came across as a significant issue for residents in the conversation, as did improving the road infrastructure and road quality, and was raised several times by voluntary and community organisations, and at the Dorset Communities Forum.</p> <p>One of the recommendations is that the council is more explicit in the plan about how they will address this (eg lobby government in respect of rail services, work with the Local Enterprise Partnership on major road schemes, and improve digital connectivity so that people can access services and work from home etc).</p>
--	--

Single parent families:	<i>Neutral or positive</i>
Please provide details:	One of the key messages from the consultation was that the council consider investing more in deprived areas to reduce inequalities.

Poverty (social & economic deprivation):	<i>Neutral or positive</i>
Please provide details:	One of the key messages from the consultation was that the council consider investing more in deprived areas to reduce inequalities. If this is agreed, the impact is expected to be positive in those areas (principally Weymouth and Portland) where levels of poverty are highest.

Military families/veterans:	<i>Neutral or positive</i>
Please provide details:	Details about the conversation were circulated to military contacts through the Military-Civilian Integration Partnership. No comments were received. The Council remains committed to the Military Covenant and is now working with town councils to broaden its support.

Step 4: 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	Person(s) responsible	Deadline	How will it be monitored?
Changing the council plan	Amend the draft council plan as detailed in section 2/page 3 above	Jen Lowis & Becky Forrester	20 January 2020	NA -
Monitoring performance	Identify one or more performance indicator that will help measure the impact of the plan on people with protected characteristics	Becky Forrester & Susan Ward-Rice	31 March 2020	The performance framework that sits around the council plan will be monitored on an annual basis

Step 5: EqIA Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA:		Date:	
Equality Lead:		Date:	
Relevant Focus Groups*:		Date:	
Directorate Board Chair:		Date:	

* To include Diversity Action Groups