



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Template

Before completing the EQIA please have a look at the [Dorset Council style guide](#) and also use the [accessibility checker](#) to make sure your document is easy for people of all abilities to read.

Use the [Hemingwayapp](#) to check the readability of your document, to do this, click the edit button on the top right of the hemminwayapp screen, paste your text and the app will highlight if there are any problem areas.

Some key tips

- avoid tables and charts, if possible please provide raw data
- avoid pictures and maps if possible.
- avoid using bold, italics or colour to highlight or stress a point
- when using numbering or bullet points avoid using capitals at the beginning unless the name of something
- date format is dd month yyyy (1 June 2021)
- use clear and simple language
- where you need to use technical terms, abbreviations or acronyms, explain what they mean the first time you use them
- if using hyperlinks, make sure the link text describes where the link goes rather than 'click here' Please note equality impact assessments are published on the Dorset Council [website](#)

Before completing this form, please refer to the [supporting guidance](#). The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to consider the equality implications of your policy, strategy, project or service on different groups of people including employees of Dorset Council, residents and users of our services and to consider if there are ways to proactively advance equality.

Where further guidance is needed, please contact the Inclusion Champion or the [Diversity & Inclusion Officer](#).

1. Initial information

Name of the policy, project, strategy, project or service being assessed:

South Walks House – options for repurposing / redevelopment

The proposals are aligned with the [Property Strategy and Asset Management Plan](#), and the [Dorchester Office Strategy](#), which in turn is aligned with the [Dorset Workplace](#) hybrid working model.

This is an initial EqIA, containing high level information and analysis. The EqIA will be revisited and further developed on identification of a preferred option.

2. Is this a (please delete those not required):

New policy, project, strategy, project or service

~~Review of policy, project, strategy, project or service~~

~~Other (please explain)~~

3. Is this (please delete those not required):

~~Internal (employees only)~~

External (residents, communities, partners)

~~Both internal and external~~

4. Please provide a brief overview of its aims and objectives:

The cabinet paper to which this EqIA is associated details four options with regards the future of South Walks House, and makes recommendations taking into account commercial, social and economic best value. The four options being:

1. Disposal for a capital receipt
2. Use of South Walks House by a group of NHS organisations for clinical and office use
3. Conversion by the Council as private rented residential accommodation
4. Conversion for hotel use

The cabinet paper provides an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

5. Please provide the background to this proposal

On [6 April 2021 cabinet](#) considered and approved the [Dorchester Office Strategy](#), including the principle of consolidating the council's office requirements on the County Hall campus, and, as such, the vacation of South Walks House, with occupying teams being relocated to County Hall, and the customer access point relocated to Dorchester Library and Learning Centre.

The cabinet decision also directed officers to continue to explore and investigate alternative uses for South Walks House so as to ensure that the council achieves best commercial, social and economic value. This has resulted in the four options referenced above.

A previous EqIA ([Dorchester Office Rationalisation EqIA](#)), prepared as part of the development of the [Dorchester Office Strategy](#), considered the impacts of vacating South Walks House.

Evidence gathering and engagement

6. What sources of data, evidence or research has been used for this assessment? (e.g national statistics, employee data):

For this initial EQiA the following data and evidence has been considered:

- Economic development data
- Hotel economic impact assessment
- Anecdotal evidence from NHS colleagues concerning impact of pop up Orthopaedics Clinic currently located at South Walks House, and future potential clinical space.

Further, more detailed analysis in relation to the preferred option will be undertaken once identified.

7. What did this tell you?

Initial data gathering has particularly highlighted the positive economic impacts of options 2, 3 and 4 on the Dorset Council area. All with likely associated positive impacts on economic sustainability and growth in Dorchester town centre, especially in the context of COVID recovery.

8. Who have you engaged and consulted with as part of this assessment?

Engagement has occurred with key stakeholders in relation to each option. This includes internal stakeholders including finance, legal and economic development colleagues. External stakeholders including NHS representatives, hotel representatives, and independent estate agents.

9. Is further information needed to help inform decision making?

Not at this stage

Is an EQIA required?

Not every proposal will need an EqIA. The data and research should inform your decision whether to continue with this EqIA. If you decide that your proposal does not need an EqIA, please answer the following question:

This policy, strategy, project or service does not require an EqlA because (provide details):

This is an initial EqlA, containing high level information and analysis. The EqlA will be revisited and further developed on identification of a preferred option.

Assessing the impact on different groups of people

For each of the protected characteristics groups below, please explain whether your proposal could have a positive, negative, unclear or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is and if unclear or negative please explain what mitigating actions will be taken.

- use the evidence you have gathered to inform your decision making.
- consider impacts on residents, service users and employees separately.
- if your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option.
- see guidance for more information about the different [protected characteristics](#).

Key to impacts

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.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Age	Option 1 – neutral	
	Option 2 – potentially positive	Potential to reduce NHS back logs / waiting lists through increased clinical capacity, has a potentially positive impact on age related ill health
	Option 3 – neutral	
	Option 4 – neutral	
Disability	Option 1 – neutral	
	Option 2 - potentially positive	Potential to reduce NHS back logs / waiting lists through increased clinical capacity, has a potentially positive impact on disability related ill health
	Option 3 – neutral	
	Option 4 – neutral	
	Option 1 - neutral	

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity	Option 2 – neutral	
	Option 3 – neutral	
	Option 4 - neutral	
Marriage or civil partnership	Option 1 - neutral	
	Option 2 - neutral	
	Option 3 - neutral	
	Option 4 - neutral	
Pregnancy and maternity	Option 1 - neutral	
	Option 2 – potentially positive	Potential to reduce NHS back logs / waiting lists through increased clinical capacity, has a potentially positive impact on pregnancy related ill health
	Option 3 - neutral	
	Option 4 - neutral	
Race and Ethnicity	Option 1 – neutral	
	Option 2 – neutral	
	Option 3 – neutral	
	Option 4 – neutral	
Religion and belief	Option 1 – neutral	
	Option 2 – neutral	
	Option 3 – neutral	
	Option 4 – neutral	
Sex (consider men and women)	Option 1 – neutral	
	Option 2 – neutral	
	Option 3 – neutral	
	Option 4 – neutral	
Sexual orientation	Option 1 – neutral	
	Option 2 – neutral	
	Option 3 – neutral	
	Option 4 – neutral	
People with caring responsibilities	Option 1 – neutral	
	Option 2 – neutral	
	Option 3 – neutral	
	Option 4 – neutral	
Rural isolation	Option 1 - neutral	
	Option 2 – neutral	
	Option 3 – neutral	
	Option 4 – neutral	
Socio-economic deprivation	Option 1- positive	Retail and residential development will contribute to wider growth / sustainability of the town centre
	Option 2 – positive	Use as office space / clinical space will increase footfall in the

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		town centre, and contribute to economic growth / sustainability
	Option 3 – positive	Residential development will contribute to wider sustainability of the town centre. Additionally, there is potential to include some affordable rented accommodation in this option.
	Option 4 – positive	Hotel development will increase footfall to town centre, including a positive impact on tourism and tourist related businesses, contributing to economic growth / sustainability
Armed forces communities	Option 1 – neutral	
	Option 2 – neutral	
	Option 3 – neutral	
	Option 4 – potential positive	Potential to address identified lack of hotel accommodation for armed forces facilities such as those located at Dorset Innovation Park

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

As can be seen in the above table, the four options are judged mainly to result in neutral impacts with regards protected characteristics and other groups.

Potential positive impacts are identified in relation to all four options regarding socio-economic deprivation.

Additionally, option 2 (clinical/office space for the NHS) may result in some positive impact on certain groups relating to waiting times for treatment.

Action Plan

Summarise any actions required as a result of this EqIA.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by

Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA: Jessica Maskrey

Officers involved in completing the EqIA: Jessica Maskrey, Ade Adebayo, Ben Lancaster, Paul Scothern, Mark Osborne

Date of completion: 10 November 2021

Version Number: 1

EqIA review date: TBC

Inclusion Champion Sign Off:

Equality Lead Sign Off: Becky Forrester

Next Steps:

- the EqIA will be reviewed by Business Intelligence & Performance and if in agreement, your EqIA will be signed off.
- if not, we will get in touch to chat further about the EqIA, to get a better understanding.
- EqIA authors are responsible to ensuring any actions in the action plan are implemented.

Please send to [Diversity and Inclusion Officer](#)