

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:

[The future role of Dorset Council in Queen Elizabeth Leisure Centre](#)

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

[Review of a service](#)

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

External

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

Queen Elizabeth Leisure Centre in Wimborne, Dorset is owned by the Queen Elizabeth School Foundation Trustees. The leisure facilities are managed by Dorset Council under a Dual Use Management Agreement. This agreement enables both the school and community to have access to the facilities at set times. Queen Elizabeth School receives funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency for their use of the facilities and the community usage is funded by Dorset Council. The Council has the right under the agreement, to give 2 years notice to withdraw from the management agreement.

The aim of the public consultation was to enable the Council to fully understand the future impact on users, clubs, and staff should they decide to withdraw from managing the Queen Elizabeth Leisure Centre.

5. Please provide the background to this proposal?

As part of its wider Leisure Review, Dorset Council is committed to help create strong, healthy communities. The council's aims are to support communities to be active, to increase people's healthy life expectancy and reduce health inequalities between areas. Leisure facilities will play a significant role in providing opportunities for all ages to lead a more physically active lifestyle, alongside the council's greenspaces, Rights of Way, country parks and outdoor education centres.

The leisure centre at Queen Elizabeth School is not under the ownership of Dorset Council, however through the dual use agreement, the Council manages the site and has an ongoing joint liability for both revenue costs and capital investment.

Dorset Council's Leisure Services is currently subsidising the leisure centre at Queen Elizabeth School by around £550,000 per annum, and this is far higher than any of the leisure centres owned by the Council. Dorset Council owns and funds 8 leisure facilities across the council area; providing an overall subsidy of approximately £1.7m per annum. The funding at Queen Elizabeth Leisure Centre equates to 33.3% of the council's total leisure centres budget and raises the question as to whether this provides value for money.

There are a high number of public leisure facilities within a 20-minute drive time of Queen Elizabeth Leisure Centre, three of which are owned by Dorset Council (see map on the next page). Similarly, there are several large private and budget leisure clubs within a 10-mile radius; and this high level of competition continues to have a negative impact on the centre's usage figures and trading. The BH Live leisure centre in Corfe Mullen has attracted a high number of local users who are able to have full access to facilities without the restrictions of a school having priority use.

Under the contract, Dorset Council has the right to give written notice to Queen Elizabeth School Foundation Trustees to withdraw from the management agreement. There is a requirement to give at least two years notice. If this were to happen then Queen Elizabeth School have confirmed that they would not be able to operate a full leisure offer due to financial constraints.

The school currently receives exceptional factor funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency, as a result of the centre being opened fully for community leisure use. Given that Queen Elizabeth School would not have the funds to operate a dual use leisure provision, it would no longer be eligible for circa £279,500 annual payment from the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This would not only impact the school's ability to provide community access but would also reduce the leisure facilities available for school use.

The school continue to make the case that they would still be left with exceptional premises and that the funding should continue. However, school funding is bound by the regulations from the Educational Skills Funding Agency.

Evidence gathering and engagement

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

Public and staff consultation

Stat maps (postcode analysis)

Medium Financial Strategy

Play pitch Strategy

Governing Bodies (England Hockey, Swim England)

Dorset Council Corporate Plan

7. What did this tell you?

The consultation told us the main activities undertaken at QE Leisure Centre by individual users are swimming, exercise classes, court or astro pitch sports and climbing. 38% said they use the centre weekly, with a further third several times a week. 82.8% travel by car and 10.4% walk. Respondents choose QE as it is close to where they live (74.9%) and has good facilities (68.0%); these are factors they also value highly in a leisure centre. Some are members of a club that is based at QE and commented on the unique facilities there (e.g. climbing, swimming apparatus). While many commented that there were no disadvantages to using QE, those who did highlight concerns referred to small gym/studio spaces and poor maintenance of equipment and the outdoor space. Reference was also made to limitations due to dual use with the school.

When asked what other local sports facilities you use or have you used, 51.1% of those responding to this question selected one or more other sites, the remaining 48.9% of respondents to this question said none of the other facilities. The key barrier to going to other sites that were highlighted by respondents was that of distance, travel and being 'too far', along with a lack of or inadequate/unavailable facilities for clubs, certain classes not being available at other sites and cost (whether for attendance, membership, or extra travel). Others raised issues such as practical reasons or convenience e.g., travel time and impact, other commitments, parking, prefer to walk etc. Some said there were no barriers to them using other sites and a few respondents already do use them.

Overall, a change in the provision from QE would mostly reduce (57.4%), as opposed to cease (24.0%) sporting/fitness activities engaged with by individual users. 19.4% would look to use other facilities in the local area. Findings were similar for those who use a car (58.2% reduce v 21.8% cease v 21.7% use other facilities). Respondents commented that a change would affect their levels of exercise and fitness (especially swimming), their lives generally and impact the area itself, and the school and students. Further mention was given to the impact on mental health.

There were 62 responses from organisations, some sports clubs had multiple submissions from members. Many of these organisations base their core activity at the QE Leisure Centre. The key messages from this group include that QE has the facilities they need to operate (e.g. roped climbing, adapted swimming pool equipment, astro-turf, athletic equipment, privacy for swimmers, flood-lit courts) and other sites do not have the equipment or capacity to host another club/team/league. The impact of travel and membership are mentioned with the overall impact of changes being that the club will cease to exist or reduce its capacity to operate.

Findings from disability individuals and group are generally like the wider results; there is a specific group for disabled swimmers who use the QE pool. Disabled users reported that they were more likely to cease sport/fitness altogether if the centre could not continue as it is now (50.7%). There were also a number of responses referring to those who go to the QE leisure centre due to a GP referral or for rehabilitation purposes.

Although also referenced throughout the responses, the key issues raised in 'Any Other Comments' were those of the need for a leisure centre in Wimborne (if not actually increasing the facilities available) due to increasing housing provision in the area, the impact on the school and its students and the community as a whole. Reference was also made to the impact on the environment of asking residents to drive, the contrast in asking people to drive versus being encouraged to walk/cycle and the importance of access to health/wellbeing activities.

The findings from competitor analysis also told us that there are 7 public leisure facilities within a 10-mile radius offering the same and similar facilities that are on offer at QE Leisure Centre.

Particular concern was voiced by governing bodies of Hockey and Netball if provision were withdrawn as to whether the local hockey club 'Wayfarers' and the local netball league would be able to continue.

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

The consultation received 1,799 responses were received: two thirds (64.6%) said they were users of the QE Leisure Centre; 22.1% were parents/carers of (19%), or pupils (3.1%), of QE school. 3.4% were organisations, with a further 12.7% responding as members of clubs. 1.3% were members of staff and 0.3% representing Town/Parish councils. 17% stated that they were non-users of the leisure centre. 'Other' users included previous/ex-users, parent of a future student, ex-pupil, or teacher/staff member of QE. About a third of respondents said they were members of QE.

Members of clubs came from a wide range of organisations such as Wimborne Wayfarers Hockey Club, Wimborne Athletics Club, Wimborne Wagtails, Poole Netball League, and the Wimborne Manta Rays Swimming Club.

Outside of the consultation local and parish councils were consulted as well as QE School, local clubs and organisations associated with QE Leisure Centre, associated governing bodies and public health/Active Dorset

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

The consultation brought up comments from users that needed to be tested and, in some respects, challenged. Currently work is being undertaken with other leisure providers to ensure appropriate sessions are available and these key groups such as disability and GP referral groups are not impacted

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 EqIA because (provide details):

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	Negative	Potential sporting development of school children attending QE School
Disability	Unclear	If the pool were to close would there be any other provision in the local area to accommodate
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity	Neutral	
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral	
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	
Race and Ethnicity	Neutral	
Religion and belief	Neutral	
Sex (consider men and women)	Negative	The Poole netball league would need to relocate and find alternative provision which could affect hundreds of women
Sexual orientation	Neutral	
People with caring responsibilities	Unclear	As per disability if the disabled client requires a carer

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Rural isolation	Neutral	
Socio-economic deprivation	Neutral	
Armed forces communities	Neutral	

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

Many of the impacts would not be affected, and the unclear impacts could become neutral once it becomes clear from liaising with local centres on their provision for the effected groups such as disability and people with caring responsibilities

If an alternative management company cannot be found, the greatest impact is likely to be on the children attending QE school as they would have a lack of resources for physical education classes and their on-going sporting development, health, and wellbeing

It is clear however that if the outside provision were to cease operation it would affect a large number of ladies teams who participate in the weekly Poole Netball League.

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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
Disability Provision	Competitor analysis of sessions and spare time within timetables for sessions and groups to relocate	Darren Spreadbury	
Dorset Council and Wimborne Academy Trust agreement on conditional survey	Both parties need to make agreement on what provision needs to be upgraded, repaired, and replaced that could elevate the Age impact	Paul Rutter	

Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA: Paul Rutter

Officers involved in completing the EqIA: Darren Spreadbury, Rebecca Forrester

Date of completion:14/01/2022

Version Number: 1

EqIA review date: On-going

Inclusion Champion Sign Off:

Equality Lead Sign Off:

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](#)

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