



Resident Events Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Initial information

A Big Conversation

Is this a:

New project

Is this (please delete those not required):

External

Please provide a brief overview of its aims and objectives:

To help support the development of the new Council Plan, and in part due to the recent elections, the Council is planning to engage with residents to find out what people think of the manifesto priorities within the new plan. This will be done through in-person events throughout the summer and across the Dorset Council area. Feedback will also be sought online for those unable to attend the in-person events.

Rather than sticking to a traditional survey, we want to go out and have face to face conversations with people and engage with them more creatively online. Some of the aims are to:

- Facilitate dialogue: creating safe spaces for open conversations on relevant topics
- Increase participation: encourage community members to actively engage
- Build trust: listen to residents to build mutual respect
- Drive action: translate discussions into tangible initiatives

Please provide the background to this proposal?

In mid-2021, the communication and engagement service identified a challenge to:

‘Improve engagement with our external communities and demonstrate that their voice is being heard within the council, in ways which are consistent, efficient, and appropriate, defining the role of the central team and responsibilities of other teams.’

Appendix 4

This was a council transformation project, and agile methodology was used throughout. The discovery period of work ran from autumn 2021 to spring 2022, and actively involved colleagues from all services across the council who deliver engagement, consultation and co-production activity.

We have since created solutions for several of the learnings introduced in the discovery phase, and the transformation element of the project formally closed in February 2024. However, we still need to work to change views and habits held by both colleagues and residents across the Dorset Council area in how we consult and engage.

Now we are at the start of a new administration, this is the perfect chance for us to put this new learning to the test and try our hands at something different.

This project will directly address parts of the learning from the review, such as:

1. Most consultation and engagement activity conducted by Dorset Council tends to use a traditional survey methodology, and there is a lack of more creative methods (and the tools and training to deliver this) which would better reach and engage certain audiences.
2. Too many surveys are conducted by Dorset Council, with services conducting their own activity in silos, not sharing results or learning from previous activity, and resulting in survey fatigue among residents.
3. There is no 'ongoing' way for residents to engage with us – activity tends to be conducted as a one-off.
4. Residents are engaged in a limited way that means they do not feel listened to and have poor understanding of council decision making. This negatively affects residents' trust in and satisfaction with the council. We need to do more to show what happens as a result of their feedback - 'you said, we did' - and we need to be clearer about what residents can and cannot influence through consultation and engagement.
5. It is confusing for residents to know how to engage with Dorset Council – there are lots of different surveys, but a lack of overall clarity about how or where to engage with the council.

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

Information source 1

Population - <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/census-2021-population-and-household-numbers-topic#total-population-numbers>

The total population in the Dorset Council area is 379,584. The [breakdown of the different age groups](#) is:

Appendix 4

- 0-4: 4%
- 5-15: 11.2%
- 16-64: 55.2%
- 65+: 29.6%

Diversity - [Area profile for Dorset Council - Dorset Council](#)

- 48.9% male; 51.1% female
- [97.1% White; 1.1% Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh; 1.2% from mixed or multiple ethnic groups; 0.3% Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African](#)
- [6.5% of people in the Dorset Council are disabled under the Equality Act](#)
- 1.8% of residents living in Dorset Council do not speak English as their main language
- 51.6% Christian
- 13.7% with no cars or vans in household

Information source 2 - <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/our-digital-vision#our-digital-statistics-baseline>

In the Dorset Council area 11% of residents are completely offline and another 20% lack all the essential digital skills needed. This means nearly a third of Dorset Council residents are digitally excluded in some way.

Information source 3 – the Residents’ Survey 2023

The survey results highlight residents’ views about the council, where they live, and issues that matter to them.

The survey was hand-delivered to over 2,000 Dorset residents, with results weighted by age group, geography, sex, ethnicity, and socio-economic background to ensure a representative sample of the entire area, with a 2% margin of error.

The survey shows that generally residents feel ‘fairly well informed’, with 55% of respondents stating so. However, 32% felt not very well informed, with another 8% not being informed at all.

Acting on concerns of residents was also a key theme of the survey. 43% of respondents said they thought Dorset Council acts on concerns of local residents, with just 34% saying that Dorset Council provides value for money. In terms of locality, respondents from East Dorset especially thought that Dorset Council did not act on the concerns of local residents.

Information source 4

Appendix 4

The Government has also set out their own standards that should be adopted when engaging and consulting with stakeholders. You can find more detail on the Government principles [here](#). They are that consultations should:

- be clear and concise
 - have a purpose
 - be informative
 - be only part of a process of engagement
 - last for a proportionate amount of time
 - be targeted – ensure the right people are consulted
 - take account of the groups being consulted
 - be agreed before publication
 - facilitate scrutiny
-
- Public Sector Equality Duty requires local authorities to have ‘due regard’ to the impact of changes on those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010
 - Data Protection Act (2018)
 - Six Show and Share/Tell sessions have been delivered at key points within the organisation to provide updates on activity and gather feedback on the consultation and engagement review.
 - Twelve-week programme of discovery activities (data collection, interviews, internal/external surveys). These sessions provided an opportunity to understand current activity and provide an opportunity to identify key areas to work on.

Information source 5 – for the platform specifically

When asked to confirm the assistive software packages that Delib work with or test against, this was their response:

“In terms of assistive software, the assistive technology we test against includes JAWS (Job Access With Speech, a screen reader tool), NVDA (Non-Visual Desktop Access, allows blind and vision impaired people to access and interact with Windows and many third party applications) and VoiceOver (screen reader software), plus voice interaction and the keyboard.”

Further accessibility options are as follows:

- Delib’s tools meet the WCAG 2.2 AA standards.

Appendix 4

- Text size, colour and font are at a reasonable size and contrast level and are not changeable by customers.
- Sites are 'zoomable' up to 200% without the text spilling off the screen.
- The sites are compatible with accessibility software, meaning users can:
 1. Navigate the website using just a keyboard.
 2. Navigate the website using speech recognition software.
 3. Listen to the website using a screen reader.
- All tools are responsive, so they fit on different types of devices like mobiles and tablets.

What did this tell you?

The key findings from the consultation and engagement review discovery phase were presented to Senior Leadership Team on 14 November 2022:

- most formal statutory consultations are conducted in line with legislation, including the Gunning Principles, and receive relatively high numbers of responses. However, certain groups in the population are over-represented among respondents (mainly well-educated, middle-income, white, older people) and others are under-represented. This means that results received are not always representative of the population and we are not reaching all groups in a way they would like to engage.
- most consultation and engagement activity conducted by Dorset Council tends to use a traditional survey methodology, and there is a lack of more creative methods (and the tools and training to deliver this) which would better reach and engage certain audiences.
- there is some good work on service design, user testing and co-production taking place in certain pockets of the organisation – but it is not yet widespread.
- too many surveys are conducted by Dorset Council, with services conducting their own activity in silos, not sharing results or learning from previous activity, and resulting in survey fatigue among residents.
- different services procure and use different software for engagement, which is confusing for residents and not cost effective. We need consistency in how we present our consultations and engagement: in the methods but also in branding, appearance, interfaces, etc., so people are familiar with it, how to access and use it.
- there is no 'ongoing' way for residents to engage with us – activity tends to be conducted as a one-off.
- residents are engaged in a limited way that means they do not feel listened to and have poor understanding of council decision making. This negatively affects residents' trust in and satisfaction with the council. We need to do more to show what happens as a result of their feedback - 'you said, we did' - and we need to

Appendix 4

be clearer about what residents can and cannot influence through consultation and engagement.

- it is confusing for residents to know how to engage with Dorset Council – there are lots of different surveys, but a lack of overall clarity about how or where to engage with the council. A single ‘one stop shop’ approach for consultation and engagement would be much clearer, simpler and more accessible.
- among some Dorset Council employees, there is a poor level of understanding of consultation, engagement and co-production – terms are used interchangeably. Many colleagues do not know when they should do it / what they should do / how they should do it and what tools and support are at their disposal.
- there is no comprehensive central record or library of all engagement and consultation activity across the council, and the findings from this activity. This means that some activity is duplicated and repeated when it would be better if colleagues could access the data and insight that already exists.
- the council lacks the right tools to enable colleagues to do engagement. This includes software, training and guidance.
- insufficient time is built into many council projects to conduct consultation or engagement properly, end to end. This includes time to plan, develop stakeholder relationships, to take account of the findings, to embed EQIA (not just one point in process but throughout), and to feedback findings to respondents.
- there are opportunities with the new customer account and platform to use customer data to better target engagement activity at the right audiences.

The data from the residents’ survey links to several of the points above. Residents being engaged with in a limited way has potentially led to the feeling of Dorset Council not acting on behalf of residents. Different areas within the Council area also view the authority on a varying scale. This gives an idea as to which areas should be targeted or prioritised.

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

- Dorset Council employees
- The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Reference Group

Is further information needed to help inform decision making?

None identified at this stage.

Is an EQIA required?

Appendix 4

Yes

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.

The engagement project

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Age	Anticipated positive impact	Ages 11 to 16: to support youth involvement, discussions have taken place with Youth Voice, with a potential in-person session with the Youth Council. The aim is to also liaise with the Youth Voice team to work with schools to potentially run sessions during assemblies, where a pack will be sent to them to carry out. There is also a dedicated youth event (Echo Festival) which the project can participate in.

Appendix 4

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		<p>For those aged 18 and over: in-person sessions will be held in locations across the Dorset Council area.</p> <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
Disability	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation. Methods used in the in-person sessions will be accessible to all.</p> <p>Various measures have been put in place to support engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seat provision at all sites • a 'Zero Tolerance' poster which sets out group terms of engagement. This shows that all voices are equal, and all people have the right to be heard • an Easy Read document has been produced and is available at all events • staff and members attended a participatory

Appendix 4

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		<p style="text-align: center;">engagement training session</p> <p>During in person session, a staff member can also give someone with any difficulties individual attention to explain the activity and assist in participating in the process where necessary.</p> <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>Accessibility features of the online platform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being able to zoom in up to 200% without the text spilling off the screen • navigate the website using just a keyboard • navigate the website using speech recognition software • listen to the website using a screen reader <p>Delib (the platform supplier) test the software against the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines V2.2 AA standard. Improvements to the software are released regularly.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>

Appendix 4

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation. Methods used in the in-person sessions will be accessible to all.</p> <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
Marriage or civil partnership	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation.</p> <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the</p>

Appendix 4

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Pregnancy and maternity	Anticipated positive impact	<p>phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p> <p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation.</p> <p>Various measures have been put in place to support engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seat provision at all sites • ensuring staff are aware of nearby changing/toilet facilities to support residents if needed <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
Race and Ethnicity	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation.</p> <p>A 'Zero Tolerance' poster which sets out group terms of engagement. This shows that all voices are equal, and all people</p>

Appendix 4

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		<p>have the right to be heard. This is also to show no discriminatory behaviour towards staff or members of the public will be tolerated. Other measures put in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being cautious of the language used and avoiding acronyms and abbreviations when describing groups • staff having the ability to translate key areas of the activity through google translate (or an equivalent) to support participation if English is not the attendees first language <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
Religion and belief	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation.</p> <p>A 'Zero Tolerance' poster which sets out group terms of engagement. This shows that all</p>

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		<p>voices are equal, and all people have the right to be heard. This is also to show no discriminatory behaviour towards staff or members of the public will be tolerated.</p> <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
<p>Sex (consider men and women)</p>	<p>Anticipated positive impact</p>	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure staff on the day are aware of nearby toilets and changing facilities to support residents if needed • seats will be available throughout all the events to support pregnant women or parents/carers with babies in arms • events are spread across the weekends and during the week <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be</p>

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		<p>support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
Sexual orientation	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation.</p> <p>A 'Zero Tolerance' poster which sets out group terms of engagement. This shows that all voices are equal, and all people have the right to be heard. This is also to show no discriminatory behaviour towards staff or members of the public will be tolerated.</p> <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>

Appendix 4

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
<p>People with caring responsibilities</p>	<p>Anticipated positive impact</p>	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation.</p> <p>Various measures have been put in place to support engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seat provision at all sites • a 'Zero Tolerance' poster which sets out group terms of engagement. This shows that all voices are equal, and all people have the right to be heard • an Easy Read document has been produced and is available at all events • staff and members attended a participatory engagement training session • events are spread across weekends and during the week • ensuring staff are aware of nearby changing/toilet facilities to support residents if needed • individual attention from staff to help members of the public participate if any additional support is required • stickers used at the events service a dual purpose where parents can include their children to stick dots on the boards, helping them feel included, allowing the parent to participate <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be</p>

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Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		<p>support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p> <p>Carer Support Dorset have also signposted the events through their channels to support engagement.</p>
Rural isolation	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation.</p> <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
Socio-economic deprivation	Anticipated positive impact	Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out

Appendix 4

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		<p>to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation.</p> <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
Single parents	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation. Methods used in the in-person sessions will be accessible to all.</p> <p>Various measures have been put in place to support engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • events are spread across weekends and during the week • ensuring staff are aware of nearby changing/toilet facilities to support residents if needed • stickers used at the events service a dual purpose where parents can include their children to stick dots on the boards, helping them feel

Appendix 4

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		<p>included, allowing the parent to participate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seats will be available throughout all the events to support pregnant women or parents/carers with babies in arms <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
Armed forces communities	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation. Methods used in the in-person sessions will be accessible to all.</p> <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to</p>

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		facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

It is anticipated that the events will have a positive impact on protected groups living within the Dorset council area.

Summarise any actions required as a result of this EqIA.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
Effectively engaging with residents and community members	Provide training for all staff supporting the events to ensure best practice.	Laura Cornette	23/07/2024
For those unable to attend	There will be dedicated library support to help respondents join the conversation, either online, or an offline means like a paper booklet. Customer Services are also able to facilitate responses over the phone and post out booklets.	Big Conversation project team	23/07/2024
For those unable to attend	A dedicated online version of the activity.	Consultation and Engagement team	23/07/2024
Having a safe space	Thinking of and being aware of a private area to speak to an individual, whether they be a member of the public or a staff member at an event, should they request it.	The event lead	15/09/2024

Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA: Jed Hewitt-Bell

Officers involved in completing the EqIA: Jed Hewitt-Bell, Chantel Ingarfield and Laura Cornette

Date of completion: 02/10/2024

Version Number:

EqIA review date:

Inclusion Champion Sign Off:

Equality Lead Sign Off: James Palfreman-Kay (by email)

Next Steps:

- the EqIA will be reviewed by Communications and Engagement 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](#)



Town and Parish Events Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Initial information

A Big Conversation

Is this a:

New project

Is this (please delete those not required):

External

Please provide a brief overview of its aims and objectives:

To help support the development of the new Council Plan, and in part due to the recent elections, the Council is planning to engage with residents to find out what people think of the manifesto priorities within the new plan. This will be done through in-person events throughout the summer and across the Dorset Council area. Feedback will also be sought online for those unable to attend the in-person events.

Rather than sticking to a traditional consultation and survey, we want to go out and have face to face conversations with people. Some of the aims are to:

- Facilitate dialogue: creating safe spaces for open conversations on relevant topics
- Increase participation: encourage community members to actively engage
- Build trust: listen to residents to build mutual respect
- Drive action: translate discussions into tangible initiatives

In addition to events held for residents, there will be four specifically for Town and Parish Councils.

Please provide the background to this proposal?

In mid-2021, the communication and engagement service identified a challenge to:

‘Improve engagement with our external communities and demonstrate that their voice is being heard within the council, in ways which are consistent, efficient, and appropriate, defining the role of the central team and responsibilities of other teams.’

This was a council transformation project, and agile methodology was used throughout. The discovery period of work ran from autumn 2021 to spring 2022, and actively involved colleagues from all services across the council who deliver engagement, consultation and co-production activity.

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Now we are at the start of a new administration, this is the perfect chance for us to put this new learning to the test and try our hands at something different.

This project will directly address parts of the learning from the review, such as:

1. Most consultation and engagement activity conducted by Dorset Council tends to use a traditional survey methodology, and there is a lack of more creative methods (and the tools and training to deliver this) which would better reach and engage certain audiences.
2. Too many surveys are conducted by Dorset Council, with services conducting their own activity in silos, not sharing results or learning from previous activity, and resulting in survey fatigue among residents.
3. There is no 'ongoing' way for residents to engage with us – activity tends to be conducted as a one-off.
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Diversity - [Area profile for Dorset Council - Dorset Council](#)

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Acting on concerns of residents was also a key theme of the survey. 43% of respondents said they thought Dorset Council acts on concerns of local residents, with just 34% saying that Dorset Council provides value for money. In terms of locality, respondents from East Dorset especially thought that Dorset Council did not act on the concerns of local residents.

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 - have a purpose
 - be informative
 - be only part of a process of engagement
 - last for a proportionate amount of time
 - be targeted – ensure the right people are consulted
 - take account of the groups being consulted
 - be agreed before publication
 - facilitate scrutiny
-
- Public Sector Equality Duty requires local authorities to have ‘due regard’ to the impact of changes on those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010
 - Data Protection Act (2018)
 - Six Show and Share/Tell sessions have been delivered at key points within the organisation to provide updates on activity and gather feedback on the consultation and engagement review.
 - Twelve-week programme of discovery activities (data collection, interviews, internal/external surveys). These sessions provided an opportunity to understand current activity and provide an opportunity to identify key areas to work on.

Information source 5 – for the platform specifically

When asked to confirm the assistive software packages that Delib work with or test against, this was their response:

“In terms of assistive software, the assistive technology we test against includes JAWS (Job Access With Speech, a screen reader tool), NVDA (Non-Visual Desktop Access, allows blind and vision impaired people to access and interact with Windows and many third party applications) and VoiceOver (screen reader software), plus voice interaction and the keyboard.”

Further accessibility options are as follows:

- Delib’s tools meet the WCAG 2.2 AA standards.

- Text size, colour and font are at a reasonable size and contrast level and are not changeable by customers.
- Sites are 'zoomable' up to 200% without the text spilling off the screen.
- The sites are compatible with accessibility software, meaning users can:
 4. Navigate the website using just a keyboard.
 5. Navigate the website using speech recognition software.
 6. Listen to the website using a screen reader.
- All tools are responsive, so they fit on different types of devices like mobiles and tablets.

Information source 6 – Town and Parish Councils

According to [Parish and town council A to Z - Dorset Council](#), there are 295 Town and Parish Councils, including groups and meetings.

What did this tell you?

The key findings from the consultation and engagement review discovery phase were presented to Senior Leadership Team on 14 November 2022:

- most formal statutory consultations are conducted in line with legislation, including the Gunning Principles, and receive relatively high numbers of responses. However, certain groups in the population are over-represented among respondents (mainly well-educated, middle-income, white, older people) and others are under-represented. This means that results received are not always representative of the population and we are not reaching all groups in a way they would like to engage.
- most consultation and engagement activity conducted by Dorset Council tends to use a traditional survey methodology, and there is a lack of more creative methods (and the tools and training to deliver this) which would better reach and engage certain audiences.
- there is some good work on service design, user testing and co-production taking place in certain pockets of the organisation – but it is not yet widespread.
- too many surveys are conducted by Dorset Council, with services conducting their own activity in silos, not sharing results or learning from previous activity, and resulting in survey fatigue among residents.
- different services procure and use different software for engagement, which is confusing for residents and not cost effective. We need consistency in how we present our consultations and engagement: in the methods but also in branding, appearance, interfaces, etc., so people are familiar with it, how to access and use it.

- there is no 'ongoing' way for residents to engage with us – activity tends to be conducted as a one-off.
- residents are engaged in a limited way that means they do not feel listened to and have poor understanding of council decision making. This negatively affects residents' trust in and satisfaction with the council. We need to do more to show what happens as a result of their feedback - 'you said, we did' - and we need to be clearer about what residents can and cannot influence through consultation and engagement.
- it is confusing for residents to know how to engage with Dorset Council – there are lots of different surveys, but a lack of overall clarity about how or where to engage with the council. A single 'one stop shop' approach for consultation and engagement would be much clearer, simpler and more accessible.
- among some Dorset Council employees, there is a poor level of understanding of consultation, engagement and co-production – terms are used interchangeably. Many colleagues do not know when they should do it / what they should do / how they should do it and what tools and support are at their disposal.
- there is no comprehensive central record or library of all engagement and consultation activity across the council, and the findings from this activity. This means that some activity is duplicated and repeated when it would be better if colleagues could access the data and insight that already exists.
- the council lacks the right tools to enable colleagues to do engagement. This includes software, training and guidance.
- insufficient time is built into many council projects to conduct consultation or engagement properly, end to end. This includes time to plan, develop stakeholder relationships, to take account of the findings, to embed EQIA (not just one point in process but throughout), and to feedback findings to respondents.
- there are opportunities with the new customer account and platform to use customer data to better target engagement activity at the right audiences.

The data from the residents' survey links to several of the points above. Residents being engaged with in a limited way has potentially led to the feeling of Dorset Council not acting on behalf of residents. Different areas within the Council area also view the authority on a varying scale. This gives an idea as to which areas should be targeted or prioritised.

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

- Dorset Council employees
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Reference Group

Is further information needed to help inform decision making?

None identified at this stage.

Is an EQIA required?

Yes

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.

The engagement project

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Age	Anticipated positive impact	Ages 11 to 16: to support youth involvement, discussions have taken place with Youth Voice, with a potential in-person session with the Youth Council.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		<p>The aim is to also liaise with the Youth Voice team to work with schools to potentially run sessions during assemblies, where a pack will be sent to them to carry out. There is also a dedicated youth event (Echo Festival) which the project can participate in.</p> <p>For those aged 18 and over: in-person sessions will be held in locations across the Dorset Council area.</p> <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
Disability	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation.</p> <p>Various measures have been put in place to support engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seat provision at all sites • a 'Zero Tolerance' poster which sets out group

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		<p>terms of engagement. This shows that all voices are equal, and all people have the right to be heard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an Easy Read document has been produced and is available at all events • staff and members attended a participatory engagement training session • disabled parking, or parking generally, to be close to all venues or the venues themselves to support this • hearing loop support • buildings that are accessible (including ramp access, facilities such as disabled toilets) <p>During in person session, a staff member can also give someone with any difficulties individual attention to explain the activity and assist in participating in the process where necessary.</p> <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>Accessibility features of the online platform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being able to zoom in up to 200% without the text spilling off the screen • navigate the website using just a keyboard

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • navigate the website using speech recognition software • listen to the website using a screen reader <p>Delib (the platform supplier) test the software against the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines V2.2 AA standard.</p> <p>Improvements to the software are released regularly.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation.</p> <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
Marriage or civil partnership	Anticipated positive impact	Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		<p>to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation.</p> <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation.</p> <p>Various measures have been put in place to support engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seat provision at all sites • ensuring staff are aware of nearby changing/toilet facilities to support residents if needed <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p>

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		<p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
Race and Ethnicity	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation.</p> <p>A 'Zero Tolerance' poster which sets out group terms of engagement. This shows that all voices are equal, and all people have the right to be heard. This is also to show no discriminatory behaviour towards staff or members of the public will be tolerated. Other measures put in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being cautious of the language used and avoiding acronyms and abbreviations when describing groups • staff having the ability to translate key areas of the activity through google translate (or an equivalent) to support participation if English is not the attendees first language <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online</p>

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		<p>themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
Religion and belief	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation. Methods used in the in-person sessions will be accessible to all.</p> <p>A 'Zero Tolerance' poster which sets out group terms of engagement. This shows that all voices are equal, and all people have the right to be heard. This is also to show no discriminatory behaviour towards staff or members of the public will be tolerated.</p> <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Sex (consider men and women)	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure staff on the day are aware of nearby toilets and changing facilities to support residents if needed • seats will be available throughout all the events to support pregnant women or parents/carers with babies in arms • events are in the evenings <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
Sexual orientation	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation. Methods used in the in-person sessions will be accessible to all.</p> <p>A 'Zero Tolerance' poster which sets out group terms of</p>

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		<p>engagement. This shows that all voices are equal, and all people have the right to be heard. This is also to show no discriminatory behaviour towards staff or members of the public will be tolerated.</p> <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
<p>People with caring responsibilities</p>	<p>Anticipated positive impact</p>	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation.</p> <p>Various measures have been put in place to support engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seat provision at all sites • a 'Zero Tolerance' poster which sets out group terms of engagement. This shows that all voices are equal, and all people have the right to be heard • an Easy Read document has been produced and is available at all events • staff and members attended a participatory

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		<p>engagement training session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • events are in the evening • ensuring staff are aware of nearby changing/toilet facilities to support residents if needed • individual attention from staff to help members of the public participate if any additional support is required <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p> <p>Carer Support Dorset have also signposted the events through their channels to support engagement.</p>
Rural isolation	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation.</p> <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can</p>

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		<p>join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
Socio-economic deprivation	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation. Methods used in the in-person sessions will be accessible to all.</p> <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
Single parents	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • events are in the evening • ensuring staff on the day are aware of nearby toilets and changing

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		<p>facilities to support residents if needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seats will be available throughout all the events to support pregnant women or parents/carers with babies in arms • stickers used at the events service a dual purpose where parents can include their children to stick dots on the boards, helping them feel included, allowing the parent to participate <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>
Armed forces communities	Anticipated positive impact	<p>Engaging with residents in a variety of ways, actively seeking their views. We will be going out to groups to reduce barriers and encourage participation. Methods used in the in-person sessions will be accessible to all.</p> <p>For those unable to attend, there are 5 ways people are still able to respond. There will be support in the libraries, both</p>

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		<p>online (through library staff) and a paper version. Anyone can join the conversation online themselves, through the engagement platform.</p> <p>For residents unable to access a library or an event, Customer Services are also able to facilitate a response over the phone or send out the activity to them through the post.</p>

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

It is anticipated that the events will have a positive impact on protected groups living within the Dorset council area.

Summarise any actions required as a result of this EqIA.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
Ensuring the town hall meetings are accessible	Choose venues that are accessible where possible. Including ramp access, lifts, hearing loops and more.	Chantel Ingarfield and Jed Hewitt-Bell	01/07/2024
Ensuring the town hall meetings are accessible	Create a registration form to capture any accessibility requirements ahead of the meetings to ensure they can be catered for.	Chantel Ingarfield and Jed Hewitt-Bell	31/07/2024
Ensuring the town hall meetings are accessible	Contact the halls/venues to ensure that the hearing loops and other equipment are functional.	Chantel Ingarfield and Jed Hewitt-Bell	31/07/2024
Having a safe space	Thinking of and being aware of a private area to speak to an individual, whether they be a member of the public or a staff member at an event, should they request it	Chantel Ingarfield and Jed Hewitt-Bell	15/09/2024

Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA: Jed Hewitt-Bell

Officers involved in completing the EqIA: Jed Hewitt-Bell, Chantel Ingarfield and Laura Cornette

Date of completion: 02/10/2024

Version Number:

EqIA review date:

Inclusion Champion Sign Off:

Equality Lead Sign Off: James Palfreman-Kay (by email)

Next Steps:

- the EqIA will be reviewed by Communications and Engagement 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](#)