



Equality Impact Assessment - Digital Strategy

Directorate	Resources
Unit/Team	Organisational Improvement
Assistant Director Responsible for EIA	Alan Ratcliffe
Service EIA or Proposal	The EIA is for the overarching Digital Strategy document

Aims of the EIA

Purpose of the EIA	To assess the impact of moving to a more digital, transactional public service offer. The digital strategy is a response to the need to recognize that the world in which the Council operates is changing in terms of social media; technological advances; different models of service delivery; different customer expectations; and a changing role for the council in this time of financial austerity. As a response to these drivers the council already offers a number of online services/transactions on the Council website and is developing further online services. The council recognises the need for improvement in basic online skills for some citizens and is working on a number of initiatives which includes empowering others to share online knowledge and skills.
Summary of findings	There are positive and negative impacts identified in the delivery of the Digital Strategy. The negative points identified could be reduced in their impact by the actions suggested. Were any others to be identified during the adoption of this policy and any subsequent changes to services then these will be addressed appropriately and follow the appropriate democratic process with a separate EIA to support any changes.
Scope of the EIA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One directorate 	Cross Directorate. The Digital Strategy is an overarching strategy to support the work already completed, in progress and future developments. Any changes to service delivery

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross directorate • Outsourced organisation 	resulting from the adoption of this strategy would go through the appropriate democratic process and a separate EIA will be submitted to support any such changes.
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Phase 1: Gathering information

List examples of background information that you think are **relevant**. If carrying out an assessment of a proposal this section should include the data used to establish whether the proposal has an impact.

Type of information	Findings
Statistics from Office of National Statistics (ONS), ACORN socio-economic profiling, census and results from local surveys.	<p>The document in Appendix I of the Digital Strategy Statistics from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) covers age, disability, income and rurality.</p> <p>It is recognised that equality is an important key feature of this strategy.</p>

Phase 2 Impacts

From the evidence above use this section to identify the risks and benefits according to the different characteristics protected by the Equality Act.

All/general: Any issue that cuts across a number of protected characteristics

Issue	Positive Impact or benefits	Negative impact or risks	Action Required
Security		Cyber crime/internet security might have a disproportionate effect on vulnerable people in general.	

Disability and health and wellbeing: All forms of disability recognised under the Disability Discrimination Act including sensory impairment, mental health, learning disabilities, mobility related conditions, conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, asthma. This also covers any impact on health and well being

Issue	Positive Impact or benefits	Negative impact or risks	Action Required
<p>Access to information and services</p> <p>Mental health</p> <p>Disabilities</p> <p>Dementia</p>	<p>Able to access a vast of Council services from home without travel.</p> <p>The strategy would be able to help us develop technology that addresses the communication requirements for people with sensory impairment including hearing and sight loss.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to develop online easy read information for people with learning disabilities.</p> <p>There is the potential for people experiencing early dementia/memory loss to use IT to help manage decisions, i.e. electronic calendars to setup reminders.</p> <p>Increase in digital interaction may increase social contact for people with mental health e.g. agoraphobia.</p>	<p>Some people may experience additional barriers to access as a result of disability if they don't have home access or sufficient IT skills. This could impact on the level of support required in Libraries, CDCs, one stop shops.</p> <p>Potential for people with some conditions to require additional support to process information to help make decisions. Potential risk of greater pressure on services such as advocacy services if other types of support reduce due to a move to online services only.</p> <p>People with memory loss and dementia are particularly an at risk group in Cumbria if they don't already have IT skills.</p> <p>Increase in digital interaction may result in a decrease in physical social interaction for people with mental health.</p>	<p>Implementation of the strategy would need to consider the impact and involve piloting the technology with the identified groups.</p>

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Gender, Transgender and Marital Status

Issue	Positive Impact or benefits	Negative impact or risks	Action Required
Access to information and services	Online facilities might encourage more user groups to access services where they are currently under represented.	Potential increase in costs to people of marital breakup of IT equipment.	Implementation of the strategy would need to consider the impact and involve piloting the technology with the identified groups.
Equality	An intelligent approach to tackling online access to health inequalities could bridge the inequality gap.		
Single Parents	Access to online services would help with managing time in busy households, i.e. single parents juggling kids, work etc.		

Ethnicity: All ethnic groups including Asian, Black, East Asian and white minority ethnic groups, including Eastern Europeans and Gypsy and Travellers.

Issue	Positive Impact or benefits	Negative impact or risks	Action Required
Access to information and services	Online services offer the opportunity for multi lingual services without the cost of interpreters.	IT access and support language barriers.	Identify if Digital Champions are engaging with these groups.
Multi lingual	Multi lingual online forms and information	People with less access and skills digital may cause additional barriers which need to be considered.	

Migrant Workers	would help in assessing the needs of the ethnic community. Migrants doing shift work will be able to access council services 24/7.		
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Sexual Orientation: including heterosexual, gay, lesbian and bisexual people

Issue	Positive Impact or benefits	Negative impact or risks	Action Required

Age: Where a person is at risk of unfair treatment because of their age group

Issue	Positive Impact or benefits	Negative impact or risks	Action Required
Access to information and services Older People Younger People	Older people can be supported in their homes for longer if they have access to home shopping and can communicate with family, friends and support services on-line. Different methods of online communication might enable younger people more access to the council services i.e. web chat. Older people are increasingly becoming IT literate and investing in services now will have a longer term benefit.	Lack of knowledge of how the internet works and access to IT.	Inspire and support Digital Champions in Cumbria through the Go-ON North West initiative.

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Religion/belief: all faiths including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and non religious beliefs such as Humanism

Issue	Positive Impact or benefits	Negative impact or risks	Action Required
Access to information and services	Easier to make information available for different religions using council services and showing support available.		

Socio-Economic Status: This can include people on low incomes, as well as issues around rural and urban deprivation

Issue	Positive Impact or benefits	Negative impact or risks	Action Required
Access to information and services Low income Rurality	Web access can open up education and employment opportunities for low-income families and those seeking work. Rural isolation can be reduced by access to online services. The rollout of superfast broadband will provide increased availability to rural areas.	Cost of IT access. Pressure on low income families to use government online services i.e. Universal credit and pressure in council to provide support. Channel shift may require smarter technology thus increasing the costs to families on low incomes.	Support may be required in getting access to IT through different routes

Community Cohesion: This is where a decision or a change to services may risk creating tensions between community groups in a local area.

Issue	Positive Impact or benefits	Negative impact or risks	Action Required

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Phase 3: Action Planning

Based on actions raised in the action required box above

Area for further action	Actions proposed	Lead officer	When	Resource implications	Outcome

Documents appended to the Equality Impact Assessment:

Quality Assurance and EIA completion

Date completed	
Lead officer	Alan Ratcliffe
EIA taken through Directorate Equality Group/or DMT	Resources DMT 5/11/2014
Have staff been involved in developing the EIA?	Engagement sessions have taken place with Directorate DMT's
Have community organisations been involved?	The identified groups to be consulted during the lifetime of the strategy
Date of latest update of EIA	24/10/24

