

# South Cambridgeshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

## Introduction – Please read

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) allow the Council to:

- Show that the Council are meeting its legal duty, demonstrating due regard for the provisions of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) as below:
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
  - Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
  - Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Methodically consider and assess the impacts of proposals across the [nine protected characteristics](#)
- Allow the Council to develop and implement high quality proposals that maximise positive outcomes for all.

EqIAs should be completed during the development and review of all Council policies, strategies, procedures, projects or functions. Where there is any doubt, the completion of an EqIA is always recommended.

When the form is completed, please send an electronic copy to [equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk). Further support and guidance, [including a video on how to fill out EqIAs](#), is available on Insite or you can contact the Policy and Performance Team.

# Equality Impact Assessment Complete Form

## Section 1: Identifying Details

- 1.1 Officer completing EqIA:  
Kevin Ledger
- 1.2 Team and Service:  
Policy and Performance and Communications
- 1.3 Title of proposal:  
Implementation of a consultation and engagement platform
- 1.4 EqIA start date:  
01/11/2024
- 1.5 Proposal implementation date:  
04/11/2024
- 1.6 Who will be responsible for implementing this proposal (Officer and/or Team):  
Engagement Platform Implementation Team (Nicole Stimson, Kevin Ledger, Michael Hill)

## Section 2: Proposal to be Assessed

- 2.1 Type of proposal:  
Other - Please specify  
If other, please specify  
A new system
- 2.2 Is the proposal:  
New
- 2.3 State the date of any previous equality impact assessment completed in relation to this proposal (if applicable):  
Click or tap to enter a date.

2.4 What are the headline aims of the proposal and the objectives that will help to accomplish these aims? (Max 250 words)

To introduce consultation and engagement platform software to facilitate engagement between the Council and its residents, enabling effective and transparent communication, feedback collection, results analysis and participatory decision-making.

2.5 Which of the Council's equality objectives (as detailed in the Council's Equality Scheme) does this proposal link to or help to achieve?

- Identify, prioritise and deliver actions that will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community
- SCDC is an employer that values difference and recognises the strength that a diverse workforce brings.
- Protected characteristic groups have a voice and are represented in forming the future shape of the district.
- None.

2.6 Which groups or individuals will the proposal affect:

- Service Users
- Councillors
- External Stakeholders
- Other
- Employees

If other, please specify [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

2.7 Broadly speaking, how will these groups or individuals be affected? (you will be asked to provide more detail on the specific impacts on different protected characteristic groups later in the form) (max 250 words)

Service users and external stakeholders will have an improved method for providing input into engagement and consultation exercises, and ultimately decision making. This will include both distinct set piece consultations taking place over a set period of time, as well as the provision of ongoing feedback opportunities to help



inform continuous improvement efforts, such as the Council's customer feedback survey, which in turn will help to inform improved service delivery for all. Councillors will be impacted in their capacity as decision makers – providing better quality of information about customer perspectives upon which to make decisions. They may also be respondents to or promoters of some of the consultation and engagement exercises that will be supported by the platform. Employees will be encouraged to use the platform for consultation and engagement exercises taking place within their service areas. The platform should help them to deliver improved consultation and engagement exercises and provide them with better quality information to inform their work.

- 2.8 If any part of the proposal is being undertaken by external partners, please specify how the Council will ensure that they will meet equality standards?  
(Max 250 words)

The chosen procurement platform is provided by Go Vocal. This solution has been procured through the Crown Commercial Services G Cloud 13 following an exercise to determine the solution that best fits the Council's requirements. The contract that has been signed sets out a number of service delivery standards that we expect the provider to meet. Assistance was provided by the Council's procurement officer and sign off by the Monitoring Officer and Head of Transformation, to help ensure that the contract provides the Council with adequate protection in relation to the quality of service provided, included the meeting of equality standards.

### **Section 3: Evidence and Data**

- 3.1 Describe any work you have done (this could include consultation) to understand any effects on groups of people, including those within [9 protected characteristic groups?](#) Please list any key sources (e.g. web-search, previous versions of document, customer feedback etc) that you used to reach your conclusions.

(Max 250 words)

We have spoken to other local authorities who already use a consultation and engagement platform, to understand the impact that this has had. For example, representatives of Cambridge City Council (who also use Go Vocal) informed us about how census data can be pre-loaded allowing comparison of respondent demographics against the local equality profile, to help achieve a representative response. We have undertaken desk-based research into different solutions and the various features that these include. We have also followed this up with demonstrations for solution providers to better understand the features available. For example, this made us aware of the ability to import paper survey responses into the Go Vocal platform, which will help to ensure that while we improve our digital consultation and engagement offering, we continue to offer paper based feedback channels for those who may be digitally excluded for various reasons. We are also aware of the demographics of the district, and some of the various issues that can tend to face different protected characteristic groups – for example, the fact that older people and disabled people are more likely to be digitally excluded, and the need to make adjustments to account for this, such as ensuring the accessibility of any online platforms and to ensure the availability of different feedback methods. Finally, while we have not undertaken a formal consultation on the procurement of a consultation platform, we have recently undertaken some consultation activity (seeking feedback in relation to the Council's proposed priorities), without making use of a consultation platform. This has provided some learning about various approaches to consultation that will help to inform usage of the platform following implementation.

- 3.2 If you have not undertaken any consultation, please detail why not, or when consultation is planned to take place.

(Max 250)

Requirement to deliver a solution at speed to support upcoming consultations.  
No formal requirement to consult on the introduction of the platform.

## Section 4: Impact of proposal on those with protected characteristics

4.1 Please select all characteristics that may or will be impacted (positive or negative). When providing details of the impact please consider the following questions

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. (both the number of persons affected and the severity of the impact)
- you will be asked to set out actions to manage these impacts in the following question (4.2)

All - general to all protected Characteristics.

Details: Service users and external stakeholders will have an improved method for providing input into engagement and consultation exercises, and ultimately decision making. This will include both distinct set piece consultations taking place over a set period of time, as well as the provision of ongoing feedback opportunities to help inform continuous improvement efforts, such as the Council's customer feedback survey, which in turn will help to inform improved service delivery for all. In addition the chosen platform allows the upload of baseline demographic information allowing comparison of respondent demographics against the local equality profile, to help achieve a representative response.

Age

Details: We know that older people can be more likely to face barriers when seeking to access information or undertake tasks online. During the process of identifying the most suitable solution for the council, the project team has placed ease of use and navigation at the top of their considerations, to ensure the chosen online platform can be used by as wide a range of individuals as possible. However the chosen platform also includes the facility to import surveys that have been completed on paper, including a feature that scans and recognises handwriting before adding to



digital results. This will make consultation and engagement exercises more accessible to older people, as the previous methodology (based primarily on use of MS Forms) did not include such facilities, and the inclusion of paper-based forms involved manual entry of written responses. Whilst younger people may be less likely to be digitally excluded, we know that they may traditionally be less likely to feed into local council consultation and engagement exercises. The introduction of the platform may help younger people to have a greater say in relation to Council activity and proposals, through the provision of a wider range of feedback tools, that can be used to create more engaging consultations or engagement exercises. In addition, there is the ability to build up a pool of respondents and for those who set up an account to opt into being kept informed about future consultation or engagement exercises that are of interest to them. Again, this type of functionality may help increase the accessibility of these types of feedback opportunities to younger people.

Disability

Details: We know that disabled people are more likely to require consultation or engagement materials in a range of different formats, and the chosen solution will provide us with the flexibility to offer this. For example, through flexible feedback tools, the ability to embed documents, videos (including with subtitles), paper document upload facilities etc, and through compliance with the latest web accessibility standards WCAG 2.2.

Gender reassignment

Details: Click or tap here to enter text.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Details: Click or tap here to enter text.

Pregnancy and maternity

Details: Click or tap here to enter text.

Race

Details: We know that those who speak English as a second language may face barriers to feeding into consultation or engagement exercises that are not translated into their native language. The chosen solution offers an auto-translate function,



which will allow a translated version of consultation and engagement material to be accessed by the respondent as needed. This will be an improvement to the current situation, whereby translated material has to be obtained from a translation company at cost and in response or anticipation of specific requests, before being manually uploaded to MS Forms.

Religion and belief

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Sex

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Sexual orientation

Details [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

None of the above

#### 4.2 Other characteristics

Some characteristics are not yet protected in law, but the Council has made declarations it will consider them in policy making.

Digital inclusion [\(what is this?\)](#)

Details: As detailed in relation to the age category, the chosen solution will help us to include those who may be digitally excluded through the provision of a paper survey import functionality, meaning that we can offer both an enhance digital offering, whilst also offering the option for paper survey responses to those for whom this may be an easier option.

Care experience [\(what is this?\)](#)

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Rurality

Details The provision of effective digital feedback options may reduce the need for people to have to travel in order to participate in consultation exercises. Having said



this, this already exists through current practices (e.g. use of MS Forms), but the new platform will help to further improve online feedback functionality.

Socio-economic

Details [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

4.3 Considering the above impacts you have identified above, please detail any actions (specific or general) which may help to enhance or mitigate impacts.

Please include the timescale for completing the action.

Action and timescale	Officer
Ensure that paper based survey import functionality is understood and promoted internally as part of training and role out, so that this can be offered as part of future exercises – by March 2025	Implementation team
Ensure that auto-translate functionality is understood and promoted internally and externally as part of training and role out, so that this can be offered as part of future exercises – by March 2025	Implementation team
Upload census baseline data to the platform to ensure that responses can be compared against that baseline and attempts to obtain representation from under represented groups can be made, as required – by March 2025	Implementation team
Complete configuration and promotion of the new platform, which will have positive impacts on ability of people from all backgrounds to be able to feed into Council business, to ensure that maximum benefit is gained from the platform for the benefit of all – by March 2025	Implementation team

4.4 How will you monitor that the above actions have been completed and that this proposal, once implemented, is impacting fairly on everyone it affects? In answering

this question, please include information about feedback you will seek and/or data you will collect and analyse, and how often you will do this

The implementation team will continue to meet on a regular basis to assess progress towards full role out of the chosen solution, including the actions detailed at 4.3.

## Section 5: Summary

5.1 Briefly summarise the key findings of the EqIA and any significant equality considerations that should be taken into account when deciding how to proceed with the proposal (this section can be included within the 'equality implications' section of any committee reports). (Max. 250 words)

The implementation of the consultation and engagement platform will have a positive impact on service users and external stakeholders who will have an improved method for providing input into engagement and consultation exercises, and ultimately decision making. The functionality of the chosen solution will help us to account for the needs of groups who may be more likely to be digitally excluded and / or face greater barriers to participation in local council feedback exercises, as described at section 4.

5.2 Confirm the recommendation of the officer completing the EqIA:

Proceed with the proposal (with any actions identified as required within Section 4 of the EqIA). Analysis demonstrates that the proposal is robust, we have taken all appropriate opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations between groups.

Reject the proposal: Analysis demonstrates that the proposal will cause unlawful discrimination and it must be removed or changed

## Section 6: Sign Off

6.1 Signature of individual completing EqIA:

Kevin Ledger

6.2 Date of completion:

01/11/2024

6.3 When will this proposal next be reviewed and who will this be? (when in doubt  
3 years minimum)

01/11/2027

6.4 Approving officer signature \*, this should be your Head of Service, Service  
Area Manager, or Project Sponsor:

Kevin Ledger

6.5 Date of approval:

01/11/2024

Please send the completed document to [Equality.Schemes@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:Equality.Schemes@scambs.gov.uk) for  
publishing on the website.

*\*in the event that this EqIA is completed by Head of Service, then no additional  
approving signature is required.*