

# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EqIA)

## Context

1. The Public Sector Equality Duty as set out under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires Rugby Borough Council when making decisions to have due regard to the following:
  - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
  - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
  - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
  - age
  - disability
  - gender reassignment
  - marriage/civil partnership
  - pregnancy/maternity
  - race
  - religion/belief
  - sex/gender
  - sexual orientation
3. In addition to the above-protected characteristics, you should consider the crosscutting elements of the proposed policy, such as impact on social inequalities and impact on carers who look after older people or people with disabilities as part of this assessment.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document is a tool that enables RBC to test and analyse the nature and impact of what it is currently doing or is planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. The questions will enable you to record your findings.
6. Where the EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. Once completed and signed off the EqIA will be published online.
8. An EqIA must accompany all **Key Decisions** and **Cabinet Reports**.
9. For further information, refer to the EqIA guidance for staff.
10. For advice and support, contact:
 

Minakshee Patel  
Corporate Equality & Diversity Advisor  
[minakshee.patel@rugby.gov.uk](mailto:minakshee.patel@rugby.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01788 533509

## Equality Impact Assessment

<b>Service Area</b>	Legal & Governance
<b>Policy/Service being assessed</b>	Return to Full Council meetings in the Council Chamber
<b>Is this is a new or existing policy/service?</b>  <b>If existing policy/service please state date of last assessment</b>	Return to previous practice, replacing temporary arrangements
<b>EqlA Review team – List of members</b>	Minakshee Patel, Claire Waleczek, Sarah Chapman
<b>Date of this assessment</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> November 2021
<b>Signature of responsible officer (to be signed after the EqlA has been completed)</b>	

**A copy of this Equality Impact Assessment report, including relevant data and information to be forwarded to the Corporate Equality & Diversity Advisor.**

**If you require help, advice and support to complete the forms, please contact Minakshee Patel, Corporate Equality & Diversity Advisor via email: [minakshee.patel@rugby.gov.uk](mailto:minakshee.patel@rugby.gov.uk) or 01788 533509**

**Details of Strategy/ Service/ Policy to be analysed**

<b><u>Stage 1 – Scoping and Defining</u></b>	
(1) Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the Strategy/Service/Policy (or decision)?	<p>Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic there have been no Full Council meetings within the Council Chamber. Initially, meetings took place remotely and following changes in legislation earlier this year a decision was taken for meetings to take place in the Benn Hall.</p> <p>Restrictions have slowly been easing; however, the risk of COVID-19 still remains. Government guidance puts the management of risk to individuals and organisations. Therefore, Members are being asked to consider the present arrangements and whether a return to the Council Chamber should take place for Full Council meetings.</p>
(2) How does it fit with Rugby Borough Council's Corporate priorities and your service area priorities?	<p>This supports the priority under Organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rugby Borough Council is a responsible, effective and efficient organisation.</li> </ul>
(3) What are the expected outcomes you are hoping to achieve?	Return to the Council Chamber in a Covid safe manner.
(4) Does or will the policy or decision affect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers</li> <li>• Employees</li> <li>• Wider community or groups</li> </ul>	The decision will have an impact on Officers, Members and the general public as attendees of Full Council.
<b><u>Stage 2 - Information Gathering</u></b>	As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, eg service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).

<p>(1) What does the information tell you about those groups identified?</p>	<p>The demographic data for officers and members is available, however, it is difficult to ascertain this for the general public.</p>
<p>(2) Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the strategy/ service/policy you want to implement? If yes, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision?</p>	<p><del>Internal consultation with</del> <u>Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Performance, Legal and Governance:</u></p> <p><u>Expressed concerns that members may feel personally unable to attend meetings in the Council Chamber as a result of the risk posed.</u></p> <p><u>Opposition</u> Group Leaders, <del>;</del>:</p> <p><u>Group leaders from both opposition parties raised concerns about members being excluded from meetings in the Council Chamber as a result of the risk posed being unacceptable to that member. This may be as a result of their own personal health circumstances, implications on their work environment or any caring responsibilities they may have.</u></p> <p>Leadership Team, Stephen Agutter – Health &amp; Safety, Henry Biddington – Regulatory, Minakshee Patel – Equality &amp; Diversity, Suzanne Turner – HR <del>;</del>:</p> <p><u>Expressed concerns about the extent of mitigation that can be achieved in the Council Chamber to reduce the risk posed and the health and safety implications this would have for both officers and members attending Council meetings in person.</u></p> <p><u>In making a decision on a return to the Council Chamber Members will need to consider whether the benefits of that return outweigh any negative impacts of the return, including the impacts identified above.</u></p>
<p>(3) If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary.</p>	<p>N/A - this is about the Council managing the risk in relation to COVID-19.</p>

<b>Stage 3 – Analysis of impact</b>			
<p><u>(1) Protected Characteristics</u>                      From your data and consultations is there any positive, adverse or negative impact identified for any particular group, which could amount to discrimination?                       If yes, identify the groups and how they are affected.</p>	<p><b>RACE</b>                      Potential impact</p>	<p><b>DISABILITY</b>                      Potential impact</p>	<p><b>GENDER</b>                      Potential impact</p>
	<p><b>MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</b>                      N/A</p>	<p><b>AGE</b>                      Potential impact</p>	<p><b>GENDER REASSIGNMENT</b>                      N/A</p>
	<p><b>RELIGION/BELIEF</b>                      Potential impact</p>	<p><b>PREGNANCY MATERNITY</b>                      Potential impact</p>	<p><b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</b>                      N/A</p>
<p><u>(2) Cross cutting themes</u>                      (a) Are your proposals likely to impact on social inequalities e.g. child poverty, geographically disadvantaged communities?                      If yes, please explain how?                       (b) Are your proposals likely to impact on a carer who looks after older people or people with disabilities?                      If yes, please explain how?</p>	<p>N/A</p>		
<p>(3) If there is an adverse impact, can this be justified?</p>	<p>No</p>		

<p>(4) What actions are going to be taken to reduce or eliminate negative or adverse impact? (this should form part of your action plan under Stage 4.)</p>	<p><u>Mitigations</u> <u>If a return to the Council Chamber is to take place, mitigations measures</u> need to be put in place in the Council Chamber to ensure the risk of COVID-19 is reduced for high risk / clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals such as, people with disabilities, people from different community groups, older people, gender (specifically males) and pregnant women.</p> <p>The disparities review report published by Public Health highlighted age (older age range), gender (males) and ethnicity (BAME) as at higher risk of dying if they caught COVID. This may <del>also</del> include undertaking individual risk assessments.</p> <p><del>One</del> <u>These mitigation measures are outlined in the risk assessment accompanying the report to Full Council.</u></p> <p><u>An alternative measure to a return to the Council Chamber</u> is to continue holding meetings in the Benn Hall where social distancing can <u>be</u> more effectively <del>be</del> achieved.</p> <p><u>Legislation does not permit members to participate in meetings through a remote means (video or telephone), therefore hybrid meetings or remote meetings are not a suitable mitigation measure.</u></p>
<p>(5) How does the strategy/service/policy contribute to the promotion of equality? If not what can be done?</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>(6) How does the strategy/service/policy promote good relations between groups? If not what can be done?</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>(7) Are there any obvious barriers to accessing the service? If yes how can they be overcome?</p>	<p>One of the issues with the Council Chamber is that it is a small, not very well-ventilated space and so could be a barrier to those who are vulnerable or anxious about COVID.</p>

<b><u>Stage 4 – Action Planning, Review &amp; Monitoring</u></b>					
<p>If No Further Action is required then go to – Review &amp; Monitoring</p> <p>(1)Action Planning – Specify any changes or improvements that can be made to the service or policy to mitigate or eradicate negative or adverse impact on specific groups, including resource implications.</p>	EqIA Action Plan				
<p>(2) Review and Monitoring State how and when you will monitor policy and Action Plan</p>	Ongoing				

  

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Date for completion</b>	<b>Resource requirements</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Mitigation measures as identified in the risk assessment accompanying the report to Full Council	Aftab Razzaq	<u>Prior to the first meeting in the Council Chamber</u>		

Please annotate your policy with the following statement:

**‘An Equality Impact Assessment on this policy was undertaken on 15.11.21.’**