

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

Directorate:	Communications, Cultural and Civic Services	Lead officer responsible for EIA	Sarah Tidy
Name of the policy or function to be assessed:		Communications and Engagement Strategy 2026-28	
Names of the officers undertaking the assessment:		Sarah Tidy	
Is this a new or an existing policy or function?		New	
1. What are the aims and objectives of the policy or function? The strategy is designed to help the Council communicate and engage effectively with its stakeholders, ensuring residents, employees, elected members, partners and communities are informed, involved and able to influence decisions that affect them. The objectives of the strategy are: Bring Council priorities to life - develop compelling and engaging communications that demonstrate how the Council is delivering its priorities and improving outcomes for local people. Empower employees to tell our story - provide employees and elected members with the information, skills and tools they need to act as effective ambassadors for the Council. Listen, respond and collaborate - strengthen two-way engagement with residents, communities and stakeholders to support informed decision making and co-production. Build effective communications platforms - ensure information is accessible and reaches the right audiences through the most appropriate channels. Support Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) - deliver clear, timely and transparent communications and engagement activity to support the transition to new local government arrangements and help stakeholders understand and engage with change.			
2. What outcomes do you want to achieve from the policy or function? The Communications and Engagement Strategy 2026-2028 is expected to have a positive impact across all protected characteristics by improving access to information, increasing opportunities for participation and engagement, strengthening community cohesion, and ensuring that communications relating to Local Government Reorganisation are inclusive, transparent and accessible to all stakeholders. - Increased understanding of our corporate priorities and objectives - Increased engagement with our stakeholders - Behaviour change - Increased trust and confidence in the Council and local government. - Increased participation in consultations, engagement activities and community initiatives.			

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- Improved accessibility and inclusivity of Council communications. - Effective communication and engagement throughout Local Government Reorganisation, ensuring stakeholders understand how changes affect them and have opportunities to contribute to the transition process.			
3. Who is intended to benefit from the policy or function? - Residents and service users - Employees - Elected Members - Partner bodies and organisations - Business community - Local groups and forums			
4. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy or function? - Residents and service users - Employees - Elected Members - MPs - Partner bodies and organisations - Business community - Potential investors - The media - Local groups and forums - Civic Dignitaries - Influencers			
5. What baseline quantitative data do you have about the policy or function relating to the different equality strands? - Workplace profile - Ward profiles - Electoral data - Communications and engagement performance data, including digital channel analytics. - Consultation and engagement participation data, including equality monitoring information where available. - Employee engagement survey results. - Stakeholder engagement data and community mapping information.			
6. What baseline qualitative data do you have about the policy or function relating to the different equality strands? - Feedback from local groups and stakeholders. - Equalities monitoring data from consultation exercises conducted by the Council. - Feedback from employee engagement activities and forums. - Feedback received through consultation exercises, stakeholder workshops and community engagement events.			

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Feedback from Disability Forum participants and other representative groups.			
7. What has stakeholder consultation, if carried out, revealed about the nature of the impact? The strategy seeks to ensure that communications and engagement activities are inclusive, accessible and responsive to the needs of different communities. Previous engagement activity has highlighted the importance of using a range of communication channels, providing opportunities for face-to-face engagement, and ensuring information is available in accessible formats. The likely impact of the strategy is therefore positive, helping to improve participation and ensure that a wider range of voices are represented in Council decision making. The dedicated Local Government Reorganisation section will also support transparent engagement during a period of significant change.			
8. From the evidence available does the policy or function affect or have the potential to affect different equality groups in different ways? In assessing whether the policy or function adversely affects any particular group or presents an opportunity for promoting equality, consider the questions below in relation to each equality group: The strategy recognises that barriers may exist for some groups, including digital exclusion, language barriers, literacy levels, disabilities, socio-economic factors and limited awareness of engagement opportunities. The action plan includes measures to address these barriers through the use of multiple communication channels, accessible formats, targeted engagement activity and collaboration with community organisations and representative groups. The impact is therefore expected to be positive, helping to improve access and participation across all communities.			
☐ Does the policy or function target or exclude a specific equality group or community? Does it affect some equality groups or communities differently? If yes, can this be justified? No			
☐ Is the policy or function likely to be equally accessed by all equality groups or communities? If no, can this be justified? No			

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□ Are there barriers that might make access difficult or stop different equality groups or communities accessing the policy or function? The strategy aims to break down barriers across different groups and encourage more engagement with the Council, so the likely impact would be positive in nature.			
□ Could the policy or function promote or contribute to equality and good relations between different groups? If so, how? The strategy will promote equality, inclusion and good relations by: • Providing accessible information through a range of communication channels. • Increasing opportunities for residents and stakeholders from all backgrounds to participate in decision making. • Supporting engagement with seldom-heard and underrepresented groups. • Ensuring Local Government Reorganisation communications are transparent, inclusive and accessible. • Using feedback and insight to inform service delivery and policy development. • Promoting a greater understanding of the Council's priorities, services and decision-making processes.			
□ What further evidence is needed to understand the impact on equality? Regular evaluation will take place throughout the duration of the strategy to monitor its impact and effectiveness and identify areas to focus on in terms of the equality strands.			

9. On the basis of the analysis above what actions, if any, will you need to take in respect of each of the equality strands?

All protected characteristics: Regular monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken throughout the life of the strategy to ensure communications and engagement activities are reaching and engaging diverse audiences. Equality monitoring data, consultation feedback, stakeholder insight and performance information will be used to identify gaps in participation and inform targeted activity where required.

Specific action will be taken to:

- Understand the barriers to participation
- Ensure communications are available in accessible formats where required.
- Utilise a mix of digital, face-to-face and traditional channels to reduce barriers to participation.

- Engage proactively with representative groups and community organisations.
- Monitor participation in consultations and engagement activity to identify underrepresented groups.
- Ensure Local Government Reorganisation communications are inclusive, accessible and tailored to the needs of different audiences.
- Review the impact of communications activity annually and update action plans where necessary.

Age: Regular evaluation to ensure this group is engaged.

Disability: Regular evaluation to ensure this group is engaged.

Gender: Regular evaluation to ensure this group is engaged.

Gender Reassignment: Regular evaluation to ensure this group is engaged.

Marriage and Civil Partnership: Regular evaluation to ensure this group is engaged.

Pregnancy and Maternity: Regular evaluation to ensure this group is engaged.

Race: Regular evaluation to ensure this group is engaged.

Religion and Belief: Regular evaluation to ensure this group is engaged.

Sexual Orientation: Regular evaluation to ensure this group is engaged.

Care Experience: Regular evaluation to ensure this group is engaged.

Chief Executive: Zulfiqar Darr

I am satisfied with the results of this EIA. I undertake to review and monitor progress against the actions proposed in response to this impact assessment.

Signature: Zulfiqar Darr