

## Equality Impact Assessment Form

A copy of this form is available on the Intranet.

### Screening

Name of strategy, project or policy:

Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Access Arrangements

This is a function within Electoral Services

Officer completing assessment:

Joanne Smith, Elections Manager

Telephone:

01706 252445

1. What is the main purpose of the strategy, project or policy?

To review Polling Districts and Places in line with the Electoral Administration Act 2006.

2. List the main activities of the project, policy (for strategies list the main policy areas)

Divide each Ward into Polling Districts and designate Polling Places for each District

Provide information on the positioning and access arrangements relating to Polling Stations

Make available and distribute consultation documentation relating to the above to residents, Local and County Councillors, MP's, Political Parties, Local Community Groups and national disability organizations in order to inform and obtain comments

Consider all information and put forward proposals for changes, where necessary

Report to Full Council for approval

3. Who will be the main beneficiaries of the strategy, project or policy?

Residents of Rossendale and prospective Councillors

4. Use the table below to tick:

- (a) Where you think that the strategy, project or policy could have a negative impact on any of the equality groups i.e. it could disadvantage them.
- (b) Where you think that the strategy, project, policy could have a positive impact on any of the groups or contribute to promoting equality, equal opportunities or improving relations within equality target groups.

		<b>Positive Impact</b> – it could benefit	<b>Negative Impact</b> – it could disadvantage	<b>Reason</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Women & Men	✓	✓	Positive – all residents and interested parties are given the opportunity to be involved in the Review. Positive - to enable all electors access to polling arrangements. Positive – review will identify access problems and locate alternatives, where possible. Negative – some people may have further to travel to their polling station.
<b>Race</b>	Asian or Asian British people  Black or black British people  People of mixed race  Chinese people and other minority ethnic communities not listed	✓		Positive – equal service for electors of all races. Where identified as necessary, polling instructions can be provided in community languages.
	Irish people  White people	✓		Positive – review will identify access problems and locate alternatives, where possible.
<b>Disability</b>	Physical/learning/mental health	✓	✓	Positive – access arrangements will be

				considered and alternatives put in place where necessary. Negative – correspondence is written.
<b>Sexuality</b>	Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals	✓		Positive – equal service to all sectors of the community.
<b>Gender Identity</b>	Transgender people	✓		Positive – equal service to all sectors of the community.
<b>Age</b>	Older people (60+)	✓		Positive – equal service to all sectors of the community.
	Younger people (17-25), and children	✓	✓	Positive – equal service to all sectors of the community. Negative – format of forms and polling stations may be daunting to young people.
<b>Belief</b>	Faith groups *	✓	✓	Positive – equal service to all sectors of the community. Negative – dates of elections do not take into account dates of all religious festivals.
<b>Equal opportunities and/or improved relations eg Rural</b>		✓		Positive – equal service to all sectors of the community.

**Notes:**

\* Faith groups cover a wide range of groupings, the most common of which are Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Sikhs, Hindus. Consider faith categories individually and collectively when considering positive and negative impacts.

5 If you have indicated there is a negative impact on any group, is that impact:

YES  NO

(i.e. it is not discriminatory under anti-discriminatory legislation)

Intended? YES  NO

Level of impact HIGH  LOW

If the negative impact is possibly discriminatory and not intended and/or of high impact you must complete section two of this form. If not, complete the rest of section one below and consider if completing section two would be helpful in making a thorough assessment.

- 6 a) Could you minimise or remove any negative impact that is of low significance?

Explain how:

Provide information in community languages where this is identified as being required.
Take into account all major religious festivals when determining election dates where possible.
Provide postal votes where residents have difficult traveling to their polling station.

- a) Could you improve the strategy, project or policy's positive impact?

Explain how:

N/A
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*You may wish to use the action sheet at the end of Section two.*

- 7 If there is no evidence that the strategy, policy or project promotes equality, equal opportunities or improved relations – could it be adapted so that it does?

How?

N/A
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Please sign and date this form, keep one copy and send one copy to the Head of Human Resources.

Signed: .....

Date: 31 October 2007

## APPENDIX A

### Section Two – Full Assessment

Name of strategy, project or policy:

Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Access Arrangements

Date: 31 October 2007

Part a

1. Looking back at section one of the EQIA, in what areas are there concerns that the strategy, policy or project could have a negative impact?

Gender	✓
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	✓
Sexuality/Transgender	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age	✓
Faith	✓

2. Summarise the likely negative impacts.

Correspondence is written format of forms and polling stations may be daunting to young people. Information in polling stations currently not available in community languages. Dates of elections do not take into account all major religious festivals. Some electors may have further to travel to their polling station.

3. What previous or planned consultation on this topic/policy area/project has taken place/will take place with groups/individuals from equality target groups?

Comments and suggestions of electors and any interested parties are taken into account each time an election is planned.

If there has already been consultation what does it indicate about negative impact of this strategy, project or policy?

Consultation has been carried out with a wide cross section of the community and other interested parties, however little response has been received.

Equality target groups	Summary of consultation carried out or planned
Women	Electoral Office carry out consultation and issue notice of amendments. To be repeated at 4 yearly intervals.
Black and minority ethnic communities	
Disabled people	
Lesbians, gay men, bisexuals or trans people	
Older people	
Young people/children	
Faith groups	

4. What consultation has taken place/or is planned with Council staff – including staff that have, or will have, direct experience of implementing the strategy/ policy/ working on the project?

Consult with Community & Partnerships dept to obtain dates of religious festivals.
Consult with communications department to obtain language and disability information to add to correspondence.

5. Check that research /studies/reports concerning the equality target groups and the likely impact have been used to plan the project and guide it or indicate what research you intend to carry out.

Equality target groups	Title/type/details of report/research
Women	Electoral Commission, Disability Discrimination Groups, Association of Electoral Administrators, Department of Constitutional Affairs, Electoral Administration Act give detailed advice and instruction
Black and minority ethnic communities	
Disabled people	
Lesbians, gay men, bisexuals or trans people	
Older people	
Young people/children	
Faith groups	

6. If there are gaps in your previous or planned consultation and research, are there any experts/relevant groups that can be contacted to get further views or evidence on the issues.

YES  (Please list them and explain how you will obtain their views)


NO

**Part b**

**Complete this section when consultation and research has been carried out**

7. a) As a result of this assessment and available evidence collected, including consultation, state whether there will need to be any changes made/planned to the policy, strategy or project.

b) As a result of this assessment and available evidence is it important that the Council commissions specific research on this issue or carry out monitoring/ data collection?

*(You may wish to put this information directly onto the action sheet at the end of this form)*

8. Will the changes planned ensure that negative impact is:

Legal?   
*(not discriminatory, under anti-discriminatory legislation)*

Intended? NO

Low impact?

9. a) Have you set up a monitoring/evaluation/ review process to check the successful implementation of the strategy, project or policy?

YES  NO

b) How will this monitoring/evaluation further assess the impact on the equality target groups/ensure the strategy/project/policy is non-discriminatory?

Details:

The Review process must be carried out at least every 4 years in line with the Electoral Administration Act 2006.
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**Please complete the action form below, sign the EQIA, retain a copy and send a copy of the full EQIA, including the Action Plan, to the Head of Human Resources.**

Signed: (Joanne Smith)

Date: 31 October 2007

### **Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan**

Please list below any recommendations for action that you plan to take as a result of this impact assessment.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Action required</b>	<b>Lead officer</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resource implications</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Dates of major religious festivals required	Consult with Community & Partnerships	Joanne Smith	3 weeks	Officer time	Complete
Information in Polling Stations posted in other languages where identified as necessary and available	Obtain information on other languages from Electoral Commission and Comms	Joanne Smith	In lead up to Elections	Officer time	