



# Resources and Equalities Scrutiny Panel

8<sup>th</sup> June 2023

<b>Report title</b>	Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) Information	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Paula Brookfield Governance and Equalities	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	
<b>Accountable director</b>	David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer	
<b>Originating service</b>	Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)	
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<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>		

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## Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Resources and Equalities Scrutiny Panel is requested to:

1. To provide comments and feedback on the Integration and consideration of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) undertaken by City of Wolverhampton Council
2. Note the EDI Process in place
3. Note the examples attached in appendix 1

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 To provide Resources and Equalities Scrutiny Panel with an outline on the Council's new arrangements on undertaking Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) following best practice guidance from The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and how their integration has informed key projects within the city, including large capital projects, and to share the legal obligations of the local authority under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, also known as the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).
- 1.2 The PSED requires us to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, advance equality of opportunity by minimising disadvantages, meeting differing needs and encouraging participation between different groups, foster good relations from people in different groups. Adherence to these duties is demonstrated through the systematic use of EIAs, a tool that allows us to assess the impact of our policies and practices on different groups within the community.
- 1.3 This report will provide an overview of how we have embedded this process in our work and the steps taken to ensure that our duties under the Equality Act 2010 are being fulfilled.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.2 The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), a statutory body established to help enforce and promote equality, provides detailed guidance on how public authorities can fulfil their obligations under the PSED. One significant suggestion is the systematic use of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) when planning, implementing, and delivering policies or projects.
- 2.3 EIAs allow us to assess and understand the potential impact of our policies or projects on different groups within our community, particularly those with protected characteristics. The process involves several key steps, including scoping and identifying the aims of the policy, collecting and analysing data, assessing impact and considering alternatives, and consulting and involving relevant stakeholders.
- 2.4 In line with our obligations under the PSED and the guidance from the EHRC, our council has been diligently integrating EIAs into any Service Function or Policy. This involves a thoughtful process that starts at the initial planning stage and continues throughout the project, ensuring that our regeneration initiatives promote equality and do not discriminate against any protected groups.

## **3.0 Internal EIA Process**

- 3.1 Over the last 18 months the EDI team have reviewed the EIA template and guidance, to simplify the process and enhance understanding for lead officers to undertake EIAs. CWC Officers have access to EIA Templates and guidance via internal Governance Portal, Our People Portal and EDI Hub. All EIAs are now undertaken at the development stage of any new proposal, initiative, or strategy, to ensure there are no adverse impacts across all equality groups.

- 3.2 This is complemented by comprehensive training, including face-to-face sessions delivered by the EDI team and eLearning training modules, which ensures that all staff are equipped to undertake EIAs in their work.
- 3.3 All completed EIAs are sent to the EDI Team email inbox, which is monitored daily by the EDI Support Officer. The EDI Support Officer allocates EIAs to advisors based on work priorities and subject knowledge such as areas of the business covered by advisors.
- 3.4 The EDI Advisor will arrange to meet with the EIA Author/Project leads within 5 working days of allocation. Where advice is given to ensure the completed document takes account of any equality impacts across all equality groups. To ensure that the initiative takes account of data and/or consultation.
- 3.5 Author is asked to make any agreed changes, and final version asked to be sent to EDI inbox before EDI team sign off.
- 3.6 Review date is then agreed to ensure function and policy is still aligned with current data and continues to take into account outcomes of consultation. Members are to note that an EDI is a live document.

#### **4.0 Next Steps**

- 4.1 Scrutiny Panel to acknowledge the report and endorse this current process and advise on future proposals.
- 4.2 As a part of our ongoing commitment to improve our EIA process, we are planning to establish a new EIA forum. This forum, inspired by best practice seen in other councils and organisations, will comprise heads of service across the council, EDI team members, and community partners. The purpose of this forum will be to provide advice, guidance, and support, to evaluate EIAs, and to ensure no adverse impacts across all equality strands. Participants in the forum will be expected to assist managers throughout the EIA process, especially in the formative/planning stages, helping to identify potential concerns, minimise impacts, and consider improvements or new ways of working.
- 4.3 Continue to enhance the EIA process through ongoing training and development initiatives.

#### **5.0 Finance implications**

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with the report. The EIA Process continues to be a core function of the EDI Team, however, there will be financial implications on individual Initiatives where EIA's have been undertaken as part of any improvements and developments taking place in the city.

#### **6.0 Legal implications**

- 6.1 While there are no direct legal implications associated with this report, it should be noted that adherence to the EIA process and the PSED, as outlined in this report, is crucial to ensuring the council's compliance with the Equality Act 2010. This compliance helps to mitigate potential legal risks associated with failing to meet the PSED. [DP/30052023/A]

## **7.0 Equalities implications**

- 7.1 The Council under the Equality Act 2010 has a legal duty to ensure that the authority eliminates unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity & foster good relations. This is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 7.2 The EDI Strategy is a key example of how the authority is meeting its legal obligations.

## **8.0 Background Papers**

- 8.1 EIA Template [Equality Analysis Template \(Word\).docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- 8.2 Summary Guidance [Governance Portal - Summary-Guide.pdf \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- 8.3 Detailed Guidance [Governance Portal - Equality Analysis - Detailed Guide.pdf \(sharepoint.com\)](#)