



City of Edinburgh Council

Record of Equality and Rights Impact Assessment

Part 1: Background and Information

(a) Background Details

Please list ERIA background details:

ERIA Title and Summary Description:

Planning and Building Standards Customer Engagement Strategy: timetable for improvements – Planning Committee 2 March 2017

The purpose of this report is a follow up report on a request from Planning Committee on 8 December 2016 for officers to provide a timetable of the proposed improvements. This introduces no new equalities considerations since the previous report and the assessment is as before.

Service Area	Division	Head of Service	Service Area Reference No.
Planning and Transport	Planning and Building Standards	David Leslie, Chief Planning Officer	2016P27

(b) What is being impact assessed?

Describe the different policies or services (i.e. decisions, projects, programmes, policies, services, reviews, plans, functions or practices that relate to the Corporate ERIA Title):

Policies and Services	Date ERIA commenced
1. Customer Engagement Strategy (refocus)	17/10/16

(c) ERIA Team

Please list all ERIA Team Members:

Name	Organisation / Service Area
Damian McAfee	Planning and Building Standards
Nancy Jamieson	Planning and Building Standards

Part 2: Evidence and Impact Assessment

(a) Evidence Base

Please record the evidence used to support the ERIA. Any identified evidence gaps can be recorded at [part 3a](#). Please allocate an abbreviation for each piece of evidence.

Evidence	Abbreviation
1. Officer knowledge	
2. Customer consultation and feedback	
3. Council's transformational change programme	
4. Online service data	
5. Project board feedback	

(b) Rights Impact Assessment – Summary

Please describe all the identified enhancements and infringements of rights against the following ten areas of rights. Please also consider issues of poverty and health inequality within each area of rights:

- Life
- Health
- Physical security
- Legal security
- Education and learning
- Standard of living
- Productive and valued activities
- Individual, family and social life
- Identity, expression and respect
- Participation, influence and voice

Please indicate alongside each identified enhancement or infringement the relevant policy or service (see [part 1b](#)) and relevant evidence (see [part 2a](#)).

Summary of Enhancements of Rights

The proposals will continue to enhance participation and influence as they promote improving online services available to all whilst maintaining direct contact where still required. The refocusing of the engagement strategy will help improve access to information and advice, allowing customers to self serve as much as possible.

Summary of Infringement of Rights

Can these infringements be justified? Are they proportional?

There are no infringements of rights under these proposals. It is recognised that some groups (e.g. those with learning difficulties) may be disadvantaged in the interim period whilst reducing direct contact time for telephone calls. The option of calling in person at the planning and building standards reception will remain in place and a call-back option will also be available for general enquiries. Customers who have submitted applications will continue to have direct telephone and email contact.

(c) Equality Impact Assessment – Summary

Please consider all the protected characteristics when answering questions 1, 2 and 3 below. Please also consider the issues of poverty and health inequality within each protected characteristic:

- Age

- Disability
- Gender identity
- Marriage / civil partnership
- Pregnancy / maternity
- Race
- Religion / belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

1. Please describe all the positive and negative impacts on the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation. Please indicate alongside each identified impact the relevant policy or service (see [part 1b](#)) and relevant evidence (see [part 2a](#)).

Positive Impacts
There are no identified positive impacts on the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation
Negative Impacts
There are no identified negative impacts on the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation

2. Please describe all the positive and negative impacts on the duty to advance equality of opportunity (i.e. by removing or minimising disadvantage, meeting the needs of particular groups that are different from the needs of others and encouraging participation in public life)? Please indicate alongside each identified impact the relevant policy or service (see [part 1b](#)) and relevant evidence (see [part 2a](#)).

Positive Impacts
<p>The proposals promote the duty to advance equality of opportunity as they continue to promote better and more accessible information and the systems we use such as the Planning Portal to view and comment on planning applications. This is to the benefit of a range of the above groups who have protected characteristics and continues to ensure any customer groups who need bespoke advice or help still have access to the service through telephone or face-to-face contact. The Council works in partnership with the Edinburgh Access Panel (details about the Panel are online at http://www.edinburghaccesspanel.org.uk/) with Planning and Building Standards supporting and attending the Panel. The improved access to online information supports the role of the panel and their opportunity to engage in the planning process. The Access Panel members meet regularly with planning and building standards staff to discuss planning issues and policy development.</p> <p>The Council has a corporate position in relation to making its online content accessible and understood by those with protected characteristics. Webpages can be read aloud for those with visual impairments, web pages can be increased in size with web content written to a readability score of 8-10 using Plain English. Documents produced by the service can be translated on request for those who require these. Were it necessary and proportionate, home visits could be arranged for certain groups with protected characteristics.</p>
Negative Impacts
<p>Asking some individuals with protected characteristics to self serve online may affect some groups such as those with disabilities and those of a different race. However, the strategy states that we will continue to provide a direct service for those with protected characteristics who need this level of support. There will therefore be no negative impact on the duty to advance equality of opportunity.</p>

3. Please describe all the positive and negative impacts on the duty to foster good relations (i.e. by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding)? Please indicate alongside each identified impact the relevant policy or service (see [part 1b](#)) and relevant evidence (see [part 2a](#)).

Positive Impacts

The updated proposals promote the duty to foster good relations as they make clear the service that can be expected and promote understanding. This is set out in the Planning and Building Standards Service Charter. Refocussing of the Engagement Strategy will continue to provide and enhance the levels of service expected by customers.

Negative Impacts

There will be no negative impacts on the duty to foster good relations
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Part 3: Evidence Gaps, Recommendations, Justifications and Sign Off

(a) Evidence Gaps

Please list all relevant evidence gaps and action to address identified gaps.

Evidence Gaps	Action to address gaps

(b) Recommendations

Please record SMART recommendations to

- (i) eliminate unlawful practice or infringements of absolute rights;
- (ii) justify identified infringements of rights; or
- (iii) mitigate identified negative equality impacts.

Recommendation	Responsibility of (name)	Timescale
none		

(c) Sign Off

I, the undersigned, am content that:

- (i) the ERIA record represents a thorough and proportionate ERIA analysis based on a sound evidence base;
- (ii) the ERIA analysis gives no indication of unlawful practice or violation of absolute rights;
- (iii) the ERIA recommendations are proportionate and will be delivered;
- (iv) the results of the ERIA process have informed officer or member decision making;
- (v) that the record of ERIA has been published on the Council’s website / intranet, or
- (vi) that the ERIA record has been reviewed and re-published.

Date	Sign Off (print name and position)	Reason for Sign Off (please indicate which reason/s from list (i) to (vi) above)
24/10/16	Damian McAfee, Senior Planning Officer	(i, ii, iv)
29/3/17	Paul Lawrence, Exective Director of Place (gillian.johnston@edinburgh.gov.uk)	i-iii