



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 Practice and Procedures – Proposed Changes – Planning Committee 12 October 2017

The purpose of this report is to ask the Committee to approve a number of changes to various practices and processes connected to the work of the Planning Service, including Committee processes. In addition, changes to the Scheme of Delegation are proposed to extend delegated powers.

The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 sets out the duty of the local authority to secure best value. Best value is described in terms of the continuous improvement of performance of functions. In securing best value the Council must maintain an appropriate balance among the quality of performance, the costs to the authority in that performance and the cost to persons of any service the Council provides for them.

Planning and building standards processes are often complex and further efficiencies need to be put into place to ensure a culture of continuous improvement is embedded. This can mean stopping some practices which are out-of-date but there is also an opportunity to harness improvements in technology to make better use of Council systems. This report makes a number of suggestions to secure improvements whilst ensuring a quality service is still provided

Service Area	Division	Head of Service	Service Area Reference No.
Place Development	Place Development	Michael Thain	2017P122

(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. Council scheme of delegation	28/8/17
2. planning procedures	28/8/17

(c) ERIA Team

Please list all ERIA Team Members:

Name	Organisation / Service Area
David Leslie	Place Development
Nancy Jamieson	Place Development

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. service data	

(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](#)).

<p>Summary of Enhancements of Rights</p> <p>The proposals will make procedural changes which will affect the range of channels of communication with the service but still ensure adequate, inclusive channels are available. This will be balanced by a more efficient process where information will be properly managed with less risk of missing documents including those which allow participation, influence and voice. The proposals ensure a suitable balance in terms of participation, influence and voice.</p>
<p>Summary of Infringement of Rights</p> <p>Can these infringements be justified? Are they proportional?</p> <p>There are no infringements of rights under these proposals. It is recognised that some people find online services difficult to operate and a paper based facility is still available. Safeguards have been put in place to ensure democratic rights are not affected.</p>

(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 other systems. of communication. 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. None of the changes affect options for communication - paper or electronic.</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
the move from accepting cash/cheques and email representations may affect some groups. However, the former will still be accepted with paper applications and there are online systems available in place of email. there will therefore be no disadvantage. the extension of the scheme of delegation will have no negative impacts as it is designed to ensure there is no impact on participation in public life.

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. The Planning and Building Standards Service Charter will be updated to reflect the proposed changes. The information provides clarity and improves efficiencies in the process to improve the service provision.

Negative Impacts

There will be no negative impacts on the duty to foster good relations

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)
31/8/17	Nancy Jamieson, Team Manager	(i, ii, iv)
14/09/17	Michael Thain, Head of Place Development (gillian.johnston@edinburgh.gov.uk)	(i, ii, iii)