

Equality Impact Assessment Template

Please complete this template using the [Equality Impact Assessment Guidance document](#)

Version 3: January 2013

Title of proposal (include forward plan reference if available)	Digital Strategy 2018 to 2021
Directorate and Service Area	Resources ICT Digital Transformation
Name and title of Lead Officer completing this EIA	Nicola Biddle ICT Digital Transformation Lead
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Names and titles of other officers involved in completing this EIA	Manjit Kaur Senior Lead – Digital Inclusion
Partners involved with the EIA where jointly completed	
Date EIA completed	September 2018
Date EIA signed off or agreed by Director or Executive Director	
Name of Director or Executive Director signing off EIA	Darren Carter
Date EIA considered by Cabinet Member	

See [Equality Impact Assessment Guidance](#) for key prompts that must be addressed for all questions

1. The purpose of the proposal or decision required (Please provide as much information as possible)

Digital Strategy 2018 to 2021

The aim of this proposal is to seek approval of the Council's Digital Strategy 2018 to 2021.

Our Digital Strategy 2018-2021 is a new strategy for Sandwell and one that will bring about significant transformation of services.

The aims of the strategy

- It sets the scene for the council and its partners for the future direction of digital in Sandwell, working to enable an agile workforce and present opportunities to deliver services in different, innovative ways.
- The Strategy is an over-arching document that gives a clear direction and demonstrates in a non-technical way Sandwell's high level vision, principles and ambitions for Digital Transformation.
- Underpinned by the ICT Strategy, the focus of our Digital Strategy isn't just about developing digital services, it's about putting residents at the heart and delivering better outcomes.
- It also aims to deliver real benefits to our citizens by supporting them to learn new digital skills so that they can benefit from the opportunities digital inclusion brings.

The case for why we need a digital strategy

- Digital technology is in every aspect of our home and work life. It continues to change the way we communicate and go about our day.
- Having digital skills is essential in our modern world. And the world is becoming digitally dependent with 90% of jobs requiring digital skills.
- Our challenge in Sandwell is to make the best use of technology to improve people's lives. Our strategy will address the growing demand for digital services and focus on what residents want in order to deliver outcomes that matter to them.
- We will continue to focus on helping to identify the digital priorities of all equality groups and promoting work that will support every resident to benefit from digital change.
- Will enable the Council, residents, businesses and partners to get the most out of digital.
- The strategy will ensure that a strong vision and sense of direction is essential for managing effective transformation, engaging all service areas across the Council is essential as we strive to deliver our Vision 2030

2. Evidence used/considered

Communities and Residents

The evidence gathered through extensive one-to-one, face-to-face consultation with an array of community groups from across the richly diverse communities that make up the profile of Sandwell to understand the barriers, issues and future needs of our communities has been used to inform and shape this strategy and draft our key themes:

1. Digital by Default Workforce
2. Access to Services
3. Digital Inclusion

Evaluation and consultation with residents engaged in current digital inclusion projects funded through the iSandwell Accelerator Project. (A programme of activity funded by the council delivering varied digital projects across the 6 towns by the third sector to residents) gave us not only feedback from people impacted by these projects but from all sections of our community including ethnic community groups but a real and timely understanding of what people's current digital needs and issues are.

Workforce Engagement

Through workshops attended by council employees, held at key council sites, Providence Place, Oldbury Council House, and Roway Lane enabled us to capture the digital ambitions of our workforce.

Further, research conducted into the approach taken towards managing and governing "Digital" by other local authorities confirmed that our approach towards setting the future direction of digital services, infrastructure and innovation was in line with the direction being taken nationally as well as timely in ensuring our residents and communities would not be left behind in a new digital world.

3. Consultation

Extensive consultation to date has taken place to inform this Strategy;

Community Groups and Residents have been consulted on a one-to-one, face to face basis to ensure the cultural and equality needs of all of our communities have been addressed. These organisations and residents included:

- Sandwell Visually Impaired Unit – visually impaired
- Confederation of Bangladeshi Organisations – Asian and Eastern European residents
- Creative Academies – Sandwell’s youth
- Inside Outcomes – staff from organisations delivering digital learning to residents
- Friar Park Community Centre – a cross section of residents, all ages, male and female
- SCIPS – An organisation supporting the third sector in Sandwell to deliver voluntary services to our residents

Our Workforce has been consulted through a variety of open days, workshops and round table discussions to ensure their contribution

Consultation with our residents and community through community networks and face to face dialogue will remain an ongoing process to ensure our strategy remains current and relevant.

Outcomes of the Consultation:

In the past 2 years our knowledge and understanding of what can be achieved through digital transformation has grown and we are now starting to see real positive outcomes for the people of Sandwell and our workforce. We now know what we need to do more of and this has helped shape the strategy.

Third sector and community demand for digital is clear – We understand the importance our residents place on digital inclusion projects in the community and the genuine benefits of increasing aspirations and ambitions for employability, educational and economic status that they bring so will do more to support third sector

We need to address social isolation when implementing digital services

Our digital services will recognise the importance of not isolating communities; residents want to get out of the house and see other people to overcome loneliness and not necessarily access IT in their own home and we’ll ensure our service design reflects this.

It's not all about the technology

To make sure transformation is truly for everyone, we need to provide more than just access. Over 88,000 people are using digital skills to enjoy access to many online council services. Making something simple and easy to use is hard work but we'll continue to do the behind the scenes complex designs and most importantly, robustly challenge to drive out unnecessary steps as we understand the easier we make it, the more people can benefit.

Digital transformation requires holistic change

Growing skills gaps puts our transformation efforts at risk and we recognise that digital transformation requires holistic change; we need to transform technology and people - starting with our workforce. We will do more to address skill levels within our workforce, supporting the use of technologies and engaging them in change to deliver services in different, innovative ways which are crucial to the delivery of our ambitious Vision 2030.

4. Assess likely impact

Please give an outline of the overall impact if possible.

Please complete the table below at 4a to identify the likely impact on specific protected characteristics

4a. Use the table to show:

- Where you think that the strategy, project or policy could have a negative impact on any of the equality strands (protected characteristics), that is it could disadvantage them or if there is no impact, please note the evidence and/or reasons for this.
- Where you think that the strategy, project or policy could have a positive impact on any of the groups or contribute to promoting equality, equal opportunities or improving relationships within equality characteristics.

Protected Characteristic	Positive Impact ✓	Negative Impact ✓	No Impact ✓	Reason and evidence (Provide details of specific groups affected even for no impact and where negative impact has been identified what mitigating actions can we take?)
Age	Positive			Being digitally literate opens-up opportunities for all age groups to enjoy the social, cultural, economic and educational benefits being digitally active bring.
Disability	Positive			Being digitally active enables residents who are housebound to interact with the outside world, overcoming loneliness and social exclusion. Advancements in technology that enable visually impaired residents and hearing impaired residents to use ICT ensures no one is missing out or being left behind

Gender reassignment	Positive			Being digitally literate opens-up opportunities for all residents irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability to enjoy and take advantage of the social, cultural, economic and educational benefits being digitally active brings.
Marriage and civil partnership	Positive			Being digitally literate opens-up opportunities for all residents irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability to enjoy and take advantage of the social, cultural, economic and educational benefits being digitally active brings.
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive			Being digitally literate opens-up opportunities for all residents irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, religious belief to enjoy and take advantage of the social, cultural, economic and educational benefits being digitally active brings.
Race	Positive			Being digitally literate opens-up opportunities for all residents irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, religious belief to enjoy and take advantage of the social, cultural, economic and educational benefits being digitally active brings.
Religion or belief	Positive			Being digitally literate opens-up opportunities for all residents irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, religious belief to enjoy and take advantage of the social, cultural, economic and educational benefits being digitally active brings.

Sex	Positive			Being digitally literate opens-up opportunities for all residents irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, religious belief to enjoy and take advantage of the social, cultural, economic and educational benefits being digitally active brings.
Sexual orientation	Positive			Being digitally literate opens-up opportunities for all residents irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, religious belief to enjoy and take advantage of the social, cultural, economic and educational benefits being digitally active brings.
Other				

Does this EIA require a full impact assessment? Yes No

If there are no adverse impacts or any issues of concern or you can adequately explain or justify them, then you do not need to go any further. You have completed the screening stage. You must, however, complete sections 7 and 9 and publish the EIA as it stands.

If you have answered yes to the above, please complete the questions below referring to the guidance document.

5. What actions can be taken to mitigate any adverse impacts?

None Applicable

6. As a result of the EIA what decision or actions are being proposed in relation to the original proposals?

No major change required

7. Monitoring arrangements

This strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis

8. Action planning

You may wish to use the action plan template below

9. Publish the EIA

Where can I get additional information, advice and guidance?

In the first instance, please consult the accompanying guide “Equality Impact Assessment Guidance”

Practical advice, guidance and support

Help and advice on undertaking an EIA or receiving training related to equalities legislation and EIAs is available to **all managers** across the council from officers within Improvement and Efficiency. The officers within in Improvement and Efficiency will also provide overview quality assurance checks on completed EIA documents.

Please contact:

Kashmir Singh - 0121 569 3828