

Appendix C - Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

The characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 are:

Disability	Age	Sex (gender)
Gender reassignment	Marriage/civil partnership	Pregnancy/maternity
Race	Sexual orientation	Religion/belief

By law the council must have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

In effect, this means that the council needs to ensure that our policies and services are fair, equitable and proportionate and where possible mitigate against any adverse impacts on people from the different protected characteristics.

In addition to the above protected characteristics, the council should consider the impact of living in a **rural area** as part of this assessment. Where people live is not a characteristic protected by law, but for an organisation such as Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils it is good practice to consider carefully how location may affect people’s experience of a policy or service.

The Rural-Urban definition defines the rurality of very small census-based geographies. Census Output Areas forming settlements with populations of over 10,000 (which are urban), while the remainder are defined as one of three rural types: *town and fringe, village or hamlet and dispersed*.

Details	
Service or policy title	Law and Governance
Lead officer	Patrick Richardson-Todd
Officers carrying out the EQIA	Patrick Richardson-Todd
Is this new or a revision?)	Revision
Is this the first time this policy or function has been assessed?	no
Date of completing this EQIA	January 24 th 2024

Description
<p>What exactly is proposed?</p> <p>Community governance review recommendations, involving administrative and electoral arrangements. The council is required to ensure that community governance within the area under review will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area and • be effective and convenient
<p>Why?</p> <p>Every ten-fifteen year period it is good practice for District Councils to review their community governance arrangements. In reception of a proposal from a qualifying petition or Parish Council the District is obligated to consider whether to undertake a community governance review.</p>

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<p>What will the effect of the changes be?</p> <p>A Community Governance Review is a review of the whole or part of the council's area to consider one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes • the naming of parishes and the style of new parishes • the electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election, council size (the number of Councillors to be elected to council), and parish warding); and • grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes other types of local arrangements, including parish meetings
<p>How will it be implemented?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start of Review 23rd January 2023 • Formal Notice of Review published • Notification sent to all interested parties • First Consultation starts July 26th 2023 ends 26th September 2023 • Second Consultation starts November 10th 2023 ends 10th January 2024 • Report to Council 20th March 2024 • Boundary Orders communicated to the LG BCE for 2027 implementation.
<p>When is it due to start?</p> <p>Changes to take effect 6th May 2027</p>

<p>Data about the population</p>
<p>What is the demographic profile or make up of the community you are serving?</p> <p>https://www.suffolkobservatory.info/</p>
<p>What is the profile or make up of your service users by protected characteristics?</p> <p>Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils face a number of challenges relating to electoral engagement. The largest of these is the far lower propensity of some (largely urban) wards to turn out to vote during elections. These wards tend to contain higher proportions of people disadvantaged by class, unemployment, high levels of rental accommodation, lack of qualifications and general relative socio-economic deprivation. They also tend to contain a large proportion of young people and homemovers, ethnic minorities, residents with countries of birth outside of the U.K., those with low levels of English language proficiency and disabled people. This is probably related to the very low representation of all of these groups, as well as of women, as elected public officials (whether Councillors or MPs) in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk area.</p>

<p>Implications for communities and workforce</p>	
<p>Disability</p>	
<p>What is the impact on people with a disability (including children with additional needs) and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i></p>	<p>Differences in administrative local authority may impact the possibility of additional enabling provisions and the representation provided, i.e. consideration of disabilities on matters. The District and County authority have a higher obligation and role.</p>
<p>How does it have a positive or negative impact?</p>	<p>The consultation process requires attention to accessibility. The 'upon request' feature means assistance can be focused to the need.</p>

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What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	Equality Monitoring is used to ensure considerations include representation from disabled backgrounds.
Age	
What is the impact on people of different ages and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	The exercise is of a technical nature and though this does not exclude those from younger backgrounds experience supports disengagement of youth.
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	Disengagement is a known negative.
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	Social media campaigns were utilised in the communication plan and posters created to appeal to a wide audience.
Sex (gender)	
What is the impact on people of different genders and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	No known impact
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	No known impact
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	n/a
Gender reassignment	
What is the impact on people who have undergone gender reassignment (i.e. transgender people) and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	No known impact
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	No known impact
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	n/a
Marriage/civil partnership	
What is the impact on people who are married or in a civil partnership and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	No known impact
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	No known impact
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	n/a
Pregnancy/maternity	
What is the impact on people who are pregnant women or those with a young child and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	n/a
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	No known Impact
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	n/a
Race	
What is the impact on people from different races or ethnic groups and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	Due to the technical nature of the exercise overly long sentences or complicated word use may hinder accessibility, especially to those whose

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	first or second language(s) are not English
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	No known impact
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	Clear and simple language use is essential. A large enough language demographic may warrant translations being made.

Sexual orientation

What is the impact on people according to their sexual orientation and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	No known impact
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	No known impact
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	n/a

Religion/belief

What is the impact on people according to their religion or belief and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	No known impact
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	No known impact
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	n/a

Rurality

Where people live is not a characteristic protected by law: but for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils it is good practice to consider carefully how location may affect people's experience of a policy or service.	
What is the impact on people according to whether they live in an urban or rural environment and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	As the consultation relies on paper responses the process is heavily reliant on the post service, which may in some cases only be delivered once per week.
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	Negative
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	Public Consultation was extended as the time frame was considered insufficient, in addition electronic responses were accepted by email and forms were provided on the Council website.

Making Decisions

Having completed this equality impact assessment indicate which decision is recommended to be taken.	
Should the policy or service be implemented as the correct course of action?	That the recommendations in the report are implemented
Should the policy or service be amended as suggested by the report so that mitigating actions are taken to address an adverse or negative impact on any characteristic?	Mitigations have already been put in place where possible, others are noted for future use.
Should the policy or service be reviewed and revised more significantly to take into account its impact on different groups?	The process is reviewed at each iteration.

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Should the policy or service not be actioned as there are too many negative impacts?	no
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Monitoring Impact	
Assessing the impact on equality is an ongoing process that does not end once a policy or service had been agreed or implemented.	
How frequently will the policy or service be reviewed?	Legislative guidance 10-15 years and when petitioned by a qualifying petitioner.
Who will be involved?	Members, district, town and parish councils. Acting returning officers, MP's, businesses, members of the public and disability groups
Will there need to be an action plan completed for any amendments?	No
What further evidence or consultation will be needed to check that the policy or service is working well?	The process involves multiple consultation and these are used as checks and balances in the duration of the exercise.

Completion	
Authors signature	<i>Patrick Richardson-Todd</i>
Date of completion	24/01/2024

Additional sources of data:

<http://www.suffolkobservatory.info/Default.aspx>

<http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/>

<http://suffolkcf.org.uk/publications/hidden-needs-2016/>

<https://www.nao.org.uk/>

[Guidance on community governance reviews \(lgbce.org.uk\)](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/)

[Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/)