

Equality Impact Assessment

Title:	Review of the Minicom system	
Version:	1.0	
Date of draft:	22 July 2016	
Date approved by Equalities Group	December 2016	

Section 1A: Overview

Name of Policy, Procedure, Practice, Strategy or Service:	Review of the minicom system
Service, Group, Team:	Performance and Communities
Equality Assessment Lead Officer:	Suzanne Gorman
Head of Service	Lorraine Poyser (Director of Community Services)

1B: Please state the intended outcomes of the policy

How will you know these have been achieved? *What performance monitoring is in place?*

In March 2016 an “Access – background paper” was drafted to identify how Erewash Borough Council’s residents and customers access services and information. From this starting point it has been possible to identify that some methods of communication are no longer as popular and not being accessed as they once were.

By looking at the changes that technology has provided in recent years to identify which other methods of accessing services and information residents and customers are using. A minicom (text phone) is a phone with a keyboard that allows someone to communicate via text with another person who also has a minicom unit. There is no reference to the council’s minicom number on the “Contact Us” section of the website, although there are 32 different sections/documents on the website where the Mincom number is advertised as a means of contact. These can be found within the Culture and Leisure, Business and Licencing, Environment and Waste, Community and Living and Street and Transport sections of the website.

The proposal is therefore to remove the minicom apparatus, based at the contact centre at Long Eaton and advise all services to remove reference to it on their literature.

There is a record kept by Customer Services of when different formats are requested, for example large print or another language.

There is no record kept of the minicom’s use and anecdotally it has not rung in a considerable amount of time.

There have been no complaints about the lack of minicom service. A member of staff from Personnel rang the number in 2015 but it was not answered.

Section 2A: The policy. How will the policy/plan/strategy impact on residents, visitors, businesses or other agencies that we work with? *What work has been undertaken to advise these groups about the changes planned in the policy/plan/strategy?*

The “Access-background paper” was submitted to the July meeting of the Corporate Equality Group, who discussed the minicom service and felt that there are now other ways that deaf and hard of hearing residents and customers are contacting us and accessing services. The charity “British Deaf Association” provides SMS, Face Time and Skype, email and webform as a method for its members to make contact. Erewash

Borough Council offers email and webforms to allow residents and customers to contact us and these formats are available for the resident or customer to use on a 24/7 basis, unlike the minicom service, which would only be available when the contact centre is open.

2B: What needs is the policy/service designed to meet? *You could also refer to your current Service Plans and how the policy/service fits into EBC's Corporate Plan Priorities. How does the policy, procedure, practice, strategy or service align with Corporate Priorities*

The service is not being used and there is no saving in the system being removed as it uses a "DDI" on the internal phone system rather than a separate phone line. The cost of a replacement minicom/textphone, should one become necessary would be in excess of £300 and would require the additional purchase of the paper rolls that text is printed out on. The system is not routinely tested and any decision to keep the system would require checks to be put into place to ensure the apparatus is working.

The review of the service would meet Corporate Plan Priority 2, in particular:

- 2.1.1 Utilise ICT to improve customer access, online service provision and improve efficiency. This review will focus our resources on those services that residents and customers appear to be choosing to use.
- 2.3 Communicate with residents in a range of formats relevant to their choice.
- 2.4 Provide services that are responsive and easy to access.

2C: Is the service provided subject to any element of outsourcing? *Is the service delivered in part, or in its entirety by an outside company or organisation? If challenged about a service delivered on our behalf you must show that the organisation meets the expectations with regard to equalities in its customer service and recruitment and retention of staff.*

No

Section 3A: Gathering Information

What equality monitoring information do you gather and how is this information used to develop services, functions and policies at the current time. *You could look at the take up of services, customer satisfaction (complaints and compliments) and enforcement action.*

There is no data that identifies the number of residents or customers who are deaf or hard of hearing who are accessing council services. There are only 4 residents with a “deaf or hard of hearing” alert on W2.

According to “Action on Hearing Loss” there are 11 million people in the UK with some form of hearing loss and 6.7 million of those would benefit from the use of a hearing aid, less than 1 million are severely or profoundly deaf. In October 2015 it was reported that there were 2,200 people in Derbyshire who were “registered deaf” (less than 0.3% of the population of Derbyshire) but this would not include the many who suffer hearing loss to some degree, estimated to be 1:6 (129,000 in Derbyshire based on 2014 population data).

CamTAD (Campaign for Tackling Acquired Deafness) is a charity working in parts of the county, including Erewash and has outreach clinics in Breaston, Long Eaton, Ilkeston and West Hallam.

According to the NHS and AgeUK hearing loss is normal from the age of 50 and 71% of over 70 year-olds have some form of hearing loss. This would mean that in Erewash a little under 10,000 residents, in this age band suffer from some form of hearing loss. However, hearing loss is a normal consequence of aging as damage to the 15,000 hair cells in each cochlea is inevitable and digital hearing aids, email and SMS text messaging have all helped communication for this age related type of hearing loss.

3B: What does available data and the results of any consultations show about the take up of services? What is the impact on different groups? (qualitative and quantitative). *You could look at previous community consultation exercises, customer reviews, census data, staff feedback etc.*

Remember: by law you are required to be able to demonstrate, through data analysis and evidence, that you have considered the impact of your service on **ALL** of the relevant protected groups. This document is just a short summary of this process and a tool to help you to check that you have taken the Equality Act 2010 and the Council’s equality objectives into consideration.

No formal consultation has been undertaken to remove the minicom apparatus. There is no recollection of its use for a considerable amount of time. Technology would suggest that email and SMS have replaced the need for this service. All of the Council’s services are currently available

by email and the Council could chose to use a SMS service at a future date for all customers

Section 4: Impact Assessment *Here you need to analyse the needs of different groups and the possible impacts the service may have on them. How is the policy or decision likely to affect the **promotion of equality** and the **elimination of discrimination** in each of the groups?*

Stake Holder Group	Is this group likely to be affected in a positive way?	In what way will they be affected?	Is this group likely to be affected in a negative way?	In what way will they be affected?
Age (older people, young people)	Yes	By withdrawing the minicom service the council is targeting its resources to reflect the use of methods of communication preferred by residents and customers.	No	“Acorn” segmentation data shows that older residents use email and so the use of webforms and email by the Council will not exclude older residents with a hearing impairment from accessing information and services.
People with Disabilities (Both physical and mental impairments)	Yes	By withdrawing the minicom service the council is targeting its resources to reflect the use of methods of communication preferred by residents and customers	Yes	The minicom service is not currently being used, suggesting that residents and customers are using alternate text based solutions to access information and services. Where residents who are deaf cannot access a smart phone or computer the council would need to identify alternate provision.
Gender (Women, Men, Transgender, Transsexuals)	No		No	This group would not be impacted by the withdrawal of the minicom facility.
Race (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic groups. Include people whose	No		No	Where English is not the first language of residents and customers, they may prefer to use email so that they can access free on-line translation services.

first language is not English)				
Sexual Orientation	No		No	This group would not be impacted by the withdrawal of the minicom facility
Religion and belief	No		No	This group would not be impacted by the withdrawal of the minicom facility
Dignity, Human Rights and Socio-economic disadvantage	No		No	This group would not be impacted by the withdrawal of the minicom facility
Marriage and Civil partnerships	No		No	This group would not be impacted by the withdrawal of the minicom facility
Pregnancy and maternity/paternity	No		No	This group would not be impacted by the withdrawal of the minicom facility

Section 5A: Actions How will you monitor the ongoing effect of the policy/strategy/plan?	When will this be undertaken?	Expected outcomes / performance measures	Which Corporate Plan aim will this action meet?
Removal of the service will be monitored and there is an option to use a text based alternative, i.e. email or even the designation of a mobile phone, should it be shown to be needed. The CCC system will be monitored to identify any issues for customers who complain about access to services and information.	Any issues raised about the lack of accessibility for hard of hearing or deaf residents will be raised at the Corporate Equality Group and an alternative solution identified.	It is anticipated that there will be no complaints about the removal of the minicom apparatus.	Delivering efficient and effective services that residents need.

5B: If you have identified any negative impacts on any of the groups in section 4 how will you mitigate the effect?

Negative impact	Action required to mitigate any potential negative impact	Outcome / performance measure	Lead Officer – who will the monitoring of this action be reported to?	Date that the monitoring will be undertaken, how often will it be done?	Which of the current Equality Objectives does this action meet? (State number *)
Lack of minicom service, results in complaints and issues of access for residents and customer who are deaf or hard of hearing.	<p>Introduction of a SMS enquiry facility that could be picked up by the contact centre as with the facility to report dog fouling by SMS.</p> <p>Support for customers to access PCs at Ilkeston and Long Eaton Town Halls, where they do not have access to a smartphone or computer of their own.</p>	Any CCCs will trigger a referral to the Corporate Equality Group	S Gorman (Customer Care Officer)	Quarterly with the analysis of CCCs.	Objective 2

*The objectives are:

1. **Provide a welcoming and safe place for our communities, visitors and businesses which embraces equality and is free from discrimination.**
2. **Provide relevant services that are free from discrimination and delivered in a way that is responsive and accessible.**
3. **Understand and value the diversity of our communities through community engagement**
4. **Foster an accessible and inclusive working environment for all our staff and strive to achieve a workforce that is representative and diverse.**