

# Equality Impact Assessment

Title:	Review of Community Forums	
Version:	1.0	
Date of draft:	27.1.2017	
Date approved by Equalities Group	16.3.17	

## Section 1A: Overview

<b>Name of Policy, Procedure, Practice, Strategy or Service:</b>	Review of Community Forums
<b>Service, Group, Team:</b>	Performance and Community
<b>Equality Assessment Lead Officer:</b>	Rachel Fernandez
<b>Head of Service</b>	Lorraine Poyser

**1B: Please state the intended outcomes of the policy****How will you know these have been achieved? *What performance monitoring is in place?***

To provide the Council Executive with the opportunity to review and consider the options for the future of Community forums, currently held 3 times a year each, in the north and the south of the borough.

The current arrangement will terminate and be replaced by the use of focus groups to compliment other community engagement activities.

**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?***

Whilst the two Community forums have been used to engage with residents on local issues, attendance continues to be very low despite attempts to improve attendance. Although each forum provides the opportunity to reach and engage with over 20,000 households attendance has not exceeded 32 residents since January 2015.

<b>Forum Date</b>	<b>Forum</b>	<b>Resident Attendance</b> (Each area has a reach of approximately 55,000 residents)
January 2015	Ilkeston and North	12
February 2015	Long Eaton and South	32
June 2015	Long Eaton and South	11
September 2015	Ilkeston and North	11
October 2015	Long Eaton and South	17
January 2016	Ilkeston and North	20
February 2016	Long Eaton and South	25
July 2016	Ilkeston and North	12
July 2016	Long Eaton and South	17

Consultation was undertaken with residents who attended the two forums in July 2016 and also through the online panel. This identified that only 15% wanted to interact with the Council at public meetings, with most preferring to use other methods of consultation to raise issues. This more traditional method of engagement is no longer popular with residents.

Colleagues from the Police and Derbyshire County Council who also attend the forums were also consulted and are in support of a review of the community forum programme.

**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*

To provide an opportunity to review the use of community forums and target council resources in a way that increases the numbers of residents who engage with the council and meets the needs of the community.

Corporate Plan Priorities:

2.1.1 Utilise ICT to improve customer access, online service provision and improve efficiency.

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.

3.4 Undertake consultation in ways that find out what residents need.

3.4.1 Continue to employ a wide range of approaches to consultation

3.5.1 Undertake relevant and targeted involvement and consultation when undertaking service review and design

**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.*

As a proportion of the total population the forums are attracting very few residents and are not therefore a representative sample of the Borough. The council does not collect equality data at the forums but anecdotally they attract older residents. The online panel is well represented in the majority of wards by older residents and may prove to be more representative of the borough as a whole. Targeted, local engagement could be undertaken via the panel where residents in a post code area are identified

The council will continue to consider the use of focus groups to support improved service delivery.

**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. Does your consultation identify responses by protected characteristic or identify particular community and voluntary groups that you worked with.*

**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.

Consultation was undertaken with those residents who attended the two July 2016 forums. Both forums agreed that the key to increasing attendance was to ensure that the items for discussion were relevant and important to the local area and its residents. Alternative options were discussed including online forums, social media, and improved promotion of the 'Ask the Council' section of the council website to enable residents' issues to be heard in-between the set meeting dates.

The online consultation panel was also consulted on the community forums as part of this review, with over 700 responses being received.

This established that:-

- over 60% of those residents who responded were not aware of the community forums even though the forums are promoted in the

local press, on the news section of the council’s website and by social media.

- 28.5% are not interested in attending a forum.
- Over 55% would prefer to interact with the council through online and social media, with only 15% wanting to interact at public meetings.
- Over 88% would interact with the council via the ‘Ask the Council’ section of the website or using an online forum if this was introduced.

**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)	<b>Yes</b>	Residents of all ages will still be included in the council’s programme of community engagement. Older residents tended to be in the majority at community forums but are well represented on the on-line panel. Residents invited to attend focus groups will provide a representative balance of the community.	<b>Yes</b>	Older residents who do not have access to digital communication may feel excluded from face to face engagement but can still be included in focus group work.
People with Disabilities (Both physical and mental impairments)	<b>Yes</b>	Residents who consider themselves to have a disability will still be included in the council’s programme of community engagement.	<b>No</b>	
Gender (Women, Men, Transgender, Transsexuals)	<b>No</b>	Ending the use of Community Forums will have a neutral impact on this group	<b>No</b>	
Race (Black, Asian,	<b>Yes</b>	Residents of all ethnicities will be able	<b>Yes</b>	The Community Engagement programme

Minority Ethnic groups. Include people whose first language is not English)		to take part in the council's community engagement programme		will need to be promoted and include offers to translate on-line surveys etc. to ensure residents whose first language is not English can be included, where they wish to be.
Sexual Orientation	<b>No</b>	Ending the use of Community Forums will have a neutral impact on this group	<b>No</b>	
Religion and belief	<b>No</b>	Ending the use of Community Forums will have a neutral impact on this group	<b>No</b>	
Dignity, Human Rights and Socio-economic disadvantage	<b>Yes</b>	Residents living in areas of economic deprivation will still be able to access the on-line panel. Residents without access to the internet or who do not have a computer or smart phone can use the PCs in Long Eaton and Ilkeston Town Hall reception areas.	<b>Yes</b>	Residents living in areas of economic deprivation will be invited to attend focus groups.
Marriage and Civil partnerships	<b>No</b>	Ending the use of Community Forums will have a neutral impact on this group	<b>No</b>	
Pregnancy and maternity/paternity	<b>No</b>	Ending the use of Community Forums will have a neutral impact on this group	<b>No</b>	

<b>Section 5A: Actions How will you monitor the ongoing effect of the policy/strategy/plan?</b>	<b>When will this be undertaken?</b>	<b>Expected outcomes / performance measures</b>	<b>Which Corporate Plan aim will this action meet?</b>
<p>Work to ensure the composition of the on-line panel is fair and provides a balance of the borough will continue. Analysis of respondents for each survey could be provided to show the age, ethnicity, locality, gender and whether the respondent considers themselves to have a disability.</p> <p>Ensure that residents available for focus groups represent the borough as a whole.</p>	<p>It is proposed that the on-line panel be refreshed to ensure that current members wish to continue, wish to be included in focus groups and that equality data be established as a baseline, to be able to improve the representation of the panel across all protected characteristics and across all wards.</p> <p>At the point of invite, a representative selection of residents will be made</p>	<p>Data will identify the gaps in the on-line panel and these gaps will be narrowed by a programme of work to demonstrate that the panel is made up of residents who represent the borough as a whole.</p> <p>Focus groups will be shown to provide a balance of residents by gender, age, disability, locality (where appropriate) and ethnicity.</p>	<p>Improved access to services.</p> <p>Delivering efficient and effective services that residents need.</p> <p>Improved access to services.</p> <p>Delivering efficient and effective services that residents need.</p>

<b>5B: If you have identified any negative impacts on any of the groups in section 4 how will you mitigate the effect?</b>					
<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>Action required to mitigate any potential negative impact</b>	<b>Outcome / performance measure</b>	<b>Lead Officer – who will the monitoring of this action be reported to?</b>	<b>Date that the monitoring will be undertaken, how often will it be done?</b>	<b>Which of the current Equality Objectives does this action meet? (State number *)</b>
Older residents who do not have access to digital	Data from focus groups and the	All ages, ethnicity, gender, disabilities and	Performance and Community Manager	Half yearly for online panel and	Objective 2 and 3

<p>communication may feel excluded from face to face engagement but can still be included in focus group work. Whilst older residents in more affluent wards might be represented on the panel there is a need to ensure that all residents are represented across the economic scale</p>	<p>respondents to on-line surveys can be used to ensure that each provides a balance.</p> <p>Forums to deal with local issues will still be held. These will be called if a specific topic is of interest and/or will impact a large proportion of residents.</p>	<p>localities are shown to be representative in each programme of engagement.</p>	<p>and Community Engagement Officer</p>	<p>following each focus group.</p>	
<p>The Community Engagement programme will need to be promoted and include offers to translate on-line surveys etc. to ensure residents whose first language is not English can be included, where they wish to be.</p>	<p>Ensure from data collection that residents from different ethnic backgrounds are represented on the on-line panel or by focus group membership</p>	<p>Evidence to show that there is a representative mix of residents taking part in individual community engagement activities.</p>	<p>Performance and Community Manager and Community Engagement Officer</p>	<p>Half yearly</p>	<p>Objective 2 and 3</p>
<p>Residents living in areas of economic deprivation will be invited to attend focus groups.</p>	<p>Ensure residents from all wards of the borough are represented on the on-line panel or by focus group</p>	<p>Evidence to show that there is a representative mix of residents taking part in individual community engagement</p>	<p>Performance and Community Manager and Community Engagement Officer</p>	<p>Half yearly for online panel and following each focus group.</p>	<p>Objective 2 and 3</p>



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\*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.**