

Equality Impact Assessment Template – Policy, Function or Strategy

This document should be completed when a new policy, function or strategy is introduced or when a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy is recommended. This will ensure equality considerations are taken into account before a decision is made and the policy, function or strategy can be altered, if required.

1. Policy, function or strategy		
a.	Name/description of the policy, function or strategy ¹	Implementation of remote attendance by Elected Members at Council Meetings via a hybrid model
b.	Responsible organisation(s)/Lead Service	Corporate Services
c.	Lead Officer	Alan Puckrin, Interim Service Director - Corporate Services and Organisational Recovery
d.	Date of Impact Assessment	19 May 2021
e.	Partners/other Services involved in the development of the policy, function or strategy	Legal Services, Property Services, ICT Services
f.	Is the policy, function or strategy?	<input type="checkbox"/> New
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reviewed/Revised
g.	What is the purpose of the policy, function or strategy (include details of any new legislation which prompted the introduction of the policy, function or strategy or the substantive change to the policy, function or strategy)?	The revised proposal to allow remote attendance at Council Meetings was an existing issue raised by Members but brought into sharper focus by Covid-19 and the move to 100% remote meetings. The purpose is to provide options for Members who may not always be able to physically attend the Municipal Buildings.
h.	What are the intended outcomes of the policy, function or strategy?	Provide greater equality of access and remove barriers to becoming a Councillor/attending meetings
i.	Geographical area (Inverclyde-wide or a specific location)	Greenock Municipal Buildings (GMB) (at present)

¹ Please attach details of the policy, function or strategy to this Template

j.	Which parts of the Equality Duty will the policy, function or strategy impact on?	X	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by The Equality Act 2010
		X	Advance equality of opportunity between people of different groups
		X	Foster good relations between people from different groups
k.	Will those who may be directly or indirectly affected by the policy, function or strategy be involved in its development?	Yes	

2. Does the policy, function of strategy impact on:		
	Yes	No
a. Protected Characteristics under The Equality Act 2010: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion and Belief; Sex; Sexual Orientation (see Section 3)	X	
b. Reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage – Fairer Scotland Duty ² (see Section 6)	X	
c. Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2017/22 ³ (see Section 7)		
d. Corporate Plan 2018/22 ⁴ (see Section 8)	X	
3. If 'Yes' is selected for any part of Section 2, please populate the other relevant Sections of this Template.		

² [Fairer Scotland Duty: interim guidance for public bodies](#)

³ [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017/22](#)

⁴ [Corporate Plan 2018/22](#) (agenda item 5)

4. If 'No' is selected for every part of Section 2, please state the reasons for this.

Please sign below and email a copy of this Template to Karen Barclay, Corporate Policy Officer: karen.barclay@inverclyde.gov.uk.

Signature:

Date:

3. Impact – Protected Characteristics

Which of the Protected Characteristics will the policy, function or strategy have an impact upon?

Protected Characteristic	Impact					Reasons/Comments
	Positive High	Low	Neutral	Negative High	Low	
Age		x				<p>Because the time required will be reduced, there could be a positive impact for younger or working age Elected Members who could find it difficult to attend Committee meetings during the day due to work commitments.</p> <p>Older Elected Members will be able to participate in meetings when it may not be possible for them to physically attend.</p>
Disability		x				<p>For Elected Members with a disability, the hybrid model will have a positive impact as there will be no need for them to travel to the GMB and they will be able to participate in meetings from home.</p> <p>While people with a disability may find it difficult to participate in Council meetings remotely, steps have been taken to ensure that Elected Members have the necessary software, skills and knowledge to attend, listen and take part.</p>

Gender Reassignment			x			
Pregnancy and maternity		x				Elected Members will be able to participate in meetings when it may not be possible for them to physically attend the Municipal Buildings.
Race			x			
Religion and belief			x			
Sex			x			
Sexual orientation			x			
Other groups to consider		x				Those with caring responsibilities will benefit from the flexibility afforded by the proposal.

4. Which parts of the Equality Duty will the policy, function or strategy have an impact upon?	
X	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
X	Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
X	Foster good relations between people from different groups

5. Impact – groups

From the information you have highlighted above, describe the positive and negative impacts and the groups affected under The Equality Act 2010.

Positive impacts

+

(Describe groups affected.)

The ability to attend/participate in meetings without having to physically attend the GMB will potentially remove a barrier for underrepresented groups to run for office which may include young people and people of working age, older people, people with disabilities or caring responsibilities.

Negative impacts

-

(Describe groups affected.)

6. Impact – Fairer Scotland Duty

What impact will this policy, function or strategy have on reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage?

Positive impact +	Neutral impact =	Negative impact -
x		
<p>Briefly describe how the policy, function or strategy will impact on reducing inequalities of outcome.</p> <p>The ability to attend/participate in meetings without having to physically attend the GMB will potentially remove a barrier for young people and people of working age, older people, people with disabilities or caring responsibilities to run for office.</p> <p>While people who experience socio-economic disadvantage may not be able to access the technology required to participate in Council Meetings, steps have been taken to ensure that Elected Members have the required equipment.</p>		

7. Impact – LOIP 2017/22

Which Priority/Priorities from the LOIP 2017/22 will this policy, function or strategy impact on?

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Population: Inverclyde's population will be stable and sustainable with an appropriate balance of socio - economic groups that is conducive to local economic prosperity and longer term population growth
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Inequalities: There will be low levels of poverty and deprivation and the gap between the richest and poorest members of our communities will be reduced (This may already have been highlighted at Section 6.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Environment, culture and heritage: Inverclyde's environment, culture and heritage will be protected and enhanced to create a better place for all Inverclyde residents and an attractive place in which to live, work and visit
<p>Briefly describe how the policy, function or strategy will impact on the LOIP Priority/Priorities.</p>	

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8. Impact – Corporate Plan 2018/22

Which Priority/Priorities from the Corporate Plan 2018/22 will the policy, function or strategy impact on?

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. To promote Inverclyde, to both residents and visitors alike, as a great place to live, work and visit
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2. To work collaboratively, to enable strong, connected and empowered communities, particularly in areas of deprivation, so that residents have influence and control over the things that matter to them
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. To grow the local economy in a way that creates opportunities for all our residents, including access to good quality jobs
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. To reduce the prevalence of poverty and, in particular, child poverty in our communities
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. To safeguard, support and meet the needs of our most vulnerable families and residents
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. To improve the health and wellbeing of residents so that people live well, and for longer
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. To protect and enhance our natural and built environment
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. To preserve, nurture and promote Inverclyde’s unique culture and heritage
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9. To deliver services that are responsive to community needs and are underpinned by a culture of innovation, continuous improvement and effective management of resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. To develop motivated, trained and qualified employees who deliver quality services that meet current and anticipated service needs

Briefly describe how the policy, function or strategy will impact on the Corporate Plan Priority/Priorities.

Moving to remote attendance shows the Council as a forward thinking and modernising Council.

9. Evidence

What evidence do you have to help identify any potential impacts of the policy, function or strategy?

Note: Evidence could include information from consultations, surveys, the Citizens' Panel, focus groups, interviews, projects, user feedback, complaints, Officers' knowledge and experience, equalities monitoring data, publications, research, reports, and local and national groups.

Evidence	Details
Consultation/Engagement (including any carried out while developing the policy, function or strategy)	While engagement with Elected Members via the Strategic Leadership Forum indicates a strong desire from most Members for physical attendance at the Municipal Buildings for Committees/Council meetings, the proposal seeks to offer a hybrid model, whereby some Members and Officers attend in person and some attend remotely.
Research	Engagement with other Councils regarding their approach shows that they are considering adopting similar approaches to Inverclyde's model.
Officers' knowledge and experience (including feedback from frontline staff)	Detailed discussions have taken place with Officers from Committee Services, ICT and Property Services who have many years' experience in their respective fields on what is required to develop the best way to deliver the proposal.
Equalities monitoring data	It is noted that a number of the Council's Elected Members, in terms of Covid-19 risk assessments, should not be expected to attend meetings and, in compliance with the appropriate advice, should be alert to their risks of attending in person any meetings within the Council buildings.
User feedback (including complaints)	Elected Members' views on remote meetings during Covid-19, from the individual consultations that have been undertaken and from discussion at a Council meeting, is that the operation of the September 2020 cycle of meetings was generally positive.
Stakeholders	

<p>Other: Local residents</p> <p>Press</p>	
<p>Are there information gaps and, if so, what are these?</p>	<p>The Remote Meetings Procedure and Protocol for Committees will be reviewed following approval of the hybrid model.</p>

10. Consequences of analysis

What steps will you take in response to the findings of your analysis? Please select at least one of the following and provide a brief explanation.

a.	Continue development with no changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b.	Continue development with minor alterations	X	When the approach and location for the hybrid meetings has been agreed, it is proposed to run a trial meeting involving Members both attending physically and remotely. Thereafter, it is proposed to live stream the meetings to address public accountability and transparency issues.
c.	Continue development with major changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d.	Discontinue development and consider alternatives (where relevant)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

How will the effect of the policy, function or strategy be monitored following implementation?

Members' feedback and a further report.

When is the policy, function or strategy due to be implemented?

Once social distancing is no longer a requirement.

When will the policy, function or strategy be reviewed?

Ongoing.

What resources are available for the implementation of the policy, function or strategy? Have these resources changed?

Improved sound and ICT equipment will be needed.

11. Please use the space below to detail any other matters arising from the Equality Impact Assessment process, including what action could be taken to mitigate the impact of the policy, function or strategy.

Steps have been taken to ensure that Elected Members have the necessary software, skills and knowledge to attend, listen and take part in the Council's democratic decision-making processes.

At the time of writing, in terms of The Coronavirus Act 2020, the public continue to be excluded from all Council and Committee meetings on health grounds. When the appropriate pandemic restrictions have been lifted, it will be possible for the public to attend meetings as before.

During the implementation of remote meetings, the public will continue to be excluded from physically attending all Council and Committee meetings, however, public accountability and transparency will be delivered via the recording of meetings and the posting of the papers for meetings on the Council website.

Additionally, for the purposes of transparency and public engagement, press representation at any scheduled meetings is offered and this continues to be made available online to local and national press representatives.

Details of the Person(s) who completed the Assessment:

Name:	Alan Puckrin Karen Barclay
Position:	Interim Service Director - Corporate Services and Organisational Recovery Corporate Policy Officer
Date:	19 May 2021

Authorised by:

Name:	Alan Puckrin
Position:	Interim Service Director - Corporate Services and Organisational Recovery
Date:	21 May 2021

Thank you for your assistance with the completion of this task.

Please send a copy of the completed Template to Karen Barclay, Corporate Policy Officer at karen.barclay@inverclyde.gov.uk.

27 April 2020