Cheshire East Council

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

TITLE: Draft Digital Strategy

VERSION CONTROL

Date	Version	Author	Description of Changes
08.11.2021	V1	H Gerrard	

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Stage 1 Description: Fact finding (about your policy / service /

Department	Corporate	Lead officer responsible for assessment	Helen Gerrard
Service	Customer Service	Other members of team undertaking assessment	
Date	08.11.2021	Version	1

Type of document (mark as appropriate)	Strategy	Plan	Function	Policy	Procedure	Service
Is this a new/ existing/ revision of an existing document (please mark as appropriate)	New			Existing	Revision	

| Title and subject of the impact assessment (include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate and how it fits in with the wider aims of the organisation)

 Please attach a copy of the strategy/ plan/ function/ policy/ procedure/ service | The draft Digital Strategy responds to the aims within the Councils Corporate Plan which recognises that "new and emerging technologies are bringing opportunities to rethink how services can be provided. We want to improve connectivity for all our communities and help residents and business to benefit from the convenience and flexibility it can bring".

 Cheshire East Council has already made strong progress towards its digital priority however this has developed as a series of individual Programmes. Some of our programmes also include collaboration with our partners. It is recognised that for us to deliver the scale, focus and impact required a cohesive overarching Strategy and action plan must be developed.

 While digital developments have undoubtedly created opportunities, there are also concerns about negative impacts in terms of further widening the "digital divide". The Draft Strategy looks to address inequalities for those in our most disadvantaged communities and those communities where individuals and businesses have poor connectivity.

 The Draft Digital Strategy is built around the delivery of four aims:

 To provide innovative public services

 To create a sustainable digital infrastructure

 To create a vibrant digital economy |

To improve health, wellbeing and inclusion

The Strategy is underpinned by a range of principles against which all digital development proposals would be assessed and which ensures that digital developments are fully inclusive and align with aims of the Council's Corporate Plan:-

Digital for all – we will ensure that everyone can benefit from the Councils digital transformation including customers, residents, businesses, rural communities and community sectors. We will support the development of skills, knowledge, and accessibility to allow this to happen.

One Digital – the Strategy and solutions will cut across services and communities, breaking down silo's, driving efficiencies and improving customer experience. This does not mean "one size fits all" but that our processes, services, and the technology underpinning them are simplified, standardised, and shared wherever possible.

Digital by Design – We will design services to be as efficient as possible to improve the customer experience. Services will be designed to encourage customers to choose the digital option first, but not to exclude those who do not.

Green Digital – Our digital transformation will support the Councils commitment to be carbon neutral by 2025 and to influence carbon reduction across the borough

Safe Digital - Security and resilience will be at the core of all our digital developments. The safety of customers personal information and data will be paramount.

Transparent Digital – we will use digital technology to make the Council, its decision making and the information it holds more accessible for all.

Innovative Digital – we will embrace new technologies, testing our ideas and adopting an agile approach to service delivery. Innovation will be continuously informed by customer feedback.

Digital foundations – we will ensure that we have the technology, governance, delivery mechanism, leadership, skills, and culture to deliver against the strategy.

Who are the main stakeholders and have they been engaged with? (e.g. general public, employees, Councillors, partners, specific audiences, residents)	Stakeholders include general public, residents, businesses and partners. The themes outlined in the Strategy and the underpinning themes are collated from a range of existing strategies which have been subject to previous consultation (the Customer Experience Strategy for example). The themes and principles were subject to approval form Corporate Policy Committee. The intention is to consult with stakeholders on the Draft Digital Strategy to ensure it meets their aspirations and represents a cohesive approach to digital transformation. Consultation will be held 4th December to 13th January
What consultation method(s) did you use?	Consultation will take place via an on line survey and where possible (given COVID limitations) via hard copy. Customer Service Centre and Library staff will be engaged to promote the survey to non-digitally aware customers. The consultation will also be promoted to businesses via our Economic Development Team and to our partners via the Communities Team and Digital Inclusion Group.

Stage 2 Initial Screening

Who is affected and what evidence have you considered to arrive at this analysis? (This may or may not include the stakeholders listed above)	• The way services are delivered and how customers interact with the Council has a significant impact on our communities and therefore may impact on different groups in the community. The principles underpinning the Strategy will ensure that proposals are fully inclusive. • Our aim to enhance digital connectivity is likely to have a positive impact particularly on those living within rural communities who are more likely to have poor connections • Our aim to enhance digital health, wellbeing and inclusion is likely to have a positive impact on those adults without all 5

	digital skills and is most likely to positively impact the older generation and those with a disability	
Who is intended to benefit and how?	All stakeholder as referenced above are intended to benefit from a Digital Strategy. Please see points above. • Issues and concerns identified during this consultation will be used to develop mitigation where possible and will be used to inform further development of the Strategy	
Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups?	Some groups may be affected differently – specific actions are targeted towards those most likely to be digitally excluded either through financial reasons, lack of digital skills or lack of connectivity.	
Does it include making decisions based on individual characteristics, needs or circumstances?	No	
Are relations between different groups or communities likely to be affected? (e.g. will it favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others?)	No	
Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality? Is there a history of unequal outcomes (do you have enough evidence to prove otherwise)?	As above specific actions are included to support those who are unable to take advantage of opportunities presented by digital technology either through ack of financial resources, lack of skills or inability to connect to a digital infrastructure	

Is there an actual or potential negative impact on these specific characteristics? (Please tick)

	Y	N		Y	N		Y	N
Age	Y	N	**Marriage & civil partnership**	Y	N	**religion & belief**	Y	N
Disability	Y	N	**Pregnancy & maternity**	Y	N	**Sex**	Y	N
Gender reassignment	Y	N	**Race**	Y	N	**Sexual orientation**	Y	N

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What evidence do you have to support your findings? (quantitative and qualitative) Please provide additional information that you wish to include as appendices to this document, i.e., graphs, tables, charts		Consultation/ involvement carried out	
No negative impact on any group, there are positive impacts for age and disability		**Yes**	**No**
Age	Evidence suggests that the older population and those with a disability are more likely to be digitally excluded. The Strategy aims to support them in developing the skills, should they wish to, to be confident in engaging digitally. The principles ensure that this is a choice and that "Services will be designed to encourage customers to choose the digital option first, but not to exclude those who do not."	**Yes**	
Disability	Evidence suggests that the older population and those with a disability are more likely to be digitally excluded. The Strategy aims to support them in developing the skills, should they wish to, to be confident in engaging digitally. The principles ensure that this is a choice and that "Services will be designed to encourage customers to choose the digital option first, but not to exclude those who do not."	**Yes**	
Gender reassignment	*It is not expected that this consultation will impact people who fall within this category*	**Yes**	
Marriage & civil partnership	*It is not expected that this consultation will impact people who fall within this category*	**Yes**	
Pregnancy & maternity	*It is not expected that this consultation will impact people who fall within this category*	**Yes**	
Race	*It is not expected that this consultation will impact people who fall within this category*	**Yes**	
Religion & belief	*It is not expected that this consultation will impact people who fall within this category*	**Yes**	
Sex	*It is not expected that this consultation will impact people who fall within this category*	**Yes**	
Sexual orientation	*It is not expected that this consultation will impact people who fall within this category*	**Yes**	

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Proceed to full impact assessment? (Please tick)	**Yes**	**No**	**Date** 08.11.2021
Lead officer sign off			
Head of service sign off		**Date** 08.11.2021	

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Cheshire East
Council

This section identifies if there are impacts on equality, diversity and cohesion, what evidence there is to support the conclusion and what further action is needed

Protected characteristics	Is the policy (function etc….) likely to have an adverse impact on any of the groups? **Please include evidence (qualitative & quantitative) and consultations** *List what negative impacts were recorded in Stage 1 (Initial Assessment).*	Are there any positive impacts of the policy (function etc….) on any of the groups? **Please include evidence (qualitative & quantitative) and consultations** *List what positive impacts were recorded in **Stage 1** (Initial Assessment).*	Please rate the impact taking into account any measures already in place to reduce the impacts identified ***High:*** *Significant potential impact; history of complaints; no mitigating measures in place; need for consultation* ***Medium:*** *Some potential impact; some mitigating measures in place, lack of evidence to show effectiveness of measures* ***Low:*** *Little/no identified impacts; heavily legislation-led; limited public facing aspect*	Further action (only an outline needs to be included here. A full action plan can be included at Section 4) *Once you have assessed the impact of a policy/service, it is important to identify options and alternatives to reduce or eliminate any negative impact. Options considered could be adapting the policy or service, changing the way in which it is implemented or introducing balancing measures to reduce any negative impact. When considering each option you should think about how it will reduce any negative impact, how it might impact on other groups and how it might impact on relationships between groups and overall issues around community cohesion. You should clearly demonstrate how you have considered various options and the impact of these. You must have a detailed rationale behind decisions and a justification for those alternatives that have not been accepted.*
Age				
Disability				
Gender reassignment				
Marriage & civil partnership				
Pregnancy and				

maternity			
Race			
Religion & belief			
Sex			
Sexual orientation			
Is this change due to be carried out wholly or partly by other providers? If yes, please indicate how you have ensured that the partner organisation complies with equality legislation (e.g. tendering, awards process, contract, monitoring and performance measures)			

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Summary: provide a brief overview including impact, changes, improvement, any gaps in evidence and additional data that is needed			
Specific actions to be taken to reduce, justify or remove any adverse impacts	**How will this be monitored?**	**Officer responsible**	**Target date**
Please provide details and link to full action plan for actions			
When will this assessment be reviewed?			
Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?			
Lead officer sign off		**Date**	
Head of service sign off		**Date**	

Please publish this completed EIA form on the relevant section of the Cheshire East website