

Initial Equalities Screening Record Form

Date of Screening: 21/11/23	Directorate: Chief Executive's Office	Section: Communications and Marketing
1. Activity to be assessed	<p>The council's corporate communications and marketing strategy for 2024-2028.</p> <p>This four-year strategy has been compiled after various workshops, research, surveys and analysis. It covers the council's overall approach to communications and marketing reflecting the research and linking to organisational goals and values.</p> <p>The last communications and marketing strategy expired in 2015.</p> <p>It does not cover engagement, consultation, website or intranet – which are all covered by other strategies and teams.</p>	
2. What is the activity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy/ strategy	
3. Is it a new or existing activity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New	
4. Officer responsible for the screening	Alayna Razzell	
5. Who are the members of the screening team?	Alayna Razzell, Daisy Fitzgibbon, Sophie Muschamp, Kate Morris, Elliott Denning	
6. What is the purpose of the activity?	<p>The overall aim of the strategy is to keep communities informed by sharing easy to understand and timely updates on issues and services that matter.</p> <p>It aims to explain our decisions, clear up any misunderstandings, and make sure everyone knows what services the council provides.</p> <p>By doing this, we hope to build trust, maintain, and safeguard the council's reputation and make sure the community feels connected and well-informed.</p>	
7. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?	To benefit all stakeholders – staff, councillors, residents, partners, businesses, other local authorities and public sector organisations.	

Protected Characteristics	Please tick yes or no	Is there an impact? What kind of equality impact may there be? Is the impact positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral, please give a reason.	What evidence do you have to support this? E.g. equality monitoring data, consultation results, customer satisfaction information etc Please add a narrative to justify your claims around impacts and describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion as this will inform members decision making, include consultation results/satisfaction information/equality monitoring data
<p>8. Disability Equality – this can include physical, mental health, learning or sensory disabilities and includes conditions such as dementia as well as hearing or sight impairment.</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Positive impact: we have identified a need for more accessible communications, including content and format. This will enable us to be more inclusive in general but responsive to specific needs and requirements.</p> <p>One of the themes identified in the strategy is: Being clear, accessible and inclusive.</p> <p>Two of the six objectives relate to provide greater accessibility for people who may have a disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enhance clarity and use appropriate translation and interpretation. This will ensure information can be easily understood by diverse audiences. • To simplify language, use visuals, and make full use of communication platforms for accessibility. This includes developing non-textual 	<p>The commitments to accessibility are firmly embedded in the strategy – its themes and objectives.</p> <p>Over the past 10 years, there have been very few requests from residents/ stakeholders made to the communications team for additional formats. We would provide a reasonable adjustment in line with our legal responsibility and published guidance.</p> <p>The surveys carried out as part of the strategy did not collect disability data. However, 13.4% of residents have a disability according to the most recent census data.</p> <p>The strategy states that we will make greater use of channels, many of which have inbuilt assisted technology for people with disabilities (e.g. ALT text)</p> <p>We will make information available to forums and partners for cascade via their networks.</p>

			<p>communication such as videos, podcasts, imagery, and livestreams.</p> <p>Early actions include creating an all-staff accessibility guide and getting a translation and interpretation contract in place. Both of these will help promote and encourage inclusive communications across the council.</p> <p>The strategy identifies digital first rather than digitally exclusive in recognition that not everyone will be online, including people with disabilities.</p>	<p>While we've not had any specific requests for reasonable adjustments in the past decade, the accessibility guide will reinforce the need for promoting it and our statutory duty under the Equalities Act, in line with the council's agreed approach.</p>
9. Racial equality	Y		<p>Increasing accessibility and promoting it throughout the organisation will have a positive impact on racial equality as it also covers translation and interpretation.</p>	<p>The latest census data shows nearly 11 per cent of the population say they are Asian , black or from another ethnicity and 8 per cent non white British.</p> <p>Residents who said they did not speak English as their main language was 7.7per cent but only 0.8% reported that they Cannot speak English well or at all.</p>
10. Gender equality		N	*see section 17	
11. Sexual orientation equality		N	*see section 17	
12. Gender re-assignment		N	*see section 17	

13. Age equality	Y		<p>Exploring channels for older and younger people and making sure they are represented in content. Using more on the ground channels for older people (libraries/ GPs etc).</p> <p>Recognising that we are digital first but not digitally exclusive and will put in place traditional communications where there is a need or gap. This reduces the possible impact on older people who may be more digitally challenged.</p>	<p>33% of the borough's population are over 65+ age (census 2021) Town & Country readership surveys have previously shown that the magazine is read most widely by people in older age brackets. Likewise, the council's social media survey showed that people in older age brackets were less likely to use that as a source of information. There is an on-going programme of regular engagement and information sharing with individual VCS groups representing, advocating for and providing services to older people.</p> <p>Responses to BFC COVID -19 Residents' Survey (April 2021) indicated that 94% of residents used the internet; 98% of residents aged 18-34 are confident compared with 76% of residents aged 55 and over to access services online.</p>
14. Religion and belief equality		N	*see section 17	
15. Pregnancy and maternity equality		N	No disproportionate impact anticipated	
16. Marriage and civil partnership equality		N	No disproportionate impact anticipated	
17. Please give details of any other potential impacts on any other group (e.g. those on lower incomes/carers/ex-offenders, armed forces communities) and on promoting good community relations.			<p>Outputs from the strategy may improve racial, gender, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, religion and belief equality – for example campaigns around Pride, Black History Month, religious and cultural celebrations.</p> <p>Likewise, the use of real people and their experiences may have a positive impact as will the use of representative and diverse imagery in content.</p>	

	<p>The commitment to accessibility also covers translation and interpretation, which needs to be tailored to the audience and can include easy read for people with other cognitive disabilities. This will have a positive impact and reinforces the council's commitment to reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>It could potentially impact on people on lower incomes if they are unable to access the internet. The strategy identifies we need to use traditional/ printed materials if there is a need, which would negate some of this risk. Research suggests that there are few people in the borough within this category, but it cannot be ruled out completely. Free internet access is available through Bracknell Forest Council libraries and via the Time Square hub/ hubs.</p>		
<p>18. If an adverse/negative impact has been identified can it be justified on grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or for any other reason?</p>	<p>N/A</p>		
<p>19. If there is any difference in the impact of the activity when considered for each of the equality groups listed in 8 – 14 above; how significant is the difference in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?</p>	<p>Residents aged 55 and above are less likely to use the internet in general and access services online. There are very few households without internet access or an electronic device in Bracknell Forest (no areas in highest three deciles of Multiple Deprivation Index 2021). So, barriers are more likely to be around digital skill and confidence. There is training available via libraries, the Open Learning Centre and the VCFS to support older people with digital inclusion to learn how to use computers and the internet and increase their confidence.</p> <p>Bracknell Forest library members can use the computers free of charge for at least 1 hour a day.</p>		
<p>20. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties?</p>		<p>N</p>	
<p>21. What further information or data is required to better understand the impact? Where and how can that information be obtained?</p>	<p>N/A</p>		
<p>22. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required?</p>		<p>N</p>	<p>While this reduces access to information for some groups, it does not stop access as the magazine will still be published once a year. There is also</p>

			information available in other printed formats like newspapers/ leaflets/ posters for certain services and projects.
23. If a full impact assessment is not required; what actions will you take to reduce or remove any potential differential/adverse impact, to further promote equality of opportunity through this activity or to obtain further information or data? Please complete the action plan in full, adding more rows as needed.			
Action	Timescale	Person Responsible	Milestone/Success Criteria
Continue to focus on digital inclusion activities and projects working with service teams and the voluntary, community and faith sector.	Ongoing	Assistant Director CXO/Head of	Embed in digitalisation programme
Promote and further increase engagement and sign up to digital news from the council by residents.	April 2024 and ongoing.	Head of Communications	10% increase annually
Ensure that the annual hard copy edition of the council's magazine signposts to places with free internet access, digital inclusion	April 2024 and ongoing.	Head of Communications	
Ensure that one of the strategy's outputs/ key campaigns is around the equality and diversity calendar.	April 2024 and ongoing	Head of communications	
Regularly reviewing requests for reasonable adjustments and how many translations/ interpretations are required so the service is	April 2024 and ongoing	Head of communications	
24. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be included in?	Communications and marketing business plan, CXO service plan		
25. Please list the current actions undertaken to advance equality or examples of good practice identified as part of the screening?	Free internet access and digital inclusion training in libraries and through adult learning at the Open Learning Centre. Funding provided to community groups to delivery training in digital skills.		
26. Assistant Director/Director signature.			