



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Partial Assessment Form

Policy, practice, function or project assessed	Elections and Electoral Registration (Electoral Services)
Lead Officer	Andrew Francis
Team	Electoral Services
Start date of assessment	01/03/11
Completion of assessment	01/03/11

Please use this form to record your findings in relation to the assessment of an existing policy, function, service or practice.

A. POLICY, PRACTICE, FUNCTION OR PROJECT TO BE ASSESSED

A1. Please describe what are the main aims, objectives, purpose and intended outcomes of the policy or function?

The key objectives of the Electoral Services function are to provide an effective electoral registration service to the residents of South Cambridgeshire, and to organise and deliver well-run, timely and accurate elections at national and local levels.

A2. Is this policy or function associated with any other Council policy or priority?

Electoral registration is the personal responsibility of the Electoral Registration Officer, and Elections are the personal responsibility of the Returning Officer. In reality, both of these positions are held personally by the Chief Executive. Whilst these functions operate at arms length from the council, the Electoral Services team still operate within the council structure. It is therefore associated with projects such as Customer Service Excellence, and is closely involved in the service planning process as part of the Community and Customer Services corporate area.

A3. Who are the intended beneficiaries/stakeholders of the policy or function? How many people are affected and from what sections of the community?

The beneficiaries of the service are the electorate, who receive an effective election and registration service, along with elected members and candidates/agents who are heavily involved in standing in elections.

A4. Is the policy/function corporate and far-reaching?

The function is far-reaching as it affects all electors within the district (some 110,000 people).

A5. Are you expecting to make any significant change to the policy or service in the near future? If so, please give details.

Changes to the service are frequent, but almost exclusively driven by changes to legislation. Future changes will include the implementation of Individual Electoral Registration, and the possibility of prisoners being allowed the vote.

A6. Is this a new or existing policy or function?

The function has existed for a long time.

B. EVIDENCE/ DATA and CONSULTATION

It is important to consider all information that is available in determining whether the policy or function could have a differential impact. Please attach examples of monitoring information, research or consultation reports.

B1. What monitoring or other information do you have about relevant target groups, which will show the impact of the policy or function?

There is little in the way of monitoring information available on those accessing the service. Limited data on nationality and age are sought from the annual canvass form. However, as mentioned previously, many of the forms (including the canvass form) are prescribed within law and there is little discretion to make changes. Guidance from the electoral commission has also suggested that incorporating additional paperwork into the canvass mailing should not be favoured.

B2. Have you compared the data you have with the equality profile of the local population? What does it show?

The limited data available is consistent with the equality profile of the district.

B3. Have you identified any improvements or other changes that could be made from monitoring the data?

In previous years, language barriers had limited registration in some areas. This was at least partially remedied through use of a language booklet to help canvassers explain the registration function.

B4. Have you consulted or involved external stakeholders about the policy or function? If so, what were their views?

The majority of work completed by the electoral services team is prescribed within law, with little or no discretion allowed.

B5. Have you undertaken any consultation with staff to assess their perception of any impacts of the policy or function? If so, what has been learnt from them?

Polling Station Inspectors are employed on polling day to ensure that electors are experiencing a smooth process in the polling station. Anecdotal consultation through ongoing discussion with canvassers as to the most effective ways to canvass.

B6. Please provide information about any other consultation, research, or involvement undertaken in relation to this impact assessment.

C1. IMPACT OF THE POLICY OR FUNCTION

Assess the potential impact on each of the following protected characteristics. The impact could be negative, positive or neutral. If you assess a negative impact for any of the groups then you will need to assess whether that impact is low, medium or high. Refer to the evidence you use.

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACT	Nature of Impact (Positive, Neutral, Adverse)	Extent of Impact (Low, Medium, High)
AGE: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different age groups.	Neutral	
Under 16s are not entitled to register so there is an impact on them. However, this is prescribed in law.		
DISABILITY: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on disabled people.	Neutral	
A full audit of polling stations was carried out in Summer 2010. Where polling stations do have access issues, the presiding officers will work with electors to ensure equal access.		
GENDER REASSIGNMENT: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on people that have changed gender identity.	Neutral	
MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on people who are married or in a civil partnership.	Neutral	
PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on pregnant or maternal mothers and those women who wish to breastfeed.	Neutral	

RACE: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different ethnic groups, including national origins, colour and nationality.	Neutral	
There are poor registration levels on traveller sites, despite ongoing efforts to engage with the community.		
RELIGION/BELIEF: Identify the potential impact the policy or function on different religious/faith groups.	Neutral	
SEX: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on men and women.	Neutral	
SEXUAL ORIENTATION: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on lesbian, gay men, bisexual or heterosexual people.	Neutral	
OTHER CHARACTERISTIC SPECIFIC TO SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE – RURALITY: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on people who are rurally isolated.	Positive	
Rural isolation is an issue in some areas. The electoral registration team ensure that availability of polling stations is not affected by the size of a community (ie. Papworth St Agnes has its own station).		

PLEASE NOTE: Following completion of the section above, if the nature of the impact is adverse then you may need to proceed to a full equality impact assessment.

C2. Could you minimise or remove any adverse or potential impact that is high, medium or low significance, in advance of a full impact assessment? Explain how.

N/A

C3. Does the policy or function actively promote equal opportunities and good community relations? Or could changes be made so that it does so?

The registration and election functions are available to all sections of the community equally. Registration levels are poor on traveller sites, and the electoral services team will continue to work with other council services to try and improve this.

C4. Please provide any further information, qualitative or quantitative that does not fit into the questions but you feel has a likely impact on this assessment.

If electors do find accessing polling stations difficult, then a postal voting service is available on demand.

D. CONCLUSIONS			
D1. Was there sufficient data to complete the partial assessment?	Yes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If “NO”, what arrangements are in place for evidence gathering and continuing with the assessment?
	No?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
D2. Is the outcome of the partial assessment that the policy or function would have an adverse impact (medium or high impact) on one or more target group?	Yes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	If “YES”, will you proceed to a full assessment? If so, what arrangements are in place to carry out the full assessment?
	No?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
D3. Is the outcome of the partial assessment that the policy or function would have a neutral or positive impact on equalities?	Yes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If “YES”, have you included proposals in the Action Plan to further improve the impact of the policy or function on equalities? Yes
	No?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you plan to review the service or policy again in future to assess whether there has been any change? If so, when? Has the Equalities Steering Group and the Consultative Forum reviewed the assessment? If so what were their comments?

D4. Do you have any other conclusions/outcomes from the partial assessment?

The Electoral Services team are keen to ensure that all sections of the community are able to access the service. Response to the annual canvass form (when there are no changes to process) can now be by telephone, sms or internet. The team strives to promote accessibility at polling stations, even when there are few buildings that are available for use as stations.

ACTION PLAN for enhancing existing practice

Recommendation/ issue to be addressed	Planned Milestone	Planned completion of milestone (date)	Officer Responsible	Progress
Continue to engage with the Council's Traveller Liaison Officer to attempt to improve registration amongst the community.	Ongoing	Ongoing annually	AF	
Consider methods for promoting registration and voting amongst young people.	Ongoing	Ongoing annually	AF	

RESOURCES

Does the above action plan require any additional resources?

No

ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING

Please give your plans for monitoring the achievement of the above actions.

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SIGN OFF: The officers below confirm that this partial assessment has been completed in accordance with the Council's guidance

Signature of Lead Officer

Date:

Signature of Corporate Manager or Chief Officer:

Date:

Please retain the original form on your service area and return a copy of the completed form to the Equality & Diversity Officer.