



Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Introduction – Please read

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) allow the Council to:

- Show that the Council are meeting its legal duty, demonstrating due regard for the provisions of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) as below:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Methodically consider and assess the impacts of proposals across the [nine protected characteristics](#)
- Allow the Council to develop and implement high quality proposals that maximise positive outcomes for all.

EqIAs should be completed during the development and review of all Council policies, strategies, procedures, projects or functions. Where there is any doubt, the completion of an EqIA is always recommended.

When the form is completed, please send an electronic copy to equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk. Further support and guidance available on Insite or contact the Policy and Performance Team.



Equality Impact Assessment Complete Form

Section 1: Identifying Details

- 1.1 Officer completing EqIA:
Victoria Welsh
- 1.2 Team and Service:
Digital and Data, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning
- 1.3 Title of proposal:
MAPLE (Map Automation for Planning and Local Efficiency)
- 1.4 EqIA start date:
29/05/2026
- 1.5 Proposal implementation date:
31/05/2027
- 1.6 Who will be responsible for implementing this proposal (Officer and/or Team):
Rita Wong with project team

Section 2: Proposal to be Assessed

- 2.1 Type of proposal:
Project
If other, please specify
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- 2.2 Is the proposal:
New
- 2.3 State the date of any previous equality impact assessment completed in relation to this proposal (if applicable):
[Click or tap to enter a date.](#)
- 2.4 What are the headline aims of the proposal and the objectives that will help to accomplish these aims? (Max 250 words)



MAPLE is a proof of concept project that uses AI to read and understand the thousands of map images submitted each year. It can automatically find the site area and relevant information and turn them into digital data, reducing the need for manual mapping work and speeding up submission and validation of planning applications.

The project will create a full process that converts images into system-ready data, with people checking the results for accuracy. It aims to cut processing time by at least 75%. Designed to grow and shared as open source, MAPLE will help councils work more efficiently and build their use of AI.

2.7 Which of the Council's equality objectives (as detailed in the Council's Equality Scheme) does this proposal link to or help to achieve?

- ☐ Identify, prioritise and deliver actions that will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community
- ☐ SCDC is an employer that values difference and recognises the strength that a diverse workforce brings.
- ☐ Protected characteristic groups have a voice and are represented in forming the future shape of the district.
- ☒ None.

2.8 Which groups or individuals will the proposal affect:

- ☒ Service Users ☐ Councillors
- ☐ External Stakeholders ☐ Other
- ☒ Employees

If other, please specify [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

2.9 Broadly speaking, how will these groups or individuals be affected? (you will be asked to provide more detail on the specific impacts on different protected characteristic groups later in the form) (max 250 words)



The proposal will primarily affect employees within the Geographic Information System (GIS) and planning teams by introducing an AI-assisted workflow to automate the processing of planning-related map submissions. This is expected to significantly reduce the time spent on manual tasks such as georeferencing and digitising maps, allowing staff to focus on higher-value activities including validation, analysis, and professional judgement. Overall, this is likely to have a positive impact, improving efficiency, reducing repetitive workload, and supporting better use of specialist skills. It may also help alleviate operational pressures associated with high volumes of applications and improve turnaround times for service users. There will also be a period of adjustment, as employees will need to engage with new tools and ways of working. This may require training and support to ensure staff are confident in using the system and able to effectively oversee and validate AI-generated outputs. The proposal retains a “human-in-the-loop” approach, ensuring that professional oversight remains central and that decision-making responsibilities are not automated. Impacts are therefore expected to be positive overall and low risk, provided appropriate training, support, and monitoring are in place during implementation.

2.11 If any part of the proposal is being undertaken by external partners, please specify how the Council will ensure that they will meet equality standards?
(Max 250 words)

The University of Cambridge will lead the development of the tool. GCSP will share this Equality Impact Assessment with the University project team to inform their approach and will seek assurance on the measures in place to meet relevant equality standards. If the Corporate Strategy and Performance team would like to suggest any additional steps the project team could take to meet the equality standards, the project team would be happy to look at implementing.

(TBC - this may also be covered in the contract as part of the wider AI@Cam programme – contract is currently being confirmed).



Section 3: Evidence and Data

3.1 Describe any research (this could include consultation) and analysis you have undertaken to understand any effects on groups of people, including those within [9 protected characteristic groups?](#) Please list any key sources that you used to obtain this Information.

(Max 250 words)

None.

3.2 If you have not undertaken any consultation, please detail why not, or when consultation is planned to take place.

(Max 250)

Not required as we're automating an internal process.

Section 4: Impact of proposal on those with protected characteristics

4.1 Please select all characteristics that may or will be impacted (positive or negative). When providing details of the impact please consider the following questions

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. (both the number of persons affected and the severity of the impact)
- you will be asked to set out actions to manage these impacts in the following question (4.2)

☒ All - general to all protected Characteristics.

Details: 1) Benefit to all with faster application processing. 2) Automation reduces manual workflow, minimising the negative impact of repetitive physical actions. 3) Staff benefit - minimising repetitive work for staff which could positively impact by improving mental wellbeing and preventing burnout.



☒ Age

Details: 1) Faster application processing for older persons wishing to adapt their homes.

☒ Disability

Details: 1) The introduction of new digital tools may present accessibility considerations (e.g. compatibility with assistive technologies). Ensuring the system is designed to meet accessibility standards will help mitigate any potential barriers.
2) faster application processing for disabled persons wishing to adapt their homes.
3) Disabled (staff) may benefit as digital vector outputs can improve accessibility of mapping data.

☐ Gender reassignment

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☐ Marriage and Civil Partnership

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☐ Pregnancy and maternity

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☐ Race

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☐ Religion and belief

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☐ Sex

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☐ Sexual orientation

Details: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☒ Other

Details 1) Digital inclusion (cannot edit digital inclusion at 4.2) - differences in digital skills and familiarity may affect how easily employees interact with the system. This will be addressed through training, guidance, and support.



2) New families or growing families - faster application processing for those wishing to make home improvements such as extending their properties.

☐ None of the above

4.2 Other characteristics

Some characteristics are not yet protected in law, but the Council has made declarations it will consider them in policy making.

☐ Digital inclusion [\(what is this?\)](#)

Details: Click or tap here to enter text.

☐ Care experience [\(what is this?\)](#)

Details: Click or tap here to enter text.

☐ Rurality

Details Click or tap here to enter text.

☐ Socio-economic

Details Click or tap here to enter text.

4.3 Considering the above impacts you have identified above, please detail any actions (specific or general) which may help to enhance or mitigate impacts.

Please include the timescale for completing the action.

Action and timescale	Officer
June–December 2026: Ensure accessibility of the tool Design and develop the AI-assisted system in line with recognised accessibility standards (e.g. WCAG 2.1), ensuring compatibility with assistive technologies and clear, user-friendly interfaces.	Project team – University of Cambridge / GCSP

November - December 2026: Inclusive user testing Involve a range of GIS and planning staff in testing the system to identify and address usability or accessibility issues before wider rollout.	Project team – University of Cambridge / GCSP
January – March 2027: Provide training and guidance for staff Deliver training sessions, user guidance, and ongoing support to ensure employees of varying digital confidence levels can use the system effectively.	Project team – University of Cambridge / GCSP
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

4.4 How will you monitor that the above actions have been completed and that this proposal, once implemented, is impacting fairly on everyone it affects? In answering this question, please include information about feedback you will seek and/or data you will collect and analyse, and how often you will do this

These actions will be added to the project plan and tracked by the project manager.

Section 5: Summary

5.1 Briefly summarise the key findings of the EqIA and any significant equality considerations that should be taken into account when deciding how to proceed with the proposal (this section can be included within the 'equality implications' section of any committee reports). (Max. 250 words)

The Equality Impact Assessment identifies that the proposal is expected to have largely positive and low-level impacts, primarily affecting employees within GIS and planning teams. The introduction of an AI-assisted mapping and digitisation process will reduce time spent on manual, repetitive tasks and enable staff to focus



on higher-value professional activities such as validation, analysis, and decision-making. No direct or disproportionate impacts on protected characteristic groups have been identified. However, minor indirect considerations relate to disability, digital confidence and accessibility when using new systems. These impacts are considered low and manageable, provided appropriate mitigations are implemented. Key equality considerations include ensuring that the system is accessible by design, compatible with assistive technologies, and supported by clear guidance and training for staff. Inclusive user testing and ongoing monitoring will be important to identify and address any usability issues or unintended barriers at an early stage. The proposal incorporates appropriate safeguards, including a human-in-the-loop approach, ensuring that professional oversight is maintained and that decision-making remains with trained officers.

5.2 Confirm the recommendation of the officer completing the EqIA:

☒ Proceed with the proposal (with any actions identified as required within Section 4 of the EqIA). Analysis demonstrates that the proposal is robust, we have taken all appropriate opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations between groups.

☐ Reject the proposal: Analysis demonstrates that the proposal will cause unlawful discrimination and it must be removed or changed

Section 6: Sign Off

6.1 Signature of individual completing EqIA:

Victoria Welsh

6.2 Date of completion:

29/05/2026

6.3 When will this proposal next be reviewed and who will this be?

Victoria Welsh and Project Team – January 2027



6.4 Approving officer signature, this should be your Head of Service, Service Area Manager, or Project Sponsor:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Mambery". The signature is written on a light-colored, slightly textured background.

6.5 Date of approval:
11/06/2026

Please send the completed document to Equality.Schemes@scambs.gov.uk for publishing on the website.