

# **Equality Impact Assessment / Equality Analysis**

(Updated Nov 2024)

| <b>Item name</b>                                    | <b>Details</b>                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Title of service or policy</b>                   | Artificial Intelligence                                    |
| <b>Name of directorate and service</b>              | Resources Directorate, IT Services and Customer Experience |
| <b>Name and role of officers completing the EIA</b> | Liam Abbott – Head of Digital and Customer Experience      |
| <b>Date of assessment</b>                           | 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2024                             |

Equality Impact Assessment (or ‘Equality Analysis’) is a process of systematically analysing a new or existing policy or service to identify what impact or likely impact it will have on different groups within the community. The main aim is to identify any discriminatory or negative consequences for a particular group or sector of the community, and also to identify areas where equality can be better promoted. Equality impact Assessments (EIAs) can be carried out in relation to services provided to customers and residents as well as employment policies/strategies that relate to staffing matters.

This toolkit has been developed to use as a framework when carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) or Equality Analysis. **Not all sections will be relevant – so leave blank any that are not applicable.** It is intended that this is used as a working document throughout the process, and a final version will be published on the Council’s website.

## 1.1 Identify the aims of the policy or service and how it is implemented

| Key questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Answers / notes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| <p>1.1 Briefly describe purpose of the service/policy e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How the service/policy is delivered and by whom</li> <li>● If responsibility for its implementation is shared with other departments or organisations</li> <li>● Intended outcomes</li> </ul>     | <p>B&amp;NES is piloting the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in internal and resident-facing services, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● AI summarisation of meetings and phone calls.</li> <li>● AI web bot answering queries like “When is my next recycling pickup?”</li> <li>● AI creation of draft documents from multiple sources.</li> <li>● The intended outcome is to enhance service quality for residents and increase staff efficiency.</li> </ul> |
| <p>1.2 Provide brief details of the scope of the policy or service being reviewed, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is it a new service/policy or review of an existing one?</li> <li>● Is it a national requirement?).</li> <li>● How much room for review is there?</li> </ul> | <p>B&amp;NES council is new to AI use and regularly reviews its application in suitable cases.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <p>1.3 Do the aims of this policy link to or conflict with any other policies of the Council?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>Links to the <a href="#">Customer Experience Framework</a> launched by BANES in 2023. Adopting a continuous improvement ethos and making services easily available and digital where possible.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

## 2. Consideration of available data, research and information

| Key questions                                                                                                                                                                   | Data, research and information that you can refer to                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| <p><b>2.1</b> What equalities training have staff received to enable them to understand the needs of our diverse community?</p>                                                 | <p>All B&amp;NES staff receive mandatory Equality and Diversity training.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><b>2.2</b> What is the equalities profile of service users?</p>                                                                                                              | <p>Service users could be visitors to B&amp;NES, residents and staff therefore the profile is unknown.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p><b>2.3</b> Are there any recent customer satisfaction surveys to refer to? What were the results? Are there any gaps? Or differences in experience/outcomes?</p>             | <p>Gaps identified in areas such as digital inclusion for things like multiple languages and being able to support in areas such as sign language or people who are deaf or hard of hearing.</p> <p>AI presents opportunities to improve digital inclusion for our residents, services users and staff.</p>                                                                                                |
| <p><b>2.4</b> What engagement or consultation has been undertaken as part of this EIA and with whom? What were the results?</p>                                                 | <p>No consultations have been undertaken yet as we are still piloting the use of AI.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>2.5</b> If you are planning to undertake any consultation in the future regarding this service or policy, how will you include equalities considerations within this?</p> | <p>AI use is just starting at BANES. Liam Abbott as Head of Digital and Customer Experience is responsible for the utilisation and adoption of AI at B&amp;NES Council. The Digital and Customer Services teams will be consulting with residents and service users alongside working with our internal teams to improve access to council services for all users who require equality considerations.</p> |

### 3. Assessment of impact: ‘Equality analysis’

Based upon any data you have considered, or the results of consultation or research, use the spaces below to demonstrate you have analysed how the service or policy:

- Meets any particular needs of equalities groups or could help promote equality in some way.
- Could have a negative or adverse impact for any of the equalities groups

| Key questions                                                                 | Examples of what the service has done to promote equality                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Examples of actual or potential negative or adverse impact and what steps have been or could be taken to address this                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>3.1 Issues relating to all groups</b> and protected characteristics</p> | <p>This the start of our AI adoption at B&amp;NES and therefore we haven't completed any mappings yet</p> <p>Throughout the process officers will be following accessibility standards:<br/> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps</a></p> <p>There is anticipation that AI will offer wide ranging improvements in communication means and accessibility options for all residents, visitors and staff.</p> <p>It is already known that the following options will be available at point of contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Verbal to written word transcription</i></li> </ul> | <p>Employees who are piloting the use of AI have been given training.</p> <p>All employees who use AI will require training and may need individual support depending on the use case.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to how best communicate the available options to service users as and when it is available.</p> <p>Ambient voice AI is now in use as a pilot for social care teams having in person meetings with service users. Initial feedback has been positive from service users and staff.</p> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A wide range of translated languages.</i></li> <li>• <i>Web bots to support people who find using the telephone difficult or expensive or are unavailable or unviable to use.</i></li> <li>• <i>Documentation creation and summarisation from multiple sources.</i></li> </ul> <p>The finer details are not yet available as the project is in the early process. Detailed EqlA's will be undertaken and updated for each different use case of AI.</p> |  |
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\*There is no requirement within the public sector duty of the Equality Act to consider groups who may be disadvantaged due to socio economic status, or because of living in a rural area. However, these are significant issues within B&NES and have therefore been included here.

\*\* The Equality Act does not cover armed forces community. However, the Armed Forces Bill (which came in on 22 Nov 2022) introduces a requirement to pay 'due regard' to make sure the Armed Forces Community are not disadvantaged when accessing public services.

\*\*\*The Equality Act does not cover care experienced people. B&NES adopted this group as a protected characteristic in March 2024 alongside over 80 other Local Authorities. Although we have data for care leavers and children/young people who are currently in the care of B&NES we do not have wider data on disadvantage experienced through being in care.

#### **4. Bath and North East Somerset Council Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan**

Please list actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment/analysis. These actions should be based upon the analysis of data and engagement, any gaps in the data you have identified, and any steps you will be taking to address any negative

impacts or remove barriers. The actions need to be built into your service planning framework. Actions/targets should be measurable, achievable, realistic and time framed.

| Issues identified | Actions required | Progress milestones | Officer responsible | By when |
|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------|
|                   |                  |                     |                     |         |
|                   |                  |                     |                     |         |
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|                   |                  |                     |                     |         |

## 5. Sign off and publishing

Once you have completed this form, it needs to be 'approved' by your Divisional Director or their nominated officer. Following this sign off, send a copy to the Equalities Team ([equality@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:equality@bathnes.gov.uk)), who will publish it on the Council's website. Keep a copy for your own records.

**Signed off by:** Liam Abbott, Head of Digital and Customer Experience

**Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024