

Draft strategies/policies – Equality and human rights impact check

Draft strategy/policy being checked:

Is this draft strategy/policy:

- South only
- Vale only
- Joint across both councils

Service team: Corporate Strategy - Communications

Officer completing this: Patsy Cusworth

Once completed:

Date completed: 20/10/2016

Signed _ Patsy Cusworth __ (Officer)

Signed _____ Clare Kingston_____ (Head of Service)

Signed _ Cheryl Reeves __ (Cheryl Reeves, equalities officer)

**PLEASE NOTE – THIS CHECK MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE YOUR DRAFT
STRATEGY IS SUBMITTED TO MANAGEMENT TEAM AND COUNCILLORS
FOR APPROVAL**

Why do you need to do this Equality and human rights impact check?

Our strategies and policies set out the way we will deliver our services (including employment opportunities). When we are developing them, we need to check that they are not going to create any barriers which could prevent people from accessing our services.

People in Southern Oxfordshire may face barriers because of things like **disability, gender (including transgender, pregnancy and maternity), age, sexual orientation, rural isolation, income, religion/belief or ethnicity.**

As well as thinking about how our services will meet the needs of these groups of people, we also need to consider how our draft strategies and policies will help us to:

- promote positive relations within communities
- give everyone a voice
- respect and value everyone
- protect people's human rights

This equality and human rights impact check provides officers with a framework to help them work through these considerations in relation to their draft policy/strategy, ensuring that we are meeting our legal duties with regards to equality, diversity and human rights.

We have a statutory duty to carry out these assessments and they contribute towards our corporate priority to 'optimise access to services (Vale)/provide equality of access to our services' (South).

If you have any queries about this Check or would like some advice/support in completing it, please contact the Shared equalities officer (see contact details below).

Once you've completed this equality and human rights impact check, please send the paperwork to the shared equality officer, along with a copy of the draft strategy/policy.

Cheryl Reeves (equalities officer)
Email: cheryl.reeves@southandvale.gov.uk
Telephone: x2108

OUTLINE OF THE DRAFT STRATEGY / POLICY YOU ARE CHECKING:

1. What are the aims and objectives of this draft strategy/policy?

Our aims

To achieve our communication objectives of informing and influencing our stakeholders and the wider world, we will:

- Work closely with the senior managers, cabinet and others to help them set a clear proactive communications agenda and drive it through the organisation
- Help colleagues see communications in a strategic context – where everything the council says and does matters
- Ensure all narratives, messages, images and content are clear, consistent, professional, aligned and timely and be totally accessible to the target audience from the outset, and wherever possible takes into account people who cannot access the internet
- All communication activities will be assessed by the communication team to ensure they reflect and promote the councils' vision, aims and objectives. Primarily this will be PR and marketing activities and corporate publications

Our objectives

- To inform stakeholders of our services and of the work we are doing to make South Oxfordshire and the Vale the best place to live, work and raise a family
- To influence perceptions of the councils, its services and the two districts as a whole

2. Who is the proposed strategy or policy designed to support / help / serve?

The councils stakeholders, including, local residents, partners, councillors, staff, local/regional businesses, parish and town councils, local, regional, national and specialists media, wider stakeholders and other influencers such as councils across Great Britain, the Government, lobby groups and visitors.

3. If the draft strategy/policy relates to an existing council service/function, has an Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) already been completed on the service/function?

No

Yes – please list any issues/barriers identified within the assessment that your draft strategy needs to address:

A number of years ago an equality impact assessment was carried out on Outlook and Outpost, an e-magazine for communicating with local councillors, clerks and town and parish magazine editors. The communications strategy gives a broad overview of how we will communicate. Therefore actions contained in these assessments would not be appropriate to include as they are specific and relate to content and process of agreeing Outlook. The communications team and equalities officer will consider what is now relevant/appropriate.

4. Does the draft strategy or policy have the potential to cause a negative impact or discriminate against certain groups in the community?

- **If 'yes', please explain how the strategy/policy could cause a negative impact or discriminate. If you cannot justify this you will need to take mitigating action, complete the action plan at the end of this assessment.**
- **If 'No,' what existing evidence (presumed or otherwise) do you have for this? E.g. Will the service changes advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic? This means will they**
 - Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

Equality group	Yes	No	Yes	No – explain why, including any good practice within the strategy that will meet the needs of different groups
People from ethnic minority groups		No		The strategy will help keep all stakeholders informed, including local residents and ethnic minority groups. We will consider any requests for interpretation into a specific language on an individual bases in accordance with our Translation and Interpretation Policy. The councils website includes google translate to assist people with limited English. Staff also have access to telephone interpreters.
People with disabilities (including carers)		No		We will work with local services to provide our communications in accessible formats, such as brail, large print, CD etc., on request in accordance with our Translation and Interpretation Policy. Text phone numbers are included on all council letters. Communication methods take account of people with visual impairments e.g. the website has the ability to enlarge the text, we consider tonal and colour contrast on the website and printed materials.

Equality group	Yes	No	Yes	No – explain why, including any good practice within the strategy that will meet the needs of different groups
Men or women <i>(including pregnant women, women on maternity and transgender people)</i>		No		Our communications are accessible across a range of channels, including in print via our own publications and other content, via parish and town newsletters, or via media reports and digitally. The strategy aims to encourage people to go online wherever possible, but also recognises that some people do not access the internet, so we will also provide other methods of communications as described above whenever possible.
Gay, lesbian or bisexual people		No		Our communications are accessible across a range of channels we do not believe a person's sexuality impacts upon their choice of channel. However we will consider when relevant the images we use to depict family life for example. Our aim is to choose images that represent the whole community.
People from different religions/beliefs <i>(including people without a religion/belief)</i>		No		Our communications are accessible across a range of channels, we do not believe a person's religion or belief impacts on their choice of channel. However we will consider when relevant the images we use. Our aim is to choose images that represent the whole community.
Older or younger people		No		Our communications are accessible across a range of channels, including in print via our own publications and other content, via parish and town newsletters, or via media reports and digitally. The strategy aims to encourage people to go online wherever possible, but also recognises that some people do not access the internet, so we will also provide traditional methods of communications as described above whenever possible.
People living in rural areas		No		Our communications are accessible across a range of channels, including in print via our own publication, via parish and town newsletters, or via media reports and digitally. The strategy aims to encourage people to go online whenever possible, but also recognises that some people do not access the internet (which could include the issues relating to broadband coverage in rural areas), so we will also provide traditional ways of communication as described above whenever possible.

Equality group	Yes	No	Yes	No – explain why, including any good practice within the strategy that will meet the needs of different groups
Local Voluntary, Community and Faith sector organisations		No		Our communications are accessible across a range of channels, including in print via our own publication, via parish and town newsletters, or via media reports and digitally. We do not believe the voluntary, community and faith sector will be disadvantaged in anyway. The strategy aims to encourage people to go online wherever possible, but also recognises that some people do not have access the internet

5. Have reasonable adjustments been made for people with disabilities to ensure they can use the draft strategy or policy? This might mean treating disabled people better than non-disabled people in order to meet their needs

No

Yes - please provide detail:

Our communications are accessible across a range of channels. Text phone numbers are included on all council letters. Communication methods take account of people with visual impairments e.g. the website has the ability to enlarge the text, browse aloud enables people to listen to the website, and we consider tonal and colour contrast on the website and printed materials. Staff are required to use plain English. The draft strategy will not change this approach and will include our alternative format strapline.

Alternative formats of this publication are available on request. These include large print, Braille, audio, email and easy read. Please contact [service team] on  [telephone number]

6. Have there been any equality related recommendations in the area that your draft policy/strategy is covering which have arisen from, for example, internal/external audits or scrutiny reports?

Recommendation made	Is this being addressed in your draft strategy or policy? If not, please explain why.
No internal audits of this service	

7. Will the draft strategy or policy help to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it e.g., will the changes help to tackle prejudice and promote understanding between the different groups

- No (*If you feel there is scope to improve how you foster good relations, amend your decision accordingly*)
 Yes – please explain how

The strategy has the potential to foster good relations through the style, images used and the content of communication. The communications team will ensure positive messages that help to tackle prejudice and promote understanding between different groups are included when and where relevant.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

8. Will the draft strategy or policy have an impact on any relevant human rights [You may find it helpful to view the human rights guide for public authorities on the intranet to help you decide]. Please identify which human rights have been considered?

When the council is doing any form of communication we will consider if the content could impact on a person's human rights. The articles most relevant are:

Article 6 Right to a fair trial (for example, not disclosing personal or sensitive information during an investigation). Article 8 Right to respect for a private and family life
Article 10 Freedom of expression
Article 14 Prohibition of discrimination

What impact was identified?

Was the impact identified positive (fulfilling, protecting, promoting, respecting)

Please indicate the positive effect:

The strategy requires staff to get professional advice from the communications team before beginning any communications activity, such as launching new initiatives – including agreeing the timing, drafting content and designing images. This will help to protect and respect human rights.

Was the impact negative (removing, unjustifiably interfering with any human rights)?

If so, please indicate how the strategy / policy will be amended to reduce or eliminate any negative impact

N/A

9. Has there been consultation with relevant community groups to help inform this draft strategy or policy?

If not, please explain why:

No. However, we have used insight from local resident and staff surveys and ONS data to help shape the strategy.

If yes, please list who you have consulted:

Do you feel there are any groups that the draft strategy or policy significantly affects who you have not currently consulted? If yes, please contact the shared equality officer for advice (see page 2 for contact details).

10. Has the draft strategy or policy missed opportunities to advance equality of opportunity, positive attitudes and promote respect for human rights?

No

Yes – please outline the plans you have to address the missed opportunities (complete table below)

Action plan for mitigating action or advancing equality of opportunity and promoting respect for human rights

Action	Person responsible	Target completion date
Our aims – concerned that we are using the terminology ‘where possible’ takes into account people who cannot access the internet. This could result in teams saying it is not possible due to cost or that it is easier to communicate electronically without realising the implications of indirect discrimination.	Patsy Cusworth	25/10/2016
The draft Strategy doesn’t currently make reference to taking account of the councils Translation and Interpretation policy in order	Patsy Cusworth	25/10/2016

to meet specific communication needs, including people from ethnic minority backgrounds and people with disabilities (including learning disabilities). Consider promoting/making reference to the policy within the strategy.		
When updating the Councils brand style guides ensure this takes account of the translation and interpretation policy.	Communications team	By 31 March 2017
Page 11 – all staff responsibility. Consider adding reference to also complying with the council’s translation and interpretation policy.	Patsy Cusworth	25/10/2016