

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

1. Service Area/Directorate

Name of Head of Service for activity being assessed: Rosie Thomas-Easton

Directorate: Corporate Services

Name of lead person for this activity: Rosie Thomas-Easton

Individual(s) completing this assessment: Rosie Thomas-Easton

Date assessment completed: 16.03.2025

2. What is being assessed

Activity being assessed (eg. policy, procedure, budget, service redesign, strategy etc.)

Getting Ahead: Herefordshire Council's Transformation Strategy 2025 – 2028

What is the aim, purpose, or intended outcome of this activity?

To enable the delivery of a programme of strategic transformation with the ambition of embracing best practice, delivering innovation through technology and demonstrating value for money. The transformation programme aims to deliver improvements to customer services and ways of working through the integration of technology and efficient practices.

Who will be affected by the development and implementation of this activity?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service users | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Visitors to the county |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carers |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children | <input type="checkbox"/> Patients |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All staff | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All part-time staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff at a particular location | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |

Is this:

- ☐ Review of an existing activity/policy
- ☒ New activity/policy
- ☐ Planning to withdraw or reduce a service, activity or presence?

3. Background information and findings

What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? (name your sources, eg. demographic information, usage data, Census data, feedback, complaints, audits, research)

Demographic information, Understanding Herefordshire JSNA, Customer feedback, Customer interaction data, Council financial information, Public Sector AI and technology research, Council activity analysis, benchmarking data.

Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken (eg. who you've engaged with, and how, or why do you believe this is not required)

Council customers (not specifically as yet to the individual programmes of transformation activity though insights from relevant and recent research have been brought together to shape the strategy), council staff, Cabinet Members, business insights, provider and contractor insights.

Summary of relevant findings (it is possible that you will have gaps in your evidence. You must decide whether you need to fill in the gaps now, and if it is feasible to do so. It might be that collecting robust information forms part of your action plan below)

- Council services and online information are an issue – they are difficult to access, hard to navigate. Information is reported to be inaccessible which makes interacting with the council time consuming and inefficient.
- A disproportionate amount of staff time is spent on customer management as opposed to strategic planning and service delivery.
- There are duplicate activities and roles within the organisation with teams and services delivering similar activity. This detracts from our ability to operate as ‘one council’ and results in an inefficient and confusing ‘front door’ for customers.
- A significant proportion of staff time is spent on data processing, data entry and enquiry handling.
- Council systems are duplicated, complex and don’t integrate.
- Collaboration as one council and flexible working remains to be challenging.
- Central and external communications channels are difficult to navigate.
- The quality and access of data across the Council is a challenge for staff across the council.
- Better front door customer offerings would improve efficiency and better serve residents.

4. The Public Sector Equality Duty

Will this activity have a positive, neutral or negative impact on our duty to:

Equality Duty	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foster good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explain your rationale here, and include any ways in which you could strengthen the capacity of this activity to promote equality (remember to add anything relevant into your action planning below)

Improving equality of opportunity and access to all residents, businesses and staff, and reducing inequality underpins the transformational activity set out within the strategy. Individual projects within the council’s Transformation Programme will also complete an equality impact assessment as a fundamental element to planning, decision making and implementation. Transformation will improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the services provided to residents and businesses. As such, detailed and inclusive engagement plans will be produced to gain detailed customer insight and enable co-production of solutions in line with the programme of work ahead of us.

5. The impact of this activity

Consider the potential impact of this activity on each of the equality groups outlined below and explain your rationale. Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative within the same equality group. Remember to consider the impact on staff and service users (current and potential) and partner organisations. It may be useful to include data within these sections if you know the diversity make-up of the people likely to be affected.

Equality Group	Potential <u>positive</u> impact	Potential <u>neutral</u> impact	Potential <u>negative</u> impact	Rationale
Age (include safeguarding, consent and child welfare)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This strategy will have a positive impact on Herefordshire resident of all ages. Those who need and wish to interact with the council will be enabled to do so through the creation of a customer service operating model which promotes digital first and balances this with in-person facilities in ways and places most meaningful to residents.

Equality Group	Potential <u>positive</u> impact	Potential <u>neutral</u> impact	Potential <u>negative</u> impact	Rationale
Disability (consider attitudinal, physical, financial and social barriers, neuro-diversity, learning disability, physical and sensory impairment)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	As above, and enhanced further through improvements to accessible information and technologies that are accessible to those using a broad range of communication and accessibility aids.
Gender Reassignment (include gender identity, and consider privacy of data and harassment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The transformation strategy and programme would not directly or indirectly impact residents and staff who are undergoing/have undergone gender reassignment.
Marriage & Civil Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The transformation strategy and programme would not directly or indirectly impact residents and staff who are married or in civil partnerships.
Pregnancy & Maternity (consider working arrangements, part-time working, infant caring responsibilities)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The transformation strategy and programme may positively impact those staff and residents who are pregnant or who are on maternity leave. This may come through the introduction of technologies and ways of working that reduce the need to travel into Hereford city in order to interact and do business with the council.
Race (including Travelling Communities and people of other nationalities)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The transformation strategy and programme would not directly or indirectly impact residents and staff from different races. It is likely, however, that the introduction of AI technologies in the customer journey will better enable residents of other nationalities to communicate with the council, with many technologies offering a wide range of language capabilities.
Religion & Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The transformation strategy and programme would not directly or indirectly impact residents and staff with different religions or beliefs.
Sex (consider issues of safety and sexual violence, part-time work)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The transformation strategy and programme would not directly or indirectly impact residents and staff of different sexes.
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The transformation strategy and programme would not directly or indirectly impact residents and staff of different sexual orientation.
Others: carers, care leavers, homeless, social/ economic deprivation (consider shift-patterns, caring responsibilities)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The transformation strategy explicitly references the improvements it intends to deliver on behalf of and alongside care leavers and care experienced young people. Ease of council access through transformation will also support others working a range of shift patterns and with caring responsibilities to interact with the council in ways and at times most suitable to them.
Health Inequalities (any preventable, unfair & unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from unequal distribution of social, environmental & economic conditions)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The transformation strategy aims to advance equality and support social mobility through improved distribution of council resource where it will have the greatest level of impact to wellbeing, health and the economy.

Where a negative impact on any of the equality groups is realised after the implementation of the activity, the activity lead will seek to minimise the impact and carry out a full review of this EIA.

6. Action planning

What actions will you take as a result of this impact assessment? (you will need to include actions to mitigate any potential negative impacts)

Potential negative impact	What action will be taken	Who will lead	Timeframe

7. Monitoring and review

How will you monitor these actions?

When will you review this EIA?

Annually in line with the review of the transformation programme.

8. Equality Statement

- All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to how they can improve society and promote equality in every aspect of their day-to-day business. This means that they must consider, and keep reviewing, how they are promoting equality in decision-making, policies, services, procurement, staff recruitment and management.
- Herefordshire Council will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.

Signature of person completing EIA

R. Thomas-Easton

Date signed

16.03.25