

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

(Revised March 2021)

Please refer to the current Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this document. If you would like further guidance please contact the Diversity and Inclusion Team on 01443 444529.

An equality impact assessment **must** be undertaken at the outset of any proposal to ensure robust evidence is considered in decision making. This documentation will support the Council in making informed, effective and fair decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010.

This document will also contribute towards our duties to create a More Equal Wales within the

- Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015.

The [‘A More Equal Wales – Mapping Duties’](#) guide highlights the alignment of our duties in respect of the above-mentioned legislation.

SECTION 1 – PROPOSAL DETAILS

Lead Officer: Christian Hanagan

Service Director: Christian Hanagan

Service Area: Democratic Services and Communications

Date: 03/05/23

1.a) What are you assessing for impact?

Strategy/Plan	Service Re-Model/Discontinuation of Service	Policy/Procedure	Practice	Information/Position Statement
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.b) What is the name of the proposal? **Rhondda Cynon Taf Public Participation Strategy 2023**

1.c) Please provide an overview of the proposal providing any supporting links to reports or documents.

Under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, local authorities in Wales must publish a Participation Strategy that sets out the ways in which local people are encouraged to participate in decision-making by the Council.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council have well established engagement processes and are committed to involving residents and other stakeholders in the democratic process.

This Strategy complements the RCT Involvement & Engagement Framework (2020-2024) and associated guidance. The Framework was endorsed by the Council’s Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the [20th January 2020](#). The Strategy aims to enable residents to better understand the democratic process and the role they can play in local democracy.

The Strategy is a living document and will be reviewed and evaluated regularly

1.d) Please outline where delivery of this proposal is affected by legislation or other drivers such as code of practice.

We have committed to implementing relevant standards and principles that inform our approach. The standards include

- [National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales \(2022\)](#)
- [Children and Young People’s National Participation Standards \(2016\)](#); and the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- The Older People’s Commissioner - [Effective Engagement with Local Authorities: Toolkit for Older People](#)
- The [Equalities Act \(2010\) - Engagement and Equality Duty](#): A guide for public authorities
- [Welsh Language Standards](#) in particular standards 44, 91, 92 and 93
- [The Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)

1.e) Please outline who this proposal affects:

- Service users
- Employees
- Wider community

SECTION 2 – SCREENING TEST – IS A FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?

Screening is used to determine whether the initiative has positive, negative or neutral impacts upon protected groups. Where negative impacts are identified for protected groups then a full Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Please provide as much detail as possible of how the proposal will impact on the following groups, this may not necessarily be negative, but may impact on a group with a particular characteristic in a specific way.

Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and foster good relations between different groups. Please take an intersectional approach in recognising an individual may have more than one protected characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Age (<i>Specific age groups i.e. young people or older people</i>)	Positive	<p>The strategy embeds and reinforces our commitment to engage with people of all ages from school age upwards. We specifically work with Youth Forums, Older Person Forums and Community Groups, as well as ensuring no direct discrimination in membership of Citizen Panels or other points of access into consultation and engagement activities.</p> <p>Indirect discrimination is possible in activities that take place wholly or mainly online, such as social media actions or live-streaming events. In these cases, we will endeavour to provide alternative involvement or</p>	<p>Population by age (Census 2021 output, rounded)</p> <p>UK Consumer Digital Index 2021 (report on digital exclusion across the UK)</p>

		<p>assistance to anyone who needs it to access online services, but we recognise that digital exclusion generally affects older age groups disproportionately and will therefore impact our older residents more than younger age groups.</p> <p>Through our work with the Older People's Advisory Group (OPAG) actions have already been taken to reduce reliance on online-only activities and information. The group fed back to us that their members were sometimes struggling to use digital resources, so we have developed a range of printed material and ensured the return of face-to-face meetings when possible (which had been suspended during COVID-19 restrictions).</p> <p>We also provide the option of a freepost address and a contact centre telephone number.</p>	
<p>Disability <i>(people with visible and non-visible disabilities or long-term health conditions)</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The strategy embeds and reinforces our commitment to engage with people with disabilities. We specifically work with Disability Forums and Community Groups, as well as ensuring no direct discrimination in membership of Citizen Panels or other points of access into consultation and engagement activities.</p>	<p>Limiting long-term illness or disability by local authority (Stats Wales)</p> <p>The Social Model of Disability (Disability Wales guide)</p> <p>Plain English guides (also applicable to writing in Welsh)</p>

		<p>We have also committed to the use of Plain English and Cymraeg Clir and ensuring a range of accessible formats are available when needed.</p> <p>We recognise that people experience disability in many ways and there is no one universal “accessible” standard, and therefore will work to remain flexible and open to innovation in the ways we engage with residents and communities.</p> <p>The strategy commits to having information and people available to help residents and communities understand resources – this includes the production of Easy Read versions of documents, signposting and working with support services and remaining flexible to meet different requirements. The strategy also commits to talking to people in their communities where possible, reducing the need for travel or access to central locations.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has approved funding for a pilot scheme to fund reasonable adjustments and support for disabled candidates seeking election to the Local Government elections. Further information may be</p>	
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		viewed at https://www.disabilitywales.org/projects/access-to-elected-office-fund-wales/	
Gender Reassignment <i>(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth including non-binary identities)</i>	Positive	<p>The strategy embeds and is built upon RCT Council's own Diversity Pledge, as well as the Strategic Equality Plan. This includes commitments to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity.</p> <p>We will continue to work towards a better understanding of the demographics with Protected Characteristics in RCT, assisted by Census 2021 data, and remain open to challenge and change in our engagement activities.</p>	<p>RCT Diversity Pledge</p> <p>Strategic Equality Plan</p> <p>Census release plans (Office for National Statistics)</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p>Marriage or Civil Partnership <i>(people who are married or in a civil partnership)</i></p>	Positive	<p>The strategy embeds and is built upon RCT Council's own Diversity Pledge, as well as the Strategic Equality Plan. This includes commitments to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity.</p> <p>We will continue to work towards a better understanding of the demographics with Protected Characteristics in RCT, assisted by Census 2021 data, and remain open to challenge and change in our engagement activities.</p>	<p>RCT Diversity Pledge Strategic Equality Plan Census release plans (Office for National Statistics)</p>
<p>Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(women who are pregnant/on maternity leave)</i></p>	Positive	<p>The strategy embeds and is built upon RCT Council's own Diversity Pledge, as well as the Strategic Equality Plan. This includes commitments to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity.</p> <p>We will continue to work towards a better understanding of the demographics with Protected Characteristics in RCT, assisted by Census 2021 data, and remain open to challenge and change in our engagement activities.</p>	<p>RCT Diversity Pledge Strategic Equality Plan Census release plans (Office for National Statistics)</p>

<p>Race <i>(ethnic and racial groups i.e. minority ethnic groups, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers)</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The strategy embeds and is built upon RCT Council's own Diversity Pledge, as well as the Strategic Equality Plan. This includes commitments to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity.</p> <p>We will continue to work towards a better understanding of the demographics with Protected Characteristics in RCT, assisted by Census 2021 data, and remain open to challenge and change in our engagement activities.</p> <p>The strategy commits to making people available to help with understanding. This includes translation services when required, verbal rather than written communications when needed via telephone services and face-to-face events and other steps as required.</p> <p>Through greater engagement with communities the strategy aims to build better, trusting relationships with people from all backgrounds who live and/ or work in RCT, including "seldom heard" communities. Where appropriate we will gather and evaluate equality monitoring data during consultation activities and actively use that information to inform</p>	<p>RCT Diversity Pledge Strategic Equality Plan Census release plans (Office for National Statistics)</p>
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		future activities, including targeted consultation where specific demographics will experience greater impact from Council decisions.	
<p>Religion or Belief <i>(people with different religions and philosophical beliefs including people with no beliefs)</i></p>	Positive	<p>The strategy embeds and is built upon RCT Council's own Diversity Pledge, as well as the Strategic Equality Plan. This includes commitments to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity.</p> <p>We will continue to work towards a better understanding of the demographics with Protected Characteristics in RCT, assisted by Census 2021 data, and remain open to challenge and change in our engagement activities.</p> <p>Through greater engagement with communities the strategy aims to build better, trusting relationships with people from all backgrounds who live and/ or work in RCT, including "seldom heard" communities. Where appropriate we will gather and evaluate equality monitoring data during consultation activities and actively use that information to inform future activities, including targeted consultation where specific demographics will experience greater impact from Council decisions.</p>	<p>RCT Diversity Pledge</p> <p>Strategic Equality Plan</p> <p>Census release plans (Office for National Statistics)</p>

<p>Sex <i>(women and men, girls and boys)</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The strategy embeds and is built upon RCT Council's own Diversity Pledge, as well as the Strategic Equality Plan. This includes commitments to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity.</p> <p>We will continue to work towards a better understanding of the demographics with Protected Characteristics in RCT, assisted by Census 2021 data, and remain open to challenge and change in our engagement activities.</p>	<p>RCT Diversity Pledge Strategic Equality Plan Census release plans (Office for National Statistics)</p>
<p>Sexual Orientation <i>(bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight)</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The strategy embeds and is built upon RCT Council's own Diversity Pledge, as well as the Strategic Equality Plan. This includes commitments to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity.</p> <p>We will continue to work towards a better understanding of the demographics with Protected Characteristics in RCT, assisted by Census 2021 data, and remain open to challenge and change in our engagement activities.</p>	<p>RCT Diversity Pledge Strategic Equality Plan Census release plans (Office for National Statistics)</p>

In addition, due to Council commitments made to the following groups of people we would like you to consider impacts upon them:

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Armed Forces Community <i>(anyone who is serving, has served, family members and the bereaved)</i>	Positive	The Consultation and Engagement Team is co-managed with the Armed Forces Liaison Officers (AFLOs) for RCT and neighbouring Local Authority areas. This close working fosters direct engagement and links with Veteran groups and serving members of the Armed Forces, as well as ensuring up-to-date understanding of the needs of the Armed Forces community in the area.	Armed Forces Covenant (information regarding AFLOs)
Carers <i>(anyone of any age who provides unpaid care)</i>	Positive	The strategy commits RCT to the principles and practice of co-production and partnership working. This will encourage greater cooperation with community and other third-party groups/ organisations, including existing support networks for carers. We have also committed to greater efforts to meet people in their own communities, which is intended to reduce barriers of travel and time commitments to	Co-production Knowledge Base (information and guides to co-production in Wales) Carers Wales (facts and figures) Caring National Survey for Wales

		take part in non-local activities. We will work with other Council teams/ departments to identify and reach out to carers in our communities in ways that suit them.	
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If the initial screening test has identified negative impacts then a full equality impact assessment (section 4) **must** be undertaken. However, if after undertaking the above screening test you determine a full equality impact assessment is not relevant please provide an adequate explanation below:

Are you happy you have sufficient evidence to justify your decision?

Yes

No

Name: Bea Jeffries

Position: Community Data Analyst

Date: 16.09.2022

Please forward a copy of this completed screening form to the Diversity and Inclusion Team.

PLEASE NOTE – there is a separate impact assessment for Welsh Language. This must also be completed for proposals.

Section 3 Socio-economic Duty needs only to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. Definition of a 'strategic nature' is available on page 6 of the [Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty](#) Welsh Government Guidance.

SECTION 3 – SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY (STRATEGIC DECISIONS ONLY)

The Socio-economic Duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services.

Please consider these additional vulnerable groups and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- Pensioners
- Looked after children
- Homeless people
- Students
- Single adult households

- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales
- People with low literacy and numeracy
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People misusing substances
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People involved in the criminal justice system

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<u>Low Income/Income Poverty</u> <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i>	Neutral	The strategy commits to finding new ways to reach people beyond online engagement. Currently the majority of information regarding becoming a Councillor and the documents and information regarding democratic processes and decisions are only accessible online in the first instance (where print is available, it is by request and therefore requires an existing level of understanding of the services/ processes involved). This creates a barrier to access for anyone who is digitally excluded by income/ wealth/ material deprivation, as well as any health or social barrier leading to digital exclusion.	UK Consumer Digital Index 2021 (report on digital exclusion across the UK) Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (latest figures: 2019)
<u>Low and / or No Wealth</u> <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i>	Neutral		
<u>Material Deprivation</u> <i>(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)</i>	Neutral	<p>To mitigate this, we will create better signposting to information in libraries, One4All centres and other community facilities where computers are available for public use, as well as highlighting the resources being available at face-to-face events and when meeting with and talking to people in their area.</p> <p>The strategy's commitment to innovation will encourage new ways of</p>	

		presenting information and engaging with people who are unable to access online resources, and to work to remove barriers to access where possible.	
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<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p><u>Area Deprivation</u> <i>(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport))</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The strategy commits to talking to people in their communities where possible, reducing the need for travel or access to central locations. RCT has a number of areas scoring highly on the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivations, and the strategy commitment to innovation and flexibility in engagement will allow for approaches tailored to each area. This will allow people in disproportionately deprived areas will be able to have their say and become more engaged with Council activities and decision-making.</p> <p>By creating better signposting to information in libraries, One4All centres and other community facilities where computers are available for public use, as well as highlighting the resources being at face-to-face events and when available meeting with and talking to people in their area.</p> <p>The strategy's commitment to innovation will encourage new ways of presenting information and engaging with people who are unable to access online resources, and to work to</p>	

		remove barriers to access where possible.	
Socio-economic background <i>(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)</i>	Neutral	The strategy commits to working with existing community groups, including those centred on a variety of characteristics. However, this does not address people or communities who are not involved in these existing networks – for those marginalised or excluded groups the primary access to information and involvement would be through online resources and activities. This compounds the impact of digital exclusion and will be addressed through the promised innovation and development of new ways of working.	
Socio-economic disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)</i>	Neutral		

SECTION 4 – FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

You should use the information gathered at the screening stage to assist you in identifying possible negative/adverse impacts and clearly identify which groups are affected.

- 4.a) In terms of disproportionate/negative/adverse impacts that the proposal may have on a protected group, outline the steps that will be taken to reduce or mitigate the impact for each group identified. **Attach a separate action plan where impacts are substantial.**
- 4.b) If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible, please explain why they are not possible.
- 4.c) Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning, in particular, the sources used for establishing the demographics of service users/staff.
- 4.d) Give details of how you engaged with service users/staff on the proposals and the steps taken to avoid any disproportionate impact on a protected group. Explain how you have used feedback to influence your decision.
- 4.e) Are you satisfied that the engagement process complies with the requirements of the Statutory Equality and Socio-economic Duties?
- Yes No

SECTION 5 – MONITORING AND REVIEW

5a) Please outline below how the implementation of the proposal will be monitored:

Consultation and engagement activities are monitored throughout the year. Records are kept of individual activities and campaigns, and a new Reflection and Evaluation process is being designed to ensure that learning from each activity is embedded into the design of future actions. Visitor traffic and activity on the Let's Talk RCT website is reported quarterly to assess growth, alongside feedback from users that is reviewed and evaluated.

Specific points of action and success markers are listed in the strategy document, particularly regarding the Democratic Process section.

The strategy feeds into live framework and work processes across the Council, and will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is fit for purpose and achieving the stated aims.

5b) When is the evaluation of the proposal due to be reviewed?

On a regular basis, at least annually.

5c) Who is responsible for the monitoring and review of the proposal?

Lead officers: Democratic Services, Engagement and Consultation teams

5d) How will the results of the monitoring be used to develop future proposals?

Points of learning or challenges/ failures will be noted in the evaluation of each activity and will feed into future design of activities. Successes will be identified and celebrated as examples of good practice.

SECTION 6 – REVIEW

As part of the Impact Assessment process all proposals that fall within the definition of ‘Key Decisions’ must be submitted to the Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your proposal is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Decision please forward your impact assessment to Councilbusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for a Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. The EqlA guidance document provides more information on what a Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that you can demonstrate how you have considered equality and socio-economic outcomes. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below

Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation

SECTION 6 – SUMMARY OF IMPACTS FOR THE PROPOSAL

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment. This summary should be included in the equality and socio-economic impact section of the Cabinet report template. The impact assessment should be published alongside the report.

SECTION 7 – AUTHORISATIONS

Lead Officer:

Name: Bea Jeffries

Position: Community Data Analyst

Date: 16.09.2022

I recommend that the proposal:

- Is implemented with no amendments
- Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined
- Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on protected groups or socio-economic disadvantage

Head of Service/Director Approval:

Name:

Position:

Date:

Please submit this impact assessment with any SLT/Cabinet Reports.