Equality Impact Assessment

Please state the service / project your proposal relates to:	Council Digital Strategy
Lead Officer:	Tom Alexander
Directorate:	Chief Executive's
Is this a new policy or a review of an existing policy or service? :	New / redesigned policy / service
What are the aims and purpose of this proposal? :	This proposal outlines the Council's position on using new digital opportunities to reduce costs and improve customer experience. Adopting a digital strategic approach presents some very compelling opportunities, especially in the current economic climate. Funding from central government to local government is being drastically reduced. Our vision is informed by the following principles: • Shape demand; redirect resources to where they are most needed • Engagement with communities and businesses using digital platforms • Resilience; delivering fit for purpose infrastructure for the future • Value for Money; delivering cost effective services • Digitally inclusive; include digital in everything we do • Citizen focused rather than service focus • Enable self service
Which of the geographic areas does this proposal affect? (Insert any specific wards or state all borough):	All wards
Which stakeholder group or groups does this proposal affect? (Broad groups - e.g. Staff at LBS, residents, third and voluntary sector):	This proposal will affect all groups: LBS Staff Residents People who work in the borough Third sector

	Voluntary sector
Whose needs is the proposal designed to meet? (Specific groups of people e.g. those who directly use the service):	This proposal is designed to meet the needs of all groups: Service users LBS Staff Residents People who work in the borough Third sector Voluntary sector
What evidence has been collected to inform this proposal? :	Each individual project within the Programme has either undergone, or will undergo, a thorough discovery session. This would include liaisons with staff, people who study and work in the borough and residents alike. Following this a full assessment of the potential impact of individual projects for all protected characteristics will be undertaken and mitigations considered where appropriate
What equality-related information, for example through consultation with stakeholders, has been gathered on this proposal? :	We plan to: • Help colleagues to identify and introduce digital improvements transforming and improving the way we all work • Change the way we connect and communicate with residents to understand their needs and ambitions • Engage our partners through the Sutton Plan to introduce new smart technologies that work beyond organisational boundaries. • Use information and communication technologies and data to be more intelligent and efficient in the use of resources. This will result in cost and energy savings, improved service delivery and quality of life and reduced environmental footprint. Demographics in Sutton. • The 2011 census indicated that around 79% of people living in Sutton were white (white British 71%, other white 6% (often other European communities), white Irish 2%). 12% of Sutton's population were from Asian or Asian British ethnic groups.

	• Also in the 2011 Census 58.4% of people living in Sutton reported their religion as Christian. The next biggest group were those that reported 'no religion' (24.6%). After this, the next most commonly specified religions were Hindu (4.2%) and Muslim (4.1%). • There are no accurate statistics available regarding the profile of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) population in Sutton. However, if estimates that the lesbian and gay population comprises 5% to 7% of people were applied, there would be between 7,700-10,800 adults in the borough, though this does not include bisexual or transgender individuals. • There were 191,123 people living in Sutton at the time of the census. Young children aged under 5 years accounted for around 7% of the population. Children aged 5 to 19 years accounted for around 18.1% of the population. The Sutton working age population (20-64 years) was around 116,000 at the census, i.e. 61% of the population. People aged 85 and over accounted for 2% of the population in Sutton. It is predicted that the older population may require more assistance with the Digital proposals. • There are 7 areas within Sutton that rank in the 20% most deprived in England. The worst being Beddington South, Belmont, Wandle Valley, St Helier and Sutton Central. Investigation into these areas will be undertaken to ensure we accommodate the local people. • There is no specific data available for disabled within Sutton, but care will be shown to facilitate for this protected group. The data above will inform the thinking about the overall potential issues to be addressed. This will be supported and validated by thorough engagement and testing with appropriate groups to ensure that design is effective. Also, ensure any potential negative impacts on the protected characteristics are identified and mitigations are put in place where appropriate.

	• Furthermore a staff group of 'Digital Ambassadors' has been recruited. This group will provide a two-way communication between the programme and wider staff and also ensure that issues relating to staff are identified and resolved. Encompass are managing the work the Ambassadors are carrying out and the 'Icebox' educational sessions are imperative to their role. • Communications are currently being sent out via the Insight newsletter, the Ambassadors, drop-in sessions and by word of mouth. There are also plans in progress to purchase large screens for placing around the Council to advertise our intentions. • Accessibility to digital facilities provided by the Council will be attended to. • Unions will be consulted to ensure fairness to all staff.
Based on the information you have collated, which equality characteristics may be affected by this proposal	Potentially all protected groups
Please give further information on how these characteristics may be affected	All protected characteristic groups would be affected by the the implementation of the digital strategy as its delivery will be adopted Borough wide. At this stage, older people, those with disabilities or suffering from poverty seem most likely to be affected. Residents with certain disabilities may not physically be able to use digital, whereas some may not be able to afford personal digital equipment. The main potential impacts are: • Enabling self service (ability and monetary). • Increasing online payments so our customers can take advantage of paying for services using our website (ability and monetary). • People not being willing or able to access online (education, ability). • Shaping demand; redirecting resources to where they are most needed (staff impact). Specific impacts would need to be identified and mitigated as individual projects are

	scoped and progressed.
What will be done to promote equality of opportunity as part of this proposal?:	Some of our values will mitigate how the characteristics mentioned above will be affected.

Engagement with communities and businesses using digital platforms.
We will make every effort to ensure that all groups likely to be impacted are considered through the engagement. This will mean that wherever possible negative impacts are identified and removed at the design stage.

Resilience; delivering fit for purpose infrastructure for the future.
As part of the digital strategy, we aim to improve the digital infrastructure available to those in the least affluent areas. We plan to explore pioneering technology to bridge the financial divide between Sutton's thriving economy and some of our poorest communities. We believe that crowdfunding and social media platforms can and should form a vital local digital infrastructure to help build local resilience and support businesses to succeed. Through this process, we plan to provide access to free public WiFi across Sutton whilst also generating an income stream for the council. This will not only possibly mitigate any potential negative impacts, but will also provide a big positive benefit.

Value for money, delivering cost effective services. Through reducing costs and prioritising more costly support to those who need it.

Citizen focused rather than service focus.
By designing services based on the needs of the users, rather than around the needs of the organisation, we are likely to improve them and make them more accessible.

Also:
• Diverting calls away from the Contact Centre and face-to-face interactions with ease of use for digital service, saving money, time and officer expertise. To make |

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	this happen, we need to act as a Smarter Council, and in embracing this challenge we will establish a customer centric approach to digital service.
In what way could this proposal positively or negatively impact on the physical and/or mental wellbeing of residents? If there is a negative impact what action will be taken to mitigate this? What evidence has been or will be collected? :	Overall the change is broadly positive. The main issues are with people not being willing or able to access online. However, we will engage, consult and build around the citizen so this way we will identify mitigations. We will also mitigate by supporting infrastructure in less affluent areas and provide free cross-borough WiFi. This will both be an overall benefit and also mitigate against potential impacts identified above. We plan to take a 'digital by default' approach. At first this may appear harsh, but we plan to provide assistance for all. This tack has been proved to work at Sutton through a previous project introducing the "Freedom Pass". The Freedom Pass is a free travel card given to anyone over 66 (dependent on the year they were born). The Freedom Pass in Sutton could only be obtained on-line. Help and assistance was offered to all people (if required) to apply for their pass on-line. The project was perceived as a great success, for example, Sutton has the highest rate of Freedom Pass renewals in London. A similar approach to the Digital Strategy will be as successful, although we will still consider impacts on all protected groups as we progress.
What actions are going to be taken as a result of this IIA to address negative impacts or previously met unidentified needs?:	n/a
What data monitoring or evaluation activity has been put into place to monitor the impact of this proposal? :	We will consider each change to see if it will disproportionately impact any group and respond accordingly, putting in place any reasonable mitigations. We will continue to liaise with residents and staff to ensure all have been accommodated completely, or as best as

	possible.
	We will tackle any instances of digital exclusion by assessing and resolving in the best way possible.
	Help and assistance will be freely available.

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