South Kesteven District Council

Equality Impact
(Initial Analysis)

Customer Experience Strategy

Service Area:	Lead officer: Lee Sirdifield	Date of Meeting
Customer Services	**Assessors:** Nova Roberts Jack Perry	02/01/20
	Neutral Assessor: Carol Drury	

1.   **Name and description of policy/service/function/strategy**

Customer Access Strategy: This strategy sets out the ambitions of the Council for how it will deliver services in the future. A vital part of creating a high performing local authority is a creation of a modernised customer experience offering providing choice and delivering convenience to all customers, businesses and visitors. The strategy seeks to maximise the use of all channels available to improve our hours of accessibility 24/7 by promoting self-service for all transactions and making it easy to do business with SKDC whilst actively supporting those most vulnerable.

Is this a new or existing policy?   **New**

2.   **Complete the table below, considering whether the proposed policy/service/function/strategy could have any potential positive, or negative impacts on groups from any of the protected characteristics (or diversity strands) listed, using demographic data, user surveys, local consultations evaluation forms, comments and complaints etc.**

Equality Group	Does this strategy have a positive or negative impact on any of the equality groups? Please state which for each group	Please describe why the impact is positive or negative. If you consider this policy etc is not relevant to a specific characteristic please explain why
Age	Positive	The strategy clearly sets out how we will open up additional channels to support access to our services. It enables further choice, providing 24/7 access, allowing customers to interact with us at their convenience. This better accommodates the needs of those who would typically struggle to access services during traditional office hours and reduces the need to travel. The strategy doesn't purely focus on deploying internet-based technologies. It sees enhancements in our telephony offer, to enable out

		of hours services to be provided, as well as enabling self-service in a face to face setting for high volume transactions within partner sites. The deployment of webchat technologies will enable people to access services without the need to use telephony based solutions or travel to our offices.
	Negative	The strategy proposes the closure of two area offices. This will potentially have a negative impact on a small number of customers that only visit those offices. A consultation exercise will be completed to better understand the impact on that group and how this impact can be mitigated.
Disability	Positive	The strategy seeks to make our services more accessible. It will ensure that current services, and any new developments meet the requirements of the Equality Act. This includes the deployment of new technologies to enable items such as screen reading. The strategy reduces the need for face to face interaction, making it easier for those with disabilities to access services. It also provides enhanced tracking of service provision which would allow users (or their support network) to keep up to date with service provision.

		The tiering of the service provision enables those with the greatest needs to be either signposted or routed to the best possible place to gain the support that they require. The deployment of webchat technologies will enable people to access services without the need to use telephony based solutions or travel to our offices.
	Negative	The strategy proposes the closure of two area offices. This will potentially have a negative impact on a small number of customers that only visit those offices. A consultation exercise will be completed to better understand the impact on that group and how this impact can be mitigated.
Race	Neutral	The strategy continues to utilise the good practice that has already been embedded into the organisation to enable information to be provided in a range of formats to meet customer requirements.
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	The strategy continues to utilise the good practice that has already been embedded into the organisation to enable information to be provided in a range of formats to meet customer requirements.
Religion or Belief	Neutral	The strategy continues to utilise the good practice that has already been embedded into the organisation to enable information to be provided in a

		range of formats to meet customer requirements.
Sex	Neutral	The strategy continues to utilise the good practice that has already been embedded into the organisation to enable information to be provided in a range of formats to meet customer requirements.
Sexual Orientation	Neutral	The strategy continues to utilise the good practice that has already been embedded into the organisation to enable information to be provided in a range of formats to meet customer requirements.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Neutral	The strategy continues to utilise the good practice that has already been embedded into the organisation to enable information to be provided in a range of formats to meet customer requirements.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Neutral	The strategy continues to utilise the good practice that has already been embedded into the organisation to enable information to be provided in a range of formats to meet customer requirements.
Carers	Positive	The strategy seeks to make our services more accessible. It will ensure that current services, and any new developments meet the requirements of the Equality Act. The strategy reduces the need for face to face interaction, making it easier for carers to access services. It also provides enhanced tracking of service provision which would

		allow carers to keep up to date with service provision.
Other Groups (e.g. those from deprived (IMD*) communities; those from rural communities, those with an offending past) *(IMD = Indices of multiple deprivation)	Positive	The strategy provides a greater range of access channels for customers to utilise. This will make it easier for many in remote locations to take up council services without the need to travel. The 24/7 access also provides greater flexibility for those who require support or advice to access services. The deployment of webchat technologies will enable people to access services without the need to use telephony based solutions or travel to our offices. The new solutions that will developed under this strategy recognise that customers are choosing to access services in different ways and from a wider range of devices. Our services will be accessible across a wide range of technologies.
	Negative	The strategy proposes the closure of two area offices. This will potentially have a negative impact on a small number of customers that only visit those offices. A consultation exercise will be completed to better understand the impact on that group and how this impact can be mitigated.

General comments	The strategy sets out that we will continually engage with our customers to develop new solutions. This will help to ensure that customer needs are properly anticipated and reflected in service design.
	Where appropriate, we will complete further, in-depth assessments of any new individual processes or proposed solutions to ensure that they appropriately meet customer needs and are equitable.

3. **What data/information did you use to inform the outcomes of the proposed policy/service/function/strategy? (Note any relevant consultation who took part and key findings)**

> The strategy has been developed on extensive customer data from a range of processing systems. We've also examined customer feedback to understand where we can improve.
>
> The strategy recognises that we do not have all of the information that we will need to make changes to the way we do things. A key part of the strategy will be commissioning research into service design and user needs to better construct our provision.

If there are any gaps in the consultation/monitoring data, how will this be addressed?

> This will be addressed through ongoing engagement with our customers and the creation of a new set of performance tools to better inform current and future service delivery.

4. **Outcomes of analysis and recommendations (please note you will be required to provide evidence to support the recommendations made): Please check <u>one</u> of the options.**

a)	No major change needed: equality analysis has not identified any potential for discrimination or for negative impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken	☒
	If you have checked option a) you can now send this form to the Lead Officer and your Neutral Assessor for sign off	
b)	Adjust the proposal to remove barriers identified by equality analysis or to better promote equality.	☐

	If you have checked option b) you will need to answer questions b.1 and b.2		
c)	Adverse impact but continue		☐
	If you have checked option c) you will need to answer questions c.1		
d	Stop and remove the policy/function/service/strategy as equality analysis has shown actual or potential unlawful		☐

b.1 **In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your proposed policy/service/function/strategy to minimise or eliminate the negative equality impacts?**

b.2 **Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.**

If you have checked option b) you will need to complete a Stage 2 equality analysis

c.1 **Please provide an explanation in the box below that clearly sets out your justification for continuing with the proposed policy/function/service/ strategy.**

If you have checked option c) you will need to complete a Stage 2 equality analysis. You should consider in stage 2 whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact.

Signed (Lead Officer):   **Lee Sirdifield**
(Name and title)   *Strategic Director*

     Date completed: **02/01/20**

Signed (Neutral Assessor):   *Carol Drury*
(Name and title)   Community Engagement and Policy Development
Officer

     Date signed off: *02/01/20*