

### **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form: Initial impact assessment**

If an officer is undertaking a project, policy change or service change, then an initial impact assessment must be completed and attached alongside the Project initiation document.

#### **EqIA Titular information:**

Date:	10.02.21
Service:	Strategy and Commissioning (Place)
Project, policy or service EQIA relates to:	<b>Arts &amp; Culture Strategy</b>
Completed by:	Grant Thornton
Has the EQIA been discussed at services team meeting:	Team Meeting: Date tbc
Signed off by:	Nigel Bailey
Sign off date:	

135

#### **1. Policy, Project or service information:**

This section should be used to identify the main purpose of the project, policy or service change, the method of delivery, including who key stakeholders are, main beneficiaries and any associated aims.

<b>What is the purpose of the project, policy change or service change , its expected outcomes and how does it relate to your services corporate plan:</b>
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The Council currently does not have a cultural strategy but has an aspiration that the Borough's cultural offer will grow and develop into the future. The strategy has the potential over time to significantly enhance the cultural offer in the Borough to the benefit of the vast majority of residents, improving quality of life and enhancing well-being. Providing access to arts and culture for those who, for a variety of reasons, might otherwise miss out, including our more vulnerable residents, is a key priority. The strategy is closely aligned with the principles and priorities of key national agencies such as Arts Council England (ACE) and Public Health England (PHE) and has the potential to leverage external funding. The 10 year strategy is potentially a key strand for delivering the Council's The strategy is potentially a key strand for delivering the Council's Community Vision: 'for Wokingham Borough to be a great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business.' In particular it addresses the linked
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strategic priority for 'Enriching Lives' but it also contributes to 'Safe, Strong Communities' as well as addressing elements of the Health and Well-being Strategy.

The decision to be taken by the Executive is to approve a final strategy following a consultation with stakeholders, including the general public, that has taken place since April 2020. The strategy has an explicit priority to foster social interaction and community cohesion. Whilst the detail of events and activities that will be developed is not fully known, arts and culture are recognised as providing a powerful medium for breaking down preconceptions and stereotypes and stimulating new ways of thinking. Annual Action Plans will support the delivery of the strategy on an ongoing basis.

**Outline how you are delivering your project, policy change or service change. What governance arrangements are in place, which internal stakeholders (Service managers, Assistant Directors, Members etc) have/will be consulted and informed about the project or changes:**

The Strategy has been developed initially under the auspices of a cross-party members working group chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive and involving officers from a range of services including communications, localities, leisure and education as well as strategy and commissioning (Place). The draft strategy was considered by the Executive in April 2020 and approved as a consultation draft. In October 2020 the Arts & Culture Alliance was formed as a delivery partnership to take forward implementation of the strategy. The Alliance has representation from a range of stakeholders including arts & cultural organisations, Town & Parish Councils and with cross-party Borough Councillor involvement. Internally all Directorates have had a role in shaping the strategy and all Directors have been consulted.

**Outline who are the main beneficiaries of the Project, policy change or service change?**

The primary beneficiaries are the general population and local arts and cultural service providers. A key aim of the strategy is to grow both quantitatively and qualitatively the cultural offer in the Borough, growing audiences and extending reach and impact, including on our more vulnerable communities.

Secondary reputational and economic benefits extend to the business community.

**Outline any associated aims attached to the project, policy change or service change:**

The key priorities within the strategy are as follows:

1. Enhancing cultural identity and sense of 'place'.
2. Fostering social interaction and community cohesion.
3. Improving health and well-being.
4. Developing opportunities for children and young people.
5. Supporting economic growth.
6. Maximising partnerships and collaboration.

**2. Protected characteristics:**

There are 9 protected characteristics as defined by the legislation:

- Race
- Gender
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Age
- Religious belief
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership:

*To find out more about the protected groups, please consult the EQIA guidance.*

### 3. Initial Impact review:

In the table below, please indicate whether your project, Policy change or service change will have a positive or negative impact on one of the protected characteristics. To assess the level of impact, please assign each group a Positive, No, Low or High impact score:

*For information on how to define No, low or high impact, please consult the EQIA guidance document.*

If your project is to have a positive impact on one of the protected groups, please outline this in the table below.

*For details on what constitutes a positive impact, please consult the EQIA guidance.*

Protected characteristics	Impact score	Please detail what impact will be felt by the protected group:
Race:	Positive	The strategy will promote equality of opportunity between diverse communities and to enhance their participation in society. Celebrating diversity is an explicit cultural theme.
Gender:	No impact	It is considered that the strategy will provide additional opportunities for engagement and participation in cultural activities and will not adversely affect any one gender more than another.
Disabilities:	Positive	It is likely that specific provision will be made to meet the needs of some segments of the population to enable them to access cultural opportunities, e.g. 'relaxed' performances.
Age:	Positive	The strategy has a particular priority for children and young people with a focus on those children and young people who might otherwise miss out on great cultural experiences so that every young person can access opportunities whatever their background and can develop their creative potential.

		Cultural activities for the older generation can be a means of reducing social isolation and enhancing well-being and the strategy has an aim to increase 'cultural commissioning' to this end. The benefits of an enhanced cultural offer will provide benefits across all age-groups.
Sexual orientation:	No impact	Potentially access to a wider range of arts and cultural opportunities.
Religion/belief:	No impact	Potentially access to a wider range of arts and cultural opportunities.
Gender re-assignment:	No impact	Potentially access to a wider range of arts and cultural opportunities.
Pregnancy and Maternity:	No impact	Potentially access to a wider range of arts and cultural opportunities.
Marriage and civil partnership:	No impact	Potentially access to a wider range of arts and cultural opportunities.

N.B. Whilst detail isn't known at this stage Arts & Culture are widely recognised, across many arts forms, to provide a lens to explore and promote a wide-range of societal issues including equalities, cohesion and social justice.

Based on your findings from your initial impact assessment, you must complete a full impact assessment for any groups you have identified as having a low or high negative impact. If No impact, or a positive impact has been identified, you do not need to complete a full assessment. However, you must report on this initial assessment and it must receive formal approval from the Assistant Director responsible for the project, policy or service change.

Initial impact assessment approved by: Nigel Bailey

Date: 11.02.2021

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