

Short Equality Impact and Outcome Assessment (EIA)

EIAs make services better for everyone and support value for money by getting services right first time.

EIAs enable us to consider all the information about a service, policy or strategy from an equalities perspective and then action plan to get the best outcomes for staff and service-users¹. They analyse how all our work as a council might impact differently on different groups²

They help us make good decisions and evidence how we have reached these decisions.³

See end notes for full guidance. For further support or advice please contact the Community Partnerships Team

Equality Impact and Outcomes Assessment (EIA) Template

First, consider whether you need to complete an EIA, or if there is another way to evidence assessment of impacts, or that an EIA is not needed⁴

Title ⁵	The Withey Beds Management Plan 2025-2035	ID No ⁶	
Team/Service⁷	Leisure and Natural Infrastructure		
Focus of EIA ⁸	The formal adoption and implementation of a new ten-year management plan for The Withey Beds. The new plan contains management actions for the site over the next ten years from financial year 2025/26 until 2034/35. The implementation of the new management plan is the responsibility of the Leisure and Natural Infrastructure Service in partnership with Environmental Protection and Hertfordshire County Councils Countryside Management Service. The site remains open to the public at all times. The actions within the management plan considers opportunities to improve accessibility through the improvement of the boardwalk and keeping pathways clear.		
Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations ⁹			
The overall impact should be positive by enabling users to access the site with an improved boardwalk, subject to funding. The improved boardwalk is proposed to be shorter which will mean the loss of a loop walk, however due to the site being under water during certain periods			

of the year, areas can be inaccessible, and a loop walk is not possible. The improved boardwalk will provide access to view the wetland areas.	
Potential Issues	Mitigating Actions
Not having the funding to support the delivery of the actions, which will have a positive impact on the accessibility of the site.	Existing budgets to be used to support the ongoing actions and external funding to be secured before other projects commence.
Inaccessibility of the site for those with disability requirements.	Enhancement of the boardwalk and keeping pathways clear.
Actions Planned ¹⁰	
Continue to source additional funding to support the implementation of the action plan for The Withey Beds	

EIA sign-off: (for the EIA to be final an email must sent from the relevant people agreeing it or this section must be signed)

Equality Impact Assessment officer:

Date:

Equalities Lead Officer:

Date:

Guidance end-notes

¹ The following principles, drawn from case law, explain what we must do to fulfil our duties under the Equality Act:

- Knowledge: everyone working for the council must be aware of our equality duties and apply them appropriately in their work.
- Timeliness: the duty applies at the time of considering policy options and/or before a final decision is taken – not afterwards.
- Real Consideration: the duty must be an integral and rigorous part of your decision-making and influence the process. • Sufficient Information: you must assess what information you have and what is needed to give proper consideration.
- No delegation: the council is responsible for ensuring that any contracted services which provide services on our behalf can comply with the duty, are required in contracts to comply with it, and do comply in practice. It is a duty that cannot be delegated.
- Review: the equality duty is a continuing duty. It applies when a policy is developed/agreed, and when it is implemented/reviewed.
- Proper Record Keeping: to show that we have fulfilled our duties we must keep records of the process and the impacts identified.

NB: Filling out this EIA in itself does not meet the requirements of the equality duty. All the requirements above must be fulfilled or the EIA (and any decision based on it) may be open to challenge. Properly used, an EIA can be a tool to help us comply with our equality duty and as a record that to demonstrate that we have done so.

² Our duties in the Equality Act 2010

As a council, we have a legal duty (under the Equality Act 2010) to show that we have identified and considered the impact and potential impact of our activities on all people with 'protected characteristics' (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership).

This applies to policies, services (including commissioned services), and our employees. The level of detail of this consideration will depend on what you are assessing, who it might affect, those groups' vulnerability, and how serious any potential impacts might be. We use this EIA template to complete this process and evidence our consideration

The following are the duties in the Act. You must give 'due regard' (pay conscious attention) to the need to:

- avoid, reduce or minimise negative impact (if you identify unlawful discrimination, including victimisation and harassment, you must stop the action and take advice immediately).

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- promote equality of opportunity. This means the need to: – Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by equality groups – Take steps to meet the needs of equality groups – Encourage equality groups to participate in public life or any other activity where participation is disproportionately low – Consider if there is a need to treat disabled people differently, including more favourable treatment where necessary
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This means: – Tackle prejudice – Promote understanding

³ EIAs are always proportionate to:

- The size of the service or scope of the policy/strategy
- The resources involved
- The numbers of people affected
- The size of the likely impact
- The vulnerability of the people affected

The greater the potential adverse impact of the proposed policy on a protected group (e.g. disabled people), the more vulnerable the group in the context being considered, the more thorough and demanding the process required by the Act will be.

⁴ When to complete an EIA:

- When planning or developing a new service, policy or strategy
- When reviewing an existing service, policy or strategy
- When ending or substantially changing a service, policy or strategy
- When there is an important change in the service, policy or strategy, or in the city (eg: a change in population), or at a national level (eg: a change of legislation)

Assessment of equality impact can be evidenced as part of the process of reviewing or needs assessment or strategy development or consultation or planning. It does not have to be on this template, but must be documented. Wherever possible, build the EIA into your usual planning/review processes.

Do you need to complete an EIA? Consider:

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- Is the policy, decision or service likely to be relevant to any people because of their protected characteristics?
 - How many people is it likely to affect?
 - How significant are its impacts?
 - Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities?

How vulnerable are the people (potentially) affected? If there are potential impacts on people but you decide not to complete an EIA it is usually sensible to document why.

⁵ **Title of EIA:** This should clearly explain what service / policy / strategy / change you are assessing

⁶ **ID no:** The unique reference for this EIA. This will be added by Community Partnerships

⁷ **Team/Service:** Main team responsible for the policy, practice, service or function being assessed

⁸ **Focus of EIA:** A member of the public should have a good understanding of the policy or service and any proposals after reading this section. Please use plain English and write any acronyms in full first time - eg: 'Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)'

This section should explain what you are assessing:

- What are the main aims or purpose of the policy, practice, service or function?
- Who implements, carries out or delivers the policy, practice, service or function? Please state where this is more than one person/team/body and where other organisations deliver under procurement or partnership arrangements.
- How does it fit with other services?
- Who is affected by the policy, practice, service or function, or by how it is delivered? Who are the external and internal serviceusers, groups, or communities?
- What outcomes do you want to achieve, why and for whom? Eg: what do you want to provide, what changes or improvements, and what should the benefits be?
- What do existing or previous inspections of the policy, practice, service or function tell you?
- What is the reason for the proposal or change (financial, service, legal etc)? The Act requires us to make these clear.

⁹ **Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations**

- Make a frank and realistic assessment of the overall extent to which the negative impacts can be reduced or avoided by the mitigating measures. Explain what positive impacts will result from the actions and how you can make the most of these.

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- Countervailing considerations: These may include the reasons behind the formulation of the policy, the benefits it is expected to deliver, budget reductions, the need to avert a graver crisis by introducing a policy now and not later, and so on. The weight of these factors in favour of implementing the policy must then be measured against the weight of any evidence as to the potential negative equality impacts of the policy,
 - Are there any further recommendations? Is further engagement needed? Is more research or monitoring needed? Does there need to be a change in the proposal itself?

¹⁰ **Action Planning:** The Equality Duty is an ongoing duty: policies must be kept under review, continuing to give 'due regard' to the duty. If an assessment of a broad proposal leads to more specific proposals, then further equality assessment and consultation are needed.