

Equalities Impact Assessment

The purpose of an assessment is to understand the impact of the Council's activities* on people from protected groups and to assess whether unlawful discrimination may occur. It also helps to identify key equality issues and highlight opportunities to promote equality across the Council and the community. The assessment should be carried out during the initial stages of the planning process so that any findings can be incorporated into the final proposals and, where appropriate, have a bearing on the outcome.

(*Activity can mean strategy, practice, function, policy, procedure, decision, project or service)

Name of person completing the assessment	Francesca Castelo	Date of assessment	19/12/2022
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Name of the proposed activity being assessed	Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan	Is this a new or existing activity?	Existing
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Who will implement the activity and who will be responsible for it?	The Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan is a Council-wide activity, with the Economic Development Team being primarily responsible for managing its delivery. External partners and stakeholders will also be key in developing and delivering the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan.
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1. Determining the relevance to equality

What are the aims, objectives and purpose of the activity?	To implement a renewed Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan that outlines a renewed vision and priorities to support the local economy.
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Is this a major activity that significantly affects how services or functions are delivered?	No	Who will benefit from this activity and how?	Residents, businesses/employers and visitors to the borough by maintaining and improving economic prosperity in the area, which is of benefit to everybody.
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Does it relate to a function that has been identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?	No, however a separate EIA will be conducted for the Economic Development Action Plan later on.	Who are the stakeholders? Does the activity affect employees, service users or the wider community?	Residents, businesses/employers, community groups, local authorities, education and skills partners, service providers, business representative organisations (e.g. Surrey Chambers of Commerce, FSB)
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Based on the above information, is the activity relevant to equality?

Yes – continue to section 2	Yes
No – please record your reasons why the activity is not relevant to equality	

2. Is the proposed activity accessible for all the protected groups listed below?
(Consider in what ways the activity might create difficulties or barriers to parts of the workforce, community or protected groups. How might one or more groups be excluded because of the activity?)

Protected groups	Yes	No	Evidence
Disability	✓		<p>As a high level document, the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan is designed to benefit, and thus be accessible to, all groups.</p> <p>Discussions with the Web Team and the Consultants are being undertaken to ensure both the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan meets are accessibility requirements so it is accessible to people with disabilities. We would consider providing alternative formats if requested.</p> <p>Ongoing engagement with businesses, residents and partner organisations will be conducted (e.g. through business forums/groups such as the Guildford Economic Partnership, see below) to monitor and review the Economic Development Strategy. Difficulties and barriers to stakeholders identified in further consultations will be removed or minimised by working together with stakeholders and partner organisations (i.e. organisations helping to deliver economic growth locally)</p>
Race	✓		Yes, it will be accessible to everybody.
Gender	✓		See above
Sexual orientation	✓		See above
Age	✓		Yes, it will be accessible to everybody. Alternative formats (e.g. print) will be considered when requested.
Religion or belief	✓		Yes, it will be accessible to everybody.

Transgender or transsexual	✓		See above
Marriage and civil partnership	✓		See above
Pregnancy or maternity	✓		See above

3. Is it likely the proposed activity will have a negative impact on one or more protected groups?

Protected groups	Yes	No	Evidence
Disability		✓	This Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan has been designed to benefit the borough as a whole. It seeks to address high level economic issues in the borough (e.g. improving broadband) and does not go into detail with any specific groups, such as those in protected characteristics. If any negative impacts on one or more protected groups are identified, steps will be taken to address these by working together with stakeholders and partner organisations.
Race		✓	See above
Gender		✓	See above
Sexual orientation		✓	See above
Age		✓	See above
Religion or belief		✓	See above
Transgender or transsexual		✓	See above
Marriage and civil partnership		✓	See above
Pregnancy or maternity		✓	See above

4. What action can be taken to address any negative impact? What measures could be included to promote a positive impact? (*Consider whether it is possible to amend or change the activity due to the likely adverse impact whilst still delivering the objective. Is it possible to consider a different activity which still achieves the aims but avoids an adverse impact? Is an action plan required to reduce any actual or potential adverse impact?*)

- a. Improving stakeholder's access to information – different businesses/residents have differing ways of accessing information (e.g. social media, through organisation newsletters, word of mouth). Thus, it is important all business opportunities arising from the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan must be promoted in a range of different platforms, leveraging on partnerships with key organisations to spread opportunities more widely (e.g. partner newsletters/clinics/events, word of mouth, social media).
- b. Improving accessibility of business opportunities – Certain groups/individuals/businesses are more able to engage with business opportunities than others (e.g. experience/confidence, location/travel, familial responsibilities). Businesses and partner organisations will be consulted to discuss how we can make business opportunities more accessible to a wider range of groups/individuals, such as those in protected characteristics, early on in the planning stage (e.g. providing services online/via video call, suitable times for events, using venues with good transport links)
- c. Improving Council's engagement with businesses – The Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan proposes an overarching business groups, the 'Guildford Economic Partnership' (GEP), which will sit above a series of thematic sub-groups that reflect our business base and economic specialisms. The GEP board will include a nominated representative from each sub-group, alongside anchor institutions that are responsible for promoting economic growth locally (i.e. GBC, Enterprise M3, Surrey County Council and the University of Surrey). The GEP and the sub-groups will serve as a platform to give businesses a voice on matters relating to them and the wider economy, and will provide opportunities to review and monitor the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan.

5. What are the main sources of evidence that have been used to identify the likely impacts on the different protected groups? (*Use relevant quantitative and qualitative information that is available from sources such as previous EIA's, engagement with staff and service users, equality monitoring, complaints, comments, customer equality profiles, feedback, issues raised at previous consultations and known inequalities*).

2017 Rural Economic Strategy EIA (21/03/2017)

2013 Economic Development Strategy EIA (30/10/10)

2020 Business Survey

Business consultations (see below)

6. Has any consultation been carried out (e.g. with employees, service users or the wider community)? Please provide details

From September 2022 to November 2022, stakeholder consultations have been conducted with businesses a range of different sectors and geographies (e.g. town centre, rural, digital/games, tourism/visitor economy, brewery), alongside the Council's key partners (e.g. University of Surrey, Enterprise M3 LEP, Surrey County Council, Royal Surrey County Hospital).

Workshops were held with business stakeholders from different sectors (e.g. games, leisure and hospitality, manufacturing, space, finance), geographies (i.e. rural and urban) and sizes (i.e. SMEs and large/multinational businesses) on 12 September, 11 October, 19 October and 30 October. The discussions aimed to understand business needs, their perceptions on Guildford's strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, as well as ideas on what the Council can do to facilitate economic development in the borough.

Throughout September to November 2022, 1 to 1 stakeholder consultations were also held with the Council's key partners who will/can help in the delivery of the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan (i.e. Enterprise M3, University of Surrey, Experience Guildford, Surrey County Council, Activate Learning, Royal Surrey County Hospital)

7. Is further consultation required as a result of any negative impact identified? If so, what groups do you intend to engage with and how?

No negative impacts to particular groups have been identified in the stakeholder consultations held so far.

The Action Plan will be subject to further consultation with the Council's key partners (as identified in the document e.g. University of Surrey, Surrey County Council, Experience Guildford etc) to ensure their support in delivering the actions and vision of the Economic Development Strategy.

In addition, it is envisioned that there will be an ongoing review of the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan with businesses and partner organisations (e.g. local authorities, business representative organisations like Surrey Chambers of Commerce, FSB) to ensure both documents are relevant and reflect that needs of businesses and residents.

Both of the consultations mentioned above will provide an opportunity to highlight areas where differential impact resulting from the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan could be an issue and how it can be addressed.

8. Conclusion of Equality Impact Assessment - please summarise your findings

The policy is a high level strategic document and any actions are taken as a result of this policy document will need individual scrutiny by the Council where the impact will be assessed.

No changes to the Strategy and Action Plan are required as it does not concentrate enough on specific Equalities groups. Where there may be negative implications to specific groups arising from further consultations, discussion and coordination with stakeholders and partners will be undertaken to address these.

Name of person completing assessment: Francesca Castelo

Date: 20/12/2022

Job title: Policy Officer – Economy and Innovation

Signature: *F. Castelo*

**Senior manager name: Abi Lewis
22/12/2022**

Date:

Signature: A. Lewis