

Equality Impact Assessment

Supporting Our Town Centres

Stage 1 Details of the proposal

Name of service	Economic Development
Directorate	Growth & Sustainability
Name of officer responsible for EIA	Ben Hawley
Name of senior sponsor	Dan Harper
Description / purpose of proposal	EIA being completed to support the cabinet report to that seeks approval of the Supporting our Town Centres – Business Rates Relief, Rent Relief and business support report
Date EIA started	05/03/25
Assessment Review date	05/03/25

Stage 2 - About the proposal

What is being proposed?	The implementation of a set of interventions aimed at supporting our high streets and town centres, which include targeted business rate relief, rent reductions to qualifying businesses and a comprehensive business support package. The aim is to ensure our high streets and town centres across the borough remain vibrant places that people want to visit and spend time in.
Why is the proposal required?	Like all town and city centres across the country we are impacted by macro-economic factors that are outside the Council's control. Businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors will be impacted by a number of policy changes that take effect in the new financial year; 1) changes to employers National Insurance contributions, 2) changes to the minimum

wage, 3) changes to business rate relief in those sectors, 4) changes to employment law regulations that add costs to businesses. In addition, global market prices for some consumer goods are having significant impacts of the supply chains, as well as high energy costs and inflationary pressures are leading to a very challenging trading conditions and pose a risk to the vibrancy of our high streets and town centres.

What will this proposal mean for customers?

Customers, in this case businesses, will benefit from a package of support from the council. The aim of this support will make the businesses better prepared for the impacts the national changes will have on their operations, as well as preparing them as best they can be for any future changes that are implemented from national policies.

Stage 3 - Preliminary screening process

Use the Preliminary screening questions (found in the guidance) to decide whether a full EIA is required

- Yes - EIA required (go to next section)
 No – EIA not required (provide rationale below including name of E&I Officer consulted with)

Stage 4 - Scoping exercise - What do we know?

Data: Generic demographics

What generic data do you know?

We will be working with businesses of all sizes from across the whole of the Barnsley. As business ownership is not limited to any one individual demographic, then we are likely to be working with a representative proportion of the social economic makeup of the region.

Data: Service data / feedback

What equalities knowledge do you already know about the service/location/policy/contract?

The programme will be open to businesses as highlighted in the proposed support. This will be aimed at Retail, Hospitality, and Leisure sector. Whilst the business sector is restrictive this restriction would not impact on any protected characteristics. Any rejection to take part in the programme would be based on purely businesses not meeting the criteria set out as a target

business eligible for support, and not related in anyway to the people who work in or own the business.

Data: Previous / similar EIA's

Has there already been an EIA on all or part of this before, or something related? If so, what were the main issues and actions it identified?

We have previously submitted EIA's for similar programmes the latest one being for the South Yorkshire Innovation Programme (SYIP).

Data: Formal consultation

What information has been gathered from formal consultation?

There has been no formal consultation around DE&I relating to this programme. We do however have evaluation reports from a range of programmes that show we are conscience of different groups and how they may choose to engage. We provide the opportunity for feedback across all participants to make sure their needs are met and we implement suggestions on how to improve wider involvement.

Stage 5 - Potential impact on different groups

Considering the evidence above, state the likely impact the proposal will have on people with different protected characteristics

(state if negative impact is substantial and highlight with **red text**)

Negative (and potentially positive) impacts identified will need to form part of your action plan.

Protected characteristic	Negative '-'	Positive '+'	No impact	Don't know	Details
Sex			X		
Age			X		
Disabled <i>Learning disability, Physical disability, Sensory Impairment, Deaf People, invisible illness, Mental Health etc</i>			X		
Race			X		

Religion & Belief			X		
Sexual orientation			X		
Gender Reassignment			X		
Marriage / civil partnership		N/A	X		
Pregnancy / maternity			X		

Other groups you may want to consider					
	Negative	Positive	No impact	Don't know	Details
Ex services			X		
Lower socio-economic			X		
Other ...			X		

Stage 6 - BMBC Minimum access standards

If the proposal relates to the delivery of a new service, please refer to the Customer minimum access standards self-assessment ([found at](#))

If not, move to Stage 7.

Please use the action plan to be taken to ensure the new service complies with reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

Not yet live

The proposal will meet the minimum access standards.

The proposal will not meet the minimum access standards. –provide rationale below.

Stage 7 – Action plan

To improve your knowledge about the equality impact . . .

Actions could include: community engagement with affected groups, analysis of performance data, service equality monitoring, stakeholder focus group etc.

Action we will take:	Lead Officer	Completion date
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Constantly review the feedback to make sure the programme is accessible to all.	Ben Hawley	Ongoing

To improve or mitigate the equality impact . . .

Actions could include: altering the policy to protect affected group, limiting scope of proposed change, reviewing actual impact in future, phasing-in changes over period of time, monitor service provider performance indicators, etc.

Action we will take:	Lead Officer	Completion date

To meet the minimum access standards . . .(if relevant)

Actions could include: running focus group with disability forum, amend tender specification, amend business plan to request extra 'accessibility' funding, produce separate MAS action plan, etc.

Action we will take:	Completion date
Not yet live	

Stage 8 – Assessment findings

Please summarise how different protected groups are likely to be affected

Summary of equality impact	While the programme is focused and only available to a focused business sector, those businesses could be owned by an individual from any background, and therefor all individuals who may own or work in those businesses.
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Summary of next steps

Continue to monitor the programme and make changes where identified to make it as accessible as possible.

Signature (officer responsible for EIA) Date



**** EIA now complete ****

Stage 9 – Assessment Review

(This is the post implementation review of the EIA based on date in Stage 1 if applicable)

What information did you obtain and what does that tell us about equality of outcomes for different groups?