

Equality Impact Assessment

Title of the policy/report /strategy/service	Review of Polling Places and Polling Districts 2011
Date	
Lead Officer	Richard Ellis – Returning Officer
Who else is involved in undertaking this assessment?	Sheena Mortimer – Electoral Services Manager

Step 1 – Overview of policy/function being assessed

A. Outline: What is the purpose of this policy? (specify aims and objectives)
To ensure that all electors within the District of Harborough have such reasonable access to polling facilities as are practicable under the circumstances.
B. What specific groups is the policy designed to affect/impact?
To ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable, all polling stations are accessible to electors including those who are disabled , and when considering the designation of polling stations, to have regard to the accessibility for disabled persons.
C. Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy?
A consultation exercise was carried out between July & August 2011 all District, County & Parish Councillors were invited to feed into the consultation, information and documents were available on the Council's website a number of responses were received from electors with disabilities.

Step 2 – What we already know and where there are gaps

A. List any existing information/data you have/monitor about different diverse groups in relation to this policy? Such as in relation to ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, age, gender, transgender etc.
<p>Data/information such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Consultation § Previous Equality Impact Assessments § Demographic information § Anecdotal and other evidence
<p>Information already present from the following sources –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polling station questionnaires completed by polling station facility managers regarding access, disabled access, disabled facilities (toilets etc), lighting, size of room for ease of use • Information from register of electors regarding nationality, age (over 70's) • Questionnaires completed by Polling station staff at each station • Questionnaires completed by Polling station inspectors • Notes on polling station issues on Election Management System
B. What does this information / data tell you about diverse group? If you do not hold or have access to any data/information on diverse groups, what do you need to begin collating /

monitoring? (please list)

Questionnaires give information regarding accessibility internally as well as externally, disabled facilities, signage issues to ensure clear directions to disabled access, lighting in stations, extra tactile templates required re visually impaired voters.

Reports from systems highlight ethnicity within wards, ensuring information in appropriate languages available, notes from poll staff regarding use of tactile templates within areas and need to ensure adequate supplies.

Step 3 – Do we need to seek the views of others? If so, who?**A. In light of the answers you have given in step 2, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs / issues? If not please explain why.**

Information taken from users of stations, those employed and managers of facilities is used in conjunction with guidance by both the electoral commission and Scope to ensure that more than adequate facilities are in place for all users.

Step 4 – Assessing the impacts

	In light of any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge and awareness, please identify whether the policy has a positive or negative impact on the groups specified and provide an explanation for your decision. (please refer to the general duties on the front page)
A. Age	Seating within polling stations must be provided, lighting in station to ensure ease of use, stations if possible are in a central position within the polling area to allow ease of travel with parking facilities. Electors made aware of postal and proxy voting availability. Large print and easy to read 'how to vote & how to vote by post' available. Voters rising 18 are sent a 'birthday card' by electoral Services with information regarding their eligibility to vote.
B. Disability (physical, visual, hearing, learning disabilities, mental health)	Poll staff trained with regard to set up of polling station, 'walk through' of the polling station to ensure adequate space for wheelchair users, not just on entry/exit. Seating within polling stations must be provided, lighting in station to ensure ease of use. Presiding Officer is allowed and will offer to assist any voter with disability and record that they have done so. Postal vote allowance on demand now in place which will assist those voters who may be housebound, visit by an Officer of the Council can be arranged for assistance with postal vote form needed. Large print and easy to read 'how to vote & how to vote by post' available. Braille application forms and audio information is available on request. Disabled parking available at polling stations.
C. Gender / Sex	Electoral Services are accessible by all there, is no bar with regard to gender.
D. Religious Belief	Electoral Services are accessible by all there, is no bar with regard to religion.

E. Racial Group	Large print and easy to read 'how to vote & how to vote by post' available. Reports from systems highlight ethnicity within wards, ensuring information in appropriate languages available.
F. Sexual Orientation	Electoral Services are accessible by all, there is no bar with regard to sexual orientation.
G. Transgender	Electoral Services are accessible by all, there is no bar with regard to transgender.
H. Other protected groups (pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil partnership)	Electoral Services are accessible by all, there is no bar with regard to any of the named protected groups in this category
I. Other socially excluded groups (low literacy, priority neighbourhoods, socio-economic, etc)	When deciding on the situation of a polling station ensure that it is easily accessible to all electors within the polling district, near to public transport and that there is adequate publicity regarding election and site of polling stations. Large print and easy to read 'how to vote & how to vote by post' available
J. All	There is a statutory requirement to ensure that where practicable that all polling stations should be accessible to all electors. Publicity and awareness campaigns regarding postal and proxy votes is carried out during each major election.

Step 5 – Action Plan

Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan: <i>The issues identified should inform your Service Plan and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan</i>			
Question Number (Ref)	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date
J	Where there have been issues highlighted regarding the use of certain facilities as polling stations, alternative venues have been considered to ensure adequate provision is provided	Sheena Mortimer	November 2011
J	Ensure any changes made to polling station locations are publicised in order that voters are aware of changes prior to next scheduled elections. This will be done by awareness campaign and note on poll cards in the run up to next election highlighting the changes.	Sheena Mortimer	ongoing

Step 6 – Who needs to know about the outcomes of this assessment and how will they be informed

	Who needs to know (Please tick)	How they will be informed (we have a legal duty to publish EIA's)
Employees		They will be given training regarding Equality issues prior to elections, new list of polling stations will be published on website
Service users		An awareness campaign and note on poll cards in the run up to next election highlighting the changes
Partners and stakeholders		Councillors, Parish Clerks, MP's, Returning Officers for Parliamentary constituencies, will be notified of changes due to the review
Others		
To ensure ease of access, what other communication needs/concerns are there?		Ensuring that all facilities keep the Returning Officer up to date on changes, letter is sent with a questionnaire prior to the election to allow the electoral services office to highlight potential problems in advance with regard to our facilities

Step 7 – Conclusion (to be completed and signed by the Service head)

Please delete as appropriate
I agree / disagree with this assessment / action plan
If <i>disagree</i>, state action/s required, reasons and details of who is to carry them out with timescales:
Signed (Service Head):
Date:

Please send completed & signed assessment to the Equality and Diversity officer.