



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Stage 1: Title and aims of the activity (“activity” is an umbrella term covering policies, procedures, guidance and decisions).	
Service	Corporate Services
Section	Legal & Governance
Title of the activity etc.	Legal & Governance
Aims of the activity	<p>This EIA concerns the Legal & Governance budget. The budget funds the delivery of the Legal and Governance service predominantly through a staff resource.</p> <p>The Legal & Governance service covers all aspects of legal service to the council as well as Committee Services, Planning Gain, Registration Services and Information Security. The functions of Civic Government Licensing and Liquor Licensing are contained within a separate budget page (Miscellaneous Services).</p> <p>The nine teams within Legal & Governance combine to collectively offer a suite of support services to the Council, it’s Committees and Service Departments that encompass the corporate need to ensure legality, regulatory and democratic propriety and good governance. There is also an element of public facing front line services in the delivery of Registration Services and Licensing in particular and certain subsidiary aspects of the other teams also. In the main however, the role of Legal & Governance is one of support.</p> <p>We work to support the Corporate Services vision of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging effectively with customers and residents to provide the best services • Enabling employees to fulfil their potential by equipping them with the necessary knowledge, skills and tools • Promoting good governance by ensurieng the right things are done in the right way, by the right people, at the right time • Encouraging innovation to creat a culture of improvement
Author(s) & Title(s)	<div style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 150px; height: 20px; display: inline-block;"></div> Head of Legal & Governance

Stage 2: List the evidence that has been used in this assessment.

<p>Internal data (customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).</p>	<p>End of Transaction surveys of internal customers have been undertaken since August 2013. Although only a small amount of data has been ingathered so far, the general response is of a high level of satisfaction with the services provided. L & G intend to undertake an annual customer satisfaction survey as part of an agreed programme of Benchmarking via SOLAR (Society of Local Authority Lawyers and Administrators in Scotland). The format of this has been agreed although not yet undertaken.</p>
<p>Internal consultation with staff and other services affected.</p>	<p>A recent Survey Monkey of all staff within L & G resulted in an 80% response. The topic of the survey was the current structure of L 7 G, its effectiveness etc. This was done as part of an ongoing review – Phase 3 legal & Governance Modernisation Review, to assess if the structure implemented 2years ago is working well and fit for purpose. Recommendations for minor alterations are about to be consulted upon. The staff survey revealed strong levels of satisfaction with the current structure.</p>
<p>External consultation (partner organisations, community groups, and councils.</p>	<p>The Budget Simulator (online tool where members of the public can set the budget) will provide feedback on where they believe the local priorities are and if the Legal & Governance spend is appropriate in their view.</p>
<p>External data (census, available statistics).</p>	<p>Customer satisfaction levels are monitored as part of a monthly reputation tracker, including the level of satisfaction with the delivery of council services. Legal & Governance does not tend to be indicated in these being a largely internal support service however certain customer facing aspects of L & G such as Registrars and Planning Gain have had no adverse comment in the overall results.</p>
<p>Other (general information as appropriate).</p>	

Stage 3: Evidence Gaps.	
<p>Are there any gaps in the information you currently hold?</p>	<p>Internal Customer information is currently underdeveloped hence the recent establishment of end of transaction customer satisfaction ratings and the intention to undertake an annual satisfaction survey with the first this year.</p> <p>Performance measures, particularly in the legal services provided are recognised to be traditionally difficult to develop however there is a drive to improve these. L & G recently established its own "Challenge Panel" which seeks to use peer support and challenge to assist each team to question and analyse their own performance and evidence of it. The Panel meets for the first time in January and will meet monthly thereafter.</p>

Stage 4: Measures to fill the evidence gaps.		
<p>What measures will be taken to fill the information gaps before the activity is implemented? These should be included in the action plan at the back of this form.</p>	Measures:	Timescale:
	Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey	Date to be agreed as part of national benchmarking initiative.
	Establish L & G Challenge Panel	January 2014

Stage 5: Are there potential impacts on protected groups? Please complete for each protected group by inserting "yes" in the applicable box/boxes below.				
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Age – Younger	Yes			
Age – Older	Yes			
Disability	Yes			
Race – (includes Gypsy Travellers)	Yes			
Religion or Belief	Yes			

Gender – male/female	yes			
Pregnancy and maternity	yes			
Sexual orientation – (includes Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual)	yes			
Gender reassignment – (includes Transgender)	yes			
Marriage and Civil Partnership	yes			

Stage 6: What are the positive and negative impacts?

Impacts.	Positive (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)	Negative (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)
<p>Please detail the potential positive and/or negative impacts on those with protected characteristics you have highlighted above. Detail the impacts and describe those affected.</p>	<p>The Legal & Governance Service provides specialist legal advice on equalities legislation, regulation and case law to all services of the Council thus, strong, clear, well resourced legal advice is essential and by funding through this budget that legal support, the Council is ensuring that it has the right advice and service in place to promote fairness between people belonging to different groups; eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who not share it.</p>	

Stage 7: Have any of the affected groups been consulted?

<p>If yes, please give details of how this was done and what the results were. If no, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating steps?</p>	
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Stage 8: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce negative impacts?

<p>These should be included in any action plan at the back of this form.</p>	Mitigating Steps	Timescale
	None identified	

Stage 9: What steps can be taken to promote good relations between various groups?

<p>These should be included in the action plan.</p>	<p>Legal & Governance will support the Council's functions and encourage the promotion of good relations between various groups across all of the services provided by the Council by the provision of strong, clear legal advice on the impact and expectations of the equalities legislation and this on an ongoing basis with the ever growing case law in this field and developing good practice. The administrative sections of L & G will ensure that the Council fulfils its duties in this regard by supporting an effective and efficient decision making culture.</p>
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Stage 10: How does the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity?

Legal & Governance will support the Council's functions and encourage the creation of opportunity for advancing equality of opportunity across all of the services provided by the Council by the provision of strong, clear legal advice on the impact and expectations of the equalities legislation and this on an ongoing basis with the ever growing case law in this field and developing good practice. The administrative sections of L & G will ensure that the Council fulfils its duties in this regard by supporting an effective and efficient decision making culture.

Stage 11: What equality monitoring arrangements will be put in place?

These should be included in any action plan (for example customer satisfaction questionnaires).	The Monitoring Officer, her depute and the Monitoring Solicitors who carry out her duties on her behalf , along with Committee Services Officers and all legally qualified staff who come into contact with the Council's decision makers, will continue to support and challenge adherence to the legislation. The Monitoring Officer will continue to track practice in relation to the inclusion of EIAs and good equalities practice in the decision making of the Council and its Committees.
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Stage 12: What is the outcome of the Assessment?

Please complete the appropriate box/boxes	1	No negative impacts have been identified –please explain.
	Only positive impacts have been identified since the equalities culture and the public sector duty in particular only stand to be enhanced and reinforced by the provision of a fit for purpose Legal & Governance service.	
	2	Negative Impacts have been identified, these can be mitigated - please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen.
	3	The activity will have negative impacts which cannot be mitigated fully – please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen

* Stage 13: Set out the justification that the activity can and should go ahead despite the negative impact.

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Stage 14: Sign off and authorisation.

Sign off and authorisation.	1) Service and Team	Corporate Services, Legal & Governance	
	2) Title of Policy/Activity	Legal & Governance	
	3) Authors: I/We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: <input type="text"/>	Name:
		Position: Head of Legal & Governance Date: 22/11/13 Signature:	Position: Date: Signature:
	4) Consultation with Service Manager	Name:	Name:
		Date:	Position: Date: Signature:
	5) Authorisation by Director or Head of Service	Name: <input type="text"/> Position: Director of Corporate Services Date: 25/11/13	Name: Position: Date:
6) If the EIA relates to a matter that has to go before a Committee, Committee report author sends the Committee Report and this form, and any supporting assessment documents, to the Officers responsible for monitoring and the Committee Officer of the relevant Committee. e.g. Social Work and Housing Committee.	Date:		
7) EIA author sends a copy of the finalised form to: eia@abdnshire	Date:		
(Equalities team to complete) Has the completed form been published on the website? YES/NO			Date:

Action Plan					
Action	Start	Complete	Lead Officer	Expected Outcome	Resource Implications
Further general budget information from communities via engagement events held by local Area Managers	Oct 2013	Nov 2013	[Redacted]	Further details about local priorities to feed into the budget setting process.	Officer support developing briefing pack and analysing and reporting results.
Youth engagement	Oct 2013	Nov 2013	[Redacted]	Further details about local priorities to feed into the budget setting process.	Officer support developing briefing pack and analysing and reporting results.
Communication Plans 2014/2015 ensuring services include the comms plans for their projects within the project EIA.	Oct 2013	ongoing	[Redacted]	That the work of the comms team supporting projects and services is captured with EIAs	Communication team members to ensure that their plans are captured as part of the project EIA process.