

APPENDIX E: Equality Impact Assessment [version 2.12]



Title: Polling District Review	
<input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Function <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Other [please state]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Already exists / review <input type="checkbox"/> Changing
Directorate: Resources	Lead Officer name: Gareth Cook
Service Area: Electoral Services	Lead Officer role: Electoral Services Manager

Step 1: What do we want to do?

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment is to assist decision makers in understanding the impact of proposals as part of their duties under the Equality Act 2010. Detailed guidance to support completion can be found here [Equality Impact Assessments \(EqIA\) \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

This assessment should be started at the beginning of the process by someone with a good knowledge of the proposal and service area, and sufficient influence over the proposal. It is good practice to take a team approach to completing the equality impact assessment. Please contact the [Equality and Inclusion Team](#) early for advice and feedback.

1.1 What are the aims and objectives/purpose of this proposal?

Briefly explain the purpose of the proposal and why it is needed. Describe who it is aimed at and the intended aims / outcomes. Where known also summarise the key actions you plan to undertake. Please use plain English, avoiding jargon and acronyms. Equality Impact Assessments are viewed by a wide range of people including decision-makers and the wider public.

Under the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, Bristol City Council has a duty to review the location of polling stations for voting and the assignment of electors to each polling station. The outcome is a series of polling districts (voting areas) with venues for voting in (polling stations) assigned to the polling district. The review will account for future population growths and new developments and it will rebalance who votes in which polling station so as to reduce the possibility of queues occurring

It is a city-wide right of all persons within the authority area who meet the legal franchise (age, nationality, residency) to be able to vote and have a polling station and polling district assigned to them. . No right of access to voting is being withdrawn.

After a city-wide consultation is held, Full Council is required to approve the outcome of the review. Full Council will approve the boundaries used to determine which properties vote together. The Returning Officer, not the council, is responsible for the choice of polling station, though due consideration is given to the requests of the consultees.

1.2 Who will the proposal have the potential to affect?

<input type="checkbox"/> Bristol City Council workforce	<input type="checkbox"/> Service users	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The wider community
<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioned services	<input type="checkbox"/> City partners / Stakeholder organisations	
Additional comments: The ability to vote is for all residents of the city equally that meet the legal requirements to be able to vote (see franchise above).		

1.3 Will the proposal have an equality impact?

Could the proposal affect access levels of representation or participation in a service, or does it have the potential to change e.g. quality of life: health, education, or standard of living etc.?

If 'No' explain why you are sure there will be no equality impact, then skip steps 2-4 and request review by Equality and Inclusion Team.

If 'Yes' complete the rest of this assessment, or if you plan to complete the assessment at a later stage please state this clearly here and request review by the Equality and Inclusion Team.

Yes

No

[please select]

The purpose of this review is to ensure that polling is accessible for all electors and thus that polling places and polling districts are set up to enable the Returning Officer to identify polling stations that meet the aim of S149 of the Equity Act and the need to promote equality for persons with "protected characteristics"

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 requires a review to be undertaken for the whole of the authority area.

It is a requirement of the review to

- Undertake a public consultation, to which 40 responses have been received and changes implemented as a result;
- Make representations to the following to raise awareness of the review and to request a response.
 - o Political parties and elected representatives
 - o Disability and age-related equality organisations within the local authority area.
 - o Equalities and inclusion representatives internal and external to the council.
- Promote the review to aid engagement;
- Account for population trends for which we included known developments within the city and made census based sub-ward level population predictions up to 2028.

The basis used for the recommendations that were consulted upon were the availability of potential venues coupled to the following desirable criteria: -

- A venue reachable for all voters regardless as to the means of travelling there.
- A venue within 1 mile safe walking distance.
- Circa 1,500 polling station electors (based on projected 2028 electorate numbers) at a polling station where geographical and physical features such as rivers and railways allow. This is to reduce the potential for queuing issues.
- Polling station must stay within the ward.
- A voter must not walk past another in-use polling station to get to their own one.
- Minimise the use of Portacabins.

All potential polling station venues have been assessed by physically visiting between October 22' and July 23'. A full suitability and accessibility assessment was undertaken that considered

- Location (bus routes, parking on-site, parking near-by)
- Disabled parking, drop curbs
- Main entrance route (pavement quality, lighting, door operation, signage)
- Separate disabled access (as main entrance)
- All doorways (opening operation, ramps., step colour contrasts, door widths, thresholds)
- Flooring (mats, surface coverings, trip hazards)
- Voting area (space, temperature, draughts, induction loops, lighting, fire safety, security features, kitchen facilities)

All venues have additionally been assessed for suitability to deliver voting when taking into account new space requirements for voter ID checks as required by the Election Act 2023 ie:- future proof their usability and ensure they remain fit for purpose until the next review in 2028.

Step 5: Review

The Equality and Inclusion Team need at least five working days to comment and feedback on your EqIA. EqIAs should only be marked as reviewed when they provide sufficient information for decision-makers on the equalities impact of the proposal. Please seek feedback and review from the [Equality and Inclusion Team](#) before requesting sign off from your Director¹.

Equality and Inclusion Team Review: <i>Reviewed by Equality and Inclusion Team</i>	Director Sign-Off: T O'Gara
Date: 17/11/2023	Date: 20/11/2023

¹ Review by the Equality and Inclusion Team confirms there is sufficient analysis for decision makers to consider the likely equality impacts at this stage. This is not an endorsement or approval of the proposal.