



# City of Edinburgh Council

## Record of Equality and Rights Impact Assessment

### Part 1: Background and Information

#### (a) Background Details

Please list ERIA background details:

#### ERIA Title and Summary Description:

**Planning and Building Standards Customer Engagement Strategy and Building Standards Improvement Plan – Planning Committee 17 August 2017**

The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee about progress in the implementation of the Planning and Building Standards Customer Engagement Strategy and the Building Standards Improvement Plan on performance.

The Planning and Building Standards Customer Engagement Strategy aims to implement the Council’s Channel Shift policy, encouraging customers to self-serve online. It is recognised that this culture change can be difficult to implement and a ‘one size fits all’ does not always work. This report looks at progress so far and the potential for better customer engagement.

Following an inspection in February 2017, the Building Standards Division of the Scottish Government identified a number of recommended actions to bring the level of service in Edinburgh up to the standards required to be a verifier under the Buildings (Scotland) Act 2003. This report informs the Committee of the Improvement Plan being implemented to address the recommendations.

Service Area	Division	Head of Service	Service Area Reference No.
Place Development	Planning and Building Standards	Michael Thain	2017P102

#### (b) What is being impact assessed?

Describe the different policies or services (i.e. decisions, projects, programmes, policies, services, reviews, plans, functions or practices that relate to the Corporate ERIA Title):

Policies and Services	Date ERIA commenced
1. Customer Engagement Strategy	6/1/2015
2. Building Standards Improvement Plan	7/4/2017

#### (c) ERIA Team

Please list all ERIA Team Members:

Name	Organisation / Service Area
Damian McAfee	Place Development
Nancy Jamieson	Place Development
David Givan	Place Development
David Leslie	Place Development
Ruth White	Place Development

## Part 2: Evidence and Impact Assessment

### (a) Evidence Base

Please record the evidence used to support the ERIA. Any identified evidence gaps can be recorded at [part 3a](#). Please allocate an abbreviation for each piece of evidence.

Evidence	Abbreviation
1. Officer knowledge	
2. Customer consultation and feedback	
3. Council's transformational change programme	
4. Online service data	
5. BSD Inspection report	

### (b) Rights Impact Assessment – Summary

Please describe all the identified enhancements and infringements of rights against the following ten areas of rights. Please also consider issues of poverty and health inequality within each area of rights:

- Life
- Health
- Physical security
- Legal security
- Education and learning
- Standard of living
- Productive and valued activities
- Individual, family and social life
- Identity, expression and respect
- Participation, influence and voice

Please indicate alongside each identified enhancement or infringement the relevant policy or service (see [part 1b](#)) and relevant evidence (see [part 2a](#)).

Summary of Enhancements of Rights
The proposals will continue to enhance participation and influence as they promote improving online services available to all whilst maintaining direct contact where still required. The recent improvements to customer contact services will help improve access to information and advice, allowing customers to self serve as much as possible. In addition, the BS Improvement Plan will improve performance allowing quicker decisions on building warrants thereby allowing customers to carry out their development quicker and, in some cases, improving individual, family and social life.
Summary of Infringement of Rights
Can these infringements be justified? Are they proportional?
There are no infringements of rights under these proposals. It is recognised that some groups (e.g. those with learning difficulties) find online services difficult to access and in these cases the customer services adviser is trained to help them find the answer.

### (c) Equality Impact Assessment – Summary

Please consider all the protected characteristics when answering questions 1, 2 and 3 below. Please also consider the issues of poverty and health inequality within each protected characteristic:

- Age

- Disability
- Gender identity
- Marriage / civil partnership
- Pregnancy / maternity
- Race
- Religion / belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

1. Please describe all the positive and negative impacts on the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation. Please indicate alongside each identified impact the relevant policy or service (see [part 1b](#)) and relevant evidence (see [part 2a](#)).

<b>Positive Impacts</b>
There are no identified positive impacts on the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation
<b>Negative Impacts</b>
There are no identified negative impacts on the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation

2. Please describe all the positive and negative impacts on the duty to advance equality of opportunity (i.e. by removing or minimising disadvantage, meeting the needs of particular groups that are different from the needs of others and encouraging participation in public life)? Please indicate alongside each identified impact the relevant policy or service (see [part 1b](#)) and relevant evidence (see [part 2a](#)).

<b>Positive Impacts</b>
<p>The proposals promote the duty to advance equality of opportunity as they continue to promote better and more accessible information and the systems we use such as the Planning Portal to view and comment on planning applications. This is to the benefit of a range of the above groups who have protected characteristics and continues to ensure any customer groups who need bespoke advice or help still have access to the service through telephone or face-to-face contact. The Council works in partnership with the Edinburgh Access Panel (details about the Panel are online at <a href="http://www.edinburghaccesspanel.org.uk/">http://www.edinburghaccesspanel.org.uk/</a>) with Planning and Building Standards supporting and attending the Panel. The improved access to online information supports the role of the panel and their opportunity to engage in the planning process.</p> <p>The Council has a corporate position in relation to making its online content accessible and understood by those with protected characteristics. Webpages can be read aloud for those with visual impairments, web pages can be increased in size with web content written to a readability score of 8-10 using Plain English. Documents produced by the service can be translated on request for those who require these. Were it necessary and proportionate, home visits could be arranged for certain groups with protected characteristics.</p>
<b>Negative Impacts</b>
Asking some individuals with protected characteristics to self serve online may affect some groups such as those with disabilities and those of a different race. However, the strategy states that we will continue to provide a direct service for those with protected characteristics who need this level of support. There will therefore be no negative impact on the duty to advance equality of opportunity.

3. Please describe all the positive and negative impacts on the duty to foster good relations (i.e. by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding)? Please indicate alongside each identified impact the relevant policy or service (see [part 1b](#)) and relevant evidence (see [part 2a](#)).

<b>Positive Impacts</b>
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The updated proposals promote the duty to foster good relations as they make clear the service that can be expected and promote understanding. This is set out in the Planning and Building Standards Service Charter. The Customer Engagement Strategy continues to provide and enhance the levels of service expected by customers. The BS Improvement Plan seeks to improve building warrant performance and will foster good relations by reducing complaints about the service.
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<b>Negative Impacts</b>
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There will be no negative impacts on the duty to foster good relations
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### Part 3: Evidence Gaps, Recommendations, Justifications and Sign Off

#### (a) Evidence Gaps

Please list all relevant evidence gaps and action to address identified gaps.

Evidence Gaps	Action to address gaps

#### (b) Recommendations

Please record SMART recommendations to

- (i) eliminate unlawful practice or infringements of absolute rights;
- (ii) justify identified infringements of rights; or
- (iii) mitigate identified negative equality impacts.

Recommendation	Responsibility of (name)	Timescale
none		

#### (c) Sign Off

I, the undersigned, am content that:

- (i) the ERIA record represents a thorough and proportionate ERIA analysis based on a sound evidence base;
- (ii) the ERIA analysis gives no indication of unlawful practice or violation of absolute rights;
- (iii) the ERIA recommendations are proportionate and will be delivered;
- (iv) the results of the ERIA process have informed officer or member decision making;
- (v) that the record of ERIA has been published on the Council's website / intranet, or
- (vi) that the ERIA record has been reviewed and re-published.

Date	Sign Off (print name and position)	Reason for Sign Off (please indicate which reason/s from list (i) to (vi) above)
13/7/17	Nancy Jamieson, Team Manager	(i, ii, iv)
14/9/17	Michael Thain, Head of Place Development (gillian.johnston@edinburgh.gov.uk)	(i, ii, iii)