

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

### **Purpose of the Equality Impact Assessment process:**

The Equality Act (2010) introduced the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (PSED) requiring public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Consideration must be given to the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act (2010). Assessments should consider relevant evidence relating to persons with protected characteristics in relation to assessments of potential impact.

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is to ensure that policies, functions, plans or decisions (hereafter referred to as 'policy/ decision') do not create unnecessary barriers for people protected under the Act. Where negative impacts are identified these should be eliminated or minimised, and opportunities for positive impact should be maximised. An EIA is not required for a decision in relation to an individual.

Screening is a short exercise to determine whether a policy/ decision is relevant to equalities, and if so, whether a full EIA should be conducted.

## Section 1: Equality Impact Assessment Screening

Title and description of the policy/ decision:	Strategic Grants 2024
Job title of the person(s) undertaking the assessment:	Zoë Lentell, Economic Development Team Leader
Council service:	Growth, Economy and Delivery
Date of assessment:	19/12/2023
What are the aims, purposes, objectives and proposed outcomes of the policy/ decision?	
<p>The aim of the strategic grants programme is to provide grants towards core running costs in order to help underpin not-for-profit organisations where their service delivery augments Council provision and aligns with the Council's strategic priorities (Homes, Environment, Economy and Community).</p> <p>The aim of the decision is to enable the continued support of strategic grant provision within a reduced budget.</p>	
Who may be affected by the policy/ decision?	<p>Strategic partners (grant beneficiaries)</p> <p>Service users, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People in need of legal advice (particularly people in financial difficulties, on welfare support or in debt)</li> <li>• Those who are or may be in danger of becoming homeless</li> <li>• All residents and visitors to the District</li> <li>• Voluntary and Community Organisations (many of whom work with vulnerable individuals)</li> <li>• Rurally and socially isolated individuals including those unable to use public transport due to age and frailty, illness and infirmity (including mobility impairments).</li> </ul>
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of the policy/ decision? E.g. a consultation exercise	<p>During the period of the review, grant recipients were asked to complete a self-assessment form providing information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The services they deliver;</li> <li>• Their desired outcomes and the level of outputs;</li> <li>• How the aims and objectives of their organisation match MDDC's corporate aims and objectives;</li> <li>• The possible effect of a 5%, 10% and 20% reduction in their level of grant;</li> <li>• Any additional social, economic or environmental benefits they might provide.</li> </ul>

	<p>Organisations were also asked to submit annual accounts and a business plan or other development profile.</p> <p>The organisations were also invited to come and speak with elected members at the Community PDG meeting. This afforded the opportunity for a presentation and for any clarification questions to be asked by members in order to support effective and robust decision making.</p>		
Will there be scope for prompt, independent reviews and appeals against decisions arising from the policy/ decision?	<p>The awarding of grants to external agencies is a discretionary function of the Council. It has no statutory responsibility to provide a Strategic Grants programme. Therefore there is no formal right of appeal. However, organisations can make representation requests to their Ward Member(s) or Cabinet Member.</p>		
To which part(s) of the Public Sector Equality Duties is the policy/ decision relevant:			
	Yes	No	Details
1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. Advance equality of opportunity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>To ensure equality of opportunity to access support and services in Mid Devon. This decision particularly affects those from the age and disability protected characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.</li> </ul> <p>There is a risk that reduced funding may result in reduced service provision, reducing the support for these groups of people.</p>
3. Foster good relations between different groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

**Which of the protected characteristics is the policy/ decision relevant to?**

*Tick and briefly describe any likely equalities impact (positive, negative, or neutral)*

Characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Comments
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Religion or Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Comments
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Pregnancy/ maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Marriage and Civil partnership*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

\*Applies only to Employment and the duty to give regard to the elimination of discrimination.

**Decision by Corporate Manager to recommend this policy/ decision for an Equality Impact Assessment?**

**Yes**

**If the answer is “Yes”, please continue to the Section 2 and complete the Equality Impact Assessment. If the answer is “No”, please give a brief reason here.**

**EIA Screening Complete**

## Section 2: Equality Impact Assessment

### Evidence and Consultation

What existing sources of information have you gathered to help identify how people covered by the protected characteristics may be affected by this policy/ decision? E.g. consultations, national or local data and/or research, complaints or customer feedback. Please identify any gaps in the available information that might make it difficult to form an opinion about the effect of the policy on different groups.

During the period of the review, grant recipients were asked to complete a self-assessment form providing information about:

- The services they deliver;
- Their desired outcomes and the level of outputs;
- How the aims and objectives of their organisation match MDDC's corporate aims and objectives;
- The possible effect of a 5%, 10% and 20% reduction in their level of grant;
- Any additional social, economic or environmental benefits they might provide.

Organisations were also asked to submit annual accounts and a business plan or other development profile.

Members of the Community PDG undertook the Strategic Grants review. As part of the review, Members considered:

- a) The criteria for selecting the agencies that should be funded;
- b) The level of funding for each agency, taking into account the proposed budget by Cabinet and the impact of any proposed reductions on the organisation and on vulnerable residents that access support through that organisation.
- c) The term of the funding period, taking into account the Council's budgetary position and the need to provide some certainty to strategic partners for the purposes of financial planning.

Consistent with previous reviews, Community PDG Members prioritised funding decisions against categories of eligible potential strategic partners, where group 1 was the highest priority, group 2 the next highest, group 3 the least:

Group 1: defined as providing essential services to residents that represent a strong strategic alignment with the Council's objectives

Group 2: defined as providing important services to residents that represent some strategic alignment with the Council's objectives

Group 3: recognised as providing valued but non-essential services to residents that represent a weak alignment with the Council's objectives.

The Community PDG determined the following recommendations:

- i. To assist with financial forecasting and planning for funding recipients, that the strategic grant offers are made for a two-year period (April 2024- March 2026); and
- ii. To ensure a balanced budget, organisations in group 1 to receive a 90% funding allocation compared to current award (10% reduction) and organisations in group 2 to receive an 85% funding allocation compared to current award (15% reduction). None of the organisations were classed as group 3.

All of the strategic partners supporting residents in protected characteristics were in group 1.

Please complete this table for all the Protected Characteristics. If you have identified any negative impacts you will need to consider how these can be justified or where possible mitigated either to reduce or remove them. (Please add rows where needed)

Potential Impacts/ Issues Identified/ Opportunities identified	Mitigation required (action) or Justification	Lead Officer and target completion date	What is the expected outcome from the action?
<b>Sex</b>			
N/A			
<b>Age</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritised focus on health transport reducing access to shops and services to once a month</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Essential health transport will be maintained
<b>Disability</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritised focus to basic maintenance on the Canal meaning delayed or limited maintenance could result in reduced standards (which may impact on user experience re surface quality or path width).</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Essential maintenance will be maintained
<b>Religion or Belief</b>			
N/A			
<b>Race</b>			

N/A			
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>			
N/A			
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>			
N/A			
<b>Pregnancy/ maternity</b>			
N/A			
<b>Marriage and Civil partnership</b> (Applies only to Employment and the duty to give regard to the elimination of discrimination)			
N/A			



**Please provide details of arrangements to monitor and review the policy/ decision and any mitigating actions or actions to promote equality:**

The decision will be monitored by Service Leads in liaison with their respective Cabinet Members.

**Please state where the EIA will be published (e.g. on the Mid Devon District Council website):**

On the Mid Devon District Council website.

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**Equality Impact Assessment Sign off**

**For completion by Corporate Manager**

**Are you prepared to agree and sign off the EIA?**

**Yes**                       **No**

If "No", provide details of why and next steps:

**Name: Richard Marsh**

**Job Title: Director of Place**

**Date: 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023**