

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** (Section 149 of the Equality Act) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people carrying out their activities.

The Equality Duty supports good decision making – it encourages public bodies to be more efficient and effective by understanding how different people will be affected by their activities, so that their policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people’s needs. The Council’s Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) includes an assessment of the community safety impact assessment to comply with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act and will enable the Council to better understand the potential impact of proposals and consider mitigating action.

<b>Name or Brief Description of Proposal</b>	Digital Strategy
<b>Brief Service Profile (including number of customers)</b>	
<p>The Digital Strategy is a high-level document that will help guide the council’s investment in technology, enable improvement of services and support delivery of other key strategies such as the Customer Strategy. It does not commit the council to any individual decisions.</p> <p>As such this is a high-level assessment only. Individual projects arising from the adoption of the Digital Strategy will need their own more detailed assessments.</p>	
<b>Summary of Impact and Issues</b>	
<p>A principal aim of the Digital Strategy is to make contacting the council easier. Success will depend partly on the ability of customers to use the digital tools that the council may offer, such as online forms, voice recognition software or geolocation/GPS.</p> <p>It is also expected that the council will increasingly promote digital access as the preferred means of engaging with services, due to the typically lower cost and faster response of digital options.</p> <p>While the council would expect most people to find digital access to services quicker, easier and cheaper than other methods, it is possible that some will find digital services harder to use. The council will therefore need to mitigate this by continuing to provide alternative means of access such as a telephone</p>	

number, face-to-face meetings or large-type web pages.

This impact is most likely to be felt by older people, who may not have high levels of digital skills; those with disabilities that inhibit use of digital devices such as smartphones; and those on low incomes, who may not own or have access to digital devices. The impact will need to be continually assessed in the light of service and customer information arising from specific projects.

**Potential Positive Impacts**

Digital services are by their nature equally available to everyone who has access to the internet. In addition to the substantial majority of customers who own internet-enabled devices, the council provides free internet access at a number of locations including the city's libraries.

The cost of digital access to council services will vary depending on individual tariffs, but in most cases it is likely to be cheaper to use a digital option than to make a phone call to the council or visit a council office. For many customers it will carry no cost at all.

Digital access will mean that customers are able to engage with the council and its services at a time and place that suits them, rather than the council. This could, for example, avoid the need for someone with mobility difficulties to have to make a visit to a council office in person.

Digital access allows fast or 'real time' responses to customers' enquiries, meaning that customers have to spend less time on their dealings with the council and get the information they need much sooner than they would otherwise have done.

Digital systems allow enormously expanded access to council information, thereby increasing transparency and democratic accountability. Digital technology such as social media also allows safety- or emergency-related information such as flood alerts or weather warnings to be disseminated within minutes.

Online forms can currently involve completing or sending information to the council online through a website, including typing, reading and processing complex information. As the Digital Strategy is taken forward the need for this will reduce as the council offers services through voice-enabled applications, like Siri, Ask Google, Amazon Alexa or other 'bots'. This will offer increased accessibility and ease of use compared to current digital services.

Staff, Members and organisations that deal with the council are likely to benefit from digital systems that enable greater productivity and integrate with each other, not just internally but with partner systems.

**Responsible  
Service Manager**

Deborah Smart

<b>Date</b>	3 January 2018
<b>Approved by Senior Manager</b>	James Strachan
<b>Date</b>	3 January 2018

### Potential Impact

<b>Impact Assessment</b>	<b>Details of Impact</b>	<b>Possible Solutions &amp; Mitigating Actions</b>
<b>Age</b>	Some older people may lack digital skills or familiarity with new technology	Maintain availability of telephone numbers and other non-digital contact options; promote accessible options such as 'large type' web pages and voice recognition; promote digital skills initiatives
<b>Disability</b>	Some disabled people may have inhibited use of digital devices and reduced ability to read online information	Maintain availability of telephone numbers and other non-digital contact options; promote accessible options such as 'large type' web pages and voice recognition; promote digital skills initiatives
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	None	
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>	None	
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	None	
<b>Race</b>	None	
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	None	
<b>Sex</b>	None	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	None	
<b>Community Safety</b>	More timely/up-to-date of advice and information about keeping communities safe	
<b>Poverty</b>	Some people may not be able to afford digital devices	Maintain availability of telephone numbers and other non-digital contact options; maintain free

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
		internet access in council locations such as libraries; promote universal mobile and broadband coverage, and free wifi access in city-centre locations; promote digital skills initiatives
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	None	
<b>Other Significant Impacts</b>	None	

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