

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010 – Customer Impact Assessment February 2024

Building Facilities Team - Customer Impact Assessment

Name and brief description of policy being analysed

Briefly summarise the policy including any key information such as aims, context etc; note timescales and milestones for new policies; use plain language – NO JARGON; refer to other documents if required

Property, Buildings & Facilities Management

Fenland District Council Property, Property, Buildings and Facilities Management – includes the management, design, specification, and procurement of both capital and revenue funded works and services.

Works are generally identified in the Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan, and the highest priorities are funded through the Council's 3 year capital programme as specific projects, although some Health & Safety related works which may be identified throughout a financial year may still be funded from the capital programme e.g. addressing recommendations from a fire risk assessment. These works will be agreed in conjunction with the council's Health & Safety Advisor, the Health & Safety member's panel, and/or the Senior Management team, and shall be in accordance with health & safety policies available on the Council's intranet.

Property repair and maintenance comprises planned work e.g., Statutory (the law) compliances such as water hygiene testing and 3 yearly risk assessments, or reactive works, such as dealing with blocked drains, or replacement of building components which have reached the end of their life and the cost is below the deminimis of £10,000. These works are generally funded from revenue. This policy specifically references the use of Construction Line or local contractors for works. On some occasions it is necessary to appoint contractors outside of this approach due to the specialist nature of the work or specific expertise being needed. For example, conservation work.

Hard FM is managed by the Buildings & Facilities team. A 3rd party cleaning contract is in place at operational offices and business units and the Buildings & Facilities team oversee the performance of the contract.

Work is also undertaken by the Buildings & Facilities team on behalf of other organisations such as the tenants of the King Edward Centre at Chatteris or works at the Traveller sites which are owned by Cambridgeshire County Council. The team

also supports other teams within FDC such as housing. Health and Safety checks are carried out on hostels and where necessary arrangements are made by the team to appoint contractors to undertake necessary work.

When meetings take place the building & facilities team is responsible for making sure all rooms are in order and are set out in the right lay out, the layout is made to make sure that all can access and move around, it is fit for all lay-outs that allow everyone to be heard and seen, this can be from inhouse meetings, to stake holder meetings and to external or councilor meetings.

When it comes to polling stations Building & Facilities are responsible for moving furniture in the polling station and setting everything up, we also provide the ramps for wheelchair access weather this be get one specifically made or buy a made to fit ramp.

All work is undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation (Acts of Parliament), technical process and design standards including good practice from a range of organisations both nationally and locally. Works or services are commissioned in accordance with the Council's procurement policy and procedures to demonstrate Best Value as far as is reasonably practicable.

Information used for customer analysis

Note relevant consultation; who took part and key findings; refer to, or attach other documents if needed; include dates where possible

Please also refer to the section of this document below about research and data.

The Main Stakeholders

- Elected Member's (Councilors), FDC Senior Management team, partner, and other local government organisations are key stakeholders.
- Internal stakeholders are generally the staff who use the Council's buildings (Fenland Hall, The Base, Leisure Centres, Customer Service Centres, business units, and industrial units to provide a service to the citizens and visitors to Fenland. Support to FDC service teams such as housing also forms part of our work with stakeholders,
- External stakeholders include the general public, visitors to Fenland, and representatives of partner organisations occupying or using FDC facilities such as renting office accommodation (commercial and industrial units and offices) or using meeting spaces including the civic rooms at Fenland Hall and conferencing facilities at the business units.
- We have suppliers of Goods, Works, and Services who are contracted to undertake service, testing and inspection, small to large projects and building works e.g., repairs to closed cemetery walls, or to provide professional services e.g., advice, or to carry out structural surveys etc.;

- Periodically our work will require us to liaise with frontline services customers e.g., the travelling community, tenants of dwellings and industrial units, neighbours adjacent to FDC properties. This may involve getting work undertaken, agreeing alterations to our properties, obtaining party wall agreements, or overseeing matters associated with leases in conjunction with our estate's colleagues.

Customer Information

In normal circumstances (pre-Covid), FDC buildings are fully accessible to all members of the public and business users. We also have processes in place to help people who may need some assistance. An Access & facilities audit of all Council buildings and sites was undertaken in July 2019 and notes that most of the recommendations from the 2003 audit have been addressed. The report notes that at inception of the DDA, the audit report 2003 was necessarily very detailed. The Act has had time to embed, and a better understanding has enabled a more pragmatic approach, since it is impossible to legislate for every disability. Importantly, we will ensure that if our facilities are not suitable to accommodate a person with a particular disability, we will look at ways to make that possible, or suggest other options.

Consultation Information

Regular consultation is undertaken with service clients to determine their requirements for project or maintenance works. A works request form was developed in 2019 and use of this is encouraged to enable clients to report premises problems or works they want to procure. Changes to the organisational structure in 2020 changed some ways of working, and ultimately impacted on who communicates with who, and what services are provided by the new generic team known as MyFenland. This approach freed up time of professionally qualified members of staff with technical expertise and experience in their relevant field. This approach allows jobs to be taken forward by the appropriate member of staff more quickly and to maximize the use of technical staff.

Generally, if a capital project is to be progressed on behalf of a service client, the scope of works is agreed and the scheme is designed, specified, and procured in accordance with the brief. The works are competitively tendered in accordance with procurement procedures, and in consultation with the procurement team. The service client is part of the tender sign off, tender evaluation process, and appointment of consultants or a contractor.

If low to medium value maintenance works are undertaken, the client or their delegates may request works, or the Property, Buildings and Facilities team may respond to a call-out where a problem has arisen with building fabric, structure or services installations e.g. Blocked drains. Quotations for work are obtained and the service client as the budget holder acknowledges the work and cost by approving the purchase order. The nature of the work can be reactive and urgent, which means that

prior consultation is not always possible. It is also likely that a retrospective purchase order has to be raised for urgent works e.g. flooding.

'What's Breaking' is a council wide electronic message service (e-mail) and is used to inform internal stakeholders of works or projects including updates where work is being undertaken e.g. temporary closure of a toilet facility whilst work to taps is in progress. This is sometimes supplemented by "all staff" emails where appropriate e.g. the heating system is not working and what when it might be repaired.

In addition to consultation, for larger schemes the Buildings & Facilities Team in conjunction with service clients may issue press and information notices to inform the public and stakeholders that works will be taking place and where necessary setting out alternative arrangements or approaches whilst work is being delivered on site e.g. public WC's are temporarily out of order and what alternative provision is available.

The Property, Buildings and Facilities team may be part of a larger team working on economic regeneration work, which is consulted widely through cross section of representatives at Project Board meetings, through press releases, events, and project signage erected on the site of the proposed development which may include some history, photographs and a visual impression of the scheme design e.g. Wisbech High Street.

Surveys, Questionnaires and Evaluation

Pre-scheme consultation is undertaken as outlined above, on larger value schemes this is ongoing with the client as plans and designs are developed. As outlined above, many of our schemes are low value and do not benefit from wider formal consultation, as the proposed works are undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements e.g. compliance with health and safety legislation, and also compliance with design standards to comply with Equality Act 2010.

Informal post scheme consultation and evaluation is carried out at the end of a project, where we ask our clients and building users for feedback. On larger value projects e.g. a capital funded project, the project team may undertake a 'lessons learned' meeting at which parties to the project discuss what went well, less well, and how they might do things differently in the future. The outcomes are recorded for future reference and implementation. Feedback from end users can also be fed into this meeting.

Economic Growth and Assets Helpdesk

The Economic Growth and Assets Helpdesk has been subsumed into MyFenland, who now more widely support services across the council including the Property, Buildings and Facilities work. Internal and external customers can register queries or problems including providing general feedback. Once a query is registered it is then directed to the most appropriate member of staff to be actioned by MyFenland or by the Corporate Asset Group

From 2021 onwards The Accommodation Review Group has had oversight of all relevant accommodation matters. Where relevant work is cascaded downwards from the senior management team e.g. re-purposing of Fenland Hall west end for MyFenland, or arise as individual requests directly to the Property, Buildings & Facilities team, or through the Corporate Asset Group, or via the MyFenland Project Board e.g. relocation of postal and printing services.

Asset Management Condition Assessments of 8 properties were carried out in 2020 at the request of the Accommodation Review Group. They identified that significant investment is required to bring these properties into a good condition within a 5-year period, with some works needed urgently. Economic Growth proposed that an option appraisal be carried out to ascertain what property is needed to provide services in the future given that more people are now enabled to work from home, and customers can access services in a number of different ways without the need for a face-to-face meeting. This will influence investment decisions in existing or new property, and amongst a number of decisions on design and usage, it would consider how adaptable & flexible (multifunctional) office spaces need to be, and also how many people would need to be accommodated. This process has been moving forward since that time. Consultants Carta Jones were appointed to complete detailed work in 2022 and 2023, focusing on FDC space requirements now and in future. A business case with options was also developed setting out costs and work required to address the future space needs of the Council. Other teams in the Council such as ICT are supporting this with new electronic systems and reducing paper. In 2023 and 2024 Elected Members are being consulted on their views and are undertaking tours of council buildings. This work could identify some radical accommodation changes and any final decision will be made by Cabinet and Council. Any final decision on Council buildings and space, along with associated processes and procedures will fully take account of how customers access the council and to maximize opportunities for customer contact. Further updates about the accommodation review will be provided in future updates of this customer impact assessment.

3 C's Procedure – Compliments, Complaints, & Correspondence

The Council has a 3Cs procedure in place which invites customers to tell us about issues and problems as well as providing more general feedback. This is another way that customers can contact us and that we can monitor feedback coming into us.

Key Finding Consultation findings and feed back to key stakeholders, including the public are usually by email, phone or letter as appropriate. Verbal discussions may also be held with Ward Councilors and the Portfolio Holder. Meetings are sometimes held to enable key stakeholders to meet and discuss key issues. In some cases, additional consultation may be undertaken as appropriate due to specific issues with an individual scheme. Individual and specific comments are assessed and taken account of.

	Could particularly benefit	Neutral	May adversely impact	Explanations	Is action possible or required?	Details of actions or explanations if actions are not possible Please note details of any actions to be placed in your Service Plan
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>In designing and developing projects and schemes consideration is given to all equality issues at that time.</p> <p>In line with the Equality Act 2010 every effort is made to ensure that persons with accessibility issues are considered e.g. lifts, ramps, signage, hearing loops etc..</p>	Y / N	<p>See the explanation section in the middle of this table.</p> <p>Where reasonably practicable adjustments will be made to accommodate persons with access issues. These may not always require building adaptations.</p>
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Y / N	
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Y / N	
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Y / N	
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Y / N	
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Y / N	
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Y / N	
Pregnancy & maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Y / N	
Marriage & civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Y / N	
Human Rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Y / N	
Socio Economic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Y / N	
Multiple/ Cross Cutting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Y / N	

Outcome(s) of customer analysis

a) Will the policy/ procedure impact on the whole population of Fenland and/ or identified groups within the population;
negative neutral positive

No major change needed Adjust the policy Adverse impact but continue Stop and remove / reconsider policy

The likely impact of the projects and programmes delivered and implemented by the Property, Buildings and Facilities team is positive.

Specific projects undertaken are in response to pro-active asset management, or as a result of requests from Councilors and the local community as facilities that will benefit the public and local residents. Whilst this policy is not specifically targeted at any of the protected groups as defined in the Equality Act 2010 there is the potential for positive outcomes for all of them in terms of where they live and places they may want and need to visit within Fenland District.

Arrangements for future monitoring:

Note when analysis will be reviewed; include any equality indicators and performance against those indicators

Schemes are designed in accordance with a range of guidance which includes and is not limited to national and government standards, health and safety requirements, building regulations, and technical guidance from relevant authorities. The Property, Buildings and Facilities Officers are encouraged to keep their knowledge current through training courses and seminars, on-line learning, and publications, and where appropriate, in accordance with their professional institutions e.g. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Working together with other professionals also provides a learning platform.

As outlined above, project evaluations are completed after all projects either formally or informally and will depend on the nature and complexity of the project. Feedback can then be given either in writing or verbally by phone. Feedback is taken account of and used to inform and improve future projects. We will continue to use our current processes and procedures for monitoring projects taking into account proportionality in relation to the size and value of the project.

Contractors will have to show that they are either Construction Line registered, that they have their own equality and equal opportunities policy, or they can sign up to policy that we will provide. This approach will be the minimum required and where possible we would like contactors to meet a higher standard. We expect such policies to be equal to those of the Council or

more comprehensive. Contractors and suppliers will also need to demonstrate compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and FDC policies.

Details of any data/ Research used (both FDC & Partners):

In respect to new projects as part of the capital programme, where the Property, Buildings and Facilities team are commissioned to design, specify, procure and manage the works, any evidence-based research determining the need for the project will generally be instigated by the service client, as part of their business planning and budgeting process.

The service client, in the spirit of 'one team' will often engage with the Property, Buildings and Facilities team for their contribution. Some works require the Property, Buildings and Facilities team to lead on a project e.g. Capital project to Alter the former café at The Boathouse to accommodate the Customer Services Centre. In this instance, our 'client' was the Head of Legal & Governance, who delegates responsibility to the Head of Economic Growth & Assets. Project budgets, programmes, compliance with any health & safety or other legislation will form part of the planning from the start of the project through to completion. Feedback is escalated to the Head of Service in terms of project progress, budget, quality, and any issues that may have a negative impact on the completion or cost.

Construction Line – Where the Property, Buildings and Facilities Team requires the use of external consultants and contractors for large projects the procurement policy requires that Construction Line to find suitable suppliers. Construction Line is a pre-qualified contractors and consultant's database. This ensures that any organisation listed is suitable to undertake the work and that they have met certain standards and procedures, which would otherwise cost clients considerable time and money to undertake each time a new contractor is needed. Construction Line annually inspects contractors and consultant's policies including their procedures for compliance with Equality and other legislation. Where the works are low value, the procurement policy encourages the use of local suppliers where appropriate. Contractors are expected to be registered with Construction Line at Silver or Gold standard. We also prefer our suppliers to be Contractors Health and Safety Assessment (CHAS) registered.

The use of framework contracts are being used more frequently. These have been competitively procured at National level by Government procurement organisations, or similar e.g. Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) which is a public sector owned professional buying organisation. The council is able to utilize many of these contracts, and benefits from competitive rates, expertise, and quality service provision. Generally, the contracts are let for a 3 year period with options to extend for a further 1-2 years. Examples of the ESPO frameworks in use include energy supplies (gas and electricity); Display Energy Certification, Energy Performance Certificates, Statutory Testing and Inspection (e.g. fixed wire and portable

appliance testing) water hygiene, and fire fighting & equipment. Frameworks procured by other local authorities may also be used if they are 'open' for use by others e.g. Cambridgeshire County Council energy contractor framework. The use of frameworks reduces procurement costs, helps to ensure consistency of approach, and compliance with national and European procurement procedures and vetting procedures including Equality, diversity and inclusion

Legislative works undertaken as part of planned works, repairs and maintenance are procured using framework contracts. These are typically either through ESPO or other local authority works frameworks which are open for others to use. Other reactive maintenance works are procured through a combination of using frameworks or our local list of approved suppliers.

Contractor requirements - all contractors working with or for are required to confirm in writing that they have read the council 'management of contractor's code of practice.

Building inspections and site audits or similar, – inspections are undertaken for a variety of reasons e.g. Building inspectors will inspect foundations and drainage. Dates of inspections and the type of inspection for each site may be formally registered on a Corporate Buildings Inspections log and/or noted in project site records. The nature of the inspection determining how and where it is recorded.

Completed by:

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Date published: 15-4-24

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Date endorsed by Members if applicable: