

# Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Screening Form – FDC Business Centres – December 2024

A successful EQIA screening will look at 5 key areas:

**1. Identify the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option to be assessed.**

A clear definition of what is being screened and its aims.

**2. Gathering Evidence and Stakeholder Engagement**

Collect data to evidence the type of barriers people face to accessing services (research, consultations, complaints and/or consult with equality groups).

**3. Assessment and Differential Impacts**

Reaching an informed decision on whether or not there is a differential impact on equality groups, and at what level.

**4. Outcomes, Action and Public Reporting**

Develop an action plan to make changes where a negative impact has been assessed. Ensure that both the assessment outcomes and the actions taken to address negative impacts are publicly reported.

**5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

Stating how you will monitor and evaluate the **Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option** to ensure that you are continuing to achieve the expected outcomes for all groups.

## Section 1: Identify the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option

<b>Name of the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option to be screened</b>	Fenland District Council Business Centres. The Boathouse in Wisbech and South Fens Business Centre in Chatteris.
<b>Reason for change in Policy or Policy Development</b>	N/A
<b>List main outcome focus and supporting activities of the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option</b>	Please see the details above about the service area being screen.

<b>Name of officer completing assessment (signed and date)</b>	Bill Tillah
<b>Assessment verified by (signed and date)</b>	

**If applicable, please provide further details about the name and 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*

Fenland District Council has two business Centres. These centres offer opportunities office/unit space for small, medium and large businesses. Conference and meeting room facilities are also available to tenants, other businesses and organizations. Rents are offered at affordable prices to give everyone an opportunity use the facilities. To include start up and established businesses.

## Section 2: Gathering Evidence and Stakeholder Engagement

The best approach to find out if a policy, etc. is likely to impact positively or negatively on equality groups is to look at existing research, previous consultation recommendations, studies or consult with representatives of those groups. You should list below any data, consultations (previous relevant or future planned), or any relevant research or analysis that supports the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option being undertaken.

**Reminder** – protected characteristics include age, disability, race and/or ethnicity, religion or belief (including lack of belief), gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

<b>Name any research, data, consultation or studies referred to for this assessment</b>	<b>State if this reference refers to one or more of the protected characteristics</b>	<b>Do you intend to set up your own consultation? If so, please list the main issues that you wish to address if the consultation is planned; or if consultation</b>
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		has been completed, please note the outcome(s) of consultation.
Please refer to the details about stakeholder engagement and customer analysis below.		

**If applicable, please provide further information about stakeholder engagement or detail 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

Small, medium and large businesses, public sector bodies, charities and the wider voluntary sector, community groups, the general public, tenants, conference delegates and conference organizers, students and job seekers. Contractors including utility and service providers, catering contractors and other teams from within Fenland District Council. Exclusively at The Boathouse our specific stakeholders include FDC's Marine Services team, marine berth holders and the Border Agency. The Probation Service

Consultation Information

The Estates Team have established a better presence at both centers, improving business relationships. Estates and reception take informal feedback on conference and office services and a yearly tenant feedback email, to identify concerns and respond.

Key Findings

Our customer feedback from the use of the conference facilities is very good, with a high level of customer satisfaction in terms of service received from business centre staff at both centers.

In terms of usage over the two centres, – approximately twenty conferences and meetings per week. Users are encouraged to provide feedback and Estates work with reception to resolve any issues

### Section 3: Assessment and Differential Impacts

Use the table below to provide some narrative where you think the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option has either a positive impact (contributes to promoting equality or improving relations within an equality group) or a negative impact (could disadvantage them) and note the reason for the change in policy or the reason for policy development, based on the evidence you have collated.

Please note that:

- a Positive Impact could benefit an equality group and a negative impact could disadvantage an equality group
- for reasons of brevity race is not an exhaustive list – please edit the list if appropriate to reflect the complexity of other racial identities
- a definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 is available on the [gov.uk website](http://gov.uk)
- there are too many faith groups to provide a list, therefore, please input the faith group e.g., Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Hindus, etc. Consider the different faith groups individually when considering positive or negative impacts

Protected Characteristic	Specific Characteristics	Positive Impact	Neutral	Negative Impact	Socio Economic/Human Rights Impacts
Sex or Gender	Women		X		
	Men		X		
	Transgender		X		
Race	White		X		
	Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups		X		
	Asian		X		
	African		X		
	Caribbean or Black Other Ethnic Group		X		
Disability	Physical disability	X			
	Sensory Impairment (e.g. sight, hearing)	X			
	Mental health		X		
	Learning disability		X		

Protected Characteristic	Specific Characteristics	Positive Impact	Neutral	Negative Impact	Socio Economic/Human Rights Impacts
LGBT	Lesbians		X		
	Gay Men		X		
	Bisexual		X		
Age	Older people (60+)		X		
	Younger people (18-25)		X		
	Children (0-16)		X		
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Women		X		
	Men		X		
	Lesbians		X		
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women		X		
Religion and belief	See below		X		

Summary of Protected Characteristics most impacted	Physical and sensory disabilities - As landlord, Estates are responsible to provide adequate access to both premises. There are disabled parking bays at both centres. Sufficient surfaces and ramps for access. Lifts in both buildings and disabled toilets.
Summary of Socio-Economic impacts	The Boathouse is regularly used for Planning Consultation events (most recently the Energy from Waste Facility), providing an accessible venue. The site is also used as a local polling station for elections. Both centres have a mix of office tenants, several that provide social / advisory services to the local community and charity services
Summary of Human Rights impacts	
Summary explanation of the scoring against the protected characteristics	In designing and developing the Business Centres consideration was given to all the equality issues at that time. In line with 2004 legislation every effort was made to ensure the building is accessible for disabled people. Lifts were installed to the upper floors and the whole building has been designed so that a disabled person can access any part of the building. They would be able to attend any meeting or event in any part of the building. This is positive for disabled people.

Equally, as the centres were designed for everyone to be able to access, there are no specific issues for any of the other key groups either positive or negative.

Induction hearing loops are available for use in the meeting and conference rooms.

## Section 4: Outcomes, Actions and Public Reporting

Screening Outcome	Yes, No or not at this stage
Was a significant level of negative impact arising from the project, policy or strategy identified?	No
Does the project, policy or strategy require to be amended to have a positive impact?	No
Does a Full Impact Assessment need to be undertaken?	No

### **If applicable, please state the overall outcome of the assessment, impacts and customer Analysis**

The likely impact of the Fenland District Council Business Centres is positive. The Business Centre's were built to address demand that such premises were required. The Boathouse was developed as part of a regeneration programme which offered additional employment during its construction and now acts as a permanent employment site in a town centre location that was previously derelict land.

The policy of having Business Centres ensures that opportunities are available for existing and new businesses and therefore new employment opportunities within an area of deprivation and traditionally low educational attainment. All members of the community can access the business centre's including the disabled and community groups. Whilst this policy is not specifically targeted at any of the protected groups in the Equality Act there is the potential for positive outcomes for all of them in terms of access to employment opportunities, starting a business and training.

Community Groups also have access to meeting spaces, which did not exist before the centre was built.

South Fens Business Centre, remains a challenging location to achieve full office occupancy. Recent Budget concerns have limited plans to expand the marketing opportunities for the centre. Estates are focusing on establishing good business relationships with current tenants and improving the services provided. To retain current tenants and improve further the reputation of the centre, to hopefully attract further tenants by 'word of mouth'.

## Section 5: Monitoring outcomes, evaluation and review

The Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) screening is not an end in itself but the start of a continuous monitoring and review process. The relevant Service responsible for the delivery of the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option, is also responsible for monitoring and reviewing the EQIA Screening and any actions that may have been taken to mitigate impacts.

Arrangements for Monitoring	<b>Please see the text box below</b>
Timing of the current review	November/December 2024
Next scheduled review	November/December 2025

**If applicable, please provide details of the arrangements for future monitoring:**

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

Daily Monitoring

- Conference Feedback Forms are collected and assessed
- Conference enquires by phone, email or in person are collated and responses provided where appropriate
- Health and Safety – checks are visual inspections

Weekly

- Fire Alarm checks and fire exit safety checks – Fire alarm is tested and a recorded visual inspection is carried out on fire extinguishers and safety equipment.

Monthly

- Corporate Performance Monitoring includes occupancy rates for the centres, number of meetings held, income, number of new start-up business in centres, number of new office enquiries taken and number of customers rating conference service as satisfactory.

Ad-hoc

- Proactive engagement with all tenants is undertaken by the new established **Estates Team** which has resulted in an improved working relationship between all tenants and the Council



**If applicable, please provide details of any supporting data/ research linked to monitoring arrangements (both FDC & Partners):**

Fenland Economic Growth Refresh Strategy 2022-25 – This includes themes around workforce development, business retention and growth and inward investment. The Business Centres offer a range of opportunities for businesses to obtain premises and offer employment, a venue for conferences for training to improve skills and learning.

The Harbour Office is within the Boathouse Business Centre at Wisbech offering wider employment, discharging the Council's statutory functions and assisting industry related to Wisbech Port.

The Fenland Local Plan (adopted May 2014) This document explains how the district is expected to grow, in a sustainable way over the next 20 years and beyond. The growth will not only be in housing and population but also in economic activity, jobs and infrastructure.

## Legislation

### **Equality Act (2010) – the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties)**

The 2010 Act consolidated previous equalities legislation to protect people from discrimination on grounds of race, sex, being a transsexual person (transsexuality is where someone is changed, is changing or has proposed changing their sex – called 'gender reassignment' in law), sexual orientation (whether being lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual), disability (or because of something connected with their disability), religion or belief, having just had a baby or being pregnant, being married or in a civil partnership and age.