

# Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Screening Form – Economic Growth Team – November 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>	FDC Economic Growth Team – its policies, projects, programmes and activities.
<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</b>	The economy is one of the Council's three outward facing Corporate Priorities. Attract new businesses, jobs and opportunities whilst supporting our existing businesses.

## Reform or Budget Option

- Work with external stakeholders, local businesses and the Combined Authority to attract inward investment and establish new business opportunities.
- Provide responsive business support to encourage business growth, job diversity, skills development and increased grant.

The Council created and approved its Economic Development Strategy 2012-2031 (EDS), “Building a competitive vision for Fenland” that focuses on the most important outcomes and outputs required to ensure continued economic growth in Fenland.

In 2021 the First Strategic Refresh 2022-25 was approved to continue delivery of the EDS and set out how the Economic Growth Team, other Council departments and public and private partners (hereafter referred to in this document as the “Team”) could continue to work together to drive forward economic growth in the district. The second Strategic Refresh 2025-28 follows on from the first considering changing circumstances.

Each Refresh is reviewed annually to ensure that the actions undertaken by the Team remain responsive, appropriate, up to date, deliver real impact and demonstrate how Fenland is open for all businesses.

Each Refresh utilises the five strategic ‘Model for Growth’ themes developed in the EDS designed to positively impact economic growth:

- Enterprise
- Workforce development
- Enabling infrastructure
- Business retention & growth
- Inward investment

Within each theme the Refresh sets out the projects and initiatives designed to have the most impact on each theme and includes:

- Action being undertaken
- Outcome expected
- Measurable outputs

	<a href="#">Cabinet Committee Report Economic Growth Refresh 2025-28</a> <a href="#">Economic Growth Team Service Plan 2024 to 2025 v4</a>
<b>Name of officer completing assessment (signed and date)</b>	Simon Jackson and Ann Wardle
<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's economic growth activities center around enterprise, workforce development, business retention, growth and inward investment. The activities offer information and advice for small/medium and large business across the District. The Economic Growth Team (EGT) engages with key stakeholders including the Combined Authority, the Growth Hub and Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce. The Fenland for Business website (and all content) is managed by the Fenland District Council's Comms Team. The website provides transparent and accessible services and advice to the business community 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Team utilise X and LinkedIn to inform a large variety of business owners and managers on the business support available.

The Team also manages a Customer Relationship Management system comprised of data on local businesses to enable them to efficiently and effectively engage with local businesses

Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) from Central Government via CPCA total funding of £1.25m over three years has been secured by the Team and approved for Fenland for four projects ending 31st March 2025. Monitoring of progress against milestone and spend objectives and internal communication for all Fenland SPF projects (two projects in total) Fenland – Investment in Business: Investment in Business Grants & Business Start-up Grants. Quarterly updates provided to CPCA.

Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) from Central Government via CPCA. The Team have secured £436k of funding over two years ending 31st March 2025. Business grants scheme. Quarterly updates provided to CPCA.

## 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.

Name any research, data, consultation or studies referred to for this assessment	State if this reference refers to one or more of the protected characteristics	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 has been completed, please note the outcome(s) of consultation.
Please refer to the text box 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, intermediaries, public sector bodies, charities, education providers and partners.

Consultation Information

Consultations are regularly ongoing with all the different stakeholders regarding a variety of activities led by or involving the EGT. The Council monitors the feedback given through informal feedback and case studies.

### Key Findings

The majority of the feedback is positive, with businesses looking for a range of support with different initiatives. For example: Start-up/Grants, recruitment, skills, land and property etc.

The Strategic Refresh 2025-28 seeks to help continue the delivery the Council's Economic Development Strategy 2012-31 with the overall aim of achieving economic growth in Fenland. What does economic growth look like?

- More business start-ups
- More businesses relocating into the district
- More expansions of existing businesses
- More local well-paid jobs for local people
- Thriving town and village centres
- More home-based businesses

The delivery of economic growth is substantially in the hands of businesses and specifically the people who run or create them. People make the decisions about whether to expand, relocate, start and so on. Given this, the role of the Team is to:

- support owners/senior managers with their decision making through account management, signposting and so on
- ensure that there are opportunities for businesses to acquire suitable premises and/or serviced land on which to expand or locate
- ensure that the message that Fenland is “open for all businesses” and what that means practically for businesses is understood across Fenland and outside of Fenland by targeted businesses, targeted sectors and those making enquiries about relocating into Fenland

Demonstrating the success of the Refresh is therefore based upon how well the Team interacts with these decision makers that ultimately lead to the business expanding, relocating, or starting. The resultant outcomes being more businesses, more jobs, higher paid jobs, more apprenticeships, etc

Examples of feedback received from Fenland businesses:

#### **Vita Nova Solutions, Chatteris**

Vita-Nova Solutions has been enjoying support from Fenland for Business for several years and has benefited from advice, signposting and grant funding.

Director Paul Millard said: "It has been key to everything we have done. I can't overstate how valuable the Fenland for Business team has been to us.

"If they are not supplying us a grant they are supporting us in other ways. They have been vital in what we have been doing.

"If I don't know what to do, my contact at Fenland for Business points me in the right direction."

### **Suncrop Produce Ltd, Chatteris**

Richard Hall, of Chatteris firm Suncrop Produce Ltd, a salad supplier to major retailers that employs up to 170 people in peak seasons said: "I've recommended Fenland for Business to so many other businesses already.

"I had no idea this service was out there, within the public sector - and it's free! For me it has opened the door massively.

"We now have serious potential of getting grants from the Government. It has enabled us as a business to deal with adversity in the marketplace, turn a corner on energy costs and to get help where it was needed."

### **Agrimech, Manea**

Belinda Smith, finance director of Agrimech, a leading UK manufacturer of end of line weighing, bagging, placing and palletising systems, based in Manea, said: "The teams at Fenland for Business and Growth Works have been invaluable to our business, introducing us to a business support network within Fenland and nationally, including contacts and information that we would never have found without their help and support.

"Our ongoing relationship with the teams ensures that we are made aware of and can take advantage of new opportunities that become available to businesses that we would often never have otherwise heard about. It's a fantastic service for Fenland and I would encourage businesses to get in touch."

### **StocksAG, Wisbech**

Following a Fenland for Business information event, David Hampton, manufacturing and operations director at Wisbech firm StocksAG, said: "I found it to be very informative as we had no idea of the help and support that was out there to support our journey. A number of the topics discussed were exactly the things we are underway with here at StocksAG."

### **Rai and Rai Bathrooms, Whittlesey**

Rai and Rai Bathrooms was supported to secure a Rural England Prosperity Fund grant.

Firm director Raivis Tidemanis said: "The grant has made us feel 'seen' and supported by Fenland District Council and Whittlesey Town Council.

"It was an absolute pleasure having the grand opening with them and gave us an extra boost of confidence to want to do well and we really felt part of the community that day!"

Ruth Godden, of Rai and Rai Bathrooms, said: "If you want support, ask Fenland for Business. The team is so helpful and so knowledgeable. Getting that advice is great."

### **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

<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>Specific Characteristics</b>	<b>Positive Impact</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative Impact</b>	<b>Socio Economic/Human Rights Impacts</b>
Sex or Gender	Women		<b>X</b>		
	Men		<b>X</b>		

Protected Characteristic	Specific Characteristics	Positive Impact	Neutral	Negative Impact	Socio Economic/Human Rights Impacts
	Transgender		X		
Race	White		X		
	Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups		X		
	Asian		X		
	African		X		
	Caribbean or Black		X		
	Other Ethnic Group		X		
Disability	Physical disability		X		
	Sensory Impairment (e.g. sight, hearing)		X		
	Mental health		X		
	Learning disability		X		
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	
Summary of Socio-Economic impacts	<p>The Strategic Refresh 2025-28 seeks to help continue the delivery the Council's Economic Development Strategy 2012-31 with the overall aim of achieving economic growth in Fenland. What does economic growth look like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More business start-ups</li> <li>• More businesses relocating into the district</li> <li>• More expansions of existing businesses</li> <li>• More local well-paid jobs for local people</li> <li>• Thriving town and village centres</li> <li>• More home-based businesses</li> </ul>
Summary of Human Rights impacts	
Summary Explanation of the scoring against the protected characteristics	<p>All people are supported through the economic development team and no distinction is made in respect of those who form the protected characteristics. Everyone can engage and receive support.</p> <p>Contacting the team - The website is fully responsive and can be accessed on all personal devices (pc, laptop, tablet and mobile). People/businesses that cannot access the internet can contact us by telephone.</p> <p>Our impact is to offer support and advice in a wide range of mediums.</p>

## 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
<p>The likely impact of the Economic Growth Activities (including web-based &amp; social media activity) is positive as it allows businesses to access information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via the website, social media and email formats but also by phone and in person during normal office hours. Business can register for the Fenland for Business Newsletter and follow FfB on X and LinkedIn which provides information on local, regional and national business support, including specific support for equality and diversity.</p>

## 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	Please see the text box below for further details
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*

We regularly monitor website and social media content. We work with local businesses that have received support provided by the EGT and create case studies. Example case studies can be found here <https://www.fenlandforbusiness.co.uk/article/17667/What-Businesses-Say-About-Us>

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

The CPCA Local Economic Recovery Strategy – the EGT are a key stakeholder in the strategy and where appropriate to Fenland its delivery.

The CPCA Skills Strategy

Fenland Economic Development Strategy 2012 – 2031 – This includes themes around workforce development, business retention and growth and inward investment. The use of the Council's Business Centre's offers a range of opportunities for businesses to obtain premises and offer employment, a venue for conferences for training to improve skills and learning.

The Fenland Local Plan 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.

Website traffic and activity is monitored through the use of Google Analytics and accessibility and clarity of content is regularly reviewed.

## 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.