

Equality Impact Assessment: Statutory *Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places*

The Equality Act 2010 includes a general duty which requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

Authorities which fail to carry out equality impact assessments risk making poor and unfair decisions which may discriminate against particular groups and worsen inequality.

1. **Key recommendations:** 1. To consider the closure of St. Andrews Church, Alphington Road, as a polling station and the impact of the temporary measure put in place for the elections held in May 2019. Recommendation to combine the relevant polling district with the polling district which uses Westex Technology College as a polling station. 2. To consider the closure of Lopes Hall as a polling station and its merger with Exeter Cricket Club. This will improve disabled access – Lopes Hall is currently served by a temporary ramping arrangement. Exeter Cricket Club has permanent facilities for disabled access.
2. Committee name and date: Executive 8 Oct 2019
3. **Stakeholders:** All registered electors; candidates; political parties; charity organisations related in particular to disability and age.
4. **Main beneficiaries are:** As above

5. **Consultation:** Public consultation took place between 10 June and 19 July 2019, with a further consultation period up until 9 August 2019, regarding the comments made by the Acting Returning Officer.

6. **Factors to consider in the assessment:** For each of the groups below, an assessment has been made on whether the proposed recommendation will have a **positive, negative or neutral impact. This is must be noted in the table below** alongside brief details of why this conclusion has been reached and notes of any mitigation proposed. Where the impact is negative, a **high, medium or low assessment** is given. The assessment rates the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact –some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
Race and ethnicity (including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers; asylum seekers).	None identified		
Disability: as defined by the Equality Act – a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.	<p>1. Positive</p> <p>2. Negative</p>	Low	<p>1. The temporary arrangements made at the Seven Stars pub by the provision of a mobile unit, presented access issues for wheelchair users. Westex school is fully accessible.</p> <p>2. The arrangements for disabled access at Exeter Cricket Club are a permanent facility as opposed to temporary, at Lopes Hall. However access is reliant on a lift. If the lift should be out of action on polling day presiding officer will need to make alternative arrangements such as taking the paper work down to the voter.</p>
Sex/Gender	None identified		
Gender reassignment	None identified		
Religion and belief (includes no belief, some philosophical beliefs such as Buddhism and sects within religions).	None identified		
Sexual orientation (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual).	None identified		
Age (children and young people aged 0-24; adults aged 25-50; younger older people aged 51-75/80; older people 81+; frail older people; people living with age related conditions. The age categories are for illustration only)	None identified		

as overriding consideration should be given to needs).			
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Actions identified that will mitigate any negative impacts and/or promote inclusion

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Officer: Jeff Chalk
Date: 22 August 2019