

Equality Impact Assessment: conversation screening tool

[Use this form to prompt an EIA conversation and capture the output between officers, stakeholders and interested groups. This completed form or a full EIA report will be published as part of the decision-making process]

Policy/Service under development/review:	Smart Place Strategy
What changes are being made to the policy/service?	This is a new strategy (This is BCP Council's first Smart Place Strategy)
Service Unit:	Smart Place/Development
Persons present in the conversation and their role/experience in the service:	Adrian Hale – Smart Place Strategy & Programming Lead Ruth Spencer – Head of Smart Place Ian Woodgate – Smart Place Commercial Lead Sarah Powell Pisareva – Smart Place Analyst Jack Matthews – Smart Place Digital Degree Apprentice
Conversation dates:	27/07/21
Do you know your current or potential client base? Who are the key stakeholders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents • Local businesses e.g. digital companies, manufacturers, retailers, hospitality etc.; • Local voluntary/community groups e.g. YMCA; Shelter; Community Action Network; Business Improvement Districts; Poole Housing Partnership etc. • Smart Place R&D Consortium technology partners; • Smart Place Investors; • Local skills providers; • Bournemouth University; • Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group; • Local health providers • Dorset Police; • BCP Council internal departments including Community Services; Adult Social Care; Children's Services; Transport; Environment; Waste Management; Seafront Services; CCTV team; • Dorset LEP; • AFCB Bournemouth; • Government departments including Cabinet Office, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport; Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy; National Cyber Security Centre; Centre for Protection of National Infrastructure;
Do different groups have different needs or experiences in relation to the policy/service?	<p>Yes. An online public consultation on the Smart Place Strategy Objectives relating to People, Communities and Businesses took place between June and July 2021. This produced the following high-level findings in relation to protected characteristics:</p> <p>People</p>

- Affordable broadband is significantly more of an issue for older people;
- Using technology to promote healthier lifestyles is significantly more important for older people;
- Using information to help local businesses to provide a better service was significantly more important for older people;
- Creating innovative digital solutions that help tackle key social issues is significantly more important for people with disabilities;
- Providing digital skills training for local residents is a significantly higher priority for females and Christians.

Communities

- Reducing carbon emissions through digital monitoring and behaviour change is significantly less important for heterosexual respondents than for other sexual orientations;
- Enhancing community safety through digital technology was significantly more important for older people and a much higher priority for older people, females and Christians;
- Providing live information to help manage use of roads, car parks, etc. is a much higher priority for people with disabilities;
- Utilising digital capabilities to support major incident response is a much higher priority for Christians.

Businesses

- Creating major online marketplaces to promote buying local is significantly more important for older people and a much higher priority for older people, females and Christians;
- Promoting innovation utilising highly advanced digital networks is more important for older people;
- Providing data insights to help local businesses improve their systems is much more important for older people;
- Providing digital skills training for the local workforce is a much higher priority for older people, females and Christians.
- Utilising, promoting and supporting local companies within the Smart Place programme is a much higher priority for females.

A further public engagement postal survey relating to 'Use of Technology' was conducted for the Smart Place programme in October/November 2020. The key findings in terms of protected characteristics were as follows.

- Age is the biggest factor in determining whether people use the internet. Those aged 65 and over are less likely to use the internet (18% do not use the internet) than other age groups. All of those aged under 45 use the internet, with 2% of those aged 45-54 and 3% of those aged 55-64 not using it.
- Those with a disability that limits their activities a lot are less likely to use the internet (17% do not use the internet) than those with no limiting illness (3%).
- In terms of economic activity, 18% of those permanently sick or disabled and 15% of those retired from work do not use the internet.
- Black minority ethnic (BME) respondents are more likely to use the internet when out and about using mobile internet (82%) than White Other or White groups.
- Of those who do not use the internet skills/confidence is a barrier for 40% of those aged 45-54, 31% of those 55-64 and 44% of those aged 65 or over. No respondents under the age

	<p>of 35 said this was an issue. Skills/confidence is a bigger factor for those who are permanently sick/disabled (57%),</p>
<p>Will the policy or service change affect any of these service users?</p>	<p>Our analysis of how the strategy will affect people, including those with protected characteristics is in the following section.</p>
<p>[If the answer to any of the questions above is ‘don’t know’ then you need to gather more evidence and do a full EIA. The best way to do this is to use the Capturing Evidence form]</p>	
<p>What are the benefits or positive impacts of the policy/service change on current or potential service users?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>• <i>Different Ages</i> Older people have less experience of emerging technology and may need support in accessing online services safely and suitable devices. The wider Smart Place programme will deliver skills-based programmes to address any access issues caused by lack of confidence or knowledge.</p> <p>There is great potential to support independent living through Smart Technology which can assist users and carers in the home with telecare and other digital devices. In partnership with members of the Research and Development Consortium, which is part of the project, we are exploring assistive technology alongside Poole Housing Partnership and Adult Social Care.</p> <p>The COVID pandemic has highlighted the digital divide for children in low-income families with access to sufficient bandwidth, digital devices and skills impacting on their learning. The gigabit network will offer benefits to schools and organisations working with young people, for example by enabling schools to set up dedicated networks for learning.</p> <p>• <i>Those who are married or in a civil partnership</i> There is no specific impact.</p> <p>• <i>Those with physical and/or mental disabilities and those with caring responsibilities</i> Although visually, physically and hearing impaired people face more challenges in accessing online services, wider access to the networks will enhance the options for them. Partnered with skills sessions to support use of accessibility settings such as screen reader, and enlarged fonts, together with the reduction in requirements to leave the home for services will benefit many residents.</p> <p>There is great potential to support independent living through Smart Technology which can assist users and carers in the home with telecare and other digital devices.</p> <p>• <i>People from different ethnic groups and different religions or beliefs</i> Although some differences in internet use and behaviours were suggested in our surveys, the installation of the network will not disadvantage any ethnic or religious group. Better connectivity could offer community groups and organisations improved communications and access to online services. The MyBoscombe app offers a platform for community groups and organisations and for potential users to find information about them.</p> <p>• <i>Different sexes/genders and people with different sexual</i></p>

	<p><i>orientations, those who identify as trans</i></p> <p>Although some differences in internet use and behaviours were suggested in our surveys, the installation of the network will not disadvantage any sex or gender. Better connectivity could offer community groups and organisations improved communications and access to online services. The MyBoscombe app offers a platform for community groups and organisations and for potential users to find information about them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Those who are pregnant or on maternity leave</i> Some concerns have been raised in the press about radiation resulting from mobile phone masts. Our recent electromagnetic field site survey, conducted by an appropriate external assessor in April 2022, shows that levels are low and within the ICNIRP 1998 General Public limits which form the basis of the relevant Regulations. We continue to keep levels under review and data is publicly available via the Smart Place website. • <i>People on low incomes</i> There are numerous positive outcomes anticipated, which include increased access to digital skills, boosting the local economy and creation of local jobs in the digital sector, better access to information and services and access to more affordable digital connectivity through the free wi-fi in the centre of Boscombe. Some lower income households may struggle to access digital services due to a lack of appropriate devices (laptops, smart phones and computers). We will address the issue by investigating how the programme could support the collection and recycling of hardware, for example through the voluntary sector.
<p>What are the negative impacts of the policy/service change on current or potential service users?</p>	<p>None currently known.</p> <p>Potential minor impact on accessibility and noise whilst construction works are taking place.</p>
<p>Will the policy or service change affect employees?</p>	<p>Yes – it should help to secure existing jobs and lead to the creation of new job opportunities.</p>
<p>Will the policy or service change affect the wider community?</p>	<p>Yes – ultimately the Smart Place Programme should have a significant beneficial impact upon communities. Typically, information about local events, volunteering opportunities and local support can be made available.</p>
<p>What mitigating actions are planned or already in place for those negatively affected by the policy/service change?</p>	<p>At this programme level there are no significant negative impacts and therefore no mitigation actions are required at this stage. Mitigation measures will be considered where applicable for any specific future Smart Place project.</p>
<p>Summary of Equality Implications:</p>	<p>Equality implications are positive. The programme will benefit low-income households in the area with numerous positive outcomes anticipated, including increased access to skills, jobs and services, better access to information, targeting of services, access to more affordable digital connectivity through the free wi-fi in the centre of Boscombe and a more welcoming and safer local environment for all groups.</p> <p>There are many positive implications for people with protected characteristics, particularly those who experience a greater level of digital exclusion such as people with disabilities or who are in</p>

older age groups. The COVID pandemic has highlighted the digital divide for children in low-income families with access to sufficient bandwidth, digital devices and skills impacting on their learning. The programme seeks to address these inequalities and to enable people with other protected characteristics and organisations supporting them to benefit from better access to information and to online services.

For any questions on this, please contact the Policy and Performance Team by emailing performance@bcpcouncil.gov.uk