

Section 4

Equality Analysis Toolkit

BOPo63 - Countryside Service
For Decision Making Items

November 2015

What is the Purpose of the Equality Decision-Making Analysis?

The Analysis is designed to be used where a decision is being made at Cabinet Member or Overview and Scrutiny level or if a decision is being made primarily for budget reasons. The Analysis should be referred to on the decision making template (e.g. E6 form).

When fully followed this process will assist in ensuring that the decision-makers meet the requirement of section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need: to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other unlawful conduct under the Act; to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard means analysing, at each step of formulating, deciding upon and implementing policy, what the effect of that policy is or may be upon groups who share these protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation or pregnancy and maternity – and in some circumstances marriage and civil partnership status.

It is important to bear in mind that "due regard" means the level of scrutiny and evaluation that is reasonable and proportionate in the particular context. That means that different proposals, and different stages of policy development, may require more or less intense analysis. Discretion and common sense are required in the use of this tool.

It is also important to remember that what the law requires is that the duty is fulfilled in substance – not that a particular form is completed in a particular way. It is important to use common sense and to pay attention to the context in using and adapting these tools.

This process should be completed with reference to the most recent, updated version of the Equality Analysis Step by Step Guidance (to be distributed) or EHRC guidance at

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/private-and-public-sector-guidance/public-sector-providers/public-sector-equality-duty>

This toolkit is designed to ensure that the section 149 analysis is properly carried out, and that there is a clear record to this effect. The Analysis should be completed in a timely, thorough way and should inform the whole of the decision-making process. It must be considered by the person making the final decision and must be made available with other documents relating to the decision.

The documents should also be retained following any decision as they may be requested as part of enquiries from the Equality and Human Rights Commission or Freedom of Information requests.

Support and training on the Equality Duty and its implications is available from the County Equality and Cohesion Team by contacting

AskEquality@lancashire.gov.uk

Specific advice on completing the Equality Analysis is available from your Service contact in the Equality and Cohesion Team or from Jeanette Binns

Jeanette.binns@lancashire.gov.uk

Name/Nature of the Decision

The proposal seeks approval to:

- *Cease the Countryside Service from 1 April 2018 with a phased reduction commencing as soon as possible from 1 April 2016;
- *Agree budget arrangements funding for the transitional period leading up to service cessation by 1 April 2018.
- *Transfer the active travel network maintenance responsibility to highway services.

What in summary is the proposal being considered?

The Countryside Service will cease from 1 April 2018 with a phased reduction beginning as soon as practicable after 1 April 2016. The Team will remain in place until 31 March 2018 in order to explore and implement options to:

- * sell or dispose of its flagship sites;
- * downgrade retained sites; and
- * review options to continue some services wherever possible at no cost to Lancashire County Council through other possible means/organisations from 1 April 2018.

During the transition period the Team will develop an exit strategy which will, as far as possible, divest the County Council of its liabilities in relation to all sites by 31 March 2018.

- *Responsibility for maintaining the Active Travel Network is proposed to be transferred to highway services.

Is the decision likely to affect people across the county in a similar way or are specific areas likely to be affected – e.g. are a set number of branches/sites to be affected? If so you will need to consider whether there are equality related issues associated with the locations selected – e.g. greater percentage of BME residents in a particular area where a closure is proposed as opposed to an area where a facility is remaining open.

The Countryside Service have responsibilities for over 90 sites within Lancashire ranging from flagship sites such as Beacon Fell or Wycoller to stretches of former industrial land, disused railway tracks and routes which are significant for local connectivity in terms of travelling to work or school or for informal recreation such as walking, cycling, etc.

Could the decision have a particular impact on any group of individuals sharing protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, namely:

- Age
- Disability including Deaf people
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race/ethnicity/nationality
- Religion or belief
- Sex/gender
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage or Civil Partnership Status

In considering this question you should identify and record any particular impact on people in a sub-group of any of the above – e.g. people with a particular disability or from a particular religious or ethnic group.

It is particularly important to consider whether any decision is likely to impact adversely on any group of people sharing protected characteristics to a disproportionate extent. Any such disproportionate impact will need to be objectively justified.

At the time of presenting this item this information is not available – as part of the EA process we will identify this data and update the full EA as and when information becomes available. Where the data does not exist we will consider introducing monitoring systems to allow the analysis to be undertaken.

Information from customer satisfaction surveys carried out several years ago suggests that 32% of visitors to countryside sites were over 60, which appears to be a higher level than in the population of Lancashire.

The sites at Beacon Fell and Wycoller may also receive a greater proportion of visitors with mobility difficulties because of the availability of Tramper all terrain vehicles.

It is also anticipated that should the Service cease the physical condition of paths and car parks, etc will deteriorate which will make them less usable for people with mobility difficulties, pram users, visually impaired people and older people.

This proposal impacts on a small number of staff (7) and there are no anticipated significant negative implications in terms of their protected characteristic. The Countryside Service also have around 130 volunteers of whom about 50 are regular volunteers. The Service also has groups come to volunteer for day-long sessions such as from schools, universities, Rotary Clubs and employers who allow staff to volunteer.

Whilst there is no current comprehensive information in terms of protected characteristics, some information about the numbers of vehicles using two sites is available and using a Forestry Commission recognised multiplier of 2.7 people per car it can be estimated that since 2009 70,000 vehicles (89,000 people) visited Crook o' Lune and 79,000 vehicles (or 213,000 people) visited Beacon Fell.

If you have answered "Yes" to this question in relation to any of the above characteristics, – please go to Question 1.

Yes

If you have answered "No" in relation to all the protected characteristics, please briefly document your reasons below and attach this to the decision-making papers. (It goes without saying that if the lack of impact is obvious, it need only be very briefly noted.)

Question 1 – Background Evidence

What information do you have about the different groups of people who may be affected by this decision – e.g. employees or service users (you could use monitoring data, survey data, etc to compile this). As indicated above, the relevant protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability including Deaf people
- Gender reassignment/gender identity
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race/Ethnicity/Nationality
- Religion or belief
- Sex/gender
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage or Civil Partnership status (in respect of which the s. 149 requires only that due regard be paid to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment or victimisation or other conduct which is prohibited by the Act).

In considering this question you should again consider whether the decision under consideration could impact upon specific sub-groups e.g. people of a specific religion or people with a particular disability. You should also consider how the decision is likely to affect those who share two or more of the protected characteristics – for example, older women, disabled, elderly people, and so on.

At the time of presenting this item this information is not available – as part of the EA process we will identify this data and update the full EA as and when information becomes available. Where the data does not exist we will consider the introduction of monitoring systems to allow the analysis to be undertaken.

Previous customer satisfaction surveys carried out several years ago had indicated that 32% of visitors surveyed were aged over 60, which indicates that visitor numbers from this group are higher than in the population of Lancashire overall.

Due to the availability of the Tramper all-terrain vehicles at Beacon Fell and Wycoller, it is likely that people with mobility difficulties may visit these sites in greater numbers than might otherwise be the case.

It is also expected that should the Service cease the physical condition of paths and car park surfaces may deteriorate making them less usable for people with mobility difficulties, those with prams, visually impaired people and older people.

Question 2 – Engagement/Consultation

How have you tried to involve people/groups that are potentially affected by your decision? Please describe what engagement has taken place, with whom and when.

(Please ensure that you retain evidence of the consultation in case of any further enquiries. This includes the results of consultation or data gathering at any stage of the process)

The Service plans to discuss other options for service delivery with its volunteers, partners and local communities but no timescales have yet been set.

There has been some initial consultation and engagement with volunteers – and three sessions will take place to give volunteers a clear understanding of the proposals and obtain feedback.

The Service are also in the early stages of exploring options for wider consultation and seeking users feedback from the sites operated to help inform consideration of future options.

A small number of staff work in the Countryside Service (7) and these employees will be fully involved in the development of future options for the Service's sites. They will also be included in the County Council's commitment to follow correct consultation procedures with staff and recognised Trade Unions.

The results of the consultation will be analysed and taken into account when implementing the proposal. The findings of any consultation will be incorporated into this EA.

Question 3 – Analysing Impact

Could your proposal potentially disadvantage particular groups sharing any of the protected characteristics and if so which groups and in what way?

It is particularly important in considering this question to get to grips with the actual practical impact on those affected. The decision-makers need to know in clear and specific terms what the impact may be and how serious, or perhaps minor, it may be – will people need to walk a few metres further to catch a bus, or to attend school? Will they be cut off altogether from vital services? The answers to such questions must be fully and frankly documented, for better or for worse, so that they can be properly evaluated when the decision is made.

Could your proposal potentially impact on individuals sharing the protected characteristics in any of the following ways:

- Could it discriminate unlawfully against individuals sharing any of the protected characteristics, whether directly or indirectly; if so, it must be amended. Bear in mind that this may involve taking steps to meet the specific needs of disabled people arising from their disabilities
- Could it advance equality of opportunity for those who share a particular protected characteristic? If not could it be developed or modified in order to do so?
- Does it encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low? If not could it be developed or modified in order to do so?
- Will the proposal contribute to fostering good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, for example by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding? If not could it be developed or modified in order to do so? Please identify any findings and how they might be addressed.

An initial analysis has revealed that this proposal may detrimentally affect a wide range of people including older and disabled people, however we will need further information from questions 1 and 2 and the review proposed within the Countryside Service before a robust analysis can be completed. Once this information is available we will update this EA

Question 4 –Combined/Cumulative Effect

Could the effects of your decision combine with other factors or decisions taken at local or national level to exacerbate the impact on any groups?

For example - if the proposal is to impose charges for adult social care, its impact on disabled people might be increased by other decisions within the County Council (e.g. increases in the fares charged for Community Transport and reductions in respite care) and national proposals (e.g. the availability of some benefits) . Whilst LCC cannot control some of these decisions, they could increase the adverse effect of the proposal. The LCC has a legal duty to consider this aspect, and to evaluate the decision, including mitigation, accordingly.

If Yes – please identify these.

The majority of users to flagship countryside sites travel by car but users of more local sites may use public transport so proposals relating to public transport may have an impact on this Service.

Question 5 – Identifying Initial Results of Your Analysis

As a result of your analysis have you changed/amended your original proposal?

Please identify how –

For example:

Adjusted the original proposal – briefly outline the adjustments

Continuing with the Original Proposal – briefly explain why

Stopped the Proposal and Revised it - briefly explain

The proposal will be reviewed following further analysis and upon results of the consultation and service review.

Question 6 - Mitigation

Please set out any steps you will take to mitigate/reduce any potential adverse effects of your decision on those sharing any particular protected characteristic. It is important here to do a genuine and realistic evaluation of the effectiveness of the mitigation contemplated. Over-optimistic and over-generalised assessments are likely to fall short of the “due regard” requirement.

Also consider if any mitigation might adversely affect any other groups and how this might be managed.

Mitigating actions are in the process of being developed and will be informed by the findings of the consultation and review which is exploring options for the future use of sites and how they are currently used.
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Question 7 – Balancing the Proposal/Countervailing Factors

At this point you need to weigh up the reasons for the proposal – e.g. need for budget savings; damaging effects of not taking forward the proposal at this time – against the findings of your analysis. Please describe this assessment. It is important here to ensure that the assessment of any negative effects upon those sharing protected characteristics is full and frank. The full extent of actual adverse impacts must be acknowledged and taken into account, or the assessment will be inadequate. What is required is an honest evaluation, and not a marketing exercise. Conversely, while adverse effects should be frankly acknowledged, they need not be overstated or exaggerated. Where effects are not serious, this too should be made clear.

This proposal has emerged following the need for the County council to make

unprecedented budget savings. We acknowledge that many groups including older and disabled people may be negatively affected however we will strive to minimise any negative impacts by developing as many mitigating actions as possible and by taking into account the views from the consultation and service review.

Question 8 – Final Proposal

In summary, what is your final proposal and which groups may be affected and how?

The Countryside Service will cease from 1 April 2018 with a phased reduction commencing from as soon as practicable after 1 April 2016. The Team will remain in place until 31 March 2018 in order to explore and implement options to:

- * sell or dispose of its flagship sites;
- * downgrade retained sites; and
- * review options to continue some services wherever possible at no cost to Lancashire County Council through other possible means/organisations from 1 April 2018.

This proposal will be revisited in the light of consultation and the review of sites which the Countryside Service is to carry out.

Question 9 – Review and Monitoring Arrangements

Describe what arrangements you will put in place to review and monitor the effects of your proposal.

Appropriate monitoring procedures will be developed following the implementation of this proposal based on the relevant protected characteristics affected.

Equality Analysis Prepared By Jeanette Binns

Position/Role Equality & Cohesion Manager

Equality Analysis Endorsed by Line Manager and/or Service Head

Decision Signed Off By **Saeed Sidat**

Cabinet Member or Director

Please remember to ensure the Equality Decision Making Analysis is submitted with the decision-making report and a copy is retained with other papers relating to the decision.

Where specific actions are identified as part of the Analysis please ensure that an EAP001 form is completed and forwarded to your Service contact in the Equality and Cohesion Team.

Service contacts in the Equality & Cohesion Team are:

Karen Beaumont – Equality & Cohesion Manager

Karen.beaumont@lancashire.gov.uk

Contact for Adult Services ; Policy Information and Commissioning (Age Well); Health Equity, Welfare and Partnerships (PH); Patient Safety and Quality Improvement (PH).

Jeanette Binns – Equality & Cohesion Manager

Jeanette.binns@lancashire.gov.uk

Contact for Community Services; Development and Corporate Services; Customer Access; Policy Commissioning and Information (Live Well); Trading Standards and Scientific Services (PH), Lancashire Pension Fund

Saulo Cwerner – Equality & Cohesion Manager

Saulo.cwerner@lancashire.gov.uk

Contact for Children's Services; Policy, Information and Commissioning (Start Well); Wellbeing, Prevention and Early Help (PH); BTLS

Pam Smith – Equality & Cohesion Manager

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Contact for Governance, Finance and Public Services; Communications; Corporate Commissioning (Level 1); Emergency Planning and Resilience (PH).

Thank you