**Birmingham City Council - Equality Impact Assessment Budgdet Savings Proposal 2020+**

**Title of proposed EIA**

Cessation of the handling of Planning calls by the Contact Centre (EQUA134)

Both Policy & Service Change

**EIA is in support of**

Strategic & support services

**Directorate**

Planning

**Service Area**

Nick Smith

**Responsible Officer**

**Purpose of proposal**

The corporate contact centre handles 26,000 calls per annum on behalf of Planning. These calls are predominately signposting as they are unable to provide planning advice. Planning applications must be submitted online and in English via the planning portal. There is a wealth of advice online (on the BCC website and the Planning Portal) that provides answers to all queries that can be raised in relation to planning applications and queries.

**What sources of information/data have been used to produce the screening of this policy/proposal?**

**PLEASE ASSESS THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF YOUR PROPOSAL ON THE FOLLOWING PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS**

**Age**

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| --- |
|  Service Users / StakeholdersIf a citizen does not have a computer or smartphone they can make a booking at a local library to use a computer there. The City Council does offer a, chargeable, Pre-application Advice Service so any citizen unable or unwilling to go online could use this channel. Some older people may experience challenges when interacting digitally. However, recent research shows that 71% of 55 to 75 year olds have a smartphone <https://www.deloitte.co.uk/mobileuk/#hi-ho-silver-swiper> and given that the BCC webpages are mobile friendly most of the likely enquiries by service users in these age groups would be able to get the answers they need without speaking with a contact centre advisor.We will monitor the services to mitigate any adverse impacts to older people. |
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**Disability**

Jadu technology built into the BCC website meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) AA standard.

The City Council does offer a, chargeable, Pre-application Advice Service so any citizen unable or unwilling to go online could use this channel.

**Sex**

We have no identified any potential adverse impacts. However, we will monitor the service to mitigate any negative impacts.

**Gender Reassignment**

We have no identified any potential adverse impacts. However, we will monitor the service to mitigate any negative impacts.

**Marriage and Civil Partnership**

N/A

**Pregnancy and Maternity**

N/A

**Race**

The contact centre utilises the BigWord language service to translate calls to the services they support on behalf of citizens who are unable to speak English. However, over the period Mar-16 to Jul-18 BigWord have translated a total of 5 Planning calls for the contact centre.

It should be borne in mind however that should a citizen wish to submit a planning application that this has to be done online through the Planning Portal and that the only language supported on that site is English.

Google Translate could be utilised by citizens (as at 29/08/18 it could deal with 102 languages - Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Basque, Belarusian, Bengali, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Catalan, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Corsican, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Esperanto, Estonian, Filipino, Finnish, French, Frisian, Galician, Georgian, German, Greek, Gujarati, Haitian Creole, Hausa, Hawaiian, Hebrew, Hindi, Hmong, Hungarian, Icelandic, Igbo, Indonesian, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Javanese, Kannada, Kazakh, Khmer, Korean, Kurdish (Kurmanji), Kyrgyz, Lao, Latvian, Lithuanian, Luxembourgish, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malay, Malayalam, Maltese, Maori, Marathi, Mongolian, Myanmar (Burmese), Nepali, Norwegian, Pashto, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Scots Gaelic, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Sindhi, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Somali, Spanish, Sundanese, Swahili, Swedish, Tajik, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Uzbek, Vietnamese, Welsh, Xhosa, Yiddish, Yoruba & Zulu)

**Religion or Beliefs**

We have no identified any potential adverse impacts. However, we will monitor the service to mitigate any negative impacts.

**Sexual Orientation**

 We don’t believe there are any sexual orientation-specific issues related to this proposal

**Please indicate any actions arising from completing this intial screening exercise**

**Please indicate whether a full impact assessment is recommended**

**If a full assessment is required please complete sections below:**

**What information/data has been collected to facilitate the assessment of this policy/proposal?**

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**Any consultation analysis**

**Is there any adverse impact/s on any people with protected characteristics?**

**If yes, please explain your reasons for going ahead with your proposal?**

**Could the policy/proposal be modified to reduce or eliminate any adverse impact on any particular protected equality group(s)?**

**How will the effect(s) of this policy/proposal on equality be monitored?**

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**What data is required in the future to ensure effective monitoring of this policy/proposal?**

**Consulted people or groups**

 The proposal has been shared with the Planning Service teams.

**Informed people or groups**

 The proposal has been shared with the Planning Service team.

**Summary and evidence of findings from EIA**

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| --- | --- |
| We believe that this change would touch, potentially, on 3 of the protected characteristics – age, race and disability – but that the mitigations in place are sufficient to offset the impacts. Given that Contact Centre advisors are not permitted to give planning advice (they can only act as a signposting service), that planning applications must be submitted online and in English via the Planning Portal, that there is a wealth of advice online (on the BCC website and the Planning Portal) and that the Planning Service itself does offer advice (albeit for a fee) the cessation of call handling for this service by the Contact Centre will not unduly impact the citizenry of Birmingham. |  |
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**DATE: 11/10/2019**

