



North West Leicestershire District Council

The Council's Constitution –
Information on Council Meetings
Equality Impact Assessment

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Name of the policy or service being assessed:

The Councils' Constitution:- Information on Council meetings (including agenda, minutes & reports)

Service Area: *Legal and Democratic Services*

Date Impact Assessment completed:

Is this a policy or service? Policy Service Procedure

Is this a new or existing policy or function? New Existing

Names and roles of the people carrying out the Impact Assessment:

1. Melanie Phillips, Democratic Services Manager
2. Rachel Levy, Democratic Services Officer
3. Michelle Terry, Democratic Services Officer
4. Clare Hammond, Democratic Services Assistant

Head of Service: Elizabeth Warhurst

Signature



Date: March 2009

PART 1

AIMS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

Identifying the aims of the policy

Information on Council meetings (agenda, minutes & reports) are set out in the Council's Constitution. This document sets out the corporate governance framework for the authority, identifying how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.

Rationale behind the policy and its delivery

Some of the processes set out in the Constitution are required by law, while others are a matter for the Council to choose. The Constitution contains 16 articles in Part 2 which set out the basic rules governing the Council's business. More detailed procedures and codes of practice are provided in separate rules and protocols at the end of the document.

Who is affected by the policy? Who is intended to benefit from it and how?

The Constitution is aimed at Members and Officers of the Authority, both elected and co-opted [including Parish Councils] as a working document and for members of the public to gain an understanding of the Council's decision making procedures.

Policy Priorities: -

All the Council's wider aims are reflected throughout the document, specifically with regard to the portfolios of the Cabinet Members and the Terms of Reference for the Committees.

How the policy is implemented?-

The Constitution is monitored and reviewed by the Monitoring Officer who also takes responsibility for ensuring that the policies and procedures contained therein are adhered to. This role is similarly undertaken by staff in Legal and Democratic Services when attending meetings or in the absence of the Monitoring Officer. Each Head of Service is requested to review their own areas within the Constitution, e.g financial procedure rules, contract procedure rules and the scheme of officer delegation. Regular reports are taken to Council with a view to agreeing amendments, as necessary, and all reports must include any reference to issues relating to equalities.

Users and beneficiaries are:

The main attendees at meetings are those with a specific interest in the item under consideration e.g the planning applicant, an objector etc. Their attendance is not influenced by any equality issues, just simply that they are interested in the item under consideration.

Action needed: (Include short-term measures to be taken to provide a baseline where no or little information is available)

We are in constant contact with Members who give regular feedback on issues raised at meetings. We always have an officer present and any issues raised at the meetings are fed back and dealt with as appropriate.

PART 2

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

	From the evidence available Identify how the groups are reflected in the take up of the service	From the evidence does the policy have an actual or potential negative impact	If there is an adverse impact, can it be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity
Race	All racial groups are treated the same way.	There is the potential problem of language or interpretation being a barrier, though there is no evidence to suggest that this has caused any problems to date.	N/A
Gender	Although a long established tradition, the use of Chairman/Vice-Chairman could be seen as discriminatory suggesting that the posts are intended to be occupied by a man. The choice on how they wish to be addressed is left to the individual.	No as we generally refer to Chairmen as Chairs and ask the individual, male or female, how they prefer to be addressed.	N/A
Disability	Disabled people are affected no differently to anyone else. However, those with mental problems may have difficulty in understanding some of the more complex areas of the procedures. People with poor eyesight may benefit from having the written procedures in larger print.	No. Every effort is made to ensure that those who request assistance and guidance on any area of the Constitution are given it, whether disabled or not.	N/A
Age	All age groups are treated the same way	No	N/A
Religion/Belief	All religious groups are treated the same way	No	N/A
Sexual Orientation	All people of whatever sexual	No	N/A

	orientation are treated the same way.		
Other groups		None identified	

PART 3: PROCESS OF POLICY OR SERVICE DELIVERY AND MONITORING

Operation Times

Most public meetings take place at 6.30pm. This overcomes any potential barriers for those who work.

Methods of communication to the public (external) and internally

Externally:

Website, public notices on notice board, local press, as appropriate

Internally:

Intranet, e-mail and notice board.

How will the results of the EIA feed into the Service and Financial planning process?

The issues around increased participation at public meetings has been addressed by including it as a specific target in the TEN system and this will be monitored quarterly.

How and when will the policy be monitored?

All equality issues will be considered when proposed amendments are taken to Council for a decision.

PART 4

MEASURES TO REDUCE DISPROPORTIONATE OR ADVERSE IMPACT – POSITIVE IMPACT

RACE:

Place notice on the website that extracts of the Constitution and agendas, minutes and reports can be translated upon request.

GENDER:

Ensure that each civic year the appointed Chairs/Vice-Chairs be given the option on how they wish to be addressed.

DISABILITY:

Place notice on the website that the Constitution and agendas, minutes and reports can be made available in large print upon request. Ensure a common sense approach is taken by officers when requesting that Members stand/ raise their hands to vote at meetings.

AGE:

Not applicable

RELIGION/BELIEF:

Not applicable

SEXUAL ORIENTATION:

Not applicable

PART 5 – ACTION PLAN

Recommendation	Key activity	Responsible Officer	Milestones	Progress	Date of completion
Place notice on the website that the Constitution and agendas, minutes and reports can be made available in large print or translated upon request.	Decision making - Publication of documents	Michelle Terry/ Rachel Levy	October 2008		
To ensure that each civic year the appointed Chairs/Vice-Chairs are given the option on how they wish to be addressed.	Inference relating to gender	Michelle Terry/ Rachel Levy	At the beginning of each civic year		
Ensure staff are advised to take a common sense approach when requesting that Members stand/ raise their hands to vote at meetings.	People with disabilities/elderly attending meetings	Mel Phillips	October 2008		