



**Form to be used for the initial assessment (Equality Impact Assessment)**

<b>Service Area:</b> Financial Services and Communities & Citizens' Services 95	<b>Section:</b> Fit for the Future – Change Support Team	<b>Key person responsible for the assessment:</b> Helen Bishop (Director of Communities and Citizens' Services and Citizen Experience Delivery Lead)  Vicki Galvin (Senior Programme Manager for Citizen Experience)	<b>Date of Assessment:</b> May 2025	
<b>Is this assessment in the Corporate Equality Impact Assessment Timetable?</b>			Yes	No
<b>Name of the Policy to be assessed:</b>  Citizen Experience Strategy			<b>Is this a new or existing policy</b>	Existing

<p><b>1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy</b></p>	<p>This Citizen Experience Strategy outlines the approach we will be taking to provide a positive experience for all our citizens in accessing our services and engaging with us as a provider of them.</p> <p>This strategy will ensure that all the City Council Services are in tune with the approach and embraces other organisations and community groups so that together, we provide the right support for anyone living, working or visiting Oxford.</p> <p>The Citizen Experience (CEX) Strategy Vision is to:</p> <p>‘Put communities and citizens at the heart of how we work, ensuring they actively shape our services and that the right support is available for anyone living, working or visiting Oxford.’</p> <p>To bring this to life there are 4 key principles that accord with the Customer Service Excellence Standard. They are:</p> <p>Citizen focused: Positive Citizen Experience (CEX): Inclusive Access: Get it right first time:</p> <p>The CEX Strategy is strongly aligned with the Council’s Equalities, Inclusive Economy and People Strategies. It also supports the Thriving Communities Strategy, particularly as the Citizen Experience Strategy aims to strengthen support within communities and work collaboratively with partners, agencies and community groups giving ‘right first-time’ solutions and advice. This is not just about solving short term day to day issues but ensuring early intervention, improving citizen outcomes overall and reducing the call on council services, so it can focus on the most complex needs.</p>
<p><b>3. Who is intended to benefit from the policy and in what way</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All citizens of Oxford which includes residents and businesses</li> <li>• Our staff</li> <li>• Our Members</li> <li>• Partners</li> <li>• Visitors</li> </ul> <p>Strengthening support within communities and enhancing the role of prevention, this strategy will improve citizen outcomes overall and</p>

	<p>reduce the call on council services, which can then focus on the most complex needs.</p> <p>Technology, systems and processes will be integrated between the customer operations and operational services, to ensure the needs of our citizens are met in a seamless way, whilst staff can focus their efforts where they are most needed.</p>
<p><b>4. What outcomes are wanted from this policy?</b></p> <p>Outcomes have been defined under each of the four main principles of the strategy. The current known workstreams to deliver these outcomes and the potential EDI implications for each of these have been set out below.</p> <p><u>Citizen focused</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting our Citizens at the heart of everything we do</li> <li>• Using insight and feedback, developing a learning culture to continually improve our offer to citizens</li> </ul> <p>The following current/future high level workstreams will help deliver these outcomes:</p> <p>97</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining Customer Service Excellence accreditation.</li> <li>• Reviewing our corporate standards, key performance indicators and service offer to ensure they are fit for purpose.</li> <li>• Collecting and utilising Customer Satisfaction feedback more consistently across the organisation through use of an improved question bank.</li> <li>• Defining what excellent citizen experience looks like for each of our Service Areas to support service planning.</li> <li>• Implementing the Low-Income Families Tracker to proactively identify families with unmet support needs and connect them with the assistance they are entitled to.</li> </ul> <p>The EDI implications here are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Inclusive Service Delivery:</b> Ensure all initiatives are designed to meet the diverse needs of all communities, including those who are marginalized or disadvantaged.</li> <li>• <b>Accessible and Representative Feedback:</b> Collect customer satisfaction data in accessible formats and analyse it across different demographic groups to identify and address inequalities.</li> <li>• <b>Equity in Standards and KPIs:</b> Embed EDI considerations into corporate standards and performance indicators to ensure fairness and accountability.</li> <li>• <b>Diverse User Engagement:</b> Involve a broad range of citizens in defining excellent service to reflect varied experiences and expectations.</li> <li>• <b>Proactive and Sensitive Support:</b> Use tools like the Low-Income Families Tracker in a respectful, non-stigmatizing way to connect under-supported families with essential services.</li> </ul> <p><u>Positive Citizen experience</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making sure the experience is quicker, easier and better</li> </ul>	

- Working collaboratively with our communities, designing services to meet our citizen's needs through a variety of contact channels

The following current/future high level workstreams will help deliver these outcomes:

- Completing the website improvement project including developing new webforms and maximising automation opportunities.
- Delivering process review projects to improve service delivery e.g. HMO Licensing
- Driving wider utilisation of the Community Led Solutions database to signpost citizens to the right support
- Ensuring a more consistent approach to payments with online payment options more widely available

The EDI implications here are

- **Digital Accessibility:** Ensure all website improvements, webforms, and automated services meet accessibility standards and are usable by people with disabilities, low digital literacy, or limited internet access.
- **Inclusive Process Design:** Review service delivery processes (e.g. HMO Licensing) to remove barriers faced by underrepresented or vulnerable groups and ensure equitable access.
- **Equitable Signposting:** Use the Community Led Solutions database to connect all citizens—especially those from disadvantaged or hard-to-reach groups—to relevant, culturally appropriate support.
- **Fair Access to Payments:** Provide multiple, inclusive payment options to avoid excluding those who are digitally excluded or unbanked.
- **Engagement and Communication:** Involve diverse communities in testing new systems and communicate changes in multiple formats and languages to ensure understanding and uptake.

86

#### Inclusive Access

- Delivering modern, accessible services that meet the needs of our diverse communities & promote our equalities objectives
- Delivering face-to-face and other assisted support, helping the most vulnerable and complex cases and ensuring no one gets left behind

The following current/future high level workstreams will help deliver these outcomes:

- Supporting our communities to have access to digital technology and better digital skills through various community initiatives.
- Developing and delivering a Communications Plan to raise awareness of the translation options available for accessing our services
- Expanding and encouraging wider use of Community Ladders by the organisation to support our citizen outreach
- Using video walkthroughs on our Community Centre websites to show the facilities available and access options

The EDI implications here are

- **Reducing Digital Inequality:** Ensure digital inclusion initiatives prioritise those most affected by the digital divide, such as older adults, low-income households, and people with disabilities.
- **Language Accessibility:** Promote and expand translation services to support non-English speakers and those with limited literacy, ensuring equitable access to information and services.

- **Inclusive Community Outreach:** Use Community Ladders strategically to reach underserved populations, considering cultural sensitivities and barriers to access.
- **Accessible Communication:** Ensure video walkthroughs are inclusive, featuring captions, voiceovers, and clear navigation for users with sensory or cognitive impairments.
- **Targeted Engagement:** Collaborate with diverse community groups to raise awareness of available resources and tailor approaches to local needs and preferences.

#### Get it right first time

- Resolving our citizen's needs holistically at the first point of contact where possible
- Ensuring our systems and processes reduce unnecessary contact for our citizens

The following current/future high level workstreams will help deliver these outcomes:

- Embedding a continuous improvement culture with staff through self-assessment tools and training in areas such as SharePoint and Artificial Intelligence
- Expanding the availability of online booking functionalities to make the process quicker and easier
- Completing call intent analysis to understand how Artificial Intelligence may be able to support service improvements for our Contact Centre
- Implementing the Channel Management Plan to rationalise and improve use of our contact channels
- Utilising data and insight from the new 3Cs system to improve services and inform decision making.

The EDI implications here are

- **Inclusive Staff Development:** Ensure all staff have equitable access to training and tools, with support for varying digital skills and learning needs.
- **Accessible Digital Services:** Design online booking systems and AI-supported tools to be user-friendly and accessible for people with disabilities or low digital confidence.
- **Bias-Free AI and Data Use:** Monitor AI and data-driven insights for potential biases, ensuring fair treatment and representation of all demographic groups.
- **Equity in Channel Access:** Implement the Channel Management Plan to retain inclusive, non-digital contact options for those who prefer or rely on them.
- **Responsive Service Improvement:** Use 3Cs data to identify and address service gaps affecting underrepresented or disadvantaged groups.

Where appropriate these individual high level workstreams will develop their own Equality Impact Assessments so the specific impacts can be thought through, assessed and mitigated as far as possible.

<b>5. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff engagement, buy-in and commitment to implementing the strategy and action plan</li> <li>• Perceived capacity for implementing and embedding the action plan</li> <li>• Level of cultural change achieved in some areas</li> <li>• Leaders consistently leading by example</li> <li>• Local Government Re-organisation</li> </ul>
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6. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Oxford citizens</li> <li>• Our staff – including ODS and OX Place</li> <li>• Our Members</li> <li>• Unions</li> </ul>	7. Who implements the policy and who is responsible for the policy?	Oxford City Council – all services
8. Are there concerns that the policy <i>could</i> have a differential impact on racial groups.	We will complete more detailed EIAs for the individual workstreams as appropriate	N	
What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	<p>Oxford City Council does not discriminate or restrict access to their services on the grounds of; Age, Disability, Gender, Reassignment, Marriage or Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race/ethnicity, Religion or Belief, Sex (gender) and Sexual Orientation (Equality Act 2010).</p> <p>The council are committed to equality and diversity and to ensure that services are reflective and responsive to local need.</p>		
9. Are there concerns that the policy <i>could</i> have a differential impact due to gender	We will complete more detailed EIAs for the individual workstreams as appropriate	N	

<b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b>	<p>Oxford City Council does not discriminate or restrict access to their services on the grounds of; Age, Disability, Gender, Reassignment, Marriage or Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race/ethnicity, Religion or Belief, Sex (gender) and Sexual Orientation (Equality Act 2010).</p> <p>The council are committed to equality and diversity and to ensure that services are reflective and responsive to local need.</p>		
<b>10. Are there concerns that the policy <u>could</u> have a differential impact due to disability</b>	We will complete more detailed EIAs for the individual workstreams as appropriate	N	
<b><del>What</del> existing <del>evidence</del> (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b>	<p>Oxford City Council does not discriminate or restrict access to their services on the grounds of; Age, Disability, Gender, Reassignment, Marriage or Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race/ethnicity, Religion or Belief, Sex (gender) and Sexual Orientation (Equality Act 2010).</p> <p>The council are committed to equality and diversity and to ensure that services are reflective and responsive to local need.</p>		
<b>11. Are there concerns that the policy <u>could</u> have a differential impact on people due to sexual orientation</b>	We will complete more detailed EIAs for the individual workstreams as appropriate	N	

<b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b>	<p>Oxford City Council does not discriminate or restrict access to their services on the grounds of; Age, Disability, Gender, Reassignment, Marriage or Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race/ethnicity, Religion or Belief, Sex (gender) and Sexual Orientation (Equality Act 2010).</p> <p>The council are committed to equality and diversity and to ensure that services are reflective and responsive to local need.</p>		
<b>12. Are there concerns that the policy <u>could</u> have a differential impact on people due to their age</b>	We will complete more detailed EIAs for the individual workstreams as appropriate	N	
<b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b>	<p>Oxford City Council does not discriminate or restrict access to their services on the grounds of; Age, Disability, Gender, Reassignment, Marriage or Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race/ethnicity, Religion or Belief, Sex (gender) and Sexual Orientation (Equality Act 2010).</p> <p>The council are committed to equality and diversity and to ensure that services are reflective and responsive to local need.</p>		
<b>13. Are there concerns that the policy <u>could</u> have a differential impact on people due to their religious belief</b>	We will complete more detailed EIAs for the individual workstreams as appropriate	N	



<b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b>	<p>Oxford City Council does not discriminate or restrict access to their services on the grounds of; Age, Disability, Gender, Reassignment, Marriage or Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race/ethnicity, Religion or Belief, Sex (gender) and Sexual Orientation (Equality Act 2010).</p> <p>The council are committed to equality and diversity and to ensure that services are reflective and responsive to local need.</p>					
<b>14. Could the differential impact identified in 8-13 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact in this policy</b>	Y	N	This will be determined as we implement the action plan. We will complete more detailed EIAs for the individual workstreams as appropriate.			
<b>15. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or any other reason</b>	Y	N	TBC – see above.			
<b>16. Should the policy proceed to a partial impact assessment</b>	Y	N	<b>If Yes, is there enough evidence to proceed to a full EIA</b>		Y	N
			<b>Date on which Partial or Full impact assessment to be completed by</b>			
<b>17. Are there implications for the Service Plans?</b>	YES	NO	<b>18. Date the Service Plan will be updated</b>	All Service Areas are expected to include references to this strategy in their emerging Service Plans each year.	<b>19. Date copy sent to Equalities Officer in Policy, Performance and Communication</b>	

<b>20. Date reported to Equalities Board:</b>			<b>Date to Scrutiny and EB</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> July 2025	<b>21. Date published</b>	
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Signed (completing officer): \_ \_      Signed (Lead Officer) \_ \_