

Equality Impact Assessment

Please consult with the Equality Team for any assistance with completing this assessment- equalityteam@cardiff.gov.uk

Policy Title:
New: Multi-Locations Meeting Policy

Who is responsible for developing and implementing the Policy?	
Name: Gary Jones	Job Title: Head of Democratic Services
Service Team: Committee & Member Services	Service Area: Democratic Services
Assessment Date:	

1. What are the objectives of the Policy?

With the implementation of “The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 the Welsh Government has provided Councils the power and freedom to convene multi-location meetings which will allow councillors to participate remotely and the public to participate/observe remotely, enabling greater accessibility and public participation in local government decision making. This EIA is in reflection to our proposed Multi-Locations Meeting Policy.

2. Please provide background information on the Policy and any research done [e.g. service users data against demographic statistics, similar EIAs done etc.]

The Council’s Constitution reflects the existing legislation and provides the basis for the observation and participation of individuals at formal meetings of the Council and its committees. This policy will support the intentions of the Welsh Government to enable greater participation and transparency of Local Government decision making. Consultation with Elected Members, Officers, Joint Committee Members, Independent Members and a public consultation to seek the views of the residents of Cardiff including Young people, Equality Groups, Community Councils has been carried out and has informed our approach.

3 Assess Impact on the Protected Characteristics

3.1 Age

Will this Policy have a **differential impact [positive]** on younger/older people?

	Yes	No	N/A
Up to 18 years	X		
18 - 65 years	X		
Over 65 years	X		

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Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

The provision for observers and participants at meetings will not differentiate between the age ranges. Although there is a likelihood that some individuals may prefer to participate or observe the physical rather the remote part of meeting or vice versa. An equal level of opportunity will be provided in support of participants and observers in any element of the multi-location meeting. This policy is considered as a positive step to enable wider access to council meetings. The Welsh Government has identified the following benefits of multi-location meetings:

- Enhancing and supporting local democracy by demonstrating this Council conducting its business;
- Making it easier for the public to observe multi-location meetings.
- Enabling external participants to actively engage at meetings to provide a greater range of views and to enhance decision making.
- Making the Council more resilient and sustainable. The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires relevant authorities to think about, and act on, long term needs in the way that policy is developed and made. Multi-location meetings reduce the carbon footprint of physical meetings (although digital activity is not of course carbon-neutral). They can also help relevant authorities to reduce the risk of future unexpected events – such as extreme weather – which could in future present a challenge to in-person meetings.
- Reducing the need for travel. Significant time and cost savings for councillors, officers and other participants have arisen particularly for joint bodies.
- It is easier for participants to take part if they have professional and caring commitments.
- Better support for members from diverse backgrounds, by multi-location meetings making it easier for care providers, or disabled people, or people with other protected characteristics, to engage on an equal footing;
- Better behaviours. Although experiences have been mixed, on the whole meeting management and the behaviours of participants have both improved, with less heckling taking place at meetings.

The Youth Council Executive identified that the policy did not specifically reference young people although some members of the Youth Council attend Scrutiny Committees as invitees. They also identified that policy was long and difficult to read and that young people would benefit from having their own version to refer to.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

The Youth Council could assist in the development of a Young Persons version of the policy.

3.2 Disability

Will this Policy have a **differential impact [positive]** on disabled people?

	Yes	No	N/A
Hearing Impairment	X		

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Physical Impairment	X		
Visual Impairment	X		
Learning Disability	X		
Long-Standing Illness or Health Condition	X		
Mental Health	X		
Substance Misuse		X	
Other:		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

General:

The online availability of meeting via webcasting supports all of these impairments and will also make it easier for disabled participants to take part if they have professional and caring commitments.

Hearing Impairment:

For those participants or observers at the physical part of the meeting, audio enhancement will be provided and access to the hearing loop technology will be available in the meeting rooms. BSL provision will also be provided for participants (when requested). Those participating or observing remotely will be able to utilise their own bespoke facilities to provide audio enhancement or on-screen subtitling.

Physical Impairment / Long-Standing Illness or Health Condition

For those participants or observers who may be challenged to attend a physical meeting, the ability to participate or observe meetings remotely provides an opportunity to engage with decision making meetings. Previously with only physical meetings being available attending a meeting may have posed a significant challenge to some individuals. Remote participation and observation reduce these challenges and enables wider consideration of the decision-making process.

Visual Impairment

Being able to participate or observe meetings from their home may enable those with visual impairments to access meetings using their own bespoke equipment. The personal equipment is likely to be tailored to the needs of the individual and provide them with suitable support to participate or observe a multi-location meeting.

Enhanced sound quality at physical meetings may also assist those with visual impairment.

The use of BSL Interpreters in physical meeting can be provided on request with and with appropriate notice.

Learning Disability

The ability for observers with learning disabilities to view meetings from their homes which allows and webcast to be viewed multiple times to assist with understanding

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Mental Health

Some people with mental health issues may be challenged with travel or locations with lots of people and may prefer to watch alone or in a familiar environment at home.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

The increased use of technological solutions and the continued development of processes and equipment will enable better support to be made available for those with disabilities. Further investigation of how BSL Interpreters can support remote observers and or participants should be undertaken.

3.3 Gender Reassignment

Will this Policy/ have a **differential impact [positive]** on transgender people?

	Yes	No	N/A
Transgender People (People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process [or part of a process] to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex)	X		

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Beneficial to all regardless of gender

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

No actions necessary

3.4. Marriage and Civil Partnership

Will this Policy have a **differential impact [positive]** on marriage and civil partnership?

	Yes	No	N/A
Marriage	X		
Civil Partnership	X		

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Beneficial to all regardless of Marriage or Civil Partnership status

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

No actions necessary

3.5 Pregnancy and Maternity

Will this Policy have a **differential impact [positive]** on pregnancy and maternity?

	Yes	No	N/A
Pregnancy	X		

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Maternity	X		
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Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

This policy will enable those individuals who may be pregnant or on maternity/paternity leave to engage, participate or observe Council and other meetings if they do not wish to travel or be in physical attendance. .

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

No actions necessary

3.6 Race

Will this Policy have a **differential impact [positive]** on the following groups?

	Yes	No	N/A
White	X		
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups	X		
Asian / Asian British	X		
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	X		
Other Ethnic Groups	X		

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Beneficial to all regardless of race.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

No actions necessary

3.7 Religion, Belief or Non-Belief

Will this Policy have a **differential impact [positive]** on people with different religions, beliefs or non-beliefs?

	Yes	No	N/A
Buddhist	X		
Christian	X		
Hindu	X		
Humanist	X		
Jewish	X		
Muslim	X		
Sikh	X		
Other	X		

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Beneficial to all regardless of Religion

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

No actions necessary

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3.8 Sex

Will this Policy have a **differential impact [positive]** on men and/or women?

	Yes	No	N/A
Men	X		
Women	X		

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

The use of technology for multilocation meetings which results in improved behaviours particularly those that are being webcast. This prevents poor behaviour adversely affecting any participants at meetings

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

No actions necessary

3.9 Sexual Orientation

Will this Policy have a **differential impact [positive]** on the following groups?

	Yes	No	N/A
Bisexual	X		
Gay Men	X		
Gay Women/Lesbians	X		
Heterosexual/Straight	X		

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Beneficial to all regardless of sexual orientation

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

No actions necessary

3.10 Socioeconomic Duty

Is the change anticipated to reduce or contribute to inequality of outcome as a result of socio-economic disadvantage? (e.g. will the change negatively impact on those on low-incomes or those living in deprived areas)

	Yes	No	N/A
Socioeconomic impact	X		

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

The provision of the physical meeting arrangements alongside remote for participants or observers who may enable those who digitally excluded to participate or observe the decision-making process. This will be achieved by enabling those wishing to observe or participate to attend the physical meetings venue without the need for

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their own access to the internet or ICT equipment. This support will be provided by suitably trained officers to individuals in the relevant meeting venues.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

Monitor the level of attendance of individuals who attend physical meetings by the use of a sign in sheet with the option to identify why they have decided to attend the physical part of a public meeting.

3.11 Welsh Language

Will this Policy have a **differential impact [positive]** on Welsh Language?

	Yes	No	N/A
Welsh Language	X		

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

The legislation requires that simultaneous translation facilities at meeting should be made available to those who wish to speak in Welsh. The policy identifies that when integrated with the new conferencing system the authority will have the ability to:

- have translators undertake their duties remotely is necessary
- have simultaneous translation to hearing loop type equipment
- provide webcasts in English (with Welsh translation) and Welsh on the relevant webcasting webpages.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

No actions necessary

4. Consultation and Engagement

What arrangements have been made to consult/engage with the various Equalities Groups?

Liaison with the equalities team to circulate consultation survey to the key equalities stakeholders, these included:

- Cardiff 3rd Sector Network
- Race Equality First
- Diverse Cymru
- Cardiff 50+ Forum
- Guide Dogs Cymru
- Disability Wales
- Alzheimer's Society
- Age Connects (Cardiff and the Vale)
- Royal National Institute for the Blind
- Wales Council for the Deaf
- Deaf Hub Wales

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- British Deaf Association
- Cardiff Councils 5 Employee Networks
 - Black Asian and Minority Ethnic,
 - Carers,
 - Disability,
 - LGBT+ and
 - Women's
- Cardiff East Interfaith Network

5. Summary of Actions [Listed in the Sections above]

Groups	Actions
Age	The Youth Council could assist in the development of a Young Persons version of the policy.
Disability	The increased use of technological solutions and the continued development of processes and equipment will enable better support to be made available for those with disabilities. Further investigation of how BSL Interpreters can support remote observers and or participants should be undertaken.
Gender Reassignment	No actions necessary
Marriage & Civil Partnership	No actions necessary
Pregnancy & Maternity	No actions necessary
Race	No actions necessary
Religion/Belief	No actions necessary
Sex	No actions necessary
Sexual Orientation	No actions necessary
Welsh Language	No actions necessary
Generic Over-Arching [applicable to all the above groups]	Monitoring the observation and participation levels at meetings during the first year following implementation of the policy will be used to provide some evidence which can be considered as part of a subsequent review of the policy to ensure its effectiveness.

6. Further Action

Any recommendations for action that you plan to take as a result of this Equality Impact Assessment (listed in Summary of Actions) should be included as part of your Service Area's Business Plan to be monitored on a regular basis.

7. Authorisation

The Template should be completed by the Lead Officer of the identified Policy/Strategy/Project/Function and approved by the appropriate Manager in each Service Area.

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Completed By : Gary Jones	Date: 4 Feb 22
Designation: Head of Democratic Services	
Approved By:	
Designation:	
Service Area:	

7.1 On completion of this Assessment, please ensure that the form is submitted to the Equality Team mailbox so that there is a record of all assessments undertaken in the Council- equalityteam@cardiff.gov.uk.

For further information or assistance, please contact the Equality Team- equalityteam@cardiff.gov.uk

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