

Initial Equality Impact Assessment

Department	Finance
Service	Customer Services
Decision	To move to a policy of 'online-only' for some services when the percentage of online transactions achieves 75%.
People involved	Kristina Watson, Leyton Allen –Scholey, Clare O'Connor

1. What is the decision?
To move to a policy of 'online-only' for some services when the percentage of online transactions for that specific service transaction achieves 75%.
2. What is the rationale behind the decision?
<p>1. A key aim of the Customer Service's Strategy –'Online First' is to encourage greater usage of the website as it is the most cost effective contact method. This proposal will support the drive to increase the number of transactions through our automated systems. The Council has a responsibility to provide cost effective services to the public and value for money to the taxpayer, to do this it aims to target resources where they are needed most, and provide face to face service where this is most needed. Moving to online-only will deliver savings through a reduction in transaction costs and the costs of maintaining an alternative service will become prohibitively high.</p> <p>2. The proposed policy will not result in the cessation of any of the services provided, but will instead limit the method of service request for residents with capacity(who are not vulnerable) and have the ability to self-serve.</p>

3. What information do you have on the policy and the potential impact of the decision in relation to the following?

	Data
Overall	The results of the 2015 Wandsworth Residents Survey have shown that just 8% of residents never use the internet; 86% use it daily, a figure that has risen a significant 6 percentage points since 2013. 98% of residents access the internet at home.
Race	Data on internet usage not available by this protected characteristic
Gender	Data on internet usage not available by this protected characteristic
Disability	Data on internet usage not available by this protected characteristic
Age	According to The ONS (albeit in 2013) 73% of over 16s in the UK use the internet daily and 15% that never use it. Whilst it is evident that many residents aged 65+ may not have access to the internet at home, the 2015 survey has shown that the proportion of older residents that do not use the internet is declining. 17% of those aged 55-64 never use the internet (26% in 2013), 36% of 65-74s (44% in 2013) and to 62% of those aged 75+ (71% in 2013).
Faith	Data on internet usage not available by this protected characteristic
Sexual Orientation	Data on internet usage not available by this protected characteristic

4. Thinking about each group below please list the impact that the policy will have.

	<u>Positive</u> impacts of decision	Possible <u>negative</u> impacts of decision
Age	The proposal will assist the drive to put as many services as possible online allowing convenient, quick and easy access to these facilities 24/7. This aids social inclusion for residents, as they can now make a request for a service 24/7 and on	The proposed policy will not result in the cessation of any of the services provided, but will instead limit the method of service request for residents with capacity, who are not vulnerable, and have the ability to self-serve. Nevertheless it is recognised that delivering more services online could possible disadvantage residents who do not have access to the web or feel less confident in using online

	<p>most occasions from the comfort of their own home.</p> <p>Wandsworth has a relatively young population structure who should benefit from the provision of services online and therefore accessible 24/7. The proposed online-only policy will assist residents to become more skilled and confident in transacting through the web in everyday life. This will encourage the user to build their digital skills and confidence, making it more likely that they will be able to do it on their own in future.</p> <p>The broader benefits of accessing the internet are well documented including alleviating social isolation and bringing together communities. For the elderly, being able to use the internet could be a way of staying connected with friends and family.</p>	<p>services. In order to mitigate this impact the following steps will be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Services Centre staff will retain the authority to use their discretion with vulnerable residents who visit the Council for a service. Similarly, Contact Centre staff will use their discretion to complete the online form on behalf of the caller, taking details over the phone and completing the form whilst on the call. Therefore a telephony service will continue for those residents that fall within a vulnerable group and support to 'self serve' will be given to those who may require some additional assistance • The number of 'self-service terminals' that are available in the Customer Services Centre has been expanded with proposals to increase this even further. These computers are supported by Customer Advisors who provide advice and support residents to access online services. This will encourage the user to build their digital skills and confidence, making it more likely that they will be able to do it on their own in future. • The move to service transactions being online only will be judged on a service-by-service basis, so might be deemed inappropriate for services such as Blue Badge or Freedom Passes where the focus is on vulnerable client groups. • It is proposed that the Council approach some of the specialist voluntary organisations in the borough, such as Share Community, to establish whether a group of service users could be engaged to look at, and test, the usability of the some of the online service applications.
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		<p>organisations such as Share Community, Thomas Pocklington Trust and Mencap offer local ICT based courses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For those using the website the Council is developing a 'web chat' facility that will be piloted in the Contact Centre shortly. Once implemented it will support residents to navigate key services of the website whilst online.
Race	As above	The proposed policy will not result in the cessation of any of the services provided, but will instead limit the method of service request for residents with capacity, who are not vulnerable, and have the ability to self-serve. Nevertheless it is recognised that delivering more services online could possible disadvantage residents where English isn't their first language. A set of mitigating actions to address this impact are outlined above.
Gender	As above.	None identified.
Disability	As above.	The proposed policy will not result in the cessation of any of the services provided, but will instead limit the method of service request for residents with capacity, who are not vulnerable, and have the ability to self-serve. Nevertheless it is recognised that delivering more services online could possible disadvantage residents who do not have access to the web or feel less confident in using online services. A set of mitigating actions to address this impact are outlined above.
Sexual orientation	As above.	None identified.

Faith	As above.	None identified.
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5. Is a full EIA required? No

- Does the policy support a frontline service? Yes
- Is it clear what impact the decision will have on all the equality groups? No
- Overall will the decision have a negative impact on any of the equality groups? Yes

6. Through the initial EIA have you identified any actions that needed to be implemented to improve access or monitoring of the policy? (please list)

- It is recognised that delivering more services online could disadvantage residents where English isn't their first language or who do not have access to the web or feel less confident in using online services. A set of mitigating actions has been developed to address these concerns

Date: 26.10.15

Approved by: Clare O'Connor