

Transformation, Income, and Saving Proposal No 96

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

Organisation prepared for

Somerset County Council

Version

1

Date Completed

6/1/23

Description of what is being impact assessed

The Council currently makes certain orders (modification and diversion) that make changes to the Definitive Map & Statement for public rights of way. Notice of these orders need to be advertised in a local newspaper in the area to which the order relates. New legislation will amend the relevant schedules to require the notice of such orders to be published on a website maintained by the authority.

Once there is no requirement to advertise in a local newspaper it is unlikely that the Council would continue to spend money to continue to advertise notice of orders in a local newspaper. This will have an impact on those that do not have access to the internet and would not receive notices of such orders under other statutory provision. It should be noted that we are required to have copies of orders on deposit at Council Offices available for inspection and this will not change, and notices are also posted on site at either end of the route(s) in question. These aspects are not changing.

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

We do not collect evidence to understand how much of existing contact arises from notice of orders being published in newspapers, but it is considered to be negligible. The majority of people that respond to orders that are made, tend to be landowners and stakeholders that we are obliged to notice direct anyway or stakeholders/ individuals that have already submitted formal requests to be notified direct of any such orders.

ONS data for 2020 for over 16's in Dorset & Somerset indicates that:

- 94.5% have used the internet in the last 3 months
- 1.8% used the internet over 3 months ago
- 3.5% have never used the internet

Whilst this data is not solely for Somerset it does indicate there is only a small percentage of the adult population that have never used the internet.

ONS data for 2020 indicates that 96% of UK households have internet access.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

The change in notice advertising is not something of choice, it will flow from new legislation. In that regard it is not common for the Council to consult on the change, as there would have been opportunity for any consultation/campaigning in the lead up to the legislation being passed. The nuance of this legislative change is that it doesn't prevent us from continuing to advertise in local newspapers but it would be a voluntary cost to the Council as opposed to a compulsory cost, a cost that it is not proposed that it continues to bear.

When the regulations that effect the legislative change are published, briefings will be given to Councillors and to the Somerset Local Access Forum and this will be an opportunity for them to raise any concerns with the approach the Council intends to take and their views can be taken into account.

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
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Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative – the older age groups are those that in general terms use the internet less often or have no internet access, thus they may be reliant on local newspaper notices to know about changes to their local rights of way network. • Positive – there is a general trend across all age groups of news consumption via non-print media, i.e.: television, internet and social media. Advertising online when we haven't previously will enable a reach to a wider audience. 	☒	☐	☒
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having considered Disability we do not foresee any disproportionate positive or negative impact 	☐	☒	☐
Gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having considered Gender Reassignment we do not foresee any disproportionate positive or negative impact 	☐	☒	☐
Marriage and civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having considered Marriage and Civil Partnership we do not foresee any disproportionate positive or negative impact 	☐	☒	☐
Pregnancy and maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having considered Pregnancy and Maternity we do not foresee any disproportionate positive or negative impact 	☐	☒	☐
Race and ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having considered Race and Ethnicity we do not foresee any disproportionate positive or negative impact 	☐	☒	☐

Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having considered Religion or Belief we do not foresee any disproportionate positive or negative impact 	□	⊗	□
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having considered Sex we do not foresee any disproportionate positive or negative impact 	□	⊗	□
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having considered Sexual Orientation we do not foresee any disproportionate positive or negative impact 	□	⊗	□
Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive: local newspapers are not delivered to all residences and a percentage of such residences will have internet access, therefore the switch to online advertising will be beneficial for some in areas where they do not receive delivery of their free local newspaper. Negative: rural or deprived areas may not have/be able to afford any/ high quality internet access, making it difficult to access the notices. Libraries and Council offices would be alternatives to be able to access the information. 	⊗	□	⊗

Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
A notice will be placed in relevant newspapers advising of the change in advertising of notices for certain orders and	TBC, but post	Pete Hoblely	These actions will be added	□

<p>advising of other methods of being kept up to date of orders that are made.</p>	<p>publication of regulations</p>		<p>to current Sharepoint location relevant to the legislative change and will form part of a wider action plan</p>	
<p>A briefing of Councillors, Local Access Forum and other stakeholders</p>	<p>TBC, but post publication of regulations</p>	<p>Pete Hobley</p>	<p>These actions will be added to current Sharepoint location relevant to the legislative change and will form part of a wider action plan</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Ensure that the Council's website is amended to enable publication of notices and that they are easy to navigate to</p>	<p>TBC, but post publication of regulations</p>	<p>Pete Hobley</p>	<p>These actions will be added to current Sharepoint location relevant to the legislative change and will</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

			form part of a wider action plan	
Consider other means of online communication for raising awareness of notices to minimise the impact of no hard copy print advertising of the notice	TBC, but post publication of regulations Select date	Pete Hobley	These actions will be added to current Sharepoint location relevant to the legislative change and will form part of a wider action plan	<input type="checkbox"/>

If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

It is not possible to eliminate all negative impacts. For those who do not access or do not have access to the internet the change will have a negative impact. However, we have no data to suggest that the change would result in a lesser response to the orders that we make. It is considered that the change would have the opposite effect and the reach of notices that orders have been made would be far wider than it is currently.

Completed by:	Pete Hobley
Date	6/1/23
Signed off by:	Pete Hobley
Date	6/1/23

Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:	17.01.2023
To be reviewed by: (officer name)	Pete Hobley
Review date:	Once notified that regulations have been published