

The **public sector Equality Duty** (Section 149 of the Equality Act) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people carrying out their activities.

The Equality Duty supports good decision making – it encourages public bodies to be more efficient and effective by understanding how different people will be affected by their activities, so that their policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people’s needs. The Council’s Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) includes an assessment of the community safety impact assessment to comply with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act and will enable the council to better understand the potential impact of the budget proposals and consider mitigating action.

<b>Name or Brief Description of Proposal</b>	Strategic Services Partnership (SSP) – Possible Extension of Contract with Capita on Revised Terms.
<b>Brief Service Profile (including number of customers)</b>	<p>The SSP commenced in October 2007. It covers the following service areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer Services: the front line contact with the council's customers through Gateway and the customer service centre, internal post and document management.</li> <li>• Human Resources &amp; Payroll: recruitment, payroll, employee relations, health and safety, occupational health, learning &amp; development, and strategy &amp; reward.</li> <li>• Property Services: professional consultancy, project management, valuations, managing investments, accommodation strategy, repair and maintenance, highways and bridges, regulatory services and property records.</li> <li>• Procurement Services: undertaking procurement projects to source appropriate suppliers able to meet the Council's needs on high value projects.</li> <li>• Local Taxation &amp; Benefits: administering the collection of council tax, national non-domestic rates and the calculation and payment of housing and council tax benefits.</li> <li>• IT Services: grouped into the four main areas of strategy and planning, service delivery, technical infrastructure and applications development and support.</li> <li>• Print Services: providing a one stop shop for all printing and printed related services, including a central photocopying service, finishing and any print related projects.</li> </ul> <p>The contract was awarded to Capita for a period of ten years (until September 2017), with the option of a five year extension (until</p>

	<p>September 2022). The proposal under consideration includes awarding the five year extension, changes to the services provided and more flexible contract terms (including an overall reduction in cost).</p> <p>Other than Customer Services and Local Taxes and Benefits, the services provided by the SSP are internal support services.</p> <p><u>Customer Services Statistics</u></p> <p>Over the twelve months from June 2012 to May 2013 Gateway received 114,000 visits from customers. The biggest proportion were regarding benefits (32%), Council Tax (11%) and Parking (10%).</p> <p>Over the same period the call centre received 770,000 calls of which 177,000 (23%) were taken by the switchboard and so are directly affected by the automation proposals. Other areas with large call volumes are: Actionline (14%) Children and Families (11%), Council Tax (10%), Benefits (9%), Adult Services (6%).</p> <p>The council achieved four stars from the Socitm Better Connected Survey which evaluates council web sites on usability. Web site statistics have been somewhat distorted by the impact of the EU Directive on cookies. However Google Analytics shows the number of visitors over the six months to June 2013 as nearly 600,000. On average each visitor made 2.2 visits.</p> <p>Survey results show that 30% of visitors to the web site visit it at least monthly. 59% of visits are just to find information, but 18% of visits are to undertake a transaction. Satisfaction results are:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Very satisfied</td> <td>30.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Quite satisfied</td> <td>22.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OK</td> <td>22.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Quite dissatisfied</td> <td>10.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Very dissatisfied</td> <td>13.7%</td> </tr> </table>	Very satisfied	30.2%	Quite satisfied	22.8%	OK	22.4%	Quite dissatisfied	10.9%	Very dissatisfied	13.7%
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<p><b>Summary of Impact and Issues</b></p>	<p>The main concern is that some people may be prevented or hindered in accessing services because of the changes proposed in Customer Services (i.e. online self-service and the automated switchboard).</p> <p>The people most likely to be affected are those that are “digitally excluded” through lack of access to the internet or through lack of skills and confidence. Digital exclusion is most likely in the elderly, disabled people and people in poverty. In Southampton the Housing Services tenant feedback questionnaire 2012 showed that 49% of respondents</p>										

never use the internet outside of work.

The trend towards reliance on the internet for administering the benefits system (both local and national Government) led the Southampton Citizen's Advice Bureau (along with the New Forest and Basingstoke Bureaux) to undertake a survey of their clients. 158 responses were received and the headline results are:

- 8% of all respondents said they had no access to the internet
- 35% said they were not confident about completing forms online
- 67% of those over 65 did not have access to the internet at home.
- 78% of those over 65 did not feel confident filling in forms online.

The problem is of course not unique to Southampton and the move to "digital by default" is taking place across national and local government. In particular Universal Credit must be claimed online and initiatives are underway to support people who may have difficulty with this approach.

In one of these the government is investing £50 million in an "assisted digital" project to address digital exclusion. It is aimed both at people without internet access at home and people lacking the skills and/or confidence to use computers. It is likely that a series of partnerships or consortia will form to run the project, involving organisations such as UK Online Centres; Citizens Advice; major high street retailers and digital access charities. A supplier workshop was recently held for potential suppliers.

Southampton City Council has a good record in providing public access to the internet in libraries and is currently providing 169,000 hours of IT access in libraries per year across 11 sites and 159 computers. Over 92% of people in the City live within 1 mile of a library and 100% live within 2 miles. Free public WiFi will also be operational by end July in five main district libraries and Thornhill library.

It is reported by the Libraries Service that the average job search application, form filling activity or subscription takes over 30 minutes of support for a user who is computer able but not skilled and using the system for the first time. For those who have not used a computer it can take 2-3 sessions. Libraries are well placed to provide such support and are contracted to provide support to 200 job seekers on computer skills this year. Additionally UKonline/Tinder Foundation have contracted them to introduce 200 people to computers and support 150 with greater IT skills within the learning centre.

The Libraries Service points out that it is imperative that libraries are

	<p>involved in early planning stages of initiatives to provide meaningful information on patterns of usage, the non-computer user's experience, support required based on existing initiatives (Universal Job Match, HomeBid, Schools Admissions) and how it can be delivered economically and what training is required. For any initiative to be successful, it needs to take into account the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library opening hours decreased by 11 % last year and are among the lowest for unitaries in the whole country</li> <li>• Library staffing has reduced by 36% in the last 5 years.</li> <li>• The additional time/cost to support further users.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Potential Positive Impacts</b></p>	<p>For the majority of residents, who already have internet access, this will mean quicker service and better interactions with the council. For those who could use digital public services, but lack skills and confidence, support will be provided thus boosting their knowledge and confidence when using such services again in future. This has the potential to help towards reducing digital exclusion, for example by giving access to other benefits from being online, such as job adverts.</p> <p>A recent study by O2's Local Government Practice found that 48% of citizens like to use the internet, mobile apps or social media for essentials like paying for council tax or getting information on local services, however just 7% have used these technologies to communicate with their local authority in the last year – either because they are unavailable or don't provide the information and services they need. The study also noted that smartphone penetration is expected to reach 90% in the next three years.</p>
<p><b>Responsible Service Manager</b></p>	<p>Rob Harwood Head of Contract Management</p>
<p><b>Date</b></p>	

<p><b>Approved by Senior Manager</b></p>	<p>Andy Lowe Head of Finance and IT</p>
<p><b>Signature</b></p>	
<p><b>Date</b></p>	

**Version control**

Version	Date	
0.1	5 June 2013	Initial draft provided by Carol Harwood
0.2	16 July 2013	Updated by Paul Medland with statistical information and further detail.
0.3	30 July 2013	Incorporate comments from Carol Harwood. Include information from O2's Digital Community Study.
0.4	6 August 2013	Incorporate comments from Raymond Clowes. Tidy up for publishing on consultation website. Updates following meeting with Spectrum Centre for Independent Living.
0.5	7 November 2013	Updated following consultation results.
1.0	11 November 2013	Final following internal review and sign off

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions																														
<p><b>Age</b></p>	<p>The proposed changes may make it harder for some older people, who are statistically less likely to go online, to access services.</p> <p>The ONS statistical bulletin shows a high correlation between age and internet use. Almost all people aged 16 to 44 are internet users, but this reduces to just over 30% for those aged 75 and over.</p> <p>The survey of council tenants shows that for this population this trend is even more pronounced. 49% of respondents to the survey were aged 66+ which perhaps indicates that the impact on council tenants may well be more pronounced than in the general population of Southampton.</p> <p>The CAB survey also supports this view. CAB clients are likely to be Gateway customers. Their survey found that 67% of those over 65 did not have access to the internet at home and 78% did not feel confident filling in forms online.</p> <p>A survey of visitors to the council's web site gave the following age profile:</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr><td>80 and over</td><td>1.2%</td></tr> <tr><td>65-79</td><td>19.3%</td></tr> <tr><td>60-64</td><td>13.5%</td></tr> <tr><td>50-59</td><td>25.9%</td></tr> <tr><td>40-49</td><td>17.1%</td></tr> <tr><td>30-39</td><td>10.6%</td></tr> <tr><td>18-29</td><td>10.1%</td></tr> <tr><td>17 and under</td><td>2.1%</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Total for 65+ is 20.5%</p> <p>For Gateway the profile is:</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr><td>75 and over</td><td>2.4%</td></tr> <tr><td>65-74</td><td>7.0%</td></tr> <tr><td>55-64</td><td>11.8%</td></tr> <tr><td>45-54</td><td>15.0%</td></tr> <tr><td>35-44</td><td>20.8%</td></tr> <tr><td>25-34</td><td>27.6%</td></tr> <tr><td>18-24</td><td>15.1%</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Total for 65+ is 9.4%</p> <p>For the call centre the profile is:</p>	80 and over	1.2%	65-79	19.3%	60-64	13.5%	50-59	25.9%	40-49	17.1%	30-39	10.6%	18-29	10.1%	17 and under	2.1%	75 and over	2.4%	65-74	7.0%	55-64	11.8%	45-54	15.0%	35-44	20.8%	25-34	27.6%	18-24	15.1%	<p>Where the problem is one of access to equipment, information about sites with free access to the internet is already being promoted to all residents (for example in the last City View). The Council's libraries offer 2 hours free use per day.</p> <p>Support will be given in Gateway to people who need assistance with the self-service terminals. It is likely that a high proportion of elderly visitors will require such help.</p> <p>The option of telephoning will be available. Also, face-to-face interviews will still be available by appointment on a same day basis to "vulnerable persons", i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to any customer who is unable (as opposed to unwilling) to use the online processes or other automated processes for self-service;</li> <li>- where any customer or other person related to their enquiry is facing an imminent threat to their safety (including domestic violence or homelessness); or</li> <li>- where delaying action may otherwise give rise to the customer or other person related to their enquiry facing an increased risk of loss of or damage to personal property or personal injury.</li> </ul> <p>The consultation process, including the distribution to public contact points of leaflets, has increased awareness of alternatives to online access and further public communication will be</p>
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<b>Disability</b>	<p>The proposed changes may make it harder for some people with visual, audio or learning impairments to access services.</p> <p>The ONS statistical bulletin shows that individuals with no disability are over three times more likely to have used the internet than individuals with a disability</p> <p>In Southampton a sample of visitors to the council's web site were asked: "If your use of the internet is impeded please indicate how". The responses indicate that 2.6% of visitors had a vision impairment; 4.0% had mobility difficulties; 1.1% had a cognitive or learning difficulty and 2.6% had a hearing impairment.</p> <p>Similar questions were asked of users of Gateway and the Call Centre. A similar breakdown by impairment is not available, but 15.7% of visitors to Gateway and 20.4% of callers to the call centre responded that they considered themselves to have an impairment.</p> <p>Self-service terminals must be at heights that are accessible for all users. The layout and interior design of Gateway must meet the needs of people who have impaired vision, mobility difficulties, a hearing impairment or who have cognitive or learning difficulties.</p> <p>The automated switchboard may be a barrier for people who do not understand (because of language or learning difficulties) or who cannot make themselves understood by the system.</p> <p>Some individuals will have difficulty</p>	<p>The information on the website and phone services will be accessible and the language used to access services will be simple and easy to understand. Where a customer is unable to use the internet or phone options, appointments can be made.</p> <p>The design of Gateway will include self-service terminals which are at wheelchair height. Capita will also engage with representatives of service users who have disabilities when the final Gateway design is being developed.</p> <p>Where a caller to the automated switchboard cannot understand, or fails to make himself/herself understood, the system will transfer the call to an operator.</p> <p>Floorwalkers will be available to assist customers. They will be trained to identify and approach customers who seem lost or uncertain. The quality of this training, and monitoring of its effectiveness, will be important in order to ensure that no-one slips through the net.</p> <p>The council uses the Readspeak speech system on its website so that visitors with visual problems can hear the content of the pages. At the bottom of every page there is a link titled "Listen" which will</p>																

	<p>understanding the environment and will not know what to do.</p> <p>The consultation results highlighted concerns about accessibility to services for people with disabilities and highlighted that an impairment that may not be severe can still prevent use of keyboards and phones (for example early arthritis or an inability to read and write). There was also concern about the difficulty in identifying “vulnerable” people and a feeling that many may not be identified and will not access the services they need.</p>	<p>open up Readspeakr. The web content can then be listened to in whole or part by using the different controls to activate the speech system.</p> <p>All web content produced by Southampton City Council will conform to W3C/WAI's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0, Conformance Level AA wherever possible. New, updated, and existing web content provided for the council's site by third-parties will conform to Conformance Level A.</p> <p>Web pages can be made easier to read by magnifying the page (zooming in). Everything on the Web page will be magnified (including text, images, and controls). Zooming will change the magnification of the web site, regardless of the web site's formatting.</p> <p>The consultation process, including the distribution to public contact points of leaflets, has increased awareness of alternatives to online access and further public communication will be undertaken as part of the roll-out of any change</p> <p>The option of telephoning will be available. Also, face-to-face interviews will still be available by appointment on a same day basis to “vulnerable persons”, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to any customer who is unable (as opposed to unwilling) to use the online processes or other automated processes for self-service;</li> <li>- where any customer or other person related to their enquiry is facing an imminent threat to</li> </ul>
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<b>Race</b>	<p>The proposed changes may make it harder for people, for whom English is not their first language, to access services.</p> <p>A sample of the visitors to the council's web site were asked to provide their ethnic origin. The results are:</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>White English</td><td>81.1%</td></tr> <tr><td>White Irish</td><td>1.3%</td></tr> <tr><td>White Northern Irish</td><td>0.7%</td></tr> <tr><td>White Scottish</td><td>2.4%</td></tr> <tr><td>White Welsh</td><td>1.3%</td></tr> <tr><td>White Any Other White Background</td><td>8.1%</td></tr> <tr><td><i>White Total</i></td><td><i>94.9%</i></td></tr> <tr><td>Mixed White and Black Caribbean</td><td>0.1%</td></tr> <tr><td>Mixed White and Black African</td><td>0.2%</td></tr> <tr><td>Mixed White and Asian</td><td>0.5%</td></tr> <tr><td>Mixed Any other mixed background</td><td>0.6%</td></tr> <tr><td><i>Mixed Total</i></td><td><i>1.3%</i></td></tr> <tr><td>Asian or Asian British Indian</td><td>0.8%</td></tr> <tr><td>Asian or Asian British Pakistani</td><td>0.2%</td></tr> <tr><td>Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi</td><td>0.1%</td></tr> <tr><td>Asian or Asian British Any other Asian background</td><td>0.6%</td></tr> <tr><td><i>Asian or Asian British Total</i></td><td><i>1.7%</i></td></tr> </table>	White English	81.1%	White Irish	1.3%	White Northern Irish	0.7%	White Scottish	2.4%	White Welsh	1.3%	White Any Other White Background	8.1%	<i>White Total</i>	<i>94.9%</i>	Mixed White and Black Caribbean	0.1%	Mixed White and Black African	0.2%	Mixed White and Asian	0.5%	Mixed Any other mixed background	0.6%	<i>Mixed Total</i>	<i>1.3%</i>	Asian or Asian British Indian	0.8%	Asian or Asian British Pakistani	0.2%	Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	0.1%	Asian or Asian British Any other Asian background	0.6%	<i>Asian or Asian British Total</i>	<i>1.7%</i>	<p>Where the problem is one of access to equipment, information about sites with free access to the internet is already being promoted to all residents (for example in the last City View). The Council's libraries offer 2 hours free use per day.</p> <p>Support will be given in Gateway to people who need assistance with the self-service terminals.</p> <p>The information on the website and phone services will be simple and easy to understand. Where a customer is unable to use the internet or phone options, appointments can be made and an interpreter can be booked.</p> <p>The consultation process, including the distribution to public contact points of leaflets,</p>
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<p><b>Religion or Belief</b></p>	<p>The proposed changes should not disproportionately impact in this category.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>																								
<p><b>Sex</b></p>	<p>The proposed changes should not</p>	<p>Where the problem is one of</p>																								

	<p>disproportionately impact in this category for the majority of customers.</p> <p>The gender profile for use of the web site is:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>55.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>44.4%</td> </tr> </table> <p>However the ONS statistical bulletin shows the older females (65+) are less likely to use the internet than older males. This is confirmed by deeper analysis of the council’s web survey:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Female</th> <th>Male</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>80 and over</td> <td>23%</td> <td>77%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65-79</td> <td>47%</td> <td>53%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>60-64</td> <td>48%</td> <td>52%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50-59</td> <td>57%</td> <td>43%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40-49</td> <td>62%</td> <td>38%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30-39</td> <td>58%</td> <td>42%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18-29</td> <td>65%</td> <td>35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17 and under</td> <td>70%</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>For Gateway 52.8% of visitors are male and 47.2% female. For the call centre 34.3% of callers are male and 65.7% female.</p> <p>In the online survey there was a significant difference between the views of men and women on one question in particular – i.e about whether public access PCs and the phone service are alternatives that meet the needs of people without access to a PC or smartphone of their own. 80% of women felt this did not meet their needs compared to 54% of men. The difference is unexplained, but may reflect a reluctance to use public PCs.</p>	Female	55.6%	Male	44.4%		Female	Male	80 and over	23%	77%	65-79	47%	53%	60-64	48%	52%	50-59	57%	43%	40-49	62%	38%	30-39	58%	42%	18-29	65%	35%	17 and under	70%	30%	<p>access to equipment, information about sites with free access to the internet is already being promoted to all residents (for example in the last City View). The Council’s libraries offer 2 hours free use per day.</p> <p>Support will be given in Gateway to people who need assistance with the self-service terminals.</p> <p>The option of telephoning will be available. Also, face-to-face interviews will still be available by appointment on a same day basis to “vulnerable persons”, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to any customer who is unable (as opposed to unwilling) to use the online processes or other automated processes for self-service;</li> <li>- where any customer or other person related to their enquiry is facing an imminent threat to their safety (including domestic violence or homelessness); or</li> <li>- where delaying action may otherwise give rise to the customer or other person related to their enquiry facing an increased risk of loss of or damage to personal property or personal injury.</li> </ul> <p>The consultation process, including the distribution to public contact points of leaflets, has increased awareness of alternatives to online access and further public communication will be undertaken as part of the roll-out of any change.</p>
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<b>Orientation</b>	disproportionately impact in this category.	
<b>Community Safety</b>	The proposed changes should not disproportionately impact in this category.	Not applicable
<b>Poverty</b>	<p>The proposed changes mean residents may spend longer on the telephone, may have to visit Gateway twice (to book an appointment and for the actual appointment) and are designed to push them to use the internet. These factors could have a negative impact on people with lower incomes who may not have access to the internet at home and who could struggle to find additional telephone or transport monies.</p> <p>Homeless people (and those in imminent danger of homelessness) are often assisted by third parties (e.g. advice agencies or potential landlords) who will find it inconvenient to deal with an appointment system.</p>	<p>Where the problem is one of access to equipment, information about sites with free access to the internet is already being promoted to all residents (for example in the last City View). The Council's libraries offer 2 hours free use per day.</p> <p>Support will be given in Gateway to people who need assistance with the self-service terminals.</p> <p>Where the customer is unable to use the internet then the existing phone and face-to-face options are available, although face-to-face will require an appointment.</p> <p>The consultation process, including the distribution to public contact points of leaflets, has increased awareness of alternatives to online access and further public communication will be undertaken as part of the roll-out of any change.</p> <p>The option of telephoning will be available. Also, face-to-face interviews will still be available by appointment on a same day basis to "vulnerable persons", i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to any customer who is unable (as opposed to unwilling) to use the online processes or other automated</li> </ul>

		<p>processes for self-service;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- where any customer or other person related to their enquiry is facing an imminent threat to their safety (including domestic violence or homelessness – this will deal with the specific example given opposite); or</li> <li>- where delaying action may otherwise give rise to the customer or other person related to their enquiry facing an increased risk of loss of or damage to personal property or personal injury.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Significant Impacts</b></p>	<p>Impact on advice agencies and libraries as providers of free internet access.</p> <p>Other impacts identified by the consultation process are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealing sensitively with customers who are emotionally vulnerable (for example have suffered a death in the family).</li> <li>• People with poor literacy skills may not be identified as requiring assistance.</li> <li>• People may have difficulty fitting in appointments around work commitments.</li> <li>• Some people have difficulty remembering appointments.</li> <li>• There is a perceived inequality around some people having to wait for an appointment when others are seen without an appointment</li> </ul>	<p>As part of the rollout of the online benefits claim form (which is likely to be the most complex service to be provided online) briefings/training will be offered to advice agencies and library staff so they can assist their clients or customers.</p> <p>The training to identify vulnerable people will address this point.</p> <p>The training to identify vulnerable people will address this point.</p> <p>There should be sufficient appointments available to ensure flexibility.</p> <p>A system of phone/text reminders will be investigated.</p> <p>Floor walkers can explain why there is a need to see some people urgently to customers to anyone who complains or makes comment.</p>

