

Equality Analysis

Questionnaire

1. Details of function, policy, procedure or service:	
Title of what is being assessed: Customer Access Strategy (CAS)	
Is it a new or revised function, policy, procedure or service? Revision to existing services	
Department and Section: All	
Date assessment completed: October 2015	
2. Names and roles of officers completing this assessment:	
Lead officer	Bill Murphy, Barnet Partnership Customer Services Director
Stakeholder groups	Delivery Unit Directors, Commissioning Directors
Representative from internal stakeholders	Kari Manovitch, Head of Customer Strategy & Programmes Members of Customer & Information Management Board and Strategic Commissioning Board
Representative from external stakeholders	None at this stage
3. Full description of function, policy, procedure or service:	
Please describe the aims and objectives of the function, policy, procedure or service	
<p>The Customer Access Strategy has been produced to identify what needs to happen to achieve the council's agreed vision for customer services up to the period 2020. A key aim of the strategy is to seek to improve the quality of the website's self-service facilities, recognising that over 82% of the residents of Barnet, have access to, and are competent in the use of, transacting with service providers online.</p> <p>The vision for customer services in 2020 is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the majority of access is via digital means – 'digital by default' • Customer journeys enable efficient and effective resolution at the earliest opportunity • Customers receive a high quality personalised service, including relevant services from partners • Customers are connected to the community, not just council services <p>The services currently accessed via customer services provision is show in the table below.</p>	
Table 1 - Matrix of services & current access options	

Service	Telephone	Face to Face - Barnet House	Face to Face - Burnt Oak Library	Face to Face – bespoke
Customer services provision				
General enquiries	X	X	X	
Council tax & council tax support	X	X	X	
Housing benefits	X	X	X	X ¹
Street-based services (street cleansing, refuse & recycling, green spaces, trees, grounds maintenance)	X			
Parking	X			
Street Lighting	X			
Assisted Travel (freedom passes & blue badges)	X			
Highways (roads & pavements)	X			
Licensing, environmental health, pest control, noise & nuisance, trading standards	X			
Planning	X	X		
Registrars	X	X		X ²
School admissions	X			
Libraries	X			X
Families and Young Peoples' Information	X			
Youth Services	X			
Children's Social Care	X	X		
Adult Social Care	X			
Housing tenants & leaseholder services	X	X		
Housing advice, housing options, homelessness	X	X		
BOOST – multiagency jobs assistance			X	
Referral-only services				
Welfare reform assistance		X		
Family services (including child protection)		X		
Special Educational Need services		X		

Currently around 80% of customer services contact is made by telephone. The aim is to shift this to 80% digital means by 2020. This would include improved web functionality and the implementation

¹ Housing benefits claimants can ask libraries staff for assistance with filling out an application on-line

² The main Registrars office is in Burnt Oak, a separate location to the library

of automated telephony solutions, including recorded messages and menu options for customers to select by using their telephone touchpad, and voice recognition software where customers speak their requirements and it is recognised automatically.

There are three key areas where residents may feel the impact of the changes proposed in the CAS:

- Removal of staff contact options for certain services, replacing them with user-friendly self-service options and assistance to use these
- Development of a digital inclusion strategy
- Reconfiguration of face to face access away from Barnet House, towards a mixture of libraries, community hubs and the new Colindale centre.

We know that there are customers who will struggle to use self-service options and will need support to do so. We also know that there are some customers who will not be able to use self-service options at all, and will either need someone to perform the transactions on their behalf (such as a family member) or will need to be given assistance from council staff. Through a digital inclusion strategy, the council will look more closely at who these customers are and the ways in which we can best support them, so that no-one is excluded from accessing council services.

There are also residents who are not classed as 'digitally excluded' but would nonetheless prefer not to use digital, self-service access methods for council services, and prefer to speak to a member of staff. The council wants to encourage and persuade these customers to use digital self-service, on the basis that it is a more efficient way for the council to deliver services and ensure that staff support is focused on those who most need it.

The reconfiguration of face to face access is not expected to disadvantage any residents because the closure of Barnet House will be compensated by providing services in other face to face locations, where the locations relate to where the customers are most geographically concentrated.

1. Assessing the impact of making some services self-service only

The strategy suggests the following services as pilots for making the web or automated telephony the only form of access, chosen because they are high volume transactions that should be straightforward, where customer services staff intervention can add little value:

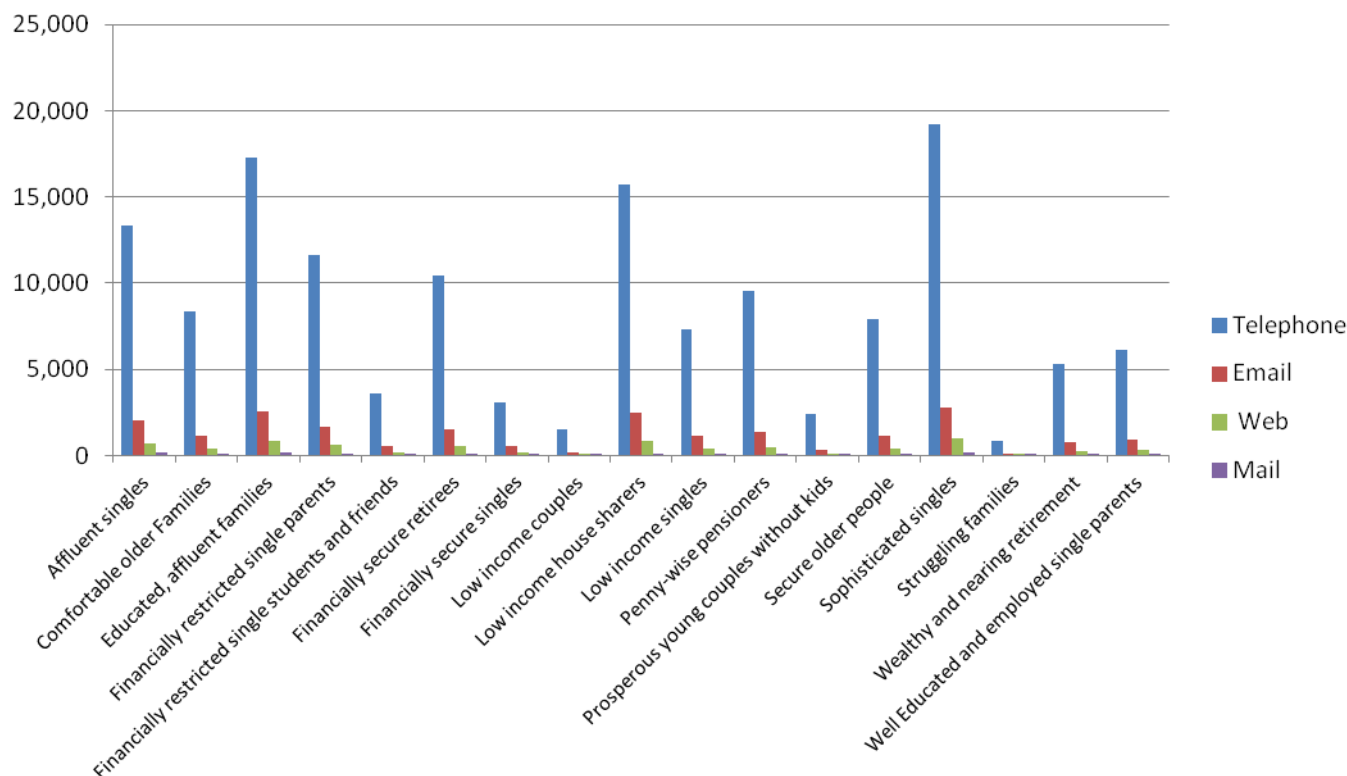
- Reporting highways and street related issues
- License applications for businesses
- Parking permits & appeals
- New bins and waste collections
- Pitch bookings
- Library Membership
- School admissions (excluding in year transfers)
- Schools information

It should be noted, that it is not proposed to restrict access to the phone for personal care and welfare services such as social care.

The strategy is clear that before this can be implemented, a full end-to-end customer journey mapping exercise must be undertaken, and the service redesigned to ensure that the new digital only solutions are fully implemented. The proposed implementation date for this is the end of 2016.

The table below shows that the use the phone is dominant across all customer segments, despite

the high level of digital capability amongst Barnet residents.



It is clear from the poor satisfaction scores for the existing website (struggling to attract more than 40% positive ratings) that significant improvement is needed in the infrastructure before people have confidence in using the council's website. This is a key theme in the strategy. However, the strategy is clear that the majority of Barnet residents use the web for other services (e.g. flights, online shopping etc.) and therefore would use the web for council services if they had confidence in it and it was easy to find what they wanted.

It is recognised that the key group impacted by the proposals to make some services self-service only will be those that are deemed to be digitally excluded, specifically older residents who have missed out on the internet age or very vulnerable people who may have a range of complex needs or have particularly chaotic lives.

The strategy proposes that a digital inclusion strategy is agreed before these changes are implemented and that there are services to support those who are unable to use the improved self-service methods.

CSG already offers a service for vulnerable customers and this service will need to be enhanced. For example, once customers who are digitally excluded are identified, the aim would be to encourage customers to register one or more phone number which the system would recognise when they phoned, directing them to the enhanced service with specially trained advisors. In addition, where technically possible, automated telephony will be utilised in addition to web self-service, because digitally excluded groups will tend to find telephone easier than the website.

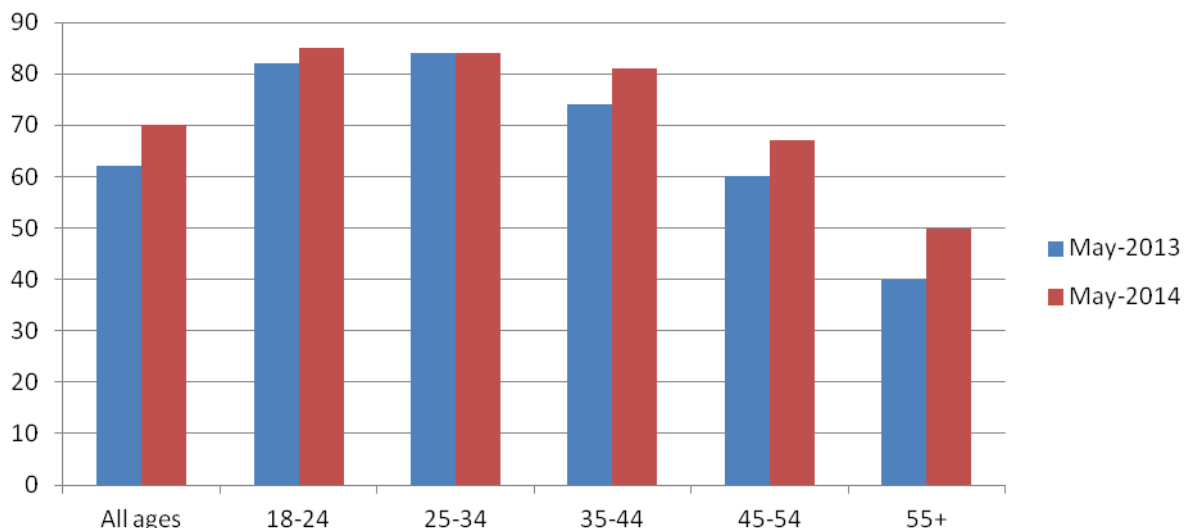
Therefore there will be an impact for customers without internet access or with the skills to use the web, but this will be mitigated by a specialist service for people with specific needs customers or via the ability to seek assisted self-service in two libraries.

Internet Usage in Barnet is extensively explored within the Customer Access Strategy and shows that compared to other authorities in the UK, Barnet is classified as low probability – in terms of residents' likelihood of being digitally excluded – this is the lowest ranking in the UK.GoV system of

measurement. It is estimated that around 82% of Barnet residents have access to, and the skills to use, the internet.

The table, reproduced from the strategy, also shows the growth in Smartphones in Barnet, broken down by age. It is interesting to note that the 55+ age range had a 10% increase between 2013 and 2014. It is estimated that now more people access the web via smartphones than via a laptop or PC.

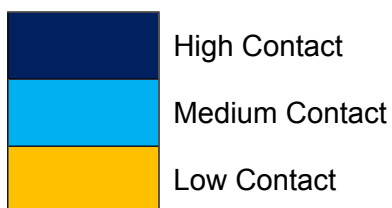
Table 2 – % smartphone usage by age



However, the strategy acknowledges that the estimated 18% of non-users are likely to be bigger users of council services than the 82% that are digitally included.

The table below shows the breakdown of likelihood of particular segments to be users of council services. Unsurprisingly the biggest group of high contact users are for benefits, with the biggest impact being on “pennywise pensioners” and “financially restricted single parents”. While the strategy does propose changes to the face-to-face service for benefits via the closure of Barnet House, this is mitigated by the availability of assisted self service and document drop at initially two libraries, North Finchley and Golders Green. Customers will still have the option to visit Burnt Oak.

Table 3 – Propensity to use service by customer insight segment



Segment	Households	Individuals	Adult Social Care	Schools	Benefits	Parking Permits	Libraries	Business Rates
Affluent Singles	9,404	17,849	Medium Contact	Medium Contact	Medium Contact	High Contact	Medium Contact	Medium Contact
Prosperous Young Couples without Kids	1,907	3,742	Medium Contact	Medium Contact	Medium Contact	High Contact	High Contact	Medium Contact
Educated, Affluent Families	14,374	38,900	Medium Contact	High Contact	Medium Contact	Medium Contact	High Contact	Medium Contact
Well Educated and Employed Single Parents	4,260	5,775	Medium Contact	Low Contact	Low Contact	Low Contact	Low Contact	Low Contact

Sophisticated Singles	15,301	34,779						
Wealthy and Nearing Retirement	4,277	8,355						
Financially Secure Retirees	9,149	22,528						
Financially Secure Singles	2,509	2,509						
Low Income Couples	1,172	2,303						
Low Income House Sharers	10,566	30,130						
Comfortable Older Families	6,568	19,582						
Secure Older People	8,903	8,903						
Financially Restricted Single Students and Friends	2,164	5,039						
Low Income Singles	5,994	5,994						
Struggling Families	646	2,307						
Financially Restricted Single Parents	7,448	12,036						
Penny-wise Pensioners	10,181	14,538						

2. Assessing the impact of moving service access from Barnet House to other locations

For face-to-face services, the volume of customers impacted by the closure of Barnet House is shown below as well as the expected impact and proposed mitigation.

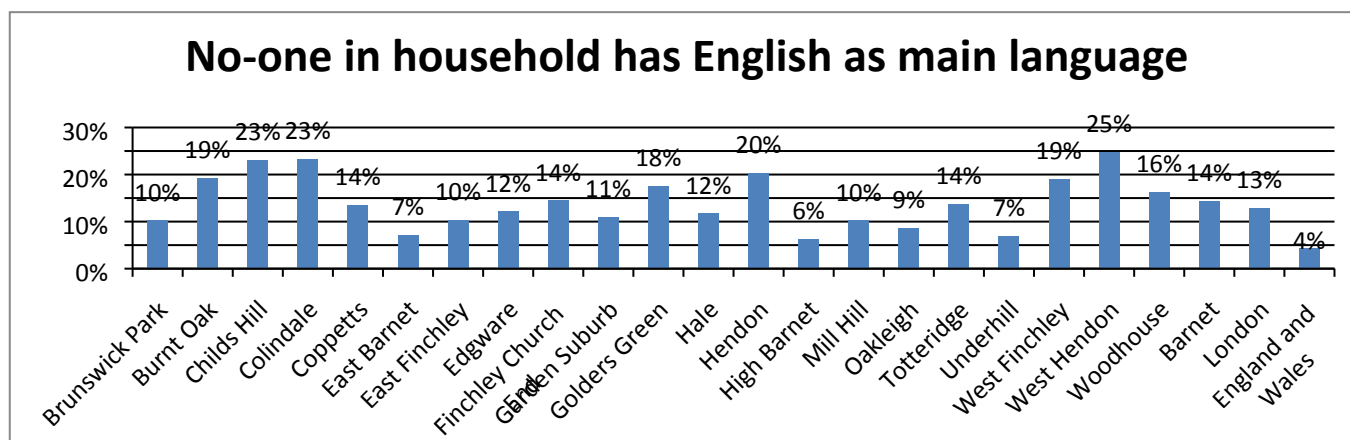
Table 4 – Existing Volumes for Services at Barnet House

Service	Avg Barnet House visitors a day	Nature of current visits	Proposed changes
Housing Benefits & Council Tax	150	Appointments and mandatory document provision/certification. Walk ins being reduced.	Assisted self-service, document certification and appointments to be relocated to North Finchley and Golders Green libraries. This would promote additional footfall to these libraries, and utilise existing community assets that are geographically close to where the existing customers live.
Homeless and Housing Needs	65	Appointments and walk ins	Relocate appointments to the ground floor of the new Colindale HQ or a community hub subject to review. This is a more accessible location for the majority of the client group. Location of ‘walk in’ demand to be determined, and the proposed end to end review of this service will look at how ‘walk ins’ can be reduced.

Housing Advice-Barnet Homes	35	Appointments and walk ins	Relocate appointments to the ground floor of the new Colindale HQ or a community hub subject to review. The proposed end to end review of this service will ensure an improved web presence to reduce the need for both walk in and appointment-based demand.
Planning Office	25	Appointments and walk ins	Relocate appointments to the normal officer meeting rooms within the new Colindale HQ, and cease to offer walk ins. The need for walks ins is already reducing due to better availability of online documents.
Registrars (Birth and Death Certificates)	20	Appointments only	Relocate appointments either to Barnet Hospital or Identify a better location for the service once a decision is made on the future of the existing office in Burnt Oak
Family Services (child protection interviews and conferences, youth offending meetings)	7	Appointments only	Relocate appointments to the ground floor of the new Colindale HQ or community hub as determined by the new operation model for the service.
Booked meetings	Unknown	Customer invited in for specific services e.g. SEN reviews	There are a number of meeting rooms that are booked by services for specific functions as and when needed. This will be captured by the Colindale HQ project

It is recognised that some people use face-to-face services as a result of having English as a second language. The latest data for Barnet, showing a ward by ward breakdown of the number of households is shown below. It should be noted that in many cases, even if English is not the first language, people may still be relatively fluid in English as a second language. However, the web has a built in-function that enables the easy translation of 80 languages.

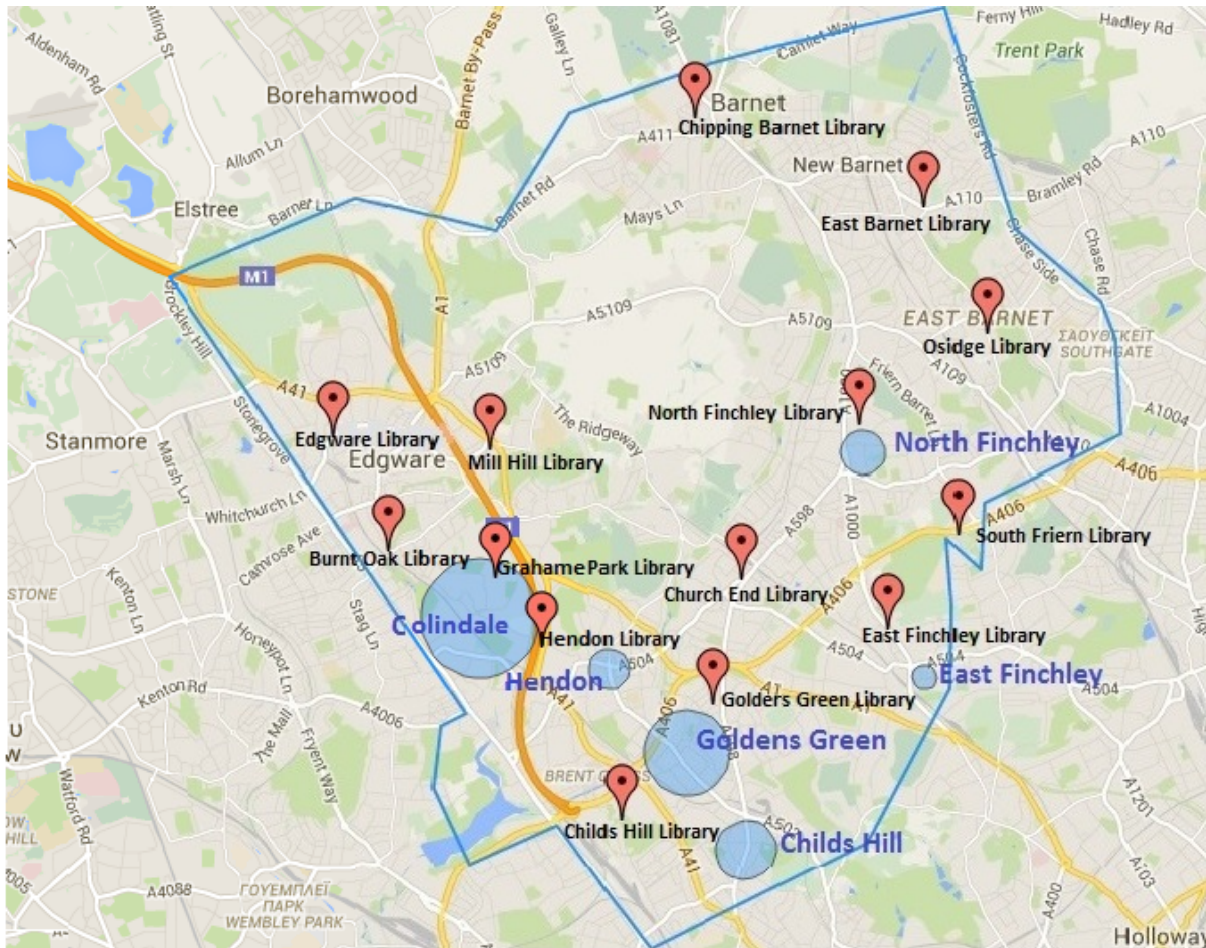
Table 5 – Housing where no-one had English as main language by ward



While there are some peaks in the data, the need is spread across all wards. Therefore, there is no specific location that would meet this widespread need. Again the combination of two libraries plus Burnt Oak will provide adequate accessibility for the services.

However, the website does have an in-built translation service covering 80 languages which means people whose first language is not English can obtain the information needed.

The map below shows where the majority of customers currently live and the new locations for the services. The data shows that around 90% of people will be within 2.5 miles of a centre. The blue circles indicate where clusters of customers who use the existing services travel from. The pins show the existing locations of all libraries. The choice of Golders Green and North Finchley is based on this data. Also, being main libraries they have the most extensive opening hours making them more accessible to customer need (e.g. open Saturday's or late night opening)



Therefore, the impact is judged to be neutral overall with the potential for enhanced accessibility using assisted self service and document drop at, initially, two libraries.

4. How are the equality strands affected? Please detail the effects on each equality strand, and any mitigating action you have taken so far. Please include any relevant data. If you do not have relevant data please explain why.

Equality Strand	Affected?	Explain how affected	What action has been taken already to mitigate this? What action do you plan to take to mitigate this?
1. Age	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Older residents are more likely to be digitally excluded, and have mobility restrictions, so the increased emphasis on digital channels, and the change in location of face to face services, is likely to impact older people more than other residents.	<p>To address digital exclusion, the council provides free computer access in all libraries and its two face to face centres, and staff are encouraged to identify and support customers who need help. Customer services staff in Coventry also provide guidance over the phone to assist customers in using website services. and the two face to face centres have a number of free-phones that customers can use. The website is designed to meet the 'AA' standard (an international content accessibility standard set by an organisation called W3C) and there is a searchable list of frequently asked questions and answers (FAQs) to address common problems with using web self-service published on the website.</p> <p>The Customer Access Strategy includes a plan to produce a digital inclusion strategy to identify more ways in which older people can be supported to access council services via digital channels. Given that older people already tend to be comfortable using the phone, we will look at how phone self-service can be offered for the list of services that we wish to make 'self-service'. We will also look at methods of ensuring that where staff support is the only way a customer can reasonably access a service, this is made available on an individual basis.</p> <p>The services that the CAS proposes to move from Barnet House to Colindale are not services that are used much by older residents: Housing and homelessness services, Family Services, Special Education Needs. It is also the case that moving these services will bring them closer to some residents, whilst moving them further away for others. We believe the impact of the move will benefit more residents than it will disadvantage, because of the demographics of the services users and the fact that these demographics are more</p>

			<p>concentrated in the west of the borough and therefore closer to Colindale. The move of housing benefits services from Barnet House to two libraries (currently proposed to be North Finchley and Golders Green) should have a positive impact of accessibility because North Finchley is very close to Barnet House's current location, and Golders Green is a brand new location not previously offered for these services. There is not a firm proposal for relocating the registering of births, marriages and deaths currently offered at Barnet House. Of these services, older people are most likely to register deaths. The re-location of this service needs to assess the impact on residents once the new location options are known. A re-location to Barnet Hospital is likely to make the service more accessible, whereas a re-location to a venue in the west of the borough may make it less accessible.</p>
<p>2. Disability</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Residents with a learning disability or a communication disability (visual or hearing impairment) will find it harder to use self-service options. Residents with a mobility impairment may be affected by the change in location of face to face services, if the new location is further away or less accessible by their mode of transport.</p>	<p>In addition to the actions described above, the council's website already has various features to make it more accessible for those with communications disabilities, such as 'BrowseAloud' for those with sight impairment or dyslexia for example.</p> <p>The digital inclusion strategy needs to incorporate the involvement of people with disabilities in the design of new self-service channels so that accessibility and usability is maximised.</p> <p>We will also look at methods of ensuring that where staff support is the only way a customer can reasonably access a service, this is made available on an individual basis.</p> <p>The assessment and actions in relation to the re-location of services away from Barnet House are the same as identified above for older residents.</p>
<p>3. Gender reassignment</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>		
<p>4. Pregnancy and</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> /</p>	<p>Some pregnant women may mobility restrictions, particularly in the latest</p>	<p>The assessment and actions in relation to the re-location of services away from Barnet House are the same as identified above for older</p>

maternity	No <input type="checkbox"/>	stages of pregnancy, thus they may be affected by the change in location of face to face services, if the new location is further away or less accessible by their mode of transport.	residents.
5. Race / Ethnicity	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/>	People whose first language is not English may prefer using face to services, as this may enhance their ability to communicate effectively and obtain the service they need.	<p>The council's website has a language translation built in (using Google Translate software) and new web self-service channels should continue to benefit from this.</p> <p>The voice recognition software in use for the automated switchboard has been designed to recognise a number of different accents.</p> <p>The digital inclusion strategy may need to consider how translation can apply to emails that are sent in response to self-service transactions, and also to telephony self-service.</p> <p>The impact of face to face changes should be neutral because there will be assistance and appointments for housing benefits offered at two libraries instead of Barnet House.</p> <p>There is currently no translation service currently provided at face to face and there are no plans to change this.</p>
6. Religion or belief	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
7. Gender / sex	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
8. Sexual orientation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
9. Marital Status	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

10. Other key groups?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
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5. What will be the impact of delivery of any proposals on satisfaction ratings amongst different groups of residents?
<p>Customers who are digitally excluded or who have a preference to speak to staff rather than use self-service may find the inability to speak to a member of staff for some services frustrating and therefore feel less satisfied with the council. It is therefore important that the council explains why it is reducing accessing to staff, and how those who are genuinely excluded can access the support that they need. However, for the majority of residents in Barnet, if the strategy is fully implemented, the customer experience will be much better than is currently the case and will be comparable to some of the best service providers in both the private and public sector.</p>
6. How does the proposal enhance Barnet’s reputation as a good place to work and live?
<p>If the strategy is implemented in full, customers will have a better experience of the council, and therefore a more positive impression of the council.</p>
7. How will members of Barnet’s diverse communities feel more confident about the council and the manner in which it conducts its business?
<p>Giving customers more information about services and transactions, and more control over when they interact with the council, will assist all communities.</p>
8. What measures and methods have been designed to monitor the application of the policy or service, the achievement of intended outcomes and the identification of any unintended or adverse impact? <i>Include information about the groups of people affected by this proposal. Include how frequently will the monitoring be conducted and who will be made aware of the analysis and outcomes? Include these measures in the Equality Improvement Plan (section 15)</i>
<p>The council has an extensive customer services performance framework in place that includes the measurement of self-service transaction volumes, satisfaction and complaints on a quarterly basis, which is reported to the Performance and Contract Management Committee and therefore publically available.</p>
<p>In addition, the council has biannual resident satisfaction surveys that will assess the impact of the changes. This is also published on the</p>

council's website.

The development of the digital inclusion strategy will also need to include measuring the impact on residents who are digitally excluded, as these residents may not be identifiable from our existing measures. For example, a resident who typically uses the phone to contact the council and is unable to speak to a member of staff will not be given the opportunity to complete a satisfaction survey. They may also not know how to make a complaint to the council if they are unable to speak to a member of staff or obtain the online information about the council's complaints policy and process.

9. How will the new proposals enable the council to promote good relations between different communities? *Include whether proposals bring different groups of people together, does the proposal have the potential to lead to resentment between different groups of people and how might you be able to compensate for perceptions of differential treatment or whether implications are explained.*

The aim is to provide enhanced customer services for all residents in a fair and transparent way.

10. How have residents with different needs been consulted on the anticipated impact of this proposal? How have any comments influenced the final proposal? *Please include information about any prior consultation on the proposal been undertaken, and any dissatisfaction with it from a particular section of the community.*

The council will run a public consultation exercise from January 2016, following the approval of the Customer Access Strategy by the Policy & Resources Committee in December 2015, to assess whether the actions being taken by the council to promote accessibility are sufficient.

The council will also use a set of service design principles that were developed through consultation with residents in November 2013 when designing new ways of accessing services.

The council will also seek to involve service users directly in designing services where possible, to find ways of increasing accessibility and ease of use, and reduce the risk of exclusion.

Overall Assessment

11. Overall impact		
Positive Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Negative Impact or Impact Not Known ³ <input type="checkbox"/>	No Impact <input type="checkbox"/>
12. Scale of Impact		
Positive impact: Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Significant <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Negative Impact or Impact Not Known Minimal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Significant <input type="checkbox"/>	

13. Outcome			
No change to decision <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Adjustment needed to decision <input type="checkbox"/>	Continue with decision <i>(despite adverse impact / missed opportunity)</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	If significant negative impact - Stop / rethink <input type="checkbox"/>

14. Please give full explanation for how the overall assessment and outcome was decided
<p>The development of a digital inclusion strategy, as well the use of robust challenge during the service design phase, will ensure that digitally excluded customers, or those with mobility challenges, are not impacted in a negative way by the changes. While it is recognised that channel choice will be reduced for some services, this is only being used for services where there is no risk to individual welfare, and will only be implemented when necessary mitigations have been agreed.</p> <p>For the vast majority of residents, the service will be significantly improved.</p>

³ 'Impact Not Known' – tick this box if there is no up-to-date data or information to show the effects or outcomes of the function, policy, procedure or service on all of the equality strands.

15. Equality Improvement Plan

Equality Objective	Actions	Officer/s responsible	By when
<p>Maximise accessibility of council services for customers who are digitally excluded</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct public consultation on the changes proposed in the Customer Access Strategy • Develop and implement a Digital Inclusion Strategy 	<p>Cath Shaw, Commissioning Director for Growth and Development</p> <p>Kari Manovitch, Head of Customer Strategy & Programmes</p>	<p>March 2016</p>
<p>Maintain geographic accessibility for customers who have to complete transactions face to face</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct public consultation on the changes proposed in the Customer Access Strategy • Develop housing benefits provision in two libraries • Assess the accessibility and equalities impact of the new location for the Registrars service once identified 	<p>Kari Manovitch, Head of Customer Strategy & Programmes</p> <p>Bill Murphy, Barnet Partnership Customer Services Director</p>	<p>December 2016</p>