



# **Integrated Impact Assessment Toolkit**

**Corporate Services  
Revised March 2018**

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## **Section 1 What is Integrated Impact Assessment**

### **1.1.1 Introduction**

West Lothian Council provides services to a diverse community and the decisions made by the council can have a profound influence on the health and wellbeing of that community.

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) aims to enable the council to meet its legal duties to consider equality, human rights and health when considering changes to 'policy' or services or implementing new policies or services. It also provides an opportunity to identify and tackle any unanticipated impacts on the wider causes of poor outcomes in our communities, such as inadequate housing, low educational achievement, low income, reliable and accessible transport, poverty, stigma and social inequality. This process will also allow the council to critically assess whether a 'Policy' has wider impacts beyond its intended outcomes and if it impacts differentially on different groups in our communities.

For the purposes of this toolkit the term IIA refers to both Integrated Relevance Assessment (IRA) (the screening aspect) and the full Integrated Impact Assessment unless otherwise stated.

## **1.2 Legal Context**

### **1.2.1 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)**

Section 149 of The Equality Act 2010 came into force in April 2011, introducing a new Public Sector Equality duty. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (often referred to as the 'general duty') requires public bodies in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct
2. Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
3. Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Supplementary legislation was introduced by the Scottish Government in 2012 (the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012). This legislation was introduced with the express purpose of enabling the better performance of the PSED contained in s149 (1) of the Equality Act 2010. This supplementary legislation requires Local Authorities to be proactive in meeting the general duty of eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations.

### **1.2.2 Protected Characteristics**

The legislation requires that people are not discriminated against, harassed or victimised on the grounds of their 'Protected Characteristic'. The Protected Characteristics are;

- age,
- disability,
- gender reassignment,
- marriage and civil partnership,
- pregnancy and maternity,
- race – this includes ethnic or national origin, nationality and also includes Gypsy/Travellers,
- religion or belief (including lack of belief),
- sex (gender),
- sexual orientation.

Every person has one or more of the protected characteristics; therefore the Act protects all individuals against unfair treatment.

Undertaking an IIA is one way to ensure council policies meet these legal requirements.

Assessing the likely impact of our plans and services also makes good business sense, as it is important in developing any proposal to understand the needs of different population groups.

One of the main aims of the PSED is to improve transparency and accountability and this is also a priority for the Council when it comes to reporting on potential 'policy' changes and other equality related issues.

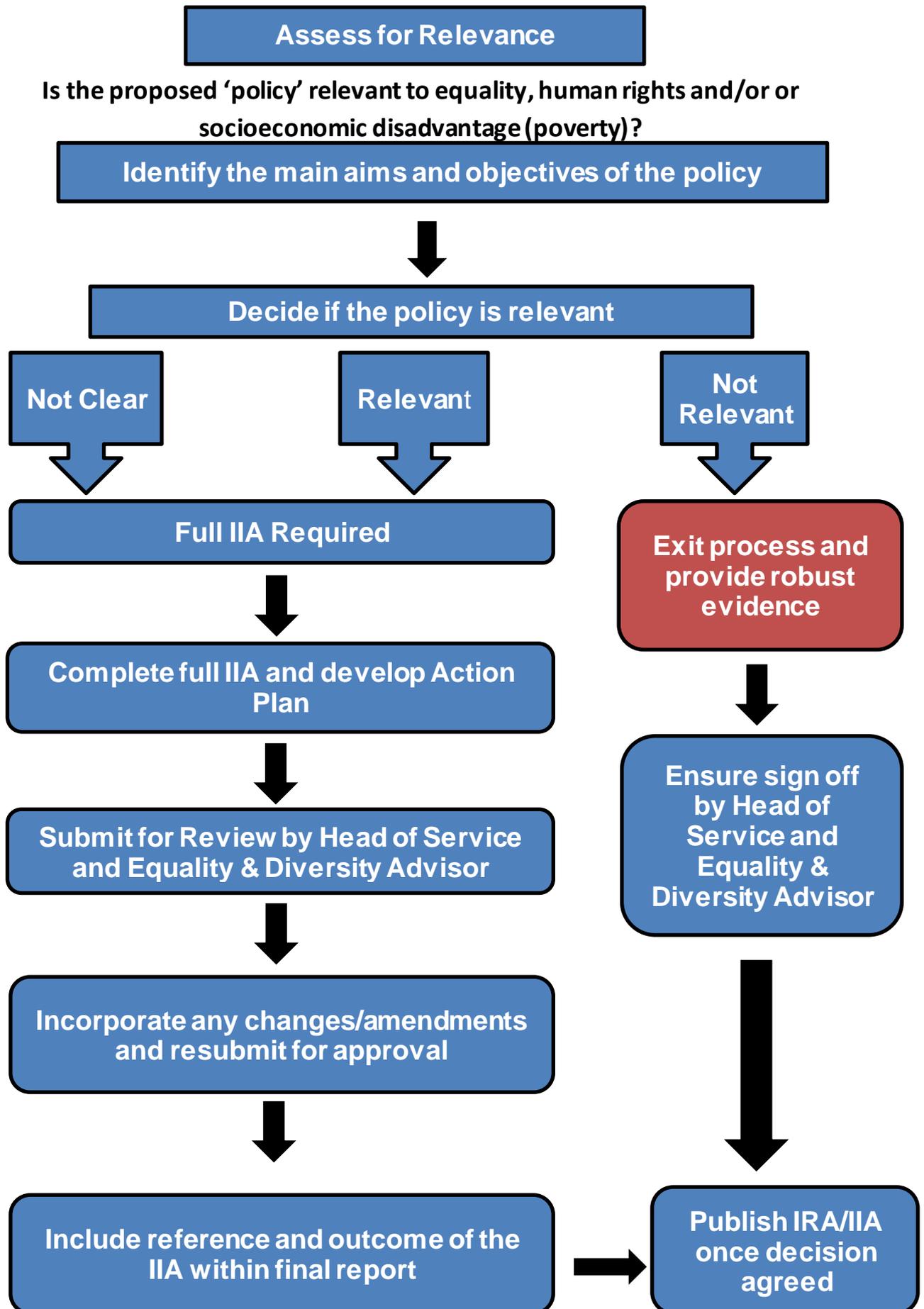
### **1.3 Definition of Policy**

The term 'policy' is used throughout this toolkit and the guidance notes (separate document) and applies to policies, strategies, provisions, criteria, functions, practices, budget savings and activities, including the delivery of services.

Everything we do as a council has the potential to impact on equality, human rights and socioeconomic disadvantage and have relevance to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in the Equality Act (2010) and the corresponding supplementary 'Specific Duties' contained within the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, Fairer Scotland Duty (part 1 of the Equality Act 2010), Human Rights Act 1998 and the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, therefore Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) should not be restricted to a review of formal 'policy' documents or written action plans.

1.4

### Integrated Impact Assessment Flowchart





## Integrated Relevance Assessment Form

<b>1. Details of proposal</b>	
<b>Policy Title</b> (include budget reference number if applicable)	Elections
<b>Service Area</b> (detail which service area and section this relates to)	Chief Executive Office
<b>Lead Officer</b> (Name and job title)	Carrie Heron, Executive Project Officer
<b>Other Officers/Partners involved</b> (list names, job titles and organisations if applicable)	Carrie Heron, OET member Caroline Burton, OET member Joanna Anderson, OET member Pamela Roccio, Equality and Diversity Officer Chris Beaton, Electoral Registration Officer
<b>Date relevance assessed</b>	30/07/2020
<b>2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented?</b>	
<b>YES</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>3. The General Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and</li> <li>• Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</li> </ul> <p><b>NB: In this section you must also consider the Human Rights Act and the key PANEL (Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination, Empowerment and Legality) principles of Human Rights – (further detail on what these are, are provided in the guidance document)</b></p>	
<p><b>Which groups of people do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? You should consider employees, clients, customers and service users (Please tick below as appropriate)</b></p>	
<b>Age</b> - Older people, young people and children	Yes
<b>Disability</b> - people with disabilities/long standing conditions	Yes
<b>Gender reassignment - Trans/Transgender Identity</b> – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth	Click here to enter text.

<b>Marriage or Civil Partnership</b> – people who are married or in a civil partnership	Click here to enter text.
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b> – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave	Click here to enter text.
<b>Race</b> - people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds	Yes
<b>Religion or Belief</b> – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs	Yes
<b>Sex - Gender Identity</b> - women and men (girls and boys) and those who self-identify their gender	Click here to enter text.
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight	Click here to enter text.
<b>4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities? Consideration must be given particularly to children and families</b>	
<b>Socio-economic Disadvantage</b>	<b>Impact – please tick below as appropriate)</b>
<b>Low Income/Income Poverty</b> – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	Click here to enter text.
<b>Low and/or no wealth</b> – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	Click here to enter text.
<b>Material Deprivation</b> – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies	Yes
<b>Area Deprivation</b> – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	Yes
<b>Socioeconomic Background</b> – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income	Yes
<b>5. Integrated impact assessment required?</b> (Two <b>ticks (✓)</b> above = full assessment necessary)	
<b>YES</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>NO</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>6. Decision rationale – if you have ticked no above, use this section to evidence why a full IIA is not required</b>	

<b>Signed by Lead Officer</b>	Carrie Heron
<b>Designation</b>	Executive Project Officer
<b>Date</b>	30/07/2020
<b>Counter Signature</b> (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	Click here to enter text.
<b>Date</b>	06/08/2020

- **No assessment required – process ends**
- **Include** a detailed summary of the decision rationale in any council reports and include a copy of the IRA with the background papers.
- **Full Assessment required – continue to Full Assessment Form**

## Full Integrated Impact Assessment Form

1. Details of proposal	
Details of others involved	Elections Awareness Raising Working Group Operational Election Team Community Planning and Regeneration Equality and Diversity Advisor Electoral Registration Office
Date assessment conducted	30/07/2020
2. Set out a clear understanding of the purpose of the policy being developed or reviewed (what are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes) including the context within which it will operate.	
<p>Raise awareness and facilitate participation in elections and remove barriers to doing so.</p> <p>The Equality Act 2010 requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eliminate discrimination</li> <li>• advance equality of opportunity</li> <li>• foster good relations between different people</li> </ul> <p>The Returning Officer also has a duty to encourage participation to ensure that it is straightforward for people to participate in elections, whether campaigning or voting; and people should be confident that their voice counts.</p> <p>Therefore, the Council, as a provider of electoral services, has a number of responsibilities which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To change practices, policies and procedures that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use a service.</li> <li>• To make reasonable adjustments to the physical features of buildings to overcome physical barriers to access. This covers many of the buildings used as polling stations, as they are in use for a wide variety of other functions.</li> </ul> <p>Equal access is about proactively providing an electoral service that gives all eligible electors an equal opportunity to participate.</p> <p>Consideration of 'equal access' issues will therefore form an integral part of election planning which will cover all electoral procedures where practicably possible.</p> <p><i>(Reference - Electoral Commission).</i></p> <p>Politics affects nearly every aspect of peoples lives. Voting in elections is the easiest way for people to be directly involved in the democratic process.</p> <p>Evidence suggests that young people and minority groups are under-represented in being registered to vote and/or voting. People with disabilities can also encounter barriers in trying to engage in the democratic process by casting their votes. In addition, one of the key sections of the community identified as being under-represented by the Electoral Commission are individuals with learning disabilities.</p>	

(Reference – Electoral Commission)

Evidence also shows that people in the DE social grades are least likely to vote: 61% were estimated to have voted at the 2017 General Election, compared to 73% in the AB social grades; 66% of those in the C1 social grade; and 66% of those in the C2 social grade Turnout is estimated to be have been lowest among social and private renters: 51% and 53% respectively. People who own their own home (either outright or with a mortgage) were more likely to vote: mortgage (72%), own outright (80%).

(Reference - British Election Study, Face to face post-election 2017 survey; based on validated registration and weighted with wt\_vote\_valid

Research suggests that low engagement in the democratic process, which is demonstrated in falling levels of voter registration and voter turnout, is linked to

- Political disengagement and dissatisfaction
- A belief that their vote will not change anything if they do vote
- Concerns about where power lies

(<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmpolcon/232/23205.htm>)

While there are limited actions that the Returning Officer can take in respect of those issues, some groups do face barriers to participating in democracy that the general population do not, and it is in these areas that the Returning Officer can take steps to remove or minimise those barriers

**3. Please outline any needs and/or barriers which equality groups (People with Protected Characteristics) may have in relation to this policy**

**Age**

**What effect/difference will the policy have on people**

The 2014 Referendum on Independence for Scotland was the first occasion in which a significant number of young people of school age (16/17 year olds) were entitled to vote. The franchise for Scottish Parliamentary elections and local government elections in Scotland was also extended to include 16 and 17 years olds. As the electoral register is compiled annually for the following year, this means that 14 and 15 years olds can register to vote if they will turn 16 during the time the electoral register will be in force. This has meant that we need to continue to educate and engage with young people on the democratic process.

	<p>Looked After Children – with the voting age lower for Scottish Parliamentary and council elections in Scotland, there should be an emphasis on ensuring that Looked After Children are given every opportunity to register to vote and to take part in the democratic process. Officers from Children and Families (Social Policy) work with these young people on a regular basis to provide support through various forums – Looked After Children Champions Board and Having Your Say Groups.</p> <p>Similar to the above, Family Placement Teams work with young people in foster care.</p> <p>Evidence continues to suggest that older people are more likely to vote. An Ipsos Mori poll carried out after the EU referendum in 2016 found that 60% of registered 18-24 year olds voted, rising through the age ranges to 82% of 65-74 year olds.</p> <p><i>Reference – <a href="https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/how-britain-voted-2016-eu-referendum">https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/how-britain-voted-2016-eu-referendum</a></i></p> <p>However older people, including those in care homes, may find it harder to vote in person due to immobility, therefore, as part of the council’s Awareness Raising Promotional Plan, information on how to vote by post or by proxy will continue to be promoted. Guidance will be issue also to care home staff on how to support residents to register to vote, and to consider voting by post or proxy.</p> <p>Particularly in relation to the Livingston South by-election, it is recognised that age is a significant factor in the risk of a person becoming seriously ill if they are infected with COVID-19 and may impact on how willing older people are to vote in person, or potentially to work for the Returning Officer in delivering the poll.</p>
	<p><b>How do you know that</b></p> <p>Electoral Commission Your covid age tool</p>
<p><b>Disability</b></p>	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people</b></p> <p>Any impediment to physical access to a polling place will have a disproportionate impact of voters with a disability. Every effort is made to ensure that polling places and stations are physically accessible to people with disabilities.</p> <p>Disability Scotland identified a lack of disabled parking spaces and a lack of low level booths as the main barriers which disabled voters faced in polling places.</p>

	<p>In relation to voters with learning disabilities, it is the intention to target this group with the aim of raising awareness, which will provide the necessary information to increase confidence.</p> <p>People with impaired vision may require the use of a tactile device, magnifier and/or assistance.</p> <p>Legislation on the voting process itself leaves little room for adjustments to be made to allow all voters with disabilities to vote independently</p> <p>Children and Families Services (Social Policy) provide support to child disability service to facilitate voter awareness for young people with disabilities.</p> <p>Postal voters who have a loss of dexterity may find it difficult to provide a matching signature to ensure their postal vote is opened. Promotion of the availability of a signature waiver is promoted to care homes.</p> <p>Again, some disabilities will increase a persons vulnerability to becoming seriously ill if they are infected by COVID-19 and this may impact on their willingness to vote in person.</p>
	<p><b>How do you know that</b>          Disability Scotland          Electoral Registration Office          Feedback from local communities and Disability West Lothian          Your covid age tool</p>
<p><b>Gender Reassignment – Trans/Transgender Identity</b></p>	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people</b>          Click here to enter text.</p> <hr/> <p><b>How do you know that</b>          Click here to enter text.</p>
<p><b>Marriage or Civil Partnership</b></p>	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people</b>          Click here to enter text.</p> <hr/> <p><b>How do you know that</b>          Click here to enter text.</p>

<p><b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b></p>	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people</b> Click here to enter text.</p> <hr/> <p><b>How do you know that</b> Click here to enter text.</p>
<p><b>Race</b></p>	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people</b> The Electoral Commission's research and our local research indicates that among the reasons citizens from the Black and minority community give for not registering are confusion about eligibility, residence requirements and perceived language barriers. The Electoral Commission website, <a href="http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk">www.aboutmyvote.co.uk</a> provides answers to these, and many other questions, and downloadable registration forms in a variety of languages. Ongoing liaison with the wider electoral community in Scotland has meant that translated documentation has been shared.</p> <p>Therefore, as part of the council's Awareness Raising Promotional Campaign, the Electoral Commission's website will be displayed on all promotional material.</p> <p><i>Reference - <a href="http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/">http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/</a></i></p> <p>In addition, as part of the council's Awareness Raising Promotional Plan, a pro-active generic elections campaign will take place so that information regarding why voting is important and how to vote etc, is available to all eligible electors giving them an equal opportunity to participate.</p> <p>Again, evidence shows that some ethnicities are more vulnerable to becoming seriously ill if they are infected by COVID-19 and this may impact on their willingness to vote in person.</p> <hr/> <p><b>How do you know that</b> <b>Members of our local Race Forum</b> <b>Electoral Commissions research</b></p> <p><i>Reference - <a href="http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/">http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/</a></i></p>
<p><b>Religion or Belief</b></p>	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people</b></p>

	<p><b>How do you know that</b> Click here to enter text.</p>			
<p><b>Sex - Gender Identity</b></p>	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people</b></p>			
	<p><b>How do you know that</b> Click here to enter text.</p>			
<p><b>Sexual Orientation</b></p>	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people</b> Click here to enter text.</p>			
	<p><b>How do you know that</b></p>			
<p><b>4. Please outline any needs and/or barriers which may affect vulnerable groups falling into poverty and disadvantage in relation to this policy</b></p> <p><b>Vulnerable groups may include the following;</b></p>				
<table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="130 1281 625 1731"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployed</li> <li>• Single parents and vulnerable families</li> <li>• People on benefits</li> <li>• Those involved in the criminal justice system</li> <li>• People in the most deprived communities (bottom 20 SIMD areas)</li> <li>• People who live in rural areas</li> </ul> </td> <td data-bbox="625 1281 1024 1731"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pensioners</li> <li>• Looked After Children</li> <li>• Carers including young carers</li> <li>• People misusing services</li> <li>• Others e.g. veterans, students</li> <li>• Single adult households</li> <li>• People who have experienced the asylum system</li> </ul> </td> <td data-bbox="1024 1281 1522 1731"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those leaving the care setting including children and young people and those with illness</li> <li>• Homeless people</li> <li>• People with low literacy/numeracy</li> <li>• People with lower educational qualifications</li> <li>• People in low paid work</li> <li>• People with one or more Protected Characteristic</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployed</li> <li>• Single parents and vulnerable families</li> <li>• People on benefits</li> <li>• Those involved in the criminal justice system</li> <li>• People in the most deprived communities (bottom 20 SIMD areas)</li> <li>• People who live in rural areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pensioners</li> <li>• Looked After Children</li> <li>• Carers including young carers</li> <li>• People misusing services</li> <li>• Others e.g. veterans, students</li> <li>• Single adult households</li> <li>• People who have experienced the asylum system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those leaving the care setting including children and young people and those with illness</li> <li>• Homeless people</li> <li>• People with low literacy/numeracy</li> <li>• People with lower educational qualifications</li> <li>• People in low paid work</li> <li>• People with one or more Protected Characteristic</li> </ul>
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<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people</b></p> <p><b>Criminal justice prisoners change to legislation in force from August 3 – prisoners serving less than 12 months will be eligible to vote. Requires liaison with Scottish Prison Service and Sodexo regarding provision of information to eligible voters to support them to register.</b></p> <p><b>Polling places for people in rural areas – no reduction planned in number of polling places, including those serving small electorates in rural areas. Not a particular issue for Livingsgton South by-election</b></p>				

**Carers – May have limited ability to vote in person and potential for ongoing risk to medically vulnerable groups from covid 19 will provide an additional barrier to them voting in person.**

**Veterans – Promote information on voting via veterans networks / Armed Forces Covenant**

**People who have been through the asylum system – Liaise with ERO on eligibility and identify appropriate networks for providing information if appropriate**

**People with low literacy – having difficulty in reading the ballot paper and signage could be a barrier to participation. Assistance is available to voters in the polling station. CLD team provide adult literacy courses.**

**Registration rates and canvass returns tend to be lower in areas of high deprivation. Door to door canvassing has focused on areas of low returns. Due to the current circumstances with covid this is unlikely to happen this year.**

**In relation to COVID-19, rules have been changed to allow a COVID emergency proxy for anyone having to self-isolate on polling day.**

**How do you know that  
Electoral commission  
Research papers  
New/revised legislation**

**5. Action Plan**

**What action/s will be taken, by whom and what is the timescale for completion**

<b>Actioner Name</b> Carrie Heron/Joanna Anderson	<b>Action Date</b> 31/08/2020
<b>What is the issue</b> The need for accessbile information	
<b>What action will be taken</b>  Access up to date demographic information for West Lothian and Livingston South in particular Identify alternative languages in use Identify existing channels for dissemination of information	
<b>Progress against action</b> Joanna has provided information on demographics and agreed to take language enquiry to the Race Forum. Existing channels for dissemination of information has been included below.	
<b>Action completed</b> See above	<b>Date completed</b> 07/08/2020
<b>Actioner Name</b> Carrie Heron	<b>Action Date</b> 30/07/2020
<b>What is the issue</b> Inclusion – age specific	
<b>What action will be taken</b> Liaise with ERO on provision of information to Care Homes on alternative voting methods.	
<b>Progress against action</b> Click here to enter text.	
<b>Action completed</b> Click here to enter text.	<b>Date completed</b> Click here to enter a date.
<b>Actioner Name</b> Nan Mathews, Community Education and Christine Cairns, Social Policy	<b>Action Date</b> 30/07/2020

<p><b>What is the issue</b> Inclusion of young people</p>	
<p><b>What action will be taken</b> Check whether Burnouse etc are included in raising awareness on democracy for young people . Check planning for delivery of Democracy Challenge</p>	
<p><b>Progress against action</b> Click here to enter text.</p>	
<p><b>Action completed</b> Click here to enter text.</p>	<p><b>Date completed</b> Click here to enter a date.</p>
<p><b>6. Details of consultation and involvement</b></p> <p><b>Who will be or has been involved in the consultation process</b></p> <p><b>a. State which groups are involved in this process and describe their involvement.</b></p> <p><b>b. Describe any planned involvement saying when this will take place and who is responsible for managing the involvement process.</b></p> <p><b>c. Describe the results of the involvement and how you have taken this into account.</b></p>	
<p>Click here to enter text.</p> <p>Following the completion of the initial impact assessment, this assessment will be issued to relevant stakeholders via the following methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy sent to West Lothian Disability Forum for comments and amendments;</li> <li>• Copy sent to West Lothian Learning Disability Forum for comments and amendments;</li> <li>• Copy sent to West Lothian Race Forum for comments and amendments;</li> <li>• Copy sent to MILAN Forum for comments and amendments;</li> <li>• Copy sent to West Lothian LGBT youth group, the Glitter Cannons, for comments and amendments;</li> <li>• Copy circulated to all stakeholders involved in the assessment for comment, approval and additional recommendations;</li> <li>• Comments from additional employee and community groups will be incorporated once operational;</li> <li>• Comments from Operational Election Team;</li> <li>• Comments from Elections Awareness Raising Team</li> </ul> <p>Equality Forums would be consulted about their election experience to identify any issues affecting particular groups. Post-election feedback will be collected.</p> <p>In addition, we will consider further consultation or involvement mechanisms with relevant groups if requested and deemed appropriate.</p>	

Click here to enter text.

## 7. Data and Information

**What equality data, poverty data, research, information or other evidence has been used to inform this assessment?**

**(Information can include, for example, surveys, databases, focus groups, in-depth interviews, pilot projects, reviews of complaints made, user feedback, academic publications and consultants' reports)**

- a. **What information or other evidence has been used in the development of the policy?**
- b. **What does research, consultation and other data or information tell you about the impact of the policy? (Describe the information and the conclusions, and state where the information can be found).**
  - (i) **Quantitative (numbers, percentages, statistical data)**
  - (ii) **Qualitative – (written/spoken words, opinions, surveys)**
- c. **Describe any gaps in the available information, and record within section five (Action Plan Section), action you are taking in relation to this (e.g. new research, further analysis) and when this is planned.**
- d. **Give details of any existing local or national evidence which has been used to inform the development of your policy.**

Research

<https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/how-britain-voted-2016-eu-referendum>

Political and Constitutional Reform Committee, Voter Engagement in the UK, 14 November 2014

Political disengagement in the UK: who is disengaged? House of Commons BRIEFING PAPER Number CBP-7501, 16 October 2019

British Election Study, Face to face post-election 2017 survey; based on validated registration and weighted with wt\_vote\_valid

Data on the demographics for West Lothian

There is limited research on why people don't vote, low engagement in the democratic process, which is demonstrated in falling levels of voter registration and voter turnout, is linked to

- Political disengagement and dissatisfaction

- A belief that their vote will not change anything if they do vote
- Concerns about where power lies

(<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmpolcon/232/23205.htm>)

While there are limited actions that the Returning Officer can take in respect of those issues, some groups do face barriers to participating in democracy that the general population do not, and it is in these areas that the Returning Officer can take steps to remove or minimise those barriers.

Actions can be taken to target awareness raising activities at groups which research shows are underrepresented in the democratic process.

More research on the reasons why people do not vote and what would be effective in getting people to vote would be useful. Resources needed to do this effectively are beyond what is available in the council.

## 8. Mitigating Actions

**If the policy has a negative/adverse impact on a particular group/s, but is still to be implemented, please provide justification for this.**

**Note: If the policy is unlawfully discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010 and/or is having a negative impact on poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage under the Fairer Scotland Duty, you MUST identify, how the policy can be amended or justified so the Council acts lawfully.**

- a. **How could you modify the policy to eliminate discrimination or to reduce any identified negative impacts? If necessary, consider other ways in which you could meet the aims and objectives.**
- b. **How could you modify the policy to create or maximise the positive aspects of the proposals and to increase equality and reduce poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage.**

- c. Describe any modifications which you can make without further delay (for example, easy, few resource implications).
- d. If you propose to make any of the modifications shown above, describe any potential new negative impacts on other groups in society or on the ability to achieve the aims and how you will minimise these.
- e. Please describe the resource implications of any proposed modifications taking into account financial, people and property issues.

Tackling barriers to participation in the democratic process

The following actions will be taken to minimise the barriers to participation in the democratic process

1. Information about voting made available in the relevant community languages via the Electoral Commission or West Lothian Council
2. Awareness raising of postal voting options
3. Implement changes to emergency proxy voting process for people who have to self-isolate due to COVID19
4. Information will be made available through Livingston Mosque, Craigshill Church, the Race Equality Forum and the Advice Shop
5. Low-level booths and disabled parking spaces will continue to be made available at all polling places/stations
6. Enable Scotland (#ENABLEtheVote) has produced materials for promoting awareness to those with learning disabilities – these will be distributed through the Disability Forum and the relevant council services
7. Video of people with disabilities voting – available on the council's website
8. 'Democracy Challenge' work in schools, and potentially for Looked After Children – carried out by Community Education in partnership with Electoral Registration Office
9. 'Youth voters' section of website – featuring video of young people voting
10. West Lothian Race Forum and West Lothian Disability Equality Forum feed into Elections Awareness Raising Group
11. A pro-active generic elections campaign will take place so that information regarding why voting is important and how to vote etc, is available to all eligible electors giving them an equal opportunity to participate.
12. Promotion of fund for people with disabilities who wish to stand as a candidate at a poll (Access to Elected Office Fund Scotland (AEOFS))
13. Ongoing review of processes to make them covid safe includes assessment of whether they impact on ability to participate in democratic process.
14. The Election Team will continue to assess feedback from Presiding Officer Survey and implement changes if necessary.
15. The impact assessment will be published externally on the council's website. The final version of the assessment will be issued to all those involved in the consultation and involvement process.
16. **Continue planning for delivery of Democracy Challenge next year - The Community Education Services – Work with Young People Team have an ongoing 'Democracy Challenge' programme in West Lothian's schools which aims to get young people registered to vote. The programme also educates young people on why voting is important, electoral systems, how to vote etc. The team are liaising with colleagues in Social Policy to look at delivering 'virtual' sessions to groups which may include Looked After Children via the LAC Champions Board or the Having Your Say groups. Work is also in going by colleagues in Social Policy to provide support to young people in foster care, via Family Placement Teams, and also to young people with a disability, via the Child Disability Service. Additionally, senior managers in Social Policy will work closely between teams to**

**make appropriate approaches to Looked After Children who do not currently go to school or who receive a bespoke education package or external education.**

**9. Monitoring and Review**

- a. How will the implementation and impact of the policy be monitored, including implementation of any amendments? For example, what type of monitoring will there be? How frequent?**
- b. What are the practical arrangements for monitoring? For example, who will put this in place? When will it start?**
- c. How will results of monitoring be used to develop future policies?**
- d. When is the policy due to be reviewed?**
- e. Who is responsible for ensuring this happens?**

**Please detail below**

- a. Review arrangements as part of post poll review
- b. Election team member with responsibility for the area of action will monitor it
- c. Part of post election review which captures lessons learned which are then used to inform how policy develops
- d. A review takes place after every poll
- e. The Returning Officer oversees the post election review

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### 10. Recommendation and Reasoning

- Implement proposal with no amendments
- Implement proposal taking account of mitigating actions (as outlined above)
- Reject proposal due to disproportionate impact on equality, poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage

Reason for Recommendation

Click here to enter text.

<b>Signed by Lead Officer</b>	Carrie Heron
<b>Designation</b>	Executive Project Officer
<b>Date</b>	30/07/2020
<b>Counter Signature</b> (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	Click here to enter text.
<b>Date</b>	Click here to enter a date.

- **Integrated impact assessment completed**
- **Final assessment must be published on the council website once the decision to implement has been agreed:**

[Council EQIA Publication Page](#)

- **Link must be included in “Background Re ferences” section of committee/management reports**