

# EQUALITY SCREENING

Equality Impact Assessment guidance should be considered when completing this form.

POLICY/FUNCTION/ACTIVITY	LEAD OFFICER
Economic Development Strategy	Rachel Raynaud

**A. What is the aim of this policy, function or activity?** Why is it needed? What is it hoped to achieve and how will it be ensured it works as intended? Does it affect service users, employees or the wider community?

Runnymede Borough Council has not had an Economic Development Strategy since 2002/3. Given the increasing flexibilities in economic development that local government is being given (e.g. business rates retention and setting, and bidding for funding from the LEP) and that the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership (EM3 LEP) is about to review its Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), this Strategy will enable the Council to effectively contribute to the consultation on the new SEP, better align its priorities with those of the LEP, and ensure that the Council builds on recent regeneration initiatives and Runnymede's well established business partnership.

The Strategy should enable the Council to ensure a proactive stance in relation to economic development in order to exploit new economic opportunities for businesses, residents and visitors. It will also strengthen the Council's relationship with local business, and help the local community benefit from opportunities provided.

The Strategy sets out five priorities for the local economy. For each priority a list of objectives and deliverables has been identified to ensure that the priorities are achieved. Each deliverable has been costed and officer time attributed to it.

The Strategy will affect the local community (including residents, businesses and their employees); visitors to the Borough, and companies/individuals wanting to invest. It should have a positive effect on all these groups as it contains priorities linked to:

- Skills – to provide support to people out of work, encourage recruitment of local labour, and raise the profile of STEM subjects to local school children and retention of local graduates in the local labour market, and support literacy skills through working with Dyslexia Action where funding is available
- Business support – to provide greater assistance to start-ups and SMEs in the local area.
- Business engagement – to strengthen engagement especially with our largest employers and to engage with small businesses (including retailers).
- Business investment – to raise the profile of the Borough regionally, nationally and internationally including information on key development sites including the Enterprise Zone to encourage new business to invest.
- Support high tech sectors – to ensure that the jobs of tomorrow are available within the Borough for local residents.
- Better infrastructure for growth – to help tackle congestion, promote sustainable transport options for local residents and visitors, and work with stakeholders to improve the local environment of the town centres and major employment areas.

**B. Is this policy, function or activity relevant to equality?** Does the policy relate to an area in which there are known inequalities, or where different groups have different needs or experience? Remember, it may be relevant because there are opportunities to promote equality and greater access,

not just potential for adverse impacts or unlawful discrimination.

Parts of the Strategy do relate to areas in which there are known inequalities and where different groups have different needs or experience – such as skills and access to employment. However the Strategy promotes equality and greater access and should have a positive impact on the following protected characteristics - age, disability and sex

#### **Skills deliverables:**

**Support for the job club:** this will help support people currently out of work with job applications and skills and training support. The job club works with a wide variety of stakeholders including the DWP to promote the job club to residents across the Borough. The club is situated in Addlestone in an area of identified relative deprivation. The job club is accessible to all working age residents in the Borough and the volunteers running the service have promoted the club widely including to children's centres and schools. However the majority of the people accessing the service so far have been older working age residents who are long term unemployed. Many of these residents do not have the level of IT skills or access to IT equipment required to access job opportunities online and benefit greatly from one to one support.

**Basic Skills Training:** priority 3 of the strategy also seeks to work with local skills agencies on basic skills training where funding is available. The nature of the training and age group supported will depend on the funding source criteria, however where feasible delivery will be to residents within the identified areas of relative deprivation.

**STEM Challenge:** A STEM challenge has been successfully delivered in the Borough in 2016, and a further challenge is proposed in 2018. The Runnymede Business Partnership ("RBP") will work with schools and companies in the Borough on the challenge, to raise awareness of the importance of STEM skills in the modern workforce. This will enable children to be better informed prior to making subject choices. Delivery of this project is reliant on joint working with companies many of whom have Corporate Social Responsibility policies focused on supporting young people. The project is focused at this age group as they require information prior to making GCSE, A level or vocational training choices. CSR programmes are also targeted at this group and Government Policy is to support uptake of STEM in school age children. Targeting schools also enables a larger audience to be targeted.

**Local Labour Market Agreements/Apprenticeship Levy:** The proposed deliverable around encouraging recruitment of local labour will support all working age residents in the Borough. The promotion of the new apprenticeship levy and apprenticeship opportunities will also help all working age residents as the levy can be used to upskill older people as well as train young people entering the workforce.

#### **Business support deliverables:**

Priority 2 seeks to provide greater assistance to start-ups and SMEs in the local area. Although available to all working age residents, this priority may be of particular assistance to women who wish to return to work after having a family and want the flexibility of starting/running their own business.

#### **Better infrastructure for growth deliverables:**

Priority 4 seeks to improve the Borough's competitive performance through investment in employment areas, transport, infrastructure and town centres.

**Sustainable transport:** the deliverables include lobbying DfT/SW Trains for improvements to the rail

service and promotion of the yellow bus school transport system. Both these deliverables will be of particular assistance to residents who do not have access to a car. The Local Plan will provide the main policy base for encouraging sustainable transport in the Borough including cycling and bus transport, and will include consideration of accessibility to sustainable modes of transport to all residents.

**Town Centre Improvements:** the Council will work with stakeholders to improve the local environment of the town centres and major employment areas. This will include public realm improvements which will enable more accessible environments to be created which will benefit disabled people, the elderly, and parents with young children.

The strategy is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the other protected characteristics not mentioned above.

If the policy, function or activity is considered to be relevant to equality then a full Equality Impact Assessment must be carried out.

**C. If the policy, function or activity is not considered to be relevant to equality, what are the reasons for this conclusion?** What evidence has been used to make this decision? A simple statement of 'no relevance' or 'no data' is not sufficient.

The Strategy emerged from the finding of an economic assessment, business survey and consultation process, which were used to produce a SWOT analysis. The data used in the economic assessment was from publically available sources (with the exception of Experian data which was purchased). There are certain limitations to the data available which is often at a local authority level only. For example skills data is available at ward level but is not available for different ethnic groups or age cohorts etc. Where possible information will be gathered during the running of the projects to provide a greater understanding of socio-economic issues affecting the protected characteristics.

From all the available evidence that has been gathered Officers conclude that all known impacts are positive and therefore do not feel there is a need for a further assessment.

This screening assessment will need to be referred to the Equality Group for challenge before sign-off.

Date completed:

Sign-off by senior manager:



