



Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland

**Multi-Equality
Impact Assessment
Toolkit**

Stage 3: Full MEIA

Stage 3: Full Multi-Equality Impact Assessment

The Full MEIA will be undertaken where:

- It is identified at Stage 1 that the policy has overall high or medium relevance to equalities, or
- Following Stage 2, if the Partial MEIA points to a real concern about the policy in terms of differential impact, which is echoed by the views of the experts/relevant groups.

The Full MEIA will build on Stage 1 and Stage 2, expanding further in light of formal consultation, research, data collection and analysis. It will also state clear recommendations as to what changes or amendments have occurred/ are necessary as a result of the MEIA.

A Full MEIA will be undertaken in 6 stages:

- Identifying what the policy is designed to achieve
- Information gathering and consultation
- Assessing the impact
- Recommendations and actions
- Performance monitoring and reporting
- Publication

The following sections outline each stage of the Full MEIA in more detail and should be referred to when completing the proforma at Appendix A. All sections must be completed.

Section 1: Function / Policy Details

The first step of the assessment process is to identify what the policy is designed to achieve. This will help you to identify the needs of affected groups or people. It will also help you identify who may be affected by the policy.

Question/Heading	Description
Name of function / policy	Provide the name of the policy, strategy, project, funding, initiative etc that requires an Impact Assessment.
Policy Officer	This is the person who is responsible for developing or reviewing the policy.
Lead Service / Partnership	This will be the Service / Partnership that takes primary responsibility for the MEIA. For a partnership function / policy the need to undertake the MEIA remains.
Impact Assessment Team	This is the group of people carrying out the impact assessment relative to the policy.
Is this function / policy new or existing?	This will indicate to the team whether the MEIA is part of the development process, review process or a retrospective MEIA.
Why is this being assessed?	A brief description outlining why the policy is being impact assessed.
What are the main aims of the policy?	Give a brief summary outlining the aims of the policy. The aims may include reference to other documents such as the Service plan, Community Plans or legislative requirements.
Who are the main target groups / beneficiaries?	Identify the people or groups that may be affected by the policy. For example, the main target groups/beneficiaries of free school meals will be school pupils, parents and guardians.
What are the intended outcomes of the policy?	Provide a summary of what the policy intends to achieve.

Section 2: Information Gathering and Consultation

In order to complete this section you must:

- Consider how the policy will affect each of the equality target groups
- Gather and collate evidence which will support the assessment and inform recommendations
- Clearly identify who you consulted / involved and detail how and when

Gathering evidence and information

You are required to understand the different needs and experiences of the people you are making the policy for - you will need to gather information about the target group(s) for your policy. You must know who will be affected by it and how.

The evidence/information may come from a variety of sources including:

- Statistical information
- Identified local and national groups
- Equality group organisations
- Feedback from service users
- Officer knowledge and experience

The evidence itself may include:

- Facts, figures
- Research findings
- Minutes of meetings
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Management information
- Consultation exercises

Important factors to remember when gathering information:

- Evidence may indicate that there may or may not be an equality impact associated with the policy
- The absence of evidence does not necessarily mean that there is no impact on equality
- If it is established that there is an issue, which only has a 'small' impact on a few people, this does not mean that there is not an issue to be considered.

Consultation and involvement

Dialogue with and the involvement of equalities communities in the development of policies and the impact assessment process is very valuable. The Council is legally required under equalities legislation to do this.

You should consult and engage as widely as possible with relevant public bodies, voluntary, community and other interest groups with an interest in the subject matter to obtain views and perspectives about your policy. By working in this way you will be able to gain a different perspective on the policy you are developing.

It is important to ensure that sufficient time and resources are dedicated to the consultation process to encourage full participation by marginalised groups. Consultation should begin as early as possible with the relevant groups and individuals.

Aberdeenshire Council maintains a Consultation database. All consultations run by or in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council will be recorded on this database. The details and conclusions of previous consultations can be accessed on this database, therefore it is recommended that you check the database to establish if any recent consultations could inform your work. The consultation database and the consultation toolkit can be accessed on Arcadia, within the Corporate Communications section.

It is essential that the format of the consultation process (for example, presentation, questionnaire, email etc), the date, scale etc be documented on the MEIA form.

Note: In addition to consultation, it is a further requirement to **involve** disabled people in the MEIA process.

Section 3: Assessing the Impact

This step is the most critical part of the full MEIA process and care must be used when identifying negative / positive impacts. In order to ensure depth of analysis, take individuals / groups based on your evidence in the previous section, and take them through a customer / service user journey relating to the function / policy. Try to ascertain whether there is potential or actual differential impact.

3.1 It is important to look firstly at the differential impact of the policy and then to look at the adverse impact of the policy.

Differential impact

Differential impact will occur when a particular group has been affected differently by the policy in either a positive, neutral or negative way. The potential for differential impact will have been identified at the screening stage.

- A **positive** impact is one that can improve equal opportunities and/or relations between different groups. The positive impact may be differential where the positive impact on one equality target group is likely to be greater than on another. This is permissible but you must always be able to demonstrate that positive impacts are justifiable in law and do not amount to discrimination (direct or indirect) for any other equality target groups.
- A **neutral** impact on the equality target groups indicates an impact that is neither positive nor negative. This too is permissible but you should think about ways to develop your policy so that it has a positive impact on the target groups.
- A **negative** impact is one that could disadvantage one or more equality target groups. This disadvantage may be differential where the negative impact on one equality target group is likely to be greater than on another.

Adverse Impact

After differential impact has been identified, a judgement must be made as to whether the differential impact is adverse based on an assessment of the accumulated information. If the impact is adverse the policy makers must consider whether it is or is not likely to discriminate. If so then consideration should be given as to how the adverse impact can be avoided. If the adverse impact is unavoidable this should be justified. This is possible in some circumstances as there are policies which are intended to increase equality of opportunity by requiring or permitting positive action, or action to redress disadvantages.

3.2 Cross cutting issues

The MEIA process allows us to consider the relationship between belonging to an equality target group and the effect of wider cross cutting issues, which is helpful when assessing positive and negative impacts.

The following are examples of cross cutting issues which should be considered as part of the MEIA process. It is also important to note that the MEIA process allows individual project teams and officers to identify additional cross cutting issues that are relevant to their specific function or policy.

Cross cutting issues:

- Employees
- Health
- Access (including rural isolation and geographic location)
- Low income
- Literacy difficulties
- Unemployed
- Homelessness
- Carers/caring responsibilities
- Drug and Alcohol users

When assessing positive impacts, considering the wider cross cutting issues involved allows us to identify more easily those people who will benefit most from the policy.

Similarly, when assessing negative impacts, identifying any cross cutting issues will allow officers completing the MEIA to pin point more accurately those people who could be particularly affected by any negative impacts that the policy may have. This is important because cross cutting issues can act to heighten any potential disadvantages the equality target groups may experience.

The effect of cross cutting issues on negative impacts should be thought of as layers which have a compounding effect on each other making a person increasingly more vulnerable to discrimination.

Section 4: Recommendations and Actions

If your policy is likely to have a negative or adverse impact on an equality target group you may be required to make changes or revise the policy to lessen or remove the impact. It may also be the case that you are required to discontinue with the policy. However in all cases you will be required to state what actions need to be taken to eliminate these impact(s).

It is important to ensure that the recommendations and actions are SMART:

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Timebound

Any adverse impact that cannot be resolved must be detailed and justification provided as to why you should continue with the policy.

A few useful questions to consider:

- Are there any alternative measures or mitigation that could be taken which would achieve the desired outcome without the identified adverse impact?
- If so, could the alternative measures or mitigation lead to adverse impact for other equality groups?
- Can you justify proceeding with an indirectly discriminatory policy, i.e. can you argue credibly that the policy aims and objectives were essential and justifiable to the organisation and that the means you employed in achieving them were appropriate and necessary?

Section 5: Performance Monitoring and Reporting

MEIA should not be seen as a one off exercise. The true impact of a function / policy may only become clear once it is implemented or operating in practice. Existing and normal monitoring practices need to be adapted to include the monitoring of impact on equality target groups.

Please explain how monitoring will be undertaken, when it will take place and who is responsible for undertaking it, making reference to any equalities action plans / service plans.

Consider the following:

- How will the policy be monitored after full implementation?
- Have any reviews of the policy been planned? If so, how often and who is responsible?
- Will a further impact assessment be carried out? If so, why and when?
- How could the policy be improved, particularly in respect of promoting equality and good relations?

Section 6: Publishing the Results of the Assessment

It is a legal responsibility to make the results of the MEIA available to the public, and as a minimum standard, it must be available on the Aberdeenshire Council website.

Prior to publication, the MEIA form must be signed off following completion of all other sections. Two signatures are required:

Head of Service or Service Representative

The Head of Service has knowledge of the subject and responsibility within the Service to ensure that the content is of an acceptable standard, and that the actions are SMART.

Quality Assurance

A 'buddy' should be identified from a pool of existing MEIA Lead Officers to quality assure the process of MEIA (each Council service has a MEIA Lead Officer). As a result the 'buddy' should be fully trained on MEIA and external to the Service.

The 'buddy' should be satisfied that the process has been followed according to the guidance, and that all available evidence, including consultation, has been considered in reaching the decisions. As part of the Quality assurance process the 'buddy' will complete the proforma at Appendix B. This will document the process and provide detail of any amendments recommended.

Once signed by both signatories, the Policy author should email the completed MEIA form to the Policy Officer (Equalities), Chief Executive for publication.



Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland

**Multi-Equality
Impact Assessment**

Full MEIA Form

Name of Policy: Aberdeenshire Open Space Strategy

Date of Assessment: 21 November 2008

Before commencing with this Full Multi-Equalities Impact Assessment (MEIA), please make reference to the Full MEIA Notes, which give guidance on each of the sections included.

Section 1: Function / Policy Details

Name of Function / Policy	Aberdeenshire Open Space Strategy
Lead Service / Partnership	T&I, Landscape Services
Policy Officer (Name / Position)	Irina Birnie Project Co-ordinator Open Space
Impact Assessment Team (Names / Positions)	Irina Birnie Gillian Buchanan Daniel Harrington

Is this function / policy...

New? (✓)	Existing? (✓)
√	

What are the main aims of the policy?	-To improve policies and procedures in relation to management of open space -To promote mental and physical wellbeing of Aberdeenshire residents. -To promote community identity and cohesion -To improve the landscaping and visual appearance of communities. -To conserve habitats and biodiversity -To promote integration between SUDS and open space
Who are the main target groups / beneficiaries?	-Residents of Aberdeenshire, especially those living in towns and villages.
What are the intended outcomes of the policy?	-Delivery of resources and structures required to implement the Strategy, and as part of this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An open space policy within the Local Development Plan • An evidence based strategy to provide justification for further detailed application of the policy, • Robust mechanisms for the funding and maintenance of open space.

Section 2: Information Gathering and Consultation

Gathering information and evidence used to assist the impact assessment process.

Information / Evidence	✓relevant box	List details (source, date, scale etc.)
Community consultation	✓	1) Consultation with community councils on findings of open space audit. 2) Consultation as part of Main Issues Report of Local Development Plan
Research (including websites & legislation)	✓	Health Impact Assessment of Greenspace: A Guide Aberdeenshire Pitches Strategy (draft 08) National Audit of Sports Facilities (sportscotland 2007) SPP11: Open Space and Physical Activity PAN78:Inclusive Design www.youthscotland.org.uk www.sportscotland.org.uk Please see SEA scoping report for full listing of plans, programmes and strategies relevant to Open Space Strategy, and how these will be taken into account.
Officer knowledge and experience	✓	Development planning, policy planning, environmental issues. Also skills and knowledge of impact assessment team, as well as Board members. (Landscape operations and maintenance experience)
Equalities monitoring data		No specific data
Service user feedback (including complaints)	✓	Through 'truthing' of findings of the open space audit, and consultation on the main Issues Report of the Local Development Plan.
Partner user feedback	✓	Through stakeholder group discussions
Other	✓	Websites of organisations concerned with equal opportunities for sport and recreation, such as that of SportScotland, Girls on the Move etc

Section 3: Assessing the Impacts

What likely impacts or issues does the function / policy have for different people and communities in the following group(s)?

3.1 Identify and describe any likely positive, negative or neutral impacts.

Equality Target Group	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral Impact
Race			√
Gender	Levels of inactivity and obesity are rising across the population, but at a greater rate among teenage girls. The Strategy will contain measures to overcome existing barriers to participation in sport and exercise in this group.		
Disability	OSS to promote maximum access for disabled, and consult with relevant groups on contents of Strategy.		

Age	<p>A number of barriers contribute to a lack of access for elderly to outside spaces. The Strategy will contain proposals to redress inequalities of opportunity in this area.</p> <p>Communities commonly identify lack of facilities for teenagers as an issue: targeted investment and use of developer contributions as a result of community consultations will improve under supply where this arises.</p>		
Religion & Belief		<p>A failure to 'police' certain types of public space, or to close some spaces at night, may encourage behaviour which could be offensive to certain faiths. Eg: in terms of alcohol consumption, dress and noise disturbance. It is uncertain whether the Strategy could encompass these issues.</p>	
Sexual Orientation			√
Other groups (please specify)			

If no impact has been identified, and this is justifiable, please go to Section 5.

3.2 Have any cross cutting issues been identified?

Possible cross cutting issues you should consider for the purpose of this MEIA are employees, health problems, access (including rural isolation), low income, unemployed, literacy difficulties, homelessness and caring responsibilities, or any other relevant issue(s).

A cross cutting issue is that of long term maintenance of open space in Aberdeenshire settlements. Who takes over open space in new developments, and who pays for its maintenance, is often not seen as a planning issue. However, removing this responsibility to third parties is increasingly resulting in problems of poorly maintained open space, unfit for purpose, with the range of associated and chronic problems this can give rise to. Areas of affordable housing are particularly prone a lack of quality open space, reinforcing equality and inclusiveness issues across the Shire.

The current economic climate is more likely to mean that developers and landowners are keen to renegotiate on housing schemes, and where possible to opt out of commuted payments. This is unlikely to fit with the broader objectives of the Open Space Strategy, and the public interest : it is important to remain focussed on longer term outcomes, and bear in mind that markets will recover.

A second cross cutting issue is that of communicating the Strategy, as there will be groups who are less likely to engage in on-line feedback. Ways of engaging with these sectors might include consultations with the groups they represent, such as the Disability forum and Age Concern. However, this does not take into account the fact that many Aberdeenshire residents not in 'minority groups' may simply prefer not to use the internet.

Section 4: Recommendations and Actions

4.1 As a result of this assessment, consultation, research and available evidence collected, state whether there will need to be any changes made / planned to the function / policy. Please clearly detail practical actions you would take to reduce or remove any identified adverse / negative impact. Please ensure that recommendations and actions are SMART.

Recommendation	Action	Who	When	Expected Outcome
Ask for feedback from disabled groups	Send draft open space strategy to Aberdeenshire disability forum and ask for comments	Project co-ordinator	Project stages 2 & 7 (both public consultations)	Any suggested improvements to be considered for inclusion in Strategy.
Ensure that there is not an over-reliance on electronic media	Ensure that consultation is available in alternative formats.	Project co-ordinator	As above	As above
Ask for feedback from Age Concern Scotland	Ensure that draft Strategy is forwarded to Age Concern	Project co-ordinator	As above	As above

4.2 Detail any adverse impact that cannot be resolved, and justify the recommendation to continue with the policy.

Detail	Justification

<p>An increase in the delivery of open space may give rise to an increase in incidence of anti social behaviour. Even with an increase in resources eg: for park wardens, there is no guarantee that this will not be the case. Adverse impacts could affect all groups, but in particular the elderly, young children and faith groups.</p>	<p>The Council has an Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy in place, and the Open Space Working Group will liaise with the anti-social behaviour officer and the police to reduce the potential for negative impacts eg: b y designing out crime, as far as possible.</p>
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Section 5: Performance Monitoring and Reporting

Please explain how monitoring will be undertaken, when it will take place and who is responsible for undertaking it, making reference to any equalities action plans / service plans.

Aberdeenshire Council is required to monitor the significant environmental effects arising from the Strategy implementation, in accordance with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) directive. Environmental effects cover the nine SEA topics, among which is Population and Human Health. The SEA Scoping report already completed for this Strategy identifies those barriers which give rise to inequalities across different groups, and measures that the Strategy will need to include to address them.

A monitoring report will therefore be integrated into the adopted Open Space Strategy to monitor its significant effects, and the framework for this is shown under Part 5 of the SEA scoping report (Table 5.7)

It is proposed to update the Open Space Strategy every 5 years, or more frequently if required, to take account of any issues and remedial actions that have been revealed through this process.

Section 6: Publishing the Results of the Assessment

Prior to publication, the MEIA need to be agreed and signed off by your Head of Service and Quality Assured by an MEIA Lead officer.

1. Head of Service or Service Representative

Signed:..... Name:..... Date:.....

2. Quality Assurance

Signed:..... Name:..... Date:.....

Please email the completed MEIA to the Policy Officer (Equalities), Chief Executive.

Section 5: Performance Monitoring and Reporting

1. Are you satisfied with the proposed monitoring and reporting of the policy / functions? (How, when and who?)

YES NO

Additional information

Please detail below any points for clarification and recommended actions.

Point for clarification/ Recommendation	Action	When	Who
<p>Section 2</p> <p>Evidence of feedback</p> <p>To what extent have disabled users been involved</p>	<p>Confirm that there is written evidence of feedback from service users and partners.</p> <p>Brief description of disabled user's involvement.</p>	<p>Dates throughout 2009</p> <p>Dates throughout 2009</p>	<p>Stakeholders Group, including service users and partners, being consulted during 2009.</p> <p>Aberdeenshire Access Panel on Stakeholders Group.</p>
<p>Section 3</p> <p>Neutral impact on race</p> <p>Levels of inactivity increasing among teenage girls</p> <p>Negative impact on religion and belief</p>	<p>Can policy be developed to have a positive impact?</p> <p>Is there evidence for this?</p> <p>Could a recommendation be included in Section 4 to address this?</p>	<p>Unlikely</p>	<p>This would be positive discrimination; with no reason and justification.</p> <p>Yes, refer to Youth Scotland/Girls on the Move website and Scottish Government 'Fit for Girls' programme.</p> <p>This is already being addressed through the Community Safety Partnership on a wider society basis.</p>
<p>3.2 Cross cutting issues</p>	<p>Consider using local papers, community centres, swimming pools, community notice boards to communicate strategy. Include as an action in Section 4?</p>	<p>2009</p>	<p>Strategy and open space audit consultation to be advertised in community spaces, as part of consultation.</p>

Signed by officer completing QA:

Vaughan Jennings

Print name: Vaughan Jennings
 Service: Education, Learning & Leisure
 Date of QA: 12/01/09