

Equality impact assessment (EIA) form: evidencing paying due regard to protected characteristics

Whitby Cliff Lift

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যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are public documents. EIAs accompanying reports going to County Councillors for decisions are published with the committee papers on our website and are available in hard copy at the relevant meeting. To help people to find completed EIAs we also publish them in the Equality and Diversity section of our website. This will help people to see for themselves how we have paid due regard in order to meet statutory requirements.

Name of Directorate and Service Area	Environment
Lead Officer and contact details	Chris Bourne
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the EIA	Tony Law
How will you pay due regard? e.g. working group, individual officer	Small group
When did the due regard process start?	Started with a public consultation on 24 th June 2025

Section 1. Please describe briefly what this EIA is about. (e.g. are you starting a new service, changing how you do something, stopping doing something?)

The Whitby Cliff Lift was closed in 2022 when corrosion was found within its structure.

For the last four years the borough and then unitary council have run a free subsidised bus service over the summer to replace the lift.

The Executive is considering a report that proposes to permanently decommission the cliff lift and also to permanently remove the free bus service.

For information, the matter was considered by the Area Committee at its meeting on 19th September 2025, where they resolved to advise Executive to reject the recommendation to decommission the lift and sought further surveys and monitoring of water ingress.

Section 2. Why is this being proposed? What are the aims? What does the authority hope to achieve by it? (e.g. to save money, meet increased demand, do things in a better way.)

The decommissioning of the lift is being proposed :

1. Of the six options, option two is the best option to address the problems facing the lift and the top station.
2. The Council operates in a challenging financial environment and the option to bring the lift back into service, whilst desirable to the community of Whitby, would add to the financial burden and reduce funding that would be available for other higher priorities.
3. The lift has been closed for three years without much detriment to Whitby or impact upon the chalet lets.
4. There is too much uncertainty surrounding the need for waterproofing of the shaft. The surveys alone to establish the need will cost almost as much as the option to decommission the lift; and, if required, the potential cost of up to £5m is disproportionate to the value of the service proved by the lift.
5. Bringing the lift back into use will also create an revenue burden requiring ongoing maintenance and the employment of a seasonal lift attendant.

The cancellation of the bus service is being proposed because :

1. There is no revenue budget for the operation of the bus and the cost has been funded from reserves which are now fully utilised.
2. The passenger usage figures for the bus are very low.
3. There were a lot of criticisms of the bus service in the consultation feedback.
4. The Council does not provide a free bus service up and down other steep hills within North Yorkshire.

Section 3. What will change? What will be different for customers and/or staff?

The cliff lift closed in 2022 and there will be no change as a result of this decision.

If approved, the bus service will no longer be provided and all members of the public, including the disabled and elderly would have to make their own way down to the promenade.

Section 4. Involvement and consultation (What involvement and consultation has been done regarding the proposal and what are the results? What consultation will be needed and how will it be done?)

A public consultation was held over the summer which started on 24 June 2025 and closed on 7 September 2025. In order to reach as many people as possible the consultation was:

- Hosted electronically on the Council's website.
- Paper copies were available in the Beach Management Centre.
- Posters erected in local venues with a QR code.
- Notified to Whitby Town Council, Whitby NYC Members and the local MP with a request to publicise the consultation to constituents and provision of information on how to access the consultation.
- Promoted on social media.
- Good coverage in local media.

The high level findings of the public consultation are:

- The Council received 753 responses to the consultation.
- 49% of respondents were Whitby residents.
- 32% of respondents stated they were a disabled person or had a disability.
- 79% of respondents had previously used the cliff lift.
- Only 25% of respondents had used the replacement bus service.
- A majority (over 70%) consider the service important or very important.
- Respondents were asked to rank four funding options. The most frequent first-choice preferences were:
 - Continue funding the free bus service: (274)
 - Part subsidise and charge all passengers: (84)
 - Part subsidise and exempt disabled users: (172)
 - Remove the bus service altogether: (130)
 - When considering all rankings, removal of the service was most frequently ranked last, indicating low support for discontinuation.
- The open comments show 182 mentions of a desire to fix the lift.

The consultation reveals strong public support for maintaining or restoring access to the beach via either the cliff lift or a reliable replacement service. The disabled and elderly communities are particularly impacted, and many respondents view the lift as a heritage asset worth preserving. There is low support for removing the service, and many suggest modest charges or alternative funding to sustain it.

However, this needs to be placed in the context of only 195 people (25%) having previously used the bus service.

A full analysis of the consultation findings is in the embedded file below :

Section 5. What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

The decision to decommission the lift will cost approximately £232k in capital funding.

The decision will be revenue cost neutral for the Council as the lift does not have an existing revenue budget

The decision to discontinue the free bus service will be cost neutral. There is no revenue budget for the operation of the bus and the cost has been funded from reserves which are now fully utilised.

Essentially the decisions being made are to prevent revenue cost increases in a challenging financial environment which would reduce funding for that would be available for other higher priorities.

Section 6. How will this proposal affect people with protected characteristics?	No impact	Make things better	Make things worse	Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.
Age			x	
Disability				
Sex	x			
Race	x			
Gender reassignment	x			
Sexual orientation	x			
Religion or belief	x			
Pregnancy or maternity			x	
Marriage or civil partnership	x			

Section 7. How will this proposal affect people who...	No impact	Make things better	Make things worse	Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.
..live in a rural area?	x			
...have a low income?	x			
...are carers (unpaid family or friend)?	x			
..... are from the Armed Forces Community	x			

Section 8. Geographic impact – Please detail where the impact will be (please tick all that apply)

North Yorkshire wide	N/A
Craven	N/A
Hambleton	N/A
Harrogate	N/A
Richmondshire	N/A
Ryedale	N/A
Scarborough	x
Selby	N/A

If you have ticked one or more areas, will specific town(s)/village(s) be particularly impacted? If so, please specify below.

Whitby and visitors to Whitby will be specifically impacted due to this being the location of the lift.

Section 9. Will the proposal affect anyone more because of a combination of protected characteristics? (e.g. older women or young gay men) State what you think the effect may be and why, providing evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.

No.

Section 10. Next steps to address the anticipated impact. Select one of the following options and explain why this has been chosen. (Remember: we have an anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can access services and work for us)	Tick option chosen
1. No adverse impact - no major change needed to the proposal. There is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact identified.	
2. Adverse impact - adjust the proposal - The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We will change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, or we will achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people.	
3. Adverse impact - continue the proposal - The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We cannot change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, nor can we achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people. (There must be compelling reasons for continuing with proposals which will have the most adverse impacts. Get advice from Legal Services)	X
4. Actual or potential unlawful discrimination - stop and remove the proposal – The EIA identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination. It must be stopped.	
Explanation of why option has been chosen. (Include any advice given by Legal Services.) The decision to discontinue the provision of the bus service has been chosen because :	
1. There is a minor adverse impact upon a small number of people.	

2. It is not reasonable to fund a service that provides a disproportionate benefit to such a small number of people (as evidenced by the low response to the consultation).
3. North Yorkshire is a county which is known for its hills. In inland areas free bus services are not provided to enable transport up and down hills for people of limited mobility.
4. The proposal will create a revenue growth at a time when the Council has other higher priorities for essential funding. In the context of the budget being estimated to be £47m underfunded next year.

Section 11. If the proposal is to be implemented how will you find out how it is really affecting people? (How will you monitor and review the changes?)

Monitor volume of any complaints received from members of the public.

Section 12. Action plan. List any actions you need to take which have been identified in this EIA, including post implementation review to find out how the outcomes have been achieved in practice and what impacts there have actually been on people with protected characteristics.

Action	Lead	By when	Progress	Monitoring arrangements

Section 13. Summary Summarise the findings of your EIA, including impacts, recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

The findings show that there is an adverse impact to a small number of people.

But the removal of the bus service is justified due to the impact being on a small number of people.

Section 14. Sign off section

This full EIA was completed by:

Name: Chris Bourne
Job title: Head of Harbours and Coastal Infrastructure
Directorate: Environment
Signature:

Completion date: 22 September 2025

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature): Callum McKeon

Date: 24/09/2025