
Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

Stage 1 Scoping and Assessing for Relevance

Section 1 Details of the Proposal

A. Title of Proposal: Scottish Borders Weddings Project

B. What is it? A new Policy/Strategy/Practice/Project

C. Description of the proposal: The Scottish Borders Wedding Project aims to boost the region's profile as a wedding destination by enhancing marketing and social media visibility, delivering a modern and accessible weddings website, streamlining registrar booking and payment processes, and ensuring complete, high-quality venue data across partners—all with the primary goal of increasing wedding bookings, improving customer experience, and generating Income from Registrar fees for SBC and also huge economic benefit for local communities.

D. Service Area: Customer Services - Registrars

Department: Resilient Communities

E. Lead Officer: Young, Gillian

F. Other Officers/Partners involved: (List names, job titles and organisations)

Adam Drummond - Communications Team SOSE, Live Borders

G. Date IIA completed: 30/01/2026

Section 2 Will there be any impacts as a result of the relationship between this proposal and other policies?

No

If yes, - please state here

Section 3 Legislative Requirements

3.1 Which groups of people do you think will be or potentially could be, impacted by the implementation of this proposal?

(You should consider employees, clients, customers / service users, and any other relevant groups).

In considering the impact of your proposal on people with equality characteristics, you should take into account the fact that the Equality Act 2010 covers:

- A. **Elimination of discrimination (both direct & indirect), victimisation and harassment.** (Will the proposal discriminate? Or help eliminate discrimination?)
- B. **Promotion of equality of opportunity?** (Will your proposal help or hinder the Council with this)
- C. **Fostering good relations?** (Will your proposal help to foster or encourage good relations between those who have different equality characteristics?)

Protected Characteristics:

Please describe the potential impacts, and how any negative impacts could be mitigated. Some negative impacts may not be capable of mitigation, but the proposal as a whole may still be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving its outcomes.

Age: Older or younger people or a specific age grouping

30/01/2026 Scottish Borders Wedding Service doesn't discriminate against individuals on the basis of age. However, both younger and older people may experience different types of barriers when accessing or engaging with the service, and these must be appropriately considered to prevent indirect disadvantage. Younger people—particularly those planning their first marriage—may be less familiar with the legal processes involved in civil ceremonies, documentation requirements or timelines. Clear, accessible, and jargon-free information is therefore essential to support effective decision-making. Younger users may also rely more heavily on digital access and social media; the service's enhanced online presence and redesigned website will support this, provided that content is easy to navigate and relevant guidance is clearly signposted. Conversely, older adults may be disproportionately affected by increased reliance on digital systems if they have lower digital confidence or limited access to online platforms. Ensuring that alternative contact routes remain available—such as telephone support, in-person appointments, and accessible printed materials—will help prevent digital exclusion. Older users may also have differing mobility or accessibility needs when attending venues or registrar offices, requiring clear information on access arrangements and flexibility in appointment scheduling. The service must also avoid assumptions based on age, such as presuming that younger couples prefer certain ceremony styles or that older adults require less support. All users should be offered the same level of information, guidance and personalisation, regardless of age. Overall, while no direct negative impacts have been identified, ensuring flexible access routes, clear communication, and age-inclusive practice will support equitable participation for both younger and older people. With

appropriate mitigations in place, the proposal is considered a proportionate and inclusive approach.

Disability: A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This may be visible or invisible, progressive or recurring.

30/01/2026 Scottish Borders Wedding Service doesn't discriminate against disabled people. However, individuals with physical, sensory, cognitive, or mental health impairments—whether visible or invisible, progressive or fluctuating—may experience particular barriers when interacting with the service. Ensuring accessibility across all stages of the customer journey is therefore essential to avoid indirect discrimination and uphold the Council's duties under equality legislation. As the service increasingly incorporates online processes—including digital information, enquiry forms and booking systems—there is a risk that users with certain impairments (such as visual impairment, neurodivergence, learning disabilities, or limited dexterity) may find these platforms difficult to navigate if accessibility standards are not fully met. Accessible website design, compatibility with screen readers, clear structure, plain language, and alternative formats are therefore required to ensure equal access. Individuals who experience digital exclusion may also require non-digital options, such as telephone or in-person support, to complete necessary steps. Disabled users may face additional barriers regarding physical access to venues or registration offices, especially where historic wedding locations have inherent structural limitations. Clear, detailed information on venue accessibility—including mobility access, parking, toilet facilities and sensory environment—should be provided so that disabled couples can make informed decisions. Where feasible, reasonable adjustments should be offered during appointments, such as extended time, quiet spaces, or alternative communication methods. Some disabled individuals, particularly those with fluctuating or episodic conditions (e.g., chronic pain, fatigue, or certain mental health conditions), may require flexibility in scheduling or may need to reschedule appointments at short notice. Staff awareness and a responsive approach to such needs will help ensure that service delivery is inclusive and supportive. Overall, while no direct discriminatory impacts have been identified, the provision of accessible digital and physical environments, reasonable adjustments, inclusive communication, and staff training will ensure disabled people can engage equitably with the Scottish Borders Wedding Service. With these mitigations in place, the proposal is considered a proportionate and inclusive means of improving access and customer experience for all users.

Sex: Women and men (girls and boys)

30/01/2026 There is no evidence to suggest that the Scottish Borders Wedding Service directly discriminates against individuals on the basis of sex. However, it is recognised that women and men may experience the service differently due to broader societal patterns and expectations. These differences should be considered to avoid any indirect

disadvantage and to ensure equitable access for all users. Women often take on a disproportionate share of emotional and administrative labour in wedding planning. Where service processes are complex, time-intensive or require repeated follow-up, this may result in a greater burden being placed on women. Ensuring that all information is clearly presented, easy to navigate, and available through multiple communication channels can help distribute planning responsibilities more evenly within couples, regardless of sex. Men may, in some cases, be less familiar with detailed administrative or planning tasks associated with wedding arrangements. If information is unclear, fragmented, or relies on assumptions about prior knowledge, men may be disproportionately affected. Service materials must therefore remain neutral and accessible, avoiding gendered expectations about who is responsible for specific planning activities. All communications should be written to avoid gender stereotyping, including assumptions about roles within relationships or who will interact with the service. Staff should be trained to engage impartially and respectfully with both partners, ensuring that each individual receives equal attention, support and opportunity to participate in decision-making. No differential impact is expected for girls or boys, as the service is provided exclusively to adults; however, the presence of children at ceremonies or appointments may affect logistical needs for some users. Where relevant, staff should remain sensitive to parental responsibilities when arranging appointments or providing service guidance. Overall, while no direct negative impacts have been identified, awareness of gendered social patterns and the implementation of accessible, unbiased communication will help ensure that both women and men can engage with the Scottish Borders Wedding Service on an equal basis. With these measures in place, the proposal is considered proportionate, inclusive, and aligned with equality duties.

Gender Reassignment: Anybody who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

30/01/2026 Scottish Borders Wedding Service doesn't discriminate against individuals who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender reassignment. However, trans and non-binary people may experience particular barriers or sensitivities when engaging with registration and wedding services, and these must be carefully considered to avoid indirect discrimination and ensure an inclusive customer experience. Individuals undergoing gender reassignment may have identity documents that reflect different stages of their transition. If service processes are inflexible regarding acceptable documentation, or if staff lack clarity on what evidence is required, this may lead to repeated explanations, delays, or unnecessary discomfort. Clear public guidance on identification requirements, presented in a sensitive and non-intrusive manner, is therefore essential. There is also a risk of unintentional misgendering or inappropriate questioning if staff are unfamiliar or insufficiently trained in gender identity awareness. Such interactions may cause distress and deter individuals from accessing the service. Staff should therefore receive training in inclusive language, respectful communication, and how to provide support without assumptions regarding gender identity or transition history. Privacy is a significant concern for some trans individuals, particularly those who are not publicly "out" or

who wish to avoid disclosing details of their transition. All communications, appointments and customer interactions must therefore protect confidentiality, minimise unnecessary collection of personal information, and ensure that no individual is placed in a position where their transgender status is inadvertently revealed. Where relevant, website content, ceremony information and booking forms should use neutral, inclusive language and avoid heteronormative or gender-specific assumptions. Processes should be designed so that both partners feel equally recognised and respected, regardless of gender identity or stage of transition. Overall, while no direct discriminatory impacts have been identified, ensuring staff awareness, providing clear documentation guidance, maintaining strict confidentiality, and promoting inclusive communication will support equitable access for trans and non-binary users. With these measures in place, the proposal is considered a proportionate and inclusive approach aligned with the Council's equality duties.

Marriage or Civil Partnership: People who are married or in a civil partnership

30/01/2026 Equal Access to Services - Individuals in a marriage or civil partnership should have unrestricted and equal access to all aspects of the wedding service, including ceremony bookings, registrar support, venue information and administrative processes. No procedural differences in how individuals are treated based on marital status. Avoiding Assumptions About Roles Service design must avoid gendered or traditional assumptions about who leads the wedding planning within a couple. Communications, forms and website guidance should remain neutral, recognising that either partner may be the primary contact. Affordability and Financial Impact Changes to wedding-related fees (civil or religious ceremonies) will affect couples uniformly. Privacy and Sensitivity: Some couples may prefer a degree of privacy in early planning stages. Online and staff-led interactions should ensure confidential handling of personal data, particularly where the couple is navigating sensitive situations (e.g., previous marriages, blended families). All communications (digital or printed) should refer to partners neutrally and respectfully, avoiding language that implies one partner must take the lead. Information should be accessible to both partners equally, reducing reliance on one person to disseminate details. Documents confirm no expected positive or negative impact for people married or in civil partnerships in terms of service availability or outcome

Pregnancy and Maternity: (refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth).

Answer: 30/01/2026 There is no evidence to suggest that the Scottish Borders Wedding Service directly advantages or disadvantages people who are pregnant or within the 26-week maternity protection period. However, individuals in this group may experience specific needs arising from pregnancy, childbirth, and early parenthood, and the service must ensure that these are appropriately supported to avoid any indirect discrimination. Pregnancy-related health considerations—such as fatigue, reduced mobility, or the need to attend medical appointments—may affect a person's ability to engage with in-person

processes. In the postnatal period, caring responsibilities and recovery may similarly constrain availability. Where booking appointments, submitting documentation, or attending registrar interviews requires physical presence, these factors may limit participation if not accommodated. The service should therefore ensure that flexible scheduling, remote communication options, and alternatives to in-person attendance are readily available. Physical accessibility is also an important consideration, as some venues or offices may pose challenges for those with pregnancy-related mobility changes or those managing prams or newborns. Clear communication about venue facilities, accessibility features, and available support is essential to enable informed decision-making. Staff should maintain a sensitive and supportive approach, avoiding assumptions about family arrangements or parental roles, and ensuring privacy when discussing personal circumstances. Overall, while no disproportionate impacts have been identified, the provision of accessible information, flexible access routes, and supportive customer-care measures will help ensure that pregnant individuals and new parents experience fair and equitable access to the Scottish Borders Wedding Service. The approach is therefore considered a proportionate means of delivering service improvements while upholding equality duties.

Race: including colour, nationality, ethnic origins, including minorities (e.g. gypsy travellers, refugees, migrants and asylum seekers)

30/01/2026 There is no evidence within current project documentation to suggest that the Scottish Borders Wedding Service directly advantages or disadvantages individuals on the basis of race, colour, nationality, or ethnic origin. However, people from minority ethnic backgrounds—including Gypsy/Traveller communities, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers—may encounter specific barriers which, if not addressed, could result in indirect discrimination. Language considerations are a key factor. Individuals whose first language is not English may find it more difficult to understand the legal requirements, documentation processes, or terminology associated with marriage and civil partnership. Without clear, plain-English guidance and access to translation or interpretation support where needed, these users may experience reduced ability to navigate the service effectively. People from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds may also have varied expectations around wedding customs, ceremonies or marital processes. If staff are not confident in supporting diverse cultural needs or explaining the distinctions between cultural and legal requirements in Scotland, this could cause confusion or discomfort for service users from minority groups. Additionally, certain racial or ethnic groups—particularly refugees, migrants and asylum seekers—may have concerns about documentation, immigration status, or interactions with official bodies. Clear, transparent information about what forms of identification and evidence are required, and reassurance that the process does not rely on immigration enforcement, will help mitigate these concerns. For Gypsy/Traveller communities and other itinerant groups, access issues may arise when digital or location-based services do not align well with mobile lifestyles or community needs. Ensuring flexible access routes and clear information supports equitable participation. Overall, while no direct discriminatory impacts are anticipated, the provision of culturally sensitive communication, accessible information, and clear guidance on documentation requirements will ensure that the

Scottish Borders Wedding Service remains inclusive and accessible to all racial and ethnic groups. With these mitigations in place, the proposal is considered a proportionate and fair means of achieving service improvements.

Religion or Belief: different religious or philosophical beliefs, customs (including atheists and those with no aligned belief) e.g. Christianity, Islam, Hindu, pacifism, vegetarianism, gender critical.

30/01/2026 There is no evidence to suggest that the Scottish Borders Wedding Service directly discriminates against individuals on the basis of religion or belief. However, people of different faiths, belief systems, or non-belief may interact with the service in varying ways, particularly where cultural or religious traditions shape expectations around marriage ceremonies. It is therefore important that the service remains sensitive to a diverse range of religious and belief practices to avoid any indirect disadvantage. Some faith groups hold specific customs, symbolic traditions, or requirements associated with marriage. While civil marriages conducted by registrars must follow statutory guidelines, couples may wish to incorporate readings, rituals, or symbolic gestures that reflect their beliefs. The service should provide clear information to help couples understand what can be accommodated within a civil ceremony, while ensuring that personalisation remains respectful and inclusive. Language and communication barriers may also affect faith communities, particularly recent migrants or those from minority religious backgrounds. Ensuring accessible, plain-language information and the option to request translation or interpretation support can help avoid misunderstandings and ensure that all users feel confident engaging with the process. Additionally, some individuals may prefer particular days, times, or venues due to religious observance or cultural practices. Offering flexibility in scheduling where operationally feasible, and providing clear guidance on available ceremony locations, can support equitable access. Staff awareness is also essential: registrars and customer support teams should remain sensitive to religious dress, dietary requirements during meetings, and variations in naming conventions to ensure respectful engagement. Overall, while no direct impacts have been identified, maintaining culturally aware practice, providing accessible and neutral information, and offering reasonable flexibility will ensure that individuals of all religions and beliefs can access the Scottish Borders Wedding Service on an equal basis.

Sexual Orientation: e.g. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Heterosexual

30/01/2026 Scottish Borders Wedding Service doesn't discriminate against individuals on the basis of sexual orientation. Civil marriage and civil partnership processes in Scotland apply equally to all eligible couples, and the service is designed to be inclusive of people of all sexual orientations. However, it remains important to recognise and mitigate potential indirect barriers that may be experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual or other minority-orientation couples. Some users may have heightened concerns about confidentiality, privacy, or the sensitivity of staff when discussing relationship details or

personal information, particularly if they have previously experienced discrimination. To ensure equitable access, all staff involved in providing wedding services must demonstrate inclusive practice, use respectful language, and avoid assumptions about the gender of a partner or the nature of a relationship. Clear communication about ceremony options, personalisation, and legal requirements is essential, as same-sex couples may wish to incorporate elements that reflect their identity and relationship. The service should ensure that all written and digital materials use neutral, inclusive language and imagery, avoiding heteronormative assumptions that could make the process feel less welcoming to LGBTQ+ users. Additionally, individuals who are not publicly “out” or who have concerns about stigma may prefer discretion when making enquiries or attending appointments. Ensuring private meeting spaces, secure handling of personal data, and sensitivity around communication channels will help prevent any inadvertent disclosure of sexual orientation. Overall, while no direct negative impacts are anticipated, the adoption of inclusive communication, supportive staff training, and confidentiality-focused processes will ensure that people of all sexual orientations can access the Scottish Borders Wedding Service fairly and confidently. With these mitigations in place, the proposal is considered a proportionate and non-discriminatory approach.

3.2 Fairer Scotland Duty

This duty places a legal responsibility on Scottish Borders Council (SBC) to actively consider (give due regard) to how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage when making strategic decisions.

The duty is set at a strategic level - these are the key, high level decisions that SBC will take. This would normally include strategy documents, decisions about setting priorities, allocating resources and commissioning services.

Is the proposal strategic?

Answer: No

If No go to Section 4

If Yes, Please describe the potential impacts, and how any negative impacts could be mitigated. Some negative impacts may not be capable of mitigation, but the proposal as a whole may still be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving its outcomes.

Low and/or No Wealth: 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.

Material Deprivation – 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

Area Deprivation – where you live (e.g. rural areas), where you work (e.g. accessibility of transport), see rural proofing guidance

Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parents' education, employment and income

Care experienced people

Answer:

Carers paid and unpaid including family members

Homelessness

Addictions and substance use

Those involved within the criminal justice system

3.3 Consumer Duty

This duty places a legal responsibility on Scottish Borders Council (SBC) to have regard to the matters listed below.

This applies to strategic matters so only complete this section if you have marked “Yes” in Section 3.2

How will the proposal impact on users or potential users of the service? E.g. Will the proposal affect the way in which people can access services, will it improve the range of choice accessible to service users, will it improve or hinder access to information for service users?

If there are any negative impacts, do you intend to mitigate these and, if so, how?

3.4 Armed Forces Covenant Duty (Education and Housing/ Homelessness proposals only)

This duty places a legal responsibility on Scottish Borders Council (SBC) to actively consider (give due regard) to the three matters listed below in Education and Housing/ Homelessness matters.

This relates to current and former armed forces personnel (regular or reserve) and their families.

Is the Armed Forces Covenant Duty applicable?

No

If Yes:

For each of the following Covenant Duties, You should cover these two points:

The unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces;

The MOD Statutory Guidance gives the following examples – Link for this can be found here: [MOD Statutory Guidance](#)

- Danger
- Geographical Mobility
- Separation from Family
- Service Law

-
- Unfamiliarity with Civilian Life
 - Hours of Work
 - Stress

How is the proposal impacted by the following principles?

If there are any negative impacts, do you intend to mitigate these and, if so, how?

Some negative impacts may not be capable of mitigation, but the proposal as a whole may still be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving its outcomes.

The principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces;

How is the proposal impacted by the following principles?

If there are any negative impacts, do you intend to mitigate these and, if so, how?

Some negative impacts may not be capable of mitigation, but the proposal as a whole may still be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving its outcomes.

The principle that special provision for Service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.

How is the proposal impacted by the following principles?

If there are any negative impacts, do you intend to mitigate these and, if so, how?

Some negative impacts may not be capable of mitigation, but the proposal as a whole may still be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving its outcomes.

3.5 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Scottish Borders Council (SBC) has a duty not to act, or fail to act, in a manner incompatible with the requirements of the UNCRC.

This only applies to certain matters, where SBC is acting under:

- An Act of the Scottish Parliament.
- Regulations made under an Act of the Scottish Parliament.
- A general (common law) legal duty.

Is the UNCRC Duty applicable?

No

If “Yes”, please complete below

If you have answered yes for any of the Articles, please specify whether it is positive, negative or neutral, the nature of the impact, as well as any mitigations put in place if the effect is negative. Some negative impacts may not be capable of mitigation, but the proposal as a whole may still be regarded as a proportionate means of achieving its outcomes.

Which of the General Principles of the UNCRC are engaged?

Non-discrimination (Article 2)

Impact:

Best interests of the child as a primary consideration (Article 3)

Impact:

Right to life, Survival and Development (Article 6)

Impact:

Right to be heard (Article 12)

Impact:

Other:

Impact:

Section 4 Full Integrated Impact Assessment Required

Select No if you have answered “No” to all of Sections 3.1 – 3.5.

No

If a full impact assessment is not required briefly explain why there are no effects and provide justification for the decision.

There are no specific consideration which would require further consideration as this would not specifically discriminate any one category

Signed by Lead Officer: Young, Gillian

Designation: Customer Advice & Support Manager

Date: 30/01/2026

Counter Signature Director: Craig, Jenni

Date: 30/01/2026