

Colchester Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment Form - An Analysis of the Effects on Equality

Section 1: screening stage

Name of policy, service or strategy to be assessed:

- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan

1. What is the main purpose of the policy, service or strategy?

1. The Council last produced an HRA Business Plan in 2002/03, the same time as Colchester Borough Homes was being created. In subsequent years, a business plan hasn't been produced, with the focus for the HRA primarily centring on meeting the Decent Homes target and managing the Inspace arrangements. The operation of the old subsidy system meant there was uncertainty and volatility on levels of available resources, therefore, the ability to plan further ahead than one year at a time was limited.

However, the introduction of the HRA Reform has brought with it a transfer of risk from Central to Local government; therefore, a more commercial outlook should be followed. To this extent, a more planned approach, both in the short and medium and long-term needs to be adopted, of which a key part is the production of an HRA Business Plan by the Council.

2. What main areas or activities does it cover?

- Sets out the strategic priorities for the next 5 years based on the Housing Investment Programme already considered by Cabinet. Integrated frontline housing customer experience and new housing options and advice service
- Places the Business Plan within a strategic context.
- Looks at the long term aspirations of the Council, such as, "new builds".
- Identifies current housing stock profile and other housing assets (garages/land)

3. Are there changes to an existing policy being considered in this assessment?

- No.

If so what are they?

- Not applicable

3. Who are the main audience, users or customers who will be affected by the policy?

- Council tenants and leaseholders
- Members of staff, CBC and CBH
- Colchester Borough Homes Board
- Councillors
- Residents of the Colchester Borough

4. What outcomes do you want to achieve from the policy, service or strategy?

- The housing stock represents Colchester's highest value asset and its repair and maintenance its largest liability. The property owned is worth many millions of pounds, either as capital assets or as revenue generating assets therefore planning for its sustainable future is important and reflects the council's objectives to work toward providing safe, secure, decent and affordable homes for all.
- The Business Plan should allow an overview of the Council's priorities for investment over the next 5 years this should include known projects and current aspirations. It will also look at longer term aspirations, such as, new builds or such things as land-banking.

5. Are other service areas or partner agencies involved in delivery? If so, please give details below:

- Colchester Borough Homes
- Contractors delivering the programmes

- Planning Authority
- CBC finance and Legal Services
- Portfolio Holder and Members
- Building related consultancies

6. Are you aware of any relevant information, data, surveys or consultations¹ , which help us to assess the likely or actual impact of the policy, service or strategy upon customers or staff?

- Customer insight has been obtained through localised tenant events, questionnaires paper and electronic

Insight to-date supports in principle the priorities of the Business Plan. Consultation remains on-going.

¹Click on [surveys or consultations](#) for more information. The Council's surveys and consultations include 'equality monitoring information' to help us identify any particular concerns or views expressed by any particular group or 'protected characteristic'. It can also help us to assess how representative of our customers the respondent group is.

7. How does the policy, service or strategy help to further or facilitate to our 'general duty'² to:

- (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation?
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a 'protected characteristic'³ and those who do not?⁴
- (c) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not?⁵

Please complete the following in order to identify how the policy, practice or strategy furthers the aim of the 'general duty':

'Protected characteristic' group		How does it help to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'?	How does it help to 'advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?	How does it help to 'foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?
Age	Older people (60+)	The Business Plan facilitates arrangements to deliver more effectively to meet the older customer's specialist needs. This could help reduce the potential for discrimination, harassment and victimisation by supporting adaptations within their homes and refurbishing sheltered accommodation.	By providing housing to meet people's needs they have the opportunity to make choices over the property they live in and where they live, promoting equality of access to housing community facilities and employment.	By giving people with protected characteristic choices over where they live they have the opportunity to participate in the activities of the broader community fostering good relations.
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)	The Business Plan includes maintaining buildings and increasing supply which could particularly benefit younger people and children	As above	As above

² These 3 points summarise the 'general duty' as it applies to public sector organisations in the Equality Act 2010

³ The Equality Act's 'protected characteristics' include age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sex and sexual orientation. It also covers marriage and civil partnerships, but not for all aspects of the duty.

⁴ This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to: (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it, and (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

⁵ This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding.

'Protected characteristic' group		How does it help to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'?	How does it help to 'advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?	How does it help to 'foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?
Disability	Physical	The Business Plan facilitates arrangements to deliver resources more effectively to meet customer's specialist needs. This could help reduce the potential for discrimination, harassment and victimisation by supporting adaptations within their homes and refurbishing sheltered accommodation.	As above	As above
	Sensory	As above	As above	As above
	Learning	As above	As above	As above
	Mental health issues	As above	As above	As above
	Other – <i>please specify</i>			
Ethnicity ⁶	White	None identified	None identified	None identified
	Black	None identified	None identified	None identified
	Chinese	None identified	None identified	None identified
	Mixed Ethnic Origin	None identified	None identified	None identified
	Gypsies/ Travellers	None identified	None identified	None identified
	Other – <i>please state</i>			
Language	English not first language	None identified	None identified	None identified
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks	None identified	None identified	None identified
Religion or Belief	People with a religious belief (or none) ⁷	None identified	None identified	None identified
Sex	Men	None identified	None identified	None identified

⁶ National Census 2011 categories are: Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian (Asian or Asian British), African, Caribbean, Other Black (Black or Black British), White and Black African, White and Asian, White and Black Caribbean (Mixed), British, Irish, Other White (White), Chinese, Other (Other Ethnic Group).

⁷ For example, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh or no religious belief.

'Protected characteristic' group		How does it help to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'?	How does it help to 'advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?	How does it help to 'foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not'?
	Women	None identified	None identified	None identified
	Transsexual / gender reassignment	None identified	None identified	None identified
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual, Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian	None identified	None identified	None identified
Marriage and Civil Partnership ⁸	People who are single, married or in a civil partnership	None identified	not applicable	not applicable

8. Are there any concerns that the policy, service or strategy could have a differential impact in terms of equality?

- No. This proposal allows an enhanced service for all tenants and leaseholders, residents of the borough requiring advice.

Please use the table below to indicate how the policy, service or strategy could have a positive or negative effect on any of the following equality groups (known under the Equality Act as 'protected characteristics'). Include reference to any consultation, data or information that you have used in making this assessment about positive or negative effects.

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could disadvantage the group
Age	Older people (60+)	X	This group will particularly benefit from the investment programme and ongoing improvements to housing stock and urban environment, providing housing that meets their needs.	X	No negative impacts identified
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)	X	As above	X	As above

⁸ Our legal duty in respect of 'marriage or civil partnership' extends only to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination.

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could disadvantage the group
Disability	Physical	X	As above	X	As above
	Sensory	X	As above	X	As above
	Learning	X	As above	X	As above
	Mental health issues	X	As above	X	As above
	Other – <i>please specify</i>				
Ethnicity	White	X	It is not anticipated that this group will particularly (disproportionately) benefit from identified positive impacts.	X	As above
	Black	X	As above	X	As above
	Chinese	X	As above	X	As above
	Mixed Ethnic Origin	X	As above	X	As above
	Gypsies/ Travellers	X	As above	X	As above
	Other – <i>please state</i>				
Language	English not first language	X	As above	X	As above
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks	X	As above	X	As above
Religion or Belief	People with a religious belief (or none)	X	As above	X	As above
Sex	Men	X	As above	X	As above
	Women	X	As above	X	As above
	Transsexual / gender reassignment	X	As above	X	As above
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual, Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian	X	As above	X	As above
Marriage and Civil Partnership	People who are single, married or in a civil partnership	X	As above	X	As above

9. Could the policy, service or strategy unlawfully discriminate⁹ against any 'protected characteristic', either directly or indirectly?

- No

10. If you have identified any negative impacts above, have you been able to minimise or remove them, and if so, how?

- Not applicable

⁹ The Council has a general duty to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'. Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another in a comparable situation because of their 'protected characteristic' whether on grounds of age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity; religion or belief; sex (gender), sexual orientation, or marriage and civil partnership. Indirect discrimination occurs when an apparently neutral provision or practice would nevertheless disadvantage people on the grounds of their 'protected characteristic' unless the practice can be objectively justified by a legitimate aim.

Summary and findings of Initial Equality Impact Assessment – screening stage

11. Please put a tick in the relevant box to confirm your findings, and what the next step is:

Findings	Action required
No likely negative impacts have been identified and this has been justified with reference to information, data, surveys or consultations. X	Sign off screening and finish.
Likely negative impacts have been identified but have been minimised or removed. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and finish.
Likely negative impacts were identified but have not been minimised or removed. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and complete a full impact assessment – Section 2.
There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and complete a full impact assessment – Section 2.

12. Name and job title of person completing this form:

- Jeanette Smith Strategy and Solutions Project Officer

13. Date of completion:

- October 2013

14. Date for update or review of this screening:

October 2014