

Colchester Borough Council

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

Section 1: Initial Equality Impact Assessment

Name of policy/ decision to be assessed:

Taking action to tackle homelessness

1. What is the main purpose of the policy/ options report?

To carry out a number of actions to tackle homelessness in Colchester in order to provide better temporary accommodation and housing options for households experiencing homelessness.

2. What main areas or activities does it cover?

Pursue purchase of open market properties for use as temporary accommodation, Pilot to increase the supply of private rented sector accommodation, process changes to the Allocations Policy, continuing the purchase of former right to buy council properties offered back to the Council under the “right of first refusal” legislation.

3. Are there changes to an existing policy being considered in this assessment? If so what are they?

No

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

Households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

5. What outcomes do you want to achieve from the policy?

Better options to provide homes for those facing homelessness; better outcomes for homeless households and better value for money.

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

Other service areas: Corporate and Policy – Housing Strategy, Financial Services, Legal Services, Housing Systems.

Partner agencies: Colchester Borough Homes, Registered Providers of affordable housing working in the borough

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

Homelessness data returns to Department for Communities and Local Government.

8. The 'general duty' states that we must have "due regard" to the need to:

- (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a 'protected characteristic'² and those who do not³
- (c) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not⁴

Not all policies help us to meet the 'general duty', but most do.

Where applicable, explain how this policy helps us to meet the 'general duty':

The Equality Act's 'protected characteristics' include many of the groups who are deemed to be in "priority need" under Homelessness legislation; local housing authorities have a statutory duty to ensure households that are believed to be homeless, eligible for assistance and in priority need are provided with interim accommodation. Following investigations, the Council may accept that it has a statutory duty to find suitable permanent accommodation for that household. Priority need groups include households with dependent children, women who are pregnant, care leavers aged 18-20, people who are vulnerable due to old age, physical disability, learning disability, mental health or fleeing domestic abuse.

The policy helps us to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation' in the following way(s):

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. Local Data on the Protected Characteristics is available [on this page](#) of the Hub.

² 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.

³ 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.

⁴ This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding.

- The actions seek to provide good quality temporary accommodation which meets households housing needs. This will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation these households may have faced in securing their own accommodation.

The policy helps us to 'advance equality of opportunity...' in the following way(s):

- The actions seek to give households who are homeless better housing options and better quality temporary accommodation and advance equality of opportunity. The majority of those homeless households to whom the Council has accepted a duty to rehouse also fall into the protected characteristics groups.

The policy helps us to 'foster good relations...' in the following way(s):

- The Council will work closely with partner agencies when implementing the actions to help tackle prejudice and promote understanding which can benefit all groups.

9. This section helps us to identify any disproportionate impacts. Please indicate in the table below whether the policy is likely to particularly benefit or disadvantage any of the 'protected characteristics'.

Remember to include reference to any relevant consultation, data or information.

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
Age	Older people (60+)	/	The actions seek to secure more and better quality accommodation for households experiencing homelessness. People who are vulnerable due to old age are identified as a priority need group for rehousing under homelessness legislation and will therefore benefit from the proposed actions.		None identified
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)	/	The actions seek to secure more and better quality accommodation for households experiencing homelessness. Households with dependent children and Care leavers aged 18-20 are identified as a priority need group for rehousing under homelessness legislation and will therefore benefit from the proposed actions.		None identified
Disability	Physical	/	The actions seek to secure more and better quality accommodation for households experiencing homelessness. People who are vulnerable due to a physical disability are identified as a priority need group for rehousing under homelessness legislation and will therefore benefit from the proposed actions.		None identified

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
	Sensory	/	The actions seek to secure more and better quality accommodation for households experiencing homelessness. People who are vulnerable due to a sensory disability are identified as a priority need group for rehousing under homelessness legislation and will therefore benefit from the proposed actions.		None identified
	Learning	/	The actions seek to secure more and better quality accommodation for households experiencing homelessness. People who are vulnerable due to a learning disability are identified as a priority need group for rehousing under homelessness legislation and will therefore benefit from the proposed actions.		None identified
	Mental health issues	/	The actions seek to secure more and better quality accommodation for households experiencing homelessness. People who are vulnerable due to mental health issues are identified as a priority need group for rehousing under homelessness legislation and will therefore benefit from the proposed actions.		None identified
	Other – <i>specify</i>				None identified
Ethnicity ⁵	White	/	None identified		None identified
	Black	/	None identified		None identified
	Chinese	/	None identified		None identified

⁵ 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).

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
	Mixed Ethnic Origin	/	None identified		None identified
	Gypsies/ Travellers	/	None identified		None identified
	Other – <i>please state</i>		None identified		None identified
Language	English not first language		None identified		None identified
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks	/	The actions seek to secure more and better quality accommodation for households experiencing homelessness. Women who are pregnant are identified as a priority need group for rehousing under homelessness legislation and will therefore benefit from the proposed actions.		None identified
Religion or Belief	People with a religious belief (or none)		None identified		None identified
Sex	Men		None identified		None identified
	Women		None identified		None identified
Gender Reassignment ⁶	Transgender/ Transsexual		None identified		None identified
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual, Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian		None identified		None identified
Marriage and Civil	People who are married or in a civil		None identified		None identified

⁶ The protected characteristic of gender reassignment is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as “a person 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.” This is a personal process that may involve medical interventions such as counselling, psychotherapy, hormone therapy or surgery, but does not have to. NB: It is generally held that transgender people disguise their features or clothing to resemble their preferred sex, whereas transsexual people wish to change their body to completely resemble their preferred sex.

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
Partnership	partnership				

10. If you have identified any negative impacts (above) how can they be minimised or removed?

None identified.

11. Could the policy discriminate⁷ against any 'protected characteristic', either directly or indirectly⁸?

None identified.

Summary and findings of Initial Equality Impact Assessment

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

Findings	Action required
No negative impacts have been identified <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and finish.
Negative impacts have been identified but have been minimised or removed <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and finish.
Negative impacts could not be 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.

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

- Tina Hinson, Housing Strategy Manager

⁷ 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'.

⁸ If you answer 'yes' to question 11 (above) you will need to complete this section *and* go on to complete Section 2 in order to conduct a full Equality Impact Assessment.

14. Date of completion:

- 05/12/17

15. Date for update or review of this screening:

- December 2020