

Colchester Borough Council

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

Section 1: Initial Equality Impact Assessment

Name of policy* to be assessed:

The provision of new and additional affordable housing

1. What is the main purpose of the policy?

- The provision of new and additional affordable housing

2. What main areas or activities does it cover?

- Negotiation with developers to ensure that affordable housing is secured through Section 106 obligations in accordance with policy.
- Liaison with Registered Providers and other affordable housing providers to enable delivery of their affordable housing programme
- Delivery of affordable housing on land owned by the Council
- Acquisition of housing stock in the borough to be provided as affordable housing

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?

- Applicants on the housing register
- Residents living near the proposed developments and/or acquired properties
- Affordable housing providers

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

- To increase the quantum of affordable homes available in the borough to meet the housing need of households unable to secure a home on the open market.
- To develop mixed tenure sustainable communities which are desirable places to live
- For the Council to meet its responsibilities to provide housing to households who may be homeless or at risk of homelessness where the Council has a duty.
- To deliver accessible and adaptable homes to meet the needs of households with accessibility requirements.

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

- Policy and Corporate – Planning Policy, Housing Strategy, Planning, Development Management and Housing Client Team
- Registered Providers and other providers of affordable housing
- Developers
- Colchester Amphora Homes Ltd
- Colchester Borough Homes

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? *If so provide details and include a link to the document or source where available.*

- No

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

¹Click on [Customer Insight](#) 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 staff intranet, 'Colin'.

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

- A failure to take steps to increase the supply of affordable housing, as well as accessible housing, could be considered to be discriminatory against any group that may not be able to meet their own housing need.

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

- All groups would benefit from an increase in supply in affordable housing

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

- New residential development that contains mixed tenure of affordable and private housing which can cater for different household sizes can lead to a community with a mix of people across the protected characteristics and could help to foster good relations.

9. The Council has an important role in improving residents' health under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. This relates to both its 'core functions' (such as housing, leisure, green spaces and environmental health) and to its 'enabling roles' (such as economic development, planning and engaging with communities)⁵. The Council recognises that its Public Sector Equality Duty and its role in improving health are interrelated and mutually supportive. This is especially true across the 'protected characteristics' of age and disability.

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.

⁵ The King's Fund: [The district council contribution to public health: a time of challenge and opportunity, 2015](#)

“Health inequalities are the unjust and avoidable differences in people's health across the population. They come from the unequal distribution of income, wealth and power and influence the wider determinants of health such as work, education, social support and housing. Currently, in England people living in the least deprived areas will live around 20 years longer in good health than those in the most deprived areas. Reducing health inequalities means giving everyone the same opportunities to lead a healthy life, no matter where they live or who they are.”

Where applicable, explain how this policy helps us to improve health/ reduce health inequalities for residents:

- Affordable housing benefits residents with insufficient income for market housing and therefore could reduce the negative health and wellbeing impact of living in housing which is inadequate and/or unaffordable.
- The effects of living in unsuitable or poor housing on a person's health are well documented in national research. Increasing the supply of affordable housing will contribute towards meeting local housing needs and improving the housing conditions of households.
- Accessible and adapted affordable housing benefits residents with specific accessibility needs, who do not have sufficient income for market housing or whose needs cannot be met by market housing

10. This section helps us to identify any disproportionate equality 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+)	X	Increasing the supply of accessible and adaptable affordable housing will benefit this group as it will enable this group to remain in their home for longer		
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)	X	Increasing the supply of affordable housing will provide stability and security for this age group where they can remain in their home in the longer term as opposed to market rent housing where residents may be required to seek alternative accommodation, should the landlord wish to sell or if the rent is increased to an unaffordable level.		
Disability	Physical	X	Increasing the supply of accessible and adaptable affordable housing can meet the needs of this group		
	Sensory	X	As above		
	Learning	X	Affordable Housing specifically for adults with learning disabilities to live independently is delivered through Essex County Council. However, families who have members of the household with learning disabilities will benefit from the increase in affordable housing.		

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
	Mental health issues	X	Increasing the supply of affordable housing could positively impact residents with mental health issues through the provision of a secure and affordable home which is regulated and will include a supportive housing management service which is included in the services provided by Registered Providers and other affordable housing landlords.		
	Other – <i>specify</i>				
Ethnicity ⁶	White	X	All groups will benefit from an increase in supply of affordable housing		
	Black	X	As above		
	Chinese	X	As above		
	Mixed Ethnic Origin	X	As above		
	Gypsies/ Travellers	X	As above		
	Other – <i>please state</i>	X			
Language	English not first language	X	As above		
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks	X	As above		
Religion or Belief	People with a religious belief (or none)	X	As above		
Sex	Men	X	As above		
	Women	X	As above		

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).

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
Gender Reassignment ⁷	Transgender/ Transsexual	X	As above		
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual, Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian	X	As above		
Marriage and Civil Partnership	People who are married or in a civil partnership	X	As above		

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

None identified

12. Could the policy discriminate⁸ against any 'protected characteristic', either directly or indirectly⁹? No

Summary and findings of Initial Equality Impact Assessment

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

Findings	Action required
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⁷ 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.

⁸ 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'.

⁹ If you answer 'yes' to question 11 (above) you will need to complete the following section *and* go on to complete Section 2 in order to conduct a full Equality Impact Assessment.

A. No negative impacts have been identified <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and finish.
B. Negative impacts have been identified but have been minimised or removed <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and finish.
C. Negative impacts could not be minimised or removed <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and complete a full impact assessment – Section 2.
D. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and complete a full impact assessment – Section 2.

14. Name and job title of person completing this form:
Ruth Newcombe - Affordable Housing Strategy Officer

15. Date of completion:
13th January 2020

16. Date for update or review of this screening¹⁰:

January 2023 or before if there is a significant change to any of the Council's strategic policies or national legislation.

¹⁰ This is normally three years, but not always: You may know that the policy itself will be reviewed earlier in which case the EqIA should be reviewed at that time. Or, in the case of a five year strategy, you may want to have a review date of five years. In the case of a “one off” decision, such as closing a service, a review date may not be needed - in which case you should indicate ‘N/A’. In any event, the review date should be brought forward if you receive information or feedback which raises new concerns, or if the public policy context changes. You can speak to the [Equality and Safeguarding Co-ordinator](#) for more advice.

