

## 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: **Colchester DCMS Local Full Fibre Network Fund Deployment**

(\*Please note that the term 'policy' is used broadly to include a service, strategy or key decision.)

1. What is the main purpose of the policy? The policy is the major implementation stage of the Council's Digital Strategy 2017-22, using £3.5m of Government funding to deliver three major fibre infrastructure build projects in the Borough.

2. What main areas or activities does it cover? The project will deliver the densification of the existing town centre fibre optic network; the building of a wholly new network across the Northern Gateway (north and south sides) and a large network of ducting and street cabinets linking these two locations and passing through the major residential and business clusters of urban Colchester. It will facilitate further external investment in this critical infrastructure, bolstering the borough's investment attractiveness, and, with importance for equality assessment, deliver gigabit connectivity to disadvantaged sections of the market who would otherwise be unable to take advantage of future-proof infrastructure of this type. The ways in which this will be ensured are set out further in the document.

3. Are there changes to an existing policy being considered in this assessment? If so what are they? The proposal does not change existing policies, but represents a significant move in the implementation of the Digital Strategy.

4. Who are the main audience, users or customers who will be affected by the policy? The fibre infrastructure will aim to deliver benefits to the widest possible target markets in the borough, including residents and businesses of all size alike, as well as the whole of the CBH social housing stock and all its sheltered housing developments.

5. What outcomes do you want to achieve from the policy? We aim to make gigabit pure-fibre connectivity available to 20,000 premises within five years and to provide the infrastructure required for the full replacement of the Council's CCTV infrastructure, which requires the construction of new fibre optic networks across all the areas requiring CCTV. The same core network will be used to provide both digital (IP) CCTV and gigabit broadband. The advent of hyperfast infrastructure will greatly increase the potential for the use of Smart Devices and the Internet of Things, which are currently impossible to deploy in Colchester because of obsolete existing technologies. The cumulative investment over a 5-yr period will reach £13.5m.

6. Are other service areas or partner agencies involved in delivery? If so, please give details below: CBC's IT, Communities and Comms teams have been involved in the development of the project scope, and CBH will be closely involved in the deployments to the social housing stock and the sheltered housing developments. These are home to many disadvantaged people who will be able to take advantage of the advent of these new technologies for the first time as a result of the project.

7. Are you aware of any relevant information, data, surveys or consultations<sup>1</sup> 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.* Extensive market research, heatmapping and modelling was undertaken in preparation for the bid to DCMS. The most relevant is a study by Point Topic and Adroit Economics, which studies the existing connectivity landscape across the borough and the long-term impact of deploying the LFFN project in full. This concludes that it will deliver a significant improvement in terms of GVA uplift to the borough's economy over the 5-to-10 year period.

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'<sup>2</sup> and those who do not<sup>3</sup>
- (c) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Click 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'.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

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):

- N/A

The policy helps us to 'advance equality of opportunity...' in the following way(s): The project aims to provide equality of opportunity in terms of access to new technologies that, in some cases, the market will not deliver, for example the provision of gigabit technologies to deprived communities, the elderly and those dependent on care. Furthermore, it will help improve the future provision of care for the elderly and vulnerable by making possible the deployment of Smart Technologies that will improve the life conditions of these groups.

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

- N/A

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)<sup>5</sup>. 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.

*"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:*

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

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

- The advent of future-proof, pure-fibre technologies opens the possibility of Smart Technology device deployment for the provision of monitoring devices that can provide real-time information on the health and well-being of residents, particularly the elderly and those in sheltered housing developments.
- The provision of ultra-modern technologies to deprived communities should help deliver better educational and training outcomes over the longer-term, improving the life chances of groups who currently risk falling victim to the new, emerging digital divide (not just between those who use the Internet/digital services and those who do not, but those who are stuck with obsolete technologies and those enjoying the benefits of newer, significant improvements in digital connectivity).

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+)	Yes	Provision of better home-based smart device care solutions for monitoring of health and welfare.		
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)	Yes	Better opportunities for education and training, helping deliver better life outcomes overall.		
Disability	Physical	Yes	Provision of smart devices for better provision of care and medical services.		
	Sensory	Yes	As above.		
	Learning	Yes	Better provision of education, including home-based services, will be a key outcome of the project in terms of its social benefits.		
	Mental health issues	N/A			
	Other – <i>specify</i>	N/A			
Ethnicity <sup>6</sup>	White	N/A			
	Black	N/A			
	Chinese	N/A			
	Mixed Ethnic Origin	N/A			
	Gypsies/ Travellers	N/A			
	Other – <i>please state</i>	N/A			
Language	English not first language	Yes	Better provision of modern, digital-based learning technologies and techniques.		

<sup>6</sup> 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
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks	Yes	Greatly improved opportunities for home- and flexible working will come from the wider adoption of new technologies.		
Religion or Belief	People with a religious belief (or none)	N/A			
Sex	Men	N/A			
	Women	N/A			
Gender Reassignment <sup>7</sup>	Transgender/ Transsexual	N/A			
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual, Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian	N/A			
Marriage and Civil Partnership	People who are married or in a civil partnership	N/A			

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

*(This is a key section: Please deal with each negative impact noted above in turn.)* No negative impacts have been identified; market deployment and the development of the infrastructure will be conducted on a non-discriminatory basis in terms of the protected characteristics.

12. Could the policy discriminate<sup>8</sup> against any 'protected characteristic', either directly or indirectly<sup>9</sup>? (Yes/No) No.

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<sup>7</sup> 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.

## 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
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: Steven Eke, Senior Development Manager, Colchester Amphora Trading Ltd

15. Date of completion: 21 October 2019

16. Date for update or review of this screening<sup>10</sup>: October 2022

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<sup>8</sup> 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’.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

*If you have selected A or B (above), you have completed the assessment and can remove this paragraph and everything that appears below. In this case please:(a) send a copy to the relevant Head of Service and the Equality and Safeguarding Officer; (b) arrange for it to be published on the Council's website [here](#) (under the relevant service area heading); and (c) update the Corporate Spreadsheet by clicking [here](#) and selecting and updating the first document. If you have selected C or D (above), you must complete Section Two (below).*



## Section 2: Full Equality Impact Assessment

### Where there is a negative impact which has not been minimised or removed

17. If you have identified negative impact(s) on the ‘protected characteristics’ that have not been minimised or removed, is this considered to be ‘a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim’?<sup>11</sup> If yes, state how:

*If a negative impact cannot be minimised or removed and cannot be objectively justified as being ‘a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim’, the policy should not be implemented as it is could unlawfully discriminate.*

### Where there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement

*If you identified that there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on whether there are any negative impacts on the ‘protected characteristics’, please complete the first column of the Action Plan below.*

#### Engagement and Consultation Action Plan

		Details of Planned Engagement	Date for Review	Summary of findings
Age	Older people (60+)			
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)			
Disability	Physical			
	Sensory			
	Learning			

<sup>11</sup> This phrase is taken from sections 15 and 19 of the Equality Act 2010. ‘Positive action’, benefitting one or more protected characteristic(s), may result in a disproportionate negative impact upon another, but this may be justified as being ‘a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim’. The need to balance a budget can constitute a “legitimate aim”. Contact the Equality and Safeguarding Co-ordinator for more information or look at the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) webpage under “objective justification”.

		Details of Planned Engagement	Date for Review	Summary of findings
	Mental health issues			
	Other – <i>please specify</i>			
Ethnicity	White			
	Black			
	Chinese			
	Mixed Ethnic Origin			
	Gypsies/ Travellers			
	Other – <i>please state</i>			
Language	English not first language			
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks			
Religion or Belief	People with a religious belief (or none)			
Sex	Men			
	Women			
Gender Reassignment	Transgender/ Transsexual			
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual, Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian			
Marriage and Civil Partnership	People who are married or in a civil partnership			

*If your answer to question 16 (above) is ‘no’, this policy could be unlawfully discriminatory against a ‘protected characteristic’. You should not implement this policy. Otherwise, you may implement the policy, taking care to review its impact based on planned engagement. The Review should be carried out within 6 months from the date of this Full Impact Assessment, at which point a further Review may or may not be required depending on whether you have collected sufficient evidence.*

## Summary and findings of Full Equality Impact Assessment

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

Findings	Action required
Likely negative impacts have been identified but are considered to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off and finish.
Further planned engagement with equality target groups will take place in order to gain sufficient evidence to make a judgement on impact. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off and review within 6 months.
Planned engagement has taken place: No likely negative impacts have been identified. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off and finish.
Planned engagement has taken place: Likely negative impacts have been identified but have been minimised or removed. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off and finish.
The policy could be unlawfully discriminatory and will not be implemented. <input type="checkbox"/>	Finish without signing off.

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

20. Date of completion:

21. Date for update or review of this screening:

*If you have now signed off this full assessment, please (a) send a copy to the relevant Head of Service and the Equality and Safeguarding Officer (b) arrange for it to be published on the Council's website [here](#) (under the relevant service area heading) and (c) update the Corporate Spreadsheet by clicking [here](#) and selecting and updating the first document.*