

Equality Impact Assessment Form

The aim of an equality impact assessment (EqIA) is to consider the equality implications of your policy, practice, function or service on different groups of staff, customers, and residents and consider if there are ways to proactively advance equality.

Where further guidance is needed, please contact
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1. Project Details (Policy, Practice, Function or Service)	
Name of the policy, practice, service or function being assessed.	Colchester Economic Plan 2026-2028
What is the main purpose?	The Economic Plan provides the strategic framework for supporting economic growth, regeneration, investment, business resilience, infrastructure delivery and inclusive prosperity across Colchester between 2026 and 2028. It seeks to ensure economic opportunity is accessible to all residents while strengthening the city's competitiveness and resilience.
What main areas or activities does it cover?	The Plan is structured around four themes: People • Skills development • Employment support • Business innovation and entrepreneurship • Labour market participation Place • Regeneration projects • Housing, transport, digital, water and energy infrastructure • Inward investment • City centre development Partnerships • Collaborative working with local, regional and national partners • Business support • Investment promotion • Economic governance and devolution Potential • Green economy growth

	• Net Zero transition • Sustainable transport • Innovation and emerging sectors
Are there changes to an existing policy being considered? If so, what are they?	The Plan updates and succeeds the Colchester Economic Strategy 2022-2025. Key changes include: • Alignment with Essex Devolution arrangements and the emerging Essex Mayoral Authority. • Recognition of Local Government Reorganisation and the proposed North Essex Unitary Council. • Stronger focus on infrastructure delivery and investment. • Increased emphasis on green growth, clean energy, sustainability and Net Zero. • Greater focus on economic inactivity, inclusive employment and health inequalities. • Continued support for regeneration, skills and inward investment.
Who are the main audience, users or customers who will be affected by the project?	• Colchester residents • Local businesses and employers • Young people and learners • Economically inactive residents • Investors and developers • Community groups and voluntary organisations • Educational institutions • Public sector partners • Visitors to Colchester
What outcomes do you want to achieve?	• Sustainable and inclusive economic growth. • Improved access to employment and skills. • Increased business growth and resilience. • Higher levels of investment. • Improved infrastructure and connectivity. • Reduced barriers to economic participation. • Increased productivity. • Improved health and wellbeing through economic opportunity. • Progress towards Net Zero and growth of green industries.
Are other service areas or partner agencies involved in delivery? If so, please provide details.	Key partners include: Essex County Council Emerging Essex Mayoral Authority North Essex Economic Board (NEEB) Colchester Institute University of Essex Team Colchester We Are Colchester Our Colchester BID Freeport East

	Royal Society of Arts Colbea Tendring District Council Braintree District Council Employers, investors and developers
Are you aware of any relevant information, data, surveys or consultations ¹ 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.	The Plan is informed by: • Evidence used for the 2022-2025 Economic Strategy. • Business opinion surveys. • Economic and labour market data. • ONS and Census information. • Town Deal consultation activity. • Regeneration consultations. • Data and evidence from Essex County Council, North Essex Economic Board and partner organisations. • Monitoring and evaluation evidence from UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Rural England Prosperity Fund, Town Deal and Levelling Up Fund programmes.

2. Public Sector Equality Duty	
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 not	
Not all projects help us to meet the 'general duty', but most do. Please evidence below.	
The policy helps us to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation' in the following way(s)	The Plan promotes equal access to employment, skills, business support and economic opportunities. Delivery partners are expected to operate within Equality Act requirements and provide inclusive services. Programmes such as Connect to Work are targeted at reducing barriers faced by disadvantaged groups.
The policy helps us to 'advance equality of opportunity...' in the following way(s)	The Plan has a strong focus on inclusive growth. It seeks to:

¹ Click on [Customer Insight](#) for more information. The Council's surveys and consultations include 'equality monitoring information' to help us identify any 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 online by searching for Census 2021.

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.

	• Support economically inactive residents into work. • Improve access to skills and training. • Promote social mobility. • Improve transport and digital connectivity. • Support disadvantaged communities through regeneration programmes. • Create opportunities in emerging sectors such as green industries and digital technologies. • Increase access to quality employment opportunities.
The policy helps us to 'foster good relations...' in the following way(s) ⁴	The Plan promotes collaboration between communities, businesses, anchor institutions and public services. Programmes such as the Connected Place initiative encourage stronger community cohesion, trust and participation. Regeneration and community-led initiatives will help strengthen engagement between different groups.

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

3. Health Inequalities

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). 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

The Plan supports reduction of health inequalities by addressing wider determinants of health including:

- Employment.
- Income.
- Skills.
- Housing.
- Transport accessibility.
- Digital inclusion.
- Community connectivity.

Specific programmes such as Connect to Work, Heart of Greenstead, Pride in Place, Pedal Power-linked activity and active travel infrastructure target communities that experience poorer health outcomes and economic disadvantage.

The Plan recognises the relationship between economic prosperity, improved wellbeing and healthier communities.

4. 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.

		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	Improved infrastructure, regeneration, access to services, digital inclusion and opportunities for continued employment and volunteering.	None identified	
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)	Yes	Apprenticeships. Skills programmes. Sustainable Skills Innovation Centre. Young entrepreneur initiatives. Improved routes into employment.	None identified.	
Disability	Physical	Yes	Connect to Work specifically supports individuals with disabilities and health conditions into employment. Improved infrastructure, digital access and regeneration initiatives may improve accessibility and opportunity.	Potential	Some employment, training or consultation activities may be less accessible if accessibility requirements are not considered. Mitigation through accessible design and inclusive delivery.
	Sensory				
	Learning				
	Mental health issues				
	Other – <i>specify</i>				
Ethnicity	White	Yes	The Plan aims to provide equitable access to employment, skills and business support regardless of ethnicity. Economic growth and workforce development initiatives should	Potential	The Plan aims to provide equitable access to employment, skills and business support regardless of ethnicity. Economic growth and workforce development initiatives should benefit all communities.
	Black				
	Chinese				
	Mixed Ethnic Origin				
	Gypsies/ Travellers				

			benefit all communities.		
	Other – <i>specify</i>				
Language	English not first language	Yes	Access to employment and skills opportunities may particularly benefit residents whose first language is not English	Potential	Information and support programmes may be less accessible if communication is only provided in English. Mitigation through accessible communications where appropriate.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks	Yes	Improved employment opportunities, flexible employment support and economic growth may benefit expectant and new parents.	Potential	Potential barriers to participation where childcare availability limits access to programmes. This is recognised within the Plan's reference to barriers to engagement.
Religion or Belief	People with a religious belief (or none)	None identified			
Sex	Men	Yes	Improved access to skills, employment and business opportunities.		
	Women	Yes	Improved access to skills, entrepreneurship and employment support. Potential benefit through efforts to address barriers such as childcare and accessibility.	Potential	Women may continue to face barriers linked to caring responsibilities and labour market participation if not considered in programme design.
Gender Reassignment	Transgender/ Transsexual	None identified			
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual, Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian	None identified			
Marriage and Civil Partnership	People who are married or in a civil partnership	None identified			

5. If you have identified any negative impacts above, how can they be minimised or

removed?		
Issue Identified	Planned Action	Lead and Timeframe
Limited equality-specific evidence for some protected groups, particularly ethnic minority communities and LGBTQ+ communities	Monitor participation data and engagement activity where available. Seek equality information through future programme evaluations.	Economic Development Team, ongoing
Potential accessibility barriers for disabled people	Ensure funded projects and programmes incorporate accessibility requirements and reasonable adjustments.	Delivery partners, ongoing
Potential barriers arising from language requirements	Use plain English and consider translated or accessible information where appropriate.	Delivery partners, ongoing
Caring responsibilities may limit participation in skills and employment programmes	Encourage flexible delivery methods and consideration of childcare barriers.	Delivery partners, ongoing

6. Where there is a negative impact which has not been minimised or removed	
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'? If yes, state how	The assessment has not identified any significant adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated or justified. No unlawful discrimination has been identified.
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 could unlawfully discriminate.	

7. 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 outline below planned engagement and summary of findings from this.

There is insufficient evidence to determine whether all protected characteristic groups will benefit equally from the Plan because:

- The Plan is strategic rather than service-specific.
- Equality monitoring data is not available for all proposed interventions.
- Limited equality-focused consultation has been undertaken specifically for the Plan.

Future programme-level monitoring should collect and review equality data where proportionate and available.

7. Monitoring and Review	
How will you monitor the impact of your project once it has been put into effect?	Monitoring will be undertaken through: • Delivery of the Economic Plan Action Plan. • Programme and project evaluations. • Funding programme monitoring and reporting. • Regeneration programme monitoring. • Labour market and economic performance indicators. • Feedback from residents, businesses and partners. • Review of equality impacts where relevant evidence becomes available.
Could this discriminate against any protected characteristic, either directly or indirectly?	No direct discrimination has been identified. Some indirect impacts could arise if programmes are not delivered in an accessible and inclusive manner. These risks can be mitigated through appropriate project design, engagement and monitoring.
Completed by: Victoria Hanley, Project Specialist	
Review Date: ⁵ September 2028 (or sooner if significant changes arise through devolution, local government reorganisation, new evidence, or material changes to delivery programmes).	

Once this has been completed, please share with Stephen Kane, and decide whether it should be published on our website.

⁵ 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.