

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 Local Plan 2026-2043 (Submission Version Draft)
What is the main purpose?	The Local Plan is a long term strategy for the development that will take place in Colchester to 2043 and beyond. The Local Plan addresses the challenges of population growth and change, the climate emergency, evolving economic trends and the need for more sustainable and active travel opportunities to meet the needs of current and future generations whilst also protecting and enhancing the environment and people's quality of life.
What main areas or activities does it cover?	The Local Plan sets out a vision, strategy and policies for planning development across the city including strategic policies, site allocations and development management policies for the city area.
Are there changes to an existing policy being considered? If so, what are they?	The Plan will replace the adopted Colchester Local Plan 2017-2033.
Who are the main audience, users or customers who will be affected by the project?	All those who engage with the planning system and require planning guidance and advice. The main stakeholders include: • Private individuals/residents • Developers/landowners • Local organisations and agencies

	• Community and interest groups • Town and Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums • Neighbouring Authorities • Existing communities • Service providers • Local businesses and employers • All protected groups that live, work and travel to the Colchester administrative area will be affected by the Colchester Local Plan. The Local Plan is subject to various formal stages of consultation where members of the public have been invited to comment on the proposals in the Local Plan. Organisations that represent the interest of various equality, minority and special interest groups have also been consulted throughout these stages of consultation and this can be found in the Council's draft consultation statement. Individuals from all protected groups are also able to submit comments in relation to equality issues as individuals. The consultation strategy outlines the range of methods used to inform the public and organisations (including various equality groups) of the Local Plan. This version of the plan will be being consulted on, which may lead to further changes being made.
What outcomes do you want to achieve?	The Local Plan takes a holistic and integrated approach to achieving sustainable development, addressing the climate emergency, biodiversity and the environment, and health and wellbeing. All policies individually and cumulatively have been considered in this context. The Colchester Local Plan vision sets the wider context and has been informed by the outcomes of stakeholder engagement undertaken at the beginning of the plan making process. The vision for the Colchester Local Plan is: 'Growth in Colchester is inevitable and brings with it change and opportunity. The Local Plan will embrace growth opportunities to meet the environmental, social and economic needs of the changing population and future generations. In doing so it will improve the quality of life for our communities, create a better environment and contribute to healthy lifestyles, by maximising the opportunities provided through well connected green networks. The Plan will also preserve

	and enhance Colchester's identity defined by its special diverse natural environment, green networks and waterways, prestigious heritage, varied arts and culture, and welcoming inclusive, vibrant and healthy communities.'
Are other service areas or partner agencies involved in delivery? If so, please provide details.	The Local Plan has been delivered in the context of a range of other plans and strategies operating at the national, county and local levels. In preparing the Local Plan, the Council co-operates with a range of other bodies to ensure a co-ordinated approach in the development of its policies, in line with national guidance. These bodies include Essex County Council, neighbouring Councils, together with infrastructure providers including agencies responsible for transport, health and the environment. The Statement of Cooperation and Statements of Common Ground demonstrate how strategic matters have been discussed and addressed. This ensures transparency, supports effective plan preparation and provides evidence that strategic matters have been taken into account with our partners in accordance with national policy.
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 Colchester Local Plan has been informed by a wide range of evidence and data, including technical studies, national policy and guidance, and public consultation. The evidence base can be viewed on the Council's website here. Our Statement of Community Involvement sets out the overall approach we take to involving the community. All consultations have been carried out in accordance with this document. at each stage the Council has sought feedback from members of the public and stakeholders on the emerging Local Plan to help guide its development. The Council's draft Consultation Statement sets out the different consultation stages and information on levels of engagement. Public consultation has included the following: Issues and Options engagement on key themes including Green Networks, the Local Plan Vision, Placemaking, and Call for Sites. Preferred Options consultation – a formal phase of the Local Plan consultation to encourage formal feedback

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.

	and representations (comments) on the draft Preferred Options Plan. Submission consultation (planned) Full details of consultation on the Local Plan can be found on the Council's website here
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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)	Providing the opportunity for residents to feed in their views about how Colchester grows as a place to ensure policies would not inadvertently lead to unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
The policy helps us to 'advance equality of opportunity...' in the following way(s)	Encouraging good design of environments and places that are inclusive and accessible to all, improve health and discourage crime.
The policy helps us to 'foster good relations...' in the following way(s) ⁴	It is not believed that the Local Plan specifically helps to achieve this aim.

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 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

Contributing to healthy lifestyles is embedded in the Plan's vision. Numerous policies on improving access to sports and play provision, active travel routes, healthier food environments and more all contribute to this.

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+)	X	Provision of supported/specialist housing including retirement living Provision/retention of community facilities. New local centres in developments		None identified
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)	X	Creation of environments that increase access to healthier food options. Improve provision/access to play and child-friendly spaces in new development Policies that will support increased sports provision, community infrastructure and education facilities		None identified
Disability	Physical	X	Provision of supported/specialist housing including for people with disabilities. Policies that improve accessibility of neighbourhoods by encouraging safe access of pedestrian and cycle routes, green spaces and play areas etc. Contributions from new development that will support improved public		None identified

			transport provision.		
	Sensory	X	Provision of supported/specialist housing including for people with disabilities		None identified
	Learning	X	Provision of supported/specialist housing including for people with disabilities Contributions to education provision, including SEN provision		None identified
	Mental health issues	X	Provision of supported/specialist housing including for people with mental health needs. Improving quality, quantity and access to green and blue spaces in Colchester which can have mental health benefits The plan will help deliver neighbourhoods and community infrastructure which can support social interaction and thus mental health issues		None identified
	Other – specify				None identified
Ethnicity	White	X	Improved access to housing, employment, education, community facilities, green spaces and improvements to public transport and active travel options		
	Black	X	Improved access to housing, employment, education, community facilities, green spaces and		

			improvements to public transport and active travel options		
	Chinese	X	Improved access to housing, employment, education, community facilities, green spaces and improvements to public transport and active travel options		
	Mixed Ethnic Origin	X	Improved access to housing, employment, education, community facilities, green spaces and improvements to public transport and active travel options		
	Gypsies/ Travellers	X	Plans for new gypsy/traveller sites in Colchester in accordance with need.		None identified
	Other – <i>specify</i>				
Language	English not first language		None identified	X	Some residents may struggle to understand parts of the Local Plan due to its technical complexity in parts and the Plan only being produced in English by default
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks	X	Increased provision of family homes, education and community facilities, Improvements to healthcare infrastructure		
Religion or Belief	People with a religious belief (or none)	X	Retention and provision of community and social infrastructure. Protection of heritage assets		
Sex	Men	X	Design of places and environments that discourage crime including ASB through encouraging natural surveillance		None identified

	Women	X	Design of places and environments that discourage crime including ASB through encouraging natural surveillance		None identified
Gender Reassignment	Transgender/ Transsexual		None identified		Single sex spaces law – this is not delivered by the Local Plan directly.
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual, Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian		None identified		None identified
Marriage and Civil Partnership	People who are married or in a civil partnership		None identified		None identified

A full draft Equality Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment has been completed for all policies in the Plan. This can be found on the Council's [website](#).

5. If you have identified any negative impacts above, how can they be minimised or removed?		
Issue Identified	Planned Action	Lead and Timeframe
English not first language	Translation services available upon request including BSL and Braille.	Aaron Ashwood – Upon request as needed.
Single sex spaces law	To be aware of when facilities are designed but Local Plan cannot seek to override the law or influence the internal design of community spaces linked to single sex spaces.	N/A

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	
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.
N/A

7. Monitoring and Review	
How will you monitor the impact of your project once it has been put into effect?	The Plan will be monitored annually through the Annual Monitoring Report. This includes several indicators related to equality and health. The Council has also produced a full Equality Impact Assessment for all the policies in the Plan and this will be reviewed to see if the predicted outcomes of the policies are realised.
Could this discriminate against any protected characteristic, either directly or indirectly?	None identified
Completed by: Aaron Ashwood	
Review Date: ⁵ December 2026 (to support the Submission Local Plan)	

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.