

Housing Strategy 2023-2027

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Epping District Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, i.e., have due regard to:
 - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
 - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
 - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage/civil partnership
 - pregnancy/maternity
 - race
 - religion/belief
 - sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics, you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy or change.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. **All Cabinet, Council, and Portfolio Holder reports must be accompanied by an EqIA.** An EqIA should also be completed/reviewed at key stages of projects.
8. To assist you in completing this report, please ensure you read the guidance notes in the Equality Analysis Toolkit and refer to the following Factsheets:
 - Factsheet 1: Equality Profile of the Epping Forest District
 - Factsheet 2: Sources of information about equality protected characteristics
 - Factsheet 3: Glossary of equality related terms
 - Factsheet 4: Common misunderstandings about the Equality Duty
 - Factsheet 5: Frequently asked questions
 - Factsheet 6: Reporting equality analysis to a committee or other decision-making body

Section 1: Identifying details
Your function, service area and team: Housing Strategy Manager Communities and Wellbeing
If you are submitting this EqlA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team:
Title of policy or decision: Housing Strategy 2023-2027
Officer completing the EqlA: Janice Nuth
Date of completing the assessment: 30.11.2022

Section 2: Policy to be analysed	
2.1	<p>Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project? This is a review and update of the Housing Strategy for the period 2023-2027.</p>
2.2	<p>Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision): The vision for the Housing Strategy 2023-2027 is 'Working with our communities to provide great places where people want to live, work, thrive and prosper in safe good quality homes that meet their needs.'</p> <p>What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (i.e., decommissioning or commissioning a service)? The intended outcomes of the Housing Strategy 2023-2027 are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the supply of affordable housing • Ensure quality, safety and high standards • Promote health, wellbeing and independence • Facilitate economic growth and regeneration • Protect and enhance the environment.
2.3	<p>Does or will the policy or decision affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service users • employees • the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities? <p>The strategy affects residents, employees, other statutory agencies, organisations and community groups with an interest in the supply of and demand for affordable housing in the District.</p> <p>Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate? The strategy will influence how organisations operate.</p>

2.4	<p>Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?</p> <p>The strategy is likely to involve the following substantial changes in resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a potential increase in grant funding and pooled resources through partnership working with other organisations • a request from the Director of Housing and Property for additional budget to prepare for proactive regulation -pending business case approval.
2.5	<p>Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council’s other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes?</p> <p>The Housing Strategy 2023-2027 supports the following corporate outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support residents in need and provide support and equality of opportunity in a district that is safe for everyone. • Work with partners to achieve wellbeing and health equity for all our residents. • Listen to our communities and work with them when making decisions, developing policies, and designing services. • Strive to reduce pollution and protect our environment, encouraging housing that complements, rather than competes with the natural world. • Protect and enhance our green spaces for future generations while providing safe decent homes to meet all our needs. • Improve customer access to our services. <p>The Housing Strategy 2023-2027 is linked to the following EFDC policies and strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocations Scheme 2022-2027 • Anti-social behaviour strategy and statement 2018 • Corporate Plan 2023-2027 (Draft) • Domestic Abuse Policy 2022-2025 (Draft) • Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2027 • Local Plan (Emerging) • More than Bricks and Mortar Estate Improvement Program 2020 • Tenancy Policy 2022-2027. <p>The Housing Strategy 2023-2027 supports the following local partnership initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epping Forest Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026 • Levelling Up Essex – An Essex White Paper 2022 • Essex County Council Housing Strategy 2021-2025.

Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation¹

As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, e.g., service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).

3.1 What does the information tell you about those groups identified?

The evidence to support the Council's understanding of the impact of the Strategy is based on:

- Data published by Office for National Statistics including the National Census 2021
- Government and industry publications about the characteristics of those households most in need of affordable housing, including those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and/ or to whom a reasonable preference must be given to join the waiting list
- Government and regulatory returns such as Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS)
- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- The emerging Local Plan
- The Epping Forest Social Housing Annual Lettings Report 2021/22
- The Review of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping 2020/21
- Local profiling information routinely gathered for people who apply to join the Housing Register and are allocated social housing in the District.

3.2 Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision?

Yes, open consultation was carried out in two stages with the following groups:

- Residents
- The Tenant and Leaseholders Panel
- Registered providers of social housing in the District
- The clerks to the town councils and parish councils in the District
- The Community Safety Partnership and other statutory services
- Community groups including the Faith Covenant
- Essex County Council and the district, borough, and city councils in Essex
- Third sector partners with an active interest in housing in the District
- All elected Members of the Council and Council staff.

Stage 1 consultation sought suggestions for the following points:

- three to five housing related priorities and why they are important
- other services or organisations that may be interested in working in partnership with Housing to improve health and wellbeing
- how partners could work with housing to improve health and wellbeing of our residents.

This information was considered in conjunction with legislation, regulatory guidance, the Corporate Strategy, the emerging Local Plan and management information.

A draft Housing Strategy was produced along with a draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, a draft Allocations Scheme, and a draft Tenancy Policy for 2022-2027.

Stage 2 consultation for the Housing Strategy included detailed consideration of five proposed priorities and themes by the same groups listed above.

Professional stakeholders were invited to a workshop with the Council. They reached in principle partnership agreement to formulate the delivery plan and propose SMART targets together and take collective responsibility for achieving the outcomes.

The report detailing the outcome of the Stage 2 consultation will be published alongside this Equalities Impact Assessment subject to Cabinet approval in December 2022.


Section 4: Impact of policy or decision			
<p>Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know.</p> <p>The proposed priorities, themes and actions included in the draft Housing Strategy for 2023-2027 have been specifically designed to level up the effect of inequalities that are known to contribute to the disproportionate demand for affordable social housing from people with one or more protected characteristic, socio-economic disadvantage and/or literacy support needs.</p>			
Characteristic	Description of Impact	Impact Positive/neutral/adverse	Extent Low / Medium High
Age	<p>Positive - Providing the right support at the right time to promote health wellbeing and independence.</p> <p>Between 2011 and 2021 the number of children living in the District aged 15 and under has increased by 9.6%. The number of people aged 65 and over has increased by 16.6% (National Census 2021).</p> <p>The life expectancy of residents living in the most deprived areas of the District can be between 11-13 years lower than those living in the most affluent areas, and 12% of children are living in poverty.</p> <p>'Research has shown the impact of poor housing on children is both immediate and long term. Its influence can stretch well into adulthood and potentially the next generation. Improvements to housing...have a significant and long-term influence on children's life chances' Shelter 2006.</p> <p>The focus on building resilience and the commitment to providing access to safe good quality homes that meet household needs is likely to have a positive impact across generations including the wellbeing of dependents such as children and/or elderly relatives.</p> <p>Protecting and enhancing the environment improves access to greenspaces, play areas and outdoor activities particularly for residents of non-working age.</p> <p>Early intervention and the increased focus on single homeless households and hidden homeless is likely to improve access to services for younger adults under 24.</p> <p>Reducing digital exclusion should have a positive impact on the over 65s who require access to services and are statistically more likely to require support to access on-line services than people of working age.</p> <p>The planned modernisation of housing services for older people will aim to move from the traditional model of sheltered housing to supporting independent living based on current and future need.</p>	P	H

Disability	<p>Positive – In June 2021 24.9% of disabled people nationally aged 16-64 rented social housing compared to 7.9% of non-disabled people.</p> <p>More than half the households who approached the Council for help to prevent or relieve homelessness in 2020-2021 had one or more support needs, including mental health, physical disability, and or learning disability (information from the Council’s choice-based lettings system LOCATA).</p> <p>Each of the five priorities within this strategy incorporates housing related aspects of the National Disability Strategy including accessible housing, resident participation and tackling hate crime on the grounds of disability.</p> <p>Staff development will include a greater understanding of mental health learning differences and the provision of trauma informed services.</p> <p>Personal housing plans will include the principles of social prescribing to encourage people in housing need to pursue activities that prevent reduce or improve physical and mental wellbeing. The aim is to reduce conditions like heart disease, diabetes and obesity and issues like isolation and addictions which can lead to long term disabilities.</p>	P	H
Gender	<p>Positive – the commitment to pursuing Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation will have a positive impact victims and survivors of domestic abuse who are predominantly women and their dependents.</p>	P	H
Gender reassignment	<p>Neutral – There is limited information to evaluate whether residents who fall within this group will be disproportionately affected by the strategy. The outcome of the National Census 2021 and the EFDC Tenant Census 2022 (when published) will provide some comparative data.</p> <p>Services will be sensitive to ensuring policies apply equally and fairly to residents who have or are undergoing gender reassignment.</p>	N	L
Literacy	<p>Positive – The strategy can be listened to online and is available in other formats on request. The writing style follows the Oxford Guide to Plain English.</p>	P	H
Marriage/civil partnership	<p>Positive – Epping Forest has a higher proportion of married or civil partnership couple households compared to England (34% compared to 30%).</p> <p>The focus on improving health and wellbeing, substance misuse, support with the cost-of-living crisis and economic growth for residents in need of affordable housing is likely to have a positive impact on relationships between couples who are married or in civil partnerships.</p>	P	M
Pregnancy/maternity	<p>Positive – Improved access to support services through the use of the Frontline App and increasing the information and choice that is available to women who are pregnant or with an infant child in housing need is likely to have a positive impact on their wellbeing during this vulnerable period.</p>	P	M

Race	<p>Positive - Nationally 8% of new social housing is let to black tenants compared with 4% of the population and 5% of new social housing is let to Asian tenants compared to 9% of the population. English Housing Survey 2019-20.</p> <p>In 2021-22 Just over 84% of lettings in EFDC were to white applicants. 3.7% of lettings were to black applicants. 2.5% were to applicants with a mixed background or dual heritage and 6.7% were to applicants who had not stated their ethnic origin. The last available comparative data on the ethnic breakdown of the local population was gathered in 2011 and therefor offers no meaningful comparison.</p> <p>The National Census 2021 and the EFDC Tenant Census 2022 (when published) will provide opportunity for additional analysis.</p> <p>Improving overall access to good quality affordable housing will provide a platform to improve the life chances of people with black and multiple ethnic backgrounds. Historically this group has been disproportionately affected by substandard or overcrowded housing nationally particularly in the private rented sector.</p>	P	M
Religion / belief	<p>Positive –The emerging resident involvement strategy provides an opportunity to foster good relations between those people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.</p> <p>Learning from the lived experiences of people with a range of religious (or other) beliefs is likely to have a positive impact on the Councils understanding and response to varied belief systems when seeking to prevent or resolve homelessness.</p> <p>The National Census 2021 and the EFDC Tenant Census 2022 (when published) will provide additional opportunity for analysis.</p>	P	M
Sexual orientation	<p>Neutral – There is limited information to evaluate whether residents who fall within this group will be disproportionately affected by the strategy. The outcome of the National Census 2021- and the EFDC Tenant Census 2022- when published, will provide some comparative data.</p> <p>Services will be sensitive to ensuring policies apply equally and fairly to residents who may be impacted because of their sexual orientation.</p>	N	L
Socio-economic	<p>Positive – The commitment to increasing the supply of good quality affordable housing across all tenure types, the focus on the wider determinants of health and to providing the right support at the right time is designed to level up the inequalities that exist within the District.</p>	P	H

Section 5: Conclusion		
		Tick Yes/No as appropriate
5.1	Does the EqlA in Section 4 indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	No
		If ' YES ', use the action plan at Section 6 to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.

Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts		
What are the potential adverse impacts?	What are the mitigating actions?	Date they will be achieved.
None identified	Update the EqlA when the full details of the Census 2021 and the EFDC Tenant Census are published.	2023/24

Section 7: Sign off	
I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately. (A typed signature is sufficient.)	
	
Signature of Executive Director :	Date: 30.11.22
Signature of person completing the EqlA: Janice Nuth	Date: 30.11.22

Advice
 Keep your director informed of all equality & diversity issues. We recommend that you forward a copy of every EqlA you undertake to the director responsible for the service area. Retain a copy of this EqlA for your records. If this EqlA relates to a continuing project, ensure this document is kept under review and updated, e.g., after a consultation has been undertaken.