

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 victimisation, 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 and Property Directorate – Housing Strategy & Older Peoples Team

If you are submitting this EqIA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team: N/A

Title of policy or decision: Independent Living for Older People Strategy 2023-2028

Officer completing the EqIA: Michelle Green & Charlotte Wright

Date of completing the assessment: 21st December 2023

Section 2: Policy to be analysed

2.1	<p><i>Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?</i></p> <p>This is a new policy.</p>
2.2	<p><i>Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision):</i></p> <p>The Independent Living Strategy sets out how our priorities outlined in the Housing Strategy 2023-2027 will support independent living for older people within the district over the next 5 years (2023-2028).</p> <p>The priorities within the strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Priority 1: Increasing the supply of affordable housingPriority 2: Ensuring quality, safety, and high standardsPriority 3: Promoting health, wellbeing, and independencePriority 4: Facilitating economic growth and regenerationPriority 5: Protecting and enhancing the environment <p>Our key objectives are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Work towards providing aspirational accommodation for older people2. Make best use of assistive technology to help older people remain independent for as long as possible3. To keep the delivery model under review4. Engage with residents to improve the quality, suitability and desirability of our Independent Living schemes5. Carry out options appraisals for poorly performing stock in the Asset Management Strategy6. Future housing provision for older people to be reflected in the Asset Management Strategy and stock condition survey. <p><i>What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)?</i></p> <p>The ways we plan to deliver the strategy are outlined in the document and delivery plan.</p> <p>Engaging with residents – We will review how the Sheltered Forum meetings bring together the views of residents and work towards having a tenant representative from Independent Living on the Council’s Tenant & Leaseholder Panel.</p>

	<p>Deliver Model Charge Options – The service charges for residents in our schemes will continue to be reviewed annually, and we will carry out a deeper dive into what we can and cannot recover via service charges.</p> <p>Maximise additional accessible accommodation – Schemes with additional communal lounges are to be converted into accessible accommodation, subject to funding.</p> <p>Working in partnership with other organisations – We will continue to work in partnership with internal and external teams, as well as the local Health and Wellbeing Board, to increase opportunities for older people.</p> <p>Modernising our Independent Living Schemes</p> <p>Refurbish all our independent living schemes - Using the information gathered in the Ark report, we are undergoing refurbishments of several schemes. The aim is to complete one or two refurbishments per year until they have all been completed.</p> <p>Deliver and modernise telecare equipment - To ensure the alarm systems in our independent living schemes continue to provide a reliable service, and meet the needs of our residents, now and in the future, we will upgrade to a digital system.</p> <p>Automatic Doors - We aim to have automatic doors installed at the main entrance of our schemes over the life of the strategy.</p> <p>Mobility Scooters - We will develop a programme to ensure that all our independent living schemes have appropriate storage with charging points for these vehicles by 2030.</p> <p>Digital Inclusion - We will explore the options for communal broadband, undertaking a pilot initially at one scheme and then open out to others schemes if that is successful.</p> <p>Flowers in Bloom - The Flowers In Bloom competition is fun and exciting and encourages residents to be outside, have some exercise and be socially interactive. We will continue this annual competition as long as residents are interested.</p>										
2.3	<p><i>Does or will the policy or decision affect:</i></p> <p>The strategy will affect service users and potential service users, employees, partnership organisations, and community groups with an interest in independent living schemes in the district.</p> <p><i>Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?</i></p> <p>Yes, the policy will influence how organisations operate.</p>										
2.4	<p><i>Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?</i></p> <p>The resources are dependent on the outcomes of resident consultation and feasibility studies. The table below shows which projects have resources in place and which projects may need resources dependent on feasibility studies.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="309 1563 1422 1783"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="309 1563 863 1619">Resources already in place</th> <th data-bbox="863 1563 1422 1619">Resources that may be needed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="309 1619 863 1659">Refurbishments</td> <td data-bbox="863 1619 1422 1659">Automatic doors</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="309 1659 863 1700">Telecare system & monitoring service</td> <td data-bbox="863 1659 1422 1700">Mobility scooter stores</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="309 1700 863 1740">Flowers in Bloom</td> <td data-bbox="863 1700 1422 1740">EV charging points</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="309 1740 863 1783">Digital inclusion work - Pilot</td> <td data-bbox="863 1740 1422 1783">Lounge conversions to accessible flats</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Resources already in place	Resources that may be needed	Refurbishments	Automatic doors	Telecare system & monitoring service	Mobility scooter stores	Flowers in Bloom	EV charging points	Digital inclusion work - Pilot	Lounge conversions to accessible flats
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2.5	<p><i>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?</i></p> <p>The Strategy supports the following corporate outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will safeguard vulnerable people. Our teams will support residents in need, providing support and equality of opportunity in a district that is safe for everyone. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consistent in our approach, we will strive to ensure all our residents can live in a safe and well-maintained environment 										

- We will work with our partners to achieve wellbeing and health equity for all our residents.
 - We will adopt the Robert Wood Johnson Wider Determinants of Health Model as a framework through which to deliver multi-agency health and wellbeing improvement initiatives
- We will listen to our communities and work with them when making decisions, developing policies, and designing services.
 - We will coordinate our consultation and engagement to ensure residents' views shape the services we provide
 - Strengthen and empower individuals and communities to help themselves
- We will improve existing spaces and create new places for people to live, play, gain skills and do business.
 - Providing affordable homes within sustainable developments, served by transport, leisure, health, and other infrastructure to meet our residents' needs
 - Consultation and engagement with our residents in decisions affecting their place
- We will protect and enhance our green spaces for future generations while providing decent, safe homes to meet all our needs.
 - Meet standards for good quality homes in sustainable locations enshrined within the Local Plan
- We will improve customer access to our services.
 - Making high-quality digital services the default choice for most residents, businesses, and visitors
 - Providing digital solutions within a secure online environment, keeping us and our customers safe

(Source: Corporate key objectives 2023-2027)

The Strategy is linked to the following EFDC policies and strategies:

- Corporate Plan 2023-2027
- Housing Strategy 2023-2027
- Housing Allocations Scheme 2022-2027
- Tenancy Policy 2022-2027
- Resident Involvement Strategy 2022-2027

The Strategy pays due regard to the following:

- Epping Forest Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026
- The emerging Asset Management Strategy
- The Social Housing (Regulation) Bill

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?*

See Ark and other information in full Strategy

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?*

General consultation on new decisions through chatterbox sessions

Listening to and acting on what our residents tell us about their homes, the area they live in and the services they receive from the Council are important to us and holding regular meetings enables residents to tell us what matters to them.

Chatterbox sessions are held three times a year at all twelve of our independent living schemes. These informal meetings are held with members of the Older Peoples Services Team or the Resident Involvement Team. They enable all residents to tell us what we do well and where we could improve, actions notes are created and acted upon.

These sessions provide an ideal platform to consult residents within the Independent Living Schemes and gather valuable feedback on any changes the Council are considering.

The Chatterbox sessions feed into the Sheltered Forum Meetings. These are virtual meetings for which the Council supply iPads and are held after the Chatterbox sessions have taken place. Usually, one or two residents from each scheme attends having been nominated by other residents at their scheme. These meetings are more formal, and minutes are taken.

Changes to service consultation

In 2022 we consulted with residents on the new support model to create a more flexible, needs led service. Every resident in our schemes received a letter to inform them of the proposed changes and inviting them to complete a consultation survey. The changes were also discussed at the Chatterbox Sessions on each scheme. The results of the survey were collated and presented at Communities Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet for discussion.

Of the 463 residents living in sheltered housing 138 returned their questionnaire. Below are the questions asked along with responses:

- Can you see the benefits of tailoring our support service to meet individual Resident's needs? **Yes = 75% No = 10% Unsure = 15%**
- Do you feel that we should ensure more social activities are held at your scheme as part of this review? **Yes = 68% No = 27% (Not answered by all)**
- Do you agree that the service you receive (emergency alarm and support service) offers value for money? **Yes = 78% No = 10% Unsure = 12%**
- There will no longer be a Sheltered Housing Officer based at your scheme, instead, a team of staff will provide support to ensure you receive a reliable and consistent service. Can you see the benefit of this? **Yes = 52% No = 24% Unsure = 23%**
- Having read the letter regarding the new support model and having had the opportunity to attend a question & answer session, taking everything into account do you support the proposed changes? **Yes = 51.5% No = 13% Partially = 35.5%**

	<p>We will be carrying out further consultation during 2023/2024 to ensure the new delivery service is meeting our resident's needs.</p> <p><u>Consultation on the emergency alarm system</u></p> <p>All residents were written to and invited along to alarm awareness days which were held at each independent living scheme across 3 days. At these sessions residents were told about the different types of emergency alarm system and asked to give feedback on their preference. Residents were then invited to a supplier day on 25th October 2023 where several emergency alarm providers gave a presentation and demonstrated how their alarm system worked. There was an opportunity to ask questions after each demonstration and give views on preferred alarm equipment at the end of the day. Although this event was not well attended by residents, those that did come along gave us valuable feedback enabling us to make an informed decision as to who will be our new alarm providers.</p> <p><u>Consultation on the scheme refurbishments</u></p> <p>At the start of each refurbishment, we set out the process and order of work. Residents are consulted on colour schemes (3 x mood boards). The one with the highest votes is used on the ground floor and the mood board with the second highest votes is used on the first floor as these refurbishments are helping to create a more dementia friendly environment. We also consult on seating as one size does not work for everyone. At the appropriate time we consult on artwork to be displayed around the scheme.</p> <p><u>Consultation on strategy</u></p> <p>Consultation on the Strategy has been undertaken with stakeholders, including the Health & Wellbeing Socio Economic Action Group, Tenant and Leaseholder panel and resident Chatterbox sessions in the Independent Living Schemes.</p>
3.3	<p><i>If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary:</i></p> <p>N/A</p>

Section 4: Impact of policy or decision

Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know.

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Age	<p>Positive –</p> <p>In Epping Forest life expectancy is 84.1 years, higher than the national average (82.8) (source: 2021 census).</p> <p>Between the 2011 and 2021 census the population of Epping Forest increased by around 10,300 to around 135,000. The population of people aged over 65 has increased in the same period from 22,550 to 26,269 (around 1.4%), with the biggest increase being in those aged 65 to 74 years.</p> <p>The projects focused on reducing digital exclusion should have a positive impact on the over 65s who are statistically more likely to require support to access online services than people of working age. <i>'Age UK analysis reveals that almost 6 million people (5,800,000) aged 65+ are either unable to use the internet safely and successfully or aren't online at all'</i> Age UK launches offline and overlooked digital campaign</p> <p>The modernisation of housing services for older people will shift from the traditional model of sheltered housing to supporting independent living based on current and future need. This will enable residents to remain in their homes whilst their needs change.</p> <p>2021 Census Profile for areas in England and Wales - Nomis (nomisweb.co.uk) All usual residents - 134,981 Aged 4 years and under - 5.9% (7,921 residents) Aged 5 to 9 years - 5.7% (7,687 residents) Aged 10 to 15 years - 7.0% (9,440 residents) Aged 16 to 19 years - 4.1% (5,492 residents) Aged 20 to 24 years - 5.1% (6,840 residents) Aged 25 to 34 years - 12.2% (16,435 residents) Aged 35 to 49 years - 20.0% (26,988 residents) Aged 50 to 64 years - 20.7% (27,909 residents) Aged 65 to 74 years - 10.2% (13,727 residents) Aged 75 to 84 years - 6.5% (8,775 residents) Aged 85 years and over - 2.8% (3,767 residents)</p>	H
Disability	<p>Positive –</p> <p>Residents will have increased choice with more accommodation options to meet their needs related to their disability. Three of the independent Living Schemes that have two communal Lounges have just passed planning to convert one of the lounges to accessible flats. Other projects such as automatic doors and mobility</p>	H

	<p>scooter storage will also enable residents to live independently.</p> <p>Independent Living Schemes have the flexibility to tailor their care needs as they change, allowing residents to stay in their property for longer. Personalised Housing Plans are completed with all residents to outline their support needs from Independent Living Officers.</p> <p>The incidence of dementia in the district is higher than the national average. The refurbishments in schemes are designed to be dementia friendly to support the growing need for suitable accommodation.</p> <p>2021 Census Profile for areas in England and Wales - Nomis (nomisweb.co.uk) All usual residents - 134,982 Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a lot – 5.9% (7,976 residents) Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a little – 8.2% (11,036 residents) Not disabled under the Equality Act: Has long term physical or mental health condition but day-to-day activities are not limited - 6.1% (8,186 residents) Not disabled under the Equality Act: No long term physical or mental health conditions – 79.9% (107,784 residents)</p> <p>Epping Forest- Dementia prevalence by UK Constituency (polimapper.co.uk) Epping Forest total number of people living with dementia - 1,459 National average: 1,302.38 Epping Forest Ranking: #176 Epping Forest percentage of population living with dementia - 1.47% National average: 1.33% Epping Forest Ranking: #203</p>	
Gender	<p>Neutral –</p> <p>There is nothing to indicate that residents who fall within this group will be disproportionately affected by the strategy.</p> <p>Services will be sensitive to ensuring policies apply equally and fairly to all genders.</p> <p>2021 Census Profile for areas in England and Wales - Nomis (nomisweb.co.uk) All usual residents - 134,980 Female – 51.4% (69,389 residents) Male – 48.6% (65,591 residents)</p>	L
Gender reassignment	<p>Neutral –</p> <p>There is nothing to indicate that residents who fall within this group will be disproportionately affected by the strategy.</p>	L

	<p>Services will be sensitive to ensuring policies apply equally and fairly to residents who have or are undergoing gender reassignment.</p> <p>2021 Census Profile for areas in England and Wales - Nomis (nomisweb.co.uk) All usual residents aged 16 and over - 109,932 Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth - 94.4% (103,752 residents) Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given - 0.2% (171 residents) Trans woman - 0.1% (75 residents) Trans man - 0.1% (72 residents) Non-binary – 0.0% (28 residents) All other gender identities – 0.0% (14 residents) Not answered - 5.3% (5,820 residents)</p>	
Marriage/civil partnership	<p>Neutral –</p> <p>There is nothing to indicate that residents who fall within this group will be disproportionately affected by the strategy.</p> <p>Some Independent Living schemes have some accommodation available for couples.</p> <p>Services will be sensitive to ensuring policies apply equally and fairly to all residents.</p> <p>2021 Census Profile for areas in England and Wales - Nomis (nomisweb.co.uk) All usual residents aged 16 and over - 109,933 Married or in a registered civil partnership – 47.8% (52,592 residents) Never married and never registered a civil partnership - 35.1% (38,594 residents) Separated, but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership - 2.0% (2,166 residents) Divorced or civil partnership dissolved - 8.7% (9,564 residents) Widowed or surviving civil partnership partner – 6.4% (7,017 residents)</p>	L
Pregnancy/maternity	<p>Neutral –</p> <p>Due to the age restrictions on the independent living schemes this is not applicable.</p>	L
Race	<p>Neutral –</p> <p>There is nothing to indicate that residents who fall within this group will be disproportionately affected by the strategy.</p> <p>Services will be sensitive to ensuring policies apply equally and fairly to residents of all backgrounds.</p>	L

	<p>2021 Census Profile for areas in England and Wales - Nomis (nomisweb.co.uk)</p> <p>All usual residents - 134,980</p> <p>Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh - 7.2% (9,678 residents)</p> <p>Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African - 2.9% (3,932 residents)</p> <p>Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups - 3.6% (4,896 residents)</p> <p>White - 84.1% (113,469 residents)</p> <p>Other ethnic group - 2.2% (3,005 residents)</p>	
Religion/belief	<p>Neutral –</p> <p>There is nothing to indicate that residents who fall within this group will be disproportionately affected by the strategy.</p> <p>Services will be sensitive to ensuring policies apply equally and fairly to residents with varying beliefs.</p> <p>2021 Census Profile for areas in England and Wales - Nomis (nomisweb.co.uk)</p> <p>All usual residents - 134,979</p> <p>No religion - 33.3% (44,976 residents)</p> <p>Christian - 49.4% (66,733 residents)</p> <p>Buddhist - 0.4% (512 residents)</p> <p>Hindu - 2.1% (2,848 residents)</p> <p>Jewish - 3.2% (4,376 residents)</p> <p>Muslim - 3.5% (4,699 residents)</p> <p>Sikh – 1.4% (1,847 residents)</p> <p>Other religion - 0.6% (868 residents)</p> <p>Not answered - 6.0% (8,120 residents)</p>	L
Sexual orientation	<p>Neutral –</p> <p>There is nothing to indicate that residents who fall within this group will be disproportionately affected by the strategy.</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> <p>2021 Census Profile for areas in England and Wales - Nomis (nomisweb.co.uk)</p> <p>All usual residents aged 16 and over - 109,932</p> <p>Straight or Heterosexual - 91.3% (100,420 residents)</p> <p>Gay or Lesbian – 1.0% (1,139 residents)</p> <p>Bisexual – 0.7% (763 residents)</p> <p>Pansexual – 0.1% (161 residents)</p> <p>Asexual – 0.0% (33 residents)</p> <p>Queer – 0.0% (18 residents)</p> <p>All other sexual orientations - 0.0% (16 residents)</p> <p>Not answered - 6.7% (7,382 residents)</p>	L

Section 5: Conclusion

		Tick Yes/No as appropriate	
5.1	<p><i>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?</i></p>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><i>If 'YES', use the action plan at Section 6 to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.</i></p>

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.
N/A	N/A	N/A

Section 7: Sign off

**I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately.
(A typed signature is sufficient.)**

Signature of Head of Service: Denise Pegler

Date: 21.12.23

Signature of person completing the EqIA: Charlotte Wright & Michelle Green

Date: 21.12.23

Advice

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