

Charnwood Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment 'Knowing the needs of your customers and employees'

Background

An Equality Impact Assessment is an improvement tool. It will assist you in ensuring that you have thought about the needs and impacts of your service/policy/function in relation to the protected characteristics. It enables a systematic approach to identifying and recording gaps and actions.

Legislation- Equality Duty

As a local authority that provides services to the public, Charnwood Borough Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that we can demonstrate having paid due regard to the need to:

- ✓ Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ✓ Advance Equality of Opportunity
- ✓ Foster good relations

For the following protected characteristics:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion and belief
8. Sex (Gender)
9. Sexual orientation

What is prohibited?

1. Direct Discrimination
2. Indirect Discrimination
3. Harassment
4. Victimisation
5. Discrimination by association
6. Discrimination by perception
7. Pregnancy and maternity discrimination
8. Discrimination arising from disability
9. Failing to make reasonable adjustments

Note: Complete the action plan as you go through the questions

Step 1 – Introductory information

Title of the policy	Charnwood Empty Homes Strategy
Name of lead officer and others undertaking this assessment	Rebecca Short
Date EIA started	June 2017
Date EIA completed	June 2017

Step 2 – Overview of policy/function being assessed:

<p>Outline: What is the purpose of this policy? (Specify aims and objectives)</p> <p>This Strategy sets out our approach, for bringing long term empty homes (empty for 6 months or more) back into use.</p> <p>There are at present 470 homes that have remained empty for 6 months or more within Charnwood.</p> <p>In contrast, there are at present approximately 2300 people on the Housing Register, ranging from priority to non priority need, who are all dissatisfied with their current accommodation or lack accommodation altogether.</p> <p>Empty homes can blight local neighbourhoods and in some cases become a magnet for crime and anti-social behaviour. The Strategy aims to reduce the impact of empty homes on local communities and minimise the wasted housing resource created by homes being left empty.</p> <p>It is the Councils aim to ensure the approach taken is inclusive across the range of protected characteristics, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.</p>
<p>What specific group/s is the policy designed to affect/impact and what is the intended change or outcome for them?</p> <p>The Empty Homes Strategy is designed to impact positively on communities and individuals who are affected by the presence of a long term empty home in their neighbourhood. Improvements in property condition and occupation of the property will enhance the appearance of the home and remove the risk of crime and ASB associated with vacant homes.</p> <p>The Strategy will also impact positively on the owners of long term empty homes, encouraging and enabling them to return the home back into use, generating rental income (or sale value) and minimising Council Tax (including 150% premium charged for homes empty for 2 years or more).</p> <p>Finally, those in housing need will benefit from the Strategy through the increased availability of housing.</p>

Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy?

A stakeholder consultation event was held in May 2017, which was attended by a wide range of groups, including empty home owners, neighbouring residents (affected by empty homes), Estate Agents, Letting Agents, Auctioneers, The Bridge Housing Advisory Service, the Lead Member for Strategic and Private Sector Housing and Council Officers.

The ideas for key actions identified by those attending the event have been included in the document.

Step 3 – What we already know and where there are gaps

List any existing information/data do you have/monitor about different diverse groups in relation to this policy? Such as in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation etc.

Data/information such as:

- Consultation
- Previous Equality Impact Assessments
- Demographic information
- Anecdotal and other evidence

Empty Homes Strategy Stakeholder Consultation Event (May 2017).

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for Leicester and Leicestershire (2014) – used to inform the Housing Strategy on how Charnwood will increase the supply of suitable housing within the Borough.

What does this information / data tell you about diverse groups? If you do not hold or have access to any data/information on diverse groups, what do you need to begin collating / monitoring? (Please list)

The SHMA identifies an overall housing requirement for Charnwood of 20,202 new homes over the 25 years from 2011-2036, to meet current and future need. Affordable housing needs equates to 21.5% of all the new housing planned over the period. Data modelling identifies that 46% of the overall housing need is for 1 bedroom units and that 72% of the 1 bedroom need is for older people.

Future demand is likely to come from single person households and child free couples although the greatest immediate need is for 2 bedroom houses and 2 bedroom bungalows. This information has been fed into the enforcement matrix, used to prioritise empty homes considered for enforcement action and it is also considered when determining discretionary Partnership Grant applications. Partnership Grant approvals include a nomination rights agreement, which contain a condition that the rental level for the property is set at no more than the Housing Allowance rate, making the property affordable. In addition, the tenants are nominated by the Homelessness Prevention Team – prioritising those families who are most in need.

Step 4 – Do we need to seek the views of others? If so, who?

In light of the answers you have given in Step 2, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs / issues? If not please explain why.

Further equalities monitoring may be required of the beneficiaries of Partnership Grants and other future assistance made available to long term empty home owners, to determine any barriers to the application process.

Step 5 – Assessing the impact

In light of any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge and awareness, please identify whether the policy has a positive or negative impact on the individuals or community groups (including what barriers these individuals or groups may face) who identify with any 'protected characteristics' and provide an explanation for your decision (please refer to the general duties on the front page).

	Comments
Age	By returning accessible homes e.g. bungalows, into use, residents with age related mobility issues will benefit from a general increase in the availability of this type of accommodation.
Disability (Physical, visual, hearing, learning disabilities, mental health)	By returning accessible homes e.g. bungalows, into use, residents with a physical disability leading to mobility issues will benefit from a general increase in the availability of this type of accommodation.
Gender Reassignment (Transgender)	No Impact
Race	Potential barrier for any house owners that do not speak a sufficient level of English to understand the process and/ or what is being asked of them. Written and verbal communication may need to be translated or interpreted, as an equalities consideration, in order to mitigate any adverse impact.
Religion or Belief (Includes no belief)	Neutral impact. However it is acknowledged that some faiths/ religions require worship on particular days and therefore may not be able to attend meetings/ appointments due to this. Due consideration will be given to this and flexibility will be applied, if required, in order to mitigate any adverse impact.
Sex (Gender)	No Impact
Sexual Orientation	No Impact
Other protected groups (Pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil partnership)	No Impact

<p>Other socially excluded groups (carers, low literacy, priority neighbourhoods, health inequalities, rural isolation, asylum seeker and refugee communities etc.)</p>	<p>General increase in availability of affordable accommodation, including affordable housing for people experiencing financial hardship.</p>
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Where there are potential barriers, negative impacts identified and/ or barriers or impacts are unknown, please outline how you propose to minimise all negative impact or discrimination.

Please note:

- a) If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately.
- b) Additionally, if you have identified adverse impact that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people.

Race: Make interpretation and translation available in different languages, as and when required, so all house owners are able to understand the process and what is being asked of them.

Religion or Belief: As individuals of some faiths/ religions require worship on particular days they therefore may not be able to attend meetings/ appointments due to this. Due consideration will be given to this and flexibility will be applied, if required, in these circumstances.

Summarise your findings and give an overview as to whether the policy will meet Charnwood Borough Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity (please refer to the general duties on the front page).

By removing any potential barriers that may occur with regards to race & religion or belief, and therefore mitigating adverse impact, the Empty Homes Strategy fully meets Charnwoods responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity. More so, the Strategy has the potential to create a greater positive impact across a range of community groups through the general increase in availability of affordable accommodation, including affordable housing for people experiencing financial hardship.

Step 6- Monitoring, evaluation and review

Are there processes in place to review the findings of this Assessment and make appropriate changes? In particular, how will you monitor potential barriers and any positive/ negative impact?

The outcomes of this EIA will be monitored and reviewed alongside the Strategy.

How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes? e.g. policy reviews, annual plans and use of performance management systems.

Recommendations will be built into service planning, as appropriate. Additionally, there will be the consideration of the inclusion of service types on Customer Satisfaction and Equalities Monitoring (e.g. Partnership Grant) to enable the isolation and monitoring of equalities information.

Step 7- Action Plan

Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan: The issues identified should inform your Service Plan and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan			
Reference Number	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date
001	Further equalities monitoring may be required of the beneficiaries of Partnership Grants and other future assistance made available to long term empty home owners, to determine any barriers to the application process.	Private Sector Housing Manager	1 st August 2018
002	Consider the inclusion of 'service types' on Customer Satisfaction and Equalities Monitoring (e.g. Partnership Grant) to enable the isolation and monitoring of equalities information as detailed above.	Strategic and Private Sector Housing Management Team	1 st August 2018
003	Provide written and verbal communication in an appropriate language, if appropriate and when required.	Strategic and Private Sector Housing Management Team.	1 st July 2017

Step 8- Who needs to know about the outcomes of this assessment and how will they be informed?

	Who needs to know (Please tick)	How they will be informed (we have a legal duty to publish EIA's)
Employees	Yes	Private Sector Housing Manager – for dissemination to team – in particular the Empty Homes Officer Housing Needs Manager – for dissemination to team Housing Strategy and Support Manager – for dissemination to team
Service users		
Partners and stakeholders		
Others		
To ensure ease of access, what other communication needs/concerns are there?		

Step 9- Conclusion (to be completed and signed by the Service Head)

Please delete as appropriate
I agree / disagree with this assessment / action plan
If <i>disagree</i>, state action/s required, reasons and details of who is to carry them out with timescales:
Signed (Service Head):
Date:

Please send completed & signed assessment to Suzanne Kinder for publishing.

