

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, ie 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

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Section 1: Identifying details

Your function, service area and team: The Residential Team sits within the Regulatory Service and delivers as part of its functions, a service to provide Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants in the private sector and to also administer financial assistance for discretionary financial assistance through the Council's Housing Assistance Policy

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

Title of policy or decision: New service delivery for Private Sector Grants including Disabled Facilities Grants and revised Housing Assistance Policy

Officer completing the EqlA: Sally Devine Tel: 01992 564149 Email: sdevine@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Date of completing the assessment: 26.3.2020

Section 2: Policy to be analysed

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| 2.1 | <p>Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?</p> <p>The proposal for a new service delivery involving a restructure of the PSH Grants Team is a new decision</p> <p>The new Housing Assistance Policy follows a review of the existing Housing Assistance Policy (2018),</p> |
| 2.2 | <p>Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) To discontinue the CARE and Repair Service that operates separately and alongside the existing Private Sector Housing Grants and CARE Team;(2) To provide one streamlined service within a newly structured Grants Team to deliver Disabled Facility Grants and the Councils Housing Assistance Policy;(3) To agree the revised Housing Assistance Policy subject to this report, that extends the scope of financial assistance available to our disabled residents and streamlines processes to facilitate a more effective and efficient service delivery of the Housing Assistance Policy. <p>What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (i.e. decommissioning or commissioning a service)?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To discontinue the CARE service in its existing form and bring the entire Grants service under one regime. The service to our grant applicants will be improved as they will always deal with a single dedicated officer rather than the disjointed process that currently exists, and they will continue to benefit |

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	<p>from the same 'hand holding' service currently offered by the CARE Service. Discontinue the existing in house</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. To extend the scope of assistance that may be offered to our disabled and vulnerable residents and to remove barriers that currently slow down the process. 3. To maximise the annual expenditure of financial assistance made available through the Better Care Fund, improving service delivery, through more effective and efficient working practices.
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>Yes</p> <p>Service users (disabled applicants and other residents in the private sector that meet the criteria by virtue of age and financial vulnerability) will be positively affected by the new Housing Assistance Policy and the improved service delivery brought about by the restructure of the team</p> <p>The wider community will benefit from the Empty Homes Repayable Assistance that is available to owners of empty properties to bring them back to use. The effect is to return a property to use for provision of essential housing, to improve the appearance of the immediate community and reduce neighbourhood fear of crime associated with living next to, or near an empty property</p> <p>The restructure will lead to a reduction in establishment posts to the Council. However, as a result of existing vacant posts, no employee will be at risk or affected negatively. One employee, who currently has a split (50:50 FTE) CARE caseworker role and Grants Officer role will be offered a full time Grants Officer role which is at the higher grade.</p> <p>Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?</p> <p>The PSH Team will operate with revised procedures but no other organisations will be affected</p>
2.4	<p>Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?</p> <p>Discontinuing the CARE Service will give a reduction in staff costs of £33,105 per annum. There will also be IT savings of £2,847 each year as the Foundation database will not be required and the top slice allocation of £51,000 currently used to fund the CARE service can be redirected to fund disabled adaptations.</p>
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 new Housing Assistance Policy is linked with the Housing Strategy 2017-22. The Policy directly supports the corporate objectives within the corporate plan:</p>

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	<p>1.2 Promoting independence for older people and people with disabilities - through the provision of disabled facilities grants to provide essential access and egress to their properties and to safely use facilities so that they can live as independently as possible in their homes for as long as they wish</p> <p>1.6 Keeping the district safe – through the provision of alterations and improvements that reduce the risks of trips and falls in the home and other essential repairs that remove significant hazards from the property that would otherwise put the occupier at risk</p> <p>2.1 Keeping the district clean and green – through energy efficiency measures that will reduce the financial burden on residents to keep their homes warm but will also contribute to the reduction of the Districts carbon footprint</p>
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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 following data and information are drawn from statistical documents and reports that adds relevance and context to the Housing Assistance Policy:

Age profile and associated information:

Epping Forest is similar the county average for Children and Young aged 0-15 (18.9%), 16 to 64 years olds (61.4%) and older people aged 65+ (19.6 %). This is close to the percentages for Essex as a whole (18.9%, 60.6% and 20.5%). (*The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2020 (JSNA)*)

The 'Impact of an ageing population study in Epping Forest District' states that:

- Between 2015 and 2025 it is anticipated that the number of over 65's in Epping Forest will increase from 25,400 to 30,000 and over 50's – 64's, from around 24,200 to 27,400.
- Services in preventative healthcare and activities to help people to remain active and health in later life, could help increase the proportion of life spent in good health and reduce costs to a wide range of organisations.
- It is evidenced that good physical and mental health are essential to living longer and having a better quality of life.
- In 2013 there were 1,855 Dementia sufferers, by 2025 the number is expected to be 2,553 (37.6%).

Information from the JSNA identifies that in 2017/18, the age standardised rate of emergency hospital admissions due to hip fractures among persons aged over 65 years was 542.62 per 100,000 population. Whilst this is lower than the rate across Essex as a whole (611.91) and ranks Epping forest as the second lowest rate across the Districts in Essex, it still identifies a significant number of older people admitted to hospital from preventable accidents that the Housing Assistance Policy could help address.

Disability

The latest JSNA states that the exact figures for the number of people living in an area with a physical impairment are not available, However, it is predicted that for adults aged 18-64 years, 4467 people in the area might currently have some form of

	<p>impaired mobility, 3937 have difficulty in performing personal care tasks, and 256 have health condition caused by a stroke.</p> <p>For Adults aged 65+ it is estimated that 5017 people might be unable to manage one or more mobility task (<i>such as going out of doors and walking down the road; getting up and down stairs; getting around the house on the level; getting to the toilet; getting in and out of bed</i>), whilst 5398 people have their day to day activities limited a lot by their physical health.</p> <p><u>Fuel Poverty</u></p> <p>Figures from 2016 estimate that 4,411 households the Epping Forest area were classed as fuel poor. This is equivalent to 8.1% of the total number of households in the area which was lower than the average for Essex (8.6%) or England (11.1%). (JSNA).</p> <p>The report 'The Health Impacts of Cold Homes and Fuel Poverty' (2011), identifies that Countries which have more efficient housing have lower Excess Winter Deaths (EWDs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link between EWDs, low thermal efficiency of housing / low indoor temperature (SAP rating). • EWDs are almost three times higher in the coldest quarter of housing than in the warmest. • 21.5% of all EWDs are linked to the coldest quarter of housing. • Around 40% of EWDs are attributable to cardiovascular diseases. • Around 33% of EWDs are attributable to respiratory diseases. • Strong relationship between cold temperatures and cardio-vascular and respiratory diseases. • Cold housing negatively affects: (i) dexterity and increases the risk of accidents and injuries in the home (ii) children's educational attainment, emotional well-being and resilience & (iii) twice likely to suffer from a variety of respiratory problems • Fuel poverty negatively affects dietary opportunities and choices. "The annual cost to the NHS of treating winter related disease due to cold private housing is £859 million. This does not include additional spending by social services, or economic losses through missed work.
3.2	<p>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?</p> <p>No.</p>

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3.3	<p>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:</p> <p>We work very closely with Occupational Therapists in West Essex and collaborate closely with other LA offering financial assistance to disabled residents to understand essential needs</p> <p>The mandatory disabled facilities grants are set by statute and are not subject to consultation. Also, the HHSRS is a Government standard that is used to assess the health and safety risk in a home, which is subject to professional judgement.</p> <p>We always request feedback via customer questionnaires as to the quality of service that we are offering and will continue to do this in order to gauge the quality of service delivery and adjust where necessary</p>
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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	Positive The HAP helps older people access financial assistance where they meet certain criteria, to carry out essential repairs and improvements to protect their health and safety and improve general living conditions	H
Disability	Positive The HAP creates greater flexibility and scope for disabled facilities grants to assist our disabled residents in the private sector to live safely and independently in their homes	H
Gender	neutral	L
Gender reassignment	neutral	L
Marriage/civil partnership	neutral	L
Pregnancy/maternity	neutral	L
Race	neutral	L
Religion/belief	neutral	L
Sexual orientation	neutral	L

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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 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	If ' YES ', use the action plan at Section 6 to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.


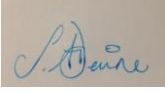
Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

What are the potential adverse impacts?	What are the mitigating actions?	Date they will be achieved.

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Section 7: Sign off

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

Signature of Head of Service: 	Date: 26.3.2020
Signature of person completing the EqIA: 	Date: 26.3.2020

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.