

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form **'Knowing your customers needs'**

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 who provides services to the public, Melton 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 (when providing services)
5. Pregnancy and maternity (when providing services)
6. Race
7. Religion and belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual orientation

What is prohibited?

1. Direct discrimination, including by association and perception.
2. Indirect discrimination – now covers all characteristics.
3. Pregnancy and maternity discrimination.
4. Harassment.
5. Third party harassment.
6. Discrimination arising from disability.
7. Duty to make reasonable adjustments.

Title of the policy	Strategic Tenancy Strategy
Is it new or exiting?	New
Date	16 April 2012
Officer undertaking EIA	Nicola Butcher
Who else is involved in undertaking this assessment?	-

1. Overview of policy/function being assessed

A. Outline: What is the purpose of this policy? (specify aims and objectives)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To meet statutory requirements of the Localism Act 2011 (section 150). The Localism Bill includes new powers relating to allocations and flexible tenancies; it requires local authorities to produce a Tenancy Strategy that sits alongside the Housing Strategy; Homelessness Strategy; and Allocations Policy. To provide guidance to registered providers operating in the Borough, informing their tenancy policies and practices to produce lettings for customers that meet local housing need and make the best use of the housing stock. Specifically to provide guidance on the use of the affordable rent tenure of housing and fixed term tenancies. <p>The allocation of affordable housing will be in accordance with the Council's Allocations Policy which is subject to its own equalities monitoring and impact assessment. This impact assessment only relates to the policies within the tenancy strategy, these are regarding the use of the affordable rent tenure of affordable housing and different types of tenancies, including fixed term tenancies.</p> <p>The tenancy strategy provides strategic guidance for registered providers of affordable housing, they are expected to 'have regard to' it when developing their own tenancy policies. It will be important for each registered provider's tenancy policy, which will contain more specific guidance, to undergo an equalities impact assessment in its own right.</p>
B. What specific groups is the policy designed to affect/impact?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any member of the local community who may require affordable housing now or in the future, including people moving to the Borough or looking to stay within the Borough (e.g. emerging households) Those on the housing register Registered providers of affordable housing Partner organisations whose client groups may require access to affordable housing, including Probation, Adult Social Care and the third sector.
C. Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those on the housing register– 6 week consultation ending in April 2012 via online survey linked to the choice based lettings system, conducted in partnership with Blaby District and Charnwood Borough Councils. Consultation also advertised in tenants' newsletter and Melton Borough Council website to gauge views of others who may have an interest in preparation of draft tenancy strategy. Registered providers – consultation workshop in November 2011 in partnership with all Leicestershire district councils. Partner organisations – consultation workshop in November 2011 in partnership with all Leicestershire district councils.

2. What we already know and where there are gaps

A. What existing information/data do you have/monitor about different diverse groups in relation to this policy? This could consist of previous EIA's, reports, consultation, surveys, demographic profiles etc.

- The housing register. Full equalities monitoring data (recorded under section 2 - Equal Opportunities) of the housing application form. This data is then accessible through the Abris database used to manage and report on the housing register. This data can be extensively cross referenced by specific household details and housing need information to profile equalities information.
- Analysis of termination of Melton borough Council tenancies by reason, duration and property type to inform potential impacts of fixed term tenancies.
- Outcomes of consultation exercises as described in 1c above.

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

The profile of the housing register is similar to that of the Borough as a whole and does not identify any specific concerns.

The information on diverse groups has helped us to provide guidance on;

- the minimum length of tenancy we would prefer to be used for certain household groups
- what we expect providers to consider when developing their tenancy policies e.g., health and wellbeing of older people, in order to minimise adverse effects
- identify the actions the council would like to take, working with providers, to manage adverse impacts, for example, developing appropriate information and advice services

We could improve our information and data on existing tenants; those who are successful in attaining affordable housing, to assist in reviewing the equalities implications of affordable housing allocations; including fixed term tenancies and affordable rent. This information could then be utilised during future reviews of the allocations policy as well as the tenancy strategy.

3. Do we need to seek the views of others and if so, who?

A. In light of the answers you have given in question 2, do you need to consult with specific groups? If not please explain why.

This strategy will be subject to a 6 week public consultation. As part of this consultation we will specifically request comments on any equality impacts of the strategy and whether it could be adapted to promote equality. We specifically will consult with;

- The local community, particularly those with an interest in affordable housing, including those on our housing register
- All registered providers of affordable housing within the Borough as well as the Homes and Communities Agency
- Other partner organisations, including those whose clients are likely to require access to affordable housing, including adult social care, children's services, probation, the youth offending team and the third sector.

4. Assessing the impacts

	In light of any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge and awareness, please identify whether the policy has a positive or negative on the groups specified and whether there is evidence of discrimination. Provide an explanation for your decisions. (please refer to the general duties on the front page)			
<u>Diversity Groups</u>	<u>Positive impacts</u> Intentional / Unintentional	<u>Negative impacts</u> Intentional / Unintentional	Is there evidence of direct/indirect discrimination?	<u>Comments/explanation</u> Use data to evidence
Age	<p>Housing designated for older people – strategy sets out lower affordable rent charges should apply and such tenants should have greater security of tenure (lifetime) promoted within strategy, e.g. sheltered housing.</p> <p>Young people, particularly younger working households, may benefit from access to the new ‘affordable rent’ product and are more likely to accept shorter tenancies as a ‘step up’ into the housing market</p>	<p>A number of homes in the district are under-occupied. These are suitable for families for whom there is less accommodation available. It is likely that many of these are occupied by older people. The strategy aims to address this to make better use of the stock.</p> <p>Moving home at the end of a fixed term tenancy because circumstances have changed may affect educational attainment.</p>	Yes	<p>Measures are included within the strategy to incentivise older people who under occupy their accommodation to move to alternative housing which meets their needs, including housing designated for older people. This in turn is expected to free up general needs housing and make better use of the housing stock overall, having positive impacts on all groups.</p> <p>We have asked providers to consider individual including educational needs in developing their tenancy policies, specifically regarding tenancy renewal.</p>
Disability (physical, visual, hearing, learning disability, mental health)	There is a clear link between age and disability and housing designated for older people is also suitable for those with a need for such accommodation on the grounds of disability. Therefore there are likely to be indirect positive impacts on those with a disability as described for age above.	A shorter than lifetime tenancy may be more stressful for some disabled households for whom there is more limited alternative adapted accommodation available.	No	<p>As older age above</p> <p>We have asked providers to use a system of presumption of renewal unless circumstances of the household have changed significantly, to reduce potential for stress for all households, including disabled households. The process of review at the end of a fixed term tenancy should help to ensure that the needs of the household continue to be met through their home, and that access to other services/adaptations can</p>

				be enabled as required.
Gender / Sex	Fixed term tenancies may enable a better use of housing stock to meet housing needs. Our intention is that this will enable us to meet the needs of homeless households in particular – these are typically women with children and pregnant women.	No issues identified	No	No comments
Religious Belief	No issues identified	Religious belief may affect a household's ability to take out a mortgage/loan and may impact the ability of a household with improved financial circumstances to afford or access market housing	No	The tenancy strategy asked providers to consider the impacts of their tenancy policies, including renewal on individuals and ability to access market housing, this would include needs based upon religious belief.
Racial Group	No issues identified	No issues identified	No	No comments
Sexual Orientation	No issues identified	No issues identified	No	No comments
Transgender	No issues identified	No issues identified	No	No comments
Other protected groups (pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil partnership)	See gender above	No issues identified	No	No comments
Other socially excluded groups Low Literacy and Vulnerable Households	No issues identified	Period of change and overall more complicated types of offers of housing, in terms of types of tenancies and charges may be confusing to some vulnerable households, including those with low literacy levels	No	Strategy promotes high quality housing advice services to assist people make informed housing choices.
Other socially excluded groups Rural Housing and Priority	No issues identified	There is limited affordable housing in rural communities. Fixed	No	The strategy asks providers to take into consideration the impacts of affordable rent in rural

<p>Neighbourhoods</p>		<p>term tenancies may affect community stability and affordable rent may prevent some households from accessing this accommodation, or place them at greater risk of tenancy failure.</p> <p>There is a danger that priority neighbourhoods, particularly where there is a greater supply of social housing, will become the only neighbourhoods where low income and possibly vulnerable households can afford to live.</p>		<p>areas as to not unduly penalise households with higher rents, including specific advice for the use of lower than 80% affordable rent and special consideration for specialist rural developments where under occupation may be normally tolerated on sustainability grounds.</p> <p>The strategy asks providers to taken into consideration the impacts of affordable rent on specific neighbourhoods, including priority neighbourhoods and take advice from the council and regarding neighbourhood management to reduce any possible impacts.</p> <p>The strategy specifically asked providers to take into consideration individual household needs when renewing fixed term tenancies, this may have a positive impact on tenants because of the areas where they live (e.g. tenancy may be renewed because of need to access support or education and lack of alternative accommodation available in village)</p>
<p>All</p>	<p>The strategy sets out that individual circumstances need to be taken into consideration in making tenancy decisions.</p>	<p>No issues identified</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The strategy states the need for providers to consider the individual needs of all households when making decisions on the use of flexible tenancies, particularly vulnerable and disabled households, utilising information from and working with partner organisations particularly for those with housing related support needs.</p> <p>The tenancy strategy asked providers to consider the impacts of their tenancy policies on individuals</p>

5. Action Plan

Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan: <i>The issues identified should inform your Service Plan and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan</i>			
Question Number (Ref)	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date
1	Comment on registered providers individual tenancy and affordable rent policies and equality impact assessments in order to minimise adverse impact.	Housing Policy Officer	As and when published and reviewed
2	Monitor equalities information from the housing register	Housing Policy Officer/Housing Options Manager	Annually

6. Who needs to know about the outcomes of this assessment and how they will they be informed

	Who needs to know (Please tick)	How they will be informed (we have a legal duty to publish EIA's)
Internally (employees & EIA Scrutiny group)	✓	Draft strategy and EIA circulated to key officers and taken to Housing Landlord Task Group for approval prior to public consultation
Externally (service users, stakeholders etc)	✓ People on housing register/service users Registered Providers Partner Organisations (Adult Social Care, Probation, YOT, Social Services, Third sector)	Draft strategy and EIA published for 6 week consultation including being; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displayed on Melton Borough Council website /press release/social media • Promoted on choice based lettings website • Sent to all registered providers of affordable housing currently operating or owning stock within the Melton Borough. • Sent to partner organisations.
Others		
To ensure ease of access, what other communication needs/concerns are there?		

7. Conclusion (to be completed and signed by the [Head of Service](#))

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 (Head of Service): H Rai
Date: 30/05/12

8. Internal Scrutiny (to be completed and signed by an independent [member of the third tier manager group](#))

Please delete as appropriate
I agree / disagree with this assessment
If <i>disagree</i> , state action/s required, reasons and details of who is to carry them out with timescales:
Signed (third tier manager): D Pendle
Date: 31/05/12

[Please ensure that this EIA is publicised on the Internet](#)