

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

Background

An Equality Analysis is a way of making sure that equality considerations are embedded into our decision-making processes and that equality is considered when we are developing key policy & services etc.

One tool to help you do this is an Equality Impact Assessment or EIA. It will assist you in ensuring that “**due regard**” has been given to identify any potential or actual impact (Positive or Negative) that our policies/services/functions*etc., have on differing groups of people.

EIAs also provide a systematic approach to identifying and recording gaps and actions in relation to ensuring equal access when providing functions.

The purpose of the Equality Analysis is to:

- make us focus on the needs, experiences and circumstances of everyone who will be affected by the decisions the Council makes
- direct us to seek alternative ways of achieving our aims and avoiding inequality
- enhance our creditability with our service users to have greater confidence in our performance
- improve our policy making procedures and services

*** Note: For simplicity we have sometimes referred to the following (listed below) as 'Functions'. This includes:** Services, Employment Practices, Projects, Strategy, Processes, Systems, Practices, Procedures, Protocols and Guidelines

Legislation - Equality duty

As a local authority that 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
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion and belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual orientation

When completing the Equality Impact Assessment you are encouraged to consider other disadvantaged or socially excluded communities or groups e.g. carers, the homeless, rural communities, priority neighborhoods, ex-forces personnel etc., who are likely to be affected by the proposal. **The evidence** also needs recording to demonstrate that consideration has been given.

Title of the policy	HRA Rent and Service Charge Setting Policy
Is it new or existing?	New (existing practice)
Date	11.08.20
Officer undertaking EIA	Andrew Cotton
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 the aims and objectives.) Please also state why the policy has been introduced or changed.

- a) Ensure that rents and service charges will be set in accordance with relevant statutory, regulatory, audit and contractual obligations.
- b) Ensure that the HRA does not fall into a deficit position.
- c) Ensure rents and service charges are set at a level which ensures that the Council meets its obligations to tenants and leaseholders, maintains stock at a high standard of repair, plans for future investment and continues to function as a financially viable organisation.
- d) Protect Council tenants and leaseholders from excessive increases in charges. This is a positive impact for those who have low income, this could include the disabled, elderly, carers.
- e) Help ensure sub-market rents are being provided to those in housing need. This is a positive impact for the homeless, disabled, low income.
- f) Provide a clear framework for the setting and review of rent levels for each property.
- g) Ensure that all tenants are made aware of the weekly rent payment due to the Council in respect of their property, both at the beginning of their tenancy and when it changes in April every year. this will be done in accordance with the method of communication preferred by the tenant (where possible) and as such is a positive impact for the disabled or those where English is not their first language.
- h) Ensure that our customers are advised of the availability of benefits to help with housing costs and are given support to claim benefit where applicable. This is a positive impact for the elderly, disabled, homeless, pregnancy and maternity.

The policy outlines how Melton Borough Council (the Council) will calculate and charge rent and service charges for the housing stock that it owns and has responsibility to manage and maintain. It should be noted the policy is not predicated on **increasing** charges, but providing reassurance that they are calculated in a clear and transparent way.

B. Who are the people/groups affected and what is the intended change or outcome for them?

- o Tenants
- o Leaseholders
- o Shared Owners

The intended outcome is provided in section A

C. Equality implications/obligations			
Will this proposal/policy/service etc., meet the Equality Act requirement to have 'due regard' to the need to meet any of the following duties? In this question, consider both the new/current service and the proposed changes.			
	Is the equality duty listed in the left hand column relevant to your policy/service etc?		Comments on how it meets the duty or why is not relevant
	Yes	No	
(1) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation – please complete section 4 of the template.		x	No direct connection
(2) Advance equality of opportunity between different groups How does the proposal/policy/service etc ensure that the intended outcomes promote equality of opportunity for users who have protected characteristics? This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing or minimising disadvantages for protected groups of people • Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people • Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where there participation is disproportionately low e.g. are stakeholders engaged in the process and are there any barriers? 	x		Provision of decent affordable housing promotes equality of opportunity for users
(3) Foster good relations between different groups (tackling prejudice and promoting understanding). Does the service contribute to good relations or to broader community cohesion objectives? How does it achieve this aim? This could include: <i>(The following are examples and so you do not need to answer all the bullet points below.)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building services around people and communities and involving 		x	No direct connection – the policy has been consulted upon with tenants and will provide clarity and transparency with a view to tackling myths and misinformation

them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering if there are strong and positive relationships between groups/communities affected by this policy. Does the policy/service bring together groups of people not used to interacting with each other? If so will it raise any issues that need to be addressed? • Tackling myths and misinformation. If the service is seen as unfair by certain groups, how do you tackle the myths and communicate this? 			
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D. Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy? Did they identify any barriers?

Consultation with Tenants' Forum Executive Committee has been undertaken and the Policy was welcomed, and all tenants and leaseholders were written to and invited to comment. One comment was received.

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 Council acknowledges that it has gaps in terms of data on tenants and leaseholders and their protected characteristics. Increasing the Council's knowledge of its service users is identified as part of the Corporate Plan. However, a significant proportion of lettings are made on basis of vulnerability (disability, old age for example) as there are barriers to accessing the housing market for this sector of the community. The Housing Management will be adapted to ensure data is collected accurately and in a timely fashion going forward to bridge the gaps identified.

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)

As 2A

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 1D & 2 do you need to consult with specific groups? If not please explain why.

Statutory consultation was undertaken between 13th July 2020 and 09th August 2020

4. Assessing the impacts

<p>In light of any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge and awareness, please identify whether the policy has an actual or potential positive or negative impact on the groups specified and whether there is evidence of discrimination. Please read the guidance that accompanies this template.</p> <p>If you have identified actual or potential negative impact or discrimination that is <i>illegal</i>, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately.</p> <p>If you have identified negative impact or discrimination that is justifiable or legitimate please give your reasons. You will need to consider what can be done to mitigate its effect on those groups of people.</p> <p>Provide an explanation for your decisions</p>				
<u>Diversity Groups</u>	<u>Positive impacts</u> (Actual or Potential)	<u>Negative impacts</u> (Including any barriers) (Actual or Potential)	Is there evidence of direct/indirect discrimination ? (Is it illegal or legitimate/justifiable?)	<u>Mitigation</u> Where there are potential barriers, negative impacts identified and/or the barriers or impacts are unknown, please outline how you propose to minimise or remove all negative impact or discrimination.
Age	Not applicable			
Disability (physical, visual, hearing, learning disability, mental health)	Not applicable			
Gender / Sex	Not applicable			
Religious Belief	Not applicable			
Racial Group	Not applicable			
Sexual Orientation	Not applicable			
Gender reassignment/ Transgender	Not applicable			
Other protected groups (pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil	Not applicable			

partnership)				
Other socially excluded groups (low literacy, offenders, priority neighbourhoods, ex forces personnel etc)	Not applicable			

5. Action Plan

Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan: The issues identified should inform your 'One Council Delivery Plan' and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan			
Action Number	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date
1	Consultation 20 July 2020 - 09 August 2020	AC	Complete
2	Corporate Plan – data issues		Corporate plan 2020 – 2024
3	Cabinet Approval	AC	Sept 2020
4	Effective Date	AC	April 2021

6. 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)
Internally (employees & Check & Challenge group)	x	Internal processes
Externally (service users, stakeholders, private sector householders, landlords etc)	x	Policy to be hosted on the Council's website and promoted via tenants' newsletter
Others		
To ensure ease of access, what other communication needs/concerns are		

there?		
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7. Internal Scrutiny (to be completed and signed by a member of the check and challenge group).

Please delete as appropriate
I agree with this assessment / action plan
If <i>disagree</i> , state action/s required
Signed (Check and challenge): By email exchange
Date: 31 August 2020

8. Conclusion (to be completed and signed by the Head of Service)

Please delete as appropriate
I agree 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): Andrew Cotton
Date: 07 September 2020

Once approved by Head of Service please pass to person responsible for Equalities to publish on the internet