**Equality Impact Assessment**

**Validation Decision Notice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>EIA Reference Number</strong></th>
<th>192</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service, policy, or strategy</strong></td>
<td>Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2013 - 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Element(s) assessed</strong></td>
<td>Introduction of policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Names of Assessors</strong></td>
<td>Policy Officers, Business Analyst, Community Development Officer (Diversity) and Housing Officer</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Consider:**

- Was discrimination or disadvantage identified?  
  - Yes  
  - No [✓]

- Was the service promoting equality?  
  - Yes [✓]  
  - No

- Could the service be improved in promoting equality?  
  - Yes [✓]  
  - No

- Are the customers' needs understood and met?  
  - Yes [✓]  
  - No

- Is there good evidence and/or reasoning to support the decisions on whether groups are/aren't affected?  
  - Yes [✓]  
  - No

- Does the summary report properly reflect the key findings of the assessment?  
  - Yes [✓]  
  - No

- Is the summary report clear and easy to understand?  
  - Yes [✓]  
  - No

- If improvements have been identified, do they reflect and deal with the key findings?  
  - Yes [✓]  
  - No

**The decision is to: Validate [✓] Not validate [ ]**

The reason/s for the decision are: **please give details below**

- Validation given – information correct [✓]

- Not validated – decision not to proceed as EIA incorrect

- Not validated - screening error

- Not validated – research/consultation error

- Not validated – improvement error

**Signed**

**Name**

**Designation**

**Date** 6-3-2013
Equality Impact Assessment

Stage 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EIA ID (Sinbad reference number)</th>
<th>192 - Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date of meeting</td>
<td>19/02/2013</td>
</tr>
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<td>Job Titles of assessors</td>
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Assessment and Findings

This assessment is focused on the new Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018. It evaluates the potential impacts of the strategy on the protected characteristics groups included in the Equality Act 2010, as well as other potentially vulnerable groups. In the instance that any potential adverse impacts are identified, mitigating actions will be considered.

There is currently no legal requirement to have a housing strategy but the council is statutorily obliged to provide homelessness strategy. As good practice, it was agreed that it would be appropriate to combine the two strategies. This decision was taken on the basis that homelessness prevention and tackling the causes of homelessness are an integral part of the day to day housing service and are very closely linked to other housing issues such as housing need and new housing supply and delivery. The strategy details the council’s approach to the challenges that are faced (e.g. preventing homelessness and supporting vulnerable people) and it is based on previous work and evidence gathering.

The initial briefing discussion revealed a number of positive impacts of the strategy. It makes general reference to vulnerable people needing support and there is specific reference to work with some of the protected characteristics groups:

- Disabled Facilities Grants that help disabled people to stay independently in their homes are to be reviewed.
- Reference is made to older people and extra care provision.
- Support is included for 16-17 year olds.

No negative impacts were identified at this stage.

All housing customers are considered on an individual basis and are supported according to their own specific needs. This includes mortgage rescue and private sector issues and support for people in all tenures, for example with Disabled Facilities Grants or for those who are victims of domestic violence. The strategy also covers a wider proportion of the population than just social housing.
Stage 1

The development of the current draft of the strategy has been based upon extensive consultation. Further consultation has been carried out more recently with stakeholders and service users, the results of which (including the related equalities data), are currently being analysed and will be used to inform the final strategy.

Justification

The justification for proceeding to the next stage of the EIA is that the strategy and the housing service have a direct impact on the daily lives of borough residents.
Stage 6

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**Assessment and Findings**

This assessment is focused on the new Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018. It evaluates the potential impacts of the strategy on the protected characteristics groups included in the Equality Act 2010, as well as other potentially vulnerable groups.

There is currently no legal requirement to have a housing strategy but the council is statutorily obliged to provide homelessness strategy. As good practice, it was agreed that it would be appropriate to combine the two strategies. This decision was taken on the basis that homelessness prevention and tackling the causes of homelessness are an integral part of the day to day housing service and are very closely linked to other housing issues such as housing need and new housing supply and delivery. The strategy details the council’s approach to the challenges that are faced (e.g. preventing homelessness and supporting vulnerable people) and it is based on previous work and evidence gathering.

There were a number of positive impacts of the strategy that were identified during the assessment. It makes general reference to vulnerable people needing support and there is specific reference made to some of the protected characteristics groups:

**Disability**

- Disabled Facilities Grant’s for individuals with disabilities.
- Adapted properties advertised on Homebid,
- The scheme of allocations, which forms part of the strategy, gives priority to people who are experiencing ill health or who need to move on medical or welfare grounds.

**Age**

- The strategy takes into account the housing needs of over 55s by looking for opportunities to provide downsized accommodation on new development sites.
- Reference is made to older people and extra care provision.
- Specific reference is made to 16 and 17 year olds, who are protected by homeless legislation and joint working protocols with Children’s Services.

**Other**

- The Rural Housing Needs Survey, referred to in the strategy, mentioned and the need for more units of social housing to be built in the rural areas.
- Support is provided to help customers with limited budgets and for those claiming benefits.
Stage 6

- The Allocations Policy, which forms part of the strategy, makes allowances for those with caring responsibilities.
- The strategy makes specific provisions for those who find themselves homeless and individuals at risk of homelessness.

No negative impacts of the strategy were identified as a result of the assessment. As each individual is dealt with on a case by case basis, any specific needs will be identified and addressed as part of the support process. This includes mortgage rescue and private sector issues and support for people in all tenures, for example with Disabled Facilities Grants or for those who are victims of domestic violence. The strategy also covers a wider proportion of the population than just social housing. The frequency for monitoring and reporting is included in the strategy to ensure that any unforeseen issues that arise are addressed.

Key Individuals and Organisations

The strategy links directly to all service users of the Housing and Benefits Department and stakeholders, such as Housing Associations, Parish Councils, Supported Housing Providers and Voluntary Organisations. Potentially, all borough residents could be supported through the strategy. The EIA was supported by a number of council officers and was reviewed by the Equality Working Group and Equality Strategy Group.

Consultation and Research

The development of the strategy has been based upon extensive consultation with stakeholders and service users. A web survey was carried out and information sent to key stakeholders, customers, the voluntary sector and parish councils. Face to face consultation was also completed at several supported housing units. Further analysis was carried out on the Housing Register and customer contacts by phone, in person and by email to identify trends and demand.

There were no negative impacts of the strategy identified as a result of the consultation and research to date. Further consultation has been carried out more recently with stakeholders and service users, the results of which (including the related equalities data), are currently being analysed and will be used to inform the final strategy.

Recommendations

- Further supporting data and evidence of trends in equalities information of service users is needed to better understand which groups are impacted upon by the strategy.
- Add paragraph regarding the Equality Act 2010, protected characteristics groups and EIA.
- Include a statement offering alternative formats to facilitate access and understanding for those who require it (e.g. large print, Braille etc.).
- Ensure supporting data and evidence of trends are widely available to evidence rationale for priorities,
- Need to monitor and reassess the strategy on an on-going basis.