

## Equality Impact Assessment: *Council Housing and Development Resident Involvement Strategy 2021-2025*

The Equality Act 2010 includes a general duty which requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

Authorities which fail to carry out equality impact assessments risk making poor and unfair decisions which may discriminate against particular groups and worsen inequality.

<b>Committee name and date:</b>	<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Decisions being recommended:</b>	<b>People with protected characteristics potentially impacted by the decisions to be made:</b>
Executive Committee 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	Council Housing and Development Resident Involvement Strategy 2021 - 2025	Approval of Strategy and recommendation to full Council	None

--	--	--	--

**Factors to consider in the assessment:** For each of the groups below, an assessment has been made on whether the proposed decision will have a **positive, negative or neutral impact**. This must be noted in the table below alongside brief details of why this conclusion has been reached and notes of any mitigation proposed. Where the impact is negative, a **high, medium or low assessment** is given. The assessment rates the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

**High impact** – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

**Medium impact** –some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

**Low impact** – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
<p><b>Race and ethnicity</b> (including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers; asylum seekers).</p>	<p>Positive</p>		<p>The Housing Service is keen to develop the involvement of both ECC tenants and leaseholders in the services we provide. This is partly because it is both a government and Council priority; partly because it is a regulatory requirement; and partly because we believe it is a good thing in and of itself.</p> <p>Resident Involvement is beneficial because it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leads to services that residents actually want</li> <li>• Improves existing services in line with residents' needs and preferences</li> <li>• Enhances communication and understanding between landlord and tenant</li> <li>• Demonstrates accountability</li> <li>• Improves the health and well-being of residents</li> <li>• Offers relevant training opportunities – gaining new skills and qualifications</li> <li>• Reduces ASB; increased community coherence</li> <li>• Improves the local environment</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates financial dividends – possible savings for landlords in terms of designing and delivering new services/products</li> <li>• Increases levels of resident satisfaction</li> </ul> <p>We have reviewed and updated our current Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement and Communication Strategy which was written in 2016.</p> <p>The principles informing the new Strategy and its main goals include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting involvement from all residents whatever their background or characteristics by offering a range of opportunities</li> <li>• Working with residents to drive continuous service improvement</li> <li>• ‘Mainstream’ resident involvement into our core business processes</li> <li>• Promoting partnership working</li> <li>• Offering a range of training opportunities and support to residents to make the most of their skills and potential</li> <li>• Being accountable to residents for our performance</li> </ul> <p>Key to these aims is to involve as many residents as possible including traditionally “hard to reach” groups. As part of this we have recruited temporarily to a new post of Resident Involvement Officer which we intend to become permanent, with the possibility of extra resources in the near future.</p> <p>The Strategy was based on a survey of residents which asked, among other questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were their main areas of concern/interest</li> <li>• How would they like us to communicate</li> <li>• What level of involvement (if any) would they wish to have with us</li> <li>• What level of support would they like from us</li> <li>• What are the barriers to them becoming more involved</li> </ul> <p>We also held three focus groups from December 2019 to February 2020 to discuss issues in greater depth.</p>
--	--	--	---

			<p>All residents had the opportunity to comment on the Strategy through an online survey. We received over 550 responses.</p> <p>The Strategy itself will be available in a variety of formats according to residents' requirements/wishes.</p> <p>Consideration has been given to what circumstances or situations may limit a person's capacity or willingness to engage.</p> <p>We therefore offer the following opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement opportunities will be made available in the daytime or evenings in a range of locations</li> <li>• There will be opportunities for formal or informal engagement 'as and when' to suit as many as possible</li> <li>• Residents will be able to 'dip in and out' of involvement events</li> <li>• Travel and childcare expenses will be met</li> <li>• The option of paying residents to attend certain meetings will be explored (possibly in the form of vouchers to avoid any negative impact on welfare benefits)</li> </ul> <p>We intend to adopt more robust monitoring of the levels of involvement and engagement within all protected groups especially those identified as being under-represented.</p> <p>We intend to recruit to a new Residents' Group which will be the focus for structured resident involvement (e.g. scrutinising our performance as well as working with us on specific projects) and also set up a 'Virtual panel' of residents whom we can contact electronically for their views on policies; plans; reports; initiatives etc. We will actively recruit to both these groups paying special attention to under-represented groups.</p> <p>We will monitor how well we are doing in terms of involving all groups through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer satisfaction surveys</li> <li>• Participation in all resident groups</li> <li>• STAR biennial survey</li> <li>• Use of Tenants' Portal on OPEN Housing system (once it is up and running)</li> </ul>
--	--	--	---

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Census data for 2021 when available</li> </ul> <p>The Strategy will be closely monitored over the coming months to identify any unintended negative impacts or consequences. We will work closely with tenants, leaseholders and staff to ensure feedback on the implementation of the strategy is received, understood and taken into account. We will monitor any impacts, in particular on individuals with protected characteristics, and do our best to ameliorate them.</p>
<b>Disability:</b> as defined by the Equality Act – a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.	Positive		See above
<b>Sex/Gender</b>	Positive		See above
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	Positive		See above
<b>Religion and belief</b> (includes no belief, some philosophical beliefs such as Buddhism and sects within religions).	Positive		See above
<b>Sexual orientation</b> (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual).	Positive		See above
<b>Age</b> (children and young people aged 0-24; adults aged 25-50; younger older people aged 51-75/80; older people 81+; frail older people; people living with age related conditions. The age categories are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs).	Positive		<p>See above</p> <p>If at all possible and feasible and provided the interest is there we intend to set up a Youth Group to represent the interests of young people.</p>

<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b> including new and breast feeding mothers	Positive		See above
<b>Marriage and civil partnership status</b>	Positive		See above
<b><u>Actions identified that will mitigate any negative impacts and/or promote inclusion</u></b>			
See above			

**Officer: Mark Jolly**  
**Date: 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021**