

Equality Impact Assessment

Service Area	Housing & Property Services
Policy/Service being assessed	Housing Revenue Account Draft Business Plan 2012 – 2042
Is this a new or existing policy/service?	
If existing policy/service please state date of last assessment	
EIA Review team – List of members	
Date of this assessment	November 2011
Signature of completing officer (to be signed after the EIA has been completed)	
Name and signature of Head of Service (to be signed after the EIA has been completed)	

A copy of this Equality Impact Assessment Report including relevant data and information should be saved in the Equality and Diversity Folder on the shared drive.

Form A1

INITIAL SCREENING FOR STRATEGIES/POLICIES/FUNCTIONS FOR EQUALITIES RELEVANCE TO ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION AND PROMOTE EQUALITY



High relevance/priority



Medium relevance/priority



Low or no relevance/ priority

Note:

1. Tick coloured boxes appropriately, and depending on degree of relevance to each of the equality strands
2. Summaries of the legislation/guidance should be used to assist this screening process

DEPARTMENT:	Relevance/Risk to Equalities																							
State the Function/Policy /Service/Strategy being assessed:	Gender			Race			Disability			Sexual Orientation			Religion/Belief			Age			Socio-economic			Priority status For EIA		
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Form A2**Equality Impact Assessment
Please Explain**

Stage 1 – Scoping and Defining			
(1) What are the aims and objectives of policy/service?	In April 2012, the existing Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subsidy system will be replaced by a self financing model. This will require Warwick District Council to take on debt of £136.8m (as per draft determination) to be paid to the CLG on 28 th March 2012. The Business Plan sets out how the Council will service the debt and deliver services over the 30 year period from 2012 to 2042.		
(2) How does the policy/service fit with the council's wider objectives?	The Business Plan sets out the strategic purpose of the housing landlord service to make Warwick District a great place to live, work and visit. The Plan proposes to deliver this through three overarching objectives; Improving Services for Customers, Leading Differently and Financial Viability		
(3) What are the expected outcomes of the policy/service? Who is intended to benefit from the policy/service and in what way?	Self Financing derives from the Governments Localism agenda and will give Councils the freedom to keep all of the rents it collects to allow local decisions and more control. If the current subsidy system were to continue, the Council would not have enough funds to pay for the management, maintenance and improvement of Council homes in the future. Under the Self Financing model, the Council will have the funds to meet the level of required investment now and in the future. There will also be opportunities created to at least maintain the existing level of stock numbers and the potential for new affordable housing which would benefit our existing tenants and people who are currently on the HomeChoice register		
(4) Does this policy/service have the potential to directly or indirectly discriminate against any particular group? Please identify all groups that are affected and briefly explain why	RACE YES/NO	AGE YES/NO	GENDER YES/NO

	RELIGION/BELIEF YES/NO	DISABILITY YES/NO	SEXUAL ORIENTATION YES/NO
	Other – please specify		
(5) Are there any obvious barriers to accessing the service?	There remains a significant affordable housing need in the district. The shortage of affordable housing increases the risk of customer need not being met. Current levels of call answering performance remain a challenge to accessing the service.		
(6) How does the policy/service contribute to promotion of equality?	The Business Plan proposes to deliver services which will benefit tenants representing different ethnic groups and backgrounds. It will also be supplemented wherever required with equality impact assessments for specific policy areas and the promotion of equality.		
(7) Does the policy/service have the potential to promote good relations between groups?	The Business Plan has the potential to promote good relations between groups and does not discriminate against groups representing any of the equality strands.		
<u>Stage 2 - Information Gathering</u>			
(1) What type and range of evidence or information have you used to help you make a judgement about the policy or service?	The Business Plan is based on the following evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stock condition survey • Other asset data • Customer profiling data • Key performance data • Historical cost and customer data 		

(2) What consultation/ information has been used?

What new consultation, if any, do you need to undertake?

In preparation for the Business Plan a formal governance arrangement was agreed which included:

- Project Board – represented by cross party members, tenant and officers
- Project officer group – multi disciplinary group of officers representing housing and finance

The Project board a one page communication and engagement strategy for the following audience:

Audience

- Customers/Tenants
- Members
- Staff
- Contractors
- Press/External Media

Key Actions –

- Develop user friendly guide to self financing – October 2011
- Share message via Homes News and the Website – October 2011
- Provide regular updates to the Tenant Panel – November 2011 ongoing
- Undertake staff briefings on self financing – December 2011
- Update contractors on self financing project at contract meetings – January 2012
- Consult members through existing decision making committees/processes – December 2011/January 2012
- Brief members of the project board to provide updates to their respective political groups – July 11 onwards
- Liaise with the communications team regarding the opportunity for self financing in order to seek external press coverage – November/December 2011

<u>Stage 3 – Making a Judgement</u>	
<p>(1) From your data and consultations is there any adverse or negative impact identified for any particular group?</p> <p>Is there any evidence of needs not being met? e.g. language or physical access barriers; lack of appropriate resources or facilities</p>	<p>Following consultation with tenants the following needs were identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing investment in existing homes in reducing fuel poverty • Initiatives to reduce disproportionate increases in rent • To improve the call centre answering performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reduce abandoned calls ○ Reduce wait times for abandoned and answered calls ○ Improve the grade of service (calls answered within 30 seconds)
<p>(2) If there is an adverse impact, can this be justified?</p>	<p>In relation to rents the Business Plan assumes increases of RPI plus 0.5% plus £2.00, a material change in this increase would have a significant impact – making the Business Plan unsustainable.</p>
<p>(3) What actions are going to be taken to reduce or eliminate negative or adverse impact?</p>	<p>Action has been taken to ensure that rent policy is in line with previous decisions to increase by RPI plus 0.5% plus £2.00</p> <p>End to end reviews to systems within the housing service are expected to reduce failure demand through customers having to chase up requests and for works not completed right first time. This will improve end to end times but also reduce call demand on the call centre. In addition a provision has been put into the Business Plan to accommodate increases in recharges to the HRA for services offered by the CSC – this will include the opportunity to increase staffing resources to answer housing related calls.</p>
<p>(4) Is there any positive impact? Does it promote equality of opportunity between different groups and actively address discrimination?</p>	<p>The Business Plan proposes to deliver services which promote equality of opportunity and are not discriminatory.</p>

<u>Stage 4 – Action Planning, Review & Monitoring</u>					
<p>If No Further Action is required then go to – Review & Monitoring</p> <p>(1) Action Planning – Specify any changes or improvements which can be made to the service or policy to mitigate or eradicate negative or adverse impact on specific groups, including resource implications.</p>	EIA Action Plan				
	Action	Lead Officer	Date for completion	Resource requirements	Comments
<p>(2) Review and Monitoring</p> <p>State how and when you will monitor policy and EIA Action Plan</p>					

Once complete please save a copy of this EIA into the central drive **L:/Equalities & Diversity/EIA/2010/relevant service area**

Please annotate your policy with the following statement:

'An Equality Impact Assessment on this policy was undertaken on (date of assessment) and will be reviewed on (date three years from the date it was assessed'.