

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) FORM

Name of Policy: Vulnerable Communities Strategy

Lead Officer (responsible for assessment): Kerrie Wall (Project Coordinator)

Department: Communities and Partnerships

Others Involved in the Assessment (i.e. peer review, external challenge): Lewis Bage
(Communities and Partnerships Manager)

Date EIA Completed: 21.02.2024

What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)?

As part of any effective policy development process, it is important to consider any potential risks to those who will be affected by the policy's aims or by its implementation. The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process helps us to assess the implications of our decisions on the whole community, to eliminate discrimination, tackle inequality, develop a better understanding of the community we serve, target resources efficiently, and adhere to the transparency and accountability element of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The word 'policy', in this context, includes the different things that the Council does. It includes any policy, procedure or practice - both in employment and service delivery. It also includes proposals for restructuring, redundancies and changes to service provision.

(a) **What is the policy trying to achieve?** i.e. What is the aim/purpose of the policy? Is it affected by external drivers for change? What outcomes do we want to achieve from the policy? How will the policy be put into practice?

The East Cambridgeshire Vulnerable Community Strategy has been developed to ensure that the council understands, considers, responds to and prevents issues affecting residents that are, or could, contribute towards vulnerability, and to support the growth of resilient communities.

(b) **Who are its main beneficiaries?** i.e. who will be affected by the policy?

The Strategy recognises that anybody can go through periods of vulnerability depending on their circumstances, however some people are at an increased risk of experiencing issues that may lead to them becoming vulnerable including, but not limited to:

- people with disabilities and physical or mental health issues
- those who are rurally isolated
- those who are socially isolated
- those who are digitally isolated
- people who require financial assistance or support to access essentials
- the long term unemployed and those living in poverty
- those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- those affected by alcohol and substance misuse
- older people
- armed forces community
- migrant workers, ethnic minority groups, refugees and asylum seekers
- young people moving through the care system (aged 16 and over)

- new communities
- carers

(c) Is the EIA informed by any information or background data (quantitative or qualitative)? i.e. consultations, complaints, applications received, allocations/take-up, satisfaction rates, performance indicators, access audits, census data, benchmarking, workforce profile etc.

Feedback from organisations who work directly with vulnerable people, service leads, and research gathered from secondary sources (including other strategies and census information).

(d) Does this policy have the potential to cause a positive or negative impact on different groups in the community, on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics? (please tick all that apply)

Ethnicity: YES

Age: YES

Gender: YES

Religion and Belief: YES

Disability: YES

Sexual Orientation: YES

Gender Reassignment: YES

Marriage & Civil Partnership: YES

Pregnancy & Maternity: YES

Caring Responsibilities: YES

Please explain any impact identified: i.e. What do you already know about equality impact or need? Is there any evidence that there is a higher or lower take-up by particular groups? Have there been any demographic changes or trends locally? Are there any barriers to accessing the policy or service?

Pages 10 to 13 set out specific issues that can contribute towards somebody becoming vulnerable and evidence relating to these issues in East Cambridgeshire.

(e) Does the policy have a differential impact on different groups? NO

(f) Is the impact adverse (i.e. less favourable)? NO

(g) Does it have the potential to disadvantage or discriminate unfairly against any of the groups in a way that is unlawful? NO

(h) How have you engaged stakeholders in gathering evidence or testing the policy proposals? Who was involved, how and when where they engaged? Does the evidence show potential for differential impact? How will you mitigate any negative impacts? Where there is the potential for an adverse impact that cannot be addressed immediately, these should be highlighted in your recommendations and objectives at the end of the EIA.

To inform the strategy, information was sought from ECDC Service Leads, parish councils and organisations that are already engaged with and working to support vulnerable people. The Council sought information on issues being faced by local people that can contribute to somebody being vulnerable, what is being done to address these issues and what more could be done. The strategy recognises that some people are at an increased risk of experiencing issues that may lead to them becoming vulnerable. The groups of people were identified through consultation with ECDC Service Leads and partner agencies.

* The Consultation Register is available to assist staff in consulting with the Council's stakeholders.

(i) Summarise the findings of your research and/or consultation (please use a separate sheet if necessary).

Findings are detailed in the strategy from pages 10 and 19.

(j) What are the risks associated with the policy in relation to differential impact and unmet needs/requirements? i.e. reputation, financial, breach of legislation, service exclusion, lack of resources, lack of cooperation, insufficient budget etc.

Without the implementation of the work set out within this strategy and action plan, the issues faced by communities listed in the section entitled: 'Vulnerabilities in East Cambridgeshire' may worsen.

(k) Use the information gathered in the earlier stages of your EIA to make a judgement on whether there is the potential for the policy to result in unlawful discrimination or a less favourable impact on any group in the community, and what changes (if any) need to be made to the policy.

Option 1: **No major change** - the evidence shows that the policy is robust and no potential for discrimination. YES

Option 2: **Adjust the policy** - to remove barriers or to better promote equality.NO

Option 3: **Continue the policy** - despite potential for adverse impact or missed opportunity to promote equality, provided you have satisfied yourself that it does not unlawfully discriminate.NO

Option 4: **Stop and remove the policy** – if the policy shows adverse effects that cannot be justified.NO

(l) Where you have identified the potential for adverse impact, what action can be taken to remove or mitigate against the potential for the policy to unlawfully discriminate or impact less favourably on one or more communities in a way that cannot be justified? Include key activities that are likely to have the greatest impact (max. 6). Identified actions should be specified in detail for the first year but there may be further longer term actions which need to be considered. To ensure that your actions are more than just a list of good intentions, include for each: the person responsible for its completion, a timescale for completion, any cost implications and how these will be addressed. It is essential that you incorporate these actions into your service plans.

No adverse impacts have been identified.

This completed EIA will need to be countersigned by your Head of Service. **Please forward completed and signed forms to the HR Manager.**

All completed EIAs will need to be scrutinised and verified by the Council's Equal Opportunities Working Group (EOWG) and published on the Council's Intranet to demonstrate to local people that the Council is actively engaged in tackling potential discrimination and improving its practices in relation to equalities. Please be aware that you may be asked to attend a half-an-hour session to summarise the findings of the EIA to the Scrutiny and Verification panel.

Signatures:

Completing Officer:	<u>Kerrie Wall</u>	Date:	<u>21.02.2024</u>
Head of Service:	<u>Lewis Bage</u>	Date:	<u>21.02.2024</u>