

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – INITIAL SCREENING TEMPLATE (IST)

Initial screening needs to take place for all new/revised Council policies. 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. This stage must be completed at the earliest opportunity to determine whether it is necessary to undertake an EIA for this activity.

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| Name of Policy: | Draft Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy |
| Lead Officer (responsible for assessment): | Senior Environmental Health Officer |
| Department: | Environmental Services |
| Others Involved in the Assessment (i.e. peer review, external challenge): | Environmental Services Manager |
| Date Initial Screening Completed: | 16 th October 2018 |

(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?

East Cambridgeshire District Council authorises officers to carry out statutory functions in the Private Rented Sector in the Council’s district. Officers enforce housing legislation under the Housing Act 2004 amongst other pieces of legislation.

The draft Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy is good practice to clearly set out the Council’s approach to enforcement to provide consistency and transparency. It is designed to be both fair to responsible landlords but deals effectively with uninformed or rogue landlords to maintain and improve housing conditions within East Cambridgeshire.

Where the option of Civil Penalties are to be adopted, local authorities are also required to produce a penalties matrix, which is attached to the policy.

The draft policy also proposes charging for the service of certain housing notices when deemed appropriate.

The draft is being submitted to the Regulatory Services Committee on 5th November 2018.

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

Existing and proposed landlords and private sector tenants.

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

The Council must conform to statutory functions.

The draft has been prepared having regard to East Cambridgeshire Equality framework.

(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 | x | Age | x |
| Gender | | Religion or Belief | |
| Disability | x | Sexual Orientation | |
| Gender Reassignment | | Marriage & Civil Partnership | |
| Pregnancy & Maternity | | Caring Responsibilities | |

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?

This is an updated document.

The Private Rented Sector houses a higher proportion of vulnerable groups and in East Cambridgeshire District the private rental market is slightly higher than the national average. The draft policy aims to have a positive impact on vulnerable groups by providing officers with more enforcement options to encourage a good standard of housing throughout the district. There will also be a positive impact on responsible landlords within the district and act as a deterrent to rogue landlords.

Age

An authorised officer will need to evaluate cases and deal with these especially sensitively where necessary. Officers will also use the policy and feed into other appropriate groups where necessary i.e. Age UK to ensure the best outcome for the occupant.

Disability

These cases again will need to be evaluated appropriately.

Legislation dictates that some applications must be made in writing or online for example a Houses in Multiple Occupation Licence etc. An applicant may be visually impaired and therefore unable to complete the application forms his/herself. A physically or mentally disabled person may have special needs. Where a person with a disability is invited to attend a recorded interview under the rules of PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984), they may need special support or, need to have the interview conducted at another premises and not the Council Offices.

Ethnicity

Where English is not be the first language of the landlord or tenant, translation services may be required and can be provided. Letters etc. can also be provided in the appropriate language where necessary.

- (e) Does the policy affect service users or the wider community?
- (f) Does the policy have a significant effect on how services are delivered?
- (g) Will it have a significant effect on how other organisations operate?
- (h) Does it involve a significant commitment of resources?
- (i) Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities, e.g. disabled people’s access to public transport etc?

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|----|
| NO |
| NO |
| NO |
| NO |
| NO |

If you have answered **YES** to any of the questions above, then it is necessary to proceed with a full equality impact assessment (EIA). If the answer is **NO**, then this judgement and your response to the above questions will need to be countersigned by your Head of Service and then referred to the Council’s Equal Opportunities Working Group (EOWG) for scrutiny and verification. Please forward completed and signed forms to the Principal HR Officer.

Signatures:

Completing Officer: Julia Atkins **Date:** 16/10/18

Head of Service: Liz Knox **Date:** 22.10.18