

Chesterfield Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment - Full Assessment Form

Service Area: Homes and Communities
Section: Housing Services
Lead Officer: Alison Craig

Title of the policy, project, service, function or strategy the preliminary EIA is being produced for: **Results of Tenant Consultation for Changes to Council Housing Tenancy Agreement**

Is the policy, project, service, function or strategy:

Existing
Changed
New/Proposed

STEP 1 – MAKE SURE YOU HAVE CLEAR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

What is the aim of the policy, project, service, function or strategy?

The purpose of the report is to seek final approval from Cabinet to make changes to the housing tenancy agreement and repairing obligations relating to secure and introductory tenants following comprehensive consultation with tenants on these proposed changes.

Who is the policy, project, service, function or strategy going to benefit and how?

These are set out at section 3.1 and section 5 of the covering report

What outcomes do you want to achieve?

There are a number of outcomes that the Housing Service wishes to achieve:

Mitigate the risk of increased rent arrears from Universal Credit recipients where UC paid over 52 weeks and rent collection on a 48 week basis.

Removal of ambiguous clauses and obligations within the Tenancy Agreement resulting in cases not successful at court / legal stage

A £500,000 reduction in the responsive repairs budget in 2017/18 and each of the following two financial years, after which the budget will be increased by inflation (CPI). Part of this will be the transfer of repair obligations to tenants.

What barriers exist for both the Council and the groups/people with protected characteristics to enable these outcomes to be achieved?

Aware of implications of impact of changes to repairs obligations. This has been factored into the consultation to ensure adequate provision to cover these groups is developed in final proposals

STEP 2 – COLLECTING YOUR INFORMATION

What existing data sources do you have to assess the impact of the policy, project, service, function or strategy?

The data has been collected as part of the tenant consultation process on the proposed changes

STEP 3 – FURTHER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Please list any additional engagement activities undertaken to complete this EIA e.g. met with the Equalities Advisory Group, local BME groups, Employee representatives etc. Could you also please summarise the main findings.

The process for amending the tenancy agreement has been developed over eighteen months through consultation with Members, Tenant steering groups and officers to identify required changes. When amending a tenancy agreement Legislation requires the Housing Service to advise tenants of the intention through serving a notice of variation. Therefore as part of the process a full consultation with all tenants was undertaken.

Date	Engagement Activity	Main findings
July 16- Mar 17	In July 2016 a Steering Group was established to consider the implications for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan following national housing policy changes, including the reduction in rents for 4 years until April 2020 and to make recommendations as to how these implications can be mitigated. The Steering Group comprises of cross party elected members, officers and tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A £500,000 reduction in the responsive repairs budget in 2017/18 and each of the following two financial years, after which the budget will be increased by inflation (CPI) • A reduced and re-phased capital programme • Moving from collecting rent on a 48 week basis to a 52 week basis and that consultation on this and other changes to the tenancy agreement takes place during 2017/18 • Mitigating income loss through bad debts (rent arrears) and having properties stood empty (voids)
April – Aug 2017	A series of tenant, officer and elected member working groups were established in April 2017 to consider how these savings could be achieved in more detail. These recommendations included several things that required changes to the tenancy agreement. Opportunity was taken to consult on other proposed changes as part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing tenant repairing obligations e.g. tenants taking more responsibility for their own repairs and damage • Reviewing repair response times • Reviewing void standards and undertaking some work after a property has been re-let as part of the Housing Capital Programme • Adopting a standard approach to the removal of the previous tenants fixtures and fittings

	of consultation.	
October November 2017	Full written consultation with the Councils 9,200 tenant households. Ability to complete online offered	Outcomes are attached as Appendix 1 and 2 and detailed in main report
October November 2017	Programme of Consultation Events linked to the written consultation. Advertised in 'Our Homes' was provided for tenants to attend to discuss the proposals. These were held in locations across the Borough and at different times to maximise opportunity to attend.	Outcomes are attached as Appendix 1 and 2 and detailed in main report

STEP 4 – WHAT’S THE IMPACT?

Is there an impact (positive or negative) on some groups/people with protected characteristics in the community? (think about race, disability, age, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation and other socially excluded communities or groups). You may also need to think about sub groups within each equalities group or protected characteristics e.g. older women, younger men, disabled women etc.

Please describe the potential impacts both positive and negative and any action we are able to take to reduce negative impacts or enhance the positive impacts.

Group or Protected Characteristic	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	Action
Age – including older people and younger people.		Transfer of repair obligations meaning that elderly tenants may struggle to carry out minor	See below

		repairs	
Disabled people – physical, mental and sensory including learning disabled people and people living with HIV/Aids and cancer.		Transfer of repair obligations meaning that disabled tenants may struggle to carry out minor repairs	See below
Gender – men, women and transgender.	None	None	
Marital status including civil partnership.	None	None	
Pregnant women and people on maternity/paternity. Also consider breastfeeding mothers.	None	None	
Sexual Orientation – Heterosexual, Lesbian, gay men and bi-sexual people.	None	None	
Ethnic Groups	None	None	
Religions and Beliefs including those with no religion and/or beliefs.	None	None	
Other groups e.g. those experiencing deprivation and/or health inequalities.	Change to a 52 week rent year will ensure rent year reflects the payment of benefits mitigating potential for rent arrears to accrue	None	

From the information gathered above does the policy, project, service, function or strategy directly or indirectly discriminate against any particular group or protected characteristic?

Yes
No

If yes what action can be taken to stop the discrimination?

Following the consultation the list of repairs where proposals to transfer responsibility to the tenant has been amended to take into account the issues raised by Disabled and Elderly tenants. The amended list is attached as **Appendix 5** Summary of Proposed Changes in Repair Obligations and Timescales. It is also proposed that a series of You Tube videos be produced to demonstrate how minor DIY tasks can be undertaken. In addition it is proposed that some DIY classes for tenants be established. Where a tenant has 'tried' to rectify a repair that is their responsibility e.g. unblock sink, if this has been unsuccessful they can contact the council for a new, rechargeable repair. This would also be possible where a vulnerable tenant is unable to attempt a repair due to their disability e.g. reset trip switch at high level when tenant is in a wheelchair.

STEP 5 – RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISION MAKING

How has the EIA helped to shape the policy, project, service, function or strategy or affected the recommendation or decision?

The Housing Service was aware of the potential impact of changes and therefore the consultation included facility for respondents to highlight any disability or age related issues that could arise from the proposed changes to feed into the response to the repairs and maintenance changes.

How are you going to monitor the policy, project, service, function or strategy, how often and who will be responsible?

The impact of the proposed tenancy agreement changes will be measured in several ways:

- Routine Rental Income monitoring will identify the effect of removing water charges and changing to a 52 week rent year
- Repairs and Maintenance budgets will be monitored to identify whether the savings have been achieved.
- Monitoring of take up of Commercial Services paid for repairs service by council tenants
- A six and twelve month review of the impact of the proposed changes in order to identify whether any other mitigating actions need to be introduced e.g. a Handyvan Service

STEP 6 – KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND PUBLICATION

Please note the draft EIA should be reviewed by the appropriate Head of Service/Service Manager and the Policy Service before WBR, Lead Member, Cabinet, Council reports are produced.

Reviewed by Head of Service/Service Manager

Name:

Date:

Reviewed by Policy Service

Name:

Date:

Final version of the EIA sent to the Policy Service

Decision information sent to the Policy Service