

Equality Analysis for a Policy, Project or Report

What is the name of your policy, project, or report? Empty Homes Update	Month/Year January 2020
Name and job title of lead officer: Nat Slade Group Head of Technical Services	
<p>Briefly describe the aims of your policy, project, or report.</p> <p>On the 04 January 2018 the Housing and Customer Services Working Group recommended to Cabinet that the Empty Homes Strategy 2018-2023 was adopted and the report provides an update on the work and achievements to date.</p> <p>The Housing and Customer Services Working Group on 03 July 2014 recommended to Cabinet that the Empty Property Assistance Program (EPAP) was set up to help provide grants and loans to owners of empty properties to bring them up to decent home standard and back into occupation. Additional funds are requested for the continuation of this work.</p> <p>The funding from the Empty Property Assistance Program is used to support the works in default any money the Council spends in doing this is recharged back to the owner, nonpayment can lead to a Charge being secured on the property. Where a Charge has been placed on the property and registered as a Local Land Charge by the Council's Local Land Charges Team, it provides the basis for the Enforced Sales Procedure. The Council has the power of sale of the property, conferred by the Charge, to recover the money it is owed for carrying out the works in default. It is the same power that a bank or building society would rely upon to sell a house, when the owner has defaulted on the mortgage, which is secured as a Charge against the property. The aim is to update the procedure for enforced sale which enables the Council to recover their debt and in turn ensure that the property is brought back into use.</p>	

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination, both in the workplace and in wider society. It covers 9 specific groups of people who share 1 or more of these protected characteristics; age; disability; gender; gender reassignment; marriage & civil partnership; pregnancy & maternity; race; religion or belief; and sexual orientation.

As a local authority Arun District Council (and any other organisation that is carrying out a public function on our behalf) is further bound by the Public Sector Equality Duty. This means that we have to consider **all** individuals in their day-to-day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to our own employees.

The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it – this means removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics and encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it – this involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Having due regard means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. This means that consideration of equality issues must influence the decisions reached by public bodies – such as in how they act as employers; how they develop, evaluate and review policy; how they design, deliver and evaluate services, and how they commission and procure from others.

The Equality Duty does not impose a legal requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Compliance with the Duty involves consciously thinking about the three aims as part of the process of decision-making. Doing this will entail understanding the potential effects of the organisation's activities on different people. Keeping a simple record of how decisions were reached will help public bodies show how they considered the Duty. Producing an Equality Impact Assessment after a decision has been reached will not achieve compliance with the Equality Duty.

Analysis

Consider what it is that you are trying to achieve and write a brief equality analysis in the box below. You should mention each of the nine protected groups, plus any others (e.g. families, people on low incomes, people in remote areas, etc) who may be affected. The following questions should help shape your thought process and subsequent decision making.

- Who will benefit most from this? Will anyone be treated more favourably as a result?
- Is there any evidence to suggest that your action or policy could have an adverse impact on some groups of people and specifically those with a protected characteristic? Does it present barriers or problems for any groups or communities?
- Is there any data, research or other evidence available to help or support your decisions?
- Have you considered any existing examples of good practice.
- How do you intend to deal with any adverse impact, or lessen it?
- Who else will you need to be working with to do this e.g. partners, contractors etc and what is their approach? How will this help?

The empty property assistance program and enforced sale procedure takes account of all the specific groups age; disability; gender; gender reassignment; marriage & civil partnership; pregnancy & maternity; race; religion or belief; and sexual orientation, this is based on a number of years' experience in dealing with this type of work.