



Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE



Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council

Equality Impact Assessment

Housing Services Budget

January 2021

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Section 1: Summary details

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| Directorate and Service Area | Adult Social Care and Housing - Housing Services |
| What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change). | The Housing Service will be reviewed and redesigned to increase income generation, reduce overheads, release reserves and restructure the establishment in line with service priorities. |
| Is this a new or existing function or policy? | Existing |
| Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment). | This proposal is to reduce the Housing Services budget by £433k through a combination of service redesign, efficiencies and income generation. Frontline delivery will be prioritised. There is the potential for some impact on response times but in the design of the new service approach the most vulnerable customers will be prioritised and this will mitigate any impact on customers with protected characteristics. |
| Completed By | Gillian Douglas |
| Authorised By | |
| Date of Assessment | December 2020 |

Section 2: Detail of proposal

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| <p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p> | <p>The Housing Service incorporates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing options and homelessness services • Housing allocations – managing access to social housing • Strategy and development – planning for future need • Housing standards in private rented housing, tenancy functions and licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation • Housing grants which are used to adapt the homes of disabled people and support hospital discharge <p>The aim of the review is to retain the frontline aspects of the service that have the most impact in meeting the different needs of our customers. At the same time, we will restructure staff teams to align with priority services to customers, reducing the overall costs of the service by reducing posts and improving efficiency.</p> <p>We will also generate £50k by charging registered providers (RPs) for the housing allocations service. This is an action we should implement because we deliver a valuable service to RPs and it is standard practice for local authorities to charge for this type of service.</p> |
| <p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p> | <p>We have undertaken a benchmarking exercise with other local authorities and produced proposals for reasonable charging of RPs. This will generate an estimated £50k per annum.</p> <p>The remainder of the savings will be generated by a service review and redesign to reduce the costs of the Housing Service as a whole while prioritising homelessness prevention, meeting the community’s housing needs and raising standards in rented housing.</p> <p>This will focus on process improvement, restructuring and subsequent realignment of the establishment and a reduction in overheads. Changing the delivery model may have an impact on our customers generally in terms of processing and response times. However, we will ensure that vulnerable customers continue to be prioritised and receive the help they need.</p> |

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| <p>Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p> | <p>Review and redesign of the service will be subject to normal processes of consultation and engagement and changes that impact on service delivery will be subject to further detailed impact assessment. Our aim is to support the workforce to transform and continuously improve, taking a person-centred and strengths-based approach.</p> <p>We receive around 50 housing applications per week and have kept processing times low. By streamlining the application process we will be able to maintain processing times within target limits.</p> <p>Resources for Housing Options will be maintained.</p> <p>We help around 200 households per annum by adapting their home using Disabled Facilities and other flexible grants. This delivery will not be affected by restructuring.</p> <p>Policy and strategy work will be reduced with priority given to statutory reporting and strategies. Increased focus on partnership working and cross-county join up, led by the joint Cherwell/County Council Assistant Director, Housing and Social Care Commissioning post, will mitigate impact on policy and strategy outcomes.</p> <p>We presented the proposed charging regime to all of our lead Registered Providers (RPs) at a meeting on 30/9/20. In December 2020 we formally wrote to RPs with charging details and confirmed that this will be implemented from 1/4/21.</p> |
| <p>Alternatives considered / rejected</p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p> | <p>Not charging RPs – rejected as this is a valid proposal and justifiable in terms of offsetting some of the cost of housing allocations.</p> <p>Not reviewing and redesigning services – rejected, as we do have to meet savings targets in order to sustain the council and maintain statutory and priority services including those to the most vulnerable residents. Comparisons and benchmarking with other authorities demonstrates that statutory services can continue to be delivered with a reduced resource base.</p> |

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

| Protected Characteristic | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of Impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Age | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Disability | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Gender Reassignment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Marriage & Civil Partnership | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Pregnancy & Maternity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Race | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Sex | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Sexual Orientation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Religion or Belief | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

| Additional community impacts | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| Rural communities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Armed Forces | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Carers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Areas of deprivation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

| Additional Wider Impacts | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of Impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Other Council Services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Reviewing and redesigning the service may rely on working more closely with other council services, for example the customer service centre and IT and digital teams. | | Gillian Douglas | |
| Providers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Any potential impact on housing providers through changes to the way we work will need to be reviewed through the service review and design work | | Gillian Douglas | |
| Social Value ¹ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

¹ If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

Section 3: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

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| Review Date | 1/7/21 |
| Person Responsible for Review | Alison Adkins/Tim Mills |
| Authorised By | Gillian Douglas |