

Colchester Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment Form - An Analysis of the Effects on Equality

Section 1: Initial Equality Impact Assessment

Name of policy to be assessed:

- Colchester's Strategic Plan 2023-26.

1. What is the main purpose of the policy?

- This plan sets out the direction and future potential for our borough. As a Council we have an ambitious range of priorities and goals.
- The Strategic Plan 2023-26 sets the framework for the Council's three-year Medium Term Financial Forecast and its Capital Programme.
- These priorities are kept under review to ensure they remain relevant and take account of changing needs and issues locally, as well as the changing legislative, financial and policy context for local government.

2. What main areas or activities does it cover?

- All Council areas and activities.

3. Are there changes to an existing policy being considered in this assessment? If so what are they?

- This is will update the Council's policy framework.

4. Who are the main audience, users or customers who will be affected by the policy?

- All residents, customers, businesses and partners
- Visitors to the borough.

5. What outcomes do you want to achieve from the policy?

- Colchester has a rich heritage and an ambitious future. The Strategic Plan 2020-23 sets out five key themes to build on this, and the outcomes will be based on achieving these themes, which are:
- Develop modern services for a modern city
- Respond to the climate emergency
- Tackle health, well-being and happiness
- Deliver homes for those most in need
- Grow our city's economy so everyone benefits
- Celebrate our city and our heritage and culture

The Strategic Plan will have a delivery plan which will set out the specific actions needed to achieve this.

6. Are other service areas or partner agencies involved in delivery? If so, please give details below:

- All Council services
- Colchester Borough Homes
- Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd - parent company to Colchester Amphora Trading, Colchester Amphora Homes and Colchester Amphora Energy
- Town and Parish Councils
- Partners in the public, private, community, voluntary and education sectors
- Businesses
- Employers
- Essex borough/district councils
- Essex County Council
- Essex Police
- Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
- NHS
- North Essex Garden Communities
- Government departments and agencies.

7. Are you aware of any relevant information, data, surveys or consultations which help us to assess the likely or actual impact of the policy upon customers or staff?

The Strategic Plan is informed by a range of relevant information, data, surveys or consultations including:

[Census data](#), [ONS data sources](#), [Essex Open Data](#), [Public Health Profiles](#), [indices of deprivation](#), [Colchester Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\) profile 2019](#).

We have also used the wide range of research and statistics which are shown on the Council's website [here](#) (or follow the pathway [www.colchester.gov.uk/Our Council>Local Research and Statistics>Colchester Statistics or >Census](http://www.colchester.gov.uk/Our%20Council%20Local%20Research%20and%20Statistics%20Colchester%20Statistics%20or%20Census)) which include [key statistics for Colchester](#).

This longer term view is important in ensuring that the Strategic Plan takes due account of future needs such as population growth and diversity.

We also referred to the results of a recent consultation shown here.

As priorities are developed, so the objectives and outcomes will be shared and views sought, from potential partners, key stakeholders, councillors and the public. To deliver these shared priorities, the contribution of local stakeholders and other agencies will be particularly important where the Council must work with others and where their help and contributions may be sought.

8. The 'general duty' states that we must have "due regard" to the need to:

- (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a 'protected characteristic'¹ and those who do not²
- (c) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.³

Where applicable, explain how this policy helps us to meet the 'general duty':

The Strategic Plan's broad themes, priorities and goals will all play their part in helping to further or facilitate our 'general duty'.

- The Strategic Plan is a key part of setting the direction and future potential for our City, with its themes providing support in achieving this aim. In summary:
 - Living in welcoming, tolerant and diverse communities helps to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
 - Living in a thriving and prosperous place helps to advance equality of opportunity for everyone in fulfilling their potential.
 - Encouraging communities to meet and interact helps people to know and understand each other better, and it can support joint working on practical solutions.

A positive encouragement towards helping individuals, families and communities to flourish in the borough whatever their circumstances has been a key part of the Council's Strategic Plans since their introduction in 2002. This is backed by:

- The "Tackle health, well-being, and happiness and " theme, and its priority to "Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable
- The "Deliver homes for those most in need theme", and its priorities to "Increase the number and quality and types of homes and Meet our duty to prevent or assist those facing homelessness"
- The "Grow our city's economy so everyone benefits" theme

¹ The Equality Act's 'protected characteristics' include age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sex and sexual orientation. It also covers marriage and civil partnerships, but not for all aspects of the duty.

² This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to: (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it, and (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

³ This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding.

9. This section helps us to identify any disproportionate impacts. Please indicate in the table below whether the policy is likely to particularly benefit or disadvantage any of the 'protected characteristics'.

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
Age	Older people (60+)	√	<p>The Strategic Plan is designed to work with and influence people in showing tolerance and in changing behaviours, to enable and create better local communities and better understanding.</p> <p>A welcoming and supportive borough will benefit all residents, whatever their personal circumstances or protected characteristics.</p>	None identified	See 10. below
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)				
Disability	Physical				
	Sensory				
	Learning				
	Mental health issues				
	Other – <i>specify</i>				
Ethnicity ⁴	White				
	Black				
	Chinese				
	Mixed Ethnic Origin				
	Gypsies/ Travellers				
	Other – <i>please state</i>				
Language	English not first language		As "Age" above.		

⁴ National Census 2011 categories are: Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian (Asian or Asian British), African, Caribbean, Other Black (Black or Black British), White and Black African, White and Asian, White and Black Caribbean (Mixed), British, Irish, Other White (White), Chinese, Other (Other Ethnic Group).

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks		It aims to address the increasing population – the borough's growth must be matched with opportunities for jobs, homes, infrastructure and community life, now and in the future.		
Religion or Belief	People with a religious belief (or none)	√	<p>The Strategic Plan is designed to work with and influence people in showing tolerance and in changing behaviours, to enable and create better local communities and better understanding.</p> <p>This includes tackling anti-social behaviour such as sexual harassment.</p>	√	
Sex	Men				
	Women				
Gender Reassignment ⁵	Transgender/ Transsexual				
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual, Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian				
Marriage and Civil Partnership	People who are married or in a civil partnership				

10. If you have identified any negative impacts (above) how can they be minimised or removed?

- Not applicable. The Strategic Plan is an “overarching vision” for the borough. Individual policies and practices will support its implementation, and equality impact assessments will be part of this process. Negative impacts are more likely to be identified at that point – when the detail of implementation is being assessed. Any such negative impacts can then be considered to see how they can be minimised or removed.

⁵ The protected characteristic of gender reassignment is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as “a person proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.” This is a personal process that may involve medical interventions such as counselling, psychotherapy, hormone therapy or surgery, but does not have to. NB: It is generally held that transgender people disguise their features or clothing to resemble their preferred sex, whereas transsexual people wish to change their body to completely resemble their preferred sex.

11. Could the policy discriminate⁶ against any 'protected characteristic', either directly or indirectly⁷?

- No.

Summary and findings of Initial Equality Impact Assessment

12. Please put a tick in the relevant box to confirm your findings, and what the next step is:

Findings	Action required
No negative impacts have been identified <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and finish.
Negative impacts have been identified but have been minimised or removed <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and finish.
Negative impacts could not be minimised or removed <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and complete a full impact assessment – Section 2.
There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and complete a full impact assessment – Section 2.

13. Name and job title of person completing this form:

- Richard Block, Chief Operating Officer.

14. Date of completion:

- January 2023

15. Date for update or review of this screening:

- Not applicable – EQIAs are undertaken on a three-year basis, and that matches the 'life' of this Strategic Plan 2020-23. It will however be reviewed if circumstances demand.

⁶ The Council has a general duty to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'. Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another in a comparable situation because of their 'protected characteristic' whether on grounds of age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity; religion or belief; sex (gender), sexual orientation, or marriage and civil partnership. Indirect discrimination occurs when an apparently neutral provision or practice would nevertheless disadvantage people on the grounds of their 'protected characteristic'.