

# ITEM XXX

## **Report to Minority Communities Diversity Forum**

**11 September 2008**

### **Equality Impact, Needs and Requirement Assessments - Work so far undertaking relating to housing**

#### **Introduction**

At the meeting of the Minority Communities of 12 June, 2008, the Minority Communities Diversity Forum requested a short update of the housing related Equality Impact Assessments.

To date, three Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) relating to housing have been undertaken as follows:

- Affordable Warmth Strategy
- Allocations Policy
- Homelessness Strategy.

Full copies of all of these Assessments are published on-line at <http://www.derby.gov.uk/CommunityLiving/Equal+Opportunities>

It should also be noted that a range of EIAs are being undertaken through the Council.

These Assessments were the first tranche undertaken which will eventually cover all key policies and strategies produced by the Council.

#### **What are Equalities Impact Assessments?**

Equality impact, needs and requirements assessments provide a structured way of looking at and examining the effects or impact of a proposed or existing policy, practice, service or function on equality groups. We can use them to find out what may be wrong or even to tell us what is working well. We can find ways of putting things right if needed, by talking and listening to and involving people in the community and people from equality groups.

This will tell us what objectives and targets we need to set to put things right or improve things. When we look at our policies, practices, services and functions, we need to look deeper than just assuming that because they apply to everyone equally, then that must mean equality. Sometimes, we may need to change the policy or the way we use it so that it does meet particular groups of people's needs. For example, we may ask for all complaints in writing.

This makes it more difficult for some disabled people to put in complaints to us and difficult for people who cannot write very well in English.

So, we need to be flexible in the rules we make, and in this example, change the rules so we do accept complaints on tape, or through an interpreter, or whatever way is easiest for that individual.

These equality impact, needs and requirements assessments procedures apply to all projects and policies where the Council is the lead agency in a multi-agency project or a Council group project. The Council is the lead agency if we initiated the project or policy and the monitoring, evaluation and strategic overview of the implementation lies with us. This applies even if the Council is not the operational lead.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Affordable Warmth Strategy**

Objective	Planned action	Target performance	Responsible lead officer	Progress as of 1 August 2008
<b>Monitor to see if any gaps in service provision for New Communities</b>	Liaise with community groups and consult with community / carry out a survey to see if any gaps	1 consultation event and 1 survey by 31 March 2008	Home Energy Advice manager	2 surveys carried out (1 random) for Normanton Project – both showed that main communities accessing Service. Contact with local residents/organisations highlighted that future work to include focus on Slovak, Czech and Latvian communities.
<b>Investigate opportunities to monitor service uptake based on Sexuality and Religious belief</b>	Assess if there is a need to monitor uptake	Liaise with key Sexuality and Religious belief contacts	Home Energy Advice manager	Consideration of this ongoing.
<b>More local outreach sessions to improve access to service</b>	Providing opportunity for residents to access the service locally at libraries	50 – (number of residents getting advice at local libraries) by 31 March 2008	Home Energy Advice manager	10 sessions held at all libraries across the city – 71 visitors.

Objective	Planned action	Target performance	Responsible lead officer	Progress as of 1 August 2008
<b>Arrange two community consultation events to make sure the service provided is adequate</b>	Providing opportunity for residents to tell us if the service is adequate	100 by 31 March 2008	Home Energy Advice manager	2 surveys carried out (1 random) for Normanton Project – 130 residents responded. Majority of residents were accessing Service – those that weren't cited the following reasons: didn't think they were eligible to take part; didn't need advice; rented their home; and they either didn't know about the project, had a grant before, didn't understand what was about, or didn't have a contact number. Future work will look at addressing these issues.

## **Homelessness Strategy**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Planned action</b>	<b>Target performance</b>	<b>Responsible lead officer</b>	<b>Progress as of 1 August 2008</b>
<b>Ensure the IT system does not disadvantage sections of the community</b>	Implement a new IT system for Derby Homefinder, the Housing Register and homelessness services and consult more widely with all client groups to ensure that difficulties in using the system are addressed as far as possible to improve access.	Ongoing monthly	Lisa Callow	The Abrisas IT system will have a new release by December 2008 that will provide information on the website in other languages. It is anticipated there will be information available in another 8 languages. A review of the allocations policy and the review of the homelessness strategy will involve consultation with stakeholders and service users. Both of these activities are ongoing at present due to be completed by the end of the year.
<b>Ensure that homelessness is reduced for all sections of the community</b>	Reduce the number of homelessness acceptances	Quarterly P1E returns	Lisa Callow	The number of homelessness acceptances has reduced across all sections of the community. This can be seen by a comparison of P1E (government response form) returns.
<b>Review access to the Housing Options Centre reception area to ensure good access and is welcoming and suitable for all.</b>	Upgrade the Housing Options Centre reception area and annual Health and Safety audits completed	Ongoing	Lisa Callow	Alterations have been made structurally to the reception area. However, over the last 4 months we have introduced a new way of service delivery via the Single Point of Entry team which has increased the number of people coming into the reception area. This team will be moving to Milestone House in September which should give us the opportunity to review our services especially at the reception point.

Objective	Planned action	Target performance	Responsible lead officer	Progress as of 1 August 2008
<b>Ensure staffing structure at HOC meets needs of all as far as possible</b>	Implement restructure of staffing at the Housing Options Centre following recognition that more prevention of homeless advice needed to be provided across all client groups. This should result in a more proactive rather than reactive service and will meet HOC objectives to reduce Homelessness acceptances.	Ongoing	Lisa Callow	The restructure has taken place and there is a greater emphasis on the provision of good, comprehensive housing advice. The introduction of the Single Point of Entry and the new provision at Milestone House will mean more accessible services for singles and couples including those who are street homeless.
<b>Provide a focussed mediation service for the most vulnerable, especially young people</b>	Launch and further develop mediation services to reduce homelessness	Launch-ed 2006 – ongoing development	Lisa Callow	The mediation service has been an ongoing project and is now receiving supporting people funding to enable more stability. It is envisaged that this will be an integral part of the “crash pad” project that is being developed at present along side the YMCA Derbyshire.

Objective	Planned action	Target performance	Responsible lead officer	Progress as of 1 August 2008
<b>Provide an appropriate assessment process that does not disadvantage any sections of the community</b>	Develop a new Assessment Centre and Night Shelter for street homeless people and people with alcohol dependency	Being developed	Lisa Callow	Milestone House is due to be operational in September 2008. The building is complete and services will be transferring at the earliest possible opportunity. The provision of the alcohol dependency service is now at tender stage for a contract provider.
<b>Ensure most vulnerable not housed in B&amp;B accommodation</b>	Reduce reliance on bed and breakfast establishments for housing homeless people via development of a reduction in the use of temporary accommodation strategy.	Ongoing Develop-ment of Strategy and assessment using management information	Lisa Callow	The reduction in temporary accommodation strategy is under way and should be completed by September 2008. Staff at the housing options centre are placing a greater emphasis on preventing homelessness and the temporary accommodation figures are indicative of their success. 2 new schemes are being developed to assist with the placement of young people in emergency situations, crash pads and Night Stop.

## **Allocations Policy**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Planned action</b>	<b>Target performance</b>	<b>Responsible lead officer</b>	<b>Progress as of 1 August 2008</b>
<b>Monitor to see if any gaps in service provision for New Communities</b>	Liaise with community groups and consult with community / carry out a survey to see if any gaps	1 consultation by 31 March 2008	Lisa Callow	Consultation on the allocations policy will be held with stakeholders, members and service users. We will endeavour to ensure we include a percentage of applicants from new communities.
<b>Assess satisfaction levels of new allocations policy</b>	Undertake survey of new allocations policy	Undertake survey of new allocations policy	Lisa Callow	Will pick up under review of allocations policy due for completion year end