

Initial Equality Impact Assessment

Stage One

This document is designed to identify if the service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice in question is discriminatory against any particular social group.

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| Name of service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice | TRA & Voluntary group community buildings policy |
| Manager completing Assessment | Viv Simon |
| Date of EIA | 13/05/08 |

Part 1

About the service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice

1. What are the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy / procedure / strategy / working practice or service?

- To enable tenants and resident associations, voluntary groups and third sector organisations to access premises which will allow them to deliver local services for example, environmental projects, social and cultural activities, training opportunities to benefit the communities in which they operate.
- To promote participation, and community cohesion
- To promote opportunities for capacity building within communities
- To encourage delivery and sustainability of local projects
- To foster the principles contained within our Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2011, and our Tenant Participation Agreement 2006, which include:-
 - Promoting accessibility
 - Valuing cultural diversity
 - Promoting participation
 - Promoting equal opportunities
 - Promoting inclusive communities
- The Community Involvement Team will develop a policy and procedure, including guidance notes for applicants.
- The CIT will also provide guidance and in the case of tenants and residents groups, support to submit applications.
- The CIT will manage and monitor the policy.

2. What is the policy / procedure / strategy / working practice or service going to achieve?

- The policy will support Six Town Housings vision of 'Great communities, excellent services, inspiring people'

Great Communities: A community base is a great example of helping to build resourceful and self sufficient communities. Providing opportunities for all sections of the community to work together for the benefit of their area.

Excellent Services: A community base will not only encourage local volunteering, but will also open up opportunities for services by a wide variety of agencies to be delivered at a local level, tailored to the needs of that community.

Inspiring People: A community base in many instances can hold the key to harness the creativity and dedication of voluntary groups, and help inspire communities to get involved.

- The policy will also establish clear criteria for those who are eligible to access void properties and shop premises for the purpose of a community base to carry out local activities and services.

3. Who will be the main beneficiaries of the policy/ procedure/ strategy / working practice or service?

- TRA's, Third Sector organisations, local communities, STH, Bury MBC

4. Who are the main interested parties in the policy/ procedure/ strategy/ working practice or service? (I.e. stakeholders / Board Members / Staff?)

- TRA's, Third Sector organisations, STH staff, local communities, local Councillors

5. Who will the service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice affect?

- STH staff, local communities, TRA's, Third Sector organisations, external agencies.

6. Has the service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice been explained to those that it may affect directly or indirectly?

- **The policy at this stage has partially been explained to those whom it will effect, for example TRA's, CIT, CHO's. The policy has been sent to two third sector organisations to receive their comments.**

7. Has consultation occurred?

Yes

Please complete the following table.

Where appropriate please comment on the following situations if or how they apply to the particular social groups outlined.

a) The service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice could have a **positive impact on any of the social groups listed. Or promotes equality and improves relations within a particular social group or across a number of them.**

b) The service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice could have a **negative impact on any of the social groups listed. By this we mean discriminatory towards them.**

Please note: if the negative impact is high then a Full Equality Impact Assessment should be carried out.

| Equality strand | Any Impact? | Positive Impact? High / Low | Negative Impact? High / Low | Justifiable? i.e. Positive Action | Evidence | Reason/Comments |
|--|-------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|--|
| RACE & RELIGION | | | | | | |
| Any Particular Race or Ethnic Minority | Yes | Low | Low | | | <p>Positive – will provide opportunities for multi agency activities to be delivered at a local level. Minority groups are more likely to access facilities which are close to where they live. Part of the evidence which will need to be gathered to support applications will be profiles on the ethnic make up of the community, this will ensure that applicants have a through knowledge of the area, but will also ensure that services are tailored to meet specific needs.</p> <p>Negative – availability of properties can not be guaranteed in all areas.</p> |
| Any Particular Religion or belief | Yes | Low | | | | <p>Women from particular religious beliefs may need to access services separately from men. Groups would need to ensure that their service catered for this need if identified. STH would also ensure that any applicants held a Equality & Diversity Statement/Policy.</p> |
| New and Emerging | Yes | Low | | | | (See comments in Race or Ethnic |

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|---|-----------|--|--|--|--|---|
| groups (travellers and Eastern European communities) | | | | | | Minority Section) |
| DISABILITY | | | | | | |
| People with disabilities | No | | | | | Policy states building and activities must be assessable to all groups, and if necessary the premises must be made DDA compliant |
| GENDER (Inc. Transgender) | | | | | | |
| Women | No | | | | | |
| Men | No | | | | | |
| AGE | | | | | | |
| Younger People (16-25) | No | | | | | |
| Older People (50+) | No | | | | | |
| SEXUAL | | | | | | |

| OREINTATION | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|------------|--|--|--|--|
| Gay men Lesbian Bisexual | No | | | | | |
| OTHER | | | | | | |
| People with caring responsibilities | No | | | | | |
| Other Homeless groups | Yes | Low | | | | As the policy does include potential access to long term voids, there is a likely hood that a residential property would not be available to rent. However, or policy has made is explicitly clear that in all cases or main priority is to provide social housing, and meet our commitments to delivering the decent home standards. The application process also involves a robust assessment of housing demand, waiting list figures and length of time properties have been void. |

8. Please give a general overview of how the service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice has a positive impact on the social groups identified.

- **Delivery of local activities and services will have a positive effect on building cohesive communities and enabling access to services to all groups identified.**
- **A community building will enable tenants and resident associations, voluntary groups and third sector organisations to access premises which will allow them to deliver local services for example, environmental projects, social and cultural activities, training opportunities to benefit the communities in which they operate and target many disadvantaged groups.**
- **The policy will foster the principles contained within our Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2011, and our Tenant Participation Agreement 2006, which include:-**
 - **Promoting accessibility**
 - **Valuing cultural diversity**
 - **Promoting participation**
 - **Promoting equal opportunities**
 - **Promoting inclusive communities**
- **The policy clearly states that it will only support projects which have a positive impact on the communities it serves.**

9. Please give a general overview of how the service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice has a negative impact on the social groups identified.

- **The potential of removing a long term void property could potentially impact on vulnerable groups waiting to access housing.**

10. If negative impact was found, is the impact intended i.e. through positive action?

- **Potential loss of rental income needs to be considered and balanced against the benefits of third sector services and the true cost and value of volunteer activities, (which can not always be measured in financial terms), in building strong and vibrant communities.**

11. Or was it unintended? (N.B If Negative Impact is high a full assessment must be undertaken.)

12. If low impact was found, please summarise the actions that can be taken to minimise this impact? (N.B These actions can be documented in the Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan)

- Ensuring that we adopt clear criteria in relation to what constitutes a long term void.
- Ensuring that the policy supports our core business of providing social housing and our commitments to delivering the decent homes programme.

13. What amendments can be made to the service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice in order to promote equality rather than just limit negative impact? (N.B These actions can be documented in the Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan)

We have considered the policy in light of carrying out the EIA, and have made the following amendments:-

- Widened the policy to include third sector organisations, not for profit organisations and voluntary groups.
- Originally we had stated in the policy that groups applying would need to have been operating for 1 year, before applying. We have since removed this criteria.
- We have stated in the policy that the building and its activities must be assessable to all, and if necessary the building must be made DDA compliant.

13. Please give a brief description of how the service, strategy, policy, procedure or working practice will be implemented following the amendments, including necessary training.

- The CIT would deliver briefings on the policy and procedure for relevant service sections
- We would raise awareness of the policy by posting it on our intranet and notifying all STH/Bury staff through email and also the CIT Bulletin
- Training would be delivered the Community Involvement Officers by the Team Leader from the CIT.
- We would produce an article in Six Town News, and provide information sessions at recognised groups such as TRACC, LIAG, Housing Forum.

Is a Full Impact Assessment necessary?
(i.e. has there been a high negative impact?)

NO

If yes, please ensure that any actions from this initial Equality Impact Assessment are included in the Full Equality Impact Assessment Report. (Appendix 3).

Date Completed: 20/05/08

Signed by Manager undertaking the Assessment: Vivien Simon

Approved by EMT Member:

Approved by Equality Action Group: