

APPENDIX E



Bristol City Council Equality Impact Assessment Form

(Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this form)

Name of proposal	2018/19 HRA Budget Proposal
Directorate and Service Area	Housing Services
Name of Lead Officer	Dorian Leatham

Step 1: What is the proposal?

Please explain your proposal in Plain English, avoiding acronyms and jargon. This section should explain how the proposal will impact service users, staff and/or the wider community.

1.1 What is the proposal?

To support the recommendations/proposals for:

- ***The 2018/19 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget; tested within the context of the 30 year financial business plan model***
- ***The Capital & Revenue Investment Plan for 2018/19 that underpins the 2017/18 HRA budget,***
- ***The procurement of relevant contractors during 2018/19 to help deliver the Capital & Revenue Investment Plan, and delegate the authority to the Strategic Director Neighbourhoods to appoint relevant contractors***

Background to the Proposal

Following the implementation of self-financing in 2012, Housing developed an **HRA Landlord Strategy** and accompanying **30 year financial business plan model**. This strategy was based on the improved financial position of the HRA, which would primarily be funded through rents increasing above inflation in line with government policy. The strategy aimed to deliver three key objectives:

- **Meet Housing Need,**
- **Quality Homes & Neighbourhoods,**
- **Provide Sustainable Tenancies**

The key actions in that strategy included building 1,000 new council homes over 15 years, bringing all homes up to an improved Bristol Homes Standard, improving relet standards, increased staffing and improved processes to help sustain tenancies.

Since development of our Landlord Strategy, government policy has since shifted considerably, which in turn has a serious impact on the way we as a landlord deliver/respond to requests from our tenants in terms of repairs and our long term reinvestment plan for our existing stock.

As a result of the changes and the requirement by the government to make savings, Housing's Landlord Strategy is undergoing a review, to examine all key services to identify new approaches that will deliver savings, but still help achieve our higher level objectives and contribute towards the housing strategy aims.

Part of this review has meant that the budget for 2017/18 was reduced to make savings to ensure the viability of the HRA, and these savings have continued into the budget proposals for 2018/19.

Impact

Some of the key impacts/elements of the revised landlord strategy that underpins the 2018/19 budget and financial business plan include:

- Rents – remain as social rents, and will be set following government policy meaning a reduction of 1% for 2018/19 and a further 1 year. This is a positive for all our tenants.
- Voids – streamlining processes to minimise the number of days homes are empty until they are relet again. This is a positive impact, as we will be moving tenants into their homes faster and reducing the time the property is left empty. There is also a drive to work closely with our new tenancies to ensure we are aware of their support needs, and can monitor their tenancy to combat failures. The tenant should receive a better, efficient service from this team.
- Relets – reviewing and amending the current relet standard by decreasing decoration allowance, carpeting less rooms, and increasing the work volume of BCC operatives has meant a shorter void turnaround time which will also increase the rental income.
- Repair & Investment of existing homes – investment planning to ensure homes meet the government's Decent Homes Standard, focusing on our key priorities. Reducing some of the previous planning carried out to ensure that we still are able to deliver some of our key projects, whilst amending other work programmes to be stretched so they are delivered over a longer period (cladding of non-traditional homes, less major cladding projects, bathroom replacement programme). The revised proposal will look at repairing structural issues and general

maintenance, rather than insulating the buildings, and we will also be dealing with water ingress and damp issues to improve the life of our tenants.

- Repairs – repairs will be demand-led responsive repairs and necessary maintenance, for example gas servicing, and other elements which are required.
- New Homes – Our commitment is to build as many council homes as possible, in the current model, it shows 785 new units can be funded – this is a reduction from the 1,000 that was previously planned. There is still a positive impact for tenants waiting for a property, as the city desperately needs more social housing. This will benefit prospective tenants who are in the most need of a property, in relation to the equality groups, this will positively impact families, older residents, and disabled tenants as a proportion of our new homes will be built to at least lifetime homes standard.
- Management Costs – Savings have been made through reducing staff levels, through voluntary severance of existing staff, and some deletion of vacant posts.

HRA Budget 2018/19 and longer term business plan model

Work has been carried out to assess the impact of the reduced 2018/19 budget, together with forecasts of similar approach for the remaining 29 years, on our long-term HRA Business Plan.

Further testing of these assumptions will be carried out with a wide range of stakeholders, including our tenants from the different groups.

Procurement of Contractors

Previously, procurement of contractors to undertake investment programmes that are included in the HRA budget has been subject of a separate Cabinet approval reports.

In this proposal, the suggestion is for 2018/19 approval of the procurement required to deliver the repair and investment of council housing should be delegated to the Service Director of Housing Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Homes, to appoint contractors.

This is a positive impact for the council and our tenants, as this proposal aims to make the procurement of contractors more efficient, and will also mean work programmes can be started earlier without the need for further approvals which can add extra costs to the budget.

In summary, the proposal should lead to a more consistent approach to

investment decisions, better governance, and the delivery and confidence that we are investing our money where it will have the greatest impact on the life of our tenants.

Step 2: What information do we have?

Decisions must be evidence-based, and involve people with protected characteristics that could be affected. Please use this section to demonstrate understanding of who could be affected by the proposal.

2.1 What data or evidence is there which tells us who is, or could be affected?

The most current figures available are from April 2017:

Housing Services has 31,371 tenants living in 26,802 properties. It is estimated that in total Housing Delivery houses around 62,000 people. In addition, we have 2010 leaseholders in 1568 properties.

We know the ethnicity of 95.1% of our tenants. Of those whose ethnicities we know, 77.2% are White British. This has dropped slightly from 78.0% in 2016. The next largest ethnic groups are African Somalis, 4.5% (Up from 4.3% in 2016) and White-Other, 4.2% (up from 4.0% in 2016)

A higher proportion of our tenants are female, 62.1%, than male, 37.9%.

We know the age of 98.4% of our tenants. The largest age group are 45-54 year olds, 21.5% of the tenants whose age we know are in this age band. 24% of our tenants are aged over 65,

20.4% of our tenants identify as disabled. 13.1% of our tenants report mobility problems, 13.1% a long-term illness and 10.5% suffer from mental or emotional distress.

The Housing Equalities Digest for 2015 publishes information on cancellation of repairs rather than who has requested repairs. The information on cancellations is as follows:

Repairs - 35.90% (11,494) of all our tenants had repairs cancelled including and over representation of BME and disabled tenants having repairs cancelled which will need to be investigated as part of the procurement process:

- 55.56% of all BME tenants including 76.42% of all Asian Bangladeshi and 69.23% of all Mixed White Asian tenants.
- 79.46% of all tenants aged between 16 and 24 and 55.18% of all tenants

aged between 25 and 34.

- 51.68% of all tenants with a learning impairment and 46.00% of all tenants that experience mental/emotional distress.
- 81.82% of all Sikh and 60.51% of all Muslim tenants.

Satisfaction with repairs averages 82% satisfaction for both men and women, and disabled and non disabled people and BME and non-BME tenants, however tenants aged under 34 are less likely to be satisfied with repairs (only 64% satisfaction)

As the Business Plan requires further testing, consultation with key stakeholders – primarily our tenants - will take place to raise issues and also to discuss further ways of supporting each affected service for users.

2.2 Who is missing? Are there any gaps in the data?

We need to include data on who is requesting repairs as well as who is having repairs cancelled.

2.3 How have we involved, or will we involve, communities and groups that could be affected?

Various methods will be used to communicate with our key stakeholders, some of which are listed below:

- Meetings
- Attending tenant group sessions to discuss the proposals and impact
- Liaising with key tenant representatives who already comment, and provide advice to the city council on a variety of topics from a tenants perspective
- Engaging with BME tenant representatives to ensure they are aware of important changes with the services they received
- Officer briefings, advising service areas/teams about the changes and what this means for tenants, access to services, repairs reporting and so on.
- Briefings for CSP/ CSC staff to again ensure they are aware of any changes and how this may impact on the advice they may give to our tenants who visit a CSP.

Step 3: Who might the proposal impact?

Analysis of impacts on people with protected characteristics must be rigorous. Please demonstrate your analysis of any impacts in this section, referring to all of the equalities groups as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

3.1 Does the proposal have any potentially adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics?

From the current data available all the groups will be affected by the proposals mentioned above to some extent, older and disabled tenants may be affected more so in terms of the proposal, however those tenants who need works carrying out which are urgent will still be dealt with.

- Disabled – highly affected due to possible health/mobility issues, urgent repair requests will still be dealt with
- Age – older tenants affected due to possible health/mobility, urgent repair requests will still be dealt with and we need to identify why young tenants are more likely to have their repairs cancelled
- Religion and belief – positive impact for this group, as there are works programmed to deliver a cultural washing project for tenants from BME communities when there is a need to change/upgrade bathrooms due to damp issues being reported or serious leaks in blocks
- Pregnancy/Maternity – could affect mothers to be, or new mums, urgent repair requests will still be dealt with
- BME – more Asian and Muslim tenants have repairs cancelled which will need investigating

The likely impact of the proposal regarding repairs/reinvestment means all tenants will be affected as budgets are cut. In general terms:

- Access to repairs will still be available, however we will ensure tenants in the most need will be prioritised (older, disabled tenants)
- Planned works which will now be reduced will affect tenants living in our multi-storey blocks, urgent repairs will be the focus as mentioned above, and some planned works will be delayed, or programme stretched

Using equalities data for caretaking services as a proxy for identifying who lives in multi-storey blocks, reductions in planned repairs for these properties does have an equalities impact and will affect more older and white British tenants but has a disproportionate impact on BME tenants. 27.41% (8,778) of all our tenants receive caretaking services and this group is made up of primarily older and White British tenants. It is important to note that:

- 48.62% of all BME tenants including 76.28% of all Somali tenants and 60.33% of all Black African tenants.
- 54.95% of all tenants aged between 16 and 24.
- 62.71% of all Muslim tenants receive a caretaking service/live in multi storey accommodation.

Although there will be changes to the service, we will ensure the tenants in

the most need are still dealt with efficiently. Our duty as a landlord will still be maintained.

3.2 Can these impacts be mitigated or justified? If so, how?

Repair & Reinvestment of existing homes

- We will mainly be focusing on key building elements linked to continuing to meet the government's Decent Homes Standard.
- We will continue to meet key priorities as a landlord on areas such as:
 - Affordable warmth
 - Fuel Poverty
 - Kitchens replacement programme
 - Accessibility of our homes – ensuring the council property meets the needs of the tenant
 - Health & Safety
 - Safeguarding – tackling the worst homes

Procurement of Contractors

The city council tendering process will assess potential contractors on previous experience, knowledge of Equalities legislation, good practices, awareness of different community groups and offering a high level of customer care to our tenants and stakeholders.

In addition to this contractors are asked to submit method statements on Health & Safety issues such as:

- Health and Safety – Occupied Properties Risk Assessment, including communication with, and safety of our tenants
- Customer Care – continuous communication, dealing with vulnerable tenants etc.

Housing Service have a Contractors Code of Conduct, all contractors working for the council must adhere to this Code. Contractors are expected to ensure access/egress is accessible throughout any construction works, keeping the site tidy, and generally helping to minimise the impact of the construction works on surrounding residents and stakeholders.

Contractors will be advised of any communication issues with stakeholders and local residents, before works begin to ensure that they keep residents updated.

3.3 Does the proposal create any benefits for people with protected characteristics?

This proposal does have some benefits for our tenants in the following ways:

- Voids – Measures are being put into place to reduce the time taken to let a council home when it is between tenancies. This means tenants are able to move into a council property faster than previously.
- Repair & Investment - Continuing to focus on our priorities as a landlord, for example affordable warmth, health and safety, and kitchens.
- A focus on cultural washing facilities for BME tenants in line with their cultural practices.
- Improving heating and insulation for our existing homes and reacting to these requests. This is a huge benefit for all tenants, particularly older and disabled tenants who feel the effects of the cold.
- Targeting works to reduce fuel poverty for our tenants.
- New Homes – Continuing to build new homes within the current climate is still a huge benefit for tenants that need a home, focusing on housing need in certain areas of the city to meet housing demand is still a positive impact for tenants.

3.4 Can they be maximised? If so, how?

In the current climate where government policy is geared around making savings, maximising the proposal to create further benefits may be difficult to achieve. One area which will be maximised is the council's opportunity to change bathroom facilities for BME tenants who practice different cultural washing techniques. This is an opportunity to provide tenants with wet rooms when a repair is reported relating to leaks/damp.

Step 4: So what?

The Equality Impact Assessment must be able to influence the proposal and decision. This section asks how your understanding of impacts on people with protected characteristics has influenced your proposal, and how the findings of your Equality Impact Assessment can be measured going forward.

4.1 How has the equality impact assessment informed or changed the proposal?

The assessment has raised the issue of how our tenants will be affected by the HRA budget for 2018/19 and the investment plan as a result of a change in government policy.

It has highlighted that as a landlord, we must provide as much information and support to our tenants and stakeholders as we are able to, using the resources

we do still have available.

Using the new IT management system, streamlining processes, and offering tenants new ways of communicating with us and our services tenants will receive a more focused and efficient service.

In terms of the repairs and reinvestment service we provide, this will become more focused as we continue to develop our asset data, survey information on our assets and carefully planning how funds are spent, and ultimately ensuring they are spent in the right way.

It also highlights that all contactors working with the city council must adhere to Equalities Policies and understand that they will be required to adapt their communication practices depending on the equalities groups.

4.2 What actions have been identified going forward?

- Ensure staff are aware of changes in service so they are able to provide a clear message to tenants when they are contacted.
- Engage with service areas – Repairs, Planned Programmes, CSP, CSC, Estate Management etc and update as with other stakeholders (tenant groups, tenants associations).
- Consult with stakeholders regarding the proposal; provide clear information about the changes for tenants and how they will be affected.

4.3 How will the impact of your proposal and actions be measured moving forward?

- Key Performance Indicators will be used to monitor the contractor's performance.
- Monitor the number of complaints received regarding repairs and planned work requests.
- Continue to collect asset intelligence, proactive surveys, identify urgent priorities, assess information and feed into investment plan to ensure we have good sound knowledge and data of our homes.
- Monitor the impact on the BP and 2018/19 HRA Budget with Finance to track progress and ensure the model is working.

Service Director Sign-Off:

Equalities Officer Sign Off:

Jean Candler

Date:

Date:11/01/2017