

APPENDIX E

Bristol City Council Equality Impact Assessment Form



Name of proposal	2020/21 HRA Budget Proposal
Directorate and Service Area	Housing and Landlord Services
Name of Lead Officer	Julian Higson

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 2020/21 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget
- The Housing Investment Plan and Housing Delivery & Acquisition programme for 2020/21
- The procurement of relevant contractors during 2020/21 to support delivery of these programmes, and delegate the authority to the Strategic Director Neighbourhoods to appoint relevant contractors

Background to the Proposal

Housing and Landlord Services (H&LS) budget focusses on:

- repairing, maintaining and improving the existing BCC council housing stock;
- providing services for council tenants and leaseholders;
- and the provision of new affordable homes

The HRA operates in a difficult housing market and environment. Housing costs are high as are levels of homelessness and rough sleeping; the council has an aging stock with high levels of investment need; and many tenants struggle to maintain their tenancies and access the support they require.

The main source of HRA income is the rent paid by council tenants. For the last four years rents have decreased by 1% per year, in line with Government policy. This significantly reduced expected income levels and resulted in cuts in levels of expenditure. The rent reduction wiped millions from both annual and future HRA income.

Impact

Some of the key principles for the 2020/21 budget are:

- Rents: remain as social rents with no rent increase for existing tenants moving to formula rent when the property is let and utilising the flexibilities available (5%

for general needs homes and 10% for supported housing).

- Voids: work is underway to improve ways of work, so the quality of homes remains high but repairs are carried out more quickly resulting in a reduction in a loss of rental income while the property is empty.
- Repair & Investment of existing homes: Continue to ensure our homes are decent; warm, weathertight, modern and safe remain key priorities.
- New Homes: a new commitment to provide new affordable homes in order to meet housing need, and address homelessness and rough sleeping.

Procurement of Contractors

The report request approval for delegated authority to procure contractors as necessary to support the delivery of proposed expenditure (including the Housing Investment Plan and New Build & Acquisition programme).

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

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?

Demographic of tenants:

The most current figures available are from October 2019:

H&LS has 30,898 tenants living in 26,523 properties. It is estimated that in total H&LS houses over 60,000 people. In addition, there are 2175 leaseholders leasing 1691 properties.

- The ethnicity of 93.49% of tenants is known, of those: 75.2% are White British (reduction from 77.2% in April 2017), the next largest ethnic groups are; 4.4% White-Other and 4.3% African Somalis.
- A higher proportion of our tenants are female, 62.6%, than male, 37.4%.
- The age of 98.7% of tenants is known, the largest age group are: 21.3% are 45-54 year olds and 24.0% of our tenants are aged over 65.
- 28.8% of our tenants have told us that they have at least one disability. 11.0% of our tenants report mobility problems, 11.2% a long-term illness and 9.6% suffer from mental or emotional distress.
- When compared to the Bristol population as a whole (The Population of Bristol 2019) the differences include:
 - Older people, aged 65+, make up 13% of Bristol's population compared to 24% of BCC tenants

- Women make up 50% of Bristol's population compared to 62.6% of BCC tenants
- Non White British people make up 22% of Bristol's population compared to 24.8% of BCC tenants.

Response repairs:

In the year 1st October 2018- 1st October 2019 69670 repair requests were raised, an average of 2.25 per tenant. On average 0.34 repairs were cancelled per tenant.

- Younger tenants were more likely to order repairs than middle-aged tenants, with 16-24 year olds requesting an average of 4.67 repair requests per tenant and 25-34 year olds requesting an average of 2.87 repair requests per tenant. Over 75s reported an average of 1.98 repairs per tenant. Younger tenants were also significantly more likely to have had a repair cancelled with an average of 0.65 cancellations per 16-24 year old and 0.56 cancellations per 25-34 year old.
- BME tenants (on average 2.98 requests per tenant) were more likely to order repairs than White British tenants (on average 2.14 requests per tenant) or White Other tenants (1.73 repairs per tenant) They were also more likely to have had a repair cancelled (0.44 cancellations per BME tenant)
- Disabled tenants (2.33 repairs per tenant) were slightly more likely to request repairs than non-disabled tenants (2.22) The disability group with the most repair requests were those with learning difficulties (2.60 requests per tenant) The group least like to request repairs were those with long-term illnesses, (2.20 requests per tenant). They were no more likely to have had a repair cancelled than non-disabled tenants, but certain groups such as those with learning disabilities were more likely to have had a repair cancelled (0.49 cancellations per tenant)
- Satisfaction with repairs averages 78% 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 60% satisfaction). 80% of BME tenants were satisfied with the service compared to 77% of non BME tenants. (Source STAR survey 2017)

Customer feedback:

It has been an aspiration of the business to carry out more detailed consultation with tenants, in addition to existing methods (including service user groups, local housing forums, Housing Management Board). In autumn H&LS have completed a customer insight exercise, seeking tenants' views regarding its overall service and their priorities for improvement. Results are not available at the time of writing this report but will inform service improvements for 2020/21 and beyond.

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

Some gaps in customer satisfaction levels, but work is in hand to address this.

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 and involve them in our service transformation plans for 2020/21, some of which are listed below:

- Utilise existing groups set up to involve and engage with tenants (Service user groups, Local Housing Forums and Housing Management Board)
- EIA on specific work activities including future policy changes and strategy development
- Co-design of service improvements with tenants and leaseholders

Step 3: Who might the proposal impact?

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

There are no proposals to reduce housing management services or responsive repairs, planned maintenance or investment beyond existing levels.

Plans to increase rent levels by CPI plus 1% for existing tenants, and to utilise flexibility on formula rents for new tenants will impact all existing and future tenants. As demonstrated in section two, a significant proportion of council tenants belong to protected characteristic groups.

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

HRA income is primarily derived from rents. In 2019/20 the average BCC rent was under £80, approximately 34% of average market rent levels in Bristol.

Increasing rents in line with Government guidelines brings in additional funding to provide and improve homes and services, and respond to tenants' priorities identified through our customer engagement activities this year. Rents will remain as social rents, which are significantly lower than market rent and affordable rent products.

We will create a communication plan, utilising accessible forms of communication, to advice tenants of the rent increases. We will signpost and refer tenants for debt and financial support, in-line with our current working practices.

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:

- **Repair & Investment:** continue to focus on our priorities previously identified by tenants including providing warm and reducing fuel poverty, ensuring homes are safe and key elements such as kitchens. This benefits older and disabled tenants for whom the cold may be a particular issue, and recognises that many of the protected characteristic groups are more likely to live below the poverty line.
- **New Homes:** Women, BME and disabled households are overrepresented as both household seeking homelessness prevention advice and on the housing register. Addressing housing needs by providing more homes is therefore beneficial in addressing inequalities. In addition new homes bring in a new income stream, safeguarding future income and service provision for all tenants.
- **Service provision:** continue to focus on provision of low cost housing that supports tenants and focusses services on the most vulnerable whilst considering impacts on estates and neighbourhoods.

- Procurement of Contractors: The city council tendering process will assess potential contractors on a range of factors including how they bring social value and the level of customer care offered.

3.4 Can they be maximised? If so, how?

The results of customer insight survey will be analysed, including reviewing different results for groups with protected characteristics and opportunities to address for improvements identified and implemented.

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 equalities impact assessment has reinforced existing knowledge that service provision is not always able to respond flexibly and effectively to the different needs of groups with protected characteristics. Focussing on maximising income, improving services and increasing the provision of homes is a targeted approach to addressing inequalities.

4.2 What actions have been identified going forward?

- Maximise rental income to enable future improvements
- Identify homes that are poor performing (require high levels of future investment and/or have low levels of tenant satisfaction) and carry out option appraisal regarding their future.

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.
- Carry out ongoing equalities monitoring and impact assessments for specific projects.

Service Director Sign-Off:

Equalities Officer Sign Off:

Reviewed by Equality and Inclusion Team

Date: 10/06/2019

Date: 3/12/2019