

APPENDIX E

Bristol City Council Equality Impact Assessment Form



Name of proposal	2021/22 HRA Budget Proposal
Directorate and Service Area	Housing and Landlord Services
Name of Lead Officer	Stephen Peacock

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 2021/22 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget
- The 5 year capital programme
- The procurement of relevant contractors to support delivery of these programmes, and delegate the authority to the Executive Director of Growth and Regeneration 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 four years rents have decreased by 1% per year (2019-2019), in line with Government policy. This significantly reduced expected income levels and resulted in cuts in levels of expenditure.

From 2020/21 there was a new rent standard that will allow social landlords to increase rent levels by up to CPI +1%. However, it remains the case that the rent reduction wiped millions in HRA income.

Impact

The key principles for the 2021/22 budget are:

- Rents: no rent increase for 2021/22.
- Repair & Investment of existing homes: Continue to ensure our homes are decent; warm, weathertight, modern and safe remain key priorities.
- New Homes: 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:

These figures are as at November 2020:

H&LS has 30,620 tenants living in 26,372 properties. It is estimated that in total H&LS houses over 60,000 people. In addition, there are 2185 leaseholders leasing 1715 properties.

- The ethnicity of 93.17% of tenants is known, of those: 74.2% are White British (reduction from 77.2% in April 2017), 21.4% are Black and Minority Ethnicity, of which the largest groups are Black Africans and African Somalis (4.9% and 4.5% respectively) and 4.5% identify as White Other.
- A higher proportion of our tenants are female, 62.7%, than male, 37.3%.
- The age of 98.8% of tenants is known; of these the most common age band is 45-54 year olds who are 21.1% of our tenants. 23.7% of our tenants are aged over 65 and 2.2% under 25
- 29.9% of our tenants have told us that they have at least one type of disability. 12.9% of our tenants report a long-term illness, 12.1% suffer from mental or emotional distress and 11.8% of our tenants report mobility problems.
- When compared to the Bristol population as a whole (The Population of Bristol 2020) 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 25.8% of BCC tenants.

Rent Arrears

Overall, 23.8% of tenants have rent arrears over £250. This has increased compared to previous years, at least partly due to the impact of Covid-19.

- 32.0% of tenants from Black or minority ethnicity backgrounds have rent arrears over £250, compared to 21.5% of White British tenants and 21.1% of White Other tenants.
- 25.1% of female tenants are in arrears over £250 compared to 21.4% of male tenants.
- Younger tenants are at higher risk of arrears than older tenants. 40.0% of under 25's are in arrears over £250. 6.5% of tenants aged 65-74 are.
- Tenants with a recorded disability are less likely to be in arrears with 16.4% of them having rent arrears over £250. (This is likely to be because having disabilities is associated with being elderly and older tenants are less at risk of falling into arrears).
- Tenants identifying as White British/White European were most likely to be satisfied that their rent represented value for money, giving an average score of 8.2 out of 10. Tenants identifying as Asian were least likely to be satisfied that their Rent provided value for money, giving an average score of 7.6 out of 10. (Source: Resident Satisfaction Survey 2019).

Response Repairs

In the year 1st November 2019- 31st October 2020 63,341 response repairs were completed after being requested by a tenant, an average of 2.1 per tenant. Note this figure may be lower compared to previous years due to the impact of the lockdown.

- Younger tenants were more likely to order repairs than middle-aged tenants, with 16-24 year olds receiving an average of 2.6 repair requests per tenant and over 65's receiving an average of 1.7 repairs per tenant.
- Black and minority ethnic tenants (on average 2.8 repairs per tenant) were more likely to order repairs than White British tenants (on average 1.9 repairs per tenant) or White Other tenants (1.6 repairs per tenant).
- Disabled tenants (2.2 repairs per tenant) were slightly more likely to request repairs than non-disabled tenants (2.0 repairs per tenant) The disability group with the most repair requests were wheelchair users (2.4 repairs per tenant) The group least like to request repairs were those with long-term illnesses (2.1 repairs per tenant).
- Tenants identifying as Black or African were the most satisfied with how BCC deals with Repairs and Maintenance, giving an average score of 7.0 out of 10. Tenants identifying as mixed race were the least satisfied giving an average score of 6.5. The group most satisfied with the overall quality of their home were White British tenants who gave an average score of 7.3 out of 10. Mixed ethnicity tenants were the least satisfied giving an average score of 6.8. (Source: Resident Survey 2019).

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

There are some gaps in diversity data relating to 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)
- Further engagements / equality impact assessment 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?

We have not identified any significant negative impact from the proposal. There are no proposals to reduce housing management services or responsive repairs, planned maintenance or investment.

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

We will create a communication plan, utilising accessible forms of communication, to advise tenants of the rent decision. We will continue to signpost and refer tenants for debt and financial support.

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 on 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, Black and minority ethnic people, 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?

There will be opportunities throughout 2021/22 to engage further with tenants to explore standards and opportunities to shape our longer term vision and priorities for utilising Housing Revenue Account income.

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 complaints and identify systemic failures
- 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:

Stephen Peacock

Equalities Officer Sign Off:

Reviewed by Equality and Inclusion Team

Date: 18/12/2020

Date: 9/12/2020