

## Equality Impact Assessment - head of service review

Reference: EQIA297486468

Submitted: 16 March 2021 14:59 PM

### Executive summary

**Title of policy or decision:** Housing Strategy 2021-2025

**Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision):** The main aims and purpose of the Housing Strategy is to demonstrate the strategic importance of housing to ECC. The Housing Strategy will outline the actions ECC will take to achieve our strategic priorities and how we will work with our partners in the wider housing system.

**What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?:** Enable inclusive economic growth, Help people get the best start and age well, Help create great places to grow up, live and work

**Which strategic priorities does this support? - Enable inclusive economic growth:** Target economic development to areas of opportunity

**Which strategic priorities does this support? - Help people get the best start and age well:** Enable more vulnerable adults to live independent of social care, Improve the health of people in Essex

**Which strategic priorities does this support? - Help create great places to grow up, live and work:** Help to secure stronger, safer and more neighbourly communities, Help secure sustainable development and protect the environment, Facilitate growing communities and new homes

**Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?:** a new policy (or decision)

**Please provide a link to the document / website / resource to which this EqIA relates:**

<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/rci/essex-county-council-housing-strategy/>

**Please upload any documents which relate to this EqIA, for example decision documents:**

<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/rci/essex-county-council-housing-strategy/>

### Assessing the equality impact

**Use this section to record how you have assessed any potential impact on the communities likely to be affected by the policy (or decision):** This assessment reviews the impacts of the Essex County Council Housing Strategy on equality groups in Essex. A 12-week public consultation on the ECC Housing Strategy commenced March 2020. Feedback from the consultation and additional engagement with housing partners was incorporated into a revised version of the document. An action plan has been developed to support ECC to make progress towards the strategy's goals. The Strategy and action plan were published in March 2021. We have reviewed the impact of the strategy and action plan on protected characteristics. This assessment highlights impact on age, learning disabilities, mental health, physical and sensory impairment, sex and gender reassignment, race and ethnicity. Our assessment is that the strategy will have a positive impact on challenges faced by these groups. We do not have strong evidence for the impact of the housing strategy on marriage, sexual orientation or pregnancy and maternity, and religion, although we have no evidence that there will be any negative impacts.

The Essex joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) of 2019 provides data to set the context of housing issues within the county. We also reviewed the London Housing Strategy Equality Impact Assessment in developing this

document.

## Context

According to mid-year population estimates for 2018, the total population of the Essex County Council local authority area was an estimated 1,477,764 people. This is the largest local authority by population size in the East of England and makes up 23% of the total population of the region.

The population of Essex is estimated to have grown by 22,242 people (a rise of 1.54%) since 2011. The 12 months between 2017 and 2018 saw the largest single year population increase and is estimated to have grown by 9,587. The largest single source of population growth (59%) was attributed to internal (already UK based) inward migration from other local authorities, followed by inward international migration (26%). The Office of National Statistics population projections (2016 based) predict that by 2034 the total population will increase by another 195,160 people to a total of 1,650,500, an increase of 13.41% from 2011 estimates.

Over 20,000 households were on housing waiting lists in 2018/19, equivalent to 3.54% of the population at that time. During the same period, it is estimated that 2,100 homes were let directly or through nominations from the local authority, equivalent to 9.6% of households on the waiting lists across Essex. Out of the total number of households on waiting lists it was recorded that:

- 1,560 (7.2%) of households were classed as "homeless" regardless of statutory duty to be housed
- 3,473 (15.9%) of households were classed as being overcrowded or unsatisfactory conditions
- 3,262 (14.9%) of households need to move due to welfare, medical or disability grounds.

## Deprivation

There are major concentrations of deprivation at the neighbourhood level in Essex. 75 neighbourhoods across Essex are amongst the 20% most deprived nationally. They are home to over 120,000 Essex residents, a figure which has doubled since 2007. The most significant structural factors affecting deprivation are incomes and employment, but recent changes in deprivation across Essex stem from small changes in barriers to housing and local services; health outcomes; and levels of crime. Regeneration is challenging due to the complexity of social, structural, economic and environmental factors that shape deprivation. There is no single formula for success and an integrated solution is required. ECC's Housing Strategy sets out Essex's ambition to deliver locally led regeneration schemes which provide economic, social and environmental benefits in key localities.

The Essex JSNA of 2019 states that 52,833 households or 8.64% were estimated to be in fuel poverty in 2016. The housing strategy will: Work with partners to support progress to decarbonise new and existing homes in Essex and Promote Government funding available to Essex households to reduce carbon emissions from their homes

## Does or will the policy or decision affect:

**Service users:** Yes

**Employees:** Yes

**The wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities:** Yes

**Which geographical areas of Essex does or will the policy or decision affect?:** All Essex

**Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?:** Yes

**Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?:** No

**Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies?:** Yes

**Is the new or revised policy linked to a digital service (website, system or application)?:** No

## Description of impact

**Description of Impact.** If there is an impact on a specific protected group tick box, otherwise leave blank. You will be given the opportunity to rate identified impacts as positive, negative or neutral on the next page: Age, Disability - learning disability, Disability - mental health issues, Disability - physical impairment, Disability - sensory impairment, Gender / sex, Gender reassignment, Race

**I confirm that I have considered the potential impact on all of the protected characteristics:** I confirm that I have considered the potential impact on all of the protected characteristics

**Describe any actions that have already been taken to mitigate negative impacts on any of the protected characteristics:** Equality groups not individually specified in this EIA, will only experience positive impacts through the aims of the Essex Housing Strategy. A lack of data has prevented their inclusion as individual groups however they, in line with the groups listed will experience and be able to access the benefits and the improved quality of life as needed, that this strategy will bring.

## Age

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** The Essex Housing Strategy takes in to account all age groups in Essex and this strategy impacts positively on the young through to the older generations.

Children and Younger people

Some housing challenges are felt acutely by younger people. "Temporary" accommodation generally impacts all age groups negatively however children and young teenagers in particular experience negative impacts on their health and wellbeing. Young people leaving institutional care are particularly vulnerable to homelessness. Research carried out by Homeless link 2019 (Youth Homelessness 2019) shows that one third of young people leaving social care become homeless in the first two years after leaving care. Children are affected by domestic abuse within their households.

The housing strategy aims to see partnership working to prevent homelessness and minimise the need for temporary accommodation (Outcome 3b). Actions to achieve that objective that should have a positive impact on young people include:

Support victims and their children in domestic abuse safe accommodation, working jointly on housing solutions with local housing authorities.

Work with housing authorities to explore ways to ensure households in private rented homes benefit from good quality, stable and affordable accommodation.

Challenge government policy that leads to sites developed under permitted development becoming large temporary accommodation blocks

Older people

According to the Essex JSNA of 2019, 134,998 households (23.7%) were occupied solely by residents aged 65 and over, including 76,477 households (13.1%) where a resident aged 65 and over was living alone. It is believed that living in isolation, especially for the older generation, can have significant impacts on mental health and general physical well-being.

The Essex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment in 2017/18 found that Essex County Council's Adult Social Care Team provided long term support to 21,685 people aged 18 years and over. Of this cohort 6,610 people (30.5%) were aged 18 to 64 years and 15,075 people (69.5%) were aged 65 years and older.

The Essex Housing Strategy will:

- Develop 'pathways' to ensure there is sufficient accommodation of the right type to meet the different levels of care and support needed by care groups
- Commission providers to offer support to groups that needs help to stay in their accommodation
- Deliver an Independent Living programme to bring forward new schemes of housing with on-site care for people with care and support needs.
- Through Essex Housing deliver independent living on public land alongside market housing

- Publish the projected need for specialist housing with care in Essex
- Engage with Essex planning authorities to reflect the need for housing with care in Local Plans for future housing growth.

**Extent of impact:** High

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** The impact will be to allow older citizens to live independently and healthily for longer by reducing, preventing or delaying the need for social care. More homes will become available to younger generations and will support generations of all ages by increasing opportunities to a better quality of life with improved outcomes.

## Disability - learning disability

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** The Essex JSNA of 2019 Adult Social Care data states that 3,790 adults required ASD and LD support from Essex County Council with a range of packages depending on the severity of the condition. Some sources such as POPPI/PANSI suggest the level for adults could be around 27,546 people of whom 21,059 people are aged 18-64 and 6,487 people are aged 65+. Of this number it is estimated that a total of 5,667 (4,797 age 18-64; 870 age 65+) have severe learning disabilities thus may have additional support needs.

The housing strategy will:

- Work with local planning authorities to reflect the needs of the council's care cohorts in Local Plans and where appropriate, planning applications.
- Develop 'pathways' to ensure there is sufficient accommodation of the right type to meet the different levels of care and support needed by care groups
- Commission providers to offer support to groups that needs help to stay in their accommodation
- Work with housing authority partners to administer Disabled Facilities Grants to adapt Essex residents' homes
- Through Essex Housing deliver independent living on public land alongside market housing
- Publish the projected need for specialist housing with care in Essex
- Engage with Essex planning authorities to reflect the need for housing with care in Local Plans for future housing growth.

**Extent of impact:** High

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** The impact will be to provide access to high quality specialist and supported accommodation for those who require it.

## Disability - mental health issues

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** According to the General Practice Patient Survey (GPPS; NHS England) in 2016/17, the prevalence of depression and anxiety among persons aged over 18 years across Essex was estimated to be 12.49%. Severe mental health conditions include schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder and other psychoses. In 2017/18, the prevalence of these as recorded on general practise disease registers across Essex was 0.80. (JSNA 2019)

The housing strategy will:

Develop 'pathways' to ensure there is sufficient accommodation of the right type to meet the different levels of care and support needed by care groups

Commission providers to offer support to group that needs help to stay in their accommodation

Those who sleep rough suffer disproportionately from physical and mental health problems. Health problems can contribute to them ending up on the street, and further deteriorating while they sleep rough (St Mungo's (2016) Stop the Scandal: an investigation into mental health and rough sleeping).

The Housing Strategy will:

Work with partners to raise funds to offer support and accommodation for rough sleepers.

Continue to improve working arrangements with partners to reduce the number of people becoming homeless as they leave the criminal justice system, health, or care settings.

Develop interventions with partners to reduce the time rough sleepers spend living on the streets.

Co-ordinate work with partners to respond to the on-going impact of Covid-19 on people sleeping rough.

Homeless households accommodated away from their local areas may face pressures due to disruption to education and loss of support from extended family (National Housing Advice Service) (NHAS - Placing homeless households out of area) The Housing Strategy will:

Engage with London boroughs to reduce the number and vulnerability of homeless households placed into Essex from the capital

**Extent of impact:** High

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** The impact will be to provide help and support to those who need it whilst assisting them in identifying and securing suitable long term accommodation.

## Disability - physical impairment

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** In February 2019 Essex County Council Adult Social Care was supporting 2006 working age adults classed as having a physical impairment (PI) or long-term physical condition. Further analysis showed that 16% of these individuals live in the top 20% most deprived areas nationally and 45% live the bottom 50% of areas nationally for deprivation around Essex. Exact figures for the number of people living in an area with a physical impairment are not available however figures from the department for work and pensions in 2018 showed that 20,960 residents in the ECC area were claiming disability related benefits for physical impairments. (JSNA 2019)

The Housing Strategy will:

Develop 'pathways' to ensure there is sufficient accommodation of the right type to meet the different levels of care and support needed by care groups

Commission providers to offer support to group that needs help to stay in their accommodation

Engage with Essex planning authorities to reflect the need for housing with care in Local Plans for future housing growth.

Work with housing authority partners to administer Disabled Facilities Grants to adapt Essex residents' homes

Capitalise on the opportunities the Care Technology Contract presents to test and learn how care technology in accommodation can support individuals' wellbeing and help them stay independent for longer.

**Extent of impact:** High

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** The impact will be to provide access to high quality specialist and supported accommodation for those who require it.

## Disability - sensory impairment

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** POPPI.org.uk predictions estimate that there are

30,503 adults with severe hearing loss of which 25,231 people are aged 65+. 564 people aged 18-64 were predicted to have serious visual impairments whilst 27,181 people aged 65+ had moderate or severe visual impairment.

Essex County Council's sensory register in 2019 recorded 8,993 residents with a sensory impairment across the county. This included 31% (2,811 people) who were partially sighted and 29.1% (2,616 people) who were blind. 19% (1,712 people) were classed as "hard of hearing", and 10% were deaf but with speech.

The Housing Strategy will:

- Work with housing authority partners to administer Disabled Facilities Grants to adapt Essex residents' homes
- Capitalise on the opportunities the Care Technology Contract presents to test and learn how care technology in accommodation can support individuals' wellbeing and help them stay independent for longer.
- Deliver an Independent Living programme to bring forward new schemes of housing with on-site care for people with care and support needs.

**Extent of impact:** High

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** The impact will be to provide access to high quality specialist and supported accommodation for those who require it or to remain in their homes with the adoption of digital technologies.

## Gender / sex

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Domestic abuse is a major cause of homelessness as people leave abusive partners, which affects more women than men (NAO, 2017). Women, often with accompanying children, find it difficult to identify a safe alternative home and so have to use temporary accommodation. Government figures confirm that single women who have young children constitute 44% of all households in temporary accommodation, which is more than double the share of households with two parents in such housing. (UK homelessness: 2005 to 2018).

The housing strategy will:

- Commission advice and support for households in Essex who are facing eviction
  - Support victims and their children in domestic abuse safe accommodation, working jointly on housing solutions with local housing authorities.
  - Work with local authorities, developers and Homes England to explore ways to increase the supply of affordable housing in Essex.
- Research carried out by St Mungos confirmed that men are more likely to sleep rough than women. However, women in this environment are likely to have more complex issues and have greater challenges than men in moving off the streets. The issues of drugs/alcohol and sex working means it is a lot harder for those most entrenched female rough sleepers to move off the streets (Women and rough sleeping: a critical review 2018)

The housing strategy will:

- Work with partners to raise funds to offer support and accommodation for rough sleepers.
- Continue to improve working arrangements with partners to reduce the number of people becoming homeless as they leave the criminal justice system, health, or care settings.
- Develop interventions with partners to reduce the time rough sleepers spend living on the streets.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** Our aims will provide more secure, safe, affordable and sustainable homes for any person residing in Essex.

## Gender reassignment

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Research from Stonewall.org.uk provides evidence that those who identify as LGBT+, and particularly younger people, are more likely to experience both homelessness and rough sleeping (Stonewall LGBTQ+ people: invisible minorities in the housing system)

The Housing Strategy will:

Work with partners to raise funds to offer support and accommodation for rough sleepers.

Continue to improve working arrangements with partners to reduce the number of people becoming homeless as they leave the criminal justice system, health, or care settings.

Develop interventions with partners to reduce the time rough sleepers spend living on the streets.

**Extent of impact:** Research from Stonewall.org.uk provides evidence that those who identify as LGBT+, and particularly younger people, are more likely to experience both homelessness and rough sleeping (Stonewall LGBTQ+ people: invisible minorities in the housing system)

The Housing Strategy will:

Work with partners to raise funds to offer support and accommodation for rough sleepers.

Continue to improve working arrangements with partners to reduce the number of people becoming homeless as they leave the criminal justice system, health, or care settings.

Develop interventions with partners to reduce the time rough sleepers spend living on the streets.

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** Our aims will provide more secure, safe, affordable and sustainable homes for any person residing in Essex.

## Race

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** According to the 2011 census 90.8% of Essex's population identify as White British and 9.2% have a minority ethnic identity including White Non-British (3.5%). Harlow has the highest percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic Residents (BAME) at 16.15%, the Maldon District has the lowest proportion at 4.25%. (JSNA 2019). We do not hold recent evidence on housing issues faced by BAME communities in Essex. However, the London Housing Strategy Equality Impact Assessment states that Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) households in the capital are over-represented in homelessness services. It is thought that BAME communities are more likely to be living in poverty, more likely to be in poor standard housing in a deprived area and are more likely to be hidden homeless and living in overcrowded conditions. The London EIA also states that BAME individuals are also more likely to experience benefit sanctions and are likely to have lower levels of financial resources to cope with delays in payment and sanctions. There may be similar challenges faced by BAME communities in Essex.

The Essex Housing Strategy will:

- Work with housing authorities to explore ways to ensure households in private rented homes benefit from good quality, stable and affordable accommodation.
- Work with local authorities, developers and Homes England to explore ways to increase the supply of affordable housing in Essex.
- Work with local partners to understand the impact of high housing costs on household financial wellbeing
- Essex County Council is committed to enabling those with refugee status to resettle in secure and sustainable homes within the county.

Gypsies and Travellers; There were 1,150 gypsy caravans and 575 households in The housing Needs Assessment of Travellers in Essex (2005). The assessment notes the importance of sufficient traveller sites to meet the housing needs of this community. The Essex Countywide Traveller Unit (ECTU) is a partnership of Essex County Council, local councils, Essex Fire and Rescue Service and Essex Police. Together, we support Gypsies and Travellers to access services, including supporting children into school and further education, health services, site and home fire safety visits.

The Housing Strategy will

- Work with local planning authorities to support the progress of their Local Plans to help bring forward land for sufficient new homes

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** Our aims will provide more secure, safe, affordable and sustainable homes for any person residing in Essex.

## **Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts**

**Does your EqIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?:** No

## **Details of person completing the form**

**I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance:** I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

**Date EqIA completed:** 16/03/2021

**Name of person completing the EqIA:** Alison Gibbs

**Email address of person completing the EqIA:** Alison.Gibbs@essex.gov.uk

**Your function:** Place and Public Health

**Your service area:** Sustainable Growth.

**Your team:** Housing Growth

**Are you submitting this EqIA on behalf of another function, service area or team?:** No

**Email address of Head of Service:** lee.heley@essex.gov.uk