Equality Impact Assessment

1. Introduction

1.1 Service:	Housing
1.2 Name of proposal, policy, strategy or project:	Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27
1.3 This is:	A change to an existing policy or strategy
1.4 Completing officer's name:	Alison Robinson
1.5 Date initially completed:	10/09/2021

2. About the proposal

2.1 What is the main purpose of the proposal?
Please explain in one or two short paragraphs
There is a legal requirement to publish a Homelessness Strategy every five years setting out the local authority's approach to tackling it. The Strategy sets out the priorities for homelessness prevention and related housing activities.

2.2 Why is it being introduced / reviewed / changed now?
This could be, for example, because of new government legislation or guidance, because of changing service user needs, or for financial reasons.
The term of the previous five year Strategy is ending, a replacement Strategy is required for the next five years.

2.3 Who is the intended audience or target group(s) for the proposal?
Internal audience or group: Staff and councillors
External audience or group: Multiple (please specify below)
Partner organisations delivering statutory and non-statutory services, social housing providers, supported housing providers, support providers, the voluntary sector and charities working with households with housing issues or facing homelessness who are usually borough residents.

3. Assessment of potential impact

Who could be affected by your proposal?

3.1 Will the proposal affect people - service users, employees or the wider community?	Yes	*If yes, please identify which group(s):* Service users, employees in other organisations
3.2 Will the proposal introduce a change which will significantly affect how services or functions are delivered?	No	The Homelessness Strategy underpins the services and activities being delivered to tackle homelessness based on existing legislative requirements, many of the activities are already being delivered. New actions are proposed which enhance existing services or accommodation provision.

Data and evidence

3.3 Please list the evidence / data sources you have considered in assessing the likely impact of your proposal	• Homelessness Data: high level and detailed data is collected about each client with whom casework is undertaken on the Locata case management system. Example information includes household composition ethnicity, support needs, age, causes of homelessness etc. • Housing Needs: Numbers on the register over time, by size of property, broad waiting times, number of social housing lettings • Borough wide data: earnings data, house price data, private rent costs data, unemployment data, new affordable housing delivery
3.4 Are there any significant gaps in the evidence base that mean it is difficult to assess the likely impact of your proposal?	No

Potential impact

3.5 Does your proposal relate to a service or function which information indicates is important to those with protected characteristics?	Yes	Households facing homeless frequently have a protected characteristic and ease of access to information, advice, assistance and the right accommodation is important to deliver an effective homelessness service.
3.6 Will the proposal intentionally target any particular protected characteristic group?	No	
3.7 Will the proposal intentionally exclude any particular protected characteristic group?	No	
3.8 Will the proposal be able to be equally accessed by all at every stage of the process? Or are there barriers that might inhibit access for some people?	May be barriers that could inhibit access	The activities and services offered under the umbrella of the Homelessness Strategy depend on the ability to access information, to access the internet, the ability to a communicate or have a representative who can assist. These are potential barriers to some people, however access to translation services, support workers, telephone information all contribute to minimising these.
3.9 Does the proposal have the potential to reduce inequalities or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups?	Yes, Improve outcomes	Activities to prevent homelessness do improve outcomes for groups. For example, homeless women or families with a pregnancy, people with disabilities, long-term health problems are prioritised by legislation and, depending on their circumstances, are assisted to secure suitable accommodation and / or support. The Strategy sets out a broad and flexible range of activities to prevent homelessness and to assist those facing it.

3.10 Considering the above information, please summarise the likely impact on protected characteristic groups (within the organisation, outside the organisation or both)		
	Nature of impact	**Please briefly explain your answer**
Age *including children, young people or older people*	Positive	Children: depending on legislation, households with children facing homelessness have a priority and the strategy sets out a range of activities to help households prevent their

		homelessness, options to secure alternative accommodation and a range of support services for families with additional needs.
		Young people: The strategy identifies young people as a specific group with support needs, recognises the vulnerability of care leavers, identified joint working with partners to help young people who face financial and other barriers to secure settled housing and access support.
		Older people: whilst the strategy does not specifically mention older people, this group are prioritised under homelessness legislation.
Disability *including physical, sensory or learning disability or long-term health impairment*	Positive	Homelessness legislation and the Strategy has objectives specifically on people with support needs for example, long-term health impairments, mental ill-health, substance misuse, prison leavers, complex need clients and sets out activities to support these groups to move to settle accommodation.
Gender reassignment	Neutral	
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	Homelessness legislation, which underpins the Strategy, identifies this group as a priority. This means if a homelessness duty is accepted because homelessness couldn't be prevented, accommodation will be provided.
Race or ethnicity	Neutral	
Religion or belief	Neutral	
Sex	Neutral	
Sexual orientation	Neutral	
Deprivation	Positive	Homelessness households frequently have low incomes and this impacts on their housing options and can make them more vulnerable to risk of homelessness. The Strategy specifically supports activities to help manage debt, to budget, to assess affordability, to assess benefits, access food banks, furniture and clothing charities and to work in partnership with other organisations to assist those experiencing financial hardship and deprivation.

Other vulnerable group	Choose an item.	

3.11 Has there been any consultation with relevant interested parties or is any consultation planned?

Yes, already undertaken

A consultation took place during Sept – Oct 2021.This included an on-line survey available on the Councils website, seeking views on the Housing Service. It was designed with specific 'routing' to questions based on these respondent types: clients / members of the public, professionals, others. Specific questions were asked round support needs, services and accommodation for groups such as those with mental ill-health, disabilities, substance misuse etc. It was promoted on social media and on the Council's website. Housing staff also include a link to the survey within their email signatures which goes to clients and professionals. Housing staff also encouraged service users to complete the survey and offered assistance. A further qualitative survey will be undertaken with homelessness service uses many of whom have protected characteristics. A stakeholder workshop also took place to whom a variety of professionals were invited including mental health teams, support providers, the NHS, Surrey County Council services including children's services and mental health services, Probation, Police, domestic abuse services, local charities.

3.12 What actions have been, or could be, taken to increase the positive impacts for people with protected characteristic(s) or other vulnerabilities?

The Housing Team supports the most vulnerable and offers a flexible service which is tailored to the individual within the limits of legislation. No further actions are identified.

3.13 What actions have been, or could be, taken to reduce potential negative impacts on people with protected characteristic(s) or other vulnerabilities?

None.

3.15 Are there any remaining negative impacts for people with protected characteristic(s) or other vulnerabilities? *For example, physical, cultural or information access issues that cannot be resolved.*

No

If yes, please summarise which groups could be impacted and how.
Click or tap here to enter text.

3.16 Is any remaining negative impact legal or intended?
No
If yes, please explain further.
Click or tap here to enter text.

4. Monitoring and review

4.1 How do you proposed to monitor and review the impact of your proposal?
Data on high level indictors is assessed monthly, this identifies potential issues with our services, this is supported by regular meetings about the services and any issues. Following implementation, the strategy action plan will be reviewed annually alongside the data on our homelessness duties that is also published quarterly.