

Full Equality Impact Analysis



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| Title of review | Housing Strategy 2012-16 |
| Service | Housing Services, Community Services |
| Date of review | December 2012 |
| Date of next review | January 2014 |
| Lead officer, Job Title and Service | Lauren Hemsley, Senior Strategic Housing Officer |
| Review team | Ashley Stacey, Strategic Housing Officer Claire Grant, Business Services |
| Scope of the analysis | <p>The Local Government Act 2003 requires local authorities to have a Housing Strategy. The strategy is a four year strategy and sets the strategic objectives and approach Thanet District Council will take in relation to housing issues. The strategy addresses wider housing issues which are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver a range of homes to meet the local housing need which residents can afford. 2. Make better use of the existing housing stock across all tenures and improve housing conditions. 3. Enable vulnerable people access to good quality housing and to live independently. 4. Provide an accessible housing options service for Thanet residents. 5. Deliver housing in support of our regeneration and economic development objectives. <p>The Housing Strategy is also accompanied by an Action Plan which sets out how the key priorities will be delivered. It features a range of housing projects and work streams including cross departmental projects. The Action Plan will be updated annually so members and stakeholders can see how projects are progressing and any new projects that start during the lifespan of the strategy. It will allow for any policy changes to be incorporated ensuring the strategy is kept current and relevant for the four year lifespan.</p> |
| Beneficiaries | The Housing Strategy is a high level strategic document that sets out our priorities over the next four years. Five priorities have been identified which will benefit residents, developers, communities and partners. |
| Stakeholders | <p>Stakeholders to the strategy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents • Council Members |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Staff • Public Sector Partners (e.g. Police, Kent County Council, Fire & Rescue and NHS) • Housing Associations and Developers • Community & Voluntary Organisations • Local Landlords |
| Relevant data and research | <p>The council's 'State of the District' report summarises recent data for key indicators of social, economic, health and well-being of our district. Comparing data across England, South East Region, Kent and Kent Districts, the report provides a source of information to support and inform local decision-making and setting of priorities. Parts of the 2011 Census have now been released and where information is available, the strategic context of the Housing Strategy has been updated.</p> <p>Data and research is still emerging in relation to the Welfare and Benefit Reform changes. The action plan attached to the strategy will be reviewed every year, which will ensure new data can be analysed and projects added or amended which are within the action plan.</p> |
| Access complaints | No specific complaints have been received relating to the Draft Housing Strategy. |
| Consultation | <p>The Housing Strategy has been developed over a number of months by the Senior Strategic Housing Officer and Strategic Housing Officer. The key housing issues were identified as part of the initial consultation, which was undertaken in December 2011. A review document was sent out to 150 stakeholders, to include Housing Associations, developers, landlords and others. (The initial review document is in Appendix 3, p.42 of the strategy and the stakeholder list is on p.53).</p> <p>The comments received have helped inform the strategy as well as officer workshops and utilising existing strategies and resources. A Members Briefing was held on Monday 25th June to introduce members to the housing issues to be included in the strategy. A further SMT/Cabinet briefing was held on 4th September and the Housing Strategy was also an agenda item at the Parish Forum on 25th October.</p> <p>The 6 week consultation on the draft Housing Strategy ran from 22 October 2012 to 3 December 2012. We emailed out a link to the draft Housing Strategy to over 150 stakeholders to include housing associations, developers and other Kent local authorities amongst others. A full list of stakeholders is available on p.58 of the strategy. A dedicated page was uploaded onto the TDC website for the duration of the consultation, there were also links from the communications consultation pages and a press release was issued. An online form was created for comments to be submitted. Hard copies were made available for collection at the Gateway and were posted out to residents on request who were unable to access a computer or call into the gateway.</p> |
| Results of consultation | <p>In total we received 7 responses from stakeholders and 2 responses via the online comments from residents. We had a number of requests for copies of strategies which were posted out to residents and copies were also available at the Gateway for residents and stakeholders to collect.</p> <p>In summary the responses related to the following areas:</p> |

- The strategy should address accommodation needs of offenders.
- The importance of safety and the reduction of crime should be emphasised.
- We should include more detail about the re-invigorated Right to Buy receipts.
- More reference should be made to the welfare and benefit reform and under occupation.
- More reference to Building for Life and Wheelchair Accessible Housing should be made.
- We need to refer to people with a learning disability in the strategy.
- We should refer to the Care and Support Fund (HCA funding opportunity)
- We should refer to the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme.
- More detail of the new powers under the Localism Act should be included relating to the new powers to discharge our homelessness duty into the private rented sector.
- We need to address the impact of the Welfare and Benefit Reform on the potential migration of benefit dependent households into Thanet in search of cheaper housing costs.
- Need to include more about Affordable Rent.

These comments have now been addressed and incorporated into the final version of the strategy. None of the feedback requested changing any of the key priorities of disagreed with any actions in the action plan. They referred to drawing out certain issues in more detail and did not propose substantially altering any of the principles of the strategy.

Relevance to the Duty:

1. **Eliminate unlawful discrimination** – harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;

The strategy does not set any direct policies, that is the task for the individual projects and work streams referred to in the action plan. The strategy aims to make long term improvements to the housing conditions and situation in Thanet by delivering homes which people can afford, making better use of existing housing stock, such as bringing empty properties back into use to provide more quality housing. It also aims to manage the standards of the private rented sector. None of the actions proposed or the priorities identified within the strategy discriminate against the protective characteristics. Appendix 2 - Local Context and Issues of the strategy, details the demographic information for the district and this has been taken into consideration when forming the strategic priorities.

2. **Advance equality of opportunity** – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it by;

- The strategy seeks to review the provision of accommodation for older people in the district to provide evidence to support planning policies. This is to enhance housing opportunities for older people. 21.9% of the population within Thanet are over 65years.
- The strategy seeks to provide more detailed evidence to support the need for wheelchair accommodation, which will then inform planning policy to enable the housing needs of wheelchair households to be addressed more efficiently.
- The provision of accommodation for other vulnerable groups in the district will also be undertaken to ensure we are informed of more specialist housing needs of our residents.
- Encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.

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| Equality impacts raised or identified: | | |
| The Housing Strategy provides the strategic direction of the council over the next four years. Five priorities are identified in the strategy and the action plan advises how we will deliver our services. | | |
| Protected Characteristic | Commentary | |
| Age | Impact | The delivery of the housing strategy will have a positive impact on people of all ages. |
| | Mitigation | None Needed |
| Gender | Impact | The delivery of the housing strategy will have a positive impact on both men and women. |
| | Mitigation | None needed |
| Race | Impact | The strategy aims to have a positive impact for all people regardless of their race. |
| | Mitigation | It seems there is little or no evidence in this area. |
| Disability | Impact | The housing strategy will aim to reduce gaps for groups with various disabilities. |
| | Mitigation | DFG's will continue to ensure disabled people can adapt their properties and therefore remain in their own homes. Homes will be built to lifetime standards. |
| Religion or belief | Impact | The strategy aims to have a positive impact for all people regardless of their religion or belief. |
| | Mitigation | It seems there is little or no evidence in this area. |
| Gender reassignment | Impact | This strategy aims to have a positive impact for all people regardless of gender reassignment. |
| | Mitigation | It seems there is little or no evidence in this area. Speak to Housing Options for number of presentations. |
| Sexual Orientation | Impact | This strategy aims to have a positive impact for all people regardless of their sexual orientation. |
| | Mitigation | It seems there is little or no evidence in this area. Speak to Housing Options for number of presentations. |
| Overall conclusions and options to be put before decision maker (if contributing towards a report) or to take forward to develop your service (if reviewing a service) | | |
| An overarching Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and there is no reason to state at this time that the content of the Housing Strategy will negatively impact on any groups with protected characteristics. In fact the strategy focuses on improving the quality of life in | | |

Thanet for all.

Opportunities to further the aims of the duty will be investigated during equality impact analysis of individual projects, and plans from this strategy, for example, the Allocations Policy EIA will look specifically at the direct impact on households.

| Actions arising from analysis: | | |
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| Action | Responsible Officer | Deadline |
| To undertake equality impact analysis (EIA)'s yearly to assess the impact of the Housing Strategy where there is relevance to the Public Sector Equality Duty/protected characteristic(as defined within the Equality Act 2010) | Senior Strategic Housing Officer | January 2014 |

Acceptance

Name and signature of assessing officer and date of assessment.

Name: **Position:**

Signed: **Date:**

What to do now:

- Attach the EIA as an annex to your report to Members. Members must have all of the information before them at the time of making the decision. Also remember to complete the Equalities section in the report template.
- Send a copy of the EIA to the clerk to the Equalities Group – claire.grant@thanet.gov.uk to enable the review date and any actions arising to be added to the Equality Objectives Plan which is monitored by the Corporate Equalities Group and reported to SMT.

Please be aware that this assessment will be published on the Council’s web pages and must not contain any information that may identify individuals.

- Add your actions to your service plan.
- Report your outcomes to the clerk to the Equalities Group, we are keen to publicise our equalities work and ensure that success is captured and good practice shared.