

# 12. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT



## Initial Screening

1. Name of Policy, Strategy, Function or Project being assessed

*Existing/New or Proposed/Changing or updated – please specify:*

*East Surrey Housing Strategy 2009-13 (Epsom & Ewell, Mole Valley, Reigate & Banstead and Tandridge Councils).*

2. Officers responsible for carrying out the assessment

*Jayne Godden Miller, Head of Strategy & Enabling, Tandridge District Council*

3. What is the main purpose and objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Function or Project being assessed?

*Following on from a number of joint projects and studies, a joint developer's consultation & IDEA seminar, officers decided to write a sub-regional strategy to provide a collective voice, as many of the issues were the same and across a similar market.*

*The three main priorities of the Strategy are:*

- creating housing opportunities,
- improving housing standards,
- improving housing and support for vulnerable people.

*The Strategy links with a number of national, regional and corporate plans and strategies.*

*National policies include: 2006 Strong & Prosperous Communities to show the role of housing in an inclusive community; 2008 Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A national strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society; 2009 Valuing People Now: A new three Strategy for People with Learning Disabilities; and the Taylor Review of the Rural Economy.*

*Reference is made to the Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11, which includes delivery of new affordable housing, improving quality of housing, enhanced Gypsy & Traveller provision and improved sustainability standards for all new and refurbished homes.*

*Relevant sub-regional plans include Surrey Supporting People Strategy 2008-11 and Surrey's Interim Community Strategy 2008.*

4. What do you think are the main issues relating to diversity within the Policy, Strategy, Function or Project?

*Ensuring that the three main priorities of the Strategy allow for the needs of diversity groups to be sufficiently considered and reflected within both the body of the Strategy and the action plans.*

*Ensuring that information and learning points on the housing requirements from joint studies, such as the Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment, Extra Care for older people, and Supporting People reviews, are incorporated into the Strategy and is given adequate attention alongside such major issues alongside affordability.*

*Ensuring that in the consultation process there was accessibility to all diversity groups so that they could contribute and make their views known.*

5. Who will you need to consult with, both internally and externally, and how will you do it?

*Consultation event was held in December 2008 – groups invited included supported housing associations, Social Care colleagues, and a number of interest groups including specialist housing and support organisations; East Surrey Valuing People Group; The Alzheimer’s Society; Age Concern; East Surrey Domestic Abuse Services; Surrey Community Action; and Tandridge and Reigate & Banstead Voluntary Service Councils.*

*Information on the Strategy and a standard template for comments was placed on each of the authorities’ websites. Mole Valley’s included a video.*

*Information was sent separately to local and County Councillors.*

*Articles were placed in local newspapers and their Council magazines encouraging people to send in comments either electronically or via post.*

*Profile raised via an agenda item at the East Surrey Valuing People Group.*

*Mole Valley sought comments from its Local Youth Council, Mole Valley Housing Association tenants’ group and decision-making board.*

*Presentations were done to Tenants Groups in both Tandridge and Reigate & Banstead.*

6. Please complete the following table considering where your proposal could have a positive or negative impact on any of the following equality groups:

Equality Target Group	(a) Positive impact		(b) Negative impact		Reason / Comments or Gaps in knowledge
	High	Low	High	Low	
<b>Grounds of race, ethnicity, colour or nationality e.g.</b>  People of different ethnic backgrounds including Gypsies, Travellers and refugees / asylum seekers, non -British European.		X			General benefits of improved housing supply and conditions, together with housing support if required. Specific attention to the housing requirements of Gypsies and Travellers.
<b>Grounds of gender or marital status:</b>  Women and men, civil partnerships, transgender or transsexual people		X			The general benefits described above.
<b>Grounds of sexual orientation:</b>  Lesbian, gay, bisexual		X			The general benefits described above.
<b>Grounds of religion or belief:</b>  Religious / faith or other groups with a recognised belief system.				X	This is a gap in knowledge and its impacts much more difficult to judge as it is not considered as a separate entity within the Strategy.
<b>Grounds of disability :</b>  Physical, Sensory, Mental or Learning impairment.	X				There is a specific chapter dealing with the support requirements of vulnerable groups. The Strategy incorporates accessibility & reference to Lifetime Homes for people with a physical disability. Reference documents included national studies on health & learning disability. It has been informed by Surrey’s Supporting People Strategy.

<b>Grounds of age:</b> Older people, children and young people.	X				Older people – reference to Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods. It has been informed by Surrey’s Supporting People Strategy and builds on joint work on extra care. Also incorporates private sector work through Home Improvement Agencies & on energy efficiency projects.  The increase in housing includes family homes – larger home highlighted in some authorities. Reinforces peripatetic support schemes for homeless families.
<b>All grounds under any discriminatory legislation?</b>		X			The general benefits described above.

7. What actions could be taken to minimise a low negative impact?

*The Strategy has been designed to be as inclusive as possible and also proportionate in line with diversity groups in East Surrey. The only area above that has been identified as possibly having a low negative impact is on faith or belief grounds, but this is simply erring on the side of caution as it is difficult to judge, due to the paucity of information in this area; but it would be fair to say that this is not an area considered within the Strategy.*

*Experience to date does not indicate that this is a particular area of concern and most contact with faith groups has been with Churches Together organisations, with particular reference to homelessness.*

8. Is there any research or experience you could use to support your assessment?

**Research:**

*Housing Needs Studies – these were carried out individually in each authority by the same consultant, which ensured consistency in approach. This was updated by a joint East Surrey Strategic Housing Markets Assessment (ESSHMA) which covered all four authorities in 2008 and partially updated in 2009 and once again the same consultant was used.*

*District & Borough Private Sector Stock Condition Surveys*

*Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment*

*Local housing data on homelessness, lettings, supported housing need, supply of new homes.*

*There are a number of multi-agency and cross-authority groups that discuss a wide range of issues and share experience and working practice. These include the Surrey Supporting People Joint Management Board, Housing Enabling Officers, Housing Needs Managers & Older Persons’ groups, Housing Study Group (private sector housing), Joint Supported Housing Panels and East Surrey Valuing People group.*

9. What resource implications are linked to this Policy, Strategy, Function or Project?

*Strategy officers from the four authorities have pooled their time and resources to work together. Existing mediums have been used for consultation, e.g. websites, local press and existing representative groups. Sharing the cost of the large consultation event in December and the update of the ESSHMA proved better value for money than doing it individually as before.*

*It is hoped that the approach taken in this Strategy will strengthen sub-regional bids for funding & projects by demonstrating a willingness to work together and shared common issues and objectives.*

If there is a high negative impact you must undertake a full EIA.

Even if the impact is of low significance you may still wish to undertake a full impact assessment to enable a more thorough evaluation.

Signature(s): 

Date completed: 3rd June 2009