Equality Impact Assessment

Responsibility and Ownership

Name of policy, practice, service or function: Joint Empty Property Strategy 2015-2020

Responsible department: Growth

Service area: Housing Strategy

Lead Officer: Adrian Anderson

Other members of assessment team

Name	Position	Area of expertise
Carl Griffiths	Private Rented Sector & Housing Options Manager (NEDDC)	Homelessness legislation, private sector housing, vulnerable households
Diane Parker	Housing Strategy Officer	EIA , housing, allocations

Scope of the assessment

1	What are the main aims/objectives or purpose of the policy, strategy, practice, service or function?	The strategy exists to support the return of long term empty properties into sustainable use.
		The strategy is aligned with Corporate objective to:
		Increase the supply, quality and range of housing to meet the needs of the growing population and support economic growth.
		It is also in association with the following:
		• North East Derbyshire District Councils Corporate Plan 2015–19 • Bolsover District Councils Corporate Plan 2015-19 • North East Derbyshire District Councils Housing and Economic Development Strategy • North Derbyshire & Bassetlaw Strategic Housing Market Assessment • Joint Growth Strategy • National Planning Policy Framework • CBL Allocations Policy
		In addition to the corporate priority the strategy has a number of cross cutting themes:
		• Tackling housing disrepair associated with empty properties • Addressing Environmental Health issues associated

		with empty properties e.g. Waste on land/public health issues/vermin/arson and squatting • Improving the quality of private sector rented housing stock • Improving the amenity of communities across the district
2	**Are there any external factors we need to consider like changes in legislation?**	Legislation linked to the enforcement of empty property work has been in place for many years: • Building Act 1984 • Housing Act 2004 • Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 • Law of Property Act 1925 • Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) • Equalities Act 2010 External funding to help with tackling empty properties is subject to government priorities and therefore is subject to change with each new parliament.
3	**Who implements the policy, strategy, practice, service or function?**	The strategy will be implemented by a cross section of internal and external partners, co-ordinated by the empty property officer in the Housing Strategy team. Partners will include: • Councillors • Revenues • Environmental Health • Planning Enforcement • Legal • Finance

		• GIS • Building Control • Communications • Rykneld Homes • Developers • Action Housing • Housing Associations • Registered Providers
4	**Who is affected by the policy, strategy, practice, service or function?**	Those affected by the strategy will include: • Residents • Social Tenants • Owner occupiers • First time buyers • Private rented tenants • Developers and private builders • Partner delivery agencies • Registered providers • Rykneld Homes • Local Businesses
5	**What outcomes do we want to achieve, why & for whom?**	The strategy will seek to co-ordinate and focus empty property work across both districts with the over arching aim to reduce the number of long term empty properties. Achieving this will also result in: • An increase in affordable housing units

		• Reduced pressure on social housing stock • Realisation of additional New Homes Bonus • Greater housing choice • Improvement in Private Rented Sector housing quality
6	**What existing evidence do you have on the impact of the policy, strategy, practice, service or function?**	Measures detailed within the strategy constitute the basic tools of empty property work. All have been successfully implemented to varying degrees by local authorities across the country resulting in reductions of long term empty properties. The Empty Homes Network and Empty Homes Agency both have substantial evidence of the positive impacts of implementing the policies contained within the strategy. Examples of good practice which have been evidenced in the development of the strategy include: • Manchester City Councils Enforced Sale Procedure • Kent County Council's No Use Empty property renovation loan initiative • Exeter City Councils Private Sector Leasing Scheme • The Welsh Governments Houses to Homes scheme.
7	**How is information about the policy, practice, service or function publicised?**	The final strategy will be made available on NEDDC and BDC's websites and will be circulated to partners and stakeholders. Empty Property work has been and will be promoted at stakeholder and partner events including the annual Landlords forum event. Information regarding empty property work is available on both the Council's websites and articles publicising empty property

		work have been included in the latest editions of the residents newsletters, Intouch and The News. Leaflets have also been printed and distributed to all housing offices across the districts with press releases being carried out as appropriate to highlight individual schemes that sit within the strategy such as the Private Sector Leasing Scheme.

Consider any impacts / barriers on each of the protected characteristics set out below and consider any that might cross over eg: between race / disability, gender / religion and belief, sexuality / age etc. Indicate where the policy, practice, service or function could have a positive or negative impact for different groups and your reasons. Specify which data sources have informed your assessment.

Race

8	**Identify any adverse impacts/barriers of the policy or procedure on people who may be disadvantaged because of their race**		
	White	English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	No impacts/ barriers. The strategy states that the Empty Property Team will use a direct approach, on an individual basis, to engage with the owners and which tools will be most appropriate to achieve a successful outcome.
		Irish	
		Gypsy or Irish Traveller	No impacts/barriers, however normally Gypsies and Travellers do not wish to live in 'bricks and mortar' housing and their needs have been assessed in the Derbyshire and East Staffordshire Gypsy and Traveller Assessment 2014
		Any other White background	

8	**Identify any adverse impacts/barriers of the policy or procedure on people who may be disadvantaged because of their race**		
	Asian / Asian British	Indian	No impacts/ barriers. The strategy states that the Empty Property Team will use a direct approach, on an individual basis, to engage with the owners and which tools will be most appropriate to achieve a successful outcome.
		Pakistani	
		Bangladeshi	
		Chinese	
		Any other Asian background	
			The website does not have facilities for those whose first language is not English, however there is Google translate action to re direct to if appropriate. Also there are contact details for the translation service on the website.
			The strategy is written in English but can be ordered translated in a different language to alleviate the language barrier.
			Due to larger family sizes, larger properties may be required by the South Asian communities, however, the BME Housing Needs Study concluded that due to small numbers and the demand for larger properties from across the community, the housing needs of those who require larger houses due to religious or cultural beliefs should be met in the same way as others, which the Empty Properties team will be aware of when bringing empty properties back into use.
	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	African	No impacts/ barriers. The strategy states that the Empty Property Team will use a direct approach, on an individual basis, to engage with the owners and which tools will be most appropriate to achieve a successful outcome.
		Caribbean	
		Any other Black / African / Caribbean / Black British background	

8	Identify any adverse impacts/barriers of the policy or procedure on people who may be disadvantaged because of their race		
	Any other ethnicity	Arab	As above
		Any other ethnic group	

Sex / gender

9	Identify any adverse impact/barriers of policy, practice, service or function on people who may be disadvantaged because of their gender	
	Female	No impacts/ barriers because of gender
	Male	As above
	Transgender	No impacts/ barriers. Transgender people will be treated as the gender in which they live their life

Age

10	Identify any adverse impact/barriers of policy, practice, service or function on people who may be disadvantaged because of their age	
	0-9 years	No impacts/ barriers as the strategy is not intended for people under the age of 18, however properties may be identified that are suitable for occupation by this age group as part of family accommodation
	10-15 years	See above
	16-18 years	No impacts/ barriers within the strategy for this age group, however there are barriers to housing for under 35's since the Government changes to the Local Housing Allowance and the Welfare Reforms, however the strategy is working towards providing opportunities for affordable housing for 16 – 25 year olds linked to employment and training.
	19-24 years	As Above
	25-34 years	No impacts/ barriers within the strategy for this age group, however there are barriers to housing for

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		under 35's since the Government changes to the Local Housing Allowance and the Welfare Reforms Under Occupations charge
	35-44 years	As above
	45-54 years	As above
	55-59 years	As above
	60-64 years	No impacts/ barriers within the strategy for this age group. However this age group may need specialist housing and during the course of bringing empty properties back into use, properties may be identified that are suitable for use by residents in this age group
	65 years and over	As above

Disability		
11	Identify any adverse impact/barriers of policy, practice, service or function on people who may be disadvantaged because of their disability or long term ill health	
	Physical or mobility impairments	Empty properties vary in type, size and location. During the course of bringing empty properties back into use, properties may be identified that are suitable for use by residents with physical disabilities or mobility problems. The Empty Property Team may seek help from partner agencies where necessary to support those with physical or mobility impairments.
	Sensory (hearing, visual, speech)	The Empty Property Team will engage with the owners as most appropriate and seek help where necessary including specialist sign language providers and translators. The website is installed with Browse Aloud which allows people with a visual impairment to access

11	**Identify any adverse impact/barriers of policy, practice, service or function on people who may be disadvantaged because of their disability or long term ill health**	
		website data. Documents can be converted to a Braille document if required and the text can be enlarged.
	Mental health	The Empty Property Team may seek help from partner agencies where necessary to support those with complex needs. In particular, a partnership approach may be taken when owners appear reluctant to engage with the Council(s) because of their mental health. Empty properties can negatively impact upon the wellbeing of residents nearby, particularly if the empty property has been the subject of vandalism and/or anti social behaviour. Returning empty properties to use removes this impact from the locality.
	Learning disabilities	The Empty Property Team may seek help from partner agencies where necessary to support those with complex needs.
	Non-visible conditions such as epilepsy or diabetes	The Empty Property Team may seek help from partner agencies where necessary to support those with complex needs.

Religion or belief

12	**Identify any adverse impact/barriers of policy, practice, service or function on people who may be disadvantaged because of their religion or belief, including non belief**	
	No religion	No impacts/ barriers
	Christian	No impacts/ barriers with regards to the strategy, however if an empty property is a place of worship this may need to be treated with sensitivity in respect of the local residents who practice this religious belief.
	Buddhist	As above

12	**Identify any adverse impact/barriers of policy, practice, service or function on people who may be disadvantaged because of their religion or belief, including non belief**	
	Hindu	As above
	Jewish	As above
	Muslim	As above
	Sikh	As above
	Any other religion	As above
	Any other philosophical belief	No impacts/ barriers with regards to the strategy, however if an empty property or the surrounding area is connected to any philosophical beliefs then this may need to be treated with sensitivity in respect of the local residents who practice this belief.

Sexual orientation

13	**Identify any adverse impact/barriers of policy, practice, service or function on people who may be disadvantaged because of their sexual orientation**	
	Heterosexual	No impacts/ barriers because of sexual orientation
	Lesbian	No impacts/ barriers because of sexual orientation. Same sex couples will be treated the same as heterosexual couples
	Gay	As above
	Bisexual	No impacts/ barriers because of sexual orientation
	Prefer not to say	No impacts/ barriers because of sexual orientation

Other categories

13	**Identify any adverse impact/barriers of policy, practice, service or function on people who may be disadvantaged because of other factors**	
	Rural / urban	Empty properties are located across all geographical locations. Returning them to use will reduce the

13	**Identify any adverse impact/barriers of policy, practice, service or function on people who may be disadvantaged because of other factors**	
		housing pressures in all areas
	Carers	No impacts/ barriers
	Child poverty	No impacts/ barriers
	Social value	Returning empty properties to use that previously may have attracted anti-social behaviour or otherwise negatively impacted upon the amenity of an area will have a positive effect on the social value of the local community
	Any other	No impacts/ barriers

Analysing the information and setting equality objectives and targets

Service or function	Policy or practice	Findings	Which groups are affected and how	Whose needs are not being met and how?
None Identified at Present				

Document the evidence of analysis

Data or information	When and how was it collected?	Where is it from?	What does it tell you?	Gaps in information
Customer feedback and complaints	Letters, emails, phone calls, complaints procedure	General public/ members/ residents/partners/stakeholders	No obvious discrepancies in terms of the satisfaction with	None, as yet identified

Data or information	When and how was it collected?	Where is it from?	What does it tell you?	Gaps in information
			the service received	
Consultation and community involvement	The development of the Strategy involved consultation with partners, stake holders, developers	Surveys/ Officer steering group meetings/ consultation with members.	Fed into strategy development / Identified homes returned to use / priority for work	None, as yet identified
Performance information including Best Value	Utilise the spreadsheet developed by the Empty Homes Network for intervention monitoring	Internal from the Empty Property Officer	How many empty properties have been brought back into use through the intervention of the Empty Properties Officer	None, as yet identified
	New Homes Bonus figures	DCLG	Comparative figures from one year to the next on how many properties which have come into use based on Council Tax figures, this includes new build properties. This also shows how much New Homes Bonus the Council will receive	
	Perform – The Council's Performance Management System	Internal from the Empty Property Officer		

Data or information	When and how was it collected?	Where is it from?	What does it tell you?	Gaps in information
Take up and usage data	Length of time property has been empty Number of complaints received about the property Level of impact on the surrounding neighbourhood Properties State of repair	From Council Tax data and local information from residents and members From Uniform Physical assessment HHSRS inspection	Suitable properties for empty property initiatives Evaluation of properties for empty property work Evaluation of properties for empty property work Evaluation of properties for empty property work and associated cost of repair	None, as yet identified
Comparative information or data where no local information available	National Empty property data	Empty Homes Agency information spreadsheets which collates Empty Properties information from all local authorities across the country	The number and tenure of empty homes across the country for the past 10 years or so	None, as yet identified
Census, regional or national statistics	Hometrack Census Empty Homes Agency	Hometrack Census Empty Homes Agency	A wide range of information related to empty properties and	None, as yet identified

Data or information	When and how was it collected?	Where is it from?	What does it tell you?	Gaps in information
	data		empty property work	
Access audits or other disability assessments	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Workforce profile	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Where service delivered under procurement arrangements – workforce profile	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Monitoring and scrutiny arrangements	Monitored every 6 months by Empty Property Officer and on Perform	Empty Property Officer records.	Number of empty properties returned to use	None, as yet identified

Recommendations and Decisions

Take immediate action by:

Amending the policy, strategy, practice, service or function	
Use an alternative policy, strategy, practice, service or function	
Develop equality objectives and targets for inclusion in the service plan	
Initiate further research	
Any other method (please state)	

All actions must be listed in the following Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan Summary

Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan Summary

Name of policy, practice, strategy, service or function …………………………

Department ………………………………………………………………………

Date of assessment ……………………………………………………………….

Please list all actions, recommendations and/or decisions you plan to take as a result of the equality impact assessment.

Recommendation/Decision	Action Required	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources	Progress	Actual Outcome

Please state where the departmental electronic assessment will be kept:……………………………………………………………………………

EIA Assessment Group

Date of assessment		
Sub group approval	Yes / No	
Subject to minor amendments	Yes / No	
Date published on corporate website		

Copies of all EIAs are stored on PERFORM.

The Council publishes its Equality Impact Assessments as evidence of the analysis that it undertook to establish whether its policies, strategies, practices, services and functions would further or would have furthered the 3 aims of the general equality duty, details of the information that it considered and details of engagement undertaken when doing the analysis.

The general duty requires the council to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment & victimisation
- Advance equality
- Foster good relations between different groups