

# Appendix C: Equalities Impact Assessment

## Cambridge City Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)



### 1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service

Voids Management Policy & revised Re-Let Standard

### 2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available)

Documents will be published here:

[Agenda for Housing Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 24th January, 2023, 5.30 pm - Cambridge Council](#)

### 3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

This EqIA considers equality impacts of the Void Management Policy and revised Re-Let Standard.

### 4. Responsible service

Housing Maintenance & Assets

### 5. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

(Please tick all that apply)

- Residents
- Visitors
- Staff

This EqIA specifically considers any equalities impact for City Council tenants, in particular those vacating a council property or those about to start a tenancy

### 6. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this?

- New
- Major change
- Minor change

<b>7. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>The Policy outlines how the service will prioritise repairs in empty properties to enable them to be relet efficiently. There is some involvement from other Departments to allow this to happen, including City Homes, Streets and Open Spaces, Asset Management and Compliance and the use of external contractors.</p>	

<b>8. Has the report on your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service gone to Committee? If so, which one?</b>
<p>The Void Management Policy is being presented to Housing Scrutiny Committee on 24th January 2023.</p>

<b>9. What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?</b>
<p>Practices by other social housing providers have been looked at extensively to shape the Policy</p>

<p><b>10. Potential impacts</b></p> <p>For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.</p>
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<p><b>(a) Age - Please also consider any safeguarding issues for children and adults at risk</b></p>
<p>Standardising works in void properties ensures properties are consistently safe, secure, fit to live in and compliant with latest legislation relating to Health &amp; Safety. This therefore has a positive impact on all age groups.</p> <p>There is therefore no impact expected by the Void Management Policy on any particular age group. It is noted however that alterations and adjustments could be required to the property once an incoming tenant has been identified as having additional needs due to their age, of which some may have to be done during the period the property is empty and prior to the household moving in.</p> <p>There is an expectation that a tenant vacating a property will leave the property in a fair condition, and that any damage, unauthorised alterations and belongs left behind will be</p>

rechargeable to the tenant. This could negatively impact older tenants who may not be able to physically deliver against this expectation.

### **(b) Disability**

Standardising works in void properties ensures properties are consistently safe, secure, fit to live in and compliant with latest legislation relating to Health & Safety. This therefore has a positive impact on all tenants with disabilities.

There is therefore no impact expected by the Void Management Policy on any particular disability. It is noted however that alterations and adjustments could be required to the property once an incoming tenant/household has been identified as having additional needs due to their disabilities, of which some may have to be done during the period the property is empty and prior to the household moving in.

There is an expectation that a tenant vacating a property will leave the property in a fair condition, and that any damage, unauthorised alterations and belongs left behind will be rechargeable to the tenant. This could negatively impact disabled tenants who may not be able to physically or mentally deliver against this expectation.

### **(c) Gender reassignment**

There are no equality impacts identified specific to this protected characteristic

### **(d) Marriage and civil partnership**

There are no equality impacts identified specific to this protected characteristic

### **(e) Pregnancy and maternity**

There are no equality impacts identified specific to this protected characteristic

**(f) Race – Note that the protected characteristic ‘race’ refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.**

There are no equality impacts identified specific to this protected characteristic

**(g) Religion or belief**

There are no equality impacts identified specific to this protected characteristic

**(h) Sex**

There are no equality impacts identified specific to this protected characteristic

**(i) Sexual orientation**

There are no equality impacts identified specific to this protected characteristic

**(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular, please consider the impact of any changes on:**

**Low-income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty**

**Groups who have more than one protected characteristic that taken together create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. (Here you are being asked to consider intersectionality, and for more information see: [https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1\\_159kt25q](https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_159kt25q)).**

The purpose of the Policy is to ensure tenants moving into a council property have a safe secure, compliant environment in which to set up a home, as well as reduce the waiting times of those on the housing register who could currently be in more expensive alternative accommodation whilst waiting for a council home.

It is not expected that the Void Management Policy or Re-Let Standard will negatively impact those who are struggling financially, but the service recognises that there is increasing pressure on households in general to be able to afford even basic supplies for decorating and furnishing a new home.

There is an expectation that a tenant vacating a property will leave the property in a fair condition, and that any damage, unauthorised alterations and belongings left behind will be rechargeable to the tenant. This could have a negative impact on tenants who cannot afford to undertake the works required prior to moving out.

**11. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqIA accordingly.)**

**1. Additional works required in a void once the new tenant identified**

A void will be ready to let once the works to achieve the Re-Let Standard has taken place. Any extra work required inside an empty property due to the incoming tenant or household's needs will continue to be addressed in liaison between the Lettings and Voids Teams. Where possible, all extra work will be scheduled post move-in. If some work has to be done prior to move in (adaptations etc), this is classed as major works and removed from the day-to-day void repair time statistics (for benchmarking reporting purposes) and monitored separately. The incoming tenant will be kept informed about the expected move-in date.

**Responsibility: Voids Surveyor/Voids Supervisor/Lettings Team – ongoing monitoring**

**2. Returning the property in a fair condition and unauthorised alterations returned to original condition.**

Tenants are promptly provided with the list of repair requirements following the pre-void inspection. All tenants are asked to ensure the property is left in a clean and tidy condition prior to moving out, and the Lettings Team will work closely with the tenant, and, where relevant, the Housing Officer or Support worker to ensure the tenant can access help to achieve this.

Re-chargeable repair arrears are monitored and payment plans have been set up in a number of cases. The service will follow the Former Tenant Arrears procedure to recover any money owed due to rechargeable repairs.

**Responsibility: Voids Surveyor/Voids Supervisor/Lettings Team – ongoing monitoring**

### **3. Affordability of decorating and furnishing a new home**

The Re-Let Standard ensures the property is ready to decorate. Wherever feasible, and in liaison with the incoming tenant, the council will leave in -situ any floor coverings or fixtures that are in reasonable condition. The tenant will take responsibility for the upkeep of these items.

The housing webpages will be checked, and where necessary, updated to provide a number of signposts to organisations who can provide support and advice, access to furniture and furnishings or decorating materials, and this information will also be highlighted in the sign-up pack.

**Responsibility: Voids Surveyor/Voids Supervisor/Lettings Team – ongoing monitoring**

## **12. Do you have any additional comments?**

This EqIA provides an overall assessment of the equality impacts of budget proposals included in the Housing Revenue Account budget proposed for 2023/24. Individual service managers shall be responsible for delivery of the actions identified in this impact assessment.

## **13. Sign off**

Name and job title of lead officer for this equality impact assessment:

Catherine Buckle, Business Development Manager (Housing)

Names and job titles of other assessment team members and people consulted:

- Lynn Bradley, Head of Housing Maintenance and Assets

Date of EqIA sign off: 02/01/2023

Date of next review of the equalities impact assessment: After 23/02/2023

Date to be published on Cambridge City Council website: Published for proposals to be considered by Housing Scrutiny Committee on 24th January 2023