

EQUALITY ANALYSIS (EA)

POLICY/PROPOSAL:	Property Strategy
DEPARTMENT:	Property and Assets
TEAM:	Commercial Property
LEAD OFFICER:	Denish Patel
DATE:	24th August 2024

NB: Please ensure you have read the accompanying EA guidance and instructions in full.

SECTION A – INITIAL SCREENING

1. Please provide a description of the policy, proposal, change or initiative, and a summary its objectives and the intended results.

The proposal aims to ensure that the Council-owned commercial property assets meet the strategic aims of the Borough Plan. This includes generating revenue for the delivery of services and meeting the most pressing of social needs.

The proposal aims to strengthen safeguards for individuals with protected characteristics by ensuring Council-owned commercial buildings are safe spaces that serve as inclusive and accessible spaces that benefit all members of the community.

2. Who may be affected by this policy or proposal?

All persons who use, or benefit from, the commercial properties owned and let by the Council. This can include tenants, employees, visitors and those receiving services by businesses and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).

3. Is there relevance to equality and the council's public sector equality duty? Please explain why. If your answer is no, you must still provide an explanation.

Yes there is a strong relevance to the Council's public sector equality duty. Many of the Council's commercial property are let to voluntary and community sector organisations that provide services to the community, including those residents with

protected characteristics. The proposal aims to ensure that Council-owned commercial buildings are accessible to all. Many council assets are used by the public or for the public, therefore we have a responsibility to ensure they are accessible. The proposed strategy and framework for commercial property and asset related activities will guide and shape services in accordance with priority needs, thereby having an overall positive impact on equality and diversity. Individual decisions will determine how scarce assets are utilised and operated on a day-to-day basis to meet legislative and specific service needs. There will be communities or residents that will be disadvantaged by strategic and operational decisions, as is the case now.

4. Please indicate with an “X” the potential impact of the policy or proposal on groups with each protected characteristic. Carefully consider if the proposal will impact on people in different ways as a result of their characteristics.

Characteristic	Impact Positive	Impact Neutral/None	Impact Negative
Age	X	X	
Sex		X	
Race	X	X	
Disability *	X	X	
Sexual orientation		X	
Gender reassignment		X	
Religion or belief	X	X	
Pregnancy or maternity		X	
Marriage		X	

5. Please complete **each row** of the checklist with an “X”.

Screening Checklist

	YES	NO
Have you established that the policy or proposal <i>is</i> relevant to the council’s public sector equality duty?	X	
Does the policy or proposal relate to an area with known inequalities?	X	
Would the policy or proposal change or remove services used by vulnerable groups of people?	X	
Has the potential for negative or positive equality impacts been identified with this policy or proposal?	X	

If you have answered YES to ANY of the above, then proceed to section B.
If you have answered NO to ALL of the above, then proceed straight to section D.

SECTION B – IMPACTS ANALYSIS

1. Outline what information and evidence have you gathered and considered for this analysis. If there is little, then explain your judgements in detail and your plans to validate them with evidence. If you have monitoring information available, include it here.

Data and direct evidence on equality impact in respect of individual Council-owned commercial buildings is lacking. The analysis is based on the fact that the proposal is an over-arching framework for ensuring the portfolio remains financially sustainable and available for use by communities in the long-term. The proposal does not affect individual decisions on buildings but instead sets out a framework within which effective decisions can be made, and equality and inclusivity is a vital consideration within the proposed framework policies. Further evidence is required where the portfolio directly impacts on groups with protected characteristics.

Our strategy is focused on using property assets to benefit our communities, support the economy and improve prosperity and is designed to have a positive impact. Properties which are under-utilised, poorly managed and maintained, or vacant for long periods, invariably have a negative impact on equality.

A survey is being carried out on all of our properties, working with our tenants, to establish user needs and the current accessibility standards of our properties. This data will be invaluable to inform where improvements are required.

The Property and Assets Team will work closely with the Community and Partnerships Team and the VCS to seek additional evidence wherever possible to validate or refine the proposals and ensure stakeholders support and continue informing approach and actions e.g., engaging with Brent Mencap to understand accessibility needs and engaging with the Brent Multi Faith Forum to understand how our assets can be more conducive for holding events and making them accessible for particular faiths (e.g., prayer rooms).

2. For each “protected characteristic” provide details of all the potential or known impacts identified, both positive and negative, and explain how you have reached these conclusions based on the information and evidence listed above. Where appropriate state “not applicable”.

AGE

Details of impacts identified	Improving accessibility will have a positive impact on people of all ages, particularly the elderly and those with disabilities. Enhanced facilities, such as ramps, wider doorways, and accessible restrooms, ensure that older adults and individuals with disabilities can navigate spaces with ease and dignity. This not only promotes inclusivity but
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	<p>also supports their independence and encourages greater participation in community activities. By prioritising accessibility, we create environments that cater to the diverse needs of all age groups, fostering a more inclusive and supportive community for everyone.</p>
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DISABILITY

<p>Details of impacts identified</p>	<p>Improved accessibility allows individuals with disabilities to use facilities independently, enhancing their quality of life and enabling greater participation in community activities.</p>
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RACE

<p>Details of impacts identified</p>	<p>By creating properties that are welcoming, accessible, and inclusive, we can enhance the quality of the space, making it more appealing and conducive for people to use for events such as for cultural activities and celebrations.</p> <p>Improved properties can attract diverse businesses, providing economic opportunities and fostering a multicultural business environment.</p> <p>By maintaining high-quality properties, the strategy can attract businesses and services that provide employment opportunities and stimulate local economies, benefiting all community members.</p> <p>Ensuring that all community members, regardless of age, race, religion, or disability, have access to well-maintained and inclusive spaces promotes social equity and reduces inequalities.</p>
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SEX

<p>Details of impacts identified</p>	<p>Not known as these would only be known on a case by case basis.</p>
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SEXUAL ORIENTATION

<p>Details of impacts identified</p>	<p>Not known as these would only be known on a case by case basis.</p>
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PREGANCY AND MATERNITY

<p>Details of impacts identified</p>	<p>Not known as these would only be known on a case by case basis.</p>
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RELIGION OR BELIEF

Details of impacts identified	<p>By providing well-maintained, inclusive spaces, the strategy can enhance community cohesion through shared use of these spaces.</p> <p>Well maintained and accessible properties include facilities that accommodate various religious and cultural activities and practices.</p>
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GENDER REASSIGNMENT

Details of impacts identified	Not known as these would only be known on a case by case basis.
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MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

Details of impacts identified	Not known as these would only be known on a case by case basis.
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3. Could any of the impacts you have identified be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010?
No

4. Were the participants in any engagement initiatives representative of the people who will be affected by your proposal and is further engagement required?

Yes further engagement is required. Participants in engagement initiatives may be representative of the people who will be affected by the proposals.

5. Please detail any areas identified as requiring further data or detailed analysis.

<p>Enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the property portfolio can significantly advance equality across age, race, religion, and disability dimensions. Additionally, improving energy efficiency in our buildings will benefit those from lower income groups, small businesses and charitable organisations by lowering energy bills and reducing service costs, which are often passed onto residents and customers who access these services.</p> <p>Collecting data through a comprehensive survey on the accessibility standards of our properties will provide insights into where improvements are needed. This ensures that the benefits of enhanced property management are widely felt, contributing to a more inclusive and equitable society.</p>
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6. If, following your action plan, negative impacts will or may remain, please explain how these can be justified?

Managing and utilising finite and scarce property resources will inevitably involve making difficult choices, which cannot be avoided. The purpose of the proposal is to ensure that decisions made are in line with the Borough Plan priorities thereby supporting those most in need.

7. Outline how you will monitor the actual, ongoing impact of the policy or proposal?

The Property and Assets Team will need to work closely with stakeholders to gather evidence and monitor impact of the strategic proposals and interventions.

SECTION C - CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis above, please detail your overall conclusions. State if any mitigating actions are required to alleviate negative impacts, what these are and what the desired outcomes will be. If positive equality impacts have been identified, consider what actions you can take to enhance them. If you have decided to justify and continue with the policy despite negative equality impacts, provide your justification. If you are to stop the policy, explain why.

Mitigating actions are not required at this stage. Negative impacts can only be known when individual property decisions are made. No individual decisions on properties are being made by this proposal. The desired outcome of the proposal is to create and enhance positive impacts and minimise negative impacts by ensuring that assets are managed in a way that supports the long term use of commercial assets for the benefit of the community. The proposal also seeks to ensure that the decision-making process involves relevant stakeholders.

SECTION D – RESULT

Please select one of the following options. Mark with an "X".

A	CONTINUE WITH THE POLICY/PROPOSAL UNCHANGED	
B	JUSTIFY AND CONTINUE THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	X
C	CHANGE / ADJUST THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	
D	STOP OR ABANDON THE POLICY/PROPOSAL	

SECTION E - ACTION PLAN

This will help you monitor the steps you have identified to reduce the negative impacts (or increase the positive); monitor actual or ongoing impacts; plan reviews and any further engagement or analysis required.

Action	Expected outcome	Officer	Completion Date
Engage with stakeholders and with the VCS throughout the process of refining and developing the proposal prior to seeking Cabinet approval.	To understand the concerns of the VCS and other stakeholders and incorporate their feedback into the proposal.	Denish Patel	May 2024
Survey on accessibility followed by analysis and review.	Improve knowledge and insight into current accessibility standards and where improvements are needed.	Denish Patel	Dec 2024
Carry out energy performance assessment (EPC) on all properties within the portfolio.	Understanding of where improvements can be made cost-effectively to improve energy efficiency and assist with the cost of living which disproportionately affects those from lower income groups.	Denish Patel	Dec 2024

SECTION F – SIGN OFF

Please ensure this section is signed and dated.

OFFICER:	Denish Patel
REVIEWING OFFICER:	Angela Chaudhry, Agnieszka Spruds, Tom Pickup
HEAD OF SERVICE / Operational Director:	Tanveer Ghani, Director of Property and Assets