Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

The characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 are:

Disability	**Age**	**Sex (gender)**
Gender reassignment	**Marriage/civil partnership**	**Pregnancy/maternity**
Race	**Sexual orientation**	**Religion/belief**

By law we must have due regard to the need to:

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

In effect, this means that we need to ensure that our policies and services are fair, equitable and proportionate and where possible mitigate against any adverse impacts on people from the different protected characteristics.

In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the impact of living in a **rural area** as part of this assessment. Where people live is not a characteristic protected by law, but for an organisation such as Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils it is good practice to consider carefully how location may affect people's experience of a policy or service.

The Rural-Urban definition, defines the rurality of very small census based geographies. Census Output Areas forming settlements with populations of over 10,000 (which are urban), while the remainder are defined as one of three rural types: *town and fringe, village or hamlet and dispersed.*

Details	
Service or policy title	Communities Strategy
Lead officer *(responsible for the policy or service/function)*	David Clarke
Officers carrying out the EQIA *(at least one must have done EQIA training and it is recommended that an officer responsible for the policy or service/function is involved in completion)*	David Clarke and Belinda Bryan
Is this new or a revision? *(If revision state when previous EQIA undertaken)*	New

Is this the first time this policy or function has been assessed?	Yes
Date of completing this EQIA	15th November 2018

Description

What exactly is proposed? *(Describe the service/policy and the changes that are being planned)*

The Communities Strategy will outline the Councils' strategic approach in order to ensure that all our places 'work' now and in the future. It will articulate the powers, tools and interventions available to support local ambition and resolve local issues, where and when should we intervene and, importantly, when should we just get out of the way to allow our communities to deliver for themselves.

This strategy will consider our culture, communities expect our service delivery to be coherent and joined up and for us to be more consistent in the way we communicate. They expect us to be more collaborate and authentic, finding ways to navigate and provide solutions which don't necessarily follow service lines. It is also likely to recommend changes to our structures and processes to job roles and responsibilities, finding a better way to harness the skills and experiences of staff.

The precise changes cannot be determined as this stage although further work will be undertaken to ensure we identify and respond to equalities challenges and issues.

Why? *(Give reasons why these changes are being introduced)*

Fundamentally, the strategy will shape and clarify our relationship with our communities, how we support and not supplant their ambitions for a greater say in decisions that really matter. In doing so it will need to balance how we can give communities the confidence and skills to do more for themselves whilst not compromising our challenging political aspirations for housing-led growth and economic prosperity.

The strategy will provide an unequivocal statement of our intent for developing and building trust with all our communities, it will clarify when and how we intervene and where we do not consider this appropriate and this approach will be intelligence-led, reflecting what we know about the districts now and how demographic changes will effect demands on our services in the future.

The strategy will ultimately decide how our resources are deployed, especially, but not exclusively, those within the Planning and Communities services in order to develop communities to be more resilient and self-reliant, to develop interventions which have a measurable impact on social deprivation and health inequality and by improving our

collective impact with others which will help to address service demand, not only on the services we deliver but so they contribute to the strategic aims of our partners.

What will the effect of the changes be? *(Describe which people, communities, localities etc. will be affected by the changes)*

These changes are self-evidently about enhancing our relationships with people and communities across both districts. This is a conscious step to respond to what communities are telling us, to build on what we know works well and to develop consistency and continuity which harnesses the skills and experience of the resources at our disposal.

How will it be implemented? *(Describe the decision making process, timescales, process for implementation)*

The Strategy is a key decision for the Councils and will follow the prescribed governance process which is due to conclude at Full Council in March 2019.

When is it due to start? *(Planned start of new/revised policy/service)*

The development of the strategy has commenced.

Any other relevant details

Data about the population

What is the demographic profile or make up of the community you are serving? *(A brief overview of quantitative data used and qualitative research undertaken, including customer surveys and focus groups, plus links to reports, local or national data that you have used, suggested sources of information can be found at the end of this document). The Equality Impact Assessment reports from the Suffolk Observatory are particularly helpful* https://www.suffolkobservatory.info/equality-impact-assessment/

The data which will be used to inform the strategy will be collected from a variety of different sources, including the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Strategic Needs Assessment, the Suffolk now and 20 plus years analysis by Public Health, Suffolk Social Mobility report, Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Census Profiles, Partnership agreements, the Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, and Open Spaces Study.

The strategy development will be supported by four focus groups, both to provide an internal organisational viewpoint but also an external focus from Councillors and VCS partners.

It will also reflect anecdotal information and expressed opinion from communities from other activity, such as Local Plan development, Neighbourhood Planning groups, placed based working within Market Towns and which provide consistency of opinion

We will not be undertaking any further research as part of this policy development.

What is the profile or make up of your service users by protected characteristics?
(Where this data is available. If it is not currently available state any plans to collect this in future)

We will be informed by the helpful EQIA district profiles provided by the Suffolk Observatory. This strategy will affect the way in we deliver services across both districts. Equality and diversity issues, whether by ways of addressing social exclusion, or health inequality, or diminishing social mobility or by targeting the more "difficult to reach" are by definition integral aspects of the challenge and opportunities presented by this strategy.

Implications for communities and workforce	
Disability	
What is the impact on people with a disability (including children with additional needs) and what evidence do you have? *(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)*	Positive, the strategy will build on the Councils' commitments to reducing heath inequalities and providing a voice for disabled people to influence policy development
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	Positive impact expected for all communities
Do you expect the extent of the impact to be low, medium or high?	Medium
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	Encourage broad engagement in the public consultation process.
Age	
What is the impact on people of different ages and what	Positive- the strategy will take account of the needs of different ages. For example, GP referral schemes,

evidence do you have? *(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)*	dementia and activity-based interventions form part of our strategic approach and will be enhanced within the strategy.
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	Positive
Do you expect the extent of the impact to be low, medium or high?	Medium
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	Encourage broad engagement in the public consultation process
Sex (gender)	
What is the impact on people of different genders and what evidence do you have? *(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)*	Negligible impact- parts of the districts reveal differences in life expectancy
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	Positive impact expected for all communities.
Do you expect the extent of the impact to be low, medium or high?	Low
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	Encourage broad engagement in the public consultation process
Gender reassignment	
What is the impact on people who have undergone gender reassignment (i.e. transgender people) and what evidence do you have? *(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)*	No impact- the strategy aims to target inventions to people regardless of their gender reassignment.
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	Positive impact expected for all communities.

Do you expect the extent of the impact to be low, medium or high?	Low
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	Encourage broad engagement in the public consultation process
Marriage/civil partnership	
What is the impact on people who are married or in a civil partnership and what evidence do you have? *(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)*	No impact- the strategy aims to target inventions to people regardless of their relationship status
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	Positive impact expected for all communities
Do you expect the extent of the impact to be low, medium or high?	Low
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	Encourage broad engagement in the public consultation process
Pregnancy/maternity	
What is the impact on people who are pregnant women or those with a young child and what evidence do you have? *(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)*	No impact- the strategy aims to target inventions to people regardless of whether they are pregnant or have children
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	Positive impact expected for all communities.
Do you expect the extent of the impact to be low, medium or high?	Low
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	Encourage broad engagement in the public consultation process

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Race	
What is the impact on people from different races or ethnic groups and what evidence do you have? *(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)*	No impact- the strategy aims to target inventions to people regardless of race
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	Positive impact expected for all communities.
Do you expect the extent of the impact to be low, medium or high?	Low
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	Encourage broad engagement in the public consultation process

Sexual orientation	
What is the impact on people according to their sexual orientation and what evidence do you have? *(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)*	No impact- the strategy aims to target inventions to people regardless of their sexual orientation.
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	Positive impact expected for all communities.
Do you expect the extent of the impact to be low, medium or high?	Low
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	Encourage broad engagement in the public consultation process

Religion/belief	
What is the impact on people according to their religion or belief and what evidence do you have? *(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)*	No impact- the strategy aims to target inventions to people regardless of their religion or beliefs.

How does it have a positive or negative impact?	Positive impact expected for all communities.
Do you expect the extent of the impact to be low, medium or high?	Low
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	Encourage broad engagement in the public consultation process

Rurality	
Where people live is not a characteristic protected by law: but for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils it is good practice to consider carefully how location may affect people's experience of a policy or service.	
What is the impact on people according to whether they live in an urban or rural environment and what evidence do you have? *(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)*	The strategy needs to understand why some communities "work" and why other communities find it more difficult. Communities whose people have access to essential services, GPs, schools, shops, etc. have the physical infrastructure to "work" but people may still experience isolation and loneliness. Conversely, places without services may have a higher concentration of volunteers, of groups who represents their needs which enhance their sense of wellbeing. Communities are different, they are dynamic places which cannot be characterised easily into urban and rural definitions.
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	Both
Do you expect the extent of the impact to be low, medium or high?	Where people live can enhance or limit the impact is has on their lives and its effect will vary according to circumstance
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	The Communities Strategy will seek to address this fundamental question. Encourage broad engagement in the public consultation process

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Making Decisions

Having completed this equality impact assessment indicate which decision is recommended to be taken.

Should the policy or service be implemented as the correct course of action?	Yes
Should the policy or service be amended as suggested by the report so that mitigating actions are taken to address an adverse or negative impact on any characteristic?	No, this strategy seeks to promote equality of opportunity and to redress social and economic imbalances.
Should the policy or service be reviewed and revised more significantly to take into account its impact on different groups?	No
Should the policy or service not be actioned as there are too many negative impacts?	No

Monitoring Impact

Assessing the impact on equality is an ongoing process that does not end once a policy or service had been agreed or implemented.

How frequently will the policy or service be reviewed?	Two years after the Strategy is adopted, April 2021
Who will be involved?	It will be led by the Corporate Manager for Strong Communities
Will there need to be an action plan completed for any amendments?	It is unlikely, we are satisfied that the ambition of the Communities Strategy is to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and develop the Council's reputation with people representation our communities
What further evidence or consultation will be needed to check that the policy or service is working well?	None

Completion	
Authors signature	David Clarke
Date of completion	19/11/18

Additional sources of data can be found on the following links:

http://www.suffolkobservatory.info/Default.aspx

http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/

https://www.ons.gov.uk/

http://suffolkcf.org.uk/publications/hidden-needs-2016/

https://www.nao.org.uk/