



***CABINET***  
***Thursday, 11th June, 2020***

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Cabinet**, which will be held at:

**Online meeting using Zoom**  
on **Thursday, 11th June, 2020**  
at **7.00 pm** .

**G. Blakemore**  
Chief Executive

**Democratic Services**  
**Officer**

A. Hendry (Democratic Services)  
Tel: (01992) 564246 Email:  
democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Members:

Councillors C Whitbread (Leader of the Council & Leader of the Conservative Group) (Chairman), , N Avey, N Bedford, A Patel, J Philip, S Kane and H Whitbread

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS TO ATTEND**

**WEBCASTING/FILMING NOTICE (VIRTUAL MEETINGS)**

**Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site - at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.**

**You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.**

**Therefore by participating in this virtual meeting, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should ensure that their video setting throughout the virtual meeting is turned off and set to audio only.**

In the event that technical difficulties interrupt the virtual meeting that cannot be overcome, the Chairman may need to adjourn the meeting.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact the Corporate Communications Manager on 01992 564039.

**1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

1. This virtual meeting is to be webcast. Members are reminded of the need to unmute before speaking.

2. The Chairman will read the following announcement:

“I would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the internet (or filmed) and will be capable of repeated viewing (or another use by such third parties).

Please also be aware that if technical difficulties interrupt the meeting that cannot be overcome, I may need to adjourn the meeting.”

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To be announced at the meeting.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To declare interests in any item on this agenda.

**4. REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

To receive oral reports from Portfolio Holders on current issues concerning their Portfolios, which are not covered elsewhere on this agenda and a verbal update on the Coronavirus situation

**5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE CABINET**

To receive any questions submitted by members of the public and any requests to address the Cabinet.

**(a) Public Questions**

To answer questions asked by members of the public after notice in accordance with the provisions contained within Part 4 of the Constitution (Council Rules, Rule Q3) on any matter in relation to which the Cabinet has powers or duties or which affects the District.

**(b) Requests to Address the Cabinet**

Any member of the public or a representative of another organisation may address

the Cabinet on any agenda item (except those dealt with in private session as exempt or confidential business) due to be considered at the meeting, in accordance with the provisions contained within Article 7 of the Constitution (The Executive, Paragraphs 27 and 28).

**6. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

To consider any matters of concern to the Cabinet arising from the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function and to identify any matters that the Cabinet would like the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to examine as part of its work programme.

**7. REVIEW OF SERVICE CHARGES (Pages 5 - 16)**

(Leader) To consider the attached report (C-004-2020-21).

**8. PROVISION OF TELECARE (Pages 17 - 28)**

(Housing & Community) To consider the attached report (C-005-2020-21).

**9. IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON OUR WORKFORCE (Pages 29 - 34)**

(Customer & Corporate Support Services) To consider the attached report (C-006-2020-21).

**10. COUNTY LED HOMELESSNESS RECOVERY PLAN (Pages 35 - 38)**

(Housing & Community) To consider the attached report (C-007-2020-21).

**11. BUSINESS GRANTS TOP-UP - DISCRETIONARY POLICY (Pages 39 - 52)**

(Customer & Corporate Support Services) To consider the attached report (C-008-2020-21).

**12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, together with paragraphs 6 and 24 of the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution requires that the permission of the Chairman be obtained, after prior notice to the Chief Executive, before urgent business not specified in the agenda (including a supplementary agenda of which the statutory period of notice has been given) may be transacted.

In accordance with Operational Standing Order 6 (non-executive bodies), any item raised by a non-member shall require the support of a member of the Committee concerned and the Chairman of that Committee. Two weeks' notice of non-urgent items is required.

**13. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Exclusion

To consider whether, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt

information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) or are confidential under Section 100(A)(2):

<b>Agenda Item No</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Exempt Information Paragraph Number</b>
Nil	Nil	Nil

The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, which came into effect on 1 March 2006, requires the Council to consider whether maintaining the exemption listed above outweighs the potential public interest in disclosing the information. Any member who considers that this test should be applied to any currently exempted matter on this agenda should contact the proper officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

#### Background Papers

Article 17 of the Constitution (Access to Information) define background papers as being documents relating to the subject matter of the report which in the Proper Officer's opinion:

- (a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and
- (b) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report and does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information and in respect of executive reports, the advice of any political advisor.

The Council will make available for public inspection one copy of each of the documents on the list of background papers for four years after the date of the meeting. Inspection of background papers can be arranged by contacting either the Responsible Officer or the Democratic Services Officer for the particular item.

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:**                    **C-004-2020/21**  
**11 June 2020**



**Epping Forest**  
**District Council**

**Portfolio:**                    **Housing & Community – Cllr H Whitbread**

**Subject:**                    **Review of Service Charges**

**Responsible Officer:**                    **Deborah Fenton      (01992 564221).**

**Democratic Services:**                    **Adrian Hendry      (01992 564246).**

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) The Cabinet are asked to note the requirement to carry out a full review of service charges across the District;**
- (2) That Cabinet receive a further paper in September to agree the proposals on introducing a fair and consistent approach to service charges for tenants living in blocks; and**
- (3) Cabinet are asked to approve the development of our new scheme ‘more than bricks and mortar’ ‘EFDC Creating great places where people want to live’.**

### **Executive Summary**

The Council charge for additional services, to tenants living in blocks of flats based on a CPI increase yearly. An example of these services are the cleaning of blocks and communal utility costs such as electric for lighting. EFDC’s charging approach follows the government guidance to separate service charges from rents which took place in 2003. This approach has become challenging for most organisations over the years as some costs have risen above the rate of CPI. A recent analysis, by Housing Management of cost against income has ascertained that the under recovery of service charges stands at £1.3m for EFDC 2019/20. As the Council made a decision regarding the approach to charging in 2003, the shortfall is not identified as a deficit in the HRA account. Most organisations have changed their approach and charge out the actual cost of services.

Councils are now subject to rent regulations via the Regulator for Social Housing. The Regulations clearly state that social housing providers need to charge for services in a fair and consistent way which can be accounted for. This translates to charging the actual cost for the services broken down to each individual property. From a legal standpoint this protects us from challenge regarding fair and accurate charging.

Any increase in service charge needs to be approached with care and compassion, as such a further paper will be presented to Cabinet in September setting out the options.

It is proposed that income raised (over and above current service charge income) in the first 4 years is ringfenced to pay for estate improvements under our proposed scheme ‘more than bricks and mortar’ our mission is; ‘EFDC creating great places where people want to live’. Our estates would benefit from a cash injection, this strategically, would be a benefit to the whole district in terms of communities, place and customer satisfaction. A presentation has

been prepared to highlight the benefits for communities.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

The development of a fair and accurate and fair charging regime for service charges supports the overall aspirations of the Councils Corporate Plan – Stronger Communities, Stronger Council

### **Other Options for Action:**

Not to develop a fair and accurate charging regime. This would leave us potentially in breach of the newly published Rent Regulations and at risk of legal challenge around fair charging.

### **Report:**

#### **1. Historical Context**

Under the rent restructuring mechanism, (1999) local authorities were urged by government to separate the elements of the rent relating to the provision of communal services such as grounds maintenance, caretaking, door entry systems, concierge service etc, to make it more transparent to tenants which services they pay for (this is known as depooling). In effect this meant that tenants would be paying a separate charge for additional services. EFDC undertook this exercise, however at the time it was decided not to review the charges, in terms of developing a charging regime which considered the size of each unit, the actual cost of the service and apportioning the cost per property accordingly. EFDC took the approach of continuing to increase service charges by applying a yearly CPI uplift. This has resulted in an increasing deficit year on year. The amount for 2019/20 was £1.3m. (not accumulative)

#### **2. Regulation**

The recent change in Regulatory Governance for Councils requires EFDC to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Framework (set out by the Regulator of Social Housing). The Regulatory Standard for rents states as follows:

*Registered providers are expected to set reasonable and transparent service charges which reflect the service being provided to tenants. Tenants should be supplied with clear information on how service charges are set.*

To meet the regulatory standards, a fair and transparent charging regime needs to be implemented. There are several ways this could be approached. Options will be provided in the follow up paper.

#### **3. EFDC – current charging regime**

Service charges are worked out by working from the 'unpooled' service charge (2003) and increasing the charge by CPI, which is then agreed by Cabinet. The current charging methodology does not provide a fair and consistent approach, particularly in our newly regulated position. The cost is not proportionate with the size of property. Furthermore, the service costs have not kept in line with actual costs, leaving a deficit of £1.3m in 2019/20. This deficit is funded from the HRA account.

#### **4. EFDC – Future approach**

To develop a fair and consistent approach to charging, it is proposed to carry out a review to understand our expenditure block by block, as well as an analysis to ascertain the actual cost of the services. This would then be further analysed to break down charges to a property level. This would mean that each property was receiving a charge which represented the cost to EFDC. Our tenancy agreement allows us to charge tenants for services. These charges are called 'property' charges. All property charges are subject to Housing Benefit relief.

It is important to ensure that the cost apportionment for communal areas is accurate and based on evidence, to this end, a time and motion exercise will be carried out. This information will also allow us to consult with residents to understand their level of satisfaction with the services provided. This gives us the option to offer a variation in our cleaning service in the future should residents require it.

Following this review, options will be presented to Cabinet to recommend how future costs can be recovered in a sensitive manner. This will include creating a ringfence around the revenue for 4 years to improve our communities 'EFDC creating great places where people want to live'

#### **Resource Implications:**

The review will be resourced using inhouse resources.

#### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

The review will be carried out in line with legal and government guidelines.

#### **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

The review sets the opportunity to tweak our services to enhance our communities, making places where people want to live.

#### **Consultation Undertaken:**

Initially consultation has been undertaken with the Portfolio holder.

#### **Background Papers:**

NA

#### **Risk Management:**

There is no risk in carrying out the review

#### **Equality Analysis:**

The Equality Act 2010 requires that the Public Sector Equality Duty is actively applied in decision-making. This means that the equality information provided to accompany this report is essential reading for all members involved in the consideration of this report. The equality information is provided as an Appendix to this report.



# Equality Impact Assessment

1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Epping District Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, ie have due regard to:
  - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
  - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
  - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
  - age
  - disability
  - gender
  - gender reassignment
  - marriage/civil partnership
  - pregnancy/maternity
  - race
  - religion/belief
  - sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy or change.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. All **Cabinet, Council, and Portfolio Holder reports must be accompanied by an EqIA**. An EqIA should also be completed/reviewed at key stages of projects.
8. To assist you in completing this report, please ensure you read the guidance notes in the Equality Analysis Toolkit and refer to the following Factsheets:
  - Factsheet 1: Equality Profile of the Epping Forest District
  - Factsheet 2: Sources of information about equality protected characteristics
  - Factsheet 3: Glossary of equality related terms
  - Factsheet 4: Common misunderstandings about the Equality Duty
  - Factsheet 5: Frequently asked questions
  - Factsheet 6: Reporting equality analysis to a committee or other decision making body

## Section 1: Identifying details

Your function, service area and team: **Housing Management**

If you are submitting this EqlA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team: **NA**

Title of policy or decision: **Review of Service Charges**

Officer completing the EqlA: **Deborah Fenton** Tel: **01992 564221** Email: **dfenton@eppingforestdc.gov.uk**

Date of completing the assessment: 4/5/20

## Section 2: Policy to be analysed

2.1	Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project? <b>No</b>
2.2	Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision): <b>N/A</b>  What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)? <b>N/A</b>
2.3	Does or will the policy or decision affect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• service users</li><li>• employees</li><li>• the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities?</li></ul> <b>No</b>  Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate? <b>No</b>
2.4	Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources? <b>No</b>
2.5	Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes? <b>No</b>

### Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation<sup>1</sup>

As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, eg service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).

3.1	What does the information tell you about those groups identified? <b>N/A</b>
3.2	Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision? <b>Consultation will take place following the recommendations from the full review.</b>
3.3	If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary: <b>N/A</b>

## Section 4: Impact of policy or decision

Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know.

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Age	<b>Neutral – the paper is for information only and will not impact on any groups</b>	L
Disability	As above	L
Gender	As above	L
Gender reassignment	As above	L
Marriage/civil partnership	As above	L
Pregnancy/maternity	As above	L
Race	As above	L
Religion/belief	As above	L
Sexual orientation	As above	L

## Section 5: Conclusion

		Tick Yes/No as appropriate	
5.1	Does the EqlA in Section 4 indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	No X	
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	If ' <b>YES</b> ', use the action plan at <b>Section 6</b> to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.

## Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

What are the potential adverse impacts?	What are the mitigating actions?	Date they will be achieved.
None	N/A	N/A/De

**Section 7: Sign off**

**I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately.  
(A typed signature is sufficient.)**

Signature of Head of Service: Deborah Fenton

Date: 4/5/20

Signature of person completing the EqIA: Deborah Fenton

Date: 4/5/20

**Advice**

Keep your director informed of all equality & diversity issues. We recommend that you forward a copy of every EqIA you undertake to the director responsible for the service area. Retain a copy of this EqIA for your records. If this EqIA relates to a continuing project, ensure this document is kept under review and updated, eg after a consultation has been undertaken.

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## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-005-2020/21

**Date of meeting:** 11 June 2020



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio:** Housing and Community – Cllr H Whitbread

**Subject:** Telecare Provision

**Responsible Officer:** Jennifer Gould (01992 564073).

**Democratic Services:** Adrian Hendry (01992 564246).

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**Following Essex County Council's decision to procure a county-wide care technology service, Cabinet are asked to approve the recommendation to cease EFDC's own delivery of telecare.**

### **Executive Summary:**

Essex County Council (ECC) have decided to procure a county-wide care technology service for telecare and assistive technology delivery. This has significant implications for EFDC's own future delivery of telecare to residents across the district.

The purpose of this report is to provide background on current services and set out the options available for the ongoing delivery of EFDC's telecare provision.

This report details two options available to the Council:

1. Status quo - do nothing;
2. Cessation of the delivery of telecare;

Ultimately recommending that EFDC cease the delivery of telecare to residents living in private dwellings across the district.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

#### Cessation of the delivery of telecare

ECC's county-wide model provides an alternative for existing users from a trusted provider that offers the potential for both economies of scope and scale. This approach will likely improve efficiency and harness resources to invest and innovate ensuring the new service is at the cutting edge of telecare and assistive technology which will likely be superior to EFDC's offer.

Cessation of service delivery will remove a number of financial and operational risks that currently sit within the Council. The likelihood is that 2.7 full-time equivalent staff who currently work for the Council solely on the provision of telecare will be transferred to a newly contracted provider under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE).

## Other Options:

### Maintain status quo

There is an option to maintain the status quo with EFDC continuing to provide telecare to residents within the district. However, retaining current arrangements is unlikely to be a realistic option for the service given that the modest contribution it generates of around £20,000 per year currently would result in a deficit of at least c£15,000 following the mobilisation of ECC's new contract. The reasons for this include:

- The funding from Essex County Council to supply and maintain the telecare equipment and cover the installation costs will no longer be available under the new arrangement.
- Essex County Council currently fund the first 12 weeks of the service costs for service users. This will no longer be available outside of their new framework contract once the new contracts are awarded.
- Continuation of the service directly by the Council would require a sustainable business case (an increase in the charges to cover costs and support continuous improvement).
- Residents may view the other options such as those provided through ECC as representing better value for money in terms of both costs and potentially service quality.
- A likely outcome is that there will be little or no demand for the service without EFDC significantly investing to deliver outcomes to match the 'best in class' market offer.

## Report:

### Background – Existing Service

1. For around 10 years EFDC have worked in partnership with ECC to provide Careline services. This includes the provision of alarms and sensors in residents' homes to help them live independently and safely.
2. The service also known as 'telecare' offers a 24/7/365 emergency alarm monitoring service to older and disabled people living within the District. The Service is also offered to other vulnerable groups including victims of domestic violence and younger people with disabilities.
3. The Council's own sheltered housing schemes have a separate hard-wired system installed in their properties which is **not affected** by these changes.
4. EFDC currently provide telecare to around 1,350 private sector homes. The purpose of the service is to provide a professional installation and alarm monitoring service, enabling customers to maintain independent living.
5. Service users pay an annual rental to EFDC for the service of £161.20 covering a telecare alarm and up to 4 sensors. ECC pay the cost of the equipment, installation charge and funds the first 12 weeks rental.
6. After direct cost are covered EFDC telecare service makes a modest contribution to overheads of around £20,000 per year.
7. The service generates an income of around £140,000 from Customers plus around £35,000 from ECC (this figure varies) which fund the following annual costs:

- Tunstall Response Call Centre contract costs of around £60,000 a year to monitor the alarms (varies dependant on demand for the service).
- New equipment costs are around £15,000 per year and staffing costs of around £80,000.

### **ECC's new approach**

8. ECC's ambition is to ensure more people enjoy independent, healthy, safe lives and are keen to use new technologies (such as telecare) to deliver care, support individuals and families in caring for each other, encourage healthy and active lifestyles and to address the needs of an ageing population.

9. As such the County Council aim to invest in care technology to support independent living as part of their adult social care responsibilities under the Care Act 2014.

10. Their changes are also motivated by the proposed switch-off of the public switched telephone network (PSTN) in 2025, which will affect delivery of the existing Careline service.

11. An external review of the County's telecare services in 2018 indicated they were not maximising the potential of technology to support people to live independently.

12. Following this review Essex County Council undertook a pathfinder project which demonstrated savings to the Health & Adult Social Care budgets. This was used to estimate that savings of £11.8million would be achieved over 3 years, which would pay for the investment required in setting up the new county-wide telecare service.

13. ECC has entered into a procurement exercise to provide a county-wide telecare service. Tenders were released in November 2019 and it was originally anticipated that new contract arrangements will commence in July 2020, with contracts awarded in March 2020. However, due to Covid-19 we are yet to establish whether these timelines are still on track.

### **Resource Implications:**

The recommendation to cease EFDC's telecare provision should limit the Council's exposure to loss of income and increased overheads, particularly given EFDC have already made representations to ECC (along with several other 2<sup>nd</sup> tier Councils) that TUPE applies to the 2.7 FTEs currently undertaking this area of work.

### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

Legal and HR have been consulted in relation to the staffing implications.

### **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

While there is a risk of some disruption to service users which could impact on their safety at home as the new contracts commence this can be minimised through planning and on-going effective partnership working with Essex County Council throughout the period of service transition.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

Initially consultation has been undertaken with the Portfolio Holder.

**Background Papers:**

N/A

**Risk Management:**

There is a risk that ECC do not accept that TUPE applies to the 2.7 FTEs currently engaged in this area of work which could potentially lead to a financial impact for the Council.

There is also a risk to service users' health, safety and wellbeing during the transition phase of the service moving to ECC's county wide provider albeit this can be mitigated as far as possible with robust partnership working.

**Equality Analysis:**

The Equality Act 2010 requires that the Public Sector Equality Duty is actively applied in decision-making. This means that the equality information provided to accompany this report is essential reading for all members involved in the consideration of this report. The equality information is provided as an Appendix to this report.

# Equality Impact Assessment

1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Epping District Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, ie have due regard to:
  - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
  - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
  - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
  - age
  - disability
  - gender
  - gender reassignment
  - marriage/civil partnership
  - pregnancy/maternity
  - race
  - religion/belief
  - sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy or change.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. All **Cabinet, Council, and Portfolio Holder reports must be accompanied by an EqIA**. An EqIA should also be completed/reviewed at key stages of projects.
8. To assist you in completing this report, please ensure you read the guidance notes in the Equality Analysis Toolkit and refer to the following Factsheets:
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  - Factsheet 4: Common misunderstandings about the Equality Duty
  - Factsheet 5: Frequently asked questions
  - Factsheet 6: Reporting equality analysis to a committee or other decision making body

## Section 1: Identifying details

Your function, service area and team: **Older People's Services**

If you are submitting this EqlA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team: **N/A**

Title of policy or decision: **Telecare Provision**

Officer completing the EqlA: **Jennifer Gould** Tel: **01992 564073** Email: **jgould@eppingforestdc.gov.uk**

Date of completing the assessment: **13<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

## Section 2: Policy to be analysed

2.1	Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project? <b>Yes</b>
2.2	Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision):  <b>To mitigate the financial and operational risk posed to EFDC as a result of Essex County Council's commissioning of a County-wide telehealth service.</b>  What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)?  <b>To cease EFDC's delivery of a telecare service to private residents in the District.</b>
2.3	Does or will the policy or decision affect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• service users</li><li>• employees</li><li>• the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities?</li></ul> Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?  <b>The decision affects 2.7 FTE members of the Older People's Team and c1,300 telecare users living in private dwellings across the District.</b>
2.4	Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?  <b>No</b>
2.5	Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes?

EFDC works in partnership with Essex County Council to ensure a joined up, comprehensive telehealth offer with the aim of being best in class. EFDC's decision not to compete with the more technologically advanced and comprehensive offer afforded by ECC's County-wide tender works towards getting the best outcomes for District residents.

### Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation<sup>1</sup>

As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, eg service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).

3.1	<p>What does the information tell you about those groups identified?</p> <p><b>The group impacted are c1,300 older people living in private dwellings in the District with a degree of a social care need.</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="295 891 1500 1200"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age</th> <th>No.</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>40-49</td> <td>16</td> <td>0.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50-59</td> <td>47</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>60-69</td> <td>209</td> <td>8.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>70-79</td> <td>507</td> <td>21.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>80-89</td> <td>783</td> <td>33.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>90-99</td> <td>447</td> <td>19%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>100+</td> <td>9</td> <td>0.4%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="295 1236 702 1384"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>39%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>61%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>66.4% users have a medical condition/disability</p>	Age	No.	%	40-49	16	0.7%	50-59	47	2%	60-69	209	8.9%	70-79	507	21.6%	80-89	783	33.3%	90-99	447	19%	100+	9	0.4%	Gender	%	Male	39%	Female	61%
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3.2	<p>Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision?</p> <p><b>Consultation has been undertaken with the Portfolio Holder.</b></p>																														
3.3	<p>If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary:</p> <p><b>EFDC are currently supported by ECC to provide telecare across the District. This support will cease following the implementation of a new County-wide contract. EFDC is not in a position to compete with ECC's offer which is likely</b></p>																														

	<p><b>to use smarter technology and provide better value for money for residents. Current EFDC telecare users will be supported through a transition and there will be tapering of EFDC's service to ensure that users do not experience a gap in provision which could affect their safety, health and wellbeing and their ability to live independently.</b></p>
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## Section 4: Impact of policy or decision

Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know.

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Age	Neutral – groups affected will be supported to ensure there is no gap in service provision that could have a detrimental impact.	L
Disability	Neutral – groups affected will be supported to ensure there is no gap in service provision that could have a detrimental impact.	L
Gender	Neutral – groups affected will be supported to ensure there is no gap in service provision that could have a detrimental impact.	L
Gender reassignment	N/A	
Marriage/civil partnership	N/A	
Pregnancy/maternity	N/A	
Race	N/A	
Religion/belief	N/A	
Sexual orientation	N/A	

## Section 5: Conclusion

		Tick Yes/No as appropriate	
5.1	Does the EqlA in Section 4 indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	No X	
		Yes	If ' <b>YES</b> ', use the action plan at <b>Section 6</b> to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.

**Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts**

<b>What are the potential adverse impacts?</b>	<b>What are the mitigating actions?</b>	<b>Date they will be achieved.</b>

**Section 7: Sign off**

**I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately.  
(A typed signature is sufficient.)**

Signature of Head of Service: Jennifer Gould

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020

Signature of person completing the EqIA: Jennifer Gould

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020**Advice**

Keep your director informed of all equality & diversity issues. We recommend that you forward a copy of every EqIA you undertake to the director responsible for the service area. Retain a copy of this EqIA for your records. If this EqIA relates to a continuing project, ensure this document is kept under review and updated, eg after a consultation has been undertaken.

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-006-2020/21

**Date of meeting:** 11 June 2020



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio:** Business Support

**Subject:** Impact of Covid19 on our Workforce

**Responsible Officer:** Paula Maginnis (01992 564536).

**Democratic Services:** Adrian Hendry (01992 564246).

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**To recognise the performance, work and effort of all our employees in supporting our residents and business community throughout the Covid19 restrictions.**

### **Executive Summary:**

The Council has continued to provide services for customers throughout the Covid19 restrictions which were put in place by the Government at the end of March. Employees have worked collaboratively supporting the multifaceted Operation Shield, supporting our business community through Business Rate Grants and being innovative in using technology to provide online resources for both customers and employees.

From 11 March a total of 98 employees have been absent from work due to Covid19, 2% were confirmed as having the infection the other 98% stayed home for a variety of self-isolating reasons (figures as at 1 June). If well, employees continued to work from home. No employees have been furloughed.

Both the People and Community Wellbeing Teams have provided a wide range of resources for mental and physical wellbeing of employees. An Employee Survey is underway, and the early messages show that employees feel valued and proud working for the Council, have enjoyed working collaboratively, working in new ways and using new technology.

The Council, working with the Trade Unions, has provided greater flexibility, where it can, on Annual Leave arrangements to enable staff and managers to plan and manage leave in a practical way over the next 2 years ensuring that service delivery can continue once restrictions are lifted.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

No decisions are required as the report sets out the impact of Covid19 on our workforce

### **Other Options for Action:**

No other options are required as the report is for noting

## **Report:**

1. The report sets out the impact of Covid19 on the Council's employees.

## **Service Provision**

2. The Council has been able to keep services running, in some cases digitally, and there has been no reason to furlough our employees. Employees have provided services using technology in a variety of ways; whether it is putting together physical activity posts on social media, exercise classes and activities for children online, group chats and online forms. They are also carrying out visits where social distancing can be achieved. Business as usual activity continues across the Council.
3. Since the 16 March there have been 11,000 additional calls handled by the Customer, Revenue and Benefits teams, illustrating the increase in customer enquiries due to Covid19. This represents a 30% increase in what is traditionally the busiest time of the year for customer contact.
4. Employees from our Revenues and Business Service Teams worked collaboratively to provide £28.7m in Business Rate grants to over 2,300 local businesses since 6 April, of which, 90% was paid within the first two weeks. This was a significant achievement supporting our business community despite the substantial increase in calls to the Revenue team at the same time. Work on a further £1.5m in Discretionary Grants will begin later in June subject to member decisions.
5. A total of 35 employees from across the authority have been redeployed to Operation Shield. The work included calls to the vulnerable list of Category A residents, welfare checks, supporting with additional calls to the Covid19 helpline, also supporting the food and distribution service. The volume of work has meant that these employees have worked on a part-time basis on Operation Shield and continued to carryout work in their Service areas. Employees have been flexible and quickly adapted to working weekends and undertaking work that they would not usually carryout.
6. Our Benefits Team are dealing with a significant rise in new claims; increasing from 150 in January to 347 in April. Significantly 80% of new claims have been made through our online forms.
7. Employees in Older Peoples Services have made nearly 4000 calls to residents including our 1350 telecare clients over the 6 weeks from 30 March. Employees are referring residents onto befriending services provided by Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF) and ensuring essential provisions including medication are provided. They have also worked in collaboration with VAEF and Food4All helping to distribute free meals every Wednesday and Friday to vulnerable residents in our sheltered schemes.
8. The Communication Team have worked with external partners, members and service areas to provide a continuous flow of useful and up-to-date information and communication to our customers and employees. The team have also led the development of virtual member meetings, providing the guidance, training and supporting members at the meetings.
9. The Council's Customer Contact Team have adapted to working in a 'remote' centre and are providing a 7-day week Covid helpline. Alongside this they have supported Essex Welfare Service and Voluntary Action Epping Forest with their Covid19 response.

10. ICT have supported the organisation implementing new technology to enable our employees to work remotely, the democratic process to function in terms of virtual public meeting, at the same time as delivering business as usual.
11. The Executive Team identified the priority projects which needed to continue during this period and Project/Work Groups are working virtually together to do this. The list of projects are as follows and are not in any order of priority;
  - Accommodation
  - Flexible and remote working
  - ICT Strategy – Infrastructure Review, Application Review, HOTH
  - New Housing & Asset Management ICT solution
  - People Strategy - Health and Wellbeing workstream
  - Qualis
  - Local Plan
12. Some recruitment is still being undertaken using virtual methods to interview and test the suitability of candidates. Also, induction is carried out on-line and managers are using Teams or Zoom to carry out one-to-one induction meetings and team meetings to introduce the new employee to colleagues, set targets and manage performance.
13. Corporate communications are still taking place with the first virtual Staff Briefing taking place on 13 May. Staff were able to interact with the meeting using 'SLIDO' to ask questions of the presenters.

#### **Absence due to Covid19**

14. As at 1 June a total of 98 employees have been absent from work due to Covid 19, approximately 2% of these have been confirmed as having the infection. The remaining 98% have self-isolated due to being in Category A or B (as identified by the Government) also those who have shown symptoms or a member of the household showing symptoms and are self-isolating following government guidance.

#### **Employee Health and Wellbeing**

15. The People and Community Wellbeing Teams have provided an extensive programme of Health and Wellbeing resources for our employees.

#### On-Line Resources – Intranet Wellbeing Hub

16. The People Team have provided a range of innovative support under the banner of 'Lets get talking' which is split into streams
  - Lets get talking
  - Resilience and Coping with Change
  - Mental Health and Wellbeing First Aid
  - Counselling Support
  - Virtual Manager – supporting managers to support their teams
  - Family and Home

The range of support and events include one-to-one virtual coaching and counselling sessions, on-line training and bite size sessions for all employees, Mental Health Training for Managers, virtual coffee breaks and a series of evening family quizzes. The Community Wellbeing Team have organised online choir sessions and exercise classes.

## Wellbeing Survey

17. Employees have been asked to provide feedback to understand how they are feeling and what they need during this time. Over 200 responses have been received so far and the initial feedback includes the following key themes;
- Employees are feeling valued and proud to work for EFDC
  - Employees are working more collaboratively to support the community and each other
  - Embracing innovation and new ways of working – staff like working with MS Teams
  - Employees are appreciative of their managers running virtual team meetings and regular 1-2-1s
  - Some employees are finding challenges with having the right equipment and furniture, also sharing space with other family members working from home or that they are home schooling
  - 91% of respondents are using all the 'Lets Keep Talking' wellness resources
  - 25% of respondents stated that their mental wellbeing is a challenge at this time
  - 33% of respondents say that they find it difficult to switch off
18. The Council is considering the feedback from the survey and updating/amending support as required. A follow up set of questions regarding IT have been circulated to employees in response to the feedback.

## Annual Leave Flexibility

19. The Council has issued a Joint Statement with Unison and GMB to encourage staff to continue to take leave during this time to maintain good health and wellbeing. However, it has been acknowledged there are a variety of challenges both personally and work-related for all, so employees and managers have been given the maximum flexibility to plan and manage leave during and after this period.
20. Following the Government temporary changes to the Working Time Regulations, the Council has introduced flexibility whereby there is no cut off for the number of annual leave days taken forward for the next 2 years coming to an end April and October 2022. However, the statutory 20 days should be taken in any leave year.
21. The Council has also formally launched a Buying/Selling Annual Leave Scheme. This allows staff to buy additional leave and to sell back untaken leave. The Scheme has been amended for Covid19 so that, employees can sell 15 days leave, (rather than 8 days), after the statutory 20 days leave has been taken.

## **Conclusion**

22. The report demonstrates our employees are working collaboratively to support our customers including our business community in a responsive and effective way in a very challenging environment. The Council is facing increasing demands on services and is providing a range of support under Operational Shield, our employees have adapted to these changes, worked outside their usual remit and are achieving excellent results.
23. Our employees have met the challenge of Covid19, embraced new ways of working and new technology which will provide a strong foundation for the Council's future ambitions.

**Resource Implications:**

£20,500 additional expenditure has been identified for the digital training resources, counselling and mentoring sessions, quiz evenings and other online resources. Finance reports will be provided to members regarding the Council's overall Covid19 additional expenditure (which includes lost income) as our costs are likely to be higher than the £1.3m government allocation.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

The Council has followed Government guidance in its response to Covid19.

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

Not applicable

**Consultation Undertaken:**

Together EFDC, Unison and GMB provided the Joint Statement on Annual Leave

**Background Papers:**

None

**Risk Management:**

The report is for noting and no risks have been identified.

**Equalities Impact Assessment**

The Council has continued to provide the range of services to our customers, some switching to digital methods. Calls have been made to those identified as most vulnerable in the district to ensure they are receiving the essentials. The Council is supporting Essex Welfare Service and Voluntary Action Epping Forest in their work across the district.

The Council has allocated government funding to our business community to support the local economy.

The Council has recognised the personal and work-related challenges employees are facing at the time and has endeavoured to be as flexible as possible for all staff.

The report does not require any decisions to be made, in any event no equality issues have been identified.

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## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-007-2020/21

**Date of meeting:** 11 June 2020



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio:** Housing and Community – Cllr H Whitbread

**Subject:** County-led homelessness recovery plan

**Responsible Officer:** Jennifer Gould (01992 564703)

**Democratic Services:** Adrian Hendry (01992 564246)

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**Cabinet are asked to note the County-led post Covid-19 homelessness recovery planning that has taken place to date and approve the progression of EFDC's involvement in the drafting of a plan.**

### **Executive Summary:**

Local housing authorities face a potential surge in homelessness presentations once Covid-19 lockdown restrictions are lifted. The surge is likely to come in a series of 'spikes' for different cohorts of people experiencing homelessness for different reasons followed by a sustained increase in homelessness as the economic repercussions of Covid-19 are felt.

Whilst the impact will vary in intensity and timescale across the different Districts and Unitary Authorities in Essex, the challenges are likely to be broadly the same.

Consequently, the Essex Resilience Forum (ERF), in conjunction with Essex Housing Officers Group (EHOG), commissioned Essex County Council (ECC) to review the current position in relation to both rough sleepers and homelessness and consider the development of recovery plans and/or strategies to support measures that seek to mitigate the impact of additional pressures on homelessness services and the use of temporary accommodation as far as possible.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

For EFDC to benefit from the oversight of ECC in reviewing the current homelessness position across Essex; to, with an Essex collective, make more robust representations to MHCLG and Homes England on any agreed policy asks to support recovery; through partnership working seek to secure a more coherent support offer from ECC for the benefit of Epping residents.

### **Other Options for Action:**

Not to approve the progression of EFDC's involvement in the drafting of a plan and to progress homelessness recovery planning in isolation.

## Report:

1. Government introduced several policy changes within the homelessness arena to support lockdown. These policy changes included:
  - Everyone In: accommodating all known rough sleepers on a temporary basis for the lockdown duration; and
  - Measures to abate activities that lead to homelessness with a moratorium on evictions until the end of June
2. EFDC, like other districts across the County, has experienced a lull in homelessness presentations with a slight decrease in numbers presenting throughout the period of lockdown. A survey of (Greater) Essex local authorities, conducted by ECC, found a consensus that demand for homelessness services is likely to increase once lockdown is lifted and remain high for a considerable time after that.
3. Immediate impact is likely to come from those fleeing domestic abuse and friend/family evictions with a lag of 3-6 months on presentations as a result of an assured shorthold tenancy ending. In the longer-term economic challenges such as unemployment are likely to have an impact across all tenures, increasing presentations resulting in a strain on homelessness services and temporary accommodation with a corresponding financial implication.
4. While the levels of demand will differ across the districts in Essex the issues will broadly be similar. ECC's Housing Growth Team has reviewed the homelessness and rough sleeper position across the different local authorities in Greater Essex and using the partnership framework already provided by EHO, is looking to progress a recovery plan focussed on practical actions and policy recommendations.
5. The work will provide a basis on which EFDC can appropriately update the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (statutory document); strengthen EFDC's voice as part of a collective to lobby for central policy changes (if recommended and agreed); harness a more coherent support offer for residents and potentially enable positive protection of local housing market for local people.
6. Ratification of any plan is likely to progress through the Chief Executives Group followed by individual local council governance structures.

## Resource Implications:

None

## Legal and Governance Implications:

Ratification of any plan will be sought through the appropriate Council governance structure.

## Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

The Council has a statutory responsibility to prevent and relieve homelessness latterly strengthened by the *Everyone In* initiative as a result of the current public health emergency. EFDC's response to a potential surge in homelessness will need to be robust to minimise any further/ongoing risk to public health.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

Consultation is being sought with the Housing and Property Portfolio Holder.

**Background Papers:**

None

**Risk Management:**

Agreement on any plan will be sought at the appropriate levels ahead of any adoption.

**Equality Analysis:**

The Equality Act 2010 requires that the Public Sector Equality Duty is actively applied in decision-making. This means that the equality information provided to accompany this report is essential reading for all members involved in the consideration of this report. The equality information is provided as an Appendix to this report.

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## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-008-2020/21  
**Date of meeting:** 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio:** Customer & Corporate Support – Cllr. S Kane  
**Subject:** Business Grants Top-Up – Discretionary Policy  
**Responsible Officer:** Rob Pavey (01992 564211 ).  
**Democratic Services:** Adrian Hendry (01992 564246).

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**To approve the Discretionary Top-Up Policy for the issuing of Business Grants attached as Appendix 1.**

### **Executive Summary:**

The report is asking Cabinet to approve a Discretionary Top-Up Policy for the issuing of Business Grants for those businesses who have suffered financial losses since the Covid-19 lockdown and have not this far received financial support. The Policy follows Government guidance on where the priorities for awarding grants should be and allows authorities an element of discretion on other property types within its local area, The allocation for the scheme is a maximum of £1.49m for the district and is funded through s31 grant from Government.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

To enable the Council to issue grants to qualifying businesses due to the effects of Covid-19

### **Other Options for Action:**

- 1 To vary the terms of the Discretionary Policy;
- 2 To not issue the Discretionary Policy.

### **Report:**

1. Since the outbreak of Covid-19 the Government has announced a range of measures to support businesses during this period. The Council has already granted around £29m to 2,500 businesses who qualified for payments under the Small Business Grant scheme and the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Schemes. There were however a number of businesses who fell outside this scheme that the Government wishes to support, and the Government has also given Councils discretion to issue grants to businesses according to its own priorities.
2. The funding envelope for the Top-Up scheme is 5% of the original funding allocation provided by Government for the Small Business and Retail Schemes. This original allocation was £29.77m and therefore the budget available for this Discretionary Policy is £1.49m. The scheme cannot exceed this amount and the Government will be

undertaking sample checks to the grants that have been awarded. Funding for the scheme will be covered by s31 grants from Government. Grants can be awarded at levels of £25,000, £10,000 or amounts up to £10,000.

3. The Government's aim with the Top-Up scheme is to target support to those businesses who have received little or no support during the Covid lockdown period thus far. The Policy therefore excludes businesses that have already received the support laid out in the policy (Appendix 1) and as stated previously these include those businesses who have already received the Small Business and Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grants.

4 As with the Grants that were applied under the Small Business and Retail schemes the Top-Up Policy requires the business to have been trading on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020. The Government is asking Councils to prioritise funding on:

- **Small businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces.** Examples could include units in industrial parks, science parks and incubators which do not have their own business rates assessment;
- **Regular market traders with fixed property costs**, such as rent, who do not have their own business rates assessment eg. indoor markets;
- **Bed & Breakfasts** which pay Council Tax instead of business rates; and
- **Charity properties** in receipt of charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief.

5 The grants are aimed at:

- **Small and micro businesses**, as defined in Section 33 Part 2 of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 and the Companies Act 2006. (These are defined in the attached policy)
- Businesses with relatively **high ongoing fixed property-related costs**
- Businesses which can demonstrate that they have suffered a **significant fall in income due to the COVID-19 crisis**
- Businesses which **occupy** property, or part of a property, with a **rateable value or annual rent or annual mortgage payments below £51,000.**

6 The list set out above is not intended to be exhaustive but is intended to guide local authorities as to the types of business that the government considers should be a priority for the scheme. Authorities should determine for themselves whether particular situations not listed are broadly similar in nature to those above and, if so, whether they should be eligible for grants from this discretionary fund. There will be no penalty for local authorities because of their use of discretion to prioritise some business types

9 However, key priorities for the scheme are those businesses that will not necessarily be known to the Council, such as those in shared office arrangements and consequently their number is unknown. The ratepayer in these circumstances will ordinarily be the owner or head lessee of the building. This area presents the biggest challenge in estimating the potential cost of any proposals. Clearly, the higher the amounts of individual grants awarded the fewer that can be awarded. If grants of

£25,000 were awarded 60 businesses would be paid, if grants of £10,000 were awarded then around 150 could be awarded but if £5,000 were awarded under the scheme then around 300 businesses could benefit. It is recommended that £5,000 is awarded to all qualifying businesses to maximise its spread.

- 10 From an analysis of Business Rates records there are 4 bed and breakfast establishments in the Council Tax list which could potentially receive a grant. In addition, it is estimated that there are 20 Charities that could also benefit from the relief. There are also a number of shared business environments already identified but the number of businesses within them are unknown at present.
- 11 There are of course a number of other businesses who the Council is aware that they have rateable values below £51,000 and have not received a Business Grant. From these businesses there are rating assessments that have been excluded including advertising rights, ATMs and properties occupied by public bodies who are entitled to receive discretionary relief. These properties total 1,100 so clear priorities need to be set. In terms of the types of properties these relate to offices, workshops and warehouses.
- 12 The following are recommendations where Members may wish to issue grants, other than the Government's intended priorities. These are built from feedback from those businesses who have not received a grant and are likely to have been excluded from the Government's original calculations based on property descriptions. There is also the potential to include areas of the business sector that would focus on the highest potential for long-term viability such as business incubations. It needs to be recognised that with the limited funding the spend needs to be focussed on particular areas.
  - a) Events, hospitality or leisure businesses that require premises for storage of goods or equipment and the occupying business has not received a Business Grant relating to another business property;
  - b) Properties not described as 'shop and premises' or similar within the rating list but undertake retail sales open to the public at the premises.
  - c) Business operating in an incubation environment and who are the ratepayer of the premises.
- 13 The Government acknowledges that local authorities will need to run some form of application process as the potential beneficiaries are highly unlikely to be known directly by the local authorities. This will allow local authorities to undertake proportionate pre-payment checks to confirm eligibility relative to their local scheme and to allow each local authority to determine how to use its discretion in relation to the appropriate level of grant. Prepayment checks must include confirming that by accepting payments recipients are in compliance with State aid rules. An electronic form will be available for applicants to complete
- 14 Weekly reporting will commence in June and Govt will also sample check our awards to ensure compliance with the mandatory awards and the types of awards we are making under our discretion.

**Resource Implications:**

The cost of any Grants awarded will be offset by s31 Government Grant.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

This policy forms part of the Council's Discretionary Rate Policy under s47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

None

**Consultation Undertaken:**

None

**Background Papers:**

Guidance paper issued by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy – Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund

**Risk Management:**

The policy is intended to support businesses who may be experiencing financial difficulties due to the Covid lockdown and is aimed at reducing the risk to the local economy

# Equality Impact Assessment

1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Epping District Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, ie have due regard to:
  - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
  - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
  - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
  - age
  - disability
  - gender
  - gender reassignment
  - marriage/civil partnership
  - pregnancy/maternity
  - race
  - religion/belief
  - sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy or change.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. All **Cabinet, Council, and Portfolio Holder reports must be accompanied by an EqIA**. An EqIA should also be completed/reviewed at key stages of projects.
8. To assist you in completing this report, please ensure you read the guidance notes in the Equality Analysis Toolkit and refer to the following Factsheets:
  - Factsheet 1: Equality Profile of the Epping Forest District
  - Factsheet 2: Sources of information about equality protected characteristics
  - Factsheet 3: Glossary of equality related terms
  - Factsheet 4: Common misunderstandings about the Equality Duty
  - Factsheet 5: Frequently asked questions
  - Factsheet 6: Reporting equality analysis to a committee or other decision making body

## Section 1: Identifying details

Your function, service area and team: Customer

If you are submitting this EqIA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team:

Title of policy or decision: Discretionary Policy – Top-Up Business Grants

Officer completing the EqIA: Tel: 4211 Email: rpavey@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Date of completing the assessment: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020

## Section 2: Policy to be analysed

2.1	Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project? New
2.2	Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision): To provide financial support to businesses during the Covid period  What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)? The award of grants to qualifying businesses
2.3	Does or will the policy or decision affect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• service users</li><li>• employees</li><li>• the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities?</li></ul> It will affect small businesses in our community  Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate? Financial support
2.4	Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources? Grants funded by Government
2.5	Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes? Supporting the local economy

### **Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation<sup>1</sup>**

As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, eg service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).

3.1	What does the information tell you about those groups identified?  Businesses need financial support during the Covid lockdown period.
3.2	Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision? Feedback obtained from businesses during Covid period
3.3	If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary: Consultation would delay payments to intended recipients

## Section 4: Impact of policy or decision

Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know.

<b>Description of impact</b>	<b>Nature of impact</b> Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	<b>Extent of impact</b> Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Age	N	L
Disability	N	L
Gender	N	L
Gender reassignment	N	L
Marriage/civil partnership	N	L
Pregnancy/maternity	N	L
Race	N	L
Religion/belief	N	L
Sexual orientation	N	L

## Section 5: Conclusion

		Tick Yes/No as appropriate	
5.1	Does the EqIA in Section 4 indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	No X	
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	If ' <b>YES</b> ', use the action plan at <b>Section 6</b> to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.

## Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

What are the potential adverse impacts?	What are the mitigating actions?	Date they will be achieved.

**Section 7: Sign off**

**I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately.  
(A typed signature is sufficient.)**

Signature of Head of Service:

Date:

Signature of person completing the EqIA: Rob Pavey

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020**Advice**

Keep your director informed of all equality & diversity issues. We recommend that you forward a copy of every EqIA you undertake to the director responsible for the service area. Retain a copy of this EqIA for your records. If this EqIA relates to a continuing project, ensure this document is kept under review and updated, eg after a consultation has been undertaken.

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## Appendix 1

### Discretionary Relief Policy for Top-Up Business Grants

This policy is aimed at supporting the intentions of the Government's response to the Covid crisis and also supports the aims of the Council in supporting the local economy. Key initial points are that:

- a) The Grants paid will be at a level of £5,000.
- b) The business must have been trading from the business premises on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

#### Beneficiaries of the Scheme

1 These grants are primarily and predominantly aimed at:

- **Small and micro businesses**, as defined in Section 33 Part 2 of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 and the Companies Act 2006.
- Businesses with relatively **high ongoing fixed property-related costs**
- Businesses which can demonstrate that they have suffered a **significant fall in income due to the COVID-19 crisis**
- Businesses which **occupy** property, or part of a property, with a **rateable value or annual rent or annual mortgage payments below £51,000**.

2 To be a **small business**, under the Companies Act 2006, a business must satisfy two or more of the following requirements in a year—

- Turnover: Not more than £10.2 million
- Balance sheet total: Not more than 5.1 million
- Number of employees: a headcount of staff of less than 50

3 To be **micro business**, under the Companies Act 2006, a business must satisfy two or more of the following requirements—

- Turnover: Not more than £632,000
- Balance sheet total: Not more than £316,000
- Number of employees: a headcount of staff of not more than 10

4. The following types of businesses are prioritised for grants from within this funding pot:

- **Small businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces**. Examples could include units in industrial parks, science parks and incubators which do not have their own business rates assessment;
- **Regular market traders with fixed property costs**, such as rent, who do not have their own business rates assessment;
- **Bed & Breakfasts** which pay Council Tax instead of business rates; and
- **Charity properties** in receipt of charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief.

5 The Council also wishes to support the following types of business within this policy:

- a) Events, hospitality or leisure businesses that require premises for storage of goods or equipment and the occupying business has not received a Business Grant relating to another business property;

- b) Properties not described as 'shop and premises' or similar within the rating list but undertake retail sales open to the public at the premises.
- c) Business operating in an incubation environment and who are the ratepayer of the premises.

### **Those not eligible for the Grant payments**

6 This grant funding is for businesses that are not eligible for other support schemes. Businesses which have received cash grants from any central government COVID-related scheme are ineligible for funding from the Discretionary Grants Fund. Such grant schemes include but are not limited to:

- Small Business Grant Fund
- Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant
- The Fisheries Response Fund
- Domestic Seafood Supply Scheme (DSSS).
- The Zoos Support Fund
- The Dairy Hardship Fund

Businesses who have applied for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme are eligible to apply for this scheme.

Companies that are in administration, are insolvent or where a striking-off notice has been made are not eligible for funding under this scheme.

### **Application Process**

7 Businesses may apply for the Grant payments using the form available on the Council's website (insert link). The Council may undertake proportionate pre-payment checks to confirm eligibility to the scheme. By accepting payments recipients of the Grant confirm that by doing so they are in compliance with State Aid rules.