

Community impact assessments – for services, policies and projects

What is a community impact assessment?

A community impact assessment is an important part of our commitment to delivering better services for our communities. The form will help us find out what impact or consequences our functions, policies, procedures and projects have on our communities, as well as employees and potential employees.

By undertaking an impact assessment, we are able to:

- Take into account the needs, experiences and circumstances of those groups of people who use (or don't / can't use) our services.
- Identify any inequalities people may experience.
- Think about the other ways in which we can deliver our services which will not lead to inequalities.
- Develop better policy-making, procedures and services.

Background

Name of service / policy / project and date	Discretionary Power to Accommodate Rough Sleepers with little or no support needs
Lead officer	Martin Stacy, Lead Commissioner Housing Services and Waste
Other people involved in completing this form	This assessment has been completed in consultation with Paul Tuckey, Housing Options Manager, Cheltenham Borough Homes.

Step 1 - About the service / policy / project

What is the aim of the service / policy / project and what outcomes is it contributing to	The aim of this service is to extend the range of housing options for rough sleepers with little or no support needs, by making available for them the use of temporary accommodation
Who are the primary customers of the service / policy / project and how do they / will they benefit	Rough sleepers with little or no support needs will potentially benefit from the provision of accommodation.
How and where is the service / policy / project implemented	The services will be implemented through the council's Housing Options Service, which is managed on the council's behalf by Cheltenham Borough Homes.
What potential barriers might already exist to achieving these outcomes	Lack of knowledge amongst rough sleepers and agencies that the council is piloting the use of its discretionary power to accommodate rough sleepers in temporary accommodation. We will seek to overcome this by ensuring that the Housing Options Team and the council communicate the implementation of this initiative through relevant channels, including Cheltenham's Housing and Support Forum, which is made up of a wide range of housing and support agencies across Cheltenham.

Step 2 – What do you know already about your existing / potential customers

What existing information and data do you have about your existing / potential customers e.g. Statistics, customer feedback, performance information	Assertive Outreach Services (currently P3, and previously Cheltenham Housing Aid Centre) estimate that approximately 10-15% of rough sleepers have little or no support needs. The number of rough sleepers presenting to the Assertive Outreach service (CHAC) over the two year period to the end of December 2016 was 37 in the first year and 38 in the second. This suggests that the number of rough sleepers who will present to the Housing Options Service with little or no needs is likely to be around 4-6/year. However, given that this is only an estimate of need, it is appropriate to pilot this initiative for a period of six months in order to fully consider any unanticipated impacts arising as a result of the council's decision to use its discretionary power.
What does it tell you about who uses your service / policy and those that don't?	Rough sleepers with little or no support needs are currently entitled to receive advice and assistance from the Housing Options service in helping them to find accommodation for themselves. Whilst some rough sleepers with little or no needs can and do find their own accommodation in this way, there is a risk that if they fail to do this quickly, then they may slip into a downward spiral of increasing support needs. It is with this in mind that the council wishes to take preventative action and to invoke our power to accommodate rough sleepers who are not in priority need and who are not intentionally homeless.
What have you learnt about real barriers to your service from any consultation with customers and any stakeholder groups?	An understanding about the potential gaps in service has been highlighted during the monitoring of CHAC's delivery of the council's assertive outreach service. The focus of the assertive outreach service to get rough sleepers to engage with mainstream services again and ultimately to get them back on the pathway to independent living. Most rough sleepers have support needs and are able to access accommodation-based support, but for those without support needs their housing options are fewer as they have no automatic right to



CHEL TENHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

	accommodation.
If not, who do you have plans to consult with about the service / policy / project?	See above

Step 3 - Assessing community impact

How does your service / policy / project impact on different groups in the community?

Group	What are you already doing to benefit this group	What are you doing that might disadvantage this group	What could you do differently to benefit this group	No impact on this group
People from black and minority ethnic groups	Tailored housing advice and assistance will be given. Should accommodation be offered, this will seek to take account of individual needs.	The provision of accommodation for rough sleepers with little or no support needs may place additional pressures on our existing supply of temporary accommodation, with the result that other households may have to wait longer for suitable housing, or be housed in less suitable conditions in the short term. However, estimates of need from rough sleepers with little or no support requirements are understood to be relatively low. Furthermore, any impact arising from the provision of accommodation for rough sleepers will be monitored as part of a 6 month pilot before a final decision is taken over whether or not to use this discretionary power for the longer term.	n/a – housing advice and assistance is tailored to meet the needs of the individual.	n/a
Gender	As above	As above	As above	n/a
Gender Reassignment	As above	As above	As above	n/a

Older people / children and young people	As above	As above, with the addition that for families, priority will continue to be given to homeless families with dependent children when allocating households into the council's own supply of temporary accommodation. (Regulations require the council should not accommodate families in B&B for more than 6 weeks, so alternative temporary accommodation needs to be available).	As above	n/a
People with disabilities and mental health challenges	As above	As for the top entry	As above	n/a
Religion or belief	As above	As for the top entry	As above	n/a
Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual people	As above	As for the top entry	As above	n/a
Marriage and Civil Partnership	As above	As for the top entry	As above	n/a
Pregnancy & Maternity	As above	As for the top entry, with the addition that priority will continue to be given to those who are pregnant when allocating households into the council's own supply of temporary accommodation.	As above	n/a
Other groups or communities	As above	As for the top entry	As above	n/a

Step 4 - what are the differences

Are any groups affected in different ways to others as a result of the service / policy / project?	Rough sleepers who are not in priority need will benefit from the council's use of its discretionary power to accommodate, whereas households who are homeless (e.g. those who are living in insecure accommodation and who are not rough sleeping) will be advised and assisted in the normal way (i.e. in line with the council's statutory duties).
Does your service / policy / project either directly or indirectly discriminate?	The use of this discretionary power, whilst benefiting rough sleepers with little or no needs, will put additional pressure on the existing supply of temporary accommodation, with the result that other households who are entitled to assistance may have to wait longer for alternative accommodation.
If yes, what can be done to improve this?	Whilst it is estimated that the impact will be fairly minimal, it is appropriate to pilot this initiative for an initial 6 months and then to take a decision about how appropriate it is to continue with the initiative once more detailed intelligence about impacts are known.
Are there any other ways in which the service / project can help support priority communities in Cheltenham?	Efforts will be made to house rough sleepers through other means, such as the private rented sector, in order than any potential impact on the supply of the council's temporary accommodation is minimised.

Step 5 – taking things forward

What are the key actions to be carried out and how will they be resourced and monitored?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication of the outcome of the decision to housing options team and all relevant agencies dealing with rough sleepers. This will be done through a variety of mechanisms, including via Cheltenham's Housing and Support Forum, which is a partnership of advice and support providers. • Ensuring advice and assistance to rough sleepers capture what has been approved by cabinet. In providing this advice, Housing Options team must have regard to the risks and activities detailed with the risk register at appendix 1 of the cabinet report. • An understanding of outcomes, outputs and resource implications arising from the implementation of this initiative will need to be agreed and monitored throughout this six month pilot.
Who will play a role in the decision-making process?	Cheltenham Borough Homes' Housing Options Manager and the council's Lead-Commissioner – Housing Services will consider the outcomes, outputs and resource implications; and these will be used to inform the Cabinet Member – Housing's decision over whether to continue with the initiative at the end of the six month pilot.
What are your / the project's learning and development needs?	Whilst an estimate of need is understood, consideration will need to be given to any actual impact on resources during the running of this pilot.
How will you capture these actions in your service / project planning?	Implementation of this initiative and the monitoring of outcomes, etc. will be captured as part of the regular Housing Options liaison meetings between the council and Cheltenham Borough Homes.