

# South Cambridgeshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

## Introduction – Please read

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) allow the Council to:

- Show that the Council are meeting its legal duty, demonstrating due regard for the provisions of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) as below:
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
  - Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
  - Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Methodically consider and assess the impacts of proposals across the [nine protected characteristics](#)
- Allow the Council to develop and implement high quality proposals that maximise positive outcomes for all.

EqIAs should be completed during the development and review of all Council policies, strategies, procedures, projects or functions. Where there is any doubt, the completion of an EqIA is always recommended.

When the form is completed, please send an electronic copy to [equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk). Further support and guidance available on Insite or contact the Policy and Performance Team.

# Equality Impact Assessment Complete Form

## Section 1: Identifying Details

- 1.1 Officer completing EqIA:  
Chris Riches
- 1.2 Team and Service:  
Communities
- 1.3 Title of proposal:  
Cost of Living support
- 1.4 EqIA start date:  
01/04/2023
- 1.5 Proposal implementation date:  
01/04/2023
- 1.6 Who will be responsible for implementing this proposal (Officer and/or Team):  
Chris Riches & Lesley McFarlane

## Section 2: Proposal to be Assessed

- 2.1 Type of proposal:  
Project  
If other, please specify  
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- 2.2 Is the proposal:  
Review of existing
- 2.3 State the date of any previous equality impact assessment completed in relation to this proposal (if applicable):  
01/09/2022

2.4 What are the headline aims of the proposal and the objectives that will help to accomplish these aims? (Max 250 words)

To support residents with the rising cost of living. The project will aim to increase access to affordable food, provide emergency and ongoing financial support, and provide support for high energy bills.

The project will increase access to affordable food through improving coordination between our network of foodbanks, setting up a sustainable food network to ensure a more constant supply of fresh produce to our network of foodbanks, and commissioning a 'Mobile Foodhub'.

The project will provide emergency and ongoing financial support by supporting residents accessing cash grants, providing residents with further information and referrals to Citizen's Advice and our Income Maximisation Officer, and increasing awareness, through online and printed resources, of Council Tax support available from the Council.

The project will provide support for high energy bills by supplying vulnerable residents with a free electric blanket in time for next winter, and providing access to top up voucher for those on prepayment meters. We will also evolve Warm Hubs into Community Hubs to provide a similar service, but all year round.

The project will be completed in coordination with our partners in the NHS, County Council, and Voluntary Sector.

2.5 Which of the Council's equality objectives (as detailed in the Council's Equality Scheme) does this proposal link to or help to achieve?

Identify, prioritise and deliver actions that will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community

- SCDC is an employer that values difference and recognises the strength that a diverse workforce brings.
- Protected characteristic groups have a voice and are represented in forming the future shape of the district.
- None.

2.6 Which groups or individuals will the proposal affect:

- Service Users
- External Stakeholders
- Employees
- Councillors
- Other

If other, please specify [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

2.7 Broadly speaking, how will these groups or individuals be affected? (you will be asked to provide more detail on the specific impacts on different protected characteristic groups later in the form) (max 250 words)

According to research undertaken by the ONS, the price of consumer goods and services rose at the fastest rate in four decades in the year to October 2022. Although the rate at which prices are increasing fell to 7.8% in the 12 months to April 2023, wages have not risen at the same rate as inflation, leaving many relatively poorer than they were two years ago.

Although overall inflation sits at 7.8%, food inflation is currently at 19.1%, and gas price inflation is at 36.2% in the year to April 2023. This has led to 49% of British adults using less fuel in their homes due to the price increase, and 48% of British adults buying less food when shopping due to price increases (ONS, 2023).

This has consequences not only on the quality of life of our residents, but also their health and wellbeing, as poor diets and cold homes can often lead to further pressures on our health service. Therefore, this project will aim to ease

the effects of food and energy price inflation to ensure their health and wellbeing does not significantly diminish.

- 2.8 If any part of the proposal is being undertaken by external partners, please specify how the Council will ensure that they will meet equality standards?  
(Max 250 words)

The project will work in partnership with the County Council, NHS, and the Voluntary Sector, although led by SCDC. Any significant projects will need to adhere to our procurement legislation and meet stringent standards on their equality policies. Furthermore, statutory organisations such as the NHS and the County Council will have their own equality standards similar to that of SCDC.

### Section 3: Evidence and Data

- 3.1 Describe any work you have done (this could include consultation) to understand any effects on groups of people, including those within [9 protected characteristic groups](#)? Please list any key sources (e.g. web-search, previous versions of document, customer feedback etc) that you used to reach your conclusions.  
(Max 250 words)

Since the end of 2022, we have been undertaking Appreciative Enquiry sessions with residents attending our Warm Hubs to better understand what aspects of the cost-of-living crisis they are struggling with most. In addition to this, we regularly assess data sets available to us to understand what the data is telling us about issues residents are facing. For example, the ONS provides a regularly updated data set on issues that are affecting British people through the cost of living crisis linked [here](#). Additionally, we have access to local data from Cambridge CAB allowing us to understand fully local issues, and also to see the effect the cost of living crisis is having on some of the

different protected characteristic groups (age, disability, race, and sex). The local data is linked [here](#).

3.2 If you have not undertaken any consultation, please detail why not, or when consultation is planned to take place.

(Max 250)

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

## Section 4: Impact of proposal on those with protected characteristics

4.1 Please select all characteristics that may or will be impacted (positive or negative). When providing details of the impact please consider the following questions

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. (both the number of persons affected and the severity of the impact)
- you will be asked to set out actions to manage these impacts in the following question (4.2)

All - general to all protected Characteristics.

Details: Neutral across all age ranges. Impacts will differ based on income vs outgoings.

Age

Details: elderly and children under the age of 2 most negatively impacted by cold homes and experience poorer health outcomes. The continued delivery of warm hubs (evolving into community hubs), neighbourly signposting and support, and provision of electric blankets over winter will have a positive, high impact. For example, rather than staying at home in a cold house they will have the option of going to a community hub during the day, or able to use their electric blanket that costs considerably less than central heating to run. This will enable them to save on



fuel as they won't have to have their own heating on during the day. Or neighbourly signposting will direct people who don't have access (or don't want to attend a hub) to sources of financial support via benefits or grants, foodbanks and home energy support.

Disability

Details: The cost of living crisis is already disproportionately affecting those with long term health conditions and disabilities. According to local CAB data, 76 disabled people were supported with a foodbank referral or charitable support in April 2023, compared to 41 able-bodied people, even though able-bodied people make up over 80% of the UK population (ONS, 2021). Increasing access to affordable food, and the delivery of community hubs will have a positive, high impact. For example, as outlined previously, those with disabilities are at increased risk of having to access support from a foodbank. By increasing access to affordable food, through creating a sustainable food network and commissioning a mobile foodbank to service a number of villages, this ensures this support is available to more people.

Gender reassignment

Details: Neutral impact

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Details: Neutral impacts

Pregnancy and maternity

Details: Children under the age of 2 experience poorer health outcomes from cold homes and poor nutrition. The continued delivery of community hubs, and neighbourly signposting and support will have a positive, high impact. As per above section 1 rather than staying at home in a cold house mothers and their babies will have the option of going to a community hub during the day, to help save on fuel as they won't have to have their own heating on during the day and have access to a whole raft of support on a range of financial issues. Additionally, increased access to food will ensure children and pregnant women receive adequate diets so as to increase their health outcomes.

Race



Details: Negative, low impact as less likely to engage with health or community help and may go undetected. Gypsy, Roma, Traveller populations are the largest ethnic minority in South Cambridgeshire. Efforts will be made to engage with smaller ethnic minority groups such as South Asian communities where barriers and timely access to services is often an issue faced by BAME communities

Religion and belief

Details: Neutral impacts

Sex

Details: Neutral impacts. Women as the main carers for young children and most likely to be at home during the day. In the context of this project, women as mothers or care givers are targeted rather than women per se. Men are often underrepresented in those accessing support and so work will be undertaken as how to better target this support so that men are accessing support available.

Sexual orientation

Details: Neutral impacts

Other (socio economic, rural isolation, covid)

Details Out of work or low income and already struggling to meet bills; rurally isolated and reliant on oil for heat and cost of fuel/diesel. Positive, high impacts

None of the above

4.2 Considering the above impacts you have identified above, please detail any actions (specific or general) which may help to enhance or mitigate impacts.

Please include the timescale for completing the action.

Action and timescale	Officer
Continued and updated identification of most vulnerable; using UC data, assisted bin collection, free school meal take up, and census data. April-June 2023	Chris Riches
Provision of printed and online material to distribute at Community Hubs and foodbanks. May-June 2023	Chris Riches

Identify key target areas for support based off data we have available. May 2023

Chris Riches

4.3 How will you monitor that the above actions have been completed and that this proposal, once implemented, is impacting fairly on everyone it affects? In answering this question, please include information about feedback you will seek and/or data you will collect and analyse, and how often you will do this

Monitor and keep record of engagement events and list outcomes/suggestions.

Create feedback to keep all those involved of outcomes.

Procure the delivery of Community Hubs and Mobile Foodhub via Voluntary Sector deliver and build evaluation into the project specification.

Monitor and keep record of communities which provide other cost of living responses not provided as part of the Council's project.

An update report is expected to be presented to Cabinet every 6 months.

## Section 5: Summary

5.1 Briefly summarise the key findings of the EqIA and any significant equality considerations that should be taken into account when deciding how to proceed with the proposal (this section can be included within the 'equality implications' section of any committee reports). (Max. 250 words)

This EqIA has identified many of the impacts of this project on the different protected characteristic groups. On the whole this work is seen to be having a significant positive impact to a number of protected characteristic groups. The cost of living crisis has been proven to disproportionately affect protected characteristic groups and so any project that can ease the cost of living crisis will have positive impacts on this.

5.2 Confirm the recommendation of the officer completing the EqIA:

Proceed with the proposal (with any actions identified as required within Section 4 of the EqIA). Analysis demonstrates that the proposal is robust, we have taken all appropriate opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations between groups.

Reject the proposal: Analysis demonstrates that the proposal will cause unlawful discrimination and it must be removed or changed

## Section 6: Sign Off

6.1 Signature of individual completing EqIA:

Chris Riches

6.2 Date of completion:

31/05/2023

6.3 When will this proposal next be reviewed and who will this be? (when in doubt 3 years minimum)

2 years by Cost of Living Project Officer

6.4 Approving officer signature \*, this should be your Head of Service, Service Area Manager, or Project Sponsor:



6.5 Date of approval:

15/06/2023

Please send the completed document to [Equality.Schemes@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:Equality.Schemes@scambs.gov.uk) for publishing on the website.

*\*in the event that this EqIA is completed by Head of Service, then no additional approving signature is required.*