

**Chelmsford City Council
Equality Impact Assessment**

This form enables an assessment of the impact a policy, strategy or activity on customers and employees.

A: Assessor Details	
Name of policy / function(s):	Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) - Revised Strategy 2026 - Update to strategy scope, mitigation package, cost modelling and RAMS tariff.
Officer(s) completing this assessment:	Leanne Brisland, RAMS Delivery Manager
Date of assessment:	14/4/2026

B: Summary Details	
Description of policy, strategy or activity and what it is aiming to do	<p>The Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) provides a strategic, partnership-based approach to mitigating the in-combination recreational impacts of residential and overnight accommodation development on internationally designated European sites along the Essex coastline.</p> <p>The strategy enables Local Planning Authorities, including Chelmsford City Council, to meet their statutory duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) when permitting development, by securing developer contributions towards a coordinated package of mitigation measures.</p> <p>The Revised Essex Coast RAMS (March 2026) replaces the previous 2018 strategy and responds to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated visitor survey evidence (2025); • Significantly increased planned housing growth (c. 148,309 dwellings) within the Zone of Influence; • An expanded and more intensive package of Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) measures, based on improved understanding of recreational impacts

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	<p>and behaviours;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to secure strategic mitigation in perpetuity. <p>The revised strategy strengthens and expands the mitigation measures, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A substantially expanded on-site ranger team, who undertake wardening, monitoring and visitor engagement; • Dedicated roles for dog engagement, education, communications and monitoring; • Enhanced site-specific mitigation projects, including access management • Long-term monitoring and five-yearly strategy reviews. <p>To fund this enhanced and longer-term mitigation package, the RAMS tariff increases from £175.55 to £475.70 per net new dwelling, calculated using updated cost estimates and projected housing growth, and adjusted to include in-perpetuity delivery costs.</p> <p>The strategy enables Local Planning Authorities, including Chelmsford City Council, to continue permitting development lawfully, while ensuring no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites under the Habitats Regulations.</p> <p>✓ Existing (<i>If existing, when was the last assessment?</i>) - Not applicable / New EqIA for Essex Coast RAMS</p> <p>✓ External - Public-facing, applies to developers and the wider community</p> <p>✓ Statutory (required to support Habitats Regulations compliance)</p>
<p>Policy Owner (service)</p>	<p>Planning Policy / Strategic Planning (on behalf of the Essex Coast RAMS Partnership)</p>
<p>Scope: Internal - Service/Directorate/Council wide External – specify community groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal: Council-wide (planning decision-making) • External: Developers, residents within new developments, visitors to the Essex coast, local communities, land managers

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C: Assessment of impact

Using the information above, assess if the policy / function could potentially disproportionately impact on different protected groups. Specify if the potential impact is positive, could adversely impact or if there is no impact. If an adverse impact, indicate how the impact will be mitigated.

Please note any data used in the impact assessment should be anonymised and with due regard given to data privacy in line with GDPR.

Overall assessment: *no unlawful discrimination identified. Some potential indirect impacts are mitigated through policy design and delivery.*

Characteristic	Positive impact	Could adversely impact	No impact	How different groups could be affected	Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact
Age What will the impact be on different age groups such as younger or older people?	X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access management, signage, ranger presence and education initiatives benefit people of all ages. Funding for education and engagement (including schools) provides positive intergenerational benefits. Educational outreach supports younger people, while clearer routes and safer site management can benefit older users. <p>The tariff applies to development proposals rather than individuals directly and does not discriminate by age.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue age-appropriate engagement materials. Maintain inclusive design of access infrastructure.

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<p>Disability Consider all disabilities such as hearing loss, dyslexia etc as well as access issues for wheelchair users where appropriate</p>		X		<p>Potential indirect impact if unmanaged: Some site-specific mitigation measures (e.g. fencing, path changes) could unintentionally restrict access for disabled users if not designed carefully.</p> <p>The tariff increase itself does not directly impact disabled people but could indirectly affect the type or pace of development delivered.</p> <p>Accessibility of the RAMS strategy</p>	<p>Ensure inclusive access principles are considered in site-specific mitigation; use ranger feedback and monitoring to identify and address access issues.</p> <p>Ensure that the document meets accessibility standards and can be made available in other formats.</p>
<p>Pregnancy and maternity Pregnant women and new and breastfeeding Mums</p>			X	<p>Improved visitor management, clearer routes and safer, better managed coastal environments benefit pregnant women and people visiting sites with young children.</p>	<p>None required.</p>
<p>Marriage or Civil Partnership Could this policy discriminate on the grounds of marriage or civil partnership</p>			X	<p>Increased ranger presence and visibility may improve perceptions of safety for some users with expanded ranger patrols and presence on site.</p>	<p>Continue consistent delivery across all sites.</p>

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<p>Sex Is the service used by people of both male and female biological characteristics or intersex and are the sexes given equal opportunity?</p>	X			Increased ranger presence and visibility may improve perceptions of safety for some users with expanded ranger patrols and presence on site.	Continue consistent delivery across all sites.
<p>Gender reassignment Is there an impact on people who are going through or who have completed Gender Reassignment? Additionally, is there an impact on people with different gender identity?</p>			X	The strategy and tariff applies equally to all users and does not affect gender identity or gender reassignment.	None required.
<p>Religion or belief Includes not having religion or belief</p>			X	No restrictions or requirements related to religious belief or non-belief.	None required.
<p>Sexual Orientation What is the impact on people of different sexual orientation such heterosexual, lesbian, gay or bisexual people?</p>			X	The strategy and tariff apply equally regardless of sexual orientation.	None required.

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<p>Race Includes ethnic or national origins</p>		X		<p>Potential indirect impact: The increased RAMS tariff applies to development rather than individuals, but could indirectly affect housing delivery patterns, which may have secondary socio-economic effects to access to housing for some communities.</p>	<p>Tariff is proportionate, evidence-based and subject to planning viability considerations; communication materials to remain inclusive and accessible.</p>
<p>Are there any other groups who could find it difficult to access or make use of the policy / function? For example: low income / people living in rural areas / single parents / carers and the cared for / past offenders / long-term unemployed / housebound / history of domestic abuse / people who don't speak English as a first language / people without computer access etc.</p>		X		<p>Potential indirect impact on e.g. low income, rural, digitally excluded</p> <p>Higher development costs could indirectly influence housing delivery or tenure mix. However, the tariff funds mitigation that protects free public access to coastal environments, which is particularly valuable to lower-income households.</p> <p>The revised tariff reflects the true cost of mitigation required to support sustainable growth and therefore supports long-term social and environmental wellbeing</p> <p>The strategy will be published in digital format which could impact digitally excluded people.</p>	<p>Continue to rely on planning viability mechanisms and monitoring; review impacts as part of future RAMS updates.</p> <p>To allow for the strategy to be provided in other formats where necessary.</p>

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D: Consultation process, information used to analyse the effects on protected groups/equality and key findings Please describe the consultation process and evidence gathered. You may attach copies or links to the data / research you are using.		
1.	<p><u>Consultation/engagement</u> What consultation or engagement has been undertaken regarding this policy? <i>[Please summarise what, when and who was involved]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor surveys undertaken in 2025 at 26 coastal locations (1,793 interviews). • Workshops and formal meetings with Local Planning Authorities, Natural England, Essex Wildlife Trust, RSPB and other stakeholders. • Ongoing engagement through the Essex Coast RAMS Partnership and Bird Aware Essex.
2.	<p><u>Key findings</u> <i>(Summarise the key findings of your consultation in relation to protected groups as outlined above).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased recreational pressure linked to housing growth requires more intensive mitigation. • Ranger-led engagement and education are effective in influencing behaviour. • A strategic, coast-wide approach is more effective and equitable than site-by-site mitigation. <p>No disproportionate impacts on protected groups were identified through consultation.</p>
3.	<p><u>Data/Information</u> Ensure that data is anonymised and, if a small data set is used, seek guidance from the Data Protection Officer about GDPR compliance. What relevant data or information is currently available about the customers and employees who may use this service or could be affected by this policy? <i>(For example: equality monitoring, surveys, demographic data, research, evidence about demand/ take-up/satisfaction etc).</i></p> <p>What additional information could be collected which would increase your understanding about the potential impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essex Coast RAMS Visitor Survey 2025. • Housing growth projections within RAMS Zone of Influence. • Monitoring data from existing Bird Aware Essex delivery. <p>Equality impacts will continue to be monitored through future RAMS reviews and site-based feedback.</p> <p>The equality implications of the RAMS tariff will continue to be reviewed as part of future five-year strategy updates, alongside housing delivery, viability evidence and monitoring of mitigation effectiveness.</p>

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	<p>of the policy? <i>(What involvement or consultation with affected groups is still needed?)</i></p>	
4.	<p>For existing policies, strategy, activity only: What has changed since the last assessment? <i>(For example: evidence of public concern or complaints / new information has come to light / changes in service provision / changes in service users/ assessed impact on protected groups etc)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated evidence base. • Substantially expanded mitigation package. • Increased tariff to reflect long-term and in-perpetuity mitigation costs. • Revised governance and monitoring framework.

E: Relevance to the Equality Duty Aims:

Consider how the policy relates to the aims below (directly or indirectly), and if it could be adjusted to further meet these equality aims.

1.	<p>To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation</p>	<p>The strategy applies proportionately and consistently, with no direct or indirect unlawful discrimination identified.</p>
2.	<p>To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not <i>(This means removing or minimising disadvantages, taking steps to meet needs of different people and encouraging participation. It can involve treating people better than others, e.g. disabled people).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects free access to natural environments. • Includes education and engagement initiatives. • Improves safety, clarity and environmental quality of public spaces with increased ranger presence. • Improves access to nature

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3.	<p>To foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. If so, how? <i>(This means promoting understanding between different groups and tackling prejudice)</i></p>	<p>Ranger engagement, education and community outreach promote understanding between different users of the coast, access to nature and encourage responsible behaviour.</p>
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F: Conclusion	
Decision:	Explanation:
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Continue the policy with no changes <i>[For example: evidence suggests no potential for discrimination / all opportunities have been taken to advance equality.]</i></p>	
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue the policy with adjustments <i>[For example: Low risk of negative impact / actions or adjustments would further improve positives or remove a potential negative impact.]</i></p>	<p>The revised Essex Coast RAMS and increased tariff present low risk of negative equality impacts, all of which are appropriately mitigated. The strategy supports statutory compliance, environmental protection and long-term public benefit, while meeting the Equality Act 2010 duties.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Adverse impact but continue <i>[For example: Negative impact has been objectively justified.]</i></p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Suspend or withdraw the policy for further review / consideration of alternative proposals <i>[For example: High risk of negative impact for any group / insufficient evidence / need to involve or consult with protected groups / negative impact which cannot be mitigated or justified / unlawful discrimination etc.]</i></p>	

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Approved by:

Lead Officer / Responsible officer: Leanne Brisland, RAMS Delivery Manager

Date: 1/5/2026

Senior Manager: Jeremy Potter, Assistant Director – Planning and Place Shaping

Date: 1/5/2026

[Please save a copy and send one to Human Resources for publication on the website as appropriate]