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<b>Date</b>	<b>10 October 2019</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Housing</b>	
<b>1. The project or decision that this assessment is being undertaken for</b>				
<p>This EAA is for the Sanctuary Strategy and associated work to deliver actions arising from it.</p> <p>Sanctuary in its broadest sense is about protecting and promoting the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. Lewisham has committed to becoming a borough of sanctuary and a key part of this is the Council setting out how we will implement sanctuary across our work. The strategy sets this out, and sets up a framework for services to incorporate sanctuary explicitly across their development and delivery.</p> <p>The main report for this will be the proposed strategy and framework going to Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee and then Mayor and Cabinet.</p>				
<b>2. The protected characteristics or other equalities factors potentially impacted by this decision</b>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ethnicity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Language spoken	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other, please define: refugee, asylum seeker, migrant
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender identity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Household type	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carer status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Income	
<p>The primary factors this work regards are being a refugee, asylum seeker or migrant. Individuals who are refugees, asylum seekers or migrants usually have intersectionality with other characteristics, in particular those selected above which are overrepresented in this group or which specifically compound any marginalisation.</p> <p>These include, under the Act, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and religion, and additionally language spoken and income.</p> <p>For example, a refugee may be referred to Lewisham under the Home Office's programme because their refugee status in combination with a disability, or because their sexual orientation or religion subject them to particular risk of persecution. An asylum-seeker may be additionally disadvantaged in terms of income due to their inability to legally work in the UK.</p>				
<b>3. The evidence to support the analysis</b>				
<p>The Council does not currently hold data on the refugee, migrant and asylum-seeker population in Lewisham. There is no clear reason why the Council would collect this information at a borough-wide level and no incentive for these individuals to disclose. As such, there is no definitive data set to draw on for this analysis. The Lewisham Observatory does set out population projections for 2019 showing Lewisham has higher overall BAME populations than London. Additionally, we know that Lewisham is the 15<sup>th</sup> most ethnically diverse borough in the country, with more than 170 languages spoken, as per Corporate Strategy data.</p> <p>We are also working to become London's leading borough for resettlement with 17 refugee families welcomed in 2017 and 7 of a further 100 families welcomed so far this year, almost 100 individuals altogether. We also have over 100 unaccompanied asylum seeking children and care leavers we have a responsibility towards in Lewisham. All of these individuals have at least one protected characteristic, most of them multiple.</p> <p>The Lewisham Migration Forum, a consortium of agencies who work with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, provide insights through their work with these individuals and through formal listening exercised and consultation.</p> <p>The initial findings of a consultation by the Lewisham Migration Forum, a consortium of agencies who work with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, found that refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants in Lewisham face barriers and challenges around accessing employment, healthcare and banking, directly related to them being refugees, asylums seekers or migrants. Access to services like these and others was reported to be discriminatory around these characteristics, while there was positive feedback on a more general level about how friendly the borough is.</p>				

#### 4. The analysis

The Sanctuary Strategy proposed will seek to mitigate some of the specific marginalisation experienced by refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants by raising awareness of this marginalisation and providing a framework within which to fairly mitigate it.

While it will be underpinned by the Council's Corporate Equalities Policy, it is clear that there is a specific inequality around those seeking sanctuary as evidenced by the experiences accessing services, and that this is an area not currently being considered as part of our equalities approach.

Inability to access core services, like banking, have cumulative impacts as bank accounts are required to access benefits, which provide an income through which to pay rent etc. Institutionalised discrimination is apparent for these individuals from the qualitative information available.

In the future, further data would be useful to refine this analysis. The proposed strategy suggests inclusion of monitoring questions in consultation which would assist with this.

#### 5. Impact summary

The overall impact of this work is **positive**.

The impact on each characteristic noted above should be positive as the strategy proposed reiterates the Council's equalities duties, and seeks to address the marginalisation of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants within this framework.

There is a risk that focussing on this group in particular may be to the detriment of the individuals seeking sanctuary where it creates community tensions. Perceptions of this group as 'not local' can lead to community tensions where, in the context of local government spending cuts, this sort of work is seen by some residents as at the expense of perceived 'local' people. This perception, while discriminatory and inaccurate, can have a negative impact on equality by creating a hostile local environment.

#### 6. Mitigation

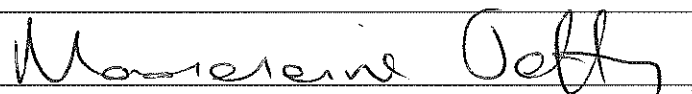
Section 4 sets out that the reason this work is required is due to the current invisibility of those seeking sanctuary, as they are not directly included in the Equality Act or in the Council's wider Corporate Equality Policy, so this work corrects a current failure to include these individuals. This proposal is itself an attempt to mitigate the existing disadvantage and discrimination against those seeking sanctuary.

To mitigate the risk of harms to those seeking sanctuary from community tensions, the strategy is very clear that the aim is equality and not disproportionate benefits for one part of the community. Officers will also need to be mindful of these risks and to work with the Community Cohesion officer in CER to monitor this.

#### 7. Service user journey that this decision or project impacts

This strategy will impact the service users seeking sanctuary specifically, with positive spillover effects for all those who would benefit from clearer language, improved accessibility etc. Most if not all services will be impacted as the council works to make improvements corporately.

Signature of  
Director



For further information please see the full [Corporate Equality Policy](#).