

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form: Initial impact assessment

If an officer is undertaking a project, policy change or service change, then an initial impact assessment must be completed and attached alongside the Project initiation document.

EqIA Titular information:

Date:	19/02/20
Service:	Place Commissioning
Project, policy or service EQIA relates to:	Housing Strategy 2020 – 2024
Completed by:	Frances Haywood, Senior Strategy Officer
Has the EQIA been discussed at services team meeting:	
Signed off by:	
Sign off date:	

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1. Policy, Project or service information:

This section should be used to identify the main purpose of the project, policy or service change, the method of delivery, including who key stakeholders are, main beneficiaries and any associated aims.

What is the purpose of the project, policy change or service change , its expected outcomes and how does it relate to your services corporate plan:

Affordable housing and economic prosperity are key themes within the Council plan. The new Housing Strategy 2020 – 24 will act as a framework underneath which more specialist housing strategies and policies will be aligned (such as the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, Learning Disabled accommodation strategy, etc). The aim of the Housing Strategy is to ensure that all residents can access well-designed, affordable and sustainable homes and effective support services in the Borough. There are 4 key objectives within the strategy:

- Addressing our housing needs
- Supporting vulnerable residents through a range of housing options

- Improving the quality, sustainability and management of the Borough's housing stock
- Enhancing people's lives

Outline how you are delivering your project, policy change or service change. What governance arrangements are in place, which internal stakeholders (Service managers, Assistant Directors, Members ect) have/will be consulted and informed about the project or changes:

As part of development of the strategy there will be both consultation with internal officers and well as more widely with the general public and partner agencies such as the Registered Provider partnership, Homes England and local charities. The strategy will be discussed at leadership teams to ensure input from across a range of service areas.

An action plan will be developed and updated annually setting out how we will deliver against the priorities within the strategy. Progress will be monitored by the Council (via leadership teams as appropriate), the Affordable Housing Implementation Group (member/officer group) and the Registered Provider partnership, all of whom meet frequently throughout the year.

Outline who are the main beneficiaries of the Project, policy change or service change?

The strategy will ensure that all residents can access well-designed, affordable and sustainable homes and effective support services in the Borough. A good choice of high quality housing will help the Borough achieve many of its ambitions. For instance, good quality settled homes can improve a child's life chances by providing the right environment for educational attainment. They can also help to improve the health and wellbeing of the Borough's residents. As part of the wider Thames Valley Berkshire functional economic area, the Council has committed to growing the local economy, which will also benefit from a healthy and competitive housing market.

Outline any associated aims attached to the project, policy change or service change:

The key objectives set out in the strategy are:

- Addressing our housing needs
- Supporting our vulnerable residents through a range of housing options
- Improving the quality, sustainability and management of the Borough's housing stock
- Enhancing people's lives

2. Protected characteristics:

There are 9 protected characteristics as defined by the legislation:

- Race
- Gender
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Age
- Religious belief
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership:

To find out more about the protected groups, please consult the EQIA guidance.

3. Initial Impact review:

In the table below, please indicate whether your project, Policy change or service change will have a positive or negative impact on one of the protected characteristics. To assess the level of impact, please assign each group a Positive, No, Low or High impact score:

For information on how to define No, low or high impact, please consult the EQIA guidance document.

If your project is to have a positive impact on one of the protected groups, please outline this in the table below.

For details on what constitutes a positive impact, please consult the EQIA guidance.

Protected characteristics	Impact score	Please detail what impact will be felt by the protected group:
Race:	Positive	No specific impact relating to race has been identified. Adoption of the Housing Strategy is likely to have a positive impact on residents and service users from ethnic backgrounds by helping to address housing needs and ensuring good quality and well designed homes for all. Whilst some may not have a local connection and therefore not entitled to access some services provided in the borough, the council will continue to provide an individualistic approach to vulnerable groups such as rough sleepers and will provide access to the appropriate services where wanted and required.

Gender:	Positive	No specific impact relating to gender has been identified. In terms of housing need, single males are less likely to be accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need and therefore at greater risk of becoming homeless and sleeping rough. However, there is good practice and joint working between different agencies, e.g., health and homelessness services, outreach services, with regular meetings taking place. The council needs to ensure that this joined up working continues and we work more closely with charities such as Wokingham In Need to examine where there can be additional support provided during “pinch points”.
Disabilities:	Positive	Those in urgent housing need are likely to have complex needs and in addition to physical health issues can have any combination of additional needs such as severe mental illness, learning disability and/or problems with substance misuse/addiction. One of the priorities of the strategy is to support vulnerable residents through a range of housing options which includes continuing to provide access to information, advice and guidance and developing more supported housing in relation to need.
Age:	Positive	It is likely that the housing strategy will have a positive impact on all age groups including children (by aiming to provide a stable home for all residents), young people (delivering more supported housing for vulnerable young people and providing a range of affordable homes), as well as older people (enabling them to live independently where possible but also providing a range of specific older persons accommodation).
Sexual orientation:	Positive	It is considered that the Housing Strategy will benefit all types of people. No specific impact relating to sexual orientation has been identified. Support is provided where appropriate through a multi-agency approach.
Religion/belief:	Positive	It is considered that the Housing Strategy will benefit all types of people. No specific impact relating to religion or belief has been identified. Support is provided where appropriate through a multi-agency approach.
Gender re-assignment:	Positive	It is considered that the Housing Strategy will benefit all types of people. No specific impact relating to gender reassignment has been identified. Support is provided where appropriate through a multi-agency approach.
Pregnancy and Maternity:	Positive	No specific impact relating to pregnancy or maternity has been identified. The priorities in the strategy are to address housing needs and support vulnerable residents through a range of housing options.
Marriage and civil partnership:	Positive	No specific impact relating to marriage or civil partnership has been identified. It is considered that the Housing Strategy will benefit all types of people.

Based on your findings from your initial impact assessment, you must complete a full impact assessment for any groups you have identified as having a low or high negative impact. If No impact, or a positive impact has been identified, you do not need to complete a full assessment. However, you must report on this initial assessment and it must receive formal approval from the Assistant Director responsible for the project, policy or service change.

Initial impact assessment approved by....

Date:....

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