

## Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form: the initial impact assessment

### 1. Process and guidance

The purpose of an EqIA is to make sure that the council is meeting the needs of all our residents by ensuring we consider how different groups of people may be affected by or experience a proposal in different ways.

The council has a two stage EqIA process:

- Stage 1 - the initial impact assessment
- Stage 2 - the full impact assessment.

This form is for use at Stage 1 of the process. This must be completed when undertaking a project, policy change, or service change. It can form part of a business case for change and must be completed and attached to a Project Initiation Document. The findings of the initial impact assessment will determine whether a full impact assessment is needed.

Guidance and tools for council officers can be accessed on the council's Tackling Inequality Together intranet pages.

Date started:	08/11/2023
Completed by:	Rod Coyle
Service:	Economy & Housing
Project or policy EqIA relates to:	Procurement of new Responsive Repairs & Maintenance Contract
Date EqIA discussed at service team meeting:	17/01/24
Conclusion (is a full assessment needed?):	No
Signed off by (AD):	Rhian Hayes
Sign off date:	01/02/2024

## 2. Summary of the policy, project, or service

This section should be used to summarise the project, policy, or service change (the proposal).

### **What is the purpose of the proposal, what are the aims and expected outcomes, and how does it relate to service plans and the corporate plan?**

Wokingham Borough Council's Housing team needs to procure a new contract for responsive repairs and maintenance services to replace its current service arrangements with the incumbent provider, Reading Borough Council, as the existing agreement expires on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. The objective of the procurement exercise will be to award a new contract to a contractor that offers the Council the best value for money to deliver the scope of the responsive repairs and maintenance service requirements for our housing stock, and that will also assist the Council with delivering on its commitment to improve and enhance residents' experiences, so when they have a need to raise a request for repairs or maintenance on their home, the service provision provides them with the best possible customer service and end-to-end journey from raising the initial request through to its resolution.

The new contract will contribute towards delivering some of the key elements of the 'WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAN 2020 TO 2024.' PROVIDING SAFE AND STRONG COMMUNITIES - 'Residents feel safe and secure in their neighbourhoods and in the services, they receive', by appointing a professional, responsible and capable contractor that can provide the service requirements and help us to provide homes that are safe and meet quality and decent homes standards.

ENRICHING LIVES - 'Support growth in our local economy and help to build business', by encouraging the contractor to utilise local businesses in their supply chain.

DELIVERING THE RIGHT HOMES IN THE RIGHT PLACES - 'Work with all landlords and homeowners to improve the quality, efficiency and sustainability of the Borough's existing housing stock', by developing and adopting a true partnership approach with the contractor for the delivery of the services, embracing innovative approaches to solving problems and delivering sustainable service solutions.

ENJOYING A CLEAN AND GREEN BOROUGH - 'Ensure our colleagues across the council and our contractors, take measures where possible to reduce carbon emissions including making our own buildings more energy efficient.', by adopting new technologies and innovations to increase green credentials and deliver the services in the most sustainable and eco-friendly manner, and for ensuring that our housing stock is serviced and maintained to be as efficient and green as possible.

CHANGING THE WAY WE WORK FOR YOU - 'Be relentlessly customer focussed', and 'Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around our customers.', by improving the customer service standards that we provide through the responsive repairs and maintenance services, and striving to exceed our customers' expectations.

BEING THE BEST WE CAN BE - 'Create a commercial mind-set in the council, that promotes the ability to deliver services differently, demands innovation and ensures we are able to maximise our assets for the benefit of our communities and to deliver financial sustainability', by working in true partnership with the contractor, thinking outside of the box and exploring all options to deliver the services more efficiently, cost effectively and sustainably.

The Council complies with the government's agenda to achieve efficiencies through the adoption of good practice in their procurement processes, including compliance with the Equality Act 2010 where it applies.

**How will the proposal be delivered, what governance arrangements are in place and who are the key internal stakeholders?**

The Council intends to procure the new responsive repairs and maintenance contract by using a competitive tender process in order to identify a suitable service provider and attempt to achieve best value for money and deliver customer service excellence.

The tender process will meet WBC's own internal governance for procurements and will comply with public sector procurement rules. Communications will be shared with all key internal stakeholders, including colleagues from; WBC's housing companies, finance colleagues, Service AD for Economy & Housing, Director for Place & Growth, TLIP (Tenant & Landlord Improvement Panel), CLT and Executive members.

**Who will be affected by the proposal? Think about who it is aimed at and who will deliver it.**

The end recipients of the responsive repairs and maintenance services included in scope of the new contract that will be delivered by the contractor, will be the tenants of housing properties that are owned by Wokingham Borough Council, and its housing companies.

**3. Data & Protected Characteristics**

This section should be used to set out what data you have gathered to support the initial impact assessment.

The table below sets out the equality groups that need to be considered in the impact assessment. These comprise the nine protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 and other priority areas defined by the council.

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Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy/Maternity
Religious belief	Race	Sex	Sexual Orientation	Socio-economic disadvantage

**What data and information will be used to help assess the impact of the proposal on different groups of people? A list of useful resources is available for officers on the Council’s Tackling Inequality Together intranet pages.**

Based on the Council’s understanding, this market sector includes a mix of large national companies, regional companies and local Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME’s), many of which that are extensively experienced in working with social housing providers. The Council carried out a ‘soft market testing’ exercise to gauge market appetite for this contract and received an overwhelmingly positive response, that indicates the procurement of this contract will attract strong interest from contractors and ensure the project team can drive a competitive tender process, achieve best value for money for the Council in current market conditions, and raise customer service standards. Contractors in this sector are experienced and knowledgeable of working with social housing providers and have a high degree of familiarity with the various cohorts that occupy social housing properties, and are experienced with identifying and reporting Safeguarding concerns, and working with social housing providers to assist them with delivering the desired outcomes of their Social Value initiatives and objectives. Any new IT service solution that is to be implemented with the contractor to improve the customer experience and help simplify the process for raising repairs and maintenance requests, making, and changing appointments and providing updates on the status of a request, will be reviewed with tenant representatives and the digital solutions team with accessibility in mind.

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**4. Assessing & Scoring Impact**

This section should be used to assess the likely impact on each equality group, consider how significant any impacts could be and explain how the data gathered supports the conclusions made.

Scoring impact for equality groups	
Positive impact	The proposal promotes equality of opportunity by meeting needs or addressing existing barriers to participation and/or promotes good community relations

Neutral or no impact	The proposal has no impact or no disproportionate impact.
Low negative	The proposal is likely to negatively impact a small number of people, be of short duration and can easily be resolved.
High negative	The proposal is likely to have a significant negative impact on many people or a severe impact on a smaller number of people.

**Referring to the Scoring table above, please give an impact score for each group, explain what the likely impact will be, and briefly set out how the data supports this conclusion.**

Equality group	Impact score	Impact and supporting data
Age	NI	Neutral/ no impact
Disability	NI	Neutral/ no impact
Gender reassignment	NI	Neutral/ no impact
Marriage and Civil Partnership	NI	Neutral/ no impact
Pregnancy/Maternity	NI	Neutral/ no impact
Religious belief	NI	Neutral/ no impact
Race	NI	Neutral/ no impact
Sex	NI	Neutral/ no impact
Sexual Orientation	NI	Neutral/ no impact
Socio-economic disadvantage	NI	Neutral/ no impact

**5. Conclusion and next steps.**

Based on your findings from your initial impact assessment, you must complete a full impact assessment if you have identified any groups 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 include reference to the initial assessment in any associated reports, and it must receive formal approval from the Assistant Director responsible for the project, policy, or service change.