

# Equality Impact Assessment

This **online** equality impact assessment should:

An equality impact assessment should take place when considering doing something in a new way. Please submit your completed EIA as an appendix to your committee report. Please remember that this will be a public document – do not use jargon or abbreviations.

**Service**

**Title of policy, service, function, project or strategy**

**Type of policy, service, function, project or strategy:** Existing  New/Proposed

**Lead Officer**

**People involved with completing the EIA**

**Step 1.1: Make sure you have clear aims and objectives**

Q1. What is the aim of your policy, service, function, project or strategy?

To set council housing rents in line with current regulation, and in order to complete the HRA budgeting process which sets out ambitions for the housing service over the short and medium term. The proposed rent increase for 2023/24 is 7% (CPI + 1% guidance capped by the government at below inflation increase of 7%).

Q2.

Who is intended to benefit? Who will it have a detrimental effect on and how?

The setting of council housing rents, and the budgeting process which derives from it, affects council tenants and other residents within the district. The aims of the housing service involve tenancy, estate, and asset management, but also an investment in communities and neighbourhoods and the delivery of social value. Prudent rent setting underpins this. The potential for a detrimental impact exists in as much as an increase in rent will put pressure on those individuals in, or at risk of, financial hardship, particularly in the context of increasing energy costs and other cost-of-living pressure. It should be noted that rent levels (set at 'social rent') will remain well below both market rent and 'affordable rent' (80% of market) and well below the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) level for the district: the LHA is the maximum amount payable through Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit. Where tenants are at risk of detriment the Council's in-house Income Management Team takes a pro active, supportive approach to preventing rent arrears and promoting financial inclusion through money advice, referrals for support, and assistance in maximising income (through benefit claims, or advice on management of other debts, for example). The Income Management Team is Housing Quality Network (HQN) accredited and delivers a best practice approach in this area. The team also works closely with internal colleagues and external partner organisations to support tenants and tenancy success generally: internally the Household Intervention Team, the Energy Support Officer and the Independent Living Team provide dedicated support to those who need it.

**Step 1.2: Collecting your information**

Q3. Using existing data (if available) and thinking about each group below, does, or could, the policy, service, function, project or strategy have a negative impact on the groups below?

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Group	Negative	Positive/No Impact	Unclear
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Faith, religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender including marriage, pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation including civic partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other socially excluded groups such as carers, areas of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Step 1.3 – Is there a need to consult!

Q4. Who have you consulted with? If you haven't consulted yet please list who you are going to consult with? Please give examples of how you have or are going to consult with specific groups of communities

Consultation has taken place with the District Wide Tenants Forum (D WTF) at their meeting on 19/01/23; a group made up of council officers, councillors, and residents from across the district. The group discussed and debated the proposed rent increase and the keys areas of spend and overall direction of the housing service, and were broadly supportive of the decision to propose an increase in rents for 23/24 of 7%, though all recognise the challenge a rent increase will pose to tenants in the context of the current cost-of-living crisis. The group commented that they feel rents are accountable and transparent, and noted that it's important that rental income is being spent to ensure homes are maintained to a high standard. Positive comments were shared about the council housing response to the climate emergency, particularly around plans to tackle energy efficiency within housing stock.

## Step 1.4 – Assessing the impact

Q5. Using the existing data and the assessment in questions 3 what does it tell you, is there an impact on some groups in the community?

<b>Age:</b> No significant impact directly related to this group
<b>Disability:</b> No significant impact directly related to this group
<b>Faith, Religion or Belief:</b> No significant impact directly related to this group
<b>Gender including Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity:</b> No significant impact directly related to this group
<b>Gender Reassignment:</b> No significant impact directly related to this group
<b>Race:</b> No significant impact directly related to this group
<b>Sexual Orientation including Civic Partnership:</b> No significant impact directly related to this group
<b>Rural Communities:</b> No significant impact directly related to this group

## Step 1.5 – What are the differences?

Q6. If you are either directly or indirectly discriminating, how are you going to change this or mitigate the negative impact?

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No areas of discrimination based on protected characteristics have been identified. Individuals in challenging financial circumstances are at risk of indirect discrimination as outlined in Q2 above, but this is not linked to any specific characteristics outlined in Q5 above. Mitigation of this risk is outlined in Q2: tenancy health checks, and monitoring of rent accounts and related financial circumstances of tenants will allow support and assistance to be provided as required.

Q7.  
Do  
you

need any more information/evidence eg statistic, consultation. If so how do you plan to address this?

No

## Step 1.6 – Make a recommendation based on steps 1.1 to 1.5

Q8. If you are in a position to make a recommendation to change or introduce the policy, service, function, project or strategy, clearly show how it was decided on.

The Equality Impact Assessment concludes no adverse impact on individuals on the basis of a protected characteristic as above. However, it is noted that all individuals and groups, regardless of protected characteristics, may be adversely impacted by a rent increase. As per Q2, above, where individuals are adversely affected there is mitigation in place.

Q9.  
If

you are not in a position to go ahead, what actions are you going to take?

N/a

Q10. Where necessary, how do you plan to monitor the impact and effectiveness of this change or decision?

Continuous weekly monitoring of rent accounts takes place to highlight areas of negative impact. A programme of pre-tenancy assessment, tenancy health checks, tenancy audits, advice, and support is in place to identify those at risk of detriment prior to tenancy commencement.