

Equality Impact Assessment

Details of the assessment	
Name of Function/Policy/ Service being assessed	Tenancy Strategy
Date of assessment	Commenced: 17/12/12 Completed: 25 01 2013
Directorate & Service	C&P Services/Housing Services
Policy Owner	Jane Ellis
Name of Officer(s) carrying out assessment:	Jane Ellis

Step 1	Initial Screening for:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New/revised policies/strategies • policy decisions • considering partnership working arrangements • procurement/commissioning activities <p>(For assessments identified within the Equality Impact Assessment Timetable please go straight to Step 2).</p>	
	Key Questions	Answers/Notes
1	What are you looking to achieve in this activity?	The Council has a statutory duty to produce a Tenancy Strategy which is set out in the Localism Act 2011.
2	Who in the main will benefit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People in housing need as defined by the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and Localism Act 2011 who have sufficient priority to secure housing through the Sevenoaks District Housing Register; • Some people already living in social housing in the District who, in certain circumstances, chose to move to another socially rented home.
3	Does the activity have the	<input type="checkbox"/> Please explain:

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	Key Questions	Answers/Notes
	<p>potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?</p>	<p>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please explain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Tenancy Strategy is based upon changes introduced by the Localism Act 2011, is subordinate to the Council’s Housing Strategy and has been designed to compliment the Council’s Homelessness Strategy and Allocations Policy. – The Council’s Tenancy Strategy specifically asks Registered Providers to take into account the impact of their allocations and tenancy policies on individuals and their protected characteristics and to grant levels of security of tenure in line with Kent wide guidance to avoid discrimination and to minimise any negative impact. – Ensuring this Council’s Tenancy Strategy is compatible with the Kent wide Tenancy Strategy, helps to provide consistency across a large area and makes it easier for Registered Providers working across Local Authority boundaries to comply with its guidance, minimising scope for adverse impact or discrimination. – Consultation has taken place with tenants, Registered Providers and partner organisations as well as being placed on the website for any comments through survey monkey. All views and comments have been considered and included and Registered Providers are supportive of the Council’s views and strategy. The Tenancy Strategy is really guidance and not enforceable. Where appropriate, each case is looked at on case by case basis to ensure fairness. <p>Note: if the answer is ‘yes’ then a full equality impact assessment is required – see step 2.</p>

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	Key Questions	Answers/Notes
4	Does the activity have potential to make a positive contribution to equalities?	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Please explain: This Strategy provides a fairer and more equitable approach to tenancies, minimising what could be unjustified positive impacts on tenancies. The Strategy sets out the Councils guidance on future tenancies taking into consideration others views. – The Tenancy Strategy gives guidance to Registered Providers when assessing what tenancies should be given. The various type of tenancies will address different circumstances and in certain cases provide adequate security which aids community cohesion and the provision of support to tenants to go back into employment. – The Council’s Tenancy Strategy therefore supports the Government’s view that social housing should be a springboard into work and self sufficiency. It directs the Registered Providers to make available relevant support equally to all tenants – Positive actions for certain age-related and vulnerable groups will remain. <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please explain:</p> <p>Note: if the answer is ‘yes’ then a full equality impact assessment is required – see step 2.</p>

Where the screening has identified the need for a full impact assessment, this must:

- be commenced during the drafting stages of a new policy/strategy and fully completed following any consultation period before submitting for committee approval
- carried out before any policy decision is taken
- completed in the planning stages of any procurement exercise

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	Key Questions	Answers/Notes	
Step 2	Scoping the assessment		
1.	What is the overall aim, or purpose of the function/ policy/service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As introduced under the Localism Act, to provide guidance to Registered Providers operating in the District, informing their tenancy policies and practices to meet local housing need and to make the best use of the housing stock. This includes guidance on the use of the affordable rent tenure and fixed term tenancies. - To provide guidance to Registered Providers when formulating their individual allocation and tenancy management policies and to ensure there is a cohesive approach. This provides an equal framework. 	
2.	What outcomes do you want to achieve with this function/ policy/service and for whom?	To help Registered providers develop allocation and tenancy management policies which are fair and equitable and make effective use of the stock in the district.	
3.	Who will be affected?	Sevenoaks District Housing Register applicants, some tenants seeking to move and Registered Providers.	
4.	Who defines or defined the function/service/ policy?	Legislation and local strategy/policy/circumstances/demographics/consultation with the local community, Shelter. CABs and providers.	
5.	Who implements the function/service/policy?	Housing Services in partnership with Registered Providers.	
6.	How do the outcomes of the function/service/policy meet or hinder other policies, values or objectives of the public authority (if applicable)?	Please indicate which of the Councils core values / promises (as set out in the Vision) these outcomes relate to:	
		We will provide value for money	✓
		We will work in partnership to keep the District of Sevenoaks safe	
		We will continue to collect rubbish efficiently and effectively	
		We Will protect the Green Belt	✓
		We will support and develop the local economy	✓
		Fairness	✓
		Integrity	✓
Quality	✓		
7.	What factors could	Registered Providers only have to have regard to the Council's Tenancy Strategy. If	

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	Key Questions	Answers/Notes
	contribute or detract from the outcomes identified earlier?	they do not agree with proposals, they could disregard the guidance provided by the Council and could find another route to allocate those homes not subject to a nominations agreement with the Council. However, whilst undertaking the consultation the Registered Providers were supportive of Council views and due to the excellent partnership working and liaison with district Registered Providers there is very minimal chance of this occurring.
Step 3 Consideration of data and information		
8.	What do you already know about who uses this function/service/ policy?	<p>We know and understand the protected characteristics of people registered on the Sevenoaks District Housing Register.</p> <p>A scrutiny committee has examined the issue of under occupation in socially rented homes.</p> <p>A scrutiny committee has examined the potential impact of welfare reform.</p> <p>Kent wide research and consultation has taken place to develop a Kent wide tenancy strategy lead by the Joint Policy and Planning Board.</p>
9.	Has any consultation with service users already taken place on the function/service/ policy and if so what were the key findings?	<p>Consultation Events have taken place. For example, one was with a group of tenants who form a consultation panel and another with the partners of the Sevenoaks District Housing Register.</p> <p>The document has also been sent to key stakeholders and partners for comments.</p> <p>The document is placed on SDC's website with survey monkey set up for any comments or views. This links to West Kent Housing Associations website which is good practice.</p> <p>All applicants on the Sevenoaks District Housing Register have been contacted inviting their comments on the Tenancy Strategy. These comments are on the whole favourable if not the providers have agreed to a flexible approach on a case by case basis..</p>

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Key Questions		Answers/Notes
		The findings from the consultation are set out within the strategy document and also summarised in Appendix C to the strategy,
10.	What, if any, additional information is needed to assess the impact of the function/service/policy?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The views of consultees with protected characteristics.. 2. Analysis of the views of consultees by demographic group.
11.	How do you propose to gather the additional information?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information about demographic groups was not collected from the consultation however a general question about the impact on different groups was asked. 2. Current contractual arrangements and resources with WKHA encourage more analysis of equality information from the housing register In addition, Services Select Committee has agreed for the Council and West Kent Housing Association to undertake an analysis of a 10% sample of the housing register to establish the impact of the new Allocation policy which is part of the Tenancy Strategy. There are links to the Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy too.. The Tenancy Strategy and Allocation policy will be reviewed after the sample analysis when the findings are reported to Services Select committee in April 2013.
Step 4 Assessing the Impact		
12.	Based on what information you already know, in relation to each of the following groups consider whether a) there is anything in the function/service/policy that could discriminate or put anyone at a disadvantage b) for an existing function/service/policy, how it is actually working in practice for each group	
a.	Equality groups Age	The Strategy directs Registered Providers to offer lifetime tenancies to older people and to provide support where necessary. There are under occupation policies which encourage older people occupying family size accommodation to downsize into smaller homes with financial incentives and support.
b.	Disability	The Strategy directs Registered Providers to offer more secure tenancy periods to those with a disability or special needs in recognition that they have more specific accommodation requirements.
c.	Carers	The Strategy directs Registered Providers to offer more secure tenancy periods to those with a disability or special needs and older people – those groups requiring carers.

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Key Questions		Answers/Notes
d.	Gender	The Strategy does not direct Registered Providers to differentiate on the issue of gender when considering tenancy types. Neither is it considered there will be an indirect impact. Everyone is treated the same.
e.	Race	The Strategy does not direct Registered Providers to differentiate on the issue of race when considering tenancy types. Neither is it considered there will be an indirect impact. Everyone is treated the same.
f.	Religion/Belief	The Strategy does not direct Registered Providers to differentiate on the issue of religion/belief when considering tenancy types. Neither is it considered there will be an indirect impact. Everyone is treated the same.
g.	Sexual Orientation	The Strategy does not direct Registered Providers to differentiate on the issue of sexual orientation when considering tenancy types. Neither is it considered there will be an indirect impact. Everyone is treated the same.
h.	Marital / Civil Partnership status	The Strategy does not direct Registered Providers to differentiate on the issue of marital/civil partnership status when considering tenancy types. Neither is it considered there will be an indirect impact.
i.	Pregnancy and maternity	The Strategy does not direct Registered Providers to differentiate on the issue of pregnancy/maternity status when considering tenancy types. Neither is it considered there will be an indirect impact.
j.	Gender reassignment	The Strategy does not direct Registered Providers to differentiate on the issue of gender reassignment when considering tenancy types. Neither is it considered there will be an indirect impact.
k.	General <i>i.e</i> affecting all of the above /other <i>e.g.</i> socio-economic	The Strategy is intended to support Government's intention to empower and encourage people back into employment wherever possible and to remove existing benefit traps.
Step 5 Reviewing and scrutinising the Impact		
13.	Have you identified any differential impact and does this adversely affect any groups in the community?	No anticipated adverse affect on the community as the Strategy takes into account the needs of those with protected characteristics , where relevant. It has not been possible to carry out an analysis of the demographics of those affected to determine any indirect impacts on those with protected characteristics.

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	Key Questions	Answers/Notes
14.	Can we make any changes?	Services Select Committee has agreed that the Council and West Kent Housing Association undertake an analysis of a 10% sample of the housing register to establish the impact of the new Allocation policy which is a part of the Tenancy strategy. This will then be reviewed to establish whether any adjustments to the policy need to be made.
15.	If there is nothing you can do, can the reasons be fairly justified?	N/A
16.	Do any of the changes in relation to the adverse impact have a further adverse affect on any other group?	N/A

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Step 5 continued...	Actions to be inserted into Equality Action Plans			
Based on your answers in Step 5, please finalise your actions here. These actions will then be incorporated into our equality action plans.				
Equality Strand	Action	Outcome/monitoring information and targets	Date for Completion	Responsible Officer
If an adverse impact was found or unmet needs identified, which actions will you put in place to address this:				
If the impact is still unclear, list the actions you will put in place to gather the information you need:				
If you did not find any evidence of unmet needs or adverse impact, list the actions you will put in place to maintain good practice:				

Step 6 Decision making and future monitoring		
	Key questions	Answers / notes
17.	Which decision making process do these changes need to go through i.e. do they need to be approved by a committee/Council?	The Tenancy Strategy needs Member approval and endorsement
18.	How will you continue to monitor the impact of the function/service/ policy on diverse groups?	Regular liaison meetings with WKHA and other Registered Providers Analysis of a 10% sample of the housing register to establish the impact of the new allocations scheme. This will then be reviewed to establish whether any adjustments to the policy need to be made.
19.	When will you review this equality impact assessment?	In 5 years time which is in line with Government guidance but before that occurs the Allocation policy and Tenancy Strategy will be reviewed in 3 months time when the matter is referred back to Services Select Committee after the 10% sampling

Final steps

For an existing function/service/policy:

- Submit the EqlA to your Departmental Management Team for approval.
- Send your assessment to the West Kent Equalities Officer for publication on the website.
- Update Covalent.

For a new function/service/ policy:

- Summarise your findings in the committee report.
- Ensure planned consultations address the findings of the impact assessment.