

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) stems from the general duty placed on public authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination and is required to ensure that equality is placed at the centre of policy development and review, as well as service delivery. The purpose of this EIA is to analyse the likely impact of a service, policy or proposals on different community groups, and how the needs of such groups have been taken in to account in developing those proposals.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 requires that those subject to the Equality Duty must, in the exercise of their functions have due regard to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

1. Name of Policy or Service	
Provision of Council Housing – proposal to deliver a new landlord service to tenants owned by Sefton Council	
2. Responsible Officer	
Suzanne Blundell	
3. Date EIA Completed	Review Date
03/10/2023	03/10/2024
4. Description and aims of policy / service / practice	
<p>Sefton Council transferred its housing stock to a housing association in 2006 and has not been a provider of social housing since this time. New provision of Council housing in Sefton will see the Council once again becoming a landlord of social housing and providing services to tenants in respect of housing management and maintenance.</p> <p>The Council is at the start of its journey to provide Council housing and over the coming weeks, months and years, operational practices will be introduced to enable the Council to</p>	

deliver its landlord function and provide homes to households in housing need within Sefton. This EIA will therefore be continually reviewed throughout, and separate EIA's undertaken where appropriate and necessary for the development of new policies.

Homes will be provided through the Councils existing Choice Based Lettings Scheme known as Property Pool Plus (PPP) to households in housing need, this may include vulnerable households, households with disabilities and households with other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. The PPP scheme has recently been reviewed following a period of public consultation and an independent EIA undertaken as part of the review.

Provision of new Council housing will provide an alternative social housing offer in Sefton to complement existing delivery of affordable housing by developers and Registered Providers and will support vulnerable residents in housing need by offering stable homes and tenancies.

5. Could there be any implications for a protected characteristic group (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) in this (or the development of) this policy/practice?

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

Protected Characteristics	Impact	Comments
Age	+	Good quality housing is recognised as a key factor in promoting health and wellbeing and supporting independent living. Council housing will be developed to target housing need within Sefton and this includes meeting the need of older and younger people where a need is identified. Housing will be let through PPP which includes policies to support people of different age groups according to housing need.
Disability	+	Provision of Council housing will support and empower people to remain in their own homes and to live independently contributing to quality of life. New homes at the proposed Buckley Hill Lane development will deliver a proportion of accessible and adaptable housing within the social housing sector to meet identified need and reduce demand on other services.
Gender Reassignment	O	No differential impact identified
Marriage / Civil Partnership	O	No differential impact identified
Pregnancy / Maternity	O	No differential impact identified
Race	O	No differential impact identified
Religion or Belief	O	No differential impact identified
Sex / Gender	O	No differential impact identified
Sexual Orientation	O	No differential impact identified

Key	Impact
+	Positive
O	Neutral / Negligible
-	Negative
P	Potential Issue

6. What research / data / information have you used to support this process?

Research / data / information used to support the proposal to provide Council housing includes the Sefton Local Plan, Strategic Housing Market Assessment, ONS data, Census data, Property Pool Plus data and empty property data.

7. Consultation

The Council is at the start of its proposals to deliver Council housing in Sefton.

A draft of Sefton's Housing Strategy (2022-2027) was published for a wider 12-week public consultation in early May 2022 and concluded on 31st July 2022. The draft housing strategy was developed over a number of months in partnership with a range of internal and external stakeholders. The development of a robust housing strategy has followed good practice guidance, which indicated the importance of developing a 'shared' strategy, in collaboration with key Local Authority partners, and also through consultation with a wider group of stakeholders and the local community.

The stakeholder collaboration to produce the draft Housing Strategy was achieved through working with a diverse range of groups. Additionally, members of the public and Housing Association partners have been briefed on the development of the housing strategy. Importantly they also had a key input in 'shaping' the draft strategy through the initial strategy drafting phases and also throughout the public consultation process.

The Housing Strategy presents five themes. All five priority themes remain interlinked and relevant to the provision of Council housing, with the directly related theme being number five below:

1. Driving housing quality in communities and neighbourhoods
2. Meeting people's housing needs
3. Enabling people to live independently
4. Tackling barriers to obtaining suitable housing for the most vulnerable and ensuring equal access to housing services
5. Effectively utilising Council assets to support housing delivery

Extensive 12-week public consultation was also undertaken on proposed policy changes to the Council's PPP scheme, the scheme is a partnership scheme with other Local Authorities across the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and enables the letting of social housing for rent in Sefton and the wider Liverpool City Region.

Consultation has also taken place with key partners and stakeholders including local Registered Providers and Homes England.

8. What are the potential implications or barriers?

No implications or barriers have been identified at this time.

9. Evidence of addressing barriers and meeting public duties

As Sefton Council develops its plans, policies, procedures and services relating to Council housing provision, this EIA will be reviewed and updated accordingly. Further EIA's will also be undertaken and introduced if and when required.

Monitoring of ongoing consultations will also inform the EIA assessment.

10. Outline any changes to be made to policy/practice because of this assessment

No changes have been made at this stage. As the Council continues with its work to deliver new Council housing, a range of policies and practices will be developed. As policies and practices are developed, they will undergo Equality Impact Assessments to identify any potential impacts on each protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Sefton's current Housing Strategy is was refreshed in summer 2022, with the draft version of the document consulted on between May and July 2022. The housing strategy builds upon themes and priorities identified in previous strategic housing documents and helps address the significant and national housing challenges that Sefton's residents face. One of the key housing priorities of the 2022-2027 strategy identifies how; the Council can effectively utilise its assets to support housing delivery by: ***Progressing the acquisition of Council Housing to meet housing needs***. The housing strategy is directly related to the provision of Council housing.

11. Progress update on actions required for the named policy/practice

An EIA has been undertaken and no negative impacts have been identified. The EIA will be updated in 12-months time or sooner if found to be required.

12. Is a Full Equality Impact Assessment and Equality Action Plan required?

No. A Full Equality Impact Assessment and Equality Action Plan is not required at this time. No negative impacts have been identified. Requirement for an action plan will be reconsidered at the point of review.