

PLEASE NOTE – THIS CHECK MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE YOUR DRAFT STRATEGY IS SUBMITTED TO MANAGEMENT TEAM AND COUNCILLORS FOR APPROVAL

Why do you need to do this Equality and human rights impact check?

Our strategies and policies set out the way we will deliver our services (including employment opportunities). When we are developing them, we need to check that they are not going to create any barriers which could prevent people from accessing our services.

People in Southern Oxfordshire may face barriers because of things like disability, gender (including transgender, pregnancy and maternity), age, sexual orientation, rural isolation, income, religion/belief or ethnicity.

As well as thinking about how our services will meet the needs of these groups of people, we also need to consider how our draft strategies and policies will help us to:

- promote positive relations within communities
- give everyone a voice
- respect and value everyone
- protect people's human rights

This equality and human rights impact check provides officers with a framework to help them work through these considerations in relation to their draft policy/strategy, ensuring that we are meeting our legal duties with regards to equality, diversity and human rights.

We have a statutory duty to carry out these assessments and they contribute towards our Corporate Equality Objectives

If you have any queries about this Check or would like some advice/support in completing it, please contact the equalities officer (see contact details below).

Once you've completed this equality and human rights impact check, please send the paperwork to the shared equality officer, along with a copy of the draft strategy/policy.

Cheryl Reeves (equalities officer)
Email: cheryl.reeves@southandvale.gov.uk
Telephone: x22108

OUTLINE OF THE DRAFT STRATEGY / POLICY YOU ARE CHECKING:

1. What are the aims and objectives of this draft strategy/policy?

- addressing housing need in the district
- preventing homelessness
- other local priorities, such as encouraging people into work and improving ability of local households to access local homes.

2. Who is the proposed strategy or policy designed to support / help / serve?

- All households seeking assistance with housing from the district council.
- Officers assessing housing register applications and nominating applicants to social housing.

3. If the draft strategy/policy relates to an existing council service/function, has an Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) already been completed on the service/function?

No

Yes – please list any issues/barriers identified within the assessment that your draft strategy needs to address:

Service functions that have undertaken an Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment:

**Choice Based Lettings
Homelessness
Housing Register**

We also carried out an equality impact assessment on the previous HAP

- No actions were identified that need to be addressed in this policy or that haven't already been addressed.

4. Does the draft strategy or policy have the potential to cause a negative impact or discriminate against certain groups in the community?

Equality group	Yes	No	If 'yes', please explain how the strategy/policy could cause a negative impact or discriminate. If you can not justify this you will need to take mitigating action, complete the action plan at the end of this assessment.	If 'No,' What existing evidence (presumed or otherwise) do you have for this? e.g. Will the service changes advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic? This means will they <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. • Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
People from ethnic minority groups People from different religions/beliefs (including people without a religion/belief)		√		<p>There are no exclusions from the housing register based on ethnic background.</p> <p>There are some exclusions based on immigration status, which are prescribed by the Secretary of State in legislation. Households ineligible to join the housing register will receive advice on their housing options and signposted to specialist services.</p> <p>There is provision in the policy to assess any housing needs arising due to an applicant's ethnicity on social and welfare grounds.</p> <p>There are no exclusions from the housing register based upon religious beliefs. Any specific housing need arising from religious beliefs will be assessed under social and welfare needs.</p>

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People with disabilities <i>(including carers)</i>		√		<p>The policy supports and promotes the welfare of disabled persons in key areas.</p> <p>Applicants with support needs are identified when applying to the register. They can be assisted with bidding and mailed the weekly newsletter that advertises properties if there are problems with digital access. (paper application forms are also available).</p> <p>The policy enables additional priority, and/or additional bedrooms, to be awarded to applicants with disabilities or caring responsibilities. The decision to award any additional priority is made by a Health and Welfare assessment.</p> <p>Disabled persons that require specifically adapted properties are also prioritised for these properties when they become available.</p>

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Men or women (including pregnant women, women on maternity and transgender people)		√		<p>Pregnant women are referenced in the policy in relation to the baby will only count in the bedroom need calculation once it has been born.</p> <p>It takes account of people at risk of /or fleeing domestic abuse, giving them a higher priority within the criteria for the housing register.</p> <p>The policy also takes account of the needs of those in the armed forces.</p>

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Gay, lesbian or bisexual people		√		<p>There are no exclusions from the housing register based upon sexual orientation.</p> <p>Decisions regarding eligibility for bedrooms or priority banding are based solely upon household circumstances and not sexual orientation.</p> <p>The allocations policy allows the applicant to specify who their partner is and includes heterosexual, same sex and civil partnerships.</p> <p>There is provision within the policy to assess any housing needs arising due to an applicant's sexuality on social and welfare grounds. This will include the need to move to be near specialist services.</p>

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Older or younger people		√		<p>16 and 17-year olds can join the housing register but will normally only be considered for supported housing until they are 18-years old.</p> <p>There is a housing pathway and joint protocol with Social & Health Care and specialist housing providers to ensure the housing needs of young people are met.</p> <p>Older people can access sheltered housing and Extra Care Home provision through the housing register.</p> <p>Health or disability issues associated with old age are considered for priority banding through a Health and Welfare assessment.</p>

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People living in rural areas		√		<p>The allocations policy operates across both urban and rural areas of the district.</p> <p>The policy awards priority to residents with a strong local connection for 20 % of new build properties in parish/ village locations.</p> <p>Rural Exception Sites are also prioritised to applicants with a connection to the parish/village.</p>
Local Voluntary, Community and Faith sector organisations		√		Not applicable

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All groups		√		<p>The new policy enables priority to be awarded to victims of modern slavery.</p> <p>It also allows workers to establish a local connection when employed on zero hours contracts.</p> <p>The policy also allows greater flexibility to consider individual circumstances when considering exclusion from the register due to rent arrears.</p> <p>The policy includes its commitment to delivering the service in line with the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998</p>

5. Have reasonable adjustments been made for people with disabilities to ensure they can use the draft strategy or policy? This might mean treating disabled people better than non-disabled people to meet their needs.

No

Yes - please provide detail:

- The draft policy and extracts will be made available on request in braille, large print, easy read or another format as requested
- The policy allows persons with disabilities to join the register and participate in Choice Based Lettings

- The policy enables priority to be awarded for disabled persons
- The policy priorities disabled persons for disabled-adapted properties

6. Have there been any equality related recommendations in the area that your draft policy/strategy is covering which have arisen from, for example, internal/external audits or scrutiny reports? NO

Recommendation made	Is this being addressed in your draft strategy or policy? If not, please explain why.
Not applicable	

7. Will the draft strategy or policy help to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it e.g will the changes help to tackle prejudice and promote understanding between the different groups?

- No (*If you feel there is scope to improve how you foster good relations, amend your decision accordingly*)
 Yes – please explain how

- The allocations policy is a transparent document aimed at treating people with a protected characteristic fairly and without prejudice. It therefore promotes good relations both between those sharing a protected characteristic and with the wider community.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

8. Will the draft strategy or policy have an impact on any relevant human rights? Please identify which human rights have been considered.

The draft policy impacts upon two articles of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Article 8: The right to respect for private and family life.

Article 14: Prohibition of discrimination in relation to any relevant articles of the Human Rights Act.

What impact was identified?

A positive impact was identified by protecting and promoting family life and prohibiting discrimination.

Please indicate the positive effect:

The allocation policy protects and promotes family life by recognising the holistic needs of applicants. For example, fostered children and carers may be considered as part of the household.

The policy does not discriminate against applicants with a protected characteristic.

Was the impact negative (removing, unjustifiably interfering with any human rights)?

If so, please indicate how the strategy / policy will be amended to reduce or eliminate any negative impact

Not applicable

9. Has there been consultation with relevant community groups to help inform this draft strategy or policy?

If not, please explain why:

If yes, please list who you have consulted:

A wide range of stakeholders have been consulted upon the policy, including:

Registered Providers

Councillors

Statutory agencies including Adult Social Care, Police and Probation

Voluntary agencies including housing advice services and housing support agencies

Council service areas including Community Safety and Environmental Health

Do you feel there are any groups that the draft strategy or policy significantly affects who you have not currently consulted? If yes, please contact the equalities officer for advice (see page 2 for contact details).

No - There will be public consultation to allow all groups and individuals to comment upon the policy.

10. Has the draft strategy or policy missed opportunities to advance equality of opportunity, positive attitudes and promote respect for human rights?

- No
- Yes – please outline the plans you have to address the missed opportunities (complete table below)

Action plan for mitigating action or advancing equality of opportunity and promoting respect for human rights

Action	Person responsible	Target completion date
Not applicable		