

PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an Equality Analysis (Part B).

Further information is available in the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance – see page 9.

1. Title	
Title: Introduction of First Homes and approval of local eligibility criteria	
Directorate: Regeneration & Environment Services	Service area: Planning Policy Team Planning, Regeneration and Transport
Lead person: Helen Sleigh Senior Planning Officer	Contact number: 01709 823831
Is this a:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
If other, please specify	

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
Adoption of the Interim Policy Statement setting out local eligibility criteria for the delivery within Rotherham of First Homes provides additional criteria and guidance for implementing the Council's Affordable Housing Policy CS7 Housing Mix and Affordability of adopted Local Plan Core Strategy.
An Integrated Impact Assessment (which included Equalities Impact Assessment)

was completed to support the adoption of the Core Strategy and Sites and Policies Documents which together form the Rotherham Local Plan.

First Homes Local Eligibility criteria will be used by applicants submitting planning applications across the Borough. The outcome will be planning decisions which comply with relevant national and local planning policies. The implementation of this policy will have an impact on residents, and workers within the Borough, who purchase a First Home on any future development site, and it will ensure a proportion of market sale housing is discounted for sale by 30% as a First Homes product

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

All the Council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc.

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>	✓	
Could the proposal affect service users? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>		✓
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics? <i>(Consider potential discrimination, harassment or victimisation of individuals with protected characteristics)</i>	✓	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal? <i>(It is important that the Council is transparent and consultation is carried out with members of the public to help mitigate future challenge)</i>		✓
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from commissioning or procurement)</i>		✓
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from your HR business partner)</i>	✓	

If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason

The Interim Policy Statement will require all applicants applying for planning permission to set out how they meet the requirements of this affordable housing policy and the local eligibility criteria subject to satisfying policy CS7 Housing Mix and Affordability of the Core Strategy.

If you have answered **no** to **all** the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals before decisions are made.

Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual's needs and encouraging participation.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below using the prompts for guidance and complete an Equality Analysis (Part B).

- **How have you considered equality and diversity?**

(think about the scope of the proposal, who is likely to be affected, equality related information, gaps in information and plans to address, consultation and engagement activities (taken place or planned) with those likely to be affected)

First Homes are a central government initiative to promote discounted market sale housing as an affordable housing product. The homes are discounted by 30% of their open market value, and in this Cabinet Report, it is proposed to include local eligibility criteria to ensure the First Homes product, is ring fenced to people, living and/or working within the Borough. Local eligibility criteria can only be applied for the first three months of marketing, after this time mandatory national criteria only will apply.

The Interim Policy Statement clearly establishes protocols for implementing local eligibility criteria, to ensure those in housing need within the Borough, are enabled to purchase their first home. The imposition of prescribed local eligibility criteria will ensure that people who reside or work within this Borough have the first opportunity to purchase such properties.

At the time of preparation of both the Core Strategy and Sites and Policies Document the Council undertook Equalities and Health Impact Assessments. These assessments are included within the accompanying Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs) published alongside both parts of the Local Plan on the Planning Policy web page.

<https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/planning-development/guide-local-plan/1>

The outputs and recommendations arising from the Health and Equalities Assessments,

that were prepared at each stage of plan preparation, were considered in drafting policies of the Local Plan. Therefore, any subsequent subsidiary and supporting planning guidance including Interim Planning and Policy Statements, are prepared in accordance with the Local Plan and fully reflect the equalities assessment and the outputs and recommendations, previously undertaken and included within the accompanying IIAs.

- **Key findings**

(think about any potential positive and negative impact on different equality characteristics, potential to promote strong and positive relationships between groups, potential to bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other, perception that the proposal could benefit one group at the expense of another)

The aims of this Interim Policy Statement are to ensure the Local Plan is in accordance with national planning policy requirements and to ensure these requirements positively benefit local people. Opportunities arising from new development can assist in meeting local housing needs identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This Interim Policy Statement will ensure that impacts on the community and wider environment are mitigated in accordance with the vision of the Local Plan: “to minimise inequalities through the creation of strong, cohesive and sustainable communities”.

- **Actions**

(think about how you will promote positive impact and remove/reduce negative impact)

The preparation of Interim Policy Statements and other guidance is a positive approach to ensuring the Local Plan and its policies can be implemented to their fullest extent. The guidance within the Interim Policy Statement removes any possibility of ambiguity or misunderstanding arising in submitted planning applications. The guidance will assist the Council in achieving the best possible outcomes from new development opportunities for its own communities and all people.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Helen Sleigh Senior Planner, Planning Policy Team

5. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:

Name	Job title	Date
Andy Duncan	Planning Policy Manager	04/02/22

6. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this screening relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy of **all** screenings should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date screening completed	20 January 2022
Report title and date	Introduction of First Homes and approval of local eligibility criteria Cabinet – 25 April 2022
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	20/01/2022