

Appendix 5.

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: Revisions to the Housing Allocation Policy

Directorate: Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

Service area: Housing Options

Lead person: Carol Wordsworth

Contact number: 01709 336009

Is this a:

☒ **Strategy / Policy**
☐ **Service / Function**
☐ **Other**

If other, please specify

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

Revision to the Housing Allocation Policy

This is a screening of the proposal to review the Council's Housing Allocation Policy which has been in place since 29 October 2014. There have been various revisions to the policy and the latest was in March 2021 which embedded the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

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?	✓	
Could the proposal affect service users?	✓	
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics?	✓	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal?	✓	
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?		✓
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices?		✓

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

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?**

The Council is required to allocate social housing according to a published Allocation

Policy which has been drawn up according to the Housing Act 1996, Part VI and Part VII, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Localism Act 2011. The Council's Allocation Policy focuses helping people in greatest need to gain access to suitable and appropriate accommodation.

The demand on the housing register has increased. As of 12 March 2024, the total number of applicants on the Council's Housing Register was 7,200. The equivalent figure in 2015 was 5,333.

Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, however at this stage we are only proposing to review the Policy. However, we do recognise that any changes, made via the review will affect 7200 applicants, some of which have protected characteristics.

As part of the review the Council will ensure the needs of applicants are at the heart of the review process through public consultation. Additionally, we will undertake a review of best practice, updated guidance and equivalent policies of other local authorities including the other three South Yorkshire policies.

Understanding the demographics of the customer group will need to be better understood to help to identify any key factors to consider in the development of the Policy and associated communication of the new policy.

Data, information, and analysis will be from a range of local sources and any identified needs will be addressed in the Policy.

The full EIA aims to analyse all data available covering all protected characteristics.

The Policy will demonstrate a transparent approach to making decisions regarding allocations in accordance with the Housing Act 1996 part VI.

• **Actions**

- Complete a full Equality Analysis
- Complete Part B full EIA
- Ensure supporting data is used to shape the Policy and reflective of local demographics.
- Collate equality data to help inform the full EIA during the review.
- Plan the level of consultation required for the Policy review.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	October 2024
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	February 2025
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Carol Wordsworth, Housing Advice & Assessment Manager

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Sandra Tolley	Head of Housing Options	30/4/2024

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	30/4/2024
Report title and date	Review of the Housing Allocation Policy
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	10 June 2024
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	30/4/2024