

Appendix 3

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: Housing Acquisitions Policy		
Directorate: Adult Care, Housing & Public Health	Service area: Strategic Housing	
Lead person: Garry Newton / Sarah Watts	Contact: garry.newton@rotherham.gov.uk	
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
The 'Housing Acquisitions Policy'. The policy will allow the Council to acquire former Council homes sold through the Right to Buy scheme, empty properties and other homes on the open market.

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.

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?**

Through the Housing Delivery Programme we aim to meet a range of housing needs based on data and evidence held about local demographics and trends. The housing we will build or acquire will help to ensure the following groups can access good quality, affordable and well managed homes: Families, older people, people with disabilities, single person households.

The Housing Acquisitions Policy aims to deliver on the above by enabling the Council to acquire properties in locations where housing need cannot be met through Council build and Section 106 acquisitions in the Housing Delivery Programme, due to a lack of available and developable land. The Policy therefore aims to meet the needs of communities that would otherwise have not been met.

Council homes are let via the Allocations Policy, for which a full equalities assessment has been carried out. This will ensure homes are allocated fairly and that no groups with protected characteristics are disadvantaged.

One of the main purposes of the Policy is to set out a transparent method of assessment for all acquisition opportunities, to ensure all opportunities presented to the Council by Rotherham residents and homeowners are measured to the same criteria.

- **Key findings**

There are several electoral wards with no planned or recent delivery of Council homes through the Housing Delivery Programme.

There are only 267 Council homes with four or more bedrooms, therefore limiting the number of homes available to larger families. There is a demand for larger/adapted family homes via 'Pathway to Care' pressures.

Around 40% of households on the housing register require a one-bedroomed property. There is demand for single households, temporary accommodation for homelessness and those seeking to downsize.

There are 869 households on the housing register with a medical priority.

Demand for family-sized three-bedroomed homes is the highest, in terms of average number of bids per Council home let, throughout the borough.

There are high numbers of care leavers who will need to be provided with affordable accommodation in the next two years. The availability of single person accommodation in the Borough is not able to meet the projected demand of our Children leaving care (the number have increased due to the number of children seeking asylum).

Young people with disabilities transitioning to adulthood with a complex need is a significant vulnerable group.

• **Actions**

- As part of the assessment process for all strategic acquisition opportunities, after consideration of the condition of the property, priority scoring will be given to larger family homes, one-bedroomed homes, homes with adaptations for disabilities and medical need, homes in areas with low level of recent/planned Council housing delivery and the most in demand house types at that time.
- We have sought advice from the Housing Options, Housing & Estates and CIC team in regard to the allocations process and type of homes to consider. As part of the decision making process, homes with parlour rooms, adaptations and extensions for adaptations will score favourably.
- Each acquisition opportunity presented, whether pursued or rejected, will be assessed, taking into account current housing need.
- Tenant profiling is updated annually to look at trends in Protected Characteristics of current tenants to help decision making for acquisitions.
- There is an ambition to develop supported, shared, dispersed accommodation to meet the needs of Care Leavers who will need support to build up their skills and abilities before achieving independence.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	03/08/23
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	16/10/25
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Garry Newton

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Peter Kandola	Interim Head of Strategic Housing and Development	02/08/23
James Clark	Assistant Director of Housing Services	02/08/23

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	03/08/23
Report title and date	Housing Acquisitions 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	Cabinet Report due for consideration 16/10/23
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	02/08/23