

Harborough District Council Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment is an on-going proactive process which requires us to consider the effect our decisions are likely to have on local communities, service users and employees, particularly those most vulnerable and at risk of disadvantage.

This document has been designed to assist in the collation of information and evidence required to support the 'Due Regard' process when introducing new policies/procedures/functions and services or reviewing existing ones.

Name of policy/procedure/function/service being assessed: Housing, Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Department and section: Housing

Name of lead officer: Steve Nash

Other people involved (assisting or reviewing – including any service users or stakeholder groups etc.):

Date assessment commenced: 24 January 2024

Date assessment signed off: 28 May 2024

Step 1: Defining the policy/procedure/function/service

Is this a new, amended, or reviewed policy? What are the aims, objectives and purpose and how will they be achieved? What are the main activities and which communities are likely to be affected by these activities? What are the expected outcomes?

The current Housing, Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping strategy runs from 2019 until 2024 and a new strategy covering 2024-2029 is being consulted upon with a view to being adopted.

The strategy comments upon increasing the supply of affordable homes, including homes specifically for people with a health issue, disability and for people experiencing multiple disadvantage such as those who have experienced domestic abuse and care leavers. Also covered is improving standards of existing homes, enabling people to remain in their existing homes and tackling empty homes. The section addressing homelessness covers a continuing emphasis on preventing homelessness, responding to those experiencing domestic abuse and rough sleeping in addition to ensuring sufficient temporary accommodation

Step 2: Data collection & evidence

What relevant evidence, research, data, and other information do you have and is there any further research, data, or evidence you need to fill any gaps in your understanding of the potential or known effects of the policy on different communities? Include quantitative data as well as qualitative intelligence such as community input and advice.

Analysis of housing related applications shows that broadly speaking we have more applications from women and those from ethnic minority background groups than would be expected from the census data. Of those who answered our disability related questions over two thirds advised that they considered themselves to have a disability.

Ethnicity	Census %	Housing Register %	Housing Register
Any other ethnic group	5.4	3.6	0.3
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi			0.4
Asian or Asian British - Indian			2.1
Asian or Asian British - Other			0.1
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani			0.7
Black or Black British - African	0.7	1.9	1.1
Black or Black British - Caribbean			0.8
Don't know / refused		1.5	1.5
Mixed - Other	2.1	5.6	1.7
Mixed - White and Asian			0.7
Mixed - White and Black African			0.6
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean			2.6
Other ethnic group: Arab	0.24	0.4	0.4
White - British	91	87	79.2
White - Irish			0.3
White Other - Greek/ Greek Cypriot			0.1

White Other - Gypsy/Roma			0.3
White Other - Irish Traveller			1.0
White Other - Kurdish			0.3
White Other - Other			5.4
White Other - Turkish			0.4

Gender	Census %	Housing Register %
Female	50.5	61
Male	49.5	39

Sexual orientation	Census %	Housing Register %
Prefer not to say	6	9
Heterosexual	92	83
Bisexual	1	4
Gay or Lesbian	1	2
Other	0	2

Disability	Homeless %
Blindness or partial loss of sight	1.0
Deafness or partial loss of hearing	2.7
Developmental disorder	0.4
Learning disability	4.5
Long term illness or condition	15.4
Mental ill health	35.3
No disabilities	37.8
Other disabilities	2.9
Physical disability	0.0

Housing Register data

Bedroom need	Count of applicants	Housing Register %
1 bed need	408	46.6%
2 bed need	278	31.8%
3 bed need	136	15.5%
4 bed need	38	4.3%
5 bed need	13	1.5%
6 bed need	1	0.1%
7 bed need	1	0.2%
8 bed need	0	0.0%
	875	

Step 3: Consultation and involvement

Have you consulted and if so, outline what you did and who you consulted with and why.

The draft strategy was presented on the Council website between 12 January 2024 until 5 February 2024 for public comments. A copy of the draft strategy (via a link or an attachment) was sent to all elected members, key Council Officers, all Registered Provider partners, contacts in the local specialist voluntary sector and to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

The consultative process was pushed through several Council social media channels including Facebook and X (formerly Twitter)

To assist in responding a set of questions were provided

1. Are there any priorities that you think are important that have not been included under any of the themes?
2. Are the objectives right and do they respond to the relevant priority effectively?
3. Do you think the actions we propose under each priority are the right ones? Is there anything else we should do?
4. Please tell us how you and your organisation could be engaged to help us address the priorities and fulfil the objectives of the Strategy.

In addition to the draft strategy a copy of the Evidence base (a 61-page document containing supporting statistics) was also available online.

Responses were received from a number of organisations and individuals. In keeping with accepted practice, we will not identify the respondents.

Overall, the Strategy has been very well received and this came through clearly from responses received during the consultation period from partners and key stakeholders. Below noted are the comments received:

A partner Registered Provider (a Housing Association) stated; The Strategy is comprehensive and sets out the key data on the District and current operating environment.

.... as an existing Registered Housing Partner we are supportive of the overall approach and aspirations and will continue to work in partnership with Harborough District Council and other partners.

Another Registered Provider commented: I do not feel that there is any priority that has been omitted, that the objectives are right and proposed actions are appropriate Everything reflects the nature of the District and is supported by an evidence base

Another Partner Organisation also commented: A really robust Strategy and we are happy to supports its aims.....

Step 4: Potential impact

Considering the evidence from the data collection and feedback from consultation, which communities will be affected and what barriers may these individuals or groups face in relation to Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Other groups e.g. rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, current and ex-armed forces personnel (Veterans), deprived or disadvantaged communities and also the potential impact on Community Cohesion. Remember people have multiple characteristics so the impact of a policy on a particular community may impact people within the community differently. Where possible include numbers likely to be affected.

The strategy impacts on a wide range of people. Those particularly impacted are households on a low income and therefore unable to access other forms of accommodation such as home ownership and private rental. This includes, but is not limited to those

- Out of work or on zero hours or limited hours contracts
- Leaving Care
- Leaving the Armed Forces
- Fleeing Domestic Abuse
- Newly arrived in the country such as Ukrainians and former asylum seekers

Step 5: Mitigating and assessing the impact

If you consider there to be actual or potential adverse impact or discrimination, please outline this below. State whether it is justifiable or legitimate and give reasons. If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately. If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people. Consider what barriers you can remove, whether reasonable adjustments may be necessary and how any unmet needs have identified can be addressed.

There is a focus on those households who are homeless in consequence of domestic abuse. This is justified as it remains a leading cause of homelessness (29% of cases) and has been highlighted as a priority under the new and strengthened provisions of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

There is also a focus on increasing single person accommodation. This is justified as single person households account for 47% of the Housing Register.

Otherwise the strategy continues to provide services for those who are in housing need. These services are guided by primary and secondary statute, codes of guidance and precedent setting case law – all of which are outside of the Council’s direct control. The council continues to provide tailored advice to those prescribed in statute and guidance including:

- (a) persons released from prison or youth detention accommodation,
- (b) care leavers,
- (c) former members of the regular armed forces,
- (d) victims of domestic abuse,
- (e) persons leaving hospital,
- (f) persons suffering from a mental illness or impairment,

Step 6: Making a decision

Summarise your findings and give an overview of whether the policy will meet Harborough District Council’s responsibilities in relation to equality, diversity, and human rights. Does it contribute to the achievement of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty – eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations?

The new strategy focuses on increasing the supply of affordable homes. The strategy builds on the previous strategy to ensure there is adequate emergency accommodation and services for people who are in housing need.

The strategy does not adversely impact on the Council’s Public Sector Equality Duty. Where certain groups are identified for additional support then this is justified by demand/ need or through statute and guidance

Step 7: Monitoring, evaluation & review of your policy/procedure/service change

What monitoring systems will you put in place to promote equality of opportunity, monitor impact and effectiveness, and make positive improvements? How frequently will monitoring take place and who will be responsible?

Once adopted the strategy will be underpinned by an action plan. The action plan will have built in monitoring and reporting as appropriate.

Equality Improvement Plan

Equality Objective :

Action:

Officer Responsible:

By when:

Equality Objective :

Action:

Officer Responsible:

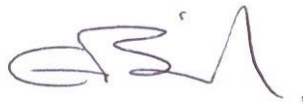
By when:

Equality Objective :

Action:

Officer Responsible:

By when:



Signed off by:

Head of Regulatory Services

Date:

28th May 2024

Once signed off, please forward a copy for publication to Julie Clarke, Equality and Diversity Officer e-mail: j.clarke@harborough.gov.uk