

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Initial Screening Form



Screening determines whether the policy has any relevance for equality, ie is there any impact on one or more of the 9 protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership*
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

1. Policy/service/function title	BMSDC Housing Strategy 2018 – 2036, to include the Homelessness Reduction Strategy 2018 - 2023 First phase; 2018 - 2023
2. Lead officer (responsible for the policy/service/function)	Robert Hobbs – BMSDC Housing Strategy Heather Sparrow – BMSDC Homelessness Reduction Strategy
3. Is this a new or existing policy/service/function?	BMSDC Housing Strategy is new. However, the Homelessness Reduction Strategy 2018-2023 is a 5-year review and a revision new Duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

<p>4. What exactly is proposed? (Describe the policy/service/ function and the changes that are being planned?)</p>	<p>For both Councils to adopt a BMSDC Housing Strategy 2018-2036, in line with the timeline of the new Joint Local Plan 2019 – 2036.</p> <p>Phase 1 Housing Strategy Action Plans will cover the period 2018 – 2023.</p> <p>The new Housing Strategy will be developed through extensive collaboration and engagement with relevant internal operational teams, external housing market stakeholders – such as developers, estate agents, public sector partners, registered social landlords, voluntary organisations – and town and parish councils.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy will set out how the housing needs of the residents of Babergh and Mid Suffolk will be met over the next 5 years by the Council, partners, and stakeholders.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy is a key document used to set the strategic direction in the planning and delivery of new homes, and, the delivery of housing related services. It supports the outcomes in the BMSDC Strategic Priorities to ensure we have ‘more of the right sort of homes, of the right tenure, in the right places’.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy also supports Government Housing Policy which is ‘helping local councils and developers work with local communities to plan and build better places to live for everyone. This includes building affordable housing, improving the quality of rented housing, helping more people to buy a home, and providing housing support for vulnerable people’.</p> <p>At the time of writing (June 2018) final decisions have not been made as to any housing related policy changes, service changes or council functions. However, if policy / service or function changes are required as part of the implementation of the new Housing Strategy or revised Homeless reduction Strategy specific EQIA work will be carried out as that programme of work is developed.</p>
<p>5. Why? (Give reasons why these changes are being introduced)</p>	<p>There is currently no legal requirement for local authorities to create and / or publish a Housing Strategy under the deregulation Act 2015. Section 29 ‘Removal of power to require preparation of Housing Strategies’.</p> <p>However, both Councils want to see greater focus on the planning and delivery of new homes and housing related services and an evidenced based BMSDC Housing Strategy will be a useful tool to support this ambition. ‘Housing delivery’ is one of the Councils six priorities for 2018 /19.</p>

	<p>It is intended to benefit all residents of Babergh and Mid Suffolk district council areas.</p> <p>The new Housing Strategy (including the Homelessness Reduction Strategy) will enable the Councils to focus their own resources and those of key stakeholders on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventing Homelessness • Stimulating the housing market • Challenging poor quality housing in the private sector, and supporting improvements • Housing acting to support jobs-led economic growth • Commissioning housing support for people with complex needs, via SCC • Increasing housing options for our ageing population • Promoting and supporting independent living through the home • Promoting affordable warmth • Supporting regeneration of place including housing to improve quality of place.
<p>6. How will it be implemented? (Describe the decision making process, timescales, process for implementation)</p>	<p>Summary of Housing Strategy development process</p> <p>a. Scoping / ideas / SLT Nov '17 – Jan '18</p> <p>b. Formal decision-making processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Overview and Scrutiny for process sign-off. July 2018 • Cabinet's assess and comment on 1st draft: Sept 2018 • Cabinet's: Request adoption of final draft: December 2018 <p>c. Additional input from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial technical stakeholder workshop April 2018 • All Member briefings / workshops x 2; June and November 2018 • 6-week open consultation period Sept/Oct 2018. The consultation will be presented via a variety of communication channels and in formats to ensure groups are not knowingly excluded. <p>The BMSDC Housing Strategy and BMSDC Homelessness Reduction Strategy will go to both Cabinets in December 2018 for formal adoption.</p>

<p>7. Is there potential for differential impact (negative or positive) on any of the protected characteristics?</p>	<p>Yes, potentially. The Housing Strategy outcomes, the delivery of new homes, will be monitored in line with the Councils existing procedures to ensure fair use of resources.</p> <p>The 2017 Strategic Housing Market Assessment evidence base clearly defines the future housing needs of residents, often mentioning specifically those households with protected characteristics.</p> <p>The evidence in the SHMA will form the basis of the programme of work for new homes delivery, in addition evidence generated by local housing needs surveys at parish level, Neighbourhood Plan Housing Policies where Plans have been made and adopted, and work of other community groups with interests in housing as appropriate.</p> <p>Good quality housing is recognised as a key factor in promoting health and wellbeing, supporting independent living, and moving towards more integrated services to reduce ill health and promote positive health outcomes. With an ageing population there are likely to be increasing numbers of people with complex health problems and disabilities, who may have different housing and service needs to other age groups. It would be entirely appropriate to address these specific housing needs.</p> <p>Younger people as individuals or households are finding it increasingly difficult to get on the housing market ladder, no matter what tenure; to buy; to privately rent; or to live in a social affordable home of their own, as homes demand continues to outstrip supply. Therefore, the strategy highlights the need to make provision for younger people to access affordable housing through the offer of more homeownership products.</p>
<p>8. Is there the possibility of discriminating unlawfully, directly or indirectly, against people from any protected characteristic?</p>	<p>No; both the Housing Strategy and Homelessness Reduction Strategy are focussed on creating a positive impact on housing availability, current housing stock conditions and housing related services provided by both Councils and other providers.</p> <p>For example, with an ageing demographic, providing an increase in more suitable housing options for older households who may prefer and be at less risk from slips, trips and falls in single storey accommodation. Additionally, we need to create more fully accessible homes to meet the needs of households where one or more person requires this type of housing solution.</p> <p>For example, wider doorways, ramps up to front doors, increased light levels, improvements to heating systems thus reducing the potential for fuel poverty, level access wet rooms instead of</p>

	<p>bathrooms, an increase of households in receipt of Disabled Facilities Grants and home improvements / adaptations support independence wellbeing and choice for people living with disabilities or poor mental health. These changes to existing housing stock and building new homes with these features in mind also prevent many residents becoming vulnerable. Many households with children will also reap positive benefit from these types of more accessible, and user-friendly homes.</p>
<p>9. Could there be an effect on relations between certain groups?</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>The BMSDC Housing Strategy is intended to enhance relations between certain groups by extending and creating greater choice and options in the local housing markets.</p>
<p>10. Does the policy explicitly involve, or focus on a particular equalities group, i.e. because they have particular needs?</p>	<p>Yes. See 7 and 8 above for some examples.</p> <p>Additionally, the housing needs of Gypsy, Traveller, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers has been assessed (see https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/Final-ANA-Report-May-2017.pdf) and currently a need has been found across Suffolk for additional Gypsy and Traveller transit sites.</p> <p>At the time of writing (June 2018) final decisions have not been made as to any housing related policy changes, service changes or council functions. However, if policy / service or function changes are required as part of the implementation of the new Housing Strategy or revised Homelessness Reduction Strategy, additional specific EQIA work will be carried out as that programme of work is developed to ensure compliance with the Public-Sector Equality Duties.</p>
<p>Proceed to full assessment: No Equalities Lead sign-off: Kate Parnum, 9th July 2018.</p>	
<p>Authors signature; Gill Cook</p>	
<p>Date of completion: 9th July 2018</p>	

Any queries concerning the completion of this form should be addressed to the Equality and Diversity Lead.

* Public sector duty does not apply to marriage and civil partnership.