

# **Equality Impact Assessment**

for

# **Stirling's Local Housing Strategy 2012**

September 2012

*Links to Local Housing Strategy : This Equality Impact Assessment for Stirling's Local Housing Strategy 2012 should be read in conjunction with the Strategy itself and the 5 background Consultation Report, all of which can be found on the Council's website at <http://www.stirling.gov.uk/services/housing/local-housing-strategy>*

**Introduction**

The Equality Act 2010 introduces a duty on public bodies and others carrying out public functions to ensure that they consider the needs of all individuals in their day-to-day work - in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to their own employees.

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to help ensure that the Council does not discriminate in the delivery of its services or in the design of its policies and where possible the Council identifies opportunities to promote equality and good relations between individuals and groups. An EqIA involves anticipating the consequences of the Council's functions and policies on different sections of the community (and colleagues), making sure that, as far as possible, any negative impact (discrimination) on any group is eliminated and that opportunities for promoting equality are maximised.

- Direct discrimination means treating a person less favourably than another on the grounds of their protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination means the application of a provision, criteria or practice that puts people from different backgrounds at a particular disadvantage and cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

The assessment extends to monitoring the actual effects of the function or policy and requires the Council to take action if there are any concerns that the function or policy is having a detrimental impact on any of the protected characteristic groups:

Equality Strands	Protected Characteristics Group
Race	Black & Minority Ethnic Community (BME) including Gypsy Travellers
Disability	Disability : Physical and mental impairment
Gender	Gender : Women & Men
Sexual orientations	Lesbian, Gay, Bi Sexual and Transgender (LGBT)
Belief	Belief : Religious and political
Age	Younger and Older people

### **The Equality Impact Assessment process**

Council officers must carry out an Equality Impact Assessment for any new Council policy that is being developed or for an existing policy that is being revised or updated. The aim is to assess any potential impact the policy will have on the range of stakeholder groups, including those with protected characteristics. The Equality Impact Assessment considers three types of impacts:

1. **Positive** - An impact that could improve equality of opportunity and / or relations between different protected characteristic groups. The positive impact may be differential where the positive impact on one Protected Characteristic Group is likely to be greater than on another. This is permissible but the EqlA must demonstrate that any positive impacts justifiable in law do not amount to discrimination (direct or indirect) for any other Protected Characteristic Groups.
2. **Neutral** - An impact that is neither positive nor negative. This is permissible but the EqlA should give thought to ways to further develop the policy so that it has a positive impact on the Protected Characteristic Groups.
3. **Negative** - An impact that could disadvantage one or more Protected Characteristic Groups. This disadvantage may be differential where the negative impact on one Protected Characteristic Group is likely to be greater than on another.

Where officers identify a negative impact, further assessment is required to identify the level of impact and the number of people potentially affected by the negative impact. Officers should then take steps to remove the negative impact where the policy is shown to be unlawfully discriminatory. There may be circumstances however where a negative impact cannot be eliminated altogether.

### **Equalities and the development of Stirling's Local Housing Strategy 2012**

A key reason for developing a Local Housing Strategy is to address housing and support needs, particularly of the most vulnerable people in Society. The Council has produced the LHS following two years of consultation and discussion. Section 5 deals specifically with the needs of those with particular housing needs including older people, those with disabilities and those from BME groups.

The LHS highlights and summarises many policies and strategies that the Council and partner agencies are pursuing. Similarly, this EqlA for the LHS summarises the equality issues that are addressed. EqlAs that are more detailed have been (or will be) produced for the more detailed strategies and policies on which the LHS is based. The main strategies and policies, which are the responsibility of the Housing Service and on which EqlAs are outstanding (or need to be updated), include allocations, homelessness, rent arrears, tenant participation, housing adaptations and housing capital expenditure.



## The Equality Impact Assessment Form

1. Title of Policy	<b>Local Housing Strategy</b>	2. Date of Initial Screening	<b>August 2012</b>
3. Is this a Council-wide or Service specific policy?	<b>Council wide</b>	4. Is this a new policy?	<b>Existing</b>
5. If Service specific, which Service?	<b>Housing &amp; Customer Service</b>		
6. Names of Officer(s) involved in Review	<b>Steve Mason (Housing), Gavin Kennedy (Housing), Florence Miller (Social Services), Claire Milne (Planning)</b>	6a. Contact Officer:	<b>Steve Mason</b>

7a. Who else is involved in the delivery of this policy? (e.g. other Council Services or partner agencies)	<b>Council : Planning, Social Services, Community Planning, Environmental Health, Money Advice, Community Services. Partners : Scottish Government, Local Housing Associations, National Park Authority, Raploch Urban Regeneration Company, representatives of Private Sector Landlords, Homes for Scotland, Stirling Voluntary Enterprise, Forth Valley Health Board.</b>
7b. How have they been involved in the Equality Impact Assessment?	<b>Discussions at the Strategic Housing Forum and discussions amongst the interdisciplinary group undertaking the EqlA Review.</b>
8. What are the main aims of your policy?	<b>To meet housing needs; improve housing conditions and energy efficiency, address climate change and fuel poverty; address homelessness; meet particular housing needs.</b>
9. Who are the intended beneficiaries?	<b>Those that live in and want to live in the Stirling Council area</b>
10. Is the policy intended to increase equality of opportunity by permitting positive action or action to redress disadvantage?	<b>Yes : The policy seeks to take action to redress disadvantage now and in the future amongst</b> <b>1. People who are homeless.</b> <b>2. Those people with particular housing needs who experience difficulties securing appropriate accommodation and support and</b> <b>3. People suffering fuel poverty.</b>

11. What evidence will you use to identify any potential positive or negative impacts?	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Details</b>
	Consultation	<p><b>Consultation at fourteen Local Housing Strategy / Local Development Plan Roadshow events and three Annual Housing Open Days. There has been close cooperation throughout with the staff working on the Local Development Plan.</b></p> <p><b>Through regular meetings of the Strategic Housing Forum, the Gypsy Travellers Working Group, the Housing &amp; Social Services Strategy Group and the Private Rented Sector Forum.</b></p> <p><b>Through meetings with the Older People's Reference Group, the Tenants' Assembly, the Multi Cultural Partnership, Youth Voices &amp; Members of Scottish Youth Parliament, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Provider Groups, the ACCESS Group &amp; Community Planning Area Forums.</b></p> <p><b>All Community Councils have received a copy of the draft Local Housing Strategy.</b></p>
	Research	<p><b>Community Care Housing Needs Assessment, 2006</b></p> <p><b>Assessing the Housing Needs of Minority Ethnic Communities, 2007</b></p> <p><b>Housing Need and Demand Assessment, 2011</b></p> <p><b>Reshaping Older People's Care, 2011</b></p>
	Officer knowledge & Experience	<b>Officers have gained knowledge &amp; experience through research into prevalence rates and service delivery and the consultation that has taken place over the last two and a half years.</b>
	Equalities monitoring data	<p><b>In January 2012 the balance of care stood at 66% in long term care/ hospital; 34% cared for at home. This is an increase from January 2010 when 26% were cared for at home.</b></p> <p><b>Whether waiting lists exist:- for adaptations, housing allocations and transfers, accommodation and support for those with learning disabilities, etc. If they do exist, whether the Council and its partners are responding to the expressed needs within a reasonable timeframe.</b></p> <p><b>The numbers of people experiencing fuel poverty. In 2010, 10,000 Stirling households were deemed to be fuel poor. Of these, 3,000 were extremely fuel poor.</b></p>
User feedback	<b>Through further customer research and regular meetings with the groups outlined at Q11.</b>	



12. What, if any, Protected Characteristic Groups could be affected by the policy?	Protected Characteristic Group	Positive Impact (+)	Neutral Impact (0)	Negative Impact (-)	Comment
Consider also the relationship between belonging to an Protected Characteristic Group and the effect of wider cross cutting issues (e.g. a gay homeless person)	BME	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing Allocations may have an impact but that policy is not addressed in the LHS beyond a commitment to undertake a review. An EqIA for Housing Allocations is to be undertaken.
	Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See below
	Gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See above
	LGBT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See above
	Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not an issue on which Housing impacts
	Younger/ Older	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See below
	Poverty/Socio-economic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See below

<p>13. From the Protected Characteristic Groups you have highlighted what positive and negative impacts do you think the policy might have?</p> <p>Detail the impacts and describe the groups affected.</p>	<p>Positive Impacts</p> <p><b>Disability and Younger/ Older:</b> A major focus of Section 5 of the LHS is meeting the needs of older people and those with particular housing needs, which includes a range of disabilities. The focus is the continuing shift in the balance of care, working with colleagues in Social Services and Health to enable people to stay in their own homes and return to their own homes. Measures include ensuring adaptations are available &amp; carried out timeously and ensuring appropriate forms of housing &amp; support are available.</p> <p>Homelessness, which is the focus of Section 4, tends to affect young people and care leavers, victims of domestic violence, people with poor mental health and people with a disability. The LHS seeks to ensure the provision of appropriate accommodation and support for all that require it.</p> <p><b>Poverty/Socio-economic:</b> Section 2 of the LHS addresses Fuel Poverty. The strategy looks at a number of ways of reducing fuel poverty including improving the energy efficiency of the housing stock and assisting people that are in fuel poverty to get on to the best tariff and to address debts that have accumulated. In Section 3, the Council seeks to work with communities and with its partners to address deprivation and inequality.</p>	<p>Negative Impacts</p> <p><b>No negative impacts</b></p>
<p>14. If you have identified any negative impacts, use the matrix to identify the level of the negative impact.</p>		<p><b>No negative impacts</b></p>
<p>15. How will the implementation of the policy be monitored?</p>	<p><b>Regular meetings with the groups outlined at question 11.</b></p>	
<p>16. How will the results of the monitoring be used to develop the policy?</p>	<p><b>The results will be reported back to the Strategic Housing Forum which oversees the LHS development and implementation process.</b></p>	
<p>17. When is the policy due to be reviewed?</p>	<p><b>Bi annually to 2017 when a new Local Housing Strategy will be approved by the Council</b></p>	
<p>18. Summarise the results of the EqlA.</p>	<p><b>The EqlA demonstrates extensive consultation on the development of the LHS over the past 2.5 years. This includes consultation with equalities groups, their representatives and service providers. The EqlA demonstrates no negative impacts and positive impacts in relation to Disability, Younger/ Older and Poverty/Socio-economic.</b></p>	