



Equality Relevance Assessment

1. Details of proposal	
Policy title	SHIP – Strategic Housing Investment Plan
Lead officer	Colin Miller
Date relevance considered	7 th October 2014
2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented?	
YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> x
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will, or may potentially:	
General Duties	Impact on equality (Yes or No)
Reduce or increase discrimination, victimisation or harassment against people covered by the equality protected characteristics?	Yes
Reduce or increase equality of opportunity between people who share an equality protected characteristic and those who do not?	Yes
Provide opportunity to improve good relations between those who share an equality protected characteristic and those who do not?	Yes
4. Equality impact assessment required? (Two Yes above = full assessment necessary)	
YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> x
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Decision rationale	
<p>The SHIP forms part of the Local Housing Strategy process for WLC and sets out the key development priorities for the council. It informs the Scottish Government’s housing investment decisions and is developed in consultation with key stakeholders. These stakeholders include other departments in WLC, RSL partners and tenants. The SHIP reinforces the council as the strategic housing authority and sets how the investment priorities will be delivered, identifying the resources required and involving other key parties.</p>	

- No assessment required – process ends
- Assessment required – continue to next section

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Details of proposal	
Details of others involved	Gillian Edwards, Grant Walker, Colin Miller
Date assessment conducted	13 th October 2014
2. Aims of the proposed change to council policy or resources	
<p>The SHIP sets out how investment in affordable housing will be delivered over a three year period to achieve outcomes set out in the Local Housing Strategy. The main outcomes are:</p>	
LHS Theme	LHS Outcome
Meeting Housing Need and Demand	People in West Lothian can find a suitable place to live and have quality options available to them.
Housing Options	Homelessness is prevented for people in West Lothian as far as possible. Effective advice and support is in place for people who become homeless.
Independent Living	People in West Lothian can access the appropriate range of care and support services enabling them to live independently in their own homes where they choose to do so.
Improving Communities	Our communities are attractive, safe places to live and work
House Condition	Improve house condition in West Lothian
Fuel Poverty and Climate Change	People facing fuel poverty can access the help and support they need. People in West Lothian live in energy efficient housing. Improve sustainability of existing housing.
<p>It identifies sites for development by both the Council and RSLs and indicates the type and tenure of housing to be constructed. A key aim of the SHIP is to ensure that the type of housing constructed meets current and future needs of people in West Lothian who seek affordable housing. RSL partners are involved in delivery of the housing and like the Council they are required to comply with the relevant guidance and legislation to ensure that housing meets a range of needs and is physically and financially accessible. The SHIP provides an opportunity for local authorities to set out key investment priorities for affordable housing and demonstrate how these will be delivered.</p>	
3. What equality data, research or other evidence has been used to inform this assessment?	

West Lothian's population continues to grow and it has been predicted to reach 196,664 by 2037, according to National Records of Scotland's forecast. With this increase in population comes a demand for affordable housing as people seek to find a suitable place to live and have quality options available to them.

The development priorities set out in the SHIP aims to meet the demand of West Lothian and the following documents are relevant in consideration of the SHIP:

- Single Outcome Agreement
- Local Housing Strategy 2012-17 (related themes and outcomes mentioned in section 2)
- Local Housing Strategy Update 2014
- Lothian Housing Needs and Demand Study Update - Tribal Consulting
- Supporting People Strategy 2003-2007 - WLC
- Assessing the Needs of Minority Ethnic Communities in West Lothian (ODS Consulting)
- SESplan Housing Needs and Demand Assessment
- Review of Service Plans
- Review of Services for Older People in West Lothian by Archie Fairley Aug 2009
- Smart Technology and Community Care for Older People: innovation in West Lothian, Scotland" by Alison Bowes and Gillian McColgan pub by Age Concern Scotland.
- Age, Home and Community: A Strategy for Scotland's Older People 2012-2021

There is also a range of Strategic Service Statements that will help inform our assessment of the requirement for housing for people with particular needs as we develop the SHIP and LHS as follows:

- Service Statement Addiction Services in West Lothian
- Children and Families Service Statement 2008-2011
- West Lothian Council Social Policy Criminal Justice Social Work Service 2009/10 -2011/12 Service Commissioning Statement
- West Lothian Strategic Service Statement Dementia 1 April 2009- 31 March 2009
- Social Policy Health Improvement Team Statement 1/4/09 -31/03/12
- Draft Service Statement Learning Disabilities Services 2009-2011
- Draft West Lothian Service Statement Mental Health Services 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2012
- West Lothian Strategic Service Statement Older People 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2012
- Draft West Lothian Strategic Service Statement Physical Disability 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2012

Many of these Strategic Service Statements relate directly to improving services for those that are covered by the protected characteristics and will inform the requirements for meeting the needs of housing for these groups.

Furthermore, as commissioning plans are developed, these too will influence the type of housing that is planned.

4. Details of consultation and involvement

Consultation has been undertaken with:

- partner RSLs
- Disability West Lothian and West Lothian Disability Forum were involved in the Equalities Impact Assessment for the Local Housing Strategy. The LHS was also made available to the West Lothian Race Forum and the Gender Equality Forum.

As part of the second phase of new build Council housing, Disability West Lothian were involved in the selection process for the contractor and this has helped to inform the design and layout of the new build Council homes. Disability West Lothian will also be engaged in the next new build Council Housing development. There has been consultation with Social Policy to consider options for particular needs housing in the next new build Council housing development. It has been identified that increasing the number of bungalows will assist in meeting the needs of a range of households. There is also high demand for smaller properties.

The SHIP will be reported to the Services for the Community Policy Development and Tenant Scrutiny Panel and to the Council Executive. Local Community Councils are also consulted.

Discussion has also taken place on housing need and demand at the *1000 Houses Project Board* Sub Group on *Housing Mix*. This group involves consultation on the provision of housing type and mix with NHS professionals, including Occupational Therapists with expertise in housing adaptations for disabled people.

5. Issues identified and 'protected characteristics' impact

(Covering: age; disability; gender; gender identity; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief and sexual orientation equality)

Age Equality

All housing proposed in the SHIP will be built to Housing for Varying Needs Standards.

This is to ensure it is accessible to as wide a range of the population as possible regardless of age.

In planning the provision of 1000 new Council Houses specific consideration has been given to the type of housing for an ageing population who will have a range of needs. Specifically provision for elderly people will be provided in ground floor accommodation or in bugalows.

Disability

The affordable housing that is proposed through the SHIP whether it is built by RSLs or the Council will be built to Housing for Varying Needs Standards. This includes a high proportion of wheelchair specific provision in the Council's own new build programme. Ground floor accommodation in cottage flats and terraced or semi-detached properties will also provide a flexible house type for people with a range of needs including those with some mobility issues. A number of units of RSL housing proposed in SHIP programme will be for people with particular needs. In particular the West Lothian Development Alliance and Bield Housing Association plan to use specialist knowledge to provide housing for people with disabilities and for older people.

Gender Equality and Gender Identity

Access to housing that is provided through the SHIP will be subject to allocations policies developed by RSLs and the Council all of which are themselves subject to relevant equalities legislation.

Pregnancy and maternity

There are no specific pregnancies or maternity equality issues that apply to the SHIP.

Race Equality

In planning for new housing provision through the SHIP the Council and its partners have and will continue to take account of issues relating to ethnic minorities. These include particular demand issues, such as household size and age distribution as well as accessibility for these groups where language and communication may be an issue. As a result particular consideration has been given to census data which indicates the growing population in West Lothian of Polish immigrants; the age "bulge" of ethnic groups which is appearing in the elderly and language barriers.

Following the appointment of the Gypsy Travellers Officer outreach services have been further developed. This involves networking with other authorities and close working with other agencies such as Police Scotland.

The provision of physical housing will be a fit for all household types, however, and will be allocated accordingly. The Council Allocation Policy, which is currently under review and due for approval in Spring 2015 will be Equality Impact Assessed to ensure that no particularly minority group is disadvantaged through the delivery of the new Council Housing.

Similarly RSLs are subject to regulation by the Scottish Government Housing Regulator in relation to their individual allocation policies. RSLs also take into account the demand expressed from ethnic groups for larger housing. This follows a recommendation in the Assessing the Housing Needs of Minority Ethnic Communities in West Lothian. In the Council's planned 1000 Houses programme 190 new units (19%) are planned to provide 3 bedrooms or more.

RSLs ensure that LIFT properties are promoted to minority ethnic communities as an affordable way of accessing owner occupation.

Religion or belief/Sexual orientation

There are no specific religion or belief, or sexual orientation equality issues that apply to the SHIP. Access to housing that is provided through the SHIP will be subject to the revised Council Allocation Policy and to those of RSLs, all of which are regulated by the Scottish Government and which are themselves subject to relevant equalities legislation and good practice.

6. What measures are in place to monitor the actual impact following implementation?

Equalities monitoring is carried out as part of the application process by Housing Allocations.

Following allocation of new build housing a new tenant visit is carried out as well as a Development Survey to record satisfaction issues with the property and any tenancy issues which have arisen.

Reports on the new build programme are provided to the Tenants' Panel and to tenant networks. The Race Equality Forum will continue to visit completed developments and provide comment and feedback for subsequent developments.

7. Recommendation

- Implement proposal with no amendments
- Implement proposal taking account of mitigating actions (as outlined below)
- Reject proposal due to disproportionate impact on equality

8. Mitigating actions and additional outputs

NONE

- **Equality impact assessment completed**
- **Final assessment must be published on the council website:**
[Council EQIA Publication Page](#)
- **Link must be included in "Background References" section of committee/management reports**