

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

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| <p>1. Policy/service/function title</p> | <p>Babergh and Mid Suffolk Housing Strategy 2019 – 2024 (titled ‘Homes and Housing Strategy’).</p> |
| <p>2. Lead officers (responsible for the policy/service/function)</p> | <p>Gavin Fisk – Babergh and Mid Suffolk ‘Homes and Housing Strategy’.</p> |
| <p>3. Is this a new or existing policy/service/function?</p> | <p>Babergh and Mid Suffolk ‘Homes and Housing Strategy’ 2019 -2024 is new.</p> |
| <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 5 year Babergh and Mid Suffolk Homes and Housing Strategy 2019-2024. However, the strategy and actions will require longer term commitments in line with the timeframe of the new Joint Local Plan 2018 – 2036.</p> <p>Phase 1 Homes and Housing Strategy and Action Plans will cover the period 2019 – 2024.</p> <p>The new Homes and Housing Strategy will be developed through extensive collaboration and engagement with relevant internal operational teams, external housing market stakeholders – such as</p> |

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| | <p>developers, estate agents, public sector partners, registered social landlords, voluntary organisations – and town and parish councils.</p> <p>The Homes and 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 Homes and 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 Strategic Priority outcomes to ensure we have ‘more of the right sort of homes, of the right tenure, in the right places.’</p> <p>The Homes and Housing Strategy also supports Government Housing Policy which is ‘<i>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</i>’.</p> <p>If policy / service or function changes are required as part of the implementation of the new Homes and Housing Strategy (or associated revised Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeper Strategy), specific Equality Impact Assessment 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 ‘<i>Removal of power to require preparation of Housing Strategies</i>’.</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 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Homes and 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 Homes and Housing Strategy (including the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeper Strategy) will enable the Councils to focus their own resources and those of key stakeholders on:</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The housing market functions effectively, providing homes which are as affordable as possible; to meet the needs of residents and support the local economy. • There is a wide and varied choice of good quality, sustainable homes of different sizes, types, and tenures, to meet the needs of a wide range of different households. • Homelessness and Rough Sleeping is prevented, and effective housing options meet the needs of vulnerable people. • Babergh and Mid Suffolk is an effective social landlord known for delivering quality services. • Homes are in high quality sustainable environments, served by jobs and community facilities, appropriate green space, effective transport links and other necessary infrastructure. • Best use is made of private sector land and accommodation across the Districts. • People live in vibrant and well-connected communities; and homes and communities continue to meet the needs of residents into the future. • Everyone has a suitable home, and residents are able to live as healthily, safely, independently as possible within sustainable communities. • Both Councils have strong relationships with residents, developers and partners that enable us to deliver housing, infrastructure and services effectively, and to innovate where appropriate. |
| <p>6. How will it be implemented? (Describe the decision- making process, timescales, process for implementation)</p> | <p>Summary of Homes and Housing Strategy development process</p> <p>a. Scoping / ideas / SLT Nov 2017 – Jan 2018 – Complete.</p> <p>b. Political formal decision-making processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Overview and Scrutiny for process sign-off. July 2018. Complete. • Cabinet’s to comment on 1st draft, seek approval for next stage (6-week consultation):^{**}Revised timetable to accommodate further revisions to draft strategies: 6 week consultation from 26th October – 7th November 2018. Also extended for further 2 weeks due to request from 2 Mid |

Suffolk parishes. Total 8 weeks. **Complete.**

- Full Councils: Request adoption of both strategies: **Revision to timetable; scheduled for March 2019
- c. Additional input from:
- Initial technical stakeholder workshop April 2018. **Complete**
 - All Member briefings / workshops x 2; June and November 2018. **Complete**
 - 6-week open consultation period Sept/Oct 2018. ** Revised timings Oct – early Dec 2018. The consultation will be presented via a variety of communication channels and in formats to ensure groups are not knowingly excluded. **Complete. 29 respondents.**

7. Is there potential for differential impact (negative or positive) on any of the protected characteristics?

Yes, potentially. The Homes and Housing Strategy outcomes, the delivery of new homes and housing related services, will be monitored in line with the Councils existing procedures to ensure fair use of resources.

The 2017 Strategic Housing Market Assessment evidence base clearly defines the future housing needs of residents, often mentioning specifically those households with protected characteristics.

The evidence in the 2017 Ipswich and Waveney Housing Market Area Strategic Housing Market Assessment forms the basis of the programme of work for new housing delivery. In addition, evidence generated by local housing needs surveys at parish level, Neighbourhood Plan Housing Policies in settlements where Plans have been made and adopted, and work of other community groups with interests in housing as appropriate.

** New position statement as of 19th February 2019 when most recent advice from Govt. to BMSDC Planning Policy team, referring to the numbers of new homes:
The Joint Local Plan consultation document (August 2017) set out a housing requirement for the two districts based upon evidence from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (May 2017). The introduction of a standard methodology for calculating housing need increases the number of new Homes and Housing to be planned for in both Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts based on national household growth projections and workplace-based affordability ratios
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>.

Currently awaiting confirmation of refreshed new housing delivery numbers - January 2019.
Update received 19.02.2019 as follows:
Babergh to deliver 420 per annum and Mid Suffolk 585 per annum, using 2014-based household projections.

Types of new homes intelligence stands as 2017 SHMAA.

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.

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| | <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 housing 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 Homes and Housing Strategy and Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy are focussed on creating a positive impact on residents, 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 at a younger age.</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 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 housing.</p> |
| <p>9. Could there be an effect on relations between certain groups?</p> | <p>No.</p> <p>The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Homes and Housing Strategy and Babergh and Mid Suffolk Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeper Strategy are intended to enhance relations between certain groups by extending and creating greater choice and options in the local housing markets and additional housing information services.</p> |

10. Does the policy explicitly involve, or focus on a particular equalities group, i.e. because they have particular needs?

Yes. See 7 and 8 above for some examples.

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.

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 as we await changes to central Government policy and strategy.

However, should Babergh and Mid Suffolk policy / service or function changes be required as part of the implementation of the new Homes and Housing Strategy or revised Homelessness Reduction Strategy outcomes, additional specific EQIA work will be carried out as that programme of work is developed to ensure compliance with the Public-Sector Equality Duties.

Proceed to full assessment: No

Equalities Lead sign-off: Kate Parnum, 9th July 2018.

Authors signature: Gill Cook (Housing Strategy Officer).

Date of completion: 9th July 2018.

Update 1: 6th February 2019.

Further update 2. 25th February 2019.

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